



## Hitchcock Downtown Assessment Report



Completed February 2026

## About Texas Downtown

**Texas Downtown** (TXD) was founded in 1985 to connect and serve communities, businesses, and champions of downtowns across the state. The non-profit organization celebrated 40 years of downtown revitalization in 2025.

TXD empowers downtown leaders with the resources, advocacy, education, and connections they need to drive transformation and revitalization.

We support the development of vibrant, thriving districts that celebrate local character, strengthen communities, and foster a strong sense of place.

### **Downtown Assessment Process**

Downtown assessments are offered as a TXD member service as part of our Downtown Assistance Program (DAP). They are designed to bring a group of downtown professionals to a city's downtown district to assess existing conditions and make realistic, attainable recommendations. The process begins with a downtown stakeholder survey and extensive research by assessment team members before arrival in the member community.

During the site visit, team members explore downtown, visit with business owners, and take notes. Team members are trained to identify opportunities and challenges, and to recommend best practices and strategies to enhance the downtown district and community. Team recommendations are compiled by Texas Downtown staff and include short (present-2 years) and long-range recommendations (3+ years).

Each assessment team is handpicked based on the community's existing needs and challenges. Led by Texas Downtown staff, the Hitchcock team included the following members:

- Shelly Ashcroft, Marketing & Membership, Texas Downtown
- Tania Moody, Executive Director, Texas Downtown
- Andrea Tantillo, Principal Program Coordinator, Houston-Galveston Area Council
- Jose Cantu, Senior Planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council

**Hitchcock Facilitating Staff:** Lance LaCour, Executive Director, City of Hitchcock EDC

# Hitchcock Downtown Assessment Report

## Executive Summary

Downtown Hitchcock is at a defining moment. Rapid residential growth, increasing development pressure, and expanding regional connectivity—particularly along State Highway 6—are reshaping the community. At the same time, residents, business owners, city leadership, and partner organizations share a strong desire to **protect Hitchcock's small-town character while intentionally guiding growth** in a way that enhances quality of life, strengthens local businesses, and builds long-term community pride.

Through the TXD Downtown Assistance Program (DAP), the Downtown Hitchcock assessment team evaluated existing conditions using a comprehensive process that included a pre-event stakeholder survey, review of demographic and historical context, shared planning documents, on-site analysis, and direct engagement with community stakeholders. This process revealed a high level of alignment across groups: Hitchcock's growth is inevitable, but **how it grows is a choice**.

Downtown Hitchcock has strong foundational assets, including city- and EDC-owned properties, a location outside the 100-year floodplain, strong school and youth pride, historical markers, and a proposed downtown promenade concept. However, the downtown currently lacks clear boundaries, a cohesive identity, walkability, consistent design standards, and everyday destinations that encourage residents and visitors to linger. Vacant lots, underutilized buildings, limited food access, and auto-oriented development patterns contribute to a disconnected downtown experience.

The assessment identifies a significant opportunity to **define Downtown Hitchcock now—before growth defines it by default**. Short-term “quick wins” such as improved downtown lighting, wayfinding, light pole banners, additional public art, pop-up retail, and pilot events can immediately improve perception, safety, and activity. These efforts can be paired with longer-term strategies, including form-based codes, phased infrastructure investments, mixed-use development, and destination anchors that support locally owned businesses and reduce retail leakage.

A central recommendation of this assessment is for the City to refine its downtown vision into **digestible, achievable phases**, beginning with a feasibility study and cost analysis to prioritize projects and guide investment. Focusing on one catalytic project—such as a weekend closure or pilot activation of Wallace Avenue—will help demonstrate proof of concept, build community momentum, and encourage private-sector reinvestment to follow public leadership.

Branding and placemaking emerged as critical tools for downtown Hitchcock's success. The community's authentic story—rooted in aviation history, agriculture, rail, and family-centered values—provides a compelling foundation for a unique downtown identity. Establishing a consistent brand, supported by public art, events, and gateway signage, will help Hitchcock stand out as a place that is **rooted, proud, and growing with intention**.

Downtown Hitchcock is a motivated community and has a rare opportunity to shape its future. With clear local leadership, coordinated partnerships, and a commitment to moving from planning to action, Hitchcock can create a downtown that serves residents, attracts visitors, and remains unmistakably—and authentically—Hitchcock.

### **Community Objectives**

The Hitchcock community demonstrates a strong, shared understanding that growth is inevitable—but must be guided intentionally. Across all stakeholder groups, there is clear alignment around preserving identity while planning for the future.

Key objectives include:

- Preserving a small-town, authentic Texas feel while accommodating growth
- Supporting and growing locally owned businesses first
- Balancing new residential development with community-serving commercial uses
- Creating a defined, walkable downtown district that feels intentional and welcoming
- Improving quality-of-life amenities for families, youth, and seniors
- Addressing food access gaps and everyday service needs
- Strengthening community pride through identity, history, and placemaking
- Ensuring growth is safe, accessible, inclusive, and well-managed

Stakeholders expressed concern that nearby development pressure feels like “the walls are caving in,” reinforcing the urgency to act now. At the same time, there is optimism and pride—residents and business owners choose Hitchcock because of its character and want reasons to stay, gather, and invest locally.

### **Initial Community & Downtown Observations**

Downtown Hitchcock is at a critical inflection point. Downtown Hitchcock is currently difficult to identify and navigate due to the absence of defining features typically associated with a walkable commercial district. The downtown contains few historic structures, lacks gateway and wayfinding signage, and has limited pedestrian-scaled street lighting. In addition, ADA-compliant sidewalks and safe pedestrian connections are inconsistent or missing, resulting in a downtown environment that is largely auto-oriented rather than people-focused.

Key observations include:

- Rapid residential growth is underway, with additional development expected
- Rising property values and development pressure are accelerating change
- State Highway 6 is both a major opportunity and a physical barrier
- Downtown lacks clear boundaries and a strong visual identity
- Limited fresh food access; no grocery option currently exists
- Numerous vacant or underutilized storefronts and empty lots create perception challenges
- Chain-link fencing and streetscape gaps detract from sense of place
- Downtown is not in the 100-year floodplain, a competitive advantage

Positive assets include:

- City and EDC ownership of key downtown properties, offering control over outcomes
- Strong school pride and youth engagement (sports, band, parades)
- An ambitious downtown vision plan, including a proposed promenade along Wallace Avenue
- Historic structures and markers that are under-leveraged

The team noted that while the existing downtown plan is strong conceptually, it will benefit from refinement, phasing, and feasibility analysis to ensure implementation momentum.



## **Economic Development & Small Business Mix**

Downtown Hitchcock currently has limited commercial activity, but this presents an opportunity to intentionally shape the business mix from the ground up. The team recommends that the City engage a neutral economic development consultant annually to provide **Economic Development Tools 101** training for EDC board members and City Council. Regular training will ensure decision-makers are fully informed about available state and local incentives and can confidently apply these tools to downtown redevelopment efforts.

In parallel, the City and EDC should consider targeted incentive programs for restaurants and breweries to attract locally owned, regionally owned, or Texas-based dining and brewpub concepts. These businesses often serve as early anchors in revitalization efforts and help establish downtown as a social and gathering destination.

### **Short-Term (0–2 Years)**

Focus on activation, visibility, and supporting local entrepreneurs:

- Recruit:
  - Farmers market (local champions already identified)
  - Comfort food and family-friendly dining options
  - Small-format grocery or fresh food market
- Leverage EDC-owned green space for pilot events and pop-ups
- Encourage food trucks and pop-up vendors through a designated downtown zone
- Explore façade, signage, and small-business incentive programs
- Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings and vacant lots
- The City already has strong incentive tools in place (Chapter 380, Chapter 312, HEDC programs) and could further streamline business attraction by creating a “How to Open a Small Business in Hitchcock” portal and checklist.

Shared-space concepts—such as business incubators or makerspaces—could activate underused buildings while also serving as the high-quality third spaces the community desires. Weekend street closures, pop-up retail, and temporary placemaking can serve as proof of concept, encouraging private investment to follow public leadership.

### **Long-Term (3+ Years)**

- Attract destination anchors such as:
  - Brewery or beer garden
  - Brick-oven pizza
  - Italian dining
- Reduce retail leakage to nearby communities
- Align zoning, infrastructure, and incentives with downtown-serving uses
- Expand hotel options near Hwy corridors and fairgrounds

- Encourage mixed-use development along Hwy 6 and downtown edges
- Hitchcock currently offers very limited and basic lodging options. As downtown activity and events expand, the recruitment of additional lodging—particularly near Hwy 6 and the downtown district—will be important to support overnight visitation and increase Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues. Additional lodging will also strengthen downtown as a destination during festivals, sporting events, and regional travel periods.

To visibly demonstrate commitment and momentum, the City of Hitchcock should consider leading downtown Hitchcock redevelopment efforts by **historically rehabilitating the exterior of 8002 N. Martin Luther King**. Preparing the interior as a basic, move-in-ready space for a potential restaurant or brewpub—offered as part of an incentive package—would signal to residents and private investors that downtown revitalization is underway.

As a long-term strategy, the City may also explore relocating City Hall to one end of the downtown district to serve as a civic anchor. Several Texas cities, including Navasota, Georgetown, and Bee Cave, have successfully used this approach to reinforce downtown as a destination and center of activity.



## **Physical Downtown Design**

Despite being constrained by the railroad and Hwy 6, the identified downtown area is well-located and viable. Improving downtown visibility, accessibility, and first impressions will be critical to repositioning the district as a place where residents and visitors feel comfortable arriving, parking, walking, and spending time and money.

## **Key Community Priorities**

- Safety, lighting, and visibility
- Walkability and accessibility
- Outdoor spaces for kids and families

## **Short-Term Recommendations**

- Coordinate with TxDOT and CenterPoint to improve:
  - Intersection lighting
  - Crosswalk striping and visibility
  - Downtown street lighting
  - Develop gateway monument signage along major highways
  - Walking and Biking Trails: connected to the TxDOT Sidewalk Project on Hwy 6 and the Good Ole Days Public Park
- Remove or screen chain-link fencing in public parks near downtown
- Install additional murals on blank walls, wayfinding signage, and light pole banners
- Add pocket parks, seating, shade, and play elements
- Clearly define downtown boundaries with street signs, maps and wayfinding signage
- Additional public art opportunities include painting or artist-wrapping TxDOT-approved junction boxes near downtown and at the Hwy 6/FM 2004 intersection. Partnering with local students or artists on these projects would reinforce community ownership and visual identity.

## **Long-Term Recommendations**

- Stakeholders emphasized that design standards and form-based codes will be essential to maintaining quality and cohesion as new development occurs.
- Close Wallace Street to create a pedestrian promenade
- Add traffic-calming features (bulb-outs, raised medians, high-contrast crosswalks)
- Explore:
  - Skate Park
  - Splash pad or water feature
  - Walking and biking trails
  - Golf cart connectivity
- Once pedestrian-scale lighting is installed at key intersections and corners, street banners can be added to further define downtown boundaries and serve as

temporary wayfinding signage directing visitors to nearby assets such as the Public Library, Museum, Latimar Park, City Hall, and other civic destinations.

Install energy-efficient, programmable LED lighting on the Hitchcock water tower located near downtown to serve as a highly visible landmark and early identifier of the downtown district. Color-changing lighting could be used to reflect seasons, holidays, community events, and school pride, reinforcing local identity while creating a recognizable nighttime presence.

Illuminating the water tower would provide an immediate, cost-effective wayfinding element for both travelers and residents, helping people locate downtown Hitchcock before more extensive investments—such as city gateway monuments, pedestrian-scale lighting, and comprehensive wayfinding signage—are implemented. This approach offers a highly visible short-term “quick win” that builds momentum, improves perception, and establishes a clear visual signal of where downtown is located, particularly for motorists traveling along SH 6.

Input indicates a strong desire for recreational amenities such as skateboarding and fishing access. Given this feedback, the team recommends elevating a downtown skate park as a capital improvement project. This investment would directly address youth needs, activate downtown during non-event hours, and reinforce downtown as a place for families and young people.

Temporary and low-cost placemaking efforts can further support this goal. Brightly painted picnic tables—potentially created through a partnership with local junior high or high school art classes—could be installed on EDC-owned property near Wallace Street. These elements would serve as both public art and functional infrastructure, creating a temporary or pop-up pocket park that provides a casual gathering space for residents and a rest stop for travelers passing through Hitchcock.

As Downtown Hitchcock grows, the City should recognize that not every surface needs to be fully paved, particularly in early phases of redevelopment. Vacant or grass lots can serve as interim event parking or overflow parking during festivals and downtown activations. As redevelopment becomes more permanent, the City should evaluate the use of permeable parking systems and stabilized walking path surfaces rather than traditional impervious pavement.

Given Hitchcock’s geographic position and exposure to runoff from areas north of the city, expanding impervious surfaces without a comprehensive drainage strategy could increase localized flooding risks. Permeable surface systems allow water to infiltrate through structured grids while maintaining load-bearing capacity and ADA accessibility, helping mitigate stormwater impacts while preserving flexibility. Incorporating permeable materials into

parking areas, trail connections, and event spaces can support downtown functionality while advancing long-term drainage resilience and sustainable design goals.

The guiding principle for these improvements is to make **Downtown Hitchcock feel like the living room of the community**—welcoming, flexible, and designed for everyday use, not just special events.





## Promotion & Special Events

Downtown Hitchcock has the opportunity to position itself as the heart of the community and would benefit from the creation of new, recurring family traditions—such as live music on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday evenings—hosted in temporary downtown pocket parks or pop-up spaces, weather permitting. These low-cost, high-impact programs help establish habits and reinforce downtown as a place to gather regularly.

## Event Opportunities

- Expand:
  - Little League Parade
  - Bulldog Nation events
  - County Fair programming
  
- Add:
  - Live music weekends
  - Cook-offs
  - Seasonal festivals
  - Pop-up holiday/seasonal markets

Hitchcock is home to mountain bike trails within its park system, yet these assets remain largely unmarketed outside the community. Mountain biking enthusiasts frequently seek new regional challenges and destinations, presenting an opportunity for Hitchcock to market these trails more intentionally as part of its outdoor recreation identity as a destination. Incorporating bike trails that connect to downtown and mountain bike assets into tourism messaging could help attract new visitors and complement downtown customer activity.

## What Makes Hitchcock Uniquely Hitchcock

Before the ideas, here's the gold we're mining — things other towns cannot copy:

- **Former U.S. Navy Blimp Base**  
Anti-submarine patrols, aviation history, coastal defense — this is rare.
- **Agricultural powerhouse roots**  
Once known for vegetable farming — not ranching, not cotton, but feeding people.
- **Railroad town DNA**  
Train Depot = oldest downtown building + defining boundary.
- **Gateway geography**  
Everything passes through Hitchcock on the way to the coast.
- **Wide-open land + growth pressure**  
Space, sky, movement — not hemmed in.

- **Not coastal, not suburban**  
A true in-between place with its own rhythm.
- **A town that watched the sky**  
Blimps, trains, growth, storms — Hitchcock has always been looking outward. That gives us a storytelling lane no other Texas downtown is really using.



## Branding Ideas

### 1. “Hitchcock: Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground.”

Top-tier, deeply authentic, flexible

#### Why this works

- Blimp Base = sky
- Farming + rail = ground
- Growth = looking ahead

#### How it shows up

- Gateway sign:  
“Hitchcock — Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground.”
- Murals:
  - Blimps floating over crops
  - Historic sky-watch imagery
- Events:

- Sky & Rail Festival
- Harvest Table Under the Hangars
- Merchandise:
  - Vintage aviation + farm graphics
- Downtown language:
  - “Grounded Growth”
  - “Rooted, Not Rushed”

## 2. “Hitchcock: Built to Move.”

*Bold, modern, very different*

### Why this works

Hitchcock has *always* been about movement:

- Trains
- Blimps
- Hwy 6
- Growth
- People passing through — and stopping (eventually)

### Sub-lines & variations

- “Built to Move. Built to Stay.”
- “Where Things Take Off.”
- “Movement Made Home.”

### Visual language

- Arrows, motion lines, flight paths
- Wayfinding that feels dynamic
- Street banners referencing routes, rails, and airways

### Programming tie-ins

- “Stopover Saturdays”
- “Passing Through? Stay Awhile.”
- Promenade becomes a literal movement corridor

## 3. “Hitchcock: Ground Control for Small-Town Living”

*Fun, kitschy, aviation-nerd gold*

### Why this works

- Blimp Base history
- Subtle NASA/aviation nod without copying anyone
- Totally unexpected for a small Texas town

## How it could show up

- Downtown wayfinding:
  - “Ground Control → Downtown”
  - “You Are Clear for Landing”
- Events:
  - *Ground Control Market*
  - *Clear for Takeoff Concert Series*
- Public art:
  - Retro aviation typography
  - Playful pilot language

## 4. “From Hangars to Harvests”

Excellent for placemaking and storytelling

### Why this works

It tells Hitchcock’s story in four words:

- Military → Agriculture → Community → Growth

### Where it shines

- Public art
- Interpretive signage
- History trails
- Branding sub-theme under a larger identity

Example:

“*Hitchcock: From Hangars to Harvests — and Everything in Between.*”

## 5. “Hitchcock: Where Texas Grows Upward”

Strong attitude, modern, flexible

### Why this works

- Agriculture reference without being old-fashioned
- Signals independence
- Fits growth, culture, people, and ideas

### Variations

- “Where Texas Grows Upward, Not Out”
- “Where Growth Has Roots”
- “Where Community Grows Different”

## 6. Kitschy Event & District Naming (Where This Really Comes Alive)

If Wallace Street becomes a promenade, lean HARD into story:

### **Promenade Name Ideas**

- The Flight Line
- Hangar Row
- The Groundway

### **Farmers Market Names**

- Ground Control Market
- The Hitch Crop
- Harvest on the Hangar
- The Grow Down (Downtown Growers Market)

### **Kids & Family Spaces**

- The Launch Pad (splash pad or play area)
- The Hangar (teen / skate / activity zone)

### **STRONG Recommendation** (TXD-style brand guidance)

If Hitchcock wants a brand that:

- Feels authentic
- Is visually rich
- Can scale with growth
- Works for placemaking, events, signage, and storytelling

### **Lead with:**

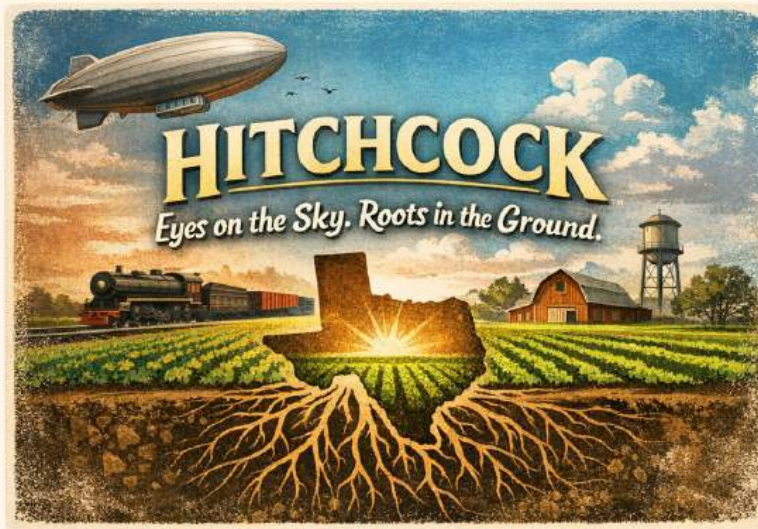
**“Hitchcock: Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground.”**

Then support it with playful sub-language:

- Ground Control
- Launch Pad
- Flight Line
- From Hangars to Harvests

This gives Hitchcock:

- A serious backbone
- With room for whimsy and fun
- And a story no other downtown can steal



## Organizational Processes

Successful revitalization will depend on structure, leadership, and focus. To strengthen transparency and trust during downtown Hitchcock redevelopment, the assessment team recommends establishing a recurring public forum—such as a bi-monthly or quarterly “Downtown Low Down” meeting.

These meetings would be led by the City, feature a published agenda, invite downtown and local stakeholders to attend, and provide structured updates from each department working on downtown projects. This forum would allow residents, business owners, and regional stakeholders to receive accurate information, ask questions, and track progress before, during, and after downtown redevelopment initiatives.

As part of this effort, the City should request and share updated TxDOT traffic count data for Hwy 6 near downtown, including the intersection of Hwy 6 and FM 2004. Presenting this data during Downtown Low Down meetings will help ground discussions about safety, access, and infrastructure investments in clear, factual information.

### Key recommendations:

- Establish a Downtown Steering Committee or Advisory Board
- Align City, EDC, TxDOT, CenterPoint, ISD, and Chamber efforts
- Ensure ordinances, code enforcement, and incentives support downtown goals
- Develop a phased 5-, 10-, and 20-year implementation plan
- Prioritize **one** catalytic project at a time to build momentum

The City may also consider becoming a Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) affiliate and actively working through the program to prepare for application to the Governor’s Community Achievement Award (GCAA). Participation would support beautification efforts, environmental stewardship, and statewide recognition tied to downtown improvements.

### Key Priority Recommendation: Evaluate a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)

As development pressure increases, the City should thoroughly research and evaluate the feasibility of establishing a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) that includes downtown Hitchcock and other select high-value or high-growth commercial areas along Hwy. 6 and 2004. A TIRZ could provide a locally controlled funding mechanism to support downtown infrastructure, public realm improvements, and targeted economic development incentives without increasing tax rates.

The **City of Mesquite's Towne Centre TIRZ** provides a relevant model. Originally created in 1998 to strengthen a major commercial corridor, the TIRZ was later expanded to include downtown Mesquite and has supported significant public and private investment. Since its inception, the Towne Centre TIRZ has generated over \$63 million in project expenditures, increased taxable value by \$220 million above its base, and supported retail, residential, and downtown revitalization initiatives through a single, coordinated financing framework.

For Hitchcock, a TIRZ could:

- Support implementation of the downtown vision through phased public investment
- Help fund streetscape, lighting, wayfinding, gateway, and placemaking improvements
- Assist in attracting catalytic uses such as downtown lodging and mixed-use development
- Leverage private investment by demonstrating long-term public commitment

It is recommended that the City pursue a TIRZ feasibility analysis to assess potential boundaries, projected increment, eligible projects, and alignment with downtown and economic development goals. When used strategically, an expanded downtown district and a TIRZ could provide the organizational and financial tools needed to move from planning to implementation while ensuring growth supports long-term downtown vitality.

As Downtown Hitchcock plans for long-term mixed-use and redevelopment near the active railroad corridor, the City should consider evaluating the feasibility of establishing a Railroad Quiet Zone in coordination with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), the railroad operator, TxDOT, and other required partners. Quiet Zones reduce routine train horn use at designated crossings while maintaining safety through required infrastructure improvements, making nearby areas more compatible with downtown residential, lodging, dining, and mixed-use development.

While federal statute does not directly fund Quiet Zone implementation, federal and state rail safety grant programs may support crossing upgrades and the closure of unnecessary or redundant crossings, helping offset costs. It is recommended that the City conduct a preliminary Quiet Zone feasibility assessment to evaluate eligible crossings, required safety measures, potential funding opportunities, and alignment with downtown redevelopment goals. When implemented strategically, a Quiet Zone can reduce development barriers, improve quality of life, and support long-term downtown investment while maintaining rail safety standards.

To further inform long-term decision-making, the City may also consider conducting a community-wide citizen survey every two to three years—similar to the approach used by the City of Georgetown—to gather resident feedback ahead of annual budget planning and priority-setting.

Finally, the team recommends that Hitchcock organize a peer-learning visit with a mix of public and private downtown stakeholders to tour comparable Texas downtowns and meet with local downtown managers. These firsthand experiences often accelerate understanding, alignment, and confidence in implementation.

### **Potential Funding Sources for Downtown Projects**

- **Texas Downtown's Anice Read Fund** – seed funding to support downtown projects and programs.
- Texas Rural Funders Grant Hub
- Keep Texas Beautiful's Governor's Community Achievement Awards
- Texas Historical Commission Grants, Tax Credits, and Funding
- Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Downtown Revitalization/Main Street Program – funds sidewalks and streetscape projects (local match can go towards brick pavers, plantar boxes with irrigation, decorative light poles, benches, and trash cans)
- Main Street America Funding Opportunities
- Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) – can be used for wayfinding and downtown signage
- T-Mobile Hometown Grant – Up to \$50,000
- Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program
- AARP Community Challenge Grant – Up to \$50,000
- Federal Railroad Administration Discretionary Grant Programs

### **Additional Comments**

- Downtown Hitchcock has untapped assets and natural resources
- Growth pressure makes now the moment to define identity
- The community wants places to gather, linger, and belong
- Clear leadership and implementation will determine success
- Growth can be guided through form-based codes, zoning, and policy tools

Hitchcock is poised for tremendous growth. The next step is to move from planning to action—conducting feasibility studies, identifying costs, prioritizing projects, and getting visible wins on the ground to build confidence and momentum.

## Addendum

### Texas Downtown Community Comparables

Here's a side-by-side look at **Mineola, TX; Navasota, TX; and Bee Cave, TX** as comparables for Hitchcock—focused on where they are now, how they got there, and what they did wrong before they got it right.

#### 1) Mineola, TX

Population (latest estimate): ~5,380 (Census 2024 estimate).

Mineola is a classic small-town, historic downtown community. Like many Texas towns, it faced the typical downtown cycle: disinvestment, vacancies, and leakage to highway-oriented retail—then chose to compete by doubling down on authenticity and a preserved historic core.

Strategy (revitalize + grow)

Use preservation-based downtown revitalization with a long-run program structure (Main Street approach) to rebuild private confidence and steadily increase foot traffic and business recruitment.

Key Moves (tools/actions)

- Formal downtown revitalization via a Main Street program, producing a “strong, focused historic downtown district” and over \$11M in combined public/private investment in the CBD.
- Consistent reinvestment in the “walkable historic experience” (historic buildings, downtown character).

What they did wrong (common early issues)

- Let highway development and convenience uses outcompete downtown for daily needs and visibility.
- Moved civic energy away from the historic core for some functions (see City Hall note below).

What they did to fix it

- Created a durable downtown “machine” (Main Street structure + sustained investment messaging) and used visible improvements + reinvestment to shift perception and attract follow-on private projects.

Bottom line for Hitchcock: Mineola shows that *a small town can grow while staying itself*—but it requires (1) a structured downtown organization and (2) steady, visible reinvestment that signals confidence.

## 2) Navasota, TX

Population (latest estimate): ~9,471 (Census 2024 estimate).

Navasota's downtown improved because the city treated downtown as core infrastructure and economic development, not just beautification. Their condition today reflects intentional public investment paired with catalytic private reuse.

Strategy (revitalize + grow)

- Use targeted public projects (streets/rail safety/utility coordination) to make downtown more accessible and inviting.
- Use city-owned assets strategically (RFP/selection process) to land "right-fit" anchors and prove demand.

Key Moves (tools/actions)

- Railroad Street improvement + safety/accessibility upgrades (including coordination with major stakeholders like rail partners), followed by more streetscape work.
- Used a community-focused RFP to sell an underutilized city-owned downtown warehouse, selecting a destination operator (WildFlyer Mead & Beer) that increased downtown activity and tax revenue—earning statewide recognition for the approach.

What they did wrong (common early issues)

- Underutilized downtown properties and gaps in active uses (a "missing anchor" problem).
- Needed improvements that made downtown feel safe and easy to navigate.

What they did to fix it

- Made a "small but strategic" catalytic deal using a city asset (RFP) + kept investing in the public realm to reinforce momentum.

City Hall: downtown or not? historic or new?

- City Hall is located downtown at 200 E. McAlpine Street, the current municipal building is a modern brick municipal building (replacing a demolished 1903 city hall).

Bottom line for Hitchcock: Navasota is a strong model for Hitchcock's situation because it proves that one catalytic reuse + street/rail/highway-edge safety and streetscape work can quickly change downtown's trajectory and investor confidence.

## 3) Bee Cave, TX

Population (latest estimate): ~8,510 (Census 2024 estimate).

Bee Cave is a "new Texas town center" story. Rather than a traditional historic downtown square, Bee Cave's identity formed through master-planned mixed-use growth anchored by regional retail/experiential destinations. Their current state reflects suburban growth pressure and the need to create community "center" through placemaking, parks, and connected

mobility.

Strategy (revitalize + grow)

- Treat the “downtown” as a town center / entertainment district and keep it aligned with the Bee Cave brand and experience economy.
- Build the community core through connectivity + civic + programming, not historic fabric.

Key Moves (tools/actions)

- Bee Cave’s economic development strategy explicitly includes keeping the Hill Country Galleria as a central shopping/experiential destination and creating/prioritizing an Entertainment District.
- Plans emphasize hike-and-bike connectivity to link destinations and create a more coherent, people-friendly “center.”

What they did wrong (common early issues)

- Started without a traditional downtown form; risk of becoming “placeless retail” unless deliberately shaped.
- Civic identity can get overshadowed by private development unless the city invests in public spaces + community programming.

What they did to fix it

- Formalized strategies around experience, entertainment, and connectivity—then backed it with planning and ongoing civic investments and public engagement.

City Hall: downtown or not?

- Bee Cave City Hall is at 4000 Galleria Parkway—functionally part of the new construction town center/Galleria area (not a historic downtown).
- The public library has operated inside City Hall (noted since 2007 in reporting), reinforcing City Hall as a community hub within the town center.
- This is effectively modern civic construction, not historic downtown fabric.

Bottom line for Hitchcock: Bee Cave demonstrates how to build a “center” from scratch—but it also shows that if you don’t define identity and public-realm character, you risk getting growth without soul.

What Mineola, Navasota, and Bee Cave Have in Common

1. They chose a “center” and invested in it.

- Mineola: historic downtown focus via Main Street investment.
- Navasota: downtown made safer/more walkable and used a catalytic downtown asset deal.

- Bee Cave: town center approach anchored by experience/entertainment + connectivity planning.
2. They used tools—not just vision.  
Program structures (Main Street), RFPs and incentive-like dealmaking, grants/infrastructure coordination, and connectivity planning.
  3. They recognized perception matters.  
Small, visible wins and “proof of concept” moments made people believe again (and that belief attracts private investment).

#### What Hitchcock Can Borrow Immediately

##### Lesson 1: Pick one “center” and draw the line

- Mineola and Navasota benefit from a clear downtown district; Bee Cave benefits from a clear town center.

Hitchcock should define downtown boundaries and reinforce them with gateways/wayfinding and visual identity cues (your team already flagged this as a must-do).

##### Lesson 2: One catalytic win beats five vague plans

Navasota’s downtown RFP reuse is the cleanest parallel: use a city/EDC-controlled asset to land a right-fit anchor and change the story fast.

Hitchcock move: choose one EDC/city-owned site (Wallace/promoted promenade edge) and recruit one high-visibility use (brewery/beer garden, brick-oven pizza, family dining) as the “confidence builder.”

##### Lesson 3: Safety + walkability are economic development

Navasota’s improvements succeeded partly because they made downtown feel safe and easy.

Hitchcock move: treat Hwy 6 crossings, lighting, and pedestrian visibility as “business recruitment infrastructure,” not beautification.

##### Lesson 4: If you’re “building a downtown,” you must also build identity

Bee Cave’s play is experience + brand alignment.

Hitchcock move: commit to a distinctive identity system (your aviation/ag/rail story lane is strong) and make sure it shows up in: gateways, banners, murals, event naming, and district signage.

Lesson 5: City Hall location is not destiny—but civic presence helps

- Navasota's City Hall is downtown.
- Bee Cave's City Hall is

Hitchcock move: even if City Hall stays where it is, you can still create a “civic heartbeat” downtown—through a plaza/promenade, signature park space, or a community-serving third place (markets, festivals, small amphitheater, etc.).



***Navasota, Texas City Hall***



***Bee Cave, Texas City Hall Lawn***

## ***Individual Recommendations (Team Notes)***

**Tania:**

### **Community's Objectives:**

- Preserve a **small-town, authentic Texas feel** while accommodating inevitable growth
- Balance **new residential development** with community-serving commercial uses
- Create a **defined, walkable downtown district** that feels intentional and welcoming
- Support and grow **locally owned businesses** first
- Improve **quality of life amenities** for families, youth, and seniors
- Address **food access gaps** and everyday service needs
- Strengthen community pride through **identity, history, and placemaking**
- Ensure growth is **guided, safe, accessible, and inclusive**

To Be Like:

- **Minneola, FL** – managed growth with retained small-town character
- **Market Street / Woodlands Town Center** – walkable, community-oriented gathering place
- **Colts Neck, NJ** – identity-driven, green, and high quality of place

### **Initial Community/Downtown Observations:** *(positive and/or negative)*

- Rapid residential growth underway; more coming
- Rising property values and increased development pressure
- Hwy 6 is both a **major opportunity and a barrier**
- Downtown lacks clear boundaries and a strong visual identity
- Limited fresh food access; no grocery option
  
- Strong school pride and youth participation (sports, band)
- Residents desire **more things to do locally**, especially outdoors
- Downtown has historic assets but they are under-leveraged
- Chain-link fencing and gaps in streetscape detract from sense of place
- Downtown is **not in the 100-year floodplain**, a competitive advantage

**Economic Redevelopment & Small Biz Mix:** *(focuses on funding, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, capitalize on property*

*development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.)*

**Short-Term (0–2 years):**

- Recruit:
  - Boutique or small-format grocery / fresh food market  
Farmers Market (local champions already identified)
  - Comfort-food restaurant options
  - Family-friendly dining
- Encourage food trucks with a temporary or pop-up food truck zone
- Promote adaptive reuse of existing buildings and vacant lots
- Leverage EDC-owned green space for pilot events and pop-ups
- Explore façade, signage, and small-business incentive programs

**Long-Term (5+ years):**

- Attract destination anchors:
  - Italian dining
  - Brick-oven pizza
  - Brewery / beer garden
- Encourage mixed-use development along Hwy 6 and downtown edges
- Reduce retail leakage to nearby communities
- Expand hotel options near fairgrounds and Hwy corridors
- Align zoning and infrastructure with downtown-serving uses

**Physical Downtown Design:** *(supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical, visual, and historic preservation assets that set the commercial district apart.)*

**Key Priorities Identified by the Community:**

- Safety, lighting, and visibility
- Walkability and accessibility

- Outdoor spaces for kids and families

#### Short-Term Recommendations:

- Coordinate with TxDOT and CenterPoint on:
  - Intersection lighting
  - Crosswalk visibility
  - Street-light installations
- Remove or visually screen chain-link fencing downtown
- Install temporary:
  - Murals
  - Wayfinding signage
  - Street banners (with TxDOT approvals)
- Add pocket parks, seating, shade, and play elements
- Begin downtown boundary definition (maps + signage)

#### Long-Term Recommendations:

- Splash pad or water play feature (third place)
- Skate park (repurpose tennis courts if feasible)
- Trails:
  - Walking
  - Biking
  - Archery
  - Golf cart connectivity
- Gateway monument signage on Hwy 6 and key entry points
- Explore Wallace Street closure as a downtown promenade
- Plan for center medians, pedestrian crossings, and possible Hwy 6 pedestrian bridge

**Promotion & Special Events:** *(positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique personality.)*

## Community-Driven Event Opportunities:

- Expand and enhance:
  - Little League Parade
  - Bulldog Nation events
  - County Fair programming
  - Good Ole Days Park activities
- Add:
  - Live music weekends
  - Cook-offs
  - Seasonal festivals
  - Pop-up markets and vendors
- Create recurring traditions that build habit and pride

## Brand Fit & Identity Recommendations:

Based on community input, Hitchcock's downtown brand should feel:

**Approachable. Proud. Rooted. Growing — but not generic.**

## Core Brand Themes to Explore:

- *“Where Roots Run Deep & Community Grows”*
- *“Small Town Heart. Room to Grow.”*
- *“Hitchcock: Grown Here.”*
- *“From Fields to Front Porch.”*

## Identity Anchors to Leverage:

- Agricultural heritage (vegetable farming)
- Blimp Base / military history
- Rail history and Train Depot
- Outdoor lifestyle and green space
- Family-centric values

## How the Brand Shows Up:

- Consistent downtown logo or mark
- Public art telling Hitchcock's story
- Wayfinding and gateway signage
- Event branding tied to seasons and traditions
- Downtown banners, murals, and monuments
- Messaging that emphasizes *belonging*, not just development

### **What This Is NOT:**

- Not overly coastal
- Not suburban or corporate
- Not anonymous growth

**Organizational Processes:** *(involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, broad-based community involvement, and federal, state, regional and local resources for the district.)*

- Establish a Downtown Steering Committee or Advisory Board
- Engage identified local champions and business owners
- Strengthen partnerships between:
  - TxDOT
  - CenterPoint
  - School District
  - EDC
  - Chamber
- Align ordinances, code enforcement, and incentives with downtown goals
- Develop a 5-, 10-, and 20-year plan to stay ahead of infrastructure timelines
- Ensure accessibility is embedded in all decisions

### **Additional comments:**

- Downtown has strong bones and untapped assets
- Growth pressure makes **now the moment to define identity**
- Community wants places to gather, linger, and belong

- Clear leadership structure will be critical to success

## What Makes Hitchcock Uniquely Hitchcock (The Raw Ingredients)

Before the ideas, here's the gold we're mining — things **other towns cannot copy**:

- **Former U.S. Navy Blimp Base**  
Anti-submarine patrols, aviation history, coastal defense — this is rare.
- **Agricultural powerhouse roots**  
Once known for **vegetable farming** — not ranching, not cotton, but *feeding people*.
- **Railroad town DNA**  
Train Depot = oldest downtown building + defining boundary.
- **Gateway geography**  
Everything *passes through* Hitchcock on the way to the coast.
- **Wide-open land + growth pressure**  
Space, sky, movement — not hemmed in.
- **Not coastal, not suburban**  
A true in-between place with its own rhythm.
- **A town that watched the sky**  
Blimps, trains, growth, storms — Hitchcock has always been looking *outward*.  
That gives us a storytelling lane no other Texas downtown is really using.

## BRANDING IDEAS

1. "Hitchcock: Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground."

*Top-tier, deeply authentic, flexible*

Why this works

- Blimp Base = sky
- Farming + rail = ground
- Growth = looking ahead

It instantly feels poetic, visual, and unique.

How it shows up

- **Gateway sign:**  
*"Hitchcock — Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground."*

- Murals:
  - Blimps floating over crops
  - Historic sky-watch imagery
  
- Events:
  - *Sky & Soil Festival*
  - *Harvest Under the Hangars*
  
- Merch:
  - Vintage aviation + farm graphics
  
- Downtown language:
  - “Grounded Growth”
  - “Rooted, Not Rushed”

This brand balances **heritage + future** beautifully.

## 2. “Hitchcock: Built to Move.”

*Bold, modern, very different*

Why this works

Hitchcock has *always* been about movement:

- Trains
- Blimps
- Hwy 6
- Growth
- People passing through — and stopping (eventually)

Instead of fighting that, **own it.**

Sub-lines & variations

- *“Built to Move. Built to Stay.”*
- *“Where Things Take Off.”*

- “Movement Made Home.”

#### Visual language

- Arrows, motion lines, flight paths
- Wayfinding that feels dynamic
- Street banners referencing routes, rails, and airways

#### Programming tie-ins

- “Stopover Saturdays”
- “Passing Through? Stay Awhile.”
- Promenade becomes a literal **movement corridor**

This is edgy for a small town — in a good way.

### 3. “Hitchcock: Ground Control for Small-Town Living”

*Fun, kitschy, aviation-nerd gold*

#### Why this works

- Blimp Base history
- Subtle NASA / aviation nod without copying anyone
- Totally unexpected for a small Texas town

#### How it could show up

- Downtown wayfinding:
  - “Ground Control → Downtown”
  - “You Are Clear for Landing”
- Events:
  - *Ground Control Market*
  - *Clear for Takeoff Concert Series*
- Public art:
  - Retro aviation typography

- Playful pilot language

This one leans **clever + playful**, perfect for murals and events.

#### 4. “From Hangars to Harvests”

*Excellent for placemaking & storytelling*

Why this works

It tells Hitchcock’s story in **four words**:

- Military → Agriculture → Community → Growth

Where it shines

- Public art
- Interpretive signage
- History trails
- Branding sub-theme under a larger identity

Example:

*“Hitchcock: From Hangars to Harvests — and Everything in Between.”*

#### 5. “Hitchcock: Where Texas Grows Different”

*Strong attitude, modern, flexible*

Why this works

- Agriculture reference without being old-fashioned
- Signals independence
- Fits growth, culture, people, and ideas

Variations

- “Where Community Grows Different”
- “Where Growth Has Roots”
- “Where Texas Grows Up, Not Out”

This is great for economic development + downtown branding alignment.

## 6. Kitchy Event & District Naming (Where This Really Comes Alive)

If Wallace Street becomes a promenade, lean HARD into story:

### Promenade Name Ideas

- The Flight Line
- Hangar Row
- The Growline
- The Groundway

### Farmers Market Names

- Ground Control Market
- The Hitch Crop
- Harvest on the Hangar
- The Grow Down (Downtown Growers Market)

### Kids & Family Spaces

- **The Launch Pad** (splash pad or play area)
- **The Hangar** (teen / skate / activity zone)

### My STRONG Recommendation (TXD-style guidance)

If Hitchcock wants a brand that:

- Feels authentic
- Is visually rich
- Can scale with growth

- Works for **placemaking, events, signage, and storytelling**

**Lead with:**

“Hitchcock: Eyes on the Sky. Roots in the Ground.”

Then support it with playful sub-language:

- Ground Control
- Launch Pad
- Flight Line
- From Hangars to Harvests

This gives them:

- A **serious backbone**
- With **room for whimsy and fun**
- And a story no other downtown can steal

**Shelly:** (incorporated as the report compiler)

**Jose:**

**Community’s Objectives:**

- Gain revenue but maintain rural look and feel
- “we feel the walls caving in from nearby developments”
- Attract families - provide gathering spaces for families
- Attract food and grocery stores
- Protect old trees
- Provide quality healthcare access
- High quality 3rd space - collaborative and inexpensive

**Initial Community/Downtown Observations:** *(positive and/or negative)*

- Quite a few empty store fronts and even more empty lots

- The “broken window theory” - while it is dated and flawed, I think it applies to Hitchcocks downtown area. I think something as simple as a form-based code that requires all businesses to keep a certain standard and any new developments to maintain a certain facade/front would go a long way in helping the space feel cohesive. As it sits, the downtown area feels disconnected.
- **Positive** - The EDC owns multiple of the vacant lots, giving the city an opportunity to develop a comprehensive look and feel.
- Branding and wayfinding signage is a must. When traveling down highway 6, there is no way of knowing that you are approaching downtown Hitchcock.

**Economic Redevelopment & Small Biz Mix:** *(focuses on funding, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, capitalize on property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.)*

- There isn't much in the way of economic redevelopment because there are very few businesses in the downtown area. This challenge is also an opportunity - the City is almost starting from scratch.
- If the city moves forward with developing their proposed promenade, Wallace should be closed to auto traffic and the businesses should face Wallace. Then parking should be behind the businesses along Hwy 6 and MLK.
- Business incubators or shared-space workshops could be a good use of the empty buildings in the study area <https://www.creatorspace.org/> a makerspace is a place that connects the community with equipment and tools. Often, these tools are too large, expensive, or otherwise difficult for a single person to own, or you only need to use them for a short time. - These workshops are also an example of a high quality 3rd space that the community desires. This example offers welding, 3D printing, and several other craft tools in Houston.

**Physical Downtown Design:** *(supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical, visual, and historic preservation assets that set the commercial district apart.)*

- Despite being wedged between the railroad and hwy 6, I think their identified downtown area is a really good choice and I think closing Wallace to cars is a no brainer - the impact to traffic would be minimal and the increased pedestrian space would be attractive to visitors.
- The issue of “not enough parking” came up a few times - I think the narrow lots that the EDC owns between MLK and the railroad would make for some easy parking space.
- Hitchcock is leaning into the blimp base, but it is very disconnected from this downtown area. If the city could find a way to own that property and turn it into a community space it would feel more like an asset and less like a distant landmark.
- If the city decides/has the opportunity to build a new hotel, i think it should be along Hwy 6 in the downtown area. It could serve multiple purposes: lodging for good ol days and fairground events and an anchor for the downtown district.

**Promotion & Special Events:** *(positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique personality.)*

- Hitchcock is home to the “Good Ol’ Days” park, next door to it is Prosperity bank. The bank has “community reinvestment funds” that could be used to invest in and activate the park.
- Reportedly, event coordinators prioritize the Galveston County Fairgrounds over the good ol days park. I think the good ol days park is missing a “differentiator” why choose this space over that one?

**Organizational Processes:** *(involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, broad-based community involvement, and federal, state, regional and local resources for the district.)*

- TxDOT and Centerpoint seem to be highly supportive of Hitchcock's proposed branding efforts.
- I think the existing proposal is really good, but it needs to be broken down into digestible and achievable chunks. The city or the community needs to rally behind a single project and see it through to the end before trying to start a second or third project.

**Additional comments:**

- Someone said "there is no way to control growth once 99 is built" and I disagree. Form-based codes, land use and zoning policies, or moratoriums on permits for certain development types are a few of the ways a city can control what their city looks and feels like.
- According to TxDOT CRIS data - Hwy 6 averages 74 crashes per 10k cars - this is high. Traffic calming measures like bulb outs, high contrast cross walks, and a raised median could help slow traffic. Slow traffic and less crashes could make it a more enjoyable walking experience for pedestrians.
- A raised median would also be a good location for a welcome monument/sign.
- Hitchcock wants an HEB but I think the DG market and Aldi are better fits and probably easier to attract.

**Andrea:**

**Community's Objectives:**

- To keep its small town character while attracting growth - new residents and businesses
- All groups - business owners, residents, city staff, Centerpoint, TxDOT, and the EDC board understand that the city is going to grow and they need to control that growth.
- To be like:
  - Not a lot of examples given, other than during conversations about how other cities were doing things well
    - Santa Fe has more restaurants and retail

- League City has powder-coated electric poles and center medians with vegetation for pedestrian safety
- Friendswood makes plans and implements them fast

Initial Community/Downtown Observations: (positive and/or negative)

- People who live and work in Hitchcock like Hitchcock - finding work, raising families, opening businesses is a choice and they chose Hitchcock for its small town character. Residents and business owners note they would like a safe place for families to gather, which further demonstrates their interest in staying in the city.
- Hitchcock lacks a real identity, something that people can point to and say “this is Hitchcock. This is who we are.” Some ideas could be the old WWII blimp base (not downtown and not city-owned), past train town and vegetable growing community, youth sports (they have a good little league program and even have a parade each year), a top tier mountain bike trail in Jack Brooks Park, and a state champion high school basketball team.
- Hitchcock has an ambitious plan for developing a downtown - including building a promenade, or gathering space, between SH6 and the active rail line, closing an existing road and using city-owned property. The plan shows a variety of newly built businesses along the promenade. However, Hitchcock may need to further refine the plan to have a clear strategy for incrementally developing the downtown elements. A feasibility study with costs estimates to help the city prioritize projects would be an excellent next step.

**Economic Redevelopment & Small Biz Mix:** (focuses on funding, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, capitalize on property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.)

- Community Reinvestment Act funds may be available through Prosperity Bank
- The City offers grant and loan programs for new businesses

- The City recently adopted new codes for commercial and residential development
- The City offers an online portal for permit applications, however there is no fee list with these applications and no overall check list - the City could further streamline the permitting process with a "How to Open a Business in the City" website and portal and checklist, including any regional, state, and federal regulations at least for reference. Codes and ordinances should also not be written in a way to broadly restrict all businesses.
- The City has a good working relationship with both TxDOT and CenterPoint and could work with either or both to install banner signage on utility poles to delineate the downtown area for a quick win. To improve safety, Centerpoint can also add additional street lighting per an agreement with the City (the first 10% at no cost). The City is working with TxDOT to install sidewalks throughout the area, but not downtown at this time.
- The City has several incentives, including Chapter 380 Economic Development Agreements, Chapter 312 Tax Abatement, HEDC 4A Direct Incentive, and HEDC Storefront and Streetscape Improvement Program.  
<https://www.hitchcockedc.com/incentives/local.php>

- 

**Physical Downtown Design:** (supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical, visual, and historic preservation assets that set the commercial district apart.)

- Hitchcock has a few historic markers, but not much historic design or any intentional design. It looks like any town with strip centers and convenience stores.
- Absence of design models will make it difficult for the City to enforce design standards to meet an aesthetic goal. A resident provided comments that the car repair shops and vape shops don't tell the best story of what Hitchcock has to offer and can be - but lack of standards or lack of enforcing standards doesn't let the City put its best foot forward.

- The City Hall has a sleek, modern look which may not match the the community's desire to be a small, family-friendly place to live, work, and play. If the City wants to have a modern look for downtown, the time is right to do so. There are very generic-looking buildings facing SH6, buildings facing Wallace Avenue (proposed promenade area) could use facade grants to update their look and feel to a more modern one. An owner of D&D's liquor in the downtown district recently moved to a generic strip center and plans to demolish the previous building and build a new strip center on that lot and an adjacent lot. The City has an opportunity to direct new construction to match its identity if they choose one.
- The City owns several assets in the downtown district, including buildings and vacant lots. The City is looking to sell those to developers to build new buildings or renovate existing buildings. The buildings and properties have easy access to Wallace Avenue.
- Design ideas to match the sleek modern shipping container/rail town look of City Hall (which may not match the community's desire for a small town feel) include:
  - <https://super-box.us/container-homes-houston-trendy-affordable-living/#:~:text=3%2Dstory%20shipping%20container%20home,what%20Breux%20wanted%20to%20achieve>
  - <https://ems-llc.com/5-ideas-for-a-shipping-container-pop-up-business-in-houston/>
  - <https://downtowncontainerpark.com/leasing/>
  - [https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g45963-d5577602-Reviews-Downtown\\_Container\\_Park-Las\\_Vegas\\_Nevada.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g45963-d5577602-Reviews-Downtown_Container_Park-Las_Vegas_Nevada.html)

● **Promotion & Special Events:** (positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique personality.)

- The City owns a large park in the middle of the commercial district that's used for an annual festival. Additional festivals and daily use at the park (adding picnic areas, playground area, walking paths) could benefit the city and residents alike. It's an underused asset
- The County owns and operates a large, well-used park within the City limits of Hitchcock. The City could capitalize on this by partnering with the County to highlight attractions in the City.
  - <https://www.galvestoncountytx.gov/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/54/573>
- While there are plenty of residents in Hitchcock, the City is also along the corridor, alternate route, back way, to Galveston on SH 6. The entrance to IH45 South toward Galveston is farther south than Buc-ees, a large gas station on I45 South. Hitchcock could work to attract a sporting goods store or a general store for motorists to stop and buy last-minute equipment, sunscreen, or snacks on their way to or from Galveston. Hitchcock-branded merchandise and products from local artisans could attract return customers.
- Residents would like to see more family-friendly activities, such as a place to listen to live music, and more restaurants, perhaps an Italian restaurant or a brick-oven pizza restaurant. The EDC is hoping to attract a brewery in a large, city-owned building on Wallace Avenue. The location could also house a restaurant.

**Organizational Processes:** (involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, broad-based community involvement, and federal, state, regional and local resources for the district.)

- The City needs to take a look at the downtown plan, develop a feasibility study, identify costs, short-term and long-term projects, and develop strategies to get something on the ground.

- Since a portion of the plan involves developers building new structures to create a linear downtown, highlighted by a promenade on Wallace Avenue, the City could close the street on weekends and offer popup/temporary shops and restaurants to demonstrate proof of concept and provide incubators for local or regional businesses. Private investment will follow public investment. This will demonstrate the City's commitment to this redevelopment. The city could leave any of these temporary changes (other than closing the street) beyond a weekend, so residents could continue to patronize popup businesses and enjoy pocket parks (looking at the rail road, not sure if that would be enjoyable or not)
  - H-GAC Instant Impact Guide - Better Block - <https://www.h-gac.com/getmedia/d7806a9e-fc24-4ec6-b1e2-97844f48c534/Instant-Impact-Guide-2016.pdf>
- Quick wins could be banner signs (wayfinding or seasonal) on utility signs to delineate downtown, a gateway sign to welcome motorists to Hitchcock, a more welcoming fence around Ole Time Days park and operating hours to include use (even though the park isn't technically in downtown, it's adjacent)
- Possibly consider including the businesses on both sides of SH6 was part of the Downtown Hub since there are more existing structures on the north side and traffic flows down SH6.
- Possibly consider keeping one of the vacant land parcels and designating it for parking for downtown or working with the railroad to use railroad right of way for parking, blocked off from the active tracks.
- EDC and City could benefit from some business attraction and retention training to help cultivate relationships with existing businesses and grow interest from non-local businesses. This includes guiding new businesses through the process and not assuming businesses are trying to take shortcuts and miss vital permitting. This also includes

offering existing businesses an opportunity to be part of future plans and to include business marketing materials in City tourism efforts, downtown marketing efforts, or at chamber/tourism offices. Local hotels and RV parks might also include local business materials in their “things to do in Hitchcock” brochure areas. There is also a roadside rest stop on SH6 coming into Hitchcock that might have a location for brochures or at least a poster about things to do in Hitchcock.

- The City could seek out certification by the State or other organizations\*
  - <https://www.killeentexas.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=2697>
  - <https://tpwd.texas.gov/wildlife/birding/bird-city-texas>

### **Additional comments:**

Hitchcock has a lot of potential and is ripe to see tremendous growth. Hitchcock needs to determine its identity and work toward all development fitting into that picture. Hitchcock as a great vision plan for creating a downtown, but needs to stop planning and start acting by conducting a feasibility study, including cost analysis, and getting projects on the ground to start building momentum. Easy quick wins could include the addition of more lighting for safety, installation of wayfinding/seasonal signage on utility poles, and gateway/monument signage to let motorists know they have entered Hitchcock. The EDC and the City could work together and make sure infrastructure and other improvements are done at the same time. This can be accomplished with flexible plans, for example, work together to find out when roads will need to be closes for elements of both plans and try to do them at the same time, closing the roads and disrupting traffic only once.

<https://www.flagandbanner.com/images/40-years-street-pole-banner.jpg>

## Implementation Roadmap (90 Days / 6 Months / 12 Months)

**Purpose:** Translate the assessment into an action sequence with clear “what first.”

### Next 90 Days (0–3 Months): Align + Launch Quick Wins

#### Governance + Coordination

- Form a **Downtown Steering Committee** (City + EDC + 1–2 businesses + 1–2 residents + ISD/community).
- Establish the **Downtown Low Down** cadence (bi-monthly or quarterly), publish schedule + agenda template.

#### Define Downtown

- Adopt a **working downtown boundary** (for marketing, tracking, incentives, and planning).
- Create a one-page “Downtown Hitchcock” map for public use (even if it's a simple draft).

#### Quick Wins (Visibility + Safety + Identity)

- Request CenterPoint streetlight additions where feasible and coordinate with TxDOT on:
  - intersection illumination priority list
  - crosswalk visibility enhancements
- Execute a **banner + wayfinding pilot** (utility pole banners + temporary district markers).
- Launch 1–2 **murals or junction box wraps** using Hitchcock's aviation/ag/rail story.

#### Catalytic Project Decision

- Select **one** catalytic project for the next 12 months:

- Wallace pilot closures → promenade proof-of-concept, or
- Exterior rehab + “move-in-ready” prep of a catalytic building, or
- Gateway + district identifier package (sign + lighting + banners as one “arrival” project)

## **Next 6 Months (3–6 Months): Prove Concept + Set Standards**

### **Pilot Activation**

- Implement the first **Wallace Pilot Day** (closure + vendors + music + kids activity).
- Build a repeatable “kit” (barricades, signage, vendor rules, ADA access, safety plan).

### **Feasibility + Phasing**

- Procure a **feasibility/cost analysis** scoped to:
  - Wallace promenade phasing and utilities
  - parking strategy and access
  - site priorities (city/EDC-owned parcels)
  - preliminary cost ranges and funding strategy

### **District Tools**

- Draft **Design Standards Lite** (interim) to guide new construction and facades now.
- Create a “How to Open a Business in Hitchcock” checklist + fee list + pathway.

## **Next 12 Months (6–12 Months): Build Momentum + Lock the Trajectory**

### **Capstone Deliverables**

- Adopt a phased **5/10/20 implementation plan** with priority projects and timing.
- Launch a recurring downtown tradition (monthly market or live music series).

## Capital + Recruitment

- Begin at least **one physical improvement** on the ground:
  - lighting/crosswalk package, OR
  - gateway/district identifier package, OR
  - Wallace promenade Phase 1 (pilot-to-permanent)
- Issue an RFQ/RFP (or targeted recruitment package) for:
  - brewery/beer garden, brick-oven pizza, family dining anchor, and/or boutique grocer concept

## Funding

- Decide whether to pursue **TIRZ feasibility** and identify boundaries/options.
- Submit 1–3 grant applications aligned with the priority project.

## Downtown Boundary Recommendation (Working Definition)

Purpose: Establish “where downtown is” so investment, marketing, tracking, and standards align.

### Recommended Structure

#### A) Downtown Core (Primary Focus Area)

- Centered on Wallace Avenue and the blocks most suitable for a walkable promenade-style district.

- Includes City/EDC-owned parcels with highest redevelopment leverage.
- Primary locations for: banners, murals, gateway identity, pilot events, and initial business recruitment.

#### B) Downtown Support Zone (Activation + Parking + Services)

- Adjacent parcels and corridors needed for:
  - parking (interim lots, overflow event parking)
  - service access (delivery routes, utilities)
  - second-phase infill and complementary businesses

#### C) Highway-Edge District (Visibility + Arrival)

- Key Hwy 6 approaches where “Downtown Hitchcock” must be identified for motorists.
- Includes major intersections, trail/park connectors, and the best first-impression nodes for:
  - monument signage
  - water tower lighting
  - directional wayfinding

Implementation Note: The boundary can begin as a “working map” and be refined after feasibility analysis. The most important step is to draw the line now so downtown does not get defined by default development patterns.

### **Wallace Promenade Pilot Playbook (Proof of Concept)**

**Purpose:** A low-cost, high-visibility test that proves demand and builds confidence.

## Recommended Pilot Format

### Pilot Name Options

- *Flight Line Fridays*
- *Ground Control Market*
- *Stopover Saturdays*
- *Launch Pad Live*

### Frequency

- Start: **1x per month** (spring/summer/fall)
- Grow to: **2x per month** once operations are smooth
- Long-term: seasonal weekly cadence (if demand supports)

## Pilot Essentials (The “Kit”)

### Operations

- Temporary street closure plan (barricades, detour signage, emergency access).
- Vendor layout (10'x10' footprints), power plan, waste plan.
- ADA access and accessible vendor spacing.
- Safety: lighting if dusk, visible crossings, volunteer “ambassadors.”
- Portable restrooms (if not available nearby).

### Programming Menu (Simple + Repeatable)

- Live music (small footprint)
- Kids zone: chalk art, games, mini-soccer, pop-up play

- Food trucks + pop-up seating
- 10–20 vendor market (makers + produce + local groups)
- “Passport” punch card encouraging visits to existing businesses

### **Placemaking Elements**

- Temporary seating clusters (bright tables/chairs)
- Shade canopies where feasible
- String lights or portable light towers (if evening event)
- Simple branded sign: “You’ve Landed in Downtown Hitchcock”

### **Success Measures (Track Every Pilot)**

- Estimated attendance
- Vendor count + vendor sales feedback
- Business owner feedback (foot traffic, sales)
- Safety notes (lighting needs, crossings, conflicts)
- Social media reach + photo assets collected
- “Return intent” survey question (would you come back? what should be added?)

### **Pilot-to-Permanent Path**

- After 3 pilots: refine layout + decide what becomes permanent (lighting, seating, mural locations, signage, curb adjustments).

## Design Standards Lite (Interim Guidance)

**Purpose:** Provide immediate direction while longer form-based code work is explored.

### Recommended Interim Standards (0–24 Months)

#### Building Orientation + Frontage

- Primary entrances should face the pedestrian corridor (Wallace/promenade side where applicable).
- Encourage buildings to create an active edge: doors, windows, porches/patios.

#### Ground-Floor Transparency

- Where retail/restaurant uses exist, prioritize visible windows on the pedestrian-facing façade.

#### Parking Placement

- Prefer parking **behind or beside** buildings rather than fronting the main pedestrian corridor.

#### Signage

- Consistent sign zone height and scale (pedestrian-readable).
- Encourage blade signs, wall signs, and simple monument signs; discourage oversized, highway-only signage within the core.

#### Materials + Form

- Avoid blank metal walls facing the pedestrian zone.
- Encourage durable materials and simple massing consistent with the desired modern-small-town character.

#### Lighting

- Encourage warm, pedestrian-scale fixtures along key blocks and corners; avoid overly harsh glare.

### **Landscaping + Shade**

- Require or strongly encourage shade trees and seating at key nodes, especially where families gather.

**Flexibility Note:** These standards should be framed as “interim design guidance” adopted by council/EDC for consistency until formal code updates are completed.

## **Downtown Metrics Dashboard (Quarterly Tracking)**

**Purpose:** Make progress visible and keep partners aligned.

### **Recommended Quarterly Dashboard Measures**

#### **District Vitality**

- Number of active businesses within the downtown boundary
- Vacancy rate (buildings) and activation rate (vacant lots used for events/parking/pop-ups)
- New business inquiries (tracked by City/EDC)

#### **Events + Activation**

- Number of downtown activations (markets, closures, concerts)
- Total estimated attendance across events
- Vendor participation count + return rate

#### **Investment**

- Public investment completed/in progress (lighting, sidewalks, signage, murals)

- Private reinvestment indicators (permits, renovations, new construction)
- Incentives issued (type + amount) and outcomes

### **Safety + Walkability**

- Lighting installations completed (count + locations)
- Crosswalk visibility improvements completed
- Notable safety concerns identified/resolved
- (Optional) Hwy 6 crash metrics tracked annually with TxDOT reference

### **Brand + Visibility**

- Wayfinding/banners installed (count + coverage area)
- Social media reach for downtown campaigns
- Photo library growth (usable images per quarter)

### **Reporting Rhythm**

- Reviewed at each **Downtown Low Down**
- Shared publicly in a one-page update to build trust and momentum

## **Downtown Branding System (Make the Brand Implementable)**

**Purpose:** Move branding from “ideas” to a consistent system that shows up everywhere.

### **Recommended Brand Backbone**

**Primary Downtown Tagline (Pick One)**

- **Eyes on the Sky • Roots in the Ground** (*recommended*)

### **Supporting “Flavor” Language (Use for events + signage)**

- Ground Control
- Launch Pad
- Flight Line
- Hangars to Harvests

### **Icon System (Use in banners, wayfinding, merch, templates)**

- Blimp silhouette (sky)
- Rail line / track element (movement + history)
- Crop rows/roots motif (ag heritage + grounded growth)

### **Where the Brand Shows Up First (Quick Wins)**

- Utility pole banners to delineate downtown
- A simple gateway identifier at key approach
- One signature mural that “tells the story” (blimp + rail + roots)
- Event naming system (Ground Control Market / Flight Line Fridays)

### **Consistency Rule**

- Same tagline + icons + color family across:
  - downtown social templates
  - banners

- wayfinding
- event graphics
- merch

