

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Northgate District is an urban neighborhood located across the street from the old "north gate" of the Texas A & M University campus. It is one of the original three neighborhoods that developed around the University (the others being Southgate and Eastgate/College Hills). This 145-acre district is now surrounded by University property on the east, south, and west sides, and the City of Bryan on the north (see Figure No. 1).

As one of the oldest areas in College Station, Northgate has played an important role in serving both the City and the University. When College Station was incorporated in 1938, the new City leased office space for municipal functions in a Northgate building (the corner of College Main and Patricia Street). As the City grew, College Station's first City Hall was built in Northgate (the corner of Wellborn Road/FM 2514 and Church Avenue).

Generations of students have patronized Northgate businesses, such as bookstores, clothing stores, restaurants, a movie theater, barber shops, and dry cleaners, among others. For many years, most off-campus student apartments were located in Northgate. With its long history of development, Northgate is perhaps the most urbanized portion of College Station. But as Northgate has aged, it has become in need of revitalization and redevelopment.

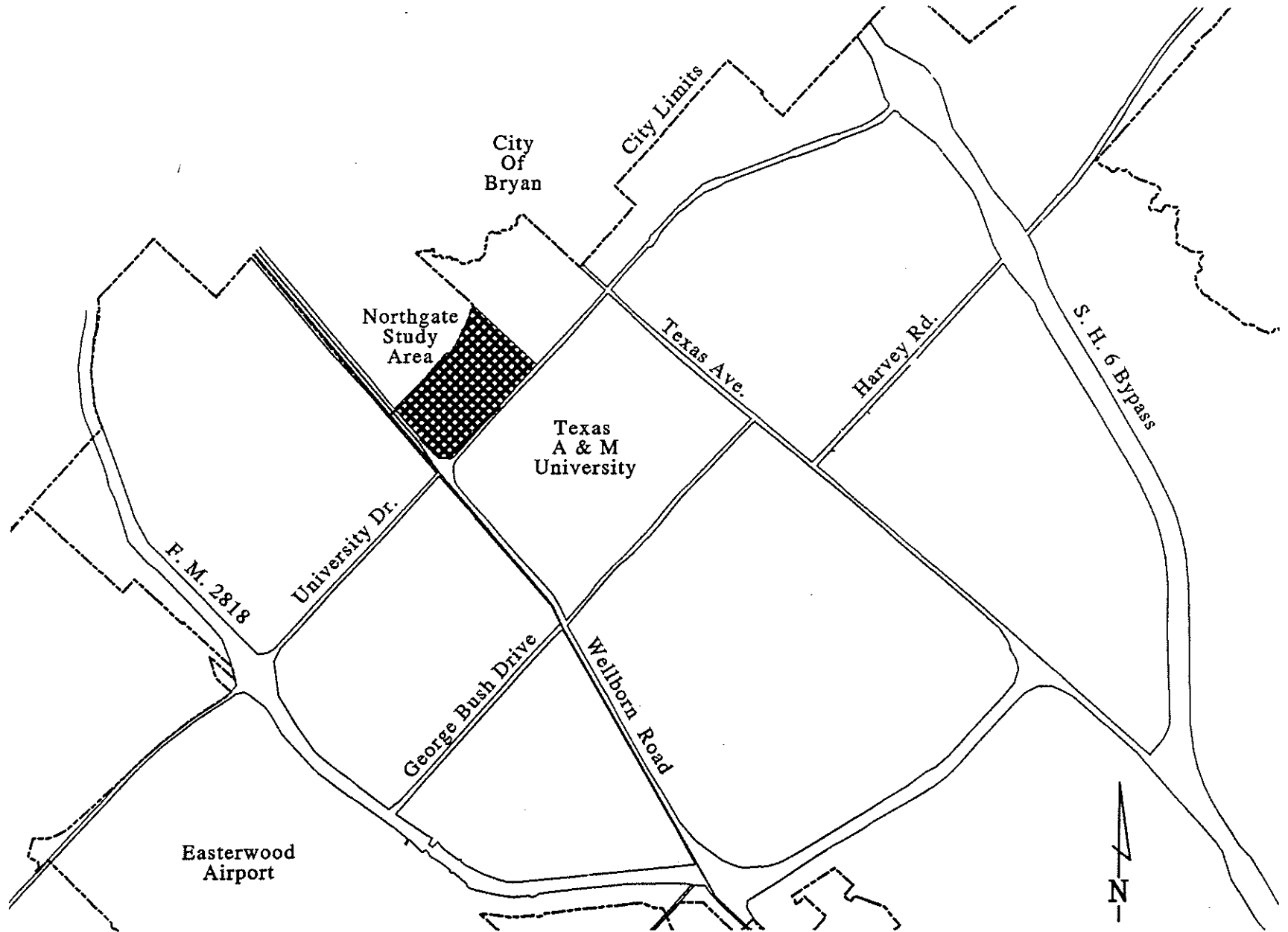
In December 1994, the City selected the team of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Inc. (HOK) and Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc. (B-A) to prepare a plan to redevelop and revitalize Northgate. The consultant team worked closely with City staff and the Northgate Steering Committee, composed of various Northgate businesses owners, University representatives, and City staff.

This redevelopment plan includes:

- A review of existing conditions in Northgate and similar experiences from other American college towns.
- A proposed plan for Northgate's redevelopment and a set of redevelopment guidelines.
- An "action plan" which identifies specific projects and funding sources to help redevelop and revitalize Northgate.

*The purpose of this study is to produce a Redevelopment Plan, a set of Redevelopment Guidelines, and an Action Plan for Northgate.*

FIGURE NO. 1 - LOCATION MAP



## SECTION 2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS

### EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Northgate contains both residential and non-residential development. Figure No. 2 shows the present land use pattern in Northgate.

#### Residential

Northgate's residential population is comprised mostly of tenants and renters, with very few owner-occupied homes. There are three types of residential development in Northgate:

- *Multi-Family* - Northgate's residential development consists primarily of small-scale apartments, usually 4 or 8-unit buildings. There are several larger apartment developments, such as the *Casa del Sol* apartments, which are two-story units that occupy large portions of the block. Multi-family developments are located in two general areas - from Boyett Street to Wellborn Road/FM 2514, and from Tauber to Nagle Streets.
- *Single-Family (Attached)* - These are predominantly single-story duplex units - some were built specifically as duplexes, others were converted from single-family homes. These developments are generally small-scale and are also scattered throughout the interior of Northgate.
- *Single-Family (Detached)* - While many of these structures were originally built as single-family owner-occupied homes, most are currently leased. These are generally scattered throughout Northgate's interior. The largest concentration of these uses is located on the block defined by Nagle Street, Inlow Boulevard, Cross Street, and Dogwood Street.

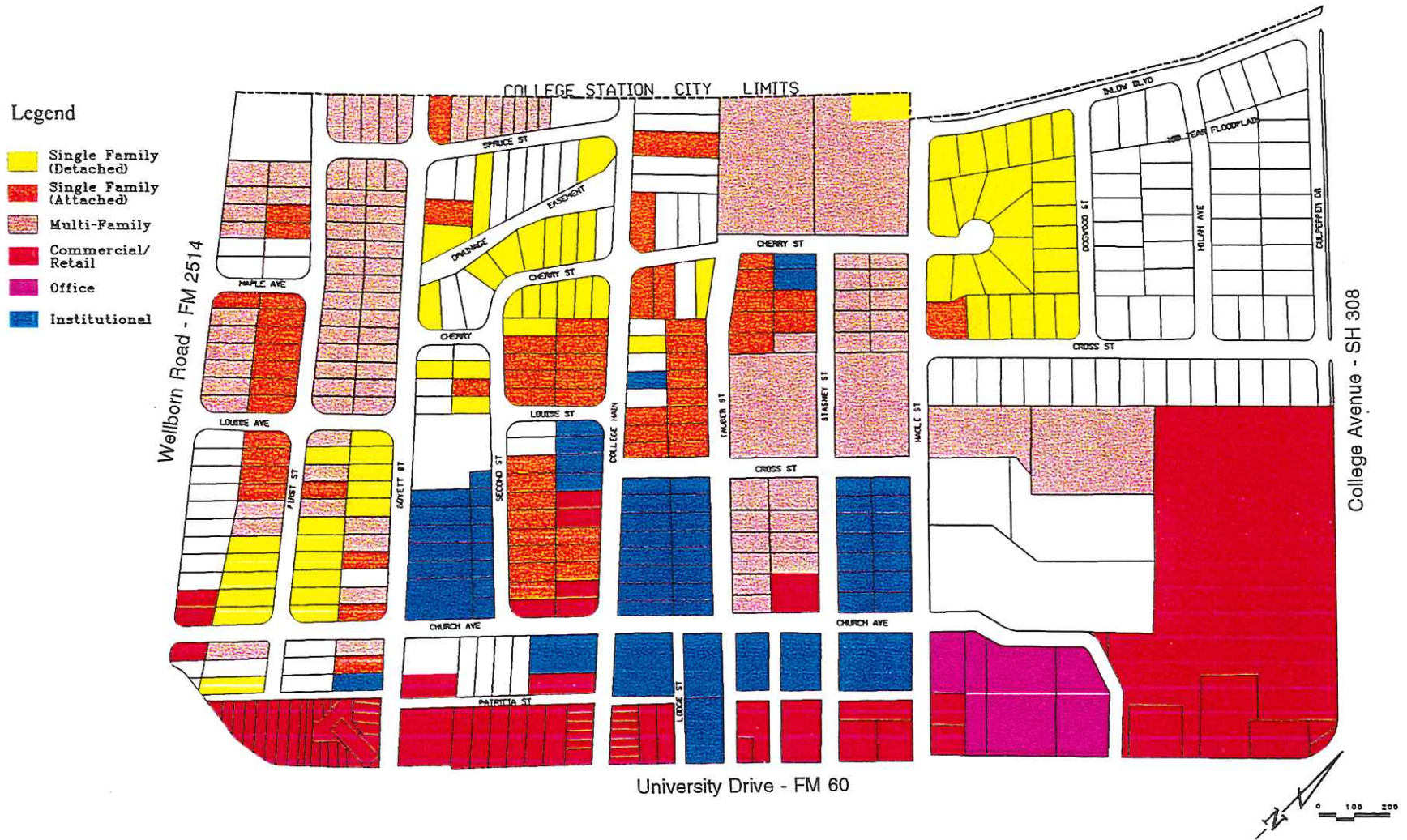
*Northgate has developed as a student-oriented residential rental area which experiences site-specific parking problems. Current water, wastewater, and storm drainage systems are some of the oldest in College Station. Northgate's relationship with the City is similar to other American college towns.*

### Non-Residential

While most of Northgate is comprised of residential development, a significant amount of non-residential development also exists, principally in the general vicinity of University Drive/FM 60. Three types of non-residential development predominate:

- *Commercial/Retail* - These uses define Northgate's edge along University Drive/FM 60. Commercial/retail uses are directed to the University market and include uses such as bookstores, restaurants/bars, and general merchandise/service retail (barber shops, dry cleaners, etc.). A large shopping center at University Drive/FM 60 and College Avenue/SH 308 includes a large supermarket (*Albertsons*), several smaller stores, and several franchise pad restaurants (*McDonalds, Mr. Gatti's, etc.*). Some smaller-scale retail is located in the interior of Northgate, such as a computer store at the corner of Church Avenue and Stasney Street, two restaurants at the corner of Wellborn Road/FM 2514 and Church Avenue, and a travel agency on College Main near Cross Street.
- *Office* - There is relatively little office development within Northgate. The existing uses (generally banks and other financial institutions) are located on the block bordered by University Drive/FM 60, Nagle Street, Church Avenue and College Main. These office uses easily co-exist with retail, and therefore could be considered another form of retail/commercial use.
- *Institutional* - All of Northgate's institutional uses are affiliated with various religious organizations. Some of the oldest churches in the City are located along Church Avenue. Other institutional uses - such as the *Christian Science Reading Room*, the *Baptist Student Center*, and the new *Islamic Community Center* - have been developed further in Northgate's interior.

FIGURE NO. 2 - EXISTING LAND USE



## EXISTING ZONING

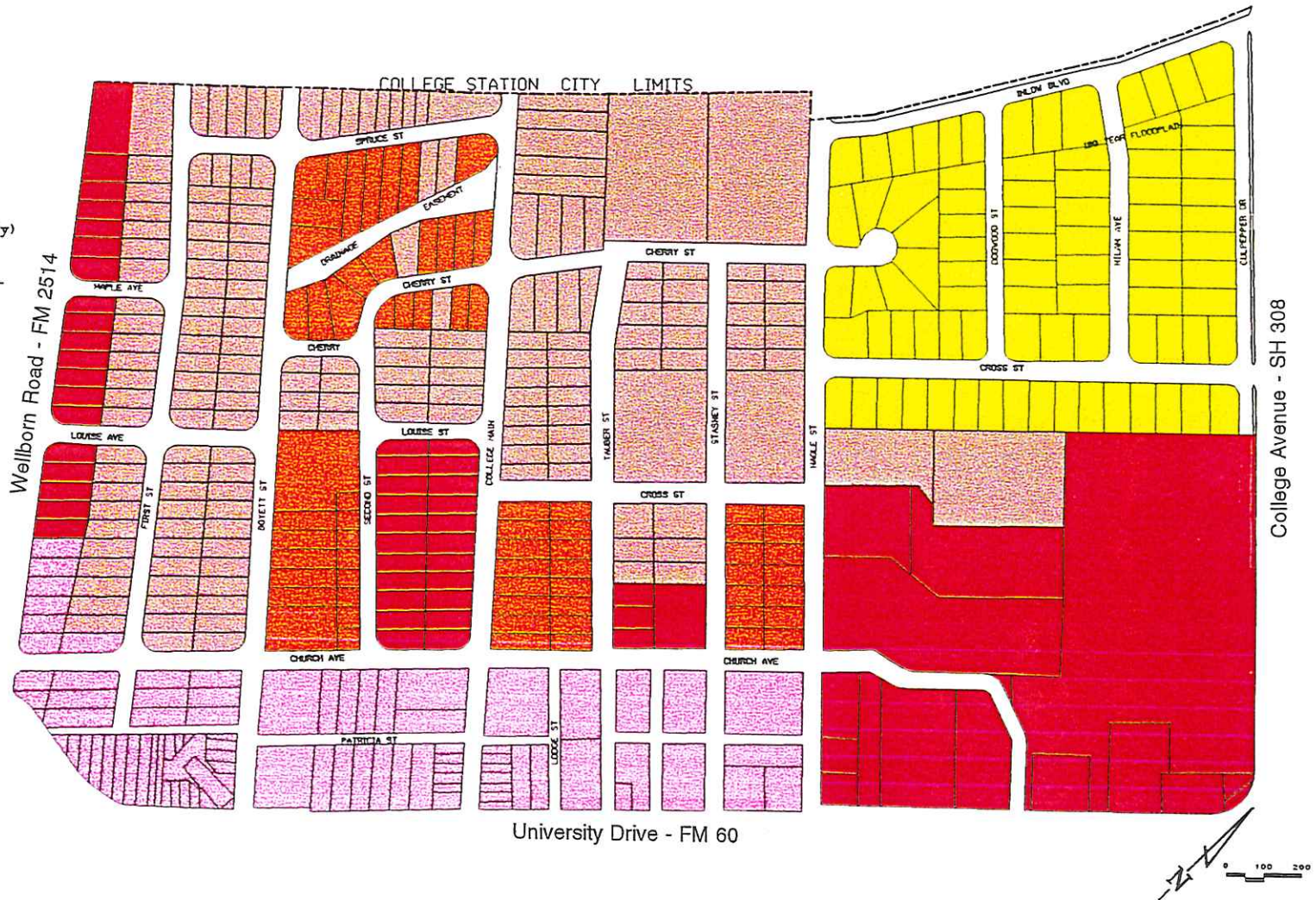
Northgate's pattern of land use development is not truly representative of its zoning pattern. There are five types of zoning districts in Northgate which cover both residential and non-residential development (see Figure No. 3):

- *R-1/Single-Family Residential* - The R-1 district is located in the northeastern corner of Northgate between College Avenue/SH 308, Inlow Boulevard, Nagle Street, and just south of Cross Street. This area is now mostly vacant, since the University purchased many of these properties and removed the structures. The homes between Nagle and Dogwood Streets, while zoned single-family, are mostly lease properties.
- *R-2/Duplex Residential* - Duplex zoning is shown on five blocks between Boyett and Nagle Streets. The pattern of existing duplex development, however, shows that many more duplexes have been developed in areas outside of the R-2 district.
- *R-6/Apartment Residential (High Density)* - The bulk of Northgate's interior - from First to Nagle Streets - has been zoned for high-density apartment development. Some "high-density" apartments have been developed, but most of the apartments in Northgate are smaller-scale units.
- *C-1/General Commercial* - The C-1 district regulates the development of general retail, and can also be found in other areas of the City. In Northgate, there are four locations of C-1 zoning - the *Albertsons* shopping center (University Drive/FM 60 at College Avenue/SH 308), along Wellborn Road/FM 2514 (Louise Avenue to the College Station city limit), along Church Avenue (between Tauber and Stasney Streets), and the block bordered by College Main, Church Avenue, Second Street, and Louise Street. The C-1 districts in the interior of Northgate and along Wellborn Road/FM 2514 have developed with more residential than non-residential uses.
- *C-NG/Commercial - Northgate* - The C-NG district is the only zoning district that is unique to Northgate. It includes the area between University Drive/FM 60 and Church Avenue (from Wellborn Road/FM 2514 to Nagle Street) and a portion of Wellborn Road/FM 2514 (to just south of Louise Avenue). C-NG allows for a variety of commercial and retail uses, much of which is presently developed with businesses and churches.

FIGURE NO. 3 - EXISTING ZONING

Legend

- R-1 Single Family
- R-2 Duplex
- R-6 Apartments (High Density)
- C-1 General Commercial
- C-2 Commercial - Northgate



The pattern of development in Northgate has generally followed the zoning districts along University Drive/FM 60 and College Avenue/SH 308. Since the College Station zoning ordinance is *Euclidian* in nature (lower-density uses are allowed in higher-density districts), Northgate's interior exhibits no recognizable pattern which may be compared to existing residential zoning.

## EXISTING PARKING

Observations of parking and traffic circulation were conducted on 3 May 1995 during the morning, noon and afternoon periods. Observations of parking included:

- An inventory of existing on-street and off-street supply.
- Identification of existing accumulations.
- Evaluation of site specific needs to commercial sub-areas.
- Documentation of existing parking signing/restrictions within the area.

Observations of Northgate traffic included evaluation of external and internal circulation, existing traffic control, and any critical traffic movements which may affect operational characteristics to the area.

(It should be noted that the observations were conducted during the week prior to final exams at the University. Final exams were held 5-10 May 1995. On 4 May 1995, no classes were in session. Since some classes may have had "walks" on the day of observation, the full impact of parking and traffic circulation may not have been observed, as compared to a typical day with class in session.)

### Inventory of Existing Parking Supply

An inventory of parking supply was conducted for both on-street and off-street parking locations:

- *On-Street Parking* - On-street parking consists of primarily parallel spaces with few head-in, angled parking spaces. (The only head-in angled parking observed was adjacent to the old Campus Theater.) Because of limited area for traffic circulation coupled with site-distance considerations at roadway intersections in Northgate, a limited amount of on-street parking is available. Throughout Northgate, about 625 on-street parking spaces currently exist. Figure No. 4 illustrates the location of on-street parking in the District.

Most of this on-street parking is regulated for either "1-Hour" or "2-Hour" limits, or "No Parking". Only a few locations had "No Parking" restrictions. These were primarily in the northeast area of Northgate where the vacant University property is located. Figure No. 5 illustrates current on-street parking restrictions.

- *Off-Street Parking* - For the most part, off-street parking was observed to be dedicated (and signed) for private commercial/retail or residential development. Off-street parking in areas other than commercial development was contained in small lots or head-in parking spaces located directly adjacent to roadways. Throughout Northgate, over 3,000 off-street parking spaces were observed. It should be noted that off-street parking for large multi-family complexes or single-family residential dwellings were not accounted for in this total. Figure No. 6 illustrates the location and quantity of observed off-street parking.

Within Northgate, three off-street lots are available for public use at a premium, offering a total of 893 off-street spaces (approximately 30% of the total off-street supply). The 800-space Mud Lot located at Church Avenue and Nagle Street charges \$1.75 per day and offers contract parking; a 51-space lot at First Street and Church Avenue charges \$1.50 per day and offers contract parking; and the 42-space Aggie Lot located between Patricia Street and Church Avenue, which has been leased by tenants in the commercial core of Northgate and is intended for customer use (persons other than customers may use the lot at the daily rate of \$1.50).

A 30-space lot adjacent to the Aggie Lot provides free parking for customers of the *Dixie Chicken* and *Dudley's Draw* only. This lot is owned by the City and has been leased to the owners of the *Dixie Chicken* and *Dudley's Draw*. Several other smaller lots (20-60 spaces) on or near Church Avenue exist but are for the private use of commercial customers or members of area churches. Towing is strictly enforced in these areas.

FIGURE NO. 4 - ON-STREET PARKING LOCATIONS

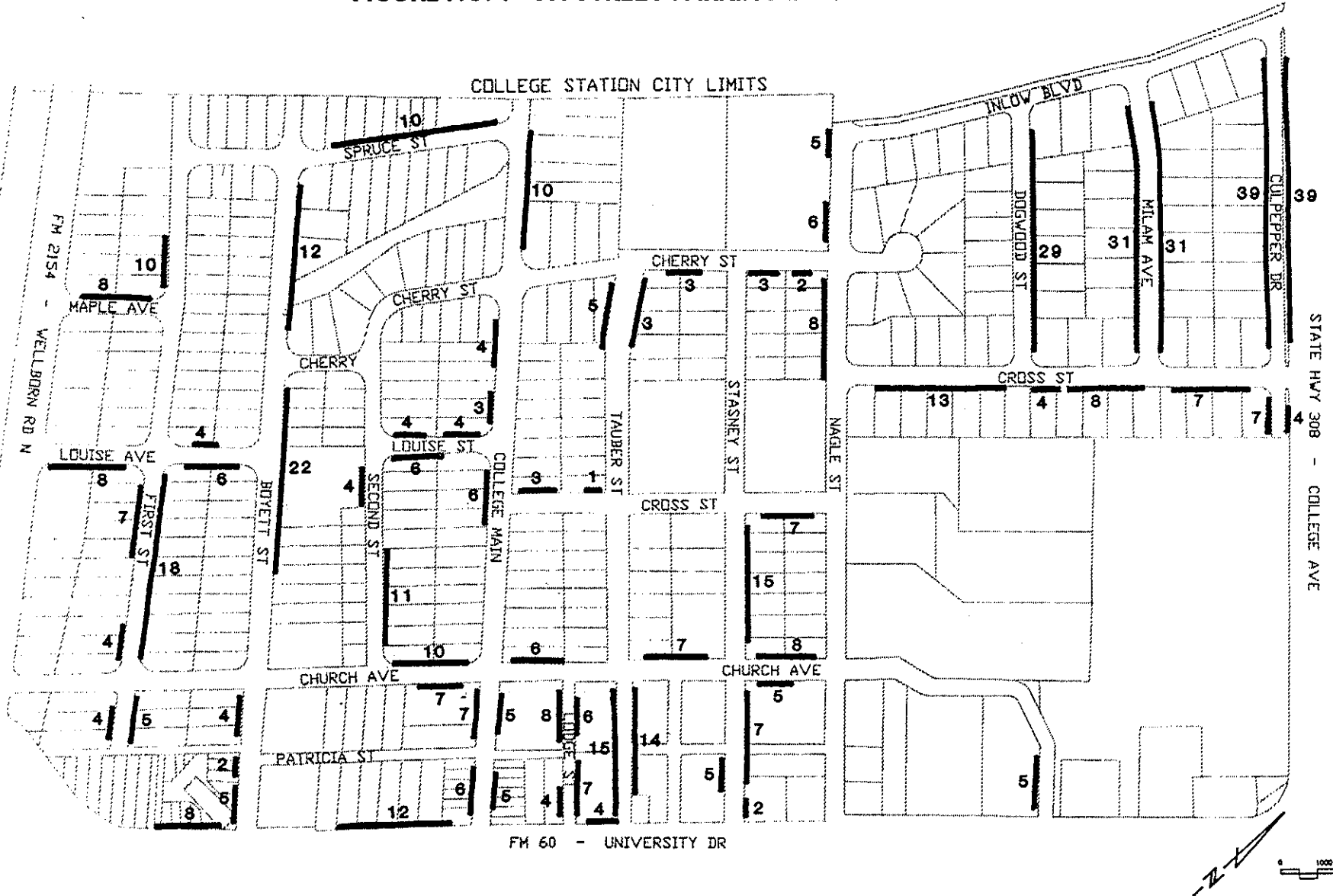


FIGURE NO. 5 - ON-STREET PARKING RESTRICTIONS

- No Parking
- △ 1-Hour Parking
- 2-Hour Parking

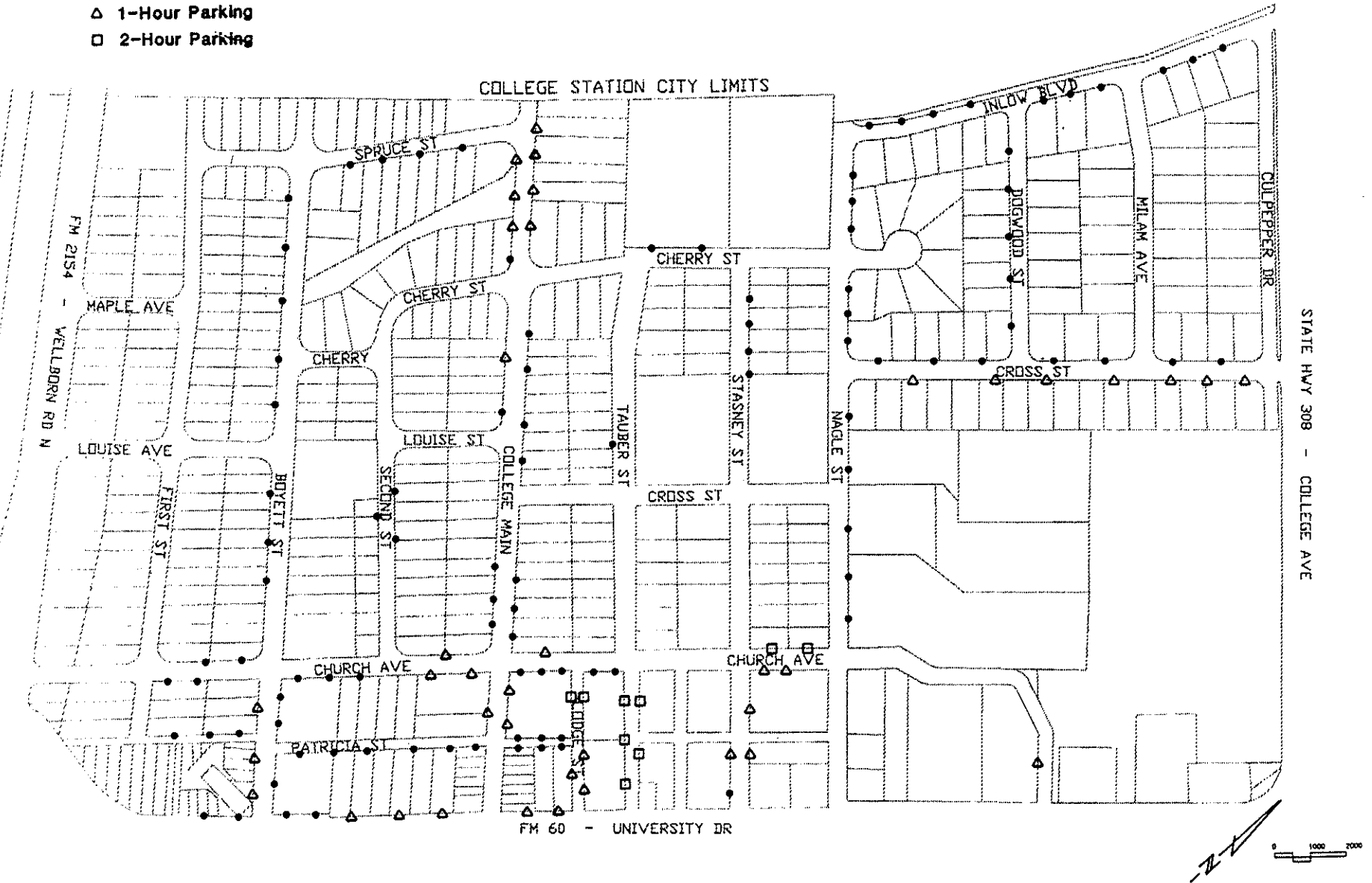


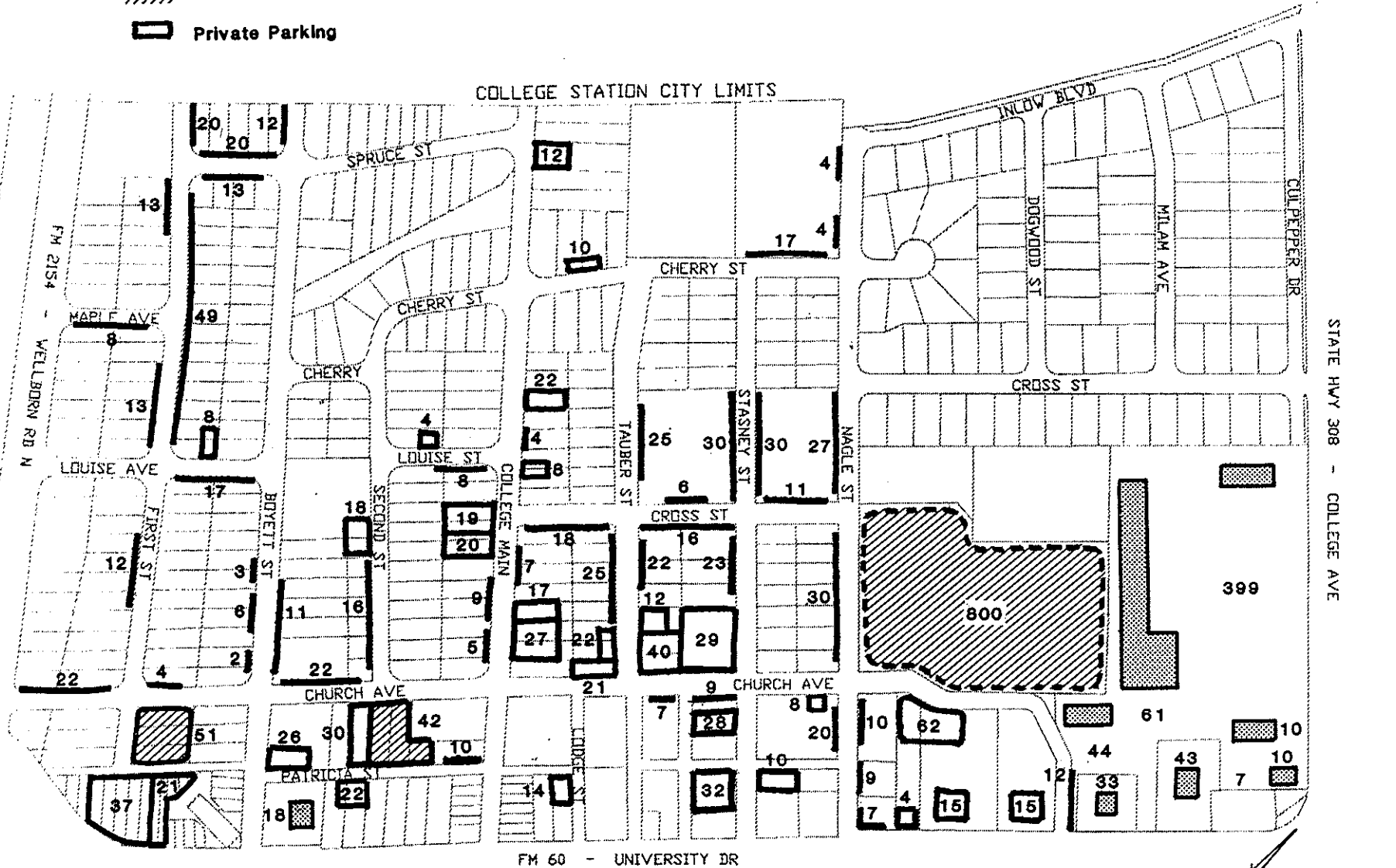


FIGURE NO. 6 - OFF-STREET PARKING LOCATIONS

-  Available for Public Use (Pay)
-  Private Parking



### Parking Accumulation

- *On-Street* - Observations of parking demand were conducted in the morning (9:30 AM to 11:30 AM) and afternoon (12:30 PM to 3:30 PM) periods. Figures No. 7 and 8 illustrate the percentage of accumulation-to-capacity for the morning and afternoon observations, respectively. Observations of on-street parking accumulation revealed heavy usage in both the morning and afternoon periods with fairly consistent turn-over rate. This was observed to occur particularly in "1-Hour" parking zones.

On-street accumulation in the "vacant" area in the northeast sector of Northgate also revealed consistent heavy usage throughout the day. The high and constant use could be attributed to the fact that there are no time limits to parking in this area. Parking was observed to occur only on-street and not within the properties themselves.

Parking accumulation for commercial activity between Tauber and Boyett Streets was observed to be 90-100% occupied throughout a majority of the day, but during the morning observations (about 10:45 AM), very few vehicles were observed. Throughout the day on-street parking near the old *Campus Theater* (now the *Shadow Canyon* nightclub) had low observed accumulations. This could be a result of either strict parking enforcement or because of the end of the semester. In all probability, parking in this area during the University semester would experience higher accumulations and turn-over.

- *Off-Street* - Observations of off-street parking accumulation for commercial development ranged from 50-100% for both the morning and afternoon observations. The *Alberstons* shopping center revealed low demands during both observation periods. However, this is to be expected with the mixed-use of evening-hour businesses located within (specifically *Hurricane Harry's* nightclub). Commercial development adjacent to University Drive/FM 60 (between Nagle Street and College Avenue/SH 308) experienced high turn-over during the observations and no parking deficiencies were noted.

Parking accumulation for commercial activity in the Stasney Street area was observed to be heavy throughout the day. Accumulations at *Kinko's Copies* was observed at virtually 100% during both observation periods with a high turn-over rate. Often, vehicles were queued within the lot waiting for a space to become available as on-street parking on Lodge Street was 100% occupied.

Two commercial lots (Mud Lot and First Street lot) revealed low demands in the morning and afternoon periods. Throughout the day, the Mud Lot never experienced greater than 50% occupancy. Mud Lot management indicated that since January 1995, demand for parking had dropped significantly (average demand about 30% of capacity). The primary reason for this lower parking demand is the relocation of the University's School of Business from the Blocker Building on the main (east) campus to the west campus. The Blocker Building is currently utilized by the Departments of English and Statistics and is, according to Mud Lot management, 40% to 50% utilized.

The commercial lot at First Street and Church Avenue also experienced low accumulations of 35% and 10% in the morning and afternoon observation, respectively. According to area tenants, this lot typically experiences high demands during the morning and noon hours, but tapers off quickly in the afternoon hours.

Parking accumulation in the Aggie Lot and adjacent 30-space lot (*Dixie Chicken* and *Dudley's Draw*) was observed to be 80% occupied during the morning observation and 100% occupied during noon hours and throughout the remainder of the afternoon. Parking accumulation for customers in the commercial core of Northgate was observed to spill-over into on-street parking along College Main, Church Avenue, and Second Street.





#### Summary of Parking Observations

Based on field reconnaissance of the area, the following observations were made with respect to on-street and off-street parking. Since these observations are based on data compiled the week prior to final exams, in all probability parking issues may be compounded during typical semester demands (particularly in the fall semester when football and other events occur at the University):

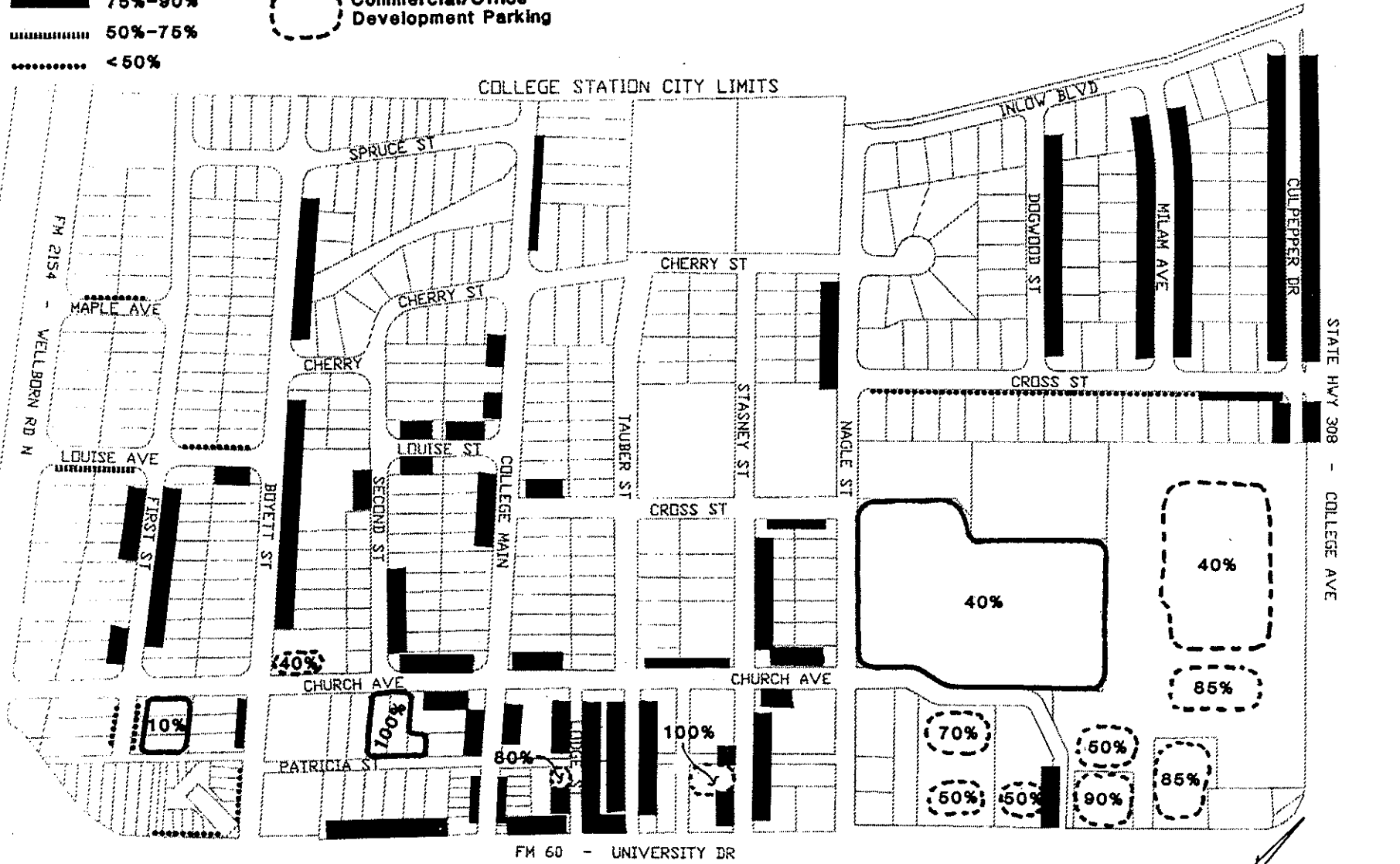
- Throughout Northgate, the amount of on-street parking appears to be provided to the maximum extent. Limited area for traffic circulation and sight distance concerns (corner clearance) prevent the opportunity for increasing the amount of on-street parking.
- Off-street parking for commercial/retail development in the *Albertsons* shopping center and adjacent banking facilities appeared to be adequate. Parking for restaurants and fast-food restaurants also appeared adequate. Parking did not appear to encroach on other properties in the area.



**FIGURE NO. 8 - PARKING ACCUMULATION (AFTERNOON)**

-  90%-100%
-  75%-90%
-  50%-75%
-  < 50%

 Commercial/Office  
 Development Parking



- Little, if any, off-street parking opportunities exist in Northgate's "core" (bound by Nagle Street, University Drive/FM 60, Wellborn Road/FM 2514 and Church Avenue) with the exception of a few sites which provide off-street parking. Customer parking is available either on-street or in pay lots which are not in close proximity to shops and businesses. The result of this deficiency is parking which encroaches into the residential areas just north of Church Avenue.
- Parking accumulation in the commercial parking lots, other than the Aggie Lot, was observed to be 50% occupied at best. According to area businesses, the 51-space lot at the intersection of First Street and Church Avenue experiences high demand during the morning and noon hours (with student and lunch demand) but tapers quickly in the afternoon hours. Parking demand for the Mud Lot has decreased significantly since the University's business school relocated to the west campus. Reduced parking demands at the Mud Lot may also be attributed, in part, to the new University garage at Nagle Street and University Drive/FM 60.
- Turn-over of on-street parking was observed to occur more frequently in the area between Church Avenue and University Drive/FM 60. The further on-street parking was away from commercial development, the less turn-over occurred.
- The Mud Lot offers several advantages and disadvantages to parking opportunities in the Northgate area. Advantages include providing relief for short-term (1-Hour and 2-Hour) on-street parking demand by customers to Northgate businesses, close proximity to the University, and significant availability during afternoon/evening hours. Disadvantages include a parking premium (price), distance from Northgate businesses, and aesthetically unattractive.

## EXISTING TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

### External Circulation and Access

Circulation external to the area is provided via the arterial street system that forms the perimeter of Northgate. These roadways include College Avenue/SH 308, University Drive/FM 60, and Wellborn Road/FM 2514.

External access to and from Northgate has limitations for north, east and west travel. Access from the east and west is available via University Drive/FM 60. Internally, no other roadway provides for continuous east/west movement through Northgate. Access to University Drive/FM 60 can be obtained either by weaving through Northgate's core area or via the north/south arterials (College Avenue/SH 308 and Wellborn Road/FM 2514).

Access to and from the south is inhibited because of the University campus. This access can be accommodated via Wellborn Road/FM 2514, College Avenue/SH 308, Nagle Street, College Main, or Boyett Street within Northgate. While Nagle Street, College Main and Boyett Street provide additional access from the north, they also increase unwanted through-traffic in the residential areas which lie in the northern portion of Northgate.

### Internal Circulation and Access

Internal access within Northgate is sufficient for north/south movement however, somewhat circuitous for east/west movement. North/south movement is facilitated through three primary roadways - Nagle Street, College Main and Boyett Street - and several other roadways which traverse about 75% of Northgate.

East/west movement cannot be facilitated through Northgate without circuitous movements. Church Avenue serves to provide the only east/west internal movement within the core area of Northgate. Traffic flows are somewhat inhibited because of narrow circulation aisles, on-street parking and pedestrian activity in the area.

Figure No. 9 illustrates the observed traffic circulation in Northgate. This figure contains roadways which were observed to experience the highest volume levels. Throughout the observation periods, traffic circulation within Northgate operated smoothly considering the amount of parking and pedestrian activity occurring in the area. In terms of roadway capacity, none of the area roadways appeared to operate at inadequate service levels.

FIGURE NO. 9 - TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

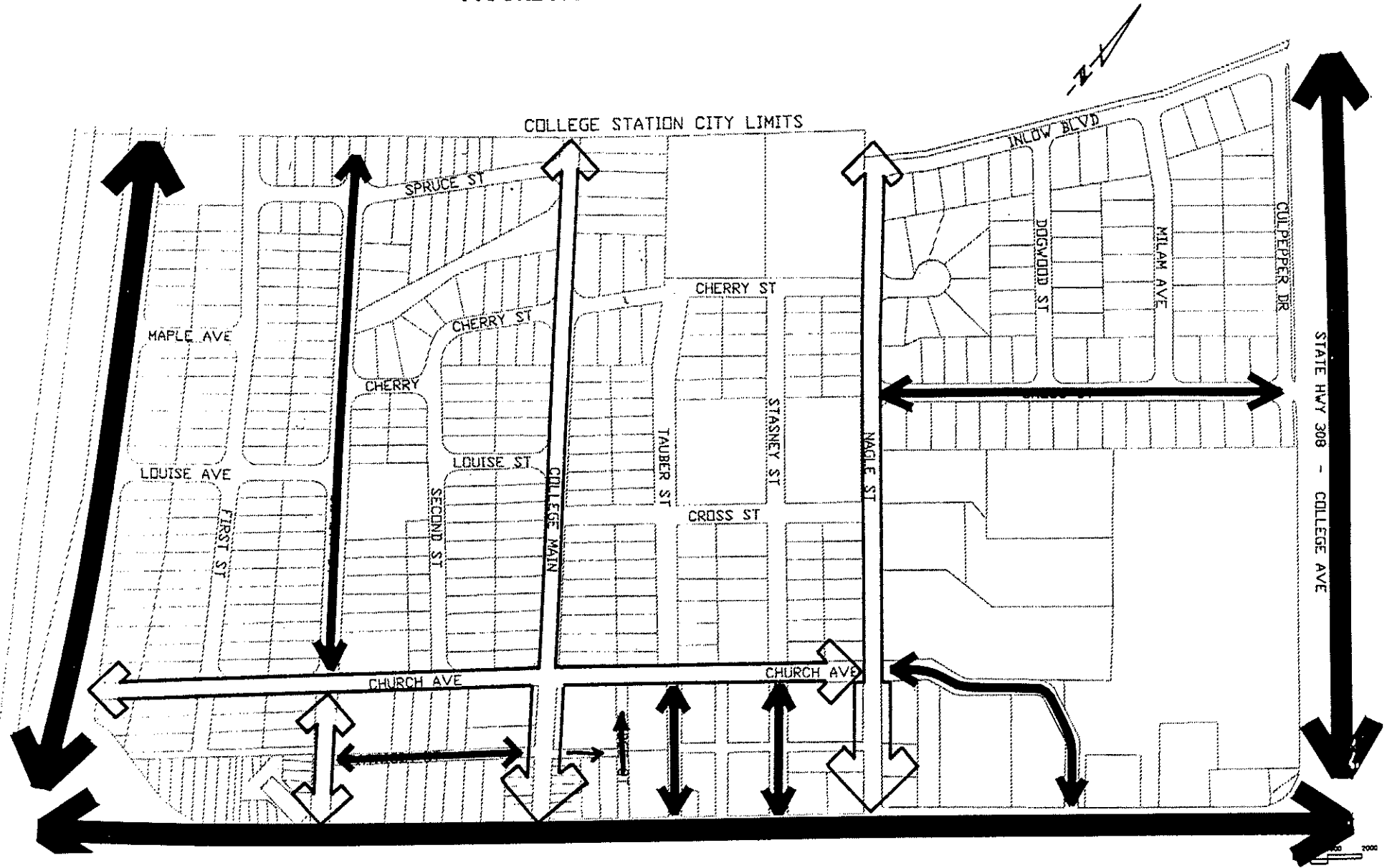
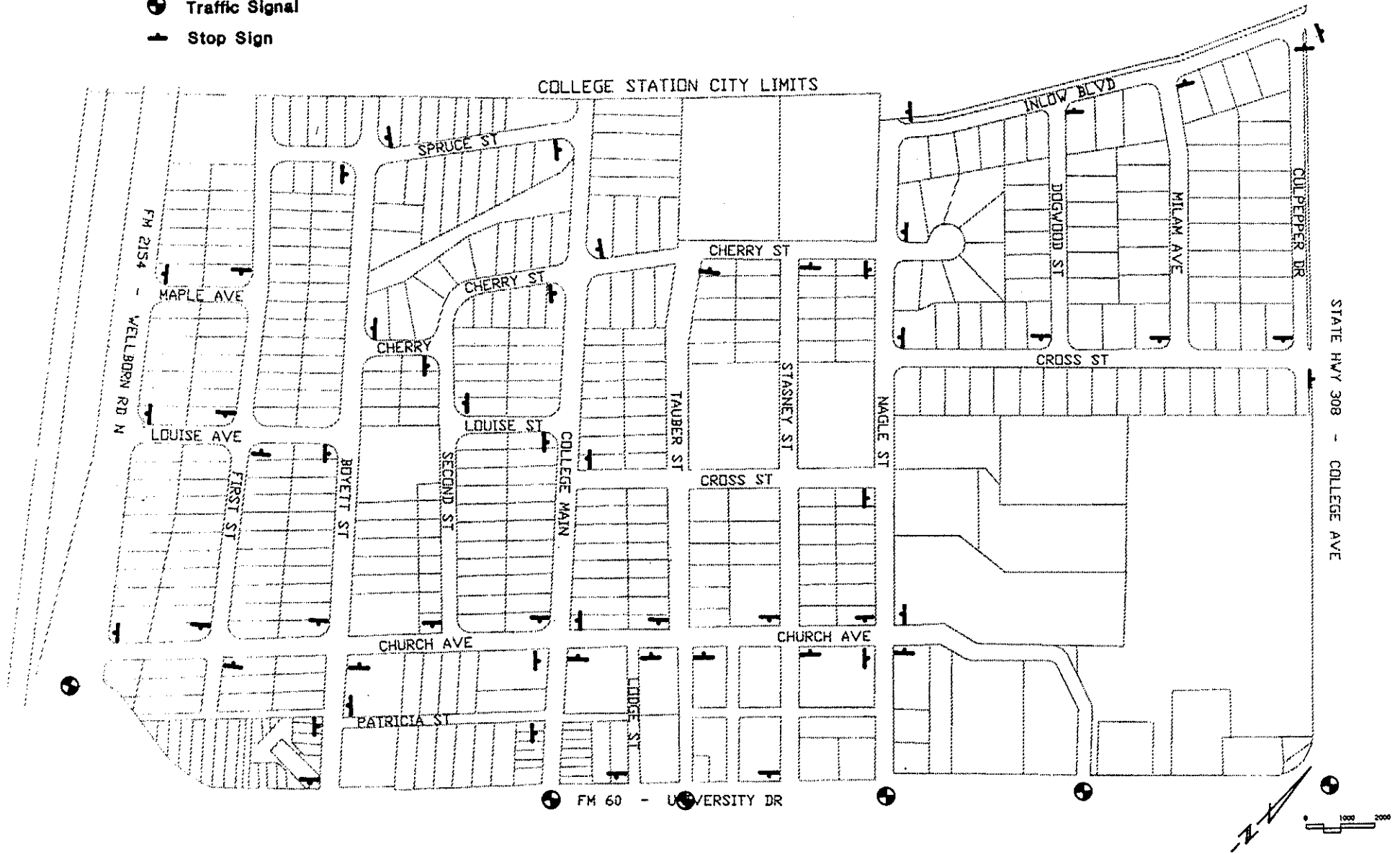


FIGURE NO. 10 - TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES AND SIGNAGE

- ⊕ Traffic Signal
- ⊣ Stop Sign



One potential traffic conflict was observed during the late afternoon period. This involved the extended queuing of traffic on a one-way alley (Patricia Street between College Main and Lodge Street) for parents to pick-up children at a daycare center. Six vehicles were observed to be waiting in the alley (signed for "No Parking") with some vehicles backing out onto College Main after the pick-up was made. In addition, several vehicles were queued on-street (westbound College Main) also waiting for their children.

### **Traffic Control and Signage**

Figure No. 10 illustrates existing traffic control devices and signage in Northgate. Observations of the signalized intersections during the noon peak revealed traffic control to accommodate demands. During signal cycles, all queues were cleared of vehicles.

In terms of signage, no guide signs were observed to direct commercial traffic to area parking facilities. By providing signage for parking, internal traffic circulation may be somewhat reduced.

## **EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

As one of the oldest portions of College Station, Northgate also contains the oldest infrastructure system. Many of these existing systems do not meet the current demand. Increasing density and development in Northgate will require associated improvements to several infrastructure systems.

### **Water System**

Most of the transmission mains in Northgate are smaller than the current City standard. Most are either 4-inch or 6-inch water mains (see Figure No. 11). There are five exceptions:

- A 12-inch main along University Drive/FM 60 (College Avenue/SH 308 to College Main).
- A 12-inch main along College Main (University Drive/FM 60 to north of Cherry Street).
- A 12-inch main along Patricia Street (College Main to Boyett Street).
- A 12-inch main behind the *Albertsons* shopping center (University Drive/FM 60 to south of Cross Street).
- A 24-inch main along Spruce Street (College Main to Wellborn Road/FM 2514).

If Northgate develops as proposed in Section 3 of this document, the residential population could double or triple, requiring an associated increase in water service and fire-flow to provide sufficient water supply and pressure. An increase in the overall water supply for this area of the City may also be required, which might necessitate the need for an additional water storage location (elevated, ground, or underground storage).

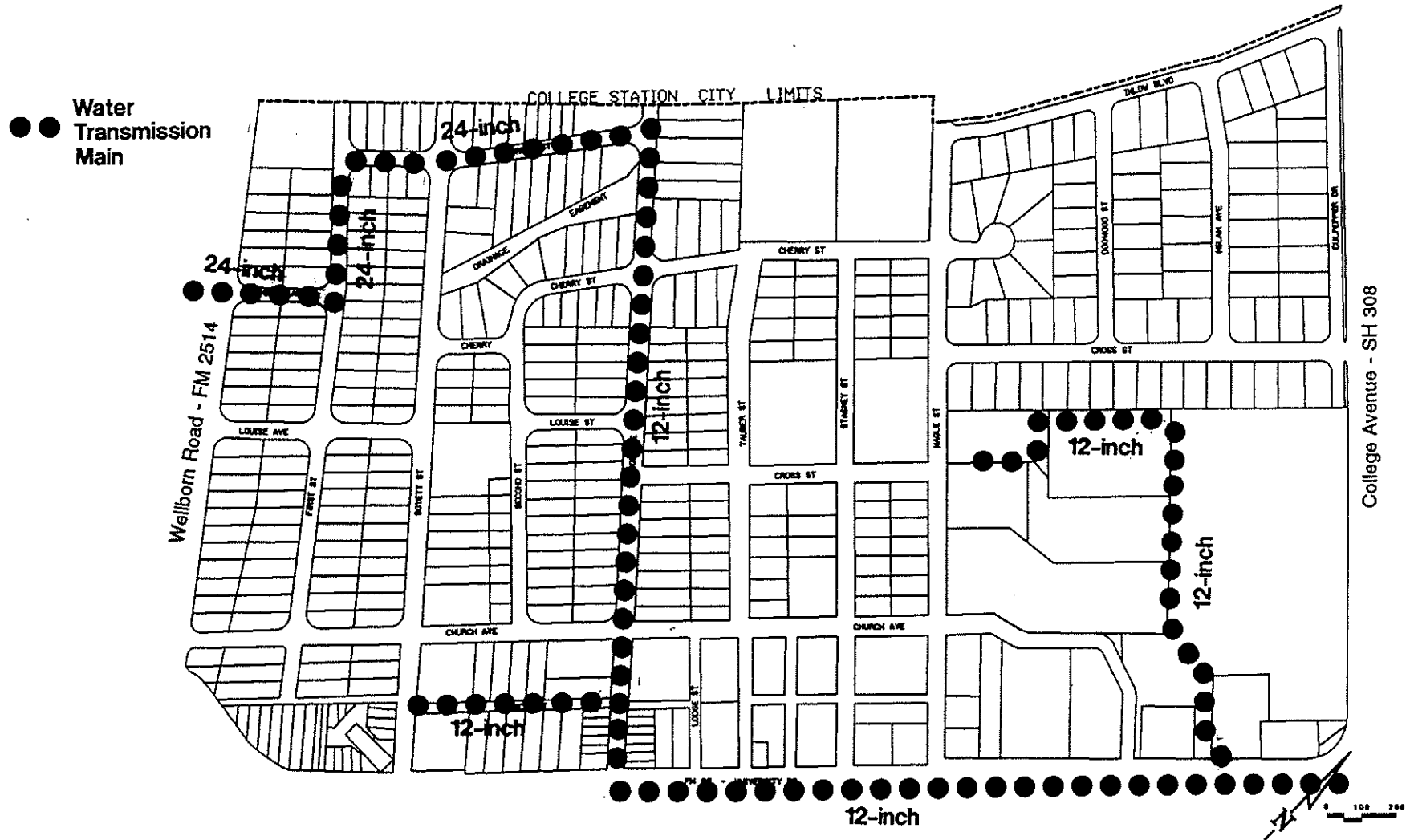
To accommodate the proposed development, the City may need to upgrade existing substandard water mains to 8-inch or 10-inch water transmission mains. Since the Comprehensive Plan is modeling the City's water system down to the 8-inch mains, City staff may want to specifically model the Northgate area in order to determine the impact of increasing these currently substandard mains.

### **Wastewater System**

Wastewater collection mains in Northgate are located in three general areas (see Figure No. 12):

- Inlow Boulevard (Nagle Street to College Avenue/SH 308).
- College Avenue/SH 308 (Inlow Boulevard to Cross Street).
- Cross Street (College Avenue/SH 308 to east of Nagle Street).

FIGURE NO. 11 - EXISTING WATER SYSTEM





As with the water transmission system, demand for wastewater collection capacity will increase with population density and new business development. Prior to new development, City staff may want to specifically model the Northgate area in order to determine the impact on the existing wastewater collection system.

### **Storm Drainage System**

Increasing the amount of impermeable surface through new development and redevelopment will increase the amount of stormwater runoff in Northgate. There is presently a drainage easement and a drainage ditch in the northeast portion of Northgate. Many streets in the District do not have a curb and gutter system - stormwater runoff is conveyed on the street surface to the drainage ditch.

As development is proposed, City staff may want to specifically model the Northgate area to determine if there are any negative impacts as a result of increased development and stormwater run-off.

## **CASE STUDIES**

The relationship between Northgate, the City and the University is similar to that of other American "college towns". This study reviewed the experiences of three other American cities with large university campuses.

### **Penn State University (State College, Pennsylvania)**

The Borough of State College (resident population of approximately 39,000) is the home of Penn State University (26,000 students). The Borough's "downtown" is along Allen Street, the main north/south arterial. The Penn State/State College relationship is almost identical to that of Texas A & M and Northgate (single-loaded retail street across from the University). The Borough has already implemented street lighting improvements and built three parking garages, from 210 spaces to 500 spaces each.

The Borough funded improvements to the storm and sanitary sewer systems in order to lower up-front costs for new development. The Borough has also used Community Development Block Grant funds to buy land in order to build housing for the elderly.

A Master Plan was completed for the area in 1990. One of the recommendations was the formation of a downtown improvement district - Downtown State College, Inc. (DSCI). The DSCI annually receives \$75,000 from the Borough and \$25,000 from the University for operating expenses. Additional dues bring the annual total up to \$170,000. The Borough feels that the DSCI presently does not do enough to promote the area. The DSCI Director, according to Borough staff, spends too much time recruiting new members and not enough time promoting revitalization/redevelopment.

#### **University of California at Davis (Davis, California)**

The City of Davis (resident population of approximately 53,000) is the home of the University of California at Davis (22,000 students). UC/Davis is surrounded by agricultural and residential land, has a strong veterinary program, and has a small mixed-use area across from campus. Two streets (Third Street and "A" Street) provide access to the campus. "A" Street has older homes facing campus and Third Street has restaurants, bookstores, and other retail. The City has had a significant parking problem because UC/Davis charges for on-campus parking and the City does not charge for on-street parking. To control traffic, the City has limited access on "A" and Third Streets.

The City of Davis also has a high volume of bicycle traffic. Consequently, traffic diverters have sufficient space to allow bicycle access. The City has also provided bike racks.

The City is currently updating its master plan, but had not done a specific district plan for the University area because the UC/Davis campus is outside the Davis city limits.

#### **Ohio State University (Columbus, Ohio)**

Columbus is the home to Ohio State University (OSU). The City has a resident population of approximately 400,000 with a student enrollment of 49,000. OSU is currently the largest campus in the United States, by both student population and area. OSU is located on the westside of High Street, the main north/south thoroughfare that defines east and west Columbus.

The area across the street from OSU is comprised of single-loaded retail (businesses facing High Street only), with churches and some second-level apartments. Most of the High Street buildings are 2 stories or less. There are very few vacant or undeveloped sites left along the campus portion of High Street (about 15 blocks, from Lane Avenue to King Avenue). The City of Columbus has made many improvements along High Street, including removing curbside parking on High Street for a dedicated bike lane, and converting several of the intersecting streets into one-way pairs. It is interesting to note that although little or no off-street parking is provided along High Street, the businesses still seem to thrive. A large on-campus parking garage is provided across the street for visitors, faculty, and staff. Students wanting to visit High Street merchants must walk, cycle, use mass transit, or park many blocks away. The City of Columbus and OSU have worked cooperatively to better manage area traffic, but there is currently no formal association that manages land development along this portion of High Street.

## DISTRICT SURVEY

A survey of existing businesses operating in Northgate was prepared by the consultant and administered by the City. (A complete detailing of the findings is available as a separate document.) The main concern voiced by the majority of the merchants was inadequate parking for their customers. On-site field surveys revealed that there are peak demand periods, particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings. Home football games and other special campus events also cause an increase in parking demand.

One of the early comments heard from City leaders and Northgate representatives was the parking problem. The survey validated those observations and indicated their site-specific nature (between University Drive/FM 60 and Church Avenue).

## SECTION 3 - REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

### REDEVELOPMENT GOALS

Based upon Northgate's existing conditions and after consultation with the Northgate Steering Committee and City staff, the following goals have been established for the redevelopment of Northgate:

- Revitalize Northgate as a campus-neighborhood that includes both residential and commercial developments.
- Encourage the development of additional owner-occupied residential units to compensate for the transient nature of Northgate's student population.
- Encourage the development of new retail/commercial/office space that maximizes Northgate's proximity to the University and its location along three State-controlled roadways.
- Provide opportunities for existing District businesses to expand and relocate within Northgate.
- Create a safe, secure, and attractive campus-area neighborhood that provides an alternative for student apartments/housing that is within walking distance of the main (east) campus.
- Create a "gathering place" in the commercial core of Northgate that would be patronized by students and City residents alike.

*Northgate has several strategic parcels of land that can be used to catalyze redevelopment in key locations. The Redevelopment Plan proposes land uses for the entire District, along with a set of redevelopment guidelines to assist in the overall redevelopment of Northgate in a consistent and harmonious fashion.*

## STRATEGIC PROPERTIES

Since Northgate has developed without an overall plan or design, it has not developed a "sense of district". However, Northgate's relationship with the University is strong and may be capitalized upon to encourage redevelopment and attract new development.

Northgate is directly across the street from the University campus. University Drive/FM 60 acts as a "hinge" to link these two areas. Retail and commercial uses have developed along the University Drive/FM 60 edge and act as a buffer between the University and Northgate's interior neighborhoods. Northgate's residential development is generally organized around three informal neighborhoods, each of which relates to a north/south street that connects to the campus. The drainage easement and floodplain on Northgate's northside also acts as a buffer between College Station and development in the City of Bryan. Figure No. 13 diagrams the existing relationships in Northgate.

There are several areas that are strategic to the redevelopment of Northgate - either by their location and current development, or by their ownership. These properties are as follows (see Figure No. 14):

- The University has purchased several blocks in the northeastern portion of Northgate which were previously in residential use. The University cleared the structures from these blocks in anticipation of developing them for University-related uses. To date, no development has occurred.
- Within Subarea 1 - bordered by University Drive/FM 60, Church Avenue, Wellborn Road/FM 2514, and College Main - the City has defined an area as the core of Northgate because of its proximity to on-campus dorms and its development of retail and entertainment uses.
- The Mud Lot (Nagle Street near University Drive/FM 60) is a large parcel under single ownership and has previously been considered for mixed-use redevelopment (hotel, retail, residential, etc.). Its strategic location near a major university makes it attractive for some higher level of development. The City has identified this area ("Subarea 2") as being of strategic importance.

Development of these strategic parcels will bring unified redevelopment to three distinct sections of Northgate. In this fashion, redevelopment would be encouraged as property values rise due to redevelopment.

FIGURE NO. 13 - NORTHGATE DIAGRAM

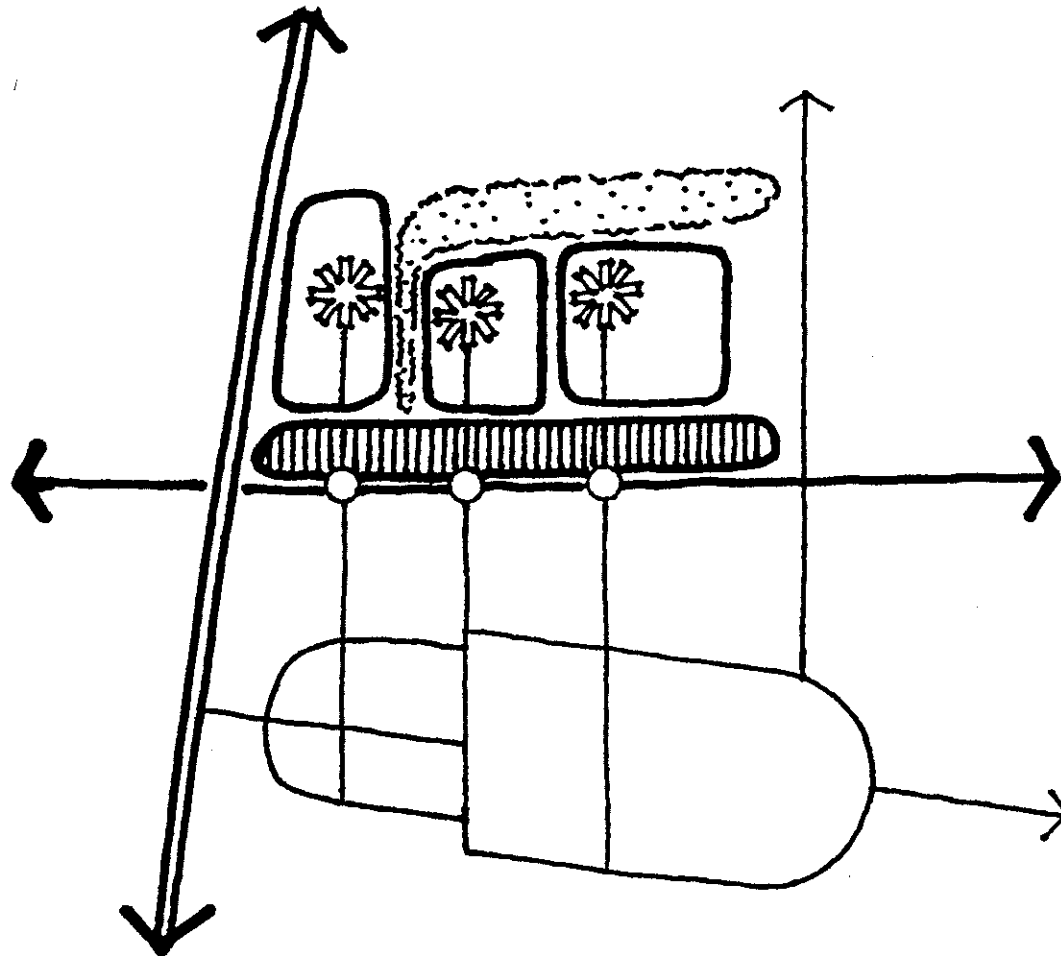
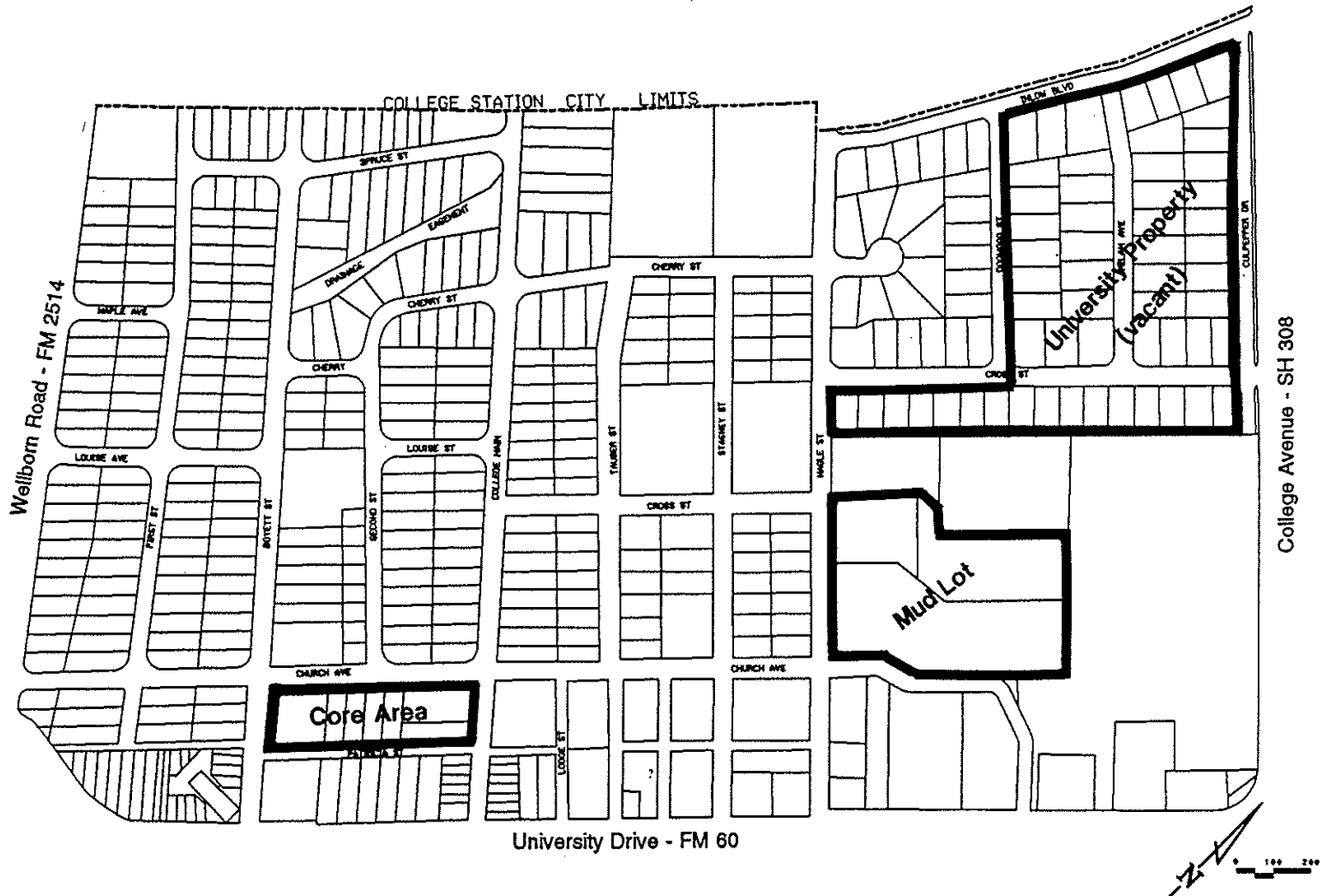


FIGURE NO. 14 - STRATEGIC PROPERTIES



## REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Figures No. 15 and 16 represent the new Land Use Plan and the Illustrative Plan for Northgate, respectively. The redevelopment and revitalization of Northgate proposes:

- Strengthening the edge of Northgate through the development of a mixed-use hotel/conference center/parking garage near the intersection of University Drive/FM 60 and Nagle Street.
- Improving the core area through improved pedestrian and parking facilities and additional retail uses.
- Developing a linear park in the northern portion of Northgate to act as a buffer for Northgate, add new park space for residents, add new permeable land for stormwater run-off, and which could connect to the University's Hensel Park (on the eastside of College Avenue/SH 308 in the City of Bryan).
- Developing the vacant land currently owned by the University as "market housing", townhomes and condominiums for sale rather than as rental apartments. This would be oriented to married students, graduate students, or those that want to live near a major university. Parents might also be interested in purchasing a unit and selling it after graduation as a way to reduce living expenses for their children.
- Developing more dense apartments and "private dorms" in the interior of Northgate.

FIGURE NO. 15 - REDEVELOPMENT PLAN - LAND USE








-  MULTI-FAMILY
-  TOWNHOUSE/CONDOMINIUM
-  PARK
-  PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL
-  RETAIL
-  MIXED USE
-  TYPE "A" STREETS



FIGURE NO. 16 - ILLUSTRATIVE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

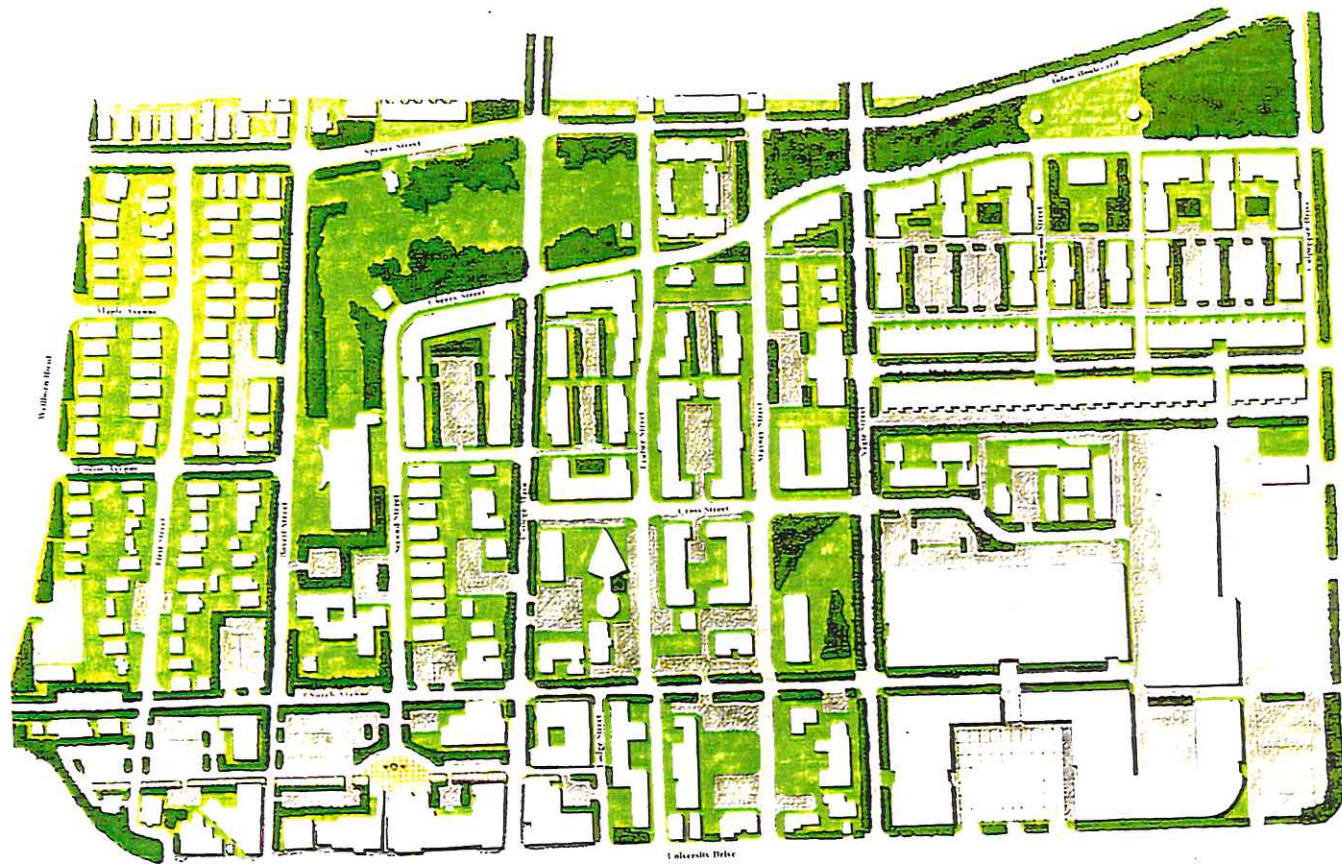


FIGURE NO. 17 - SUBAREA I PLAN



The removal of existing off-street parking spaces and the development of new retail space will further increase parking demand in the core area. Should the core area be developed as shown, there will be a deficit of approximately 100 spaces. Satellite lots north of Church Avenue would be necessary to accommodate the increased demand.

Given the City's interest in creating a "gathering place", development could begin as soon as possible. The City has already developed a facade rehabilitation program for businesses in Northgate. Further development of detailed design standards for the promenade and plaza could be accomplished by City staff or a consulting architect in a relatively short period of time.

## SUBAREA 2

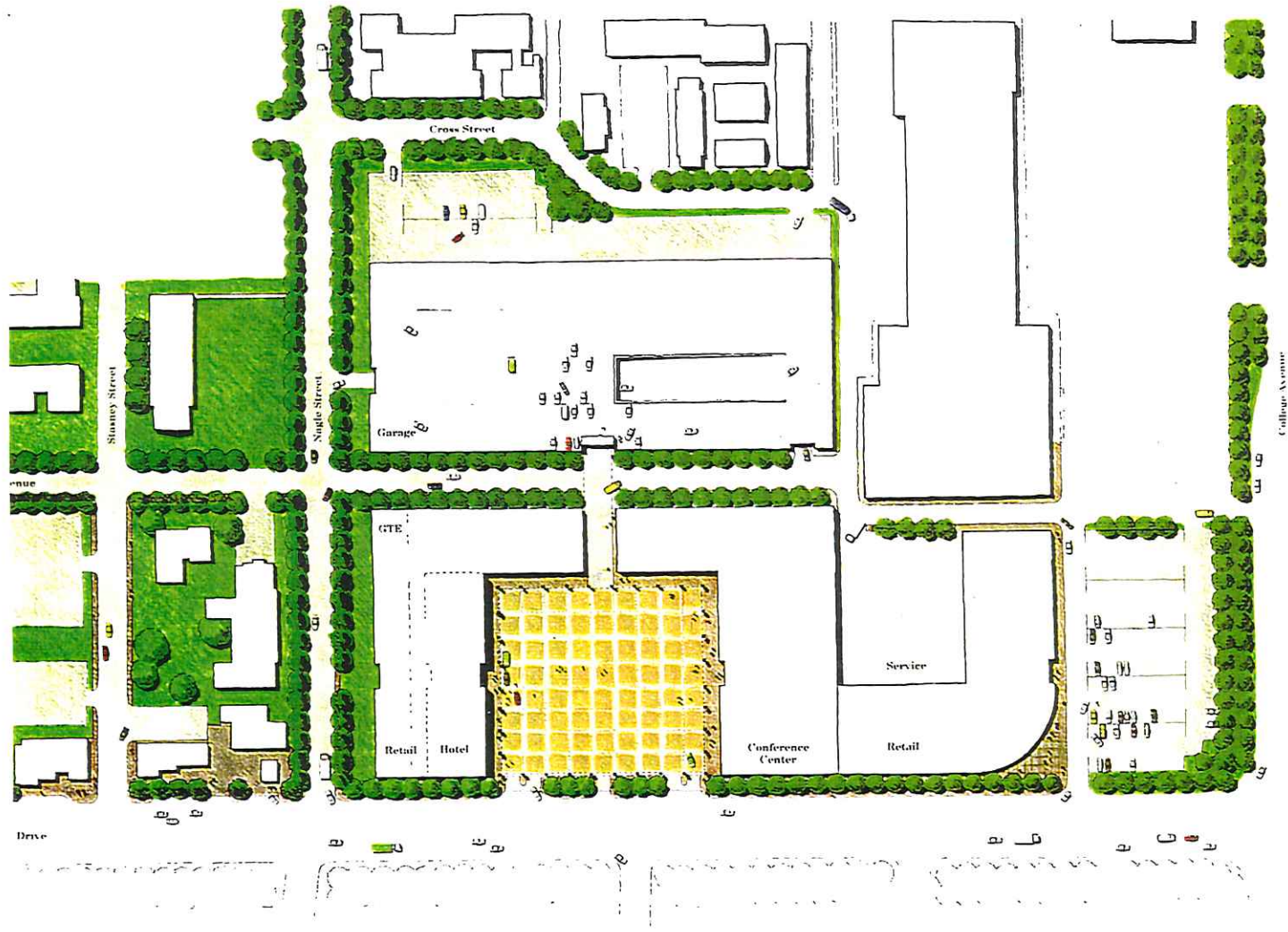
The City has identified a second portion of Northgate which is of strategic importance. Subarea 2 is the continuation of Subarea 1, encompassing the area along University Drive/FM 60 from College Main to College Avenue/SH 308, and extending north into Northgate's interior to include the Mud Lot and the *Albertsons* shopping center. Given the relative under-utilization of the Mud Lot and Subarea 2's proximity to the University campus, this area is suitable for a mixed-use development that could include a hotel, conference center, and associated parking improvements.

The Redevelopment Plan identifies a potential site for a mid-size hotel (200 to 300 rooms) in Subarea 2, similar to those typically managed by *Sheraton*, *Marriott*, *Embassy Suites*, or *Radisson*. This hotel could also incorporate some first-level retail into its base.

Separated from the hotel by a parking court would be a small conference center (approximately 45,000 square feet). The conference center could be part of the hotel complex (managed by the same management company) or it could be a City facility. (The City's existing conference center on George Bush Drive is a converted school building and the City has considered development of a new conference center.)

Behind the hotel and conference center is an opportunity to build a parking garage, approximately on the site of the existing Mud Lot. The parking garage would have second-level covered access to both the hotel and conference center and would also have the potential for first-level retail facing Nagle Street.

FIGURE NO. 18 - SUBAREA 2 PLAN



The garage could accommodate 400 to 500 cars per level and could be 3 to 4 levels. The garage could be designed in such a way as to provide dedicated parking areas for hotel guests and employees, conference attendees, and general parking.

Development of this mixed-use development could be a cooperative effort between the City, a private developer, and the University. One potential scenario could be:

- A private developer would develop the hotel site and secure a hotel management contract with a major franchise.
- The City would develop the conference center. It could either be managed as a City facility or leased to the hotel management company and operated as an auxiliary hotel facility.
- The City and the University would jointly develop the parking garage. The garage could also be made part of the University's parking system, allowing students with the proper permit to utilize the garage.

Numerous other variations on the City/developer/University relationship are possible.

Because of previous interest in similar projects in this area, development of this mixed-use development appears to be a realistic strategy in the short-term (within 1 to 3 years).

## **PARKING DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

As mentioned previously in this document, parking is one of the most significant challenges facing Northgate. Through the process of redeveloping Northgate, additional parking demand will result as a function of bringing in new uses such as the hotel/conference center and added retail. New residential redevelopment has the potential to double or triple the number of full-time residents in Northgate. Businesses, residents, students, customers, and visitors will be equally affected by the supply of off-street and on-street parking.

### On-Street Parking

Northgate currently has approximately 625 on-street parking spaces. Most of these spaces are signed for either "1-Hour" or "2-Hour" parking. On-street parking in the "vacant" area in the northeast portion of Northgate is unregulated and is heavily used by students when class is in session.

There do not appear to be additional opportunities to increase the supply of on-street spaces. Therefore, accommodating long-term parking demand (longer than one hour) in off-street facilities will free up the on-street supply which could then be directed towards short-term parking (one hour or less) for customers and visitors.

### Off-Street Parking

Clearly, Northgate parking challenges will be best addressed by accommodating long-term parking demand (longer than one hour) in off-street facilities. At present, there are approximately 3,000 off-street spaces provided. The largest lots (Mud Lot, Aggie Lot, etc.) offer pay parking. The parking lot in the *Albertsons* shopping center is restricted to customers.

The following improvements are recommended to accommodate additional long-term off-street parking demand:

- *Additional Core Area Parking* - The area between University Drive/FM 60, College Main, Church Avenue, and Wellborn Road/FM 2514 is in high demand because of the existing nightclubs and restaurants. Redeveloping the "core area" with the plaza and promenade will remove some existing parking spaces and attract new development, resulting in a deficit of 100-spaces. The Subarea 1 plan recommends providing additional off-street parking between Patricia Street, Church Avenue, Wellborn Road/FM 2514 and College Main. By providing off-street parking as indicated in the Subarea 1 plan (see Figure No. 17), a total of approximately 500 additional off-street spaces can be provided.
- *Hotel/Conference Center/Parking Garage* - The Subarea 2 plan recommends development of a parking garage in the general location of the Mud Lot as a part of the future proposed hotel/conference center.

This garage could contain a maximum of 2,000 spaces which could be dedicated to hotel guests, conference center visitors, and general parking. The potential also exists to develop the garage in cooperation with the University and allow a part of it to be used as permit parking by faculty, students, or staff.

- *Increase Residential Off-Street Residential Parking* - The Redevelopment Guidelines recommend increasing the requirements for off-street parking for apartments. The present standard is 1.5 to 3 off-street spaces per unit as mandated by the City's zoning ordinance. It is recommended that the standard be increased to 1 space per bedroom per unit. The Redevelopment Plan anticipates a 200% to 300% increase in residential density in Northgate. Since the on-street parking supply is fixed, additional off-street spaces will be required. The redevelopment guidelines also call for residential parking to be fully contained off the street, usually behind the building.
- *Increase Institutional Off-Street Parking* - Northgate is home to many institutions and houses of worship which create a parking demand during peak weekday periods. The present standard is 1 off-street space for every 3 seats in the sanctuary. It is recommended that the standard be increased to also include 4 spaces per every 1,000 square feet of building area for other structures such as offices, education centers, recreation centers, day care, etc.
- *Share Off-Street Parking* - The Northgate Redevelopment Plan suggests allowing adjacent uses to aggregate off-street parking lots. Businesses and churches may find it more effective and financially efficient to jointly develop and share off-street parking facilities in Northgate.
- *Enforce On-Street Parking Regulations* - On-street areas with various restrictions - "1-Hour Parking", "2-Hour Parking", or "No Parking" - should have those restrictions visibly enforced by the City. Tickets, towing, "booting", and other means will discourage long-term parkers from using the on-street supply which is intended for short-term users. Northgate's on-street parking demands do not follow the same peak periods as other parts of the City. Evening and weekend on-street parking is in demand because of the various nightclubs and restaurants in Northgate. During home football games, on-street parking is also in high demand. Therefore, it is recommended that the City modify the "1-Hour" and "2-Hour" parking restrictions to be effective during the hours of 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Thursday and all day (24 hours) Friday through Sunday.

By providing adequate off-street parking spaces to meet long-term demand, the on-street supply can serve the short-range parkers - customers of area businesses and visitors to Northgate. The existing 3,000 off-street spaces will be increased through additional facilities such as the proposed lots in the "core area" (an additional 500 spaces in Subarea 1), the proposed parking garage (an additional 2,000 spaces in Subarea 2), and additional off-street residential parking spaces (amount will vary based on actual development).

## REDEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

As Northgate redevelops, certain guidelines should be followed which further encourage its "sense of district". The City should take care not to overburden development with additional requirements on top of the existing zoning, landscaping, and other similar ordinances which might discourage redevelopment and reinvestment in Northgate.

The following guidelines are proposed for all subsequent redevelopment and new development within Northgate.

### Streets

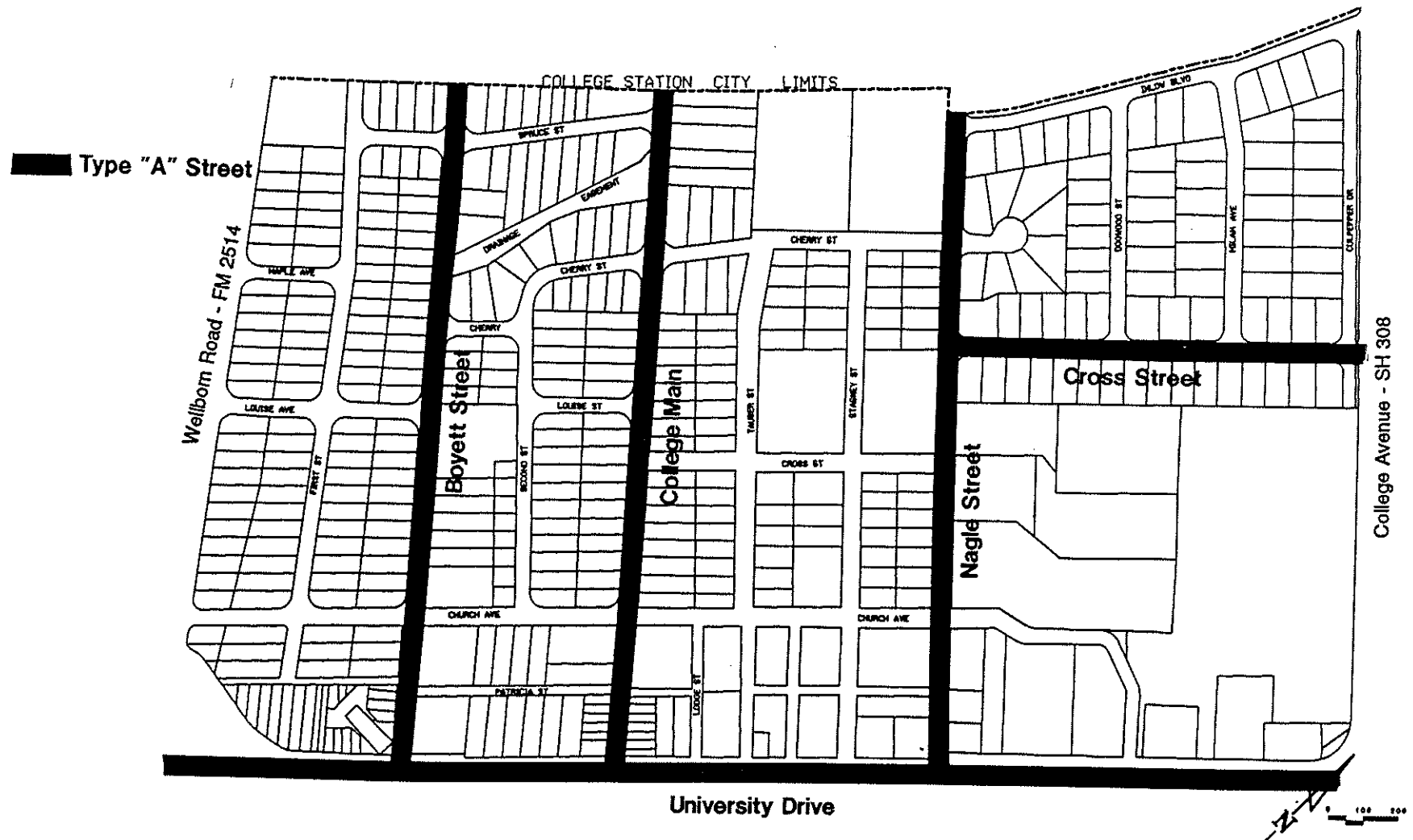
The streets in Northgate are classified into two basic types - Type "A" (University Drive/FM 60, College Main, Nagle Street, Cross Street, and Boyett Street) and Type "B" (all remaining Northgate District streets). Figure No. 19 shows this hierarchy of streets within Northgate. Figures No. 20 through 24 indicate the design standards for sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and landscaping along Type "A" streets.

### Land Uses

The following land uses are proposed for Northgate:

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - All retail, commercial, and office development is to be located generally along Type "A" streets. Retail/commercial/office development will be located:

FIGURE NO. 19 - STREET TYPES



- Between University Drive/FM 60, Church Avenue, Wellborn Road/FM 2514, and College Avenue/SH 308.
- Along College Avenue/SH 308 (the *Albertsons* shopping center).
- Along Wellborn Road/FM 2514 at the intersection with Church Avenue.
- *Residential* - Residential development in Northgate will be either multi-family (attached) or owner-occupied (attached) dwelling units. No additional single-family (detached) is planned for Northgate. Residential development is to be located generally between Wellborn Road/FM 2514, Church Avenue, Nagle Street and the College Station city limit, and between Nagle Street, Cross Street, College Avenue/SH 308, and the College Station city limit.
- *Mixed-Use* - At present, land uses in Northgate do not combine residential and non-residential uses. As Northgate develops, the City should encourage mixed-use developments - for instance, the development of second-floor residential apartments in the retail buildings along University Drive/FM 60 or the inclusion of a small retail store as a part of a large-scale apartment or private dorm development.
- *Churches* - Churches may be located anywhere in Northgate.

#### **Building Height**

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - All new retail, commercial, and office buildings should not be greater than 2 stories. Overall building height should not be greater than 45 feet (incorporating HVAC, roof systems, vent stacks, chimneys, etc.). Exceptions include:
  - The proposed hotel development (maximum of 9 stories).
  - The proposed Nagle parking garage (maximum of 36 feet or 4 levels).
  - Retail, commercial, and office buildings may be allowed to be 3 stories if an elevator is provided. In this case, the overall height of the building may not exceed 60 feet.

FIGURE NO. 20 - UNIVERSITY DRIVE/FM 60 (EAST)

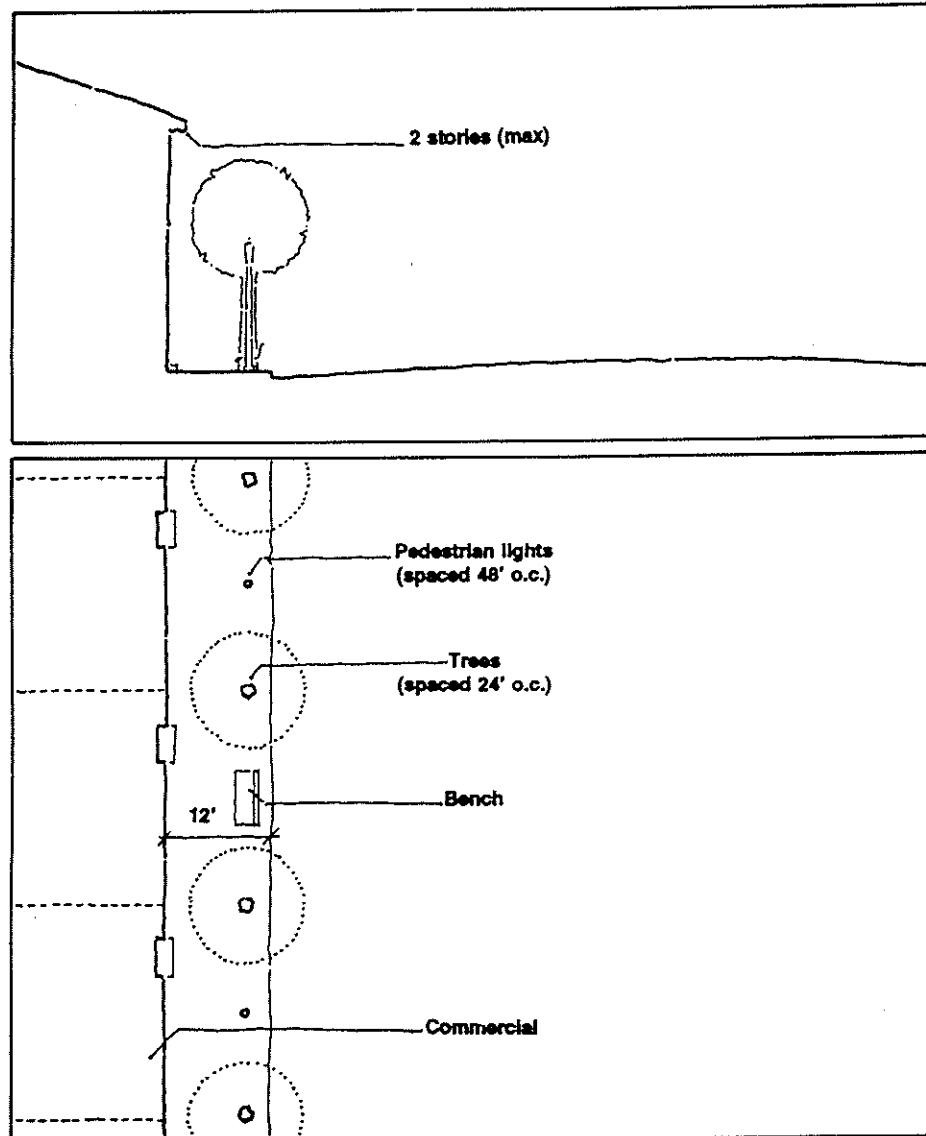


FIGURE NO. 21 - UNIVERSITY DRIVE/FM 60 (WEST)

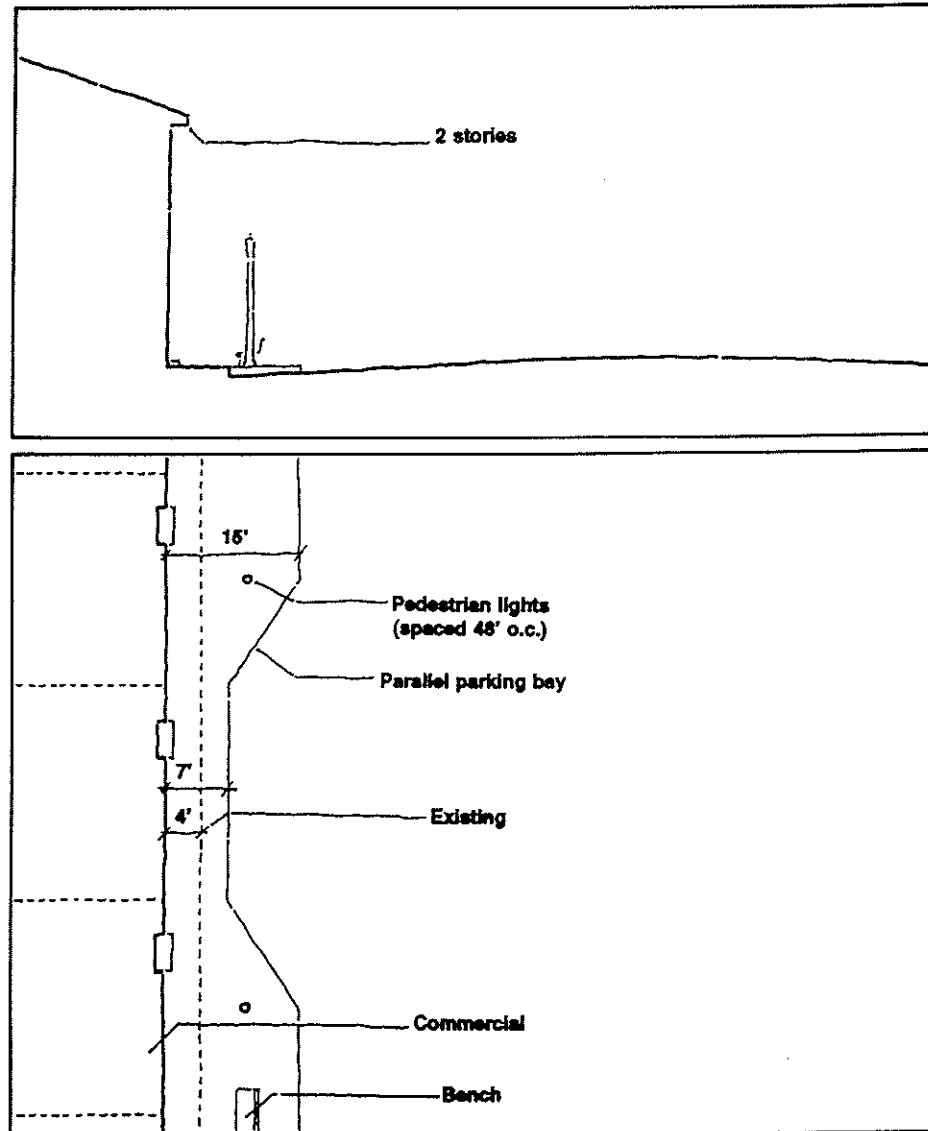


FIGURE NO. 22 - COLLEGE MAIN

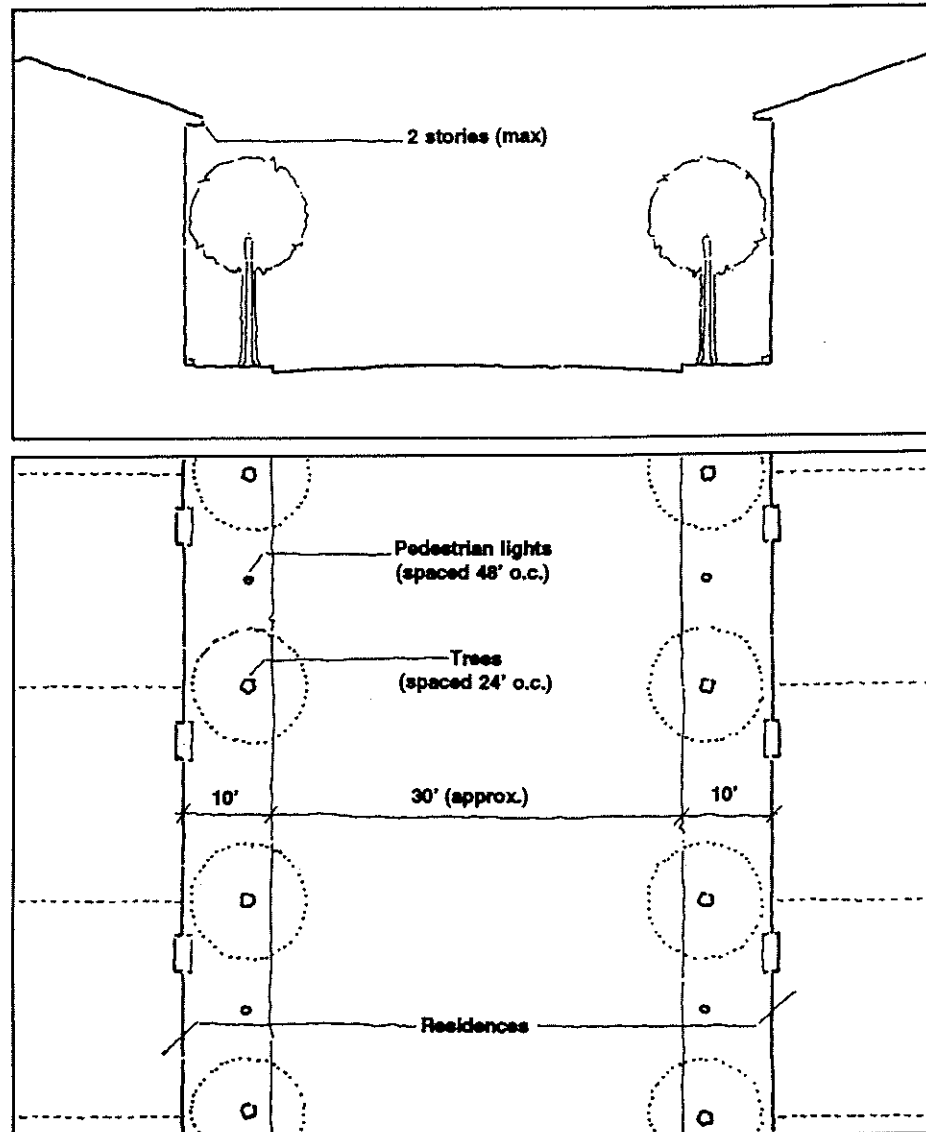


FIGURE NO. 23 - NAGLE AND BOYETT STREETS

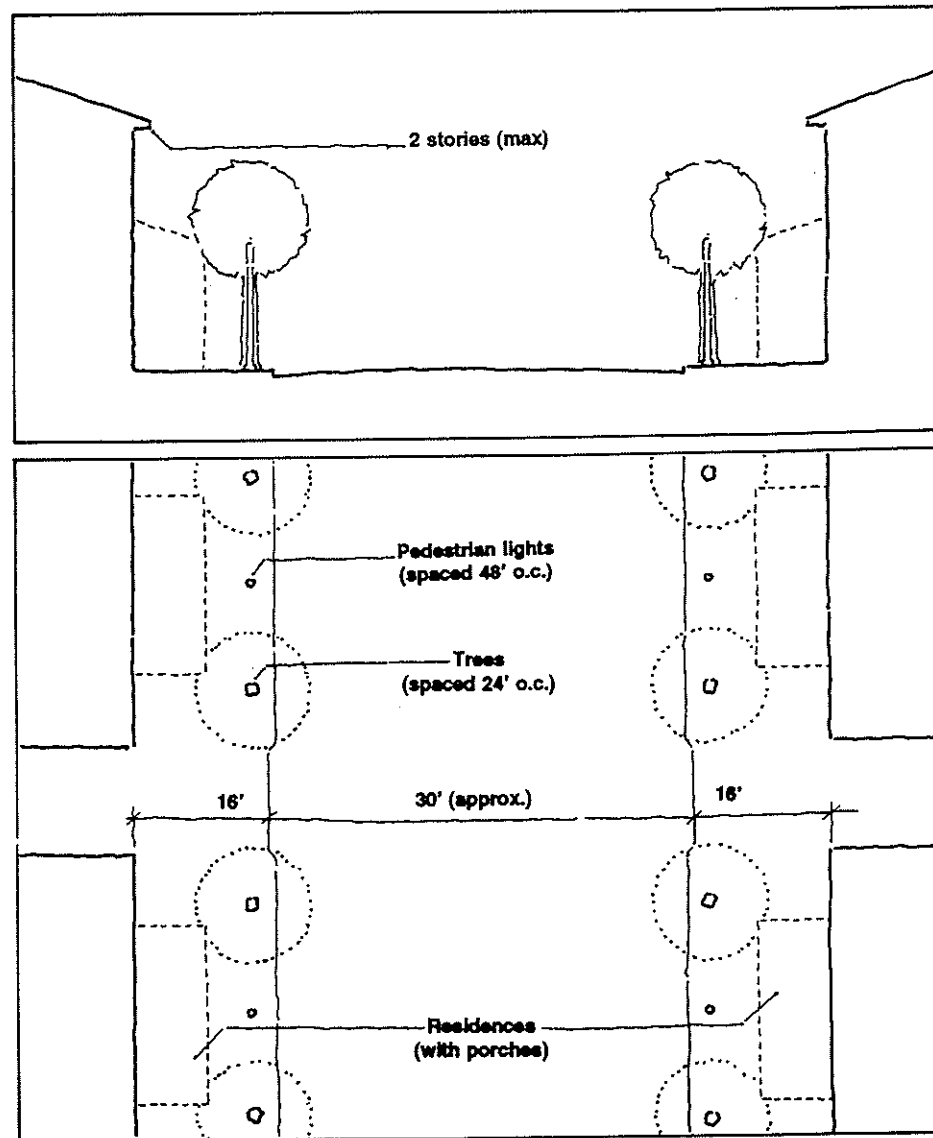
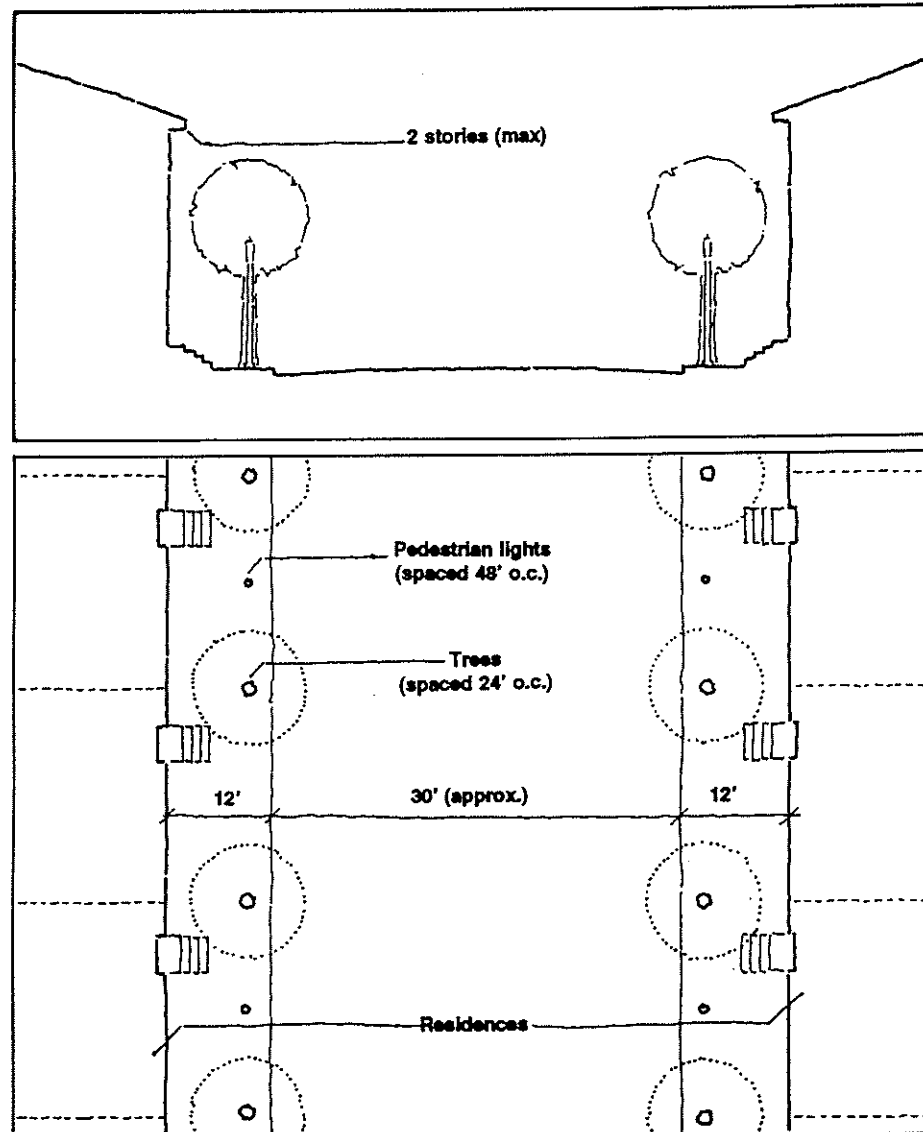


FIGURE NO. 24 - CROSS STREET



- *Residential* - All residential buildings should not be greater than 2 stories. Overall building height should not be greater than 35 feet (incorporating roof systems, vent stacks, chimneys, etc.). If an elevator is provided, buildings may be up to 3 stories and may not exceed 45 feet.
- *Churches* - Church steeples may be a maximum of 75 feet.

#### **Building Setbacks**

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - All new retail, commercial, or office development on Type "A" or "B" streets should be located on the property line (or as near as possible). Corner locations should be oriented to both the front and corner property lines.
- *Residential* - All new residential development on Type "A" or "B" streets should be setback 15 feet from the property line in order to provide maximum rear setbacks. Corner locations should be oriented close to both the front and corner property lines.
- *Churches* - Churches should conform to the same standards as retail/commercial/office development.

#### **Building Materials**

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - Retail, commercial, and office buildings in Northgate should generally conform to a traditional "Texana" architectural style, as typified by the *Aggie Credit Union* building. Buildings must have a masonry facade, utilizing brick, split-face CMU, or other similar material (stone should be permitted as a base, exterior wainscott, or first floor surface material). Masonry colors should range from beige to light sand. Other building designs and materials may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. All new construction or renovation designs must be submitted to the City for approval prior to construction.
- *Residential* - Buildings in the residential portion of Northgate should generally conform to a traditional "Texana" architectural style. Buildings must have a brick masonry facade, with colors ranging from sand to light red.

Mottled or variegated masonry types should not be permitted. Other building designs and materials may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. All new construction or renovation designs must be submitted to the City for approval prior to construction.

- *Residential* - Buildings in the residential portion of Northgate should generally conform to a traditional "Texana" architectural style. Buildings must have a brick masonry facade, with colors ranging from sand to light red. Mottled or variegated masonry types should not be permitted. Other building designs and materials may be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. All new construction or renovation designs must be submitted to the City for approval prior to construction.
- *Churches* - Churches should conform to the same standards as retail/commercial/office development.

### **Signage**

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - All business signs in Northgate should be wall-mounted signs and may be illuminated. Wall-mounted signs must be mounted parallel with, not perpendicular to, the wall-face. Billboards and pole-mounted signs should not be permitted.
- *Residential* - All signs in Northgate's residential areas should be wall-mounted signs. Signs should only be for the purpose of indicating the name of the residential development (apartment, condominium, etc.) or for informative/regulatory purposes. Wall-mounted signs should be mounted parallel with, not perpendicular to, the wall-face. Billboards and pole-mounted signs should not be permitted.
- *Churches* - Churches may have either wall-mounted signs or monument signs which are consistent with the City's sign ordinance.
- *Other Signage* - Real estate signs ("For Sale" and "For Rent/Lease") should conform to City specifications for size and placement.

### Screening

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - Dumpsters and other similar receptacles should be kept in the rear of all retail, commercial, and office buildings. Businesses located between University Drive/FM 60 and Church Avenue should screen dumpsters from view using masonry or metal fencing, or landscaping. Screening plans should be approved by City staff. Businesses may "group" dumpsters together in a common screened area to consolidate these uses.
- *Residential* - For residential developments with more than four units in a single building, dumpsters and other similar receptacles should be kept in the rear of the residential building and be screened from view using wooden or masonry fencing, or landscaping. Screening plans should be approved by City staff.
- *Churches* - Churches should conform to the same standards as retail/commercial/office development.

### Awnings

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - Awnings are encouraged for buildings along University Drive/FM 60 and College Main. Awnings must be permanently affixed structures which do not obscure the second floor. Signs may be incorporated into the awning design, but the awnings themselves may not be illuminated. Awning colors must be consistent with the suggested building design for Northgate.
- *Residential* - Awnings are encouraged for residential buildings along both Type "A" and "B" streets. Awnings must be permanently affixed structures which do not obscure the second floor. Signs may not be incorporated into the awning design. Awning colors must be consistent with the building design and the overall design of Northgate.
- *Churches* - Churches should conform to the same standards as retail/commercial/office development.

### Windows

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - "Storefront" windows are encouraged for first-floor businesses. Second-floor windows should be vertically proportioned, such as individual casement windows. Continuous "ribbon" window systems and glazed curtain walls should not be permitted.
- *Residential* - Windows should be vertically proportioned and in conformance with the buildings overall design. Continuous "ribbon" window systems and glazed curtain walls should not be permitted.
- *Churches* - Churches are encouraged to have stained-glass windows in the chapel/sanctuary and other buildings. Windows in other church buildings should conform to the same standards as retail/commercial/office development.

### Off-Street Parking

- *Retail/Commercial/Office* - Off-street parking should be provided at a ratio of 4 spaces for each 1,000 square feet of leasable area, as currently required by the City zoning ordinance. Businesses with frontage on University Drive/FM 60 or College Main should provide off-street parking behind the business. Front head-in parking should be allowed only by variance. To avoid multiple small lots, businesses are encouraged to "pool" their lots to create larger surface parking facilities. In meeting the off-street parking requirement, the City may also consider other nearby public parking facilities in counting toward the off-street parking requirement on a case-by-case basis.
- *Residential* - The current City zoning ordinance requires a minimum of 1.5 spaces per unit for apartment/multi-family developments, with a maximum of 3 spaces per unit. It is recommended that in the Northgate area, this requirement be changed to 1 space for each bedroom per dwelling unit. For residential developments with more than four dwelling units per building, parking should be accommodated behind the building. If front head-in parking is provided, all spaces must be completely contained within the property line.

New development in Northgate will attract residents that select apartments currently located on the outskirts of College Station, bringing more cars to the area. The intent behind these changes is to adequately accommodate the resident parking demand off-street in order to allow additional on-street parking for Northgate visitors and customers.

- *Churches* - Churches should provide off-street parking at a ratio of 1 space for each 3 seats in the sanctuary, as required by the City's zoning ordinance. It is further recommended that churches provide 4 spaces for each 1,000 square feet building area for other buildings (offices, education centers, recreation centers, day care, etc.). Front head-in parking should be allowed only by variance. Churches are encouraged to "pool" their lots with adjacent businesses and churches to create larger surface parking facilities.

### Graphics

- *Wall Treatments* - Businesses with large blank walls are encouraged to utilize graphic treatments in harmony with Northgate's design to mitigate the impact of such large blank surfaces. Faux finishes and *trompe l'oeil* are appropriate mechanisms. Designs should be approved by the City prior to implementation.
- *Street Signs* - Each intersection in Northgate should have a standard-size street sign which indicates each street name, along with the block number (in hundreds). Signs should have white lettering on a maroon background field, with the City's logo in the left margin.

### Other Guidelines

- *Roof Design* - Sloped roofs on residential structures should be oriented with the gable towards the front. Retail, commercial, and office building roofs may be either flat-roofed or gabled - if the latter, they should also be oriented with the gable towards the front.
- *Porches* - Porches are encouraged on residential buildings and should be permitted to encroach within the setback line.

- *Curb and Gutter* - All blocks within Northgate should have curbs and gutters which conform to City specifications. Storm sewers would be installed by the City as Northgate redevelops.
- *Sidewalks* - Sidewalks which follow standard City specifications are to be provided on every blockface of every street in Northgate. Exceptions include:
  - Sidewalks along Type "A" streets should be the same stamped colored concrete as installed in the Phase I improvement of College Main.
  - The University Drive/FM 60 sidewalk should be approximately 7 feet wide from Nagle Street to just south of Boyett Street. This should be accomplished by re-striping the travel lanes along University Drive/FM 60 from 12 feet to 11½ feet. This must be accomplished with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) cooperation.
- *Bicycle Lanes and Signage* - On-street bicycle lanes which share the travel lane with automobiles should be allowed throughout Northgate. Bicycle lane signage should be located along University Drive/FM 60, College Main, Nagle Street, and Church Avenue.
- *Bicycle Parking* - Businesses along University Drive/FM 60 are encouraged to install bike racks to accommodate/consolidate bicycle parking.
- *Landscaping* - Type "A" streets should be landscaped in conformance with the City's *Streetscape Plan* using either live oaks or red tree crepe myrtles.
- *Street Furniture* -
  - Benches should be incorporated on Type "A" streets and be constructed of materials designed to withstand weather and potential abuse, such as wrought iron or aggregate concrete, with pressure-treated wood seats. Materials which are subject to weather-damage such as recycled plastic should not be used. Figures No. 20 through 24 show the locations of benches on Type "A" streets.

- Lighting should be incorporated on Type "A" streets. Light standards should be constructed of materials designed to withstand weather and potential abuse, such as wrought iron, be pedestrian-scale height (12 feet to 15 feet), and be compatible with Northgate design (traditional, as opposed to contemporary). Figures No. 20 through 24 show the locations of benches on Type "A" streets.
- Trash receptacles should be incorporated on Type "A" streets and be constructed of materials designed to withstand weather and potential abuse, such as wrought iron or aggregate concrete. Materials which are subject to weather-damage such as recycled plastic or wood should not be used. Trash receptacles should be located on Type "A" streets at each intersection.

## SECTION 4 - IMPLEMENTATION

### POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Implementing the redevelopment/revitalization of Northgate will involve participation from both the public and private sectors. Traditionally, the public sector makes improvements to existing infrastructure systems (water, sewer, storm drainage, roads, and parks) as new development is proposed by the private sector. The private sector relies on investor financing to develop its projects (the larger developers sometimes have the resources to self-finance their own projects). In recent years, however, public and private interests have associated together to jointly develop selected projects.

There are numerous potential funding sources, mechanisms and strategies which can be used to redevelop and revitalize Northgate. Private-sector developers are more likely to invest/reinvest in Northgate if they see the City doing the same.

#### State/Federal Grants

The City of College Station has several potential grant sources available from various State and Federal sources:

- *Street Improvements* - State/Federal funding is available for the three State roads in Northgate (Wellborn Road/FM 2514, University Drive/FM 60, and College Avenue/SH 308). The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) provides funds for State-controlled facilities for roadway improvements, repaving, curb and gutter repair/replacement, landscaping, traffic control, and signage improvements. Potential funding through State/Federal grants is available through TxDOT.
- *Park Improvements* - Various grant programs are available through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for recreation and open space projects. Many of these require a local share in the overall cost (sometimes 50%), but that share often can be made up using land dedications or in-kind staff time.

*The Northgate Action Plan recommends: pursuing all available funding sources (ISTEA, CDBG, CIP, etc.); establishing a Northgate TIF district; forming a Northgate District Association; encouraging more cooperative ventures between the public and private sectors and between the City and the University; and implementing City and University projects within Northgate.*

- *Utility Improvements* - Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are available to the City to rehabilitate and improve existing water, wastewater, and storm drainage systems. The City is already designated as a CDBG "entitlement" area.

There is a fair amount of competition for State and Federal grant funds. Applications for specific grant funding does not guarantee receiving the funds. The City should continually pursue all applicable grant sources.

### **Tax Abatements**

This well-known approach has been used for many decades by cities across the US to attract new development:

- The City of Fort Worth (Texas) used tax abatements to attract an American Airlines maintenance facility to Alliance Airport.
- The City of Irving (Texas) used tax abatements to retain a major corporate headquarters from relocating elsewhere.
- The City of Columbus (Ohio) used tax abatements to attract the Nationwide Insurance corporate headquarters to downtown Columbus.

Tax abatements seem to work best when targeting a particular company. Supporters of this approach cite the increased business, sales, and *ad valorem* taxes that offset the reduce tax revenue stream attributed to the abatement. Critics say that tax abatement over-burdens other programs during the abatement period.

### **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Funding**

In the past, the City has utilized CIP funds to implement various projects. CIP funds are probably the most common means of funding local projects. CIP projects also rely on an affirmative vote from citizens in order to proceed with the project. Controversial projects or projects with a narrow focus often fail to get approval at the polls. The City should carefully assess the viability of placing site-specific Northgate projects on a citywide CIP ballot.

### **Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Funding**

In use for almost 50 years, TIF is a well-tested approach to innovative financing, although in Texas the TIF approach is still relatively new. A TIF district defines an area and "freezes" its tax valuation at a certain amount (the base). The taxing authority continues to assess and collect taxes, but as the amount increases, this difference (the increment) is earmarked for improvements only within that district. TIF districts are typically defined for 15 to 20 years and can generate a significant amount of revenue.

TIF districts are a targeted approach which specifically address the needs of a particular area. TIF districts are usually managed by a board composed of area businesses, property owners, the city, and other interested parties:

- The City of Dallas (Texas) used one of the first TIF districts in North Texas to encourage redevelopment in the State-Thomas neighborhood adjacent to downtown.
- The City of Fort Worth (Texas) has approved a TIF district for further downtown improvements and is considering a similar approach for its medical district.
- The cities of Wichita (Kansas) and Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) have used TIF districts to fund major urban improvements.

TIF districts often require interim ("bridge") financing in their early years until a significant revenue stream can be generated. TIF districts also require the cooperation of all taxing entities (city, county, school district, etc.). The most appropriate time for the designation of a TIF district is in advance of projected improvements. This allows the new development to help increase the value of the area, thus increasing the amount of the "increment".

### **Development Corporations**

Some cities have established non-profit development corporations which act as a catalyst for development. Development corporations can use the city's power to acquire land and market parcels to specific developers. Development corporations exist solely for the purpose of attracting new development.

In the 1980s, the City of Dallas established the *Southern Dallas Development Corporation* (SDDC) to attract new development and redevelopment to some of the older areas surrounding downtown. The SDDC also serves as a "clearinghouse" for grant programs, SBA loans, and new business incubation.

### **Public Improvement Districts (PID's)**

These specific improvement districts are identified by a city for additional public investment in support of private development. PID's are usually formed by voter approval and are funded either through the city's budget or through an assessment program for properties within the district:

- The City of Fort Worth (Texas) formed *Downtown Fort Worth Inc.* which assesses a rate based on a business' square footage and coordinates projects that benefit downtown. It reports to City Council and must be periodically renewed.
- The City of Columbus (Ohio) formed the *Columbus South Development Corporation* to assist in assembling parcels and developing the downtown area in the vicinity of the State Capitol.
- The City of State College (Pennsylvania) formed *Downtown State College, Inc. (DSCI)* to coordinate improvement projects in the area next to Penn State University. The DSCI is jointly-funded by the University, the City, and the businesses within the district.

### **Area Associations**

Some cities rely upon area associations to advance the interests of a specific district. These are similar to PID's except they are usually funded privately, without the help of the local municipality. The most familiar type of area association is the Chamber of Commerce. Area associations often suffer from a lack of financial resources. They also do not have a city's power to assemble land. Area associations can coexist with and complement other types of development-related organizations (such as PID's and development corporations).

## RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

By implementing publicly-funded infrastructural improvements in advance of development proposals, a city can make an area more "attractive" to private development as the upfront costs are reduced. The return on this investment is increased *ad valorem* tax revenues (for residential redevelopment) and increased business/sales tax revenues (for non-residential development). The following strategies are recommended to promote the revitalization and redevelopment of Northgate:

### #1 - Pursue All Available State/Federal Grants

The City of College Station should pursue every available grant program, including ISTEA funds, CDBG funds, and State park grants.

### #2 - Establish a Northgate TIF District

The City of College Station should further study the feasibility of implementing a TIF district in Northgate. A TIF District appears to be the most equitable and effective means of financing improvements in Northgate. Since many significant new improvements are proposed for Northgate, establishment of a TIF District prior to those projects would ensure a lucrative increment revenue-stream.

### #3 - Establish the Northgate District Association

The Northgate District Association (NDA) should be established jointly by the City, the University, district businesses, churches, property owners, and a tenants' representative. Both the City and the University should be the principal financial supporters of the NDA in its formative years. An equitable assessment formula (per square foot, for instance) may also be utilized to set dues for other members if desired. The NDA would be responsible for promoting the area through programs and events, assisting in the marketing of the area for new development and redevelopment, promoting the retention and expansion of existing businesses, and assisting in securing financing for area projects (such as facade rehabilitation). The NDA could also act in the capacity of the TIF District Board to help manage the redevelopment of Northgate.

#### **#4 - Encourage Public/Private Sector Cooperation**

Through organizations such as the NDA, the public and private sectors should be brought together for the purpose of redeveloping and revitalizing Northgate. This forum would also serve to establish clear responsibilities for both public and private-sector interests:

- *City of College Station* - The City would be responsible for all maintenance within all City street rights-of-way within Northgate. The City would also be responsible for maintenance of any City-owned land, parks, or buildings within Northgate.
- *Texas Department of Transportation* - TxDOT would be responsible for all maintenance within the rights-of-way for University Drive/FM 60, Wellborn Road/FM 2514, and College Avenue/SH 308 within Northgate.
- *Private Businesses/Property Owners* - Private businesses/property owners would be responsible for maintenance to privately-held property within Northgate.
- *Northgate District Association* - The NDA would be responsible for maintenance of the area between University Drive/FM 60, Church Avenue, Nagle Street, and Wellborn Road/FM 2514. These responsibilities augment the above maintenance tasks and principally include litter pick-up, sidewalk cleaning, and parking lot cleaning. The NDA could also help notify the appropriate agencies to repair and/or replace street lights, traffic signals, street signs, etc.

#### **#5 - Encourage City/University Joint Ventures**

It is in the best interest of both the City and the University to cooperatively work towards the redevelopment of Northgate. Several joint ventures are recommended:

- *Help Fund the NDA* - Both the City and the University should jointly fund the Northgate District Association in its early years. Both the City and the University would play important roles in this association.
- *Develop the Parking Garage* - The development of the proposed parking garage in the vicinity of the hotel/conference center would serve both Northgate District patrons and the University. The garage could also be made part of the University parking system so parkers would have a choice of on-campus surface lots or an off-campus garage.

- *Develop the Linear Park* - The development of the linear park could also be linked to the University's Hensel Park on the eastside of College Avenue/SH 308. State park funds should also be pursued for this project.

#### **#6 - Implement City Projects**

The City of College Station has the potential to encourage new development through increased public reinvestment in Northgate. These projects would lower upfront development costs through infrastructure improvements and would improve the visual appearance of the area. The following projects could be funded either through a TIF district, through CIP funds, or from the City's general revenues:

- *Provide Off-Street Parking in the Core Area* - The Core Area does not provide enough off-street parking to meet existing demand. The City should develop additional off-street parking lots that initially meet the existing demand of 440 spaces. Additional lots should be developed as new retail areas are developed, or if existing lots are removed.
- *Implement Redevelopment Guidelines* - The City should incorporate the suggested redevelopment guidelines into an "overlay district" to be applied to the entire Northgate District. The City could also rezone the areas within Northgate as a "Planned Development" district which would incorporate the design guidelines.
- *Upgrade Water and Wastewater Mains* - Many of the current water and wastewater mains are substandard by current City standards. Upgrading these mains would address both existing and projected service demands. Mains that are of primary importance are along Boyett Street, Church Avenue, Nagle Street, and Patricia Street.
- *Repair/Improve Streets* - As part of utility improvement projects, the City should rebuild Type "A" and "B" streets to meet existing standards for curb and gutter, storm sewers, and sidewalks. Street furniture, landscaping, and lighting could also be installed at that time.
- *Widen the University Drive/FM 60 Sidewalk* - As suggested in the development guideline, the University Drive/FM 60 sidewalk will be widened to approximately 7 feet wide from Nagle Street to just south of Boyett Street, through the cooperation of TxDOT.

Tables No. 1 through 3 identify the specific projects to be implemented to redevelop/revitalize Northgate. Projects are divided into four implementation horizons - "Immediate", "Short-Term" (1 to 3 years), "Long-Term" (4 years or more), and "As-Needed".

#### **#7 - Implement University Projects**

Aside from working cooperatively with the City and the NDA, there are no specific University projects identified for Northgate. However, there are two areas in which the University could assist:

- *Sell Currently Vacant Property* - The University currently owns a significant portion of the northeastern portion of Northgate. This land has been cleared of its previous structures and presently sits idle and vacant. If the University has no plans to develop this area, it is urged to sell the property so it may be developed as "market housing" or some other form of residential development. As tax-exempt land, this area currently generates no property tax.
- *Jointly Patrol the Core Area* - University police currently patrol all campus property. Increasing the presence and visibility of public safety personnel in the Core Area would help in establishing it as a safe and secure place to be. University bicycle and foot patrols could be integrated with City police patrols to further enhance the safety of the Core Area.

**TABLE NO. I - IMMEDIATE NORTHGATE PROJECTS**

<b>Immediate Projects:</b>	<b>To be implemented by:</b>
<b>Establish the <i>Northgate District Association</i></b>	<i>Businesses, property owners, City, University</i>
<b>Develop two off-street parking lots for 250 cars between College Main, Boyett Street, Church Avenue, and Patricia Street.</b>	<i>City</i>
<b>Adopt/implement <i>Northgate Overlay District</i></b>	<i>City</i>
<b>Widen University Drive/FM 60 sidewalk (College Main to Wellborn Road/FM 2514 - 900 LF)</b>	<i>City, State</i>
<b>Conduct a TIF district feasibility study. (Implement a TIF district if recommended by the study)</b>	<i>City</i>

**TABLE NO. 2 - SHORT-TERM NORTHGATE PROJECTS**

Short-Term Projects (1 to 3 years)	To be implemented by:
<p><b>Patricia Street Redevelopment</b>                      (Wellborn Road to College Main - 1,100 LF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop pedestrian promenade and plaza.</li> <li>• Repair/upgrade water and sewer mains.</li> <li>• Repair/replace curb and gutter and rebuild roadway.</li> <li>• Install pedestrian-scale lighting.</li> <li>• Improve landscaping and lighting.</li> </ul>	<i>City</i>
<p><b>Boyett Street Redevelopment</b>                      (University Drive to City limits - 2,000 LF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair/upgrade water main.</li> <li>• Repair/replace curb and gutter and rebuild roadway.</li> <li>• Install colored stamped concrete sidewalk.</li> <li>• Install pedestrian-scale lighting.</li> </ul>	<i>City</i>
<p><b>Church Avenue Redevelopment</b>                      (Wellborn Road to Nagle Street - 2,200 LF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair/upgrade water main.</li> <li>• Repair/replace curb and gutter and rebuild roadway.</li> <li>• Install colored stamped concrete sidewalk.</li> <li>• Install pedestrian-scale lighting.</li> </ul>	<i>City</i>
<p><b>Nagle Street Redevelopment</b>                      (University Drive to City limits - 1,800 LF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repair/upgrade water main.</li> <li>• Repair/replace curb and gutter and rebuild roadway.</li> <li>• Install colored stamped concrete sidewalk.</li> <li>• Install pedestrian-scale lighting.</li> </ul>	<i>City</i>
<p><b>Type "A" street landscaping:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College Main (University Drive to City limits - 1,860 LF)</li> <li>• Nagle Street (University Drive to City limits - 1,800 LF)</li> <li>• Boyett Street (University Drive to City limits - 2,000 LF)</li> <li>• Cross Street (College Avenue to Nagle Street - 1,200 LF)</li> <li>• University Drive (Wellborn Road to College Avenue - 3,100 LF)</li> </ul>	<i>City</i>
<p><b>Develop mixed-use hotel/conference center/parking garage.</b></p>	<i>Public/private</i>

**TABLE NO. 3 - LONG-TERM AND "AS NEEDED" NORTHGATE PROJECTS**

<b>Long-Term Projects (4+ years)</b>	<b>To be implemented by:</b>
<b>Develop linear park</b>	<i>City, State (?), and University (?)</i>
<b>Develop public building in linear park near Boyett Street.</b>	<i>City</i>
<b>"As Needed" Projects</b>	<b>To be implemented by:</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Street Redevelopment:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair/upgrade water and sewer mains.</li><li>• Repair/install storm sewer mains.</li><li>• Repair/replace curb and gutter and rebuild roadway.</li><li>• Install standard concrete sidewalk.</li></ul>	<i>City</i>

## SECTION 5 - SUMMARY

### AN ONGOING PROCESS

*The Northgate Redevelopment Plan establishes both a plan and a process for the revitalization of Northgate. As a flexible document, it is intended to be revised as conditions and new developments warrant. The City should consider revisiting the Northgate Redevelopment Plan every 3 to 5 years, as needed.*

Planning is often one of the most important tasks a city can perform. It integrates the various physical components of the community and the future plans for the improvement or expansion of those facilities. At the same time, it makes clear policy statements regarding the type and location of development. However, because no one can accurately predict the future, a plan should be considered as a guide to the type of development a city wishes to have. Known existing physical and economic conditions are combined with future projections to arrive at the most desirable results (such as residential/commercial mix, traffic conditions, etc.).

Northgate may be one of the most studied sections of College Station. Because of its proximity to the University, Northgate has been a convenient local case study for local planning and architecture students. Northgate has also been studied previously by the City of College Station. This document is mindful of those previous approaches, but also looks at the entire Northgate District - a large urban neighborhood which is adjacent to a major American university.

The redevelopment and revitalization of Northgate is important in re-establishing the prominence of this close-in campus neighborhood. The development of new uses, such as the hotel and conference center, will bring new vitality and business to Northgate. Development of new owner-occupied residential areas will bring a renewed "pride of ownership" and reinvestment to Northgate. During the course of this project, several developers expressed a sincere interest in these types of projects in Northgate.

Further residential development of Northgate will establish it as an attractive alternative to other off-campus housing options. Given that traffic volumes on Texas Avenue/SH 6 and Wellborn Road/FM 2514 are steadily increasing, development of off-campus residential uses that are within walking distance of the University is both timely and appropriate.

Unlike a construction blueprint, a plan is a flexible instrument that can positively react to conditions that are, today, unknown. New economic trends, new land uses, and new forms of education will impact the way we build our communities. Thus, the plan should welcome these new conditions as appropriate for College Station and Northgate, and assure that they fit seamlessly into the community. While most plans indicate a timeframe for their projections, it also makes good sense to revise and update a plan before the end of that timeframe. This can be accomplished in various ways:

- Simple, incremental adjustments to the plan (mostly regarding new developments and update data) should be accommodated by City staff as they occur.
- Annually, the City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission can meet in a joint workshop where the City staff updates them regarding any needed adjustments to the plan. Some other communities have termed these revisions "mid-course corrections", which allow their community to keep current with their changing conditions. In this manner, the City will have the tools to react more effectively to new developmental proposals.
- Depending upon the City's actual experience, there may be a need to revisit the basic tenets of the plan within 3 to 5 years of adoption. Generally, this can be done with City staff, but should involve community workshops to encourage additional public participation.
- Depending on changing conditions, the City may consider a "major tune-up" of the plan somewhere near its tenth anniversary. This might involve consultant assistance due to the complexity of the tasks involved. But because the plan has been incrementally updated, this task is much easier than developing a completely new plan.

Communities that maintain plans in this manner have a document with a longer useful life. It is also less expensive to maintain a plan than to completely rewrite it 5 to 7 years later because it is no longer valid.

The Northgate Redevelopment Plan is an excellent example of what citizens, City officials, and staff can do together. From this point forward, the challenge is to use the plan as a living, vital document to help guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the important Northgate District.