



WACO DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

AUGUST 2025

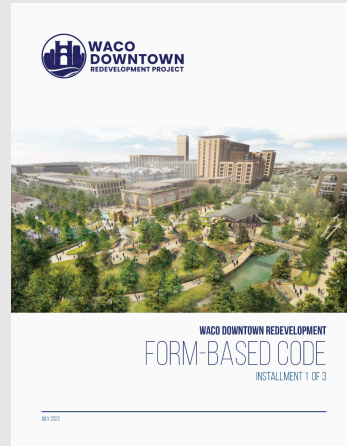
You can expect a newsletter about every six weeks that will bring you the latest information about the Waco Downtown Redevelopment Project. You'll find project updates, background articles about regional and national projects with applications for Waco, plus a snapshot of team members.

The guiding Strategic Roadmap Document for this project is available on the project website:

www.wacodowntownredevelopment.com.

The Downtown Form-Based Code is Taking Shape!

The first installment of the Waco Downtown Form-Based Code (FBC) is available online at the project website.



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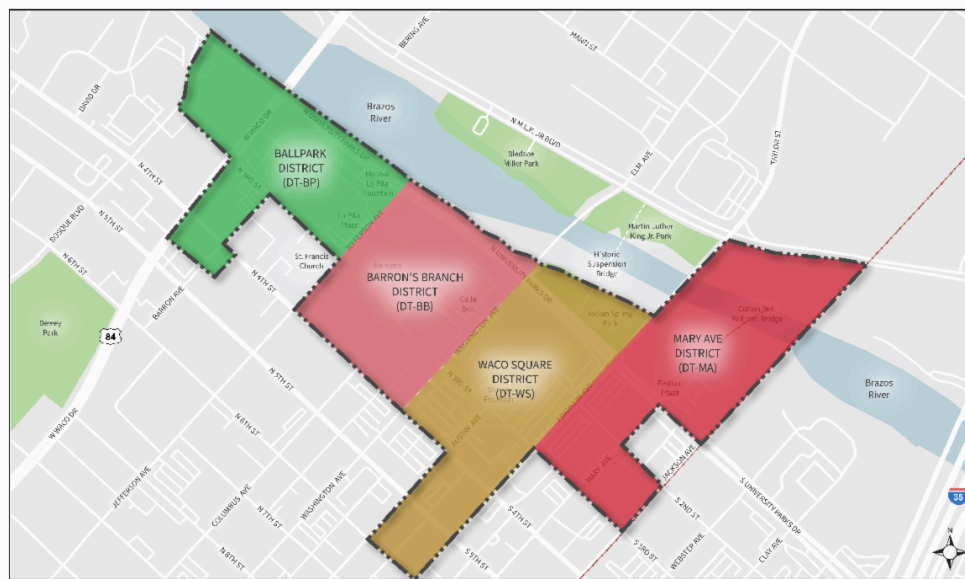
The Downtown FBC will be rolled out in three installments, or parts. This first part ("Districts and Uses") lays the groundwork for new downtown zoning in some fundamental ways:

- Establishes the four main new **form-based zoning districts** in Downtown Waco, along with key dimensional standards for each relating to site layout and building placement and massing.
- Sets **common standards** for building type, building frontage, and street classification types that will apply across multiple subareas.
- Establishes a **use table** with a reorganized/restructured use list that improves on the current Waco code. New definitions are included for all allowed land uses.

The second and third installments of the draft FBC will be available later this summer and early fall, and will address development standards (think parking, landscaping, and building design) and administration (like how to apply for a permit under the new FBC).

New Downtown Form-Based Zoning Districts

The first installment of the FBC introduces four new zoning districts that apply to most of the Downtown Waco redevelopment project area. These four districts, shown in the following map, are described below:



- **Barron's Branch:** This will be the first of the districts to see development activity and exciting progress is already underway! The district will be anchored by the resurfaced and restored creek, creating a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood and a central pedestrian corridor, honoring the site's cultural and ecological history.
- **Waco Square:** The heart of civic life in Waco, and home to the courthouse and convention center, this district will be a civic-centered urban district organized around a new public green and framed by active, walkable frontages that support both public life and everyday use.
- **Mary Avenue:** This district will be oriented around a walkable retail and cultural corridor anchored by Mary Avenue and activated by paseos, plazas, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- **Ballpark:** A proposed major recreational facility will highlight this high-energy entertainment and residential district, with a mix of large-scale venues, housing, and river-oriented public spaces.

Revitalizing Historic Downtowns:
The Economic Power of Sports and Entertainment Districts



Small to mid-size cities across America are leveraging the transformative potential of sports and entertainment districts to revitalize their historic downtowns. These dynamic, mixed-use districts, anchored by stadiums, performance venues, restaurants, and residential components, are proving to be powerful catalysts for economic growth, civic pride, and long-term resilience. Through strategic public-private partnerships and innovative financing tools, cities are reimagining their core districts as vibrant hubs of culture, commerce, and community.

Why Sports and Entertainment?

The appeal of these districts lies in their ability to generate consistent foot traffic, activate underused land, and stimulate investment in surrounding areas. Often anchored by minor or major league sports venues, they create shared experiences that foster local pride and attract tourism. What distinguishes successful entertainment districts is a focus on locals—not tourists. According to Hunden Strategic Partners’



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ve!: A Transformational Anchor

A prime example of this strategy in action is Texas Live!, a \$250 million mixed-use entertainment district developed through a public-private partnership between The Cordish Companies, the Texas Rangers, the City of Arlington, Tarrant County, and the State of Texas. Centrally located in the Arlington Entertainment District between Globe Life Park, Globe Life Field, and AT&T Stadium, Texas Live! was one of the first districts in the country to be master-planned alongside a newly constructed professional sports venue.

Since opening in 2018, Texas Live! has established itself as a year-round destination with over 200,000 square feet of dining and entertainment, a 300-room convention hotel, outdoor event venues, and a public plaza. The development has generated over 3,000 new jobs and catalyzed an

research, “instant districts” that feel contrived or overly corporate often fail to build sustained momentum. Instead, the most successful districts integrate organic, local culture such as pop-up shops, changing art installations, locally owned small businesses and restaurants, and entertainment experiences that feel authentic to the community’s identity. This authenticity builds loyalty with residents, which in turn attracts curious visitors seeking unique experiences.

Modern consumers, especially younger generations, value transparency, flexibility, social engagement, and a strong sense of place. They are drawn to districts that offer not just entertainment, but a canvas for identity and social interaction. Districts that embrace this ethos, offering everything from esports events and food trucks to outdoor fitness classes and live concerts, can become regional draws and economic engines.

Financing Revitalization: Special Taxing Districts and Infrastructure

Key to the success of many entertainment districts is the use of special financing tools such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), Municipal Management Districts (MMDs), Public Improvement Districts (PIDs), and venue taxes. These tools help fund critical infrastructure improvements including roads, utilities, and public spaces, without placing additional tax burdens on existing local residents. Instead, they allow cities to reinvest a portion of the new tax revenue generated within the district back into its continued development.

For example, TIRZ financing enabled Arlington to fund public infrastructure for Texas Live! By capturing a portion of the increased property and sales tax revenue generated within the district itself. These tools ensure that growth pays for growth, minimizing financial risk to local taxpayers while enabling ambitious, catalytic projects to proceed.

Building Places People Love

Sports and entertainment districts are redefining what revitalization looks like in America’s historic downtowns. By combining place-based economic development, local culture, and innovative finance, these districts transform historic downtowns into vibrant centers of community and commerce. When developed thoughtfully, with locals at the center and public-private partnerships aligned, they do more than attract fans. They build places people love and prosperity for the long term.

References:

1. Urban Land Institute. (2015). *Making Sports-Oriented Mixed Use Work*. Urban Land Magazine.

additional \$810 million in mixed-use investment.

Minor League Baseball as a Catalyst: El Paso’s Southwest University Park

Minor league sports have also proven to be highly effective anchors for downtown renewal. In El Paso, Texas, the Southwest University Park, home to the El Paso Chihuahuas, a Triple-A affiliate of the San Diego Padres, was developed through a public-private partnership between MountainStar Sports Group and the City of El Paso. Opened in 2014, the ballpark helped trigger millions of dollars of private-sector investment in downtown El Paso, including new restaurants, housing, and office developments. Its central location and family-friendly atmosphere attract a diverse audience and is key to the overall strategy to improve the quality of life and economic development in the Borderplex region.

2. Hunden Strategic Partners. (2019). *NextGen Entertainment Districts – Future Proofing Your Bricks and Mortar Project*.
3. Urban Land Institute. (2021). "Texas Live!" ULI Americas Awards for Excellence. <https://www.texas-live.com/>

Meet the Team!

RODNEY MOSS



The City of Waco leads the Downtown Redevelopment Project in close cooperation with Hunt Development Group. Hunt has assembled a team of national and Texas experts in architecture, engineering, zoning, and many other fields. Each month we'll introduce you to one of the team!

Rodney Moss **Sr. Vice President, Hunt Development Group**

Rodney is a Sr. Vice President of Hunt and has led its U.S. P3 business since 2017. He has acted as both developer of municipal projects and strategic P3 advisor to state and local governments. Hunt has over 120 infrastructure professionals globally with more than 200 P3 projects in the portfolio. Rodney is a national authority on the application public-private partnership delivery of complex social infrastructure projects like Waco's downtown redevelopment.

Prior to joining Hunt, Rodney was a Regional Managing Director for Aon's Construction Services Group and Regional Chief Legal Officer and national P3 lead for Balfour Beatty Construction. He is a licensed attorney in Texas and Alabama.

Rodney currently serves on the board of the Association for the Improvement of American Infrastructure (AIAI) and is the chair of the law and legislative committee. Rodney has a degree in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M. Shelly, his wife of 35 years, and four grown children also are proud Texas A&M graduates.



Email:
Info@WacoDowntownRedevelopment.com



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