



# Alpine, Texas

A Vision for the Future

Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research - College of Architecture, Construction and Planning  
The University of Texas at San Antonio - August 2016



# Preface

This report by the Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research (CURPR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) presents a Vision Plan for improving the Alpine Historic Downtown District and its tourism potential.

This study was initiated by the Rural Business Program (RBP), a part of the South-West Texas Border Small Business Development Center (SWTSBDC) which is hosted by the Institute for Economic development (IED) at UTSA. To develop the study RBP contracted with CURPR in the College of Architecture, Construction and Planning at UTSA.

A number of recommendations are made to encourage future economic development in the historic Alpine Downtown District. These recommendations include:

- The preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings
- Enhancement of sidewalks and street crossings for pedestrians to improve connectivity
- Development of a special events center that can serve as a catalyst for public and private events
- Improved connection of Murphy Street to the Downtown District
- Additional parking options and,
- Promotion of economic growth via small business development and local entrepreneurship

This Vision Plan is intended to assist Alpine with the enhancement and development of the Alpine Downtown District and lay the foundation for future long-term growth.

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# Acknowledgements

The advice and assistance of the citizens of the City of Alpine have been invaluable in the preparation of this report. We would like to especially acknowledge the following:

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# Introduction

# Future Directions

This vision study presents plans, concepts, and methods for developing and revitalizing Alpine’s Downtown District. This report is meant to serve as starting points for a discussion on what steps to take to improve the Downtown District.

The Downtown District is part of a larger Alpine Historic District. A first priority for Alpine should be to reexamine the boundaries of the Downtown District to determine its pedestrian walking boundaries. Pedestrians will generally walk up to a quarter of a mile or more if an enjoyable streetscape is present. For the purposes of this report the district is defined as the area bordered to the south by Avenue F, to the west by 9th street, to the north by Avenue E, and to the east by 1st street north of the train tracks, and 4th street south of the train tracks.



Figure 1: Holland Ave and 5th St - City Center

Source: CURPR

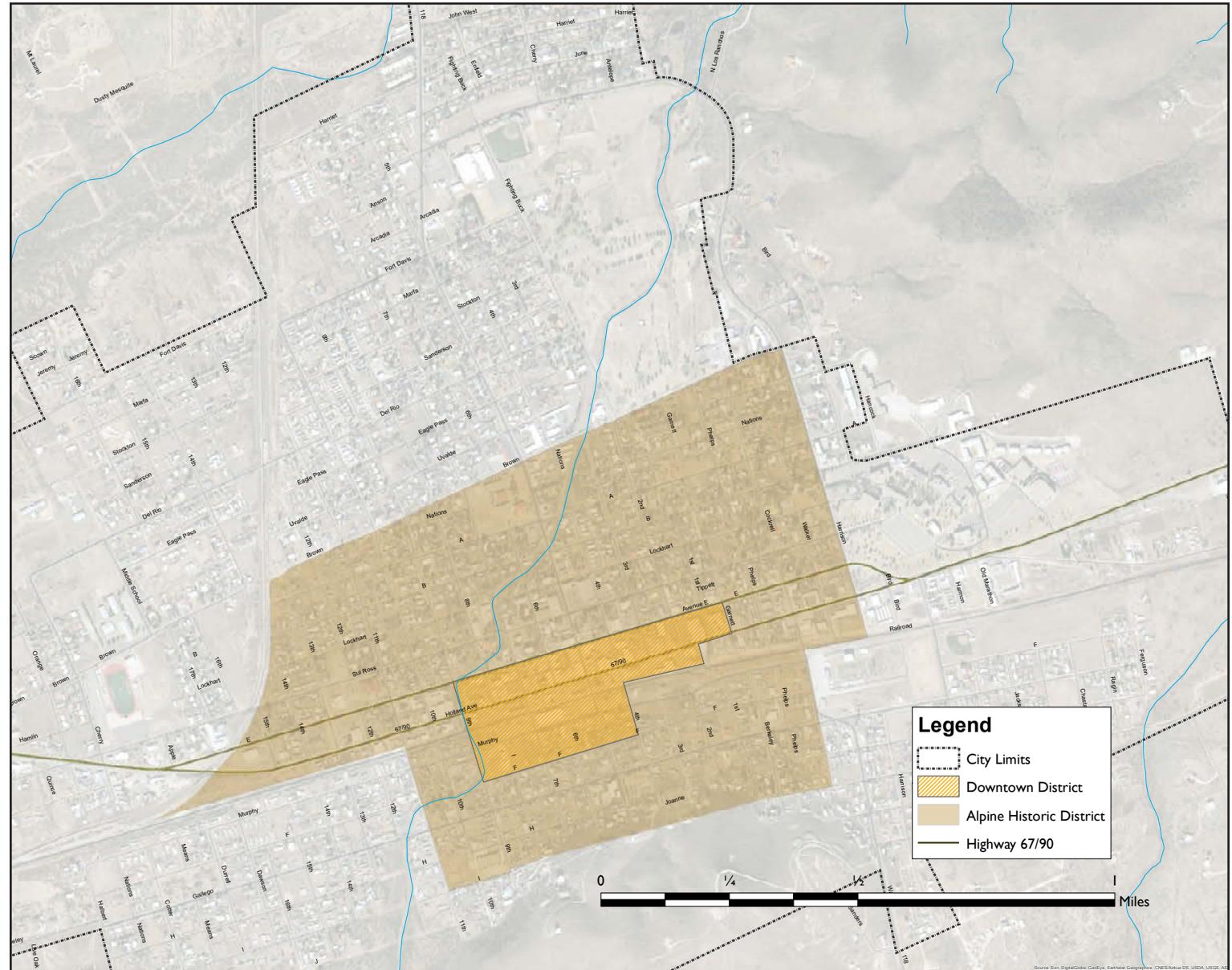


Figure 2: Boundaries of Alpine Downtown District and Historic District

Source: ESRI, CURPR

# Historical Background

The Trans-Pecos and Big Bend regions were important for transportation and trade even before Alpine was founded. Spanish explorers entered the area in 1582, and the water hole at Kokernot Springs (later called the Alpine water hole) became an important location for camps and later settlement. After Texas Independence in 1836 and annexation by the United States in 1845, Alpine became an important stop along the Chihuahua Trail, which connected the city of Chihuahua with the port of Indianola (since abandoned) on the Gulf of Mexico near Port Lavaca.

The area was still predominantly a frontier area even after the Civil War, as Indian raids on the ranches, cattle drives, and small towns continued to occur. During this time Fort Davis (as well as Fort Stockton) functioned as defensive outposts protecting (American) civilians. In the 1870s and 1880s, the military advantage of U.S. troops (often veterans of the Mexican-American and Civil Wars) over the various Indian nations such as the Apache and Comanche began to tell, and by the time railroads were built through the area, most of the remaining American Indians had been forcibly removed to reservations.

Alpine was formally established in the spring of 1882 as an unincorporated settlement, which was initially named Osborne after the railroad section at the location. Specifically, it was settled by railroad workers due to the presence of the springs and the water hole. During the era of steam railroads, water stops or stations were needed to replenish the train's supply, and a spring or water hole was precisely what the Galveston,

Harrisburg, & San Antonio (GH & SA) Railroad needed as it constructed its line further west.

In 1883, Daniel and Thomas Murphy, the settlers who owned the land containing the springs, signed an agreement with the GH & SA to allow the railroad to draw water. In return, they were given the right to formally establish the town, and so it was officially platted as Murphyville in November 1883. In 1887, Brewster County was created from Presidio County when the county seat of the latter was moved from Fort Davis (now in Jeff Davis County) to Marfa (which remains the county seat of Presidio County). Murphyville was chosen as the county seat of Brewster County, but by that time the population had grown to such an extent that many residents wanted to change the name, and so in 1888 the name was formally changed to Alpine.

The railroad gave Alpine an impetus for growth based largely on the cattle trade. The town depot became an important transit node for transporting livestock and ranching supplies. In the 1880s, mercury was discovered in the mountains near Terlingua in southern Brewster County, and this added to the economic activity in Alpine. Between 1890 and 1910 the town grew significantly based on the railroad and the cattle trade, and many of the historic buildings that remain date from this era.

In 1910, the residents of Alpine decided to create a summer-only normal school to train teachers, and the Alpine Summer Normal School was established. It proved successful, and in 1917 the Texas Legislature authorized a year-round normal school to serve the region (at the time it was the only normal



**Figure 3: Southern Pacific Railroad Station, Alpine TX, 1903 (View from across Holland Avenue)**

Source: UTSA Libraries Digital Collections



**Figure 4: Southern Pacific Railroad Station, Alpine TX, 1903 (View from Station Platform)**

Source: UTSA Libraries Digital Collections

school between El Paso and San Antonio). Sul Ross State Normal School formally opened in fall of 1920. The school was named Sul Ross State Teachers College in 1923, Sul Ross State College in 1949, and Sul Ross State University in 1965. It began awarding bachelor's degrees in 1925 and master's degrees in 1933.

In large part due to the presence of the college, the population of Alpine grew by an order of magnitude in the first three decades of the 20th century, from roughly three hundred (1904) to roughly three thousand (1927). Still, the town remained predominantly rural. Although many public areas had electricity, many private homes did not. Also, according to the Sanborn Map of 1927, only four miles of roads in the city were paved (most likely U.S. Highway 90, which formally opened in 1927).

With the stock market crash of 1929 and the severe conditions of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, the cattle business in Alpine and other nearby towns collapsed. While Alpine's economic difficulty was cushioned somewhat by the presence of Sul Ross State, many of the ranchers went out of business during this time, and the number of cattle decreased by more than half between 1930 and 1940, from around 91,000 to around 39,000.

However, various New Deal programs were implemented during the 1930s that helped Alpine and Brewster County avoid further decline. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) provided assistance to the ranchers, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided work for improving the infrastructure of Big Bend State Park, and the



**Figure 5:View of Holland Avenue looking northeast toward newly opened Sul Ross State Normal School, 1920**

Source: Sul Ross State University

Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided work for improving public facilities such as post offices, libraries, etc. Congress authorized the creation of Big Bend National Park in 1935. In some cases land was purchased from ranchers who were no longer grazing cattle. The park infrastructure of Big Bend National Park, including the roads, was largely built by

the Civilian Conservation Corps during the mid-1930s. The park officially opened in 1944 and became a popular attraction for tourists after the end of World War II with the increase in personal automobiles and the improvement in the road infrastructure.



**Figure 6: Sull Ross State Teachers College, 1923**

Source: Sul Ross State University



**Figure 7: Unidentified group of men posing for picture with inner-tubes, 1930**

Source: Marfa Public Library

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935, created a tremendous amount of public infrastructure. Much of that infrastructure remains today. In Alpine, there are three examples. The Museum of the Big Bend was built on the Sul Ross State Teacher's College campus in 1937 through the Texas Centennial Commission and the WPA. It has become a major resource for both tourists and academics. A second example is the Old Post Office, also built in 1937. Its mural was completed in 1940. A third example is the Lawrence Hall on the Sul Ross campus, built in 1938 as a women's dormitory.



**Figure 8: Lawrence Hall - Sull Ross State University**

Source: CURPR

As was the case for many rural areas nationwide during the New Deal, the infrastructure of Alpine was considerably improved during this period (in particular, paving the streets and electrification of private homes).

Eventually, as the interstates were built and the U.S. population became more mobile, Alpine became a preferred retirement

destination beginning in the 1960s. This was in part due to its climate, its location near national and state parks, the presence of a university and other amenities, and a relatively low cost of living.

This proved to be a fortunate economic shift, as the construction of Interstate 10 resulted in Alpine losing a significant portion of its cross-state and cross-country traffic that would otherwise use US-90 and the Southern Pacific (now Union Pacific) or Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (now Texas Pacifico) railways. In that sense, the fact that Alpine, while not flush against Interstate 10, might have actually worked in its favor, as potential residents who were mainly retirees would not typically look for a business or transport hub to settle in.

In the mid-1960s, the City of Alpine commissioned a plan for community facilities as part of a comprehensive plan spanning a 25 year period, 1966-1991. Prior to the implementation of this plan, Alpine did not have any specifically designated parks, only athletic fields and school playgrounds. Several parks were proposed in the plan and some of them were created during this period, improving the amenities of the town and making it more attractive to existing and prospective residents.

The intervening decades, therefore, have been about Alpine cultivating its distinctive West Texas ranching and frontier character, which has always been present. The key is that as the decades pass, such examples of pre-interstate Texas towns which have mostly retained their initial character are harder to come by, and thus more valuable for tourism.





## Background Assessment

## Regional Context

Alpine, Texas is located in northern Brewster County in the Trans-Pecos region of West Texas. It is approximately 190 miles southeast of El Paso and 310 miles west of San Antonio. The nearest towns are: Marfa, 26 miles to the west; Fort Davis, 24 miles to the northwest; and Marathon, 30 miles to the east. The population of Alpine at the 2010 Census was 5,905. Although this is comparatively small when compared to Texas as a whole, it is the largest city by population in the three-county Big Bend area (Brewster, Jeff Davis, and Presidio Counties).

Alpine lies at 4,475 feet above sea level, with the Davis Mountains to the west and south, and the Del Norte Mountains to the east. This gives the area around Alpine the characteristics of a drainage basin, which is important given the scarcity of rainfall in West Texas. Many of the nearby mountain peaks are about 1,000 to 2,000 feet above the desert plateau, and thus over a mile (5280 feet) in elevation. The terrain is part of the Chihuahuan Desert and is primarily high desert in terms of vegetation and climate. Moving south from Alpine, the Davis Mountains transition into a landscape of mesas and relatively flat terrain until the Christmas Mountains, the Chisos Mountains, and various solitary mountain peaks in Big Bend National Park.

Alpine is located along U.S. Highway 90 (US-90) which generally runs east to west. The other major road is Texas State Highway 118 (TX-118), which generally runs north to south from Fort Davis to Terlingua (near Big Bend National Park). Interstate Highway 10 (I-10) is about 50 miles to the

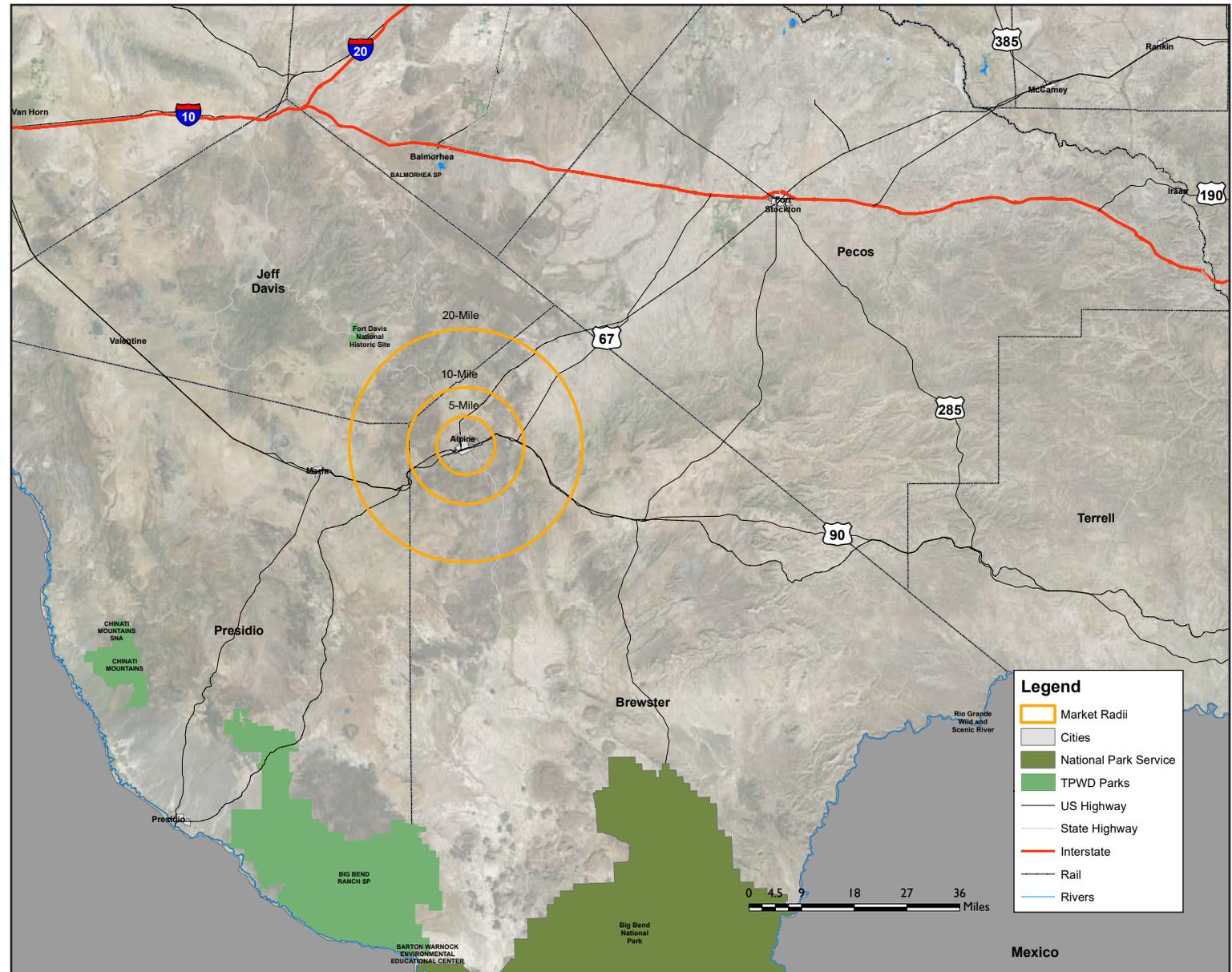
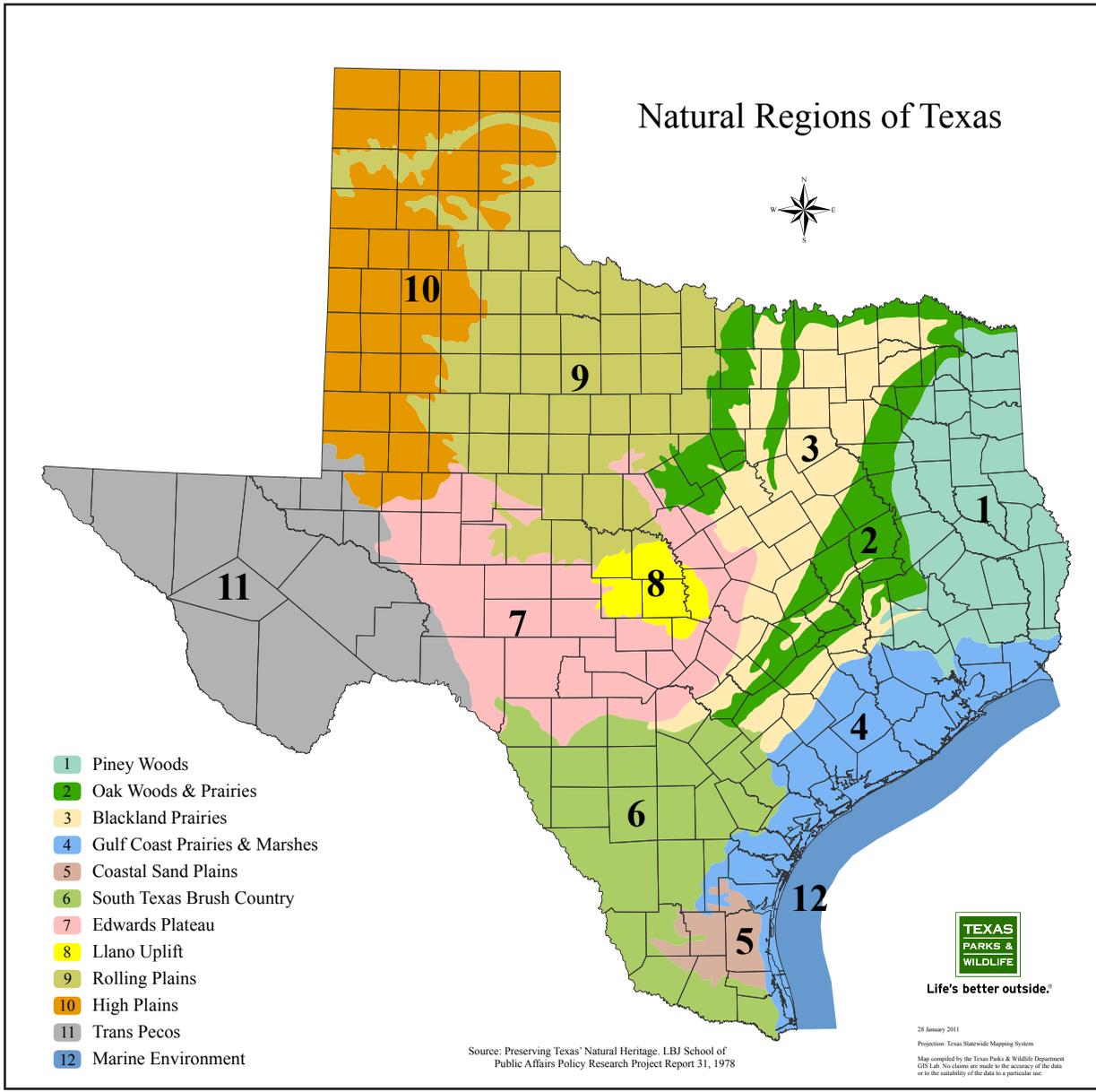


Figure 9: Regional Context Map - Alpine, TX

Source: ESRI, U.S. Census, CURPR



**Figure 10: Natural Regions of Texas**

Source: TPWD

north. The two nearest north-south roads to TX-118 are U.S. Highway 67 from Marfa to Presidio, and U.S. Highway 385 from Marathon to the Big Bend National Park entrance (at which point it becomes a park road instead of a highway).

Due to the remoteness of the area, the standard market areas (as indicated in Figure 9) are less helpful, although they provide important reference points for revised market areas. For instance, the primary market area of Alpine should encompass at least the area within a 10-mile radius of the town, as opposed to the standard area within a 5-mile radius. Conceivably, even the standard tertiary market area (within a 20-mile) radius could be used to assess the primary market area for Alpine, as it just about reaches Marfa to the west and Fort Davis to the northwest. If that is the case, then the secondary and tertiary market areas would need to change as well. If enlarged to scale, that would result in a secondary market area of 40 miles and a tertiary market area of 80 miles.

The 40-mile radius just about reaches I-10 but does not add much population. The 80-mile radius would reach the Pecos River to the northeast and include both Fort Stockton and Pecos, both of which are larger than Alpine and which would outweigh Alpine economically (which is generally the case for tertiary market areas). The 80-mile radius would also include the small towns of Sanderson, Balmorhea, and Valentine; it would encompass the northern half of Big Bend National Park as well as the border towns of Presidio (in Presidio County) and Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico. For purposes of brevity and readability, the 40- and 80-mile radii are not shown in Figure 9.

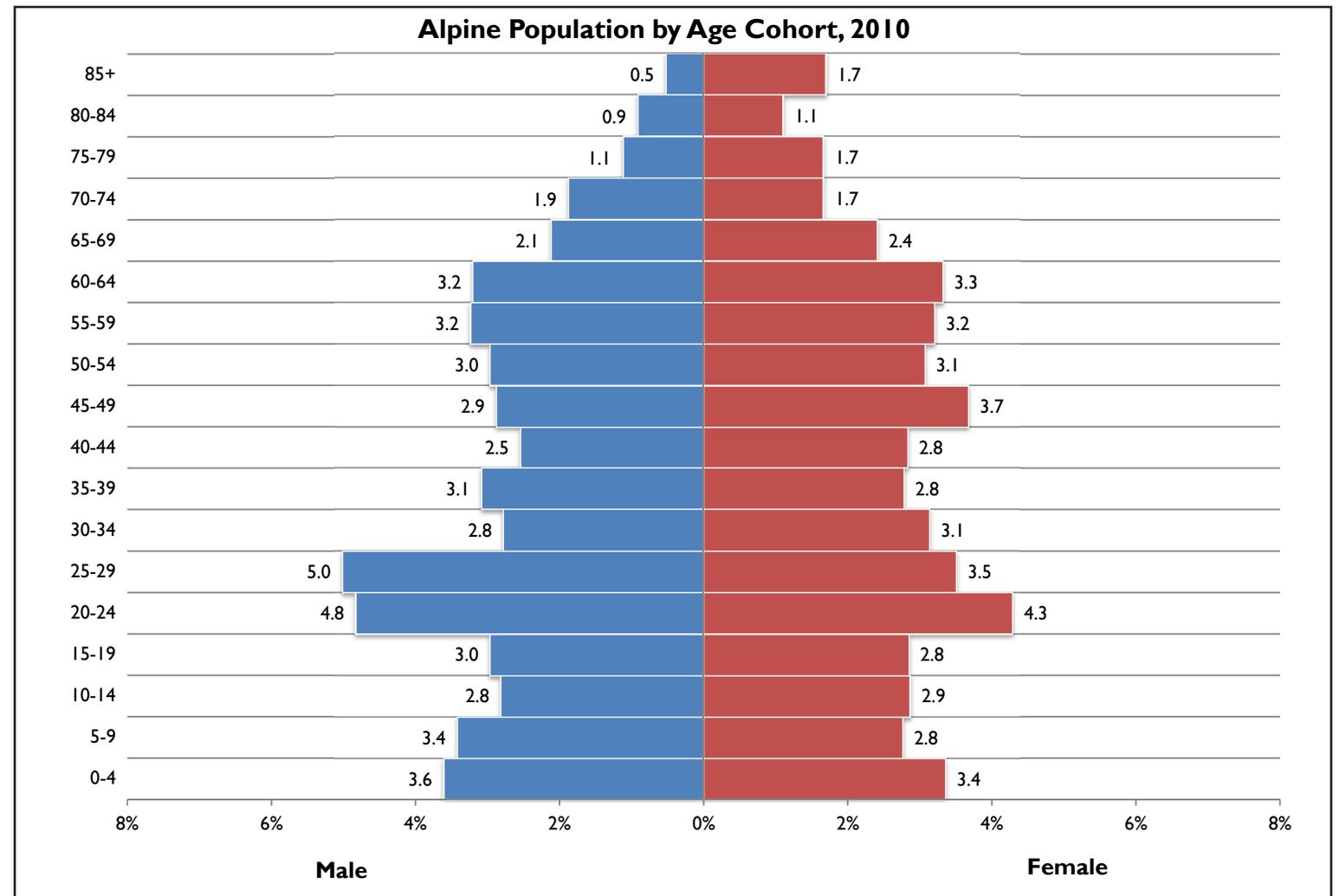
## Demographics

The population pyramid for Alpine (Figure 11) shows some distinctive features which differentiate it from the statewide age distribution among cohorts (Figure 13). The Brewster County population pyramid (Figure 12) is less distinctive than that of Alpine, but it is still noticeably different than the state.

The most obvious discrepancy is for the male population aged 20-29 and for the female population aged 20-24. This demographic bulge, especially for ages 20-24, is directly attributable to the presence of Sul Ross State University, which typically enrolls about 2,000 students. According to the university itself, Fall 2015 enrollment was 2,027 students and Spring 2016 enrollment was 1,811. In a city of 6,026 people (the American Community Survey estimate for 2014), that represents approximately a third of the total population. In fact, absent the university, the 20-24 cohort would likely be significantly smaller than neighboring cohorts, as residents of that age would have to leave Alpine to attend college.

One possible explanation for the relatively high percentage of males aged 25-29 is that construction is relatively important for the Alpine economy (at 11.8% of the labor force, it is the third largest industry in Alpine, behind educational services/health and public administration) and that it is a predominantly male industry.

In Brewster County (estimated population of 9,232 in 2014), the demographic bulge of the college-aged population is less noticeable, in part because the more significant bulge is in the



**Figure 11: Population by Age Cohort for Alpine, TX, 2010**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

older cohorts, especially ages 45-64 (Figure 12). These four cohorts represent the “Baby Boom Generation”, those born between 1946 and 1965. The oldest Baby Boomers turned 64 in 2010, while the youngest turned 45.

By contrast, the age cohorts representing the population under age 45 (“Generation X”, born between 1966 and 1980 and 30-44 years old in 2010; the “Millennial Generation”, born between 1981 and 2000, and 10-29 years old in 2010) are

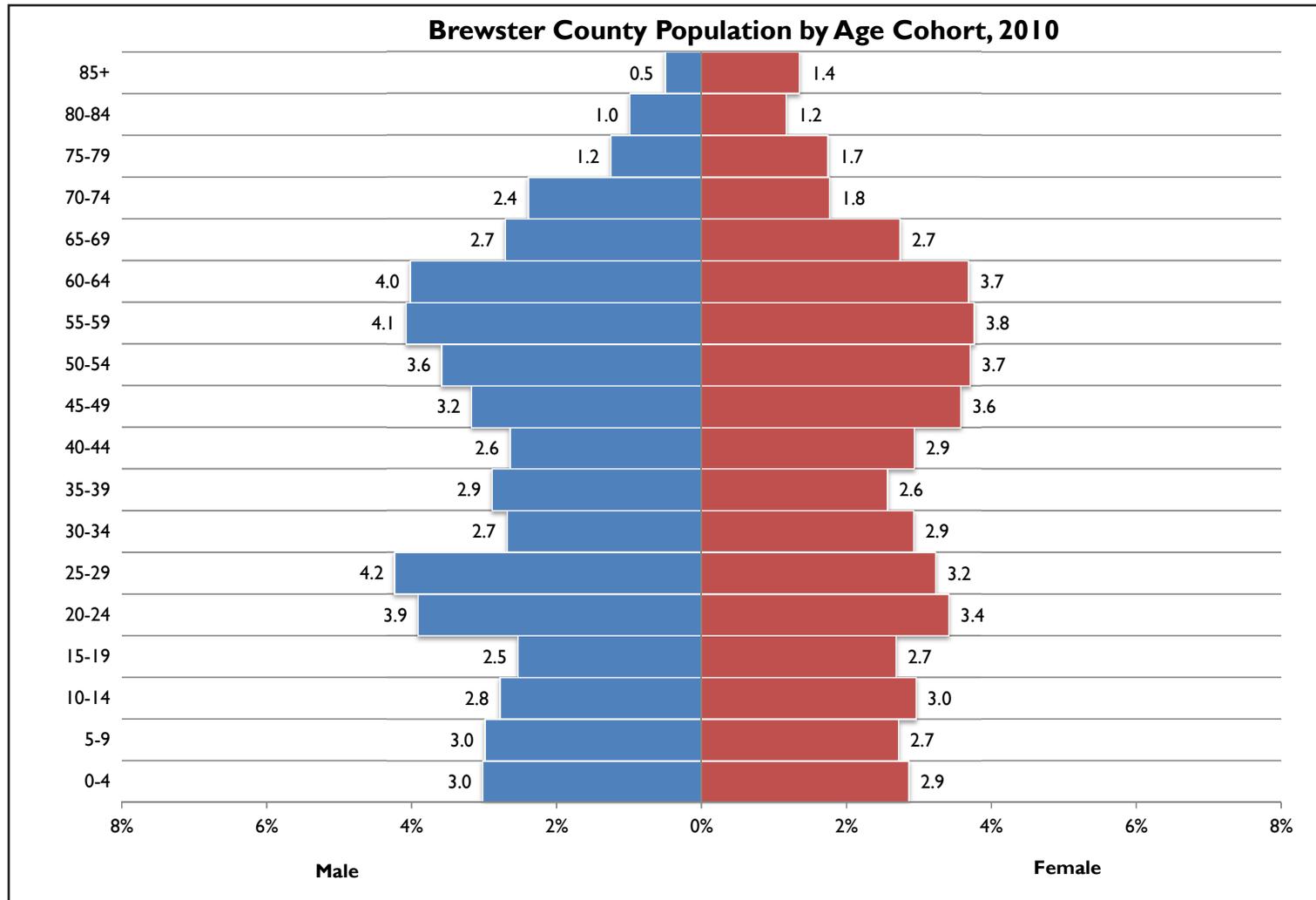


Figure 12: Population by Age Cohort for Brewster County, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

almost identical in size and distribution to the corresponding cohorts in the Alpine population pyramid.

Based on these differences, it is safe to say that Baby Boomers are less likely than younger generations to live within the Alpine city limits and more likely than younger generations to live in unincorporated Brewster County. Also, while many of the

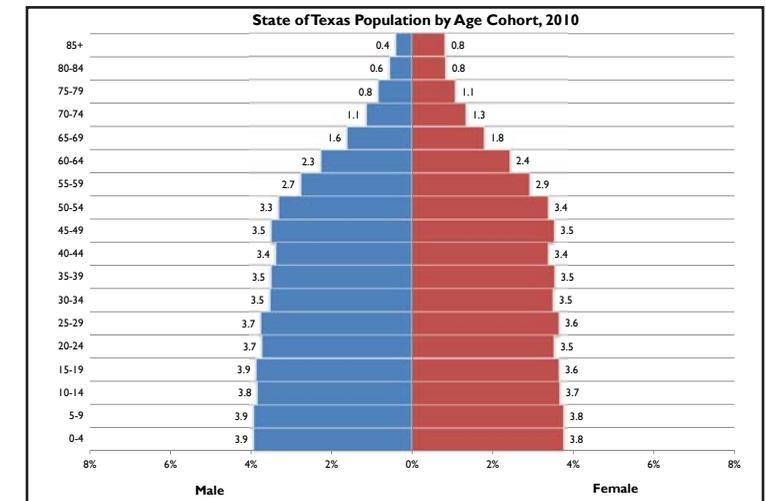


Figure 13: Population by Age Cohort for State of Texas, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

students at Sul Ross State University do not remain in Alpine after graduation, their presence at the university is a benefit to the town both economically and demographically.

The remoteness of Alpine from large cities—Odessa is about 130 miles away, El Paso is 190 miles away, Lubbock is about 240 miles away, and San Antonio is some 310 miles away—means that in the absence of the university, few college-aged residents would remain in town, and the population of both city and county would decrease by 1,500 to 2,000 (i.e. Alpine would lose between a quarter and a third of its population, and Brewster County would lose between a sixth and a fifth of its population).

Another important demographic comparison is that between the three major portions of the population: the working age

population (age 16-64), whether they are in the labor force or not; the children (age 0-15); and the elderly (age 65 and over), whether they are in the labor force or not. In some cases, children and elderly are grouped together to calculate the “dependency ratio” of the population (the ratio of the dependent population, i.e. children and elderly, to the independent population, i.e. those of working age).

In this case, the ratio is nearly identical for Alpine, Brewster County, and Texas. However, it is useful here to distinguish between the dependent populations of the three areas. Texas has the largest discrepancy between the 0-15 and 65+ populations (24.3% - 10.3% = 14.0%), while Brewster has the smallest discrepancy (18.1% - 16.6% = 1.5%). The difference will affect how jurisdictions allocate their budgets: schools, children’s playgrounds, pediatric care, and school lunch programs for one population; community centers, walking paths and benches, nursing home care, and meals-on-wheels for the other.

**Table I: Comparison of Working-age and Dependent Populations, 2010**

Subject	Texas		Brewster Co.		Alpine	
Population 16-64	16,433,369	65.4%	6,026	65.3%	3,847	65.1%
Population 0-15	6,110,306	24.3%	1,675	18.1%	1,168	19.8%
Population 65+	2,601,886	10.3%	1,531	16.6%	890	15.1%
Median age (years)	33.6	( X )	41.5	( X )	36.3	( X )

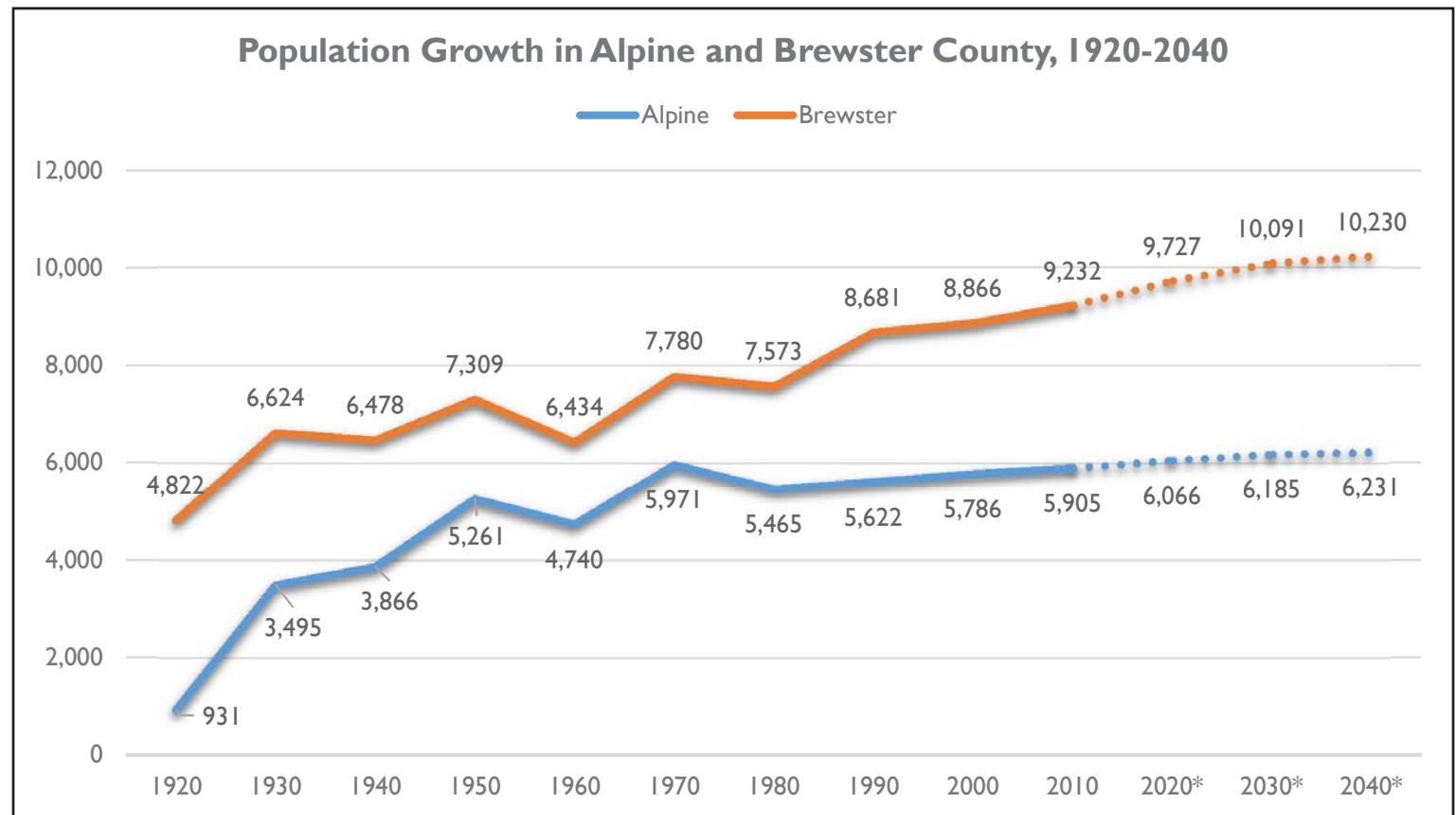
Source: U.S. Census

### Population Growth and Age Structure

Both Alpine and Brewster County grew rapidly in the 1920s (the earliest census data for Alpine is 1920), the 1940s, and the 1960s, with stagnant or declining populations in the 1930s, 1950s, and 1970s. Population growth was more steady from 1980 to 2010, especially for Alpine (see Figure 14).

As the only incorporated city in Brewster County, it would be expected that Alpine would have a significant share of the population of the county, and this is indeed the case. From 1930 onward, Alpine has had over half the county’s population, with the peak coming in 1970 at 76.7%. It currently accounts for 64% of the county’s population.

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) projects population increases for both cities and counties in order to prepare for increasing demand for water. The TWDB projects Alpine to have 6,231 residents in 2040 and Brewster County to have 10,230 residents. These are both rather gradual growth trends and approximate the pace of growth seen since 1980.



**Figure 14: Population Growth in Alpine and Brewster County, 1920-2040 (\*projected 2020-2040)**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Texas Almanac, Texas Water Development Board

## Race/Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of the population of Alpine differs from that of Brewster County primarily in comparing the Hispanic share of the population (of all races) with the Non-Hispanic White share of the population. In Alpine, the Hispanic share is 51.2% and the Non-Hispanic White share is 45.2% (Figure 15). In Brewster County, overall, the Hispanic share is 42.4% while the Non-Hispanic White share is 54.3% (Figure 16).

Alpine and Brewster County are both quite different from Texas in terms of race and ethnicity. The non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic Other population represent 11.5% and 5.6% respectively of the total population in Texas as a whole. In Alpine they represent 1.1% and 2.5%, and in Brewster County they represent 0.9% and 2.4%.

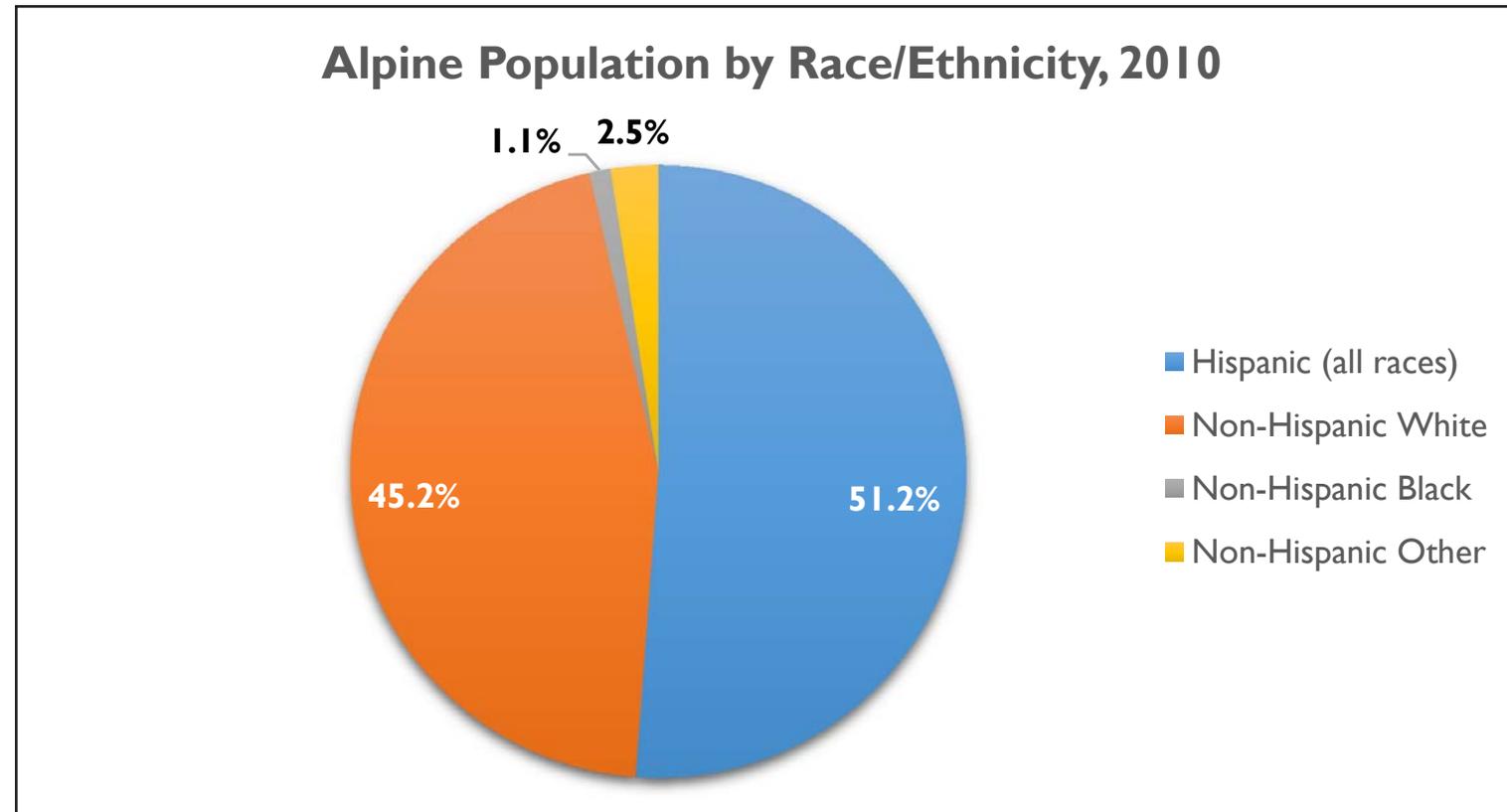


Figure 15: Alpine Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

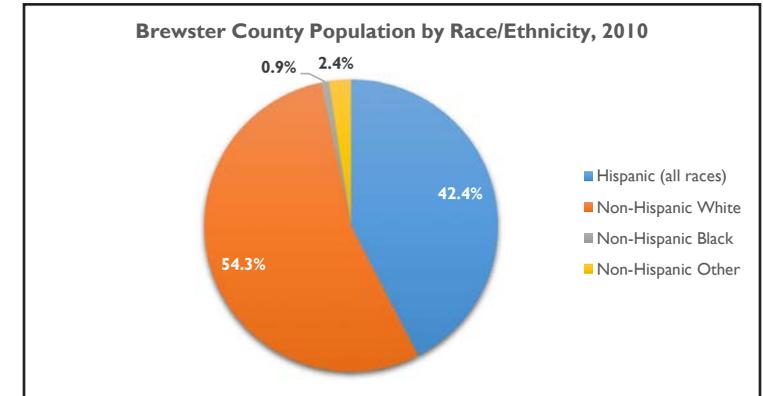


Figure 16: Brewster County Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

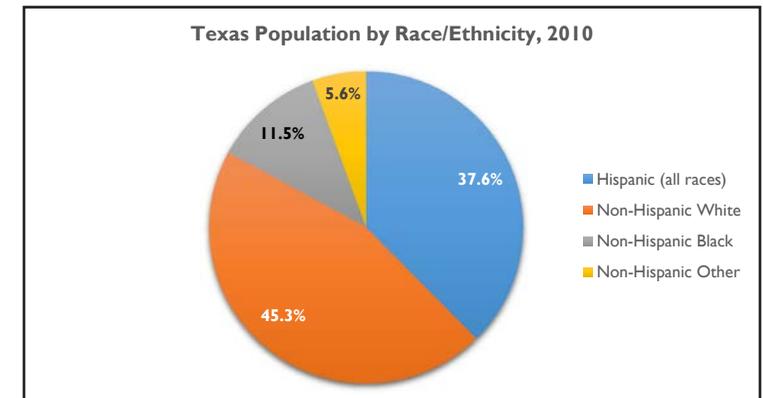
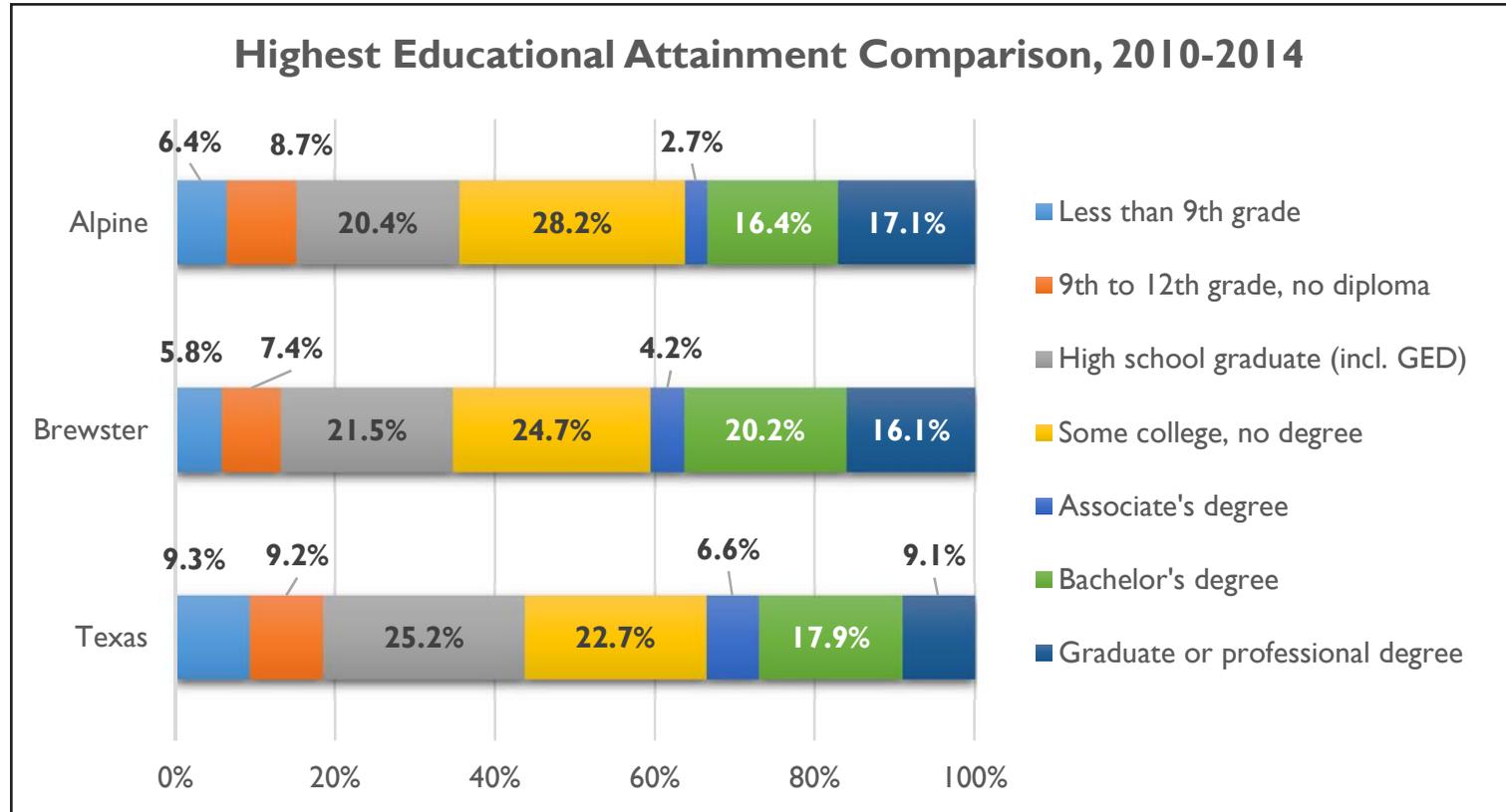


Figure 17: Texas Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

## Educational Attainment

The level of educational attainment in Alpine and Brewster County is generally higher than in Texas as a whole. As might be expected, the presence of Sul Ross State University has a significant impact upon the educational background of the



**Figure 18: Highest Educational Attainment Comparison, 2010-2014**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

residents of Alpine. Undergraduate students are represented primarily in the yellow segment (some college, no degree). The share of residents with a bachelor’s degree or a graduate degree is significantly higher than that of Texas as well. Lastly, the share of residents with less than a high school degree as their highest educational attainment is much smaller in Alpine and Brewster County than statewide.

### Housing Characteristics

Housing occupancy in Alpine, at 83.8%, is lower than the statewide occupancy rate (88.5%) but higher than the countywide occupancy rate (75.3%). The relative remoteness of Alpine and the further remoteness of unincorporated Brewster County play a part in housing demand and supply. Sul Ross State University students and a segment of retirees usually seek housing in Alpine without regard to employment,

while in larger urban areas (represented here in the statewide numbers) housing occupancy is often closely linked with the state of the job market. (Table 2)

The presence of college-aged students in Alpine also has a clear influence on the type of tenure. Over 47% of occupied housing units in Alpine are renter-occupied, significantly more than the 40.8% renter-occupied share in Brewster County as a whole, and higher still than the 37.3% statewide average.

Within the owner-occupied units in Alpine, 61% of the units are owned “free and clear” and 39% are owned with a mortgage. This is slightly lower than the 63.5% “free and clear” rate for the county, but still significantly higher than the statewide “free and clear” rate of 39.4%. This indicates a relatively stable base of homeowners in Alpine and Brewster County.

A comparison of the age of the housing stock reveals that both Alpine and Brewster County have older housing stock than Texas as a whole, according to the U.S. Census. While only 43.2% of housing stock in Texas was built before 1980, 49.6% of the housing stock in Brewster County and 58.9% of the housing stock in Alpine date from before 1980. More tellingly, close to a sixth of the housing stock in both Alpine and Brewster County was built before 1940 (16.7% and 16.2% respectively), while only 4.1% of Texas housing stock dates from that era.

### Economic Characteristics

The comparison in Table 3 of economic data between Alpine, Brewster County, and Texas is made using American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates for 2010-2014 (the most recent

**Table 2: Comparison of Housing Characteristics in Alpine, Brewster County, and Texas, 2010-2014**

<b>HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISON, 2014</b>						
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Texas</b>		<b>Brewster Co.</b>		<b>Alpine</b>	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>						
Total housing units	10,187,189	100.0%	5,406	100.0%	2,996	100.0%
Occupied housing units	9,013,582	88.5%	4,071	75.3%	2,512	83.8%
Vacant housing units	1,173,607	11.5%	1,335	24.7%	484	16.2%
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>						
Occupied housing units	9,013,582	100.0%	4,071	100.0%	2,512	100.0%
Owner-occupied	5,652,542	62.7%	2,412	59.2%	1,329	52.9%
Renter-occupied	3,361,040	37.3%	1,659	40.8%	1,183	47.1%
<b>MORTGAGE STATUS</b>						
Owner-occupied units	5,652,542	100.0%	2,412	100.0%	1,329	100.0%
Housing units with a mortgage	3,423,338	60.6%	881	36.5%	518	39.0%
Housing units without a mortgage	2,229,204	39.4%	1,531	63.5%	811	61.0%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014

The differences are more apparent for other measures. Texas has an estimated unemployment rate of 7.7% in the ACS 5-Year Estimates, while Alpine has an unemployment rate of 4.6% and Brewster County has a rate of 4.3%. This would indicate that Alpine and Brewster County are close to full employment (i.e. almost all of those considered as being in the labor force are working).

The rate of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits is one measure in which Alpine and Brewster County differ to some degree: 13.9% of households in Alpine receive SNAP benefits as compared to 10.4% of households in Brewster County and 13.5% of households in Texas. This reflects to some degree the socioeconomic differences between the town and the

available as of Feb. 2016). Note that ACS estimates are not as accurate as the Decennial Census, and thus the estimates of total population or of total households should not be used in comparison with official population and household counts from the Decennial Census. However, ACS estimates encompass a wider range of topics than the Decennial Census and provide a basis for comparing two or more study areas on a range of different characteristics.

Alpine, Brewster County, and Texas are quite similar in terms of labor force participation (Table 3). For example, the share of the population in the labor force is 64.9% for Texas, 63.0% for Brewster County, and 62.0% for Alpine.

**Table 3: Comparison of Economic Characteristics in Alpine, Brewster County, and Texas, 2010-2014**

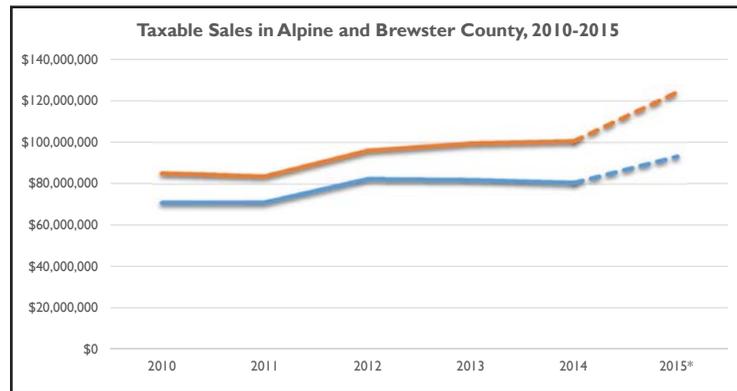
<b>ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISON, 2014</b>						
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Texas</b>		<b>Brewster Co.</b>		<b>Alpine</b>	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>						
Estimated Population 16 years and over	19,858,082	100.0%	7,519	100.0%	4,764	100.0%
In labor force	12,889,163	64.9%	4,737	63.0%	2,952	62.0%
Armed Forces	97,573	0.5%	14	0.2%	14	0.3%
Civilian labor force	12,791,590	64.4%	4,723	62.8%	2,938	61.7%
Not in labor force	6,968,919	35.1%	2,782	37.0%	1,812	38.0%
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE</b>						
Civilian labor force	12,791,590	100.0%	4,723	100.0%	2,938	100.0%
Percent Unemployed	(X)	7.7%	(X)	4.3%	(X)	4.6%
<b>INCOME AND BENEFITS</b>						
Median household income (dollars)	52,576	(X)	38,589	(X)	36,414	(X)
Total households	9,013,582	100.0%	4,071	100.0%	2,512	100.0%
With SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	1,218,803	13.5%	424	10.4%	348	13.9%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014

unincorporated county. The former consists of students and service workers (those two categories no doubt overlap); the latter consists of long-established ranchers, empty-nesters and retirees, who likely have both investment income and property assets.

### Sales Tax

According to the Texas State Comptroller’s office, the sales tax rate in Alpine is .0825 (8.25%): .015 (1.5%) of which is for Alpine itself, .005 (0.5%) is for Brewster County, and .0625 (6.25%) is for the State of Texas. In the past five years or so, taxable sales revenue for Alpine has slowly increased from around \$71 million annually in 2010 to around \$81 million in 2014, with most of the increase occurring in 2012 (Fig. 19). A similar trend occurred for Brewster County, which saw taxable sales revenue grow from about \$85 million in 2010 to about \$101 million in 2014, with most of the increase occurring in 2012. (Figure 19)



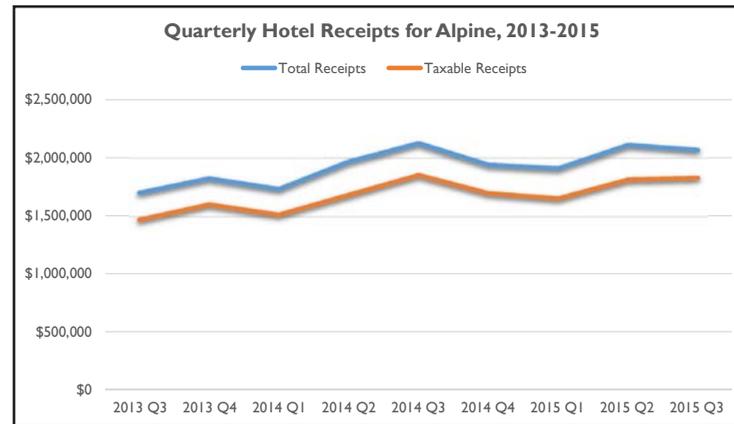
**Figure 19: Taxable Annual Sales in Alpine and in Brewster County, 2010-2015**

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

### Hotel Occupancy Tax

Another source of tax revenue is the Hotel Occupancy Tax; the state of Texas levies a tax rate of 6% (.06) on accommodations which cost \$15 or more per day. Cities and some counties can also impose additional taxes of up to 7% (.07) each. In some cases, civic venue development such as for sports arenas and concert halls are also allowed to generate revenue through hotel occupancy tax.

Alpine’s quarterly hotel receipts have been relatively consistent over the two-plus years from July 1, 2013 (3rd Quarter, July-September) to September 30, 2015 (3rd Quarter, July-September). Total receipts have increased from about \$1.70 million to about \$2.07 million, with seasonal fluctuations. Taxable receipts (important as they are a source of revenue for Alpine) have increased from about \$1.47 million to about \$1.83 million, also with seasonal fluctuations. Room capacity remained relatively constant in the 570-590 range, with some



**Figure 20: Quarterly Hotel Receipts for Alpine, TX, 2013-2015**

Source: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

turnover in ownership of large establishments and some “churn” (new establishments opening, old establishments closing) in the ranks of small establishments (guest houses and bed-and-breakfast operations). (Figure 20)

### Retail Market Gap Analysis

A retail market gap analysis was calculated for the City of Alpine using data from ESRI Community Analyst Software. Table 4 shows the summary information of the analysis, including the standardization of some of the measurements using per household calculations. Alpine has a retail market gap of about \$9.7 million in 2015, which comes to \$3,525 per household.

In terms of leakage, Alpine is losing a portion of the consumer spending made by its residents, but it is a fairly low portion (9.4% of median household income). This is in part due to the remoteness of the city from larger markets; the closest cities—each about 20 miles from Alpine—are Ft. Davis and Marfa, which are county seats (as is Alpine) but with much smaller populations (around 1,000 for Ft. Davis and around 2,000 for Marfa). Therefore, Alpine serves more as a central place for the “Big Bend” area, which includes the three counties of Brewster, Jeff Davis, and Presidio, and it likely draws in consumer spending from those towns (and others in the vicinity) rather than vice versa. It is partly for this reason that the primary market area for Alpine is considered to be the area within a 20-mile radius, with its secondary market (within a 40-mile radius) including both Marfa and Fort Davis.

It is important to note that this economic data is specifically for the City of Alpine, meaning that it refers only to the area

**Table 4: Comparison of Basic Data and Retail Market Gap Analysis data for City of Alpine, TX, 2015**

Subject	Alpine
Estimated Population 2015	6,024
Estimated Households 2015	2,757
Estimated Median Household Income	\$37,580
Estimated Median Disposable Income	\$32,586
Consumer Expenditures	\$81,910,491
Retail Sales	\$72,191,097
Retail Gap or Surplus	\$9,719,394
Leakage or Surplus Factor	6.3
Number of Businesses	91
Consumer Expenditures per household	\$29,710.01
Retail Sales per household	\$26,184.66
Retail Gap or Surplus per household	\$3,525.35
Retail Gap as Percentage of MHI	9.4%

Source: ESRI Community Analyst

within city limits. A detailed look at the retail market of Alpine by three-digit NAICS industry group (Table 5) shows that only one of the 13 general industrial groups/sectors (Nonstore Retailers) is projected to have no revenue in 2015. The leakage factor is 100, meaning there is a complete loss of consumer spending in this industry sector/group to other entities. Specifically, Alpine loses that potential to other markets or jurisdictions.

Only one other industry group has a leakage factor over 50: Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers, with a leakage factor of 77.3. Four industry groups in Alpine have retail surpluses: Electronics and Appliance Stores; Building Materials, Garden Equipment &

**Table 5: Retail Market Gap Analysis by Industry Group for City of Alpine, TX, 2015**

Industry Group	Demand (Spending)	Supply (Sales)	Retail Gap or Surplus	Leakage or Surplus
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers (441)	\$16,903,482	\$2,161,439	\$14,742,043	77.3
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores (442)	\$2,041,376	\$1,739,955	\$301,421	8.0
Electronics & Appliance Stores (443)	\$3,522,213	\$5,464,213	(\$1,942,000)	(21.6)
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores (444)	\$3,300,069	\$5,862,429	(\$2,562,360)	(28.0)
Food & Beverage Stores (445)	\$13,970,782	\$26,246,402	(\$12,275,620)	(30.5)
Health & Personal Care Stores (446)	\$4,091,769	\$2,623,354	\$1,468,415	21.9
Gasoline Stations (447)	\$5,307,967	\$2,327,391	\$2,980,576	39.0
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores (448)	\$3,203,811	\$2,210,907	\$992,904	18.3
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores (451)	\$2,089,090	\$1,864,500	\$224,590	5.7
General Merchandise Stores (452)	\$14,628,335	\$7,200,262	\$7,428,073	34.0
Miscellaneous Store Retailers (453)	\$3,351,381	\$2,189,033	\$1,162,348	21.0
Nonstore Retailers (454)	\$1,558,557	\$0	\$1,558,557	100.0
Food Services & Drinking Places (722)	\$7,941,659	\$12,301,212	(\$4,359,553)	(21.5)

Source: ESRI Community Analyst

Supply Stores; Food & Beverage Stores; and Food Services & Drinking Places. Alpine is thus drawing in consumers from outside the city to spend in these particular sectors.

These data are important because they indicate areas that the City of Alpine could address as part of an economic growth/investment strategy. For example, Alpine could target businesses in areas where gaps exist by providing incentives or other enticements to attract certain kinds of businesses to set up shop in the community. The intent here is to reduce the level of revenue leakage in the community and grow the tax base.

## Flood Plain

Given its climate and topography, the greatest flood-related risk in Alpine is of flash flooding. Alpine is situated on a plateau surrounded by mountains that create a drainage basin throughout the plateau. Both rainfall and snowmelt that occur in the mountains above Alpine flow down the mountains onto the plateau. Although rainfall is in short supply in the Trans-Pecos region, Alpine – which receives just 16 inches of rain per year – has more access to water due to its location within the drainage basin and on top of the Igneous Aquifer. The Igneous Aquifer, as its name suggests, consists of volcanic rocks in a disjointed aquifer system that provides municipal water to Alpine, Fort Davis, and Marfa. Hundreds of wells in Alpine draw water from the aquifer. Alpine was originally the site of a spring, Kokernot Spring, that provided water to American Indians and Spanish settlers in the area. The spring resulted from groundwater within the aquifer being forced out of the aquifer due to the water level. As more and more wells tapped into the aquifer, the water level dropped, and Kokernot Spring dried up, although it does occasionally reemerge in periods of heavy rain.

Alpine’s location within a drainage basin and on top of the aquifer makes it more susceptible to flash floods. Extreme flooding events occurred in September 1892, September 1904, and September 1986. The 1892 flood was especially devastating, described by the El Paso Times as water rushing down from the mountains “three to four feet deep” as residents fled their homes. The 1904 flood affected almost the entirety of the Pecos drainage basin, and although details on the specific

impact it had on Alpine are scarce, at the height of the flooding the Pecos River was spread out across its valley 2 ½ miles wide at some points, which gives an idea of the magnitude of water exhibited in this flood. In 1986, the West Texas flood resulted in four dead in the region, including one woman drowned in Alpine Creek.

The vicinity of the Alpine Creek, Moss Creek, and Paisano/Toronto Creek channels (usually dry) are most at risk for flooding. These creek beds run through the city, with Moss Creek near the eastern city limits, Paisano Creek near the residential areas on the northern side of town, and Alpine Creek running straight through downtown. In the event of a flood, Alpine Creek could be especially worrisome, as its floodplain has a large number of buildings and people within it. Alpine Creek begins south of Alpine and runs generally northeast, passing under Highway 90 at North 9th Street and



Figure 21: Alpine Creek at 8th Street

Source: CURPR



Figure 22: Alpine Creek at Avenue E

Source: CURPR

passing under East Brown Avenue at North 3rd Street. The floodplains in Alpine typically border Alpine, Moss, and Paisano Creeks, although there are some that are separated from these three main creeks. Overall, a large portion of Alpine – approximately 20% of its population – falls within a 100-year floodplain. Most of this land is in the downtown area, which would affect both residential and commercial areas.

One of the easiest ways for Alpine to minimize the impact of a flood would be to improve the creek channels. Widening/deepening the creeks would allow for more area within the creeks for the water to flow, resulting in less spillage at the flow’s peak. Another option, which could be undertaken in conjunction with the creek channel improvements, would be to construct dams upstream, south of Alpine. These would retain water in a controlled manner upstream and away from the city center, in the event of a flood.

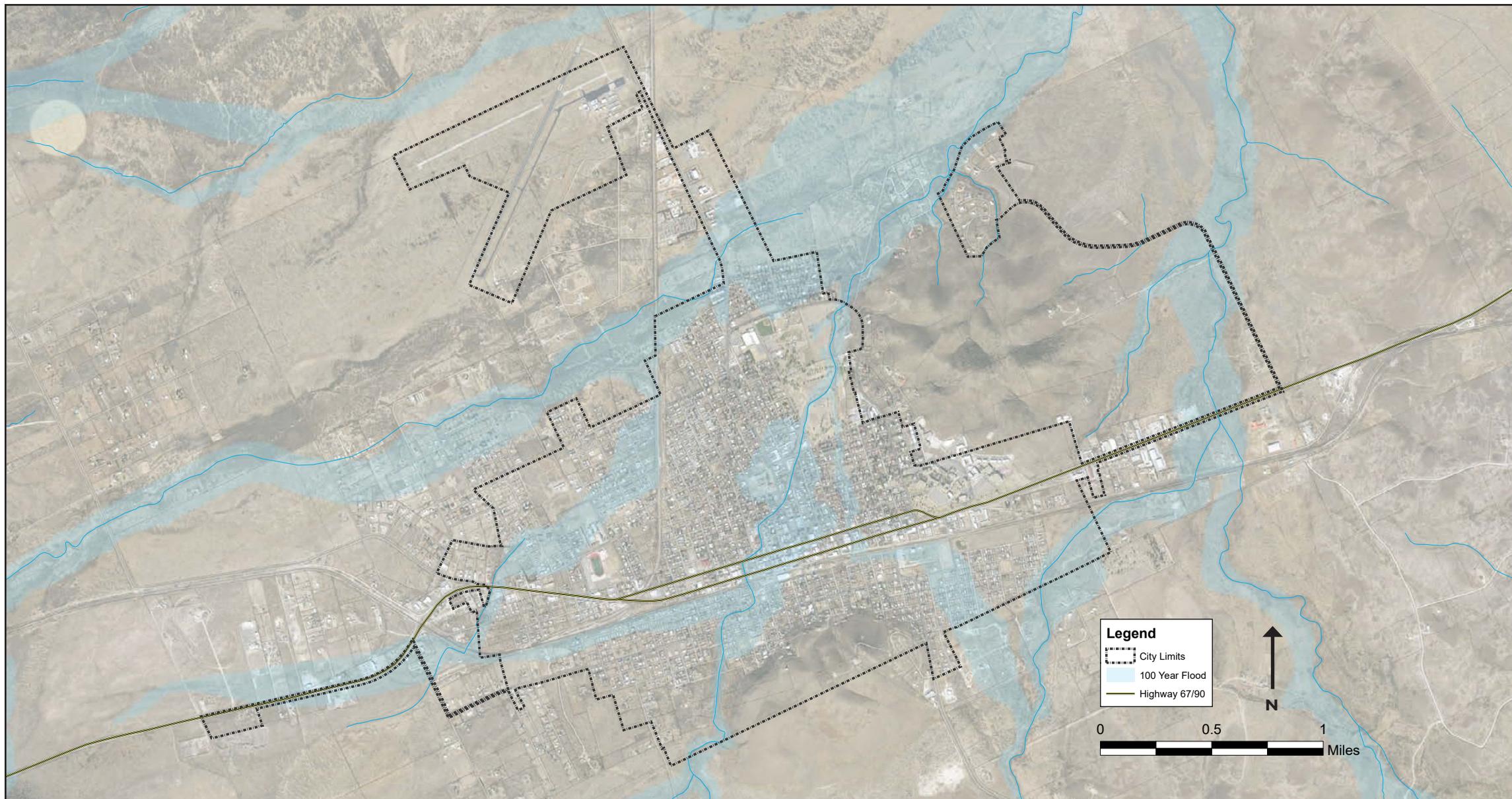


Figure 23: 100 Year Flood Zone - Alpine, TX

Source: ESRI, CURPR

# Road Traffic Circulation

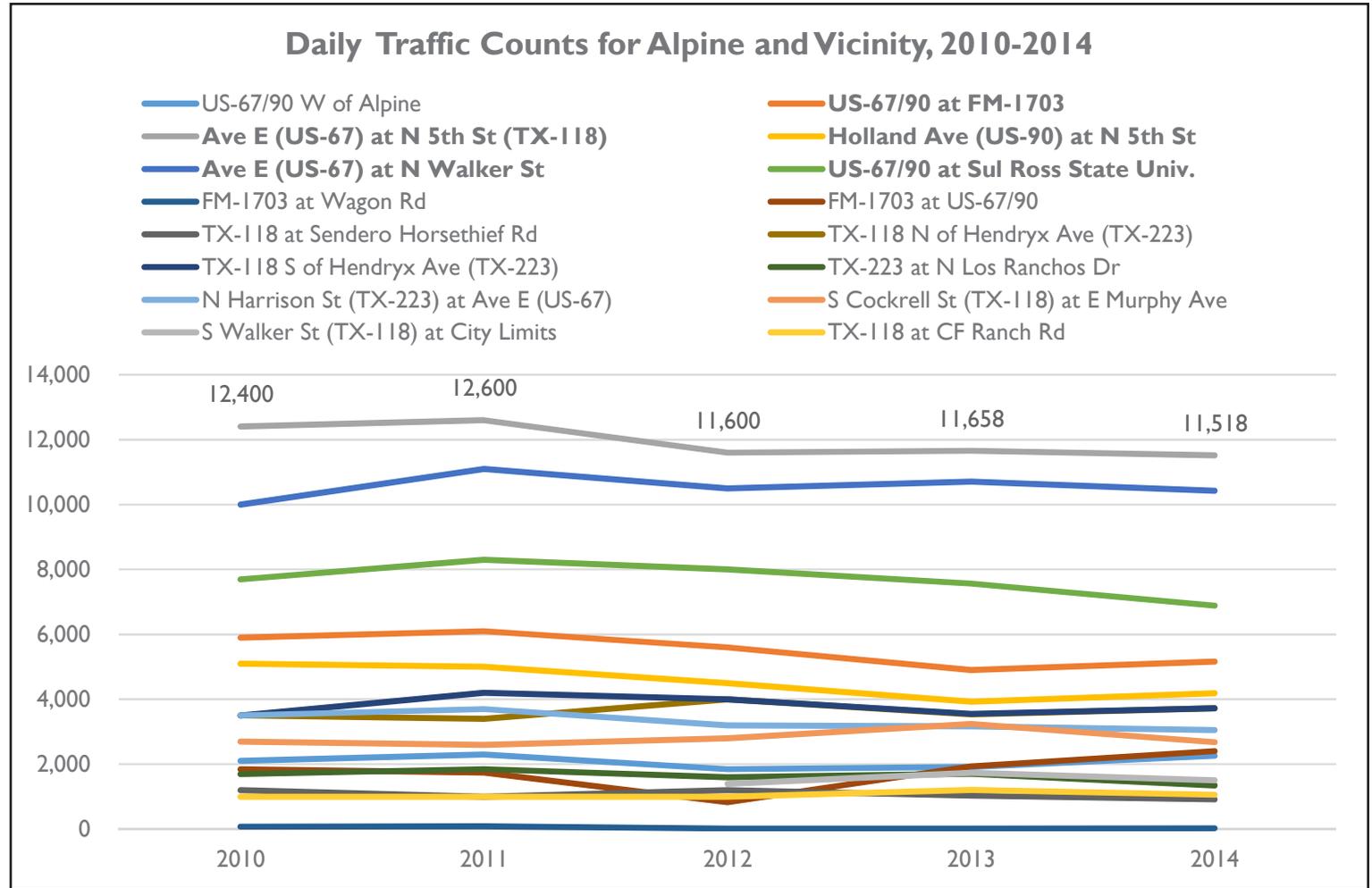
Alpine is located a considerable distance from major population centers and from interstate highways (I-10 is the closest interstate, 50 miles away) and its traffic counts reflect this. The busiest road is U.S. Highway 67/90 (the two highways converge about 10 miles east and 20 miles west of Alpine and within Alpine they run parallel along E Street (US-67) and Holland Avenue (US-90)).

Over the five-year period 2010-2014, the highest traffic counts in the area were along US Highways 67 and 90 (including the portions where they merge). The locations with the five highest traffic counts are bolded in the legend for Fig. 24.

**Table 6: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Counts in City of Alpine and Vicinity, 2010-2014**

Location	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
US-67/90 W of Alpine	2,100	2,300	1,850	1,920	2,259
US-67/90 at FM-1703	5,900	6,100	5,600	4,902	5,160
<b>Ave E (US-67) at N 5th St (TX-118)</b>	<b>12,400</b>	<b>12,600</b>	<b>11,600</b>	<b>11,658</b>	<b>11,518</b>
Holland Ave (US-90) at N 5th St	5,100	5,000	4,500	3,925	4,189
Ave E (US-67) at N Walker St	10,000	11,100	10,500	10,710	10,426
US-67/90 at Sul Ross State Univ.	7,700	8,300	8,000	7,563	6,888
FM-1703 at Wagon Rd	80	90	20	20	25
FM-1703 at US-67/90	1,850	1,750	830	1,934	2,406
TX-118 at Sendero Horsethief Rd	1,200	1,000	1,200	1,031	916
TX-118 N of Hendryx Ave (TX-223)	3,500	3,400	4,000	3,532	3,720
TX-118 S of Hendryx Ave (TX-223)	3,500	4,200	4,000	3,552	3,724
TX-223 at N Los Ranchos Dr	1,700	1,850	1,600	1,703	1,348
N Harrison St (TX-223) at Ave E (US-67)	3,500	3,700	3,200	3,165	3,052
S Cockrell St (TX-118) at E Murphy Ave	2,700	2,600	2,800	3,241	2,685
S Walker St (TX-118) at City Limits			1,400	1,739	1,511
TX-118 at CF Ranch Rd	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,212	1,062

Source: Texas Department of Transportation



**Figure 24: Daily Traffic Counts in Alpine and Vicinity, 2010-2014**

Source: Texas Department of Transportation

## Rail (Passenger & Freight) Traffic Circulation

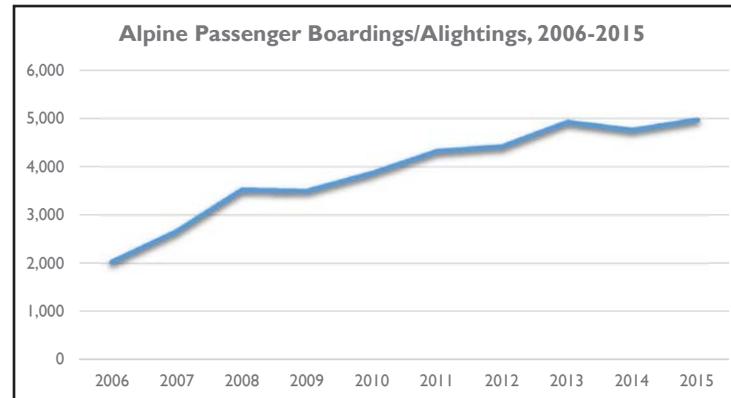
As befits its founding as a water station for steam-powered railroad transportation, Alpine remains an important node for railroad activity. This is, in part, due to the very sparsely settled nature of the Trans-Pecos and Big Bend regions. The history of the railroad in Alpine encompasses two distinct railway lines: a primarily north-south line which connects Alpine with Presidio to the south (at the border with Mexico) and San Angelo and Fort Worth to the north; and a primarily east-west line which connects Alpine to Marfa and El Paso to the west and Marathon and Del Rio and San Antonio to the east (and further on to New Orleans).

The east-west line (owned and operated by Union Pacific) is the more important by far. It was originally named the Galveston,

**Table 7: Amtrak Passenger Traffic (Boarding and Alighting) by Fiscal Year, 2006-2015**

FY	Alpine	Texas	% of TX	% Change
2006	2,027	268,452	0.76%	n/a
2007	2,659	262,081	1.01%	31.18%
2008	3,519	323,210	1.09%	32.34%
2009	3,497	329,704	1.06%	-0.63%
2010	3,862	382,754	1.01%	10.44%
2011	4,322	425,909	1.01%	11.91%
2012	4,416	465,300	0.95%	2.17%
2013	4,921	444,954	1.11%	11.44%
2014	4,756	416,397	1.14%	-3.35%
2015	4,969	380,564	1.31%	4.48%

Source: Amtrak



**Figure 25: Amtrak Passenger Boardings/Alightings in Alpine, 2006-2015**

Source: Amtrak

Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad and was built through Alpine in 1882. It became the Texas & New Orleans Railroad in 1927, the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1961 (though it had been affiliated with the Southern Pacific in one way or another since the beginning, it retained its separate identity until 1961), and the Union Pacific Railroad in 1996. This line handles 14 freight trains daily (98 trains weekly). In addition, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation—also known as Amtrak—took over passenger rail service from Southern Pacific along this line in 1971. The flagship route of Southern Pacific, the Sunset Limited, continues to run through Alpine three days a week eastbound and westbound between Los Angeles and New Orleans. In San Antonio there are connecting services to the Texas Eagle, which runs between San Antonio and Chicago. The north-south line (owned and operated by Texas Pacifico, a subsidiary of Grupo Mexico) was originally named the Colorado Valley Railroad and was built through Alpine in 1897. It became the Kansas City, Mexico & Orient (also known as the Orient of Texas) Railroad in 1905, the Atchison, Topeka &

Santa Fe (also known as the Panhandle & Santa Fe) Railroad in 1928, the South Orient Railroad in 1992, and the Texas Pacifico Railroad in 2001. This line currently handles freight only, with two trains daily through Alpine (14 trains weekly). The old depot still stands near West Del Rio Avenue between North 11th and North 13th Streets, but is closed and in bad repair. From Alpine west to the Brewster County line, the Texas Pacifico shares the right-of-way with Union Pacific.

Although Amtrak ridership for the state has, as a whole, has fluctuated up and down, ridership in Alpine (as determined by those boarding and or alighting a train at the Alpine passenger depot) has displayed a pattern of steady increase. In 2006-2008, prior to the economic downturn, there was a greater rate of increase. The increase since 2008 has been much more gradual, but has almost reached the 5,000 passengers per year threshold (or roughly 16 passengers boarding or alighting per unique train). Some of these passengers may be taking time to visit the Big Bend area to the south, while others disembark to visit Alpine itself.



**Figure 26: Amtrak Rail Passenger Station**

Source: CURPR

# Vehicular Circulation in the Downtown District

The bulk of traffic flowing through Alpine occurs along U.S. Highway 90/67, and where the highway splits through downtown, along Holland Avenue and Avenue East. The two

highest daily traffic counts, as of 2014, can be found along Avenue East: first at North 5th Street, with an Average Annual Daily Traffic count of 11,518, and then at Walker Street, with an AADT of 10,426. In contrast, the one count available on Holland Avenue, found at Holland and 5th, has an AADT of only 4,189. It's clear that much more traffic is heading west on Avenue E than is heading east on Holland Avenue, and

this pattern surely favors businesses on Avenue E while many businesses on Holland Avenue are receiving less traffic. The City should work with TXDOT and their traffic engineers to explore options that will enhance rather than hinder the economic potential in this part of the downtown district.

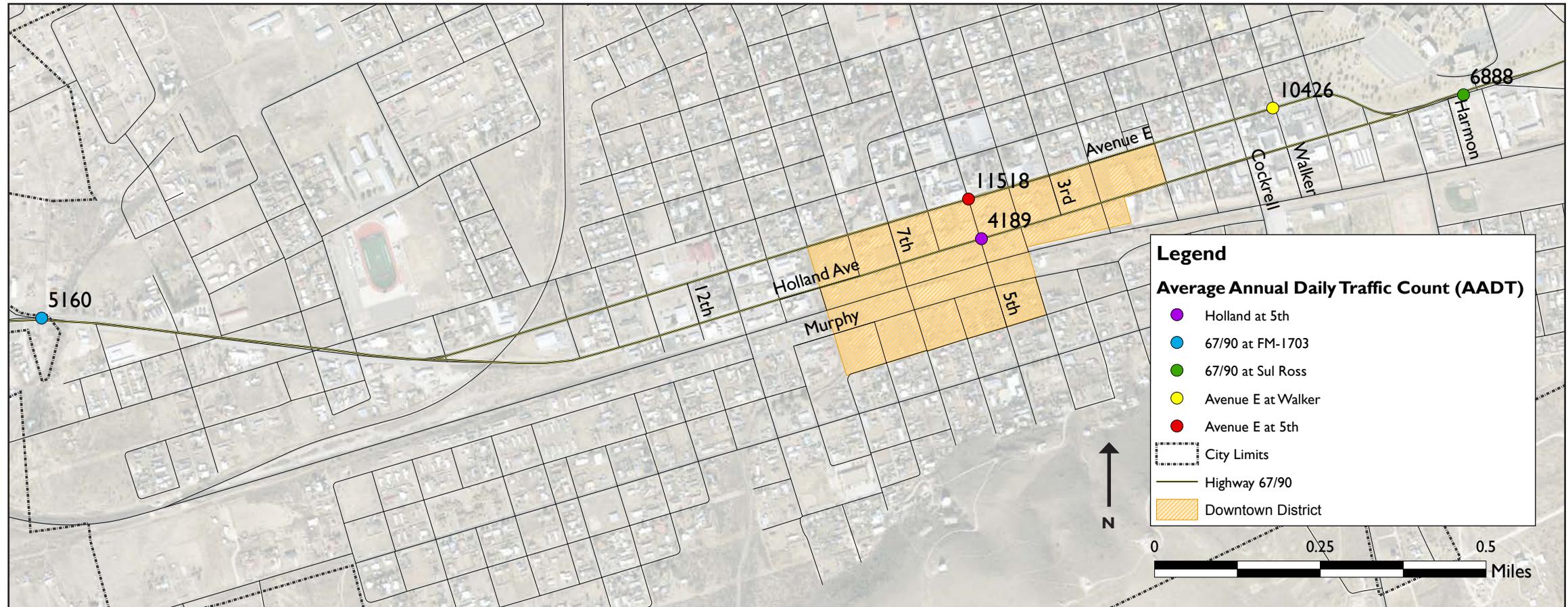


Figure 27: Traffic Counts on Avenue E and Holland Avenue

Source: TXDOT

# SWOT Analysis

All communities have strengths. They also have weaknesses, opportunities and threats they have to confront. A community that is aware of its strengths can take steps to better utilize these kinds of assets in building up the local economy and developing a better environment for their residents. Equally important for a community is an understanding of its weaknesses, and what it would take to address those weaknesses. For example, if a community is losing its businesses or jobs it can begin to target its resources to address the reasons why it is losing these businesses or jobs. Likewise it is also important to know what kinds of opportunities are out there so that the community can take advantage of them to grow and prosper. Finally, learning the kinds of threats it is dealing with will force the community to take steps to mitigate them. Knowing these key elements is vital to a community's overall success. An important step in defining these elements is what we call a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat Analysis, or SWOT Analysis.

In April 2016 a SWOT Analysis meeting was conducted in Alpine. The purpose of that meeting was to allow community stakeholders in Alpine to come together to share their views on the community's current strengths and weaknesses, along with its opportunities and threats. The stakeholders addressed the SWOT categories in two steps. The first step was to list Alpine's strengths and weaknesses. The second step focused on its opportunities and threats. Both sessions were moderated by research staff from UTSA's Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research (CURPR). These moderators also reiterated

the examples given in each category for their accuracy before they were recorded.

Listed below are some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing Alpine. A complete listing of all of those recorded is included in the Appendices of this report.

## Strengths

Stakeholders presented and discussed a number of strengths that Alpine has as it seeks to build its economy, revitalize its Downtown District, and create a better quality of life for its residents. These strengths included the presence of Sul Ross University; its strong tourist economy; its location on a key Amtrak line; and, its location relative to Big Bend National Park. These and other strengths are important because they either serve as a key building block for the local economy or expand its



Figure 28: SWOT Session

Source: CURPR



Figure 29: SWOT Session

Source: CURPR

potential market base. Also important is its location in a region that is not only attractive, but includes other communities like Marfa and Fort Davis. The task is to build on these strengths.

## Weaknesses

As said earlier, all communities have weaknesses. For Alpine these include the lack of retail shopping; the deterioration of buildings, especially in the Downtown District; the lack of a skilled workforce; high housing costs; poor coordination between the City of Alpine and Brewster County; and, the lack of health care facilities, especially with regard to pediatric and geriatric care. These and other weaknesses need to be addressed if Alpine is to improve its community and build a stronger economy. The key here, of course, is leadership. Strong communities focus not only in their strengths but their



Figure 30: SWOT Session

Source: CURPR

weaknesses, as well. If Alpine is to succeed it will have to deal with these elements in a comprehensive way.

## Opportunities

If a community is to move forward it also has to take full advantage of its opportunities. Recognizing opportunities is only the first step. Taking advantage of them is much more difficult. Stakeholders in the SWOT session presented a number of opportunities that Alpine could take advantage of. These included the presence of the Small Business Development Center in the community; Alpine Creek and its potential for development; the presence of several empty buildings and land parcels in the Downtown District that could be used for infill development; the potential for increasing the number of lodging options to take advantage of its growing tourism industry; the prospects of using Alpine's brand as a means for marketing

it; and, the renovation and revitalization of its Downtown District as a means to bolster its local economy. These and other opportunities recognized by the stakeholders hold the key to Alpine's long-term success. They also provide the means to think "outside the box" and to develop new strategies to strengthen the community's economy and enhance its quality of life.

## Threats

Threats are those conditions that constrain the potential of a community. They also provide an opportunity to transform it. By addressing its threats Alpine is forced to deal with its reality. Once they are recognized the community's leadership can take steps to eliminate them or at least mitigate their worst impact. Among the threats perceived by SWOT stakeholders was the loss of historical buildings in a community that is very conscious of its history; the lack of retail and other businesses in the community that forces local residents to shop elsewhere



Figure 31: SWOT Session

Source: CURPR

thus losing tax revenue; the large number of absentee business owners; the tendency to not plan ahead; the lack of water to support long-term growth; and, community apathy to name only a few. These threats pose real problems for local residents and businesses in the community. If not addressed they could continue to hold back Alpine and reduce its chances for success.

## Next Steps

Resilient and sustainable communities are able to capitalize on their unique assets, talents, resources and capabilities to spur positive changes and growth for the future. It is important for all community stakeholders that their views and concerns are being addressed by local leaders. It is only when the community and its leadership is able to work together toward a shared vision can their process succeed. In the sections that follow it is important to bear in mind that both the residents and the leadership of Alpine will drive the effort to revitalize and redevelop the community. As noted earlier, if Alpine is to move forward it will need to mobilize and effectively use all of its talents, resources and assets to achieve its goals. Alpine will also need to continue to build on its community driven process to make lasting changes that will most certainly impact its future.



Options for the Future

## Introduction

This section describes a number of possible options the City of Alpine may want to consider as it moves forward with the development of its Downtown District and its surrounding area. The intent here is to suggest ways that Alpine could capitalize on its assets and take advantage of its unique historical and cultural legacy. The next section will then focus more on developing a more comprehensive strategy for the community.

## Increase Tourism in Alpine

Alpine is a major tourism attraction in the Trans-Pecos region. It is the largest city in the region south of Fort Stockton and is a stopping point for visitors to Big Bend National Park, which received over 380,000 visitors in 2015. Proximity to Fort Davis, Marfa, the McDonald Observatory, and Balmorhea State Park allows Alpine to be an important stop for tourists in the region. In its own right, Alpine has many attractions for visitors within the city itself and immediate surrounding area. The Museum of the Big Bend, the city's growing art and cuisine scene, and events held throughout the year bring much attention to the City.

The City of Alpine should work to ensure that the full tourism potential of the city is realized. Though Alpine has done a good job of encouraging tourism to the city, improvements can be made in a number of areas including preserving historic buildings and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings. Additional convenient parking is also needed, along with improvements to public sidewalks and places for pedestrians.

### Lodging in the Downtown District

Alpine suffers from a lack of affordable hotel space in the downtown district. In 2015, Alpine had 598 hotel rooms serving the city. This figure includes hotels, motels, and bed-and-breakfasts in and around the city. This is an adequate number for a city the size of Alpine, but these rooms often fill up during Alpine's many events, and most are not located in the city center. Of these 598 rooms, only approximately 30 are within downtown itself, and the vast majority of these are found within the Holland Hotel.

The Holland Hotel serves visitors looking to spend in the mid-to-upper range of prices on hotel rooms, and every other option near downtown is a bed-and-breakfast style location that serves a similar demographic. The nearest budget hotel/motel is the small Bien Venido Motel, about half a mile east of downtown. Excluding the Bien Venido, all other budget options in Alpine fall further east or west on Highway 90, not within walking distance of downtown, especially during the hot summer months. There are only approximately 50 rooms for rent within reasonable walking distance of downtown, and 39 of those can be found at the Bien Venido.



Figure 32: Proposed site for New Lodging in the Downtown District

Source: CURPR

All told, less than 1/6th of the hotel rooms servicing the city can be found in or within walking distance of the Downtown District. The establishment of an affordable hotel/motel near Alpine's downtown could also attract more visitors. This could be facilitated by building a hotel in the downtown area. One location for a potential hotel could be the site of the TransPecos Drive-Thru Bank, a small building on an otherwise unused lot at the intersection of West Holland Avenue and North 8th Street. This an area of largely open land in Alpine's downtown, and if the historic Storey Whiteside Lumber Company building, found just east of this lot, could also be acquired the area would be ideal for a larger hotel. A restoration of the Whiteside building

could make for a great hotel space, as well. These lots are within Alpine's 100-year floodplain, so developers would need to take that into account, however.

There are other locations that could be considered. Downtown Alpine doesn't have much vacant space, but the buildings of some recently closed businesses could be turned into small hotels. There's a lot of land available just across the railroad tracks, along Murphy Avenue, and a location on this street would increase commercial activity in this part of downtown. The historic Hotel Ritchey should also be restored as a lodging option, if this process is not already underway. A feasibility

study should be undertaken to determine which locations are most suitable for a hotel development, but it seems Alpine has several possibilities.

## Establish an Arts Center

Alpine should work to further the strides it has already made in establishing the city as an arts and culture hub for the region. One potential move the City could make would be to build an arts center. The development of an arts center near downtown would encourage artists to come to Alpine. It could also serve as a cultural anchor for the area. It would play a part in Alpine's art-related festivals, like Artwalk. Artwalk and other art events should be expanded where possible, and a comprehensive marketing strategy should be employed to bring visitors from all over the region. The arts center could work with the special events center, proposed elsewhere in this report, in order to host large-scale cultural events, or the two could occupy the same facility. A combination arts/special events center could regularly provide studio and gallery space for artists, and host events in the same space when they occur.

Alpine should also focus on becoming a destination for music events. A musical culture coexists well with the existing culture of Alpine, an artistic college city, as it appeals to the demographics and the atmosphere to be found within the city. College students and artists, both of which are significant parts of Alpine's population, are often interested in supporting live music. Alpine has already established a few annual musical events, like Viva Big Bend. The City should continue to expand on attracting events that appeal to the student population in Alpine.



Figure 33: Hotel Ritchey Building

Source: CURPR

## Improve Historic Buildings in Alpine's Downtown District

Historic buildings can be important assets to cities. The history of a city, manifested physically in well-preserved buildings, can positively influence the economy, culture, and community of that city. In both the stories they tell and in their general aesthetic benefits, historic buildings make cities stand out to visitors and potential residents, while also connecting them to an overarching regional historic community. Cities should be encouraged to restore and maintain historic buildings at all opportunities.

Cities can utilize their history for economic gain – especially small cities that are or have the potential to be popular tourist destinations. Historic tourism is an important economic activity in Texas, and the presence of historic buildings draws in visitors from across the region, state, and country. These tourists are drawn by the history of a city and bring money into not only the history industry but also to other businesses in that town. Hotels, restaurants, transportation, and recreational businesses are among the many industries that see increased patronage from historic tourism. If the city's historic buildings are grouped together in what may be seen as a historic district, the tourism draw of the city is even better. A centralized historic district encourages a vibrant downtown and further helps the economy of that area. The drawing power of historic buildings works on a small scale as well – residents of the city and the area around it are drawn into the city center and patronize nearby businesses and services that might not have received

these customers if not for the attraction of the historic buildings. Individual businesses, too, benefit from being located within these historic buildings, as they often are successful in grabbing the attention of potential customers.

Historic buildings also reinforce and often help define the culture and community of a city and region. A distinctive historic architectural style provides a character and personality to the city that is hard to find in recently built towns. This personality makes the city stand out among both residents and visitors and provides a unifying theme or aesthetic for the city to develop on. Residents of the city may also feel a sense of community pride from being a part of a historic, distinct community.

Alpine's history is very apparent through its buildings. In particular, the downtown area stretching from Murphy Street north past the train tracks to Holland Avenue and Avenue East is filled with often well-preserved historic buildings. The majority of these buildings were constructed in the early 20th century, with some built in the 1870s and 80s.

Along Murphy Street, the Murphy Street Raspa Company store, built in 1898, is a notable landmark, as is the Ritchey Hotel building. The Ritchey Hotel is particularly interesting as an example of adobe-construction that was later enhanced by the addition of wooden framing on the exterior. Smaller adobe houses can be found in this area as well.

On Holland Avenue is where a large amount of the historic buildings can be found. The Holland Hotel is arguably the most important historic landmark in Alpine. Rebuilt in 1928 after

a fire destroyed the original, the hotel's aesthetics and well-preserved exterior help to dictate the overall architectural style of downtown Alpine. Further east are several small storefronts that display the architectural style of many Texas towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Influenced by Art Deco, Beaux Arts, and Victorian styles, these subdued constructions showcase the style and means of Texas small towns during this time period.

On Avenue East, the defining landmark is the historic courthouse, built in 1887. This building complex contains the oldest buildings to be found downtown and also includes a history museum within the courthouse itself.

Alpine's historic buildings are largely well-preserved, which can be seen in the already active tourism Alpine receives due to these buildings. However, the City should look to further restore and maintain historic buildings in need of it so as to capitalize completely on the benefits provided by historic buildings. Along Holland Avenue, several storefronts are in need of maintenance, having deteriorated somewhat over the years. Other buildings, like the law offices on the north side of Holland Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets, have clearly been modernized to the detriment of the building and to neighboring aesthetic unity. Situated next to the well-preserved Saddle Club Saloon and Granada Theater, the law office building is in need of the restoration of its façade and the removal of the unnecessary modernization that has occurred. It is common for many buildings in historic cities to have undergone modernization years ago, and it is generally an easy fix to restore the historic qualities of the building. Alpine should look to do that whenever possible.

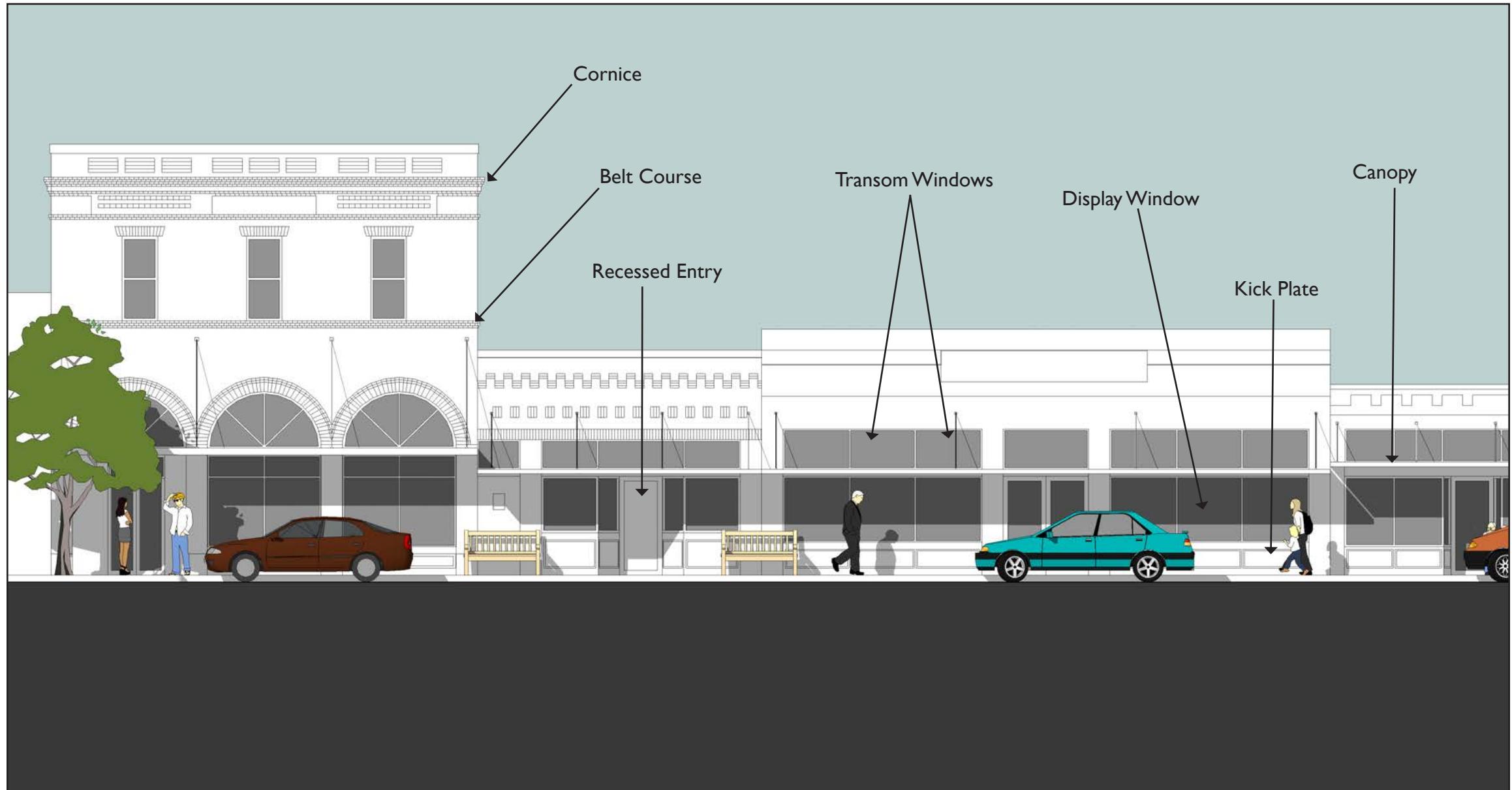


Figure 34: Drawing showing some of the significant features of commercial buildings from the late 1800s to early 1900s

Source: CURPR

## Encourage the Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings

Although Alpine's downtown area has made good use of many of its spaces and resources, there are still some areas that can be improved upon in order to maximize the areas full potential. One of these improvements would be the complete utilization of buildings along Holland Avenue and Avenue East. Many of these historic buildings are in use but are being underutilized. Many spaces in these buildings, particularly the second stories in many of them, are left vacant or are used for storage when these spaces have much more potential if used differently.

The primary use of historic buildings in the downtown area should be for retail or office space, with residences on upper floors where possible. Attention should be paid especially to the aesthetic quality of these historic buildings, and visual restorations may be necessary. Their history and appearance makes them very appealing for businesses and offices. The facades of these buildings in particular should be restored to their historic look. Metal canopies or cloth awnings hanging over the sidewalk should be added back to the buildings that have removed them over the years, and details like cornices, kick plates, and transom windows should be restored where applicable. In many cases, these features have not been removed, merely covered, so the removal of these coverings would be an easy way to restore these historic buildings. Modernization has decreased the aesthetic and historic value of these buildings and the restoration of these facades would increase their value. In addition, the buildings that are two-story should be

considered for conversion into live/work buildings, if possible. Most of these two-story buildings can be found between 4th and 6th Streets. The ground floor could house shops, offices, and restaurants, while the second floor could contain a residential unit. This was the original use of these two-story buildings, and though the usage changed with modernization, buildings like this in many towns are reverting back to their original use. Alpine should do this as well.

Live/work spaces attract unique businesses that tend to be a part of the city's character and encourages the owners to be part of the community. Another option for these two-story houses is the development of separate living and commercial spaces, similar to the live/work arrangement, but the upper floor is open for anyone to live in. This would provide additional apartment space in high-quality buildings downtown, which would help with Alpine's lack of apartment space in this area.



Figure 35: Rangra Theater

Source: CURPR



Figure 36: Proposed Improvements to the Rangra Theater Block

Source: CURPR



Figure 37: Existing Conditions of Rangra Theater Block on Holland Avenue



Figure 38: Proposed Improvements to the Rangra Theater Block on Holland Avenue



Source: CURPR



Source: CURPR

## Develop a Special Events Center for the Downtown District

There are a variety of buildings that can be constructed to provide event and meeting space for the city. A conference center is one such facility which hosts various public and private conferences. It can include main conference rooms which connect to smaller conference room space. Conference centers tend to be small and largely serve businesses and handle work-related events. An event center is a facility which hosts various public and private events. Event centers can be located in settings such as hotels, conference and convention centers. An event center usually holds events such as concerts, sporting events, and banquets. They tend to be versatile and capable of handling events of all types. Similarly, a convention center is a facility which hosts various public and private conventions along with meetings. These are often standalone venues, and tend to be very large, often containing an auditorium and large banquet hall. Convention centers serve areas of high populations. Exhibition halls are typically found within the three previously mentioned centers, and are often the main location for events being held there. The architectural design of conference, event, and convention centers ranges from historic, rustic to contemporary and eco-friendly designs.

Alpine would benefit significantly from the construction of a special events center in its downtown district. Currently, the only conference center in the city is the University Center Espino Conference Center at Sul Ross State University, with

a capacity of 280 people. There are several drawbacks to this center that prevent it from completely serving the population of the city and the region. For one, it is owned by the university, not the city or county, which limits the types of events which can be held there. Secondly, the university is located near the city limits, far enough from downtown so as to prevent the center from reaching the most population and from being an integrated part of activities and events held downtown. Finally, its function as a conference center limits its ability to hold events like concerts or parties. The vast majority of the events held at the Espino Conference Center are either within the university itself, or related to education or academia. The proposed Alpine Special Events Center would not conflict with the hosting of most of these events, and would create an option for events that would work best located near the city center and events that are more recreational in nature. For many events currently held at the Espino Conference Center, the proposed Alpine Special Events Center could serve as an additional venue, allowing for growth of these events without moving them away from the Espino Center.

Many similarly-sized cities to Alpine already have convention/ events centers, and Alpine's status as the county seat and only incorporated city in the whole county make an event center even more necessary in the city. In fact, the only existing large-scale event or conference center in Brewster, Presidio, Jeff Davis, or Pecos counties is the Sul Ross State University conference center mentioned earlier. The development of an event center in Alpine would solidify the city's position in the four-county, 17,000-square-mile region.

In Table 8, Alpine is compared to similar-sized Texas cities with an event, conference, or convention center. The table compares the city's population as well as the approximate square footage of each event center. Among those cities in Texas most similar to Alpine, the square footage of the centers range from 4,000 to 27,000. The proposed 14,000 square foot event center in Alpine fits well within that range, and that figure is not accounting for the proposed plaza space on the property. It also compares the proposed center to the square footage

**Table 8: Comparable Event and Conference Center by City**

City	Name	Population	Square Footage
Luling	Zedler Guest House and Event Center	5411	9000
Alpine	Alpine Special Events Center	5905	14000
Alpine	Sul Ross State Espino Conference Center	5905	4400
Decatur	Decatur Civic Center	6042	27000
Marble Falls	Riverbend Conference Center	6077	4000
Floresville	Floresville Community Convention Center	6448	17500
Cleburne	Cleburne Conference Center	29337	17856
New Braunfels	New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center	57740	50000

Source: CURPR



Figure 39: Proposed Event Center - Pavillion

Source: CURPR

available at the Sul Ross State Espino Conference Center, and it's clear that the proposed center would fill the needs of the city for a larger, more versatile events center.

The proposed event center would be developed at the current location of the vacant Alpine Lumber Company building. The large, historic space would be suitable for events with high attendance, and the aesthetic qualities of the building make it attractive and memorable. The building's location on Holland

Avenue/Highway 90 is advantageous to its influence on Alpine's Downtown District. Several theaters, shops, restaurants, and venues are in this part of town, and the event center would bring additional business to these enterprises and be part of a coordinated downtown culture. Along with the indoor space, the center would also contain an adjacent patio area and surrounding plaza space. The idea is to make this center a landmark in downtown Alpine, helping to make it stand out and serve as an attraction for visitors.

Alpine is especially well-known for the large number of events and festivals held in the city. Multiple music festivals, automobile shows, rodeos, art festivals, poetry readings and theater performances occur throughout the year, drawing in visitors from across the region and all of Texas. An event center could be an integral part or the focal point of many of these festivals/events. The central location and plaza space provided by the proposed event center would also be useful for outdoor, downtown-focused events.



Figure 40: Proposed Event Center along Holland Avenue

Source: CURPR



Figure 41: Birds Eye View of Proposed Event Center and Surrounding Area

Source: CURPR

## Farmer's Market at the Event Center

Alpine currently has two weekly farmer's markets, operating less than half a mile from each other. One begins at 9 a.m. Saturday at the corner of 5th Street and Murphy Avenue, in the Hotel Ritchey courtyard. The other begins at 10 a.m. Saturday at the corner of 5th Street and Avenue A, at the Big Bend Thrift Store.

The existence of two competing farmer's markets, occurring at virtually the same time, is lost potential for Alpine. The markets draw customers away from each other while being close enough so that they don't really serve different parts of the city. If the two markets were to merge in a central location, vendors would benefit from having more of an audience for their wares, and customers would benefit from having more of a selection to choose from.

It's recommended that the new, combined farmer's market take place in the plaza of the proposed Special Events Center on Holland Avenue (See Figure 42). This area is centrally located, with plenty of room, existing parking and is easily accessible. The farmers market should partner with the local food trucks to offer breakfast and lunch options using the produce offered from the market. The market could also look to expand beyond produce, to become a general community market. This would benefit small businesses in Alpine and draw in people from around the region.



Figure 42: Proposed Farmers Market Location

Source: CURPR

# Proposed Plaza Improvement

On the northeast corner of Holland Avenue and 5th Street, there is a lot that is currently being underutilized in a prime Downtown Alpine location. The lot currently serves as the parking lot for the Kiowa Gallery. Alpine would be better served if the City could work with the landowner to make better use of this valuable land.

One option would be the establishment of a food truck park on the property. This would allow for the lot to generate revenue and attract businesses to Downtown for most of the year, while being easily turned back into parking space during busy events. The lot could also be turned into a full-time, paid public parking lot. It would provide parking for more than just the adjacent gallery and generate revenue for the city and owner.

The creation of a public plaza there would also benefit the City. An open, well-designed plaza would build on the public presence of a mural already in place there, and the proposed shaded seating area would make it a desirable destination for pedestrians Downtown. A public space could also be useful in coordination with the nearby Special Events Center, and could host outdoor events like street theater. It could also serve as an interim location for the farmer's market, until it can be relocated at the proposed Events Center.



Figure 43: Proposed Improvements to Existing Plaza

Source: CURPR



Figure 44: Plaza Used for Parking When Needed

Source: CURPR

## Explore Infill Opportunities

Alpine should use as much of its vacant land as possible to maximize its economic and cultural potential, especially near downtown. Although downtown Alpine has relatively few vacant lots compared to similar cities, the city should always be looking to improve as much as it can. A higher density of businesses, recreational activities, and residences within downtown Alpine will help the city grow.

Many of the vacant parcels in the downtown district are currently used as parking lots. Although these spaces are underutilized during the majority of the year, the availability of these parking areas during annual events are crucial for their success. In order to increase the use of these lots but also retain the area for parking when needed, the city should encourage temporary establishments in these areas such as a food truck park or farmers market. Figure 45 illustrates a cluster of food trucks in the vacant parcel next to the existing Plaine Coffee Shop and the Cow Dog food truck.

The development of retail buildings near Holland Avenue and Avenue East would be beneficial to Alpine, especially as there are several industries that are underrepresented in Alpine. Small, unique businesses filling in the vacant gaps downtown could be successful in sectors that have a demand in Alpine that are not currently being met. Clothing stores – in particular, shoe stores, of which there are none in Alpine – would likely be successful, as would stores specializing in health and personal care. Specialty food retailers would also likely succeed and give character to the local economy. These are just suggestions.

There are also many other types of businesses that could locate in these areas.

The development of these business should reflect the character and community of Alpine and the downtown area in particular. Close attention should be paid to the architecture of these new buildings to see that they fit the style of the existing buildings that define Alpine's architectural heritage. Many of

these buildings could also be modeled on the existing two-story work/live buildings found downtown.

New storefronts in Alpine can serve to develop the pedestrian culture of downtown Alpine, as well as maintain Alpine's status as a regional destination in the Trans-Pecos region. They will also provide new economic opportunities for the city while contributing to its overall quality of life



Figure 45: Proposed Food Truck Park

Source: CURPR



Figure 46: Proposed Infill Building at Holland Avenue and 3rd Street

Source: CURPR

## Enhance Sidewalks and Street Crossings for Pedestrians

Downtown Alpine would benefit by becoming more pedestrian-friendly. This part of the city contains many shops, bars, restaurants, and other business that benefit from heavy foot-traffic on adjacent sidewalks. Alpine's status as a regional tourist destination is another reason the city needs to be pedestrian-friendly. An overall pleasant downtown experience increases the number of visitors the city receives.

Alpine's sidewalk system is inconsistent. The two main streets – Holland Avenue and Avenue East – have established sidewalks that are wide, developed, and well-furnished. Curb bump outs at each corner allow for more room and safety for pedestrians, and the overall streetscape is mostly pleasant and effective. However, outside of these two streets, the sidewalks in Alpine are unreliably developed. In some areas, the sidewalk system is as good as found along the main streets. In other areas there are poorly maintained, poorly designed, or entirely nonexistent sidewalk networks. Even along the cross streets that connect Holland and East, the sidewalk quality varies greatly. Fifth Street's sidewalks, for example, are of a similar quality to the sidewalks on the main streets, while three blocks to the west, 8th Street has a noticeable lack of sidewalks. The residential area across the railroad tracks from downtown is lacking sidewalks on most streets.

Alpine should first focus on ensuring the coverage and quality of sidewalks on those streets connecting Holland Avenue and

Avenue East. This would create a consistent and connected sidewalk system in the main business area, and encourage pedestrian activity on and between the two main streets. The streetscapes along the main streets are generally well-developed as well, and should be expanded to intersecting streets. The placement of trees, benches, streetlights, trashcans, and other sidewalk elements also contribute to a city's pleasing and connected character. The example set by the streetscapes on the main streets should be expanded to more of the streets in the downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods.

Streets just north of Holland and East should have well-developed sidewalks as well. This would connect these streets with the downtown commercial area more effectively, allowing for a unified commercial district which would benefit businesses in the area. Similarly, residential roads near downtown should also improve their sidewalks as well, in order to encourage pedestrian activity between residences and nearby businesses located there.



Figure 47: Existing Sidewalk Conditions

Source: CURPR

Crosswalks in Alpine are not especially safe or useful to pedestrians. Along Holland and East, there is not a single protected crosswalk. Pedestrians have to judge traffic and time their crossings accordingly. For pedestrians with limited

mobility, this is even more of a problem. Alpine needs to develop crosswalks along these main streets in order to secure a safe pedestrian atmosphere. The intersection of 5th Street and Holland Avenue, in particular, would be the first choice for

a protected crosswalk, as this is the heart of downtown, and already has a stoplight in place.



Figure 48: Proposed Streetscape Improvements

Source: CURPR

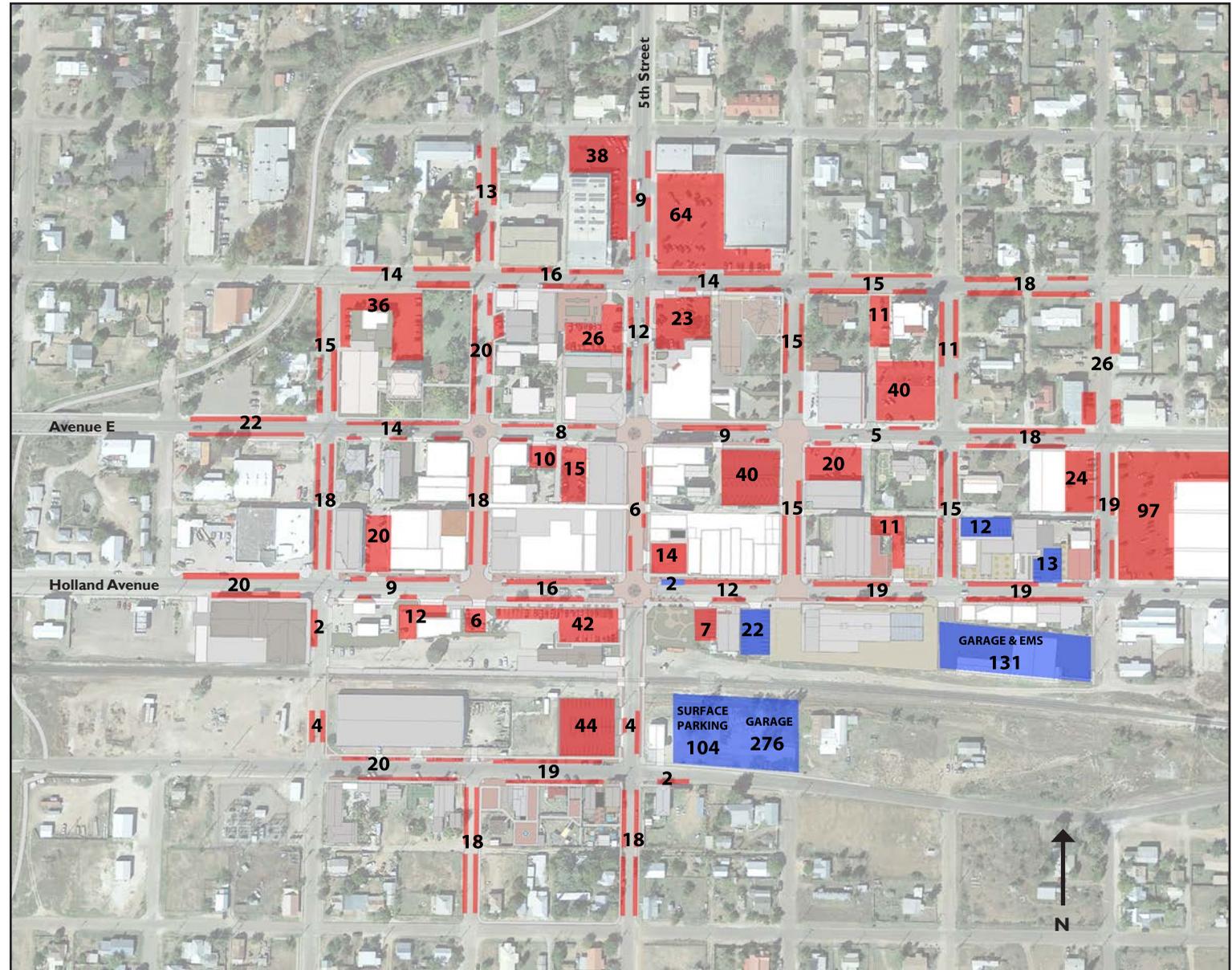
# Increase Parking Options

Alpine suffers from a lack of parking options in the Downtown District. Currently, there is parallel street parking along both Avenue East and Holland Avenue, which provides a decent amount of parking but is not fully adequate, especially when events are occurring downtown. There are also a few private parking lots, only serving the customers of the stores that own the lots. Downtown Alpine currently has approximately 1,147 spots available for public parking. With the addition of the proposed special events center, parking options will be needed downtown more than ever. Figure 49 illustrates the existing parking in red and the proposed parking in blue.

**Table 9: Existing and Proposed Parking in Alpine, TX**

Existing Parking	
Street	547
Parking Lots	600
<b>Total Existing</b>	<b>1,147</b>
Proposed Parking	
Parking Option I	131
Parking Option II	104
Parking Option III	276

Source: CURPR



**Figure 49: Existing and Proposed Parking**

Source: CURPR

## Parking Option I

One option for a proposed parking garage would be east of and adjacent to the proposed special events center on East Holland Avenue, on county-owned property found in the 300 block of East Holland Avenue. The garage would be

three stories tall, with the top two stories containing most of the parking spaces. The existing uses on the ground floor of the building could continue to operate as the base of the garage. Extra space on the ground floor could be additional parking. The top two floors alone would have approximately

132 parking spaces, which would be roughly equivalent to all possible street parking within two blocks in any direction from the event center.



Figure 50: Parking Option I

Source: CURPR

## Parking Option II

Another option for parking would be the development of a lot across the railroad tracks to the south of the proposed events center on the north side of East Murphy Avenue. This area could be used for surface parking. The advantage of this option

would be that the area is larger, with more room for ground-level parking, so a significant number of spaces could be added to the downtown area at a much lower cost than building a garage. An estimated 104 parking spots would result from this option. With this option, it would also be ideal to construct a

pedestrian viaduct running under the train tracks to connect the lot with downtown. This would provide safe passage for pedestrians moving to and from the Downtown District.



Figure 51: Parking Option II - Surface Parking at Murphy Avenue and 5th

### Parking Option III

The third option would include building a parking garage, similar to the one discussed earlier, at this site. The garage would be more expensive than the surface lot, but offer more spots. An estimated 276 parking spaces would be added near downtown with a garage in this location. A pedestrian bridge would need

to include handicap-accessible elevators on either side of the railroad, in order to allow passage for pedestrians circulating between their cars and downtown.

Additionally, another parking garage was considered on the southwest corner of North 4th Street and East Avenue East, on the site of an existing parking lot. However, that site was

determined to be too small for a garage. Regardless, Alpine should seriously consider one of the parking options proposed here and continue to look at other options as well. These parking structures would be necessary when events are held at the special events center and in other parts of its Downtown District.



Figure 52: Parking Option III - Parking Garage at Murphy Avenue and 5th

Source: CURPR

## Connect Murphy Avenue to the Downtown District

Alpine would benefit from improving the connection from Murphy Avenue to the downtown area along Holland Avenue and Avenue East. There are two roads that connect over the railroad tracks within this part of Downtown Alpine: 5th Street and 7th Street. Near Holland Avenue, 5th Street's streetscape is well-developed, featuring well-maintained sidewalks, lighting, benches and other decorative features. As the street moves south towards Murphy Avenue, however, it loses much of the quality and attractiveness found on the northern edge of the corridor. The sidewalk can now only be found on one side of the street, and it is more deteriorated than the sidewalk closer to Holland Avenue. Street lighting is sparser, and the aesthetic features of the streetscape are not to be found. Though there are two sets of well-developed sidewalks south of the railroad tracks along 7th Street, the sidewalk connection to Holland Avenue is missing, and decorative streetscape features are completely absent while street lighting needs improvement. Both streets' unprotected pedestrian crossings over the railroad tracks are a problem as well. The overall nature of 5th and 7th streets makes them unappealing to pedestrians and discourages pedestrian activity between the two sides of the downtown area separated by the railroad tracks.

Both of these two streets should have established sidewalks running on both sides from at least Murphy Avenue to Holland Avenue. In addition, street lighting should be improved. Trees, benches, and other street furniture should be introduced

along each street to make these connections more inviting to pedestrians and create a consistent atmosphere between Murphy Avenue and Avenue East.

The importance of connecting Murphy Avenue to the downtown area is that it would help establish Murphy Avenue as a complimentary cultural and commercial area serving Alpine south of the railroad tracks. Along the corridor of Murphy Avenue near 5th and 7th Streets, there is the Hotel Ritchey, Murphy Street Raspa, and several art galleries, studios, shops, and bed-and-breakfasts. Should the connection to downtown

area be improved, Murphy Avenue is sure to attract more unique businesses.

Murphy Avenue might also benefit from a focus on art and art-related businesses. Alpine and Marfa form the backbone of a flourishing arts culture in the Big Bend area, and the open areas and proximity to downtown provided by Murphy Avenue would make the area ideal for the development of additional art space. Galleries and studios already exist along Murphy Avenue, and the development of another connection to the downtown area would help to establish the neighborhood as an arts hub



Figure 53: Enhancements to the Streetscape from Holland Avenue south to Murphy Avenue

Source: CURPR

for Alpine. Because of the current physical disconnect between Murphy Avenue and Holland Avenue, these two areas of high

art concentration are in competition with each other. The unification of these two areas through an improved pedestrian

corridor would enable them to work together as a unified arts district.



Figure 54: Enhancements to the Streetscape from Holland Avenue south to Murphy Avenue

Source: CURPR

## Connect the Sul Ross Campus to the Downtown District

Residents of Alpine, particularly the students at Sul Ross State University, have expressed dissatisfaction at the small amount of weekend/nighttime activities to be found in the city. Alpine should focus on developing new recreational areas and businesses within the city, while expanding access to the existing recreational opportunities found in this community.

Sul Ross State has an enrollment of over 2,000 students, which is about one-third the entire population of Alpine. Nearly 1,000 of these students live on campus or in nearby student apartments. Student housing on and around Sul Ross State is approximately a mile and a half from Downtown Alpine. Alpine would certainly benefit by connecting the student population on and near campus to the Downtown District so that they could patronize the businesses there more easily.

There are multiple ways the City of Alpine and the University could do this. One option would be the development of a bike path from the campus to downtown. The distance between the two areas is just slightly too far to be easily walkable, especially in the summer or winter, but would be an easy bike ride. The proposed route would begin on North Harrison Street, providing access to the many students who live on the northern edge of the campus, extending south to East Sul Ross Avenue. The bike path would then run west until it reached 5th Street, continuing south passing through the heart of the city onto Murphy Avenue. The proposed bike path would

then continue west and end at Medina Park. Another possible option would be a small shuttle service running in a loop from the campus around downtown. This might prove to be too expensive, although it would also serve students who lack both cars and bikes. The shuttle could also be expanded to reach the hotels on the periphery of the city, allowing visitors easier access to downtown as well.

The cultural downtown area of Alpine seems to end on its eastern side around North 2nd Street. Businesses continue past this point, but they are not the same type of unique small businesses found in the historic buildings located in the downtown area. Some of these business types can be found in this part of town, like Harry's Tinaja, but they are surrounded by Sonic Drive-ins, McDonald's, and Porter's Thriftway. If Alpine could establish additional restaurants/bars in this area, it would bring the downtown area closer to Sul Ross State. This would also increase the connection between these two parts of town and encourage students to regularly visit downtown.

The City of Alpine should also look into developing weekly/monthly community events in order to provide additional recreational activities for residents. Most of these events should be geared towards college students, in a continued effort to better connect them to the overall community. There are many event possibilities, and the City should create events that fit the culture and community of Alpine. These events could include:

- Weekend bike rides or races. Coordinating group bike rides starting near the University and continuing

into downtown would provide a social activity for residents and bring more people to downtown. Races could be a competitive activity that would encourage both participants and spectators.

- Group hikes and other outdoor excursions. One of Alpine's assets is its surrounding natural beauty and landscape. Events that help residents experience that landscape would be beneficial to the city. Particularly, hikes up Hancock Hill would provide a low-impact activity easily available to Sul Ross students.
- Outdoor movie screenings. Weekly or monthly movie screenings, open to the public, would foster a sense of community and provide a night-time, outdoor recreational activity. The outdoor space at the proposed special events center could be used for this, as could the large open area at Veterans' Memorial Park, found next to the Brewster County Courthouse on Avenue East and North 6th Street.
- Live performances. The Theatre of the Big Bend is an established Alpine event, coordinated through Sul Ross State University. However, it occurs at the amphitheaters found in Kokernot Park, which is not accessible by all members of the community as it is a good distance from downtown. Establishing a secondary performance arts event through the Theatre of the Big Bend in the Downtown District would add to downtown, and serve as advertisement for the main event. These can be small performances

staged at outdoor plazas or parks, or as street theater occurring on the sidewalks of downtown.

- Game nights. A public game night, held in coordination with an Alpine restaurant or bar, could provide a fun night and an incentive to patronize that establishment and other ones nearby. Whether it's bingo or a

board game competition, or a darts tournament, the community and business benefit from this kind of event.

- Community markets. Perhaps as an addition or as a complementary event with the Farmer's Market, a monthly opportunity for vendors to set up shop on

a weekend in a public market place would provide an opportunity for the community to gather. It would also encourage small local businesses and attract visitors from the surrounding area.

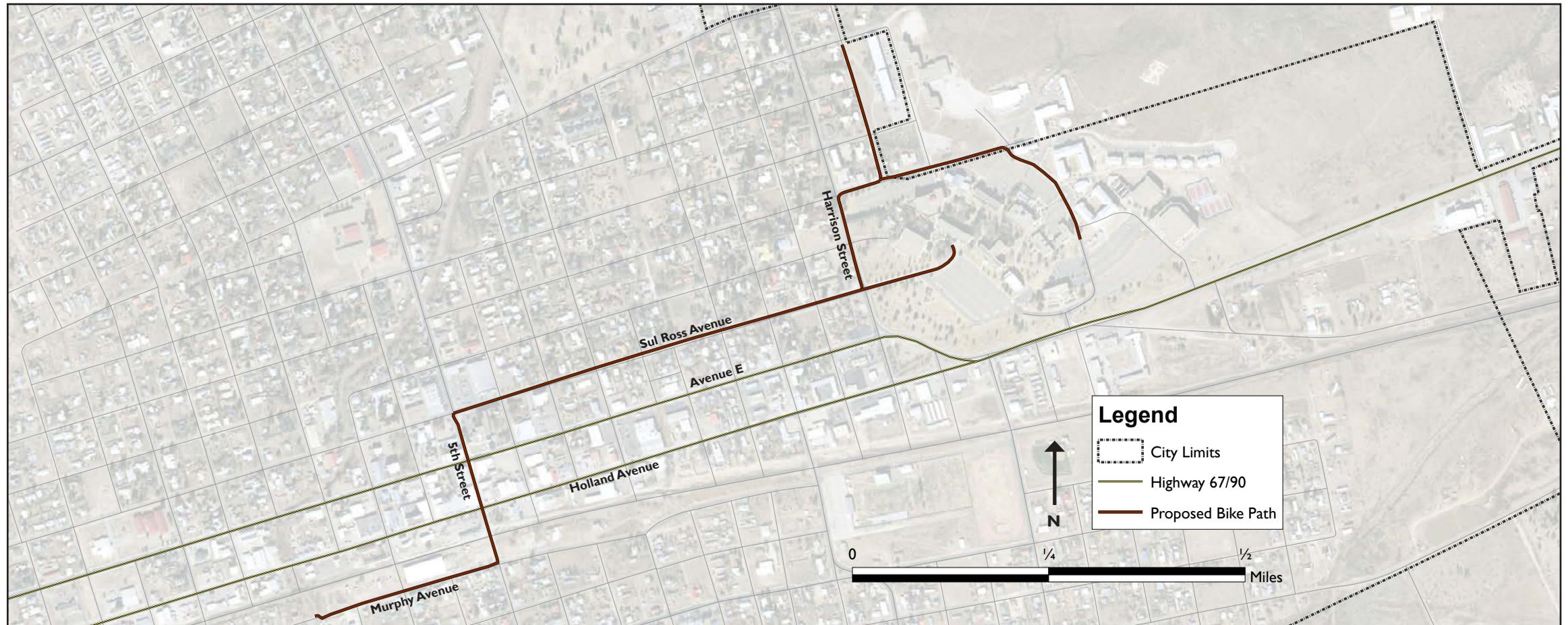


Figure 55: Proposed Bike Path

Source: CURPR

## Develop a Linear Park along Alpine Creek

Alpine Creek is mostly a dry creek bed that runs through the center of Alpine. It begins south of Alpine, running north across the railroad tracks and Holland Avenue, through the residential neighborhoods, past the Alpine Country Club, and north past the city. It is a geographical feature that provides open space within the center of the city that has largely gone unused. The creek bed and surrounding area are a flood plain, and, as such, are not areas suitable to the development of buildings or other structures. However, they are still dry most of the time, except for in times of heavy rain. Alpine would benefit from developing a linear park, complete with hike-and-bike trails, along the section of the creek that lies within city limits.

The park would encompass the area of the creek that begins adjacent to Medina Park, found south of the railroad tracks between 10th and 11th Streets, and ends at the Alpine Country Club, on the northern edge of the city near State Highway 223. The first phase of the linear park would include the stretch between Medina Park and Fighting Buck Avenue. The second phase would include the extension between Fighting Buck Avenue and State Highway 223 (See Figure 56). The entire linear park would be approximately 1.7 miles long including the existing Alpine Trail.

The development of this park would allow for a recreational corridor connecting Medina Park in the south to Kokernot Park and Alpine Country Club in the north. The land would

remain as an example of the natural landscape of Alpine even as the city grows. The inclusion of a hike-and-bike trail would allow for multiple types of recreational activity to occur in the corridor, and create a unified pedestrian passageway connecting the parks that serve as endpoints. More than that, the pedestrian corridor is also an uninterrupted connection between the northern, central, and southern parts of Alpine. The location of the park makes it easy for pedestrians in most

parts of the city to access other parts of the city without the worry of automobile traffic. This will help with the crosswalk problem mentioned earlier in this report.

The linear park's central location and unique attributes would make it an important addition to Alpine. The City would also benefit from this open natural space while enhancing its quality of life.

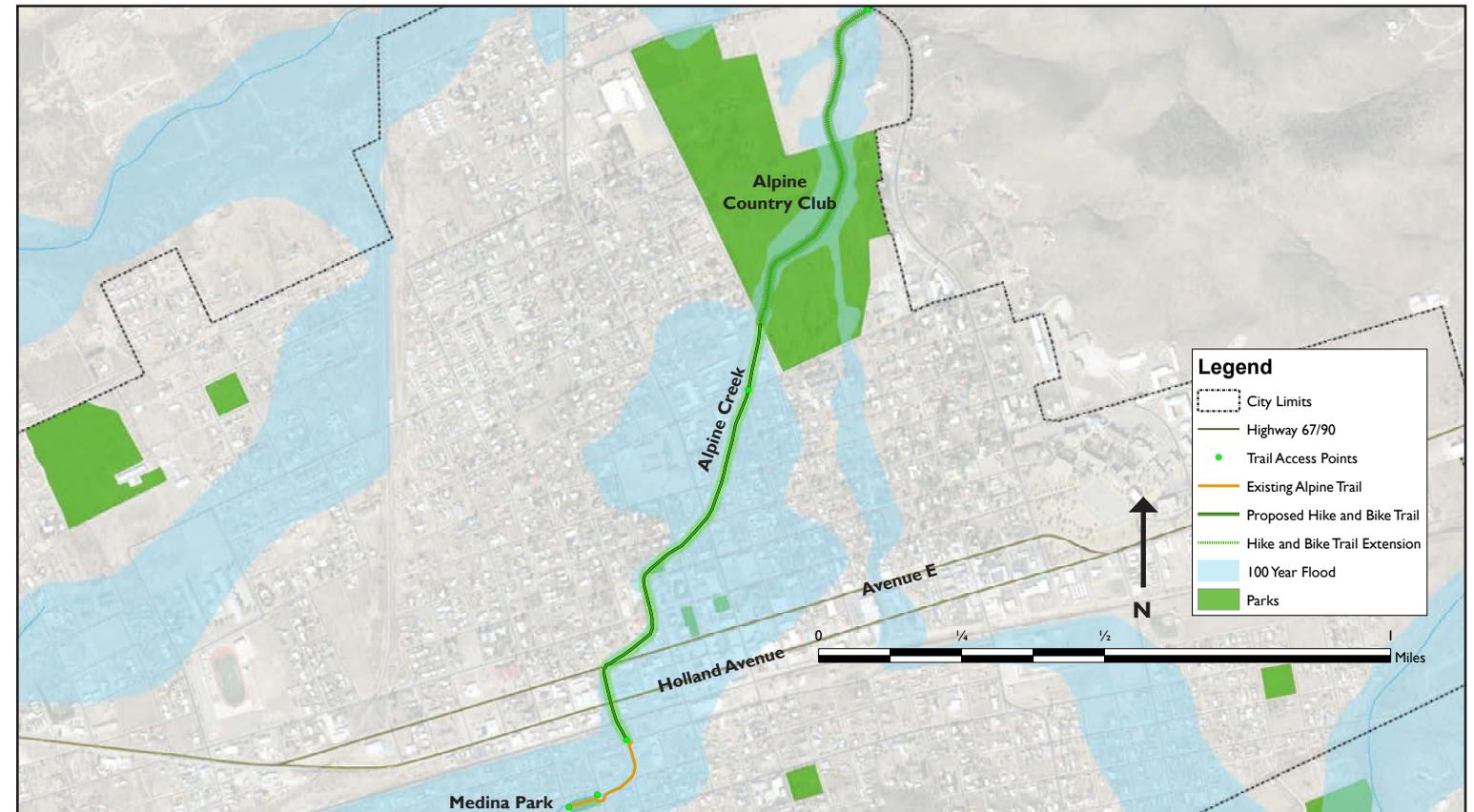


Figure 56: Proposed Linear Park

Source: CURPR



Figure 57: Alpine Creek and the Downtown District

Source: CURPR

## Proposed Hiking/Biking Loop

The routes of the proposed bike path connecting Downtown and Sul Ross State University, and the proposed hike-and-bike trail running along Alpine Creek could be extended and connected. These extensions would allow for the creation of two hiking/biking loops for recreational and pedestrian use. This would provide additional options for Alpine's residents and visitors to experience more of the city.

The proposed bike path extension forks off near the northernmost end of the path, with one path heading west down East Brown Avenue, and another north along Highway 223. This extension adds approximately 1.1 miles to the proposed 1.8 mile bike path, bringing the total distance of the bike paths to 2.9 miles.

The hike-and-bike trail extension continues north from the terminus of the proposed trail, following Alpine Creek through the Alpine Country Club, where it meets the bike extension on Highway 223 near Burgess Spring. This extension adds another .65 miles to the existing .85 mile trail, which, along with the .2 mile Alpine Trail, would bring the total hike-and-bike distance to 1.7 miles.

Three loops would be created with this proposal, one main loop and two secondary loops. The main loop would stretch around the entirety of the network, from Medina Park along the entire proposed hike-and-bike trail to Highway 223, then down the length of the bike extension until it hits the original

proposed bike path, which it follows back to Medina Park. The entirety of this loop is 3.5 miles long.

The southern secondary loop would be similar to the larger loop, except that the trail and bike path would intercept along East Brown Avenue, and the loop would continue eastward on East Brown Avenue rather than continue northward to Highway 223. This loop is 2.5 miles long.

Finally, the northern secondary loop would consist of the hike-and-bike trail section that starts on Brown Avenue and continues through the Country Club, then hits the bike path on Highway 223, and turns west on Brown to close the loop. This loop is 1.75 miles long.

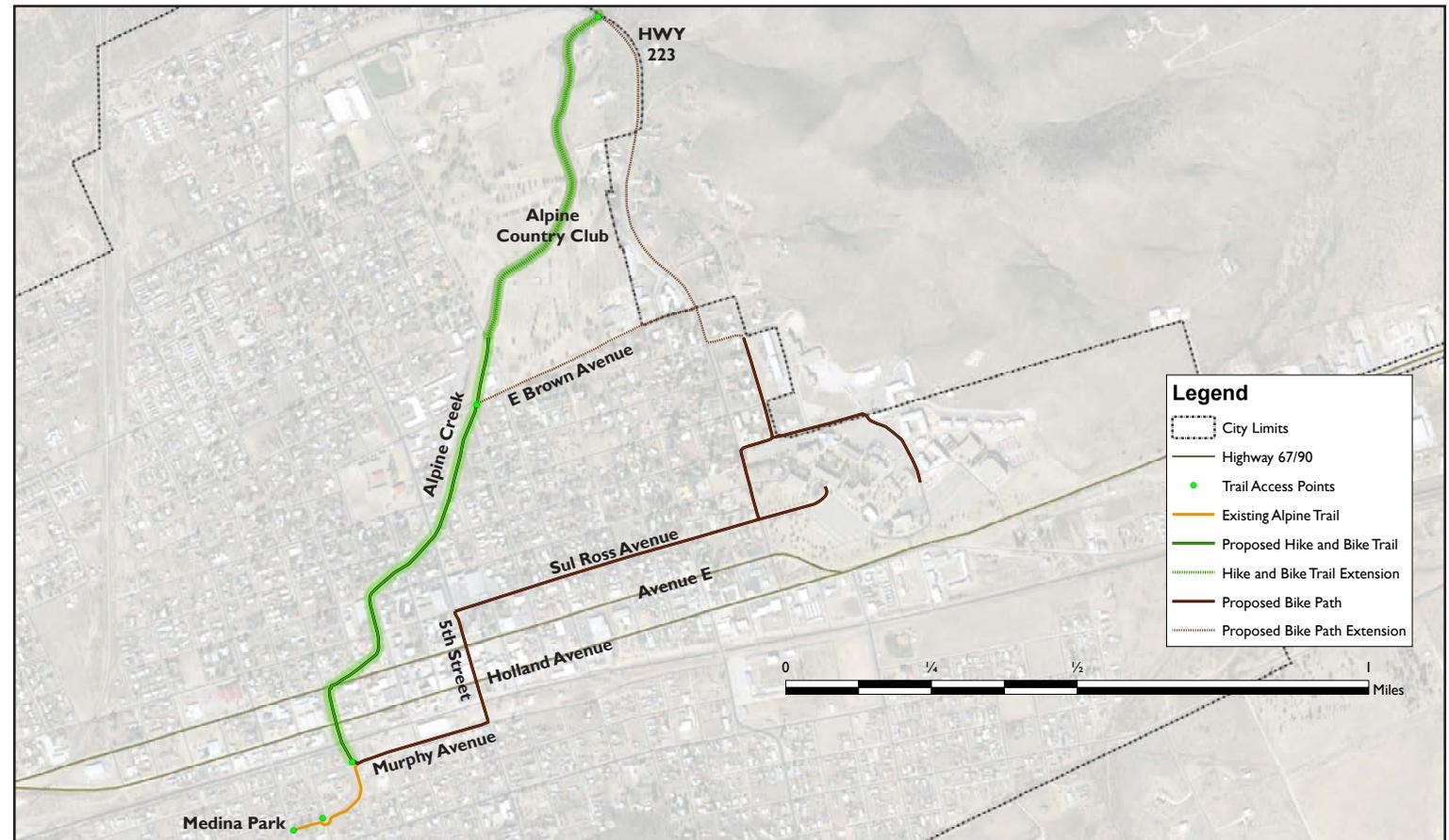


Figure 58: Proposed Hiking/Biking Loop

Source: CURPR

# Conclusion

The recommendations presented in this section describes a number of options the City of Alpine can explore and examine in depth as it moves forward with developing its priorities. The next section will outline and discuss, at length, an implementation strategy for Alpine. That strategy will focus mainly on strategic initiatives, projects and plans to encourage development and improvements to the Downtown District. We believe that the recommendations presented here could have a significant impact on Alpine's future. However, the future of Alpine really lies in the hands of those who live and work there. This means that the community, as a whole, must come together and discuss these and other possible recommendations to set the stage for its long-term development.



Figure 59: Proposed Options for the Future - Alpine, Texas

Source: CURPR





Implementation Plan

## Introduction

This section presents and discusses a number of strategic initiatives, projects and plans that are designed to help revitalize Alpine's historic Downtown District and its surrounding area. A number of recommendations are also included. Many were discussed previously. They include the need to maintain and improve important historical structures within the downtown area; the need for a Special Events Center to spur additional development in the Downtown District; the development of a new tourism strategy for the community; the development of additional parking options for the downtown area; the creation of infill opportunities to bring in new investment and businesses; the need to improve streets, sidewalks and streetscapes in the Downtown District to improve pedestrian connectivity and movement; and, the improvement of Alpine Creek and other natural areas within and close to the downtown area to enhance its overall environment and attractiveness. Equally important is the need for more lodging facilities and a greater range of businesses that can attract local residents and visitors to the Downtown District.

All communities, large and small, are made up of many different parts. They include such things as business enterprises, historical buildings, cultural and civic assets, social networks, families, governmental entities, institutions, and various civic groups to name only a few. The City of Alpine is no exception. Indeed, over the years, it has created a distinct cultural and social environment that enhances these parts. It has also been impacted by external events and conditions over the past decade including the emergence of the Border Region as a

major economic corridor, the growth of tourism generated, in part, by the increasing importance of the Big Bend National Park as a major recreational destination, and the draw of other communities in the region such as Marfa and Fort Davis. The region has also become a major retirement area for those looking to escape the pressures of big city living. The economic ramifications of these developments on the local economy of Alpine and other communities in the region have also been significant. This plan seeks to take into account these and other developments now occurring in the region as it puts forth its recommendations to improve the Downtown District of Alpine. It also takes into account the economic and investment factors that will most certainly impact Alpine in the future.

The actions and recommendations being proposed dictate the need for a long-term strategy to revitalize Alpine's historic center, improve its quality of life and enhance its economy. Also important is the need to take advantage of its opportunities and strengths, while maintaining its core values. However, in order to do this Alpine, as a community, must decide on a long-term vision of what it wants to be. The important thing here is to put in place a strategy and a game plan to accomplish these ends. Also important is the need to devise an implementation plan that will help Alpine's leadership and citizens to achieve their vision.

Implementation is usually defined as the execution of a selected course of action to achieve a certain goal or end point. Implementation of the plan is perhaps the most difficult part of the whole planning process. While this vision study offers

an overall plan of action, it will be up to the local leadership in Alpine to carry it out. Just as important is the need to involve individuals and civic/business groups in the community from the very beginning to help implement it. This will require the local leadership to both organize and motivate the community to move forward. This vision study and its recommendations is a start.

## Putting in Place a Downtown Development Strategy for Alpine

While this study outlines a long-term vision for the redevelopment and revitalization of Alpine's historic Downtown District, it is also important to put in place a workable strategy and plan of action to help the community's leadership achieve this goal. This section proposes such a plan. It also describes an overall implementation strategy to assist the local leadership in revitalizing the downtown area and the surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, several recommendations are discussed at length. These recommendations are important because they provide the means to guide the overall development and revitalization of Alpine's downtown area, while setting the stage for further development in the community.

In putting together any kind of plan or strategy it is useful to keep two things in mind. First, the recommendations included in this study are only a start. Second, the planning/development/

revitalization process is ongoing. Planning is a continuous process that is designed to build on past successes and changes in the environment over time. The first step in this process is to put in place a long-range vision for the community. The next step is to devise a strategic framework with recommendations and goals to achieve the community's vision. The third step in this process is to carefully address and discuss the proposed recommendations and make adjustments as needed. Once this is done, priorities will need to be developed. This will be one of the main tasks of those who will be in charge of carrying out this revitalization/redevelopment strategies. These priorities will always be governed by the availability of resources to carry them out, and their relationship to other needs the community has to address. As these priorities are decided on the next step is to put together an implementation strategy and a plan to carry it out.

It is useful to acknowledge that whatever team, organizational entity or working group is charged with the responsibility for carrying out this plan, they must always be cognizant of the need to make adjustments and changes as they move forward. This means that whatever plan is ultimately decided on, that plan will likely have to be modified as needs and circumstances change over time. As a result, it will be necessary to carefully monitor the plan's implementation to make sure that it stays relevant and on-track. This plan's success, however, will largely depend on the kinds of leadership that is exercised over the course of its implementation. In the end, leadership more than anything will drive this process in Alpine.

## Development Strategy

In developing a plan it is absolutely critical for the community to organize itself. Planning as a process involves a number of distinct steps such as collecting data, analyzing it, identifying goals, creating a vision, establishing priorities and putting together a strategic framework through which the development process can proceed. In creating a vision we are asking residents, business and civic leaders, public officials and other stakeholders what they would like their community to be at some point in the future. The key is coming up with a community vision that is both achievable and sustainable. Equally important it must be something that everyone can buy into.

Once this is done, the next step is to identify a set of goals. Goals are basically statements of what a community wants to achieve. They almost always include objectives. Objectives, in this context, indicate how the goals can be achieved. They are more specific than goals. In some cases, they also include quantitative statements such as creating so many jobs over a specific timeline. In effect, they provide a map of sorts to get a community from Point A to Point B.

As a community defines its vision, goals and objectives it is also developing a strategy and a game plan, i.e., a plan of action, to achieve them. Implementation then becomes the next step. The strategic framework and the plan of action indicate how the community will manage the implementation process over time. The strategy encompasses the specific steps and measures that will facilitate that process.

## Strategic Considerations

In putting together a community plan or a downtown revitalization strategy the ability to think and act strategically and long-term is vital for addressing the needs of Alpine. This has several important components. First, by thinking strategically and long-term it becomes easier for the community to align its vision with its strengths and opportunities. Second, it allows Alpine and its leadership to take into account future needs in a comprehensive inclusive way. Third, it is centered on outcomes that are linked to the goals that Alpine, as a community, has set for itself. Fourth, it allows Alpine to carefully evaluate its options. This is important because there are usually several solutions for every need or problem that needs to be addressed. The residents of Alpine and the implementation team will have to decide which options provide the best outcomes given their priorities and resources. The final component of this process involves the actual deployment of strategies to address the needs and priorities established by the community and its leadership. They also set the stage for acquiring the resources, i.e., funding, needed to carry out specific projects.

## Creating a Framework for Development

In creating a framework for development it is vital to have some idea of what a community can bring to the table. This is usually determined by conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. This process usually involves a group of community representatives and stakeholders coming together to discuss their community's strengths and weaknesses. They also talk about their community's opportunities and threats. Community strengths

are those assets that contribute to its economy, sustainability and quality of life. Weaknesses, on the other hand, refer to perceived liabilities such as a declining tax base, poor or nonexistent infrastructure, high unemployment, lack of housing, inadequate schools, etc. Opportunities are usually external factors that could benefit the community over the long-run if certain steps were taken. Examples of opportunities include things like increasing the number of tourists coming into the area, or a major company that is looking to expand or relocate its operations into a community thereby expanding its tax base and creating new jobs. Threats, in contrast, are events, conditions and trends that could negatively impact a community.

Most communities have some control over their strengths and weaknesses. This is less true with regard to opportunities and threats since they are largely external to the community. As Alpine moves forward it will want to build on its strengths, take advantage of its opportunities, reduce its weaknesses and mitigate its threats as much as possible. This can be done by carefully analyzing its present environment, i.e., its social, economic, political and community assets, and the forces that are impacting them. Once this is done we can begin to put together appropriate policies, strategies and plans to address them.

In April 2016, a community SWOT process was convened in Alpine focusing on its future, and the historic downtown. Local stakeholders shared their ideas and thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats confronting Alpine today. The ideas and themes raised and addressed at that

session underscored the need for revitalizing Alpine's historic downtown and surrounding area. For example, many of the participants felt that not enough was being done to preserve the downtown area's historic footprint. In fact, many pointed out that much of the downtown area's historic buildings were in disrepair or vacant. The presence of absentee owners was also discussed. On the other hand, several participants felt that the downtown area had significant economic potential as a retail destination for a larger market area. The idea of a special events center was also discussed as a means for generating more interest in the downtown area. A number of threats were also raised. One was the lack of investment in the area. Another was the concern that apathy in the community was taking hold. Over the longer term, the lack of investment in the downtown area was felt to be both a threat and a growing concern. The consensus of those participating in this session was that Alpine's historic downtown, if it is to remain viable, must take active measures to revitalize itself.

The ideas and themes raised and discussed at the SWOT session also underscored the need for the community to take on a more active role in redeveloping and revitalizing its downtown area. One of the key points discussed was that the downtown area really constitutes the core or 'heart' of Alpine. Without a strong, vibrant and prosperous downtown, Alpine will find it difficult to move forward. From an investment standpoint, maintaining the status quo in the downtown area will only limit and constrain the local economy. Given that there is no coherent strategy in place to revitalize or redevelop Alpine's downtown this concern becomes even more contentious. Those plans that do exist are outdated. Indeed, this lack of a

downtown strategy not only has economic implications, it also affects the community's overall quality of life.

During the SWOT session and subsequent discussions with local leaders and residents several ideas on how to revitalize and redevelop Alpine's Downtown District began to emerge. These included:

- Steps should be taken to enhance Alpine's tourism potential as a means to bolster the local economy and to bring in new investment.
- The downtown area's streetscapes and infrastructure should be upgraded and improved.
- New business enterprises should be encouraged to locate in the downtown area, and existing businesses already in the area should be strengthened.
- Steps should be taken to better maintain existing buildings in the downtown area, especially those that have been designated as historic.
- A Special Events Center should be developed for the downtown area to provide a central venue for the community to come together.
- The downtown area's pedestrian connectivity needs to be improved in order to enhance access and mobility.
- Efforts should be undertaken to improve Alpine Creek

and other public spaces in the downtown district and adjacent areas.

- Additional steps should be taken to strengthen Alpine's downtown historical district designation.

In the sections that follow a plan of action and an implementation strategy is presented to address these and other concerns. The central idea underlying this action plan and implementation strategy is the need to create a more dynamic and attractive downtown district that not only improves the community's overall quality of life, but expands its local economy, as well. Equally important, is that any plan and/or strategy presented should be feasible and adaptable to the community's overall strengths and opportunities. The goal is to put together an effective planning framework that will serve to guide the long-term redevelopment and revitalization of Alpine's downtown district.

## Funding Considerations/Resources

Financial resources and funding considerations are a critical component of any long-range redevelopment/revitalization effort in Alpine. Financial requirements will always be a limiting factor in any business or community development project. As a result, priorities will have to be established and a plan of action devised that will take into account these priorities. Also important, is the need to put into place an implementation strategy and plan that is both realistic and feasible.

In Texas, the primary resource base for funding local operations, services and capital improvements in communities are derived

from property and real estate taxes. Also important are local sales taxes, hotel occupancy taxes, state and federal grants, and the issuance of city and county bonds. Local governments also have the power to initiate special programs like municipal development districts, empowerment zones, and tax increment financing districts to leverage additional financial resources. These resources, in turn, can be used to incentivize revenue generating development in a community or a special district within a community to improve the local economy, redevelop an area, or improve its quality of life.

In Alpine, the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area will likely utilize several types of funding streams or sources to facilitate things like economic and business development, upgrades in infrastructure, streetscape improvements, building renovation, restoration of historic structures, and park improvements. For example, the City of Alpine may want to consider establishing a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District encompassing its downtown area or a portion of it. Tax increment financing is a useful tool that can be used by local governments to finance needed improvements and infrastructure upgrades within a defined area. These improvements can also be used to promote existing businesses and for attracting new businesses to the downtown area. The statutes governing tax increment financing for local governments in Texas are found in Chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code.

The underlying idea behind this type of financing is that the cost of improvements in a particular part of a community can be covered and repaid by future tax revenue raised by the

local government. The taxing entity – city or county – can then choose to dedicate all or a portion of the tax revenue generated resulting from an overall increase in tax revenues derived from improvements made in the TIF district. The additional incremental tax revenue that is received from businesses located in the district is referred to as the tax increment.

Another option the City of Alpine may want to consider is creating a Public Improvement District (PID) encompassing its downtown district. Public improvement districts are designed to help improve local infrastructure and provide the means for other types of public improvements in order to facilitate economic, business and community development within a designated area. These districts can be initiated either through a local governing body such as a city council, or through a group of affected property owners. If property owners in a particular area such as a downtown district want to establish a PID they would have to initiate a petition process that would call for a specific and defined area to be declared a public improvement district. This petition would also have to state the nature of the proposed improvements sought and provide an estimated cost for these improvements. It would also have to include some kind of property assessment method, and an apportionment strategy to divide the funds raised.

Public improvement districts are especially effective for improving local infrastructure systems within a defined area. The key here is developing a plan of action and an assessment methodology that would work for local business owners in the targeted area. The district, in the case of Alpine, could cover

the entire downtown area, or only a portion of it. However, as noted previously, all of the affected property owners in the targeted area would have to agree to create such a district. Also, a PID can only be dissolved through a petition process. In any case, such a district, or something similar to it, could serve as a means for funding improvements in Alpine's downtown area.

Still another option the City of Alpine could use is to create a Municipal Management District (MMD) encompassing its downtown area. These districts are designed to help commercial property owners and local businesses to improve their overall physical environment and to add additional amenities to a designated area to attract both residents and visitors alike to shop in their stores. These districts, also called downtown management districts, are usually created within established commercial areas. Once established they allow the community to finance the development of new facilities, infrastructure and services within the targeted area beyond those that are already in place. This is accomplished through a combination of self-imposed property taxes, special assessments and impact fees, or through other charges imposed on property owners within the district. Chapter 375 of the Local Government Code governs the creation and activities of these districts. They are also considered to be a governmental entity.

To establish an MMD the owners of a majority of the assessed value of real property in the proposed district, or 50 people who own real property in the proposed district, must sign a petition asking for the creation of such a district. At this point the process of setting up a MMD is similar to that of

establishing a PID. The primary difference, however, is that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TECQ) must approve the district's designation. In addition, several public hearings are required, and other forms of documentation are needed. Once empowered, a MMD assumes the authority and functions similar to that of a conservation or reclamation district. The MMD can also impose ad valorem taxes, impact fees, and special assessments against what are called 'benefited properties' within the district to finance development type projects such as street and sidewalk repairs, landscaping, drainage improvements, off-street parking facilities and other improvements.

In addition to those options already discussed the City of Alpine may want to examine the possibility of seeking funding from the State of Texas and the Federal Government to develop projects within its downtown area. For example, the Texas Capital Fund - Infrastructure Program and the Texas Leverage Fund could be used for development type projects in the downtown area. The Texas Main Street Program, administered through the Texas Historical Commission, is another option. While it is a self-help program it can be used to marshal local resources and volunteers to coordinate services and planning activities centered on downtown redevelopment and revitalization activities, especially in the areas of historic preservation, partnership development and economic development. Also, the Texas Department of Agriculture has several grants that could be used for community/downtown revitalization initiatives under its Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Programs. Eligible applicants for these grants are non-entitlement units of local governments including cities and counties not

participating or designated as eligible to participate in the entitlement portion of the federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program.

At the federal level several programs administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Economic Development Administration can be accessed to provide funding for local projects. The important point here is that these funding sources are competitive and will require additional research and project clarification. The City of Alpine can, if needed, seek additional assistance from technical advisors such as the Center for Urban and Regional Planning Research and the Rural Business Program, housed in the Institute for Economic Development at the University of Texas at San Antonio. The key, however, is to put in place a long-term strategy and plan of action that will lay the foundation for revitalizing and redeveloping Alpine's downtown area. Once the vision and goals are in place the community and the implementation team can begin to position themselves to seek state and federal grants.

Regardless of the approach used the City of Alpine and the development/implementation team should devise a plan to both finance the proposed improvements in its downtown area, and create a long-range strategy that will provide an on-going revenue stream that will generate sufficient financial resources to carry out its program in the downtown area over time. This process will also require significant input from the community, as a whole. This public/private partnership and interaction should be embraced and used extensively to facilitate development in other parts of the community, as well. Underlying this kind of partnership is the need to involve local

citizens and community leaders in the ongoing development process. The key here is leadership. This leadership will, in turn, drive the process.

## Development Timeline

In addition to defining a long-term vision for Alpine and its Downtown District is the need to put in place a plan of action and a timeline to help the community achieve its goals. This section suggests a possible framework and a timeline to accomplish this.

In putting together a development timeline several things need to be kept in mind. First, the recommendations and courses of action discussed in this study are only a start. Second, the development/redevelopment/revitalization process described here is ongoing. Planning, as already noted, is a continuous process that constantly builds upon past and present successes and changes in the community’s economic, social, political and physical environment. The first step in this process is to carefully review and evaluate the recommendations put forth in this study, and make adjustments and changes as needed. Once this is done it will be important to establish priorities for development. This will be one of the main tasks for those responsible for carrying out the action plan. As noted earlier, these priorities will also be governed by the availability of resources, and their relationship to other needs the community has to address.

It is also important to emphasize that the team or organization responsible for carrying out the plan must always be aware

of the fact that adjustments and changes in the plan are likely to occur as the community moves forward with its implementation. This means that whatever plan is decided upon initially will likely have to be modified and adjusted over time. As a result, it will be important to carefully monitor the plan’s implementation to make sure that it remains relevant and on schedule. Just as important, is the need to ensure that the effort moves forward and does not falter because of a lack of resources, disinterest or apathy. Any effort centered on community development, if it is to be successful, must be ongoing and continuous. If it is disrupted, put on the “back burner”, or forgotten the whole thrust of the development/ redevelopment/revitalization effort could be curtailed causing additional problems in the future.

The development timelines suggested here is centered on three key phases: Planning, Implementation and Monitoring/Feedback. Each phase overlaps with the other as the implementing entity or team moves forward with the task of carrying out the plan. While it is recommended that the planning/implementation effort should be ongoing, it is important to begin the initial startup effort over a three (3) year period in order to pull together the necessary financial and organizational resources needed to ensure success. Once the resources and organizational assets are in place implementation of the plan can begin. Table 9 describes a general scheme and timeline for the initial implementation effort. As development proceeds in subsequent years changes may be required with regard to project scheduling, resource allocation and priorities. This will require the planning team and/or the implementing entity to adapt to changes as they occur. If there is an ongoing

monitoring/feedback effort in place these changes should not cause a problem.

How the development/redevelopment/revitalization process is carried out over time is a decision Alpine’s leadership will have to make. Many communities already have a planning department or other organizational entity in place to plan for their needs. There are other options as well. Some of these were discussed previously. The important point here is the need to maintain this process over time so that the community is not blindsided or caught off guard. The ramifications of being taken by surprise can be costly. Even when a current condition, project or situation seems to be in place unforeseen events can change the situation.

**Table 9: Proposed Planning/Implementation Process Alpine Downtown District Project**

Phase – Timeline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Phase I. Planning	X X X X	X X X X	X X X X
*Define Issues/Concerns	X X X		
*Analyze Data	X X		
*Conduct SWOT Analysis	X X		
*Set Goals/Priorities	X		
*Prepare Plan of Action	X		
*Secure Funding	X		
Phase II. Implementation			
*Approve Plan of Action	X	X X	
*Define Projects	X	X X	
*Implement Plan		X X X X	X X X X
Phase III. Monitor/Feedback			
*Review Status of Plan		X	X
*Maintain Planning Process			X X X X
*Continue Implementation			X X X X

Source: CURPR

# Implementation Strategy- Proposed Action Plan

## Overview

To carry out the recommendations and action steps included in the proposed implementation strategy discussed below it will be important to bring together Alpine's leadership to address issues of mutual concern regarding the development, redevelopment and revitalization of the community's downtown area. The key players in this task should include representatives from the business and civic community, local residents, community leaders, public officials and the chamber of commerce. Equally important is the need to maintain an open community-wide process in revitalizing the downtown area. The goal is to get as much community input into the process as possible. Another goal is to get a high level of community involvement and participation to ensure a successful effort.

## Implementing The Plan – Areas of Responsibility

In carrying out this plan a blend of both the public and private sectors is both desirable and necessary. This public/private partnership is important because no one entity or sector has the knowledge and resources needed to fully implement this effort over time. Equally important is the non-profit sector and the resources and talent that may be available through Sul Ross State University. The non-profit sector includes community based organizations and civic groups that have a stake in Alpine's future. Each brings its own set of responsibilities. These are briefly discussed below.

### Public Sector – City of Alpine/Brewster County

Both have major responsibilities for planning and constructing infrastructure, the platting of land for various uses, and the development of ordinances and laws to guide long-term economic and community development in the county and the incorporated area that comprises the City of Alpine. Both, in conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation are also responsible for developing, maintaining and upgrading the streets, roads and highways within their respective jurisdictions. As envisioned here, both the City of Alpine and the county will be the major players in the redevelopment and revitalization of Alpine's downtown area. The City of Alpine will take on the primary role for coordinating services and activities associated with this effort. It may also want to organize an ongoing planning/development committee or task force to spearhead the effort. In addition, it will be the primary source of funding for the various projects and initiatives suggested in the plan of action.

### Private Sector

The private sector is the primary driver of the local economy in Alpine. This sector also helps to generate the necessary revenue and investment assets that drive the local economy. It is comprised mainly of local and area businesses that provide goods and services to the local population.

### Non-Profit Sector

This sector consists mainly of those organizations and groups that contribute to the civic, cultural and quality of life aspects of the larger community. These qualities are extremely important to the community's overall success, sustainability and livability. They also add a distinctive persona to the community's focus and character. Also included here is Sul Ross State University. As a institution of higher learning it can contribute assets and talent to help Alpine meet its goals. As a group, these entities also bring to the table critical management, resource and organizational assets to grow the community.

Communities are most successful when they are able to pull themselves together. Successful communities are also proactive. They are not willing to let things just happen. Instead, they try to anticipate change rather than react to it. This plan reflects Alpine's desire to create new opportunities for its residents and to transform its downtown area so that it can once again become its civic, cultural and economic center. It also seeks to expand the local economy, and set the state for new investment in the area. The goal here is to build on Alpine's past successes, and to make it a strong, viable and sustainable community that can respond to its future challenges effectively and forthrightly.

## Recommendations

To move forward with the redevelopment of Alpine's downtown area it is recommended that priority be given to the following:

- **Develop a Long-Range Strategy and Plan to Redevelop and Revitalize Alpine's Downtown District**

A key component in any long-range effort to redevelop and revitalize Alpine's downtown area is to put in place some kind of comprehensive framework that takes into account both its historical significance and its economic potential. At the present time, however, there appears to be no overall strategy in place for this area. While this study is a start in the right direction steps should be taken to define more precisely the boundaries of this district. Once that is done a long-range strategy for the district can be devised.

In the past, efforts have been made by the City of Alpine to establish a historical district for the community. In 2003, for example, the City of Alpine conducted a historic resources survey of South Alpine. Nearly 300 structures were surveyed and evaluated in a 50 block area. That survey found 51 properties that were of historical or architectural interest. In 2008, a business workgroup in Alpine listed the development of a historic district as a priority. In 2010, boundaries for such a district were established by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission. However, that district was found to be too large. Some also felt that the district's boundaries were not well thought out. While the district is still in place it is being evaluated and refined.

While the development of a historic district is important for the long-term success of Alpine a smaller area defining its Downtown District is recommended. One possible configuration is for the district to be bounded on the east by Garnett Street, on the north by Avenue E, on the west by 9th Street, and on the south by Avenue F. Holland Avenue (U.S. Highway 90) cuts through the proposed district and serves as its Main Street. Immediately south is the Amtrak Railroad Depot. This area is also located within Alpine's Historic District. However, as noted earlier, the boundaries for that district are still being finalized. Within the proposed Downtown District there are a number of business enterprises and historic structures. Many of these structures such as the Holland Hotel and the Berkeley Building located along Holland Avenue are currently occupied by businesses. In the case of the Holland Hotel that enterprise has been in operation since 1928.

- **Develop a Broader Marketing Strategy for Alpine to Enhance its Tourism Industry and Expand its Economy**

In order to expand its tourism industry, Alpine will need to broaden its marketing strategy so that it properly brands the city as a family oriented destination. In addition, it should create an environment that can support an expanded tourism industry. This environment should include the development of new wayfinding systems; the development of new lodging facilities, an arts center and a special events center in the Downtown District; improved pedestrian access; and, better use of its historical buildings.

The goal is to enhance Alpine's position as a major tourism destination in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas.

- **Create a Well-Defined Historic District for Alpine**

The development of a well defined historic district in Alpine will be a key element in helping it to expand its tourism industry. The proposed Downtown District boundaries discussed earlier should serve as the core for this district. Once the historic district is better defined it can serve as a location for cultural events, special ceremonies and festivals that will only strengthen Alpine's historical legacy. Equally important, the creation of such a district will help to preserve the community's cultural and historical legacy, and provide a focal point for tourists.

- **Develop an Arts Center and a Special Events Center in the Downtown District to Help Expand its Tourism Industry and Local Economy**

Alpine is considered to be an arts and cultural hub for the Trans-Pecos region of Southwest Texas. To build on this it is recommended that it should take steps to build both an arts and a special events center in the Downtown District. The proposed arts center would create an important focal point for local and regional artists. It could also play an important role in facilitating several local and area art festivals. The proposed special events center would provide a place where music concerts, conferences, theater productions and exhibitions could be held. Both facilities would also serve as strong anchor points for Alpine's Downtown District. In addition, they

could link up with the Espino Conference Center and other key facilities at Sul Ross State University. This kind of collaboration would help make the university a partner in developing the Downtown District, and possibly spur additional investment in the downtown area. It is also important to point out that Alpine already has a number of assets in the downtown area centered around its unique cultural heritage and historic buildings. The proposed centers would only reinforce these assets by providing a central point for bringing visitors, tourists, students and local residents together.

- **Encourage the Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings in the Downtown District and the Historic District**

Many of the historic buildings in the Downtown District are currently being used for stores and other kinds of businesses. However, many are being underutilized. This is especially true for those buildings located along Holland Avenue and Avenue East. Some are vacant, as well. To fully utilize these buildings steps should be taken to evaluate the current condition and use of buildings in the Downtown District to get some idea of their reuse potential and adaptability. As noted earlier, the primary use of historic buildings in Alpine's downtown area should be for retail and office space, with residences on the upper floors. Special attention should be given to those buildings that have been designated as historic. The goal here is to not only reuse buildings, but to bring more variety to the Downtown District and the larger Historic District in Alpine. This, in turn, will strengthen

the downtown area's tourism, add to its character, and enhance business development. It will also help to retain the area's historical and cultural legacy.

- **Develop a Plan to Take Full Advantage of Potential Infill Opportunities in the Downtown District**

Alpine should use as much of its vacant land as possible within its city limits, and especially in its downtown area to maximize its economic potential, create new investment opportunities and improve its overall appearance. While many of the vacant parcels in the area are being used for parking and other functions during the day, they are largely underutilized or unused in the evening hours. Many of these vacant lots could be used for new development such as buildings, stores, pocket parks, plaza's and parking garages. For example, one of the suggestions made in this study is to transform an underutilized parcel located on the northeast corner of Holland Avenue and 5th Street into a public plaza that would incorporate several activities. Other suggestions were presented as well to better utilize these parcels. Many of these underutilized or vacant parcels could also be used as sites for new businesses. This combined with the adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings will not only add variety to the area, it will increase pedestrian activity and improve the Downtown District's ambience and quality of life for both residents and visitors.

- **Enhance Pedestrian Activity and Access in the Downtown District by Improving Sidewalks and Street Crossings**

Successful downtown areas are not only attractive they are pedestrian friendly. While Alpine's downtown area contains many shops, restaurants and other businesses that normally generate heavy foot traffic, its sidewalk system is inconsistent and disjointed. Some areas like Holland Avenue and Avenue East have sidewalks that are wide, well designed and well furnished. However, when we venture outside of these areas the sidewalk system is not as well developed. Moreover, there are parts of the downtown area that have no sidewalks at all. The same applies to crosswalks. The variation ranges from very good to very poor. The goal here is to develop a plan that ensures a consistent and connected sidewalk system throughout the downtown area and especially in the Downtown District to encourage pedestrian access and activity. Also emphasis should be placed on improving the area's streetscape by adding trees, benches, streetlights and other sidewalk elements that contribute to the areas overall appearance and attractiveness. Finally, efforts should be made to ensure that street crossings in Alpine, and in its Downtown District are safe and attractive.

- **Develop Additional Parking Options for the Downtown District in Alpine**

At the present time the downtown area of Alpine has few parking options other than on street parallel parking, and several parking lots associated with businesses. These options are barely adequate for downtown visitors and tourists. When there are special events in the area the need for additional parking becomes readily apparent. If the proposed Arts Center and Special Events Center

become a reality the parking problem in the downtown area could become acute. To deal with this need several options are described in this study. One option is to build a parking garage near the proposed centers in the Downtown District. A second option discussed is to create additional surface parking spaces across the railroad tracks south of the proposed Arts and Special Events centers on the north side of East Murphy Avenue. A third option is to build a parking garage on this site. The proposed garage would be three stories tall, with a portion of the ground level being devoted to either commercial/retail type activities or additional parking. The intent here is to make the Downtown District more accessible to local residents, visitors and tourists. A second goal is to improve the overall economic environment in the area.

- **Connect Murphy Avenue to the Downtown District**  
Murphy Avenue is a major artery located on the downtown area's southern edge. However, its connection to the downtown area, and especially to the Downtown District is somewhat tenuous. Moreover, its overall environment and attractiveness is considerably less when compared to Holland Avenue. In addition to improving the connection from Murphy Avenue to the downtown area, efforts should be made to improve its streetscape, signage, lighting, sidewalks and pedestrian crossings. The intent here is to establish Murphy Avenue as a complementary cultural and commercial area serving Alpine south of the railroad tracks. It would also provide a southern edge to the proposed Downtown District. There are already a number of shops, art galleries, bed-and-breakfasts and

studios along Murphy Avenue. Given its location relative to the downtown area Murphy Avenue could also become an ideal area for future investment and new development. Currently, the physical disconnect between Murphy Avenue and Holland Avenue tends to create a somewhat competitive edge between the two areas. By improving this connectivity the prospects for creating a unified arts district in the downtown area would also be enhanced.

- **Take Steps to Better Connect the Sul Ross Campus to the Downtown District**

While the campus of Sul Ross State University is only about a mile and a half east of Alpine's downtown area, the actual gap appears to be much wider. Certainly the proposed Downtown District and the surrounding downtown area would benefit from having more students from Sul Ross using its shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. However, the distance between the downtown area and the campus is too far to be easily walked. However, it would be an easy bike ride. By creating a bike path or route connecting the campus and the downtown area access would be improved. The path could also be extended into other parts of Alpine through an interconnected network of bike paths. Another option is to initiate a small bus shuttle service between the Downtown District and the campus. The City of Alpine could also generate more community related events that would attract students living on campus. The establishment of an Arts Center and a Special Events Center in the Downtown District would also entice more students to the downtown area. Other options are also discussed as well in this study.

The intent here is to attract more students on campus to use the businesses, cultural facilities, restaurants and entertainment venues in Alpine's downtown area to improve the local economy and enhance the area's small business environment.

- **Develop a Linear Park Along Alpine Creek**

A community's parks and recreational areas is one of the items high on its quality of life list. In Alpine the need for additional parks is high given its growing population, and the student population at Sul Ross State University. A key element in Alpine's long-term plan to develop additional park and recreational areas is centered on developing an inter-connected link bringing together several parks and trails. The proposed linear park along Alpine Creek is one part of a longer range plan to create additional parks in the city and Brewster County.

Alpine Creek is a dry creek that runs through the city. It begins south of Alpine in Medina Park and runs north through the downtown area to the Alpine Country Club and Kokernot Park. The creek bed and the surrounding areas are located in a flood plain and, as such are not areas sustainable for development. These attributes make it ideal for a linear park that could be further developed with a network of hike-and-bike trails. As noted in this study the proposed linear park would be about 1.7 miles long. It would add additional park and recreational land to Alpine, and its location would also serve the Downtown District and other areas within the city.

- Increase Lodging Accommodations in the Downtown District of Alpine and the Surrounding Area

Alpine and the immediate area around it suffers from a lack of affordable hotel space. The need is especially acute in the downtown area. In 2015, Alpine had a total of 598 hotel rooms. That figure also included motel and bed-and-breakfast rooms in and around the city. While adequate for meeting the day-to-day needs of visitors and tourists, the total number of rooms becomes more problematic when there are special events in the community. Of the 598 rooms previously noted, only 30 are located in the Downtown District. Most of these are found in the Holland Hotel. The creation of additional lodging facilities in and around the proposed Downtown District should be given a high priority. One possible option for increasing the number of hotel rooms in the downtown area, is to utilize existing buildings that are either underutilized or vacant. Another possibility discussed in this study is to transform the historic Storey Whiteside Lumber Company building located just east of the downtown area. This building is also located in an area that has several open land parcels nearby making it an ideal location for a fairly large hotel. Finally, the historic Hotel Ritchey could be restored as a lodging option. Over the short term the City of Alpine should conduct a feasibility study to determine what locations would be most suitable for hotel development. Once that study is completed steps can be taken to actively work with a hotel operator or developer to secure the necessary financing to build the facility. This development should

be incorporated into a larger effort to redevelop and revitalize Alpine's Downtown District.

In carrying out these and other projects in Alpine it will be important to put in place a management team that can coordinate the various activities involved in their implementation. The lead entity for implementing these projects should be the City of Alpine. In addition, it is recommended that a strong public/private partnership be formed involving local civic, business and community leaders along with public officials and private citizens to help coordinate specific initiatives and to maintain some kind of oversight to ensure that the various projects stay on course. It is also recommended that the City of Alpine establish a Downtown District designation in order to clearly define its targeted area. The intent here is to make sure that the City of Alpine and its partners are able to successfully move forward with the implementation of a long-term strategy that will have a significant bearing on its future development and quality of life.

## Economic Development/ Investment Strategies

Equally important for the long-term development of Alpine is the need to expand its local economy, generate new investment in the community, provide job opportunities for local residents, and create a more sustainable growth process for the community as a whole. To achieve these aims it is recommended that Alpine put in place a broad based economic and business development strategy centered on expanding its

small business sector, enhancing entrepreneurship, bringing in new investment, and expanding its tourism industry. The city should also work more closely with existing local businesses to expand their markets and perhaps build up their operations. To accomplish these ends several initiatives are proposed. These are described below:

- In order to expand and diversify its economy and strengthen its small business assets, the City of Alpine and its partners should take steps to broaden its marketing effort to rebrand itself as a destination community to attract more tourists. In addition, Alpine should move forward on several fronts to strengthen its tourism industry and expand its capacity to handle tourists. This includes increasing the number of hotel and bed-and-breakfast accommodations, developing a better defined historic district, and creating a broader marketing strategy that is centered on the Trans-Pecos region. In addition, it should put in place a business development strategy that emphasizes new specialty type retail businesses, art galleries, restaurants, and other businesses that could reach out to this particular market. Finally, additional emphasis should be placed on wayfinding and connectivity to allow tourists and visitors to gain easier access to various historic sites in the community and the surrounding region.
- In addition to expanding its tourism industry the City of Alpine should take steps to diversify its economy by attracting new kinds of businesses, encouraging local entrepreneurship, and incentivizing local business growth

projects. This would involve broadening the range of incentives to attract new businesses to the community, and improving the Downtown District to make it more attractive for businesses to locate there. These incentives could include special tax rebates, a development fee reduction program, expedited permitting and a tax abatement program for certain types of businesses. In addition, it may want to consider establishing a Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) encompassing the Downtown District to provide an ongoing revenue scheme to spur additional economic and business development in the proposed district. Finally, Alpine should consider putting in place a targeted business development strategy that would focus in on certain types of businesses that could locate in the community. This could include working with a hotel developer to build a new hotel facility in the downtown area of Alpine.

- In addition to growing the local and regional economy the City of Alpine and its partners should consider putting in place a Business Support Network to strengthen local and area businesses. This network would involve several entities including the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) associated with Sul Ross State University in Alpine, the Rural Business Program housed at the Institute for Economic Development at the University of Texas at San Antonio and the Alpine Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the City of Alpine and Brewster County should be a part of this proposed network. Its goal would be to strengthen existing businesses in Alpine and the surrounding area, and grow new businesses by

providing them with the support they need to better address the needs of their existing markets and to grow new markets. The proposed network could also provide ongoing training, technical support and market research to those businesses in the network.

- Quality of life issues are also important for growing a local economy. Communities that have a high quality of life tend to be more successful than those that do not. These communities not only provide a very livable environment they also provide a high level of services for its residents. In the case of Alpine the quality of life is high. At the same time, however, Alpine must take steps to expand its local infrastructure, improve its services and provide more usable park and recreational areas. Several initiatives proposed in this study are designed to accomplish that. One has to do with developing new park and recreational areas in the Alpine Creek corridor. Another initiative being proposed is the development of a new Arts Center and a Special Events Center in the Downtown District. Also included are proposals to reuse and adapt vacant or underutilized buildings in the downtown area, and to improve its access and connectivity to ensure easier pedestrian movement. These and the other developments proposed in this study not only meet specific needs they also contribute to the community's quality of life. They also contribute to the ability of Alpine to draw in new investment to grow its economy.
- The City of Alpine may also want to look into the possibility of creating a Type A or B Economic Development

Corporation (EDC) as a way to strengthen the local economy and finance improvements in the community. The Type A/B Sales Tax, like the TIF concept discussed previously, is an important tool for local governments in Texas seeking to raise additional revenue to foster economic and community development. However, communities looking to establish either a Type A or Type B sales tax must be within their local sales tax cap to allow them to adopt an additional one-half cent sales tax. There are other limitations and restrictions as well. For example, no community can adopt a sales tax rate that would result in a combined rate that would exceed 2% of all local sales taxes. Despite these restrictions this tax has been used extensively in Texas and should be considered by the City of Alpine as a possible option to grow its local economy and to finance public improvements in the community.

Economic and community development are closely linked together. Without a strong local economy it will be difficult to move forward in Alpine. At the same time, certain preconditions are necessary to support that economy. If Alpine chooses to move forward with the development of its downtown area it will have to create not only a long-range strategy to do this, it will also have to put in place a mechanism to make it happen. The recommendations and strategies included in this vision plan are designed to provide a framework to accomplish this end.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

The initiatives and strategies included in this section are designed to improve the sustainability, economic potential and investment prospects of Alpine. They are also designed to support business, economic and community development activities in Alpine. In order to move forward with the implementation of these projects and initiatives a more detailed plan of action will be necessary. That effort, in order to be successful, must be cost effective and incorporate realistic goals. The next step is to carefully review the ideas, options, recommendations and strategies included in this vision plan to determine their feasibility for the community. Once this is done the City of Alpine and its partners can put in place appropriate mechanisms to move forward with their implementation.

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# Appendix A

## SWOT

### Group I (Andrew)

#### Strengths

Border Patrol  
Sul Ross University  
Airport  
Climate  
Tourist Destination  
Views  
Geography  
Frontier Heritage  
Friendliness  
Festivals  
Art Walk  
DEA  
County Seat  
Gateway to Mexico  
Brewery  
Sno Cone Shop  
Main Street  
Retirement  
Hospital  
Recognized schools  
Historic Buildings  
Rail Road/Depot  
Golf Course  
Park/Pool  
Semi-pro Baseball Team  
RV Park  
EMS  
Patrol  
Social Media  
Radio Station  
Private education  
Health food stores

SBDC  
Kokernot Field (semi-pro baseball)  
Big Bend National Park  
Cultural Heritage  
Guitar manufacturing  
Nationally known Businesses  
Rodeo  
Surrounding Communities  
Hotels/Hospitality  
Churches  
Food Available Monday – Saturday  
Community Involvement  
Civic Clubs  
Chamber of Commerce  
Car Rally  
Hunting  
Ranching  
Library  
After School Activity  
Art Community

#### Weaknesses

Food Availability on Sunday  
Healthy Business Competition  
Retail Shopping  
Entertainment  
Deterioration of buildings  
Nursing Facilities  
Internet Capability  
Railroad Noise Pollution  
Lack of Quiet Zone (RR)  
Workforce – Labor  
Location  
Code Enforcement  
Dilapidated buildings  
Absentee owners  
Civic involvement w/ Government  
Street Condition  
Sewer lines

Vocational Schools  
Affordable Housing  
Sufficient Tradesmen  
City Leadership  
Retail customer service  
Business Planning Failure  
Knowledge of SBDC  
North/South Sides of RR  
Lack of Coordination between City and County  
2 farmers Markets  
Unity of Business Owners  
Newspaper  
Chamber of Commerce

#### Opportunities

SBDC  
Chamber of Commerce  
Empty buildings/houses/lots  
Pipeline  
More communication/coordination amongst Sul Ross-City-County-State  
Nursing Facility  
RV Parks  
Snow Birds  
Implementation Plans  
Restaurants (Should open on Sundays)  
Retail Shops  
Competition drives economic development  
Airport Expansion  
Expand Recycling  
Dancing Hall/Classes/Lessons  
Engage newcomers/retirees  
Border Patrol move from Marfa

#### Threats

Apathy  
Pipeline  
Frontier (Isolation)  
One-way downtown streets

RR blocks cross traffic  
 Brain Drain  
 New Residents not interested in Community  
 Loss of Historic Buildings  
 Absentee business owners  
 Money (GAP) leaving community  
 Enrollment at Sull Ross  
 University of Texas Permian Basin  
 Government Funding (i.e. border patrol)  
 Weather

## Group II (Patricia)

### Strengths

Community Spirit  
 Law Enforcement  
 Sul Ross University  
 Hospital – EMS  
 Tourism  
 Variety of Parks  
 Historic Structures  
 Murals  
 Climate  
 Great Real Estate Market  
 Hub of Greater area  
 Community Parks  
 Amtrak  
 Railway Depot  
 Radio Station  
 Kokernot Field  
 Festivals  
 Library  
 Museum of Big Bend

### Weaknesses

High School Track and other recreational not available  
 One-way Downtown Streets  
 Central place for Community  
 No commercial Air Service

Zoning Enforcement  
 Railroad underpass on West Side too low  
 No Activities for youth  
 Difficult for new families to integrate into Alpine  
 Weak political leadership  
 Too few diners open on Sunday  
 No Fair Grounds  
 Nursing Home  
 Pediatrician/Geriatric Care

### Opportunities

More diverse Restaurants  
 Young People Environments (Arcades, etc.)  
 Ministerial Alliances  
 Horseback Riding  
 Central High School in Alpine for other local communities  
 New leadership groups to be formed to entice younger people  
 Training of Seniors to become mentors  
 Develop Alpine Creek  
 Landscaping  
 Threats  
 Illegal Immigrants close to border (Perception)  
 Apathy  
 High Price of Gas  
 Not enough competition for goods  
 Globalization of Communities (Lack of Identity)  
 Bad food in Schools  
 Ad valorem Tax (Empty Buildings)  
 New Businesses outside city limits  
 Not Planning for the Future  
 Be realistic about pipeline  
 Local Government being in Debt  
 Limited resources (i.e. water)

## Group III (Bert)

### Strengths

City Parks, Recreation Space  
 Pedestrian Friendly

Creek Infrastructure  
 General Infrastructure  
 Views  
 Traffic thru city (not around)  
 Access to Supplies and Hardware  
 County Seat  
 Observatory  
 Culturally diverse and cooperation  
 Diverse Population  
 Educated Professionals  
 Eateries/Beverage Establishments used for networking  
 Water for drinking  
 Slower Pace  
 Law Enforcement  
 Geography  
 Location to Big Bend  
 Climate  
 Passion, Pride, Culture  
 Sul Ross University  
 Big Bend National Park  
 Golden Triangle (Marfa, Alpine, Fort Davis)  
 Early Retirees  
 Historic Buildings  
 Hospital  
 Airport  
 Golf Course  
 Amtrak (Visitors)  
 Wildlife

### Weaknesses

School District (Preparedness for future)  
 Low tax base  
 Infrastructure (Traffic, Water and Sewer)  
 Lack of Parking  
 One-Way Street  
 Lack of Training (Vocational)  
 Workforce  
 Lack of Activities for students  
 High Cost of Housing

Lack of Fresh Produce,Variety  
High Price Point on Groceries  
Lack of good jobs  
Lack of Spousal Employment  
Lack of Eateries  
Customer Service  
Lack of Specialized Medicine  
Senior Housing,Assisted Living

Crosswalks undefined  
Lack of Qualified Workforce  
Adequate water for growth and long term use  
Strong Economy in Texas  
Brain Drain

### Opportunities

Increasing the Student Body  
Vocational School (Skilled Tradesman)  
Car Dealership – Mechanics  
Event Planning Management  
Business/Professional Office  
Venues for Public Events  
Options for Lodging (Hostel)  
East Side Waste Management/Packing Plant  
Ground Water Improvement  
Airport Improvements (Multi-Use, Terminal, Meeting Space, Car  
Rental etc.)  
Aviation Industry  
Train Station  
Utilizing Upper floors of Historic Building  
Parking Downtown  
Renovation of the Downtown District  
Infill in Downtown District (Increase Density)  
Foxworth Building (Lumber/Hardware Structure)  
Enhancing Murphy Street  
Develop Art/Music District  
Branding  
Music Venue  
School District and Home School Cooperation

### Threats

Train (Hazardous Materials)  
Traffic Patterns (Two one-way Main Streets)  
La Entrada Al Pacifico  
Truck Traffic

# Appendix B

## Community Resources

### U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Programs (USDA-RD)

#### **Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans (B & I)**

B&I loans are offered to improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Cooperative organizations, partnerships, non-profits, public bodies, or individuals can apply for a loan provided that the funds are used for specific purposes. They can be used to start up or acquire a business if doing so will prevent employment loss and/or create employment opportunity. Funds can also be used to modernize a business or purchase equipment, land, buildings, or easements. Further information can be found on the USDA-RD website: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_gar.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_gar.html)

#### **Rural Energy for America Program**

This program is available to rural small businesses and agricultural producers through local lenders approved by the USDA. The loans and grants must be used to purchase renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements. More information is available at: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_ReapResEei\\_Eligibility.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_ReapResEei_Eligibility.html)

#### **Rural Business Enterprise Grants Program (RBEG)**

The RBEG Program provides grants for the development of rural businesses, provides funding employment rated adult

education programs, and funds distance learning networks in order to give employees access to adult education programs. Examples of eligible projects include construction or renovations, training and technical assistance, and distance adult learning for training and advancement. More information can be obtained by visiting the RBEG Program website: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_rbeg.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_rbeg.html)

#### **Intermediary Relending Program (IRP)**

The purpose of the IRP is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural communities. Low-interest loans are provided to community organizations for the establishment of revolving loan funds. These organizations can then provide loans for activities like construction or repair of businesses, purchasing and development of land, or pollution control and abatement. More information can be found at: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_irp.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_irp.html)

#### **Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG)**

These grants are designed to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs. Funds can be used for strategic planning, feasibility studies, leadership and entrepreneur training, and more. This program is designated for any area not within the boundaries of a city that has a population of more than 10,000. More information can be found at: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_RBOG.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_RBOG.html)

#### **Community Facilities Grants**

This program provides grant funds to develop essential community facilities in rural communities and areas up to 20,000 in population. Funds may be used to build healthcare

facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities. More information on the program can be found at: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF_Grants.html)

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable communities and ensure everyone has access to an affordable home. They accomplish this through a variety of grants and programs that offer assistance for a variety of needs including disaster recovery, home-improvement, and housing for the elderly.

#### **HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

This program offers grants to states and local governments to implement local housing strategies for increasing home ownership and affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans. Funding can be used for the rehabilitation of housing, provide assistance to home buyers and facilitate the construction of new housing. Participating jurisdictions must match 25% of HOME funds. More information can be found at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUDPrograms2013-12.pdf>

#### **Good Neighbor Next Door**

Law enforcement officers, teachers, firefighters, and EMT's are given the opportunity to buy homes in revitalization areas at a significant discount. The goal is to make the neighborhoods safer and stronger. More information can be found at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUDPrograms2013-21.pdf>

### **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)**

The CDBG Program is a national program whose goal is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities principally for those of low to moderate income. Funds can be allocated for several uses including disaster relief, water and sewer infrastructure improvements, and renewable energy pilot programs. More information can be found through the Department of Housing and Urban Development website at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/hudprograms/toc>

### **Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program**

This program offers competitive grants to private non-profits, counties, and local governments for re-housing of individuals placed in emergency or transitional housing, and for improving the housing situation of low-income families in a geographical area. Funds can also be used to help low-income residents keep their homes and/or improve their access to affordable housing. Additional information is available at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUDPrograms2013-15.pdf>

### **Self-Help Housing Property Disposition**

This program makes surplus federal properties available to state and local governments at less than fair market value for the purpose of building self-help housing for low-income residents. Residents of the property must make a substantial contribution of labor towards the construction, rehabilitation, or renovation of the property. More information can be found by visiting the HUD website at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUDPrograms2013-47.pdf>

### **Community Challenge Planning Grant Program**

These grants are given in partnership with the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency for the development of affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities. Funds can be used to modify master plans, zoning, and building codes to promote development and the re-use of older buildings with the goal of promoting sustainability at the neighborhood and community levels. More information can be obtained at: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HUDPrograms2013-85.pdf>

### **Other Federal Agencies and Programs**

#### **U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA)**

The EDA has several programs designed to improve communities throughout the country. The Public Works Program provides funding to revitalize, expand and upgrade infrastructure in distressed communities to draw in new business and job opportunities to an area. They also provide planning and economic development strategies to designated Economic Development Districts, communities and councils of government. More programs and information are available at: <http://www.eda.gov/>

#### **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**

The SBA offers a number of financial assistance programs for small businesses. They also set guidelines for loans through lenders and community development organizations, help small business contractors obtain surety bonds, and provide mentors and counseling through its Service Corps of Retired Executives

(SCORE) Program. While they do not directly provide grants, they have several sources of funding listed on their website at: <http://www.sba.gov/content/what-sba-offers-help-small-businesses-grow>

#### **Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)**

FEMA offers a variety of grants not only for victims of natural disasters, but for mitigation activities that avert future damage. They also offer grants to local fire departments for staffing, volunteer firefighter retention, and reducing injuries and deaths among high-risk populations. More information can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/grants>

### **Texas Historical Commission Programs**

#### **Texas Main Street Program**

The Texas Main Street program was formed over 30 years ago and is operated through the Texas State Historical Commission. The programs goal is to provide technical expertise, resources and support to Texas communities to preserve and revitalize historic downtowns and commercial neighborhood districts. Communities can apply annually, and each year up to five cities are selected for Texas Main Street designation. Once accepted, cities pay a nominal annual fee based on population and have access to strategic planning reports, design services, resources for funding projects, and much more. More information can be obtained by visiting: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-main-street> or by contacting the Texas Main Street State Coordinator at (512)463-6092. (Texas Historical Commission)

### **Museum Services**

The Texas State Historical Commission also helps small history museums through its Museum Services Program. Staff provides free consultations and assistance in a number of areas including museum development, strategic planning, exhibit design, fundraising and volunteer training. Additionally they offer training on various museum topics through workshops and online. More information can be found by visiting: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/museum-services> or contact the Museum Services Coordinator at (512)463-6427.

### **Cemetery Preservation**

The Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation provided through the Texas Historic Commission protects these cemeteries by recording boundaries in the county records to alert current and future owners of land surrounding these areas. This designation does not impose any restrictions on the private use of land. The site must be designated as an HTC before it is eligible for a historical marker. More information is available at: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/cemetery-preservation>.

### **Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation (THCP)**

The THCP Program was established in 1999 to help counties restore their historic courthouses. The program provides partial matching grants and is regularly funded by the Texas Legislature. Training and education is also provided to county staff for future preservation needs. Further information can be found at: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-historic-courthouse-preservation>

### **Certified Local Government Program (CLG)**

The CLG Program is a partnership for historic preservation of state, federal, and local government. Local governments work independently to develop and maintain a successful preservation program. To qualify, a city or county must enforce legislation that protects historic properties, establish a qualified review commission, maintain a survey and inventory of historic properties, and provide for public participation in the preservation process. More information is available at: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/certified-local-government>

### **Texas Department of Agriculture Programs**

#### **Texas Capital Fund (TCF)**

This program allocates funds to incorporated cities and county governments that do not meet the standards set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program. Funds can be used for real estate development, infrastructure improvements, and downtown revitalization efforts. The TCF can also help attract new business and grow the local economy. More information can be found at: <http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund.aspx>.

#### **GO TEXAN Rural Community Program**

This program is designed to encourage the growth of rural communities throughout Texas. It is a membership-based program that promotes economic activity in rural areas through restaurants, tourism, and special recognition of products made in Texas. Restaurants as well as items manufactured or grown in Texas can receive the special GO TEXAS label.

More information is at: <http://www.gotexan.org/ForMembers/GOTEXANPartnerProgram.aspx>

### **State Office of Rural Health (SORH)**

The SORH works with local healthcare providers, county leaders and state partners to support access to quality healthcare for rural Texans. It also assists healthcare providers through programs that provide information and referrals, medical licensing, grants, and educational awards. A complete list of programs can be found by visiting: <http://www.texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/StateOfficeofRuralHealth.aspx>

### **Other State Agencies and Programs**

#### **Texas Education Agency (TEA)**

The TEA provides grants to schools and school districts throughout Texas for the academic enrichment of students. Examples of grants offered are the Algebra Readiness for Small and Rural Schools Grant, the Online College and Career Preparation Technical Assistance Grant, and the Public Charter School Start-up Grant. More Information can be found at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487872>

#### **Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)**

The mission of the TDHCA is to improve the quality of life of all Texans through the development of better communities. They act as an intermediary for federal grant funds for housing and community services. They also act as a financial and administrative resource that provides essential services and

affordable housing to those who qualify and provides resources for first-time home buyers. More information is available at: <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/index.htm>

### **Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)**

TXDOT offers a number of grants for infrastructure and accessibility improvements. The Safe Routes to Schools Grant is designed to improve the safety of children in grades K-8 that walk or bike to school. The routine Airport Maintenance Program matches local government grants up to \$50,000 for basic improvements like parking lots, fences, or other similar needs at airport facilities. TXDOT also administers funds from several federal grant programs designed to help cities with planning and research, rural public transportation, and transportation for individuals with disabilities. Further information can be found at: <http://www.txdot.gov/government/funding.html>

### **Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)**

The TWDB offers grants and loans for the planning, design, and construction of water related infrastructure and improvement programs. They also offer grants to local governments and technical assistance for agricultural water conservation, flood mitigation, and clean drinking water programs. More information can be found at: <http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/financial/programs/AWCG/index.asp>

### **Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)**

The TCEQ offers both competitive and non-competitive grants to local governments for a variety of uses. Funds can be provided for cleanup or prevention of pollution, research

into pollution reduction, or for replacing old municipal vehicles with newer, more efficient models. The Texas Clean School Bus Program provides money to school districts to replace old school buses with new ones or retrofit them with new technology to reduce the pollution from diesel exhaust. More information can be found at: [http://www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/governments\\_main.html](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/agency/governments_main.html)

### **Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB)**

The TSSWCB offers a matching funds program for soil and water conservation assistance. Through local conservation boards they also offer technical and planning assistance to agricultural producers to incorporate best management practices on their farms and ranches. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.tsswcb.texas.gov/programs/swcdassistance>

### **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)**

The TPWD offers 50% matching grant funds to municipalities, counties, and other units of government for the development of parks, nature centers, urban outdoor recreation, and recreational trails. They also offer 75% matching funds for the construction of public boat ramps throughout Texas. Further information on programs and deadlines can be found at: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#outdoor>

### **Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)**

The TVC awards reimbursement grants to local government agencies and Veterans Service Organizations that provide direct assistance to Texas veterans and their families. Grants

are offered for limited financial assistance, transportation services, housing assistance, and family and child services. More information, grant applications and deadlines can be found at: <http://www.tvc.texas.gov/Apply-For-A-Grant.aspx>.

### **Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA)**

The TCA offers a variety of grants to municipal and county arts agencies to provide services and support in the advancement of the cultural arts. Information and deadlines can be found at: <https://www2.arts.state.tx.us/tcagrants/TXArtsPlan/TAPTOC.asp>

## **Economic Development**

### **Type A and B Economic Development Sales Tax**

These voter-approved taxes are used by cities to promote economic development. To date, more than 583 cities in Texas have collected over \$500 million annually in sales tax revenue. (Office of the Attorney General of Texas) There are key differences between the Type A and Type B sales tax mainly in the ways cities can adopt a sales tax, use tax revenue, and the oversight of project expenditures. Not every city can collect Type A sales taxes, but every city in Texas can collect Type B.

Type A is considered more restrictive and allows more traditional types of economic development initiatives that assist manufacturing or industrial activities. It can fund things like buildings, equipment, facilities, distribution centers, and infrastructure improvements. It can also fund business related airports, port facilities, and some airport activities within 25 miles of an international border. (Office of the Attorney General of Texas)

Type B Sales Taxes fund the same projects that Type A can, as well as projects considered to be community initiatives. Facilities and expenditures for a professional or amateur sports park, entertainment facilities, tourist facilities, and affordable housing are allowed under Type B funds, but with additional procedural requirements. More information is available through the Office of the Attorney General of Texas: [https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf](https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf)

### **Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)**

The HOT is imposed on anyone paying for a room or space in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast costing \$15 or more per night. It also applies to condominiums, apartments, and houses that are rented for less than 30 consecutive days. The State of Texas charges 6% of the cost of the room, and local city and county taxing authorities are allowed to impose an additional percentage provided it does not go above 15% of the room rate. Funds collected must be used to directly enhance and promote tourism. They must also fit into one of the nine statutory categories outlined in the tax code. These categories include the funding of a visitor's center, tourism related advertising, programs that enhance the arts, historical preservation, and others. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/hotel/index.html>

### **Property Tax Incentives**

Attracting new businesses and encouraging economic growth can be accomplished using the right property tax incentives. Property tax abatement, tax increment financing, and the Texas Economic Development Act are three ways a municipality can

grow economically, attract new industries, and retain existing employers.

Property tax abatement is where incorporated cities, counties, and special districts are permitted to enter into an agreement with a taxpayer (i.e. a business) that exempts all or part of the increase in property value from taxation over a period of up to ten years. (Texas Comptroller's Economic Development & Analysis Division)

Tax increment financing can be used by a city or county to publicly finance needed improvements to infrastructure and buildings within a designated reinvestment zone. (Office of the Texas attorney General) The cost of improvements is financed by future tax revenues levied against property in the improved area.

The Texas Economic Development Act also gives school districts the ability to create jobs and attract investment. A school district can provide tax credits and an 8-year limitation on appraised value of a property on the school district property tax to eligible corporations or limited liability companies (LLC). In return, the companies are required to use the property for manufacturing, research and development, clean energy generation and other similar uses. (Office of the Attorney General of Texas) More information on property tax incentives can be found by visiting: [https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf](https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf)

### **County Development District (CDD)**

Counties with a population of 400,000 or less can be petitioned

by landowners to establish a CDD in an effort to promote and develop tourism in the county. They are allowed to levy taxes for such purposes provided that they do not exceed the 2% cap on local tax rates. More information can be found at <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.383.htm>

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

PID's provide a way for cities make necessary public improvements by allowing them to collect special assessments on property within the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. A PID can be formed to improve drainage and wastewater facilities, construct or improve libraries or off-street parking, acquire and install pieces of art, or other similar projects that improve public safety and economic development. More information of PID's can be found at: [http://www.texasahead.org/tax\\_programs/pubimprovement/](http://www.texasahead.org/tax_programs/pubimprovement/)

### **Municipal Management Districts (MMD)**

Also called a downtown management district, a MMD is created within an existing commercial area as a supplement to municipal services in the area. Improvements to infrastructure and facilities are paid for by a combination of self-imposed property taxes, impact fees, and special assessments. Many cities in Texas have used this tool with great success. Additional information can be found by visiting: [https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf](https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/pdfs/econdevhb2013.pdf)

### **Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZ)**

A NEZ can be established by a city to promote economic development activities within a designated area. The zone must promote the creation of affordable housing; an increase

in economic development; an increase in quality of social services; education, and public safety; and, the rehabilitation of affordable housing. The city has certain development powers within the zone to draw in economic activity. They may grant waivers for building fees, issue municipal sales tax refunds, offer property tax abatements, and establish baseline performance standards and environmental goals on construction projects. More information can be found at: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.378.htm>

### **NAFTA Impact Zones**

Cities with areas affected by the North American Free Trade Agreement are authorized to establish this zone. The rules are nearly identical to Neighborhood Empowerment zones. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/LG/htm/LG.379.htm>