

# Making the Case for Sticky Community Design

—

Hidalgo Co., TX

Aug. 2015



Intrepid walk auditors yesterday.

## In a nutshell:

- We should be **physically active**.
- But mostly we are **not**.
- Simply telling people to exercise **doesn't work**.
- Building more active environments **does**.
- Bonus: we get **triple bottom line** benefits.

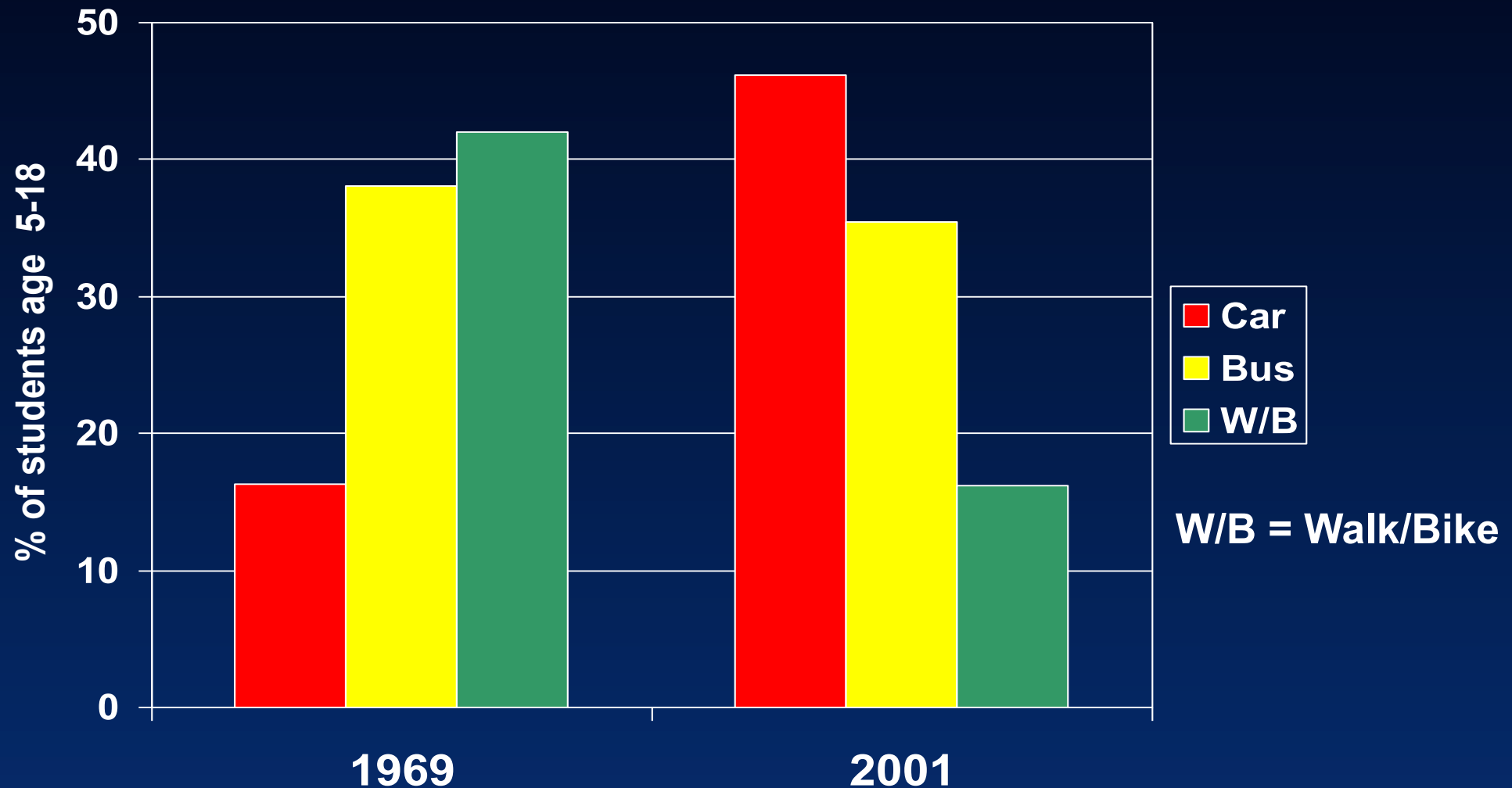


# Youthful recollections



# Changes in Walking & Cycling to School, 1969 to 2001

Ham et.al., *Jour. of Physical Activity & Health*, 2008, 5, 205-215



# Trends in Childhood Obesity & Overweight

- 2–5 Years of Age
- 6–11 Years of Age
- 12–19 Years of Age



CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. *National Health Examination Surveys (NHANES) II (ages 6–11) and III (ages 12–17), and NHANES I, II and III, and 1999–2006.*

[www.rwjf.org/files/publications/annual/2008/year-in-review/](http://www.rwjf.org/files/publications/annual/2008/year-in-review/)

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)



The real risk kids face . . .



[freerangekids.org](http://freerangekids.org)

## **A thought:**

**Evolve the conversation. It's *not just* an obesity epidemic.**

**It's twin epidemics of **physical inactivity** and **poor nutrition**.\***

**\* Two of the three biggest drivers of skyrocketing healthcare costs.**

# The bad news in just three numbers:

**30** minutes of daily physical activity recommended (**60** min for youth).

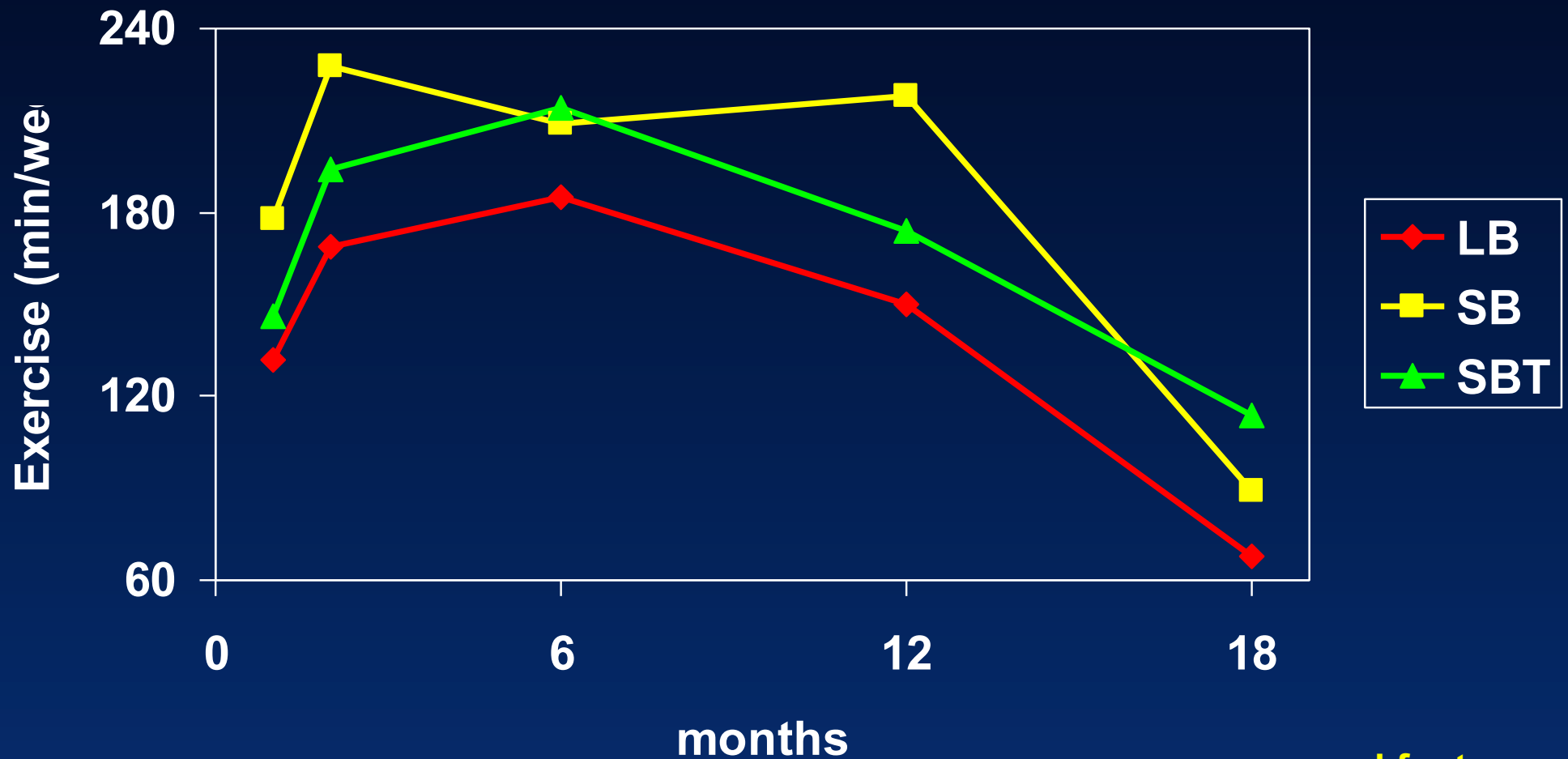
< **20** % of Americans actually meet these recommendations (thru LTPA).

**365,000** Estimated annual deaths in America due to physical inactivity & poor nutrition. (2<sup>nd</sup> only to tobacco.)



# Exercise Participation

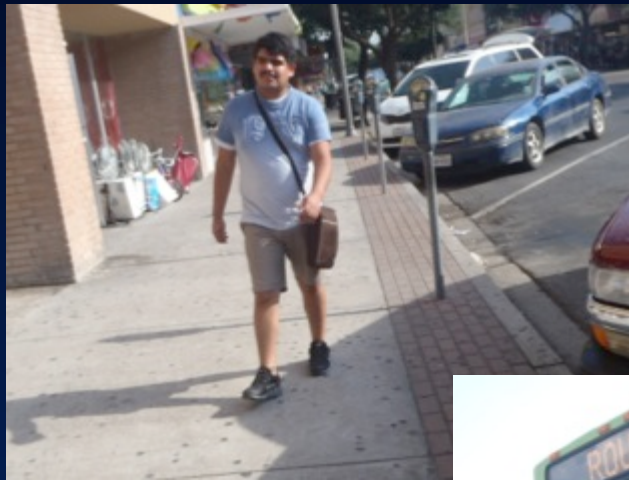
Effect of Short Bouts, Home Treadmills  
(Jakicic et.al., *J. Amer. Med. Assoc.*, 282, 16)



## **A realization:**

Simply teaching people to “exercise” is not enough. We need to support increases in **routine, daily physical activity** for everyone.

**Necessary and  
important,  
but insufficient. >**



**< We must build  
communities  
where people are  
*intrinsically*  
more active.**

**But if we build it  
will they come?**

# 4 elements for stickiness

1. Destinations within walk, bike, & transit distance.
2. Sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, safe crossings.
3. Functional designs & for bikes, peds, & transit.
4. Safe & accessible for all ages, incomes, abilities.



[www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org)

CDC Guide to Community Preventive Services

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

# Or in planner language:

- Mix of land uses.
- Network of bike, pedestrian, & transit facilities.
- Functional site design & details.
- Safety & universal access.



New community center,  
San Carlos



Canal trail to school . . .

# 1. Land use.

Live, work, shop, play, learn, pray.



Schools nearby.



E.g. shopping, post office, library, . . .

Compact neighborhoods & shared open space.



Housing above, retail below.



# 1a. Healthy nutrition choices

Penitas community garden



Groceries, healthy corner stores, farmers markets . . .



Drive-throughs?





## 2. Network. More activity with:



Re

- Presence of sidewalks, bike lanes.
- Access to trail, park, pathway.
- Grid, shorter blocks.
- Better, more frequent *transit*.



# Transit riders are physically active.

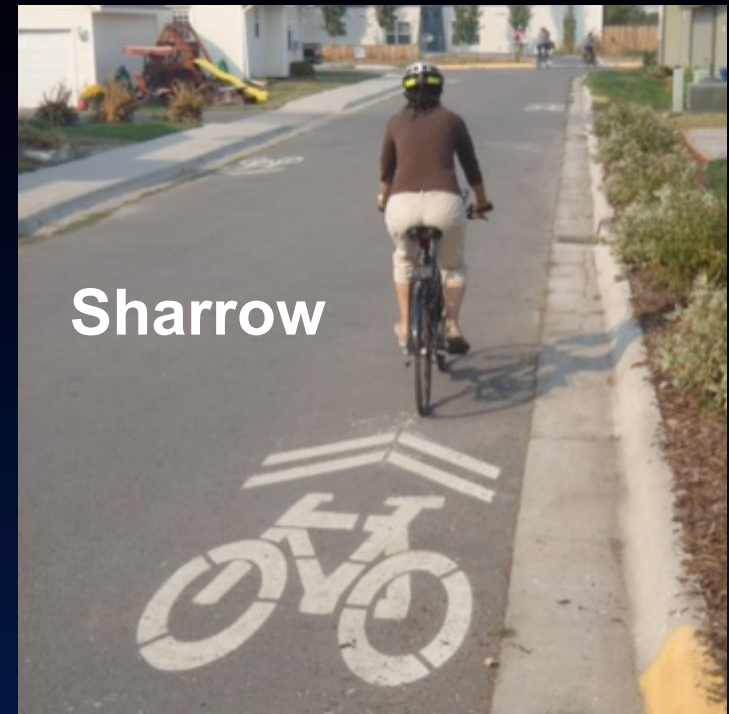
Besser, Dannenberg, *Amer. J. Prev. Med.*, 29 (4), Nov. 2005.

Just during the **walk** to transit:

- Half of transit riders walk at least 19 mins.
- 29% get at least 30 mins. of activity.
- Minorities, poor (income <\$15k/yr.), denser urban dwellers more likely to get 30+ mins./day due to transit trips.



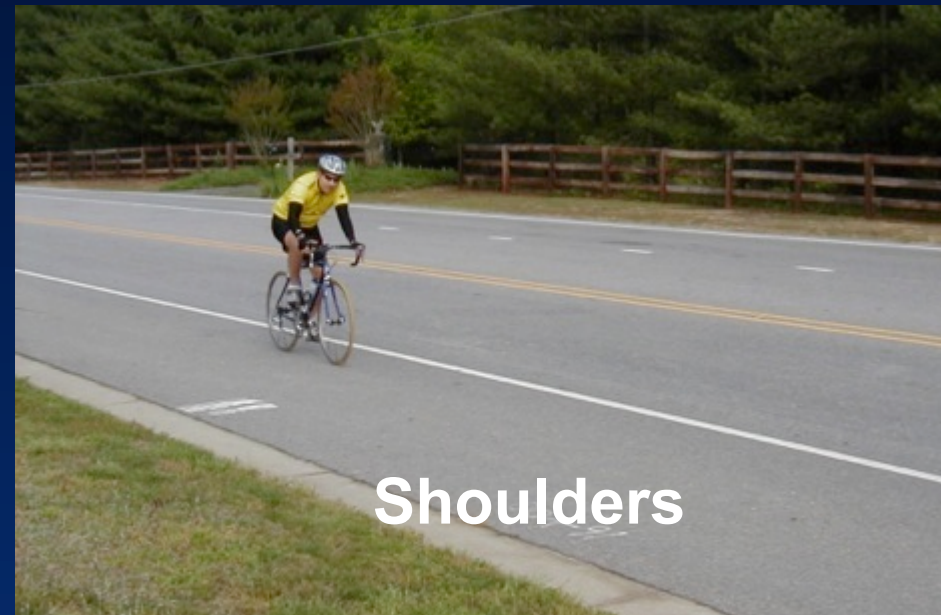
# Bicycle network options:



Sharrow



Bike lanes



Shoulders

# Bicycle network options:



Protected bike lane



Phoenix, AZ



Sacramento

# 3. Site design:



**McAllen**

**Which setting is more appealing for travel on foot, by bike, and by transit?**

# 3. Site design:

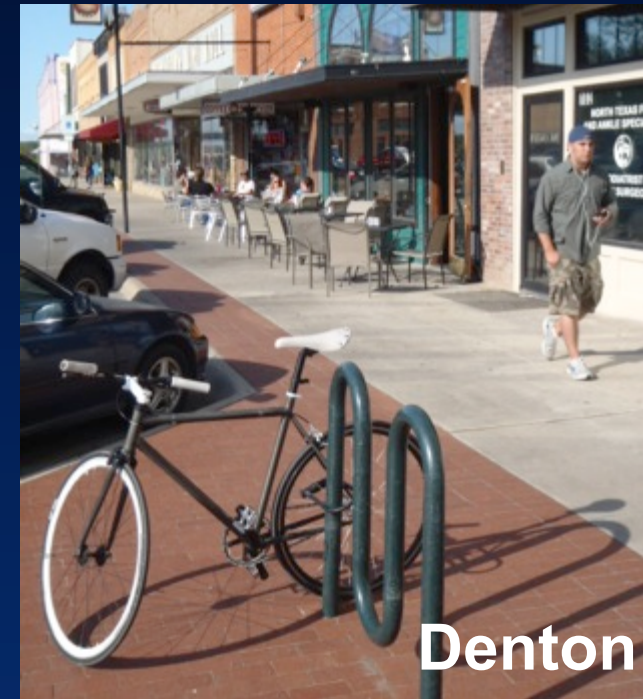


**Weslaco**

**Which setting is more appealing for travel on foot, by bike, and by transit?**

# Site design Research & practice suggest:

- Buildings near the sidewalk, not set back; parking on street or behind.
- Trees, benches, lighting, awnings, “human” scale.
- Details: bike parking, open space, plants, art, materials.



## Possible incentives:

- Decrease, share parking (include bike racks).
- Build-to lines.
- Mixed-use, multi-story, w/ residential density bonus.
- Expedite permits.



Neenah WI



Appleton WI

**Elected & appointed officials & staff must be supported if they are to act!**

**Donald Shoup,  
*The High Price of Free Parking***



## 4. Safety & access :

- Engineering can dramatically improve safety.
- Increasing bike & pedestrian trips *decreases* accident & fatality rates.

(Jacobsen P, *Injury Prevention*, 2003; 9:205-209.)



# Four Elements of Healthy Community Design:



Mix of destinations



Ped, bike, & transit network

Safety & access



Site design

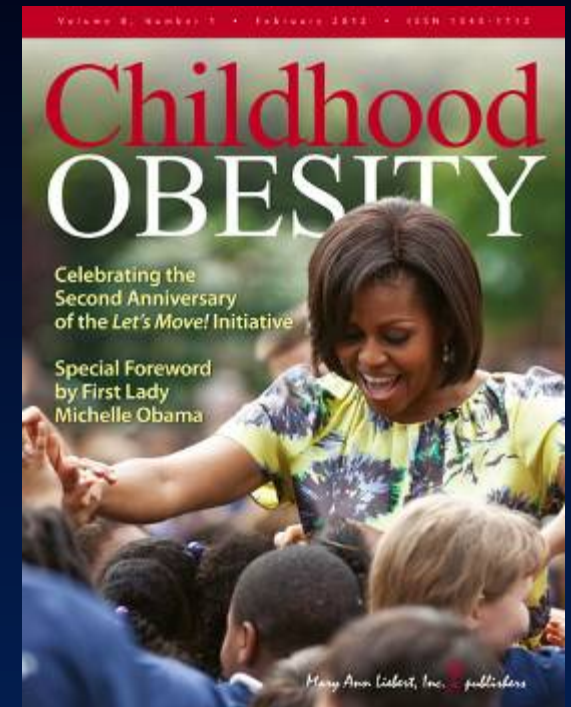
[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

[www.markfenton.com](http://www.markfenton.com)

# Policies & procedures, not programs.

Fenton, Community Design . . . , *Childhood Obesity*, 8(1); Feb 2012.

- Master planning, **zoning**, **subdivision rules**.
- **Complete streets** guidelines & routine practice.
- Transportation **trail networks**.
- **Bicycle & transit** infrastructure, incentives.
- **Schools as centers of community health**.



# 1. Plan & zone to keep things closer.

- Slow the spill out into open space, farm & ranch land.
- Concentrate development near existing infrastructure.



More of this . . .



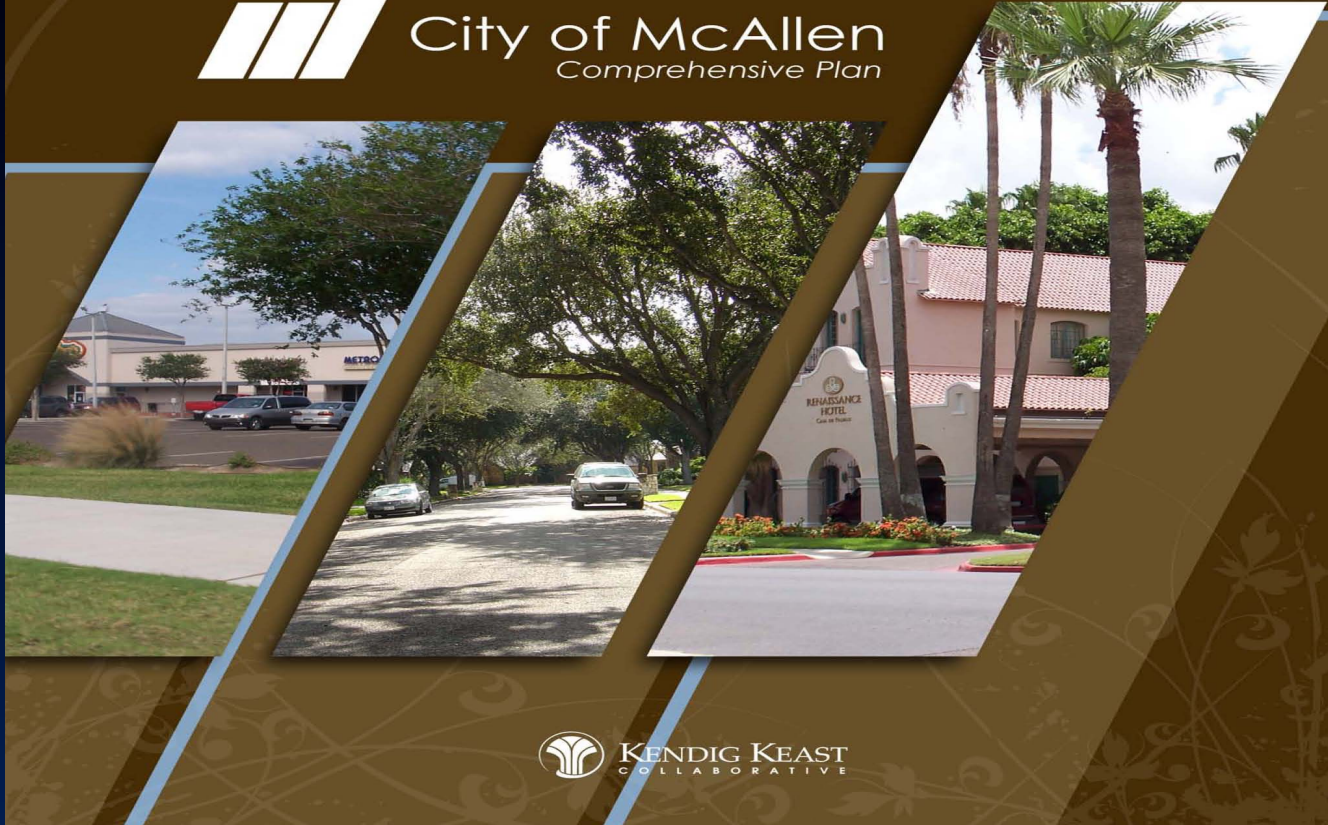
Terre Haute



Less of this . . .



City of McAllen  
Comprehensive Plan



KENDIG KEAST  
COLLABORATIVE

# *Foresight McAllen Plan*

## *Horizon 2025*

# The Words of Your *Vision*

By the Year 2025, McAllen will be the Valley leader, economically, culturally, and environmentally, with a unique character that proclaims McAllen as a “destination city.” As a model border city, McAllen will promote its unique cultural heritage, be safe and clean, and have a beautiful appearance. McAllen will be a Mecca for a well-educated, creative workforce with quality and diversified employment opportunities. It will have sustainable, quality growth with safe, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and excellent transportation initiatives.

# Site design.



Not quite there . . .

