

2007 Community Concept Plan for Poth, Texas

The University of Texas at San Antonio College of Architecture - Center for Economic Development



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City of Poth

Chrystal Eckel - Mayor
Travis Pruski - Council Member
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Rita Serna - Council Member

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Preface

The Poth Economic Development Corporation retained Ernest Gerlach of the Center for Economic Development and Dr. Richard Tangum of the College of Architecture at The University of Texas at San Antonio to develop a Community Plan for the City of Poth, Texas. The Plan is presented in three chapters: Introduction, Options for the Future, and Background.

The first chapter defines the regional context and history of Poth. Guiding principles for the community plan and future land-use development are discussed. The goal statements were derived from discussions and review sessions with community leaders. This section concludes with a discussion of population trends for the City in the past and population projections into the future.

The second chapter examines options for the future development of the City. This discussion includes recommendations for improvements in Poth's downtown district. The advantages of a proposed community pavilion, new city hall, community learning center, and future rail stop are discussed along with commercial expansion. The importance of historical buildings that define the unique character of the City is discussed. The potential for a linked open space network and an expanded hiking and biking trail is also analyzed. A future land use and transportation plan for the City is suggested that offers balanced development for the future. This chapter concludes with a review of current ordinances and recommendations for the future.

The third chapter reviews the background for the Community Plan. Included in the review are discussions of economic trends, land use and zoning patterns, housing, streets, traffic, utilities, and environmental conditions.

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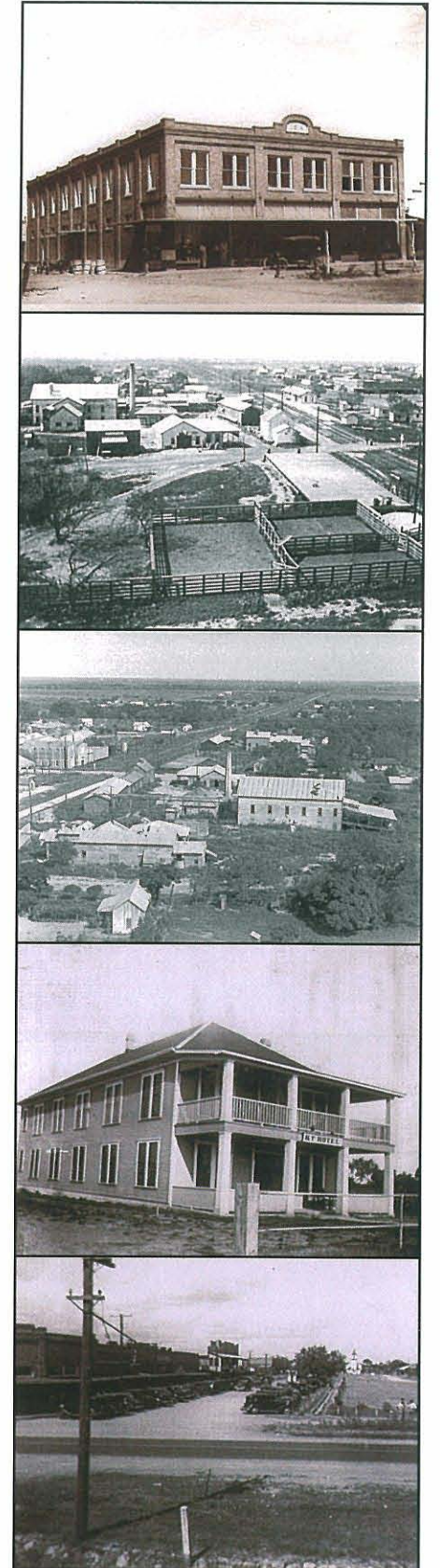
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Introduction



Regional Context

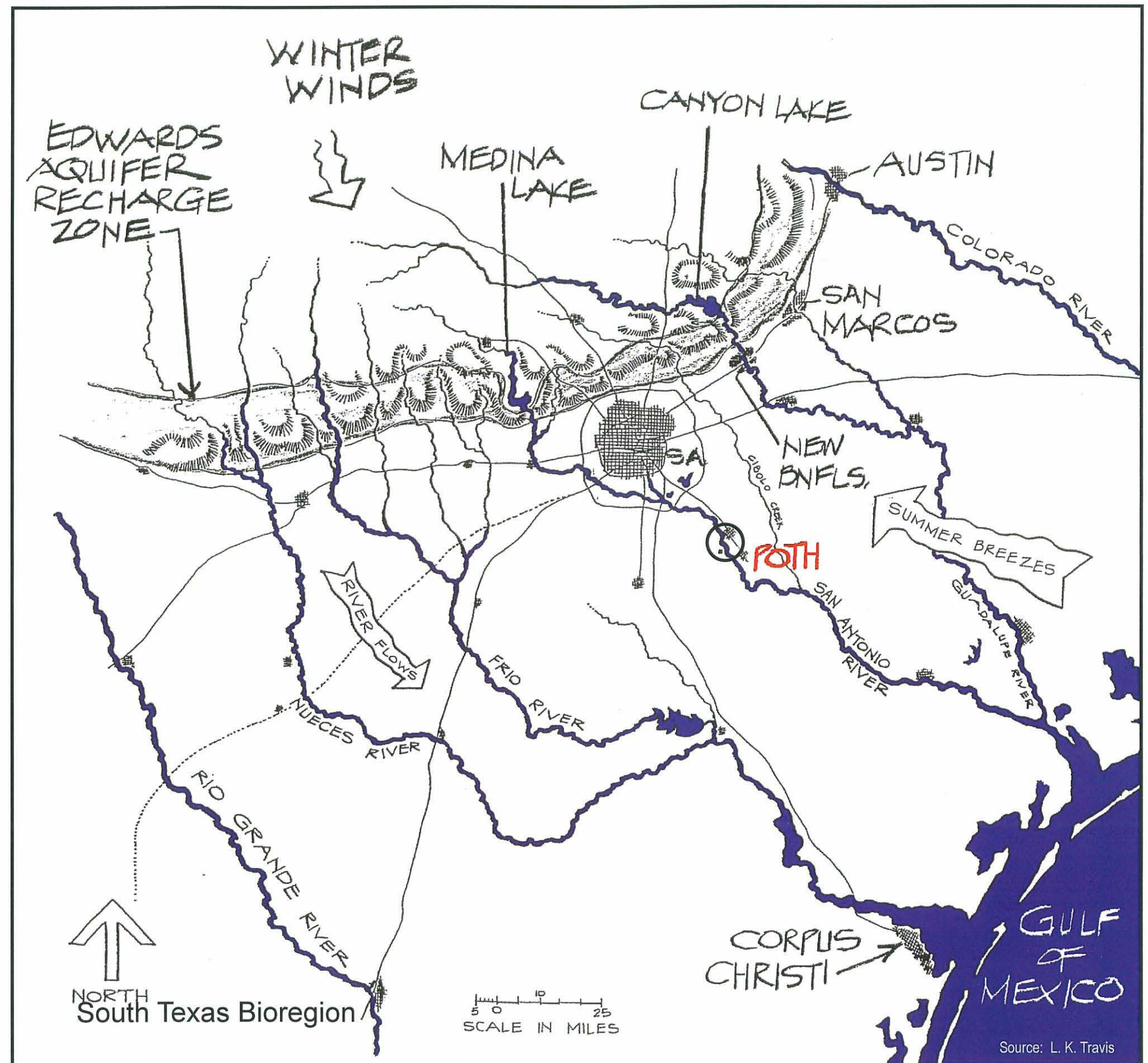
Poth is located in the northeast sector of the South Texas Plains region. This region lies south of San Antonio and contains over 20,000,000 acres of rolling to level topography. Elevations vary from sea level to 1,000 feet with soils that are alkaline to slightly acid. Average annual rainfall can range from 16 to 35 inches with the highest rainfall occurring in May and June.

The first descriptions of vegetation in south Texas by Spanish explorers records grasslands and woody plants (trees and shrubs) along major drainageways and river bottoms. Settlers arriving between 1820-1870 changed the landscape, especially with the introduction of barbed wire. Overgrazing allowed brush to invade the prairie.

Texas has ten distinct vegetative areas. These large areas called ecological regions or bioregions are defined by similar natural features in flora, water, fauna, soils, climate, and landforms. The dominant vegetation type in the South Texas Plains region is thorny brush which includes plants like prickly pear, blackbrush, brasil, and mesquite. Ash, elm, live oak, and hackberry forests occur along creeks and rivers. The diversity of habitats also accommodates many bird species as wild turkeys, quail, and mourning doves. In addition, white-tailed deer are found throughout the region.



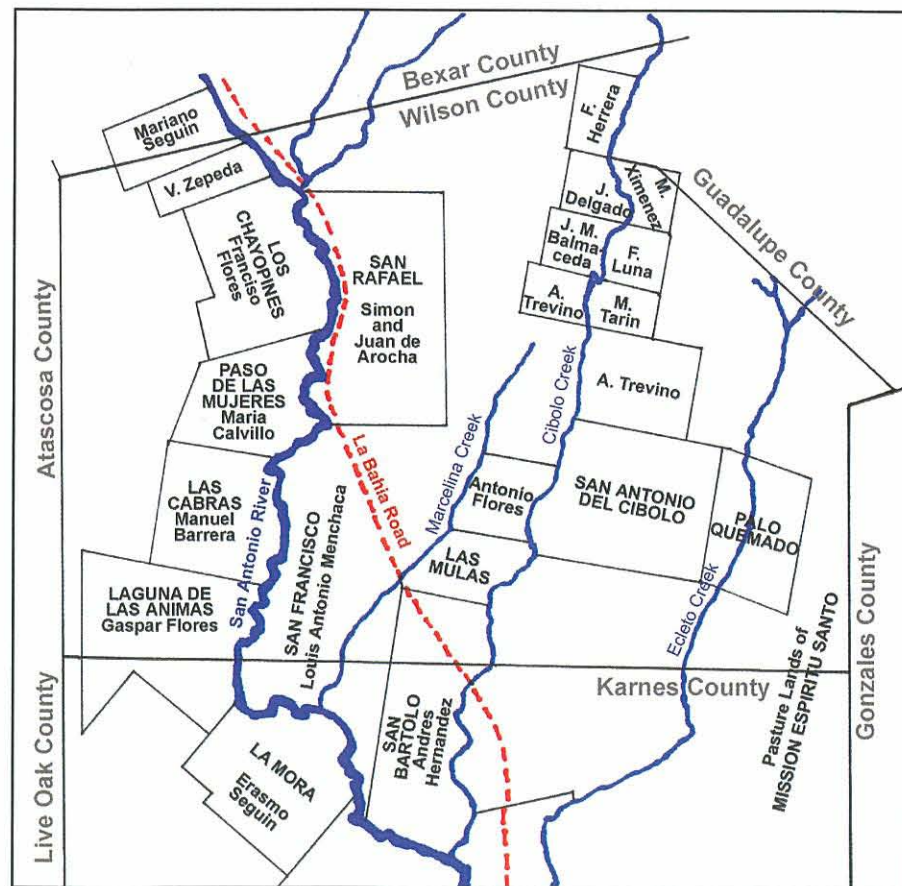
South Texas Brushland



History

Spanish Colonial Settlement

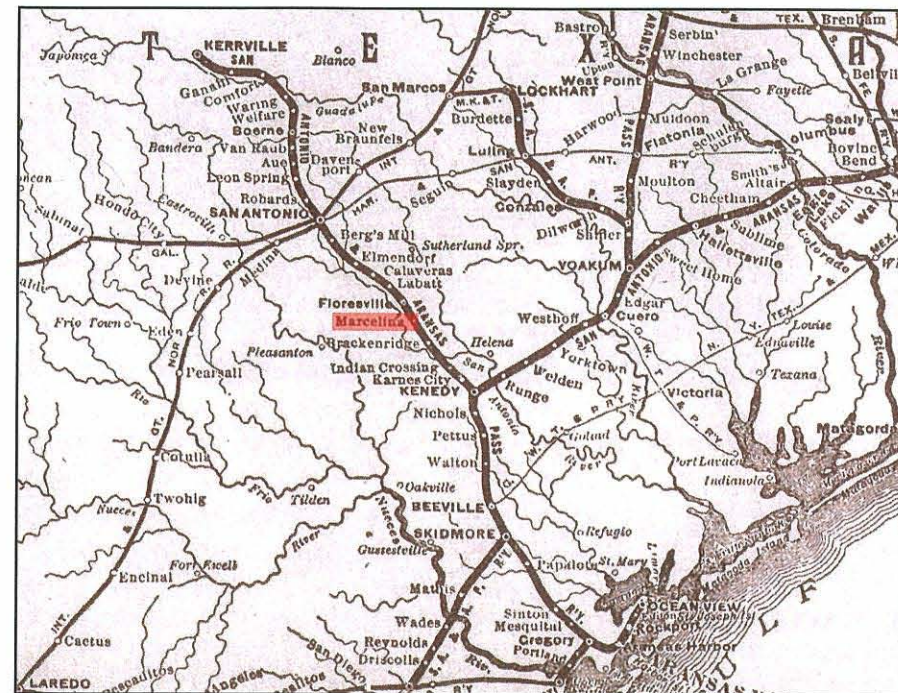
Early residents of the Poth area were the Tonkawa Indians who were driven from central Texas by the Apaches around 1600. Hispanic settlement in the vicinity of Poth dates back to the 1700s, when Spanish settlers first entered the area. The King of Spain granted land to those who showed their loyalty to the throne. Louis Menchaca and Andres Hernandez both received land grants from the King. In 1758, after several negotiations and trades, Menchaca became to owner of land that is bordered by the Alamo-La Bahia Road to the east, the San Antonio River to the west, the Marcelina Creek (near present day Falls City) to the south, and the El Pajario Creek (near present day Floresville) to the north. In the middle of these natural boundaries is the land that is now the city of Poth. By 1776, the Missions of San Antonio and private citizens of the area were using this land for ranching. The land was appealing to ranchers because of the plentiful grass, adequate water supply, and mild weather.



Source: <http://www.glo.state.tx.us> (TGLO Map collection - Wilson County)
Spanish Land Grants

The Railroad

The town of Poth was not established until the railroad route of the San Antonio-Aransas Pass (SAAP) railroad was built. The railroad company began the construction of the rail line in 1886 and planned on following the La Bahia Road through Bexar, Wilson, and Karnes counties. The route deviated from its intended path when the town of Helena did not meet monetary terms set by SAAP. This change allowed the route to take a more southerly path to establish a connection with Corpus Christi. In 1886, a switch station and water supply point located 35 miles southeast of San Antonio was established and called Marcelina, after a creek in the vicinity. The name of the community was changed to Poth in 1901.



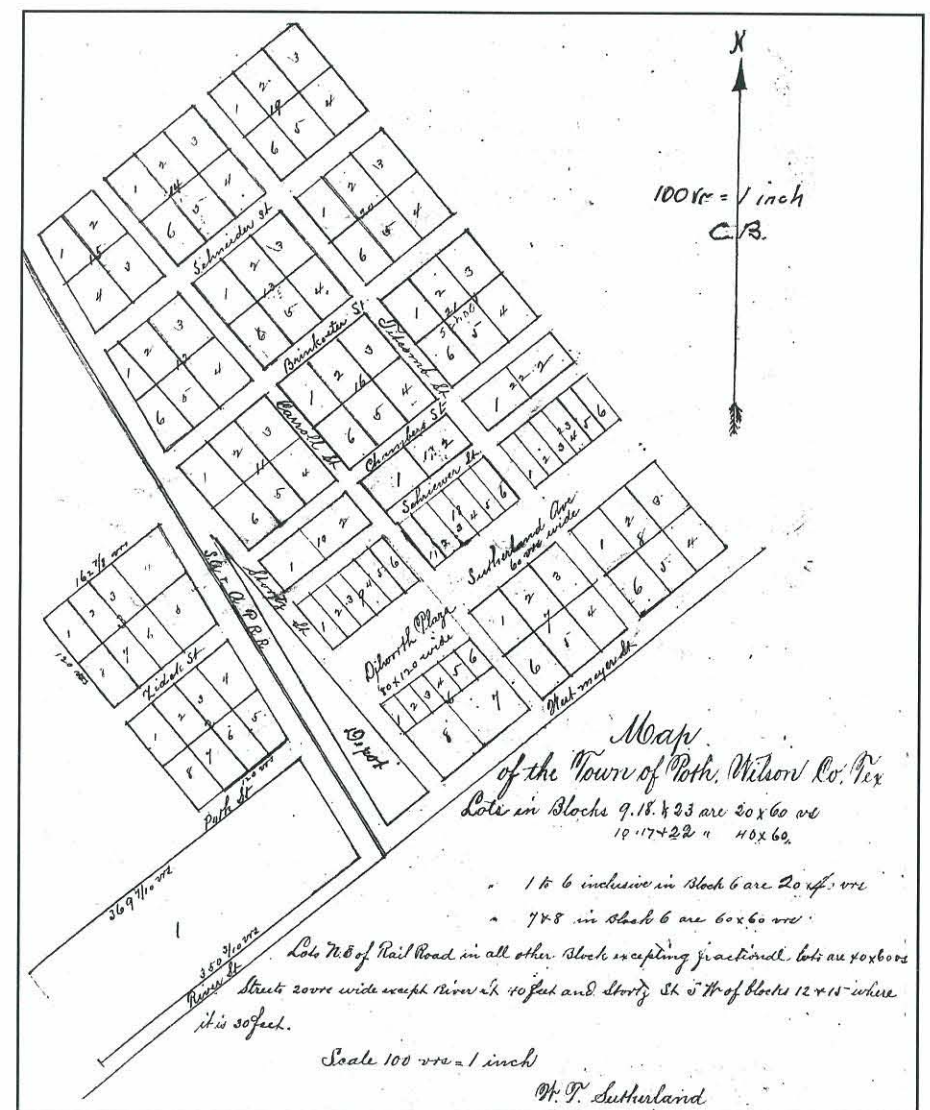
Source: <http://saap.tnorr.com>

SAAP Railroad Route

The railroad provided important service to ranchers that were settled in the surrounding area. During early years, Marcelina remained an isolated location that served as the site where cattle from local ranches were corralled, loaded on railcars and shipped north or east to market. Large ranches in Wilson County were owned by the Dilworth, Dewees, and Hawkins families.

Marcelina Becomes Poth

On August 26, 1901 the name of the community changed from Marcelina to Poth when the postal service was established. A. H. Poth was appointed to serve as the first postmaster. When it came time to submit the official application, the name "Marcelina" could not be used because it was the name of another town in Texas. Because of this conflict, A. H. Poth simply put his own name in the space and Poth became the official name of the community. The owner of majority of the land in and around the new community was owned by Mary K. Jones, a member of the Dilworth ranching family. To jump-start the community, she gave a parcel of land to Frank Stortz to build and operate a store and another parcel to A.H. Poth to build and operate a cotton gin.



Source: Gene Maeckel

The few settlers that lived in and around Poth were local ranchers, their hired hands, and people of German heritage. The area was primarily settled by Germans who were second and third generation descendants of immigrants who originally settled in Moulten, approximately 75 miles northeast of Poth, in Lavaca County.



Reynold's Gin (ca. 1944)
Source: Gene Maeckel

Development

The success of Frank Stortz and A. H. Poth in their business ventures encouraged the development of other new businesses and population growth. In 1905, Ms. Jones further supported the development of Poth by funding the surveying, platting, and recording of the community in the Wilson County Courthouse in Floresville.

During the next 32 years, the businesses and population of Poth expanded. By 1906, private residences, businesses, a school, and church were built along with a wooden depot constructed by the railroad. In 1909, the town of Poth included a blacksmith, repair shops, a school building, meat market, dance hall, and several saloons. The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church was constructed on land donated to the church and dedicated in 1912. Two years later, the first bank was chartered by J. H. Brown and operated by R. J. Woellert. The first brick building was constructed in 1914 by A. H. Poth. In 1915, E. H. Reinhard and William Eckel built the Eckel's Cash Store which sold groceries, clothes, and hardware. In the following years, Poth continued to grow and more people came to the town and established residences and businesses.

However, along with the growth came disaster. Two major fires destroyed important buildings in December of 1920. On December 7, 1920, the railroad depot was destroyed and was soon replaced with a masonry structure that still stands today. On December 28, 1920, a segment of the business district was destroyed by fire. Five businesses located on the north side of Dilworth Plaza were completely destroyed. Fortunately, the Eckel's Cash Store was spared. Almost immediately, the buildings were replaced and businesses reopened. At this time, the population of Poth was reported to be approximately 300 people.



Poth Mercantile Building built by A. H. Poth (1912-1914)
Source: Gene Maeckel



Schneider's Cafe (Pop's Family Restaurant) at the corner of US 181 and FM 541
Source: Gene Maeckel



December 28, 1920 - Fire Destroys Business on the Plaza.
Source: Gene Maeckel

In November of 1922, St. John's Lutheran Church was offered land by Mary K. Jones and built a church. In 1926, many of the local citizens decided that the town needed a fire department. This led to the formation of a volunteer organization. In the early 1930s, citizens began discussing incorporation for Poth. A successful election was held and the incorporation took place on October 18, 1933. After this achievement, the City began a series of modern improvements. Streetlights, street paving, city waterworks, and a sewer system were added to the City. In 1946, Poth was the first city in Wilson County to have paved streets.

More tragedy followed when, in 1942, a hurricane struck the city while the U.S. was at war which made repairs difficult because of the shortage of building materials

By 1965, the population rose to 1,119 people and 35 businesses were reported in operation. Poth continued to expand in population, however, declined in business. In 1990, there were 1,771 people and 13 businesses. Today (2006), the population is 1,850 people.

Historical Timeline

- 1884

The San Antonio Aransas Pass (SAAP) Railroad began making its way from the City of San Antonio to the Gulf Coast of Texas
- 1886

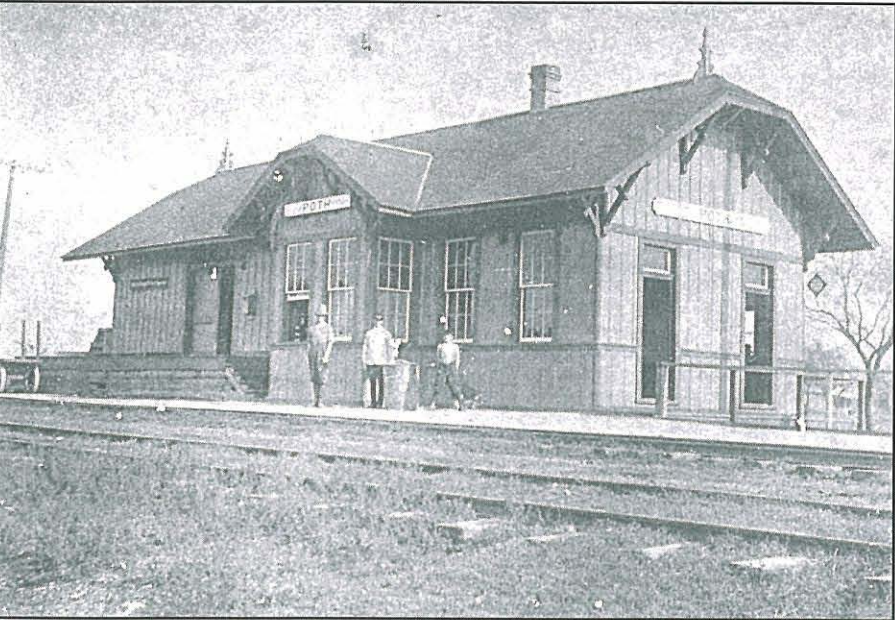
Marcelina, 35 miles southeast of San Antonio, was established as a switch station on the San Antonio Aransas Pass Railroad
- August 26, 1901

A postal service is established in town and the towns's name is changed to Poth
- 1901

A.H. Poth establishes a cotton gin and soon after, 3 more gins are built
- October 10, 1905

Mary K. Jones secures surveying and platting of the community which led to the dedication of the Town of Poth
- 1906

A rail depot is built along with more private residences and businesses



Original San Antonio Aransas Pass Railroad Depot

Source: Gene Maeckel

- 1909

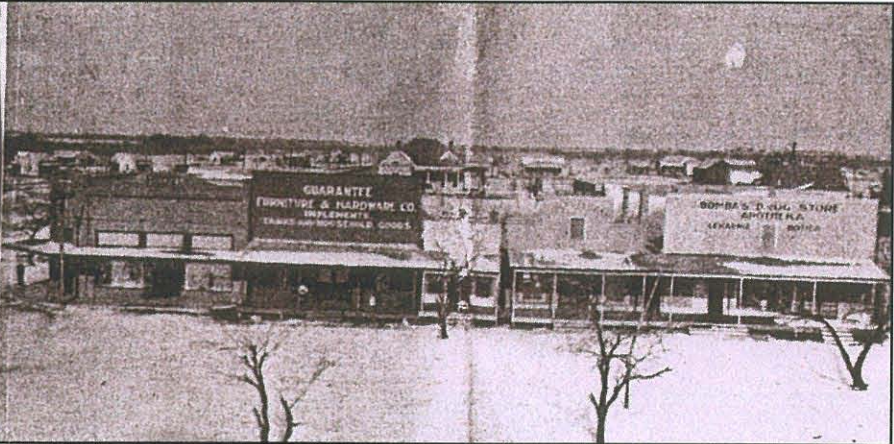
Many businesses and services have been established such as a blacksmith, repair shops, a school building, meat market, dance hall, and several saloons
- January 21, 1912

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church is constructed on land donated to the church and is formally dedicated
- 1914

The first bank is established by J. H. Brown and operated by R. S. Woellert
- 1914

The first brick building is constructed in town by A. H. Poth
- 1915

E. H. Reinhardt and William Eckel build a general mercantile store which sells groceries, clothes, and hardware



Business Along the Plaza (ca. 1920)

Source: Gene Maeckel

- December 7, 1920

Fire destroys the rail depot – a new masonry depot is constructed
- December 28, 1920

An additional fire destroys a large portion of downtown businesses
- November 30, 1922

St. John's Lutheran Church is dedicated



Dilworth Plaza (ca. 1940)

Source: Gene Maeckel

- 1926

Poth Volunteer Fire Department is established
- October 18, 1933

Poth becomes an incorporated city
- 1939

Poth High School is built
- 1942

A hurricane ravages the area while the U.S. is at war which makes repair materials hard to acquire
- 1945

Poth is the first city in Wilson County to have paved streets
- 1959

The Poth City Hall is built
- 1986

Dillworth Plaza is built

Guiding Principles

The 2006 Community Concept Plan for Poth, Texas establishes ten guiding principles that provide the basis from which valuable, useful and sustainable decisions can be made.

Social Goals... to achieve a healthier, satisfying and meaningful life for all citizens by:

- providing secure and sufficient housing in a healthy and nourishing environment that will meet the individuals' physical and psychological needs.
- supplying the essential facilities, resources, and opportunities, for the physical well-being of the citizens of Poth.
- providing opportunities for cultural enjoyment and participation.



A Saturday Morning at Lyssy & Eckel - 2006

Economic Goals... to achieve a viable economy for Poth, capable of assuring the greatest employment opportunities and improving the standard of living, by:

- making efforts to attract new business development and promoting the development of existing businesses.
- providing adequate and desirable locations for business expansion.

Urban Planning Goals... to achieve a convenient, satisfying and attractive community in which to live, work, and play by:

- establishing and maintaining land use patterns which provide maximum opportunity to meet human needs.

- preserving the natural environment and removing those components which tend to degrade the landscape and community.
- improving the Central Business District by upgrading its visual image and improving its potential for economic, social, and cultural activities.
- providing sufficient, but not excessive, amount of land for urban usages in appropriate locations.



The Downtown Business District in Poth - 2006

Transportation Goals... to achieve a proficient transportation system capable of moving both people and goods by:

- developing a circulation system (pedestrian and vehicular) to serve existing and future land use, and assist in shaping the course of future expansion.
- coordinating the planning of residential streets in new subdivisions with the thoroughfare plan as they develop.



The Poth Railroad Station - 2006

Education Goals... to achieve an educational system that will make certain that all citizens are provided the opportunities intended to fit the needs, capacities, and capabilities of the individual by:

- elevating the academic achievement of pupils and rising the holding power of the schools in order to cultivate full educational potential.
- making the greatest possible use of the local educational institutions in improving the levels of human skills.



Poth ISD Library - 2006

Recreation Goals... to achieve a more stimulating and rewarding use of leisure time by:

- providing both active and passive recreational facilities, conveniently situated, which satisfy individual needs and desires.
- preserving and developing a continuous open space system in those areas inappropriate for urban development because of slopes, topography and flooding.
- encouraging the development of the region's recreation potential.



Proposed Hike and Bike Trail Location - 2006

Government Goals... to achieve community spirit and structure of local government by:

- providing responsible leadership to the community.
- encouraging citizen participation in the planning process.

Housing Goals... to provide the opportunity for all citizens to live in safe, sanitary and decent housing by:

- encouraging the continued development of new housing units and rehabilitation of existing housing units where needed.
- encouraging the development of low and moderate income housing by utilizing available Federal and State programs.



Poth Housing - FM 541 - 2006



Poth Housing - Railroad Street - 2006

Sustainable Community Goals... to provide a healthy and safe environment to work and live in complementary to surrounding ecosystems while meeting the economic, social, and other needs of the present and future generations of Poth citizens by:

- conserving energy and water resources and minimizing waste.
- integrating sustainable principles into rules, policies, and practices.
- representing a balanced mix of residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses in land use patterns.



Recreational Open Space

Source: Albert Casares



Poth Housing - FM 541 - 2006

Source: Albert Casares

Historic Preservation Goals... to identify, preserve, protect and enhance significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources in order to promote community and economic development while instilling public awareness of these resources by:

- conducting archaeological and historic surveys to identify and evaluate sites, buildings and structures.
- reviewing the land use, housing, transportation, and economic development projects of the City of Poth to ensure cultural resources remain protected and historic preservation is enforced.
- promoting historic preservation as a successful economic development tool to maintain, enhance, and revitalize Poth and to promote tourism.
- increasing the number of historic resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Source: Gene Maeckel

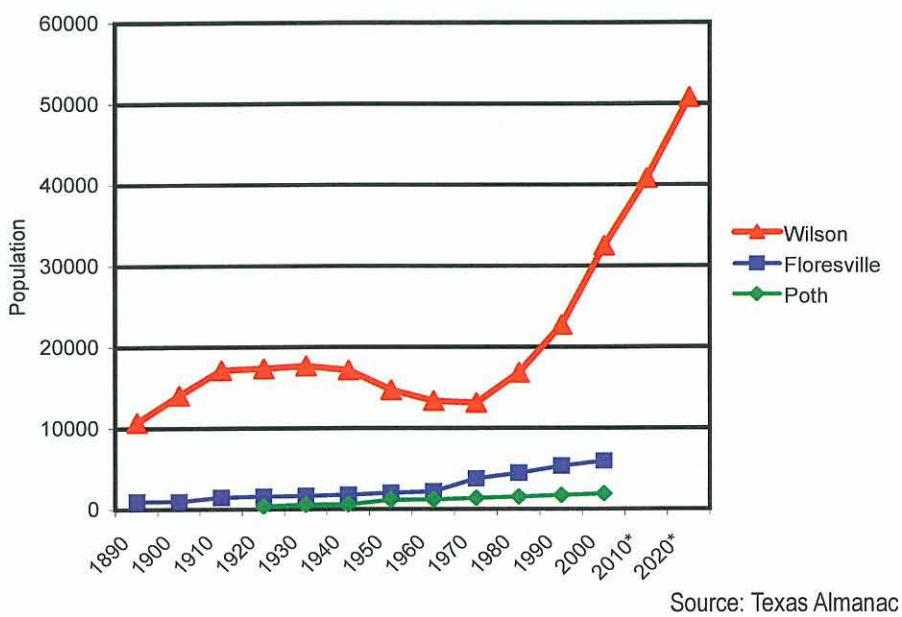
Poth Mercantile - 1920s



Poth Mercantile - 2006

Population Trends

When the post office was established in 1904, Poth had a population of 80 people. As the town began to develop, the population grew to 175 people by 1916, increasing to 350 people in 1930, and 600 people in 1947. The population of Poth increased dramatically in 1955 to 1,089 people, while Wilson County was experiencing a decline in population. By 1990, slow and steady growth resulted in a population of 1,642 residents.



Population of Poth, Floresville, and Wilson County 1890 - 2020

According to the 2000 census, Poth had a population of 1,850 people, with 623 households, and 490 families. Poth has experienced a slow and steady increase in population since 1970. However, Poth has not grown at the same rate as Wilson County since 1975. In 1970, the population of Poth accounted for 9.9% of the total population of Wilson County. By 2000, Poth made up only 5.7% of the population of the county.

The population of Poth experienced a 13% growth from 1,296 in 1970 to 1,461 in 1980 with a total population change of 165 people. During the same time, Wilson County experienced a 23.5% growth. From 1980 to 1990, the Poth population change was 181 people (12.4%), while Wilson County grew by 35%. From 1990 to 2000, the Poth population change was 208 people which results in a 13% change, yet Wilson County boasted a population increase of 43%.

The estimated 2005 population for Poth is 2,164, which represents 6% of the 2005 Wilson County population, up slightly from 5.7% in the year 2000.

With the introduction of the new Toyota plant and continued economic development in South San Antonio, Poth is expected to grow at a much greater margin than before. The estimated population of Poth is projected to be 2,545 people by the year 2010, up to 2,962 people by the year 2015, and 3,422 people by the year 2020.

Table 1
Population Trends
Poth, Floresville, and Wilson County

Year	Poth (% of Wilson County)	Floresville (% of Wilson County)	Wilson County
1970	1,296 (9.9%)	3,707 (28.4%)	13,041
1980	1,461 (8.7%)	4,381 (26.1%)	16,756
1990	1,642 (7.2%)	5,247 (23.2%)	22,650
1991	1,666 (7.1%)	5,426 (23.4%)	23,328
1992	1,678 (7.0%)	5,526 (23.2%)	23,822
1993	1,715 (6.9%)	5,706 (23.1%)	24,729
1994	1,780 (6.9%)	5,932 (22.9%)	25,954
1995	1,863 (6.8%)	6,241 (22.7%)	27,514
1996	1,922 (6.8%)	6,475 (22.5%)	28,812
1997	1,984 (6.6%)	6,714 (22.2%)	30,196
1998	2,031 (6.5%)	6,891 (22.0%)	31,304
1999	2,082 (6.4%)	7,075 (21.8%)	32,504
2000	1,850 (5.7%)	5,868 (18.1%)	32,408
2001	1,899 (5.7%)	5,998 (17.9%)	33,427
2002	1,949 (5.7%)	6,306 (18.3%)	34,367
2003	2,009 (5.7%)	6,655 (18.7%)	35,494
2004	2,093 (5.7%)	6,866 (18.7%)	36,739
2005	2,164 (6.3%)	7,024 (18.7%)	37,529

Source: UTSA
U.S. Census Bureau

Numbers in RED indicate actual population. Numbers in BLACK indicate estimated population.

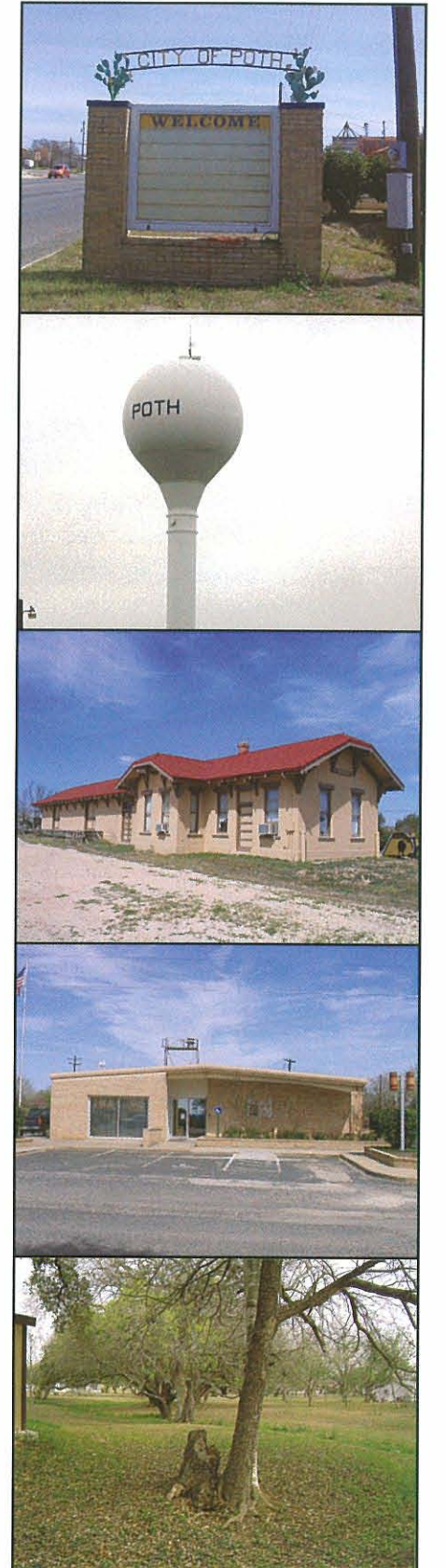
Household Trends

The racial makeup of Poth (2000 Census) is approximately 66% white, 0.5% african american, 1% native american, 0.2% asian, and 29% from other races, with 3% from two or more races. The population of Poth is 57% Latino.

Poth has 623 households, out of which 42% have children under the age of 18 living with them. Of the 623 households, 64% consist of married couples living together, while 10.5% have a female household with no husband present, and 21% are non-families. Single individuals made up 20% of all the households and 11% have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. The average household size in Poth is 2.97 and the average family size is 3.41 while the average household size in Wilson County is 2.89 and the average family size is 3.26.

The median age in Poth is 33 years which is younger than the median age of 36 years in Wilson County. When looking at the age distributions for Wilson County and Texas, the makeup of the two populations is very similar, except for a deviation in the 20-35 years of age population. In Texas, the 20-24 years of age, the 25-29 years of age, and the 30-34 years of age populations each represent about 3.8% of the total population of the state. However, in Wilson County the 20-24 years of age population is 2.3% of the total, the 25-29 years of age population is about 2.7% of the total, and 30-34 years of age population is about 3.3% of the total population of Wilson County. One explanation for this difference could be that people in these age groups are leaving rural areas to live in larger cities, such as nearby San Antonio. This can adversely affect the potential growth of a smaller city because the 20-34 age group is the main population group that starts families and makes major consumer purchases.

Options for the Future



Recommendations for the Future

Poth is part of the growing San Antonio and South Texas region. San Antonio, 35 miles to the north, has a population of over 1,200,000 persons today but is projected to increase to 2,369,950 by 2050. Poth is 45 minutes away from downtown San Antonio.

The City of Poth will continue to grow and develop in coming decades. Many Poth residents will continue to commute to work in San Antonio. As the south-side of San Antonio continues to develop with new job opportunities, new households will be drawn to small town environments, such as Poth, as a pleasant place to live. The current growth rate of Poth is 13% per decade (1990 to 2000). If the current trends continue, the population is projected to reach over 2,400 people by 2020. To accommodate future residential and commercial growth in an organized and sustainable manner, a future land use, open space, and street plan are presented in this report along with specific community project recommendations. These concept plans and recommendations are intended as guidelines for the City to assist in making decisions about the locations of future residential and commercial development, streets, and improvements in community facilities. A new Community Pavilion, City Hall, a Community Learning Center, and expanded Fire Station are discussed as future projects.

The image and identity of a city as a distinctive place is important for future growth and economic development. Historic buildings, recreational spaces, entrance corridors, landscaping, and the kinds of activities that take place within a city on an annual basis collectively help define the image and economic success of a city. Poth has the potential to make substantial visual and physical improvements to its downtown district and along US Highway 181 by planting trees along the abandoned railroad right-of-way, locating a new City Hall Building and Community Pavilion in this corridor, and restoring historic buildings.

Development of the Poth Downtown District

The proposed Downtown District includes the buildings surrounding Dillworth Plaza east of US 181 and the buildings and blocks immediately west of the highway and railroad station. This area has many unique buildings that would appeal to outside visitors if properly renovated. Economically successful cities have pedestrian oriented settings for public events that reinforce the historic image of the community and



its business activity. The area south of the Railroad Station has adequate space and available buildings that can be adaptively reused for restaurants and retail shops. There is also room to relocate abandoned historic buildings from the surrounding County to this area for adaptive reuse as shops or bed and breakfast inns. A renovated Railroad Station could act as a catalyst for redevelopment, since it is highly visible from US 181. The building could possibly house a small museum/visitors center and a café or coffee shop that is breakfast and lunch oriented. Pothe needs to work towards developing a compact downtown walking district as a future setting for festivals, market days, and community events. The small towns of Gruene and Fredericksburg, Texas are good examples of the transformation that is possible. Adequate parking space is available and could be easily expanded to support increased activities. The proposed Downtown District is bisected by US 181. The two sides need to be linked by a pedestrian crossing light from City Plaza to the Railroad Station.

The assistance of the Texas Department of Transportation

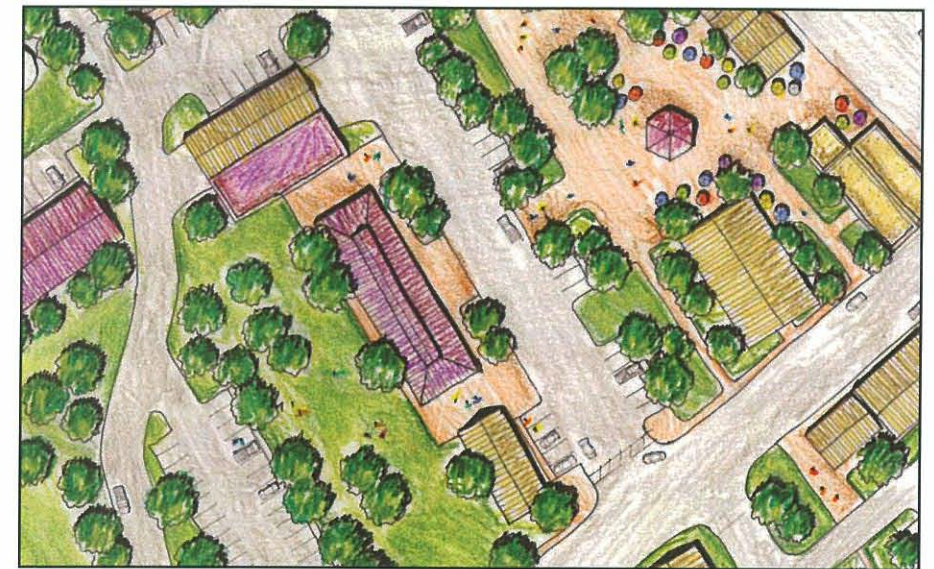


Proposed Downtown District Detail

(TXDOT) will be needed to establish a crossing point.

The Proposed Community Pavilion

A new multi-use Community Pavilion is proposed on City owned land along Railroad Street. The pavilion would be a roofed open-sided structure. It should be designed to accommodate a wide variety of events. Concerts, dances, art and craft shows, farmers markets, and a sausage festival could all be held in this area using the Community Pavilion as a focal point. The Pavilion could act as a setting for family oriented music concerts on weekends. Adequate adjacent space exists for an overflow of activities around the pavilion. Parking could be developed along Railroad Street and off street parking developed south of the pavilion. Pothe is recognized for the quality of its meat markets and sausage which are an important part of its German and Polish heritage. A sausage festival and cook-off with music could become an annual attraction for the community that would draw visitors from nearby San Antonio.



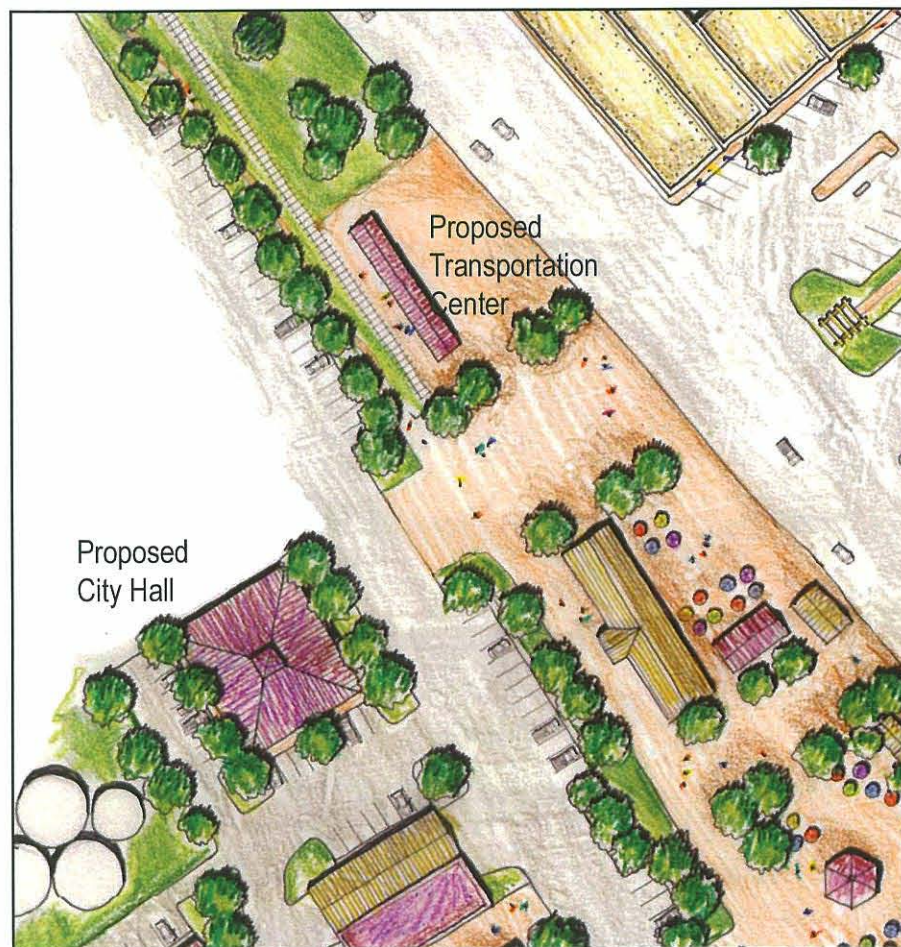
Community Pavilion Location



Proposed Community Pavilion

A New City Hall and Community Learning Center

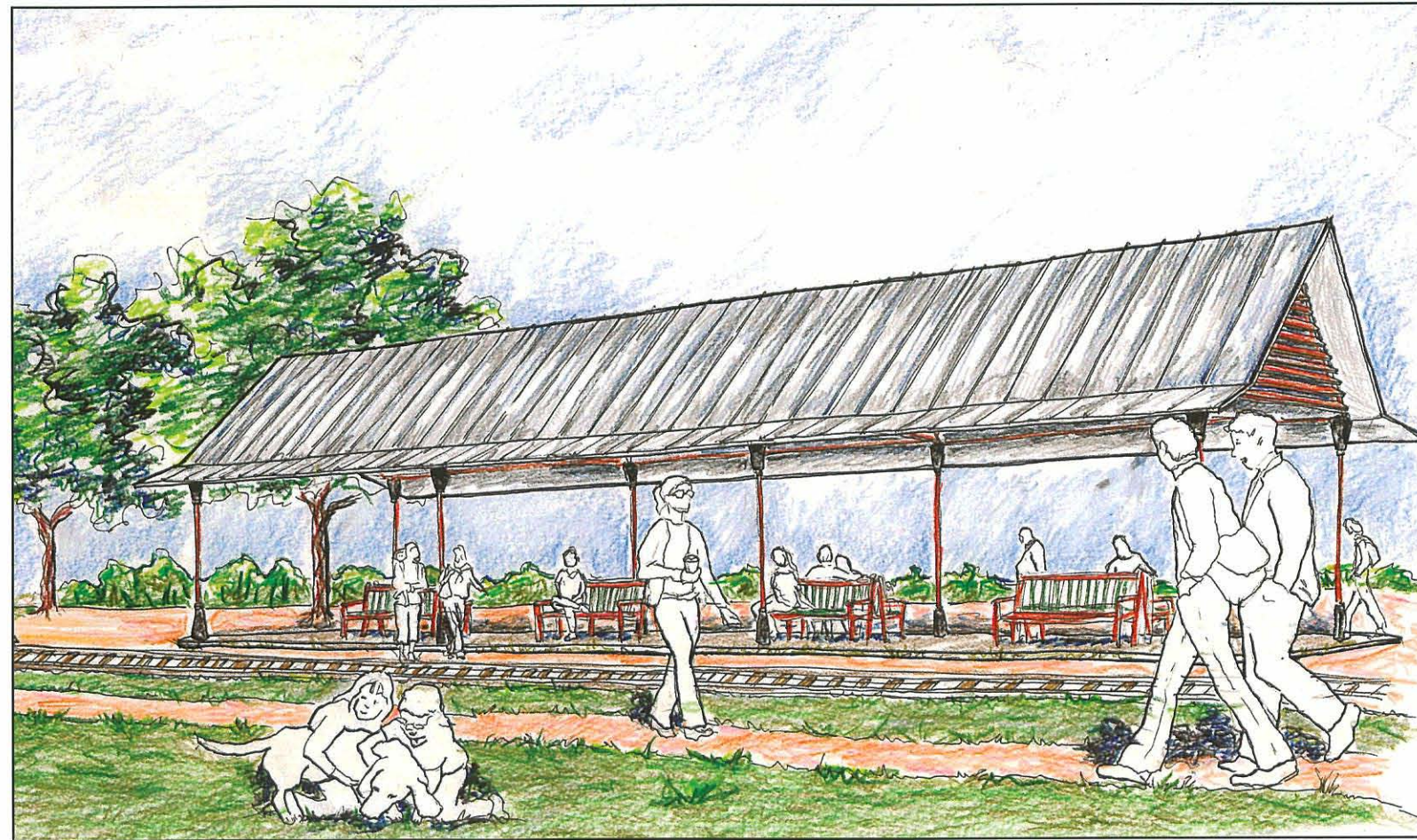
This study proposes that a larger city hall and police station be built facing Railroad Street on axis with City Plaza to the north. The new city hall would be built on City owned property in the general location of the maintenance facilities which would be relocated on the City site. The existing city hall has inadequate working and meeting space. A new city hall is needed to meet the future needs of the city. The existing city hall could be converted into a community learning center with meeting rooms and classrooms for community groups. The classrooms could be utilized for extended education and learning credit courses for residents. The rooms should be set up for a wireless network that permits computer-assisted learning. Grants could be sought to equip and operate the center. The Downtown District concept plan also shows the potential for expansion of the existing volunteer fire station and a relocated and expanded maintenance shop and service yard.



Proposed City Hall and Transportation Center

The Restored Railroad Depot and Transportation Center

Poth is part of a historic farming and ranching region that includes trail drives and early railroad development. This history makes Poth distinctive as a place. The Transportation Center is envisioned as an open pavillion for passengers that would take buses from Poth to San Antonio. The Center is one component of an expanded visitor destination area that includes a restored Depot, small museum, retail shops and places to eat and possibly a small corral that could be used for displays of cowboy roping and riding techniques. The proposed museum in the Depot and outdoor exhibits of railroad and farm equipment could help convey the unique history of the region to visitors. Americans are increasingly interested in the history and uniqueness of places to visit. Poth could become one of those destinations with a development strategy that works towards establishing that identity.



Proposed Transportation Stop

Entrance Corridors and Landscape Treatment

A linked open space network is proposed for Poth. This proposed network of trails could offer residents young and old opportunities for hiking, biking and jogging and would link neighborhoods to the Downtown District and City Park. The proposed trail system is primarily located along natural drainage-ways which are bordered by trees. The use of trees to define entrance corridors to the City would be an inexpensive way of increasing the attractiveness of the City. Small trees can be obtained free from a variety of corporations and other sources and could be planted annually by school children and community groups. Trees should be selected that are drought and disease resistant. Native trees, such as cedar elms and live oak are good candidates for planting. Technical assistance can be provided by the Texas Forest Service and agriculture extension agents. If a planting program begins in the near future, within 20 years Poth could experience a significant improvement in its visual appearance.

Historic Buildings in Poth

Poth contains over twenty buildings in the Downtown District that have historical significance. These buildings contribute to Poth's distinctive identity. Additional studies are needed to further document many of these buildings to trace their origins. The names below reflect discussions with citizens of Poth.

1. Railroad Depot (San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad)
2. Barbershop Building
3. Meatmarket Building
4. Schneider's Cafe
5. Railroad Platform 1
6. Railroad Platform 2
7. Engine House
8. Warken Machine Shop
9. Schneider Building
10. Warnken Scales
11. Warnken Warehouse
12. Farmers Bond and Trust
13. Poth Mercantile
14. Kolodziej Building
15. E. B. Poth Building
16. Eckel Building
17. Jonny's Place
18. St. John's Lutheran Church



Eckel Building - 2006 (new location of McBee's Barbecue)



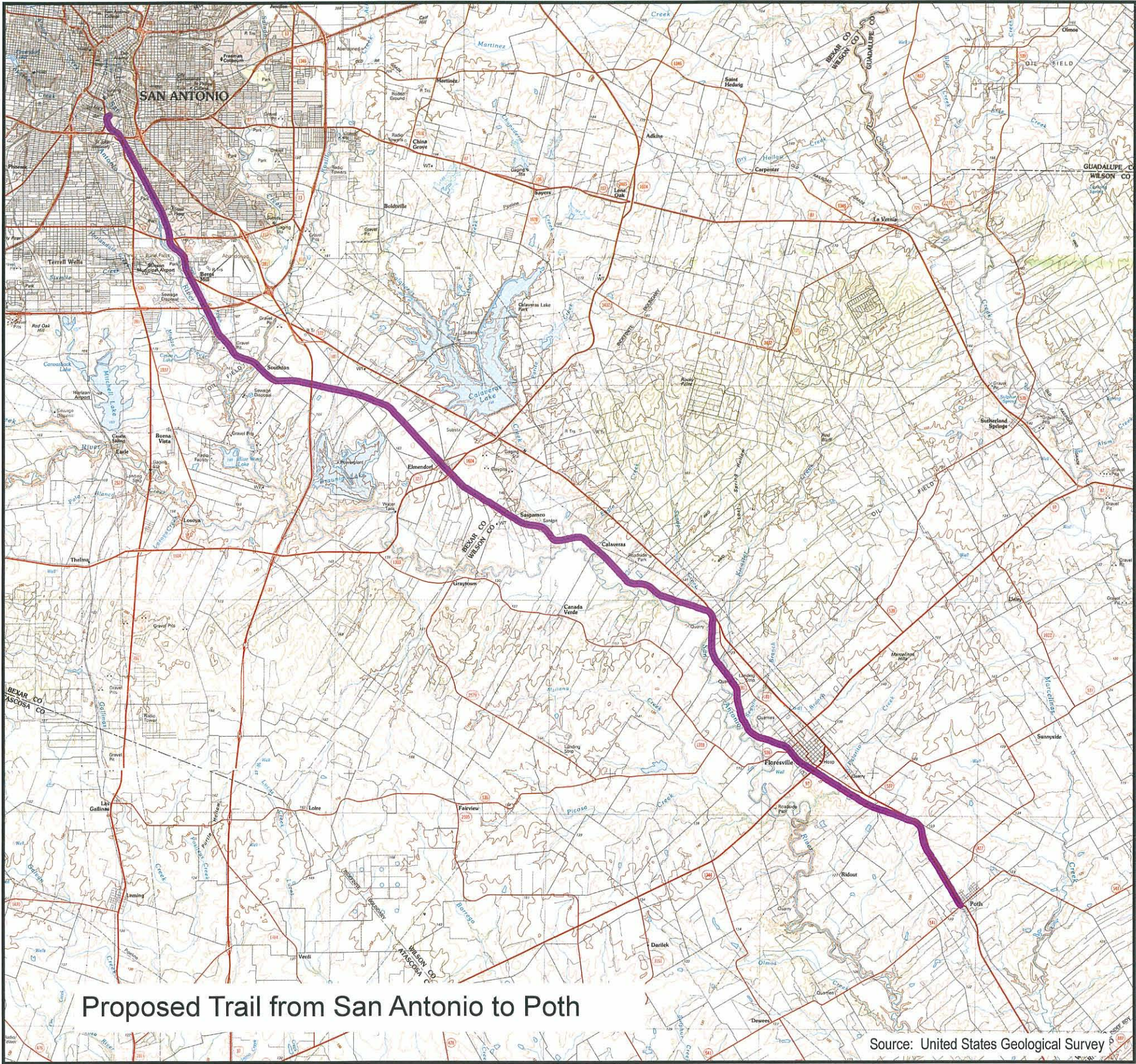
Proposed Hike and Bike Trail

As Americans become more health conscious, there is a growing desire for recreational options to help people improve their wellbeing. With this increased awareness, outdoor recreational activities, such as cycling, running, and walking, have started to increase in popularity. One option is to convert abandoned railroad lines like the abandoned into trails which provide individuals with areas to exercise and experience the natural environment. Poth has the unique opportunity to create a hike and bike trail system using the abandoned rail right-of-way that passes through the city.

Hike and bike trails can be developed to accommodate many uses. Multi-use trails can be created for long- and short-distance equestrian activities. Bird watching can occur due to the continuity of intact environments. Disabled individuals can utilize the trail with obstacle-free designs and level grades. Joggers are provided with uninterrupted scenic corridors and walkers can socialize, exercise, or find solace. The most common form of exercise is cycling due to miles of uninterrupted biking trails. Creating a rail-trail or a rail-with-trail project can connect various destination points along a “linear park” that would attract tourists.

In order to begin a hike and bike trail project, three support mechanisms must be in place. Public support must be evident since a trail corridor is a community facility. Community-wide workshops should be held to build public support for the project. An action plan should be created to develop maps that indicate the community resources that the trail links together. This will demonstrate how the abandoned railroad corridor can be used for recreation, open space conservation, and historic preservation. In an action plan finances must be discussed to determine at what lengths one will go to acquire the rail line in negotiations. The last support mechanism needed is a committed public agency. Some entity must agree to own and manage the corridor. One of the best public agencies to assume this responsibility is one that deals with parks already.

Once support has been acquired for the project, many tasks must be accomplished to aid the trail effort. One must research property descriptions, plats and deeds, obtain financing, determine the railroad’s interests and options, work with adjacent landowners and the community, and make corridor inventory



and field assessments/ environmental assessments. Involving stakeholders, groups that can benefit from the trail, can help a trail's success.

After assembling the essential information, team, and finances, the project leader must get in touch with the railroad's representatives. The railroad company must be notified of the interest in the railroad corridor. The rails-to-trails movement should also demonstrate credibility and commitment to the project to facilitate smooth negotiations. While establishing credibility, the railroad's representatives should be educated about the differences between your project and other potential buyers. Determining who has the authority to negotiate on the railroad's behalf is another important step, as without this, the project can become tied up and eventually lose support. Establishing a time line and setting up subsequent meetings with the railroad will allow the project to stay on track and keep the railroad company in touch and interested.

When negotiating with a railroad, one must understand their perspective and objective in disposition of the corridor. If the project knows what the railroad wants, then the project can develop a compromise between its needs and the railroad's. Railroad companies make about one percent of their income from real estate sales, so projects which are interested in acquiring a corridor are usually not top priority. Researching information from the Asset Management (Strategic Planning) Department, the Operating Department, the Legal Department, the Real Estate Department, and the Public Affairs (Government Relations) Department can help the project determine what is planned for certain railroad corridors in the future, the day-to-day operations of the rail line, and the requirements that must be met to acquire a corridor.



San Antonio River Region

Source: San Antonio River Basin Guide

Proposed Land Use

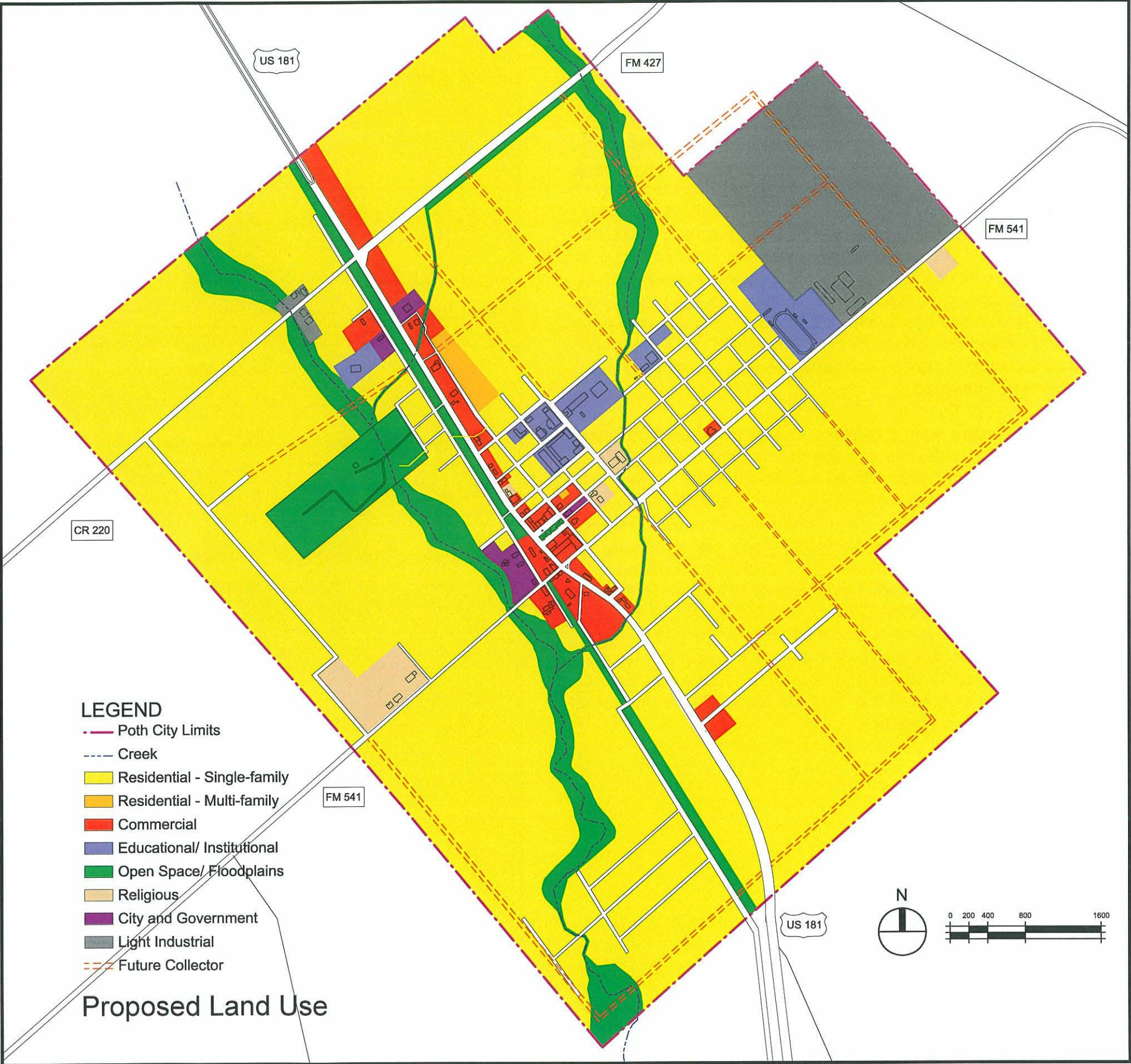
A proposed land use plan is a guide for the future location of housing, commercial, and manufacturing uses within a city. A land use plan requires constant updating as conditions change. A sudden large increase in population should require a reevaluation to determine if the planning principles need updating.

The proposed land use pattern for Poth shows future commercial activities concentrated in the Downtown District and along U. S. Highway 181. Many under utilized parcels of land and properties exist in this area today. As Poth continues to grow this commercial zone could be in-filled to become more effective as a commercial and service destination. Shoppers prefer making trips to shop in places where businesses are in proximity to each other.

Much of the land within the City currently in agriculture use, or dormant, would eventually be converted into residential development. The existing residential block grid should be continued with residential streets serviced by a collector network as indicated by the red dashed lines.

A linked open space recreational system ties the various quadrants of the City together. As future subdivisions are platted, the City should work to acquire areas in flood plains as dedicated parkland or as recreational easements. All residents should be within a five minute walk from a park space. Small neighborhood parks that primarily serve the needs of small children should be located within new residential areas.

As the number of residents increase there could be a need for a future elementary school in the northeast quadrant of the City. Elementary schools should be located in proximity to student populations and within walking distance if possible.

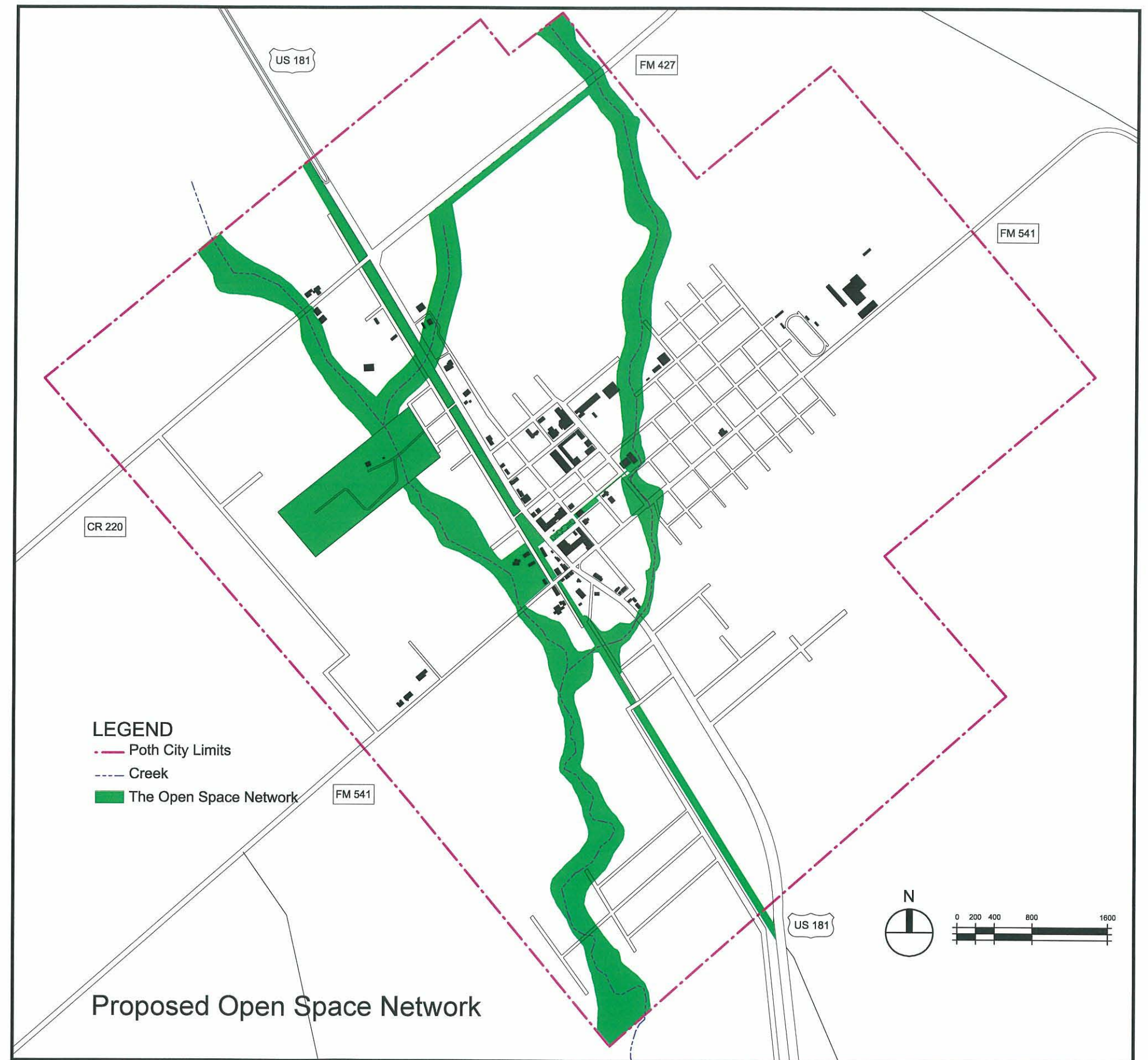


Proposed Open Space Network

↳The open space network of Poth should be developed into a linked network that takes full advantage of the existing natural drainage system of floodplains to allow for more options for outdoor recreation. The creeks that meander through Poth are beautiful assets which are not being fully utilized. The naturally lush green banks would make an attractive setting for many uses – hiking, biking, or picnicking. These creeks are intrinsic to Poth yet are currently hidden rather than celebrated. The creeks also serve as alternative links to other communities such as Floresville and San Antonio. If trails were created along the creeks, these corridors could serve as natural gateways for hikers and bikers.

The abandoned railroad corridor could similarly be developed to accommodate hiking and biking trails to link Poth to other communities. While an open space connection with other communities is desirable, it is also necessary to create loop trails within Poth. These trails can accommodate the daily exercise routines of residents, including the many seniors living in Poth.

The proposed open space network would allow for recreational biking to Floresville. An open space network supports a healthy lifestyle that is attractive to many future homebuyers. Families are looking to buy homes near greenbelts and to increase physical activity on a daily basis. Poth would be an attractive community for families.



Proposed Street System

A common hierarchy of streets in ascending order includes, local streets, collectors, and arterials (including freeways and highways). Local streets primarily serve residential properties that front along them and are the backbone of neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle networks. Collector streets serve as the link between local streets and arterial streets. Much of the appeal of travel in Poth is due to the abundance of convenient collector streets. Arterial streets are primarily used for mobility. US 181 serves as an arterial street and its primary purpose is to move as much traffic as possible at a reasonable speed.

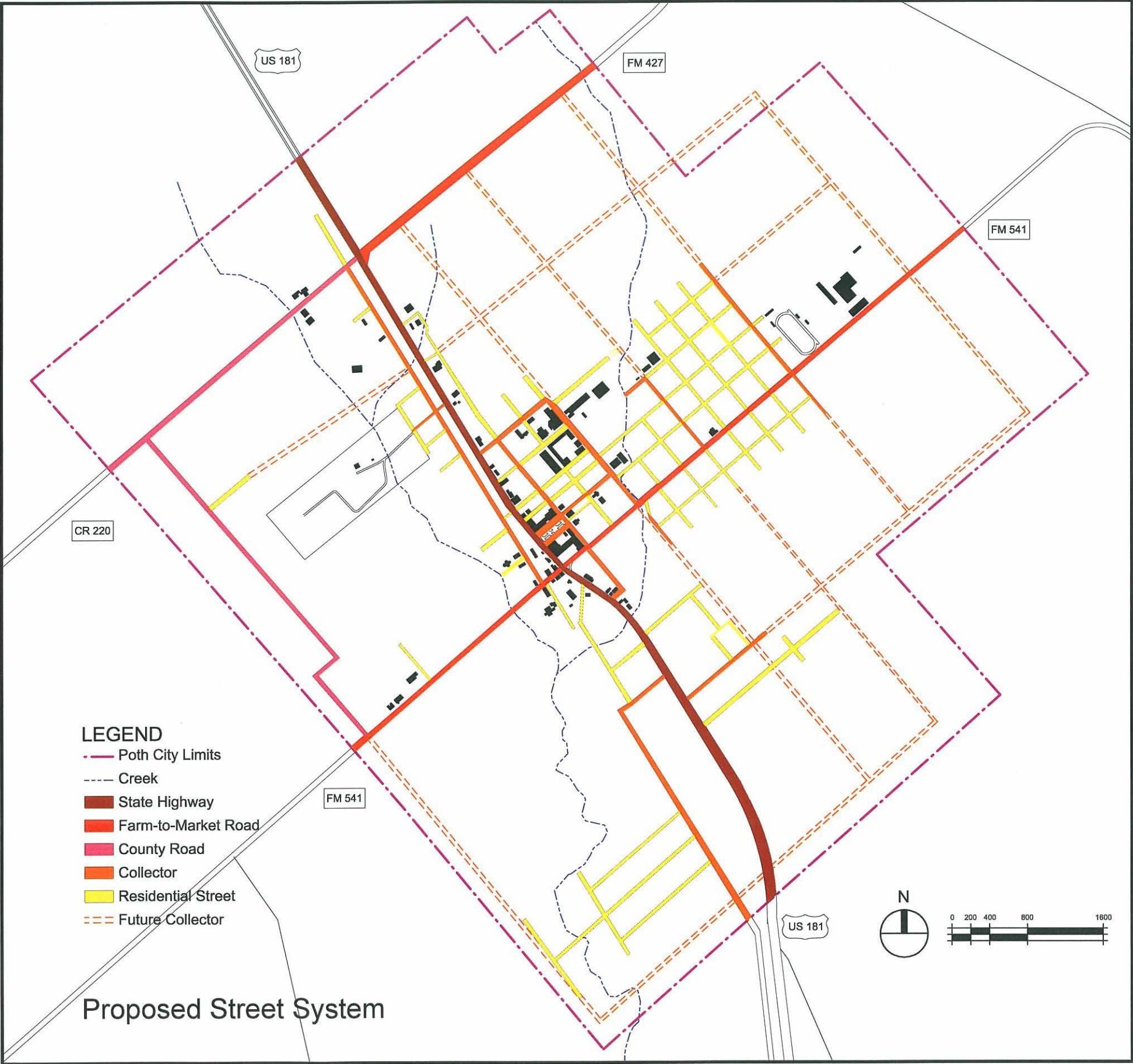
Local Streets

The majority of local residential streets in Poth are organized into a grid network with blocks that are approximately three hundred feet square with an average of eight homes per block. This residential street pattern should continue as new subdivisions are platted in the future. Local residential streets should be extended to avoid dead-end streets which would create an unbalanced traffic flow pattern for residents.

Collector Streets

A balanced network of collector streets should be developed to move residential traffic to major arterials in north-south and east-west directions. The collectors shown on the proposed thoroughfare plan provide service for block groups that can range in size from twelve to thirty two blocks. This proposed network of collectors is intended to provide multiple trip options for residents to avoid congestion on any one street. A measure of the effectiveness of the collector system is the ability to conveniently reach daily shopping and schools. No residential location should ever be more than one-half mile from a collector street.

The proposed plan should be evaluated when new developments are presented and the impact of future traffic patterns is known.



Codes and Ordinances

The City of Poth adopted a subdivision ordinance in 1985 and followed with a planning and zoning ordinance in 1988. These ordinances constitute the primary means that the City utilizes to guide and control development. An important consideration with respect to ordinances is the ability of City staff to interpret and enforce the ordinances. If ordinances become overly complex, it becomes difficult for a City the size of Poth to enforce the specific requirements of the ordinance. To prevent conflicts in the ordinances, the consultants recommend that the City work towards adopting a unified development code that combines the planning and zoning and subdivision ordinances along with other future ordinances that may be developed in the future (tree ordinance, historic preservation).

The Planning and Zoning Ordinance

The current Planning and Zoning Ordinance defines seven options for districts:

- PD Predevelopment District
- R-1 Single Family Dwelling District
- R-2 Two Family Dwelling District
- R-3 Apartment/Multi-Family Dwelling District
- R-4 Single Family Dwelling Manufactured Housing District
- GB General Business District
- M-1 Manufacturing District

An additional district option defined in the ordinance is an overlay district (Article XI) which could be applied to areas where additional zoning and control requirements are necessary. No overlay districts are currently in effect. The current planning and zoning ordinance is basically adequate for Poth’s immediate and near future needs with some minor adjustments.

A Proposed Historic Overlay District

Consideration should be given to establishing a historic overlay district in the downtown area where over eighteen buildings have been identified that have historical significance. The content of a historic overlay district could address issues of preservation and adaptive reuse of these buildings. The buildings are irreplaceable and could play a significant role in the future economic development of Poth as a destination tourism location.

The Subdivision Ordinance

The Poth Subdivision Ordinance defines the rules and regulations governing the approval of plats of subdivisions and creation of subdivisions along with street and utility requirements.

An area in the existing ordinance that could use additional attention and definition is the limitation of new structures and expansion of existing structures in flood zone areas. No building permits should be issued in flood prone areas. The City should work towards acquiring flood plain land either as a donation or easement to facilitate development of a city-wide recreational open space system.

The current ordinance defines drainage in the following manner: *Section 10 - E (1) Easement. Where a subdivision is traversed by a water course, drainage way, or natural channel or stream, there shall be provided an easement or right-of-way conforming substantially to the limit of such water course, plus additional width to accommodate future needs.*

As development increases in future years, more surface runoff will occur with hard surfaces replacing natural settings. One approach to defining this area would be to utilize the updated FEMA designated Flood Zone AE areas within the City which are periodically inundated.

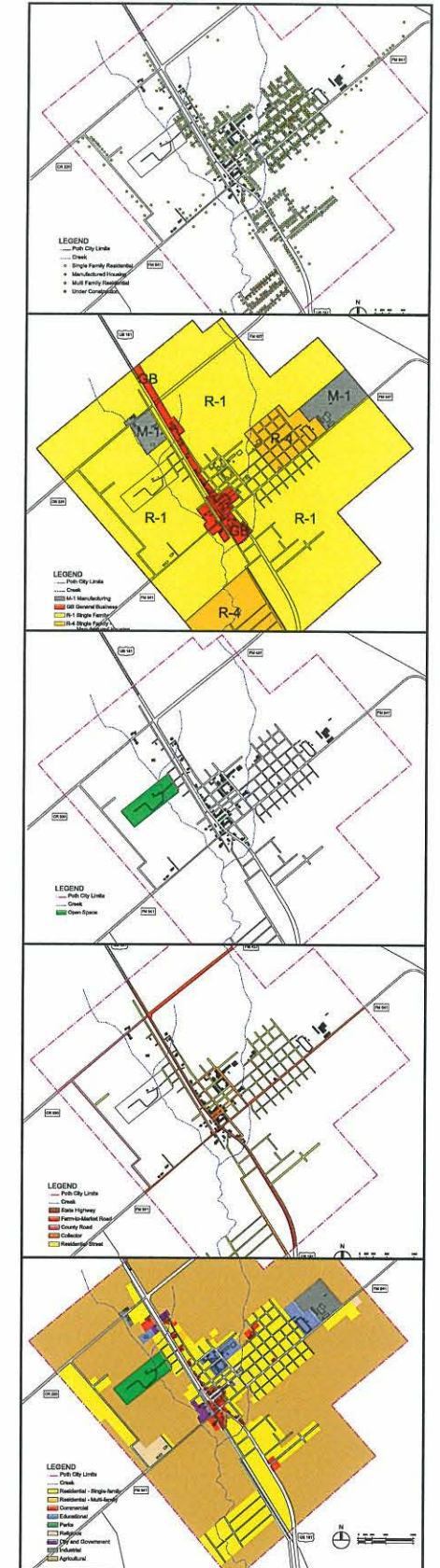
Housing

Poth falls in the jurisdiction of the Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) which provides assistance with the weatherization of housing units which can create savings for low-income and elderly residents. AACOG’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program provides rental assistance to assist individuals and families to afford decent housing.

There is a need for more affordable housing choices in Poth. Families with annual incomes below \$45,000 need options other than manufactured housing (mobile homes). One strategy to improve housing options would be for the Poth Economic Development Corporation (PEDC) to develop partnership initiatives with private developers, home builders, and non-profit housing corporations. San Antonio has thirteen housing and

community development corporations that could be contacted to determine their potential interest in building in Poth. The PEDC could provide assistance in the preparation of sites for development by providing infrastructure assistance (streets, utilities). The Floresville Economic Development Corporation assisted the City of Floresville in extending water and sewer lines to the Highland Oaks Apartments and is working with the Grayhawk Corporation in the development of the 500 acre Riverbend residential development that will contain up to 800 homes. The PEDC can offer similar assistance.

Background



Economic Trends

Overview

Poth traces its history back to the 1880s when the railroad began to serve the area. In 1906, the community began to grow with homes being built and the railroad constructing a depot. By 1909, a blacksmith and a number of stores had opened up in Poth. In 1913, the community had its first chartered bank and by October 18, 1933 the City of Poth was formerly incorporated.



Poth Downtown District ca. 1930.

Source: Gene Maeckel

During the 1940s and 1950s, Poth continued to grow. As Highway 181 was upgraded, it became a major route connecting San Antonio and Corpus Christi. This also contributed to the development of the Poth downtown business district, which grew along the highway. Additional growth was spurred on by increased rail traffic. However, by the early 1960s, several key events occurred that led to the decline of the economy. One was the construction of IH-37. Another was the shifting of rail traffic to other routes. Despite these setbacks, the population of Poth continued to grow. One reason for this is that many of those who chose to continue living in Poth were able to work elsewhere, primarily in Floresville and San Antonio. The City of Floresville became the economic center of Wilson County. Today, it is the largest city in the county. Poth is the second largest. Both communities fall within the outer fringes of San Antonio's economy. The economy of Wilson County has changed over time as well. That economy is mainly centered around the service sector, retail trade, light manufacturing and

government services. Poth's economy is also built around the retail/wholesale trade sector, services, government and some local manufacturing. Its local economy, however, has grown little over the past decade.

Local Economy of Poth

According to the latest Census, the population of Poth was 1,850 in 1999/2000. Current estimates put Poth's population at around 2,135. Of this number, 812 or nearly 44.0% were 16 years and over. This group comprises the employed civilian population in the community. The three largest occupational grouping of this employed population, according to the 2000 Census, were: Management/ Professional and Related Occupation – 178 or 21.9% of the total, Sales and Office Occupations – 212 or 26.1%, and Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations – 183 or 22.5%. Other major occupational groups in Poth's employed population were: Service Occupations – 145 or 17.9%, and Construction, Extraction and Maintenance Occupations – 83 or 10.2%. Most of those employed were concentrated in three major industry groups: Retail Trade – 93 or 11.5%, Manufacturing – 117 or 14.4%, and Educational, Health and Social Services – 146, or 18.0%. Other major industry groups were: Construction, which employed 55 workers, Transportation and Warehousing with 70 or 8.6% of the workforce, and Other Services which includes those employed in the government sector, with 104 or 12.8% of the total. By far, the largest class of workers in the community was Private Wage and Salary workers. Based on the 2000 Census, 591 or 72.8% of all those working were classified as such. Nearly 20.0% or 154 were employed in the public sector. The rest – 67 or 8.2%, were either self-employed or family workers. The vast majority of this workforce worked outside the community.

In 2004, there were 27 businesses in Poth, employing some 328 workers. These businesses were in several major sectors. The largest sector was Retail with nine businesses. The second largest was Manufacturing and Health Care/Social Assistance with three businesses in each sector. There were five businesses in the Other Services classification. Other businesses were in Construction (2), Administrative/Support/Waste Management (2), and Accommodations/Food Services (1). The majority of these businesses employed from one to four workers. Seven employed between five and nine workers, and three had between 10 and 19 employees. Three businesses in Poth had more than 20 workers on their payroll. Most of these businesses were either located in the downtown district in Poth, or along U.S. Highway 181.

A good indicator of the local economy's strength is the level of taxable sales revenue derived from business transactions, and goods and services sold. In Poth, gross sales generated by local businesses ranged from \$31.7 million in 2000, to \$46.1 million in 2005. During that same time period, the amount of these sales subject to sales tax ranged from \$1.9 million in 2000 to about \$3.1 million in 2005. Sales tax revenue redirected to the City of Poth over this time period ranged from \$38,558 in 2001/2002 to an estimated \$40,000 in 2005/2006. Over the five year period, sales tax revenue averaged around \$39,649 a year. In general, the city's sales tax revenue base has remained fairly steady over the years.



Lyssy & Eckel Feeds Mill ca. 2006.

Market Base

Businesses and merchants in Poth serve a number of markets. One of these markets includes the residents and businesses already in Poth. A second one is the primary trade/market area that lies around it. A third market is the tourists and visitors who pass through Poth on their way to another location, or to attend an event in the community. Poth also has a larger trade/market area that is more regional in scope. Businesses in Poth provide goods and services to all of these markets. The two main ones, however, are the local market and the primary trade/market area that stretches outward some three miles around the community. People living within these two market areas are most likely to shop in Poth and use its facilities.

The resident population in Poth appears to have sufficient disposable income to purchase goods and services. For example, the median household income in Poth, according to the 2000 Census, was \$35,492. This compares favorably with the state's median of \$39,927. The median family income in Poth was \$42,279, compared to \$45,861 for the state as a whole. The average salary for workers living in Poth was \$44,262 a year. Yet, while there appears to be enough disposable income in Poth, the data suggests that most of this income is being spent outside the community. In other words, instead of shopping in Poth, many local residents are spending their money elsewhere to purchase household items, entertainment, groceries and durable items. The primary reason for this is that these kinds of items are not available in the local or primary trade/market area.

The key to developing a successful local economy in Poth lies in how well local businesses serve their markets. The data appears to indicate that local businesses may not be fully serving this market. One reason for this is that Poth represents a small market to begin with. It also must compete with stores in Floresville and San Antonio. To succeed and prosper, local businesses in Poth may have to reach out to a larger market. Another alternative is to create additional niche markets that local merchants can tap into. Efforts can also be directed toward making the downtown district more attractive and lively to encourage local and area residents to shop there. An attractive downtown with additional amenities could also become a magnet to attract shoppers, visitors and tourists from outside the primary market area to purchase goods and services from local merchants. It could also bring in "new" money to the local economy. If, on the other hand, nothing is done, the downtown district and the local economy could, at best, remain as it is; or, at worst, suffer a decline.

Niche markets are difficult to build. The key is to develop an appropriate marketing strategy for the community that can attract local and outside consumers. There are several potential niche markets that Poth could exploit. One possibility is to focus on cultural/heritage tourism. Another alternative are stores that specialize in the arts and culture. Numerous communities in the rural areas of Texas have turned to this market to rebuild or rebuild their economy. Some have been very successful. A third niche merchants in Poth may want to develop is to transform it into an entirely different market, one that is able to take advantage of its unique qualities and history. For example, Poth could take steps to renovate its existing train depot and transform in into a museum to attract visitors and tourists from

outside its local and primary market area. It could also bring in new retail stores to serve the local market more effectively, and reduce the amount of dollars that are being spent outside the local economy. By bringing in new money into the economy, a multiplier effect would be generated. It will also affect local sales tax revenues, create new job opportunities and, over the longer term, transform the community's economy.

Next Steps

In devising a strategy to redevelop and revitalize Poth's downtown business district, two important factors need to be taken into account. The first one is to improve the overall design, appearance and ambiance of the district to make it more attractive for residents, shoppers and visitors alike. The second factor has to do with the economies of transforming the district, and expanding the range of impacts. There are essentially three types of economic impacts – direct, indirect, and induced. A direct impact occurs when a purchase of a good or service is made by the local consumer. Indirect impacts, on the other hand, come about as a result of a purchase. These are sometimes called secondary effects. This is where the multiplier effect comes into play. An induced impact results from salaries and wages paid to employees by directly and indirectly impacted businesses in the community. The employers, in turn, then spend this income on various goods and services. Ideally, we want them to spend most of their income locally, that is, in Poth. These expenditures create additional cycles of direct and indirect impacts. The sum of these effects equate to the total economic impact on the community. The goal is to maximize that impact on Poth to generate additional revenue for the community.



Poth Downtown District ca. 2006

Population Profile

According to the latest Census, the City of Poth had a population of 1,850. Current estimates put its population at around 2,135. Hispanics make up about 57% of the population, while White/Anglos comprise around 42%. Other minorities make up the remaining 1% of the population in the community. Over the years, Poth's population has grown slowly, but steadily. Long-term projections call for additional growth over the next decade.

Employment Profile

About 1,338 or 72.3% of the population in Poth is 16 years and older. Of this, 848, or 63.4% are in the labor force. Almost all are employed in the civilian workforce. Job growth in Poth has been steady, averaging around 2.9% a year over the past two years. This growth compares favorably with that found in Wilson County, and the state as a whole. Projections call for additional employment growth in the community. Most of those entering the workforce, however, will more than likely be working outside of Poth. (See Table 2)

Economic Profile

A local economy's degree of diversification is an important factor influencing long-term growth and the number of new jobs being created. Most of the economy in Poth is centered on manufacturing, retail trade, and the service sector. Little change in the community's economic base has occurred over the past decade. To expand its economy, Poth will need to build on what it already has in place, and attract new businesses to the community. If this occurs, it will be able to create new job opportunities for local residents, improve its tax base, and secure additional investment.

Workforce Profile

Based on the 2000 Census, 591 or nearly 73% of the employed workforce in Poth were working in private wage/salary type jobs. Another 154 or 19% were employed in the government sector. Only 65 or about 8% were self-employed, and less than 1% were classified as unpaid family workers. A large segment of the workforce in Poth was employed in Management/ Professional (21.9%), Service (17.9%), Sales and Office (26.1%), and Production/ Transport/Material Moving (22.5%) type occupations. (See Table 1)

Table 2
City of Poth - 2000 Census
Selected Economic Characteristics

<u>Employment Status</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Population 16 yrs. and over	1,338	100%
In Labor Force	848	63.4%
Civilian Labor Force	842	62.9%
Employed	812	60.7%
Unemployed	30	2.2%
Percent of Civilian Labor Force		3.6%
Not in Labor Force	490	36.6%
<u>Occupational Status</u>		
Management, Profession and Related	178	21.9%
Service	145	17.9%
Sales and Office	212	26.1%
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	11	1.4%
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance	83	10.2%
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	183	22.5%
<u>Industry</u>		
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Mining, etc.	38	4.7%
Construction	55	6.8%
Manufacturing	117	14.4%
Wholesale Trade	39	4.8%
Retail Trade	93	11.5%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	70	8.6%
Information	15	1.8%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	50	6.2%
Professional, Management, Administration	28	3.4%
Education, Health, Social Services	146	18.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Food Service	57	7.0%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	52	6.4%
Public Administration	52	6.4%
<u>Socioeconomic Characteristics</u>		
Median Household Income	\$35,492	
Median Family Income	\$42,279	
Per Capita Income	\$13,910	
Median Earning: Male	\$30,885	Full-time,
Female	\$21,563	Year
Median Retirement Income	\$16,540	Round
		Workers

(Source: U.S. Census. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000
- City of Poth)

Income Profile

The median household income in Poth, based on the 2000 Census, was \$35,492 in 1999/2000. The median family income base was slightly higher at \$42,279. The per-capita income level for Poth, on the other hand, was only \$13,910. In 2000, median earnings for full-time, year round male and female workers living in Poth were \$30,885 and \$21,563, respectively. Overall income levels for Poth residents were comparable to those found elsewhere in Wilson County and the surrounding area. However, almost 16% of all families, and about 18% of all individuals in the community were at or below the poverty line in 2003. These figures were slightly higher than those found for Wilson County as a whole. (See Table 2)

Business Profile

The Texas Workforce Commission reported that there were some 445 businesses in Wilson County in the first quarter of 2004. An average of 13.1 workers were employed in these businesses. In Poth, there were 27 businesses, employing some 220 workers in 2004. The annual payroll for these businesses was around \$4.8 million. Of the 27 businesses in Poth, 13 are in the retail/service sector, and one is engaged in wholesale trade. There are also three manufacturing type businesses. Most of these businesses are small, employing nine or fewer workers. Only two employ more than 20 workers. (See Table 3)



Felux Metal Works & Supply ca. 2006

Economic Conditions

General economic conditions in Poth and in Wilson County as shown in their gross sales, generally reflect those of the surrounding area. For the most part, gross sales by businesses in Poth increased from \$28.4 million in 1999, to \$46.1 million in 2005. During the same time period, sales in the county increased from about \$191.0 million to \$376.2 million. (See Table 4) The amount, subject to sales taxes in Poth have likewise, increased from nearly \$2 million in 1999, to slightly over \$3 million in 2005. The increase in Wilson County, however, has been even more dramatic, rising from \$62.4 million in 1999, to nearly \$108 million in 2005. The number of reporting outlets in the county has also increased over the years indicating growth in the economy. (See Table 5)



Falls City National Bank ca. 2006

Source: Albert Casares

Despite the increase in sales in the local economy, the impact of this growth has been uneven. For example, research indicates that a relatively large portion of all business sales in Poth are made to consumers and businesses outside the community. This has resulted in bringing in new money to the local economy. Conversely, because of the small size of the local economy, most residents tend to shop and purchase their goods and services outside the community. This income leakage tends to lessen the impact of the new money coming into the community through its export sector. The end result is a local economy that has grown little over the past decade. Employment levels and the number of business establishments in the community has also remained fairly steady over this time period as well.

Table 3
City of Poth
2004/2005 Business Survey
Number of Establishments by Industry

Industry	Total Est.	Size – Employees				
		1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50+
Construction	2	2	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	3	0	1	1	0	1
Wholesale Trade	1	0	0	1	0	0
Retail Trade	9	5	3	0	1	0
Finance and Insurance	2	0	2	0	0	0
Administrative, Support Waste Management	2	2	0	0	0	0
Health Care and Social Assistance	3	2	1	0	0	0
Accommodations and Food Service	1	0	0	1	0	0
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	4	4	0	0	0	0
Total	27	15	7	3	1	1

Number of Employees: 220
Annual Payroll in \$1,000: \$4,799

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – Zip Code, Business Patterns (NAICS)
City of Poth Zip Code: 78147 Date: 09/16/06



PDQ Cafe ca. 2006

Table 4
City of Poth / Wilson County
All Industry Sales Trends
Gross Sales by Year
1999 – 2005

City of Poth Year	Gross Sales	Outlets	Wilson County	
			Gross Sales	Outlets
1999	\$28,398,627	35	\$191,001,932	553
2000	31,662,920	37	213,963,659	576
2001	33,286,341	39	225,795,326	587
2002	34,949,008	40	238,621,581	642
2003	34,251,755	45	253,275,149	659
2004	41,313,640	50	287,323,041	699
2005	46,122,935	44	376,216,756	713

Table 5
City of Poth / Wilson County
Sales Subject to Sales Taxes
All Industries
1999 – 2005

Year	City of Poth	Wilson County
	Amount Subject to Sales Tax	Amount Subject to Sales Tax
1999	\$1,991,938	\$62,350,577
2000	1,900,461	63,910,949
2001	2,038,891	65,546,010
2002	2,639,848	71,819,561
2003	2,847,518	76,436,093
2004	2,980,139	83,546,837
2005	3,067,503	107,766,685

Source: Quarterly Sales Tax Report – City of Poth / County of Wilson – All Industries,
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, Window on State Government 09/16/2006

Summary

Although Poth has had a relatively stable economy over the past decade, it has also grown little. While there appears to be sufficient disposable income to support a larger service/retail base in the community, this has not yet occurred. A good indicator of just how well the local economy is doing is the amount of sales tax revenue it generated. Total sales tax revenue in Poth has averaged around \$41,000 a year, over the past six years. Although there is some variation from year to year, the total has remained fairly steady indicating that the local economy has grown little. (See Table 6) However, Poth does have some significant assets that could reverse this trend. One is its location relative to Floresville, the county seat, and San Antonio. Another is the potential for new housing in the area. A third asset is the prospect for additional commercial development along U.S. Highway 181. Over the longer term, given careful planning, Poth could improve its economy by bringing in new types of businesses and carefully nurturing those that it already has. It could also exploit a number of niche markets to bring in more visitors and tourists to purchase local goods and services. By doing this, Poth will be able to capture more local income, income that is currently being spent outside the local economy by residents, as well as bring in new money to improve its economy. Indeed, the potential is there. The key to building a more robust local economy is to exploit that potential.

Table 6
The City of Poth
Sales Tax Revenue
2001 – 2006

Time Period	Total Sales Tax Revenue
October 2005 – June 2006	\$33,582.82
October 2004 – September 2005	\$42,797.73
October 2003 – September 2004	\$41,096.81
October 2002 – September 2003	\$42,202.13
October 2001 – September 2002	\$38,558.05

Source: City of Poth, Texas, Sales Tax Revenue – Revenue Journal

Existing Land Use

Residential

Single-family residential encompasses 18.9% of land in Poth while multi-family residential only covers .1% of the land. The majority of residential uses can be found east of US 181, with only a small percentage located west of the highway. The exception to this is the Richland Heritage Neighborhood found at the southwest corner of the city limits.

Commercial

The bulk of the commercial land (1.5% of the City of Poth) is found facing US 181 and concentrated in the intersection of US 181 and FM 541.

Educational

The Poth Independent School District consists of one elementary, one junior high, and one high school. School facilities are located adjacent to one another along Dickson Street. The football stadium is located in the northeast sector of the city along FM 541.

Parks

Poth has two dedicated parks. Dilworth Plaza is located in the downtown district and City Park (31.9 acres) which is located west of US 181.

Religious

Religious facilities occupy 1.2% of the land in Poth.

City and Government

City and government facilities encompass .5 % of the City. These facilities include the United States Post Office, the Poth City Hall, the Volunteer Fire Department, and the City Maintenance Shops.

Industrial

Industrial land use (1.8% of the City of Poth) in the City is occupied by the Lyssy & Eckel Feed Mill and two meat processing plants (only one is still in use).

Agricultural

Agriculture use occupies 72.5% (nearly 3/4 of the City) of the land within the city limits. This land is used for farming and ranching.



Existing Zoning

The City of Poth is divided into eight (8) zoning districts which promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the City. These districts include:

- PD Predevelopment District
- GB General Business District
- R-1 Single Family Dwelling District
- R-2 Two-Family Dwelling District
- R-3 Apartment/ Multi-Family Dwelling District
- R-4 Single Family Manufactured Housing District
- M-1 Manufacturing District

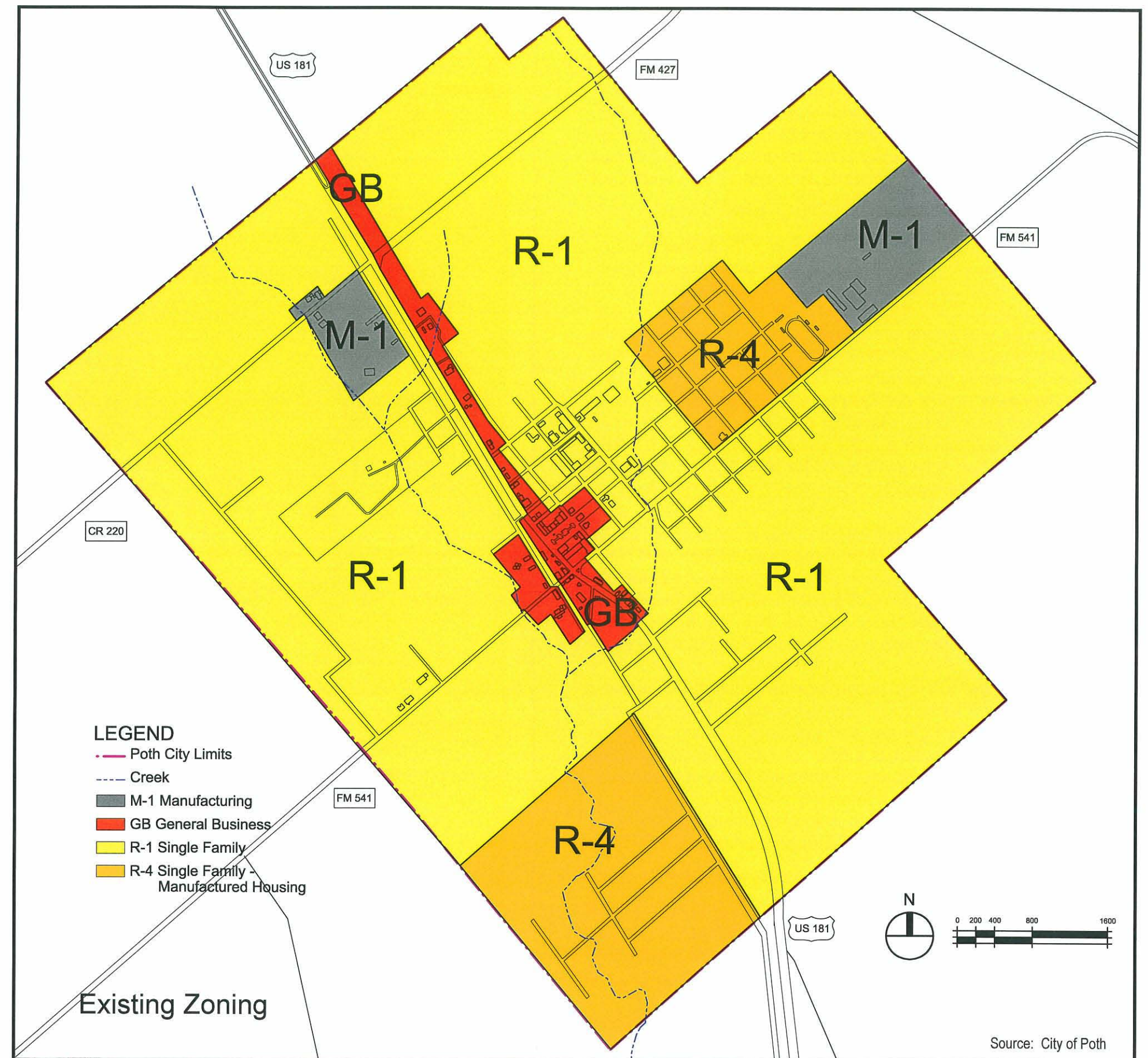
Currently, Poth is only utilizing four of these districts: GB, R-1, R-4, and M-1. The General Business District is located along US 181 and includes City Hall and Dilworth Plaza. This district occupies 64.5 acres of land, about 3.3% of the total 1,956.6 acres within the city limits of Poth.

The Single Family Dwelling District, R-1, is by far the largest zoning district with a total of 1,568.1 acres, or 80% of the land within the city limits.

R-4, Single Family Manufactured Housing District, is located in two areas: in the Southern corner of Poth, which includes Richter, Bossier, Oak Lawn, Natchez, Shenandoah, and Moss Point Streets; and more centrally, between Louise and Wright Streets, and between FM 541 and just past Eschenburg Street.

There are manufactured housing units in other locations throughout the city which are not zoned for manufactured housing. Along Railroad Street, there are nearly half a dozen mobile homes. Along Sunshine Road, there are three manufactured homes, while along US 181, there are seven. Two more manufactured homes are on Mesquite Street and three more on Sylvester Street. Also on Carroll Street there is a manufactured home with two more on Dickson Street, and four units along FM 541.

The Manufacturing District, M-1, covers about 76.8 acres or 3.9% of Poth. This area is divided into two different sites: at the junction of Railroad Street and CR 220 and along FM 541 next to the football stadium.



Existing Housing

A field survey conducted by the UTSA Research Team in July 2006 indicates that there are a total of 700 housing units in Poth, consisting of 537 traditional single-family housing units, 141 manufactured housing units (mobile homes), and 22 multi-family units. The multi-family units are located in two duplex structures, two four-plex structures, and one 12 unit apartment complex.

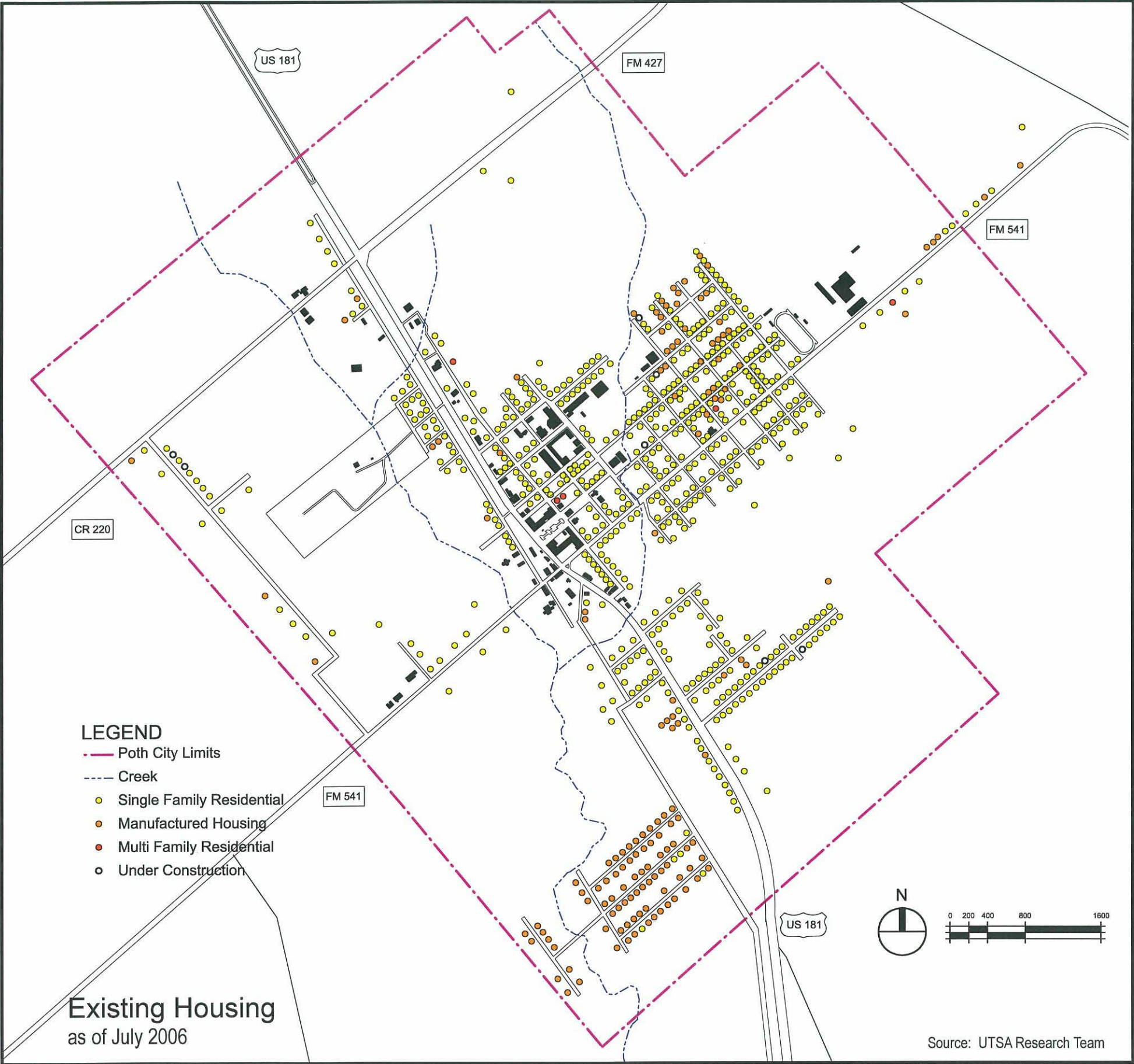
Traditional single-family housing makes up 77% of total housing, while manufactured housing is 20% of the total housing. Multi-family units make up approximately 3% of the total housing.

Single family residences are spaced throughout Poth, with the highest concentration north of FM 541 and east of US 181. Older homes are mainly found north of FM 541 and east of US 181, while the newer homes are found south of FM 541, particularly around Plainview Street. Most of the older homes are wood frame with wood exterior on pier and beam foundations. New home construction is typically wood frame with brick veneer on concrete slab foundations.

The majority of the manufactured housing is located off Richter Street on Bossier, Oak Lawn, Natchez, Shenandoah, and Moss Point Streets. This area contains 76 manufactured housing units, approximately 57% of total manufactured housing units in Poth and 11% of total housing for the city. The remaining 59 manufactured housing units are scattered throughout Poth.

Poth has an extremely high percentage of manufactured housing units with respect to the total housing inventory. Twenty percent of all the homes in Poth are manufactured housing, while the national average for cities is 6.5%. This high percentage is a concern because manufactured homes are highly susceptible to wind damage and must be adequately anchored to a foundation for stability. Additionally, the life span of manufactured homes is significantly less than a traditional single-family home site built home.

The multi-family housing units are located north of FM 541 and West of US 181. There is one duplex on Welhausen as well as one duplex and one four-plex on Schreiver Street and another four-plex on FM 541. The 12 unit affordable housing complex is located along Carroll Street.



Existing Open Space

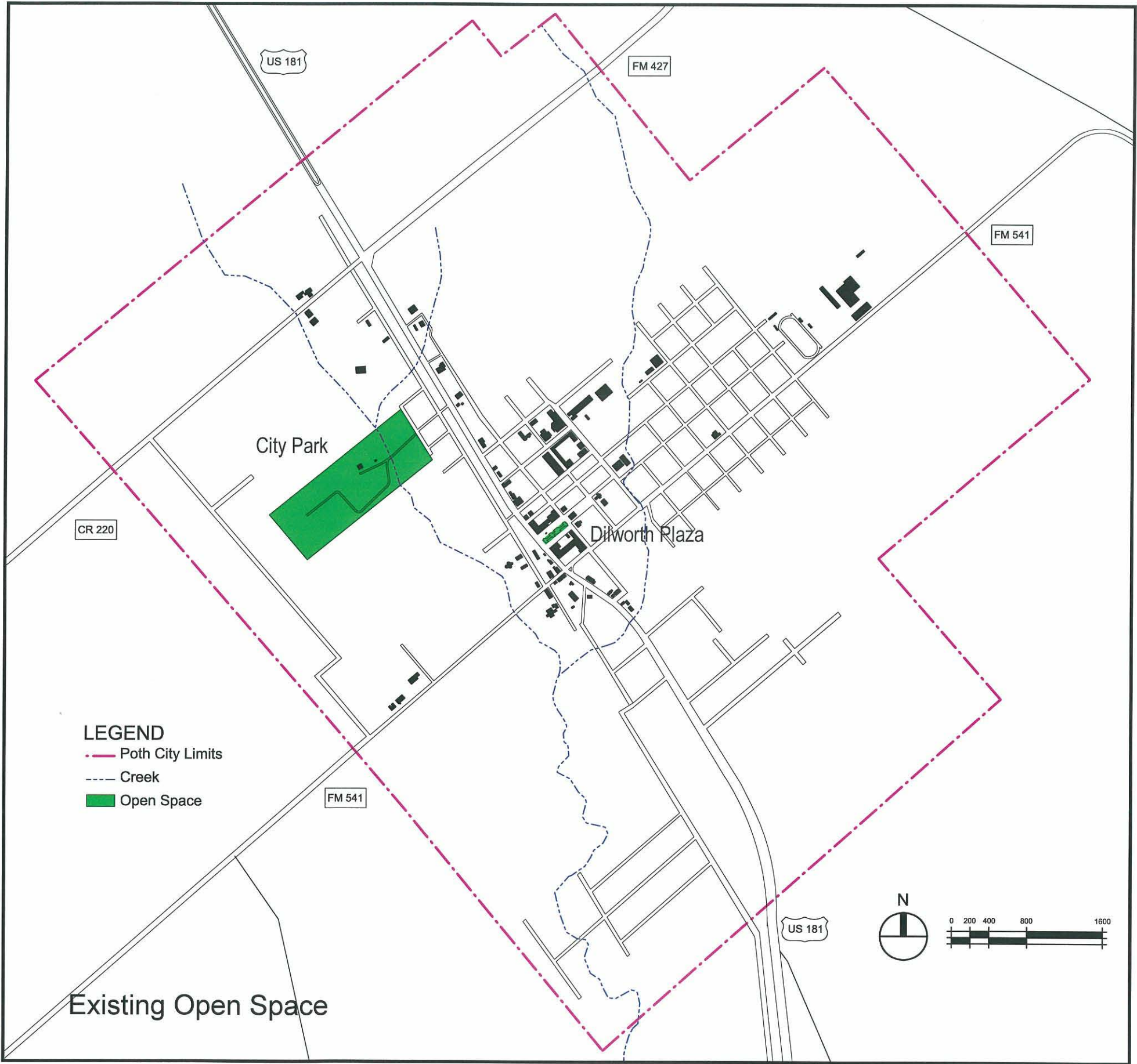
The City of Poth has two parks. City Park is a large open space, covering 31.9 acres. Dilworth Plaza, an open space in the City Center, has an area of .54 acres.

City Park hosts many events, including Community Fair Day, an annual summer event with an estimated attendance of over 1,000 people. Softball leagues also utilize the park throughout the summer. The Park is maintained by the Poth Independent School District in exchange for using the ballparks. Access to City Park is from Coy Street, which lies adjacent to a residential area. The one vehicular entrance also serves as the exit for the Park. A pavilion inside the Park is the only covered area. The Park also contains a children’s playground. Parking is allowed on the grass on either side of the interior Park road.

Improvements to Dilworth Plaza were generously donated to the City of Poth by First National Bank in the mid 1980s. The City of Poth shared in the construction costs for the Plaza. The Plaza extends from US 181 to Carroll Street and consists of a strip of brick-lined green space with trees, a small gazebo, and paved walkways. The Plaza is flanked by a drive-thru for Wells Fargo Bank, which faces the Plaza, and is surrounded by parking. Dilworth Plaza can host City events only by closing the streets immediately north and south of the plaza. By closing these streets, there is enough space for public events.



Dilworth Plaza



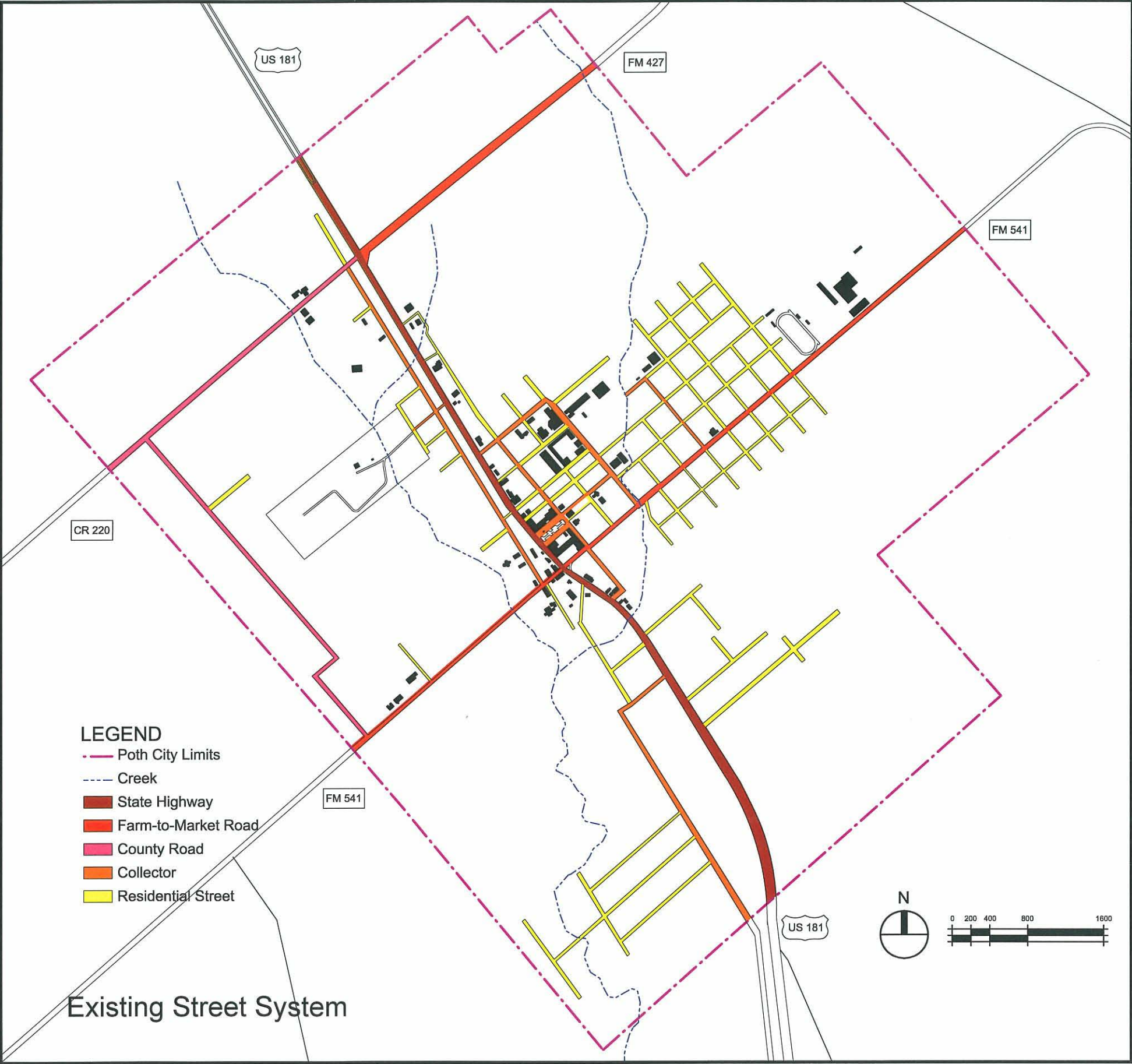
Existing Street System

In the City of Poth, a hierarchy of streets exists. The two main transportation corridors are United States Highway (US) 181 and Farm-to-Market Road (FM) 541. US 181 is a transportation route that runs northwest to southeast from Corpus Christi to San Antonio. It runs parallel to Interstate Highway (IH) 37 that connects San Antonio to the Gulf of Mexico. Within the City of Poth, US 181 is comprised of two lanes in each direction. North of Poth, the highway maintains the two lane configuration, however, it is separated by a grass median. South of Poth, the two lanes continued, but without a median. The only traffic light in Poth occurs at the intersection of US 181 and FM 541. FM 541 runs northeast to southwest through Poth and connects State Highway (SH) 123 to IH 37. FM 427 is located in the northern part of the city. County Road 220/Mencha Street is also located in the northern part of Poth. Both FM 427 and CR 220 provide access for local residence and landowners to the major transportation routes.

The city streets in Poth are divided into three classifications: arterials, collectors, and local residential streets. The primary purpose of an arterial street is mobility. State highways, farm-to-market roads, and county roads act as arterial streets. Collector streets serve as the link between local streets and arterials. Local residential streets provide access for residential properties. All collectors and local residential streets branch off the major transportation routes (US 181, FM 541, FM 427, and CR 220).

The collectors in Poth include the streets around Dilworth Plaza and Carroll Street which serve many of the commercial businesses. The streets on the north, east and south side of Dilworth Plaza appear ambiguous and cause confusion within the extensive paving between the plaza and the surrounding commercial businesses. Schneider, Dickson, and Louise Streets are also collectors that serve the three campuses of the Poth Independent School District. During school hours, Schneider and Dickson Streets, along with Chambers and Titcomb Streets, are transformed to one way streets to ease traffic during peak school hours. Klecha Street and Richter Avenue serve as collectors for those residing in the Richland Heritage Park.

The residential streets east of US 181 and adjacent to FM 541 are arranged in a gridiron pattern with most of the streets leading to dead ends. Many of the streets west of US 181 and south of FM 541 are laid out in a linear pattern that also lead to dead ends.

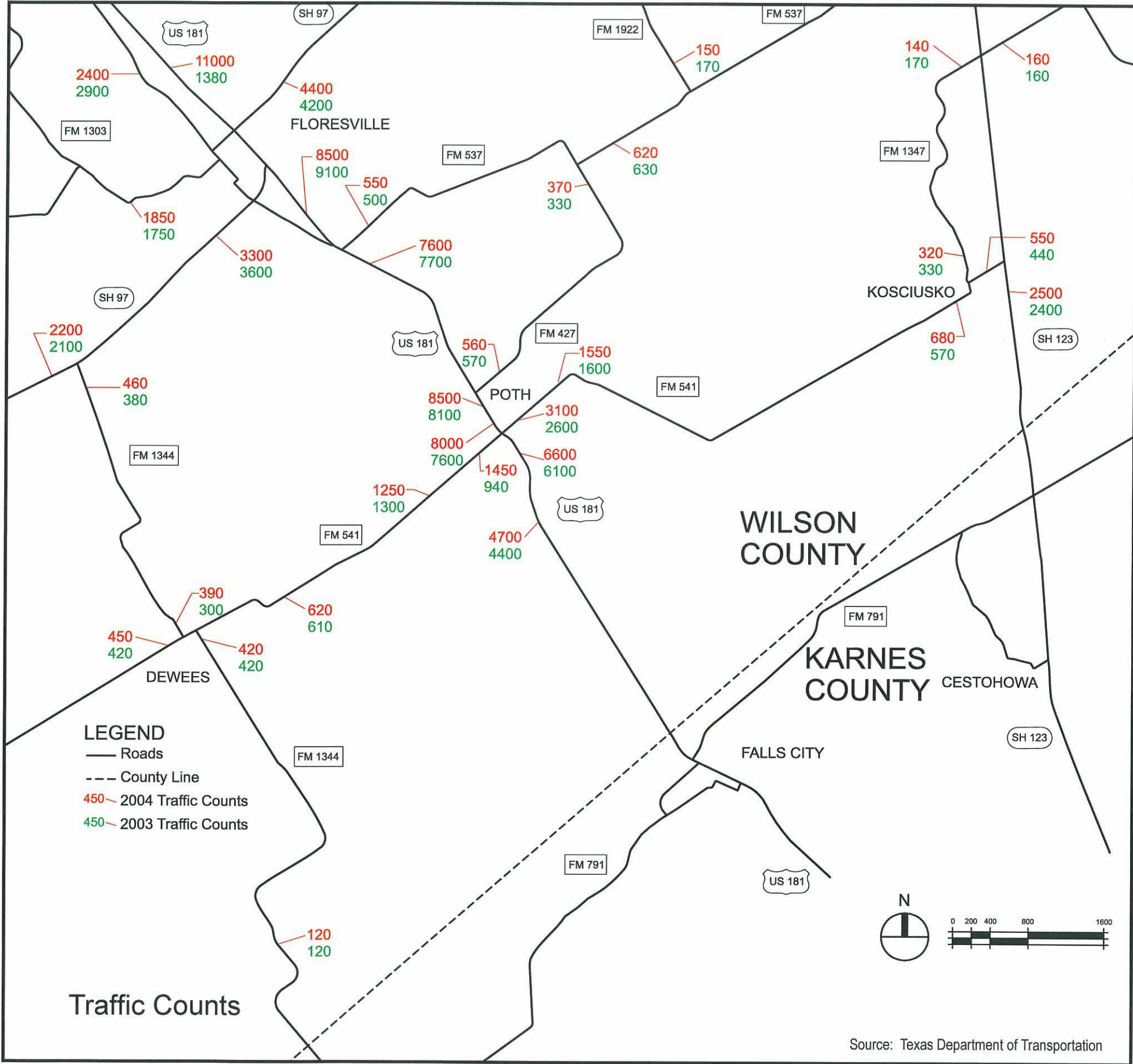


Existing Traffic Counts

Traffic counts conducted in 2003 and 2004 by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT) show that the majority of traffic is located along US 181. In 2003, the average daily traffic count was 8,100 vehicles per day on US 181, just south of FM 427. In 2004, the count increased to 8,500 vehicles per day. Just a bit further south on US 181, just north of Schneider Street, the 2003 count was 7,600 while the 2004 count increased to 8,000. Continuing south on US 181, to Klecka Street, the daily average for 2003 was 8,100 and decreased to 6,600 in 2004.

In the east to west direction, the 2003 traffic count for FM 427 east of US 181 is 570 with the 2004 figure down to 560. Along FM 541 at the west city limits the count for 2003 is 940, increasing to 1,250 in 2004. Closer to US 181, near Railroad Street, the 2003 traffic count went from 1,350 in 2003 to 1,450 in 2004. Across US 181 near Dickson Street, the traffic count was 2,600 in 2003 and by 2004 the count increased to 3,100. Further east just past the city limits, the average daily traffic for 2003 was 1,600 and decreased to 1,550 in 2004.

Examining the traffic counts beyond the city limits of Poth establishes an understanding of the amount of traffic that passes through the city, as well as the amount of traffic Poth generates. On US 181, south of Poth, the daily traffic count for 2004 was 4,700 vehicles, where as on US 181, north of Poth, the daily count for 2004 was 7,600. These numbers represent a 38% increase in the amount of traffic generated by Poth, along with FM 541 and FM 427. The traffic counts taken along FM 541, in both the east and west directions, beyond the Poth city limits provides an indication to the amount of traffic Poth receives each day. The 1,550 vehicles (2004 count) traveling on FM 541 east of Poth and 1,250 vehicles (2004 count) traveling on FM 541 west of Poth combined to an additional 2,800 vehicles that travel to/ through Poth.



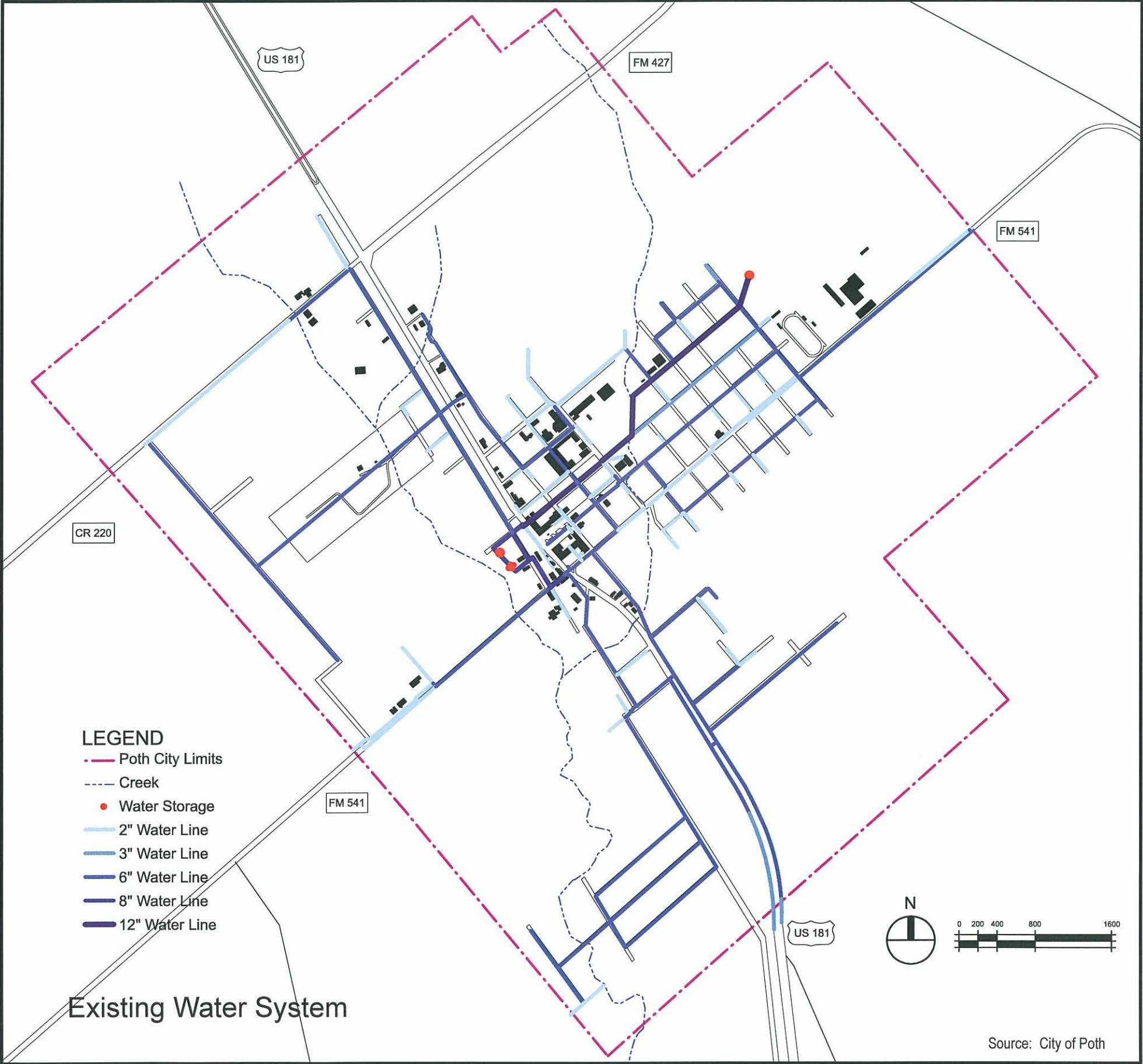
Source: Texas Department of Transportation

Utilities - Water

The City of Poth water distribution system has six different sizes of water lines, which include two (2), three (3), six (6), eight (8), and twelve (12) inch lines. Two inch water lines are located throughout Poth. There are two three inch water lines, along the northern tip of Wright Street, just north of Eschenburg Street, and Griffith Street, from the creek to Wright Street. The six inch lines are the most prevalent, found throughout Poth. The eight inch lines are located across US 181 from the City Center. These lines lead to the water tower and holding tanks for the City. The largest line, the twelve inch, is situated along Shriewer Street, from US 181 to Dickson Street and jogs up to Griffith Street to the creek, following it up to Houston Street, where it continues to the water tower, located northeast of the football stadium.

The City of Poth has four (4) above ground tanks located off of Zidek Street. These four tanks have a total holding capacity of 750,000 gallons. Additionally, there is a water tower located northeast of the football stadium. The tower has a 150,000 gallon capacity, bringing the total capacity with the tanks to 900,000 gallons. However, because it is not recommended to fill the tanks and tower to maximum capacity, the typical holding capacity is closer to 840,000 gallons.

The water system currently in place appears adequate for the needs of Poth. The City has not expressed any shortcomings with the current system.



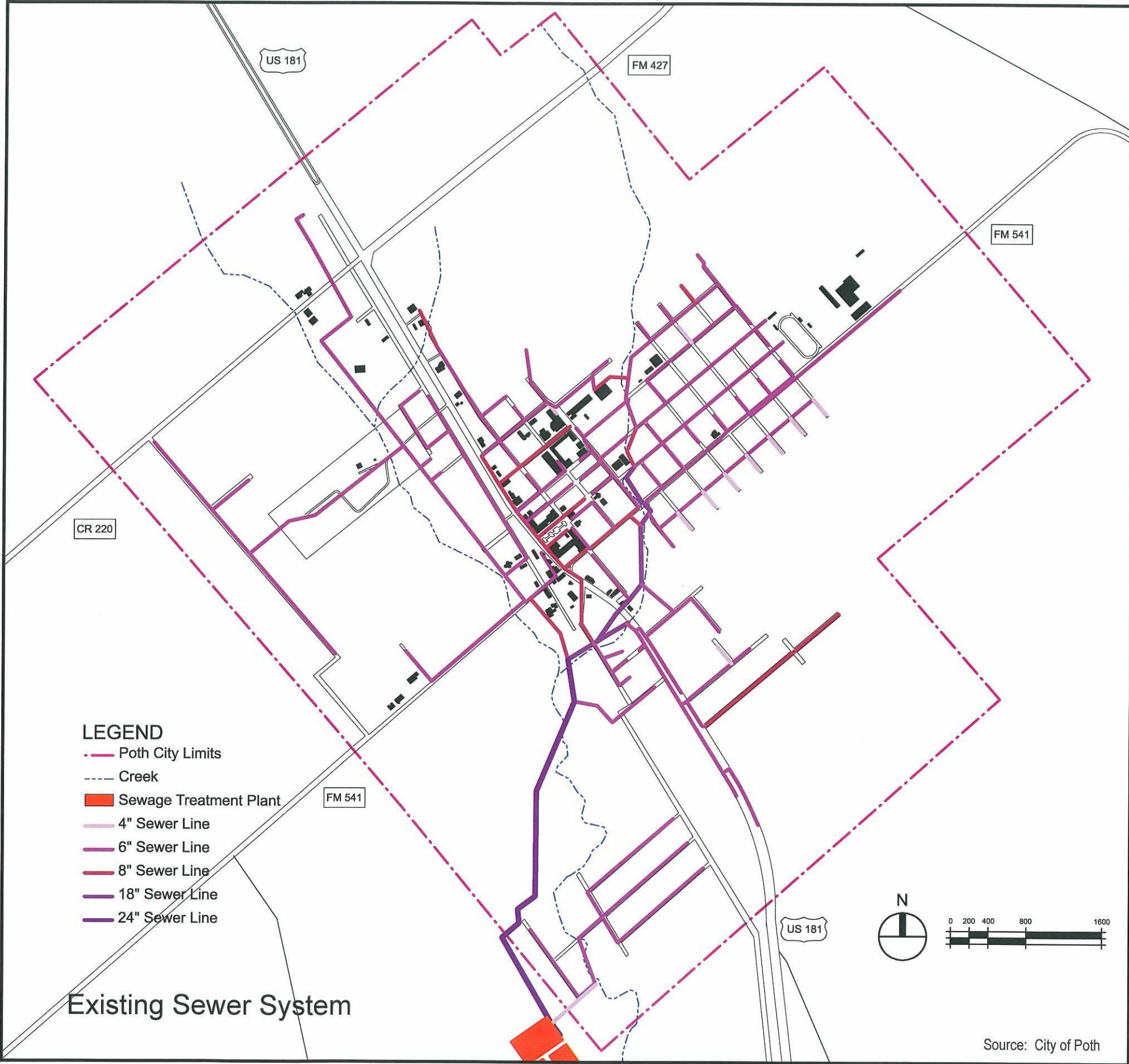
Utilities - Sewer

Poth uses five different sewer lines of various sizes. The four (4) inch line is a short-distance residential line which spans no more than 600 feet in length at its longest section, but is typically found in 200 foot sections. The six (6) inch line is the most commonly used and mainly serves residential neighborhoods. Most of these lines are located beneath street right of ways. The eight (8) inch sewer lines are found in commercial areas, along US 181 in the city center district, and principally act as collector lines that feed into the larger eighteen (18) inch line. There are only two eighteen inch lines, located south of FM 541 near the joining of the two creeks and a recently installed line on Sunshine Road. The eighteen inch sewer line collects from eight inch and six inch lines and feeds into the twenty-four (24) inch line. The twenty-four inch sewer line leads directly to the sewage treatment plant, located just outside the city limits on the southwest side of the City.

Recent improvements include upgrading the sewer line from US 181 to Green Street from eight inch to eighteen inch as well as the introduction of a eighteen inch sewer line to Sunshine Road.

The sewer lines tend to follow the creeks, which follow the natural topography of Poth. The sewer lines converge into main lines that are eighteen inch and twenty-four inch in diameter at approximately the same place where the two main creeks of Poth also meet, south of FM 541. From this point the sewer line continues as a twenty-four inch system until reaching the treatment plant, located further downstream.

The sewage treatment plant consists of a total of four (4) treatment ponds. The City of Poth considers the system adequate for its needs.

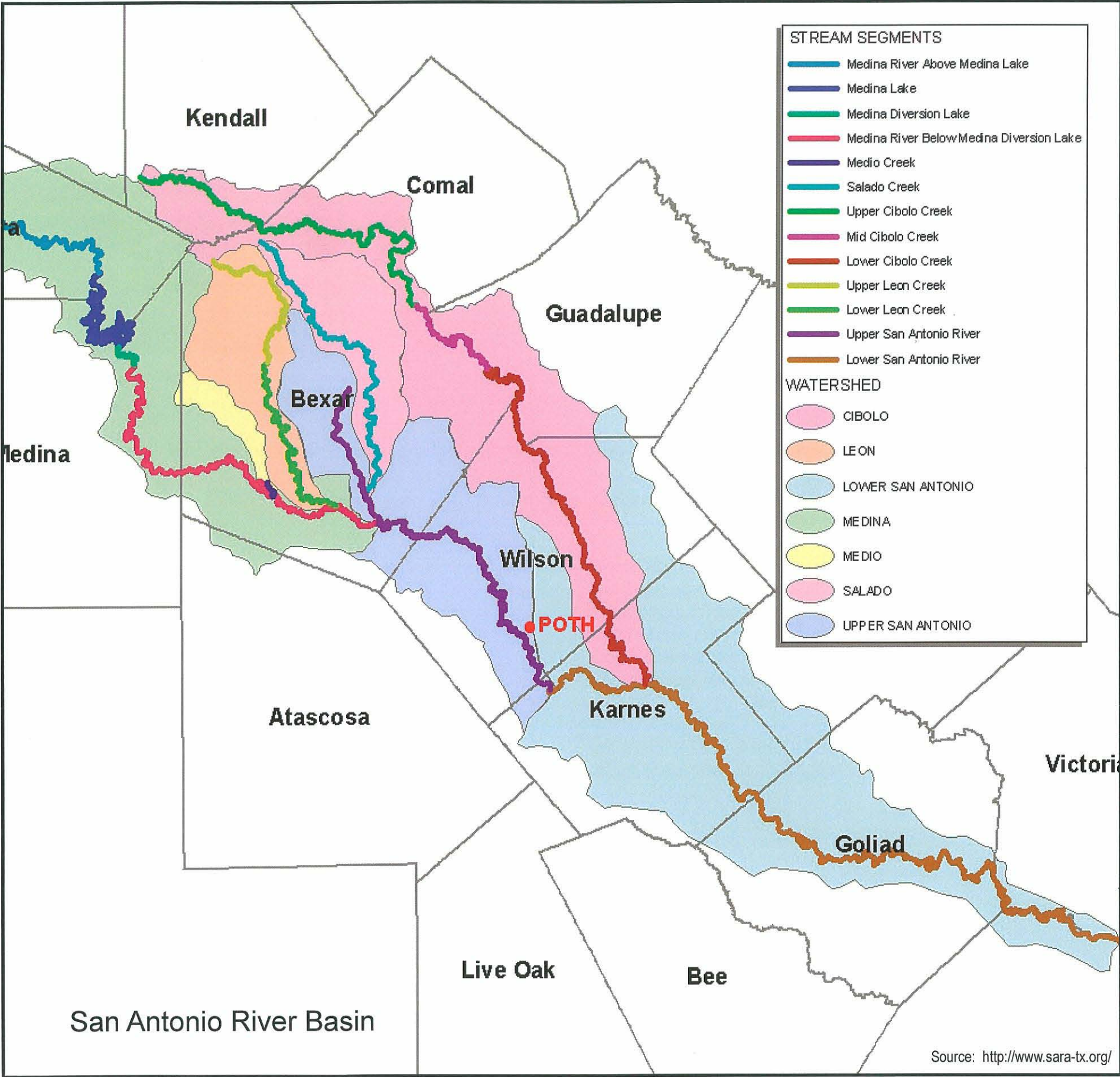


The San Antonio River Basin

The City of Poth is located east of the San Antonio River. Runoff from the City, and lands north and west, flow into the San Antonio River as part of the Upper San Antonio River Watershed. By the time the river passes near Poth, it carries water from the head of the San Antonio River and collections along the way from the Medina, Medio, Leon, and Salado Watersheds. Further down stream, water from the Cibolo Watershed flows into the river stream and eventually makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico.



San Antonio River



Natural Features

Floodplain

The Y-shaped floodplain follows the creeks that pass through the City of Poth. There are some structures that are located in the floodplain, including the former Hermann Hall, and a few houses near FM 541 and Dickson Street, as well as by the creek at Griffith Street and also at Welhausen near the creek. Most of the floodplain, however, has no structures.

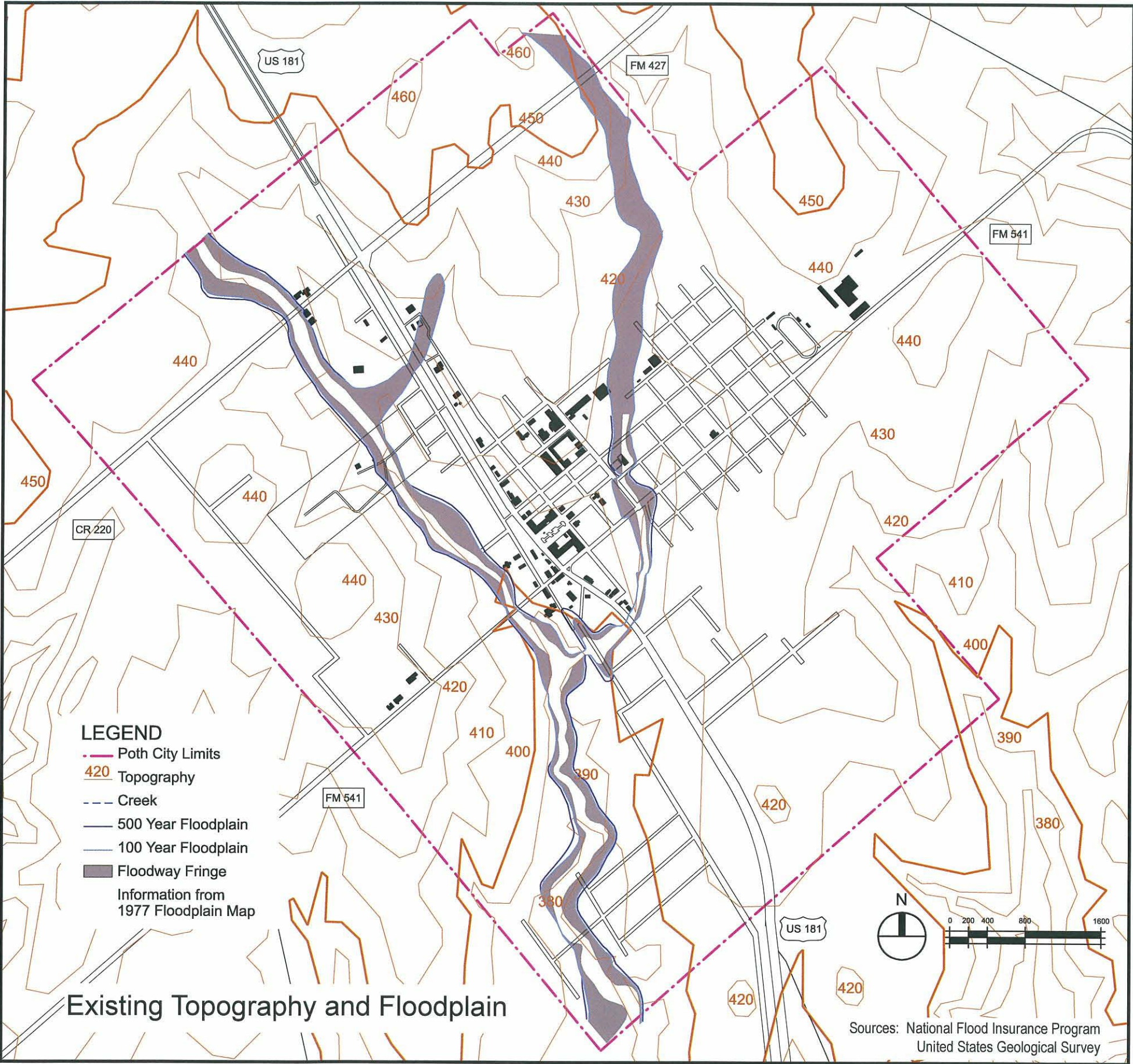
Topography

The general topography of Poth is considered flat. The City has a gentle slope with its peak at the northern edge, just north of FM 427 and east of US 181. At this point, the elevation is 460 feet while the lowest elevation of 380 is at the City's most southernmost point, along the creek near the Oak Lawn residential neighborhood. The 80 foot elevation difference occurs over an approximate distance of 1.7 miles (9,000 feet). This represents an average of a 1% slope, approximately one foot elevation change for every 100 foot distance.



City of Poth

Source: Gene Maeckel



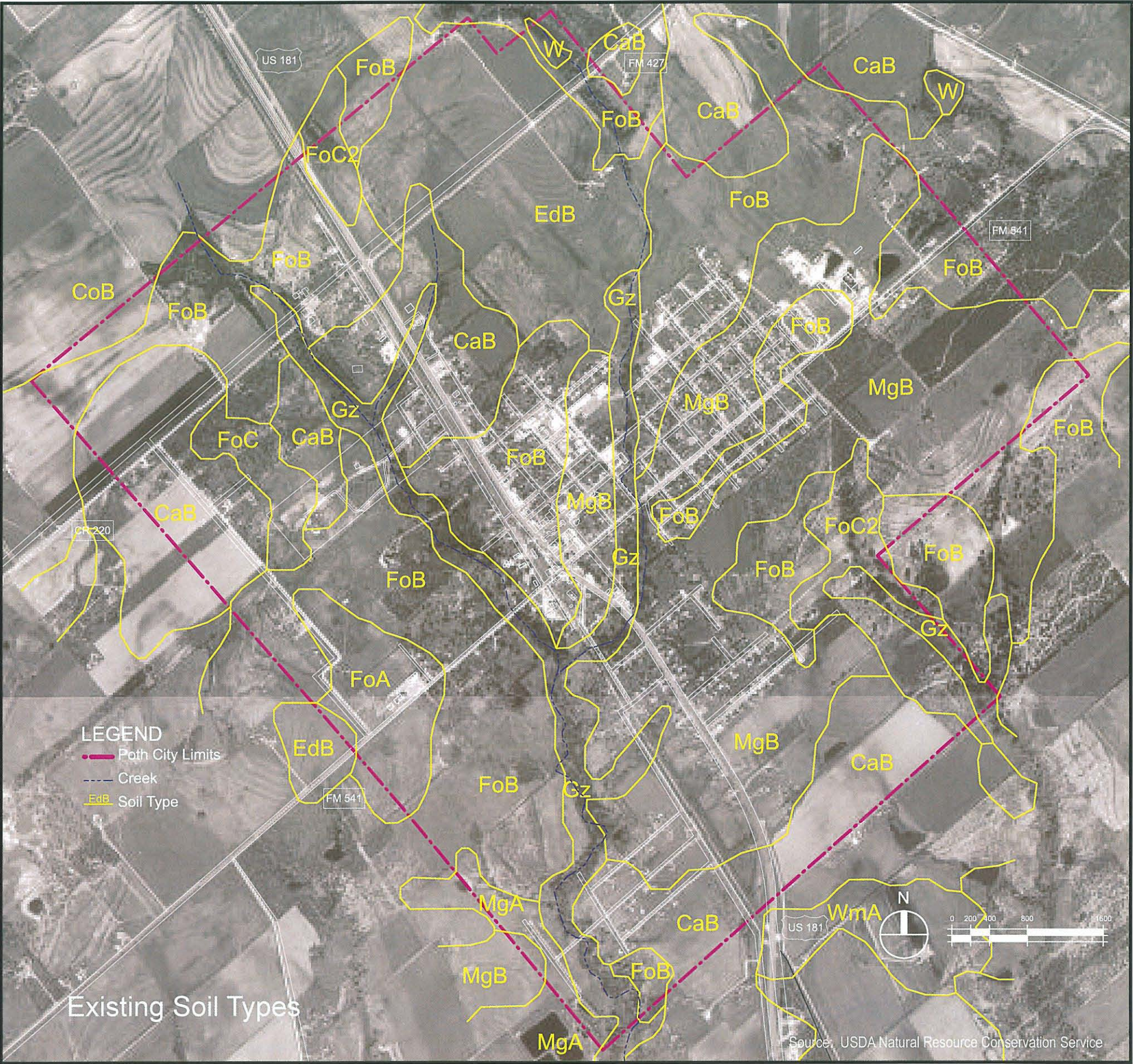
Natural Features - Soils

Within city limits of Poth, there are ten different soil types, which are listed below. The most commonly occurring soil, FoB, which is Floresville fine sandy loam, covers about one third of the City of Poth. The second most common soil, MgB, Miguel fine sandy loam, is found on just over one fourth of the total land acreage of Poth.

Table 7
Soil Types of Poth, Texas

Soil Symbol	Soil Name	Acres	Percent
CaB	Clareville clay loam, 1% - 3% slope	318.5	16.3%
CoB	Coy clay loam, 1% - 4% slope	17.7	.9%
EdB	Elmendorf - Denhawken complex, 1% - 4% slope	185.9	9.5%
FoA	Floresville fine sandy loam, 0% - 1% slope	55.7	2.9%
FoB	Floresville fine sandy loam, 1% - 3% slope	648.1	33.1%
FoC	Floresville fine sandy loam, 3% - 5% slope	28.1	1.4%
FoC2	Floresville fine sandy loam, 2% - 5% slope, eroded	62.5	3.2%
Gz	Degola and Zavala soils, Frequently flooded	144.2	7.4%
MgA	Miguel fine sandy loam, 0% - 1% slope	17.6	.9%
MgB	Miguel fine sandy loam, 1% - 3% slope	478.3	24.4%
Total		1,956.6	100%

Source: UDSA National Resource Conservation Service



Sources Consulted

Hemphill, Hugh (2006) *The Railroads of San Antonio and South Central Texas* (San Antonio Texas, Maverick Publishing Company).

Quarterly Sales Tax Report – City of Poth / County of Wilson
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Gene Maeckel, interview by Pamela M

Juan Padilla
L. K. Travis
Bert Carsase

City of Poth

Texas Almanac

