

# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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July 30, 2014

## Texas Main Street Center Design Report

**Re:** Canton Pocket Park @ N Buffalo and E Dallas Streets  
**City:** Canton  
**By:** Howard Langner, Main Street Design Staff

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*Not for regulatory approval, permitting, or construction  
Howard Langner, Architect, Texas Historical Commission*

*Prior to making any improvements to the building façade(s), the building owner should perform a thorough review of the major structural components of the building, including the roof, walls, and foundation. All mechanical and electrical systems should be well maintained in conformity with applicable codes and ordinances. Building uses and interior arrangements of program spaces should also be in conformity with applicable codes and ordinances.*

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## Design Request and Existing Conditions

The Canton Main Street Office requested design recommendations for a community pocket park to be located on the vacant property at N Buffalo and E Dallas.

## Building Analysis

Once, there was a building situated on this prominent corner lot northeast of the courthouse square. Ideally, a properly massed/proportioned/detailed new building should go back on this site, but a “pocket park” can be successful in this location if done properly.

## Recommendations

This report contains a series of sketches illustrating how a pocket park could be successfully integrated into the property. Generally speaking, the most successful pocket parks offer the following:

- shade on hot days*
- sunny areas on cool days*
- comfortable seating (movable if possible)*
- proximity to food and drink*
- proximity to clean and safe public restrooms*
- activities for children and places for parents/guardians to supervise*
- water features*
- private “nooks” within the overall park for private conversation*
- attractive graphics*
- a distinctive entry feature (gates or archway)*
- paths that cut through the site to gain access to an adjacent street or property*

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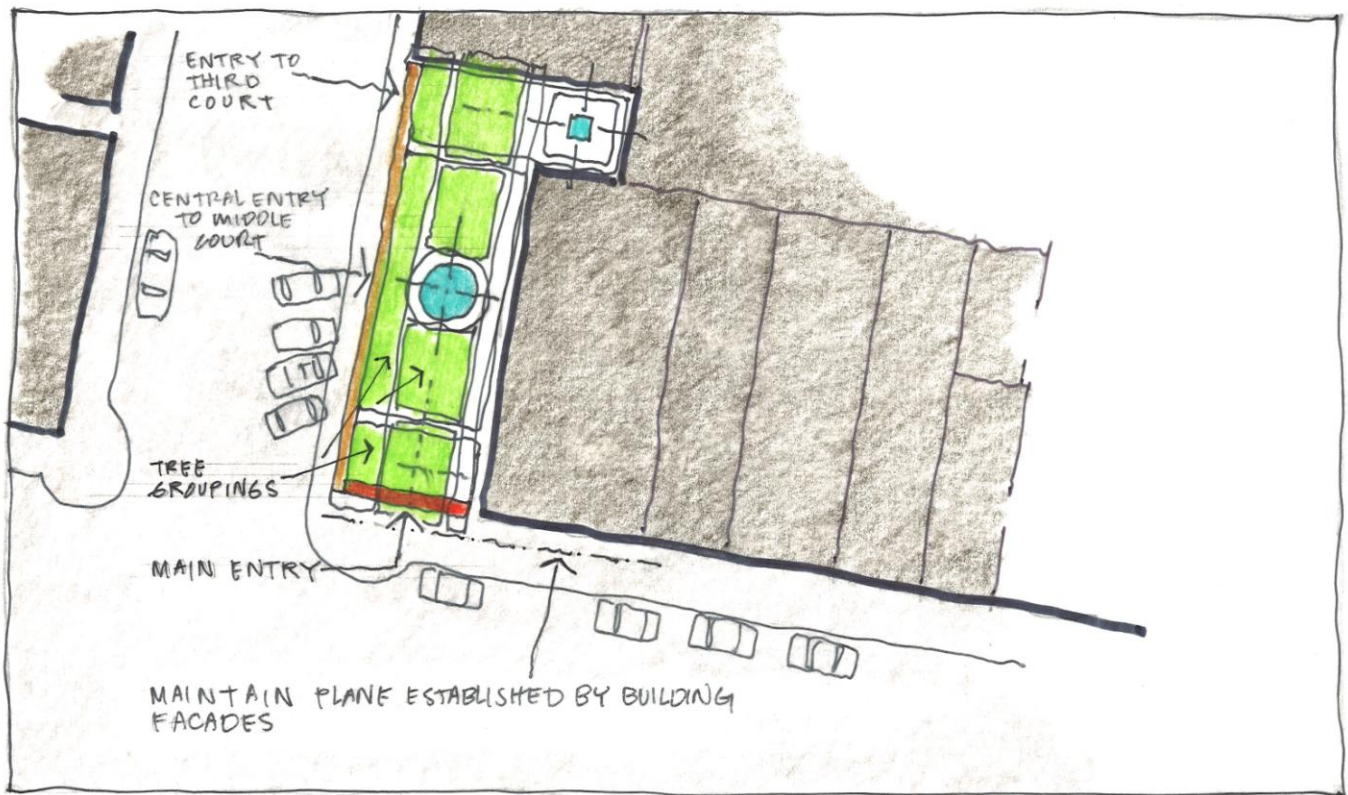


**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

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[www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us)

## Site Analysis



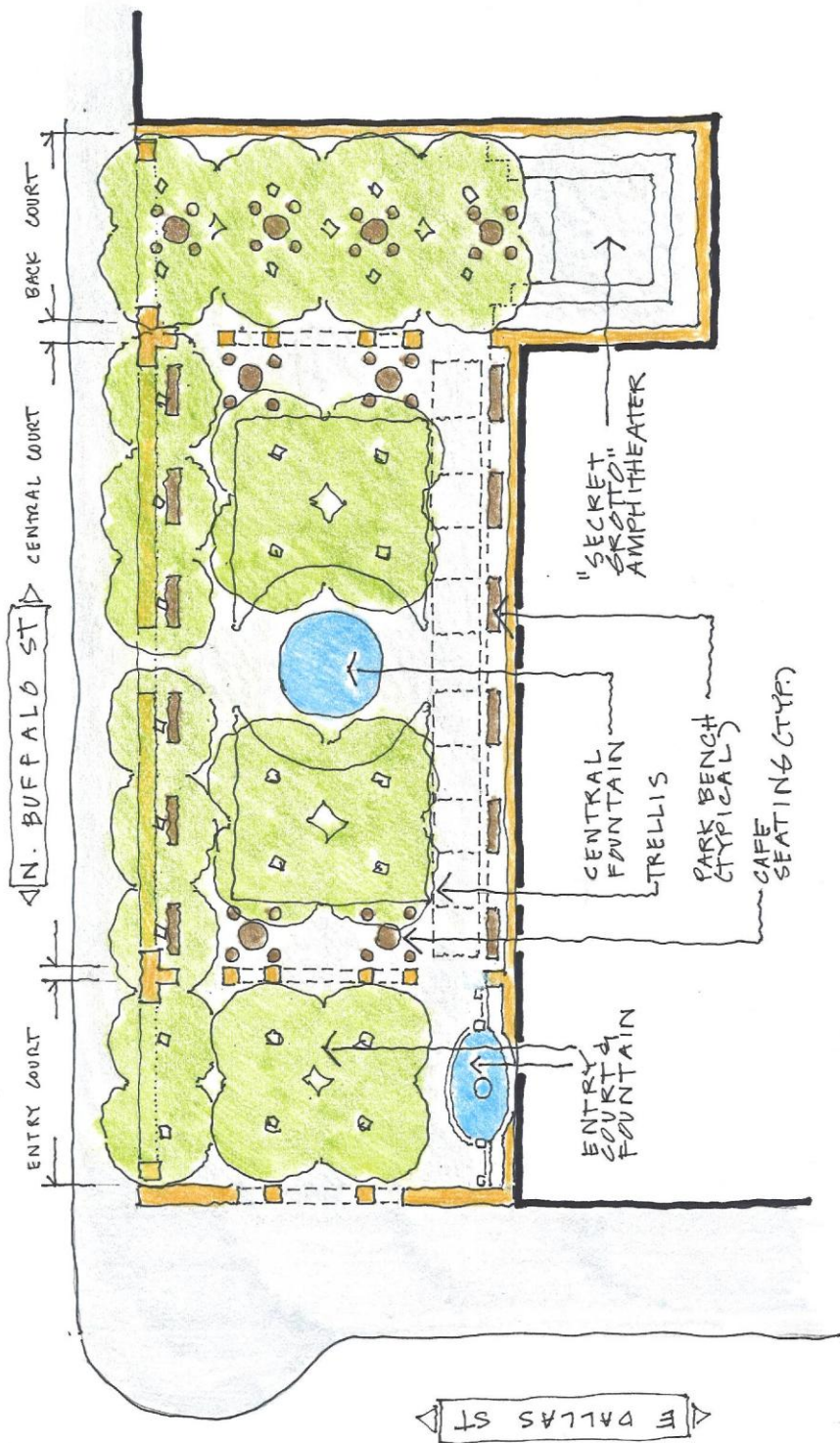
ANALYSIS OF PROPERTY / DESIGN SUGGESTION  
CORNER OF N. BUFFALO & E DALLAS STREETS

From an urban design standpoint, the park should be designed to provide as much edge definition as possible to this exposed corner site. This is best accomplished by a combination of high/low walls, trees, and low shrubbery. People should enter the park at distinct entry locations and feel that they are comfortably situated in a unique series of outdoor spaces.



The image to the left is reproduced at larger scale on the next page of this report. Notice the overall organization of the property:

- central axial entrance from E Dallas through an entrance gate
- centrally placed fountain feature with variety of proximate seating options
- trellis structure running along east side of property
- space in back corner of property is treated as a special "grotto"





First Baptist Church  
Canton, TX 75103 - approximate address  
E Dallas St

Street View - Oct 2012



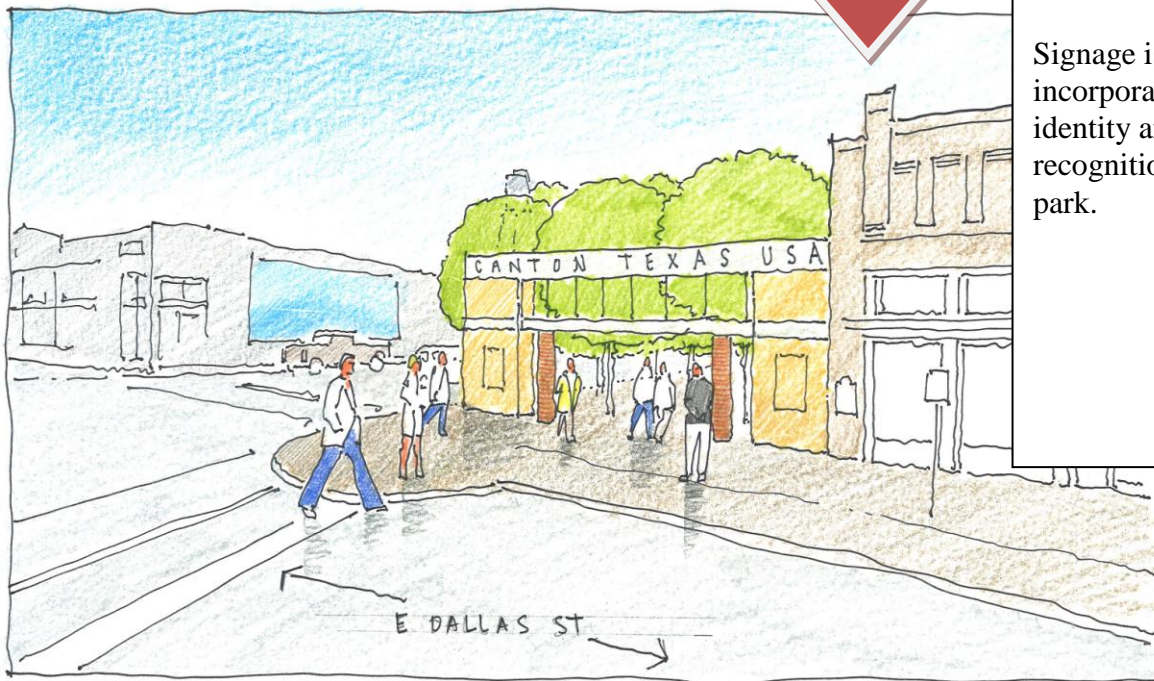
The property should look “filled” when seen from E Dallas and the Courthouse lawn.

A freestanding front wall is shown that picks up on the heights of the adjacent historic facades.

Mature trees further establish the façade plane.

Signage is incorporated to give identity and name recognition to the new park.

[https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556546,-95.863303,3a,75y,344.59h,87.93t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1s2d\\_1b\\_p56WQyL6ou9Aq!2e0](https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556546,-95.863303,3a,75y,344.59h,87.93t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1s2d_1b_p56WQyL6ou9Aq!2e0)



ENTRANCE FROM E. DALLAS ST.

-WALL CONTINUES LINE OF FACADES ALONG E. DALLAS



128 E Dallas St  
Canton, TX 75103 - approximate address  
E Dallas St  
Street View - Oct 2013



The new entry wall should go across the full width of the site just as a storefront would.

The materials, colors, and proportions should reflect the historic building facades nearby without literally copying them.

The park's features should be evident from the sidewalk but the path to them should be carefully choreographed to maximize interest.

<https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556561,-95.863398,3a,75y,3.55h,84.73t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1sqZR2hAlsQMlj1NfqdSyZMw2a0>

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CORNER OF E. DALLAS AND N. BUFFALO  
- SCALE OF NEW ENTRANCE WALL DERIVED  
FROM ADJACENT FACADES



118 N Buffalo St  
Canton, TX 75103 - approximate address  
N Buffalo St  
Street View - Dec 2012



The entry wall steps down as it turns the corner into N Buffalo.

The mature trees maintain full height and continue along the full length of the N Buffalo sidewalk.

<https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556628,-95.86348,3a,75y,57.07h,77.31t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1sHTIGSPilhqtd8mpWlnUeAI2e0>

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N. BUFFALO CORNER  
- SCALE OF WALL DIMINISHES AS IT TURNS THE  
CORNER





The N Buffalo entrance to the park is located in the middle of the central fountain courtyard.

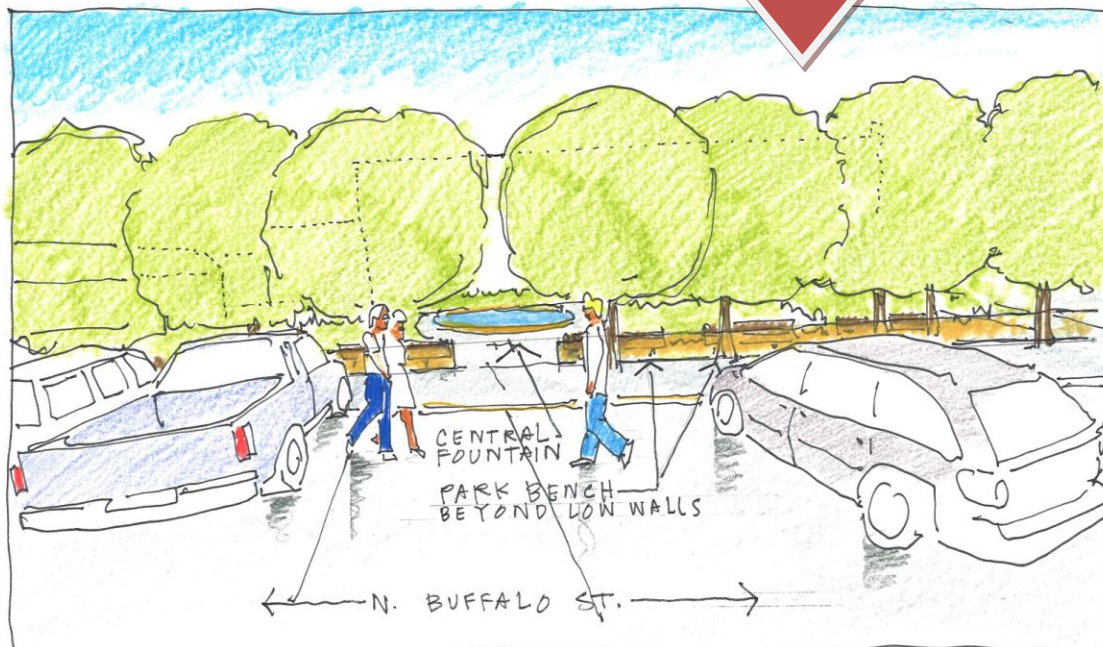
Note the sidewalk edge is defined by a continuous low masonry wall in this portion of the site.

The wall has a gap to allow axial approach to the central fountain from the N Buffalo sidewalk.

Mature trees are planted in an even grid and park benches are evenly placed between.

<https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556743,-95.863457,3a,75y,94.42h,77.04t/data=!3m1!1e1!3m2!1sUQJ3QKp8J983JLFOAQw!2e0>

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APPROACHING CENTRAL FOUNTAIN FROM N. BUFFALO



7/25/2014

Canton, TX - Google Maps

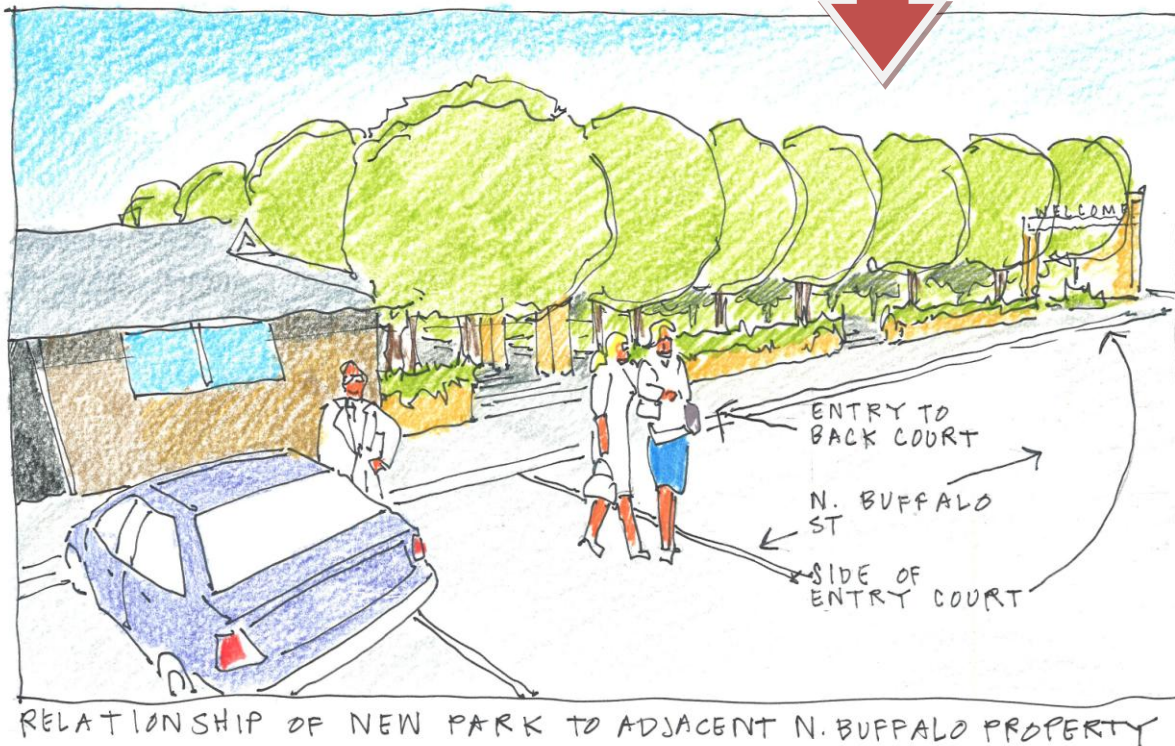
119 N Buffalo St  
Canton, TX 75103 - approximate address  
N Buffalo St  
[Street View - Dec 2012]



This last view of the park site from N Buffalo shows the continuous low wall, the mature trees, and the gap which leads to the back "grotto" court.

Notice the importance of the trees in establishing the mass and volume of the park.

[https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556929,-95.863421,3a,75y,128.77h,77.47t/data=!3m1!1e1!3m2!1sO6ksY\\_Mo\\_wSaJlDDINFCAl2e0](https://www.google.com/maps/@32.556929,-95.863421,3a,75y,128.77h,77.47t/data=!3m1!1e1!3m2!1sO6ksY_Mo_wSaJlDDINFCAl2e0)





The following 6 images show a selection of highly successful, smaller urban parks. Notice the importance of mature trees in every example. These trees provide shade, form, mass, and visual relief from the surrounding buildings and streets.

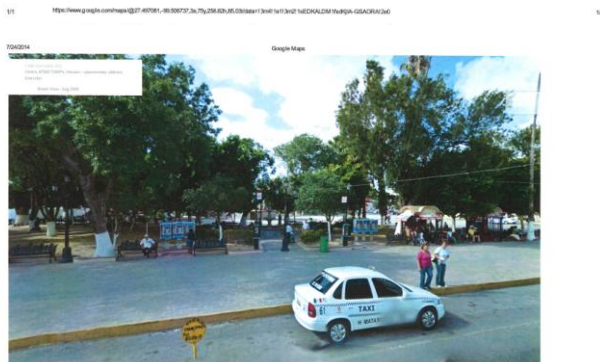
Notice the other elements that contribute to the success of these parks:

- vendors
- park benches
- lighting
- maintained trash receptacles
- small lawn areas
- sculptural elements that also serve as playscapes for children
- broad walkways and paved areas





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## **Guidance for Rehabilitation**

The Texas Main Street Program helps Texas cities revitalize their historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts by utilizing preservation and economic development strategies. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation is a list of ten ways to approach rehabilitation on historic buildings. The Texas Historical Commission uses this list of standards when analyzing and making recommendations for a project. The standards can be found here: [http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab\\_standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm)

Rehabilitation is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

## **Funding**

There are many options for funding preservation projects. As part of a designated Main Street community, the property owner has as a resource the local Main Street manager who can help you research and identify sources of additional funding. Localized financial tools can include façade grants or other direct assistance programs that come through sources such as local economic development organizations.

The THC and TMSP has compiled a document that identifies many of these avenues for funding and financing, it can be found on our website: <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/public/upload/Funding-Methods-for-Main-Street-communities-8.26.13-update.pdf> There are funding sources at the local, state and federal levels and they are outlined in the document. The list provides only brief summaries of potential funding sources, and information including eligibility requirements and application deadlines that are subject to change without notice. If the scope of work exceeds available sources of funding, the project should be phased accordingly, but these options for funding can still be utilized. Please contact possible grantors directly for more information on their programs.

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After the owner has had a chance to review the recommended concept, the Texas Main Street Design Center Staff will work with the owner(s) to help develop their rehabilitation plan for this particular building. It is also requested that TMSDC be notified when clarification of design elements might prove helpful or when an alternate scheme is contemplated. Please contact Howard Langner (512) 305-9045/ [howard.langner@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:howard.langner@thc.state.tx.us).