

# HUTCHINS TOWN CENTER DISTRICT

EDC Board Report, Development Strategy, and Implementation Program

City-Owned 8-Acre Site at Lancaster-Hutchins Road and J.J. Lemmon Street

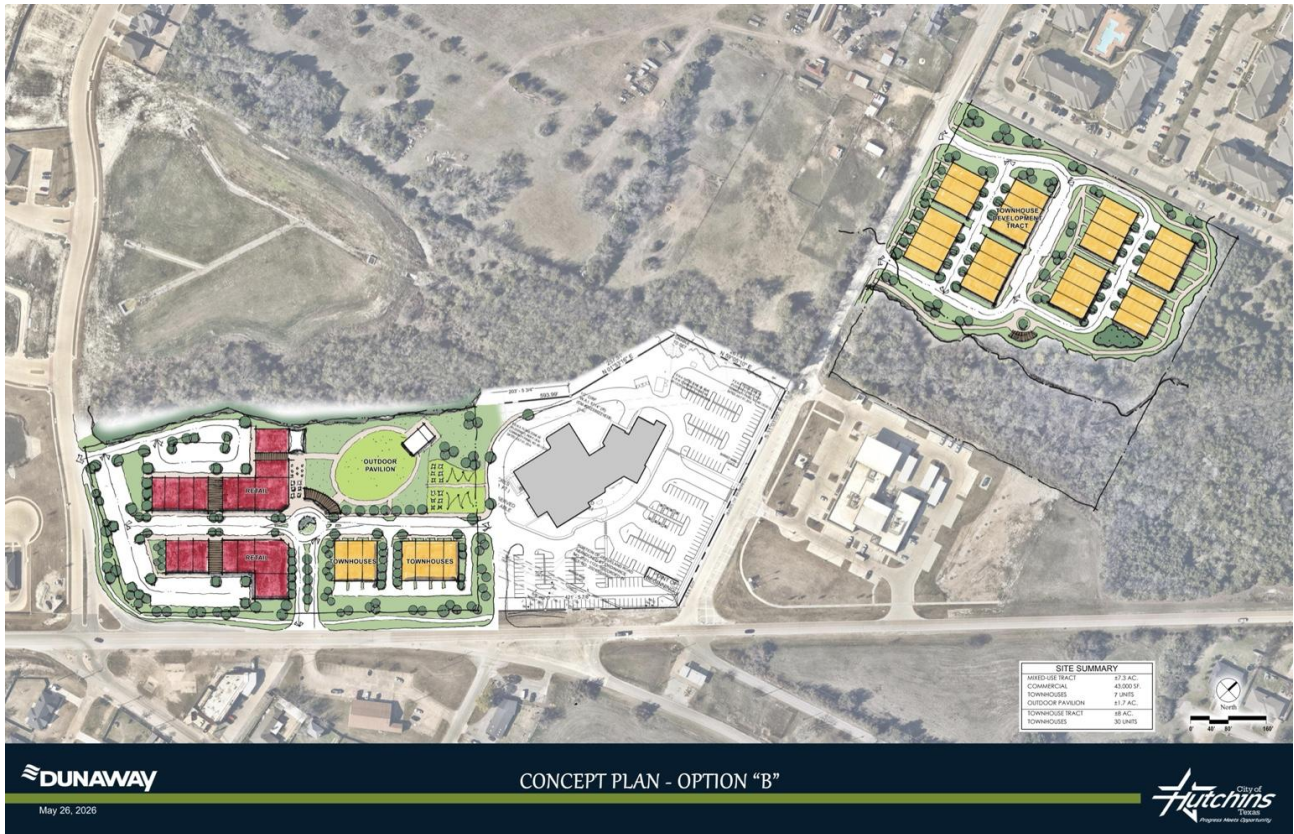


Figure 1. Conceptual town center site plan provided for discussion purposes.

## Summary

The City of Hutchins has an opportunity to convert an 8-acre city-owned property at Lancaster-Hutchins Road and J.J. Lemon Street into a civic-focused Town Center District. The concept is anchored by a Recreation Center and Library now under construction and could be supported by a 2-acre Town Green with a pavilion or bandshell, approximately 40,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, and flexible residential opportunities including townhomes and residential units above retail.

This report recommends that the City and EDC proceed with a Town Center implementation program. The recommended approach is to use public investment to create a high-quality public space and solicit private development. The City should build the place; the private sector should build and operate the buildings. However, the City and EDC should be prepared to develop the initial mixed-use space if needed.

The current level of public investment is substantial. The Recreation Center and Library is under construction at a project cost of approximately \$21 million. The EDC has approximately \$8 million available to support public improvements such as streetscape, landscaping, signage, lighting, parking, the town green, and the pavilion/bandshell. Together, these commitments represent an approximate \$29 million City of Hutchins commitment before private development begins.

The surrounding residential reinforces the case for retail and restaurant development. Approximately 750 single-family homes are being constructed to the south, approximately 30 townhomes are anticipated to the north, and additional residential development is occurring in the broader area.

This project is a 10-year economic development initiative, not as a single-site real estate transaction. The aspiration is creating a lasting civic and economic center for Hutchins that improves quality of life and establishes a *recognizable community identity*.

Recommendation	Rationale	Action
Proceed with a formal Town Center Master Plan	A concept plan is not sufficient for public investment or developer solicitation.	Authorize consultant RFQ and planning budget.
Invest EDC funds for site readiness	Public spaces, streetscape, lighting, parking, and signage increase the value of every development parcel.	Reserve approximately \$8M for eligible catalytic improvements.
Use a two-step developer procurement process	RFQ first identifies capacity; RFP later tests project-specific proposals.	Issue RFQ after master plan, market study, and preliminary design.
Phase retail delivery	40,000 SF is plausible given nearby growth, but should be delivered as demand and tenants emerge.	Allow phased retail and mixed-use construction.
Create a long-term operating plan	Town centers require maintenance, programming, and business recruitment after construction.	Establish annual operations, marketing, and event budgets.

## PROJECT DEFINITION

Item	Description
Project Name	Hutchins Town Center District
Location	Lancaster-Hutchins Road and J.J. Lemon Street, Hutchins, Texas
Ownership	City-owned property
Parcel Size	Approximately 8 acres
Civic Anchor	Recreation Center and Library under construction
Local Recreation Center Cost Assumption	Approximately \$21 million, based on City-provided project information
EDC Funding Capacity	Approximately \$8 million for project assistance and public improvements
Open Space Program	Approximately 2-acre Town Green with pavilion/bandshell
Commercial Program	Approximately 43,000 SF retail and restaurant space
Residential Context	750 single-family homes under construction to the south; approximately 30 townhomes and additional residential planned development to the north (Madrigal Tract)

## RESEARCH BASIS AND DEVELOPMENT RATIONALE

The recommended strategy is consistent with common economic development and town center best practices: create a strong civic/public realm framework, reduce developer uncertainty, align zoning and infrastructure, recruit private investment, and establish ongoing place management.

### Public Investment as a Catalyst

The Texas Comptroller describes Type B economic development corporations as eligible to fund broader quality-of-life projects in addition to Type A projects, including land, buildings, facilities, targeted infrastructure, and improvements for authorized purposes. The Hutchins EDC is identified by the City as a nonprofit entity funded by 4B sales tax proceeds. This supports the policy justification for using EDC funds for public improvements that create economic development value, subject to local legal review and statutory compliance.

### Placemaking and Economic Development

Research consistently links successful town centers and downtown districts to public space quality, walkability, programming, and ongoing management. Conventional guidance emphasizes understanding the community, creating attractive walkable places, diversifying economic uses, financing projects, and establishing ongoing place management. Project for Public Spaces describes public places as contributors to attachment and economic growth, and notes a relationship between social offerings, openness, beauty, community attachment, and local GDP growth.

## Green Space

The proposed 2-acre Town Green should be treated as economic infrastructure. For Hutchins, the Town Green and pavilion can support retail demand by generating repeat visitation through concerts, farmers markets, food truck events, and seasonal programming.

## Walkability, Streetscape, and Complete Streets

The Federal Highway Administration maintains Complete Streets case studies to support safe and complete pedestrian, bicycle, and transportation networks. The relevance to Hutchins is practical: if the Town Center is intended to serve nearby subdivisions and the recreation center/library, it must be safe and comfortable to walk between parking, civic uses, retail, and open space. Sidewalks, crossings, lighting, shade, and wayfinding are core project infrastructure.

## VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Vision: Establish Hutchins Town Center as the civic, cultural, and commercial heart of the community: a walkable destination anchored by the Recreation Center and Library, activated by a 2-acre Town Green and pavilion, and completed by restaurants, retail, residential uses, and community events.

- Build a destination.
- Use the Recreation Center and Library as an anchor that creates daily and weekly visitation.
- Use the Town Green and pavilion as the signature civic space.
- Phase private development to match market demand and reduce vacancy risk.
- Allow mixed-use density, including residential units above retail, where feasible.
- Create a public/private structure that protects City investment and requires developer performance.
- Track progress quarterly through measurable milestones and economic outcomes.

## RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Component	Recommended Program	Purpose
Recreation Center / Library	Approximately \$21M public civic facility under construction; Fall 2027 expected opening.	Primary civic anchor and daily activity generator.
Town Green	Approximately 2 acres, designed as flexible open lawn with shade, seating, lighting, public art, and event utilities.	Community gathering space and retail foot-traffic generator.
Pavilion / Bandshell	Covered stage, lighting, power, sound infrastructure, storage, and supporting event utilities.	Supports concerts, movie nights, civic events, festivals, and seasonal programming.
Retail / Restaurant Space	Approximately 43,000 SF, phased based on tenant demand.	Sales tax generation, services for nearby residents, destination dining, and small business development.
Residential Opportunities	7 townhomes in initial concept; allow higher density, apartments over retail, live-work units, and	Extends activity beyond business hours and supports retail.

	potential future mixed-use residential.	
Streetscape / Public Realm	Sidewalks, crossings, trees, planting, irrigation, decorative lighting, signage and parking.	Transforms the site into a walkable district and protects public investment quality.

## PUBLIC/PRIVATE RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORK

The EDC Board should clearly distinguish between public responsibilities and developer responsibilities. Public funds should create value and protect long-term public benefit. Private developers should finance, construct, lease, and operate private buildings.

Responsibility	City	EDC	Developer	Consultant Team
Master plan	Lead / adopt	Fund/support	Comment	Prepare
Market analysis	Procure/manage	Fund/support	Provide feedback	Prepare
Zoning and development standards	Lead/adopt	Support	Comply/comment	Draft/support
Town Green	Own/maintain	Fund capital improvements	Benefit/coordinate	Design
Pavilion/bandshell	Own/maintain	Fund capital improvements	Program coordination	Design
Streetscape/lighting/signage	Own/maintain or assign	Fund capital improvements	Comply/connect	Design/engineer
Retail buildings	No direct construction except extraordinary gap case	Incentivize and construct if necessary	Finance/build/operate	Review concepts
Residential buildings	Entitle/approve	Possible incentive	Finance/build/lease/sell	Review concepts
Developer procurement	Lead	Co-lead	Respond	Prepare RFQ/RFP
Development agreement	Approve	Approve if funding involved	Execute/perform	Support negotiation

## 7. Financial Strategy

The financial strategy should be based on leverage. The City and EDC should use public investment to unlock a larger amount of private investment. A reasonable target is a 3:1 to 6:1 private-to-EDC investment leverage ratio over the full implementation period. With approximately \$8 million in EDC assistance, the target private investment range should be approximately \$25 million to \$50 million over time.

Public Investment Item	Estimated Amount	Purpose
Recreation Center / Library	\$21.0M local project assumption	Civic anchor; under construction.
EDC Town Center Public Improvements	\$8.0M	Town Green, pavilion, streetscape, lighting, parking, signage, landscaping, and related project assistance.
Total Public Platform	\$29.0M+	Creates the base for private investment and long-term district identity.

Potential Private Investment	Illustrative Range	Notes
Retail / restaurant buildings	\$11M-\$16M	43,000 SF at broad-order vertical construction assumptions; actual cost depends on shell vs. turn, finish-out, and tenant mix.
Upper-story residential / mixed-use	\$5M-\$15M	Depends on unit count, building height, structured costs, and market feasibility.
Townhomes / future residential	\$2M-\$8M	Depends on unit count and product type.
Total target private investment	\$25M-\$50M+	Target range for performance measurement and developer solicitation.

### 7.1 Recommended EDC \$8 Million Allocation

Category	Budget	Purpose	Notes
Town Green	\$1,500,000	2-acre civic lawn, landscaping, seating, irrigation, event utilities	Refine through schematic design and cost estimating.

Pavilion / Bandshell	\$1,000,000	Covered performance structure, power, lights, sound readiness, storage	Can be scaled based on design and operations budget.
Streetscape	\$2,500,000	Streets, Sidewalks, crossings, paving, tree wells, pedestrian zones	Highest-value investment for walkability and development quality.
Decorative Lighting	\$750,000	Street lights, pedestrian lights, accent lights, event/festival lighting	Coordinate maintenance standards.
Signage and Wayfinding	\$250,000	Gateway signs, district identity signs, pedestrian wayfinding	Should follow branding package.
Parking and Site Work	\$1,000,000	Shared parking, access, grading, drainage, public parking areas	Coordinate with recreation center parking.
Design and Engineering	\$500,000	Landscape architecture, civil engineering, construction documents	May require adjustment depending on scope.
Contingency	\$500,000	Cost escalation and design development contingency	Should be protected until bid stage.
Total	\$8,000,000	EDC catalytic public improvement program	Subject to legal eligibility review and formal authorization.

## DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The following schedule assumes a start date following Council authorization. The sequence is structured so that the City reduces market and entitlement uncertainty before asking developers to commit capital.

### Phase 1: Project Authorization and Governance

Timeline: Months 0-3

Objective: Create the project management structure and authorize consultant procurement.

Proposed Actions:

- Council and EDC endorse Town Center initiative as a strategic economic development priority.
- Confirm project boundary, parcel ownership, frontage, known constraints, and decision-making authority.
- Authorize RFQ for consultant team.
- Decision points / measures:
- Project charter adopted
- RFQ issued

- Consultant selected

## **Phase 2: Master Plan, Market Study, and Feasibility**

Timeline: Months 3-9

Objective: Convert the concept into a development-ready master plan and market-based program.

Proposed Actions:

- Complete site survey and existing conditions analysis.
- Evaluate access from Lancaster-Hutchins Road and J.J. Lemon Street.
- Complete market analysis for retail, restaurants, residential, and mixed-use.
- Analyze support from 750 homes south, townhomes north, recreation center/library users, and broader trade area.
- Develop at least three plan alternatives: base concept, enhanced mixed-use, and full town center scenario.
- Prepare preferred master plan, cost estimate, phasing plan, and economic impact assumptions.
- Decision points / measures:
  - Market study complete
  - Preferred plan selected
  - Council/EDC adoption

## **Phase 3: Entitlements, Standards, and District Rules**

Timeline: Months 6-15

Objective: Create certainty before developer solicitation.

Proposed Actions:

- Draft Town Center zoning or planned development district.
- Allow retail, restaurants, civic uses, townhomes, mixed-use buildings, and residential above retail.
- Adopt design standards for architecture, storefronts, signage, parking, lighting, landscaping, and streetscape.
- Create shared parking and event parking strategy.
- Confirm utility, drainage, fire access, and traffic requirements.
- Decision points / measures:
  - Zoning adopted
  - Design standards adopted
  - Parking strategy approved

## **Phase 4: Public Realm Design and 30%-100% Construction Documents**

Timeline: Months 12-18

Objective: Design the improvements that will be funded by the EDC and establish a reliable cost basis.

Proposed Actions:

- Prepare 30%, 60%, 90%, and final construction documents for Town Green, pavilion/bandshell, streetscape, lighting, parking, landscaping, and signage.
- Develop operations plan for event lawn and pavilion.

- Coordinate with recreation center/library construction schedule and parking/access plan.
- Prepare final probable cost and bid package.
- Decision points / measures:
- 30% design complete
- Final construction documents complete
- Bid-ready package complete

#### **Phase 5: Developer RFQ/RFP and Market Outreach**

Timeline: Months 15-24

Objective: Recruit private development capacity after the City has a credible plan and public improvement commitment.

Proposed Actions:

- Issue RFQ to identify qualified town center, retail, restaurant, mixed-use, and residential developers.
- Conduct broker, restaurant operator, and developer outreach.
- Shortlist 3-5 development teams.
- Issue RFP to shortlisted teams with site plan, design standards, infrastructure commitments, and preferred deal structure.
- Evaluate proposals based on capacity, design quality, financial terms, schedule, and economic impact.
- Decision points / measures:
- Minimum 10 developer contacts
- 3-5 teams shortlisted
- Preferred developer selected

#### **Phase 6: Development Agreement and Land Strategy**

Timeline: Months 21-30

Objective: Convert the selected proposal into enforceable obligations.

Proposed Actions:

- Determine land sale, ground lease, master development agreement, or phased parcel disposition strategy.
- Define minimum private investment, construction milestones, design compliance, default remedies, and reversion rights.
- Require clear schedule for retail delivery, restaurant recruitment, mixed-use/residential components, and public/private interface improvements.
- Ensure incentives are performance-based and tied to measurable outcomes.
- Decision points / measures:
- Development agreement approved
- Land terms approved
- Performance schedule adopted

#### **Phase 7: Public Improvement Construction**

Timeline: Months 24-36

Objective: Build the public assets that establish the Town Center identity.

Proposed Actions:

- Bid and construct Town Green, pavilion/bandshell, sidewalks, crossings, lighting, landscaping, signage, parking, and event infrastructure.
- Coordinate construction phasing with recreation center/library operations and developer schedule.
- Create interim programming even before full buildout where feasible.
- Decision points / measures:
- Town Green complete
- Pavilion complete
- Streetscape substantially complete

**Phase 8: Private Vertical Development**

Timeline: Months 30-60

Objective: Deliver commercial and residential buildings in phases.

Proposed Actions:

Construct first-phase retail and restaurant buildings based on tenant demand.

Construct residential or mixed-use components where feasible.

- Encourage upper-story residential above retail if market and financing support it.
- Monitor pre-leasing before releasing later retail phases.
- Decision points / measures:
- First vertical construction started
- First certificate of occupancy issued
- Retail occupancy milestones met

**Phase 9: Activation, Management, and Long-Term Expansion**

Timeline: Years 4-10

Objective: Operate the Town Center as an active district, not a static capital project.

Proposed Actions:

- Establish annual event calendar.
- Fund maintenance for landscaping, lighting, irrigation, pavilion, and public space assets.
- Create business recruitment and tenant support program.
- Evaluate later-phase residential density, retail expansion, and district management tools.
- Decision points / measures:
- 24-40 annual events
- 90% retail occupancy target
- Annual economic impact reporting

**IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE SUMMARY**

Workstream	Active Period	Primary Milestone
Governance / project charter	Months 0-3	Charter adopted and steering committee established
Consultant RFQ and selection	Months 0-3	Consultant contract executed
Market study and master plan	Months 3-9	Preferred master plan adopted
Zoning and design standards	Months 6-15	Town Center zoning and standards adopted
Public realm design	Months 12-18	Construction documents complete
Developer RFQ/RFP	Months 15-24	Preferred developer selected
Development agreement	Months 21-30	Agreement approved and executed
Public improvements	Months 24-36	Town Green, pavilion, and streetscape substantially complete
Private vertical development	Months 30-60	First certificates of occupancy issued
Programming and operations	Years 4-10	24-40 events annually and annual district reporting

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The EDC Board and Council will receive a quarterly Town Center update.

Category	Metric	Target / Measure	Frequency
Planning	Master plan progress	Adopted by Month 12	Monthly until complete
Entitlements	Zoning and standards	Adopted by Month 15	Monthly until complete
Financial	EDC budget variance	Within authorized budget or formally amended	Quarterly
Developer recruitment	Qualified developer contacts	10+ before RFQ close	During procurement
Private investment	Committed private dollars	\$25M-\$50M long-term target	Quarterly after selection
Retail	Retail square footage built	43,000 SF total program phased	Quarterly during buildout
Retail	Occupancy	90% within three years of final phase opening	Quarterly after opening
Residential	Units delivered	20-50+ encouraged through mixed-use/townhomes	Quarterly during buildout

Activation	Annual events	24-40 events annually	Annual
Economic impact	Sales tax growth	Annual positive trend after opening	Annual
Economic impact	Property value growth	Annual positive trend in district and nearby parcels	Annual

## RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation
Overbuilding 43,000 SF retail too early	Vacancy, weak rents, negative perception	Phase retail; require pre-leasing thresholds; allow temporary activation.
EDC funds spent before developer alignment	Public improvements may not match market needs	Complete market study and 30% design before final allocation; coordinate public improvements with RFQ/RFP.
Infrastructure cost escalation	\$8M budget may be insufficient	Use early cost estimating, bid alternates, contingency, and phased construction.
Weak developer response	Delayed private investment	Reduce uncertainty through zoning, design, utility review, and clear public commitments.
Public space not programmed	Town Green becomes passive and does not support retail	Fund annual programming and assign operating responsibility.
Maintenance burden underestimated	Declining appearance and asset quality	Adopt operations and maintenance plan before construction.
Traffic/parking conflict during events	Resident and visitor frustration	Shared parking study, event parking plan, and wayfinding.
Retail tenant mix underperforms	Sales tax and destination value weaker than expected	Recruit restaurants and service retail intentionally; use business attraction incentives selectively.

## RECOMMENDED CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

The City should procure a multidisciplinary team. The Consulting Team should be experienced in town center planning, public/private development, civil engineering, market analysis, and developer solicitation.

**Task 1:** Project management and Council/EDC presentations.

**Task 2:** Existing conditions, ownership, utilities, drainage, transportation, parking, and frontage analysis.

**Task 3:** Market study for retail, restaurants, residential, and mixed-use development.

**Task 4:** Economic and fiscal analysis, including private investment targets and tax revenue assumptions.

**Task 5:** Master plan alternatives and preferred illustrative master plan.

**Task 6:** Town Green, pavilion/bandshell, streetscape, lighting, and signage concepts.

**Task 7:** Cost estimates and phasing strategy.

**Task 8:** Zoning and design standards support.

**Task 9:** Developer RFQ/RFP package and evaluation support.

**Task 10:** Final implementation manual and quarterly dashboard template.

### **RFP Required Submittals**

- Proposed development program and phasing schedule.
- Conceptual site plan.
- Retail and restaurant leasing strategy.
- Residential program, including any upper-story units or mixed-use concepts.
- Financial proposal, land terms, incentive request, and public/private responsibilities.
- Preliminary sources and uses of funds.
- Construction schedule and performance milestones.
- Long-term ownership, operations, and maintenance approach.
- Exceptions to City design standards or proposed modifications.

### **RECOMMENDED EDC BOARD ACTION**

Staff will request that the EDC Board support the following Proposed Actions:

- Recognize the Hutchins Town Center District as a strategic economic development priority.
- Authorize staff to prepare a consultant RFQ for a Town Center Master Plan, market study, implementation plan, and developer solicitation support.
- Reserve approximately \$8 million for eligible catalytic public improvements, subject to future board approvals, legal review, final design, and cost estimates.
- Direct staff to return with a formal scope of work, consultant selection schedule, and planning budget.
- Establish quarterly reporting to the EDC Board and City Council using the dashboard format in this report.
- Coordinate with City Council to align land use, zoning, public improvements, and developer procurement into a single implementation program.

### **Conclusion**

The Hutchins Town Center District will be a deliberate public/private economic development initiative. The City owns the land, the Recreation Center and Library are under construction, adjacent residential growth is already creating a customer base, and the EDC can fund public improvements.

The project can create a lasting civic center, attract restaurants and retail, support nearby residents, expand the tax base, and establish a recognizable public identity for Hutchins over the next decade.

**Appendix A: Staff Work Plan Checklist**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Staff Action</b>	<b>Output</b>
0	Confirm EDC/Council direction and project objective	Board/Council consensus direction
2	Draft project Town Center Report and Rationale	Project charter
3	Select Planning consultant and execute agreement	Professional services agreement
5-6	Complete market demand analysis	Market study
9	Adopt preferred master plan	Adopted plan
10-12	Draft zoning and design standards	Draft ordinance/standards
24	Prepare developer RFQ	RFQ issued
24-27	Shortlist and select developer	Preferred developer
27-33	Negotiate development agreement	Executed agreement
36	initiate public improvements	Substantial completion
30-60	Coordinate private construction	Certificates of occupancy