

NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRITY
AND
COMMUNITY CHARACTER



Throughout the development of the College Station Comprehensive Plan, residents expressed a desire to maintain strong and unique neighborhoods with long-term viability and appeal. The intent of the neighborhood planning

process is to identify ways to protect and strengthen neighborhoods, maintain their viability over time, and enhance the quality of life for residents. As directed by the Comprehensive Plan, places of distinction – those unique areas that set College Station apart from other cities – are being studied to find how to best enhance, preserve, and promote their vibrancy. In this Plan, the Southside Area is distinguished as one such area due to its history, proximity to campus, and its diverse population.

Neighborhood integrity can be described as a measure of the quality of life in a neighborhood. Neighborhood integrity includes resident involvement, preservation of neighborhood resources, identity and investment, property maintenance, and adherence to adopted codes. Neighborhood integrity builds relationships among various community groups so that a proactive and positive interaction occurs to address issues and retain the strength and vitality of the neighborhood

“Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of a city. Neighborhoods are places to live, raise families, and socialize with friends and neighbors. For most people, purchasing a home is the largest financial investment they will make. However, housing choice is not based solely on the value of property. Homeowners are also interested in the schools their children will attend, the parks they will enjoy, the type of development that is planned for the surrounding areas, and the roads they will travel. Strong neighborhoods are not just a collection of houses within a subdivision boundary; neighborhoods also contribute to a unique sense of place and community identity, with residents contributing to partnerships, leadership, and civic involvement. In many ways, a community is only as strong and sustainable as its neighborhoods.” -

College Station Comprehensive Plan

Community character relates to the stability, sustainability, and vitality of an area through the appropriate placement and interaction of land uses. The Community Character section of this chapter identifies the location of future land uses and appropriate locations for redevelopment in order to create, protect, and enhance places of distinction throughout the community.

Southside Area – A Place of Distinction



Figure 2.1 Southside typical street configuration.
Source: Southside Neighborhood Resource Team

The Southside Area grew piece by piece over time into its current form, resulting in an eclectic collection of homes, multi-family, and commercial buildings. Though formal subdivision of land occurred over time, much of the area was divided into individual lots or homesteads prior to the incorporation of College Station in 1938 or the development of the City's subdivision regulations in 1970. As land was divided and sold, some chose to construct

homes immediately, while others waited decades to build. This resulted in a unique housing stock for which the Southside Area is now valued.

Few areas in the City may boast of a more diverse resident population, in part due to the varying housing stock, which ranges from some of the highest property values in College Station to affordable housing opportunities. Residents of varying ages, income, race, ethnicity, and tenure call the Southside Area home – including an increasing number of student residents. While the Southside Area has housed students for decades, portions of the area are transitioning to predominantly renter-occupied housing. Though the rental industry contributes a positive economic element to the neighborhood, it is not without its challenges, including property maintenance concerns and the compatibility of residents' lifestyles. In addition to student renters living in single-family houses, the Southside Area includes 1,753 multi-family and 200 duplex units. The area attracts students because of its proximity to Texas A&M University; located just to the north, it can be easily biked or walked to. The viability of the neighborhood is a shared responsibility between City government, homeowners, rental-residents, and investors. This chapter will focus on how these groups can work together to promote and create a stable neighborhood environment.

PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

Goal

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a set of strategies to preserve and enhance the integrity and character of the Southside Area. Based on the immense public input that was received during the planning process, and the clear desire to focus on neighborhood stabilization, the Neighborhood Integrity & Community Character Goal for the Southside Area is:

“To be a neighborhood that is a collection of unique areas with preserved character and long-term viability and appeal as an established family-friendly neighborhood.”

Contents of the Chapter

This chapter is organized into five broad categories:

- Neighborhood Identity & Character
- Relationship to Texas A&M University
- Preservation of Neighborhood Resources
- Land Use & Development
- Neighborhood Participation

This chapter describes these five components and their relationship to the Southside Area. This information is supported by **Appendix A, Existing Conditions** which supplies supplementary qualitative data about the Area, and **Appendix B, Public Input Summary**. This chapter describes some of the key issues facing the Southside Area and provides information and opinions garnered through the engagement process. At the end of the chapter, strategies are identified to assist the neighborhood in moving toward the chapter goal. The broad strategies are accompanied by recommended actions that support changes to the Comprehensive Plan, zoning options available to the neighborhood, and considerations for future development in the area. Specific information about timelines, responsible parties, and estimated costs are reflected in **Chapter 5, Implementation**.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY & CHARACTER

The Southside Area is known for its unique environment, charm, and proximity to campus, attracting a very diverse population. It has been cherished for nearly a century as a place to raise a family and plant long lasting roots.

While the Southside Area has housed students for decades, it is increasingly becoming a highly desirable location for student housing.

Increased investor interest has resulted in higher property values and unstable integrity. In turn, it is becoming a place that families may still desire, but may hesitate to invest in. In areas of Southside that have seen more owner-occupied investment, some of the older homes have been removed and larger modern homes have been constructed in their place.

Neighborhood Conditions

Rental Market

Of the total single-family and duplex units located in the Southside Area, approximately 62% are registered as rental units, according to the College Station Rental Registration Program. Approximately 50% of the single-family homes in the neighborhood are registered as rental properties. **Map 2.1 Registered Rental Properties** illustrates the location of registered rental properties in the Southside Area. **Map 2.2 Rental Rates by Street** illustrates the percentage of rental properties by street. Specific rental information by subdivision can be found in **Appendix A, Existing Conditions**.

Property Values & Housing Conditions

Property values vary substantially across the neighborhood, with an average single-family home value of \$80,416 in the McCulloch Subdivision to an average of \$385,903 in the Oakwood Subdivision. While the actual values vary substantially across the Southside Area, they have increased dramatically in all areas in the past decade; in fact, the average property value in the Southside Area increased 241% between 2000 and 2010.

Housing conditions also vary greatly across the neighborhood. In general, a correlation exists between property value and housing condition, although structures located closer to the University tend to have higher values even with poor housing conditions. Housing condition tends to also be closely related to both the age and the tenure of the structure, meaning whether it is owner or renter-occupied. Overall housing condition and property maintenance tends to be lower when a property is renter-occupied. Comparisons can be made and correlations seen on **Map 2.1 Rental Registration Properties** and **Map 2.3 Property Maintenance Cases**.

RELATIONSHIP TO TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Texas A&M University is located to the northwest of the neighborhood, across George Bush Drive. The Southside Area is tied to Texas A&M by proximity and history. The earliest construction and subdivision of the neighborhood was by Texas A&M professors when the College decided faculty homes could no longer be located on its campus.

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While living in a college town may come with some challenges, it certainly comes with its benefits, including access to sporting events, art, culture, and recreation.

According to Texas A&M University, more than 1,200 public events are hosted on campus each year. Residents of Southside Area are a short distance from the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum; the Century Tree; the Bonfire Memorial; numerous outdoor landmarks and sculptures throughout campus; sporting events at Kyle Field, Blue Bell Park, and Reed Arena; events and exhibits at the Memorial Student Center, such as the Forsyth Center and J. Wayne Stark Galleries and their collections; the Texas A&M Sports Museum; the Rudder Box Office and Theatre Complex, including OPAS; the University golf course; and miles of multi-use paths for recreational biking, jogging, and walking.

The Town/Gown Relationship

The City of College Station has a diverse population creating a responsibility to balance its role as home to one of the largest public universities in the Nation with the need to provide excellent services to the residents that make College Station their permanent home.

The Southside Area is home to thousands of college students - calling College Station their home for only a short time. These students make housing choices just as a family or individual does, based on location, amenities, pricing, and lifestyle preferences. The integration of the student population with the permanent population creates a unique environment, and, inevitably, some challenges for both groups. Lifestyle differences between student households and family households include differences in hours kept, household activities, acceptable noise levels, number of vehicles at the home, and number of vehicle trips to and from the home, resulting in the "symptoms" of student rental. Because student renters are living in the home only temporarily, relationships between non-student and student neighbors are limited.

The primary concerns related to student rental homes identified through the planning process include a lack of property maintenance and parking.

Property Maintenance

The City's Code Enforcement Division is responsible for premise code enforcement and compliance with City codes and ordinances. The most common types of code violations in the Southside Area are sanitation related, including containers left at the curb, theft of services, and open storage.

Other violations include litter in the yards, stagnant water, tall weeds and grass, and vehicles parked in the yard. The City's Code Enforcement Officers also enforce the Property Maintenance Code, which requires certain maintenance standards for fences, exterior walls, roofs, and driveways. Properties not meeting existing City codes and ordinances should be identified. The City should work with the owners of these properties to ensure compliance. The City's Code Enforcement Division and their services are discussed further in **Chapter 4, Public Facilities & Services**.

Still other property maintenance issues exist that are not a violation of City codes. Many of the concerns heard through the process included a lack of landscaping around the homes, a general lack of lawn and landscaping care, excessive amounts of lawn furniture at the front of the home, and seasonal decorations left up year round.

Neighborhood Traffic Management

The street sizes, on-site parking areas, and, in many cases, lack of garages, reflects the era in which the neighborhood was developed and, in many ways, adds to its character. Maintaining the feel of the original neighborhood can contribute to the overall neighborhood integrity.

Consistent with City-wide concerns, many comments from Southside Area residents focus on neighborhood transportation issues such as cut-through traffic, on-street parking, bicycle facilities, pedestrian paths, and the location of thoroughfares adjacent to and within the neighborhood. Dexter Drive and Fairview Avenue, thoroughfares within the neighborhood, are well integrated into the neighborhood pattern providing ease of interaction and reflective character, while others, such as Anderson Street and Holleman Drive, have larger cross-sections creating a perceived barrier within the neighborhood. In general, as the Southside Area is a collection of older neighborhoods, the streets have a greater level of connectivity, more evenly dispersing the traffic. Also reflective of 1930s and 1940s College Station is the lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the neighborhood. Walkers and bikers tend to share the roads with vehicles in the Southside Area.

These and other mobility issues are further discussed in **Chapter 3, Mobility**, but are recognized as playing a significant role in neighborhood integrity and the character of the area.

On-street Parking

As is further discussed in **Chapter 3, Mobility**, on-street parking was a concern voiced during the planning process. Often, on-street parking problems are due to the prevalence of rental properties in the area. On-street parking can cause difficulties when cars block driveways, trash cans, bike lanes, intersections, and mailboxes, but particularly for emergency vehicle access and pedestrian safety.

On-street parking can, however, have benefits. Parked cars can serve as traffic calming by visually and physically reducing the lanes of the roadway. Drivers will typically slow down and pay better attention to the surrounding cars, bicycles, and pedestrians when the through lanes are narrowed.

City streets are public property and open to the public for parking, otherwise signed. The current right-of-way standard in the City for a local street is a 27-foot pavement width, which usually accommodates two-way traffic with parking. As provided in **Figure 3.1, Southside Local Streets Not Meeting Current Standard** in **Chapter 3, Mobility**, there are a number of local streets in Southside that are not built to this standard. Parked cars may not be located within 20 feet of street intersections or be parked facing against the flow of traffic. The City's Traffic Code requires that parked cars not block a driveway, mailbox, dumpster, or alley, and parking is not permitted on bike lanes or in the yard. On-street parking can only be removed by action of the City Council through the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program.

Many streets in the Southside Area have had parking removed from one or both sides of the street due to public safety concerns, such as emergency vehicle access (**See Map 2.4, Parking Restrictions**). Some areas of Southside have no current parking restrictions and have voiced concerns about emergency access through their streets. One such area is the Redmond Terrace Subdivision. In this area, the streets curve and have a width slightly less than current standards and a very high level of on-street parking due to the number of student rental properties in the neighborhood. A complete discussion related to on-street parking and associated action recommendations can be found in **Chapter 3, Mobility**.



Figure 2.2 Current Southside Area signs and parking restrictions.
Source: Southside Neighborhood Resource Team

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Because of the inconvenience to residents when on-street parking is removed within an area, on-street parking should not be removed unless there is a negative impact to emergency service response times or accessibility to fire hydrants. Continued monitoring of on-street parking will allow for a more proactive response to parking issues within the neighborhood.

Likely, as an unintended consequence of on-street parking removal, issues related to off-street parking have increased in some areas of the Southside neighborhood. Off-street parking can currently be located anywhere on site with no restriction on size, generally resulting in a large parking pad in the front of each home. Off-street parking areas lining the road detract from the neighborhood aesthetic and have changed the character of some areas.

PRESERVATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES

Some neighborhoods are rich in commercial space and others in affordable housing. Undeniably, Southside is rich in its history. While the history of the Southside's development and early residents is unique within each area, history is a common theme that unifies the neighborhood. The Southside Area is home to buildings and places of local architectural, historical, and cultural value, such as the City's Lincoln Center (formally Lincoln School) and former A&M campus homes. Preservation or protection of these resources can stabilize development pressure, enhance property value, promote heritage conservation, and provide educational opportunities. A brief history of the Southside Area can be found in **Chapter 1, Introduction**.

Historic Preservation

Generally, the term Historic Preservation refers to protecting part of a community, from a single building to an entire neighborhood, because of its ties to the history of the area, the State, or even the Nation. Simply, it is the community saying "we have something that we want to hang on to." The community recognizes that Southside is a place of distinction within the City. However, this recognition has not translated into any regulations that protect the structures. At this time, there are no sites listed on the National Historic Register and there are no Historic Areas or Historic Preservation Overlay zoning districts located in the Southside Area. Though there are several houses over 100 years old, there has been little support for the preservation of the structures through legal protection.

Texas Historical Markers

The Southside Area includes only one Texas Historical Commission Marker. Designated for “African American Education in College Station,” the marker is located at the Lincoln Center on Eleanor Street, the location of the first formal school for African American education in College Station. The school opened as the Lincoln School for Negro Children in 1942. The school burned in 1966; the land and remaining structures were later purchased by the City of College Station. The City’s Lincoln Center currently operates out of the facilities, including the remaining 1956 gymnasium.

A second Texas Historical Commission Marker is located on the Texas A&M University campus recognizing the significance of early faculty housing that was later moved from campus to surrounding areas, including the Southside Area.

College Station Historical Marker Program

In 1986, the City of College Station Historic Preservation Advisory Committee was created to aid in the collection and preservation of items of historical significance in the City and to educate residents about the history of College Station. One initiative created by the Committee is the College Station Historical Marker Program that recognizes sites, persons, objects, events, or buildings that are significant to the history of College Station, yet may not meet the criteria for historic marker designation at the State or Federal level. As such, the program is separate from the Federal inventory of historic properties (National Register of Historic Places) and separate from the State marker program (Official Texas Historical Markers). College Station historical markers are solely for historical interest and educational purposes and do not prevent the structures from being altered or demolished. Properties in the Southside planning area that have received a College Station Historical Marker are identified on **Map 2.5, Historic Resources in the Southside Area**. The Southside Area includes approximately 65 College Station Historic Preservation Committee markers.

The “College Station Southside Historic Area” signs seen throughout the north side of the neighborhood are only decorative and not an indication of a historic designation. The true purpose of the signs is for the City to limit parking on certain days by flipping the signs down. No historic district exists in the Southside Area.



Figure 2.3 African American School, Texas Historical Marker.
Source: City of College Station

Former Campus Homes



Figure 2.4 Campus Home in Southside Neighborhood.
Source: City of College Station

During the early years of Texas A&M College, faculty lived in on-campus housing. These single-family homes were later moved from campus as College enrollment grew and the City of College Station was incorporated. These relocated houses made up some of the first residences in the Southside Area. See **Appendix C, Former Campus Homes** for Addresses and photographs of Campus Houses still existing in the Southside Area. **Map 2.5, Historic Resources in the Southside Area** depicts the location of the Campus homes.

While some residents have expressed a desire to save this aspect of College Station and the University's history, no regulations exists that restrict the alteration or demolition of the Campus Homes. Because of this, the City should explore possible incentives for the preservation of older structures, including permitting alternative uses in restored Campus Homes, such as bed & breakfasts or game-day rentals.

Historic Resources Survey

In 2008, a Historic Resources Windshield Survey was conducted for two areas of the City, including portions of the Southside Area. The survey included brief histories; statements on architectural, historic and cultural resources of significance; and maps detailing areas within the survey that best represented potential historic districts. This survey identified six potential historic districts and 27 potential individual landmarks in the Southside Area. The potential districts and landmarks are identified on **Map 2.6, Potential Historic Districts and Landmarks**.

Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinance

Also in 2008, the City adopted a comprehensive historic preservation ordinance that provides the opportunity for protections. The City's Comprehensive Plan identifies historic preservation as an important component of community character. Preservation of historic properties provides for the protection and preservation of places and areas of historical, cultural, and architectural importance and significance, as well as promotes sustainability through the reuse or adaptation of historic structures for contemporary uses.

Historic Preservation in Southside

Though it includes some of the oldest houses in College Station, attempts to promote historic preservation have been unsuccessful.

Because historic preservation can limit or restrict the property's development potential, property owners are hesitant to voluntarily participate in a neighborhood preservation effort. Most recently, the North Oakwood Subdivision area worked with the City in an attempt to establish a Historic Preservation Overlay. Due to a lack of majority support from the neighborhood, the initiative never matured. However, new neighborhood-led efforts are starting to approach preservation in a way that focuses less on the structure and more on the character of the neighborhood.

Existing Ordinances

The City has a variety of existing ordinances aimed at preserving neighborhood integrity. The Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinance (HPO) and the Single-Family Overlay Ordinance (SFO) were established in 2008 to aid in the preservation of College Station's historic assets. The SFO was developed to help mitigate some of the issues that have come with teardowns in College Station's older neighborhoods. Two types of overlays, the Neighborhood Preservation Overlay (NPO) and the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO), exist as neighborhood preservation tools in College Station. Application for these districts are made by the interested neighborhood and adopted by City Council; they are intended to assist neighborhoods in establishing consistent setbacks, building mass, lot coverage, and tree preservation in established neighborhoods.

Character Preservation

The average single-family home in the Southside Area is 42 years old, has 1,600 square-feet of living space, and covers just under 14 percent of its lot. Much of the recent single-family construction in the Southside Area is larger than the neighborhood average, the average new home constructed in the Southside Area in 2007-2012 is almost 1,900 square-feet. New structures, with some exception, fall into one of two categories: "McMansions" or student housing.

A "McMansion" -mini-mansion- is new construction in an older neighborhood that may be considered contemporary and large compared to the surrounding structures. These homes are typically built on lots that have a very high value, both market and appraised, and are typically constructed for families new to the Southside Area.

Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay (NPO)

This district is intended to provide standards that preserve single-family neighborhoods by imposing neighborhood-specific yard, lot, and open space regulations that reflect the existing character of the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay does not prevent construction of new single-family structures or the renovation, remodeling, repair or expansion of existing single-family structures, but, rather, ensures that new single-family structures are compatible with existing single-family structures.

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO)

The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCO) is intended to protect and preserve single-family neighborhoods through a district that is focused on the specific needs of the neighborhood. NCO districts are based on in-depth study of the existing neighborhood conditions, and should be used to protect unique assets and qualities of the neighborhood. Conservation districts may be used for neighborhoods that offer a distinct character that its residents and the City wish to preserve and protect. It differs from the Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay in that it allows neighborhoods to choose from a variety of standards to address neighborhood specific issues.

"As College Station attracts more retirees and alumni back to the community and as property values increase, areas close to the University will become targets for redevelopment. Already, older homes in the Southside neighborhood have been torn down in favor of larger homes – some serving as weekend homes for alumni, changing the character and identity of the neighborhood."

"With an increase of teardowns, gentrification is becoming a more relevant issue than in the past. The City should evaluate the impact of single-lot redevelopment on existing residents – taking care to minimize the displacement of permanent residents priced out of their neighborhoods as property values increase. This may become more relevant in the core neighborhoods closest to the University as older housing stock become the focus of rehabilitation and infill efforts." -

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Single-family structures built to house students in the Southside Area tend to be four-bedroom, four-bathroom structures intended to accommodate the maximum number of unrelated renters permitted by City ordinance – four. Again, the property values of the lots are generally high and, typically, an investor is looking for the highest return. In either case, the result is generally a home that is significantly larger than its predecessor, and may be considered out of scale with its surroundings. Additionally, the amount of open yard is being reduced and mature vegetation removed.

Existing Regulations

The City attempts to preserve the pattern of land development in older neighborhoods by requiring that resubdivision of properties in these areas meets a higher standard and by defining property that was commonly owned and used as a single-family plot in 1970 as a single "building plot" today, limiting further subdivision in some cases. Additionally, a contextual front setback that attempts to preserve the character of the block is required for new construction in older

areas.

The City's Property Maintenance Code and Residential Code, both part of the International Building Codes, address minimum maintenance standards expected in the City and set out the standards for newly constructed residential homes.

In 2009, the City began requiring the registration of single-family and duplex rental properties. The purpose of the registration is to provide the City with a local point of contact for rental residences that can be used to address code enforcement and policing issues. Approximately 62% of all single-family homes and duplexes in the Southside Area are registered as rental units.

Character Elements

When asked what residents like most about their neighborhood, the responses overwhelmingly included mature trees, historic homes, diversity of houses, and the location and proximity to Texas A&M University.

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Together, these create the neighborhood character - the look and feel of the area. The City should create a Character Preservation district opportunity and work with interested parties in the neighborhood to establish character elements that residents are interested in preserving. Questions such as “what is our character?” “what elements create this character?” and “are these elements important by themselves, or only as a group?” should be answered by the residents to identify elements that demonstrate the neighborhood character. The following are character elements that were discussed during the planning process and may be considered with the creation of a Character Preservation district.

Lot Size

In areas where the original lot size or building plot size was larger than City minimums today, preserving the look and feel of the area may necessitate the requirement for increased lot sizes to the average of the lot in the designated area or an average of adjacent lots.

Trees

Mature vegetation was one of the most common character elements identified. Trees located between the front of the structure and the street are a benefit to the community as much as to the individual property owner. Preservation of large trees, such as those within the first 15-30 feet of the front yard may further character preservation in some areas where large trees are prevalent.

Building Setbacks

In some areas of Southside the setback of structures to the street help create the character that exists today. Retaining the feel of a neighborhood street may include allowing new homes to reduce front contextual setback requirements using previous structure setbacks to maintain eclectic layout of structures within the subdivision. In other areas, alternative setback requirements for structures (including greater side setbacks in some areas) may better compliment existing development in the surrounding area.

Height & Mass

The overall height of new construction, lot size, and lot coverage is a growing concern in the neighborhood due to tear downs during the last decade. Height limitations to maximize privacy and minimize lot coverage for new development and expansions may be needed to retain the character in some areas.

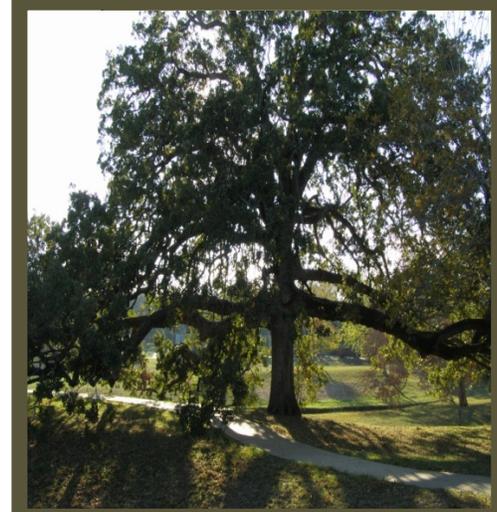


Figure 2.5 Character Description- “This is a historical area of primarily modest homes of 50 to 80+ years old...It is heavily wooded with mature live oaks among the homes on narrow streets...It is an oasis from a bygone time...closely tied to Texas A&M.” – Anonymous Southside Resident explaining what makes their neighborhood unique.

On-site (Off-Street) Parking

The increasing number of vehicles parked in the neighborhood is causing concern among residents. During the planning process, consensus was reached that one parking space per bedroom should be required for new construction of a single-family home (or addition of bedrooms to an existing home) with a maximum of four parking spaces required. It was agreed that this parking requirement must be coupled with a maximum parking coverage requirement that would limit the parking area within the front yard to 50% of the area between the structure and the property line. Because this may push larger parking lots to the rear of the single-family structure, the rear parking should then be combined with a screening requirement. Additionally, single-family parking and driveway standards for gravel drives need to include a solid edging and durable lining requirement. A process should be established to make exceptions for properties with mature trees that are properly protected during construction.

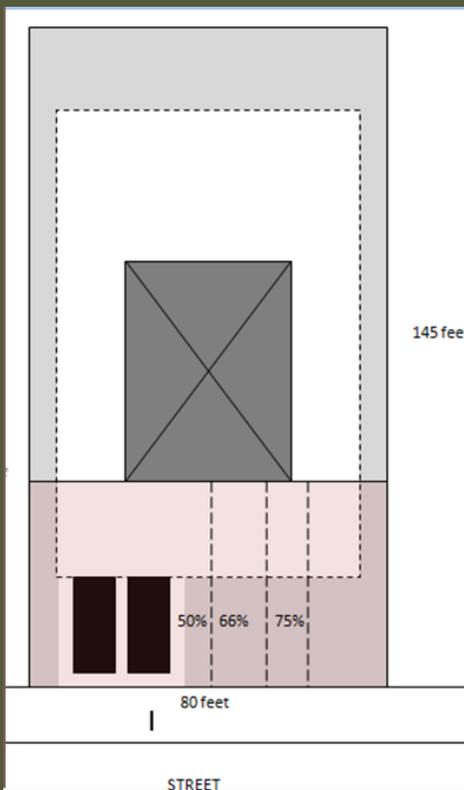


Figure 2.6 Front lawn parking. Source: City of College Station.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Types of Land Uses Designated in the Southside Area

The following are descriptions of the existing character designations found in the planning area based on the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The locations of these designations are shown in **Map 2.7, Future Land Use and Community Character Map**. The future land use and character designations are grounded in the historical and existing use of land in the area and the prevailing character in the area.

Institutional/Public - This land use designation is generally for areas that are, and are likely to remain, in some form of institutional or public activity. Examples include schools and libraries.

Natural Area - Protected - This land use designation is generally for areas permanently protected from development. Such areas are preserved for their natural function or for park, recreation, or greenway opportunities. These include areas such as regulatory floodway, publicly owned open space, conservation easements, and public parks.

Natural Area - Reserved - This designation is generally for areas that represent a constraint to development and should be preserved for their natural function or open space qualities. These areas include floodplains and riparian buffers, as well as recreation facilities.

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Neighborhood Conservation - This land use designation is generally for areas that are built-out and are not likely to be the focus of extensive infill development or redevelopment. Further, these areas were typically platted before current development regulations were in place which often results in non-conforming situations. These areas are appropriate for overlays or zoning classifications that provide additional character protection and address non-conforming issues.

General Suburban - This land use designation is generally for areas that should have an intense level of development activities. These areas will tend to consist of high-density single-family residential lots (minimum 5,000 square feet).

General Commercial - This land use designation is generally for concentrations of commercial activities that cater to both nearby residents and to the larger community or region. Generally, these areas tend to be large in size and located near the intersection of two regionally significant roads (arterials and freeways). It is preferred that in such areas development be concentrated in nodes rather than spread out in strips.

Redevelopment Area III: George Bush Drive / Wellborn Road - This area includes a number of underperforming commercial activities and poor quality residences that, due to planned road construction in this area and proximity to the University, are posed for redevelopment. Much of the area is currently subdivided into small lots, making it difficult to assemble land for redevelopment. The presence of existing residences and businesses, and proximity to existing neighborhoods and the University campus, requires careful site planning and appropriate building design. These efforts should be guided by the neighborhood plan for the Southside neighborhood area and should focus on bringing vertical mixed-use and other aspects of urban character to this portion of the City.

Urban - This land use designation is generally for areas that should have a very intense level of development activities. These areas will tend to consist of townhomes, duplexes, and high-density apartments.

Urban Mixed Use - This land use designation is generally for areas that should have the most intense development activities. These areas will tend to consist exclusively of residential, commercial, and office uses in vertical mixed-use structures.

Existing Zoning in the Southside Area

The following are descriptions of the existing zoning districts found in the Southside Planning Area. The locations of these districts are identified in **Map 2.8, Zoning**.

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Single-Family Residential (R-1) - This district includes lands planned for single-family residential purposes and accessory uses. This district is designed to accommodate sufficient, suitable residential neighborhoods, protected and/or buffered from incompatible uses, and provided with necessary and adequate facilities and services.

Duplex Residential (R-2) - This district contains land that has been planned for duplex residential purposes and associated uses. Characterized by moderate density, it may be utilized as a transitional zone.

Townhouse (R-3) - This district contains land that is to be used for a unique type of dwelling, typically designed for individual ownership, or ownership in-groups of single-family attached residences constructed on individually-platted lots.

Multi-Family (R-4) - This district provides land for development of apartment and condominium units at low to medium densities. This district may serve as a transitional zone between lower density residential areas and other residential or non-residential areas.

High Density Multi-Family (R-6) - This district contains land used for a variety of housing types, but primarily multiple family dwellings. This district is designed to provide the highest density in the community for developments in close proximity to the University.

Administrative-Professional (A-P) - This district accommodates select commercial businesses that provide services rather than sell products, either retail or wholesale. The uses allowed have relatively low traffic generation and require limited location identification.

General Commercial (C-1) - This district provides locations for general commercial purposes that is, retail sales and service uses that function to serve the entire community and its visitors.

Commercial-Industrial (C-2) - This district provides locations for outlets offering goods and services to a limited segment of the general public. The uses included primarily serve other commercial and industrial enterprises.

Light Commercial (C-3) - This district provides locations for commercial sites that are too small for many permitted uses in the C-1, General Commercial District. These are moderately low traffic generators that have little impact on adjacent areas or on adjacent thoroughfares.

Planned Development District (PDD) - The purpose of the Planned Development District is to promote and encourage innovative development that is sensitive to surrounding land uses and to the natural environment.

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If this necessitates varying from certain standards, the proposed development should demonstrate community benefits.

Future Land Use and Character Map

Land use helps both describe and establish the character of an area. In determining appropriate land use classifications, the existing use, zoning, and current land use and character classification were all considered. The planning process yielded much discussion about future land use in the Southside Area. The result of those discussions is that the existing neighborhood pattern, meaning land use and density, should be preserved in much of the Southside Area.

Neighborhood Conservation

A large portion of the interior of the planning area is currently designated as Neighborhood Conservation in the City's Comprehensive Plan, reflecting the desires of the community. However, much of the area surrounding the core of the planning area does not carry this designation. During the planning process, two areas were identified by residents and property owners as appropriate for a change from General Suburban to a Neighborhood Conservation designation. These areas are the Redmond Terrace Subdivision and the McCulloch Subdivision as shown in Figure 2.6. Based on the existing residential zoning, the existing patterns of development, and the information and opinions gathered through this planning effort, the City should designate these areas as Neighborhood Conservation.

The Redmond Terrace Subdivision – Area 1

The Redmond Terrace Subdivision is located just south of George Bush Drive, across from the Texas A&M University golf course in Area 1. This area was subdivided for single-family and commercial development in 1958. Lot sizes in the area are average 14,650 square feet, or about a third of an acre -larger than what is suggested by the current General Suburban designation (minimum 5,000 square-foot lots). Residents and property owners in the Redmond Terrace neighborhood expressed their desire for the single-family neighborhood pattern to remain as it exists today. The Neighborhood Conservation land use designation is the first step toward preserving the existing lot sizes that help shape the character in this area.



Figure 2.7: Redmond Terrace Subdivision proposed change of designation.
Source: City of College Station.

The Future Land Use & Character Map should be amended to reflect the desire to preserve the existing single-family land use and pattern of development. Second, public and private neighborhood protection standards should be explored to establish expectations for new development that occurs within the defined area. **Map 2.9, Community Character-Area 1** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended. Additional strategies for investing in public infrastructure and property maintenance will be explored in **Chapter 2, Public Facilities & Services** and **Chapter 3, Mobility**. Amending the Comprehensive Plan will prepare the area for future development opportunities that are permitted in zoning districts

that support single-family use of the area and set the stage for additional protections for area residents.

The College Park Subdivision – Area 4

The College Park Subdivision is located just east of Montclair Avenue, south of George Bush Drive. This property was subdivided for and is developed as single-family residential homes. The large majority of the College Park Subdivision is currently designated as Neighborhood Conservation on the City's Future Land Use and Character Map. A single row of lots fronting on the east side of Montclair Avenue, adjacent to Area 5, is currently designated as Urban on the City's Future Land Use and Character Map and should be designated as Neighborhood Conservation.

The McCulloch Subdivision – Area 7

The McCulloch Subdivision is located just south of Holleman Drive, across from the Lincoln Center in Area 7. This area was subdivided for single-family development in the mid-1940s in a grid pattern with standard 50-foot by 100-foot lots. At that time, property was purchased for single-family development on either a single lot or on a group of lots intended as a single homestead. The City recognizes these "building plots" in older subdivisions based on property configuration in 1970, the year College Station adopted its first set of Subdivision Regulations.



Figure 2.8: College Park Subdivision proposed change of designation.
Source: City of College Station.

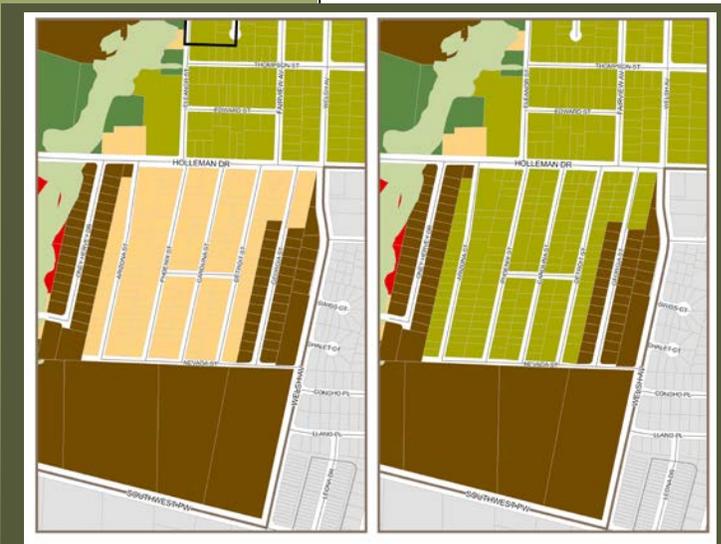


Figure 2.9: McCulloch Subdivision proposed change of designation.
Source: City of College Station.

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In the McCulloch Subdivision, building plot sizes vary, with some areas of the subdivision having 5,000 square-foot lots/building plots and others having half of an acre or more. During the planning process residents and property owners in the McCulloch Subdivision expressed their desire to see the pattern of development remain primarily as it is today. Some additional restrictions currently exist for subdivision in older neighborhoods, including a minimum lot size of 8,500 square feet (larger than R-1 zoning), and a minimum lot width being at least the average of the lot width on the block.

While these additional restrictions certainly do not preclude further subdivision in the area, they do help to preserve the neighborhood pattern and reduce the total number of homes constructed in this area in the future.

Currently, this area is designated as General Suburban and Urban in the City's Comprehensive Plan. This designation supports a potential change to denser housing. Area residents and property owners have participated in this planning process and have indicated that increased density in this area is not a desired character shift. To help ensure the character remains compatible with the existing single-family homes in the area, a change to the Future Land Use and Character Map is necessary. The Future Land Use and Character for the McCulloch Subdivision should be designated as Neighborhood Conservation. **Map 2.10, Community Character-Area 7** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended for this area.

Infill and Redevelopment

Protecting and enhancing the integrity of the City's existing neighborhoods is of paramount importance. Redevelopment and infill development have a significant impact on neighborhood character and identity and should not come at the expense of adjacent established uses. Lighting, noise, traffic, and aesthetic issues arise when new development occurs in close proximity to established single-family areas.

The City's Comprehensive Plan designates several areas in the City for "Redevelopment," two of which are located in the Southside Planning Area. In these areas, Redevelopment means that a change in land use, and possibly character, is anticipated and may be supported by the City by means of rezoning, capital improvements, or special regulations. The Comprehensive Plan also recognizes that these areas will be further studied and may change during the neighborhood planning process.

West Park Subdivision & W.M. Sparks Subdivision– Area 5



Figure 2.10: Area V , West Park & W.M. Sparks Subdivisions proposed change of designation.
Source: City of College Station.

The Urban and Redevelopment designations existing in Area 5, including the West Park and Sparks Subdivisions, were the focus of many discussions during the planning process, including a special public meeting on the topic. Concerns surfaced from nearby residents about the future land uses and the effect on the character and integrity of the remainder of the Southside Area. Future population density, building heights, traffic into adjacent areas, and the removal of structures that contribute positively to the character of the neighborhood were the primary concerns of residents.

The Comprehensive Plan currently states the following about Redevelopment in this area: *"...a number of underperforming commercial activities and poor quality residences that may be further impacted by future intersection improvements (are) in this area. Much of the area is currently subdivided into small lots, making it difficult to assemble land for redevelopment. The presences of existing residences and businesses, and proximity to existing neighborhoods and the University campus, requires careful site planning and appropriate building design. Efforts should include a focus on bringing vertical mixed-use and other aspects of urban character to this portion of the City."*

The Comprehensive Plan is careful to add that redevelopment of this area should be more closely considered during the small area planning process. Through the current planning effort, Area 5 redevelopment was considered at length. Based on these discussions, the recognition of redevelopment opportunities in the area, and the future grade-separation at the intersection of George Bush Drive and Wellborn Road (detailed discussion in **Chapter 3, Mobility**, the Redevelopment designation should remain along Wellborn Road and George Bush Drive (see Figure 2.9).

Additionally, Area 5 is home to almost half of the Campus Homes still existing today. Although residents have expressed a general appreciation for these homes and the character that they add to the area, there was no clear consensus to save this aspect of College Station and the University's history. Lacking any effective regulations that would restrict the demolition of the Campus Homes, the City recognizes the importance of preserving our history and should explore ways to preserve the structures by providing incentives for their preservation and restoration.

Area 5 Proposed Land Use Description

Area 5 is approximately 40 acres bounded by George Bush Drive to the north, Montclair Avenue to the east, Luther Street to the south, and Wellborn Road to the west. In the future, the Area should primarily contain residential uses, including single-family and townhomes in the core of the Area and a mix of uses at a higher density along the perimeter of the Area. Multi-family and hotel uses may be the most appropriate near the intersection of George Bush Drive and Wellborn Road. Vertical mixed use, including neighborhood serving commercial uses would also be appropriate. As access and visibility improves south along Wellborn Road, it is expected that general commercial development would occur at Wellborn Road and Luther Street and at Wellborn Road and Park Place.

Multi-family, hotel, and mixed-use development would also be appropriate in these areas.



Figure 2.11 Area 5 proposed land use map.
Source: City of College Station

- Area 5-A: Maximum 5 stories.** Single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, game day homes, game day condos, dormitories, mixed-use, neighborhood commercial, hotels, structured parking.
- Area 5-B: Maximum 3 stories.** Single-family homes, townhomes, and game-day homes.
- Area 5-C: Maximum 3 stories.** Single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, game day homes, game day condos, hotels, vertical mixed -use, neighborhood commercial.

Timing

Consistent with the Urban designation in the Comprehensive Plan, Area 5 is appropriate for more dense redevelopment only when the interchange at George Bush Drive and Wellborn Road is constructed, providing traffic relief. Water and sewer infrastructure in this area is not currently sufficient to support that dense level of development. Appropriate use of properties prior to the completion of the interchange may include further single-family development and redevelopment using standard R-1 Single-Family restrictions in Area 5 (in lieu of more restrictive standards for redevelopment in older subdivisions).

General Notes about Area 5 Land Use

- Limit additional land use / development to the equivalent to 15,000 vehicles per day of additional capacity once the interchange of Wellborn Road and George Bush Drive is completed.
- Allow the highest density along the perimeter streets (George Bush Drive & Wellborn Road).
- Highest concentration of commercial will likely occur along Wellborn Road at Park Place and Luther Street.
- Structured parking along the perimeter is acceptable.

The City should explore all possible ways to reduce the amount of traffic into other areas of Southside, including the possibility of one-way streets. A Traffic Impact Analysis and mitigation will be required for all multi-family and commercial development in Area 5. See **Mobility, Chapter 3** for further discussion related to Area 5.

Zoning in the Southside Area

Compatibility with Land Use & Character Designation

This section outlines areas where the existing zoning does not support the future land use assumptions for the area and rezoning should be explored to support future development in compliance with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Montclair Avenue at Eleanor Street - Area 6

A small portion of Area 6, generally located along the east side of Montclair Avenue, south of Luther Street and along the west side of Fairview Avenue, between Luther Street and Thompson Street (see Figure 2.11) is currently zoned R-2 Duplex Residential.



Figure 2.12 : West Park & W.M. Sparks Subdivisions proposed change of designation.

Source: City of College Station.

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Of the 22 R-2 zoned properties, 20 are currently developed as single-family homes and the lots are subdivided in such a way that duplex development is not permitted by City ordinance. Two of the properties are currently developed as duplexes. These properties are located in the Neighborhood Conservation area designated by the Comprehensive Plan. Based on the current Comprehensive Plan designation and the single-family land use of the surrounding properties, the City should work with the current property owners in this area to rezone the properties to reflect their current use.

Along the west side of Montclair Avenue, south of Eleanor Street (see Figure 2.12), the property is currently zoned R-6 High Density Multi-Family. Of the five structures in the R-6 zoned area, four are currently developed as single-family homes and one is developed as a duplex. Again, these properties are located in the Neighborhood Conservation area designated by the Comprehensive Plan. Based on the current Comprehensive Plan designation and the single-family land use of the surrounding properties, the City should work with the current property owners in this area to rezone the properties to reflect their current use and the Future Land Use & Character designation in the Comprehensive Plan.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

In considering strategies to strengthen the integrity of the neighborhood, this Plan recognizes that the success of neighborhood and homeowner associations significantly impact the future success of neighborhood improvement efforts. Without citizen-partners in the area, strategies will be difficult to implement and less effective in achieving the goals of this Plan.

Neighborhood organizations play a valuable role in helping to maintain neighborhood integrity. Effective neighborhood groups are important for promoting the integrity of a neighborhood because they provide the existing organizational structure capable of effectively and efficiently addressing problems that may arise in and around the neighborhood. More specifically, homeowners associations have the ability to create and enforce covenants and deed restrictions for types of neighborhood-appropriate regulations for which the City does not have the authority.



Figure 2.13 :Properties at Montclair Avenue and Eleanor Street proposed change of designation.
Source: City of College Station.

Neighborhood Walk and Talk

The Neighborhood Walk and Talk program is a coordinated effort between Neighborhood Services, "Aggie Up," Code Enforcements, and Police to contact residents directly about issues in a neighborhood. A neighborhood walk and talk consists of representatives from each of the above divisions and departments walking through a neighborhood together to meet with residents one-on-one to educate, discuss, and resolve issues about property maintenance, parking, noise control, and other issues that may be of concern. Typically, three to four areas are targeted during a school semester.

What are Homeowner Associations (HOA) and Neighborhood Associations (NA)?

A **Homeowner Association**, or HOA, is usually a non-profit entity created to manage the common lands and interests of property owners within a subdivided area. HOAs may have adopted Covenants and Restrictions (or deed restrictions) that encompass property maintenance and development activities allowed on the property within the area governed by the HOA. HOAs are generally governed by an elected executive committee that also works to enforce the deed restrictions. When purchasing a home in an area with an HOA, membership is required as part of the deed unless at some point the HOA is dissolved.

A **Neighborhood Association** is an organization that is also created to manage the interests of property owners within a subdivided area, but does not have the authority to enforce any deed restrictions. Membership in neighborhood associations is voluntary. As a result, these organizations are typically more social in nature than an HOA, though both commonly host social activities in a neighborhood.

Effective training can help establish, build, and improve these organizations in the Southside Area. In doing so, the City has opportunities to help address neighborhood and subdivision level issues, and can build more effective working relationships with its citizens.

Currently, the City works with neighborhood and homeowner associations through the Neighborhood Partnership Program run by Planning and Development Services through its Neighborhood Services division. Neighborhood groups registered with the City's Neighborhood Partnership Program receive information related to development activity in the area and are eligible for neighborhood matching grants to assist with various projects, and other support from Neighborhood Services. The Neighborhood Services Coordinator also works closely with Texas A&M University organizations through "Aggie Up" to address student

and student-rental issues that negatively impact neighborhoods.

Role of Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhoods groups, whether formally organized or not, have a responsibility to participate in identifying and implementing solutions to neighborhood concerns.

Organization activities may include neighborhood cleanup activities along neighborhood streets, in neighborhood parks, and along the creeks; and meet-and-greet events with new neighbors each year.

Neighborhood Organizations in the Southside Area

There are four registered neighborhood associations in the Southside Area - the Oakwood Neighborhood Association, Lincoln Area Association, Pershing Place Neighborhood Association, and the Wolf Pen Creek Association (see **Map 2.11, Existing Neighborhood Organizations**).



Figure 2.14 :Oakwood Neighborhood Association Boundaries.
Source: City of College Station.

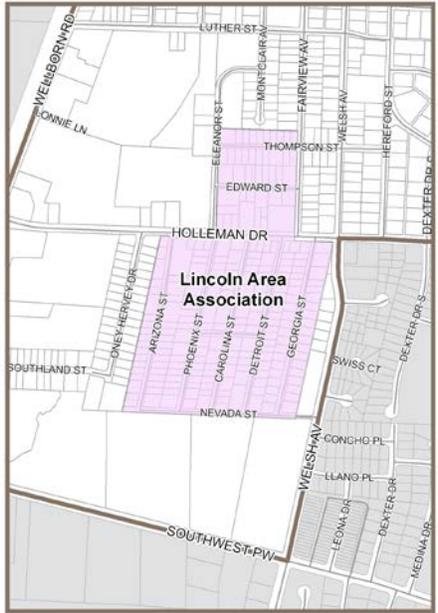


Figure 2.15 :Lincoln Area Association Boundaries.
Source: City of College Station.

There are no registered homeowner associations in the Area. The Oakwood Neighborhood Association was formed in 1999 with 100 households in their association. The boundaries include portions of George Bush Drive, Park Place, and the west side of Timber Street through the west side of Suffolk Avenue. (See Figure 2.13).

The Lincoln Area Association was formed in 2008 with over 150 homes in the association. The association boundaries include Arizona Street, Holleman Drive, Eleanor Street, Thompson Street, part of Welsh Avenue and Nevada Street. (See Figure 2.14)

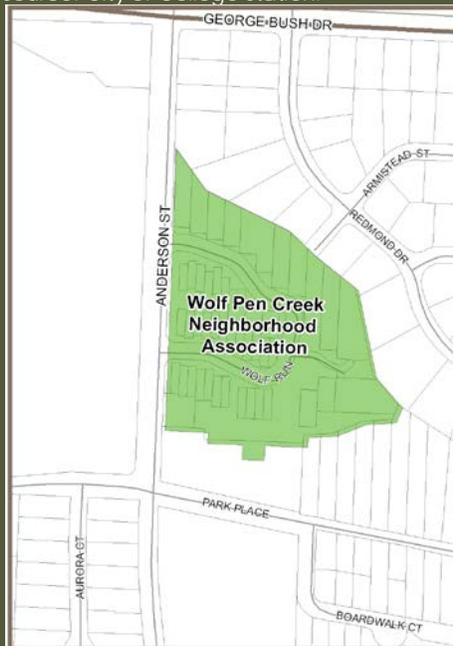
of Welsh Avenue and Nevada Street. (See Figure 2.14)

The Pershing Place Association registered with the City's Neighborhood Partnership Program in 2012. There are 12 homes and four lots

Figure 2.16 Pershing Place Association Boundaries.
Source: City of College Station.



Figure 2.17 :Wolf Pen Creek Association Boundaries.
Source: City of College Station.



remaining in the neighborhood.

The Wolf Pen Creek Association registered with the Neighborhood Partnership Program in 2007. Wolf Pen Creek is a condo/townhome community with 45 units.

Other opportunities exist in the Southside Area for the formation of new associations. The City's Neighborhood Services Office has regular contact with residents in the College Park area surrounding Brison Park and in the Redmond Terrace Subdivision. These areas have loosely organized neighborhood groups with residents that operate like an association, but have not officially formed an association and registered with the City.

GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS FOR THE SOUTHSIDE AREA

The **Neighborhood Integrity & Community Character Goal** for the Southside Area is **to be a neighborhood that is a collection of unique areas with preserved character and long-term viability and appeal as an established family-friendly neighborhood.** Strategies have been developed to progress toward this goal. Each strategy has a series of action recommendations designed to implement the strategy.

Strategy NI&CC 1- Enhance viability of the existing land uses in the Southside Area, including single-family homes and unique historic retail.

Action NI&CC 1.1 –Explore ways to preserve Campus Homes and other structures of historic significance by incentivizing their preservation and restoration for alternative uses, including permitting alternative uses in restored structures, such as bed & breakfasts or game-day rentals.

Action NI&CC 1.2 – Collaborate with interested parties and other professionals to create an alternative development plan to preserve the neighborhood shopping opportunity in the Southgate Commercial Area. The effort should include a market analysis for the area and a concept plan for the block to gauge the development potential under several sceneries.

Action NI&CC 1.3 – Conduct educational sessions with potential historic district and landmark property owners to gauge interest in pursuing historic preservation regulations.

Strategy NI&CC 2- Focus on character preservation within the Southside Area neighborhood.

Action NI&CC 2.1 – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to include a Character Preservation Overlay zoning option that

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provides the neighborhood with the flexibility to select character elements and to determine the area to which they may apply.

Action NI&CC 2.2 – Assist neighborhood representatives in the organization and application of a Character Preservation Overlay zone.

Strategy NI&CC 3- Preserve the Southside Area’s existing neighborhood development pattern, where possible.

Action NI&CC 3.1 –Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan in the Redmond Terrace Subdivision from General Suburban to Neighborhood Conservation.

Action NI&CC 3.2 –Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan in the McCulloch’s Subdivision from Urban and General Suburban to Neighborhood Conservation.

Action NI&CC 3.3 – Amend the Redevelopment description for the southeast corner of George Bush Drive and Wellborn Road, identified in this Plan as Area 5, in the Future Land Use and Character Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action NI&CC 3.4 - Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan in Area 5 of the Southside Area Neighborhood to move the Neighborhood Conservation designation to the west so that it is located along Montclair Avenue, providing additional protection to the areas located east of Area 5.

Strategy NI&CC 4- Ensure future development in the Southside Area is in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan

Action NI&CC 4.1 – Work with property owners in the area bounded by Fairview Avenue, Luther Street, and Montclair Avenue to initiate a rezoning to reflect the existing land use on the properties.

Action NI&CC4.2–Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to allow development and redevelopment in Area 5 to utilize typical standard R-1 Single-Family Residential standards in lieu of the existing, more restrictive standards for redevelopment in older subdivisions.

Action NI&CC 4.3 – Develop a new zoning district to implement the recommended future development of Area 5.

Strategy NI&CC 5- Address the visual impact of off-street parking to lessen the impact of rental property on the character and integrity of the Southside Area Neighborhood.

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Action NI&CC 5.1 – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to limit the size of allowed parking areas within the front portion of single-family and duplex lots in the Southside Area.

Action NI&CC 5.2 – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to define appropriate parking surfaces for single-family and duplex lots in the Southside Area.

Action NI&CC 5.3 – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to require that rear-yard parking be screened from adjacent single-family properties.

Action NI&CC 5.4 – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to require one parking space per bedroom for new single-family construction, with a maximum of four spaces required.

Strategy NI&CC 6- Strengthen existing Neighborhood Associations and encourage the creation of additional Neighborhood Associations within the Southside Area.

Action NI&CC 6.1 – Meet with interested parties willing to undertake a partnership with Neighborhood Services to establish new neighborhood associations, such as the Redmond Terrace Subdivision and portions of College Park around Brison Park.

Action NI&CC 6.2 – Provide staff support in the creation and leadership training for new associations.

Strategy NI&CC 7- Increase code compliance and property maintenance in the Southside Area.

Action NI&CC 7.1 – Properties not meeting existing City codes and ordinances should be identified. The City should work with the owners of these properties to move toward compliance.