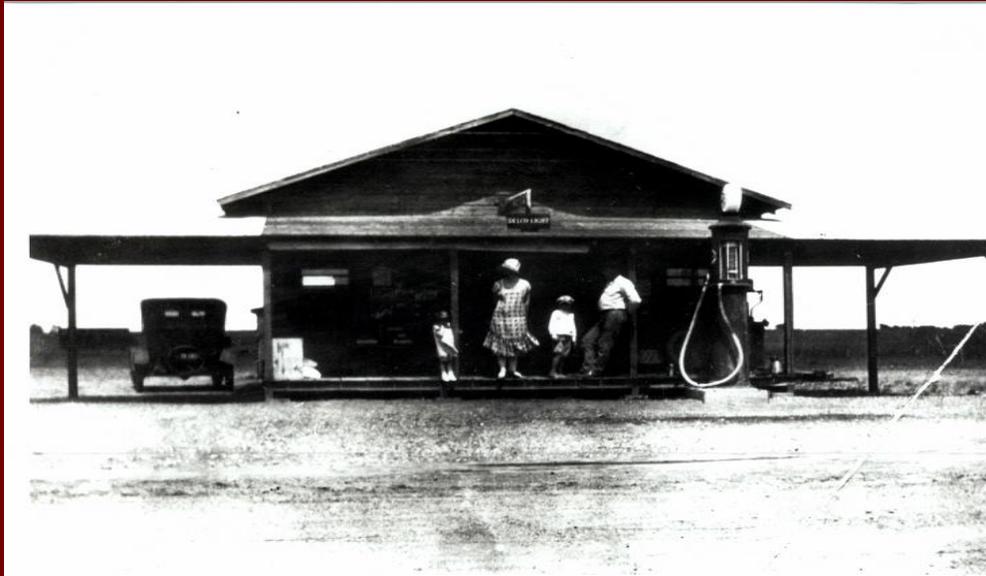


COMMUNITY CHARACTER



Wellborn Gas Station (1920's)
Source: City of College Station (Project Hold)

Throughout the development of the College Station Comprehensive Plan, residents expressed a desire to develop, enhance, and protect unique corridors and districts. More specifically, to create or protect places with unique character and identity. Included in this is the protection of rural areas. 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 Wellborn Community is distinguished as one such area due to its history, individual identity, and unique character.

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 both additional development opportunities and character preservation.

PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a set of strategies to preserve and enhance the integrity and character of the Wellborn Community. Based on the public input that was received during the planning process, and the desire to focus on the preservation of Wellborn while understanding that the potential growth in the area, the Community Character Goal for the Wellborn Community is:

“To be a community of rural character positioned for contextually appropriate growth that embodies and sustains the uniqueness and history of the area.”

Contents of the Chapter

This chapter is organized into five broad categories:

- Area Character
- Preservation of Community Resources
- Land Use & Development
- Zoning
- Community Design and Appearance

This chapter describes these five components and their relationship to the Wellborn Community. This information is supported by **Appendix A, Existing Conditions** which supplies supplementary qualitative data about the Community, and **Appendix C, Public Input Summary**. This chapter describes some of the key issues facing the Wellborn Community and provides information and opinions garnered through the engagement process. At the end of the chapter, strategies are identified to assist the planning area 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 4, Implementation**.

AREA CHARACTER

The Wellborn Community is known for its rural environment and long history. Though it is the newest addition to College Station, the Wellborn settlement actually pre-dates Texas A&M University and the City. Due to development pressure within the Wellborn planning area increasing during the recent past, the City of College Station took the initiative to annex the area into the City limits so that zoning and building codes could be applied to new development. Through the Wellborn Community Plan process, there is an opportunity to preserve the rural character that is cherished by so many and distinguish those areas from others which have more development opportunities benefiting the property owner, community, and City.

Area Conditions

Property Values

Residential property values, in general, are significantly higher for properties that contain a typical single-family detached residence as opposed to properties containing a mobile home. The average property value difference is roughly \$95,000 for single-family residences versus mobile homes. This difference is approximately \$90,000 on single-family

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residential ranchland versus mobile home ranchland. Some of these differences may be attributable to larger lot/parcel sizes or home sizes for single-family residences. (See **Figure EC.7, Existing Land Use**).

Map EC.8, Single-Family Property Values depicts the range of single-family property values in the Wellborn planning area.

The average commercial assessed value in the Wellborn planning area is \$537,549.

Property Maintenance

The City's Code Enforcement Unit is responsible for premise code enforcement and compliance with City codes and ordinances. Since the area is currently zoned A-O Agricultural-Open, Code Enforcement has different regulatory standards than in more central and populated portions of the City.

Enforcement is generally complaint-based, meaning that Code officers generally do not seek out violations but instead react to resident complaints. Issues that have arisen since annexation include property maintenance and trash, but a historical pattern of enforcement has not yet been established due to the limited amount of time since College Station's annexation of the Wellborn Community.

Traffic Management

During the planning process, an early concern expressed by residents was the potential widening of Wellborn Road beyond the planned four traffic lanes. The residents voiced a strong opposition to this widening due to character deterioration and the way that right-of-way would be acquired. Due to the presence of the railroad on one side of the Wellborn Road right-of-way, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) would be required to acquire additional right-of-way from only the eastern side. This side of the roadway is home to many existing businesses and residents that would suffer greatly from a reduction in setback. Such consequences would include, but would not be limited to, loss of on-site parking, possible right-way encroachments, and reduction in business facility expansion opportunities. This topic, among others related to transportation to and through the Wellborn Community is discussed in greater detail within the **Chapter 3 Mobility** of this Plan.

PRESERVATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The original community of Wellborn was established in 1867 and quickly became a thriving railroad community with a grocery store, post office, saloon, school, and many other local amenities that lasted until the late to mid 1900's.

Many of the original sites of this era have been demolished over the years, minus a few homesteads and the Wellborn school which are all held in private ownership. The Wellborn Community does boast one Texas Historical Commission marker which can be found at the Wellborn Cemetery.

According to the first documented burial, two-year-old Newton Farquhar, a cemetery was in existence by 1874, to serve the community. The grounds contain the graves of community leaders (including brothers and business partners Thomas Harvey Royder and John Horace Royder), veterans from armed conflicts dating back to the Civil War; Brazos County pioneers; and members of fraternal organizations (Brazos County Historical Commission). Though this is the only marker that exists within the planning area, the Wellborn Community is one of rich, deep history and is home to residents that are still able to recall the high times of the once thriving community.

Character Preservation

The Wellborn Community is one of age and unique character. Outside of being rural in nature, the exact character was challenging for residents to describe. In short it is one where families come to grow, seniors come to retire, and the stars can still be seen at night. Community members expressed a desire to maintain the ability to hold acreage without the concern that abutting properties could be subdivided and developed into high-density single family or multi-family developments. There was a concern regarding property values if such development occurred, as well as the destruction of the rural character and lifestyle residents and property owners currently enjoy.

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Citizens of the Wellborn Community have overwhelmingly identified the long-term character of Wellborn as being one of a rural nature with open space that is both privately and publicly held. The citizens see the area continuing as a place where local stores survive and low-density large acreage homesteads remain. This character has been further defined by the land use designations created by the residents. Some designations are unique to the Wellborn Community and some can similarly be found in other parts of College Station. However, each represents something unique about the Wellborn Community and will contribute to the preservation of its Character.

The following is a description of the existing land use designations found in the planning area based on the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, as shown in **Map EC.2, Existing Future Land Use and Community Character Map**.

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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.

Rural – Area that currently exist in and around College Station include areas that exhibit countryside, agricultural, and natural character. Countryside is typically dominated by a few lots of estate size fronting a road surrounded by agricultural and natural lands. The latter two tend to be determined by uses – crop or ranching in agricultural area and wooded or savannah lands in natural areas. Rural areas tend to be more sensitive than other character areas to intrusions from incompatible development.

Restricted Suburban – This land use designation is generally for areas that should have a moderate level of development activities. These areas will tend to consist of medium-density single-family residential lots (average 8,000 square feet) when clustered around open space, or larger lot sizes when not clustered. Townhomes, neighborhood commercial, and office uses may also be permitted as an element of a planned development.

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, current land use, and character were all considered. The planning process yielded multiple discussions about future land use in the Wellborn Community. The result of those discussions is that the rural pattern of land use and density should be preserved in much of the Wellborn Community, but that the opportunity exists for portions of the area to be developed more intensely. (See **Map 2.1, Proposed Future Land Use and Character**).

Wellborn Rural – This land use designation is generally for areas that, due to public service limitations or a prevailing rural character, should have limited development activities. These areas will tend to consist of low-density single-family residential lots of three acres or more.

Wellborn Estate – This land use designation is generally for areas that, due to public service limitations or a prevailing rural character, should have limited development activities. These areas will tend to consist of low-density single-family residential lots of two acres or more.

Wellborn Estate-Open – This land use designation is generally for areas that, due to public service limitations or a prevailing rural character, should have limited development activities. These areas will tend to consist of low-density single-family residential lots of two acres or more but may be one acre if clustered around undeveloped open space. Open space should be provided so as to that density is not increased

when using the cluster option. Open space should be provided against areas of lower residential density through the cluster and open space option or through a buffer requirement.

Wellborn Preserve – This land use designation is generally for areas that, due to public service limitations or a prevailing rural character, should have limited development activities. These areas will tend to consist of low-density single-family residential lots of one acre or more.

Wellborn Preserve-Open – This land use designation is generally for areas that, due to public service limitations or a prevailing rural character, should have limited development activities. These areas will tend to consist of low-density single-family residential lots of one acre or more but may be reduced to 20,000 square feet if clustered around undeveloped open space. Open space should be provided so as to that density is not increased when using the cluster option. Open space should be provided against areas of sensitivity such as natural or historic features through the cluster and open space option or through a buffer requirement.

Wellborn Restricted Suburban – This land use designation is generally for areas that should have a moderate level of development activities. These areas tend to consist of medium-density single-family residential lots (minimum 20,000 square feet) and may be clustered for reduced lot sizes (minimum 8,000 square feet). Open space should be provided so as to that density is not increased when using the cluster option. Such open space should be in addition to a general open space requirement of 15% of the developing area. Townhouses, office, and light commercial activity may also occur within 15% of the developing area, and should generally be located in a fashion to limit the visual and character impact on surrounding residential uses.

Wellborn 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). Development features should be incorporated such as greenbelts, garages, and limited lot coverage to reduce the character impact on surrounding residential uses.

Wellborn Commercial – This land use designation is generally for concentrations of commercial activities that focus primarily on the nearby residents versus the larger community. Such uses should be limited in size and not accommodate for drive-thru services. Specific design elements, as described in this Plan, should be incorporated into such development so as to limit the visual impact on the community and enhance the defined character.

Wellborn Business Park – This land use designation is generally for areas that include office, research, and related used planned and developed

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as a unified project. Specific design elements, as described in this Plan, should be incorporated into such development so as to limit the visual impact on the community and enhance the defined character.

Wellborn Institutional /Public – This land use designation is generally for areas that are, and likely to remain, in some form of institutional or public activity. It should also apply to privately held property that is specifically used for the public use, and is likely to remain so.

Zoning

Existing Zoning

The following is a description of the existing zoning districts found in the Wellborn Planning Area, as identified in **Map EC.1 Existing Zoning**.

Agricultural-Open – This district is for property that is either not subdivided or is relatively undeveloped, and is intended to be applied to land which is used for agricultural, very low-density residential or open space. The Agricultural-Open zoning district was put in place upon annexation of the Wellborn Community and is reserved area in which the future growth of the City can occur.

Compatibility with Existing Development

Upon the annexation of the Wellborn Community, the properties within the area were zoned A-O Agricultural-Open which allows for single-family residential development and agricultural activities. This zoning is standard for all annexation that occurs in College Station and was not specifically intended to accommodate for the land uses within the Wellborn Community. It is known that multiple uses within the area are not appropriate for an A-O zoning district. Such uses are identified below. It is not the City's intention to actively rezone property beyond currently developed property that is in compliance with the proposed land use plan, but the information below should provide guidance and act as a recommendation for future rezoning requests made by the property owners. **Map EC.3, Existing Zoning Non-Conformance**, provides a graphic representation of specific properties that are currently operating under this status.

Commercial along Wellborn Road

To date, there are approximately 20 commercial businesses within the Wellborn Community. The A-O zoning in place on these properties makes each a non-conforming use that is allowed to continue as long as the use stays active. Under this status, the use is unable to expand which could be limiting to the growth of the Wellborn Community. The City will pursue rezoning of existing commercially developed property in compliance with the proposed land use plan, once the new

Wellborn Commercial zoning district has been created.

Citizens of the Wellborn Community and surrounding areas have identified the desire to maintain the existing level of commercial activity. Though more commercial is amenable to residents, such commercial activity should not be more intense than what can be found in the Community today. Future zoning for commercial properties should limit the use of large structures and prohibit drive-thru options. Development patterns should be closer to those found along F.M. 2154, with the exception of structures exceeding 4,000 square feet in area. In general, new commercial opportunities should be provided to promote local, neighborhood-oriented businesses that are area appropriate in scale and character to the Wellborn Community and should represent the rural nature of the area through the use of open space and design. In order to accomplish this recommendation, the creation of a new zoning district may be required that is specific to the Wellborn Community. Other examples of this approach to zoning may be found in Wolf Pen Creek and Northgate.

Light Industrial Uses

There are currently three businesses within the Wellborn Community that resemble or incorporate industrial activity. Each of these uses are slightly different in function and were considered separately by neighborhood representatives during the planning process.

TDI Brooks Private Research Campus began development while still located within the bounds of the City of College Station Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The development includes private properties used as a private research campus consisting of assorted structure and recreational uses for the use. Much of the property is intended to remain as open space as the development continues. The residents of the Wellborn Community view this development as a positive attribute to the community that has developed sensitively to its rural and residential surroundings. The Master Planned campus may continue to develop under the current A-O zoning that is in place due to property rights related to annexation. To vary from this plan, would require a rezoning of the property, which would need to align with the land uses called for in City's Comprehensive Plan.

Elliott Construction is an established business that does excavation work, site utility work, and construction services. This business has been in operation for several years prior to annexation. As such, this development is allowed to continue under the current A-O zoning due to property rights related to annexation. Additional development on the site would require a rezoning of the property.

Wellborn Business Park is a planned and permitted development that began prior to annexation and that is allowed to continue in a way that

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is compliant with the original development plan. This development is dense in structure, but it intended to contain low-intensity light industrial and storage types uses. The development is permitted to continue under the current A-O zoning that is in place due to property rights related to annexation.

To vary from the original development plan, would require a rezoning of the property, which would need to align with the land uses called for in City's Comprehensive Plan.

Residential Subdivisions

There are hundreds of acres of unsubdivided and unimproved land within the Wellborn Community, which defines the character as being one of rural nature with open space and vegetation for all community members to enjoy visually. However, some areas have been developed as single-family residential subdivisions resulting in the division of land being less than five acres which is not compliant with the A-O zoning put in place upon annexation. Such developments include the Shiloh Subdivision, and unplatted portions of Creek Meadows. Such areas may continue under the current zoning, but future development potential is limited until the property is rezoned in accordance with the land use.

COMMUNITY DESIGN AND APPEARANCE

Image Corridors and Gateways

F.M. 2154 is designated as a Primary Image Corridor by the College Station Comprehensive Plan Community Assets and Image Corridors Map. This designation signifies that the roadway carries a high amount of traffic and facilitates the movement of traveler to and through the some of the City's most significant assets. As such, particular attention should be made to both the appearance and functionality of this major thoroughfare. The Wellborn Community as a whole is designated as an Early Image-Setting Gateway (**Comprehensive Plan Map 2.3, Community Assets and Image Corridors**), which means that the Wellborn Community is one of the entry points into the City area where visitors will have the first opportunity to be engaged and experience the College Station identity.

For the Wellborn planning area, there are two types of gateways/image corridors identified, Community Arrival Gateways and Community Welcoming Gateways (see **Map 2.2 Image Gateways**).

Community Arrival Gateways

Community arrival gateways signify the primary entry points into the Wellborn Community. These types of gateways are typically defined by having a large monument sign and are accompanied by landscaping beds.

Community Welcoming Gateways

Community Welcoming gateways signify secondary entry points into the Wellborn Community. These are typically defined by having signage and landscaping, similar to the Community Arrival Gateways, but on a much smaller scale.

Design Workshop

The City hosted a design workshop to give residents, property owners, and business owners an opportunity to provide a vision for how the gateway elements and commercial areas along F.M. 2154 might look in the future. The all-day design workshop was hosted by City staff and local professionals specializing in the fields of architecture, landscape design, and planning. The workshop was capped off with a public presentation to the community that showed the results from the workshop.

For the image corridor and gateway portion of the design workshop, attendees expressed their desire to embrace the community's rural and railroad history. With the community originally created as a result of the railroad, residents felt it was key component that should be utilized in the creation of any identifying features. In addition to railroad elements being utilized in identifying features, residents also wanted to make sure that the rustic country feel was not lost. As a result, identifying features for gateway elements should incorporate items such as railroad ties, fences and hitching posts. Information on the gateway sign elements should utilize "Wellborn Community" to

reinforce the sense of community in the area, in addition to incorporating the date of establishment, and a logo that could be used throughout the planning area. The primary gateway elements would be placed generally around the Barron Cut-Off Road and F.M. 2154 intersection, and south of the Greens Prairie Trail and F.M. 2154 intersection. Secondary gateway elements, which would be smaller in scale, would be placed at the intersection of I&GN Road and South Dowling Road, the intersection of I&GN Road and Koppe Bridge Road, and at the intersection of Greens Prairie Road and Greens Prairie Road West.



Fig.1.1 – Central Sign Element Concept

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To tie gateway and identifying elements together, unified planting (such as wildflowers, or some other planting that lasts throughout the year) that leads from the gateway elements to the central point of the community should be utilized. Ultimately, these would lead to a larger sign element (See **Fig. 1.1 - Central Sign Element Concept**) that would be placed within the core of the community (generally located around the Post Office). This sign element would convey historical information about Wellborn, would incorporate a community message board and could be used as a central gathering place.

The results of the commercial corridor discussion of the design workshop focused on creating a more pedestrian friendly, village-type environment with small scale businesses located along Live Oak Street. Of note, however was the desire to not have businesses turn away from F.M. 2154 and the railroad, but to incorporate side streets, front and rear building access, and to avoid having continuous backs of buildings along the primary thoroughfare of the community. As mentioned previously, attendees sought to embrace the community's history with the railroad and not turn their back to it.

Within the commercial area along Live Oak Street, the desire is to create more rural town-like buildings, with less formal requirements for lot size, building placement and arrangement. The sentiment expressed by residents was to not have a typical strip retail center type development, but to have commercial development that was more reflective of the rural character of the area.

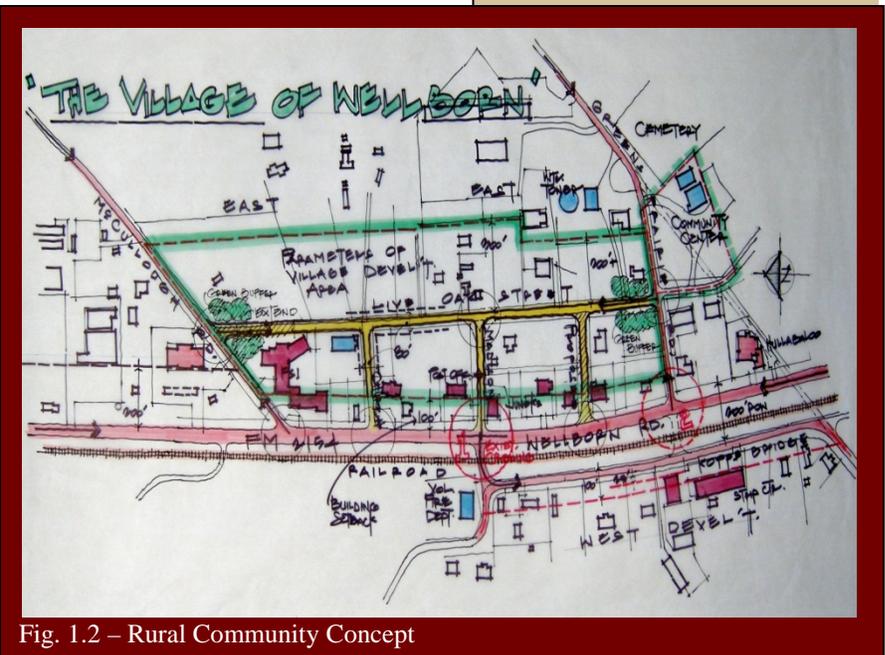


Fig. 1.2 – Rural Community Concept

With regards to building design and aesthetics, the general sentiment was to retain flexibility on the types of materials and size of buildings north of McCullough Road and generally south of Greens Prairie Road West. The core village area would incorporate smaller scale buildings, green space and a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Larger buildings with a rustic/rural look would be permitted along F.M. 2154, to coincide with existing buildings and uses already in place (i.e. America's Country Store and the gas station at the corner of McCullough Road and F.M. 2154). Architectural standards for these would focus on incorporating items already prevalent within the area (i.e. the use of metal panels and wood facades).

New buildings would need to continue the deep setbacks set forth by the most recent development in order to accommodate expansion of F.M. 2154.

GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS FOR THE WELLBORN COMMUNITY

The **Community Character Goal** for the Wellborn Community is **to be a community of rural character positioned for contextually appropriate growth that embodies and sustains the uniqueness and history of the area.** Strategies have been developed to progress toward this goal. Each strategy has a series of action recommendations designed to implement the strategy.

Strategy CC 1 – Preserve the Wellborn Community’s existing development pattern, where possible, while allowing opportunities for development and growth to accommodate the increasing number of people moving to the community.

- **Action CC 1.1** – Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan to the land uses proposed within this chapter that suit the character and situation of the Wellborn Community.

Strategy CC 2 – Focus on character preservation within the Wellborn Community.

- **Action CC 2.1** – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to include Wellborn Residential zoning districts that allows the area to develop in a unique pattern that is specific to the Wellborn Community.
- **Action CC 2.2** – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to include a Wellborn Commercial district that allow the area to develop in way as to maintain a visible distinction between traditional College Station commercial and the Wellborn Community.
- **Action CC 2.3** – Amend the Unified Development Ordinance to include a Wellborn Business Park district that allows the area to develop in a way that is sensitive the rural character of the Wellborn Community.
- **Action CC 2.4** – Explore opportunities for distinguishing areas of historical significance within the Wellborn Community.

Strategy CC 3 – Ensure future development in the Wellborn Community is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

- **Action CC 3.1** – Create design standards for commercial development that promote and continue the rural character of the area.
- **Action CC 3.2** – Pursue rezonings to bring existing developed properties into conformance with proposed zoning districts.

Strategy CC 4 – Designate the Wellborn Community as a place of distinction.

- **Action CC 4.1** – Create a district identification package for the Community Arrival Gateways and secondary Welcome Gateways, complete with signage detail, color, hardscaping, and landscaping, that is specific to the Wellborn Community and its unique character.
- **Action CC 4.2** – Create a Central Gateway element near the Post Office to convey the history and character of the community, and that would incorporate a community message board.

Strategy CC 5 – Provide an ongoing evaluation and indicator program.

- **Action CC 5.1** – Track code enforcement and property maintenance case activity in the planning area to identify frequent violations.