

# CITY OF COLLEGE STATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

## 2011 ANNUAL REVIEW

Yearly reviews are performed to ensure that the current Comprehensive Plan remains relevant and identify any changes necessary for the future growth of the City. As a City grows and evolves, concepts that were once thought to be necessary in the Comprehensive Plan can change as new development is attracted to the City or a shift in what is thought to be needed for the future occurs. It is a platform for the discussion of how the community's vision is progressing and what adjustments in policy and practice are needed to continue to fulfill the planned future of the City.

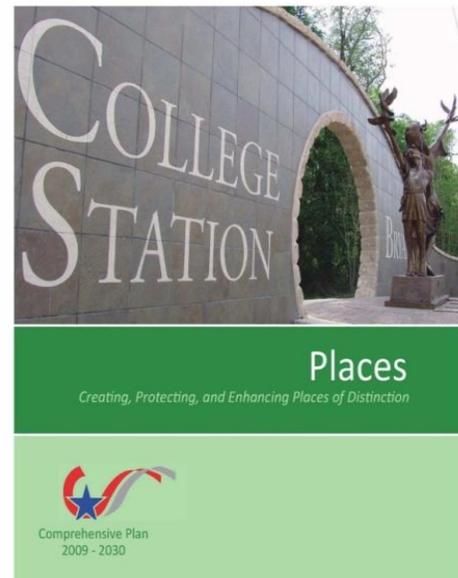
This year's annual review of the Comprehensive Plan is organized by the major elements (chapters) of the Plan. Daily success stories and programs abound, but because the activities of City leaders, staff, volunteers, and community members are so great and diverse, this review will focus on substantial projects related to the implementation of each goal. This Annual Review will reflect upon some of the programs and issues that have large impact—physically, socially, economically, and/or politically.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Comprehensive Plan acts as a guide to ensure the goals and objectives of the City are implemented by acting as a long-range planning and policy structure for future growth of the City. This is achieved by addressing topics such as infrastructure, future land use, transportation, and greenways and parks. The Plan provides consistent direction for community leaders that reflects the collaborative long-range vision of College Station citizens, business owners, and investors.

### **HISTORY**

College Station has engaged in City planning since its inception in 1938, establishing its first Zoning Commission and adopting a zoning ordinance shortly after incorporation. The earliest document that resembles a comprehensive plan for the City is the Brazos Area Plan, a regional-scale plan dating from the early 1960s. In the mid-1970s and late-1980s, interim reports were drafted and a few City-specific plans were created before the first contemporary Comprehensive Plan was established in 1980 and later updated in 1989. In 1997, the City adopted a Comprehensive Plan that guided the City until the adoption of the current plan. The development of the latest update spanned over three years, beginning in 2006. City Council appointed citizens to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee to assist the Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff in the comprehensive planning process. A Staff Resource Team was also created, as well as focus groups, a Citizens' Congress, and workshops. The Comprehensive Plan was formally adopted in May 2009.



## VISION

College Station, the proud home of Texas A&M University and the heart of the Research Valley, will remain a vibrant, forward-thinking, knowledge-based community which promotes the highest quality of life for its citizens by...

- Ensuring safe, tranquil, clean, and healthy neighborhoods with enduring character;
- Increasing and maintaining the mobility of College Station citizens through a well planned and constructed inter-modal transportation system;
- Expecting sensitive development and management of the built and natural environment;
- Supporting well planned, quality, and sustainable growth;
- Valuing and protecting our cultural and historical community resources;
- Developing and maintaining quality cost-effective community facilities, infrastructure and services which ensure our City is cohesive and well connected; and,
- Pro-actively creating and maintaining economic and educational opportunities for all citizens.

College Station will continue to be among the friendliest and most responsive of communities and a demonstrated partner in maintaining and enhancing all that is good and celebrated in the Brazos Valley. It will continue to be a place where Texas and the world come to learn, live, and conduct business!

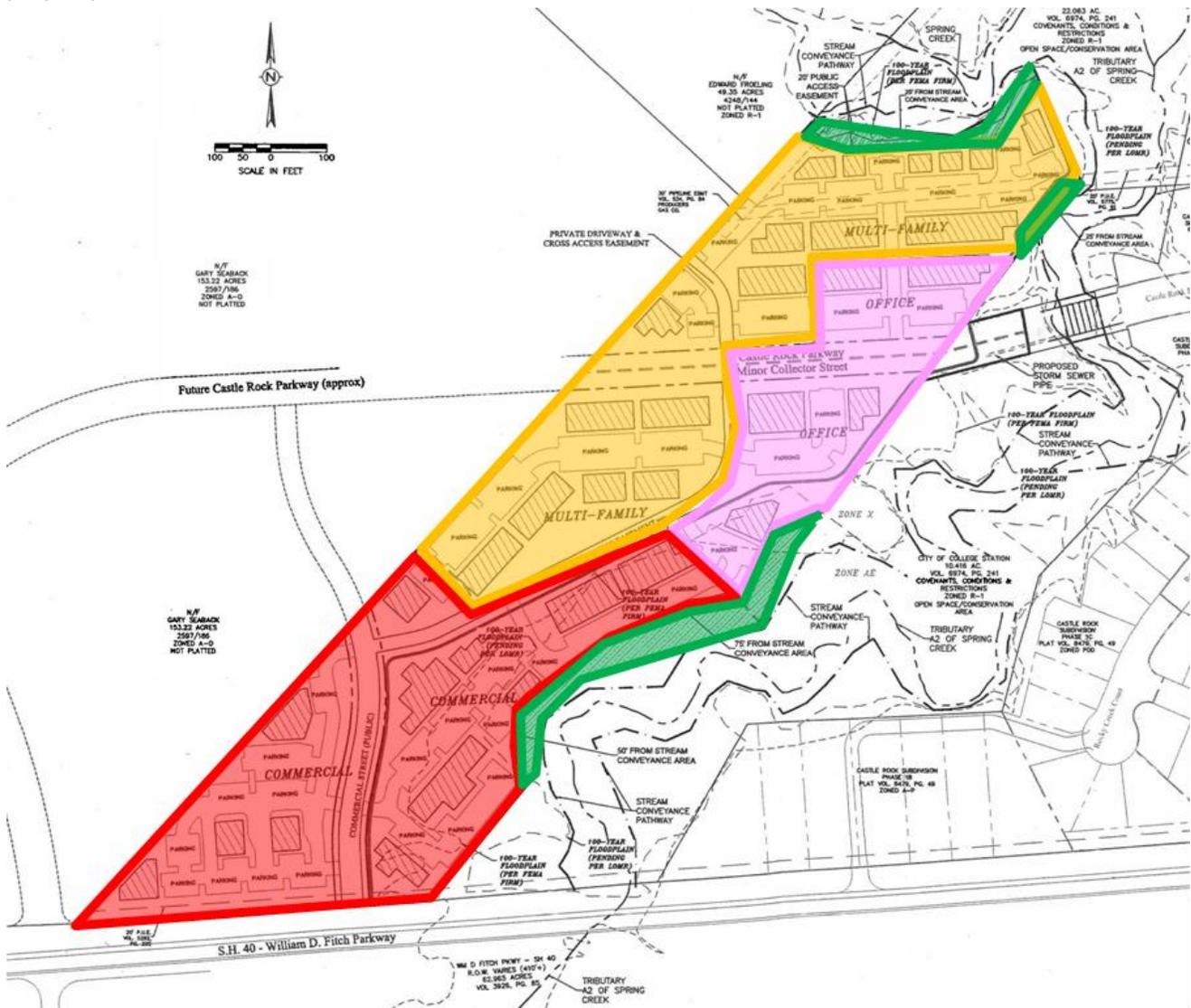
## SUCCESS STORIES

The updated Comprehensive Plan approaches the growth of College Station in a manner different from previous plans. The new plan focuses on the creation and enhancement of places of distinction in College Station. For example, it identifies key features of the community, including gateways and existing neighborhoods that require special protections. It identifies areas of town where new growth should be encouraged. It recognizes the connection between infrastructure and land use and plans not only capacities, but also contexts accordingly. Previous plans guided the growth of the City in a more rigid fashion—for example, each color on a map signified one type of land use or one type of road. The new Plan recognizes the importance of character and capitalizes upon that to offer the greatest flexibilities for development while protecting special places. Below are two examples of rezonings that were creative and offered a variety of housing and community benefits that were approved under the new Plan in the past year.

### ***Success Story—Phillips Square Multi-Use Path***

The Future Land Use and Character Map designates the Phillips Square property (north of William D. Fitch Parkway and west of the Castle Rock Subdivision) as Urban and Natural Areas Reserved. The property is also considered to be within Growth Area IV. The Urban designation is for a very intense level of development, tending to consist of townhouses, duplexes, and apartments. Within growth areas, an Urban designation may also permit commercial, office, business park, and vertical mixed uses. The Phillips Square Planned Development zoning allows for a mix of uses on the 19 acres, along with increased preservation of the floodplain. The mixed use development provides the opportunity to live, work, and play in the same area. Uses are integrated together by the vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections throughout the site. The Planned

Development District includes a “no development” area adjacent to portions of the City’s wetlands mitigation area, further protecting wildlife and preserving the property for flood control. The City’s Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan includes a future multi-use path parallel to the adjacent creek and wetlands mitigation area. Given that development on the opposite side of the creek precluded a path on that side, the multi-use path will be located on the west side of the creek and will be constructed with the development of the property.



The previous Comprehensive Plan, for the most part, only recognized singular types of land uses as appropriate for designated parcels, and while preservation of the greenway had been identified as a priority, there were few avenues the City could take to seek its protection. Under previous policies, the City had to wait for available funds to develop the hike/bike path. The current Plan offers a vision of greater flexibility to better adjust to market demands while maintaining a fabric of compatibles uses that can develop within infrastructure capabilities. Under the direction of the Comprehensive Plan’s vision and goals, a development proposal was adopted through a negotiated process that will allow the integration of uses, the preservation of flood-prone

areas, and construction of the multi-use path through along the greenway that will provide opportunities for recreation and bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

**Success Story—Scott & White**

The Scott & White Hospital, currently under construction southeast of the State Highway 6 / Rock Prairie Road intersection, is a five-story, 320,000 square-foot facility sitting on 32 acres. An adjacent 75,000-square-foot clinic will be developed on the heels of the hospital.

Anticipated completion is the summer of 2013 for both buildings. Scott & White’s overall master plan for this area includes over 100 acres with varying medical support uses, including medical office, restaurant, retail, and a hotel. The project includes full compliance with the Thoroughfare Plan, including the construction of three new thoroughfares across their property that will someday become part of the larger network that provides an alternative north-south route in this area of the City.





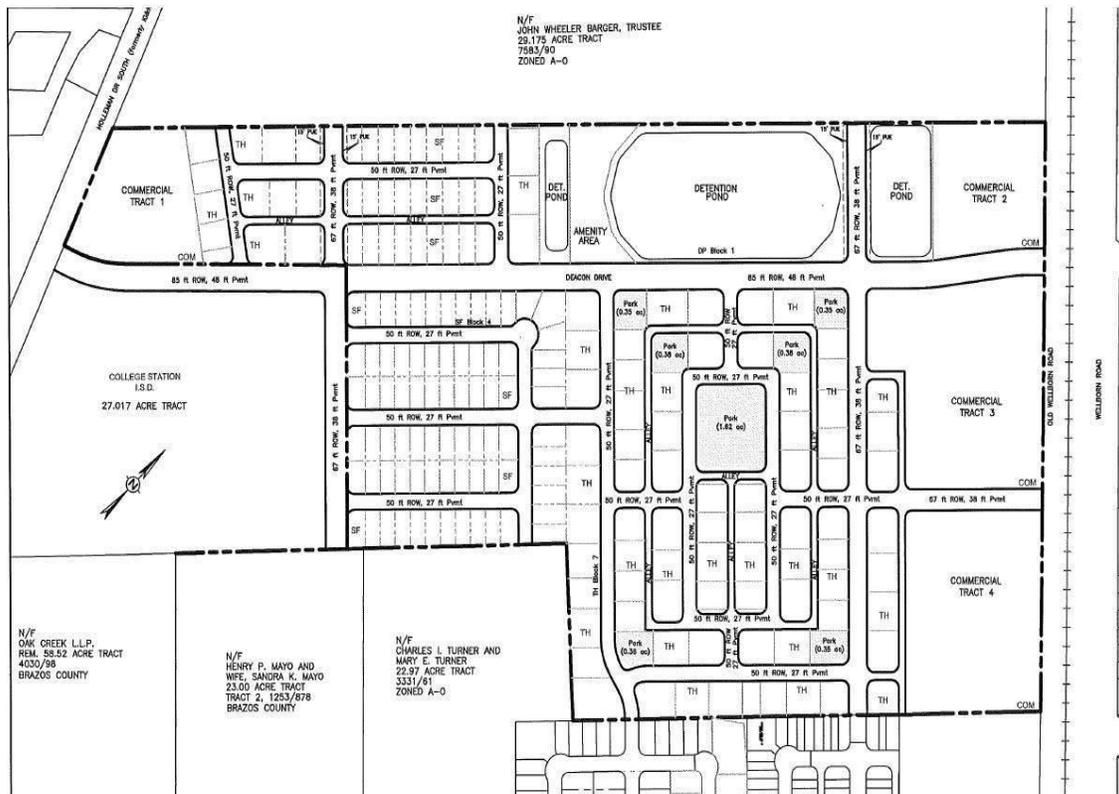
Scott & White's proposal takes full advantage of market opportunities in this portion of the City while maintaining sensitivity to the concerns of nearby residents. Through the Planned Development process, the height and scale of buildings along Rock Prairie Road were limited to reflect the existing single-family neighborhoods to the north. Uses along this corridor include neighborhood-serving retail and office uses. Big-box type retail is not permitted next to the neighborhoods, as a direct result of Scott & White's neighborhood engagement. The rezoning utilized the

flexibility of the Comprehensive Plan's concepts of land use and character while protecting the integrity of nearby established neighborhoods. In addition, the development is phased to address traffic issues. A traffic impact analysis was performed and clearly illustrates that full development of the site cannot occur without significant upgrades to the surrounding transportation network. The phased development allows only the hospital and minimal medical office development before further road improvements are made.



**Success Story— The Barracks II**

The Future Land Use and Character Map designates the Barracks II property (between Wellborn Road and Holleman Drive South) as General Suburban and is considered part of Growth Area V. The General Suburban designation is intended for areas with an intense level of development activities that consist of high-density single-family residential lots (minimum 5,000 square feet). Additionally, in General Suburban areas designated as growth areas, townhomes, duplexes and neighborhood commercial and office uses may also be permitted. The Barracks II Planned Development District consists of high-density detached single-family residences, townhomes, and neighborhood commercial and office land uses on over 108 acres.



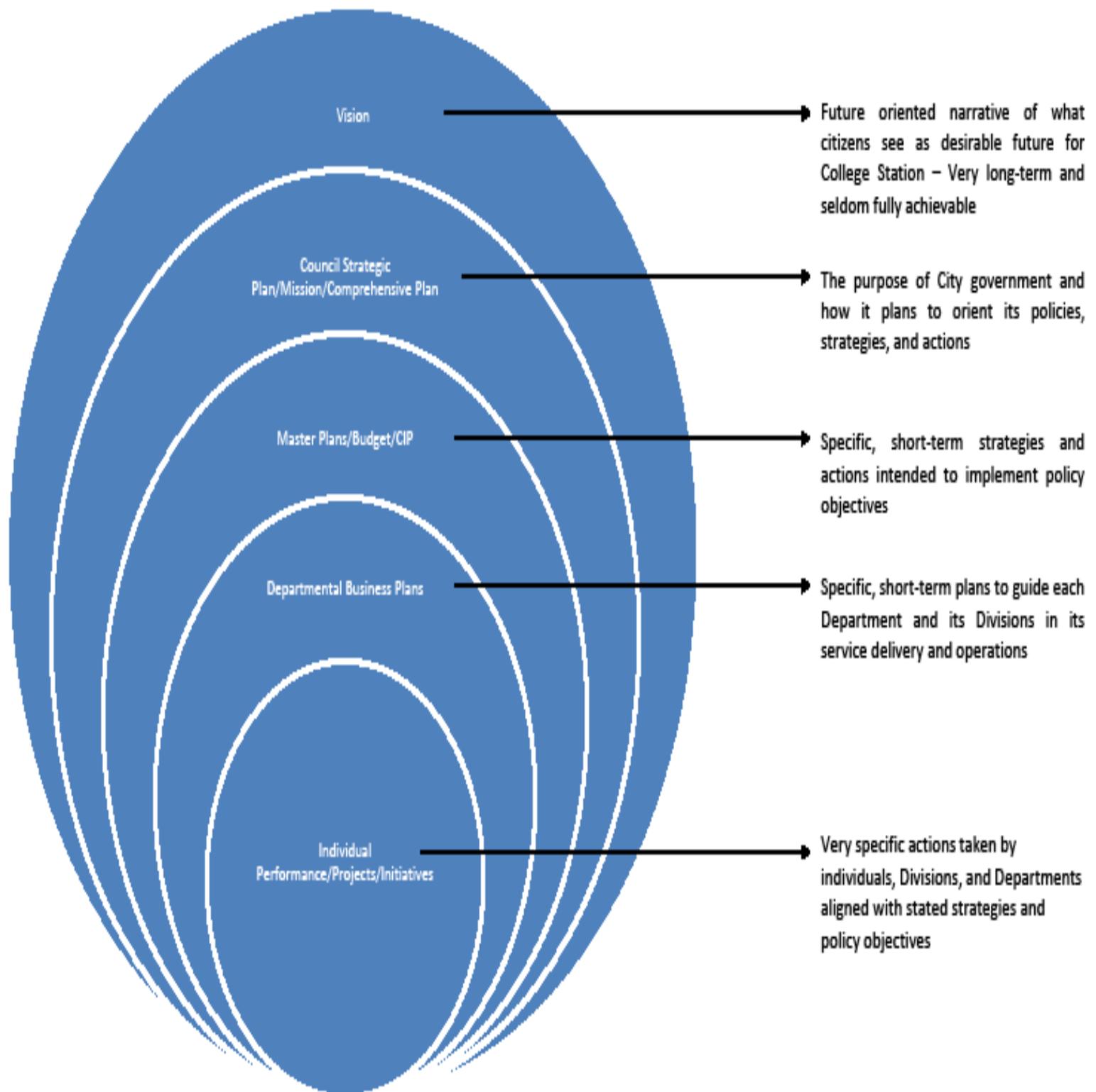
The Barracks II development takes advantage of additional market opportunities that would have been limited under the previous Comprehensive Plan. The PDD takes advantage of the flexibility in land uses offered under the Comprehensive Plan, while insuring that the integrity and character of adjacent developments is maintained. Under the previous Comprehensive Plan, there were very few opportunities to mix residential uses and commercial uses outside of a mixed-use designation.



As part of the PDD, there will be construction of three thoroughfares through the property that will provide additional connectivity and access on the west side of the railroad tracks. A traffic impact analysis was conducted and based on the proposed residential density and allowed commercial land uses, it resulted in the need for a larger capacity thoroughfare through the property. The development will include bike lanes along the three major thoroughfares as identified in the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan, and incorporates an innovative park layout with six small pocket parks located at the periphery of a larger 1.6 acre central park.

## LEADERSHIP

College Station has used a strategic planning process for several years to aid in decision-making. Most recently with the adoption of the City's new Comprehensive Plan and through it, clarification of the community's vision, the Council developed the current, proposed, multi-year strategic plan. The following graphic illustrates the strategic decision-making model used in College Station.



At their regular meeting on October 27, the City Council will consider adoption of the 2012 update of the strategic plan and desired outcomes that will provide the direction staff needs to help move towards the vision for College Station. The strategic initiatives and goals contained in the strategic plan are noted in the following:

**Financially Sustainable City**—wise stewardship of the financial resources provided to the City resulting in its ability to meet current service demands and obligations without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Success in this area will be measured through increasingly diverse sources of revenue, adequate fiscal reserves, and citizen satisfaction with services and facilities.

**Providing Core Services and Infrastructure**—efficiently, effectively, and strategically placed core services and infrastructure that maintains citizens' health, safety, and general welfare and enables the city's economic growth and physical development. Success in this area will be measured through well-maintained infrastructure/limited failures and outages, citizen satisfaction with services and facilities, stable or declining major offenses even as population increases, and understanding community needs and successful communication of City's ability to meet those needs.

**Neighborhood Integrity**—long-term viable and appealing neighborhoods. Success in this area will be measured through stable or increasing property values, citizen satisfaction with neighborhood quality of life, and fewer negative impacts of rental properties in neighborhoods.

**Diverse Growing Economy**—diversified economy generating quality, stable full-time jobs bolstering the sales, and property tax base and contributing to a high quality of life. Success in this area will be measured through increasing rate of increasing taxable value, increasing rate of increasing year over year sales tax receipts, increasing number of non-University high-paying full-time jobs, and adequate land available and serviceable for basic employers.

**Improving Mobility**—safe, efficient, and well-connected multi-modal transportation system designed to contribute to a high-quality of life and be sensitive to surrounding uses. Success in this area will be measured through increasing the number of safe and complete ways to move to and between major destinations; continued reduction in the number of major crashes; streets that are not heavily congested; and streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths that are well maintained and free of hazard.

**Sustainable City**—wise stewardship of the natural resources and features needed to meet current demands without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. Success in this area will be measured through expanded purchase of power from renewable energy sources, reduced energy consumption, reduced water consumption, reduced volumes of waste generated, efficient use of land, and protection of vulnerable environmental features.

Under the direction provided through City Council's Strategic Plan, City departments are able to develop Strategic Business Plans that prioritize municipal programs and services that will further the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, and to budget accordingly. Divisional leadership within the City in turn are then able to provide employees with individual Performance Plans that hold each employee responsible for accomplishing actions that will carry forward the Council's strategy. The major initiatives identified in the following sections describe actions taken and in progress that have been prioritized in past years.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER**

The goal for College Station's future land use and character is *to be a community with strong, unique neighborhoods, protected rural areas, special districts, distinct corridors, and a protected and enhanced natural environment*. Six strategies were developed to progress toward this goal:

**Strategy 1:** *Develop and maintain, through regular review, a land use plan that identifies, establishes, and enhances community character.*

**Strategy 2:** *Establish and protect distinct boundaries between various character areas.*

**Strategy 3:** *Promote public and private development and design practices that ensure distinct neighborhoods, districts, and corridors.*

**Strategy 4:** *Promote public and private development and design practices that encourage resource conservation and protection.*

**Strategy 5:** *Focus community enhancement activities to promote a strong sense of community identity.*

**Strategy 6:** *Identify, protect, and enhance unique community assets in our natural and built environment.*

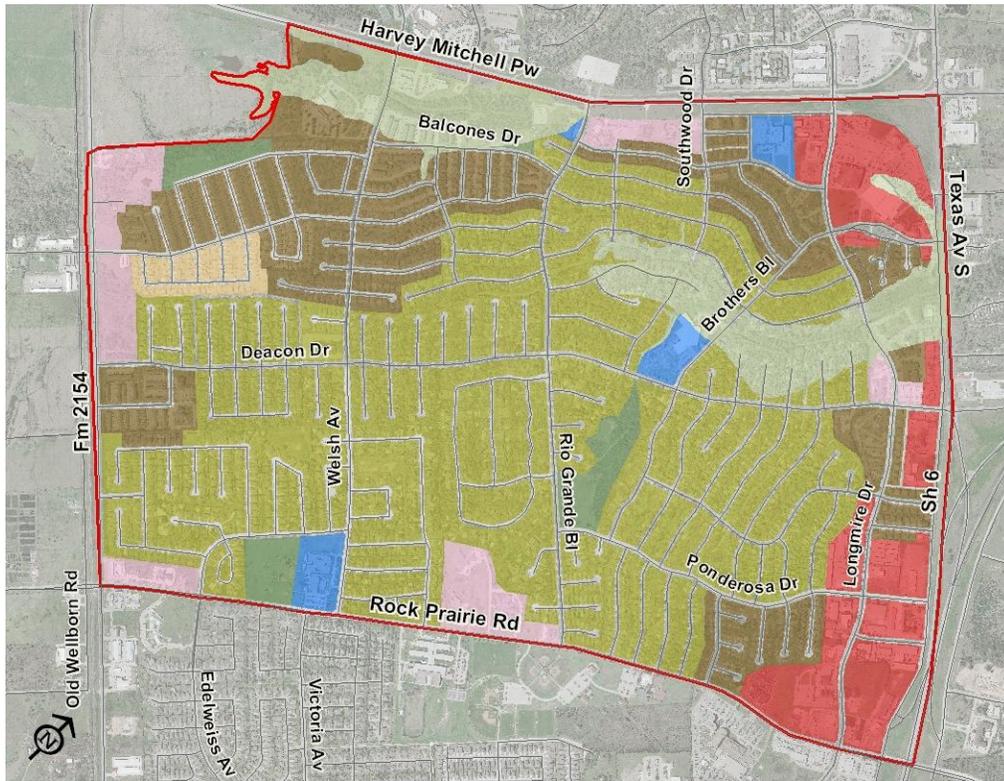
## **MAJOR INITIATIVE: NEIGHBORHOOD, CORRIDOR, AND DISTRICT PLANNING**

The neighborhood, corridor, and district planning program that began in 2009, as an action to implement these strategies and help to reach the goal for the City's future land use and character, continued throughout 2010 and 2011. The processes for these plans include intensive citizen engagement efforts with a number of community meetings and the utilization of Neighborhood Resource Teams (composed of area residents and property owners) to provide additional guidance to the formation of the plans' goals, strategies, and actions. These small area plans are intended to be implemented over five- to seven-year time frames to address issues such as community character and land use, neighborhood integrity, mobility, and sustainability in the specific areas of study. Using the planning areas identified on the Comprehensive Plan's Concept Map as a guide, one neighborhood plan was completed in 2010 (Central College Station) and is currently in the implementation stage and one was recently adopted in 2011 (Eastgate). One neighborhood plan (Southside Area) and two district plans (Medical and Wellborn) are currently underway.

### **The Central College Station Neighborhood Plan (In implementation)**

This Plan was the first in a series of neighborhood, district, and corridor plans that are created to implement the City's Comprehensive Plan vision to create, promote, and enhance places of distinction. The plan was recognized in 2010 by the Central Section of Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association with the "Long Range Planning Award". The Central College Station Neighborhood planning area is made up of 1,450 acres located in the geographic center of College Station. Bounded by Texas Avenue South/State Highway 6 South,

Harvey Mitchell Parkway South, Wellborn Road, and Rock Prairie Road, this area includes eight residential subdivisions, and is home to more than 11,000 residents.



The process for the plan began in August 2009 with the selection and establishment of the Neighborhood and Planning Resource Team. Over a period of nine months, Staff worked with the neighborhood to develop a plan to address community character and land use, neighborhood integrity, mobility, and sustainability. Over the course of the planning process, three community-wide meetings were held, along with an online survey. Additionally, representatives from CSISD and TAMU student groups were involved in the process.

Adopted in 2010, the neighborhood plan focuses on four goals:

1. Promote and protect the suburban residential character in the core of Central College Station balanced with the need to provide denser redevelopment options along the neighborhood fringe.
2. Improve neighborhood organizations, property maintenance, and City code compliance in owner-occupied areas to elevate the attractiveness of Central College Station’s subdivisions as an affordable, family-friendly neighborhood.
3. Promote a safe, well-connected, context-sensitive, multi-modal transportation system to better connect Central College Station to the rest of the community and its local neighborhood centers.
4. Increase awareness and participation in resource conservation efforts.

The plan incorporates 25 strategies and 148 action items. The implementation of these strategies aims to stabilize and protect this area as an attractive and stable single-family neighborhood for future residents of College Station. Accomplishments of the last year include:

- Implementation of the SeeClickFix program. SeeClickFix is a web and smartphone-based application that allows citizens to report non-emergency issues to the City. The program is currently being used to get feedback from citizens regarding some of the top code enforcement violations.
- Provision of property crime education to neighborhood groups. The Police Department in conjunction with Neighborhood Services met with several neighborhood groups within the Central College Station neighborhood for training on property safety and property crimes. Neighborhood watch programs are currently being pursued.
- Completion of improvements to Brothers Pond Park. Work began in March and included replacement of the crushed granite jogging loop with concrete, repairs to the pond retaining wall, additional trail lighting, and the replacement of a damaged sidewalk at the Deacon Drive entrance.
- Completion of the Harvey Mitchell Parkway multi-use path. This path follows along the northwest side of Harvey Mitchell Parkway South from Welsh Avenue to Texas Avenue South and provides connectivity to several key destinations in the area—most notably A&M Consolidated High School, Bee Creek Park, and Wal-Mart.
- Establishment of a neighborhood clean-up program. This program, while identified in the Central College Station Neighborhood Plan, will be offered annually to two or three neighborhoods throughout the City through an application process with Neighborhood Services and the Sanitation Division.
- Completion of traffic warrant studies for five intersections within the planning area. Traffic counts, traffic volume and incident data were analyzed to determine if the warrant studies merited stop signs or traffic signals. After evaluating the traffic warrant studies, all five intersections did not warrant a traffic signal or stop sign.
- Adoption of two rezoning proposals within the neighborhood for the Landmark Apartments on Longmire Drive. The rezonings were identified in the neighborhood plan and were necessary due to the existing apartment use not being in compliance with the existing zoning. As such, any redevelopment of the property would have been difficult given the split in residential and commercial zonings on the property.

The work so far has focused municipal services in the study area, improved city-owned facilities, and paved the way for needed property improvements. Implementation actions span all goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, but collectively have the greatest impact on the character of this unique area of town—enhancing this place of distinction.

### **Eastgate Neighborhood Plan (Adopted)**

The Eastgate Neighborhood Plan was adopted in June 2011 as the second in a series of neighborhood, district, and corridor plans intended to help implement the City’s Comprehensive Plan vision to create, promote, and enhance places of distinction. The Eastgate Neighborhood Planning Area is made up of 567 acres located in the

original core of College Station. Loosely bounded by University Drive East, Texas Avenue South, Dominik Drive, and Munson Avenue, this area includes 25 residential subdivisions and is home to more than 2,700 residents.



The plan focuses on goals for four main topics:

1. Community Character:

- Maintain a diverse mix of housing types;
- Preserve larger lot single-family development patterns;
- Reduce character impact of rental housing in the neighborhood; and
- Promote redevelopment around the perimeter of the neighborhood that meets community needs and is complimentary to the neighborhood.

2. Neighborhood Integrity:

- Effective neighborhood organizations;
- Conservation of neighborhood resources,
- Enhanced neighborhood identity and investment;

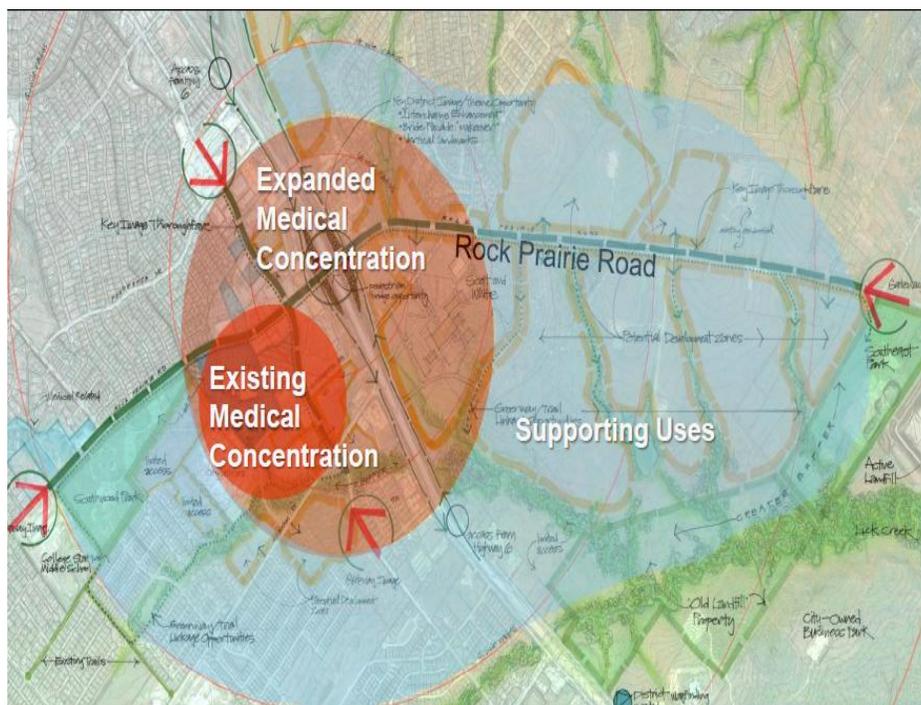
- Proactive property maintenance and code enforcement; and
  - Targeted emergency and law enforcement services to enhance the appeal of the Eastgate neighborhood as a desired, family-friendly destination.
3. Mobility:
- Maintain a safe and efficient street network while improving multi-modal transportation options by increasing bicycle and pedestrian connections to key destinations within and around the neighborhood.
4. Sustainability:
- Increase awareness and participation in resource conservation efforts.

While the plan was adopted only a few months ago, implementation of a few items is underway, namely:

- Meeting and working with the College Hills Neighborhood Association in the Pasler area to gauge interest in pursuing a single-family neighborhood protection overlay to support their neighborhood conservation efforts;
- Budgeting Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the design of a sidewalk on the south side of University Drive from Texas Avenue to Lions Park; and
- Meetings with the public to offer details regarding the construction of Fire Station No. 6 at the corner of University Drive East and Tarrow Street (the fire station is anticipated to be complete in late 2012); and
- Meeting with the public to receive feedback on a proposed sidewalk along north side of Lincoln Avenue.

### Medical District Plan (In progress)

The City of College Station is partnering with the College Station Medical Center and other stakeholders in the creation of a Medical District that will act as a focused healthcare and wellness district within the City. The study



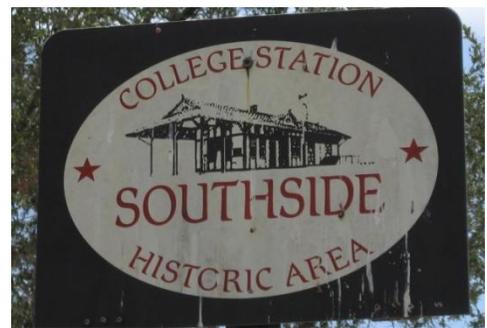
focuses on the general area around State Highway 6 and Rock Prairie Road, and includes the existing College Station Medical Center and the future Scott & White Hospital, both along Rock Prairie Road. The purpose of the study is to create opportunities for new commercial and residential development, as well as for adaptive reuse of existing properties and structures in the area and to attract significant new mixed-use space, retail, and medical providers to the corridor.





The Southside Area was selected for further study through the neighborhood planning process because of its rich history and lack of neighborhood-level planning in the area in the past. The Southside Area is one of the oldest areas in College Station – including portions of the original City limits established in 1938.

A kick-off meeting was held in late September introducing the neighborhood to the planning area, the planning process, and programs offered by the City. A Neighborhood Resource Team was created that includes a smaller group of people that will assist in developing the plan and discussing implementation strategies. The City will host additional public meetings for the community to identify issues and opportunities in the Southside Area.



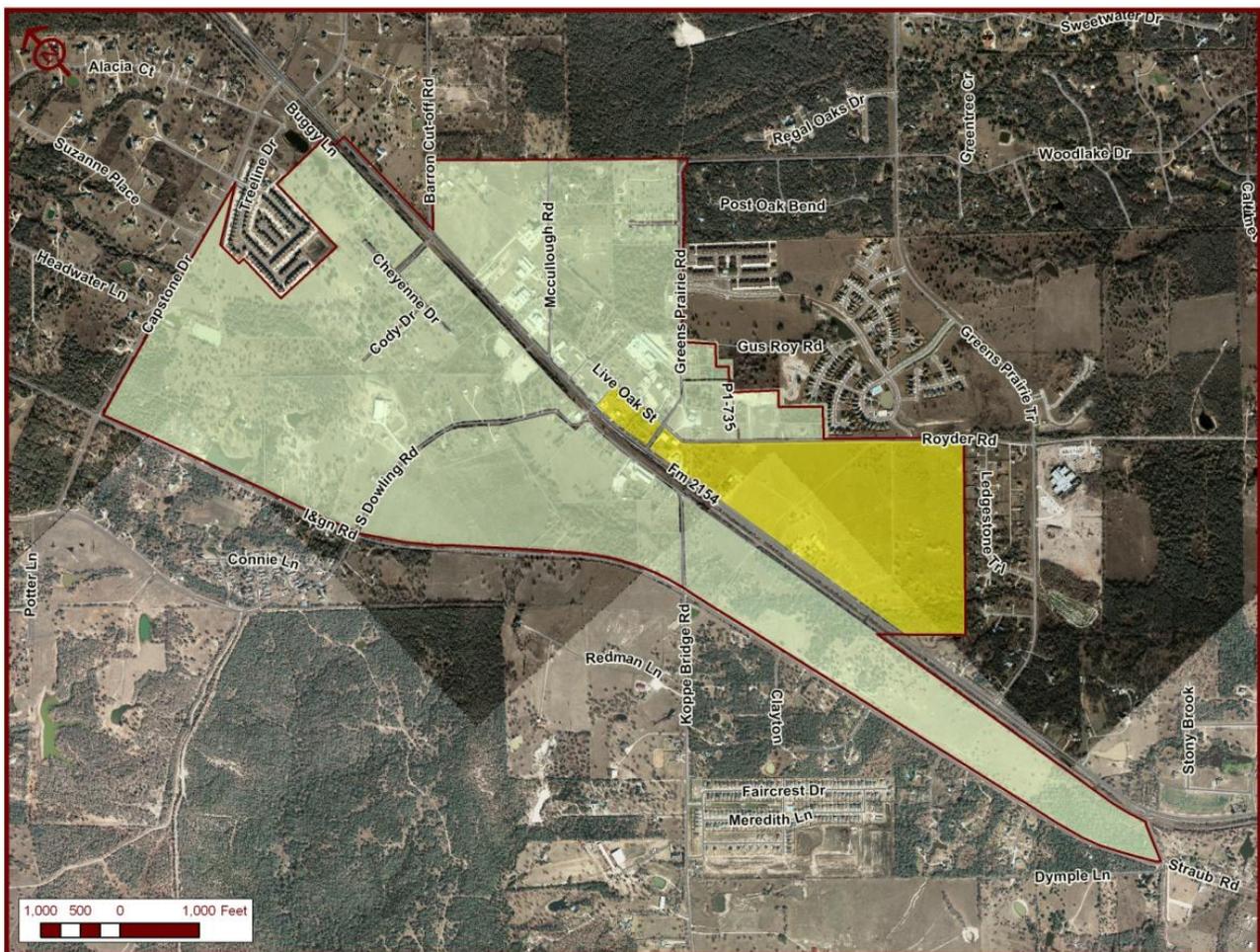
Currently, City staff is familiarizing themselves with the history of the area, inventorying the existing conditions, and collecting data in the study area for completion of the Existing Conditions Report and Phase I Report. This baseline information helps the City monitor the Plan's process during its implementation.

The planning process is anticipated to take 10-12 months.

## Wellborn District Plan (In progress)

As identified in the Comprehensive Plan, Wellborn area annexation service plan, and annexation proceedings, staff is proceeding with the development of a small area or “District” plan for the Wellborn area. As mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan, this is an area that contains elements of a rural historic community with a unique character that residents of the area desire to retain. While the plan will be similar to the two recently adopted neighborhood plans, this planning area exhibits a much more diverse and complicated character that fits more into a special center or district. As such this plan is being tailored to better fit the needs and goals of the Wellborn area.

In general, the planning area follows the recent annexation boundary. However, it also incorporates adjacent properties that share a common identity or character with the Wellborn community. In total, there are approximately 929 acres within the planning area.



The planning process requires public involvement and productive communication. Staff is currently selecting a consultant to facilitate the public meetings for the plan. A kick-off meeting for the Wellborn Plan is anticipated in early to mid-November and will introduce the goals of the planning process, cover the process, and provide information for the next steps. In addition, a stakeholder resource team will be formed to provide input and

feedback on ideas and concepts that are developed through the planning process. Furthermore, it is hoped that this group will help disseminate information to their neighbors and ultimately champion the plan.

Staff is in the process of gathering information to create an existing conditions report that will serve as a baseline to help identify potential issues and opportunities, aid in the development of goals and strategies, as well as monitor progress of the plan. The Wellborn District Plan is anticipated to take 9-12 months from start to completion, with a potential date of adoption in the Fall of 2012.

#### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: NEW SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS (Adopted)**

Subdivision regulations are important to our community as they are the means by which essential public infrastructure and services can be provided to each resident, business, and visitor. As new developments are built, land is divided into orderly lots, streets and sidewalks are constructed, water, sewer, and electric lines are installed, land for parks is dedicated, and other public infrastructure is provided. When constructed, these facilities are dedicated to the public and are added to the infrastructure networks that are the backbone on which public services are provided.

In January 2011, the subdivision regulations were modernized to standards that are contemporary to current development practices and necessary to help implement the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2009. Revisions can be generalized into either a clarification of a standard or a change to a standard to meet the expected public infrastructure demand. Previously, a number of sections in the subdivision regulations still contained the language from when they were adopted in 1970 and were ambiguous enough to be problematic to administer. One example is the street projection standard that required the "proper" projection of streets to adjacent unplatted properties. This section was updated with more specific language to administer more consistently while also providing greater certainty to developers. Other types of clarification included the addition of processes that were State law but are not yet reflected in the UDO (for example, a process for the appeal of the proportionality of a development exaction). Examples of changes to a standard include the extension of preliminary plat expirations and basing block lengths on the Comprehensive Plan land use designation (for example, urban areas with higher densities have shorter block lengths than suburban or rural areas with lower density).

College Station has grown significantly since subdivision regulations were originally adopted in 1970—when the City's population was about 18,000 residents. The Comprehensive Plan provided the framework for adjusting development patterns and infrastructure plans necessary to serve a population that is approaching 100,000 and expected to continue well beyond. The subdivision regulations implement the Comprehensive Plan and associated master plans by requiring the public infrastructure necessary for the City to serve the anticipated growth and development patterns.

#### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ZONING DISTRICTS (In progress)**

Zoning and its associated development criteria help to ensure that the form, character, and quality of development reflect the City's planning objectives. Zoning ordinances should reflect the community's desire for quality development outcomes. The Comprehensive Plan identifies 15 unique Future Land Use and Character

designations and calls for the creation of zoning districts that align with the objectives of the Plan as one means of implementation. The focus of this effort is the development of new zoning districts for each of the new land use classifications to align with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and simplify the nomenclature.

Staff has developed a phased approach to the creation and adoption of the new zoning districts. Currently, Staff is working on developing the non-residential districts, including NAP Natural Areas Preserved, SC Suburban Commercial, BP Business Park, and BPI Business Park Industrial. Additionally, C-1 General Commercial is proposed to be renamed to GC General Commercial and A-P Administrative Professional is proposed to be renamed to O Office. These districts will be similar to our existing set of zoning districts, meaning that they will largely be use-based, with some additional performance standards. Once the non-residential districts are adopted, Staff will begin work on the residential districts, including Rural, Estate, Restricted Suburban, General Suburban, Urban, and Urban Mixed-Use.

The Comprehensive Plan's Concept Map identifies Growth Areas – these are areas where future development is expected to have little impact on existing neighborhoods. Growth Areas are intended to have greater market flexibility and expanded development options, while providing development that enhances the overall character of the City. Currently, the City recommends, and developers/property owners have used, Planned Development Districts (PDDs) to implement the Plan in Growth Areas. In the short-term, it is expected that PDDs will continue to be used. In the future, it is expected that zoning specific to Growth Areas will be created to reduce the number of steps in the PDD process, while still providing the flexibility that was intended.

## **DEVIATIONS FROM THE PLAN**

Deviations to the planned community character of College Station are most apparent in the rezoning process. In the absence of new zoning districts that might better prescribe the regulations and standards expected of different areas' characters, staff has been working with developers and neighborhoods (when applicable) on a case-by-case basis to determine standards expected of the development for the request to successful for all parties involved. Two requests in the past year that have tested the limits of the Plan's intent are:

- 300-A Holleman Drive East (Broadstone Ranch / Wolf Point Center) – while the Comprehensive Plan called for Urban Mixed Use, the applicant wanted only dense multi-family in multiple buildings on 1.3 acres. A compromise was reached in 2009 with the requirement that the bottom floor of the building closest to Holleman (4,000 s.f.) be non-residential. This Planned Development District (PDD) was amended to require only 1,000 s.f., with the possibility of increasing it to 4,000 s.f. in the future. Staff had recommended denial of the amendment, believing that the initial compromise that only the ground floor, of only one of the buildings had to be reserved for non-residential uses, had reached the limit of what could be called mixed use. The Planning and Zoning Commission had recommended, and the City Council agreed, for the rezoning with the condition that the 3,000 s.f. that would be residential built to a standard that would allow those units to convert to commercial space in the future, if desired.
- 2862 North Graham Road (Follis Cole)—seven acres west of Old Wellborn Road are reflected as Business Park on the Land Use and Character Map, the successful rezoning was not a traditional business park as it contained a proposal for self-storage. Staff recognized two different types of business parks should be available through the new Plan—one type being the planned, research and development-oriented business

parks such as the College Station Business Center or the future BioCorridor, and the other where smaller, more industrial commercial uses in campus-type settings may fit better. Neither is conceptualized to contain a residential traffic generator such as self-storage, but these districts have not been developed and adopted. Staff recommended that self-storage uses be limited on the property and that the use be mitigated through additional landscape screening and buffering. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council agreed.

Staff's concern with these requests is that they test the intent of the land use and character that is planned for these areas. In regards to the Holleman rezoning amendment—for the most part, residential units are easier to rent in College Station than commercial space. This does not mean there is not a demand, or that there will never be a demand for the commercial space—especially those spaces located off of major thoroughfares that might come at cheaper rents. The amended rezoning has lessened the integrity of the mixed-use character of the tract. While it has not occurred, there is concern that the Follis Cole property will return to request an amendment to expand the self-storage use on the tract, further eroding the intent of the Business Park use and character.

If the acceptable limits of use and character are being tested anywhere in town, care should be taken to step back and comprehensively consider the implications. If the request essentially changes the land use and character of an area, it should be considered on the scale of a comprehensive plan amendment, not a rezoning. While some rezoning requests or PDD amendments may have merit, a chipping away at the defined land use and character degrades the integrity of the Plan and, if a PDD amendment, possibly the original negotiated agreement between stakeholders.

As called for in last year's annual review of the Comprehensive Plan, amendments related to the Concept Map and the Future Land Use and Character Map are scheduled to be presented and considered at the same public meetings as this Annual Review. Those recommended changes are described in detail in their corresponding reports, but in short are:

- The expansion of Growth Area IV,
- A change to the designation in the Richards Subdivision area, and
- A change in the area of Growth Area V.

At present, minor deviations have occurred from the adopted Central College Station Neighborhood Plan. These deviations have been limited to adjustment of specific timelines for strategic items to be completed. This was done in an effort to maximize citizen involvement for items such as leadership training, executive committee training, and the creation of neighborhood associations, or for budgetary reasons for items like the incorporation of landscaping along Harvey Mitchell Parkway.

Larger deviations from the adopted plan that have occurred are related to code enforcement. These include items such as the increased monitoring of rental property adjacent to owner-occupied areas, and the health and sanitation pre-violation contact program. Due to budgetary constraints (described below) there will be a reduction in proactive code enforcement, which will affect the implementation of the plan.

## **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

There are three issues that have the greatest impact upon the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan as it relates to Community Character—manpower, money, and politics. In terms of manpower, projects are not only slowed by limited municipal manpower, progress is also slowed by the lack of public participation. Staff is experienced and capable of creating the blend of coding that will meet the Plan’s goal to be a community with strong, unique neighborhoods, protected rural areas, special districts, distinct corridors, and a protected and enhanced natural environment; but two years after the adoption of the plan, one of the most powerful tools to implement protection and enhancement of character—zoning—has yet to be amended. The impediment in this is that the research of best practices, the formulation of models that will integrate a new system of zoning regulation with existing code, and the vetting of these ideas and drafts internally among staff and with the public requires a significant amount of time, of which must be shared with other planning responsibilities. Even so, the lack of new zoning districts has not completely stifled the community’s ability to move forward. The Planned Development District rezoning processes that have been used in the interim have proven to be valuable tests of expectations and tolerances. As previously mentioned, staff has divided the large project of developing new zoning districts into smaller projects to facilitate greater focus, meaningful dialog, and accomplishments at a smaller scale.

The limited interest of residents has been a challenge in the implementation of the only neighborhood plan fully in the implementation stage in the past year. The Central College Station Neighborhood Plan includes action items calling for residents to become better organized, more communicative, and more proactive in the improvement of their neighborhood. Attempts to assist them or help initiate those processes have seen limited success. While the Neighborhood Resource Team agreed with these actions in the planning process, there has been little follow through. Low citizen involvement can generally be attributed to a large number of rental-occupied houses in the neighborhood and weak neighborhood association activity. While improvement has been made with regards to neighborhood association involvement, it will be important to build on that involvement through executive committee training, leadership training and the creation of new neighborhood associations in order to carry out several strategies identified in the plan. Neighborhood Services and other City staff will continue to explore ways to engage the residents.

The new economy has necessitated closer evaluation of how public funds are spent and difficult decisions of how spending should be prioritized. Neighborhood and other small area plans are still being created and new development projects are still being reviewed, so in that regard progression towards the goal continues. What has been problematic is the implementation of the smaller, customized plans. One example is a missed opportunity for placemaking for the Central College Station area. Because of monetary concerns, the new medians in the Harvey Mitchell Parkway right-of-way are currently being constructed with decorative concrete without landscaping. Another example is that with reduced budgets, some City services are being delivered at a different standard than expected through the plan, such as code enforcement. More reliance will be placed on a complaint-based system of code enforcement. The SeeClickFix program, which is a program for citizens to report maintenance and code issues, will be one of the primary avenues for this to be accomplished. Staff will continue to promote this program to the neighborhood and monitor the results of this change in strategy. Also, increased communication with residents about what the City can and cannot do for them, and why, may

increase their engagement and mobilize them to have more ownership in their plan. Staff will continue to seek outside sources of funding, such as Community Development Block Grants and Safe Routes to School grants to fund implementation projects.

Politics is the third issue identified that has had the greatest impact on community character, particularly as it relates to the rezoning process. The political culture of College Station is such that it is common for development review applicants to bypass City staff and established processes when a conflict occurs. Issues are commonly taken directly to people at the highest echelons of public service for resolution, resulting in pressure on staff, real or perceived, to accept lower standards than is intended in the Plan and City standards. Staff and those being regulated will always have disagreements—the nature of the relationship and the industries essentially preclude total agreement; but when those at higher powers allow themselves to become directly involved in individual decisions, it undermines the processes that have been established to resolve disputes, and the faith in staff to apply decisions in a manner that do not jeopardize outlying and future scenarios. Staff is currently working to shift existing development review paradigms to further expedite approvals of entitled development projects, which is hoped will reduce conflict. City leaders can support effective decision making by staff that will further their Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Plan by providing clear municipal direction at the policy level.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRITY**

The goal for neighborhood integrity is *to protect the long-term viability and appeal of established neighborhoods*. The associated strategies provide direction of how the City will meet this goal:

**Strategy 1:** *Identify, protect, and enhance elements that contribute positively to neighborhood identity.*

**Strategy 2:** *Identify and minimize elements that detract from community identity.*

**Strategy 3:** *Identify and implement tools to ensure that infill or redevelopment adjacent to or within a neighborhood is sensitive to its surroundings.*

**Strategy 4:** *Develop, implement and maintain, through regular review, neighborhood plans.*

The City has long been involved in programming designed to protect neighborhoods and strengthen neighborhood integrity. The adoption of the new Comprehensive Plan showed continued support for these programs. In the past year, some initiatives have been continuing along a proven, effective path while some have been undergoing alterations in response to changes in direction.

### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (Ongoing)**

Since the mid-1970s, the City of College Station has partnered with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to address quality of life, neighborhood stability, and safe and decent housing for low-income residents living in the City. To date, the City has received over \$43 million in federal community development resources. These resources have included HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG),

HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), HOPE, and CDBG-R programs. The City has conducted affordable housing development activities with approximately 50% of these funds.

In the past year, the following accomplishments have helped to stabilize neighborhoods, homes, home ownership, and citizens, contributing to the goal of Neighborhood Integrity:



- The Community Development Office funded 8 public service agencies' programs through the Joint Relief Funding Review Committee Process to provide health and human services to mainly low and moderate income residents of College Station and Bryan. As of June 30, 2011 - 2,677 individuals were served by these funded programs. Staff provided ongoing technical assistance to these 8 public service agencies.

- Staff provided funding and technical assistance to Brazos Valley Community Action Agency (a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) with the City) to complete construction of three houses that will be made available for purchase to income qualified home buyers. Staff also provided funding and technical assistance to EMBRACE Brazos Valley, a new CHDO with the City, to build two houses - one is over 60% complete and the other will begin to be constructed once the first is finished and sold to an income eligible household.
- Staff released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an affordable senior housing development. Five responses were received and reviewed. Staff selected two RFP respondents to interview. Following that interview process Staff will make a recommendation to Council on October 13 for funding for one respondent.
- The Community Development Office processed and responded to 42 applications for Down Payment Assistance. Staff met one-on-one with 15 applicants for in-depth housing counseling sessions. Three applicants successfully used the Down Payment Assistance Program to purchase homes in College Station. Staff worked to advertise the program at local events, Realtors offices, College Station Schools, and City Departments. Staff made two radio and one television appearances to promote the program. In order to comply with both State and Federal Law (SAFE Act), one Community Development Analyst became licensed as a Mortgage Loan Originator in order to continue making down payment assistance loans.
- One Community Development Analyst became certified as a Home-Buyer Education Provider and successfully held a home-buyer education class attended by 11 City Employees in a pilot program offered this year.
- The City-owned house at 1124 Carolina was sold to an income qualified home buyer. The house at 4284 Hollow Stone was also sold.
- Through a partnership with Twin City Mission's Housing and Homeless Services, 28 income qualified families were helped into



permanent housing situations through security deposit assistance (Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program).

- Staff monitored Terrace Pines and Santour Court (properties built with City HOME Investment Partnership Funds) to ensure compliance.
- Environmental reviews were completed for three public facility projects.

### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: HOME OWNER ASSOCIATION/NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ORGANIZATION (Ongoing)**

The major goal of the Neighborhood Services Program is to organize and support the operations of home owner associations (HOAs) and neighborhood associations (NAs) in the city. Many HOAs are already organized due to their structure being put in place by their developer. In this case, Neighborhood Services extends the offer to these HOAs to be a part of the Neighborhood Partnership Program. Neighborhood associations are non-binding associations that do not have a legal structure like an HOA but still function in much of the same way as an HOA. Neighborhood Services assists many of the NAs in organizing and setting up their organization. Helping the associations remain strong and viable after becoming organized is another function of Neighborhood Services.

#### **The Neighborhood Partnership Program**

The Neighborhood Partnership Program is one of the primary ways that Neighborhood Services supports associations. In the past year, the program has, and will continue to:

- Maintain a database of all registered neighborhood associations to enhance community communication;
- Provide start-up support to neighborhoods establishing or revitalizing associations;
- Notify associations of public hearing pertaining to development, public works and other municipal projects in the vicinity of their neighborhood;
- Distribute the *FYI Neighbor* email update to association board members providing information regarding neighborhood, community, and City events;
- Host occasional meetings and trainings that provide a forum for networking and education on local and regional topics as well training for association officers and representatives.
- Administer the Gateway Grant & Strong & Sustainable grant programs to foster neighborhood identity, unity and beautification
- Administer the Mosquito Abatement Program to facilitate the systematic reduction of mosquitoes and associated diseases.
- Central access point within the City to direct questions, concerns and complaints to various departments. Liaison between the City departments, City Managers, the Mayor and neighborhoods.
- Help to resolve neighborhood conflicts.
- Assist with planning of annual or large neighborhood meetings.

Currently, there are 66 HOAs/NAs that are a part of the Neighborhood Partnership with six new associations becoming a part of the program in 2011. Also, there was an informational workshop held for groups interested in forming an association.

## The Strong & Sustainable Grant Program

Neighborhood Services has offered the Gateway Grant program to neighborhood and homeowner associations that are part of Neighborhood Partnership Program since 2000. The original Gateway Grant Program allowed neighborhoods to apply for matching funds to build a sign identifying the neighborhood and/or to beautify their entrances with trees, shrubs, plantings and landscaping. This changed in 2009 when the City Council approved changes to allow neighborhoods to receive smaller, matching grant awards up to \$500.00 to use funds for other smaller, non-physical neighborhood projects, celebrations, or events. This was something that neighborhoods had asked for—many not having funds or interest in large Gateways or beautification and wanting to have a neighborhood celebration or do a small project to bring neighbors together.

There are now two grant options for neighborhoods to choose from. The program has been renamed the Strong & Sustainable Grant Program, which now includes both the Gateway Grant Program & the Neighborhood Grant Program. The Strong & Sustainable Neighborhoods Grant Program assists associations and neighborhood groups with physical/ non-physical and community building projects. This program is a matching grant program, creating a partnership between the neighborhoods and the City to accomplish common goals. It helps to strengthen neighborhood integrity by:

- Strengthening and improving neighborhood associations,
- Improving the appearance of city neighborhoods,
- Strengthening the relationship between the HOA and the City government,
- Inspiring inter-neighborhood cooperation,
- Encouraging new communities to develop their own neighborhood associations, and
- Motivating interaction between all College Station HOAs/Neighborhood associations.



In the past year, Foxfire completed signage for various locations in the neighborhood. Three entrance beautification projects (for the Chimney Hill, Springbrook, and Pershing Park HOAs) are in progress, having to delay planting because of this summer's drought.

## **Seminar Suppers**

The Seminar Supper program began in 1999, with the inception of the Neighborhood Services program. The program is still in operation today, with some slight modifications. The Seminar Supper program is a great way to keep neighborhood leaders informed on important community issues and ways to strengthen and maintain strong associations. At the supper, neighborhood leaders share a light meal and hear from a featured speaker. It is also a great way for neighborhood leaders to network, get to know each other, and share information on how to build better associations. The suppers are held bi-monthly (though not in the summer), with strong attendance continuing from neighborhood leaders. There are usually 15 to 35 people that attend. Below are some of the topics/speakers for 2010- 2011 Seminar Supper series:

11/10- Subdivision Regulations- Jason Schubert, Principal Planner and Bob Cowell, Director of Planning & Development Services

12/10- New Animal Control Ordinance, Sean Dwyer, Animal Control Supervisor

3/11-Code Enforcement Issues and SeeClickFix- Doug Ervin, Code Officer & Michael Trevino- GIS Tech

5/11- Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenways Master Plan- Venessa Garza, Greenways Program Manager

7/11- Recycling & Being Green At Home- Heather Qualls, Recycling Coordinator

9/11- Thoroughfare Plan and Transportation Issues in College Station- Joe Guerra, Transportation Planning Coordinator

## **MAJOR INITIATIVE: NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING (Ongoing)**

As mentioned previously under Neighborhood Character, the City created its neighborhood, corridor, and district planning program to provide focused action plans for smaller areas of the City. Under this program, the City has adopted the Central College Station Neighborhood Plan and the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan. These plans focus on the particular needs and opportunities of the areas and are intended to be implemented over five- to seven-year time frames. Currently, the Central College Station Neighborhood Plan is being implemented, the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan is beginning implementation, the South Side Area Neighborhood planning process has begun, and the Wellborn District planning process is in its initial phase. The existing plans have, and the future plans will identify, actions for residents and the City to pursue to protect the long-term viability and appeal of established neighborhoods.

## **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

The use of funds from HUD is guided by the City-developed five-year Consolidated Plan and the annual Action Plan, both of which are developed with extensive community involvement and approved by HUD. Further, most of the programs administered by the City involve a series of Council-adopted guidelines that further clarify how each program will operate. From time to time, Council or staff will initiate changes to these plans and/or

guidelines recognizing changes in priorities, new opportunities or challenges, etc. In 2008, Council directed staff to create sustainable revenue sources to support future activities due to the significant and on-going decline of HUD resources. This implementation of this direction was accomplished in part by providing assistance for housing activities through zero or low-interest loans and the retirement of 100% grant programs. Additionally, community development activities have been structured to generate program income when applicable. While these actions were intending to help the City better respond to the needs of the low-income residents of the community and make programs more responsive and sustainable, they have met with mixed success.

Most recently (summer 2011), the City Council provided direction on several affordable housing programs pertaining to new construction. Council directed staff to expand the City's relationship with Habitat for Humanity to construct new single-family affordable homes and partner with a private developer to build an affordable senior housing development. These projects will be before Council for their consideration on October 13. Also on October 13, staff will recommend to City Council modifications and adjustments to a number of federally-funded programs administered by the City. These recommendations are based on a firm understanding of the needs of the community, challenges faced in implementing current programs, and change in Department Administration.

In summary, the recommended changes to the City-administered programs are to:

- Revise the current owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program to streamline the program, increase the amount available to each owner-occupant, and adjust the loan-type portfolio;
- Revise the current owner-occupied minor housing repair program to eliminate the minimum credit score requirements and increase the amount available to each owner-occupant;
- Establish an owner-occupied reconstruction program; and
- Establish a renter-occupied rehabilitation program.

It is anticipated that these changes, along with relationship-building at the federal level, will increase the effectiveness of these programs to protect the long-term viability and appeal of established neighborhoods.

In regards to the organizational services offered by Neighborhood Services, one of the main struggles is getting the associations to remain proactive instead of reactive. Many associations tend to organize around issues and problems, which leaves the organizational structure driven by issues instead of by goals and plans. Trying to get the associations to develop long term plans that lead and guide the organization can be very difficult. This is especially the case as they tend to change leadership frequently. Without solid plans and goals, the focus of an organization is constantly changing with each leadership change. More time will be devoted this year to helping associations develop long term plans and goals that remain in place regardless of leadership changes. Hopefully, by spending more time on developing long range plans/goals, this will address the issue of successful program implementation and long range progress.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The goal for economic development in College Station is *a diversified economy generating quality, stable, full-time jobs; bolstering the sales and property tax base; and contributing to a high quality of life*. Five strategies have been developed to progress toward this goal:

**Strategy 1:** *Promote and support new investment that serves regional market opportunities.*

**Strategy 2:** *Promote and support the establishment, retention, and expansion of locally-owned businesses.*

**Strategy 3:** *Promote and support the attraction of festivals, entertainment, conferences, conventions and other special events for the purpose of economic growth.*

**Strategy 4:** *Identify and pursue redevelopment opportunities that further desired community character.*

**Strategy 5:** *Protect and buffer prime economic generators from development that is out of character or that creates or contributes to decreased service levels.*

For the last several decades, College Station has served as a regional economic hub within the Texas Triangle. The largest employer (Texas A&M University), a significant amount of the area's retail activities, and most of the region's tourist accommodations and attractions are found in College Station. A strong local economy, and the associated tax revenues, enables the City to maintain a high quality of life, attracting and retaining residents, visitors, and businesses. The Comprehensive Plan calls for further diversification of our economic base and in the past year, two major initiatives have begun to implement this.

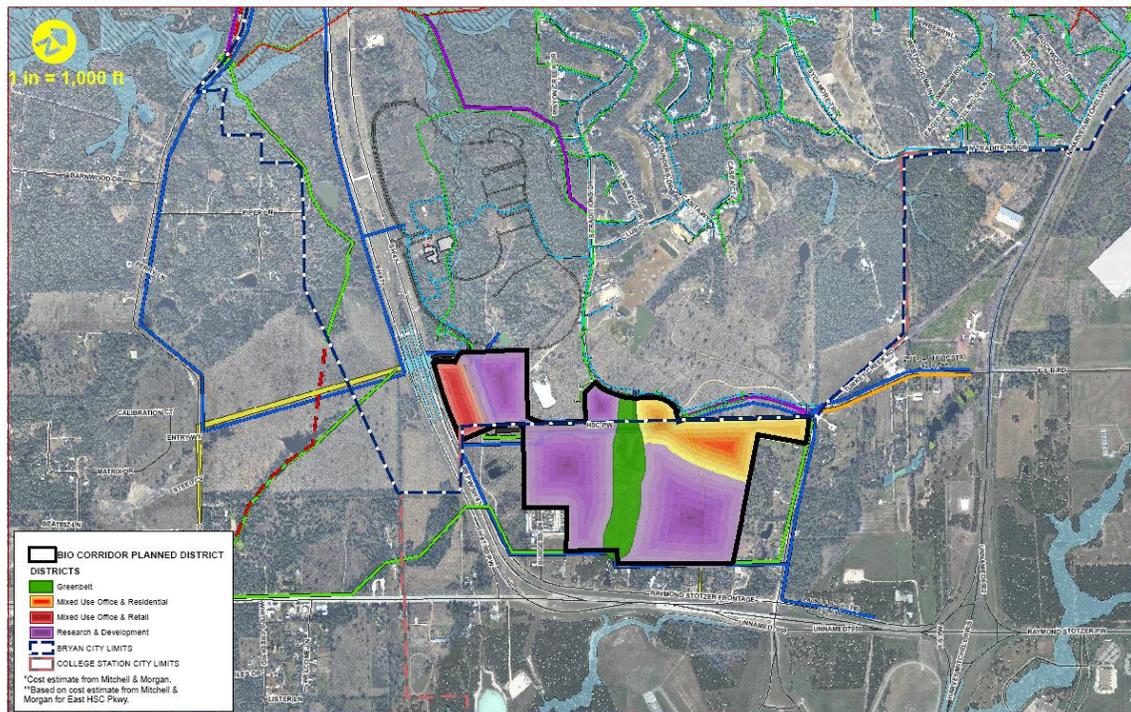
### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN (In progress)**

The City's economic development focus has traditionally been on providing opportunities to capture out-of-market dollars from students, tourists, and event attendees. When the Comprehensive Plan was developed, it laid the groundwork for further exploration of the City's future economic growth. This summer, Staff began the process of developing an Economic Development Master Plan that will provide consistent direction on how the City will ensure its economic health for years to come. Funds have been allocated to engage a consultant to provide a full assessment of our existing market conditions, opportunities, and constraints. Staff will then take the data and information provided to develop economic goals and strategies and an implementation program for College Station.

The Request for Qualifications was posted in September and will close in October. A contract should be awarded by the end of the year. The planning process is anticipated to begin in earnest in January, with an anticipated completion date in October 2012 (a nine-ten month timeframe).

## MAJOR INITIATIVE: THE BIOCORRIDOR (In progress)

In 2010, formulation of a research and development-oriented master plan began for around 3,500 acres west of the community that includes land in the cities of College Station and Bryan, land outside the cities but within their extraterritorial jurisdictions, and land owned by Texas A&M University and the Texas A&M University System. The Research Valley BioCorridor Concept Master Plan (a plan recently recognized by the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association as the “Long Range Plan of the Year”) was commissioned by the Research Valley Partnership, Inc. and completed by Broaddus Planning with the help of a BioCorridor Task Force and input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including representatives from the cities, Brazos County, TAMU, the business community, and citizens, among others. The long-range plan revolves around the concept of OneHealth Plus™—that plant, animal, and human health are intertwined and that health and life are dependent upon clean water and sustainable agriculture. The plan’s vision is that this community will provide a unique environment where plant, animal, and human health may be studied in one place, thus expediting solutions in health care research and pharmaceuticals.



In an effort to facilitate the vision, elected officials from the cities of College Station and Bryan worked this spring to develop an interlocal agreement (ILA) that will enhance the developability of the Biomedical Corridor, including being ready for business prospects. The ILA specifically targets 179 acres that are in and owned by the City of Bryan and 147 acres that are owned by the Bryan Commerce Development Corporation within the City of College Station. The agreement seeks to share economic development opportunities by sharing revenues, sharing the costs of infrastructure, allowing for “dual service areas” where the City of College Station would provide water and the City of Bryan would service sewer, standardizing economic development incentives, and creating joint development standards and processes.

In May 2011, both cities adopted versions of the ILA. They are currently working together to reconcile the differences between the adopted agreements. In anticipation of the resolution, members of the cities' Planning staffs have begun laying out the necessary joint plans, processes, and standards that will be necessary to provide a unified system to a business wishing to develop in the cities' BioCorridor area. The Planning and Zoning Commissions from both cities met jointly on September 20, 2011 to discuss the zoning and development concepts proposed by staff. Regular meetings of a joint subcommittee of commissioners commenced on October 11 to review proposed standards and regulations in detail.

Anticipated to be complete by the end of 2011, the proposed joint development processes and standards for the 179 acres covered by the ILA will be available for review later this fall.

### **DEVIATIONS FROM THE PLAN**

Most notably, the Comprehensive Plan clearly calls for action to “develop and construct a convention center” to implement the strategy to “promote and support the attraction of festivals, entertainment, conferences, conventions, and other special events for the purpose of economic growth”. Although property was acquired for the project, public outcry of the project in a receding economy resulted in the halting of the project for further consideration. Since the last annual review, City staff has been given clear direction to sell the property that had been obtained for the development of the convention center.

### **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

Lack of clear direction and understanding of our existing economic condition have been the greatest impediments toward the goal of economic development. The understanding of our current local economy and what is feasible to ensure the economic health of College Station is imperative to its success. The Economic Development Master Plan, now in progress, will help bring a common understanding of the goal of economic development and what is expected to maintain and enhance the economy of College Station.

### **PARKS, GREENWAYS, AND THE ARTS**

The overall vision for College Station's community in the years ahead is to achieve and maintain a **diversity of parks, greenways and the arts for leisure and recreation as well as for entertainment, education and culture to achieve a high quality of life for all residents and visitors**. Three strategies elaborate on these themes and community priorities:

**Strategy 1:** *Maintain and expand the parks and recreation system as well as its facilities and programs consistent with growth expectations.*

**Strategy 2:** *Preserve and enhance the greenways system of linear open spaces and trails for their intrinsic and functional value.*

**Strategy 3:** *Create and promote the arts through entertainment, educational and cultural opportunities that serve a variety of interests and abilities.*

The City of College Station provides recreational and open space and recreational and leisure programming for its citizens. These services contribute to the quality of life the citizens of College Station value. In the past year, the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan completed its first year of implementation and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed.



**MAJOR INITIATIVE: THE BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN (In implementation)**

The Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan (a plan recently recognized by the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association as a “Project Plan of the Year”), a component of the College Station Comprehensive Plan, was adopted in January 2010 after a year-long planning process including the inventorying of existing bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway facilities and the development of a needs assessment, system development and management recommendations, and implementation plan with the assistance of a Technical Task Force and Staff Resource Team. Citizen engagement included three community meetings, an online survey, and focus groups. The goals of the plan are to:

1. Improve connectivity and accessibility,
2. Increase safety,
3. Increase bicycling and walking outdoors, and
4. Encourage environmental stewardship.

The first annual review of the plan was presented to City Council in February of this year. Future annual reviews will be conducted in October as an element of the Comprehensive Plan Annual Review. Since February 2011, the following actions have been implemented to further the goals of the master plan, thus contributing not only to the goal of Parks, Greenways, and the Arts, but also those of Community Character, Neighborhood Integrity, Municipal Services, and Transportation:

- The protection of flood-prone areas through the dedication of 9.167 acres of greenway in the Alexandria Subdivision.
- The completion of a one-mile multi-use path along Harvey Mitchell Parkway (FM 2818), from Welsh Avenue to Texas Avenue.
- The addition of over 100 bike route signs along over 15 miles of streets around the City of College Station to improve wayfinding and safety.
- The substantial completion (anticipated October 2011) of the multi-use path in Bee Creek Park that will connect to bike lanes on Longmire Drive, Anderson Street, Texas Avenue/Krenek Tap Road, and the existing multi-use path that extends through Lemontree Park.
- The creation and printing of a free bike map for distribution to citizens to increase awareness of local bike lanes, bike routes, and multi-use paths. In May, 2,000 maps were printed to promote

National Bike Month. The map also identifies if a park has walking trails and/or exercise stations. Because of this, another 5,000 maps were printed through the Mayor's Council on Physical Fitness grant.

- The acceptance and utilization of an \$8,000 grant awarded in May 2011 by UPBEAT (Umbrella Partnerships – BE Active in Our Town), a collaboration of the Brazos Valley Prevention Network and the Texas Department of State Health Services. The goal of the grant was to create safe communities that support physical activity by making changes in the built environment. Projects funded by the grant included the improvement of crosswalks at Holleman and Carolina, the installation of additional bike route signs along Welsh Avenue from Holleman to Old Jersey Street, the addition of bike racks at the Lincoln Center, and the installation of an outdoor exercise station cluster within Tarrow Park. Some of these project ideas came from the students who participated in another component of this grant who performed community assessments of the Lincoln Area Neighborhood.



### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN (Adopted)**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was adopted July 14, 2011 and is a component of the City's Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2009. The previous plan built upon the 1997 Comprehensive Plan and was updated in 2003. The new plan identifies the City's parks and recreation needs for the next ten years as well as strategies and actions needed to implement the related policies, projects, and programming. Parks and recreation programs play an integral role in defining our neighborhood and community character, property values and tax revenue, and health and wellness. Quality parks and recreation programs are consistently noted as important by residents in surveys and focus groups. This has been further reinforced by voter approved support of parks and recreation bond initiatives, the most recent occurring in 2008.

The update of the Master Plan recognizes the value placed upon a quality parks and recreation system while acknowledging that current economic conditions



demand new and innovative ways of delivering such a system. The Plan proposes to deliver the necessary system within this environment through a strategic and incremental approach.

The goals of the Master Plan are:

- Resource Conservation & City Character: Protected open space, natural features, and natural resources contributing to the unique character desired for various areas of the City and for the City as a whole;
- Health & Wellness: Parks and Recreation system enabling residents to attain and sustain an active lifestyle and reduce the economic costs associated with poor health;
- Economic Sustainability: Parks and Recreation system that adds economic value to the City through enhanced property values, reduced medical costs, and through attraction of guests and participants to events and programs;
- Connectivity & Mobility: Parks and open spaces linked together and to the City’s vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian networks;
- Parkland and Neighborhood Character: High-quality environments located in close proximity to as many residences as practical meeting the needs and levels of service of those residents;
- Diversity in Recreation & Cultural Program: Opportunities for persons of all ages and abilities and to celebrate the diversity of cultures found in the community; and
- Responsible Governance: Cost-effective system where those generating demand for facilities and programs provide the means to deliver those facilities and programs and where partnerships are

maximized.



The master plan was recently adopted, but some examples of implementation items found in the plan include adding neighborhood parkland as needed to continue to provide at least 3.5 acres of neighborhood parkland for every 1,000 residents, completing all voter-approved capital projects, and developing a Park Enterprise Fund and other sources of revenue to sustain recreation program and facility enhancements.

## DEVIATIONS FROM THE PLAN

Deviations from Comprehensive Plan as it relates to Parks, Greenways, and the Arts, at this point, involve adjustments and alterations to the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan. Through the neighborhood planning process, citizens were able to voice concerns with the systems and the planned systems within their neighborhoods. With the Central College Station Neighborhood Plan, needed improvements were identified, all of which fell within the scope of the existing plan. With the adoption of the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan, amendments were made the plan to reflect the desires of the residents that live in the area. Additional

sidewalks were proposed to make the neighborhood more walkable. Other changes affected proposed bike routes, bike lanes, and multi-use paths.

## **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

The implementation of the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan has encountered impediments through limited funding and political opposition. The purchase of flood-prone property (greenways) is currently possible through 1998 bond funds, but those funds will be depleted in the next couple of years. The addition of bike lanes, bike routes, and sidewalks is sparse as the 2008 Bond only allocated \$300,000 for new sidewalks. The facilities are slowly being built through the use of operating funds and in conjunction with street and parks projects. Staff will continue to seek outside sources of funding through grants and other available avenues to try to maximize the remaining funds that exist. The next bond will be vital to furthering the Plan's implementation to make College Station more bikeable and walkable.

The new Subdivision Regulations require sidewalks on both sides of the street, with limited exceptions. Previously, sidewalks were not required on some streets, only on one side of other streets, and on both sides of other rights-of-way. In addition, smaller blocks required through the Subdivision Regulations dictate the construction of more linear feet of sidewalks. There have been complaints about these expanded sidewalk requirements, but to this point the ordinance still stands.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

College Station strives for **improved mobility through a safe, efficient, and well-connected multi-modal transportation system designed to be sensitive to the surrounding land uses**. Five strategies were developed to progress toward this goal:

***Strategy 1:*** *Develop, implement and maintain, through regular review, a multi-modal transportation plan that supports the planned growth and development pattern.*

***Strategy 2:*** *Reduce and manage traffic congestion.*

***Strategy 3:*** *Develop and implement context sensitive transportation solutions.*

***Strategy 4:*** *Promote and invest in alternative transportation options.*

***Strategy 5:*** *Balance changes in land use with the capabilities of the transportation system.*

The implementation of the City's transportation goal is most obvious through the construction of and improvements to the transportation system. The infrastructure is generally built by public entities where the public need exists and by private development where a new development's need exists and/or it crosses planned infrastructure. It is important to note that although streets are the main focus of the annual review as it relates to transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are also important to achieving the goal of a safe, efficient, and well-connected multi-modal transportation system.

## MAJOR INITIATIVE: ROAD DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION (Ongoing)

The construction of the City's street system has continued with the following accomplishments in the past year:

- Holleman Drive Extension: This project was completed this past fiscal year. The project consisted of constructing a four lane major collector with a raised median and a multi-use path that parallels the roadway on one side. The limits of the project were from just south of Dowling Road to its intersection with Wellborn Road.
- The Wellborn and Harvey Mitchell Interchange Project: This project was a Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) funded project that consisted of a grade separated roadway over the Union Pacific Railroad.
- The Wellborn Road widening project: This project was a TxDOT funded project that consisted of widening Wellborn Road from four lanes to six lanes with a raised median and sidewalks on one side of the roadway, from just north of Havey Mitchell Parkway to just south of William D. Fitch Parkway.
- The City was also able to successfully lobby TxDOT and the Metropolitan Planning Organization to fund construction improvements to the bridge at SH 6 and Rock Prairie Road. The City will undertake and fund the design of the bridge improvements. Construction will begin in the summer of 2013.



The funding, design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of roadways are multi-year projects. Initiatives currently underway include:

- The Barron Road widening project: This project is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed by August of 2012. The project consists of widening a two lane rural roadway to a four lane minor arterial, with a raised median and bike lanes plus sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, from just west of Longmire Drive to SH 40.
- The Victoria Avenue extension project: This project is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed by August of 2012. The scope consists of extending Victoria Avenue just south of Barron Road to SH 40. Victoria Avenue is classified as a major collector consisting of two travel lanes, a center left turn lane, bike lanes, and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Finally, a bus stop will be built by The District as part of the project to service the new high school.
- The Jones Butler extension project: This project is currently under design and is scheduled to be under construction in fiscal year 2012. The project will consist of building a four lane major collector from Luther Street to its terminus at George Bush Drive across from Penberthy on the Texas A&M campus. The project will include bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.
- The Deacon Drive extension project: this project is being constructed by a developer. The project will consist of extending Deacon Drive from Old Wellborn Rd to Holleman South. Deacon Drive is classified as a minor collector; however, as a result of a traffic impact analysis based on the traffic generated by the proposed development, Deacon Drive will be upgraded to a major collector and built with an additional left turn lane throughout the length of the new roadway. This project will also provide for bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the roadway.

- The widening of Rock Prairie east and west of the SH 6 Bridge: Right-of-way acquisition is currently underway to provide additional land to widen Rock Prairie east and west of the SH 6 Bridge.

## **DEVIATIONS TO THE PLAN**

As called for in last year’s annual review of the Comprehensive Plan, amendments related to Transportation are scheduled to be presented and considered at the same public meetings as this Annual Review. Those recommended changes and several newly proposed changes are described in detail in their corresponding reports. They are:

- 1) The removal of the Raintree Dr. extension to North Forest Dr.,
- 2) The extension of Birkdale Dr. from Lakeway Dr. to SH 6 Front Rd.,
- 3) The extension of Corsair to Emerald Parkway,
- 4) The increase from two lanes to three lanes to Deacon Dr. from Wellborn Rd to Holleman South,
- 5) The reduction in lanes from four lanes to three lanes to Dartmouth Dr. from Harvey Mitchell Parkway to Texas Ave.,
- 6) The reduction in lanes from six lanes to four lanes to FM 60 from SH 6 to FM 158, and
- 7) The removal of an on-grade railroad crossing at Southwest Parkway and Wellborn Rd., and terminate Southwest Parkway at Wellborn Rd.

## **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

As is common among virtually all of the actions items that implement the Comprehensive Plan, the reduction in funds available for programs and projects impacts if and how they are provided. One of the main tools to fund the provision of new roads was anticipated to be the roadway impact fee. This tool in College Station did not make it beyond the City’s Transportation Committee. Similarly, a transportation fee referendum to fund maintenance transportation projects was put before the voters and failed. Oversize participation funds were not included in the 2008 bond election, hence transportation projects that would not be proportional to the developer’s development and require over-participation by the City cannot be fully implemented because of lack of funds by the City. The City applied for federal funds through a TIGER II grant to fund the extension of the Pebble Creek Parkway North extension project, but the application was unsuccessful. Because of the transportation funding constraints, in fiscal year 2012, the Planning and Development Services Department Transportation Planning Section will undertake a travel demand model study to analyze a less robust implementation scenario and assess the impacts to the transportation network.

## **MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

It is the goal for the City to plan for *municipal facilities that meet community needs, contribute to community character, are sensitive to the surrounding land uses, and provide exceptional municipal services.* The associated strategies developed to help to meet this goal are:

**Strategy 1:** *Maintain existing infrastructure.*

**Strategy 2:** Develop, implement and maintain, through regular review, facilities and service master plans that support the planned growth and development pattern.

**Strategy 3:** Maintain exemplary levels of municipal services.

**Strategy 4:** Expand municipal services and facilities consistent with growth expectations and to support the planned growth and development pattern.

**Strategy 5:** Promote facilities and services delivery practices that encourage resource conservation and protection.



### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: THE WATER MASTER PLAN (In implementation)**

In August of 2010, the City Council adopted the City's Water Master Plan as an amendment to the City of College Station Comprehensive Plan. The new master plan reflects water lines needed as development occurs to serve newly annexed areas (within our water CCN), growth corridors, and existing areas where water lines are in need of replacement/upsizing. The updated master plan also identifies major water line connections needed within the existing system that will allow the water distribution system to operate more efficiently and also abide by all TCEQ regulations. The line locations and sizes have been determined through system models produced by engineering consultants in coordination with the College Station Water Service Department.

The water master plan maps function similarly to the thoroughfare plan with regard to implementation through private development as it occurs, with the opportunity for oversized participation to be requested by the developer. The plan addresses future utility needs within the City as well as areas where the City has the Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for water. The plan maps are the result of various engineering studies performed for the City over the last 10 years. The utility line sizes are based on existing development trends and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use and Character Map. Property owners requesting land use plan amendments and/or zoning map amendments (rezonings) are required to assess the impact of the amendment with regard to the Water Master Plans and propose changes as necessary.

Since adoption, the following items listed in the Water Master Plan, both public and private, have been implemented:

- **Well No. 8** has been completed and will increase water production capacity by 3 million gallons per day.
- **Barron Road Water Service Extension** is complete and will provide water service to residents within the City of College Station's Water CCN that were previously served by the Wellborn Special Utility District. This overall project consisted of the design and construction of a 12" water line along Wellborn Road up to the Southern Trace Subdivision.
- **Wellborn Widening Water Line** is currently under design and will begin construction soon. This overall project consists of the design and construction of a 24" water line along Wellborn Road, from North Graham Road to SH 40.

- **Water Reclamation, Phase I** is currently under construction and will help to decrease the overall peak water demand on our potable water distribution system. This overall project consists of designing and constructing reclaimed water infrastructure from Carters Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant to Veterans Park.
- **Victoria Avenue Water Line Extension** is currently under construction and will improve connectivity between the City's high service pump station and the Greens Prairie Tower. This water line extension is included as part of the 'Victoria Avenue Extension' that spans from Southern Plantation Drive to SH 40.
- A **High Service Pumping Project** has been initiated and is currently under design to increase system capacities that will meet TCEQ requirements.

Five-year reviews are planned to review major actions and interim plan amendments undertaken over the preceding five years, major water-related trends in the community and how these have changed over time, changes in the assumptions and base study data, and the ability of the Master Plan to continue to support progress toward achieving the community's goals.

#### **MAJOR INTIATIVE: THE WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN (Adopted)**

The Wastewater Master Plan was adopted in June of this year as a component to the City's Comprehensive Plan. The master plan reflects sewer lines needed as development occurs to serve newly annexed areas (within our wastewater CCN), growth corridors, and existing areas where sewer lines are in need of replacement or upsizing. The updated master plan also identifies major sewer line connections needed within the existing system that will allow the wastewater collection system to operate more efficiently and also abide by all TCEQ regulations. The line locations and sizes have been determined through system models produced by engineering consultants in coordination with the College Station Water Service Department.

The Wastewater Master Plan maps function similarly to the thoroughfare plan with regard to implementation through private development as it occurs, with the opportunity for oversize participation to be requested by the developer. The plan addresses future utility needs within the City as well as areas where the City has the Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for wastewater service. The utility line sizes are based on existing development trends and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use and Character Map. Property owners requesting land use plan amendments and/or zoning map amendments (rezonings) will be required to assess the impact of the amendment with regard to the Wastewater Master Plans and propose changes as necessary.

The following items have been implemented (both private and public):

- The Nantucket Gravity Sewer Line is complete and has removed a problematic lift station in the Nantucket area.
- The Scott and White Lift Station is currently under design and will begin construction soon. This overall project consists of the design and construction of a sanitary sewer lift station to serve the Scott & White development near the intersection of Rock Prairie Road and SH 40.
- The FM 2154 Sewer Service Extension will begin design soon and will serve the recently annexed area in southern College Station.

- The Carters Creek WWTP Headworks Improvements are currently under design and will allow the facility to be more efficient and allow for easier maintenance of the individual equipment components.
- The Lick Creek WWTP Centrifuge Improvements are currently under design and will replace/upgrade the existing centrifuge process at Lick Creek.



Annual and five (5) year reviews will also be performed by City staff in order to evaluate growth trends, wastewater demands, future treatment facilities, and the wastewater collection system master plan map.

**MAJOR INITIATIVE: JOINT WATER / WASTEWATER / DRAINAGE REHABILITATION PROJECTS IN OLDER NEIGHBORHOODS AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS (Ongoing)**

In an effort to maintain and improve City infrastructure, the following items have been implemented in the past year (both private and public):

- A water and sewer rehabilitation Capital Improvement Program project is currently in construction for Southwood 5-7 in the vicinity of Southwest Parkway, Harvey Mitchell Parkway, Glade Street, Welsh, and Shadowood.
- A water and sewer rehabilitation Capital Improvement Program project is currently in design for South Knoll/The Glade in the vicinity of Haines Street, Southwest Parkway, Glade Street, and Langford Street.
- A water rehabilitation project is currently in construction for Patricia Street in Northgate.
- A water and sewer rehabilitation Capital Improvement Program project is currently in construction for Tauber/Stasney in the vicinity of Tauber Street, Stasney Street, University Drive, and Cherry Street.
- A water rehabilitation Capital Improvement Program project will begin design soon for Plantation Oaks Water Line that spans along Harvey Road, From Munson Avenue to Scarlett O’Hara Drive.
- A sewer rehabilitation Capital Improvement Program project is complete for the Emerald Parkway/Bent Oak Sewer Line in the vicinity of Emerald Parkway and the recently developed ‘Emerald Ridge Estates’.

**MAJOR INITIATIVE: LANDFILL CLOSURE / OPENING (In progress / Complete)**

After serving the solid waste disposal needs of the Brazos Valley since 1981, the Rock Prairie Road Landfill reached final capacity this past summer. As of July, it no longer accepted municipal solid waste. After more than a decade of a permitting, design, and construction process, the Twin Oaks Landfill on State Highway 30 in Anderson received authorization from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to operate the new Twin Oaks Landfill in June. It opened for operations shortly before the closure of the Rock Prairie Road Landfill.



Closure activities at the Rock Prairie Road landfill will continue into 2012 with planned upgrades to the landfill gas collection system, the construction of a final cover system, and the development of a landfill gas-to-energy facility. The City entered into a Landfill Gas Purchase Agreement this August with the Brazos Valley Solid Waste Management Agency and the City of Bryan, moving local utilities one step closer to producing electricity with gas from the Rock Prairie Landfill. Under the purchase agreement, gas will be metered from the existing gas collection system at the landfill and would be used as fuel for a future electric generating facility located on the site. The next step will be future contracts between the cities for the design and construction of the generating facilities, along with an Interlocal Agreement for operation of the generation facilities.

**MAJOR INITIATIVE: NEW FIRE STATION (In progress)**

In the adopted Fiscal Year 2012 budget, approximately \$1.8 million has been dedicated to fund 18 firefighters and associated costs for Fire Station No. 6. The station was approved by voters in the 2008 bond election. Located at University Drive and Tarrow Street, Fire Station No. 6 will serve the University Drive corridor and will provide improved fire and emergency medical services to North College Station and Texas A&M. The College Station Fire and Public Works departments held public meetings to offer details about the station in September. Construction has begun and the station will open in late 2012.

**MAJOR INITIATIVE: SUPPORT OF THE COLLEGE STATION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (Ongoing)**

The College Station Independent School District had acquired a 52.72-acre tract on Greens Prairie Trail for the construction of a new elementary school. The existing elementary schools had reached capacity and a facility was needed in southwestern College Station. The property chosen was, at the time, in the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. In 2010, the ISD petitioned for annexation and was brought into the City after City Council action that summer. In the past year, as the school was under construction, the City of College Station supported CSISD by improving Greens Prairie Trail, laying new fiber in the area, and providing sewer service to the new school. Greens Prairie Elementary School opened its doors and began operation in time for the 2011-2012 school year. In the spirit of cooperation for needed services in this area, CSISD has agreed to make a portion of the school property available for a future fire station. This project expanded needed community facilities consistent with growth expectations and to support the planned growth and development pattern.

## **MAJOR INITIATIVE: TMDL (In progress)**

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency has worked with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to determine which waters in Texas do not meet water quality standards for their intended use. The list of these waters is known as the 303D list. There have been 271 impairments identified across the state, including Carters and Burton Creek Watersheds locally which have been placed on the 303D list due to elevated levels of escherichia coli, indicating contamination with human or animal fecal matter. The impacted entities have the option of working with TCEQ through the voluntary Total Maximum Daily Load program or enrolling in a more formal program with EPA. Formulating an Implementation Plan in the Total Maximum Daily Load program results in that entity being removed from the 303D list for the five year life of the program, at which time the program can be updated for another five years.

The two Cities, Brazos County, TAMU and TxDOT worked with AgriLIFE and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) from 2010 to 2011 to formulate an implementation plan. AgriLIFE submitted the Implementation Plan to TCEQ this summer for review.

The I-Plan recommended efforts that continue and dovetail with our existing Storm Water Management Plans (SWMP) for College Station as well as the other local entities. The I-Plan recommends continuing SWMP implementation and monitoring wastewater treatment plant effluent and the following general efforts:

1. Coordinate and expand existing Water Quality Monitoring
2. Explore Expanding Wildlife Tax Exemption Incentives
3. Improve On Site Sewage Facility Programs (OSSF) (Septic Systems)
4. Implement Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) initiatives
5. Implement Voluntary Agricultural Best Management Practices
6. Establish development mechanisms to mitigate adverse water quality impacts

The TCEQ approval of the I-Plan is expected before the end of the year.

## **MAJOR INITIATIVE: THE ADA TRANSITION PLAN (In progress)**

The American with Disabilities Act of 1990 established accessibility guidelines to provide recommendations towards establishing accessibility standards for new construction and alterations of facilities to provide safe movement to individuals with disabilities. The cornerstone of Title II of the ADA is this: no qualified person with a disability may be excluded from participating in, or denied the benefits of, the programs, services, and activities provided by state and local governments because of a disability. Public entities must reasonably modify their rules, policies, and procedures to avoid discriminating against people with disabilities. Barriers to accessibility can be architectural, related to policies and procedures, and/or hinder effective communication. Title II accessibility requirements took effect January 26, 1992. Everything past this date is required to come into compliance. The transition plan will help the City document what changes need to be made and how these changes will occur.

Staff is currently researching other communities Transition Plans and developing a strategy to accomplish the plan.

**MAJOR INITIATIVE: STORMWATER MASTER PLAN (In progress)**

Funds were budgeted for Fiscal Year 2012 for the Public Works Department to hire an engineering consultant to prepare a Drainage Master Plan. The last drainage study was completed in 1993. This plan will focus on drainage capacity or flood control projects on the public storm sewer systems and open channels. This study will identify and prioritize drainage issues or problems that currently exist in our system. Like the other master plans, this report will also assist the City and the development community to locate and size future infrastructure improvement to accommodate growth per the Comprehensive Plan.

Note that the City also has a *Storm Water Management Plan* as required and on file with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) which is primarily an operational document that addresses storm water quality, not storm water quantity.

**IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

As has been a common theme impeding virtually all of the action items of the Comprehensive Plan, the reduction in budget has had the greatest effect on its successful implementation. Several City services, programs, and staff positions were recently altered, reduced, or eliminated. Reorganization and a tightening of the budget have resulted in new relationships and collaborations, such as Planning & Development Services assisting Parks and Recreation with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process. Staff will continue to seek creative solutions to provide excellent service, though services and programs may not be or look the same within their budgetary limitations.

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY**

The overall goal for College Station’s growth in the years ahead is to **ensure fiscally responsible and carefully managed development aligned with growth expectations and in concert with the ability to deliver infrastructure and services in a safe, timely, and effective manner**. Five strategies elaborate on these themes and community priorities:

**Strategy 1:** *Identify land use needs based on projected population growth.*

**Strategy 2:** *Align public investments with the planned growth and development pattern.*

**Strategy 3:** *Balance the availability of and desire for new development areas with redevelopment and infill opportunities.*

**Strategy 4:** *Identify and implement growth management techniques for areas within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.*

*Strategy 5: Encourage and promote the redevelopment of land that is currently occupied by obsolete or non-functioning structures.*

#### **MAJOR INITIATIVE: THE WELLBORN-AREA ANNEXATION (Adopted)**

In April of this year, the City Council voted to annex approximately 649 acres on the southwest side of the City generally known as the Wellborn area. Upon annexation, police protection; fire protection; solid waste collection; maintenance of public water and wastewater facilities that were not in the service area of another utility; maintenance of public roads and streets; maintenance of public parks, playgrounds, and swimming pools; and, maintenance of any other publicly-owned facility or building were made available. The service plan provides for the extension of wastewater service to a portion of the annexation area and proposes upgrades to several roads within the annexation area. The service plan provides the annexed area with a level of service comparable to similar areas within the City. The action has enabled the city to manage its growth in a sensible, predictable, and fiscally-responsible manner.

#### **DEVIATIONS FROM THE PLAN**

While consideration of annexation of the Wellborn area was identified as a near-term priority in the Comprehensive Plan, it became an immediate priority when residents of the area formally made their desire to incorporate known. City leaders had worked with area representatives for years, but mutual agreement could not be found. City staff was given direction to research what the annexation would mean to College Station, to offer annexation agreements to eligible properties, and to eventually bring the service plan and ordinance forward for consideration.

Not a deviation as much as a sharper focus, the neighborhood plans are providing public input in the direction of areas identified as Redevelopment on the Comprehensive Plan's Concept Map. Part of the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan included a portion of Redevelopment Area II along Texas Avenue and University Drive. The plan documented feedback from area residents for three redevelopment subareas that will be used as guidance during the formation of a future Redevelopment Plan for the area. The Southside Area neighborhood planning process has recently begun and residents are providing their thoughts for the study of Redevelopment Area III (in the vicinity of George Bush Drive and Wellborn Road).

#### **IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPLEMENTATION AND SOLUTIONS**

The Bee Creek Trunk Line's sub-basin currently serves many developments along FM2818, from areas east of Wellborn Road, to the Carters Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. Much of the existing trunk line was constructed in 1973 and was shown to have several surcharging line segments in the 2011 HDR Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update. The City is currently engaged in engineering to determine the best way to address these issues. Until there is resolution, to prevent surcharge events, possible fines from TCEQ, and customer service disruptions, future demands in this respective sub-basin will need to be evaluated as development occurs.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the last Comprehensive Plan Annual Review in the summer of 2010, City leadership, citizens, community partners, and City staff have made considerable strides towards the vision for College Station. There have been a number of challenges in implementation, but the dedication and hard work of many community members to maintain and enhance the desirability of College Station has resulted in solutions and alternatives. The quality of life enjoyed in College Station will continue to inspire the creation and enhancement of places of distinction in our community.

**2011 ANNUAL REVIEW**  
**OF THE**  
**UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE**

**UDO Amendments approved since June 17, 2010**

**Amendments to respond to the concerns of the development and business community**

1. Permanent storage container area screening and permitting (June 24, 2010)  
As more businesses explore storage containers as permanent solutions to their inventory space needs, Staff realized that some flexibility in the screening requirements would be beneficial. The portable storage structures regulations were amended to adjust screening requirements when visibility of the permanent container area is limited and to allow a portable container to be located on residential property for 14 days without a permit.
2. Recreational Vehicle (RV) parks (August 26, 2010)  
Previously, RV parks were not allowed within the city limits. A request to allow RV parks as permitted uses in the City was made by a grandfathered manufactured home/RV park business owner through the 2009 Annual Review. The amendment allows RV parks in A-O Agricultural Open and C-1 General Commercial zoning districts with an approved conditional use permit (CUP).
3. Attached signs on light poles (January 11, 2011)  
The sign regulations were amended to expand the definition of attached signs to include signs attached to site lighting poles, while establishing area limitations and mounting requirements for these signs.
4. Block length (January 13, 2011—included in Subdivision Regulations update)  
Development interests had expressed concern that the current practices of what was allowed to break block length was overly restrictive. A "Public Way" - that is, drives that meet certain thoroughfare requirements such as curvature, driveway spacing, etc. and that remain open to the public, in good repair, and provide a relatively direct connection between public streets—is now permitted to break block length in multi-family and commercial developments.
5. Micro-industrial uses (January 27, 2011)  
Small-scale industrial uses, such as a micro-winery or micro-brewery, have not been permitted in a commercial zoning district. The amendment defined Micro-Industrial uses and established that they can be located in C-1 General Commercial and C-2 Commercial-Industrial districts, with the provision that specific use standards are met.
6. Mobile food vendors (February 24, 2011)  
Mobile food vendors have been able to function with an Itinerant Vendor permit which only allowed them to operate in City limits for a maximum of 21 days per calendar year (3 days at a time) This amendment created a separate permitting process for Mobile Food Vendors to allow them to operate year-round while being restricted from certain zoning districts, buffered from being placed within close proximity to existing restaurants and other performance criteria.

7. Corridor Overlay (OV) Signs (April 28, 2011)

Originally adopted in 1991, the Corridor Overlay (OV) was developed to ensure harmonious signage and other features to help promote attractive gateways into the community. Since the development of these standards, the City has enacted a more comprehensive sign ordinance and non-residential architectural standards that make the OV sign requirements less necessary to maintain the visual appeal of the corridor. This amendment removed the restriction on the number of fonts and color limitations for signs in the overlay, except for colors expressly prohibited by the City of College Station Color Palette.
8. Non-residential Accessory Structures (April 28, 2011)

The application of architectural relief design elements on smaller, accessory buildings often does not have the effect of promoting good design, and can be burdensome when compared to the benefit. This amendment removed the requirement for architectural design elements for freestanding structures if they are accessory to a primary use, if each façade is twenty-five feet (25') or less in width and the façades incorporates the same materials and colors of the primary structure.
9. Sign Visibility Standards (May 5, 2011)

As a section of the City of College Station Site Design Standards, Sign Visibility serves as the standard for determining if signage is not visible and therefore exempt from the sign regulations. After stakeholder input, the Sign Visibility standards were amended to revise the size of fonts that are considered visible to correlate more closely to visibility trends identified in the sign industry.
10. Color palette (May 13, 2011)

In the absence of natural brick or stone, non-residential buildings are required to utilize colors from an approved College Station Color Palette. Colors not listed on the approved palette are considered accent colors and may be used in minimal percentages. The development community considered the former Color Palette as limiting and without a wide variety of colors. The Design Review Board approved a new Color Palette that allows a greater spectrum of colors for non-residential buildings.
11. Campus Wayfinding Signs (May 26, 2011)

There have been few options for wayfinding signage within a development. While directional traffic control signs have been allowed, they only provide limited potential. The sign regulations were amended to add campus wayfinding signs within PDD Planned Development Districts, C-1 General Commercial, C-2 Commercial Industrial, A-P Administrative Professional, and R&D Research and Development districts of 20 acres or more in size, and that contain multiple buildings in the development. These signs have a maximum height of 6 feet, area of 30 square feet, and other location standards.
12. Landscaping (June 2011)

A local landscape architect had expressed the desire that the City's planting lists be updated to allow by right vegetation that may not be within our USDA Hardiness Zone, but has shown over time to work well in the community. Staff surveyed local landscape architects about their experiences with plantings that have been used and their successes and failures and has updated the College Station Plant List accordingly.

## **Amendments to pro-actively update the UDO**

### 1. Sidewalk Fund (August 12, 2010)

In response to an increasing number of sidewalk waiver requests, the Planning & Zoning Commission requested an amendment that would allow a developer, with the P&Z's approval, to pay into a "sidewalk fund" (similar to the parkland dedication fund) in lieu of building a sidewalk during the platting process.

### 2. Institutional Building Height (August 26, 2010)

Institutional uses such as churches, city facilities, and schools are allowed in all zoning districts. In single family, duplex, and townhome developments, structures—including churches, city facilities, and schools—are limited to 35 feet in height. In all other zoning districts, height is not limited with the exception that non-residential and multifamily structures that abut single family homes and townhomes are restricted to half of the number of feet that the structure is from the property line. The amendment permits public, civic, and institutional uses to have a maximum height of 50 feet in these districts provided they meet the 1:2 height to setback requirement.

### 3. School Facilities (September 9, 2010)

In the past, CSISD was only required to meet City regulations regarding health and life safety but not other general ordinances. An opinion from the Attorney General of Texas affirmed the authority of a home rule city to also enforce land development regulations on an independent school district for the purpose of aesthetics and the maintenance of property values. Sections of the UDO related to public and private schools were amended regarding buffering requirements and outdoor lighting standards and exemptions provided for school facilities from the non-residential architecture standards and most sign regulations.

### 4. Non-conforming lots in newly annexed areas (June 23, 2011)

This amendment provides limited relief to developed properties located within the area annexed by the City in April 2011. The amendment specifically permits expansions up to 25 percent of the area of existing non-conforming businesses with administrative approval. The previous ordinance only permitted this expansion with approval of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This amendment is intended to be temporary until Staff completes a small-area plan for the area and gets the associated zoning in place.

## **Amendments to implement the Comprehensive Plan**

### 1. Taxi services as home occupations (September 9, 2010)

Taxicab services have been legal home occupations provided they are compliant with adopted home occupation prohibitions. As enforcement of part of the regulations has been difficult, the amendment clarified that taxicab services are restricted to two taxicab vehicles parked on- or off-street like other home occupations.

### 2. Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Advisory Board (August 12, 2010)

This amendment authorized the establishment of the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Advisory Board which is a step in implementing the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan adopted in January 2010.

3. Subdivision Regulations (January 13, 2011)

The amendment was the second phase of revisions to the subdivision regulations. This effort resulted in a major overhaul of the regulations, which had not been comprehensively performed since their inception in 1970, and align the regulations with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Amendment efforts in progress**

1. Zoning Districts (winter 2011/2012)

The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision for greater land use protections and flexibilities than did previous plans. Staff has been researching, debating, testing, and creating a proposal for a new zoning plan that will reflect the intentions of the unique land uses and area characters reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. High Density Single Family Development Standards (winter/spring 2012)

Through numerous venues (e.g., the Strong and Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative, P&Z and Council meetings), the need for a new set of standards for high density single family has been discussed. Ways to regulate the needs of high density housing will be proposed through subdivision and zoning regulations.