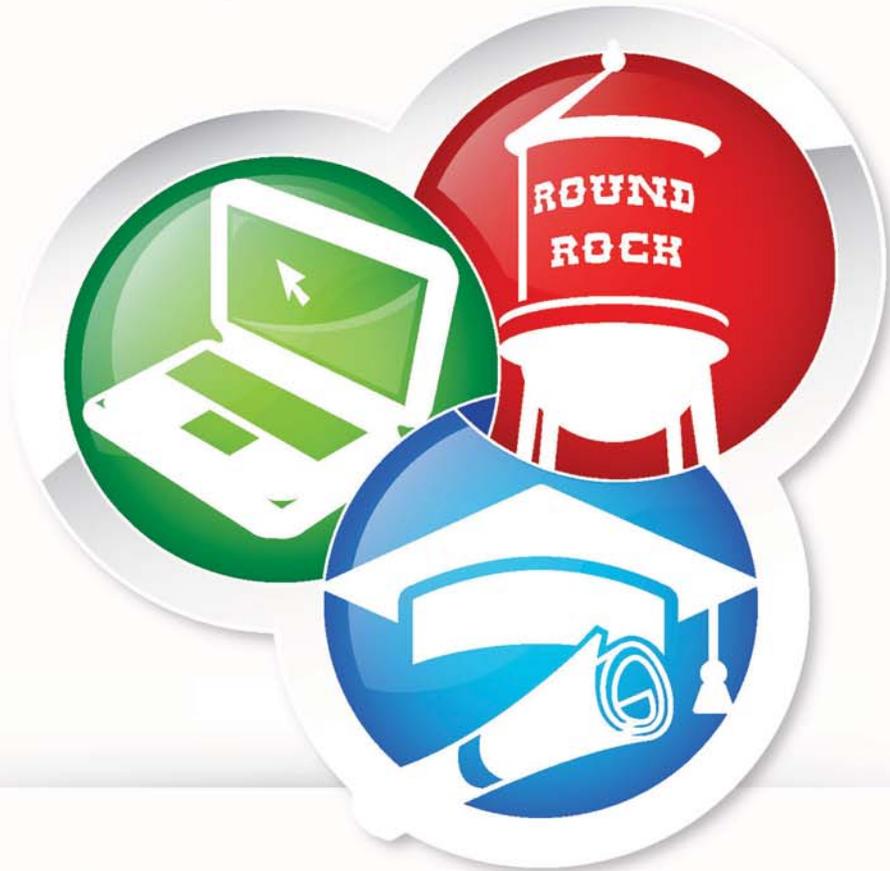




Places & Spaces:



Round Rock General Plan 2020

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Department of Planning and Community Development**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Round Rock General Plan is the official policy document guiding long-range planning and community development in the City of Round Rock. Below is a brief discussion of some of the major factors that have shaped this version of the General Plan, and a description of this document's chapter content.

Background

The General Plan was last updated in 2000. Since that time, Round Rock has continued its rapid population growth and development, as well as its transition from a suburb of Austin to a vibrant and prosperous midsize city. With Round Rock's dramatic growth has come a new series of challenges, such as preserving the City's historic infrastructure and protecting open spaces. In response, this General Plan not only covers topics that have been mentioned in previous Plan updates, like utilities and transportation, but also addresses topics which have become increasingly relevant, such as environmental preservation and community design.

Planning Process

Because this General Plan encompasses goals and objectives affecting the entirety of Round Rock, it was important to integrate input from a cross-section of the community into this document. Overall, there were two main methods of gathering public input:

General Plan Phone Survey

In the fall of 2008, Raymond Turco and Associates, a polling firm based in Arlington, TX, conducted a statistically representative phone survey of residents throughout Round Rock about a variety of topics covered in this General Plan. The survey results yielded crucial public input which was incorporated into this document.

Public Focus Group Meetings

In the late spring and early summer of 2009, the Department of Planning and Community Development held a series of public meetings to which the entire community was invited.

By involving participants in all-inclusive discussions and brainstorming sessions, the meetings presented the opportunity for participants to contribute their input on the topics in this Plan. As with the General Plan phone survey input, the input from these meetings was incorporated into this document.

In addition to these two input-gathering methods, an open house was held in April of 2010 for the public to examine draft versions of this document's Future Land Use Map and major recommendations. The open house provided an opportunity for community members to offer feedback on how the input from the General Plan phone survey and focus group meetings had been incorporated into these versions. It also provided the Planning and Community Development Department with an opportunity to use this feedback as a means to further revise and improve this Plan prior to final adoption.

Chapters

The following is a list of chapters in this General Plan:

Chapter 1: Introduction: Changing Nature of the Community

A general description of Round Rock population statistics, quality of life rankings, the local economy and infrastructure, new City policies, the relevance of Round Rock's Strategic Plan, and public involvement in the General Plan update process

Chapter 2: Public Input

A basic description of the data gathered through this General Plan's public input process

Chapter 3: Community Analysis

An analysis of population growth trends in Round Rock

Chapter 4: Community Facilities & Services

A description of school district, municipal court, library services, fire and emergency services, police services, parks and recreation, and arts and culture facilities in Round Rock

Chapter 5: Existing Land Use

A description of City development patterns; a land use inventory and analysis; a zoning inventory and analysis; and zoning and land use recommendations

Chapter 6: Future Land Use

A description of proposed future land uses in Round Rock

Chapter 7: Environment & Quality of Life

A description of basic strategies for making Round Rock more environmentally sustainable

Chapter 8: Transportation

A description of the current state of and proposed changes to the City's transportation infrastructure

Chapter 9: Water & Wastewater

A description of the current state of and proposed changes to the City's water and wastewater utility system

Chapter 10: Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space

A description of the current state of and proposed changes to the City's parks, recreation facilities, and open space system

Chapter 11: Historic Preservation

A proposal for an updated approach to historic preservation in Round Rock

Chapter 12: Community Quality

A discussion of proposals for subdivision and corridor design, maintaining older neighborhoods, revitalizing older commercial centers, redeveloping downtown, accommodating transitioning neighborhoods, and creating new uses for outdated development

Chapter 13: Implementation

A complete list of recommendations in this document, categorized by general implementation requirements

Appendices

Appendix A

A list of the Round Rock Strategic Plan goals

Appendix B

A summary of public input data

Appendix C

An explanation of federal tax credits for rehabilitating historic buildings

CHAPTER 1



Introduction: Changing Nature of the Community

The Round Rock General Plan is the official policy document guiding the physical growth and development of the City. The document serves as a foundation for Round Rock’s planning process, and provides the legal basis for the City’s zoning and subdivision regulations and other development regulations. The General Plan is an evolving document: it is updated approximately every ten years and reviewed annually to accommodate changing circumstances in the community.

Vision

The Round Rock City Council adopted the following vision as the basis of the City’s Strategic Plan: Round Rock will be the city of choice for entrepreneurs, business leaders, researchers, educators, and members of the various creative professions, who want to combine professional accomplishment and achievement with a culturally rich, recreationally and socially diverse lifestyle.

In order to achieve this vision, the General Plan aims to shape Round Rock into a diverse, historic, and family-oriented community with a distinct identity as a desirable place to live, work, and play. Residents, government, and businesses are committed to working together to build a quality community and an environment that will make it the city of choice for the talent that will shape the future.

Uses of the General Plan

The General Plan has six main uses:

1. **Policy Determination:** The Plan includes a broad physical design for the community that provides for an orderly expansion of streets, utilities, parks, and other

capital improvements. It also assists with the coordination of public and private expenditures.

2. **Policy Implementation and Coordination:** The Plan includes goals and objectives to guide the decisions of the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Development Services Office, the Historic Preservation Commission, and City staff on individual development applications. The General Plan's recommendations ensure consistent decisions within the framework of stated City goals and policies.
3. **Communication:** The Plan is a crucial source of public policy for citizens, elected officials, City staff, the business community, and developers.
4. **Measurement and Evaluation:** The Plan is a means to measure and evaluate the changing character and needs of the community. Both quantitative and qualitative information provide a rational and reasonable basis for future community decisions.
5. **Future Analysis:** The Plan identifies issues and opportunities that require further study.
6. **Strategic Plan:** The Plan reflects the City Council's Strategic Plan goals.

Topics in this latest version of the Plan cover a variety of important factors impacting the community. Some topics, such as transportation, have always been an integral part of the City's planning efforts, and have been discussed in previous versions of the General Plan. Other topics, however, like community quality and historic preservation, are new chapters in this Plan.

This Round Rock General Plan comes during a period of intensive planning efforts in the City. Over the course of this past year, several new or updated plans have been developed which aim to guide Round Rock through its transition from a successful suburb into a prosperous and attractive midsize city. Key objectives from each of these plans (*Game On, 2060: Strategic Plan for the City of Round Rock, Texas*; the *Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan*; the *Round Rock Downtown Master Plan*; and *Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community*) are incorporated into this Plan. It is the Strategic Plan, however, with its comprehensive list of objectives and vision for Round Rock's future, which represents the basic vision around which much of this Plan is written.

Since the completion of the last General Plan, the City of Round Rock has continued its transition, which began in 1993 with the arrival of Dell, from a bedroom community of Austin to a vibrant and prosperous suburb on the cusp of becoming a midsize city. Round Rock's rapid growth has served as a counterbalance to Austin's predominance as the area's major population and economic center, and consequently, the Austin region is now officially referred to as the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan statistical area. Overall, Round Rock has experienced staggering growth since the start of this decade. From 2000 to 2010, the City's population grew by 65%, from 61,136 to 100,610, and the population of Greater Round Rock has now surpassed 140,000.^{1,2}

¹ Source: City of Round Rock Community Development Department

² The population of Greater Round Rock is composed of the population within City boundaries, as well as the population of Round Rock's Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and the population of all Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) within the City's ETJ.

As Round Rock has grown, it has successfully maintained an extremely high quality of life, and the City has often appeared in the top tiers of several national quality of life rankings. For instance, in 2007, Round Rock was selected as one of the 100 best communities for young people by the America's Promise Alliance competition, which honors cities that provide safe and productive environments for young people. In 2007, the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area was ranked fifth in the nation in a survey of the best cities for re-locating families, conducted by Primacy and Worldwide ERC. In 2008, for the fourth year in a row, the City was ranked among the top 20 safest cities in the nation according to a survey released by Congressional Quarterly Press, and the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area was ranked sixth in the country by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* in its survey of the best places to live, work, and play. Additionally, Round Rock was ranked seventh in *Money Magazine's* 2008 list of best places to live in America.

An essential component of Round Rock's growth has been the deliberate diversification of its economy. While Dell remains the City's largest employer, an array of other major businesses, many outside the realm of high-tech, command a central position in Round Rock's economy. The City has become a major retail destination with the opening of IKEA and Round Rock Premium Outlets, and visitors to Round Rock now have a variety of overnight lodging options in various price ranges.

Round Rock has also become a major regional and statewide center of amateur, youth, and recreational sports. From the Clay Madsen Recreation Center to the Round Rock Independent School District Athletic Complex, this self-proclaimed Sports Capital of Texas includes a host of venues suitable for a variety of sport activities. These include the baseball fields at Old Settlers Park, which are currently undergoing major expansions and upgrades, and the recently constructed Rock'N River water park. The centerpiece of the City's sport infrastructure is the Dell Diamond, an 8,700+ fixed-seat baseball stadium, which opened in 2000. The Dell Diamond is home to the Round Rock Express, a Triple-A major league affiliate, as well as to a number of amateur sport activities.

Some of the newest industries to power Round Rock's economic engine are healthcare, higher education, and renewable energy. Two new hospitals have recently opened in northeast Round Rock, i.e., Scott and White and Seton Medical Center, and Reliant Rehabilitation Hospital recently opened in the southwest section of the City. Also, St. David's Hospital, in the northwest section of the City, is currently undergoing a major expansion. There is substantial spin-off from these new and expanded medical facilities with the current construction of thousands of square feet of medical offices in the facilities' immediate vicinity.

Three institutions of higher education have opened or are under construction in the northeast section of the City. These include Austin Community College, Texas A&M's Health Science Center, and Texas State University. Austin Community College is scheduled to open in the fall of 2010, while the first phase of Texas A&M's Health Science Center opened at the end of 2009. Texas State University opened in the fall of 2005, and is scheduled to open its St. David's School of Nursing in the fall of 2010. These institutions will eventually accommodate an estimated 26,000 students. Round Rock is also home to the Austin Institute of Art, which opened its doors in 2008.

The renewable energy industry is also represented in Round Rock. Wind turbine components are now manufactured at Teco Westinghouse's Round Rock location. Teco Westinghouse is currently reviewing the possibility of attracting synergistic businesses that would further the development of the clean energy industry in Round Rock.

In recent years, Round Rock has embraced mixed-use and multi-use development as an alternative to the auto-dependent, single-use developments. La Frontera, located in southwest Round Rock, has the City's first new multi-use development, and includes an array of retail venues, a major hotel, restaurants, and apartments. The bulk of future mixed-use development, however, is planned for the City's northeastern section, anchored by that area's new healthcare and higher education facilities, and is also planned for parts of downtown.

Key to Round Rock's economic growth has been its transportation infrastructure. In 1997, City voters approved the dedication of a one half cent sales tax on transportation infrastructure to assist in economic development. Since the previous General Plan, two new highways, SH-45 and SH-130, pass through Round Rock and the ETJ, and will serve as a springboard for growth in undeveloped parts of the City, as well as a means to better connect Round Rock to surrounding areas.

The rapid pace of new development in Round Rock has dramatically altered the City's landscape. Significant amounts of agricultural land are now developed, and several areas which were once zoned for industrial activities are now commercialized. As new development has proliferated across the City, the need to conserve undeveloped space has become increasingly important for maintaining Round Rock's high quality of life. The opening of several new parks across the City has served to protect vital pockets of open land.

In addition to protecting undeveloped space, the protection and planting of vegetation has become important to upholding the local quality of life, and the City has launched significant initiatives to properly accomplish this goal. Perhaps the most important of these was the creation of a Forestry Manager position in the Department of Parks and Recreation, which is responsible for maintaining all City trees, as well as for new tree plantings in public spaces. Another important initiative was the creation of the Tree Protection Ordinance in 2005, which established various tree protection incentives and standards. The Tree Protection Ordinance recently won a Community Forestry Award and a Gold Leaf Award from the Texas Forest Service and Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. Also in 2005, the City established a series of landscape standards, which require the planting of trees and other vegetation citywide as part of most developments. In the future it will be necessary to protect natural floodplains as public open space if Round Rock is to maintain its quality of life. These natural floodplains are the only wooded areas in most of the northeast portion of the City – the part of the City where most future development will take place.

Another change in Round Rock since the last General Plan has been the increase in the number of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) established. Round Rock has adopted PUD zoning districts since 1986. The PUD process allows the City to create a customized

zoning district in order to provide uses or development standards that would otherwise not be accommodated by the Round Rock Zoning Code. Most recently, the PUD process has been used to provide for large scale mixed-use development projects, including the Georgetown Railroad and Avery Centre properties. It has also been used on smaller properties to limit the land uses in order to provide better compatibility with neighboring properties. When a PUD is adopted, it serves as an amendment to the General Plan.

Strategic Plan Basis

As noted above, the Round Rock Strategic Plan represents the basic framework around which most of this Plan is written. Overall, the Strategic Plan outlines strategies to manage three major transformations in Round Rock's development: (1) certain areas of the City are aging and are approaching the point where redevelopment will occur and transform these areas; (2) over the next 50 years, the City's population will grow from about 100,000 to approximately 300,000, and this growth will change Round Rock from a suburban-oriented city to a mature city; and (3) the City will need to transition to a more sustainable and energy efficient community, with less impact on the environment, and build on the diverse economic engines that are now emerging.

The central importance of the Strategic Plan to Round Rock underscores the need to use the Strategic Plan as a foundation for this Plan. Overall, the Strategic Plan's framework is based on a set of 39 goals. At the start of each chapter in the General Plan, relevant goals from the Strategic Plan are listed, and help to form the basis for the chapter content. The list of Strategic Plan goals is found in this Plan's appendix.

Public Involvement

The General Plan impacts all of Round Rock, and it was essential to integrate all segments of the community into this Plan. Consequently, gathering public input was a significant component of the update process.

At the start of each chapter in this Plan, relevant conclusions from the public involvement process are listed, and help to form the basis for the chapter content.

CHAPTER 2



Public Input

Introduction

Chapter Theme

An integral part of developing this General Plan was the process of gathering public input on the key issues covered in this update. Two major vehicles for gathering public input were launched: a statistically representative General Plan phone survey of the Round Rock population and five public focus group meetings held at the Allen R. Baca Center for Senior and Community Activities in Round Rock. An open house was also held after the completion of the initial draft of this document to gather public feedback on the draft's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and major recommendations.

Data Gathering

General Plan Phone Survey

The General Plan Phone Survey was conducted by Raymond Turco & Associates, a polling firm based in Arlington, TX. Overall, 401 City residents were surveyed. A major goal of the survey was to garner public input from areas across the City. To this end, the City was divided into four sections, i.e., Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest, and an effort was made to survey residents in each section. The following are the percentages of individuals surveyed in each section: Northeast (16%); Northwest (31%); Southeast (36%); and Southwest (16%). A summary of the survey methodology and results is found in this document's appendix.

Public Focus Group Meetings

Over the course of the first four meetings, a substantial amount of input on a broad array of topics relevant to the Plan was collected. The input was generated primarily through a brainstorming process, whereby attendees sat around tables and discussed and debated

their views on particular issues. Each table had a moderator and scribe, both City staff members, who were responsible for sparking discussion and recording comments. (All comments generated by participants at table discussions were unprompted – there was no leading by moderators and scribes).

At the conclusion of the fourth focus group meeting, all participant comments were collected by the Planning Department, categorized according to General Plan topics, and converted into a series of proposals. At the final meeting in the series, each attendee (there were 36 total) was given a list of the proposals, and asked to rank each proposal by importance on a scale of 0 to 3, 0 being unimportant and 3 being high importance. An analysis of the responses collected for each proposal is found in this document's appendix. It must be noted that the data collected in this analysis is not statistically representative. Rather, it is qualitative – it is based completely on how the attendees at the final meeting felt about each proposal.

Public Open House

After the initial draft of this document was complete, an open house was held in April of 2010 for the public to examine the draft's FLUM and major recommendations. The open house provided an opportunity for community members to offer feedback on how the input from the General Plan phone survey and focus group meetings had been incorporated into this draft. Overall, a diverse group of close to 50 people attended. Ultimately, the feedback was used to further revise and improve this Plan, where appropriate, before final adoption.

Applications & Conclusions

Data Application

As noted in Chapter 1, Plan Introduction, relevant conclusions drawn from the public input data are listed at the beginning of most chapters in this document, and are used, along with Strategic Plan goals, as a foundation for chapter content.

Data Overview – General Plan Phone Survey

The phone survey data yielded a number of important conclusions that impact many of the subject areas covered by this Plan. The following are some key findings:

Leisure Activities

- While 62% of those surveyed attended cultural events, only 16% did so in Round Rock.
- While 62% of those surveyed attended band or concert performances, only 15% did so in Round Rock.

Community Characteristics

- 93% rated the City as a good/excellent place to raise children.
- 71% rated the City as a good/excellent place to be a teenager.
- 34% rated the City as a good/excellent place to be single.
- 72% rated the City as a good/excellent place to retire.

Mixed-Use Development

While 65% of respondents supported mixed-use development, 47% indicated that they would be likely/very likely to reside in that type of development.

Historic Preservation

- 90% agreed/strongly agreed that historic properties are a significant benefit to the City.
- 87% agreed/strongly agreed that City ordinances and regulations should be used to encourage historic preservation and maintenance.

Environmentally-Friendly Initiatives

- 90% supported/strongly supported ordinances to encourage developers to make subdivisions more bicycle and pedestrian-oriented.
- 80% supported/strongly supported spending public funds to build sidewalks and multi-use trails in neighborhoods that do not have them.
- 70% supported/strongly supported spending public funds to purchase open space to protect natural habitat and open space, even if not for recreational use.
- 82% supported/strongly supported ordinances to encourage water conservation.

Transportation

- 81% identified providing alternative modes of transportation to increase travel options as important/very important.
- 92% identified decreasing traffic congestion as important/very important.
- 67% rated the City's traffic congestion as fair/poor.

Culture & Recreation

- 64% agreed/strongly agreed that Round Rock needs more trail systems.
- 68% agreed/strongly agreed that Round Rock needs more art and cultural venues.
- 75% agreed/strongly agreed that Round Rock needs more public gathering places like cafes, plazas, live performance areas, outdoor markets, and street fairs.

Neighborhoods

- 88% were satisfied/very satisfied with their neighborhood.
- 89% were satisfied/very satisfied with City neighborhoods in general.

- 77% identified upgrading street appearance with trees, benches, and lighting as important/very important

Downtown Round Rock

- 73% agreed/strongly agreed that more restaurants would encourage them to visit downtown.
- 74% agreed/strongly agreed that more parking would encourage them to visit downtown.
- 77% agreed/strongly agreed that a wider range of shopping opportunities would encourage them to visit downtown.
- 54% agreed/strongly agreed that more late-night entertainment venues would encourage them to visit downtown.

Data Overview – Public Focus Group Meetings

Similar to the General Plan phone survey data, the data gathered at the public focus group meetings yielded a number of important conclusions that impact many of the subject areas covered in this Plan. Overall, these conclusions dovetail with the input gathered from the phone survey, and are listed throughout this document (at the beginning of chapters) as an accurate representation of public input. The following is a list of conclusions, organized according to how they appear in subsequent chapters of this document:

Community Facilities and Services

- Strong support for strengthening neighborhoods' sense of community through community facilities and services
- Strong support for ensuring that social services accommodate population increases

Existing Land Use

- Strong support for promoting land uses that foster a more diversified local economy

Future Land Use

- Strong support for mixed-use development in certain areas of the City

Environment & Quality of Life

- Strong support for water conservation measures, especially for new development
- Strong support for improving local household waste recycling services

Transportation

- Strong support for a more comprehensive and diversified transportation system that is integrated with neighboring communities' systems
- Strong support for improving street appearance with better landscaping, medians, improved lighting, and underground utilities

- Strong support for bus and rail service
- Strong support for improved signage for public facilities and places/events of interest

Water & Wastewater

- Strong support for water conservation measures, especially for new development

Parks & Open Space

- Strong support for conservation of natural areas
- Strong support for the development of a comprehensive hike and bike trail system
- Strong support for better maintaining older parks

Historic Preservation

- Strong support for preserving the City's historic buildings and sense of place
- Strong support for improving public awareness of historic preservation and establishing a local non-profit preservation organization
- Strong support for creating new construction standards that harmonize with surrounding older buildings
- Strong support for improving historic preservation through incentives and improvements in preservation management

Community Quality

- Strong support for requiring less obtrusive utility placement
- Strong support for encouraging greater design variety and higher quality construction and materials
- Strong support for improving neighborhood amenities (e.g., trees, sidewalks, lighting, parks)
- Strong support for a variety of housing types
- Strong support for upgrading deteriorating neighborhoods

Data Overview: Open House

Participants at the open house provided constructive feedback, which covered many of the topic areas in this Plan. Details are shown in **Appendix B** of this Plan.

CHAPTER 3

Community Analysis

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Round Rock's population growth can be categorized into two general periods: prior to 1970 and 1970 to present. Prior to 1970, Round Rock's population remained under three thousand, and growth spurts were moderate. From 1970 to present, the City's population has skyrocketed due to favorable economic conditions and a massive population influx. With the continued growth and diversification of Round Rock's economic base, it is predicted that the City will experience a healthy rate of population growth well into the future. Overall, this chapter provides population and housing data which reflect Round Rock's growth to the present, and offers future population projections.

Discussion

Population and housing statistics are often pivotal in guiding important planning decisions. By examining these statistics, decision-makers are able to identify needs and opportunities for the community and determine demand for future land development and associated municipal services.

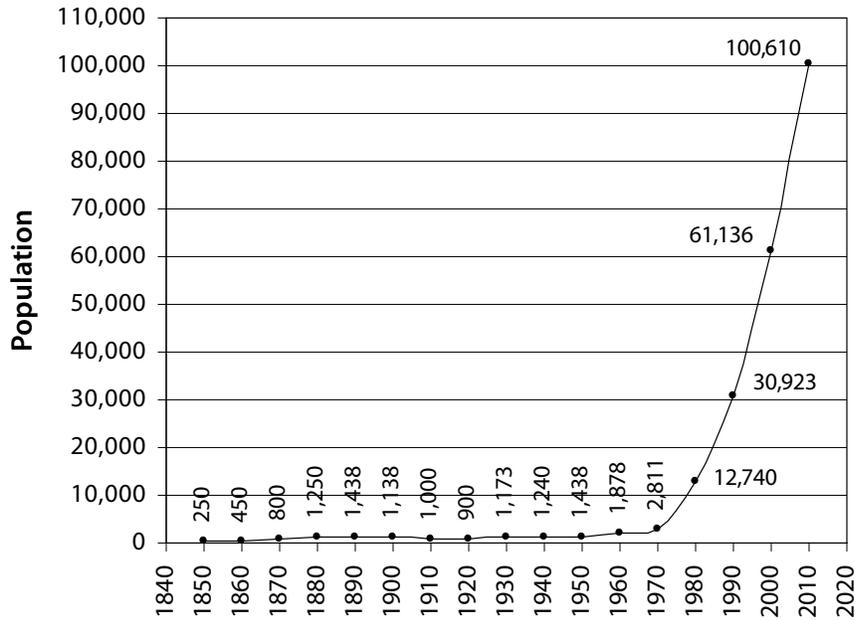
Data

Overview

Since the 1850's, Round Rock has evolved from a stagecoach stop along the Chisholm Trail to a sleepy farming town to a bedroom community of Austin. Round Rock is now emerging from Austin's shadow as a midsize city with a diverse employment base. While the City employs significant numbers in high technology, the most rapidly growing employment sectors are higher education, healthcare, and retail. With an estimated population of 100,610

in 2010¹, Round Rock is the largest city in Williamson County and the second largest city in the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area. Figure 3.1 depicts the official U.S. Census counts for Round Rock since its inception, showing the dramatic growth since 1970.

Figure 3.1 Round Rock Population, 1850-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1850 – 2000), City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department estimate (2010)

Growth of Round Rock, 1960 – 1979

The construction of IH-35 during the 1960s placed Round Rock in a strategic location for new development. While there was a surge in industrial and commercial activity in the latter half of the 1960s, housing remained the City’s mainstay economic activity, reflecting Round Rock’s status as a bedroom community of Austin.

During the 1970s, Round Rock outpaced the growth of all cities of at least 1,000 persons in the Austin metropolitan area, with a compound annual growth rate of over 16%. Based upon Williamson County’s net migration rate, it is estimated that 82% of the 10,000 person population increase during the 1970s resulted from in-migration. By the conclusion of the decade, Round Rock had established itself as the largest city in Williamson County and a viable growth center within the flourishing Austin metropolitan area.

The rapid rise in population during the 1970s placed tremendous pressure on Round Rock’s utilities, and consequently, the City’s wells ran dry in 1978. This crisis prompted the City to focus on expanding its water resources and to aggressively plan for future growth. These

¹ This estimated population figure was generated by the City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department for April 1, 2010. This figure will be replaced by data from the official 2010 U.S. Census count upon its release.

efforts enabled Round Rock to meet the extraordinary demands which would be placed on its utilities in following decades (see Chapter 9, Water & Wastewater for more detailed information).

The 1970s also brought a significant shift in the composition of Round Rock’s housing stock. Ninety-six percent (96%) of dwelling units in 1970 were single-family homes. By the end of the decade, single-family homes represented only 83% of total residential units. This shift in the housing stock was spurred by the growing population and changing demographics.

Growth of Round Rock, 1980 – 1989

During the 1980s, Round Rock’s population increased by over 18,000, almost tripling in size from 12,740 persons in 1980 to 30,587 by 1989. Over the course of the decade, the City averaged a nearly 10% annual growth rate, which was at least 50% higher than that of any other city in Williamson County. Over half of Round Rock’s population influx during the 1980s arrived just in 1984 and 1985. Due to a depressed state economy in the late 1980s, the pace of population growth slowed tremendously. Figure 3.2 shows the City’s rapid growth during the 1980s.

Figure 3.2 Round Rock Population Change, 1980 – 1989

Year	Population	Numeric Change	Percent Change
1980	12,740	-	-
1981	12,889	149	1.2%
1982	13,038	149	1.2%
1983	13,186	148	1.1%
1984	15,261	2,075	15.7%
1985	20,864	5,603	36.7%
1986	26,725	5,861	28.1%
1987	29,303	2,578	9.6%
1988	30,312	1,009	3.4%
1989	30,587	275	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

Round Rock’s economy experienced significant gains during the 1980s. The influx of major employers into Round Rock, such as Tellabs, Farmers Insurance Group, Cypress Semiconductor, AMP Packaging Systems, and DuPont Photomasks, substantially contributed to employment increases. From 1980 to 1990, the number of employed persons steadily increased by an average of 12% yearly, equaling over 1,000 newly employed persons per year. Despite the economic slowdown in the latter part of the decade, Round Rock continued to consistently record some of the state’s lowest unemployment rates.

As shown in Figure 3.3, the diversification of the City’s housing stock continued in the 1980s, resulting in considerable duplex and multi-family construction.

Figure 3.3 Residential Building Permits by Type of Housing, 1980-1989

Single-Family Homes	Duplex Units	Multi-Family Developments	Multi-Family Units
4,470	601	50	2,120

Source: City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

Growth of Round Rock, 1990 – 1999

From 1990 to 1999, Round Rock’s population grew by 57%, increasing from 30,923 to 53,860. Figure 3.4 shows the steady rise in population during this period.

Figure 3.4 Round Rock Population Change, 1990-1999

Year	Population	Numeric Change	Percent Change
1990	30,923	-	-
1991	32,213	1,290	4.2%
1992	33,769	1,556	4.8%
1993	36,139	2,370	7.0%
1994	39,457	3,318	9.2%
1995	41,631	2,174	5.5%
1996	43,895	2,264	5.4%
1997	46,485	2,590	5.9%
1998	49,990	3,505	7.5%
1999	53,860	3,870	7.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

The 1990s began much as the 1980s ended, with the City’s economy still sluggish due to the statewide recession. By 1993, however, the Austin area economy was recovering and Round Rock was experiencing major increases in residential construction. The local economy was further bolstered in 1993 with the establishment of Dell’s headquarters in Round Rock. Due to low interest rates and a healthy economy, single-family construction boomed through the end of the decade, as indicated in Figure 3.5. Multi-family and duplex construction levels were quite modest in comparison.

Figure 3.5 Residential Building Permits by Type of Housing, 1990-1999

Single-Family Homes	Duplex Units	Multi-family Developments	Multi-Family Units
7,161	168	13	1,824

Source: City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

Growth of Round Rock, 2000 – 2010

Round Rock’s population boom has continued into the new millennium. Like past decades, recent population growth has been driven by economic development. With the introduction of major retail and commercial venues, as well as new healthcare and higher education facilities, the City’s economy has become substantially diversified and strengthened. Between 2000 and 2010, Round Rock’s population grew by an astounding 65%, increasing from 61,136 to 100,610. Figure 3.6 shows this population change on a yearly basis.

As stated previously, the abovementioned City population figure of 100,610 is an estimate generated by the Planning Department for April 1, 2010. This figure will be replaced by a more accurate figure generated by the 2010 U.S. Census count, which will be released after the completion of this document.

Figure 3.6 Round Rock Population Change, 2000-2010

Year	Population	Numeric Change	Percent Change
2000	61,136	-	-
2001	66,495	5,359	8.8%
2002	71,275	4,780	7.2%
2003	75,402	4,127	5.8%
2004	78,970	3,568	4.7%
2005	82,311	3,341	4.2%
2006	86,175	3,864	4.7%
2007	90,930	4,755	5.5%
2008	93,909	2,979	3.3%
2009	97,212	3,303	3.5%
2010	100,610	3,398	2.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

While there was a considerable number of single-family home permits issued overall between 2000 and 2010, permit numbers steadily declined from 2007, as indicated in Figure 3.7. Some of the decline in single-family permits was due to single-family construction in Municipal Utility Districts within Round Rock’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. Part of the decline was due to the recent economic downturn. While the number of new single-family homes declined significantly in 2008 and 2009, the City’s population continued to grow, as demonstrated by the substantial number of new multi-family units leased during that period.

Figure 3.7 Residential Building Permits by Type of Housing, 2000-2010

Year	Single-family Homes	Duplex Units	Multi-Family Developments	Multi-Family Units
2000	1,717	0	4	488
2001	1,226	0	1	203
2002	1,423	0	4	1,303
2003	1,449	0	0	54
2004	1,255	0	0	0
2005	1,476	0	0	0
2006	1,147	0	1	30
2007	797	2	3	902
2008	259	0	4	1,297
2009	216	0	2	776
2010*	118	0	0	0
Total	11,083	2	19	5,053

Source: City of Round Rock Building Inspection Division

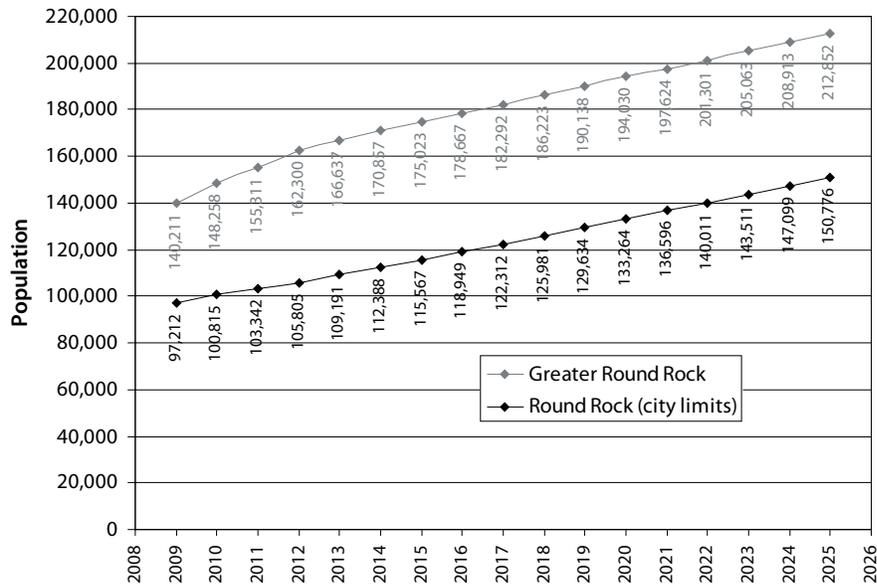
* The data for 2010 was collected through the end of April of that year.

Population Projections, 2010 – 2025

The City of Round Rock Department of Planning and Community Development develops population projections for the City of Round Rock and Greater Round Rock.

Continued population growth is expected in Round Rock in the foreseeable future. It is predicted that the City’s population will reach 150,776 by 2025, and that Greater Round Rock’s population will reach 212,852 by 2025. These population projections are displayed below.

Figure 3.8 Population Growth Within Round Rock and Greater Round Rock



Source: City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

Conclusion

The trend of rapid population growth in Round Rock will almost certainly continue in the coming decades. To track population growth trends, the City currently relies on data from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as data produced through internal analyses. When population data from the 2010 census becomes available, the City will update its population projections.

CHAPTER 4

Community Facilities & Services

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Prevent neighborhood deterioration.
2. Maintain and enhance public confidence, satisfaction and trust in City Government.
3. Develop the diverse talent pools needed for targeted industries.

Priority

1. Build and maintain the facilities and infrastructure needed to make the City attractive to target businesses.
2. Remain prepared to manage disasters and emergencies.
3. Support policies and efforts that will promote public health.
4. Expand and strengthen Arts and Cultural activities.
5. Develop recreation and library program options that respond to growing diversity of resident and visitor interests.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for strengthening neighborhoods' sense of community through community facilities and services.
2. Strong support for ensuring that social services accommodate population increases.
3. Strong support for more arts and culture venues.
4. Strong support for more public gathering places.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Community facilities are a major component of Round Rock's physical, social, and economic fabric. They help to define the identity of the City and contribute to its social and economic prosperity. Community facilities cover a broad spectrum of services, such as healthcare, safety, arts and culture, libraries, and education, and often require major investments of time and money. Consequently, new facilities must be prioritized.

School Facilities and Services

Section Theme: Round Rock Independent School District Facilities

Discussion

Round Rock Independent School District (RRISD) functions independently of the City of Round Rock and Williamson County, and is its own taxing entity. Portions of RRISD extend outside of the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) into neighboring Austin, Cedar Park, Georgetown, and Hutto.

RRISD has won numerous awards for academic excellence. Both *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* have ranked RRISD's high schools among the top in the country, and several of its schools have been declared National Blue Ribbon Schools, as well as Texas Blue Ribbon Schools. Among other distinctions, over 90 percent of RRISD campuses have earned one or more Gold Performance Acknowledgements from the Texas Education Agency. The quality of RRISD continues to be a major asset to the City of Round Rock.

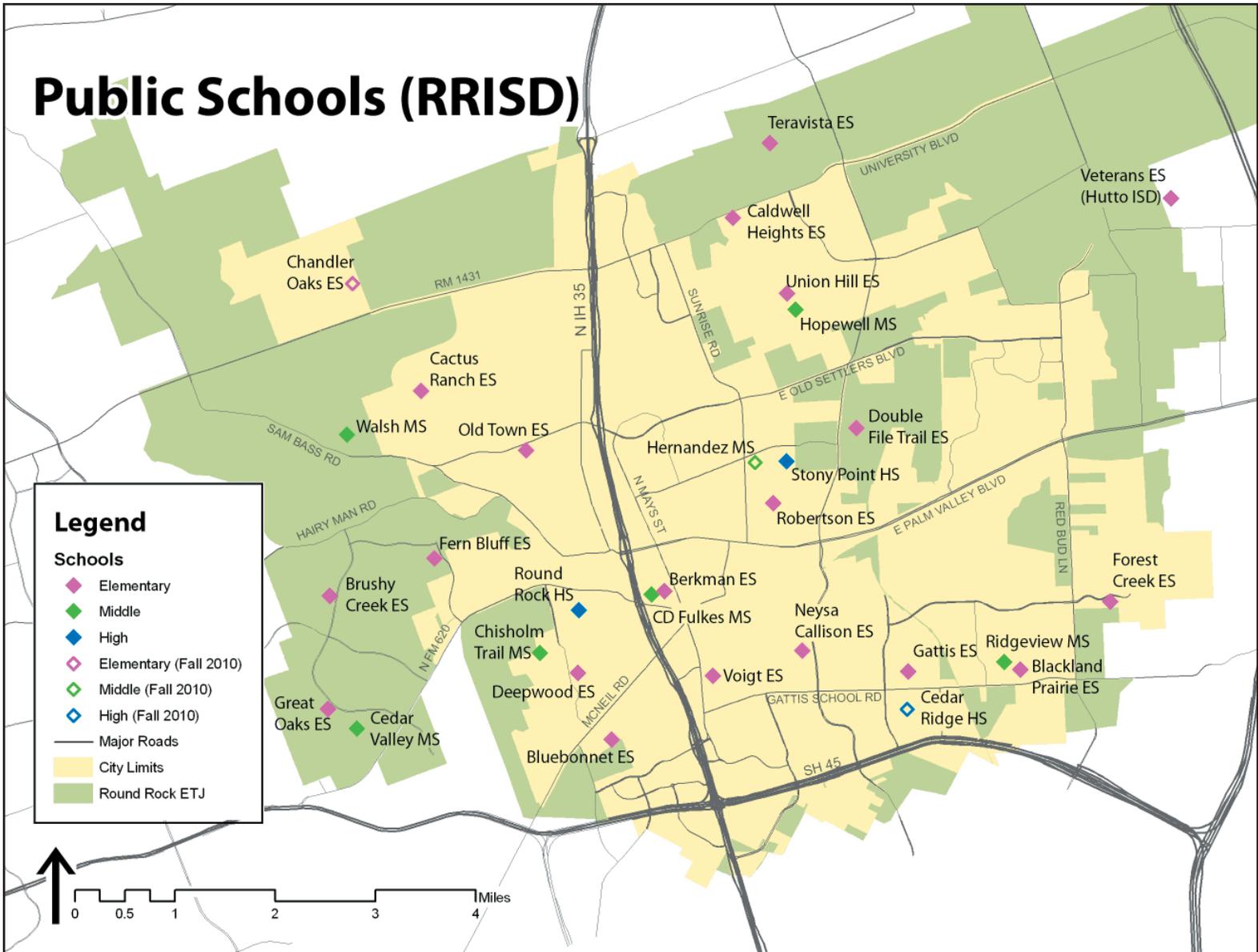
Existing Facilities

The City of Round Rock and most of its ETJ lie within RRISD. The portion of RRISD which lies within the City includes 14 elementary, 5 middle, and 3 high schools. The portion which lies within the City's ETJ, but outside the City limits, includes 6 elementary and 2 middle schools. In addition, some Round Rock students attend McNeil High School, which lies outside of the City's ETJ.

Enrollment Pressures

Enrollment at RRISD continues to rise by approximately 1000 students per year, and many schools across the City are currently above permanent capacity levels. In response, RRISD employs measures such as the installation of portable classrooms. There are currently approximately 250 portable units, which account for about 400 classrooms. Student demands are also met through early site selection and construction of schools with the potential for expansion.

Figure 4.1 Round Rock Public Schools



The 2006 bond election raised money for upgrades to older facilities, and is responsible for funding the construction of Callison Elementary, Teravista Elementary, Walsh Middle, and Cedar Ridge High Schools. The 2008 bond election, passed in November of that year, is funding the construction of an elementary school in the Paloma Lake neighborhood and Chandler Oaks Elementary School in the Stone Oak neighborhood. It is also funding the upgrading of older facilities such as Hernandez Middle School (formerly Stony Point 9th Grade Center).

In addition to the new schools mentioned above, several others have opened in Round Rock during the past decade: Blackland Prairie and Cactus Ranch Elementary Schools opened in 2001; Union Hill Elementary School opened in 2002; and Ridgeview and Hopewell Middle Schools opened in 2001 and 2002 respectively. Additionally, the Round Rock Opportunity Center, a disciplinary alternative education program for middle and high school students, opened in 2001.

The RRISD demographer coordinates on a regular basis with staff at the Planning Department and reviews proposed developments within RRISD and surrounding areas. Communication between City and RRISD officials ensures consistency among land use, transportation, and facility siting plans. RRISD officials also periodically coordinate with developers to reserve space within new developments for school sites, when appropriate, and consider the development of joint school/park facilities as a cost-effective solution to facility needs.

Overall, to ensure that new facilities are optimally sited, RRISD carefully monitors potential areas of population growth. To this end, RRISD maintains a close relationship with local developers to keep abreast of the locations of newly proposed developments. RRISD also keeps track of these locations through its close relationship with the Planning Department; the Department keeps RRISD informed through the City's platting process. The location of new schools is considered part of the platting process for large residential developments. Optimal siting is also ensured through close coordination with the Fire and Police Departments, and other essential community services.

Future Needs

In general, one elementary school is constructed for approximately every 2,200 households; one middle school is constructed for approximately every 4,500 households; and one high school is constructed for approximately every 5,000 households. In the coming years, Round Rock may need to add as many as three elementary schools, as well as one more middle and high school.¹

Other Independent School Districts

Hutto, Pflugerville, and Leander ISDs serve small portions of Round Rock's ETJ.

¹ The timeline for the addition of these new schools is dependent on population growth in certain parts of the City and, therefore, depends heavily on the state of the economy.

Relationship with Local Higher Educational Facilities

RRISD maintains close relationships with Round Rock’s higher education facilities, i.e., the Austin Art Institute, Austin Community College, Texas A&M’s Health Science Center, and Texas State University. Through these relationships, RRISD offers its students a broad range of local post-high school educational options.

Over the years, RRISD and the Round Rock community have successfully met local educational needs in the midst of rapid population growth. While enrollment pressures are not anticipated to subside in the near future, an appropriate framework is in place to handle these pressures in a comprehensive and effective manner.

Recommendations

1. City departments should promote processes to improve cooperation between the City and RRISD when considering new school locations and identifying the need for new facilities based on anticipated population growth.
2. The City should support RRISD’s efforts to prepare students to participate in Round Rock’s quickly diversifying economy.
3. The City should expand efforts to increase options for sharing and/or collocating City and RRISD facilities.

Municipal Court Facilities and Services

Section Theme: Round Rock Municipal Court Facility

Discussion

The City of Round Rock’s Municipal Court is the first level of the judicial branch of government. Though most cases heard by the Municipal Court are criminal in nature, the Court has limited administrative jurisdiction over certain City ordinance violations, such as animal cruelty and the removal of junk vehicles. The municipal judge also serves as a magistrate of the state and has the authority to issue search warrants, emergency protective orders, and arrest warrants.

In April of 2003, the Municipal Court moved into the McConico Building (in southwest downtown Round Rock) from its previous location on the first floor of City Hall, where the Court and City Council shared the same room. Currently, there is ample space in the McConico Building for all Court functions. The Court currently has a staff of thirteen, composed of two judges, two bailiffs, one administrator, and eight clerks.

Future Needs

When Round Rock’s population reaches 100,000 according to the official U.S. Census count, the Texas Office of Court Administration will require the Municipal Court to institute a collections program, which mandates that forty hours per week of employee time be dedicated to collecting past due fines. In the near future, the Court will also be looking

to purchase a paperless document imaging system, which would interface with the current Court management system.

In the long-term, as Round Rock continues its projected trend of rapid growth, the Court foresees a potential need to increase the size of its facility by creating multiple courtrooms and expanding its office space.

Recommendations

1. Options for future space needs should be investigated. These options should be prioritized, cost estimates should be developed, and the options should then be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections.

Library Facilities and Services

Section Theme: Round Rock Library Facility

Discussion

Service Standards

Round Rock library service standards are based on the Texas Library Association's Texas Public Library Standards. The purpose of these standards is threefold: to promote quality library service for all Texans, to raise the expectations of library clientele, and to provide an authoritative document to which library administrators and supporters may refer when justifying requests for funds. Overall, there are distinct standards for a number of categories, including administration, collection, facility, finance, marketing/public relations, advocacy, personnel, service, and technology. Furthermore, each standard is divided into three levels, i.e., basic, enhanced, and comprehensive, and certain standards vary based on population.

Challenges

There are at least three key issues that present major challenges to library services: (1) room for new materials is limited, (2) story-times and other programs operate at full capacity, and (3) parking is limited on peak days and at peak times (in regard to the third issue, there is a municipal parking garage within half a block of the library on East Main Street which usually has unused parking spaces).

New Facilities

Due to a lack of adequate space for expansion at the current library location and the need for library services in areas of the City outside of downtown, library staff recommend the construction of branch library facilities. The possibility of opening a library in the City's northeast or southeast section should be investigated. According to library staff, the driving time from these sections to the current library is, on average, longer than for the rest of the City, and these sections hold the largest portion of the City's projected population.

Recommendations

1. Library customers should be educated about the existing municipal parking garage. Limiting long-term parking to the garage's upper levels should be investigated; this would help to eliminate the common misperception that the garage is usually full, and encourage its use for short-term parking.
2. A proposal for opening a library branch in the City's northeast or southeast section should be prioritized, a cost estimate should be developed, and the proposal should then be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections.

Fire and Emergency Facilities and Services

Section Theme: Round Rock Fire & Emergency Service Facilities

Discussion

10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan

During the end of 2005 and beginning of 2006, the City administration set out to create the 10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan, the purpose of which was to establish appropriate levels of funding for fire and emergency service facilities, as well as other community facilities. As a crucial part of the plan development process, a series of open house meetings was held in which members of the public were given the opportunity to suggest appropriate funding/service levels for various types of community facilities, as well as to determine current funding/service levels. Meeting attendees (as well as online participants) were told to choose from three levels of funding/service: upper end, midrange, and lower end. It must be noted that lower end was not intended to represent a choice of poor value. Rather, it represented a modest choice with fewer features, and consequently, lower cost. Overall, 575 individuals provided input.

According to this input process, the overall level of service for the Round Rock Fire Department (RRFD) averaged below midrange, and the desired level of service was midrange. The reason for below midrange service was that RRFD was unable to meet an eight minute response time on 80% or more of all fire calls, which has been the standard established by the City. Nevertheless, a majority of the participants in the input process indicated that the level of execution of RRFD services was good-excellent.

Overall, the 10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan emphasized at least three key issues that presented major challenges to RRFD: (1) the provision of quality structure fire suppression training to firefighters; (2) relocation of Williamson County emergency medical services (EMS) resources from fire stations to stand alone EMS facilities in order to meet established response times for medical emergencies; and (3) the establishment of automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire service organizations.

Since the development of the 10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan, RRFD has made substantial progress on two of the three key issues mentioned above. The City has

established service level objectives for dispatch, turnout, and response times, as well as for crew staffing levels. Additionally, automatic aid agreements have been established with neighboring fire service organizations in Georgetown and Pflugerville, and also with the Sam Bass Volunteer Fire Department. The provision of quality structure fire suppression training has not been realized due to a lack of adequate training facilities in Round Rock.

Departmental Considerations

The adequacy of fire services is measured primarily by two criteria: 1) response time to a structure fire and 2) an insurance services office (ISO) rating.

Regarding structure fire responses, RRFD's goal is a response time of within eight minutes from time of alarm receipt at the public safety answering point. The first arriving apparatus must arrive at 80% or more of in-city structure fires with a minimum of three personnel, and the apparatus must meet the requirements of *National Fire Protection Association Standard 2001 – 2003 Edition*. To measure response effectiveness, RRFD monitors individual company response times and annotates reasons for delays.

Regarding ISO ratings, a comprehensive analysis of the City's Fire Department, emergency communications center, water supply and delivery system, and building and code enforcement standards is used to determine the rating. An ISO rating is used by most insurance companies to help determine the cost of fire insurance for the area served by a fire department. The ISO calculates ratings every ten years and assigns a rating from one to ten, one being the best rating. In September of 2007, the ISO gave Round Rock a rating of two. A major goal of RRFD is to receive a rating of one within five to seven years.

To meet response time goals, the City is divided into seven fire service districts (see Figure 4.2). Fire service district boundaries are determined based on response time criteria and the physical characteristics of each district, e.g., highways, railways, arterial roadways, and waterways. Examples of substantial physical barriers impacting response times within districts include IH-35, the Union Pacific Railroad, the Georgetown Railroad, and Brushy Creek.

RRFD provides both advanced and basic life support EMS at the first responder level. Annually, 70% of RRFD calls for service regard assisting Williamson County paramedics with medical emergencies.

Currently, Williamson County ambulances are housed in three City fire stations. The City and County, however, are working on a plan to relocate County EMS resources outside of fire stations and in strategic locations across the City; the goal is to improve emergency medical response times.

RRFD provides fire and emergency medical services outside of City boundaries for areas that include most of the ETJ. These services were established through an agreement with Williamson County Emergency Services District #9, and are provided through a tax assessment. For the 2008 – 2009 fiscal year, the tax generated approximately \$911,000.

RRFD is organized into four divisions, which include prevention, training, suppression, and administration. A combined City 9-1-1 dispatch facility is housed in the Round Rock Police Department (RRPD).

Personnel services costs account for approximately 90% of RRFD’s annual operating budget and are funded through a combination of sales tax, property tax, and other general fund revenues. Fire station construction is funded through bond elections and the City’s self-financing fund. RRFD also manages a replacement program for fire apparatuses.

Figure 4.3 Fire Facilities Inventory

Name	Location	Service District
Central Station	203 Commerce Boulevard	North
Station No. 2	200 West Bagdad Ave.	Central
Station No. 3	1991 Rawhide Drive	South
Station No. 4	3300 Gattis School Road	Southeast
Station No. 5	350 Deep Wood Drive	West
Station No. 6	2919 Joe DiMaggio Blvd.	East
Station No. 7	2811 Oakmont Blvd.	North

Source: Round Rock Fire Department

Future Needs

The physical expansion of Round Rock is the determining factor in planning fire facilities and for establishing and/or modifying existing fire service districts. It is essential that the location of fire stations be coordinated with future road construction to ensure the best coverage at minimal cost. Overall, the continued growth of Round Rock will ultimately require 3 or 4 new fire stations in areas presently outside the City limits. The City expects an eventual total of 10 to 11 fire stations at build-out. Ensuring an adequate supply of water, including fire flows, in the parts of the Jonah Water SUD within Round Rock’s ETJ should be a priority to guarantee that adequate water supplies are available to this area. Ultimately, RRFD is positioned to meet service challenges associated with a rapidly growing City and provide cost-effective services for residents.

Recommendations

1. Coordinate the location of new fire stations with future road construction to ensure the best coverage at minimal cost.
2. Negotiations are required with Jonah Water SUD to ensure adequate water supply for firefighting in those parts of its jurisdiction within Round Rock’s ETJ.

Police Facilities and Services

Chapter Theme: Round Rock Police Service Facilities

Chapter Discussion

10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan

The 10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan also examined police service standards. According to public input process findings from the plan, the Round Rock Police Department's (RRPD's) overall level of service averaged at above midrange, closer to upper end. Participants in the input process also indicated that the level of execution of police services was near excellent because of the following reasons: (1) Round Rock has been one of the safest cities in the country, (2) RRPD has followed the industry's best practices, (3) RRPD has had a high approval rating, and (4) RRPD has had well-established partnerships with local businesses, neighborhood associations, RRISD, and civic organizations.

According to the input process results, to achieve the desired upper end level of service over the coming years, RRPD would have needed to institute more proactive forces, such as those targeting career criminals, and perform more specialized functions in-house.

Overall, the 10 Year Comprehensive Operational Plan emphasized at least two key issues that presented major challenges to RRPD: (1) maintaining partnerships that address issues before they become serious crime problems and (2) maintaining a responsive service philosophy and low crime rate in a high growth environment.

Strategic Plan

RRPD is now looking to the Round Rock Strategic Plan for guidance, and specifically, to Goal 2.0: Prevent Neighborhood Deterioration. This goal would require close coordination among the Planning Department, Code Enforcement, the Community Block Development Program, and the Public Works Department to develop neighborhood deterioration prevention programs.

Department Considerations

The maintenance of a safe environment for all citizens, and particularly a reduction in criminal activity, forms the basis for RRPD goals. The Department uses traditional patrol and proactive policing approaches, as well as cooperative arrangements with other agencies and citizen partnerships to improve safety throughout the City. Overall, the central component of police protection is working with the community to address quality of life issues before they become public safety problems. Each police officer is responsible for specific geographic areas in the City. Response time, therefore, is based on patrol area rather than police station location and is dependent on call priority.

Facilities Inventory

RRPD is currently served by a central station at 2701 North Mays Street. The facility opened in 2008 and has 129,000 square feet on a 72 acre tract; there is potential for expansion over the next 10 years. RRPD does not rely on substations.

Future Needs

A key departmental focus is planning for and adapting to the rapid changes of Round Rock's growth. RRPD expects to continue focusing on planning law enforcement responses to major new developments like Texas State University and the new hospitals.

RRPD also seeks to expand its logistical capabilities in the years to come, which includes the development of a long-term facilities plan to maximize the use of the 72 acre headquarters building site. Researching, developing, and employing effective technologies to enhance police service will be a long-term force-multiplier for RRPD.

Expanding and improving community relationships is a RRPD priority. The Department continues to work toward providing a proactive police presence in City parks and recreation facilities and expanding community/department team-building and problem-solving initiatives. As part of such initiatives, RRPD will continue to foster an internal culture that develops a positive relationship with Round Rock's diverse community, expand business-police cooperative efforts, and expand senior- and youth-oriented Department programs.

Planning for traffic flow and enforcement is a significant issue for RRPD. To this end, coordination between RRPD and the Public Works Department is necessary. RRPD is committed to achieving its mission of providing public safety and promoting a high quality of life in partnership with the Round Rock community.

Recommendations

1. Maintain partnerships with the community that address problems before they become serious crime issues.
2. Coordinate with the Public Works Department to address traffic issues.
3. RRPD, the Planning Department, Code Enforcement, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and the Public Works Department should work together to develop programs to prevent neighborhood deterioration.

Parks and Recreation Facilities**Section Theme: Round Rock Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Spaces****Discussion**

The City's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are a key component in the facility matrix of the community. Information regarding Round Rock's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces is found in Chapter 10, Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Space.

Arts and Culture

Section Theme: Round Rock Arts and Cultural Facilities

Discussion

The City is at an important transition point: arts and culture are becoming a crucial component of the City's quality of life. To this end, the City Council has identified the need to expand and strengthen arts and cultural activities in Round Rock, as discussed in Goal 35.0 of the City's Strategic Plan: "Expand and strengthen Arts and Cultural activities." In January of 2007, a report was presented to the City Council, entitled, *The Task Force to Encourage Philanthropy for Arts and Cultural Activities*, and which recommended that a long-term plan for arts and culture be developed. Since that time, the City Council and Round Rock Chamber of Commerce promoted the development of the Round Rock Area Arts Council, an independent non-profit corporation to foster arts and culture in the City.

Performing Arts

The community is home to a number of performing arts organizations: the Round Rock Choir, Sam Bass Theater, Round Rock Symphony, Ballet Folklorico, and Williamson County Symphony. Additionally, the Penfold Theatre Company, currently located in Austin, is now looking to expand into Round Rock.

Overall, aside from the Sam Bass Theater (located at 600 Lee Street) and the outdoor performance facility adjacent to the Allen R. Baca Center, the community lacks significant performing arts space. Consequently, the City's performing arts organizations often perform in a variety of private locations. In response, the Round Rock Area Arts Council has identified the need for a 250 to 400 seat live theater venue to serve a variety of users, and the Penfold Theatre Company is currently investigating a possible \$100,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to review the feasibility of developing a live theater venue in Round Rock.

Graphic Arts

The Round Rock Area Arts Council has established a gallery and office at 231 East Main Street. The space occupies a portion of the recently expanded City Hall and is currently leased for a year with an option for an additional year. This space fronts onto both Main Street and the green space to the west, which provides a setting for outdoor movies, performances, and festivals.

Public Art

The Round Rock Area Arts Council is interested in bringing more public art to the community. A successful public art program begins with the development of clearly stated goals by community stakeholders and the identification of potential funding sources. Overall, funding opportunities should be investigated for developing public art at key locations throughout the City, especially downtown. When carefully placed, public art can bring an added depth to Round Rock's special sense of place.

Future Arts Facilities

The City, together with the Round Rock Area Arts Council and private patrons, should locate a space for a new arts and cultural center that could accommodate a variety of functions.

Recommendations

1. The City, together with the Round Rock Area Arts Council and private patrons, should locate a space for a new arts and cultural center that could accommodate a variety of functions. This facility should be prioritized, a cost estimate should be developed, and a proposal should be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections.
2. The City should investigate methods to fund public art and identify location and selection criteria.

Conclusion

Overall, as Round Rock continues its rapid pace of growth, the construction of more and higher-quality community facilities, as well as the improvement and expansion of existing facilities, will be necessary. The Round Rock Strategic Plan represents an effective approach to enhancing local community facilities, and is well attuned to current needs and trends.

CHAPTER 5



Existing Land Use

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Provide a range of employment, housing, and lifestyle choices attractive to a diverse range of young professionals, students, and empty nesters as well as families.
2. Support the growth and expansion of the business clusters of destination retail, supply chain management, health care, higher education, corporate office and computer technology.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for mixed-use development in certain areas of the City.
2. Strong support for promoting land uses that foster a more diversified local economy.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

The foundation of any planning effort should include comprehensive data on existing conditions. This chapter analyzes current land use figures for the City and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). These statistics are also compared to the previous General Plan and applicable zoning districts. As a result, a current representation of the City is provided and can be utilized for future land use decisions.

Discussion

General Characteristics

Round Rock continues to transform into a more diverse city. While the predominant land use remains single-family, several noteworthy non-residential projects have been developed.

Since the 1998 reporting period, the City has added uses of regional interest such as the Dell Diamond, home to the Triple-A Round Rock Express; Round Rock Premium Outlets; Scott & White and Seton Medical Center; Austin Community College, Texas State University, and Texas A&M Health Science Center; and IKEA. These developments not only assist in diversifying the local economy, but also foster increased opportunities for a live, work, and play environment. Additionally, these developments have changed the demographics and business dynamics of the City. The following are some additional noteworthy items that can help explain the City's existing land use pattern:

- Approximately 60% of the land area within the City and ETJ has been developed. Within the municipal boundaries, approximately 73% of the land is developed. The remaining area consists of agricultural and vacant land.
- The largest land use in the City and ETJ is single-family residential. Forty-four percent (44%) of the developed land within the municipal boundaries consists of single-family (48% when including the ETJ).
- The City has a negotiated ETJ boundary, which will not be subject to significant change. The total acreage within the ETJ boundary is currently 43,320. (The total acreage within City limits is currently 22,038.)
- Multi-family developments have increased since the previous General Plan. Several apartment complexes have been developed in the northeast section of the City. This pattern can be explained, in part, by the proximity of these complexes to future college campuses, i.e., Austin Community College, Texas A&M Health Science Center, and Texas State University. This pattern can also be partly attributed to the close proximity of these complexes to Scott & White and Seton Medical Center, and to substantial commercial growth corridors.
- Approximately half of the land zoned for industrial uses is vacant. A majority of this land is located along IH-35 in the northern section of the City. There is currently pressure to rezone much of this area for commercial offices and mixed-use.
- The City adopted its first mixed-use zoning district in 2005. This district is referred to as MU-1a (mixed-use southwest downtown) and it applies to a specific area of the City just west of downtown. This area is generally described as being bounded by Round Rock Avenue to the north; Lake Creek to the south; IH-35 to the west; and South Mays Street to the east. The intent of this district is to combine moderate density residential and commercial uses. Since its adoption, the City has processed several applications for single-family home conversions to offices, retail, and restaurants, and the redevelopment of residential structures into office developments.
- The La Frontera Planned Unit Development (PUD) has had two notable parcels developed into high-density projects. The first is the Frontera Vista office project on Louis Henna Boulevard, which consists of two five-story buildings, each containing 133,760 square-feet of Class A office space and an associated parking structure. The second is the La Frontera Square mixed-use project on Kouri Avenue, which consists of 349 multi-family units, 45,234 square feet of non-residential uses, and associated parking structures. The western portion of La Frontera is also expected to develop as mixed-use medium density.

Land Use Inventory

Section Theme

The Planning and Community Development Department and the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division conducted a land use inventory in March of 2009. This inventory provides detailed information on each existing land use.

Discussion

Examples for each type of land use are provided below:

Agricultural	Rural lands containing crops and/or pastures
Commercial	Retail, restaurants, personal services, indoor entertainment, hotels
Drainage	Floodways, floodplains, drainage structures
Education Facilities	Schools, technical institutes, vocational training, colleges
Government/Institutional	Government buildings, publicly owned facilities
Industrial	Manufacturing, unenclosed operations, warehousing
Mining	Rock or mineral extraction from the earth
Mixed-Use	A variety of commercial and residential uses
Multi-Family	Apartments, condominiums, townhouses; senior, independent, and assisted living facilities
Office	Professional offices, medical offices
Recreation/ Open Space	Public and private parks, athletic fields, golf courses
Single-Family	Detached residences
Two-Family	Duplexes
Vacant	No land use, unimproved land (not used for agriculture)
Utilities	Electric substations, water and wastewater facilities

The tables below compare the existing land use data to 1998 figures provided in the previous General Plan. It is important to mention that the current method differs slightly from the method used in the previous plan. To resolve this discrepancy, some land uses have been combined to achieve a more accurate contrast to the 1998 data. Moreover, new land use classifications have been included. These new categories include mixed-use, office, mining, utilities, and drainage. Finally, the existing data is considered more reliable due to advances in GIS technology. Nonetheless, an accurate comparison between the two reporting periods has been achieved.

Figure 5.1 Existing Land Uses 1998/2009¹

Including City Limits and ETJ (Greater Round Rock)

Land Use	1998			2009		
	Acres	% of Developed Acres	% of Total Acres	Acres	% of Developed Acres	% of Total Acres
Single-Family	8,047	66.0%	20.1%	11,347	48.3%	29%
Two-Family	176	1.4%	0.4%	213	0.1%	0.5%
Multifamily	246	2.0%	0.6%	614	2.6%	1.6%
Commercial	1,169	9.6%	2.9%	1,720	7.3%	4.4%
Industrial ²	783	6.4%	1.9%	780	3.3%	2%
Government/ Institutional	369	3.0%	0.9%	792	3.4%	2%
Education Facilities	393	3.2%	0.9%	948	4.0%	2.4%
Recreation & Open Space	1,008	8.3%	2.5%	3,850	16.4%	9.9%
Mixed-Use	-	-	-	15	0.0%	0.0%
Office	-	-	-	541	2.3%	1.4%
Mining	-	-	-	1,301	5.5%	3.3%
Utilities	-	-	-	207	0.1%	0.1%
Drainage	-	-	-	1,158	4.9%	3%
Total Developed Acres³	12,191	100%	30.4%	23,486	100%	60.1%
Agriculture	10,554	n/a	26.3%	5,949	n/a	15.2%
Vacant	17,385	n/a	43.3%	9,628	n/a	24.6%
Total Acres^{3,4}	40,130		100%	39,063		100%

Source: City of Round Rock Planning and Community Development Department

Land Use Analysis: City Limits & ETJ

Section Theme

Significant changes in land use occurred in the past decade. The most notable change was an increase in developed acreage. Including the ETJ, the amount of developed land nearly doubled since the last General Plan.

¹ This table reflects land use only. It does not necessarily correspond to zoning classifications.

² The decrease of 3 acres between 1998 and 2009 is due to redevelopment.

³ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

⁴ The decrease in total acreage between 1998 and 2009 is due to ETJ exchanges with Georgetown, Hutto, and Pflugerville.

Discussion

The largest land use in the City remained residential (single-family, multi-family, and two-family), accounting for 51%. The largest sum of new residential acreage was added to the single-family classification (3,300 acres; a 41% increase). The single-family housing stock accounts for approximately 93% of the residential total. This statistic is comparatively larger than the national average of 67%, as reported by the American Planning Association in 2006.

The fastest growing segment of residential land use was multi-family. There was an approximately 150% increase in the amount of land devoted to multi-family use in comparison to the previous General Plan. This trend can be explained by market demand for a diverse housing stock. Clearly, single-family development will remain the predominant residential land use in Round Rock. Nevertheless, the planned college facilities and a previous shortage have likely generated a need for additional multi-family housing units.

To further explain the change in developable area, agricultural land use has decreased by 43% since the last General Plan. As the City develops, it is expected that agricultural land use will continue to be converted to other uses, a trend which is present in communities throughout the country.

The amount of land utilized for commercial uses increased by 47%. As residential land use increased, a market demand for additional commercial uses was created. As noted previously, the Round Rock Premium Outlets and IKEA have been recently developed and are located on the east side of IH-35 adjacent to University Boulevard. Large shopping centers anchored by principal tenants (i.e., HEB Plus at the northwest corner of US-79 and A.W. Grimes Boulevard; Wal-Mart at the northeast corner of Red Bud Lane and US-79; and JCPenny at the southeast corner of University Oaks Boulevard and University Boulevard) all contributed to this increase. Part of this increase was also due to a concerted effort by the City to attract destination retail uses to diversify the community's economic base.

Land used for educational facilities also increased. The land devoted to education grew from 393 acres to 948 acres, a 141% increase. This can be explained partially by increased residential development as well as the development of the three higher education facilities in the northeast section of the City. As the population expands in the future, essential uses such as education will continue to increase.

Recreation and open space land use increased dramatically since 1998. In fact, there was a 281% increase in the amount of land utilized for recreation and open space.⁵ This increase represented the fastest growing land use segment over the last 10 years. Again, this correlates to the marked residential expansion. As per the City's subdivision ordinance, residential developers are required to donate land or make a payment in-lieu of parkland. The City also acquired two large tracts for passive park uses, and Williamson County has developed a major regional park in the Round Rock ETJ.

⁵ This percentage was generated by a GIS analysis conducted by the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department.

In addition to public parkland, residential developers commonly provide private recreational facilities that are later deeded to homeowners' associations. This often meets the local or neighborhood parkland requirements. A more detailed examination of public parkland is provided in Chapter 10, Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space.

Zoning Inventory: City Limits

Section Theme: Analysis of Zoning Acreage

Discussion

Several land uses are located in zoning districts in which they are not the primary uses allowed in those districts. Most notably, these include schools, which are permitted in residential zoning districts, and the variety of uses found in PUDs. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of a PUD zoning district is to accommodate innovative land use concepts that would not typically be provided for in standard zoning districts, such as a mix of residential and commercial uses, alternative architectural design standards, and/or creative site design.

Approximately one-fourth of the City's zoned acreage is designated as a PUD. This can be considered a positive land use trend since the purpose of PUD zoning is to encourage an innovative approach to land use design. While traditional zoning sets a minimum standard for the built environment, PUDs implement a design that would not otherwise be achieved through standard regulation. They also take compatibility with surrounding land uses into account and impose necessary use and design standards. Zoning for PUDs has been utilized for residential, non-residential, and mixed-use developments throughout the City.

The largest portion of the City's zoned acreage remains single-family residential, accounting for approximately 38% (44% in 1998). The single-family standard lot (SF-2) district is by far the most prevalent single-family zoning, accounting for 94%. The SF-2 district consists of low-density, detached housing on minimum lot sizes of 6,500 square feet. Neighborhoods with this zoning can be found throughout the City.

The zoning acreage for single-family land uses can be considered fairly representative of existing conditions. However, the percentage of land utilized for single-family uses would decrease if school and church uses were excluded from the zoning acreage.

Vacant lands currently zoned for single-family uses are not prevalent. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the overwhelming majority of land zoned for single-family has been developed.

It is important to note that Senior Residential (SR) is a new zoning district which was established after the previous General Plan. There have recently been two new facilities developed using the standards established by the SR district: the Bluff's Landing Senior Village west of A.W. Grimes Boulevard and Parkwood Meadows on Chisholm Trail just south of Round Rock Avenue. The remainder of the residential zoning categories account for a very small amount of the City's zoning acreage.

The General Commercial zoning districts (C-1 & C1a) contain the largest portion of the City's zoned acreage for non-residential standard zoning designations. Parcels with a C-1 designation are typically located along the IH-35 frontage roads, Palm Valley Boulevard (US-79), and Mays Street. C-1 is the City's oldest existing commercial zoning district and includes (but is not limited to) permitted uses such as retail, restaurant, hotel, and auto service facilities.

Figure 5.2 Zoning within City Limits (2009)

	Acres	% Zoned Area	% of City Limits
Zoned (see below)	17,622	100.00%	79.96%
Unzoned	959	n/a	4.35%
ROW	3,458	n/a	15.69%
Total City Limits	22,039	n/a	100.00%
Zoned Area:			
Residential:	7,499	42.55%	34.03%
<i>SF-R (Single-Family Rural)</i>	58	0.33%	0.26%
<i>SF-1 (Single-Family Large Lot)</i>	367	2.08%	1.66%
<i>SF-2 (Single-Family Std. Lot)</i>	6,322	35.87%	28.68%
<i>TF (Two-Family)</i>	302	1.71%	1.37%
<i>TH (Townhome)</i>	9	0.05%	0.04%
<i>MF (Multifamily)</i>	428	2.43%	1.94%
<i>SR (Senior Residential)</i>	13	0.08%	0.06%
Commercial:	1,973	11.20%	8.95%
<i>C-1 (General Commercial)</i>	1,761	10.00%	7.99%
<i>C-1A (Limited Commercial)</i>	125	0.71%	0.57%
<i>C-2 (Neighborhood Commercial)</i>	69	0.39%	0.31%
<i>MU-1A (Mixed Use)</i>	18	0.10%	0.08%
Office/ Public Facilities:	654	3.71%	2.97%
<i>OF (Office)</i>	80	0.46%	0.37%
<i>BP (Business Park)</i>	0	0.00%	0.00%
<i>PF-1 (Public Facilities-Low Intensity)</i>	17	0.10%	0.08%
<i>PF-2 (Public Facilities - Med. Intensity)</i>	3	0.02%	0.02%
<i>PF-3 (Public Facilities - High Intensity)</i>	553	3.14%	2.51%
Industrial:	1,510	8.57%	6.85%
<i>I (Industrial)</i>	46	0.26%	0.21%
<i>LI (Light Industrial)</i>	1,464	8.31%	6.64%
Other:	5,985	33.97%	27.16%
<i>AG (Agricultural)</i>	252	1.43%	1.14%
<i>OS (Open Space)</i>	779	4.42%	3.53%
<i>PUD (Planned Unit Development)</i>	4,955	28.12%	22.48%
<i>MI</i>	0	0.00%	0.00%
Total Zoned Area*	17,622	100.00%	79.96%

* Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%.

The main vacant areas currently zoned for light industrial uses are located on either side of IH-35 in the northern section of the City. As the City encourages corporations to locate within municipal boundaries, vacant land zoned for light industrial uses could play a key role. However, the City should examine the need for vacant light industrial land and potentially rezone some of these parcels for other uses where appropriate. In fact, over the last few years, demand for commercial offices and mixed-uses has resulted in the rezoning of significant portions of land from light industrial to commercial and mixed-use.

Municipal Utility Districts

Section Theme

A municipal utility district (MUD) is a political subdivision of the State of Texas whose purpose is to provide water, sewage, drainage, and other services within its boundaries. To establish a MUD, a majority of property owners in the proposed district must petition the State for its establishment.

There are several MUDs located within the City's ETJ, which account for a population of approximately 50,000 (MUDs are not included within the City boundary, and their populations are therefore not reflected in City population figures). Within the next ten years, most of these MUDs will not be annexed into the City because their tax rates exceed the City's tax rate, and annexation would require the City to assume the MUDs' debt.

Discussion

MUDs are primarily created for residential uses. While the MUDs lie outside of the City limits, they impact the planning of the City: MUD residents utilize City services, as well as the City's commercial and business services. Overall, due to the large population that resides in the MUDs, City services are used by a far greater population than just that of the City.

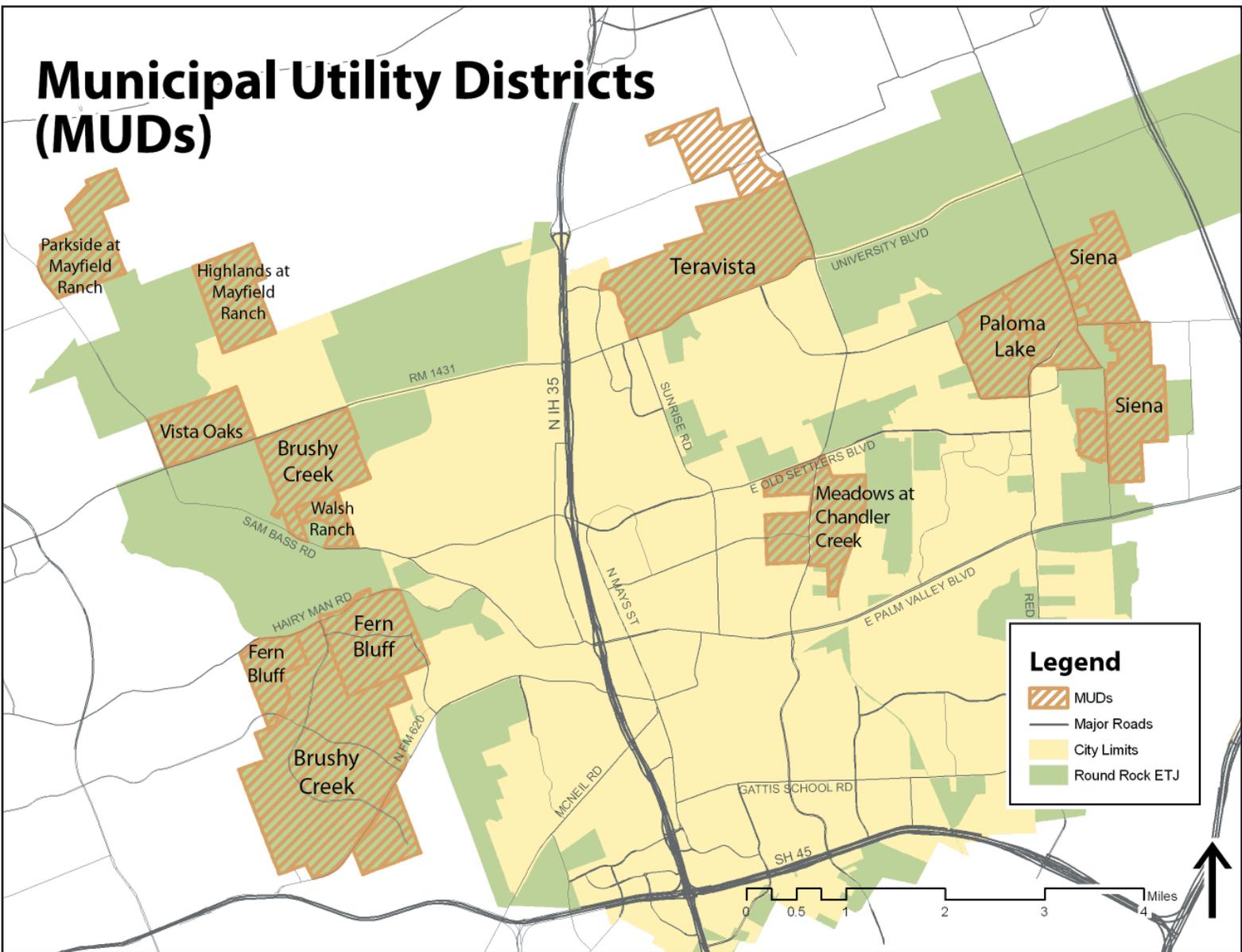
Road and utility infrastructure in MUDs is maintained by either the MUD or Williamson County. Police protection is provided by the county sheriff, and fire services are provided by the newly created Williamson County Emergency Services District #9 (see Chapter 4, Community Facilities and Services for more information).

Many of the MUDs purchase water or wastewater services on a wholesale basis from the City. These wholesale contracts are accounted for in the City's utility system planning.

The MUDs within the City's ETJ include the following:

- Brushy Creek
- Fern Bluff
- Highlands - Mayfield Ranch
- Meadows at Chandler Creek
- Paloma Lake
- Parkside at Mayfield Ranch
- Sienna
- Teravista
- Vista Oaks
- Walsh Ranch

Figure 5.3 Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs)



As shown below, a significant amount of land within the City's ETJ is occupied by MUDs.

Figure 5.4 City, ETJ, and MUD Land Areas

Jurisdiction(s)	Acres	% of Total (City Limits and ETJ)
City Limits Only	22,038	51%
ETJ (excluding City Limits)	20,992	49%
Total	43,030	100%

Jurisdiction(s)	Acres	% of ETJ
MUDs within ETJ	7,336	35%
ETJ excluding MUDS	13,656	65%
Total ETJ	20,992	100%

Summary

Round Rock grew rapidly in the last 10 years while diversifying its land use base. Single-family remains the largest land use, but uses such as recreation, commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family have increased considerably. A primary trend in the City's land use changes was the rezoning of industrial land for commercial uses, especially between IH-35 and Sunrise Road.

Approximately 40% of the City and ETJ is undeveloped (27% within the City limits). Additionally, significant vacant land is available for new and relocating industries. The figures and the analysis provided in this chapter can be utilized for guiding future growth. Opportunities for public outreach have been provided to formulate a desired future land use pattern.

Overall, the City is becoming increasingly self-supporting due to the growth of destination retail, universities, and hospitals. This has established a critical mass of educational and medical uses that provide an exceptional opportunity for the development of the local biotechnology industry. Development trends over the last ten years will result in a need for a wider range of housing types. Currently, these developments and trends provide unique opportunities for business development in the destination retail, healthcare, higher education, biotechnology, computer technology, and clean energy fields.

CHAPTER 6

Future Land Use

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Provide a range of employment, housing and lifestyle choices attractive to a diverse range of young professionals, students and empty nesters, as well as families.
2. Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.
3. Support growth and expansion of the business clusters of destination retail, supply chain management, health care, higher education, corporate office and computer technology.
4. Identify and plan for future connectivity and mobility needs and options.

Priority

1. Protect and preserve the natural areas of the City to include parks, floodplains and open spaces.
2. Foster transportation systems that would support the development of major density centers.
3. Ensure there is adequate land to meet future recreational, cultural and open space needs.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for mixed-use development in certain areas of the City.
2. Strong support for promoting land uses that foster a more diversified local economy.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Determining how land will be used in the future is essential in order to provide for well coordinated and efficient development. Land use considerations both effect and are affected by the location of transportation corridors and water and wastewater utilities. Existing land uses and historical patterns of development, including the development that has occurred since the last General Plan, also have a significant effect on future land uses. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM - see Figure 6.2 foldout map at the end of this chapter), which illustrates the general location and amount of a variety of land use types within the current City limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), guides both zoning and infrastructure decisions. The map also indicates various land use types such as residential, commercial, industrial, and open space, and is shaped partly by City policies related to land development. Some of these policies are contained in separately adopted plans which are referenced in this document. Overall, the FLUM is a generalized representation of the future land uses for Round Rock and is not intended to be parcel specific. The FLUM is not a zoning ordinance.

Discussion

Assumptions

This document's future land use section is based upon certain assumptions about conditions which will continue to exist throughout the life of this document. Some of these assumptions are based upon conditions which are not within the control of the City or its residents. Others reflect policy direction from other City plans, including the Strategic Plan. The following list of assumptions includes only those related to the City's future land uses:

- Round Rock will continue to transform into a prosperous midsize city, strengthening its role as a major center of economic activity in Williamson County and the Austin area.
- Higher education campuses, hospitals, and destination retail facilities will play a major role in Round Rock's future growth and development.
- The existing character of the community will be maintained and improved. The established land use patterns and community profile, as detailed in Chapter 5, Existing Land Use, provide the foundation for the FLUM.
- Mixed-use development, which includes a variety of land uses on one site, will continue to be utilized as an alternative development type to auto-dependent, single-use developments. Currently, the only mixed-use zoning district is MU-1a, which was custom designed for southwest downtown, and is not generally applicable to all mixed-use districts. Until the land development codes are amended to incorporate the type of mixed-use development that is deemed appropriate for other areas of

Round Rock, the Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district will be used on a case by case basis.

- The transportation system that serves Round Rock will continue to be integral to the City's economic growth. The City's Transportation Plan includes an arterial roadway system adequate for future growth and is a vital part of the FLUM. The FLUM also includes a potential commuter rail link to Capital Metro's new commuter rail system and a proposed commuter rail line that would run through Round Rock, and which would extend through Austin and down to San Antonio. While these links are not feasible today, they are identified for future planning.
- The *Round Rock Downtown Master Plan* will provide the policy direction for the development of the City's core.
- *Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community* will provide the policy direction for the City's open space and park resources.
- New or proposed uses shall be evaluated against the goals and objectives of all adopted City plans.
- Conflicts between land use activities will be minimized; this includes the protection of single-family residential areas from higher intensity uses.
- The FLUM is not parcel specific and provides an opportunity for the City to remain flexible in dealing with matters of community design. Through this flexibility, creativity and diversity in land use planning will be encouraged.

Initiatives to Shape the Future

Section Theme

Several land use initiatives will be very important to strengthen Round Rock's quality of life and economic vitality, as envisioned in the Strategic Plan. These initiatives will be used to shape the future of Round Rock.

Discussion

Economic Development Trends

Attracting desirable businesses and industries to Round Rock is a major community goal. The City cannot provide the services that its citizens expect without a healthy and robust commercial tax base. Round Rock's citizens have been fortunate to have had such a tax base with the presence of Dell and destination retail. Given the ever-changing nature of the economy, however, City leaders are well aware of the need to diversify the tax base. Overall, the latest job trends have pointed to an emphasis on creativity and "human capital." This emphasis is best illustrated in Round Rock by the location of several new hospitals and higher education campuses in the northeast section of the City.

Round Rock's economic development efforts are targeting health care and biotechnology, continued retail growth, computer systems development, corporate offices, operations and support services, and clean energy.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use is a term which describes several different land uses within one area, or within one building. Prior to the massive population growth it has experienced since 1970, Round Rock was a small, compact, and pedestrian-oriented city. With its proximity to Austin and IH-35, and with the increased use of the automobile, the City has grown into a network of areas defined by single land uses, connected by a hierarchical street system. The most recent trends in urban planning and land development have focused on reducing the need for auto-dependence by emphasizing mixed-use development. While it is not expected that mixed-use development will become the predominant development type across the City, it is expected that it will be a significant alternative to current development types, and is therefore an important focus on the FLUM.

The results from the General Plan Phone Survey (see Chapter 2, Public Input for more information) are an important indication that significant public support exists for mixed-use development. Aside from public support, however, there are several emerging issues that warrant a greater emphasis on mixed-use development. These include allowing for greater density, reducing commute times, reducing energy consumption, improving individual health, providing for community cohesiveness, and meeting the demands of the marketplace.

Round Rock has made efforts to enhance specific areas of the City to provide for mixed-use development. The *Southwest Downtown Plan* was developed to take advantage of the city's original, compact infrastructure for this type of pedestrian-oriented development. The plan established a mixed-use zoning district with design guidelines, including streets and circulation, parking, civic design, utilities, and drainage. The plan was adopted by the City Council in February of 2005. A portion of the street, sidewalk, and drainage improvements envisioned by the plan have been completed and a significant amount of new development has occurred. In addition, the City has built several municipal facilities in the southwest downtown area and has plans to build more.

Thus far, the most ambitious attempt at promoting mixed-use development has been the proposal for the Avery family property in the City's northeast section. The Avery Centre project is the result of a proposal by the landowners to develop approximately 900 acres with an extensive mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, anchored by medical and academic facilities, and potentially serviced by mass-transit. The plan, adopted as a PUD by the City Council in 2008, contains unique street design standards, building setbacks, and mixed-use districts, including a mixed-use "city center." The street design includes bike lanes that are separated from the road and roadway crossings, and which are designed specifically with pedestrian safety and comfort in mind. With the location of several higher education campuses and hospital facilities immediately adjacent, the Avery Centre project is expected to become a significant focus of development and community activity in the future.

Transit Initiatives

Efforts to establish commuter rail service to downtown Austin have begun to make progress in recent years. In 2004, Capital Metro received voter approval for a commuter rail line

between Leander and downtown Austin. In response, Round Rock, in cooperation with Georgetown, has studied the feasibility of creating a rail link to the Capital Metro line. Beginning in Georgetown, the proposed 16-mile rail link would travel along the existing Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) line to the SH-45 corridor before tying into the Capital Metro line north of the Howard Lane Station and east of the Lakeline Station. The proposed rail link may also have the potential of serving Pflugerville.

A feasibility report for the rail link was recently completed. The results of this report conclude that the rail link is not feasible today for a number of reasons.

Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities are typically large landowners in a community, and to fulfill their mission, they often influence nearby land development. This development activity can have an impact on the adjacent neighborhoods and even on the entire City. In addition, students have unique housing and recreational needs. While some colleges and universities are primarily commuter schools, the potential for students to live in close proximity to the schools in apartments or single-family neighborhoods should be considered. Nevertheless, the presence of students can be of great concern to residents due to differences in lifestyles and the conversion of houses and apartments to student occupancy, often accompanied by increases in traffic, noise, and parking problems.

The number of unrelated persons living in a single-family residence should be restricted, within constitutional constraints, to avoid neighborhood deterioration. In addition, special standards for student apartments should be developed to accommodate student housing in appropriate locations.

Developing a close working relationship with the schools is the best way to ensure that student-based issues are satisfactorily addressed. Overall, working together will help to identify common interests and avoid problems becoming too unwieldy. Other Texas cities with institutions of higher learning can provide examples of how such collaboration can occur.

Located within the City limits of Round Rock are the following colleges and universities:

- Austin Art Institute
- Austin Community College
- Texas A&M Health Science Center
- Texas State University

Utility Issues

Land development is limited primarily by the availability of transportation, water, wastewater, electricity, and communications infrastructure. Within the area served by Round Rock's water and wastewater system, it is relatively easy to determine the land use potential of a tract of land (the City's water supply system is fully described in Chapter 9, Water & Wastewater). A portion of the planning area contained in the FLUM, however, is not located

within the City's service area for water and wastewater. Some of this area includes other water and wastewater service providers (Jonah Water Special Utility District is the largest).

Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) in the Round Rock area generally have been formed with a consent agreement that provides for City oversight of MUD land uses so that land development issues are not a concern. When water and/or wastewater services are within the sole control of a service provider other than a MUD or the City, development is largely in the control of the service provider. Most often, these service providers have been established to provide services for rural development, and they cannot currently provide the level of service required for urban development. Water and wastewater utility service providers are typically granted a service area by the State of Texas, giving them the sole right to provide utility services within a specific geographic area.

When these service areas border the outer edges of Round Rock's planning area, they affect the City's ability to grow into parts of its ETJ. Land that may be suitable in terms of location and roadway infrastructure may not easily be developed because of the lack of water or wastewater utility infrastructure. While efforts can be made to negotiate terms of service with these utility providers, the lack of adequate service levels in the meantime can be a significant hindrance to development. Working with the Jonah Water SUD will be critical for developing the growing northeast area.

Implementation

Section Theme

The FLUM establishes the general distribution, location, and extent of land uses, including open space, parkland, floodplain, residential, commercial, mixed-use, business park, public facilities, industrial, and mining. The map is a living document with the flexibility to be amended to reflect changing development trends. The criteria established below for specific land use categories are intended to provide general direction to policymakers and others responsible for helping to shape the City's future. Individual zoning changes and original zoning assignments must also meet the criteria established in the Code of Ordinances.

Discussion

Land Use Categories & Location Criteria

1) Open Space

This land use designation applies to areas supporting recreational and open space uses, and also includes designated floodplain areas. Open space is defined as any parcel, tract of land, or water feature that is unimproved or developed for recreational purposes. This designation identifies areas that are scenic in nature or inappropriate for the construction of buildings. Open space can be improved through the development of recreational trails and other open space amenities.

Floodplain refers to land adjoining a watercourse or drainage way that is covered by a specific amount of floodwater in a storm. Floodplains consist of the floodway and other areas that are subject to inundation. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sets the standards for floodplain designation.

2) Residential

Residential land use primarily supports tracts with dwelling units. The land itself may be improved or unimproved. The FLUM has been designed to protect and enhance existing single-family neighborhoods and to minimize potential land use conflicts that may occur with future development.

Development permitted in the residential land use category includes:

- Semi-rural single-family housing
- Single-family detached housing
- Two-family housing (duplexes)
- Multi-family housing (with location criteria)
- Neighborhood commercial (with location criteria)
- Office (as a transitional use)

Each of these permitted uses must be appropriately located so as to minimize land use conflicts. Location criteria have been developed for this purpose. Ultimately, a location decision is made through the zoning process, but the location criteria are intended to provide general guidance to assist with zoning.

Multi-Family Location Criteria

Low Density Multi-Family: Within areas designated for residential on the FLUM, this multi-family land use allows for the compatible development of multi-family units abutting or in close proximity to single-family uses by means of design standards and a density requirement not to exceed twelve (12) units per acre. In order to qualify for this density, the following conditions must be met:

- Primary access allowed via arterial roadway or collector street; and
- Direct access to abutting single-family neighborhoods is discouraged unless integrated as part of a master planned community or as required to implement transportation network policy objectives; and
- Low density multi-family developments shall not be located immediately adjacent to other low density multi-family developments; they must be separated by open space such as parkland or natural features.

Medium Density Multi-Family: Within areas designated for residential on the FLUM, this multi-family land use allows for the development of multi-family units not to exceed twenty (20) units per acre and 400 units per development. In order to qualify for this density, the following conditions must be met:

- Primary access allowed via arterial roadway; and
- Located near existing or planned commercial nodes (areas of commercial activity); and
- New medium density multi-family buildings shall not be located within five hundred (500) feet of any single-family neighborhood or one-half (1/2) mile of any existing or zoned medium density or urban multi-family use.

Urban Multi-Family: Within areas designated as mixed-use or commercial/multi-family on the FLUM, this multi-family land use allows for the development of high density multi-family units; exact densities will be determined by means of a Planned Unit Development (PUD). Limited commercial uses are permitted on the same tract or in the same building as the multi-family development. In order to qualify for this density, the following conditions must be met:

- If the tract is located within the downtown mixed-use area, projects must conform to the Downtown Plan;
- If the tract is located within the Dell/La Frontera and the Avery Centre mixed-use areas, projects must be substantiated by a unified development plan;
- Tracts designated for commercial/multi-family are considered appropriate for a mixture of commercial and multi-family uses and therefore must be substantiated by a unified development plan or be located within an area containing an appropriate mixture of land uses.

3) Neighborhood Commercial and Office

Neighborhood commercial development generally serves neighborhood users, and is designed to address the commercial needs of local residents and office development. Office development is deemed compatible with neighborhoods because its hours of operation generally occur during the day, its activities are usually not disruptive to residents, and it can be used as a transitional use between higher intensity uses and single-family development. In order to minimize potential land use conflicts between higher intensity land uses and single-family residential neighborhoods, compatibility standards are included in the City's Zoning Ordinance. Within areas designated for residential land use, the following criterion determines appropriate locations for neighborhood commercial development:

The tract is located at the intersection of a collector street and an arterial roadway or at the intersection of two arterial roadways, and it serves local residents.

4) Commercial

Commercial land use consists of enterprises involved in the buying and selling of goods and services. The following is a discussion of the types of commercial land uses in the City.

General Commercial Location Criteria

General commercial development requires that all commercial activities occur within an enclosed structure. Some examples of general commercial development include grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments. Typically, large-scale commercial

developments provide a variety and depth of goods and services not available in neighborhood shopping areas. The development of such large-scale projects suggests that commercial businesses within Round Rock are serving not only the local population, but also drawing consumers from an area that extends well beyond the City's Planning Area. The following criteria determine appropriate locations for general commercial development:

- The tract is located at the intersection of two arterial roadways.
- The tract is an extension of an established commercial area that does not conflict with adjacent residential uses.

Although an area which fits this location criterion is to be designated on the FLUM as commercial, it is not deemed appropriate for commercial zoning until the necessary infrastructure, including the arterial roadways, is in place. Though the FLUM is to be used as a guide for zoning decisions, it does not provide all of the information that should be taken into consideration in order to make such decisions.

Highway Commercial Location Criteria

Highway commercial development includes all of the uses allowed within the general commercial category, in addition to uses which serve as regional centers of commerce. Examples include IKEA and the Round Rock Premium Outlets at the intersection of IH-35 and University Boulevard and the automobile dealerships near the intersection of IH-35 and FM 3406/Old Settlers Boulevard.

- The tract has frontage along IH-35, and access to the frontage road.

Special Commercial Location Criteria

There are some special areas identified with particular location and design criteria: properties with historic, Chisholm Trail and/or Palm Valley overlay zoning, and properties identified in the Downtown Master Plan.

5) Mixed-Use

The mixed-use category includes properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, business park, institutional, and residential, can be combined in a single building or on a single or adjacent site. The close proximity of the different land uses allows for increased pedestrian use. Mixed-use developments function best when they are located in areas where transportation infrastructure efficiently provides high traffic volumes, ideally resulting from public transit. Employment centers or other regional "draws" typically provide the anchor.

A mixed-use site should be an integrated and functional development project with a comprehensive physical design. A site may include contiguous properties. Mixed-use is one method of accommodating the projected increase in population and commerce in Round Rock while still maintaining high quality development projects. This type of development offers benefits in energy use and reduces costs associated with the construction and provision of infrastructure. It also provides a wide range of residential options to address the needs of the changing demographic nature of the community.

This land use designation is intended to encourage residential development in conjunction with commercial development or redevelopment. Redevelopment refers to the construction of new development on previously developed parcels. Higher densities may be appropriate for locations that are well separated from single-family neighborhoods and located at the junction of arterial roadways. Mixed-use areas are generally zoned as PUDs. However, new zoning districts may be needed for specific mixed-use areas.

The FLUM identifies three distinct areas as suitable for mixed-use development:

- **Downtown Mixed-Use** – This area includes the City’s historic downtown, bordered by IH-35 on the west, the Union Pacific railway line on the south, and Brushy Creek on the north and east. A portion of the area extends north of the creek along Mays Avenue to just north of Palm Valley Boulevard (US-79). While the area is in transition from its original function as the commercial center of Round Rock and older residential neighborhoods, the level of mixed-use anticipated in this area is the least intense of the three areas. The downtown mixed-use area is further defined by the Downtown Master Plan.

Some general characteristics of the type of development appropriate in this area are: a relatively concentrated cluster of low-rise residential and commercial buildings, reaching no more than three stories in height, and extending across a limited number of city blocks; buildings constructed in close proximity to sidewalks; an extensive sidewalk system that is fully integrated and with all points easily accessible by walking (due to the relatively small size of blocks); and parking located on the street or in centralized parking lots and multi-level garages. The area north of US-79 and west of Mays Street is suited for higher intensity development.

- **Dell/La Frontera Mixed-Use** – The Dell/La Frontera mixed-use area is defined by the location of the Dell employment campus located near the northeast corner of IH-35 and SH-45, the area along Greenlawn Boulevard south of SH-45 at the southeast corner of IH-35 and SH-45, and the La Frontera commercial development located at the northwest corner of IH-35 and SH-45. Between the Dell facility and IH-35 is a shopping center dominated by retail and restaurant establishments, but there is no direct connection between the two areas. The La Frontera development currently has significant commercial, office, hotel, hospital, and other types of development, in addition to multi-family dwelling units. However, large portions of the site remain undeveloped.

Although the La Frontera development has a mixture of uses, it is not pedestrian-oriented. The traffic volumes at this location generated by the two highways and any future mass transit connection will eventually justify even higher density development with a large percentage of people living and working at the same location. Redevelopment is expected to increase the mixed-use potential of the site.

Some general characteristics of the type of development appropriate in this area are: a concentrated cluster of mid- to high-rise residential and commercial buildings, reaching up to twelve stories in height, and extending across several city blocks; some buildings that are built to abut sidewalks, with significant setbacks possible,

in conjunction with plazas and open spaces; on-street parking where appropriate, with the majority of parking requirements accommodated by garages; areas that are served directly by arterial and collector roadways, with a significant potential for mass transit; and a moderate percentage of residents who both live and work in the area.

- **Avery Mixed-Use** – The Avery mixed-use area is located along A.W. Grimes Boulevard, south of its intersection with University Boulevard. A potential future light-rail route or other mass transit route passes through the area to the east of A.W. Grimes Boulevard. Campuses for Austin Community College, Texas State University, and the Texas A&M Health Science Center are located adjacent to the area, as well as Seton Medical Center. Scott & White Hospital is located to the west along University Boulevard. A public transit loop connecting this area to the multi-modal transit facility currently under construction at the corner of West Main and Brown Streets should be investigated in order to provide better public access to the hospitals and higher education facilities in this area.

Although no development of the commercial and residential areas has yet occurred, the plan for the area proposes the following: a compact cluster of mid- to high-rise residential and commercial buildings, averaging six or more stories in height, and extending across several city blocks; buildings that abut sidewalks, and an extensive sidewalk system that is fully integrated into the development; some on-street parking, with the vast majority of parking garage-based; arterial roadways and a mass-transit line that directly serve the area; a high percentage of residents who both live and work in the area.

6) Commercial/Multi-Family

Tracts designated as commercial/multi-family are considered appropriate for a mixture of commercial and multi-family uses, and therefore must be substantiated by a unified development plan or located within an area containing an appropriate mixture of land uses.

7) Business Park

The business park land use classification is intended to accommodate, in a campus setting, a limited group of light industrial, research and development, and administrative facilities subject to specific development standards. Business park developments are to be located on land which is well served by the transportation and utility systems.

Some business park developments may be located near residential neighborhoods; therefore, it is necessary that all activities, including light manufacturing, be carried out in a wholly enclosed building. All related activities should be carried out in a manner that is not injurious or offensive to the occupants of surrounding properties.

Within land designated as suitable for business park development, limited commercial support facilities may be permitted. Examples of support facilities include personal services, such as daycare centers and health clubs. Other support facilities may include branch banks and small restaurants. The northeast area has a significant potential for

business park development due to the large amount of open land and its proximity to the higher education campuses and Seton Medical Center. These new areas will also replace industrial land under pressure to convert to commercial and office uses in the area south of University Boulevard between IH-35 and Sunrise Road.

8) Industrial

Land designated for industrial use should accommodate the manufacturing, production, and processing of consumer goods. Examples of uses permitted in this category include manufacturing and assembly operations, food processing, and warehouse operations. The Northeast Plan supplement to the City of Round Rock General Plan 2000 (i.e., the previous version of this Plan) adjusted the expectations for much of the industrial land use areas along the northern portion of the IH-35 corridor. This adjustment was in response to changing market conditions and development pressure being placed on this land, particularly to the east of IH-35. The Northeast Plan supplement resulted in a change in land use designation from industrial to commercial. This change was part of a reassessment of the economic base of Round Rock and resulted in significant commercial development where industrial development had been planned but remained undeveloped for decades.

Industrial development is still desirable and areas designated for that use remain on the FLUM. However, the business park land use designation, which provides for higher quality industrial uses, has been expanded in order to accommodate the needs of research and development and medically-related businesses.

9) Public Facilities

The public facilities land use category applies to government buildings and large institutions, such as hospitals and medical centers, high schools, and universities.

10) Mining

This land use category applies to all activities that involve land excavation for the purpose of extracting minerals and similar substances. The land included in this category, all of which is located in northwest Round Rock along IH-35, represents the long-term mining activities of Texas Crushed Stone, Co. The City and Texas Crushed Stone, Co. recently negotiated the formation of a special industrial district that guarantees the company the right to continue its quarry operations on the property. In exchange, the City annexed 579 acres for non-mining uses to protect single-family neighborhoods south of FM-1431 from mining encroachment.

Future Land Use Map Policies

Section Theme

Since the designation of future land uses is general in nature, interpretations are required to determine specific zoning districts appropriate to various locations, and how to amend the FLUM as necessary.

Discussion

Interpretation Policies

The FLUM designates the proposed general distribution and location of a variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, business park, industrial, mixed-use, parkland, open space, and floodplain.

The following policies are recommended to ensure that development is in accordance with the FLUM to the greatest extent possible:

- The FLUM depicts planned land uses for the community. The map establishes the general pattern of future land use as appropriate for achieving the community's goals and objectives.
- The text in this chapter provides a more detailed explanation of the land use categories depicted on the FLUM and provides location criteria to guide decisions regarding the zoning of land.
- The official copy of the FLUM is available for review at the Planning and Community Development Department. The boundaries of land use categories represented on the official map should be used to determine the appropriate land use category.
- In accordance with Section 213.005 of the *Texas Local Government Code*, the FLUM contains the following statement in a clearly visible format: "A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries."
- Providing a zoning designation to a specific tract of land is inappropriate without due consideration given to the land use category assigned by the FLUM, and an analysis of existing transportation facilities and utility infrastructure which serve the site and abutting uses.

The FLUM is not the City's official zoning map. Rather, it is a guide for decisions concerning future land use patterns. The FLUM is primarily implemented through zoning and subdivision ordinances, the construction of new infrastructure, and through other approved means which fulfill policy objectives, such as programs that establish capital improvement priorities, area studies, and neighborhood plans. The zoning ordinance text and map determine where specific development requirements apply to a particular property.

The FLUM is intended to provide an overall framework for guiding the actions of the different entities responsible for determining the City's future. The FLUM should be reviewed on a regular basis in order for the City to realize the full benefits of coordinated development over the long-term. It should also be used as a guide for community development, which is always broadening and changing in scope.

The following policy is recommended to ensure the integrity of the FLUM:

- Rezoning or other development approvals for land uses not consistent with the FLUM should not be approved until this Plan has been amended as necessary to provide for such land uses.

Amendment Policies

Because community planning is a continuous process, the City's Zoning Ordinance includes a General Plan amendment process. Amendments may be initiated by the City Council through its own motion or through a proper application or petition submitted by any person, firm, or corporation. Amendments are typically substantiated by a comprehensive study that takes into consideration several factors, including but not limited to:

- Changing market conditions;
- Changing demographics;
- Changes to the transportation network;
- Availability of utilities; and
- Surrounding land use changes.

University Avenue and A.W. Grimes Boulevard Growth Corridor

Section Theme

The University Avenue and A.W. Grimes Boulevard Growth Corridor will accommodate the majority of new development in the City, and contains many significant developments that have occurred in Round Rock in recent years.

Discussion

The Corridor is the location of two new major hospitals, Scott & White and Seton, and several medical office and other support facilities. Additionally, the Corridor includes new destination retail development, such as IKEA and the Round Rock Premium Outlets. The presence of this new development and the potential for more development located in this area has resulted in pressure to rezone surrounding undeveloped industrial land.

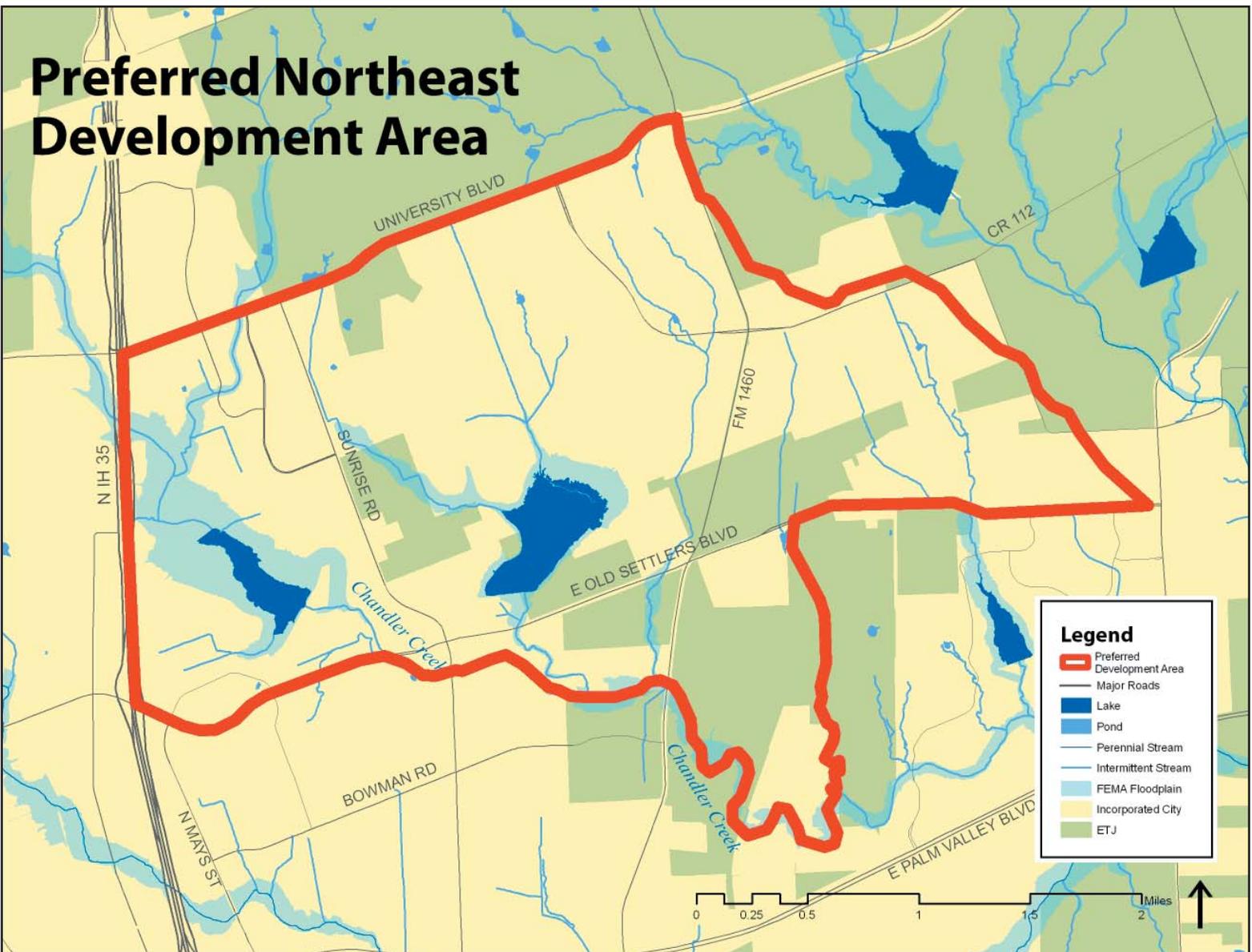
The most significant change in the Corridor has been the establishment of three major higher education facilities: Texas State University, Texas A&M Medical School, and the flagship campus of Austin Community College. These facilities will encourage substantial economic diversification, and together with the new healthcare facilities, will provide unique opportunities for attracting research facilities and associated medical and business uses to the community.

This recent development in the Corridor is expected to have a large economic and demographic impact on the community. It is anticipated that these changes will require a broad range of housing types to accommodate a more diverse population.

Existing and Potential Development Priorities

Two major PUDs, i.e., Avery Centre PUD and University Village PUD, have recently been adopted by the City Council, reserving nearly 1,200 acres around the university and hospital

Figure 6.1 Preferred Northeast Development Area



areas to provide for a wide range of housing and commercial facilities, as well as for medical offices and mixed-use developments. The Teravista MUD will continue to provide a significant number of single-family lots in the corridor. Additionally, a significant amount of new residential development outside of the Corridor will occur in the Paloma Lake and Siena MUDs.

Much of the northwest portion of the City east of A.W. Grimes Boulevard is located primarily in the McNutt Creek Drainage Basin. This area will require significant extensions of wastewater lines north from the existing McNutt Creek wastewater line. In addition, much of the area is located in the Jonah Water SUD, which holds a certificate of convenience and necessity that gives the SUD the sole right to provide water service in that area. The net effect is that development in the McNutt Creek Drainage Basin will require significant time and effort to create a servicing scenario to accommodate urban development including fire flows. The exceptions are the Paloma Lake and Siena MUDs (which are both located in the McNutt Creek Drainage Basin), which already have water and wastewater service and can accommodate approximately 4,000 single-family residential lots and a population of approximately 11,400.

The northeast portion of the City located west of A.W. Grimes Boulevard and north of Old Settlers Boulevard, as well as parts of the northeast portion located east of A.W. Grimes Boulevard and CR – 122, can be served from wastewater lines in the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin; these wastewater lines have been sized for future development. Additionally, City water is now available in the area and major improvements to A.W. Grimes Boulevard are under construction.

The area includes two adopted PUDs, i.e., Avery Centre and University Village, and also contains significant acreage to the south of the Avery Centre PUD and north of Old Settlers Boulevard. The PUDs and adjacent land to the south can accommodate a broad range of development, which includes a variety of housing, i.e., single family lots ranging in size from 5,000 to 20,000 square feet; town homes, multi-family units, assisted living facilities, and student housing. This housing variety addresses the Strategic Plan's emphasis on the need to provide a broad range of housing to serve the community's changing demographics.

These areas also include land for commercial and office development as well as for new urban style mixed-use development. Non-residential uses in the Avery Centre PUD will total over 1 million square feet. The total area available for development within the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin, together with the Paloma Lake, Teravista, and Siena MUDs, can accommodate over 70% of the projected growth over the next ten years.

The areas within the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin located immediately to the east of A.W. Grimes Boulevard, south of the Avery Centre PUD, and north of Old Settlers Boulevard are well suited for business park development. This location, near both Seton Medical Center and the three higher education facilities, provides exceptional opportunities to develop the synergy to support potential research and development and health/science-based businesses.

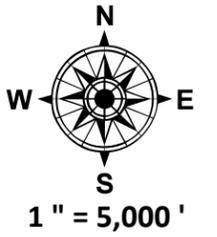
There are also a variety of other tracts within the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin that could be effectively served with City water and wastewater with a comparatively minimal amount of new infrastructure expansion.

Based on the availability of basic infrastructure as well as the location of the medical and higher education facilities in the northeastern portion of the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin, development in the northeast portion of the City should be encouraged in the near future in the areas of the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin shown in Figure 6.1 below.

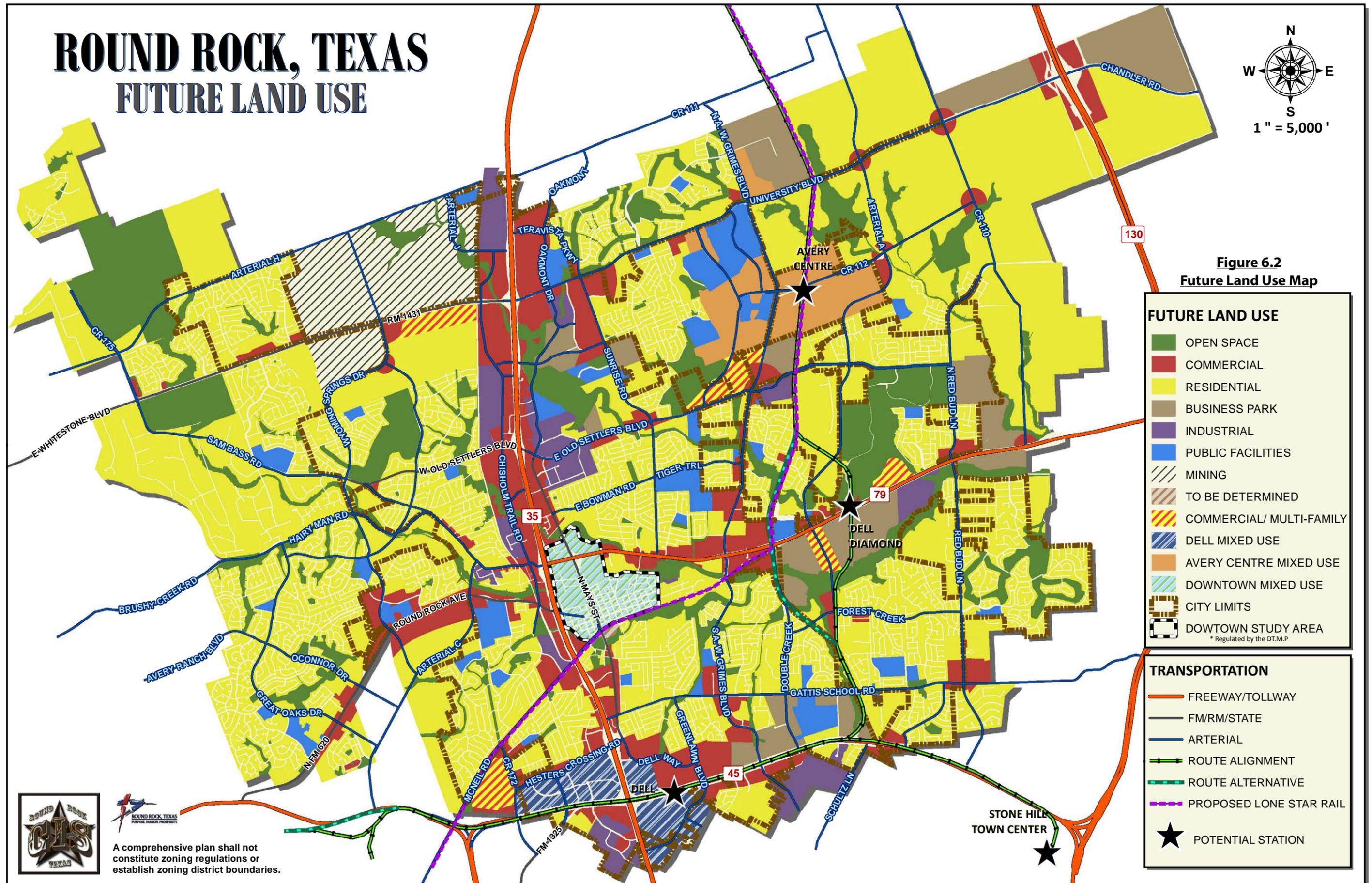
Recommendations

1. Encourage mixed-use development as designated on the FLUM through the development of codes which support mixed-use as well as infrastructure for increased density.
2. Continue to further develop partnerships with Round Rock's higher education institutions.
3. Coordinate development standards in order to accommodate research and development, biotechnology, and technology industries.
4. Resolve utility issues in the ETJ, especially through negotiations with Jonah Water SUD, in order to provide for the level of development designated on the FLUM.
5. City utility services should be extended proactively in order to encourage the most efficient development in accordance with the FLUM.
6. Promote development in the portions of the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin currently served with basic water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure.
7. Continue the policy of limiting multi-family units to 20% of the housing stock. This percentage may be exceeded in mixed- and multi-use areas.

ROUND ROCK, TEXAS FUTURE LAND USE



**Figure 6.2
Future Land Use Map**



FUTURE LAND USE

- OPEN SPACE
- COMMERCIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- BUSINESS PARK
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC FACILITIES
- MINING
- TO BE DETERMINED
- COMMERCIAL/ MULTI-FAMILY
- DELL MIXED USE
- AVERY CENTRE MIXED USE
- DOWNTOWN MIXED USE
- CITY LIMITS
- DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA
* Regulated by the DT.M.P.

TRANSPORTATION

- FREEWAY/TOLLWAY
- FM/RM/STATE
- ARTERIAL
- ROUTE ALIGNMENT
- ROUTE ALTERNATIVE
- PROPOSED LONE STAR RAIL
- POTENTIAL STATION



ROUND ROCK, TEXAS
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

CHAPTER 7



Environment & Quality of Life

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.
2. Ensure there is an adequate, affordable and safe water supply.

Priority

1. Protect and preserve the natural areas of the City to include parks, floodplains and open spaces.
2. Environmentally friendly, sustainable community.
3. Support further development of the clean and renewable energy businesses.
4. Support policies and efforts that will promote public health.
5. Provide for effective management of stormwater.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for water conservation measures, especially for new development.
2. Strong support for improving local household waste recycling services.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

With Round Rock's rapid growth have come numerous environmental challenges, such as increased air pollution and decreased open space. Of particular concern is floodplain protection, which is an integral part of the City's stormwater management system. A

plan for preserving, protecting, and enhancing important assets of Round Rock's natural environment is essential to promoting the City's continued prosperity and high quality of life.

Basis for a New Approach

Section Theme

Historically, as new development proliferated across Round Rock, the preservation of open space became a high priority. In the beginning of 2005, for example, the new Parkland Dedication Ordinance went into effect, which increased parkland dedication requirements and the standards for accepting parkland.

In the coming years, it is essential that the preservation of open space, as well as the incorporation of open space into the community fabric, become a top priority in Round Rock. To this end, the City should address a number of initiatives: (1) preservation of natural spaces; (2) promotion of environmentally sustainable development; (3) promotion of environmentally friendly business practices; and (4) recycling.

Discussion

Preservation of Natural Spaces

As the amount of undeveloped land in Round Rock decreases, the City must preserve its natural spaces. Parkland and open space can greatly enhance the aesthetic value of a community, and can provide abundant sources of recreational and cultural opportunities. They can also provide numerous health benefits, and can often boost surrounding property values (see Chapter 10, Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space for further details). While the protection and expansion of parkland is an essential component of any natural space preservation strategy, the protection of undeveloped sections of the floodplain (beyond park borders), as well as of other environmentally sensitive open spaces across the City is also crucial.

Floodplain protection can be an important part of improving the City's stormwater management system. Through capturing, draining, and detaining stormwater, floodplains can assist in flood control. In both developed and undeveloped parts of floodplains, certain types of native and adaptive vegetation can be protected and/or introduced, which are ideally suited to capture, absorb, and filter stormwater runoff. In developed areas, these types of vegetation can be placed in backyards, planting strips, swales, and medians. Overall, increasing the chances that water is infiltrated is beneficial because runoff can be cleaned naturally and aquifer recharge amounts can be increased. The development of landscaping standards designed to incorporate these types of vegetation should be investigated.

Also crucial to stormwater management is the regulation of chemicals that contaminate stormwater runoff, which commonly flow to creek corridors during storms. Floodplain regulations primarily focus on preserving a creek corridor's ability to convey stormwater runoff while minimizing the flooding risk to life and property. However, to protect creeks

from contamination, the entire creek corridor, including upstream basins, must be protected from pollutants which may be picked up in stormwater runoff. From cleaning detergents to motor oil, a variety of toxic chemicals are released from businesses and households which can severely contaminate creek corridors. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality currently requires that any new construction over the recharge or contributing zone of the Edwards Aquifer must adhere to the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program requirements; these impact a significant portion of Round Rock. The program specifies that new construction must treat stormwater runoff from the site to specific requirements prior to offsite release.

Currently, stormwater management is funded through either a sales tax or an ad valorem property tax. With increased responsibilities for floodplain management and water quality control, the City should pursue a consistent funding source, such as a drainage utility, to accommodate these new responsibilities.

One of Round Rock's most important natural areas and one of its key water sources is the Edwards Aquifer (see Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone map below). With the pressures of increasing local water consumption, significant periods of drought, and contaminated stormwater runoff, protection of the aquifer is crucial.

Overall, at least five major steps can be taken to preserve Round Rock's natural spaces:

- First, the City's development ordinances can be modified so that new development is restricted in natural floodplains and creek corridors for drainage and parkland purposes.¹ The ordinance can also stipulate that developable area cannot be increased through floodplain channelization.
- Second, the selling or transfer of development rights should be investigated, whereby developers who wish to build on environmentally sensitive open space can instead increase densities on developable land or sell their development rights to another developer. These rights can then be used to build higher (than normal) density development on less environmentally sensitive land.²
- Third, to better regulate water use and pollutants which contaminate stormwater runoff, a regional partnership can be developed so that all municipalities which are built on the local aquifer can have a legitimate stake in its protection, and coordinate protection measures.
- Fourth, to enhance the value of Round Rock's parkland and other open spaces, compatible uses, such as residential development or office parks, should be encouraged to locate adjacent to parkland and other open spaces while incompatible uses, such as low-end industry, should be restricted.
- Fifth, streets which provide access to open spaces can be single-loaded in certain instances so that public access to these spaces can be maximized (see Figure 7.2).

¹ The ordinance currently permits portions of new residential and commercial lots to extend into floodplains.

² Increasing development density can often lead to greater profit.

Figure 7.1 Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone

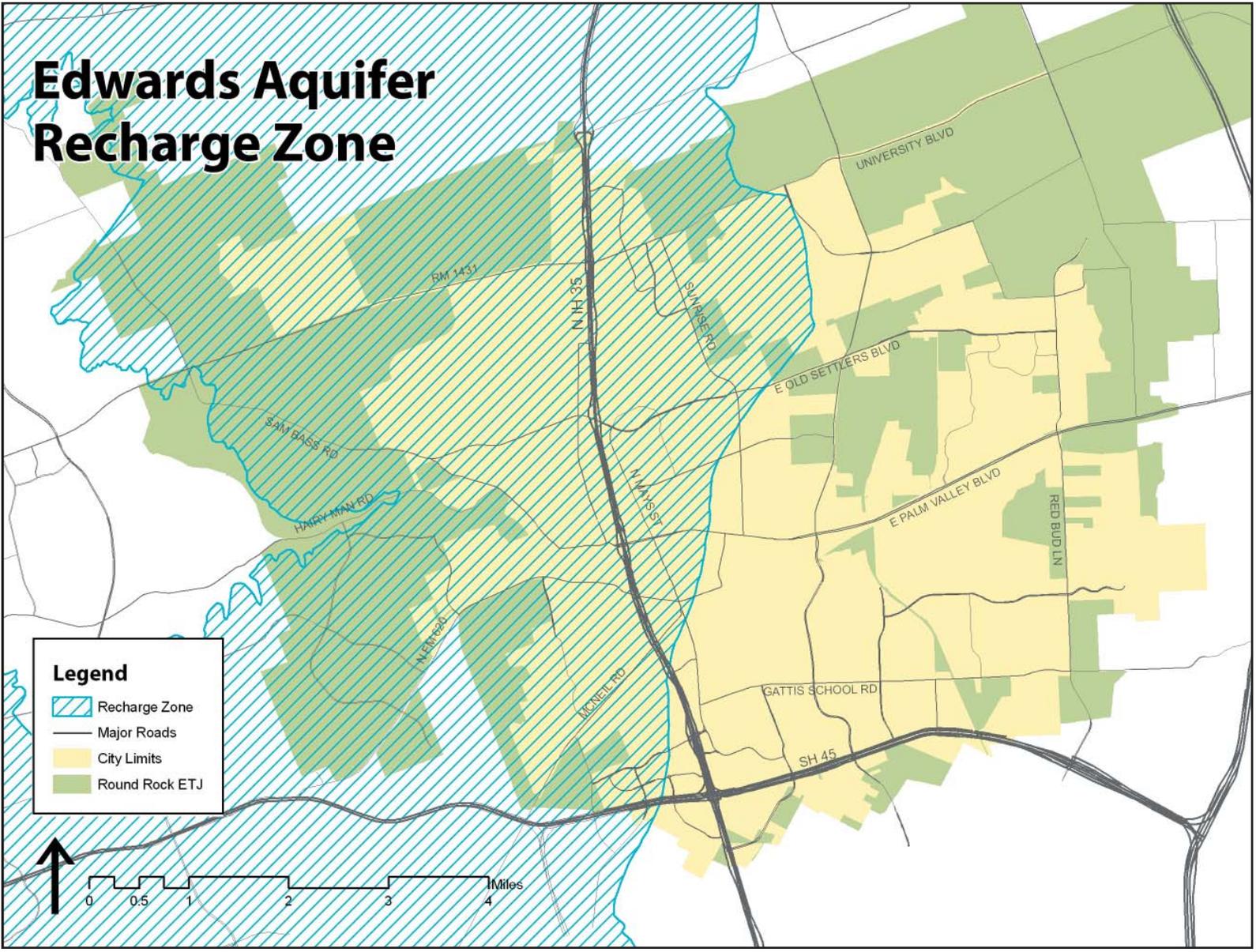
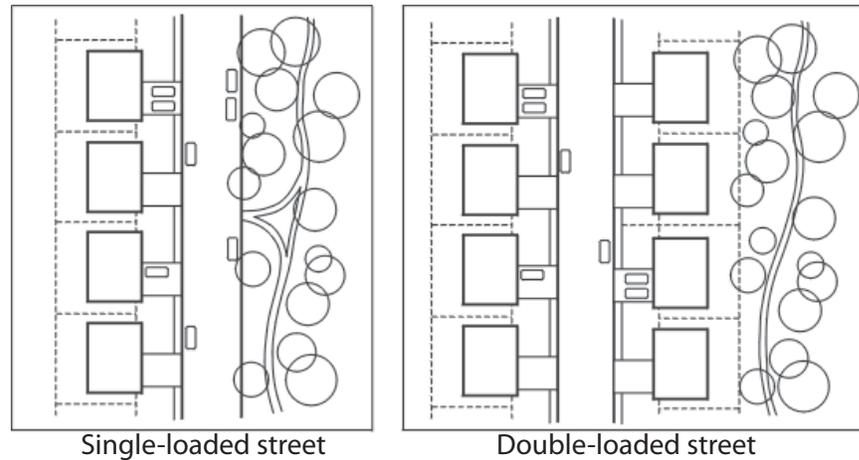


Figure 7.2 Single- and Double-Loaded Streets**Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Development**

It is essential that development in Round Rock, both new and existing, become more environmentally sustainable. One important method of achieving this goal is harnessing energy from renewable resources. To this end, the feasibility of various forms of renewable energy should be reviewed and the appropriate regulations and incentives developed.

The City of Round Rock can partner with local, environmentally-friendly businesses (e.g., REI, which is the first local business to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – LEED – certification), as well as with homeowners associations and other residential organizations, to encourage the adoption of renewable energy technology. One local business which has taken the lead in the adoption of renewable energy technology is Dell, which has built solar panels to help generate electricity for its Round Rock campus.

Figure 7.3 Solar Parking Shades at Dell Computers in Round Rock

Source: <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/10/dell-solar-parking-lot-plug-in-charging-stations.php>

Environmentally efficient building materials can help make development more sustainable. From better home insulation to energy efficient light bulbs, air conditioners, dishwashers, and other appliances, significant amounts of energy and water can be saved through efficient building and landscaping materials. The creation of incentives to encourage the use of such materials in new developments, and to encourage the retrofitting of older properties, should be investigated.

For both commercial and residential properties, environmentally sustainable development can also be promoted through “green” design techniques. The use of “green” roof technology, the maximization of natural lighting, the optimal placement of structures relative to sunlight and wind patterns, and other design features are prime examples of sustainable development. “Green” design can be encouraged by using LEED Green Building Rating System standards whenever possible. “Green” technology is also applicable in landscape design through the use of soil depth standards, native and adaptive vegetation, and efficient irrigation system design.

“Green” design can also be applied on a scale beyond individual homes or buildings to site development considerations. When creating new developments, an emphasis can be placed on pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development and a multi-modal transportation network. Such an emphasis can help to conserve open space and cut down on air pollution. Round Rock can adopt policies which promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development and a variety of transportation options (see Chapter 6, Future Land Use and Chapter 8, Transportation Chapters for further details).

Promotion of Environmentally Friendly Business Practices

Promoting a diverse and vibrant economic base should not have to compromise environmental sustainability. Many businesses can find ways of decreasing pollution and waste without losing money, and often, can even cut down on operating costs.

Increasingly, with the rise of the renewable energy industry, economic growth can foster environmental sustainability. From wind turbine manufacturing plants to solar panel research labs, entire sectors of the local economy can be devoted to sustainability.

The City of Round Rock can promote environmentally friendly business in several ways: it can create policies which encourage all businesses to find methods of becoming more environmentally sustainable, and it can create policies which aim to attract businesses spanning the range of the renewable energy industry, from research to manufacturing to sales. To this end, the modification of landscape regulations and other ordinance requirements to provide for more sustainable development should be investigated.

Recycling

Recycling can play a significant role in an effort to reduce waste produced by Round Rock households and businesses. The recycling of materials, such as organic waste and computer monitors, which are not usually accepted by municipal recycling services, can

be encouraged through alternative recycling programs and methods. Additionally, the recycling of waste from construction sites should be investigated.

The City has just completed a pilot project for curbside recycling. The project was very well received, and the City has developed a proposal for citywide curbside recycling, which could go into effect in the near future.

Increased recycling of wastewater, which involves the re-use of treated wastewater for irrigation, is essential to becoming more environmentally sustainable. As demand for water grows and water supplies become increasingly limited, expanding the City's re-use water capacity is crucial to ensuring that Round Rock has a safe and abundant water supply for years to come. Such an expansion could also eliminate the need to access additional and expensive raw water sources.

Urban Trees

Section Theme

The science of urban tree placement and maintenance is well-known and observed in a growing number of communities. Although care and maintenance of urban trees is a costly task, the value in returned benefits is so significant that a sustainable community cannot be imagined without trees.

Discussion

Properly placed and spaced urban trees in areas like parking lots, along streets, and in parks provide numerous environmental benefits. The following are some examples:

Stormwater Runoff and Flood Control

Trees absorb the first 30% of most precipitation through their leaf system; this moisture never hits the ground. Another percentage (up to 30%) of precipitation is absorbed into the ground and stored in the root structure, and then is transpired into the air. Some of this water also percolates into the aquifer. Stormwater runoff and flooding potential is thereby reduced.

Air Quality Benefits

Trees absorb substantial amounts of auto-generated pollutants, converting harmful gases into oxygen and other beneficial natural gasses. This absorption process helps to decrease levels of respiratory ailments linked to air pollution, such as asthma.

Lower Air Temperatures

Paved surfaces are known to increase air temperatures in developed areas by approximately 3-10 degrees Fahrenheit. Such temperature increases significantly impact energy costs for homeowners and consumers. A properly shaded neighborhood, primarily from trees, can help to offset temperature increases caused by paved surfaces, and can significantly reduce household energy bills.

Connection to Nature

Trees provide a vital habitat for insects and animals, as well a crucial link to nature for pedestrians and motorists.

It is important to ensure that the placement of urban trees is well coordinated with utility placement so that street trees do not conflict with utility lines. The location of new public utility easements will need to be reviewed and modified in some cases to avoid conflicts between utility lines and trees.

The spread of oak wilt disease is of increasing concern in portions of Round Rock. Policies and programs should continue to be developed to assist in combating the spread of this disease in order to maintain community quality.

Recommendations

1. Round Rock's subdivision ordinance should be modified so that new development is restricted in key natural spaces, and that the 100-year floodplain is protected for drainage and parkland purposes. The ordinance should also stipulate that developable area cannot be increased through floodplain channelization unless specifically provided for in a PUD.
2. The selling or transfer of development rights should be investigated, whereby developers who wish to build on environmentally sensitive open space can instead increase densities on developable land or sell their development rights to another developer. These rights can then be used to build higher (than normal) density development on less environmentally sensitive land.
3. Native or adaptive vegetation, soil management, and other physical design solutions should be introduced and/or protected in creek corridors to assist in flood control and maintaining the quality of stormwater runoff. Ordinances should be amended accordingly.
4. Water consumption should be limited through the use of water efficient landscaping, irrigation control measures, plumbing code changes, and other types of water conservation measures. Ordinances should be amended accordingly.
5. To enhance the value of Round Rock's parkland and other open spaces, compatible uses, such as residential development or office parks, should be encouraged adjacent to parkland and open spaces while incompatible uses, such as low-end industry, should be restricted.
6. Streets which provide access to open spaces should be single-loaded where possible and ordinances should be amended to maximize public access to open space.
7. The feasibility of various forms of renewable energy should be reviewed and appropriate regulations and incentives developed to provide developers with the option to choose renewable energy technology.
8. The City and the economic development arm of the Chamber of Commerce should promote ways to encourage Round Rock businesses to partner with the local

community to develop new methods of encouraging the adoption of renewable energy technology.

9. The use of environmentally efficient building materials and energy efficient technology should be promoted where economically viable in new developments, as should the incorporation of such materials into older properties.
10. The City should investigate methods and costs of promoting green design for various types of development and modify ordinances to provide developers with the option to implement green design techniques.
11. Businesses across the City should be encouraged to find ways of becoming more environmentally sustainable and ordinances should be amended to offer developers the choice to use environmentally-friendly technology.
12. Policies should be developed which aim to attract businesses spanning the range of the renewable energy industry.
13. The recycling of materials, such as organic waste and computer monitors, should be promoted through establishing alternative recycling programs and methods.
14. The recycling of waste from construction sites should be investigated.
15. New areas of Round Rock where re-use water is appropriate and economical should be identified, and separate piping systems should be included as part of the development requirements for these areas.
16. The City should develop standards for the proper placement and spacing of urban trees.

CHAPTER 8

Transportation

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Identify and plan for future connectivity and mobility needs and options.

Priority

1. Foster transportation systems that would support the development of major density centers.
2. Develop public transportation plan.
3. Develop funding source mechanisms for mobility and connectivity options.
4. Develop bicycle/pedestrian system.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for a more comprehensive and diversified transportation system that is integrated with neighboring communities' systems.
2. Strong support for improving street appearance with better landscaping, medians, improved lighting, and underground utilities.
3. Strong support for bus and rail service.
4. Strong support for improved signage for public facilities and places/events of interest.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Transportation impacts many facets of our lives. In addition to accessing work, schools, places of worship, recreation, and services, a transportation network provides links to

other neighborhoods, creates a venue for exercise, and can become a community space that facilitates interaction with neighbors. Transportation facilities can also have negative impacts, such as noise, vibration, air and water pollution, and congestion. Overall, an effective transportation system facilitates access while minimizing these negative impacts. The *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004*, along with this General Plan, represent policy determinations made by the local community intended to address these impacts.

The goals and objectives of this Plan are intended to foster a comprehensive City transportation system that serves the needs of all residents. Viable transportation options in this system should include pedestrian, bike, and automobile facilities, along with a recreational hike and bike system. This system should also provide linkages to major public facilities. The development of this infrastructure would require adopting effective land use policies.

Transportation Master Plan

Section Theme: Transportation Master Plan Development

Discussion

To meet the transportation needs of the community, the City contracted with Rust Lichliter/Jameson, now Earth Tech, Inc., to develop a transportation master plan, subsequently adopted by the City Council in January of 1999. *The Transportation Master Plan (1999)* included the following components:

- An evaluation of the existing transportation network
- Current and future land uses and travel patterns, as well as population and employment forecasts
- Identification of environmentally sensitive areas
- Development of roadway design standards
- Facilitation of public awareness and incorporation of citizen participation into the City's planning process
- Identification of the necessary transportation network improvements to provide efficient and safe travel in Round Rock
- Development of a prioritized improvement plan to serve the transportation needs of the community through the development of the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Subsequently, Huggins/Seiler & Associates, LP assisted the City in preparing an update to the *Transportation Master Plan (1999)* to reflect roadway construction progress, refinement of roadway alignments, and changes in City roadway priorities. In addition, the roadway planning table was amended to include updated cost estimates and planning horizons for 2010 and 2020.

The resultant *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004*, which was adopted by the City Council to replace the original *Transportation Master Plan (1999)*, outlines a system of roadways with planning horizons for 2010 and 2020, and a roadway map that supports the anticipated needs of the City through its ultimate development. Overall, the *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004* utilizes technical data to support the goals and objectives of this General Plan.

The *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004* uses travel demand models to estimate existing and future traffic volumes. To be effective, these models must be regularly updated to reflect development and land use changes, which could produce high volumes of traffic that overwhelm a roadway's capacity. While traffic modeling is a useful tool for planning future roadways, it is only one of several factors that must be used for planning. Sound policy decisions are essential for future development. The City considers the design of roadways successful only if the design provides safe conditions for all roadway users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Consequently, significant attention is given to bike and pedestrian design features, such as crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike facilities. The City looks for ways to design transportation facilities that are sensitive to the needs of all users, including citizens with disabilities, as new transportation facilities are developed.

The *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004* includes a number of maps, which are used to plan and construct future roadways. The maps include information such as potential hazardous material sites that could impact roadway construction, as well as the locations of floodplains, wetlands, and the boundaries of the Edwards Aquifer. The plan also includes the ultimate roadway network (URN) and roadway table, which schematically displays the ultimate arterial roadway system and the complete build-out of transportation facilities for the City. The table displays anticipated phased roadway construction for 2010, 2020, and for the ultimate roadway network. In addition, the table outlines ultimate rights-of-way widths. Both the network schematic and the table identify arterials with future bike facilities. These facilities are also mentioned in *Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community*.

The *Transportation Master Plan, March 2004* should not be construed as a static document. The City has recently contracted with the URS Corporation to develop a complete update of the Master Plan. All portions of the Master Plan, including socioeconomic and environmental constraints, will be updated. Furthermore, the transportation network will be modeled using updated data for 2015 and 2035, and URN-based build-out data for the City. The update will also include a discussion of current and planned transit alternatives. Overall, the update will require a robust public involvement plan to ensure citizen participation, and is expected to be completed by the summer of 2010.

Upon adoption of the new Transportation Master Plan, that plan should be adopted as part of this General Plan.

Roadway Classification

Section Theme

The street system provides a basic framework around which the City is built. The street pattern determines, to a considerable extent, the distribution of residences, schools, industries, shopping centers, and emergency services, along with urban design. Few of the physical facilities in the City are as permanent as the streets, and once buildings are erected on abutting properties, any change in the location or width of roadways is likely to be difficult and expensive. Since a considerable amount of space in the developed area of the City is devoted to streets and their associated rights-of-way, proper planning for the development of these facilities is a prime concern.

Discussion

The purpose of planning a street system is to ensure access, mobility, and safety for all modes of travel. A clear understanding of the functional relationships between various travel modes and types of streets is essential. The function of each street, along with topography and other existing features, determines its location, alignment, grade, width, and relationship with other streets.

Roadways also affect land use decisions for areas adjacent to roadways. The greatest traffic volumes within the City are created by trips from residential areas to places of employment and retail centers, and also by the transport of materials to and from business, commercial, industrial, and construction areas. Street system design and classification depend on type of use, traffic volume, traffic direction, and trip distance. The functional roadway classification system includes freeways (including tollways), arterials, collectors, and local streets.

Freeways

Freeways are limited-access highways intended to move high volumes of automobile traffic at relatively high speeds over long distances. They are direct links between major automobile traffic generators and they offer controlled access to maximize uninterrupted automobile traffic flow and safety. Access is provided along adjacent frontage roads or from intersecting City streets. Overall, freeways connect the local area with cities outside of the region, and are not intended to serve local traffic needs. Currently, IH-35 provides north-south freeway access to the Round Rock area, and SH-45 and SH-130 provide east-west and north-south toll and free frontage access to the Round Rock area.

Arterials

Arterials are continuous routes intended to serve high volume needs of both the local area and the region. Access is controlled by planning the locations of intersecting streets, left turn lanes, and signals. The function of these streets can be protected through ordinances that regulate the number and location of median breaks and driveway cuts. Due to high automobile speeds, protective measures should be established for cyclists and pedestrians along these routes.

Collectors

Collectors, which are designed for medium volume, low speed traffic (i.e., 30 – 35 mph), provide access and movement within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Operating speeds on collectors are slower than arterials and turning movements are expected. Where projected traffic volumes are less than 6,000 vehicle trips per day, development can be permitted to front on collectors, but access to single-family development is generally encouraged from local streets. Higher intensity development, such as local commercial, daycare, places of worship, schools, and multi-family uses, can be developed with direct access to collector streets.

Local Streets

Local streets provide access to relatively small areas. These streets should be designed for low volume, low speed traffic. The length of the street and number of dwelling units or businesses fronting the street should be limited.

Public Transportation

Section Theme

Round Rock is diversifying its transportation system through the investigation and implementation of new public transportation options.

Discussion

The City has recently completed a study of a potential commuter rail link to connect to Capital Metro's new commuter rail system. The study concluded that the limitations of the current Capital Metro transit line and the types of rolling stock currently used would not be able to efficiently support added traffic from Round Rock. It also concluded that current densities are not sufficient to economically support a rail line at this time. However, the proposed location of a rail line has been shown in the General Plan in the event that conditions change in the future.

The City will be providing a commuter bus connection between downtown Round Rock and the Tech Ridge commuter bus station. To facilitate this connection, a bus depot and parking structure are being constructed in southwest downtown Round Rock. Additionally, the region continues to investigate the possibility of a commuter rail corridor running between the Austin and San Antonio areas; this corridor would include Round Rock.

The development of future city bus routes should include turnouts at designated bus stops on arterial roadways. Such turnouts should be incorporated in roadway design.

Street Trees

Section Theme

As discussed in Chapter 7, Environment & Quality of Life, trees provide multiple environmental benefits to the community and have valuable benefits for the City's transportation system.

Discussion

The location of street trees requires careful consideration to avoid conflicts with utilities that are normally located in or abutting public rights-of-way. Overall, corridor studies should be prepared in order to develop a comprehensive street tree program and to identify priority areas for implementing such a program. The City's tree mitigation fund, as well as Capital Improvement Program funding, could provide potential sources of funding for a street tree program.

Some potential benefits of street trees in regard to the City's transportation system include the following:

- Safer environment for motorists and pedestrians. Street trees create vertical walls framing streets and a defined edge, helping motorists to guide their movement and properly assess their speed. They also provide distinct edges to sidewalks so that motorists can better distinguish between an auto-only environment and one shared with pedestrians and bicycles. Also, if a motorist were to lose control of a vehicle, street trees can deflect or fully stop a motorist from causing injury or death to pedestrians.
- Screen and soften streets and parking lots. Street trees help to screen and soften large, gray visual expanses created by wide streets and parking lots, as well as common street features/eyesores such as utility poles, light poles, and other needed utilities.
- Improved operations potential. When properly positioned and maintained, the backdrop of street trees enables important road features to be better seen, such as vital traffic regulatory signs.
- Longer pavement life. Street trees can add more life to costly asphalt by reducing daily heating and cooling (expansion/contraction) of asphalt.
- Reduced harm from tailpipe emissions. Street trees can absorb significant amounts of pollutants in tailpipe emissions, and convert harmful tailpipe gases into oxygen.

Recommendations

1. The City should strive to develop an economically viable, balanced transportation system that features pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, and transit links, and offers residents access to both work and non-work related destinations.
2. Improvements to the City's transportation system should be planned methodically to avoid costly mistakes that could be detrimental to the system's integrity in the future. This may require amendments to City ordinances and policies to protect future rights-of-way requirements.
3. City roadways should feature designs compatible with current land uses, include multiple modes of transportation, feature adequate buffers and landscaping, and reflect residents' desires. This may require amendments to City ordinances and policies.
4. Corridor studies should be prepared to develop a comprehensive street tree program and to identify priority areas for implementing such a program.
5. A public transit loop connecting the Avery mixed-use area to the multi-modal transit facility currently under construction at the corner of West Main and Brown Streets should be investigated in order to provide better public access to the hospitals and higher education facilities in that area.
6. Ensure that arterials can adequately accommodate future growth and are wide enough to include turn-bays to accommodate possible bus service. These issues are being addressed in the update to the Transportation Master Plan, March 2004.

CHAPTER 9



Water & Wastewater

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

Ensure there is an adequate, affordable and safe water supply.

Priority

Provide for effective management of stormwater.

Public Input Basis

Strong support for water conservation measures, especially for new development.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Over time, the supply of basic utilities for the City of Round Rock has expanded along with the City's population. The adequate provision of utilities is important for the City as it strives to maintain a desired level of service for residents and businesses, and promote economic development. Utilities represent substantial financial outlays. Consequently, utilities must be planned well in advance to meet projected peak community demands and must be commensurate with City financial capabilities.

Discussion

One of the most difficult periods for City utilities was the 1970s. From 1970 to 1980, the population of Round Rock increased by 353%, from 2,811 in 1970 to 12,740 in 1980. This rapid population rise placed tremendous pressure on City utilities and, in 1978, City wells ran dry. The 1978 crisis prompted the City to expand its water resources and aggressively plan for future growth.

Population growth continued unabated through the 1980s. To ensure adequate service for this burgeoning population and to prevent the reoccurrence of the 1978 water shortage, a study of the basic utility structure and community needs was undertaken in 1986. The resultant *1986 City of Round Rock Master Water and Wastewater Study* now forms the basis for utility planning in the City. The 1986 study has been subsequently evaluated and updated to meet current growth needs.

The greatest improvements in protecting public health and controlling disease are based on the development and maintenance of a safe drinking water supply. Additionally, community growth is partly driven by the strength and location of utilities. It is imperative that water and wastewater services can accommodate Round Rock's rapid growth: adequate resources and growth opportunities must be ensured, and the highest possible level of service at the lowest possible cost must be provided. Thus far, water and wastewater services in Round Rock have been provided at a very high standard, as is evidenced by the fact that the City's water and wastewater system has been awarded exemplary status from the State of Texas.

In the water planning business, planning for the future – 30 to 50 years– is crucial because of the substantial time required to develop additional water supplies. As described above, in 1978, the City experienced the vulnerability of being reliant on just one water supply. Currently, the City has two water supplies: the Edwards Aquifer and Lake Georgetown/ Stillhouse Hollow Lake. Round Rock's growth, however, will require even more water by 2014. Consequently, a partnership has been created between Round Rock and the cities of Cedar Park and Leander, known as the Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority. This authority is tasked with building a regional water treatment and delivery system designed to deliver water from Lake Travis; this new supply will provide water for all three of these communities for many years into the future. Not only will this partnership meet Round Rock's long-term needs for its build-out population, as a third source of water, it will increase the City's drought tolerance and improve reliability in the event of a catastrophe. Additionally, the economies of scale created by the partnership will save millions of dollars and ensure that the City continues to maintain one of the least expensive water rates in the region.

Water System

Section Theme: Round Rock Water System History and Description

Discussion

The existing water treatment plant will meet the City's water demands through at least 2014. To prepare for future demand, Round Rock has acquired water rights from the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to Lake Travis, and currently has 20,928 acre-feet of reserved water (equivalent to close to 7 billion gallons).¹ This water source will help the City meet the needs of its growing population for up to 250,000 residents. As noted above,

¹ *Acre-feet* is the standard nomenclature used in the water industry when referring to water reserves. The basic unit of an *acre-foot* describes one acre of water extending one foot deep.

the City’s surface water plant can produce approximately 52 MGD (million gallons per day) at maximum capacity, and its wells produce approximately 6 MGD on average, though this figure varies depending on rainfall and aquifer levels.

Figure 9.1 Water System Capacity

Facility Type	Number	Total Capacity
Ground Storage Tanks	8	8.6 million gallons
Elevated Storage Tanks	10	14.6 million gallons
Pump Stations	7	38,700 gallons per minute (firm capacity)

Source: City of Round Rock Public Works Department

In addition to Round Rock’s partnership with Cedar Park and Leander regarding the use of water from Lake Travis, the City has other agreements in place to accommodate its water needs. One is with the Brazos River Authority (BRA), which enables the City to take surface water from Stillhouse Hollow Lake. Another agreement is with the City of Austin, which allows Round Rock to draw water from Austin’s Martin Hill Tank on an emergency basis. The City also has an emergency connection agreement with the City of Georgetown.

Pressure Zones

The topography of Round Rock has required the establishment of several water pressure zones to provide service within desired maximum and minimum water pressure limits. The existing water system service area is divided into six water pressure zones based on topography.

Water Demand

Current water demand per capita varies from a low of approximately 203 gallons per day (GPD) to a high of about 406 GPD, depending on the season. Variation is due to pronounced increases in water usage for landscaping and other special purposes during hot, dry periods.

Although estimates of future water demand depend largely on population forecasting, large recreational, commercial, and industrial users also affect system demands. Demand projections are obtained through the process of developing a water and wastewater master plan. Such plans address both the short- and long-term needs of Round Rock. Once demand projections are made, the City Utilities Department explores alternative methods for obtaining appropriate water supplies and more effectively utilizing current supplies. Overall, future water supplies should be readily accessible, sufficiently reliable, and efficiently used to meet water demands. Figure 9.2 shows population projections and projected demands for the entire planning area in the *2007 Water Distribution System Master Plan Update*, which includes all areas within the City’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

(ETJ). Ultimately, the City intends to serve the entire planning area, either through direct City service or through contracts with neighboring water supply agencies.

Figure 9.2 Water Demand Requirements

Year	Population Estimate/ Projection ¹	Average Daily System Demand ² (MGD)
2013	145,260	26
2020	172,720	34
2030	210,853	43
2040	241,084	49
2050	254,433	52

Source: City of Round Rock *2007 Water Distribution System Master Plan Update* population projections, which were taken from recent (but not current) projections generated by the Planning and Community Development Department.

¹ Population figures denote the entire Water Distribution System planning area.

² Average Daily System Demand is based on 203 gallons per capita.

Water Supply

Wells

Wells that draw water from the Edwards Aquifer are a significant source of City water. Water from these wells is treated through gas chlorination prior to being pumped into ground storage tanks and the water distribution system. Existing City water wells have a combined capacity of 13.5 MGD, but only 4.5 MGD can be relied upon during drought conditions as a “safe yield” rating.

Surface Water

Since the amount of water that can be taken from the Edward’s Aquifer is limited, additional water supplies are provided by surface water reservoirs. Surface water sources include both Lake Georgetown and Stillhouse Hollow Lake, as well as Lake Travis beginning in 2014 (at 20,928 acre-feet/year).

Round Rock’s dependence on well water was alleviated in 1982 with the completion of the water treatment plant, which draws water from Lake Georgetown. Round Rock has a supply contract with the BRA that allows the City to draw 9 MGD from Lake Georgetown on an average annual basis with a peak diversion rate of 30 MGD. All water in Lake Georgetown has been committed by the BRA and no additional capacity is available.

The City’s treatment plant is located near the intersection of Westinghouse Road and IH-35 at the extreme north end of the City. An intake structure at Lake Georgetown draws raw surface water and pumps it approximately nine miles to the plant, in which it is treated, stored, and ultimately pumped into the City’s distribution system. Treated water is temporarily stored at the plant in three large chambers (called clearwells). A booster pump station is located at the plant to deliver treated water to the distribution network, as needed.

Stillhouse Hollow Lake is approximately 35 miles north of Round Rock. The City's contract with the BRA allows the City to draw 16.2 MGD from the reservoir on an average annual basis with a peak diversion rate of 81 MGD. This project is now complete and a 48-inch line is in use, pumping water from Stillhouse Hollow Lake to Lake Georgetown, where the City can readily access the water. The construction of the pipeline was funded by Round Rock, Georgetown, Leander, Jonah Water Special Utility District (SUD), and the Brushy Creek Municipal Utility District (MUD).

Lake Travis is located approximately 24 miles from the western boundary of Round Rock on RM 1431. The regional water treatment plant, which will draw water from Lake Travis, will be located in Cedar Park, and will have a potable water transmission line extending from the plant to the City's westernmost edge. This treatment plant will be in operation starting in April of 2012. Based on demand and growth, the water treatment plant will be expanded as necessary over the next 15-20 years in order to provide an ultimate treatment capacity of 105.8 MGD for the three cities (i.e., Round Rock, Georgetown, Leander), of which Round Rock will receive 40.8 MGD.

Intercity Agreements

Round Rock has an emergency use agreement with the City of Austin to draw a limited amount of water from the Martin Hill Tank, located in northern Austin. There is also a mutual emergency use agreement in effect to take a limited amount of water from the City of Georgetown at the Barton Hill Tank site on the northern boundary of Round Rock.

The current and future raw water supply is shown in Figure 9.3. The peak yields, as listed on the table, are projected to accommodate a population of 254,433.

Figure 9.3 Current and Future Raw Water Supply

Source	Average Yield (MGD)	Peak Yield (MGD)
Wells – Drought Yield (Current Supply)	4.5	4.5
Lake Georgetown (Current Supply)	6.0	24.0
Stillhouse Hollow Lake (Current Supply)	16.2	65.8
Lake Travis (Future Supply)	40.8	40.8
TOTAL ¹	67.5	135.1

Source: City of Round Rock Utilities Department

¹ As noted above, Round Rock can also draw a limited amount of water from Austin's Martin Hill Tank on an emergency basis.

Future Considerations

Section Themes: Peak Demand, Water Conservation, and Adequate Provision of Water

Discussion

Water treatment and supply is driven by the City's peak demand. Peak demand is the most intense one-time use that the water system will ever undergo. The City must plan and build new facilities based on peak demand even though average use is substantially less. Conservation measures are a means to flatten the peak demand and more efficiently utilize existing facilities. A lower peak demand extends the life of current facilities before costly upgrades or new facilities are required. Delaying new construction and better utilizing current capacity helps to keep water rates low.

The City of Round Rock, in partnership with the City of Austin and other central Texas cities, participates in the following two water conservation programs:

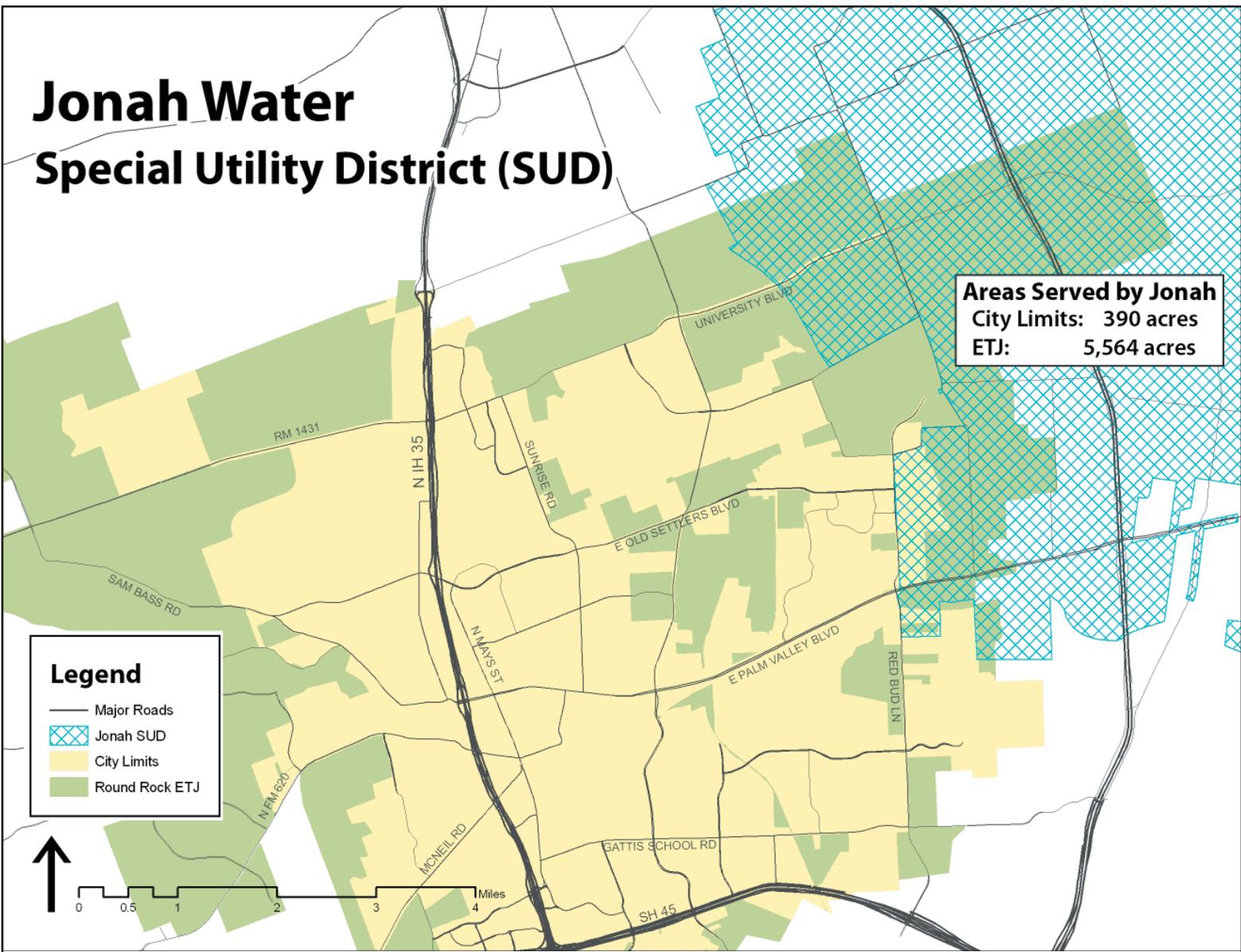
- 1. Water Wise Program:** This is a voluntary water conservation program (during Stage I water restrictions) that encourages residents to water outdoor vegetation one day out of every five according to a designated watering day. Designated watering days are based on the last digit of a residential address.
- 2. Drought Management Program:** This program features three drought response stages, which represent a phased response based on drought severity. While surrounding municipalities follow the same actions within a particular stage, they may enter the same stage at different times.

The City also recently started a new water conservation program that offers rebates for the purchase of certain water efficient toilets and irrigation system upgrades. It has also initiated an education and outreach program to promote water conservation.

Jonah Water SUD

Another crucial future consideration is the need to ensure the adequate provision of water to the portion of the City's ETJ located within the jurisdiction of Jonah Water SUD (see Figure 9.4, next page). Since the Jonah Water SUD has the sole right to provide water in its jurisdiction, the City should work carefully with the SUD to be certain that water will be available for all future development including fire flows in this area.

Figure 9.4 Jonah Water Special Utility District



Wastewater

Section Theme: Wastewater System History and Description

Discussion

Wastewater Collection

The City of Round Rock's existing wastewater collection system is based on the alignment of major wastewater interceptors² along creek beds to provide service through gravity mains³ for all areas within a particular creek's watershed. This strategy is the most cost-effective in terms of minimizing areas which must be served by lift stations due to the varying ground elevations in and around the City.

There are five major creeks within the City of Round Rock: Brushy, Chandler, Lake, Onion, and McNutt Creeks. Currently, significant development exists in all of these creeks' watersheds, and major wastewater interceptors are installed along each of the creeks (see Figure 9.5, next page). All of the interceptors flow by gravity to the existing wastewater treatment plant located along Brushy Creek. In 2004, the City began expanding its wastewater collection system in its easternmost basin, i.e., the McNutt Creek Drainage Basin.

System History

Major improvements to the City's wastewater system were made during the 1970s and 1980s in response to increased demand for wastewater service. To accommodate greater demand, the City extended wastewater collection lines in the Lake Creek Watershed and the Chandler Creek Basin. Additionally, a lift station was constructed to pump the Chandler Creek Basin's wastewater flows over a drainage divide into the Onion Creek Basin. Pushed by gravity, the wastewater flows to the City's wastewater treatment plant.

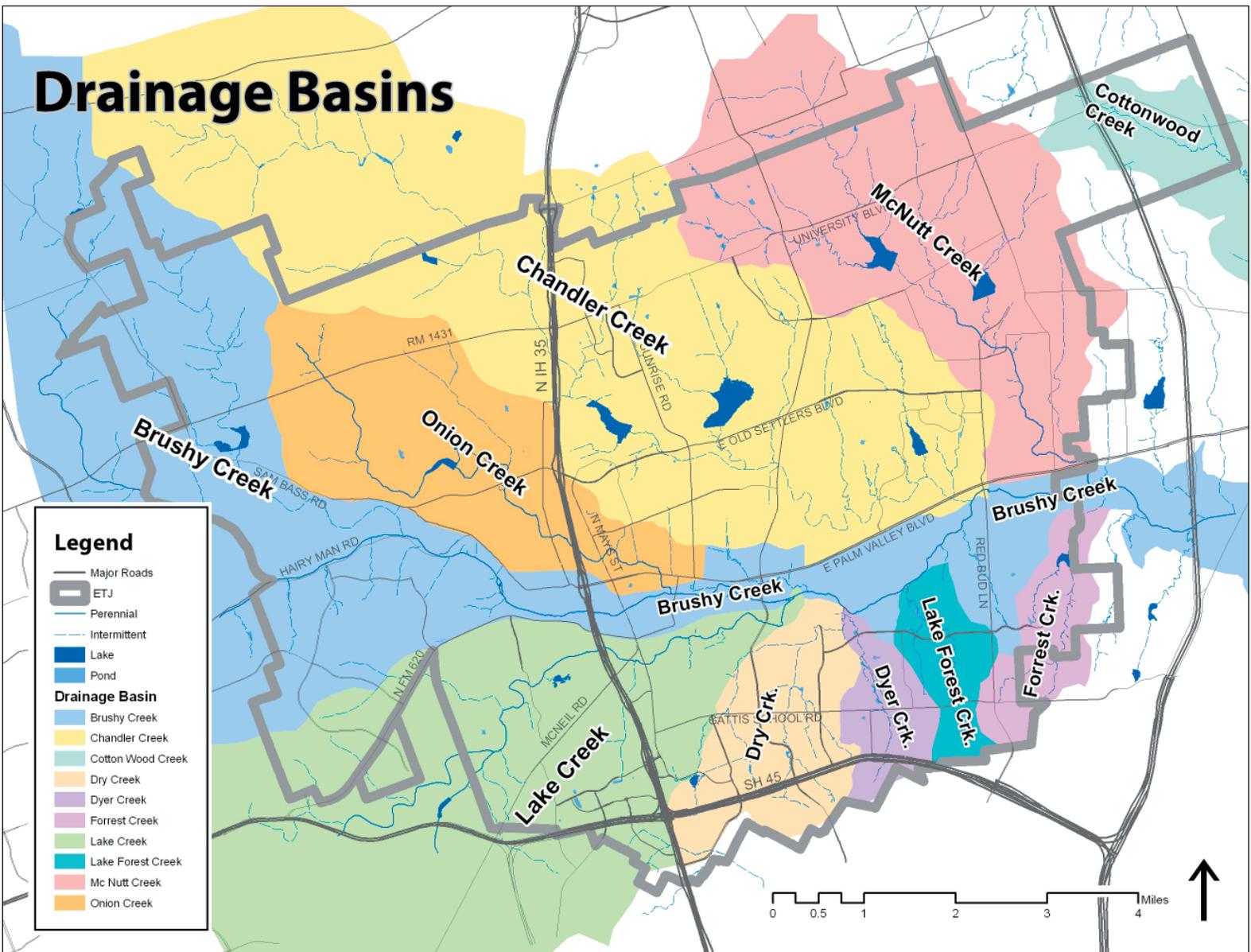
Numerous improvements were made to the City's wastewater collection and treatment facilities under the 1977 and 1981 capital improvement programs. These improvements included wastewater treatment plant expansions to a capacity of 1.4 MGD in 1977 and 3 MGD in 1981. The 1977 capital improvements program also included the construction of additional wastewater interceptor lines along Lake Creek.

Since 1981, the planning and construction of major wastewater improvements have been extensive. A 42-inch diameter interceptor was constructed in the Chandler Creek watershed in 1986 and a 36-inch interceptor was completed in the Lake Creek watershed in 1988. In 2007, a 48-inch interceptor was completed in portions of the McNutt Creek watershed.

² A wastewater interceptor is a device that prevents solids and/or oil and grease from collecting in the sewer system and stopping the flow of sewage. This device also protects sewer workers and the public by removing harmful and dangerous pollutants.

³ A gravity main is a pipe that runs on a downward slope, enabling gravity to move the pipe's contents.

Figure 9.5 Drainage Basins



Regional Wastewater Plan

In response to increasing development within the Brushy Creek watershed, the cities of Round Rock, Austin, Cedar Park, and Leander have implemented a regional wastewater system. The system is now owned by the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System (BCRWS) and was first conceived in the early 1980s, but was only recently constructed to serve the Upper Brushy Creek Watershed. The system provides central treatment facilities for the abovementioned municipalities. Overall, the regional system is a means to remove small, less effective wastewater plants from the basin and to improve water quality and protect the environment. Previously, each municipality treated wastewater in separate municipal facilities and discharged the treated water into nearby creeks. Under the regional plan, all wastewater will be treated at the regional plant in Round Rock and safely discharged from a single location.

The regional wastewater treatment plant is located at the confluence of Brushy and Chandler Creeks in the City of Round Rock. As mentioned previously, wastewater reaches the plant via wastewater interceptors along Brushy Creek. The total area currently served by the plant is approximately 140 square miles, and the plant will have an ultimate capacity of 52 MGD. The plant will be capable of serving 520,000 people.

Demand Calculation

The amount of wastewater service required by an area depends primarily on the development and population density of that area. To facilitate the sizing of wastewater mains, the Round Rock Public Works Department converts land area into a living unit equivalent (LUE). An LUE is defined as a unit of development which produces the same peak wet weather wastewater flow as is produced by a single-family dwelling using 280 GPD average flow. It should be noted that a given number of LUEs within an area does not necessarily reflect the actual population that resides within that area. Commercial, industrial, and recreational areas may have elevated LUE numbers even though these areas have no permanent residents. To compare dissimilar land uses, the Public Works Department uses a corresponding LUE conversion factor for each land use category (refer to Code of Ordinances Section 8.503 for specific figures).

Impact Fees

Wastewater impact fees are assessed by the meter size and number of LUEs required for a new development. These fees help the City to offset the cost of expanding its water and wastewater systems in order to provide utility services for new developments. Listed in Section B of this chapter's appendix are the current LUEs assigned by meter size as needed for a new development. The assessment of impact fees helps the City to maintain lower utility rates than most surrounding cities.

Overall, water and wastewater fees are based on land use and growth assumptions, as well as the capital improvement projects required to serve the projected growth over a ten year period. Projected growth-based land uses and capital improvement programs are reviewed and updated every three years. The impact fee is adjusted to reflect changes.

Inflow and Infiltration

Future wastewater treatment demand is calculated using an average daily wastewater demand of 80 gallons per capita per day. Inflow and infiltration can substantially increase wastewater treatment demand. Accordingly, a program to minimize inflow and infiltration into the wastewater system has been implemented to reduce operations costs and keep utility rates low.

Round Rock has full time crews that inspect the City's wastewater lines for infiltration in each sub-basin by using the latest technology available. Cameras are placed inside the mains to look for deficiencies and to check the structural integrity of the pipes. By using this technology, timely repairs can be made when appropriate.

By reducing the amount of inflow and infiltration, the volume of wastewater sent to the treatment plant is minimized.

Industrial and Hazardous Waste

The treatment of wastewater is adversely affected when certain industrial or hazardous materials are added. Because Round Rock's wastewater treatment system capacity exceeds 5 MGD, federal law requires the development of a wastewater pre-treatment program for industrial waste. The purpose of the program is to ensure that discharged industrial waste does not interfere with the operation of the treatment system and can be treated properly by the City's system. Pretreatment occurs on site, i.e., at the business or industry that produces the waste in need of pretreatment. Round Rock's pretreatment program has been approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Water Re-Use in Round Rock

The City of Round Rock has been irrigating with reclaimed water for several years. Water re-use entails building separate water lines or using existing abandoned mains for treated wastewater effluent to irrigate golf courses, parks, athletic fields, universities, and commercial developments. Water re-use offers a low cost alternative to the unnecessary use of fully treated water for irrigation and landscaping. Water re-use limits the burden placed on water treatment plants, preserves their capacity, and offers an opportunity to efficiently use what is becoming an increasingly scarce resource. In 1998, the first re-use project was implemented after the completion of a pipeline from the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater Facility to the Forest Creek Golf Club. The water re-use program in Round Rock has incorporated additional cost savings within the system. The City is reducing costs by using already constructed facilities like existing wastewater force mains where possible, and starting re-use projects in areas close to the wastewater facilities; this minimizes pipeline lengths and pumping costs. Currently, planned water re-use projects will occur in three phases, which will provide re-use throughout the eastern and northeastern sections of the City:

Phase I – the construction of pumping, chlorination, and storage facilities at the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, and 9,000 linear feet of 12- and 24-inch

transmission lines for irrigating Champion Fields (used for baseball and softball) in Old Settlers Park

Phase II – the construction of 1,500 linear feet of 8-inch transmission main that connects to an existing force main to Stony Point High School

Phase III – the construction of additional storage and pumping facilities along with 22,900 linear feet of 8- and 16-inch transmission mains to the Higher Education Center and other developments in the northeast section of the City

The City is seeking matching federal funds to help complete these projects. Currently, construction for Phase I is scheduled to begin around mid-2010, pending the timing of federal grant dollars. The goal is to provide reclaimed water to areas of the City where economically practical.

Re-Use Today

Wastewater is collected and treated at a high standard before being discharged into waterways. There are important reasons, however, both economic and environmental, why this water should not be discharged into waterways and instead re-used:

1. Re-use conserves scarce and precious raw water supplies by using treated wastewater effluent in parklands and other natural areas. Using treated wastewater effluent in place of potable drinking water decreases the use of raw water supplies, thereby freeing up supplies for others.
2. Re-use conserves the drinking water supply, and decreases the need for major capital expenditures and future surface water rights acquisitions.
3. Re-use provides a good source of processed water for industries to use at a lower cost to the City and to the industries, and is an incentive for economic growth and development.
4. Re-use helps optimize the resources already in the wastewater treatment process, in which significant amounts of money are spent treating water to a high level of quality.
5. Re-use provides water suited for irrigation to large end-users at a lower cost to them and to the City, and in turn, reduces peak daily usage and lowers the number of water rationing days.
6. Re-use technology is sustainable. The City of Round Rock will increasingly be using this technology to gain from its financial and environmental benefits.

Overall, as Round Rock matures into a midsize City, and as it further develops its new water re-use effort, the amount of water saved on a regular basis will constantly change.

Recommendations

1. The City should continue to anticipate the need for increased water capacity, coupled with strong conservation initiatives, to meet the peak demands generated by a growing population.
2. Capacity improvements, consistent system monitoring and upgrades, usage projections, and initiatives to promote the efficient use of existing supplies should all be utilized to provide cost-effective and dependable water and wastewater service for residents and businesses into the future.
3. The City should promote and expand its water conservation program through public education and community outreach initiatives. This program should also be enhanced through the use of a designated watering schedule, structured water rates to discourage excessive water usage, and partnering with other governmental entities to protect the City's current and future water resources.
4. The City should maximize its water re-use program to help offset future water treatment plant expansions and reduce the costs of using potable water for irrigation purposes.
5. The City should continue to expand the automated meter reading program so that water meters can be read in a more expeditious manner. (These meters will also provide the City with the ability to track water usage, as necessary.)
6. The City should continue to update its water and wastewater master plans on a regular basis to ensure that its impact fees will adequately contribute to funding future infrastructure necessary for new development.
7. With the purchase of the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System, the City, along with its partnering cities, should continue to evaluate and explore efficiencies in owning and operating the system.
8. The City should continue to work with the development community to ensure that the City's future utility infrastructure meets the requirements of its water and wastewater master plans.
9. The City should continue to utilize the latest technologies, as well as best management practices, modern equipment, and properly trained personnel, in order to maintain its water and wastewater infrastructure.
10. The City should work carefully and promptly with Jonah Water SUD to be certain that water will be available for all future urban development including fire flows in portions of its jurisdiction in the City's ETJ.

Technical Appendix

Water Supply Design Criteria

The Round Rock Public Works Department uses the following guidelines for the City water supply system:

Water Supply System

- Average Daily Demand - 203 gallons per capita
- Maximum Daily Demand - 2 times average daily demand - 406 gallons per capita
- Peak Hour Demand - 2.2 times maximum daily demand - 893 gallons per capita
- Minimum Pressure Requirements - 35 pounds per square inch (psi) at flow rates not less than 1.5 gallons per minute (GPM) per connection; 20 psi under fire flow with 1.5 GPM per connection
- Metering - Accurate metering devices at each service connection
- Mains - Minimum main size shall be 8 inches unless the director of the Utilities Department approves a smaller size because of unique circumstances. Provisions must be made for a flush valve at the end of dead end mains. The minimum size for any street type, however, shall be governed by various factors which include fire protection requirements, high density and land usage, and the designer's consideration of general system gridding, future transmission mains, neighboring developments, and area configuration. Looped systems are required for service reliability. Transmission line sizes will be determined on a case by case basis.
- Valves - Sufficient number of valves to allow repairs, pressure division, and flushing without undue service interruption
- Circulation - Minimal number of dead ends and maximum number of circulation loops; limits of no more than 30 connections on dead end lines with provisions, as practicable, to ultimately connect them for circulation

Pump Stations

For areas with less than 200 gallons of elevated storage per connection - Two or more pumps at each station with a capacity of 2 GPM per connection or a total capacity of 1,000 GPM and the ability to meet peak hourly demands with the largest pump out of service (whichever is less)

For areas with at least 200 gallons of elevated storage per connection - Two pumps at each station with a minimum combined capacity of 0.6 GPM per connection

The City of Round Rock has adopted the 2006 International Fire Code which sets the minimum requirements for fire flows, with these minimum/maximum requirements:

- Minimum Residential - 1,500 GPM
- Maximum Commercial/Industrial - 8,000 GPM
- All City design criteria exceed the minimum state criteria established by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

CHAPTER 10



Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Prevent neighborhood deterioration.
2. Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.
3. Identify and plan for future connectivity and mobility needs and options.

Priority

1. Create a range of walking and biking options within the City.
2. Protect and preserve the natural areas of the City to include parks, floodplains and open spaces.
3. Build and maintain the facilities and infrastructure needed to make the City attractive to target businesses.
4. Ensure there is adequate land to meet future recreational, cultural and open space needs.
5. Implement the Parks Plan once adopted.
6. Develop recreation and library program options that respond to growing diversity of resident and visitor interests.
7. Encourage and support efforts to build a healthier community.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for conservation of natural areas.
2. Strong support for the development of a comprehensive hike and bike trail system.
3. Strong support for better maintenance of older parks.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

Parks and recreation facilities are a crucial component of Round Rock's high quality of life and social fabric. Major benefits include cultural awareness, improved health, community involvement, environmental preservation and education, social interaction, and economic viability. Parks and recreation facilities also play an important role in increasing local tourism. As the self-proclaimed "Sports Capital of Texas," the City includes a diverse array of sports facilities as part of its parks and recreation infrastructure, attracting people from across Texas and the United States. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Economic Benefit Analysis (2010) indicates that properties in Round Rock located within 600 feet of a park have, on average, a 5% higher property value than those beyond 600 feet. In the Parks and Recreation Department's (PARD) 2007 Parks & Recreation Attitude Survey, 98% of survey participants agreed that better parks and trails will help to improve the City's image. In addition, 98% agreed that parks and trails contribute to a sense of community and character in Round Rock. Overall, PARD aims to provide the public with a range of park types, a comprehensive trail system, and a variety of recreational facilities that serve the varied needs of City residents and visitors.

Discussion

PARD has created mission and vision statements to help fulfill future goals. The mission statement is the following: PARD is composed of "people dedicated and empowered to create a positive and memorable experience in other people's lives." The vision statement is the following: the City is "an active, vibrant, and beautiful city with a diversified and quality parks and recreation system that produces economic, health, and social benefits for the entire community." Together, the mission and vision statements exemplify the City's commitment to and enthusiasm for the Round Rock community.

The City recently completed an update of the *Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan* (2000) and also of the *Citywide Trails Master Plan of 2004*. The two plans were combined into one document entitled, *Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community; The Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan*. Game Plan 2020, which was adopted by the City Council in July of 2009, establishes goals and objectives for the next 5 to 10 years and will be used as a guide for future land acquisition, development, maintenance, programming, and operations. These goals and objectives will assist in the development of a capital improvement program, which is necessary to provide for new facilities. The City Council, citizens, and PARD staff all contributed to the development of these goals and objectives.

Places and Spaces: General Plan 2020 hereby adopts *Game Plan 2020: Building an Active Community* as part of this General Plan.

Due to the projected rapid increase in Round Rock's population, a public survey was necessary to determine how Game Plan 2020 should address parks and open space development in regard to population growth. Correspondence through telephone and mail, as well as student surveys, online surveys, and public meetings, provided input from Round

Rock citizens. Overall, Game Plan 2020's public input gathering process provided input from close to 3,000 Round Rock residents.

Additionally, an assessment of the economic benefit of parks was conducted for Game Plan 2020. This assessment quantified the importance of parks and recreation facilities in regard to the economic well-being of the City. The key findings of the assessment illustrate the economic benefits of owning a home in close proximity to parks and/or open space. According to the assessment, homes in Round Rock located within 600 feet of parks/open space sell for 15% higher than homes located beyond 600 feet. Also, sales prices increased more substantially over the past 10 years for homes located within 600 feet of a park in comparison to homes located beyond 600 feet. The views of Round Rock residents overwhelmingly reflected these home value trends: 89% of those surveyed in PARD's 2007 Parks & Recreation Attitude Survey felt that parks contribute to the economic vitality of the City.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Section Theme

Round Rock has several types of parks and recreation facilities, all with distinguishing characteristics and specific needs.

Discussion

Neighborhood Parks

The most common type of park is a neighborhood park. Neighborhood parks provide recreation facilities within walking distance of most residents in a neighborhood. The parks typically range in size from 3 to 5 acres. Standard amenities for neighborhood parks include picnic tables, grills, a playscape, and a multi-purpose playing field. Overall, Round Rock has 13 developed neighborhood parks totaling 73 acres and 3 undeveloped neighborhood parks totaling 32 acres.

In addition to City-owned neighborhood parks, Round Rock has numerous private parks that are owned and maintained by homeowners associations. These private facilities usually include a swimming pool, picnic areas, and a playscape, and are maintained through fees collected by the homeowners associations.

Neighborhood parks are generally acquired through the subdivision process. The City plans to continue to receive land dedications to develop neighborhood parks. The parks may also be developed in conjunction with school properties, which lowers the cost to the community in comparison to separate facilities. In order to jointly develop park and school sites, close cooperation is required between the City and the Round Rock Independent School District as school sites are selected, acquired, and developed.

Community Parks

Community parks are generally larger than neighborhood parks, usually ranging in size from 10 to 30 acres. The parks are intended to meet the needs of several neighborhoods and provide facilities for all age groups. Facilities generally include a picnic shelter, picnic

tables with grills, a playscape, formal playing fields for sports, trails, parking, and lighting. In addition, the majority of community parks have special features such as pools, dog parks, skate parks, or water bodies. Community parks serve a substantial number of people and should be easily accessible through walking, biking, and driving.

Overall, the City has 13 developed community parks, which account for 214 acres of City parkland, and 3 undeveloped community parks totaling 70 acres. Game Plan 2020 identifies the need for additional community parks in the far southwest, southeast, and northeast sections of the City.

Metropolitan Parks

Metropolitan Parks are large parks that serve major portions of the City, and range in size from 100 to over 250 acres. The parks provide for a variety of recreational facilities including lighted playing fields for sports events, hike and bike trails, and sufficient parking to accommodate participants, spectators, and other park users. Typical metropolitan parks also include playscapes, picnic areas, restroom facilities, trails, sports fields, security lighting, multi-purpose recreation fields, and open play areas. Most metropolitan parks have special features such as fishing piers, recreation centers, swimming pools, or amphitheatres.

Round Rock has 2 undeveloped metropolitan parks: Behrens Ranch Park (223 acres) and Mayfield Park (245 acres). These parks were recently acquired and amount to 468 acres of added parkland to the City. The City's goal by 2020 is to acquire and develop one metropolitan park in each of its four sectors (i.e., NE, NW, SE, and SW).

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are large parks that typically contain more than 300 acres and include a wide variety of facilities like playscapes, open spaces, picnic pavilions, restroom facilities, hike and bike trails, and sports fields. These parks usually have special features such as dog parks, sculpture gardens, aquatic complexes, botanical gardens, or equestrian trails.

Old Settlers Park at Palm Valley is the only City-owned regional park in Round Rock. At 570 acres, it is the largest City-owned park, and is located along US-79/Palm Valley Boulevard, a main east-west arterial. The Dell Diamond, home to the Round Rock Express, borders the park. Old Settlers Park is designed to provide a range of activities for the entire City and surrounding communities. The park attracts tourists through its wide array of facilities and events. Overall, the park proudly exemplifies the City's motto, i.e., "The Sports Capital of Texas," and is the most heavily used park in Round Rock with over 600,000 visitors annually. The park generates an estimated \$6.3 million in economic activity annually.

In addition to Old Settlers Park, Southwest Williamson County Regional Park is located within the City's ETJ. The 789-acre park includes several recreational facilities.

Linear Parks and Linkages

As the City's population increases, the need for trails, linear parks/linkages, and alternative transportation increases. The benefits of these are extensive, and examples include a

reduction in obesity, the preservation of creeks and corridors, a reduction in carbon emissions, increasing land values, and the protection of wildlife habitats. Game Plan 2020 emphasizes the need to preserve corridors, waterways, and open space before the land is claimed by urban development. Connectivity by trails and bike lanes is vital if Round Rock is to allow access to schools, employment centers, and other major destinations through alternative transportation means.

Linear parks and linkages typically include trails and often follow a natural or man-made feature such as creeks, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, power line corridors, and utility corridor easements.

Currently, the City has 9 developed linear/linkage parks totaling 121 acres and which include 8 miles of trails. The City owns 16 undeveloped linear/linkage parks totaling 124 acres.

Game Plan 2020 recommends that a general assessment be conducted of potential trail, bike lane, and sidewalk connections that will reach all parts of the City. The major goal by 2020 is to triple the number of trail and greenbelt miles in Round Rock.

Recreational Programs and Events

PARD currently offers a multitude of recreational programs. Some examples include summer and day camps, arts and crafts, athletic leagues, and various festivals. According to Game Plan 2020 surveys, the top two desired recreational programs in the City are fitness programs and athletic leagues, and the top ranked community events desired are music/art festivals, street fairs, and a holiday festival of lights.

Golf Course

Forest Creek Golf Course is the only City-owned golf course in Round Rock. The 18-hole golf course is 183 acres and is located east of Redbud Lane in the Forest Creek subdivision. The course was completed in the fall of 1990 and has been rated by *Golf Digest* as the best daily fee course in Central Texas.¹ The course is operated by a management company and is self supporting. It features a driving range, pro shop, and snack bar.

Teravista Golf Course is privately owned and is located in Round Rock's ETJ. This 18-hole, daily fee course is located north of University Boulevard in the Teravista subdivision. It also features a driving range, pro shop, and snack bar.

Swimming Pools

The City maintains two outdoor swimming pools, as well as one indoor pool and one family aquatic center.

Micki Krebsbach Pool is one of the City's two outdoor pools, and is located adjacent to Round Rock High School. The pool facility is 34,000 square feet and includes three types of pools: a competition pool, a plunge pool with a tower slide, and a leisure pool with several water features.

¹ Daily fee refers to a non-membership-based course, i.e., a course that is open to the public.

The Lake Creek Pool is the City's other outdoor pool, and is located in Lake Creek Park at 800 Deerfoot Drive. The pool is approximately 16,000 square feet and is mainly used for swim teams and instruction. The facility has a small, covered wading pool for toddlers.

The Clay Madsen Recreation Center houses the City's indoor pool. The pool has six lanes that are 25 yards in length, and caters to recreational programs as well as open lap swim.

The Rock'N River Family Aquatic Center opened in 2006. The first phase of this family aquatic center is a 40,000 square foot facility located in Old Settlers Park. The facility includes a lazy river, two tall water slides, a water playscape, ample shaded areas, restrooms and lockers, and toddler swim areas. PARD has conducted citizen surveys at several Round Rock schools concerning wishes for future phases, and predicts the need for four additional phases that will provide water recreation for all ages.

Recreation Centers

The Clay Madsen Recreation Center is the City's premier recreational facility. This 55,000 square foot facility was completed in 2000, and includes a six-lane lap pool, two gymnasiums, four racquetball courts, weight/cardio machine room, game room, meeting room, childcare room, arts and crafts room, and full kitchen. The center has athletic and instructional programs and also holds community events. Both family and individual membership plans are offered to the public.

The City has planned for the construction of a new recreation center. This new center, which will be called the Legacy Field House, will be approximately 50,000 square feet and will have two floors, and will include a fitness area, multi-purpose rooms, elevated running track, large multi-purpose playing field, and reception area.

The Allen R. Baca Center for Senior and Community Activities was completed in April 2006. The Baca Center offers a variety of classes including arts and crafts, fitness, education, aerobics, and a lunchroom program. The facility provides a weight room, aerobics room, full kitchen, several meeting rooms, and an outdoor amphitheater.

In 2008, PARD developed an outdoor amphitheater behind the Baca Center, which holds outdoor concerts for the Round Rock community.

Open Space

Open space and natural corridors include land that is not intensively developed for residential, industrial, or institutional use, and are comprised of parkland, natural creek corridors, and drainage ways.

Game Plan 2020 recommends acquiring additional open space to enhance the character of the City, provide wildlife habitat, protect and bolster property values, increase tourism, provide buffers to roadway expansions, and create unique recreational venues. The preservation of natural floodplains will be a strategic component of developing a comprehensive trail system. According to the 2007 Parks & Recreation Attitude Survey, an average of 91% of City residents would support preserving certain areas of parks and

open spaces in a natural state. Currently, only 7% of total acreage within Round Rock is permanent open space or developable parkland. PARD's goal is to acquire and allocate 14% of land as open space.²

Figure 10.1 City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Facilities

Park Type	Number of Developed Parks	Developed Acres	Number of Undeveloped Parks	Undeveloped Acres	Total Acres
Neighborhood Park	13	73	3	32	105
Community Park	13	214	3	70	284
Metropolitan Park	0	0	2	468	468
Regional Park	1	570	0	0	570
Linear Park / Linkage	9	121	16	124	245
Golf Course	1	183	0	0	183
Total Parks	37	1,161	24	694	1,855

Recreation Facility	Size	Amenities / Notes
Clay Madsen Recreation Center	55,000 sf	2 basketball/volleyball courts, 4 racquetball courts, indoor pool, weight/cardio room, game room, kitchen, meeting room, arts & crafts room
Allen R. Baca Center for Senior and Community Activities	29,000 sf	1 grand meeting room, 2 small meeting rooms, billiard/game room, weight room, aerobics room, computer room, arts & crafts room, cafeteria, kitchen
Micki Krebsbach Pool	34,000 sf	Competition/lap pool, plunge pool with slide tower, leisure pool with spray features
Lake Creek Pool	16,000 sf	Competition/lap pool, plunge pool, toddler wading pool
Rock'N River Family Aquatic Center	40,000 sf	2 water slides, lazy river, water playscape, toddler swim area, adult lounge pool
Athletic Facilities	N/A	20 baseball fields, 8 softball fields, 6 basketball courts, 3 football fields, 12 soccer fields, 23 tennis courts, 5 volleyball courts, 1 multipurpose field
Shaylah Dame Skate Park	14,000 sf	Bowl area w/ Texas' first cradle, street section
Round Rock Dog Depot	1.85 acres	3 fenced areas, dog agility course, dog tunnel, water spray feature, seating areas, sally-port entrances
Rabb House	2,800 sf	Large meeting room, kitchen, outdoor pool
Kintingham House	5,000 sf	2 large meeting rooms, kitchen, playground

Source: Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department

² Fourteen percent is the standard adopted by the City's Parks & Recreation Department, and is based on parkland standards in Austin.

Summary of Future Needs

Section Theme

As part of Game Plan 2020, PARD performed an assessment of all Department assets and formulated a Repair and Replacement Program to address the deterioration of the City's parks and recreation facilities infrastructure. The program, which currently totals approximately \$9 million for repairs and replacements, will systematically address the needs of the City's aging assets. Generally, the program recommends the repair or replacement of approximately 0.75% of the City's estimated \$95.5 million dollars in parks and recreational facility assets each year. Overall, significant improvements can be made to Round Rock's parks and open spaces in a number of areas. Game Plan 2020 emphasizes four high-priority areas: (1) mobility and connectivity, (2) recreation and culture, (3) community and character, and (4) natural resources and environment.

Discussion

Round Rock has the opportunity to develop an enviable parks system: the City has an abundance of significant natural features, a rich historical heritage, a growing residential population, and the potential for pedestrian and bike links throughout the community.

Game Plan 2020 utilizes recent PARD citizen survey results to assess community needs, evaluate priorities, and establish implementation plans. Citizens and staff have already identified several key projects that would enhance that City's parks system, including the development of a trails system, the preservation of scenic open spaces, the revitalization of current parks, the integration of trails into the City's transportation system, and an increase in the number of recreational facilities and fields. Overall, Game Plan 2020 recommends that the City focus on the following four high-priority areas for improvement during the next five years (which are addressed in detail in the plan):

1. Mobility and Connectivity

Mobility and connectivity, and especially trail development, have always been the issues of highest priority to Round Rock residents in regard to parks and open space. Game Plan 2020 identifies several high priority projects for enhancing mobility and connectivity: provide downtown area trails (at least 1.5 miles); develop a trail from Downtown Round Rock to the university center area (5.8 miles); complete the Brushy Creek Trail System by developing a trail between Hairy Man Road and Memorial Park; develop a trail connecting the existing Brushy Creek Trail East to Old Settlers Park; improve the trail from the Dell campus to Clay Madsen Recreation Center; and develop nature trails in Behrens Ranch Park and Mayfield Park.

2. Recreation and Culture

Recreational and cultural amenities offer numerous benefits, such as increased exercise, especially among children and youth; an opportunity to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and other health problems; and opportunities for all people to be physically active and socially engaged.

The following are several high priority projects identified in Game Plan 2020 for enhancing recreation and culture: develop the Play For All Abilities Park project³, develop a tournament quality multi-purpose field complex in Old Settlers Park; develop phase two of Rock’N River Aquatic Center; and develop a second recreation center.

3. Community and Character

To enhance community and character, Game Plan 2020 emphasizes the need for more opportunities for rest, relaxation, and revitalization; the preservation and interpretation of historic community assets; opportunities for community involvement; and playtime opportunities, which are critical for child development. High priority projects included in Game Plan 2020 for enhancing community and character include: developing the Heritage Trail Linear Park, including the Brushy Creek and Lake Creek corridors; developing a signature downtown Plaza Park; and establishing an art in the park program.

4. Natural Resources and Environment

Major benefits of focusing on natural resources and the environment include protecting and preserving vital green spaces; protecting and preserving critical wildlife habitat; educating visitors regarding the appropriate use of natural spaces as recreational areas; improving psychological and social health through exposure to nature; improving air and water quality; and making the City significantly more attractive. Game Plan 2020 identifies several high priority projects for enhancing natural resources and the environment including acquiring a portion of the Freeman Tract; developing Behrens Ranch Park as a passive park; acquiring the Southeast Community Park; acquiring the Hairy Man Road/Brushy Creek Property as a linear park along Brushy Creek; developing a community park in the far southeast section of the City; acquiring land around North Paloma Lake for a metropolitan park; and developing Mayfield Park as a passive park.

Overall, Game Plan 2020 will lead PARD over the next 5 to 10 years to accomplish its goal of fostering an active, vibrant, and beautiful city with a diversified and high-quality parks and recreation system that produces economic, health, and social benefits for the entire community.

Recommendations

1. Community parks should be easily accessible through walking, bicycling, and driving.
2. Address *Mobility and Connectivity* issues:
 - Provide downtown area trails (at least 1.5 miles)
 - Develop a trail from downtown Round Rock to University Center (5.8 miles)

³ This refers to an adaptive playground for kids of all ability levels, including those who are disabled.

- Complete the Brushy Creek Trail System by developing a trail between Hairy Man Road and Memorial Park
 - Develop a trail connecting the existing Brushy Creek Trail East to Old Settlers Park
 - Improve the trail from the Dell campus to Clay Madsen Recreation Center
 - Develop nature trails in Behrens Ranch Park and Mayfield Park
3. Address *Recreation and Culture* issues:
 - Develop the Play For All Abilities Park project
 - Develop a tournament quality multi-purpose field complex at Old Settlers Park
 - Develop phase two of Rock’N River Aquatic Center
 - Develop a second recreation center
 4. Address *Community and Character* issues:
 - Develop Heritage Trail Linear Park, including the Brushy Creek and Lake Creek corridors
 - Develop a signature downtown Plaza Park
 - Establish an art in the park program
 5. Address *Natural Resources and Environment* issues:
 - Acquire a portion of the Freeman Tract (open space)
 - Develop Behrens Ranch Park as a passive park
 - Acquire land for a community park in the far southeast section of the City
 - Acquire the Hairy Man Rd/Brushy Creek Property as a linear park along the Brushy Creek
 - Acquire land around North Paloma Lake for a metropolitan park
 - Develop Mayfield Park as a passive park
 6. For all of the abovementioned capital improvement projects, cost estimates should be developed and then project proposals should be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections.
 7. Round Rock should strive to acquire and allocate 14% of its land as open space.
 8. In addition to providing open space, floodplains should be retained in their natural state, and should not be channelized or filled in to maximize adjacent development (see Chapter 7, Environment & Quality of Life for further details). Additionally, City ordinances should be amended accordingly, and should provide provisions for modifying floodplains when part of a comprehensive park development.
 9. Establish an annual, dedicated funding source for the implementation of the Repair and Replacement Program.

CHAPTER 11



Historic Preservation

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Prevent neighborhood deterioration.
2. Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.

Priority

1. Preserve the historic buildings, structures and places of the City.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for preserving the City's historic buildings and sense of place.
2. Strong support for improving public awareness of historic preservation and establishing a local non-profit preservation organization.
3. Strong support for creating new construction standards that harmonize with surrounding older buildings.
4. Strong support for improving historic preservation through incentives and improvements in preservation management.

Introduction

Chapter Theme

The historic built environment plays an essential role in shaping the identity of a place. Historic buildings, streets, parks, and other important vestiges of the past define a unique and special sense of physical and community character. As Round Rock's physical expansion continues, its historic resources should become an increasingly important component of community pride and identity.

This is the first Round Rock general plan to include a chapter on historic preservation. The purpose of this chapter is to serve as a starting point for the development of a Round Rock historic preservation plan. Overall, there is significant interest in historic preservation in Round Rock, particularly as expressed through the City's *Downtown Master Plan* and *Strategic Plan*. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, Public Input, the results from the General Plan Phone Survey indicate that there is substantial public support for preservation.

Discussion

Historic preservation in Round Rock is mainly a local responsibility. The Round Rock Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), which is appointed by the City Council, is the City commission primarily responsible for historic preservation. The main mission of the HPC is to ensure the preservation, protection, and promotion of the City's historic resources by preserving historically significant properties, educating the public about important local historic issues, creating community partnerships designed to foster historic preservation, and promoting heritage tourism. The HPC is responsible for approving Certificates of Appropriateness for any proposed changes to the exterior of all historically designated structures or sites. It also recommends historic preservation designations, policy, and programs to the Round Rock Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

The City's historic preservation program is regulated by its zoning ordinance. The following is a brief summary of the ordinance as it relates to historic preservation:

- The ordinance enables certain areas or properties to be designated as historically significant through historic overlay zoning. Adding an historic overlay to an individual parcel of land, a portion of a parcel, or multiple parcels, signifies the local designation of an historic landmark or district.
- Historic overlay zoning can be proposed by the HPC, the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Administrator, or property owners. Many factors must be considered in any decision regarding historic overlay zoning. Most importantly, it must be determined whether the property has significant architectural, archaeological, cultural, and/or any other type of relevant value within an historic context. The ordinance includes criteria to assist in this determination, such as an association with an important person or event or an embodiment of the local architectural style. All proposals for historic overlay zoning first require the approval of the HPC. If approved, proposals are then considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council for adoption.
- Once a property is designated with historic overlay zoning as an historic landmark or part of an historic district, the owner is required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness before obtaining a permit for the alteration, construction, demolition, or removal of the exterior of any structure or elements on the site.
- To assist property owners in their preservation efforts, Round Rock's zoning ordinance allows for a partial tax exemption for sites of historic significance. To be eligible to apply for this exemption, properties must have historic overlay zoning or

meet eligibility requirements pertaining to historic significance outlined in the City's zoning ordinance. This program exempts 75% of City property tax and requires that property owners meet certain minimum maintenance criteria. With the exception of the tax exemption program and grant money received, the City does not currently allocate any additional funds for historic preservation programming.

Downtown Master Plan

The *Round Rock Downtown Master Plan* envisions maintaining downtown's "historically-sensitive environment." Throughout the visioning process for the Downtown Master Plan, citizens expressed overwhelming support for preserving downtown's historic buildings. The plan points out that even though downtown has a National Register Commercial Historic District and several individual buildings with historic overlay zoning, there are still a significant number of buildings in the plan's study area that are not historically designated or protected.

The City is updating an historic resources survey of all properties. As the City is anticipating redevelopment downtown, the desire is to have accurate information about existing historic buildings in the area.

The plan also notes that stakeholders have expressed an interest in preserving the historic context and visual character of the predominately single-family area in the eastern part of the plan study area. Preservation would be accomplished through the implementation of an Historic Residential Character District with design guidelines for all properties that fall within that district.

In addition, the plan makes a number of other recommendations to strengthen and complement existing preservation tools such as adopting the International Existing Building Code and providing incentives to assist with the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic properties.

Other Local Initiatives

Round Rock was designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Texas Historical Commission in 1989. Since that time, the City has received nine CLG grants, each of which have required the City to contribute matching dollars and in-kind service. Two examples of previous grant projects include the 1992 assembly of an inventory of historic resources in the community and the creation of *Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial and Residential Districts & Properties* in 2000.

During the historic resources inventory project, 372 of Round Rock's pre-1945 structures were categorized as tier 1, tier 2, or tier 3, with tier 1 being the highest priority for preservation. The inventory describes every structure in terms of its historic significance, offering detailed descriptions of important physical features, persons, and/or events. As permitted by Round Rock's zoning ordinance, *Design Guidelines for Historic Commercial and Residential Districts & Properties* was adopted to better explain the exterior modification standards for properties with historic overlay zoning.

The most recent CLG grant received by the City of Round Rock was in 2008. The \$10,000.00 federal grant provided funding to develop a preservation education and awareness program.

State Framework

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is Texas' state historic preservation office. It is the primary state agency responsible for historic preservation, its goal being the preservation of Texas' architectural, archaeological, and cultural landmarks of historic significance. One important function of the THC is to designate Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), which represent the highest honor the state can award an historic structure. In Round Rock, several buildings are designated as RTHLs. These properties are afforded a measure of legal protection through the RTHL designation. The owner of a property with an RTHL designation is required to notify the THC 60 days before making significant cosmetic or structural changes to the building. This notification gives the THC an opportunity to consult with the property owner to ensure that the structure maintains its historic integrity.

Federal Framework

The federal framework includes preservation standards, federal tax incentives, and a process for historic designation. Federal standards are applied to Round Rock through the *Secretary of The Interior's Standards For The Treatment Of Historic Properties: With Guidelines For Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, which is intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help to protect irreplaceable cultural resources. Regarding federal tax incentives, Round Rock's historic property owners may be eligible for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, which offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic structures, like offices, rental housing, restaurants, and retail stores. In regard to historic designation, several of Round Rock's historic sites, as well the City's Downtown Commercial Historic District, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archaeological resources. Appendix C of this Plan includes an in-depth description of federal tax credits for rehabilitating historic main street commercial buildings.

Basis for the Development of an Historic Preservation Plan

Section Theme

Despite current historic preservation efforts, the ability of Round Rock to adequately preserve its historic resources is sometimes compromised. Nonetheless, there is evidence of favorable local public support for historic preservation measures, which warrants the review of current programs. The adoption of the International Existing Building Code would assist in rehabilitating historic structures by providing less stringent code requirements for rehabilitation.

Discussion

Round Rock's capacity for properly preserving its historic resources is mainly compromised by four factors: (1) a lack of public awareness of the benefits of historic preservation, (2) rapid growth that threatens historic buildings with demolition for new development, (3) limited funding for preservation programs and activities, and (4) insufficient community partnerships. The consequences of Round Rock's compromised position could be far-reaching. In the interest of new housing or commercial development, for instance, most of Round Rock's historic properties are at some degree of risk of being demolished or having their historic integrity compromised.

Overall, the City of Round Rock is capable of expanding and redefining its approach to historic preservation, and the public has demonstrated that it supports the City doing so. There are currently three important indications that such support exists:

- The first indication is the result of a public meeting held by consultants from the design firm, Glattig Jackson, in November of 2007, the purpose of which was to garner public feedback regarding the scope of services needed for the City's Downtown Master Plan. Among all of the priorities discussed at the meeting, which was attended by over 150 participants, historic preservation was rated the highest.
- The second indication is found in the results of the 2008 Round Rock Citizen Attitude Phone Survey, which gathered statistically representative public feedback regarding update-related planning issues from 400 Round Rock residents living across the City. The results demonstrated several measures of strong public support for historic preservation. For instance, 90% of those surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that "historic, older properties are a significant benefit to the City," and 87% of those surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that "the City should use City ordinances and regulations to encourage historic preservation and maintenance." Furthermore, of those surveyed, 54% either agreed/strongly agreed that "the City should provide tax dollars to assist property owners with maintaining historic properties," and 88% disagreed/strongly disagreed that it is acceptable for historic properties to be removed "if the site can be redeveloped more profitably."
- The third indication is the results from the General Plan public focus group meetings held in the summer of 2009, which summarized public feedback on the broad variety of issues covered in this Plan, including historic preservation. Overall, the meetings displayed strong public support for several types of historic preservation measures, such as the need to preserve the City's history and sense of place for future generations, and to clarify the City's preservation goals.

Implementation

Section Theme

Round Rock can effectively implement several wide-ranging programs designed to redefine, broaden, and strengthen its approach to historic preservation.

Discussion

It is critical that Round Rock's approach to preservation be revised to ensure that it is comprehensive. To this end, there are four measures that can be taken:

- The first measure is educating the local historic property owners, professional community, and the general public about the importance of historic preservation, as well as effective preservation measures. Overall, it will take the help of well-informed property owners, realtors, engineers, architects, and various other types of professionals who are involved with historic buildings in the City to foster the necessary support for revised preservation measures. Consequently, educational tools should be developed and there should be additional coverage in the local media specifically aimed at the professional community.
- The second measure is developing new means of funding for preservation programs and activities. Promotion through the local media, as well as through educational markers, brochures, events, and websites can play a pivotal role.
- The third measure is developing new means of funding for preservation programs and activities. To bolster its preservation efforts, Round Rock could provide funding to assist property owners with the renovation and restoration of significant historic sites and structures through façade grants or other funding programs. Tourism is also a means of obtaining historic preservation funding. Many cities have heritage tourism programs to supplement tourism dollars. The potential of heritage tourism as a revenue source should not be underestimated, as historic sites are some of the most popular and highest grossing tourist destinations in Texas.
- The fourth measure is the formation in Round Rock of at least one non-profit preservation advocacy group. On a practical level, this group would help to champion the cause of historic preservation by developing and managing new awareness programs and supporting funding mechanisms. This group could also play a pivotal role in helping to save historic properties at risk of being demolished. Currently, if a property owner wants to demolish an historic property, appropriate documentation must be provided and a 120-day period must pass. The purpose of such a postponement would be to allow the commission and any interested parties to explore alternatives to demolition. However, without the help of an advocacy group, it is doubtful that such a case would be made, placing the property at risk of losing its historic integrity.

An important way of reviewing and assessing Round Rock's approach to historic preservation is to encourage City leadership to better define the scope and intent of historic preservation in Round Rock. Part of this effort will require City leaders to define specific concepts, like "historic significance," so that new strategies and goals will be clear and refined. More generally, this effort will require that the City Council adopt policies that clarify the role of historic preservation. This can be accomplished by working with the HPC to develop a preservation plan. Ideally, such a plan should emphasize the following four elements: (1) an assessment of existing ordinance language, current landmark/district designations, enforcement practices, and use of the tax exemption program; (2) recommendations for the integration of preservation programs with other strategic/master

planning initiatives; (3) prioritization of neighborhoods/commercial areas for future historic resource surveys/inventories and funding needs; and (4) identification of resource needs and availability, including staff time, grants/funding opportunities, local partnerships, and state and federal programs.

Historic Preservation Program Review

In reviewing the City's historic preservation program, and in guiding decision-makers through the abovementioned issues, the City must address the following questions:

- a. What type of role should historic preservation play in the future identity of Round Rock?
- b. How can the City strengthen its ability to identify and preserve historically significant sites?
- c. Should changes be made concerning how a property's degree of historic significance is determined?
- d. Have properties that have been designated as historically significant had inappropriate alterations that would make them less worthy of this status?
- e. How should the perception that declining maintenance levels on historic properties indicates a decline in historic significance be addressed?
- f. How should current and new historic preservation initiatives be promoted?
- g. What additional types of historic preservation-based educational and awareness initiatives should be developed?
- h. How should historic preservation initiatives be financed?
- i. To what degree should heritage tourism have a role in any future historic preservation efforts?
- j. How is "historic authenticity" defined, and what degrees of historic authenticity are desirable?
- k. By what standards is authenticity maintained if a property is renovated or redeveloped? Is authenticity compromised when historic buildings are brought up to code?
- l. Are certain properties, such as those in Round Rock's Downtown Commercial Historic District, worthy of greater historic status than other historic properties located throughout the City?
- m. What newly annexed land should be subject to historic preservation measures?
- n. How should commercial and residential development interests be balanced with preservation interests?
- o. Should the HPC assume a more policy-oriented role? What would the role of a preservation advocacy group be in the decision-making process?
- p. How can public input best be used to inform the historic preservation process?

Recommendations

1. A Round Rock historic preservation plan should be developed. To do this, City leaders need to define the scope and intent of historic preservation in Round Rock by answering the questions at the conclusion of the previous section. Overall, the plan should emphasize the following elements: (a) an assessment of existing ordinance language, current landmark/district designations, enforcement practices, and use of the tax exemption program; (b) recommendations for the integration of preservation programs with other strategic/master planning initiatives; (c) prioritization of neighborhoods and commercial areas for future historic resource surveys/inventories and funding needs; and (d) identification of resource needs and availability, including staff time, grants/funding opportunities, and local partnerships.
2. City staff should make appropriate amendments to Round Rock's zoning ordinance to clarify key historic preservation terminology and other necessary updates. Amendments to the ordinance should be reflected in educational materials.
3. City staff should make appropriate amendments to Round Rock's zoning ordinance that revise the role of the HPC, allowing for administrative review of certain Certificate of Appropriateness applications in order to streamline the process and free up time for the HPC to focus on preservation policy.
4. A multifaceted preservation awareness program should be implemented specifically to educate members of Round Rock's professional community and historic property owners about the importance of historic preservation, as well as effective preservation measures. Similarly, an awareness program should be developed to educate the general public about the history of Round Rock and the City's historic preservation programs.
5. At least one non-profit preservation advocacy group should be encouraged to help champion the cause of historic preservation and to provide an outside funding mechanism for preservation projects.
6. A study to update the inventory of historic structures and sites should be contracted to a consultant. Overall, a broad-based assessment of the information relating to existing historic properties in the inventory should be undertaken. This assessment must be accurate and comprehensive, and determine the level of priority for preservation given to each of the City's historic properties.
7. New means of financing historic preservation programs should be developed.
8. A thorough review to identify historic preservation funding sources from various public and private entities should be undertaken to assist owners and developers in obtaining the maximum possible assistance when improving historic buildings.
9. Investigate tax increment financing or other similar funding programs to assist in further protecting the City's Downtown Commercial Historic District.
10. The City should consider adopting the International Existing Building Code to provide incentives to assist with the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic properties.

CHAPTER 12



Community Quality

Strategic Plan Basis

Highest Priority

1. Provide a range of employment, housing and lifestyle choices attractive to a diverse range of young professionals, students and empty nesters, as well as families.
2. Prevent neighborhood deterioration.
3. Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.

Priority

1. Preserve the historic buildings, structures and places of the City.
2. Expand and strengthen Arts and Cultural activities.

Public Input Basis

1. Strong support for requiring less obtrusive utility placement.
2. Strong support for encouraging greater design variety and higher quality construction and materials.
3. Strong support for improving neighborhood amenities (e.g., trees, sidewalks, lighting, parks).
4. Strong support for a variety of housing types.
5. Strong support for improving deteriorating neighborhoods.

Physical Design

Chapter Theme

The experiences of working, playing, and living in Round Rock are not only created through programs, services, and relationships, they are also profoundly shaped by the City's physical

environment. All developments in the City, both individually and as a whole, define the physical character and quality of Round Rock. As the City continues its rapid growth, it is crucial that Round Rock's physical environment be developed with an emphasis on quality. This emphasis should also pertain to redevelopment, which is becoming a vital part of the City's physical fabric. Based on the input from this Plan's public involvement process, substantial demand for such an emphasis on quality exists in Round Rock.

Discussion

As Round Rock continues to evolve from a suburban community to a vibrant, midsize city, there are many opportunities to enhance the design of the physical environment, and ultimately, to foster a stronger sense of ownership of and pride in the community. Design standards are key to realizing such opportunities, but costs associated with new standards must be recognized.

Subdivision Design

In regard to residential subdivision design, more options can be created for subdivision layout to allow for sensitivity to topography and other natural features. Neighborhoods across the City can be connected with trails, sidewalks, and bikeways (see Chapter 10, Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space for more details), and more outdoor common spaces can be created for neighborhood activities. Furthermore, more price point options can be offered to promote a variety of housing choices, and housing developments can be designed to accommodate lifestyles of all ages. These options would range from condominiums and garden homes to a variety of lot sizes including larger lots.

Single-Family Housing Design

To improve single-family housing design, higher quality and a variety of building materials can be used, and more options can be offered for appropriate lot to house proportions. For instance, the amount of land on a single-family lot dedicated to green space can be adjusted. When adjacent to a parkway or greenbelt, fences such as those made of wrought-iron, which provide view-corridors and "eyes on the park," can be considered. Additionally, the improvement of streetscape appearances can be encouraged by burying overhead utilities and planting street trees.

Multi-Family Housing Design

Regarding multi-family housing design, a variety of housing units suiting a range of income levels can be developed in order to accommodate the City's diversifying workforce. Furthermore, a diversity of housing units accommodating the incoming student population (generated by the City's new higher education facilities), as well as a variety of other lifecycle needs, can be developed. Building complexes which have well designed interfaces with surrounding streets, as well as ample green space and other open space amenities, can also be considered. Also, areas for higher density multi-family housing can be designated. Such areas would likely require structured parking.

Corridor Design

It is imperative that the City identify all streets which are worthy of consideration for corridor planning. Once identified, a number of strategies can be considered: sidewalks and bike lanes can be constructed along corridors; overhead utilities can be buried; signage can be made more effective and better designed; and uniform graphics, architecture, materials, and public art can be integrated into focal points in the corridor system, such as at major intersections and significant site lines. Additionally, by planting trees and other vegetation at regular intervals, an appealing street wall and visual rhythm can be established along major corridors.

Sustaining Quality in Older Areas/ Quality Revitalization

Section Theme

Round Rock's transition into a mature but aging city poses a significant challenge to its residents: how can the City be maintained as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, and visit? A number of possible approaches are listed in this section.

Discussion

Downtown

Revitalization, through a process of restoration, redevelopment, and/or infill, is one important approach. Downtown Round Rock, which is one of the City's oldest neighborhoods, is currently the subject of a major planning effort, i.e., the *Round Rock Downtown Master Plan*. Ultimately, the plan aims to renew downtown Round Rock with a sense of vibrancy and appeal worthy of the City's historic center. The plan area is shown on the next page in Figure 12.1.

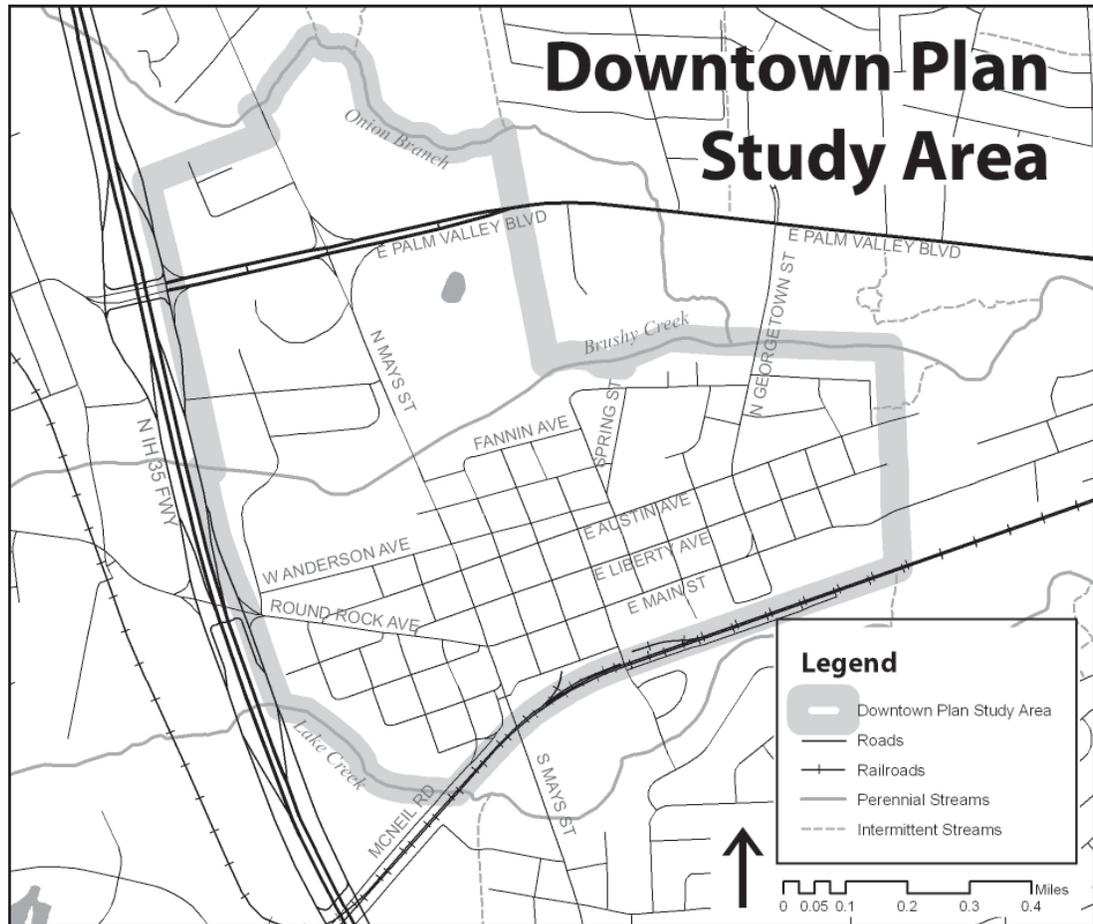
The plan's overall approach focuses on the adoption of new zoning districts, which would place significant emphasis on the physical form of buildings, streetscapes, and neighborhoods, as well as on how each building would help to shape its surrounding physical environment and enhance the public realm.

Specifically, the plan defines a series of walkable streets and neighborhoods that are differentiated through streetscaping, building form, and program. The plan also emphasizes incorporating sustainable urban design and building strategies, as well as preserving and extending the scale and character of Round Rock's historic district (see Chapter 11, Historic Preservation for further information). Other strategies include identifying and programming a series of greens and public spaces, establishing traffic calming measures, and creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

To promote the abovementioned strategies, the Downtown Master Plan identifies several "catalytic projects" crucial to downtown's success. The "catalytic projects," together with

other various infrastructure improvements and programs aimed at promoting downtown, should be reviewed and prioritized to develop phasing for public expenditures to guide the implementation of the plan.

Figure 12.1 Downtown Plan Study Area



Overall, the plan, through its long-range horizon, aims to shape downtown’s development code and guide development standards. The *Round Rock Downtown Master Plan* should become part of this General Plan.

Neighborhoods

The American Planning Association defines neighborhoods as “diverse, dynamic social and economic entities with unique characteristics, which are recognized by residents of both the neighborhood and the community at large.” The City of Round Rock recognizes that its neighborhoods are an important foundation of the community, and that the vitality of its neighborhoods depends on careful consideration of each neighborhood’s unique identity and character.

Neighborhood Planning

Neighborhood planning in Round Rock has its roots in the City's *1990 Round Rock General Plan*, which recognizes that a home is the single largest investment that most individuals make in their lifetime, neighborhoods are the building blocks of a community, and measures should be taken to strengthen this basic structure of the community. The *City of Round Rock General Plan 2000* update lists the following objectives to achieve this goal:

1. Reinvest in the infrastructure of the City's older areas.
2. Ensure strong, consistent code enforcement to maintain neighborhood integrity.
3. Investigate methods and incentives to bring existing developed properties into conformity with new ordinances.
4. Ensure compatible land uses adjacent to neighborhoods.
5. Avoid the creation of large concentrations of apartments in any one area of the City.
6. Continue the Neighborhood Planning Program (i.e., a program designed to foster collaboration among staff from the Planning Department, staff from other City departments, residents, businesses, and institutions) for the purpose of strengthening particular neighborhoods.

Since the development of the above objectives, the City has taken only a minimal role in neighborhood planning due to a lack of implementation funding and staff assigned to this function.

Neighborhoods in Transition

Neighborhood character is an amalgam of the many factors that combine to give an area its distinctive personality. Examples of these factors include land use, urban design and visual resources, socioeconomic conditions, and traffic and pedestrian activity. Not all of these elements affect neighborhood character in all cases; a neighborhood usually draws its distinctive character from a few determining elements. As neighborhoods undergo transition, the predominant elements often change. Potential effects on neighborhood character may include:

Land Use

New development can introduce a new land use or change land use character.

Urban Design and Visual Resources

In developed areas, urban design changes can introduce substantially different building bulk, form, size, scale, or arrangement. Urban design changes can also affect block forms, street patterns, or street function, as well as streetscape elements such as walls, landscaping, and curb cuts. Visual resource changes have the potential to affect neighborhood character by directly changing visual features, such as unique and important public view corridors and vistas, or public visual access to such features.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Changes in socioeconomic conditions can result in substantial direct or indirect displacement or addition of population, employment centers, or businesses. They can also result in substantial differences in population or employment density. These effects must be carefully considered when redevelopment occurs.

Traffic and Pedestrian Activity

For traffic to affect neighborhood character, it must be a contributing element to the character of the neighborhood either by its absence or presence. Some examples of substantial traffic changes include: change in traffic patterns, change in roadway classifications, change in vehicle mixes, and increases in traffic volumes on some residential streets. When a proposed action results in substantially different pedestrian activity and circulation, it has the potential to affect neighborhood character.

Considerations for Neighborhoods in Transition

Round Rock's rapid expansion has resulted in many of the City's neighborhoods experiencing the pressures of character transition. Increased commercial development, the construction of new roads, increased traffic levels, urban design changes, and shifts in the City's socioeconomic makeup have all permanently altered the character of neighborhoods across the City. Residential neighborhoods have been especially prone to character transition often because of development along larger roads, which commonly run along the edges of such neighborhoods. Overall, these transitions are a critical part of Round Rock's evolution into a vibrant, midsize city, and should be planned for accordingly. It is crucial that residents be intimately involved with the transition process, and that several questions be discussed. The following are some examples:

1. How much non-residential development is desirable, and what physical form should that development take?
2. How can the residential character of the neighborhood be maintained as non-residential development increases?
3. How should new non-residential development be weaved into the residential fabric?
4. Does adequate infrastructure exist for non-residential development?

Neighborhood Deterioration

Since the beginning of Round Rock's building boom in the 1970s, neighborhood developments have proliferated across the City. Many of these once new neighborhoods are aging. While some of these neighborhoods are aging gracefully, others are not – yards are unkempt, facades are deteriorating, motor vehicles are not properly parked and stored, and neighborhood safety is at risk. These problems are also manifested in some of the City's oldest, pre-1970s neighborhoods.

Due to the strong relationship between neighborhood deterioration and crime, the Round Rock Police Department (RRPD) plays a pivotal role in preventing neighborhood

deterioration, as well as repairing deteriorated neighborhoods. According to RRPD, the key to working with deteriorating/deteriorated neighborhoods is the Broken Window Theory, which maintains that permitting slight forms of deterioration (e.g., broken window, uncut lawn) leads to further deterioration and increases in crime. The ultimate goal is to avoid any sign of deterioration.

RRPD actively collaborates with community members, property owners, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations throughout the City to prevent deterioration. The Department also pinpoints areas where deterioration exists, and where resulting spikes in crime exist or are likely to occur. RRPD intensively collaborates with community members in those areas to address the problem.

RRPD will soon broaden its strategy for confronting neighborhood deterioration. In sync with Goal 2.0 of the Round Rock Strategic Plan (i.e., Prevent neighborhood deterioration), the Department will collaborate with community members across the City, as well as with City employees, through a series of meetings to better define neighborhood deterioration. This process will serve to increase community involvement and to expand and refine the goals for combating deterioration.

Older Commercial Centers

Dotting Round Rock's landscape are older commercial centers that have outdated designs and are underutilized. Though many of these centers are well located, they have become less marketable in recent years, and potential customers are drawn to newer, bigger, and cleaner commercial models.

The issue of quality is the key to addressing the problem of older commercial centers: to what level of quality should these centers be restored so that they are made vibrant again? Overall, several factors should be considered, such as landscaping, signage, safety precautions, parking ratios, exterior finish, changing market conditions, and the potential need for the City to adopt higher development standards.

Overall, there are three major options for making better use of the available land: refurbish, repurpose, and redevelop.

Refurbish

If older commercial centers are well located and a viable market exists for them, facade renovations, improved landscaping, and new tenants may be all that is required for improvement. To accomplish these goals, proper incentives should be investigated to undertake building and landscape improvements. Furthermore, programs should be implemented which educate small business owners about how to improve the viability and appeal of their businesses.

Repurpose

When neither the structure nor the location of an older commercial center meets the needs of the market, new uses should be explored. A variety of new uses can be applicable,

ranging from day care to office space. In the case of repurposing big box stores, many such stores around the country have been converted into smaller retail uses, movie theaters, office complexes, gyms, and even housing. Local examples exist: Round Rock's first Wal-Mart (at IH-35 and Hesters Crossing) was converted into office space for Power Computing, then into a go-cart track, and now consists of a series of small retail stores and services anchored by Grapevine Market.

Redevelop

If markets, access, and the utilities context make an older commercial center unviable, buildings can be demolished and the site redeveloped in a way more appropriate to the current context. Potentially, major changes in zoning, utilities, transportation, and/or platting will be necessary.

In addition to the three major options discussed above, other methods for improving older commercial centers include the prevention of businesses from restricting the future use of buildings which they have vacated, as well as keeping abreast of broad market trends and ensuring that current codes do not require older types of development which fail to meet current/future needs.¹ Redevelopment of key sites can include high-density mixed-use developments that reflect the changing nature of the community.

Recommendations

1. Establish neighborhood planning programs, especially in older, deteriorating neighborhoods.
2. Current zoning codes should be reviewed to provide more flexibility for infill development.
3. Review minimum standards for lot sizes and setbacks to accommodate a variety of housing styles and sizes, especially in regard to larger homes.
4. The City should promote more large-lot subdivisions.
5. To improve community design and aesthetics, the feasibility and cost of burying overhead utilities should be investigated.
6. Develop a property maintenance code to assist in preventing neighborhood deterioration.
7. The Downtown Master Plan's "catalytic projects," together with other various infrastructure improvements and programs aimed at promoting downtown, should be reviewed and prioritized to develop phasing for public expenditures to guide the plan's implementation.
8. Work with neighborhood members and groups to combat neighborhood deterioration.

¹ In certain instances, businesses are permitted to use deed restrictions to limit the future use of properties which they have vacated. If these businesses move to nearby locations, these restrictions serve to limit competition from occupying the vacated properties.

9. Establish a neighborhood planning and public safety effort that coordinates all relevant City functions.
10. Focus CDBG funds on neighborhood revitalization in low to moderate income neighborhoods.
11. Adopt and enforce an ordinance regarding the maximum number of unrelated persons living in a dwelling unit, subject to constitutional constraints.
12. Identify and close coordination gaps in code enforcement.
13. Obtain HOME funding once the City is eligible.
14. Resolve conflicting tree and landscaping requirements.
15. Increase compatibility fencing standards to ensure durability of materials.
16. Develop sustainable landscaping standards, especially those that require less water.
17. Review design standards and propose ordinance amendments to ensure quality development.
18. Develop comprehensive revision of sign ordinance based on the function of the street and neighborhood character.
19. Create ordinances to foster quality and economically feasible rehabilitation, re-use and redevelopment of aging commercial developments and neighborhoods. This should include incentives to assist with comprehensive redevelopment, such as tax increment financing.

CHAPTER 13



Implementation

This General Plan includes numerous recommendations, some of which relate to projects currently underway. Other recommendations relate to projects and processes that will involve ordinance amendments and some involve programs that will require future expenditures. Below is a complete list of recommendations in this Plan, categorized by the following three general implementation requirements: (1) continuing and new programs, (2) programs requiring capital expenditures, and (3) staffing implications with no capital expenditures. These recommendations will require prioritization and a number of years to complete. Capital improvement projects will need to be forwarded together with projected costs to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation to the City Council for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections.

A. Maintain Ongoing Programs

Chapter 4: Community Facilities & Services

1. City departments should promote processes to improve cooperation between the City and RRISD when considering new school locations and identifying the need for new facilities based on anticipated population growth. (SP 11.0)¹
2. The City should support RRISD's efforts to prepare students to participate in Round Rock's quickly diversifying economy. (SP 11.0)
3. The City should expand efforts to increase options for sharing and/or collocating City and RRISD facilities. (SP 11.0)
4. Library customers should be educated about the existing municipal parking garage. Limiting long-term parking to the garage's upper levels should be investigated; this

¹ At the end of each recommendation, a reference to a Strategic Plan goal number is found. This number represents the section of the Strategic Plan from which the recommendation is derived.

would help to eliminate the common misperception that the garage is usually full, and encourage its use for short-term parking. (SP 36.0)

5. The Fire Department should coordinate the location of new fire stations with future road construction to ensure the best coverage at minimal cost. (SP 21.0)
6. Negotiations are required with Jonah Water Special Utility District (SUD) to ensure adequate water supply for firefighting in portions of its jurisdiction within Round Rock's ETJ. (SP 27.0)
7. The Police Department should maintain partnerships with the community that address problems before they become serious crime issues. (SP 11.0)
8. The Police Department should coordinate with the Public Works Department to address traffic issues. (SP 21.0)
9. The City should investigate methods to fund public art and identify location and selection criteria. (SP 35.0)

Chapter 6: Future Land Use

1. Encourage mixed-use development as designated on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) through the development of codes which support mixed-use as well as infrastructure for increased density. (SP 4.0)
2. Continue to further develop partnerships with Round Rock's higher education institutions. (SP 11.0)
3. Coordinate development standards in order to accommodate research and development, biotechnology, and technology industries. (SP 20.0)
4. Resolve utility issues in the ETJ, especially through negotiations with Jonah Water SUD, in order to provide for the level of development designated on the FLUM. (SP 4.0)
5. Promote development in the portions of the Chandler Creek Drainage Basin currently served with basic water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure. (SP 4.0)
6. Continue the policy of limiting multi-family units to 20% of the housing stock. This percentage may be exceeded in mixed- and multi-use areas. (SP 1.0)

Chapter 7: Environment & Quality of Life

1. Round Rock's subdivision ordinance should be modified so that new development is restricted in key natural spaces, and that the 100 year floodplain is protected for drainage and parkland purposes. The ordinance should also specifically stipulate that developable area cannot be increased through floodplain channelization. (SP 4.0)
2. The selling or transfer of development rights should be investigated, whereby developers who wish to build on environmentally sensitive open space can instead increase densities on developable land or sell their development rights to another developer. These rights can then be used to build higher (than normal) density development on less environmentally sensitive land. (SP 4.0)

3. Native or adaptive vegetation, soil management, and other physical design solutions should be introduced and/or protected in creek corridors to assist in flood control and maintaining the quality of stormwater runoff. Ordinances should be amended accordingly. (SP 29.0)
4. Water consumption should be limited through the use of water efficient landscaping, irrigation control measures, plumbing code changes, and other types of water conservation measures. Ordinances should be amended accordingly. (SP 7.0)
5. To enhance the value of Round Rock's parkland and other open spaces, compatible uses, such as residential development or office parks, should be encouraged adjacent to parkland and open spaces while incompatible uses, such as low-end industry, should be restricted. (SP 4.0)
6. Streets which provide access to open spaces should be single-loaded where possible and ordinances should be amended to maximize public access to open space. (SP 4.0)
7. The City and the economic development arm of the Chamber of Commerce should promote ways to encourage Round Rock businesses to partner with the local community to develop new methods of encouraging the adoption of renewable energy technology. (SP 7.0)
8. The use of environmentally efficient building materials and energy efficient technology should be promoted where economically viable in new developments, as should the incorporation of such materials into older properties. (SP 7.0)
9. Businesses across the City should be encouraged to find ways of becoming more environmentally sustainable and ordinances should be amended to offer developers the choice to use environmentally-friendly technology. (SP 7.0)
10. Policies should be developed which aim to attract businesses spanning the range of the renewable energy industry. (SP 7.0)
11. The recycling of materials, such as organic waste and computer monitors, should be promoted through establishing alternative recycling programs and methods. (SP 7.0)
12. The recycling of waste from construction sites should be investigated. (SP 7.0)
13. New areas of Round Rock where re-use water is appropriate and economical should be identified, and separate piping systems should be included as part of the development requirements for these areas. (SP 4.0)
14. The City should develop standards for the proper placement and spacing of urban trees. (SP 4.0)

Chapter 8: Transportation

1. Improvements to the City's transportation system should be planned methodically to avoid costly mistakes that could be detrimental to the system's integrity in the future. This may require amendments to City ordinances and policies to protect future rights-of-way requirements. (SP 21.0)

2. Ensure that arterials can adequately accommodate future growth and are wide enough to include turn-bays to accommodate possible bus service. These issues are being addressed in the latest update to the Transportation Master Plan, March 2004. (SP 21.0)

Chapter 9: Water & Wastewater

1. The City should continue to anticipate the need for increased water capacity coupled with strong conservation initiatives to meet the peak demands generated by a growing population. (SP 27.0)
2. The City should promote and expand its water conservation program through public education and community outreach initiatives. This program should also be enhanced through the use of a designated watering schedule, having structured water rates to discourage excessive water usage, and partnering with other governmental entities to protect the City's current and future water resources. (SP 7.0)
3. With the purchase of the Brushy Creek Regional Wastewater System, the City, along with its partnering cities, should continue to evaluate and explore efficiencies in owning and operating the system. (SP 27.0)
4. The City should continue to work with the development community to ensure that the City's future utility infrastructure meets the requirements of its water and wastewater master plans. (SP 27.0)
5. The City should continue to utilize the latest technologies, as well as best management practices, modern equipment, and properly trained personnel, in order to maintain its water and wastewater infrastructure. (SP 27.0)

Chapter 10: Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space

1. Community parks should be easily accessible through walking, bicycling, and driving. (SP 3.0)
2. In addition to providing open space, floodplains should be retained in their natural state, and should not be channelized or filled in to maximize adjacent development. Additionally, City ordinances should be amended accordingly, and should provide provisions for modifying floodplains when part of a comprehensive park development. (SP 6.0)

Chapter 11: Historic Preservation

1. City staff should make appropriate amendments to Round Rock's zoning ordinance to clarify key historic preservation terminology and other necessary updates. Amendments to the ordinance should be reflected in educational materials. (SP 5.0)
2. City staff should make appropriate amendments to Round Rock's zoning ordinance that revise the role of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), allowing for administrative review of certain Certificate of Appropriateness applications in order to streamline the process and free up time for the HPC to focus on preservation policy. (SP 5.0)

3. Investigate tax increment financing or other similar funding programs to assist in further protecting the City's Downtown Commercial Historic District. (SP 5.0)

Chapter 12: Community Quality

1. Current zoning codes should be reviewed to provide more flexibility for infill development. (SP 4.0)
2. Review minimum standards for lot sizes and setbacks to accommodate a variety of housing styles and sizes, especially in regard to larger homes. (SP 1.0)
3. The City should promote more large-lot subdivisions. (SP 1.0)
4. The Downtown Master Plan's "catalytic projects," together with other various infrastructure improvements and programs aimed at promoting downtown, should be reviewed and prioritized to develop phasing for public expenditures to guide the plan's implementation. (SP 4.0)
5. Resolve conflicting tree and landscaping requirements. (SP 4.0)
6. Increase compatibility fencing standards to ensure durability of materials. (SP 4.0)
7. Identify and close coordination gaps in code enforcement. (SP 2.0)
8. Develop sustainable landscaping standards, especially those that require less water. (SP 4.0)
9. Develop comprehensive revision of sign ordinance based on the function of the street and neighborhood character. (SP 4.0)
10. Create ordinances to foster quality and economically feasible rehabilitation, re-use and redevelopment of aging commercial developments and neighborhoods. This should include incentives to assist with comprehensive redevelopment, such as tax increment financing. (SP 4.0)

B. Programs Requiring Capital Expenditures

Chapter 4: Community Facilities & Services

1. The municipal court should investigate options for future space needs. These options should be prioritized, cost estimates should be developed, and the options should then be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections. (SP 8.0)
2. A proposal for opening a library branch in the City's northeast or southeast section should be prioritized, cost estimates should be developed, and the proposal should then be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections. (SP 36.0)
3. The City, together with the Round Rock Area Arts Council and private patrons, should locate a space for a new arts and cultural center that could accommodate a variety of functions. This facility should be prioritized, a cost estimate should

be developed, and a proposal should be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections. (SP 35.0)

Chapter 6: Future Land Use

1. City utility services should be extended proactively in order to encourage the most efficient development in accordance with the FLUM. (SP 4.0)

Chapter 8: Transportation

1. The City should strive to develop an economically viable, balanced transportation system that features pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, and transit links, and offers residents access to both work and non-work related destinations. (SP 21.0)
2. A public transit loop connecting the Avery mixed-use area to the multi-modal transit facility currently under construction at the corner of West Main and Brown Streets should be investigated in order to provide better public access to the hospitals and higher education facilities in that area. (SP 21.0)

Chapter 9: Water & Wastewater

1. Capacity improvements, consistent system monitoring upgrades, usage projections, and initiatives to promote the efficient use of existing supplies should all be utilized to provide cost-effective and dependable water and wastewater service for residents and businesses into the future. (SP 27.0)
2. The City should maximize its water re-use program to help offset future water treatment plant expansions and reduce the costs of using potable water for irrigation purposes. (SP 27.0)
3. The City should continue to expand the automated meter reading program so that water meters can be read in a more expeditious manner. (These meters will also provide the City with the ability to track water usage, as necessary.) (SP 27.0)
4. The City should work carefully and promptly with Jonah Water SUD to be certain that water will be available for all future urban development including fire flows in portions of its jurisdiction in the City's ETJ. (SP 27.0)

Chapter 10: Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space

1. In regard to the capital improvement projects identified in Section 4 of Chapter 10, Parks, Recreation Facilities, & Open Space, cost estimates should be developed and then project proposals should be forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for recommendation for possible inclusion in future capital improvement program bond elections. (SP 33.0)
2. Round Rock should strive to acquire and allocate 14% of its land as open space. (SP 33.0)
3. Establish an annual, dedicated funding source for the implementation of the Repair and Replacement Program. (SP 33.0)

Chapter 12: Community Quality

1. To improve community design and aesthetics, the feasibility and cost of burying overhead utilities should be investigated. (SP 4.0)

**C. Potential Staffing Implications
(No Capital Expenditures)****Chapter 4: Community Facilities & Services**

1. The Police Department, Planning Department, Code Enforcement, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and the Public Works Department should work together to develop programs to prevent neighborhood deterioration. (SP 2.0)

Chapter 7: Environment

1. The feasibility of various forms of renewable energy should be reviewed and the appropriate regulations and incentives developed to provide developers with the option to choose renewable energy technology. (SP 4.0)
2. The City should investigate methods and costs of promoting green design for various types of development and modify ordinances to provide developers with the option to implement green design techniques. (SP 4.0)

Chapter 8: Transportation

1. City roadways should feature designs compatible with current land uses, include multiple modes of transportation, feature adequate buffers and landscaping, and reflect residents' desires. This may require amendments to City ordinances and policies. (SP 21.0)
2. Corridor studies should be prepared to develop a comprehensive street tree program and to identify priority areas for implementing such a program. (SP 6.0)

Chapter 9: Water & Wastewater

1. The City should continue to update its water and wastewater master plans on a regular basis to ensure that its impact fees can adequately contribute to funding future infrastructure requirements necessary for new development. (SP 4.0)

Chapter 11: Historic Preservation

1. A Round Rock historic preservation plan should be developed. To do this, City leaders need to define the scope and intent of historic preservation in Round Rock by answering the questions at the conclusion of Section 3 in Chapter 11, Historic Preservation. Overall, the plan should emphasize the following elements: (a) an assessment of existing ordinance language, current landmark/district designations, enforcement practices, and use of the tax exemption program; (b) recommendations for the integration of preservation programs with other strategic/master planning

initiatives; (c) prioritization of neighborhoods and commercial areas for future historic resource surveys/inventories and funding needs; and (d) identification of resource needs and availability, including staff time, grants/funding opportunities, and local partnerships. (SP 5.0)

2. A study to update the inventory of historic structures and sites should be contracted to a consultant. Overall, a broad-based assessment of the information relating to existing historic properties in the inventory should be undertaken. This assessment must be accurate and comprehensive, and determine the level of priority for preservation given to each of the City's historic properties. (SP 5.0)
3. A multifaceted preservation awareness program should be implemented specifically to educate members of Round Rock's professional community and historic property owners about the importance of historic preservation, as well as effective preservation measures. Similarly, an awareness program should be developed to educate the general public about the history of Round Rock and the City's historic preservation programs. (SP 5.0)
4. A thorough review to identify historic preservation funding sources from various public and private entities should be undertaken to assist owners and developers in obtaining the maximum possible assistance when improving historic buildings. (SP 5.0)
5. At least one non-profit preservation advocacy group should be encouraged to help champion the cause of historic preservation and to provide an outside funding mechanism for preservation projects. (SP 5.0)
6. The City should consider adopting the International Existing Building Code to provide incentives to assist with the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic properties. (SP 5.0)

Chapter 12: Community Quality

1. Establish neighborhood planning programs, especially in older, deteriorating neighborhoods. (SP 2.0)
2. Develop a property maintenance code to assist in preventing neighborhood deterioration. (SP 2.0)
3. Work with neighborhood members and groups to combat neighborhood deterioration. (SP 2.0)
4. Establish a neighborhood planning and public safety effort that coordinates all relevant City functions. (SP 2.0)
5. Focus CDBG funds on neighborhood revitalization in low to moderate income neighborhoods. (SP 2.0)
6. Adopt and enforce an ordinance regarding the maximum number of unrelated persons living in a dwelling unit, subject to constitutional constraints. (SP 2.0)
7. Obtain HOME funding once the City is eligible. (SP 2.0)
8. Review design standards and propose ordinance amendments to ensure quality development. (SP 4.0)

APPENDICES



Appendix A: Round Rock Strategic Plan Goals

Safety & Security
High Performance Government
Places & Spaces
Economic Progress

Appendix B: Public Input Data Summary

Phone Survey
Focus Group Meetings
Public Open House

Appendix C: Federal Tax Credits for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Main Street Commercial Buildings

APPENDIX A



Round Rock Strategic Plan Goals

Safety and Security

Strategic Initiative: Public Safety and Health

Goal 27.0 (Highest Priority): Ensure there is an adequate, affordable and safe water supply.

Goal 28.0: Protect public health and protect the environment through proper waste disposal.

Goal 29.0: Provide for effective management of stormwater.

Goal 30.0 (Highest Priority): Residents, Visitors and Businesses continue to experience a high and timely level of public safety and security.

Goal 31.0: Remain prepared to manage disasters and emergencies.

Goal 32.0: Support policies and efforts that will promote public health.

High Performance Government

Strategic Initiative: High Value Government

Goal 8.0 (Highest Priority): Maintain and enhance public confidence, satisfaction and trust in City government.

Goal 9.0 (Highest Priority): Ensure policies and procedures are consistent with the vision, intent and goals of the strategic plan.

Goal 10.0: Enhance internal communication.

Goal 11.0: Enhance capacity to succeed in strategic alliances.

Goal 13.0: Continue and enhance sound financial and business practices.

Goal 39.0: Increase City of Round Rock's capacity to hire and retain talent.

Goal 40.0 Optimize the talent of City of Round Rock employees.

Places & Spaces

Strategic Initiative: Community Character and Environment

Goal 1.0 (Highest Priority): Provide a range of employment, housing and lifestyle choices attractive to a diverse range of young professionals, students and empty nesters, as well as families.

Goal 2.0 (Highest Priority): Prevent neighborhood deterioration.

Goal 3.0 Create a range of walking and biking options within the City.

Goal 4.0 (Highest Priority): Improve City's aesthetics, development and redevelopment quality, and sustainability.

Goal 5.0 Preserve the historic buildings, structures and places of the City.

Goal 6.0 Protect and preserve the natural areas of the City to include parks, floodplains and open spaces.

Goal 7.0 Environmentally friendly, sustainable community.

Strategic Initiative: Mobility and Connectivity

Goal 21.0 (Highest Priority): Identify and plan for future connectivity and mobility needs and options.

Goal 22.0 Foster transportation systems that would support the development of major density centers.

Goal 23.0 Develop public transportation plan.

Goal 25.0 Develop funding source mechanisms for mobility and connectivity options.

Goal 26.0 Construct major elements of transportation and mobility system.

Strategic Initiative: Recreation, Arts and Culture

Goal 33.0 Ensure there is adequate land to meet future recreational, cultural and open space needs.

Goal 34.0 Implement the Parks Plan once adopted.

Goal 35.0 Expand and strengthen Arts and Cultural activities.

Goal 36.0 Develop recreation and library program options that respond to growing diversity of resident and visitor interests.

Goal 37.0 Encourage and support efforts to build a healthier community.

Economic Progress

Strategic Initiative: Economic Vitality

- Goal 14.0 Support further development of the clean and renewable energy business.
- Goal 15.0 (Highest Priority): Determine the feasibility and investment required for Round Rock to develop a concentrated and significant presence in the life sciences and related health care fields.
- Goal 16.0 (Highest Priority): Develop the financial capital needed to support business growth and development and improve the financial advantages of operating in the City.
- Goal 17.0 (Highest Priority): Support the growth and expansion of the business clusters of destination retail, supply chain management, health care, higher education, construction, arts and culture and information technology.
- Goal 18.0 Strengthen and enrich the brand identity of the City and expand the tourism marketing effort.
- Goal 19.0 Foster business growth in the City including small businesses and entrepreneurial activities.
- Goal 20.0 Build and maintain the facilities and infrastructure needed to make the City attractive to target businesses.

Strategic Initiative: Talent

- Goal 38.0 Promote Round Rock as a community that welcomes diversity.
- Goal 41.0 (Highest Priority): Develop the diverse talent pools needed for targeted industries.

APPENDIX B



Public Input Summary

General Plan Phone Survey

Methodology

1. The techniques used in this survey adhere to statistical standards used in the survey industry. The points to consider when evaluating the survey are:
2. The survey sample was composed of 401 residents within the city limits of Round Rock. Respondents were selected at random to participate. The sample was divided into four subsectors and each area was assigned a quota proportional to the number of households with available telephone numbers in that area. A survey with a random sample size of 401 respondents is accurate to within 5% at the 95% confidence level. This means that there is one chance in twenty that the survey results may vary by as much as plus or minus 5% from the results that would be obtained by polling the entire population of the study area.
3. All telephone interviews were conducted by professional interviewers under the close professional supervision of Raymond Turco & Associates. Calls were made on weekdays from 5pm to 9pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 5pm. The length of interviews varied, with the average survey lasting approximately 12 minutes.
4. Only complete surveys were accepted as part of the sample for the telephone survey, and interviewers were required to confirm the respondent's name and telephone number.
5. Certain questions were written to permit the respondent to answer "no opinion." This was done to avoid the artificial creation of attitudes on issues about which the interviewee may not have had an opinion.
6. Interviewing began on September 26, 2008. The 401 interviews were completed by October 9th. The survey was thus in the field for 14 days, a short enough time period to make this an accurate reading.

7. Completed questionnaires were checked for compliance with interviewing and sampling specifications. All editing and validation of interviews, coding of open-ended responses, data processing, and computer analyses were processed by Raymond Turco & Associates. The survey analysis was prepared by Ray Turco, President.

Cumulative Results

The following are the cumulative results from the phone survey (detailed analyses of the results can be produced upon request from the Department of Planning and Community Development).¹

1. Gender:

Male	51%
Female	49%

2. About how many years have you lived in Round Rock?

Less than 5 years	22%
5 – 9 Years	23%
10 – 19 Years	30%
20 – 29 Years	16%
30 Years or more	10%
No opinion/don't know	0%

3. Prior to moving to your current address, which statement best describes your previous address?

I moved from another residence in Round Rock	14%
I moved from another city in Texas	57%
I moved from another state	27%
I moved from another country	1%
Refused to answer	1%

3A. If another city, which city?

Austin	50%
Houston	7%
Pflugerville	5%
Georgetown	3%
Other	35%

3B. If another state, which state?

Ohio	12%
New York	8%
Minnesota	7%
Virginia	6%
Georgia	6%
Other	61%

¹ For questions whose percentages add up to either 98%, 99%, or 101%, the data have been subject to rounding.

4 Which of the following statements best describes your current employment status? If you are a full-time college student, please tell me that, as well as whether you are employed or not.

Employed	64%
College student	1%
Employed college student	0%
Retired	21%
Not currently employed	13%
Refused to answer	0%

5. If employed, do you work primarily outside of your home?

Yes	90%
No	9%
Refused to answer	1%

6. If employed, in which zip code do you primarily work?

Round Rock zip codes	46%
Austin zip codes	31%
Other zip codes	22%
Leander zip codes	2%

7. If zip code is unknown, in which city or what area of that city do you work?

Austin	44%
All over/travels	19%
Round Rock	16%
North Austin	4%
Other	17%

8. For this next question, I'm going to read you several different types of activities in which you may participate. Tell me if you participate in that activity at sites or areas primarily in the City of Round Rock or if you have to go outside of the City. If you do not participate in that activity, please tell me that.

	In City	Outside	Don't Participate	No Response
Attend a cultural event like a play or go to the theater	16%	46%	37%	1%
Go to church or worship service	48%	23%	29%	0%
Participate in my favorite recreational sport or activity	52%	23%	23%	1%
Participate in my child's favorite sport or activity	35%	8%	47%	9%
Hike on a trail	38%	20%	40%	1%
Listen to a band or a concert	15%	47%	36%	2%
Attend my favorite sporting event	38%	32%	29%	1%
Dine out for a special occasion	67%	27%	4%	1%
Participate in a service organization	39%	14%	44%	4%
Enjoy nature	60%	30%	9%	2%
Attend a special event like a festival, crafts show, or specialty convention	32%	48%	19%	1%
Go out with friends	62%	28%	9%	1%

9. Please assign a grade of Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor to Round Rock based on the following characteristics.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Response
A place to raise children	57%	36%	3%	1%	2%
A place to be a teenager	29%	42%	10%	3%	16%
A place to be single	9%	25%	21%	11%	33%
A place to retire	30%	42%	17%	7%	4%
A place to start my own business	23%	38%	13%	6%	19%
Safe streets and neighborhoods	45%	47%	7%	1%	0%
Values environmental protection	25%	47%	16%	5%	7%
A strong sense of community	32%	50%	14%	3%	1%
Natural scenic beauty	16%	46%	28%	8%	2%
An affordable place to live	22%	47%	22%	8%	1%
Walkable streets	32%	46%	15%	5%	1%
Neighborhoods have interesting and unique historic or architectural character	11%	36%	36%	11%	5%
A variety of housing options	22%	57%	16%	3%	2%
Level of traffic congestion	7%	25%	34%	33%	1%
A city in which I can generally find what I wish to purchase	32%	52%	13%	2%	0%

10. Next, tell me about how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about various business and recreational features in the City. “I believe that Round Rock needs more . . .” Please note that disagreeing means that you believe there is either too much of that feature or the right amount.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Trail systems and parks for running, cycling, rollerblading, and hiking	21%	43%	30%	2%	4%
Art and cultural venues, such as a symphony, ballet, theater, and museums	23%	45%	25%	1%	5%
Good paying job opportunities	25%	55%	12%	0%	7%
Nightlife, including bars, nightclubs, and music venues	11%	32%	41%	6%	11%
Small, neighborhood-oriented businesses like drug stores, grocery stores, and restaurants	15%	50%	30%	3%	2%
A variety of goods and services	11%	54%	32%	1%	1%
Gathering places like cafes, plazas, live performance areas, outdoor markets, and street fairs	23%	52%	22%	1%	2%
Retail businesses	7%	41%	46%	3%	2%
Restaurants	8%	44%	43%	3%	2%
Locally-owned businesses	19%	57%	18%	1%	6%

11. The last time you were unable to purchase something because it was not available in Round Rock, what were you trying to purchase?

Clothing-shoes	13%
Furniture-specialty-bedding	13%
Car-motorcycle-auto-related items	11%
Hardware-plumbing-paint	7%
Other	56%

12. And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the appearance of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Response
Your neighborhood	37%	51%	9%	2%	0%
City neighborhoods as a whole	22%	67%	7%	1%	3%

13. Regarding your neighborhood or subdivision, what would you say is its most appealing quality?

Sense of community/good neighbors/family-oriented	17%
Big/lots of trees/mature	13%
Well-kept/landscaped/appearance	13%
Quiet/peaceful	12%
Close to everything/convenient	8%
Safe	6%
Other	31%

14. And what would you say is its least appealing quality?

Unkempt/run-down/trashy	16%
Too much traffic	12%
Miscellaneous	9%
Streets needing repair/widening/clean/road construction	6%
Unfriendly/bad neighbors/people/unsupervised youth	6%
Rentals/apartments/low income housing	6%
Other	45%

15. Specific areas for new development are planned so that residential and neighborhood commercial uses are mixed together in the same building, lot, or block so that it's easy to walk or bicycle to shop for everyday needs. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree that this type of development is a good idea for Round Rock.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
31%	34%	21%	10%	4%

16. If you were new to Round Rock or moving to a new home in Round Rock, how likely or unlikely would you be to live in this type of mixed-use development?

Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	No Response
25%	22%	28%	22%	3%

17. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about older, historic buildings in Round Rock.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
Historic, older properties are a significant benefit to the City	47%	43%	6%	1%	3%
The City should use City ordinances and regulations to encourage historic preservation and maintenance	37%	50%	9%	1%	3%
We don't need ordinances and regulations to preserve historic properties	1%	17%	61%	17%	4%
It's all right to remove historic properties if the site can be redeveloped more profitably	1%	11%	54%	25%	8%
The City should provide tax dollars to assist property owners with maintaining historic properties	8%	46%	32%	5%	8%

18. Please tell me how strongly you would support or oppose the City implementing the following conservation measures in Round Rock.

	Strongly Support	Support	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No Response
Change City ordinances to allow for wind turbines on appropriately-sized private property	29%	40%	17%	6%	8%
Change City ordinances to encourage developers to make their subdivisions more bicycle- and pedestrian-oriented	37%	53%	6%	1%	2%
Spend public money to build sidewalks and other types of multi-use trails in neighborhoods that don't have them	27%	53%	15%	2%	2%
Spend public funds to purchase open space to protect habitat and open space, even if not for recreational use	23%	47%	19%	4%	6%
Adopt ordinances to encourage water conservation	24%	58%	11%	3%	4%

19. The following is a list of some of the major planning challenges facing Round Rock in the coming years. As I read each, please tell me how important or unimportant you feel it is for the City to seek solutions to the following issues:

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Response
Providing alternative modes of transportation to increase travel options	40%	41%	14%	4%	1%
Creating a more walkable city	27%	49%	19%	2%	3%
Creating more outdoor public spaces such as plazas or parks	20%	54%	19%	3%	3%
Decreasing traffic congestion throughout the City	58%	34%	6%	0%	1%
Requiring higher quality design for commercial buildings	17%	44%	29%	2%	8%
Upgrading street appearance with items such as trees, benches, or lighting	24%	53%	19%	1%	3%
Creating a stronger identity or sense of community	23%	54%	17%	1%	5%

20. Now let's talk about downtown Round Rock. What one suggestion would you make to positively affect downtown Round Rock over the next ten years?

Retail-related/more small shops/better/locally owned	28%
More/improved parking	13%
Preservation/maintenance of buildings	10%
Other	49%

21. How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following actions would increase the likelihood that you would visit downtown on a regular basis:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
More restaurants	31%	42%	22%	3%	2%
Better directional signage	7%	26%	57%	4%	6%
More parking areas	29%	45%	21%	2%	2%
Wider variety of shopping opportunities	30%	47%	18%	2%	2%
Construction of multi-use developments, with retail on the ground floor and housing on the second floor	10%	36%	41%	8%	5%
More late-night entertainment venues	17%	37%	36%	4%	5%
More gathering places, such as plazas	14%	53%	26%	2%	4%
More special events	21%	58%	15%	2%	4%

22. First, in which of the following age groups are you?

18 - 25 Years	1%
26 - 35 Years	10%
36 - 45 Years	23%
46 - 55 Years	28%
56 - 65 Years	19%
Over 65 Years	16%
Refused to answer	1%

23. The following questions are for statistical purposes only. Please tell me if you have any people living in your home in the following age groups. Please do not include yourself. If you are the only person living in your home, tell me that also.²

Under 6	17%
6 - 12 Years	19%
13 - 18 Years	18%
19 - 24 Years	11%
25 - 34 Years	14%
35 - 44 Years	19%
45 - 54 Years	22%
55 - 64 Years	18%
65 and older	12%
Only person	16%
Refused to answer	1%

24. In which of the following types of housing are you now living?

Single-family detached home	91%
Apartment	2%
Townhouse/condominium	1%
Duplex	3%
Other	2%
Refused to answer	1%

25. And do you own your home or do you rent?

Own	87%
Rent	10%
Refused to answer	2%

26. In order to ensure that our survey includes all groups fairly, I need to ask your race or ethnic background?

White/Anglo	80%
African-American	6%
Hispanic	7%
Asian	2%
American Indian	1%
Refused to answer	4%
Other	1%

² The percentages for Question 23 add up to 167% because the individuals surveyed answer on behalf of other members in their households. In other words, each data point (i.e., phone call to a particular household) provides multiple answers, enabling the final tally of information to exceed 100%.

27. Finally, how much longer would you say you plan to live in Round Rock?

0 – 3 Years	10%
3 – 5 Years	8%
5 – 10 Years	15%
More than 10 years	63%
Refused to answer	5%

28. And what one reason would you give for choosing that period of time?

Likes Round Rock-happy-satisfied	19%
Live here till I die-no plans to move	18%
Retirement	10%
Business-job factor	7%
Other	46%

Focus Group Meetings

The following is a summary of the data collected during the public focus group meeting process. For clarification purposes, the information directly below provides an explanation of how the data is displayed throughout this summary. In this case, the data is related to the topic of historic preservation.

	dis	low	med	high	mean	
n/a	0	1	2	3		(n/a = answer left blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
3	0	4	6	<u>23</u>	2.4	Preserve the City’s history/sense of place for future generations

Explanation

The number listed in the leftmost column, i.e., 3, represents the number of attendees who chose not to rank the proposal. The number just to the right of 3, i.e., 0, represents the number of attendees who disagreed with the proposal, and who gave it a ranking of 0. The number just to the right of 0, i.e., 4, represents the number of attendees who felt that the proposal is of low importance, and who gave it a ranking of 1. The number just to the right of 4, i.e., 6, represents the number of attendees who felt that the proposal is of medium importance, and who gave it a ranking of 2. The number just to the right of 6, i.e., 23, represents the number of attendees who felt that the proposal is of high importance, and who gave it a ranking of 3. Twenty-three is also bolded and underlined; this indicates that the high importance category received more votes than any of the other categories (i.e., mode). The number in the rightmost column represents the mathematical average of all of the rankings (i.e., mean).

Data Summary

Environment

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

	dis	low	med	high		
n/a	0	1	2	3	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
1	0	4	8	23	2.5	Provide incentives for developers to incorporate water conservation measures into new development
1	1	2	16	16	2.3	Develop new incentives for conserving water and for using alternative sources of energy
0	4	5	8	19	2.2	Create citywide recycling program
1	2	9	8	16	2.0	Use more advanced methods of recycling
1	6	9	11	8	1.6	Consider federal stimulus funding for conservation efforts

Parks and Open Space

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

	dis	low	med	high		
n/a	0	1	2	3	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
0	0	3	15	18	2.4	Conserve natural/green areas
1	0	5	11	19	2.3	Connect neighborhoods with hike and bike trails
2	0	3	14	17	2.3	Develop regional hike and bike trail system
1	0	3	16	16	2.3	Improve Round Rock's hike and bike trail system
1	0	3	20	12	2.2	Improve maintenance of older parks
2	0	10	20	4	1.7	Develop new neighborhood parks
2	2	9	18	5	1.7	Use City funding to acquire open space
2	4	12	11	7	1.5	Use vacant/neglected neighborhood areas for trail
2	20	8	3	3	0.6	Amend City ordinances so that electric motors are permitted on trails

Support for Older Neighborhoods

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
1	2	1	12	20	2.4	Provide City support for improving neighborhood standards/amenities (sidewalks, lighting, trails)
1	1	3	15	16	2.3	Encourage neighbors, churches, employee groups to participate in neighborhood cleanups
1	1	4	11	19	2.3	Adopt/enforce maintenance standards for rental properties/landlords
2	0	6	10	18	2.2	Solicit help from volunteer groups to help people with home repair
2	1	3	16	14	2.1	Improve maintenance of public property (parks/streets) in neighborhoods
1	2	5	14	14	2.1	Find funding sources for cleanups from City, business sponsorships, community foundation grants, other nonprofits
1	4	6	14	11	1.9	Adopt a more assertive code enforcement policy
1	1	7	18	9	1.9	City should actively organize/facilitate neighborhood cleanup efforts
2	2	8	14	10	1.8	Offer assistance to disadvantaged homeowners in meeting maintenance standards
2	5	8	9	12	1.7	Ensure that HOAs maintain their properties
1	4	7	17	7	1.7	Adopt a stronger code enforcement standard
2	12	7	3	12	1.4	Protect homes from being destroyed for rapidly-growing churches
1	10	7	14	4	1.3	Create voluntary HOAs to improve amenities in older neighborhoods

Residential Design

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
1	3	5	13	14	2.0	Encourage design variety (houses)
2	6	5	6	17	1.9	Require developers to plant trees on residential lots/backyards
2	5	5	9	15	1.9	Require less obtrusive utility placement (neighborhoods)
2	4	5	13	12	1.9	Require better materials/construction standards (houses)
2	4	7	12	11	1.8	Develop higher quality design standards for housing
2	5	3	17	9	1.8	Allow houses/neighborhoods to change and adapt with time/family growth
2	6	4	15	9	1.7	Encourage lot/house size variation (houses)
2	4	12	4	14	1.7	Require houses to be proportionate to lots
1	7	7	10	11	1.7	Allow variety of house-lot proportions
2	6	8	10	10	1.6	Require that design of new houses complements neighboring older houses
2	6	7	13	8	1.6	Encourage variety of price points (houses)
2	5	11	11	7	1.5	Keep home sizes consistent (1-and 2-story together is ok; 1- and 3-story is not)
2	6	9	13	6	1.5	Require better design/aesthetics (houses)
2	8	9	10	7	1.4	Require less obtrusive garages/driveways
2	6	13	11	4	1.3	Require bigger side setbacks (houses)
1	11	11	6	7	1.2	Allow for the use of 1-car garages (currently require 2-car garages)
2	13	8	10	3	1.0	Encourage use of alleys
2	10	13	8	2	1.0	Require features that encourage people to gather and socialize in front yards, such as porches (houses)
1	18	11	4	2	0.7	Discourage privacy fences

Future Land Use (Includes New Subdivision Design)

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
2	2	4	12	16	2.1	Incorporate more open space and recreational facilities into subdivisions
2	1	8	11	14	2.0	Improve minimum standards for subdivision design/codes
2	3	5	12	14	2.0	Include different housing types for different life stages
3	2	3	14	14	2.0	Build more housing to suit a variety of income and age groups
2	2	3	18	11	2.0	Design the commercial/residential balance carefully – it can work well but there is potential for conflict
2	3	2	18	11	2.0	Locate neighborhood commercial at intersections/neighborhood edges/ between neighborhoods
2	8	4	3	19	1.9	Include cost of new schools & services in impact fees for new development
2	4	7	7	17	1.9	Do not let developers define our community for us (more assertive standards)
2	4	6	9	15	1.9	Require more open space (esp. for denser housing)
2	5	4	11	14	1.9	Zone for only small scale commercial that serves neighborhood needs
2	2	5	16	11	1.9	Develop mixed-use, high-density nodes in certain areas of the city
4	2	3	17	10	1.9	Encourage more mixed-use development
3	1	7	15	10	1.9	Restrict the over-commercialization of areas adjacent to neighborhoods
3	5	4	10	14	1.8	Create more/stricter requirements for developers
4	3	6	12	11	1.8	Locate uses with different parking needs together so that they can share
4	3	4	15	10	1.8	Zone neighborhood commercial uses to appeal to a variety of age groups (e.g., office, daycare, assisted living, community gardens)
3	3	6	15	9	1.8	Strengthen the diversity of housing types
3	2	7	16	8	1.8	Keep retail on the edges of neighborhoods
2	7	4	12	11	1.7	Allow denser housing if well-planned
3	7	3	12	11	1.7	Require minimal amenities for subdivisions/HOAs
3	4	4	17	8	1.7	Locate apartments/duplexes carefully; near the university or dispersed within neighborhoods, not on the City periphery
4	3	3	19	7	1.7	Encourage clean, consistent design (including commercial)
4	4	8	12	8	1.6	Zone commercial locations based on what uses do well in what locations – not just based on a design ideal – dead businesses do not enhance a community
3	7	9	7	10	1.5	Prohibit developers from determining the location of major developments
4	4	6	17	5	1.5	Zone commercial in nodes and avoid strips
2	9	8	7	10	1.4	Require subdivisions to be organized/designed more like traditional neighborhoods
3	7	4	18	4	1.4	Maintain suburban land use pattern
3	11	5	11	6	1.3	Require an entrance/gateway condition for neighborhoods (including downtown)
2	20	5	6	3	0.9	Avoid cul-de-sacs
4	12	11	9	0	0.8	Place commercial activity within subdivisions

Public Services (Includes Social Services)

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
1	1	4	18	12	2.1	Ensure that social services accommodate population increases
4	1	5	6	20	2.1	Strengthen neighborhoods' sense of community
3	3	6	17	7	1.7	Increase funding for public safety
6	3	5	14	8	1.6	Improve community input for CDBG distribution

Programs and Attractions

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
4	0	4	9	19	2.2	Further diversify economic base
2	0	4	15	15	2.2	Attract more family-oriented entertainment options
2	0	3	16	15	2.2	Develop better incentives to attract a variety of businesses downtown
4	0	7	9	16	2.0	Develop a stronger identity for Round Rock
4	1	6	12	13	1.9	Develop more entertainment/arts, shopping/dining, and sport options
3	1	9	15	8	1.8	Develop concentrated entertainment districts around the City

Transit

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

n/a	dis	low	med	high	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
	0	1	2	3		
1	0	3	10	22	2.5	Develop public transit options for point to point routes and to serve the college campuses
1	2	7	9	17	2.1	Connect Round Rock to local and regional rail lines
2	0	3	19	12	2.1	Develop/improve bus connections to points within Round Rock, as well as between Round Rock and other cities
3	7	9	10	7	1.4	Avoid using Capital Metro

Historic Preservation

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

	dis	low	med	high		
n/a	0	1	2	3	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
3	0	4	6	23	2.4	Preserve the City's history/sense of place for future generations
3	0	2	9	22	2.4	Preserve local history (documents, accounts of events)
4	1	2	9	20	2.2	Clarify the City's goals for historic preservation
2	0	5	14	15	2.2	Allow modern, better-performing materials if they preserve the look and character, but standards must be strict enough to be meaningful (preservation)
2	1	3	14	16	2.2	Create compatible standards for new construction that are compatible/consistent with the historic properties in the area; preserve the community feel
4	0	1	14	17	2.2	Make use of funds and other assistance from nonprofits for preservation
3	1	3	13	16	2.1	Increase public awareness of preservation and area history
4	0	4	12	16	2.1	Initiate a Main Street Program downtown
3	1	3	15	14	2.1	Streamline review of minor changes (preservation)
3	2	3	10	18	2.1	Consider cost issues when creating standards for historic properties
5	3	3	7	18	2.0	Avoid attempts to create a false history when creating district standards
5	1	5	9	16	2.0	Exploit the tourism/economic benefits of historic preservation
4	1	4	12	15	2.0	Preserve buildings in a beautiful and useful condition
3	3	7	9	15	1.9	Consider that downtown is already architecturally eclectic when creating district standards
3	0	7	12	14	2.0	Take an inventory of (potentially) historic properties
4	2	8	9	13	1.8	Increase the City's level of support for preservation so that it stands by its programs/vision
5	0	9	12	10	1.8	Preserve outstanding interior features as well as exterior
5	2	4	16	9	1.8	Offer City grants/funding for preservation
4	1	6	16	9	1.8	Create pattern books for guidelines that are appropriate to the area's different historic styles
5	2	4	17	8	1.7	Establish a non-profit group to promote local history and preservation in ways that the HPC cannot
5	3	9	10	9	1.6	Waive fees/streamline building review for preservation
6	3	7	11	9	1.6	Maintain the City's current level of involvement in preservation
5	0	11	14	6	1.6	Improve enforcement of existing regulations (preservation)
4	7	6	10	9	1.5	Increase the City's involvement (preservation)
4	3	12	10	7	1.5	Designate more historic properties
5	6	6	13	6	1.4	Strengthen current standards for historic properties
7	15	9	3	2	0.6	Relax current standards for historic properties
4	19	9	4	0	0.5	Reduce the City's involvement/do not bother with preservation
5	23	5	0	3	0.4	It's too late for preservation; too much has been lost

Connectivity and the Transportation Network

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

	dis	low	med	high		
n/a	0	1	2	3	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
3	0	0	8	25	2.5	Build a diversified and efficient transportation system
3	0	1	9	23	2.4	Implement a regional approach to transportation planning
3	0	1	10	22	2.4	Improve circulation/accessibility around Round Rock, especially west of I-35, and between Round Rock and surrounding cities
3	1	4	6	22	2.3	Install better synchronized traffic signals
2	0	5	8	21	2.3	Reduce congestion
2	0	4	12	18	2.3	Improve street connectivity (general, subdivision access)
4	0	4	13	15	2.1	Improve connections/access to commercial areas (neighborhood, general)
5	1	5	14	11	1.8	Allow for transportation improvements to drive land use rather than vice versa
3	1	6	19	7	1.8	Improve street maintenance standards
2	6	6	13	9	1.6	Limit the number of school zones and keep speed limits consistent where there is more than one zone
4	5	9	12	6	1.4	Design roads so that you notice the City and do not just pass through as fast as possible

Transportation Infrastructure (Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, and Corridor Design)

Please rate each item on a scale from 0-3: (0=unimportant/disagree; 1= low importance/low agreement; 2=medium importance/medium agreement; 3=high importance/high agreement)

	dis	low	med	high		
n/a	0	1	2	3	mean	(n/a = blank; underline = mode; mean includes blanks as 0)
1	0	2	16	17	2.4	Improve pedestrian connectivity/more sidewalks/bike lanes
2	0	5	13	16	2.2	Use more landscaping/trees/plantings/shade in streets
2	0	3	17	14	2.2	Improve pedestrian safety/walking experience
2	2	2	15	15	2.1	Improve utility placement (underground, alleys)
2	1	6	12	15	2.1	Improve signage (places/events of interest)
2	2	3	16	13	2.1	Improve signage for police, hospital, fire, and other public facilities
1	1	8	13	13	2.0	Improve lighting/fixtures/illumination on streets
2	0	11	15	8	1.8	Use more medians/islands in streets
3	6	7	9	11	1.6	Avoid using speed bumps
2	15	12	5	2	0.8	Create traffic circles at major intersections

Public Open House

The following is a summary of the feedback collected at the public open house:

Transportation

- Bridge on Chisholm Trail by the round rock is too dangerous for children; it requires a sidewalk and/or the bridge should be widened.
- Pedestrian walkways are needed to better connect east and west Round Rock.
- New bridge and road connection to the IH-35 frontage road, through downtown mixed-use, is not appropriate. Funding should be used to enhance Round Rock Avenue.
- Do not build the bridge extending from Main Street to the frontage road. Access to downtown is critical and this does not enhance that.
- Improve traffic signals and lane configurations on Mays Street.
- Develop a fixed-route bus service in Round Rock.
- Construct sidewalks along Round Rock Avenue (RM 620) by Round Rock High School.
- Build more parking for downtown businesses.
- Increase safety crossings for students.
- Diversify intra-city transportation methods.

Historic Preservation:

- At each historic site, the history of that site should be featured.
- Build more historic signage.
- Expedite the provision of funds for restoring and/or maintaining historic buildings and homes.
- Establish special taxing/property appraisal programs to encourage historic site preservation.
- New incentives should be developed to place limits on adopting new land uses.

Community Facilities:

- Additional police substations are needed.

Land Use:

- Consider having mixed-use around the potential convention center site.
- The convention center should be located downtown around the new parking garage and City offices.
- Senior housing should be located near downtown facilities, government offices, and medical facilities.

Parks & Open Space:

- Expedite the building of park trails and be sure that they can adequately include bicycle traffic.

Community Design:

- Overhead cables should be buried.
- Trade the Yaupon trees in the middle of Main Street for shade trees.
- The entrance to downtown Round Rock should be marked by columns with an arch, stating “Downtown Historic Round Rock.”
- Build signage directing tourists and locals from Austin and Georgetown to downtown Round Rock.
- Expand downtown sidewalks for café seating.
- Downtown should have larger trees and more colorful plantings.
- Improve alleys behind buildings through better landscaping.
- Build lighting to lead pedestrians from parking off of Main Street to downtown businesses.

A P P E N D I X C



**Federal Tax Credits for
Rehabilitating Historic Buildings:
Main Street Commercial Buildings**

Introduction to Federal Tax Credits for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

Main Street Commercial Buildings



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Technical Preservation Services

- *Do you own a commercial building located in a historic district?*
- *Does it need to be fixed up?*
- *Will it be used for a business or rental housing?*

If you answered **YES** to all three questions, then you should be aware of a program that offers significant federal tax incentives for rehabilitating historic buildings.

The Program

Administered by the National Park Service in conjunction with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), the **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program** offers a 20% federal tax credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses. Thousands of property owners across the country have already utilized these tax incentives to rehabilitate historic commercial buildings and similar properties.

Why does the program exist?

Recognizing the importance of preserving our building heritage and the need to encourage the rehabilitation of deteriorated properties, Congress created in 1976 federal tax incentives to promote historic preservation and community revitalization. These tax incentives have successfully spurred the rehabilitation of historic structures of every period, size, style, and type.



Tax Credit Basics

- In general, a tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of taxes you owe.
- The amount of credit under this program equals 20% of the qualifying costs of your rehabilitation.
- A project must be “substantial” in that your qualifying rehabilitation expenses must exceed the greater of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building.
- Your building needs to be certified as a historic structure by the National Park Service.
- Rehabilitation work has to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation* as determined by the National Park Service.

The process is straight-forward, and the tax savings can be significant. For example, a property owner planning a project estimated to cost \$60,000 could realize a tax credit of \$12,000 on their federal income taxes.

Applicants are encouraged to consult their accountant or tax advisor to make sure that this federal tax credit is beneficial to them. For additional information visit the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives website of the National Park Service at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax and click on “IRS Connection.”

Monroe, MI 1910. Awnings were a prominent building feature on many of America’s Main Streets. Photo: Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

Three Steps

to Determine if a Project is Eligible for Tax Credits

First: Does your building contribute to a historic district recognized by the National Park Service?

The easiest way to determine if your building is located in a historic district is to contact your local historic district commission, municipal planning office, or State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Recognized historic districts, for purposes of federal tax credits, include those listed in the *National Register of Historic Places* (maintained by the National Park Service) and certain local historic districts that are certified by the National Park Service. Over one million buildings are already listed in the National Register, either individually or as part of historic districts.

If your property is located in one of these districts, it still must be designated by the National Park Service as a structure that *contributes* to the historic character of the district and thus qualifies as a “certified historic structure.” Not every building in a district is contributing. For example, when historic districts are designated, they are usually associated with a particular time period, such as “1820 to 1935.” In this case, a building constructed in 1950 would *not contribute* and would not be eligible for a 20% rehabilitation tax credit. Within this same district, an 1892 building might not contribute to the historic character if it was almost completely changed in the 1950s.

Second: Will your rehabilitation be “substantial”?

The cost of a project must exceed the greater of \$5000 or the building’s adjusted basis. The following formula will help you determine if your project will meet the substantial rehabilitation test:

$$A - B - C + D = \text{adjusted basis}$$

A = purchase price of the property

B = the part of the purchase price attributed to the land cost

C = depreciation taken for an income-producing property

D = cost of any capital improvements made since purchase

For example, Mr. Dillon has owned a downtown building for a number of years. He originally purchased the property for \$150,000, and of that purchase price \$40,000 was attributed to the cost of the land. Over the years, Mr. Dillon has depreciated the building for tax purposes by a total of \$60,000. He recently replaced the roof at a cost of \$8000. Mr. Dillon’s adjusted basis would be \$58,000. Since he intends to spend \$60,000 to fix a leaking basement wall; upgrade the heating/air conditioning systems; and repair the deteriorated storefront, the rehabilitation would qualify as a substantial project. If he completes the application process and receives approval, Mr. Dillon will be eligible for a 20% credit on the cost of his rehabilitation, or a \$12,000 credit.



Retaining historic character: The historic tin ceiling was retained during the rehabilitation for this Main Street clothing store.

Some expenses associated with a project may not qualify for the tax credit, such as an addition off the back of the building, new kitchen appliances, or paved parking.

Third: How does your project become “certified”?

To qualify for the tax credits you need to complete a 3-part application. In Part 1 of the application, you provide information to help the National Park Service determine if your building qualifies as a “certified historic structure.” In Part 2, you describe the condition of the building and the planned rehabilitation work. The proposed work will be evaluated based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation – a set of 10 widely accepted standards of practice for historic preservation. Part 3 of the application is submitted after completion of the project and is used by the National Park Service to certify that the project as completed meets the Standards and is a “certified rehabilitation.”

The 3 parts of the application should be completed in order. You will need to submit 2 copies of each part to your SHPO. One copy will be forwarded by the SHPO with a recommendation to the National Park Service, which will issue the final decision for each part of the application. It is important to submit Part 2 before beginning work, because if your initial project proposal does not meet the Standards, you are provided an opportunity to modify the plans.

To learn more about the Standards, visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/ or contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Part 2 of the application is where you describe the condition of the building prior to rehabilitation and the proposed work. Three forms of information are needed: a description or **narrative** for each main building feature (see sample left, below); ample **photographs** showing the condition and views of the property prior to beginning work (exterior and interior as well as the surrounding site); and architectural plans or **drawings** that include existing floor plans and proposed changes. If no work is planned for a major feature (such as windows, roof, 2nd floor plan, etc.), include a statement to that effect in the application and still provide photographs.

You are encouraged to submit **Parts 1 and 2** during the early planning of the project. This provides the opportunity to make changes with minimal inconvenience or additional expense if some aspect of the work is determined not to meet the *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

Part 3 of the application is a Request for Certification of Completed Work. This is a presentation of the finished rehabilitation and, once approved by the National Park Service, serves as documentation to the Internal Revenue Service that your project is a “certified rehabilitation.” Approval of the Part 3 application is a condition for obtaining federal rehabilitation tax credits.

Describing Your Project

Material and information to provide in your application include:

- *historic district map*
- *site plan*
- *photographs*
- *floor plans*
- *elevation drawings* (if exterior changes are planned)

On a copy of the *historic district map*, indicate where your building is located.

Photographs are essential in conveying what the building looks like prior to your rehabilitation. Think of the pictures as providing a “virtual tour” of your property. Include pictures showing each exterior side, the building’s relationship to surrounding structures, and close-ups of such primary exterior features as display windows, doors, and other character-defining features. On the interior, provide views of the main spaces on each floor, and include details like decorative ceilings, stairs, interior doors, and window trim. Document deteriorated conditions, such as crumbling brickwork or water stained plaster.

Number each photograph on the back and write the building’s address and a brief description of the image. Include a *floor plan* with the number of each photograph and an arrow pointing in the direction it was taken. Please indicate if the image is pre- or post-rehabilitation.

Elevation drawings often will be needed where major changes to the exterior of the building are planned. For example, a drawing should show the size, design, and details of a proposed new storefront. **Floor plans** of the existing room layouts are important and, where changes are proposed, **floor plans** showing the new layout are needed as well.

Supplemental material may also be helpful in describing your project. For example, product literature or a simple sketch might best detail a new side entrance door.

Remember that the SHPO and National Park Service reviewers who will be evaluating the application will probably be seeing your building for the first time through the material you provide. Your application should communicate: (a) the appearance of the building prior to beginning work; (b) the building’s condition on both the interior and the exterior prior to work; and (c) your proposed rehabilitation work.

Photo Documentation

Good quality photos (4 x 6 or larger) are needed. If using digital images, print in high-resolution on photo quality paper. Images printed on regular copy paper are discouraged due to the general lack of clarity and detail.

Label and number each photo and reference it in the application. In addition, key the picture to a floor plan with an arrow indicating the direction in which it was taken.



**Photo 3, Pre-Rehab
2147 Hamilton Rd.
City, State**

Front facade with cornice detail and mismatched mortar used in earlier repointing.

Example: Photo and label on reverse side.

Rehabilitating Your Main Street Building

The Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program was created to encourage the rehabilitation and re-use of historic structures while preserving the historic character of individual buildings and districts. Many historic districts in small towns and cities have Main Streets of small shops and other commercial buildings, typically one to four stories high. The variety of architectural styles reflects the popular taste of different eras and the image an entrepreneur wanted to project.

The commercial storefront is usually one of the most significant elements of a Main Street building. In its simplest form, a storefront traditionally consisted of several display windows in a wood or metal frame, set above a bulkhead and below a glass transom, and an entranceway to the store on the first floor. It was also common for a second doorway to be located on one end of the storefront to provide access to the floors above. A sign and a canopy or awning often embellished the storefront.

When the historic storefront has survived largely unaltered, it should be repaired whenever possible, rather than replaced, in order to preserve both the historic appearance and historic materials. Similarly, a later storefront installed during the historic district's period of significance that may have acquired significance in its own right should be repaired. Where the existing storefront is not significant or has deteriorated beyond repair, the following guidance applies, in most cases, when designing a compatible replacement (for further guidance see Preservation Briefs 11: *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*):

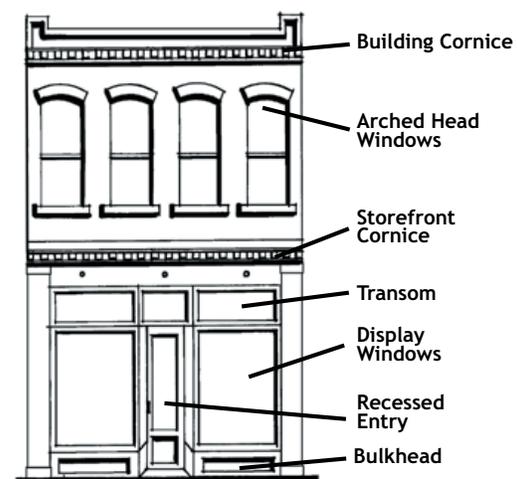
- Relate the new storefront to the design of the building.
- Correctly proportion display windows so as to consist predominantly of glass, typically with a transom above and bulkhead below.
- Retain, where possible, the location of the historic storefront entrances and any separate outside entrance to the upper floors. Duplicate the historic doors or replace with doors that are sized to the opening. (This usually requires a custom-made door to achieve the necessary height and width; avoid doors that have a residential appearance.)
- Ensure that replacement storefronts that aim to recapture the historic design are finished so as to be consistent with the historic appearance. With non-historic or replacement storefronts of a compatible design, avoid unpainted wood surfaces as well as in most cases bright metallic or bronze anodized metal finish.
- Design and attach signage and any canopies in a manner so as to avoid damage to the historic material and to be compatible with the features and appearance of the building facade.

Beside the storefront, windows on the upper floors and the roof cornice usually help define the historic character of small commercial buildings. Repair historic windows when possible, adding exterior or interior storm windows as needed. If the historic windows are beyond repair, suitable replacements are ones that match the appearance and materials of the old units.

Depending on the level of historic integrity, the interiors of Main Street commercial buildings on both the upper and lower floors often contribute to the historic character through their historic spaces, features, and/or finishes. Main Street buildings typically had a large open floorplan on all or part of the first floor, making it easily adaptable to numerous uses. While retaining the open plan is recommended, it may be possible to divide portions of the space, provided the sense of openness is preserved. Many commercial buildings retain their historic decorative ceilings, such as pressed metal, and their finished walls. These finished appearances should not be dramatically altered. Throughout the building avoid the removal of plaster to expose masonry walls or removing a pressed metal ceiling to expose the above floor joists. In most cases, mechanical ductwork is best concealed, rather than being left exposed, since exposed mechanicals can visually impact a historic space.

When more floor space is needed, it is often possible to add to the rear of Main Street buildings and still qualify as a "certified rehabilitation." Rooftop additions to most small commercial buildings are not appropriate. While costs associated with new additions are not eligible for the rehabilitation credit, the work is still reviewed by the National Park Service.

Typical Storefront Details



Drawing courtesy of Winter & Company

Frequently Asked Questions

How is a tax credit different from a deduction?

A tax credit usually saves you more in income tax. Unlike a deduction, which reduces your taxable income, a credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the amount of taxes you owe.

Can I receive federal tax credits for fixing up my personal residence?

In general, the tax credits are not available for rehabilitating your personal home. If you live in the upper floor and rent out the first floor, the money spent on rehabilitating the rental portion can be used, provided you meet the adjusted basis test. Contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine the availability of any state credits or other tax incentives for personal residences.

If I have already begun my project, is it too late to get the credit?

As long as your building is in a registered historic district and you submit your Part 1 of the application prior to completing the project, then you may apply for the tax credits. However, you are strongly encouraged to submit rehabilitation plans (Part 2 of the application) prior to construction. In doing so, you ensure that any required changes are identified early and the resulting cost and inconvenience are minimized.

Can anyone help me through this process?

Help is available through a variety of resources. SHPOs and local historic preservation organizations, including state or local Main Street programs, are the best place to begin if you have questions. Advice is available on the National Park Service website (www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/) or through many SHPO websites. Some people choose to hire a professional consultant, but for most small Main Street projects owners complete the process themselves.

How long does it take to get approval of my proposed project?

You should submit your rehabilitation plans (Part 2 of the application) well in advance of beginning work – many states recommend six months prior – to allow time if additional information is needed by the SHPO or National Park Service. When original submittals contain sufficient information, reviews by the NPS are generally completed in 30 days, once received from the SHPO.

When can I claim the tax credit?

A credit may be claimed in the same year the building is placed in service. Where the building is never out of service, the credit is usually taken in the year in which the rehabilitation is completed.

How are the Federal and local reviews different?

Local commissions develop their own guidelines that are particular to the district and the community's preservation goals. Under the Federal tax credit program, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are applied uniformly to projects from across the country. Work on both the exterior and the interior of a building is reviewed by the SHPO and NPS; while local review commissions generally only consider exterior work.

Are there any application fees?

It depends on the cost of your project. For information on current fees, visit our web address.



Approval by the National Park Service for purposes of federal tax credits is a separate and different process from that of approval by a local architectural review commission for purposes of obtaining a certificate of appropriateness.

To locate your State Historic Preservation Office visit www.ncshpo.org

This booklet was prepared by Daniel Bruechert, Technical Preservation Services Branch, Heritage Preservation Service, National Park Service, with the assistance of Charles Fisher, National Park Service. Thanks are extended to Elizabeth Creveling and Jennifer Parker of the National Park Service for their collaboration and Michael Auer for his review. All photographs are from National Park Service files unless otherwise indicated.

First-time user guides for owners of small buildings interested in the federal rehabilitation tax credits are prepared pursuant to the National Preservation Act, as amended, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop and make available information concerning the preservation of historic properties. This and other guidance on rehabilitating small buildings can be found on our web site at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/ or by writing Technical Preservation Services-2255, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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