

Comprehensive Plan 2001

OVERVIEW

WHY PLAN?

Advance, or comprehensive, planning helps to ensure that, as size and population characteristics grow and change over time, the community continues to develop in a manner which reflects the objectives and values of the community's property owners, decision-makers and citizenry. The product of a municipal advance-planning program is generally a Comprehensive Plan document (and associated maps), which is sometimes referred to as the community's "Master Plan". The Comprehensive Plan should function as a long-range guide for the future growth, development and, in some cases, redevelopment, of the community over ten years, twenty years, or an even longer period of time. It should accurately reflect what is in the best interest for the City of Lufkin, as perceived by citizens and property owners within the community. It should illustrate and represent a comprehensive "vision" of what the community can become, and it should be utilized as a long-range statement of public policy.

The Comprehensive Plan serves several important roles in the City's decision-making process. Its primary purpose is to permit the City to consciously consider and shape its own future. It serves as a response to existing problems that have been identified within the community, and as a means to address future issues in a more proactive way. It can be used to

identify areas or features that need to be protected or preserved, and it can establish a framework for setting priorities. Although the Comprehensive Plan focuses primarily upon the community's physical form and environment, it is closely tied to socio-economic factors as well. In many ways, the physical layout and design of the community affects the daily lives of those who live and work within it.

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As a vision of the City's future physical form, the Comprehensive Plan sets forth a generalized pattern of land use areas and transportation corridors. It represents a long-range statement of public policy with respect to how the community should grow, develop and mature over time. It includes policies and recommendations relative to the development of various physical elements within the community such as transportation, land use, housing, parks and recreation, public facilities, and urban design. It provides for the distribution of and interrelationships between various land uses, as well as a basis for future development recommendations. These aspects of the Plan are supported by a set of goals and objectives drawn from the desires and aspirations of citizens and business leaders, and are intended to help Lufkin create an attractive living and working

environment. The primary objectives of the Comprehensive Plan are to:

- ♦ Coordinate public and private investment;
- ♦ Minimize conflict between land uses;
- ♦ Manage growth in an orderly manner;
- ♦ Increase the cost effectiveness of public investments;
- ♦ Provide a rational and reasonable basis for making decisions about the community; and
- ♦ Provide guidance for shaping and enhancing the community's image/identity.

The Comprehensive Plan, once adopted, becomes an official policy of the City. It will help guide zoning and development decisions, and it will serve as a basis for future capital expenditures for public facilities. It is important to emphasize that the Comprehensive Plan is not a rigid policy, but rather a guide. It is intended to be flexible and to provide latitude for more detailed analyses that are commonly a part of zoning and development decisions; however, these decisions should be consistent with policies established within the Comprehensive Plan.

As previously stated, planning is not a single event but rather a continuous and ever-changing process. The City will undoubtedly encounter future development proposals that are inconsistent with the Plan. Some of these proposals may well be in the best interest of the City and worthy of further consideration. As community conditions and priorities change over time, the City's Comprehensive Plan should be amended to take advantage of new opportunities and to respond to new needs and circumstances. Thus, the Comprehensive Plan itself is not intended to be a static document; it is intended to be a dynamic, adaptable guide to help citizens and officials shape Lufkin's future.

PLAN CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Lufkin's Comprehensive Plan is divided into five major sections. Each section is designed to accomplish specific objectives within the planning process. The major sections are summarized as follows:

Overview

This section explains why it is important for a growing community to plan ahead of future growth and development, and describes the purpose and importance of

the Comprehensive Plan in the City's decision-making process.

Baseline Analysis: A Plan for Planning

In addition to providing basic information regarding Lufkin's historical development and the City's importance within the region, the Baseline Analysis section examines and summarizes existing conditions and trends that will likely affect the formulation of Plan goals, objectives and recommendations. This section also identifies important issues that should be considered in the formulation of the Plan and represents, in effect, a "plan for planning" the City of Lufkin.

Goals and Objectives: A Vision for the Community

This section establishes the general direction the City of Lufkin wishes to take in its future physical development and outlines the community's basic planning goals and objectives, making it one of the most important components of the Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives establish the overall direction the City will follow in making recommendations and decisions on development proposals, public infrastructure, urban design, finance and other issues.

Plan Recommendations

This section of the Comprehensive Plan includes analysis and recommendations on various components of the City's physical development such as land use, transportation, parks and recreation, housing, public facilities and urban design, with specific actions and policies that are recommended for implementation within each component.

Implementation Strategies

The implementation measures are suggested strategies that can be used to help the City achieve its adopted goals, objectives and Comprehensive Plan recommendations. They are not the only possible actions that would achieve these goals, but they are intended to set an initial agenda for adopting regulatory and other programs that implement the Plan. The community may select some measures for implementation immediately following Plan adoption, while others may not begin for several years or more. Including a program or project on the list of implementation measures does not automatically create that program. The community will need to adopt budgets, consider new ordinances, and allocate staff resources before new programs can begin. Each of the implementation decisions will require input and specific action by the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the City Council.

Although each of the above sections serves a separate and specific purpose, the various sections are all interrelated in some manner and, collectively, they comprise the Comprehensive Plan for Lufkin. Other documents created prior to (or separately from) the Comprehensive Plan process are also incorporated by reference, and thereby made an integral part of the community's overall "master plan" for growth and development.