



Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan Update

Implementation

CHAPTER 13

The completion of the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan serves as an initial step in achieving the City's desired vision for the community over the next 20 years. Through the comprehensive planning process the City identified key issues affecting the community and developed a series of actions and policies that will serve as a foundation for future planning. With such a foundation in place, implementation of the plan is the next critical step in the planning process to ensure appropriate and desirable growth that reflects the values of the community, enhances the local economy and improves the quality of life of its residents. By implementing the recommended actions in this plan, the desired land use pattern, thoroughfare development, parks and recreation enhancements and community facility needs will be achieved as envisioned by Nacogdoches residents.

The purpose of the Implementation element is to provide direction and recommendations for implementing and periodically updating the City's new Comprehensive Plan. The chapter also includes a compilation of specific actions from the plan that were considered the highest priority to address over the next three years and as a foundation for achieving the community's vision over the next 20 years.

Strategies for Implementation

Form Implementation Task Force

Momentum must not be allowed to falter once the plan has been adopted. Immediately following approval of the plan, it is highly recommended that the City establish an Implementation Task Force. The role of the Task Force is to refine and prioritize the Implementation Plan and initiate action. Task Force membership may include key members of City Staff; select members of the development and business communities; individuals from other public agencies and institu-

tions; leaders from organized neighborhoods and civic groups; and, residents of the community.

While the implementation plan is a beginning, the Implementation Task Force will be charged with the tough task of honing actions beyond the information provided in the plan. The Task Force will determine methods or programs to be used to implement the proposed actions, specifically identifying which agencies/ departments will be responsible for their implementation, estimating costs, identifying proposed sources of funding, and establishing a time frame in which the recommended action will be accomplished.

The work of the Implementation Task Force should be short term, but should also occur annually. The product of the Task Force should be a strategic proposal of actions to accomplish or initiate within the year. Departments and organizations charged with completing tasks, or aiding in their completion, can use the proposal in the budget process and in determining other needed resources. The City Commission can utilize the proposal for overall budget and resource decisions as well as establishing benchmarks for departmental performance.

Maintain Citizen Involvement

Communication and coordination have been key needs mentioned throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Active participation has been a cornerstone of the process to create the plan; however, it is even more essential as a means of implementing the plan. To do this, current and future leaders must pledge their support to maintain public involvement, awareness and commitment to the purpose and importance of the plan.

Nacogdoches residents shared in developing the plan's goals, objectives and proposals by participating in a Community Forum, key person interviews, public meetings and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meetings. The many ideas and comments contributed by citizens during the plan's development were incorporated and shaped the resulting priorities and action strategies. Citizens should continue to be involved in implementation and maintenance of the plan. Advisory committees, public meetings and community workshops, open houses and public forums, newsletters, media releases, and public notices should be used to inform and involve citizens in continued planning. Methods and activities for public participation should be carefully chosen and designed to achieve meaningful and effective involvement.

Quality is Key

The plan is designed to improve and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. It is meant to provide a standard of excellence by which future development, programs and activities can be measured. It is this level of quality that is highly desired by stakeholders in the community, whether it is in terms of housing, infrastructure, parks and recreation areas, historic sites, neighborhoods, downtown, gateways and corridors, or simply Nacogdoches' approach to its future.

Quality is consistently mentioned throughout the Comprehensive Plan. It is a standard to which all elements of the plan should be held. New facilities should be designed as landmarks with an understanding of their ability to positively impact the surrounding environment. Gateways for the community should represent the

character of the community. Programs created as part of the plan should establish best practices for other communities to follow.

Make Success Quick and Constant

A strategy used by successful organizations is to seek results early in the implementation process. By doing so, stakeholders are able to see the benefits of their involvement. Momentum is a result, which naturally solicits more involvement by persons desiring to be involved in a successful program. In the Implementation Plan provided below, there are various recommended actions that do not bear significant budgetary obligation. These programs and activities provide an immediate opportunity to make an impact on the community, and thus on the successful implementation of this plan.

Success is a powerful tool for marketing the plan. As such, serious consideration should be given to making sure that successes are consistent throughout the implementation process. Some actions will take longer to complete than others. Those projects should commence in a timeframe that will allow for both balancing resources and constant success.

Solve Problems Creatively

In order to seek continuous improvement it is necessary to be creative and innovative in your approach to solving key issues and problems. It is this ability to overcome what may ordinarily be considered as obstacles that will demonstrate the City's willingness and ability to achieve the community vision, including the use of creative solutions. An example may include a public-private partnership to seek objectives and results that may not be possible without a joint venture, such as the development of an otherwise constrained property.

Share Responsibility and Rewards

This plan cannot be carried out by an individual or even a single department. Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan requires responsibility and accountability from a number of diverse parties. In several cases, results will not come quickly, particularly in instances that are likely to create some controversy or come at a significant expense. However, once accomplished, each task of the plan will improve area quality of life and instill a sense of pride and accomplishment in the community.

To ease effort and expense, responsibility for accomplishing the tasks of the Comprehensive Plan should be shared by a number of individuals and organizations. By working together the community can achieve its vision, which is of benefit to all involved.

Integrate Planning into Daily Decisions

Opportunities for integrating the plan's recommendations into other business practices and programs of the City are vital to widespread recognition of the plan as a decision-making tool. For instance, the plan's recommendations should be widely used in decisions pertaining to infrastructure improvements, proposed new development and redevelopment, expansion of public facilities, services and programs, and the annual Capital Improvement Programming and capital budgeting process. The plan should be referenced often to maintain its relevance to local decisions and to support the decisions that are being made.

Financing

There are a variety of financing tools and techniques that are available to the City, which are not commonly used by municipalities. These tools, under the right circumstances, may be used effectively to finance public improvements and to provide incentives to private businesses. Access to grants and loans from public and private sources is a prime example from the standpoint that they are rarely used to the extent possible. Literally millions in available resources go unutilized every year, the majority of which are available to government entities or partner nonprofit organizations.

Plan Maintenance

The culmination of the comprehensive planning process is an implementation program that includes specific program recommendations and actions addressing each of the plan elements. The products of the implementation program include a series of specific actions for each element of the plan and linkages to implementation tools such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, other development-related ordinances, the City's annual budget process, longer-term capital improvements planning and potential bond financing, grant opportunities, and ongoing coordination with other public and private partners in plan implementation.

Circumstances will continue to change in the future, and the plan will require modifications and refinements to be kept up to date. Some of its proposals may be found unworkable and other solutions will continue to emerge. Needed refinements and changes should be carefully noted and thoroughly considered as part of Annual Plan Amendments and Five-Year Major Plan Updates. As changes occur, however, the Vision of the City should remain the central theme and provide a unifying focus. The plan's importance lies in the commitment of citizens to agree on the region's purposes and priorities for the future, and to apply that consensus in continuing efforts that focus on the betterment of their community. Since change is certain to occur, both the plan and the City's implementation tools should be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure their effectiveness in achieving the desired vision, goals and objectives of the community.

Annual Plan Amendment Process

The Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan. Annual plan amendments will provide opportunity for relatively minor plan updates and revisions such as changes in future land use policies, implementation actions, and review of plan consistency with ordinances and regulations. Annual plan amendments should be prepared and distributed in the form of addenda to the adopted plan. Identification of potential plan amendments should be an ongoing process by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff throughout the year. Citizens, property owners, community organizations and other governmental entities can also submit requests for plan amendments. Proposed plan amendments should be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission should adopt plan amendments in a manner similar to the plan itself, including public hearings and consideration of action.

Annual Report of the Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission should prepare an Annual Report for submittal and presentation to the City Commission. Status of implementation for the plan should be included in the Annual Report. Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year should be included as well as recommendations for needed actions and programs to be developed and implemented in the coming year. The time schedule for preparation and submittal of the Annual Report should be coordinated with the City's annual budget development process so that the recommendations will be available early in the budgeting process.

Major Plan Updates

Major updating of the plan should occur every five years. These updates will ensure renewal and continued usefulness of the plan for use by City officials, staff and others. Annual plan amendments from the previous four years should be incorporated into the next major plan update. Plan updates will be a significant undertaking involving City officials, City departments and citizens. Consultant services may be utilized if necessary.

As part of the major plan updates, the City should review and update the base data including population projections and existing land use. Additionally, the goals, objectives and policies of the plan should be analyzed and reviewed to determine their effectiveness and relevance to current conditions. Goals, objectives and policies that were not previously achieved due to obstacles should be identified, and new or modified goals, objectives and policies should be developed as necessary based on new base data, revisions to the anticipated time frame, specificity of objectives and actions, and identification of appropriate implementation agency.

The result of the major plan updates will be a new plan for the City, including identification of up-to-date goals, objectives, policies and implementation actions.



Requiring Updates and Implementation

To ensure that current and future elected officials, as well as the general public, remain committed to the success of the Comprehensive Plan, many communities have begun officially committing to plan implementation and maintenance. Most popular is a resolution that confirms the community's commitment to the plan and to the steps necessary to enhance area quality of life. Recommended items to incorporate into a resolution include development of an Implementation Task Force, annual updates on success of the plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission, consideration of the plan in development of budgets and in daily decisions, and a schedule of minor and major updates

Implementing the Plan

The essence of the plan is in the City's ability to implement its goals, objectives and policies through tools like subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance and a capital improvements process. In a continually changing environment, enforcement is a necessary action not only to preserve the character and integrity of established neighborhoods and nonresidential areas, but also to ensure sustainable quality development in the future.

Perhaps the most important method of implementing the plan comes through a day-to-day commitment by elected and appointed officials, City staff, and citizens of the community. The plan must be perceived as a useful and capable tool in directing the City's future. Plan elements and maps should be displayed and available for ready reference by public officials, City staff, business and property owners, and citizens. It is this high visibility that will make the plan successful, dynamic and a powerful tool for guiding Nacogdoches' future growth and development.

Plan implementation activities should include the following:

- ◆ **Future Land Use Plan** – Implementation will include use of the Future Land Use Plan and polices in decision-making relating to zoning and subdivision approvals, to ensure that development and redevelopment are consistent with the City's plan. The plan should be used to identify appropriate areas for development based on land use compatibility, infrastructure availability and environmental constraints. Additionally it should be used to direct residential and nonresidential growth in appropriate areas.
- ◆ **Thoroughfare Plan** – The Thoroughfare Plan should be used in subdivision plat review and dedication of needed rights-of-way for street and highway improvements.
- ◆ **Parks Master Plan** – The Parks Master Plan should be used in identifying and implementing park and recreation improvements and enhancements, concurrent with new developments.
- ◆ **Existing Regulations** – Existing regulations and ordinances, including the zoning and subdivision ordinances, should be reviewed and updated to reflect the policies identified in the plan.
- ◆ **Capital Improvements** – Capital improvement decisions should be consistent with the recommendations and policies outlined in the plan, such as the acquisition and improvement of parks and recreation areas as

well as street and highway improvements in accord with the City's Thoroughfare Plan.

- ◆ **Economic Development** – Policies and strategies identified in the plan should serve as a basis for providing economic incentives and enhancing economic development opportunities in the City. Land use policies should be used in encouraging industrial and commercial development in appropriate and compatible areas.
- ◆ **Private Property Owners/Developers** – Private property owners and developers should utilize the plan in identifying appropriate areas for development, based on natural constraints, land use compatibility, and upgrading of transportation facilities and public utilities. The plan should be used by local leaders in encouraging development that is compatible with the policies identified in the plan.
- ◆ **Elected Officials and Staff** – The City Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff should constantly use the plan in guiding decisions regarding subdivision changes/revisions and in implementing the zoning ordinance. The plan should continually be referenced in planning studies and zoning case reports as well as informal discussion situations. Proposals for new development should be consistent with the policies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Strategic Implementation Plan

A final, essential step in the comprehensive planning process was to prepare a Strategic Implementation Plan for the first few years of focused effort that will follow formal plan adoption. This initial plan of action is designed to “kick start” implementation activities by the City and other public and private partners.

For ease of implementation planning, the various action steps outlined in the Comprehensive Plan may be organized into five categories:

- ◆ **Capital Improvements** – Capital improvements involve all action statements in which development or revitalization of a physical item occurs, usually requiring some form of construction as well as longer-term maintenance. Like the scale of the project, the costs for capital improvements can also be broad, ranging from very expensive to limited. However, unlike programmatic initiatives, the majority of expense is incurred at the outset for purchase and construction. This may include land, labor, equipment or materials. Long-term costs for capital improvements are generally related to maintenance.
- ◆ **Ongoing Coordination and Management** – Ongoing coordination and management actions can range from coordination between government agencies and other organizations to continuing management of facilities and programs. Unlike other types of action statements, most actions in this category are relatively inexpensive, although staff resources are necessary to allow for meetings, monitoring results, preparing reports, and other management activities. These actions may also include some overlap with programmatic, capital or regulatory improvements.
- ◆ **Programmatic Initiatives** – Programmatic initiatives refer to action statements that require development or implementation of a particular program by the City, other government agencies, or private or nonprofit

organizations. In comparison to other types of action statements, Programmatic Initiatives can range from the inexpensive to the very expensive. Cost is impacted by a number of variables, particularly staff requirements and longevity of the program. Most programmatic improvements will be renewed annually based upon performance, impact and available resources.

- ◆ **Recommended Studies and Plans** – Some initiatives require additional study or detailed planning in order to prepare for a particular programmatic, capital or regulatory improvement. Such plans and studies are supplementary to the Comprehensive Plan and a prerequisite to more tangible actions. Some should be considered as potential appendices of the plan while others represent separate and independent efforts. Compared to capital improvements and some programmatic initiatives, development of further plans and studies is relatively inexpensive.
- ◆ **Regulations and Standards** – Regulations and standards refer to action statements that are met through changes in governance. Regulatory changes involve altering the existing municipal Code of Ordinances. Standards impact ordinances, but are not necessarily a written component of an ordinance. Standards may also be voluntary, privately-enforced or based on meeting a series of incentives. The costs associated with actions requiring regulations and/or standards are largely short term. Long-term costs come with added or reduced staff and the time and capital required to implement changes.

Results of Priority-Setting Exercise

The Strategic Implementation Plan was refined through a special workshop in June 2003, involving members of the City Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission, prior to the formal public hearing and adoption process for the proposed Comprehensive Plan. In preparation for the workshop, the consultant team had screened all the actions contained in the Draft Comprehensive Plan and narrowed the list to approximately 100 items that might be of interest for immediate attention after plan adoption.

During the workshop, six people participated in reviewing this 100-item list and then identifying 20 actions they considered most worthy of early attention during the first 1-3 years following plan adoption (another City Commissioner and another Planning and Zoning Commission member who were unable to attend completed the priority-setting exercise later). In deciding whether an action should be assigned short-range priority, considerations included the budgetary obligation required, the availability of City staff or another lead entity to carry the initiative forward, and the expected difficulty or complexity of the task.

As a result of the priority-setting exercise, 13 action items received four or more votes, meaning they attracted votes from at least half of the eight participants. The overall voting results showed:

- ◆ 1 action (actually a combination of three similar actions) receiving 7 votes
- ◆ 2 actions receiving 6 votes
- ◆ 4 actions receiving 5 votes
- ◆ 6 actions receiving 4 votes

- ◆ 10 actions receiving 3 votes
- ◆ 17 actions receiving 2 votes
- ◆ Single votes scattered over some 30 other actions items

While this exercise was not binding and ultimate priorities will require the input of all City Commissioners and leaders, the results illustrate how certain actions quickly rise to the top and the trade-offs that must be made among many competing needs given limited time and money. If the City pursues the idea of a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Task Force, as discussed in this chapter and during the workshop, then this new committee could begin its work of recommending action priorities and monitoring progress by building upon this initial prioritization. Plan implementation priorities and strategies will also require the professional input of City administrative staff, who can advise on budget implications and realities, items the City must do within a certain time frame given federal or state mandates, staff availability and capabilities, and other practical considerations.

The results of such strategic planning efforts should also be revisited each year as part of the annual status review of the Comprehensive Plan, as described earlier in this chapter. The results of each annual evaluation should feed into the City's budget process, capital improvements programming, departmental work plans, and other City planning and management activities. In the meantime, City Commission adoption of the overall Comprehensive Plan, including the preliminary priorities identified below, will set the stage for initial implementation efforts by City staff and other community interests.

Compiled below are all the plan actions that received at least four votes through the priority-setting exercise, starting with those that received the highest number (seven). Within each category, the actions appear in no particular priority order.

Actions with 7 Votes

Utility Infrastructure

- ◆ Update the City's **Subdivision Ordinance** to reflect the issues outlined in the Comprehensive Water System Plan and to maintain consistency with current laws and proper engineering practices.

Update the City's Subdivision Ordinance to reflect the issues outlined in the Wastewater Master Plan and to maintain consistency with current laws and proper engineering practices.

Update the City's Subdivision Ordinance to complement the current Drainage Policy and reflect the issues outlined in the Flood Control Study, as well as to maintain consistency with current laws and proper engineering practices.

Actions with 6 Votes

Land Use

- ◆ Address any **gaps in infrastructure and public service standards in existing neighborhoods**, and ensure their provision in **new developments** (streets, sidewalks, neighborhood parks, street lighting, drainage, traffic control, neighborhood policing and fire protection, etc.).

Utility Infrastructure

- ◆ Replace the 685,000 linear feet of **existing asbestos cement water distribution lines** before asbestos fiber counts in the water supply grow to unacceptable levels.

Actions with 5 Votes

Land Use

- ◆ Review and amend the City's **development ordinances and zoning map** to reflect the Future Land Use Plan.

Rezone key areas designated for growth or preservation.

Review Central Business District (B-3) zone for potential adjustments or enhancements.

Transportation

- ◆ Through NEDCO and other forums, continue close coordination on **air service** issues and opportunities among the City, County, state and federal elected officials from the region, SFA, the business community (especially major industries with the greatest air service needs), and other interested parties.

Utility Infrastructure

- ◆ Begin land acquisition and engineering design for the construction of **Regional Storm Water Detention Ponds** as outlined in the Flood Control Study. The installation of regional ponds would immediately reduce numerous flood hazards that are the direct result of high water surface elevations along La Nana Creek and Banita Creek.

Community Facilities and Services

- ◆ Address **urgent maintenance and repair needs at the City's fire stations and training facility** (paint, electrical upgrades, roofing, floors, kitchens/restrooms, interior/exterior walls).

Actions with 4 Votes

Transportation

- ◆ Pursue **specific transportation improvement projects** consistent with the Thoroughfare Plan and the needs outlined in Table 6.1: Status of Transportation Issues in 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

- ◆ Continue systematic upgrades to the **Nacogdoches municipal airport**, including potential runway expansion and other new and improved features to improve the facility's market appeal.
- ◆ Consider specific **actions suggested by transit users and Nacogdoches residents**: (1) more direct/express service versus loop routes that cause long trips on the bus; (2) higher-profile, designated stop locations versus flagging down buses; (3) improved signage; (4) expanded marketing (e.g., pocket brochures with routes, stops, schedules and fares); (5) easier options for purchasing tickets; (6) more accessible bus stops; (7) better student access to the system; and, (8) Saturday service to support weekend employment.

Utility Infrastructure

- ◆ Bid and award construction contracts for **sewer system replacements and extensions** described as "Phase I Improvements" in the Wastewater Master Plan. Complete Phase I items by 2010.

Housing and Neighborhoods

- ◆ Promote incorporation of **deed restrictions or covenants** into established neighborhoods along with development of a homeowners association with the capacity of enforcement.

Assist neighborhood organizations in development of deed restrictions and provide the training and support necessary for private enforcement.

Historic Preservation

- ◆ Provide **financial incentives**, such as tax abatement, tax credits and tax freezes to those wanting to undertake historic preservation or restoration projects.