

**The City of Lorena
2013
Comprehensive Plan**

The Excitement is Building!



The City of Lorena
107 A S. Frontage Road
Lorena, Texas 76655

The City of Lorena 2013 Comprehensive Plan

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Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to set forth the shared goals and policies of a community to help guide development and investment decisions. It sets the stage for the implementation of development regulations and standards and guides the City in funding programs and capital investments. As with this Plan, the goals and policies are developed by asking stakeholders what they think is important and what they cherish about the community or would like to change. The goals should accurately represent the community's interests.

Vision Statement: Lorena, It Feels Like Home Already.

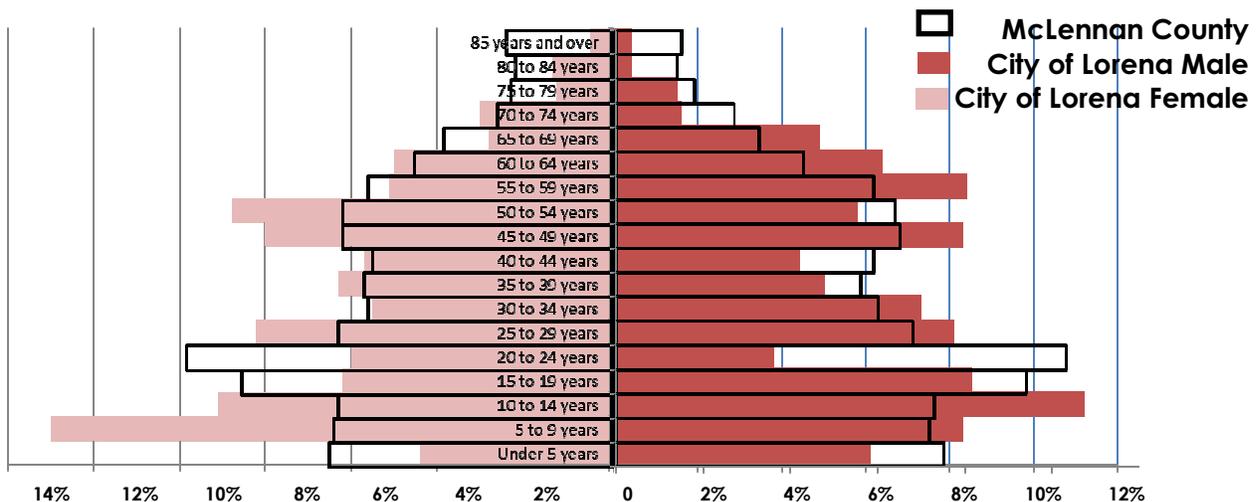
In order to appropriately plan for the future of the Lorena Community, the citizens of Lorena envision a growing exurb community, with traditions of rural life that include: preserving and protecting the core community; attracting good jobs; developing responsible and attractive commercial investment; and providing fiscal-minded service to its stakeholders.

Previous Efforts

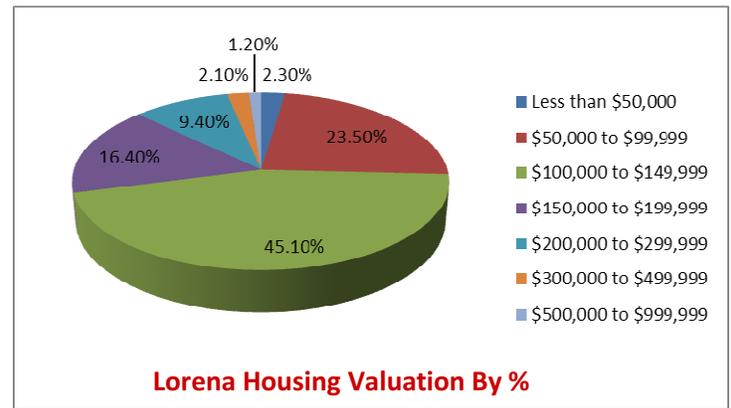
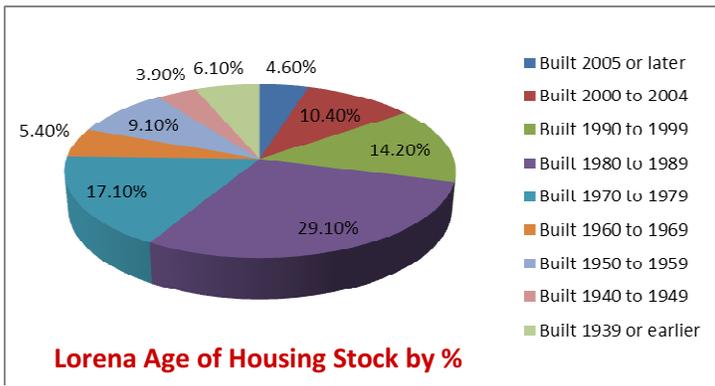
The City of Lorena last had a comprehensive plan written in 2000. This plan was a comprehensive effort to identify a specific history and identify growth patterns for the community. In the intervening thirteen years, the growth of Central Texas, within Lorena itself and the surrounding communities has provided opportunities for the City to encourage commercial, retail, and distribution growth while focused on managing housing growth.

Demographics

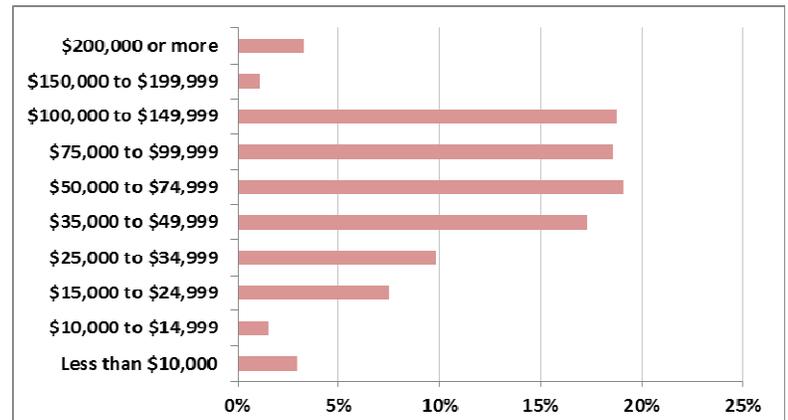
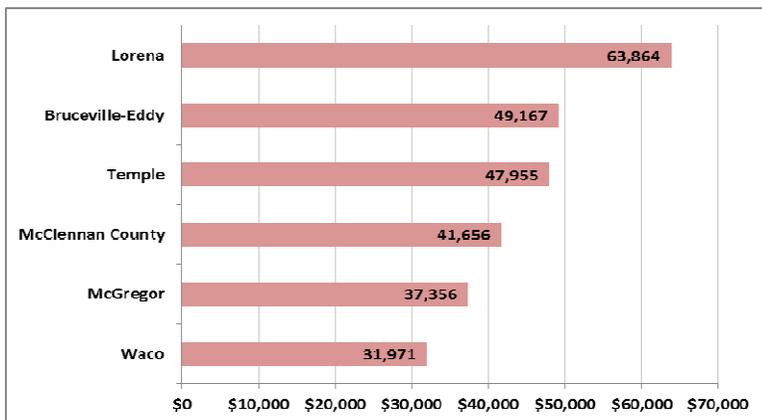
The City of Lorena has experienced some amount of population growth in the past twenty years. Current Census estimates show that significant population is younger than 19, and between 45 to 55 years of age. This shows a young demographic of families.



Age of City of Lorena Population by Cohort – 2010 – US Bureau of Census



Housing in Lorena is predominately single-family residential. There is a small amount of multi-family available in the community. The housing stock is a mix of homes constructed as a part of the original community with many of the homes built since 1990. Over 29% of all housing in Lorena has been built since 1990. One of Lorena’s greatest assets is the established single-family neighborhoods. In the meetings discussing the Comprehensive Plan, reference was made at protecting the “Core City.” There are strong established neighborhoods within the City of Lorena. Any proposed new neighborhoods should focus on the establishment of single family homes that are upgrades from starter homes as families age and demand greater space and amenities. Opportunities for well-designed multi-family density can allow greater population growth with less infrastructure demand.



The median income levels of families in the City of Lorena are significantly higher than McLennan County as a whole and are reflective of a skilled, employed workforce.

Existing Land Use and Land Use Mix

Preservation of the Central Core of the Lorena community is a basic tenet of the Comprehensive Plan. Existing neighborhoods and business should be protected, and where appropriate, should be examined for infrastructure improvement.

Lorena is dominated by land that is currently undeveloped or is used for agricultural purposes. Single family uses are the next predominant use.

Using the current land use mix a Holding Capacity Model may be created. The model is a projection of ultimate population based on a certain set of

Existing Land Use Mix

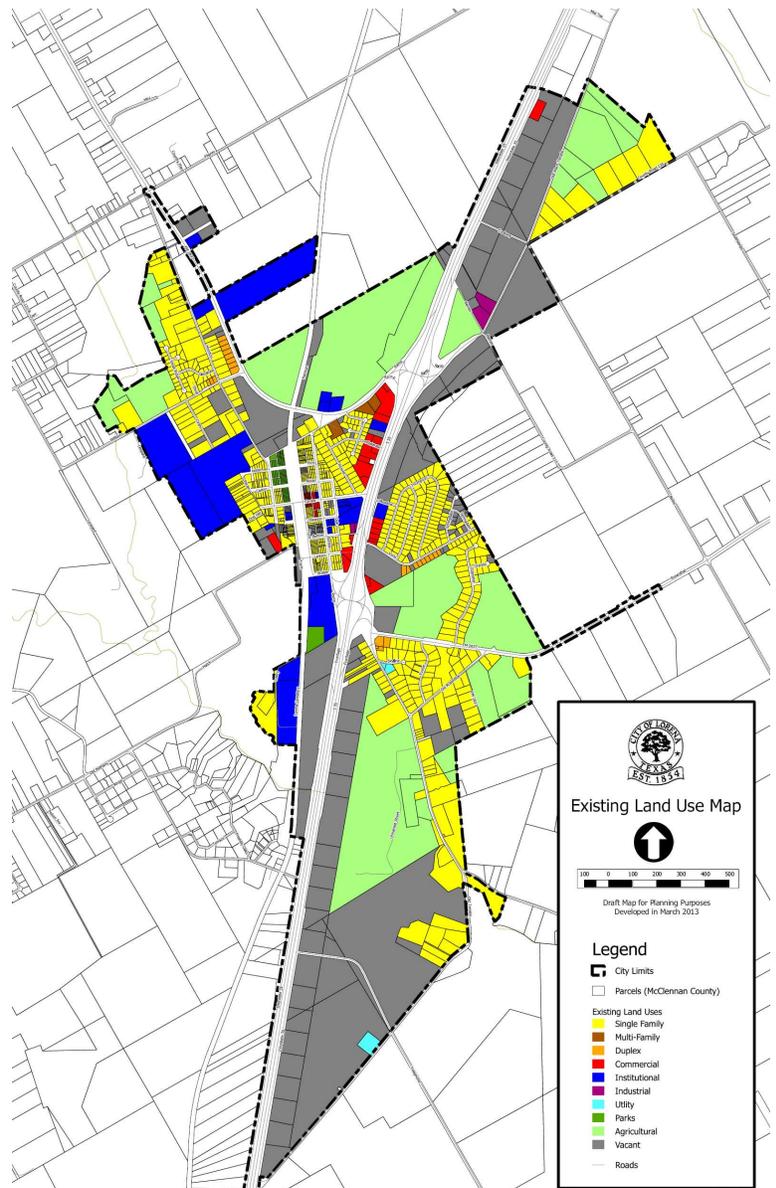
Land Use	Acres	% of City
Single-Family	417.42	19.98%
Multi-Family	4.42	0.21%
Duplex	8.50	0.41%
Commercial	24.30	1.16%
Institutional	149.40	7.15%
Industrial	5.19	0.25%
Utility	3.90	0.19%
Park	20.42	0.98%
Vacant or Undeveloped	627.00	30.01%
Agricultural	478.00	22.88%
Transportation	350.58	16.78%
Total Area	2089.13	

assumptions including ultimate land area and zoning practices. The population prediction is the total amount of population a city may have without regard to a specific timeframe.

Calculations for the holding capacity model were created using a windshield survey and aerial images of Lorena data. Existing land use data from the City that is assigned as vacant (potential to be developed) is compared with existing zoning and developed properties. A sum of the total vacant land area and properties which may be agricultural now, but could have the potentiality for redevelopment in the future is then created. For each area, a total potential number of housing units is assigned based on the maximum number of units (or minimum lot size) allowed within the City. Lorena has indicated that the minimum lot size for new housing units was to be maintained at current zoning levels. Housing units are then multiplied by the observed average household size for owner-occupied units to indicate a population projection.

Certain assumptions must be made based on the ultimate additional build-out number:

- All future and existing residential properties are assumed to be 100% occupied.
- Existing areas zoned residential will remain static throughout build-out.
- Commercial areas of the City would be built-out.
- All vacant and agricultural land potentially used for residential would build out at maximum density the zoning allows.
- Zoning districts not zoned for residential and containing vacant land were eliminated from this calculation.
- Horizontal Mixed Use - The Planned Development zoning may allow up to 350 multi-family units with an option for additional units by Conditional Use Permit.



Holding Capacity Model Based on Current Zoning

Holding Capacity	Vacant Acres	Potential Units	Potential Population
Total Vacant / Ag Zoned SF	212.24	1061	2441
Total Vacant / Ag Zoned AG	303.87	101	233
Total Vacant / Ag Zoned PD	Allows up to 700 units	700	1610

Future Land Use Plan

In order to establish orderly and managed growth, the Lorena community, through a series of committee meetings has established a future land use plan for the City. Keeping in focus a desire to protect existing neighborhoods, certain growth themes were established. These included the management of the ETJ, encouraging destination retail and flex space business centers.

Land Use Designations

Each of the land uses within the Future Land Use Plan refer to the preferred arrangement of uses that the City has determined as compatible with the managed growth of the community. The land uses are to be considered as guidelines in making decisions regarding zoning districts in the City.

Residential—stabilize and protect the residential housing characteristics of the community and to promote and encourage a suitable environment for living .

Mixed Use— horizontally mixed-use development that would allow multi-family and commercial uses which are well designed to cohabit within a master planned development.

Neighborhood Service—focus on the heart of the neighborhood and to encourage a mix of uses that support the surrounding residential neighborhood.

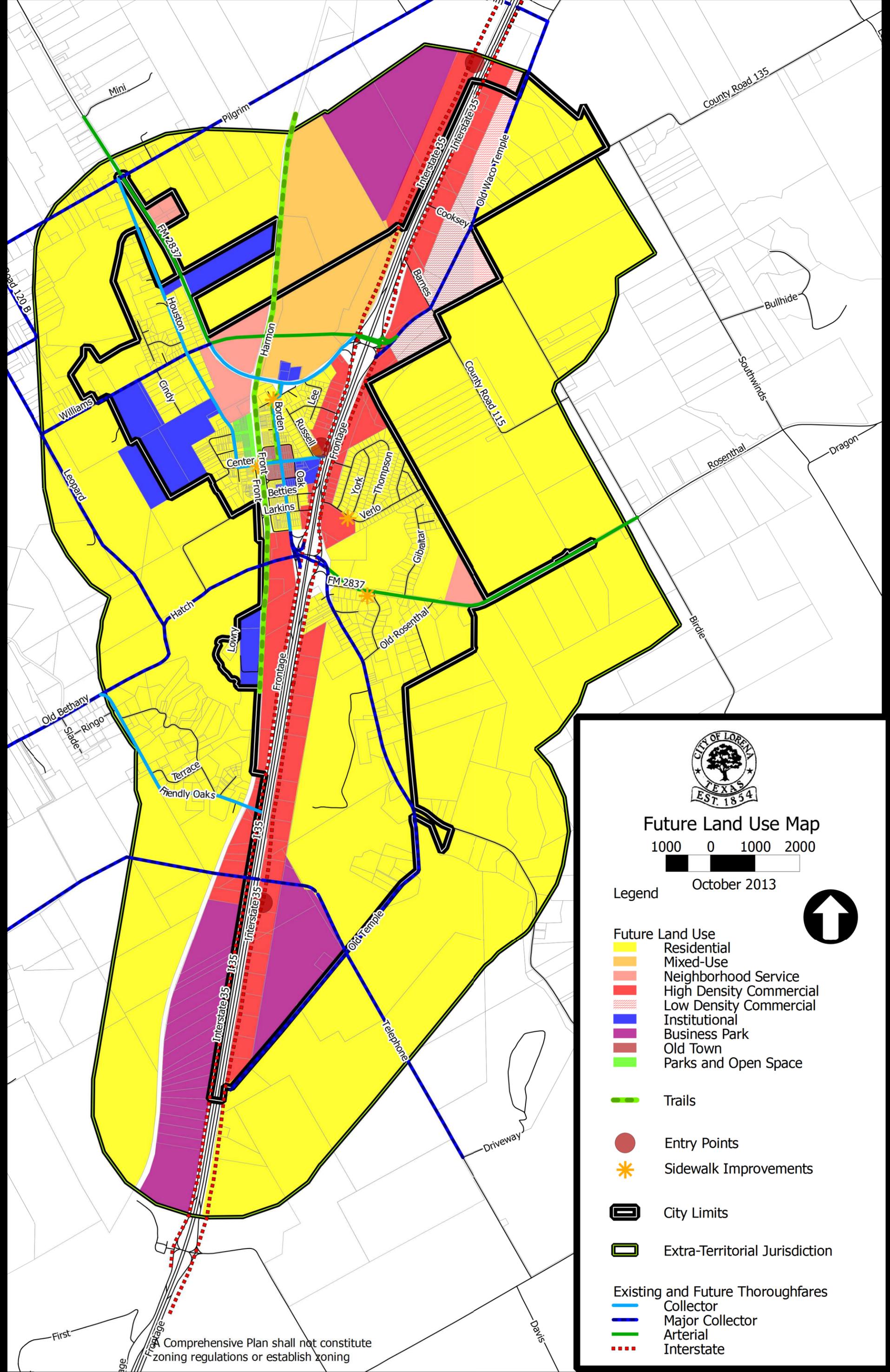
High Density Commercial — land uses that create centers of activity including shopping, services, recreation, employment, institutional facilities supported by and serving an entire region. This would include destination retail uses.

Low Density Commercial—land uses that provide service related commercial uses which act as a transition from high density commercial to residential uses.

Institutional—city, school, utility or other public related service uses.

Business Park— industrial uses which generate few objectionable conditions. Such uses include assembling, research and development, warehousing and distribution. Focus should be on flex-industrial space.

Old Town— encourage the preservation of uses and structures that have been determined as being historically and culturally significant to the City. This district shall provide flexibility in land uses and regulations that will encourage the continuance of the historic character of this area. Promote the ability to add destination retail or restaurant uses.



Future Land Use Map

1000 0 1000 2000



October 2013

Legend



- Future Land Use**
- Residential
 - Mixed-Use
 - Neighborhood Service
 - High Density Commercial
 - Low Density Commercial
 - Institutional
 - Business Park
 - Old Town
 - Parks and Open Space

- Trails
- Entry Points
- Sidewalk Improvements
- City Limits
- Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction

- Existing and Future Thoroughfares**
- Collector
 - Major Collector
 - Arterial
 - Interstate

Comprehensive Plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning

Interstate 35 Widening

Widening of Interstate 35 is beginning to have significant impact on the future of Lorena. Higher capacity and safer ramps exiting and entering the interstate will make additional property more accessible for retail, commercial and flexible industrial development. These are tax base benefit uses. The corridor is the face of the community for thousands of travelers along the busiest commercial thoroughfare in the State. Quality development will enhance the commercial image of the City and establish a visible community between the Temple and Waco metropolitan areas.



ETJ and Voluntary Annexation

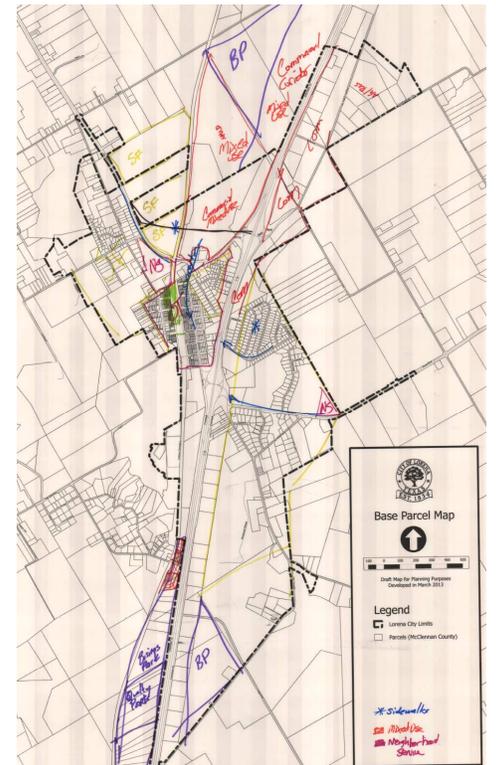
Lorena's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is heavily influenced by the ETJ of the City of Waco. Waco's ETJ borders Lorena on the north and east sides. There are areas of commercial development along the IH-35 corridor which are split between the ETJ of both cities. The City of Lorena should investigate the opportunity to coordinate an ETJ agreement with the City of Waco to consolidate whole development tracts into Lorena's ETJ. The City could then generate the opportunity for the commercial development to voluntarily annex into the City limits.

Creating a positive economic development climate which encourages public-private partnership through adequate public facilities, favorable zoning conditions which encourage growth and regulate for aesthetic design can make these properties desirable for commercial and retail growth.

Destination Retail

To invigorate and sustain retail growth that will retain residents of Lorena and attract new retail and employment to the community, the community should focus on three primary destination nodes: North Lorena along IH-35 and Old Lorena Road (FM 2837); Old Town; and potentially along the southern IH-35 corridor. The retail encouraged within these areas must be destination-driven and market appropriate. The timeline for measuring the successful implementation of this strategy must take a long-term outlook.

North Lorena: - Predominately visitor based Class-A retail availability. Concentration on adequate parking, visibility and access to the interstate. Design standards must remain focused on traffic movement and landscaping as this is the visual entry to the community from the interstate. Since destination-driven retail is exceedingly more difficult to attract and sustain than convenience-based retail, the City will need to focus on some criteria as to



Workshop Plan Design

what tenants would be appropriate. Entertainment-based retail needs traffic, land, infrastructure and visibility to be sustainable. The community has expressed interest at bringing a full-service grocery store and big-box hardware store to the City.



Old Town – Predominately resident-based Class B retail availability. Focus should be on re-development opportunities including joint-use parking for the established businesses, providing for a pedestrian environment and connectivity to the Rails-with-Trails concept linking Old Town with the newer subdivisions, maintaining street fronting businesses with parking to the side or rear of the property. Tenant choice and retention should focus on family-oriented restaurants, and locally-owned retail.

South Lorena – Combination of visitor and resident-based Class A retail availability. The retail environment will be heavily dependent on the development of corridor. Additional employment density will be required to make any retail sustainable. The southern corridor will need to have significant investment of office park / industrial flex-space development adjacent to the retail to provide the demand.

Retail attraction and retention – The catalyst for retail attraction and retention is customers whether they are local or visiting. Work-force retail demand can be generated by focusing efforts of developing office park or flex-industrial space within the northern sections of the City. The International Council of Shopping Centers estimates that workers with easy access to retail spend an average of \$2,350 annually near their workplaces. Most of this spending is food and beverage purchases (about 61%) the remaining are neighborhood goods and services and general merchandise sales.



Clustering the destination retail environments with civic, cultural uses gives restaurants and retail shops a broad-based market. Civic and cultural events and uses increase retail demand. Lorena could increase its focus on amenities such as a compact downtown area, connectivity to increasing the visibility and usability of the park. Major catalyst activities that attract visitors include festivals and arts performances and exhibitions. Festivals attract local residents as well as out-of-town visitors.

Flex Space Business Park

The use of Flex Space is a relatively new strategy to promote economic growth, retain industrial uses and respond to industry trends. Flex space allows certain industrial and commercial uses to be combined into flexible spaces where they complement each other. The term Flex Space, in these situations, allows regulations to adapt to changing development patterns and to meet modern industry shifts in industrial uses and related sectors. The term and uses of Flex Space have also been associated with economic development and redevelopment strategies in an effort to preserve, conserve and utilize industrial uses by allowing flexible design standards and provide for flexible uses compatible with light industrial and related commercial activities.



Lorena should focus on attracting flexible industrial space that is primarily focused on distribution, logistics, warehousing, and light assembly. These locations have very limited impact on the surrounding community in terms of environmental or nuisance impact. Combined with the upgraded accessibility of the bridges and higher speed access ramps that the Interstate improvements will bring to the community, these uses enable a greater employment base to the community. These developments should have a priority on functional, but aesthetic design.

Trail and Sidewalk Connectivity

Lorena benefits from a traditional urban core based on the growth of the railroad which passes through the town. This corridor has the opportunity to continue to contribute to the health, transportation and well-being in the community.

The Rails-with-trails program is a set of financial and policy tools organized by a national organization to assist communities in identifying and securing resources when there may be limited appropriate space for multi-use trails. Rails-with-trails enhance local transportation networks by providing non-motorized local connections that are sometimes preferable to on-road bike lanes or sidewalks located on congested, dangerous roadways.



Rails-with-trails benefit railroads, too. In most cases, the trail manager purchases a use easement or license from the railroad, providing financial compensation and in some cases reducing liability responsibility and cost to the railroad. In some instances, a fully developed trail will also provide the railroad with improved access for maintenance vehicles.

Park Improvement and Focus on Old Town

Improvements to McBrayer Park as well as encouraging the use of parkland dedication or parkland dedication funds for neighborhood parks linked by sidewalks are encouraged in Lorena. Connecting the use of the central park to Old Town provides a physical connection to the community. Coupled with centralized parking for Old Town and appropriate signage the park usage can be increased. Modifications through the use of capital improvement financing or parkland dedication fees to change the park from a passive green space to an active play place and public gathering location should be examined.

Much success has been gained in preserving and promoting Lorena's Old Town. Extending that success outward from the center core through the original town and connecting the Old Town through pedestrian sidewalk connectivity and other commercial areas can bring a focus to the Old Town from locals and visitors alike. The Old Town area is not far removed from the IH-35 Corridor or from potential new mixed use development on the north side of the community. Connecting these areas through sidewalks and signage encourages the curiosity of those investing their time and money in the City.

Branding and Wayfinding

Having grown along the railroad and then the interstate corridors, Lorena is a fairly linear community. The primary focus points to accessing the community lie along Interstate 35. Focus on signage at the Interstate in branding the community through entry gateway signs at both the north and southern ends of the community. Ideally these would be placed at near the reconfigured exit ramps to IH-35. These entrances are the first opportunity that the City has to capture the imagination and interest of pass-through traffic made up of consumers, and people looking for a new community in which to work and to live.



These gateway entrances must incorporate a unique identifier and appropriately designed signage program that directs people to the amenities within Lorena, but also informs them of the relevance of the community to the region as a whole. The City should consider design as to the public lighting instrumentation, median design, signage and landscaping of these entrances, then repeat the design in other focused areas such as the Old Town.

The term "wayfinding" was first used in 1960 by architect Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City*, in reference to maps, street numbers, directional signs and other elements as "wayfinding" devices. Effective wayfinding clues, provided by signs, clearly delineated roads, distinct transit corridors, and lighting, furnish cognitive maps that allow people to quickly grasp an environment. In addition, it can be used to highlight and inform observers of significant historical/cultural sites within a particular district. Pointing out major institutions, for example, makes them easier to find and engenders pride in the residents, business owners, and customers that inhabit the community.

Highway signs and markers issued by TxDOT at IH-35 and along FM 1187 point to Lorena as a community, they do not direct customers to the Old Town area or that there is the potential for available retail along the interstate corridor. Therefore, future customers unfamiliar with the area could have difficulty finding the retailers there. Modification of wayfinding by providing monument markers defining Lorena and then directional signage directing highway traffic from the interstate to Old Town.



Branding of a Community can:

- Create a common vision for the future of the community and its potential.

- Provide a consistent representation of the place.

- Enhance its local, regional, and/or global awareness and position.

- Become a recognizable and repeatable icon for tying a community together physically through signage.

Financial Tools

Lorena should investigate the creation of a community financial plan. It is a financial plan which would set forth a variety of public financing tools to implement development goals of the comprehensive plan. The City should perform an economic analysis to establish equitable financial relationships with developers to pay for off-site infrastructure needed to effectively carry out the plan without burdening the community's tax base.

Assembling a financial plan can identify the multitude of organizational grants, State enabled financial products such as Tax Increment Financing and Public Improvement Districts to examine the benefits these programs might have in providing the capital involved in completing the implementation tasks.

Implementation

Examining what aspects of a community are important to preserve, how future decisions affect the development growth of the City are highlighted within this plan. However, implementing these ideas into actions which are undertaken is a difficult task.

The Implementation table assembled through public discussion of the Comprehensive Plan is a guideline of overall goals, general objectives to achieve and specific actions which would lead into reaching the goals and objectives. The concepts described within this Comprehensive Plan are not set as absolute benchmarks which are required to be completed, rather they are a prioritization of actions which the appointed and elected officials may make as part of the City's work program.

Goals and Objectives	Major Implementation Tools	Implementation Responsibility/ Participants	Priority	Implementation Timing	
			1-2-3	1-2 Yrs	2-5 Yrs
Goal 1. Promotion of Economic Development	Assist in the marketing and redevelopment of the old school site on the south side of Old Town.	City Staff, EDC, City Council	2		X
Objective 1.1	Encourage Business Park uses that are "logistic" or manufacturing assembly uses.	Develop incentives to attract retail businesses	City Staff, EDC	2	X
Objective 1.2	Provide Destination Oriented Retail	Focus on second tier branded restaurants which service smaller towns and markets. Provide a unique dining experience which not normally available in Waco and Temple.	City Staff, EDC	2	X
Objective 1.3	Branding of Lorena and Its Current Businesses	Pursue a marketing and branding effort to attract businesses to Lorena.	City Staff, EDC	1	X
Objective 1.4	Encourage flexible-industrial development.	Create entryway signage along IH-35.	City Staff, TxDOT	1	X
Objective 1.5	Promote Lorena's Location as Regional Advantage	Improve the visual quality of the IH-35 corridor through implementation of the design standards of the IC Zoning District.	City Staff, P&Z, City Council	2	X
Objective 1.6	Investigate financial tools for the economic development of focused property reinvestment areas. Tools include property tax abatements, 380 agreements, tax incremental financing (TIF) districts and public improvement districts (PID).	Ensure that landscaping along the IH-35 corridor is present and consistent.	City Staff, P&Z, City Council	1	X
		Promote "retail readiness" of corridors and post on city web site.	City Staff	1	X
		Create financial goals based on designed capital improvements to increase economic development. Design financial tools to appropriately fund improvements.	City Council	1	X
		Implement pro-rated policy for tying into oversized water and wastewater lines.	City Staff, City Council	3	X

Goals and Objectives	Major Implementation Tools	Implementation Responsibility/ Participants	Priority	Implementation Timing	
			1-2-3	1-2 Yrs	2-5 Yrs
Goal 2. Improve Livability through the City	Create a Trails and Parks Masterplan.	City Staff	1	X	
Objective 2.1 Provide opportunities for greater pedestrianism and bi-cycling through the City.	Examine sidewalk policy for the community. Implement internal neighborhood sidewalks where needed. Plan capital improvements for sidewalks connecting neighborhoods to commercial areas.	City Staff, CDBG Funds	1	X	
Objective 2.2 Improve the accessibility of Public Parks	Examine the National Rails-to Trails program at improving the excess railroad ROW and incorporating it into the existing park area.	City Staff, Rails-to-Trails Program	2		X
Objective 2.3 Increase community identity through public gatherings and festivals.	Examine needs for pocket parks within existing neighborhoods.	City Staff	2		X
	Examine tools to implement new parks within new subdivisions.	City Staff	3		X
Goal 3. Promote managed growth and efficient land uses.	Examine an Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Agreement with the City of Waco.	City Staff, City of Waco, City Council	1	X	
Objective 3.1 Promote Neighborhood Service level retail.	Ensure new zoning implementation and decisions would not have an adverse affect on existing neighborhoods.	City Staff, P&Z, City Council	1	X	
Objective 3.2 Encourage voluntary annexation where appropriate.					
Objective 3.3 Protect the Core of the Community					