

MARBLE FALLS

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
UPDATE 2016**



Public Hearing Draft
May 5, 2016

MARBLE FALLS



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2016

Prepared for



by
Halff Associates, Inc.



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Placeholder for Resolution

Acknowledgements

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PLAN INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



Introduction

Situated in the beautiful Texas Hill Country, Marble Falls is centrally located in the Highland Lakes area of the Hill Country, along the banks of Lake Marble Falls. The City is an up-and-coming small town which also serves as the commercial hub for Burnet County and a tourist destination for the Central Texas region. The City offers opportunities for hunting and fishing, boating and water skiing, tennis, photography, visiting a local winery and brewery, historic downtown shops, and sculpture tours. Additionally, state and federal parks, golf courses, and historic sites are located less than an hour drive away along scenic roads with sweeping vistas of the Hill Country.

Marble Falls is a great place to live for retirees and families. A new regional hospital, the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, provides health benefits for the City and surrounding communities. Due to impetus for growth in the south of the City near the hospital, the City must strive to improve the quality of its Downtown. As the heart of Marble Falls, Downtown provides a unique opportunity to maintain the small-town feel, which is treasured by the community, while providing a unique, pedestrian-oriented, memorable destination district.

Previous comprehensive plans and master plans will guide this update. During this update process, the City will continue to gather facts, assess challenges and opportunities, and plan for the future of Marble Falls. The intent of this Plan is to preserve the community's richness, best plan for the future of the City, and respect the goals and priorities of the residents and workforce of Marble Falls.





PLAN TIME FRAME

The Texas economy is outpacing the national economy. U.S. Census data shows the nation's growth concentrated in Texas, with Central Texas being the epicenter of this growth. The rapid speed of changes in the world and potential for growth in Marble Falls and surrounding areas leads to the question, "What will Marble Falls look like 20 years from now?" This Comprehensive Plan is an update to the 2009 Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan. This Plan provides guidance for a time frame of up to 20 years and describes the community's desired vision for the future. Goals, objectives, recommendations, and actions are provided to guide the City towards that future. With current growth trends in the area and unforeseen future changes that may directly impact the City, this Plan should be updated annually and with more significant updates every five and 10 years. The current status of implementation actions identified in the 2009 Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan can be found in Figure 1.1, *Success of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan*, on page 5.

Implementation of this Plan will require effort on an annual basis consisting of two parts. The first part includes identification of progress to-date which should be reported to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council annually. The second part includes identifying the subsequent year's annual work program as part of the preparation of each department's annual budgeting process.

Building On Past Planning & Development Efforts

Development of Marble Falls has been shaped by the land and natural resources since before its founding. The local granite quarry created jobs and brought the railroad to the town. Mining continues as a local industry, including limestone, shale, alluvium, and gravel. The Colorado River provides water for food and

MARBLE FALLS PLAN AT A GLANCE

CHAPTER 1 PLAN INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Defines basic framework of the Plan and describes conditions of Marble Falls including the physical, economic, and social conditions of the City today.

CHAPTER 2 ENGAGEMENT AND VISION

Captures the future vision of the City as identified by the Marble Falls community. Community engagement included such things as listening sessions, surveys, open houses, and more.

CHAPTER 3 PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Describes planned growth of Marble Falls and its intent and policy for accommodating and guiding expected growth and redevelopment in alignment with community planning objectives.

CHAPTER 4 LAND USE, CHARACTER, AND DESIGN

Addresses future land uses in the City and ETJ, housing challenges and opportunities, the revitalization of Downtown, character and placemaking in the community, and economic development strategies.

CHAPTER 5 TRANSPORTATION

Examines existing transportation systems of both vehicles and pedestrians and identifies challenges and opportunities to be addressed and explored over the next 20 years.

CHAPTER 6 PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Examines the City's existing parks, recreation, trails, and tourism and identifies ways to enhance connectivity and opportunities for recreation-based quality-of-life improvements in a manner that attracts tourists and meets the needs of residents.

CHAPTER 7 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

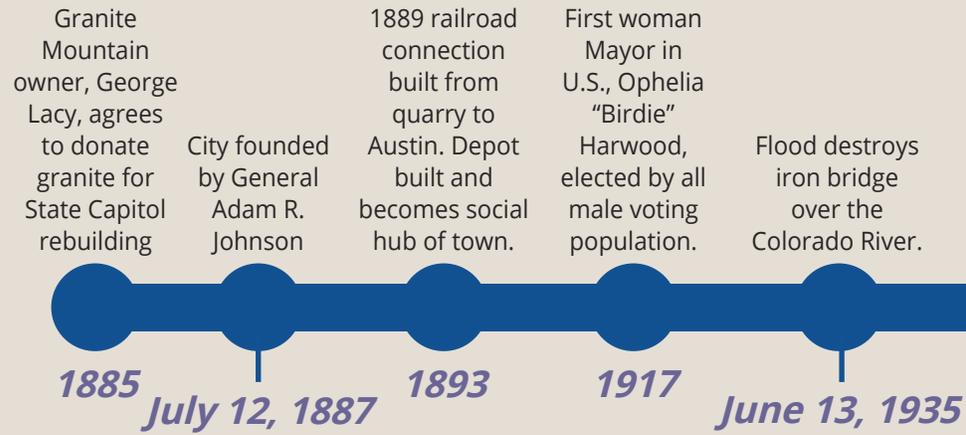
Describes the City's existing facilities and services including City Hall, the library, and police and fire rescue and recommends ways to maintain and/or improve them over time.

CHAPTER 8 INFRASTRUCTURE

Provides recommendations to improve and/or maintain drainage, water, and wastewater infrastructure including their efficiencies and service capacities.

CHAPTER 9 IMPLEMENTATION

Uses recommendations of each individual Plan element to consolidate an overall strategy for executing the Comprehensive Plan while setting a near- and mid-term action agenda.

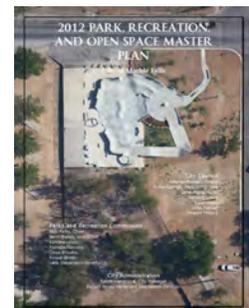
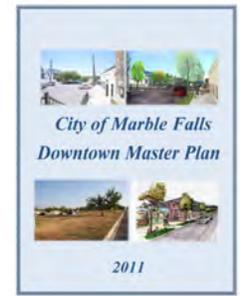


recreation. Historically, farming included pecan orchards and today ranching and local crop farms draw visitors to the area. Residents and visitors alike enjoy fishing and boating on Lake Marble Falls.

Local industry and natural-resource-based recreation will continue to be influential in the community, while the newly opened Baylor Scott & White Medical Center will likely drive potential growth and development. Due to its central location in the Highland Lakes area, Marble Falls can be a regional healthcare hub that serves surrounding communities and also attracts new residents of all ages. With this potential for new growth, preemptive planning is now more critical than ever in order to shape the character and maintain the identity of Marble Falls.

Over the years, Marble Falls has recognized the role planning plays in the ultimate success and quality of life in the community. In fact, new development and improved public services are a product of prior planning efforts. These past planning efforts are extremely important to the success of this Plan. To some degree, they have provided this Plan's framework – through the assimilation of existing conditions that have not changed, through the identification and celebration of successes already achieved, and conversely, through the understanding of lessons learned. Each of the following planning efforts, among others, have been thoroughly analyzed, and relevant and applicable information has been synthesized into this Plan where appropriate.

- City of Marble Falls Downtown Master Plan, 2011 (key points summarized in Action 4.4.7 in Chapter 4, *Land Use, Character, and Design*)
- Marble Falls Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, 2012 (key points summarized in Chapter 6, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*)
- Marble Falls Strategic Economic Development Plan, 2012 (key points summarized in Chapter 4, *Land Use, Character, and Design*)
- City of Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan 2009-2039





What about the 2009 Comprehensive Plan?

The Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan, created in 2009, was a Citywide long-range plan designed to guide the City through to the year 2039. Significant accomplishments have been made that are creating pressure on the City to improve development, especially housing needs, and increase tourism to all areas of the City including Downtown.

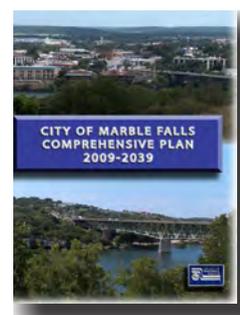
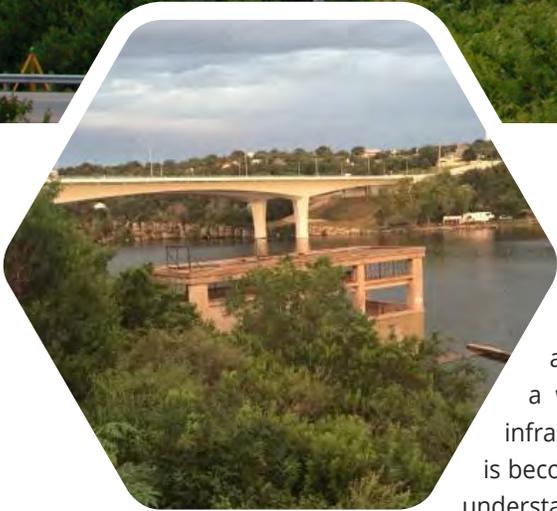


Figure 1.1, Success of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan

In-			
Complete	Progress	Pending	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the establishment of regional hospital in the Marble Falls planning area
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a drainage model to better understand problem areas within the city
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete a feasibility study for the WWTP expansion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct a new central public works facility
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare a Downtown Master Plan
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Update the sign ordinance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Update regulations to allow granny flats in appropriate neighborhoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Construct a new police headquarters and municipal court
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fund and develop a model of the existing water / wastewater system
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop and implement a new zoning ordinance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Identify boundaries and support a historic preservation district
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conduct a sidewalk inventory



Marble Falls Former US Highway 281 Bridge



Why Plan Now?

As the place of employment for over 25 percent more people than those living in the City, development pressures are mounting. Having surpassed a population of 6,000 and a workforce of over 8,000, the need for additional housing, infrastructure, traffic control, and amenities, among other things, is becoming evident. This becomes even more important when one understands that out of an 8,000 person workforce, approximately 6,000 persons commute in from outside the City limits.¹



Marble Falls has two upcoming and opposing development areas. The 2011 Downtown Master Plan focuses development on tourism and multi-use business-residential buildings along the north side of Lake Marble Falls and in the central Downtown district located just off of U.S. Highway 281. Recent development of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center at the southern end of the City limits has the potential of pulling population and development growth away from Downtown. Proposed widening of U.S. Highway 281, recent renovation of the highway's bridge, including addition of a pedestrian trail, and increased commuter traffic to and through Marble Falls tie these two development areas together. Wise planning for the City's development at this time can be the catalyst for positive growth in both areas and the City as a whole.

Consideration must also be given to preserving the history and character of the City for current and future citizens. While attracting tourists will increase the economic success of the City, high cost of land development due to construction costs will continue to be an impediment. This is a bigger issue in the Downtown and northern section of the City than in the developing southern portion. Planning now will ensure that construction alone will not be the deciding factor in development of key areas of Marble Falls.

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap

Regional Context

At a state scale (see Figure 1.2, *State Context*, at right), U.S. Highway 281 travels north-south through the City. Its closest highway intersections include State Highway 29 to the north and State Highway 71 to the south. Located in the southwest corner of Burnet County, Marble Falls is 13 miles south of the City of Burnet, the county seat. Marble Falls is located approximately one hour west of Austin, one-and-a-half hours north of San Antonio, and three-and-a-half hours southwest of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex.

At the regional scale, the City of Marble Falls is located in the Edwards Plateau in Central Texas and comprises 13.6 square miles. Centrally located in the Highland Lakes area, the regional landscape includes rivers and lakes, rolling hills, and a nearby Federal wildlife refuge. Lake LBJ is located upstream along the Colorado River from Lake Marble Falls and Lake Travis is downstream. Its closest comparison cities include Bastrop (approximately 76 miles to the southeast), Fredericksburg (approximately 54 miles to the southwest), and Granbury (approximately 144 miles to the north) (see Figure 1.4, *Comparison City Background*). These three cities share similar demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and tourism opportunities and will be used as comparison cities (see Table 1.2 and Figures 1.6 through 1.8 on pages 12 and 13).

Figure 1.3, Regional Context

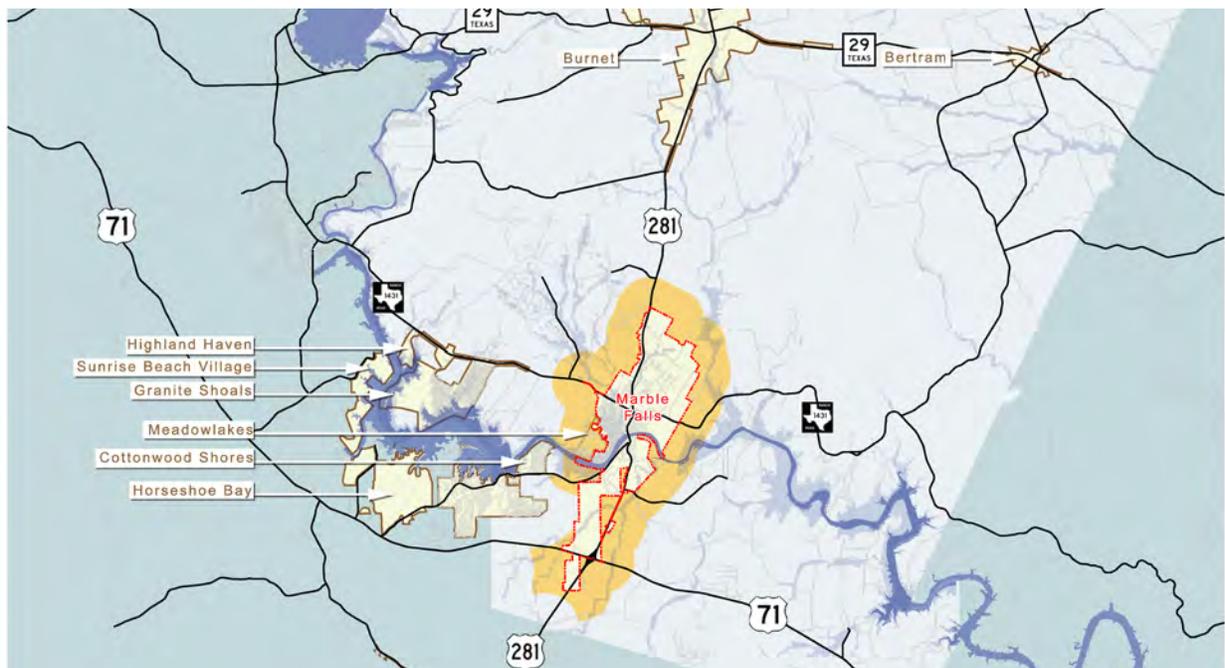


Figure 1.2, State Context

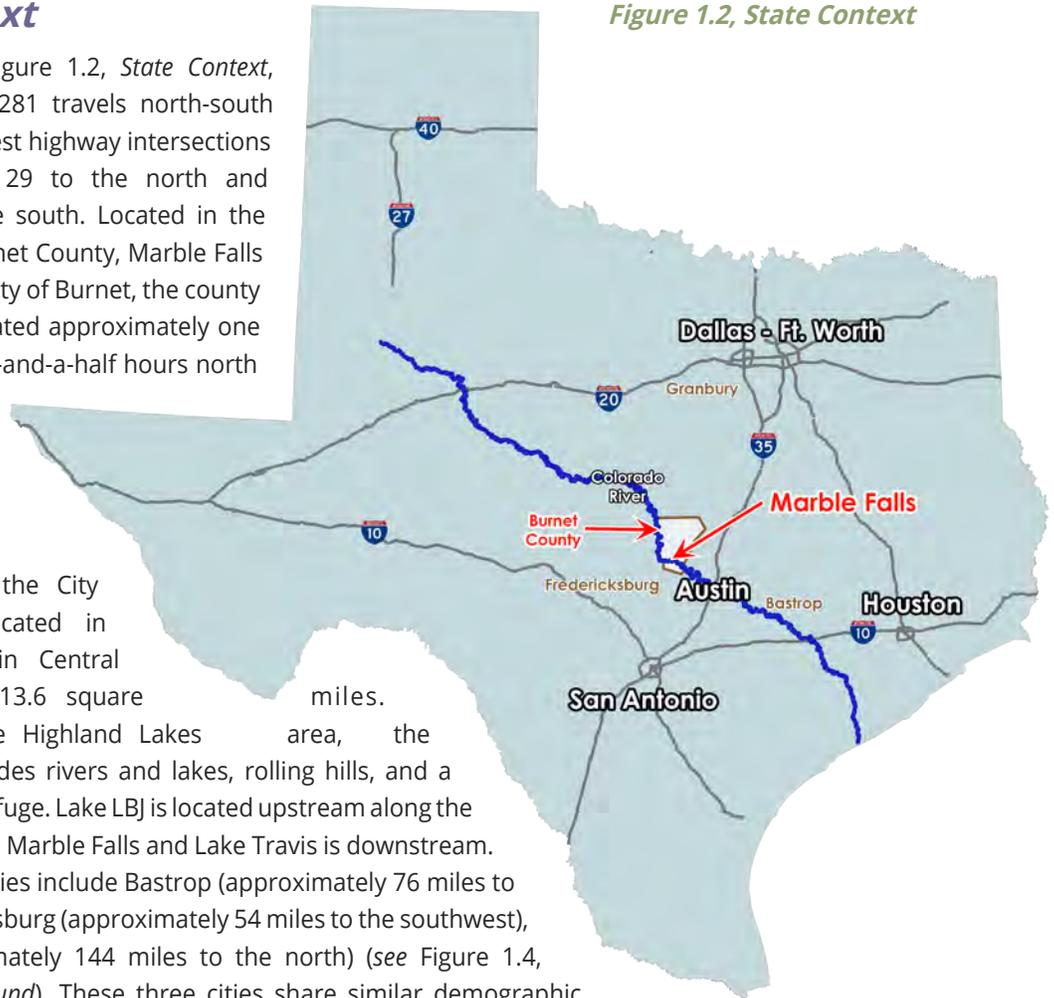


Figure 1.4, Comparison City Background

GRANBURY*

144 miles north

2010 Census Population: 7,978 (6,077)

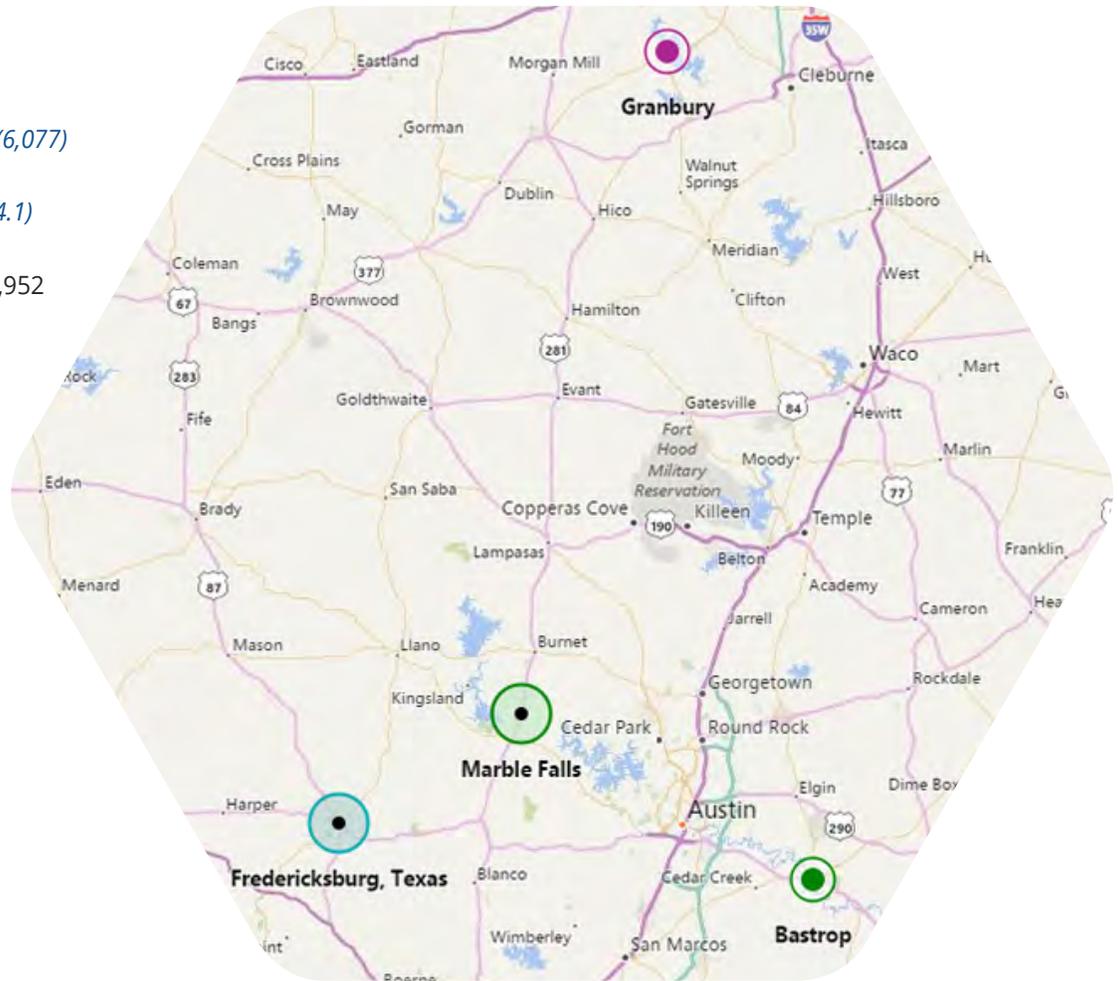
Total area: 13.9 square miles (14.1)

Median household income: \$35,952 (\$30,880)

Median age: 45.4 years (38.2)

Percent of population 65 & over: 25.7% (17.6%)

2014 Sales Tax generated: \$375,277,345 (\$334,626,031)



Map courtesy of Bing Maps

FREDERICKSBURG*

54 miles southwest

2010 Census Population: 10,530 (6,077)

Total area: 6.6 square miles (14.1)

Median household income: \$32,276 (\$30,880)

Median age: 49.6 years (38.2)

Percent of population 65 & over: 11.6% (17.6%)

2014 Sales Tax generated: \$282,686,677 (\$334,626,031)

BASTROP*

76 miles southeast

2010 Census Population: 7,218 (6,077)

Total area: 9.1 square miles (14.1)

Median household income: \$40,212 (\$30,880)

Median age: 36.9 years (38.2)

Percent of population 65 & over: 9.8% (17.6%)

2014 Sales Tax generated: \$328,603,999 (\$334,626,031)

*Marble Falls data listed in Blue

Marble Falls Planning Area

The planning area for the Comprehensive Plan includes the current incorporated area of the City of Marble Falls (the City limits) as well as the current extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) (see Map 1.1, *Planning Area, on the next page*).

Today, the incorporated area of the City of Marble Falls includes approximately 13.6 square miles, and the ETJ adds an additional 26.1 square miles. State Highway 281 (Avenue H) is one of the economic spines of the City and runs north-south through the center of the community. Downtown Marble Falls is located a block west of the highway.

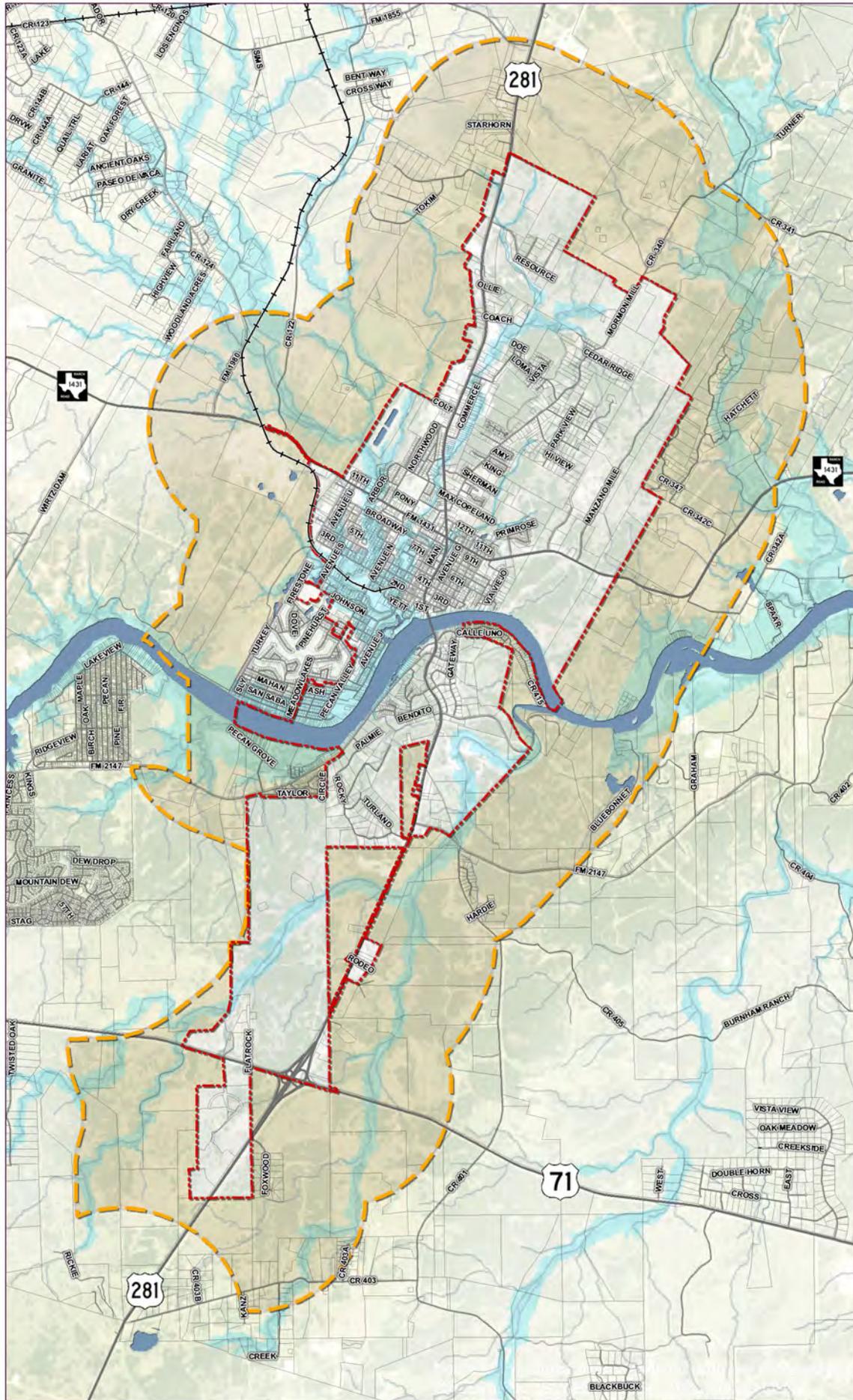
Surrounding the planning area are the neighboring communities of Meadowlake, Cottonwood Shores, and Horseshoe Bay, and recreational areas of Lake LBJ, Horseshoe Bay Resort, and Balcones Canyonland National Wildlife Refuge. The established area of Marble Falls, nearby communities, and tourist destinations means that the City has many opportunities for expansion and economic growth.

EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)

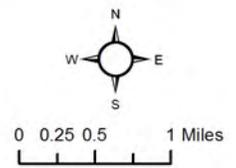
Includes the unincorporated land adjacent to a city's corporate limits that is not within any other city's municipal boundaries or ETJ. The size of the ETJ varies according to its population. Marble Falls is a home rule city with a population of over 5,000 people but under 25,000 people, so its ETJ extends one mile from the outer edge of the City.



Map 1.1, Planning Area



- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - ETJ
 - Railroad
 - Roads



Demographics

Historical Population Growth

As indicated in Table 1.1, *Historical Population Growth*, the City of Marble Falls has experienced varying levels of population growth during the 20th century. The employees required for the construction of the Max Starcke Dam lead to a large population swell of over 1,000 people between 1940 and 1950. Following the completion of construction in 1951, a long drought slowed the town’s economy and population growth was negligible for the next 20 years. However, during the 1970s a new tourism and retirement based economy began to grow and population growth has continued at a steady and moderate pace since then.¹ Until the construction of the dam, the City’s population made up a small percentage of the Burnet County total population. Since 1950, the County has generally seen a stronger population growth than the City and the City’s population as a percentage of the County continues to decrease, albeit slowly. This may be, in part, due to availability of housing in different areas of the County.

Table 1.1, Historical Population Growth

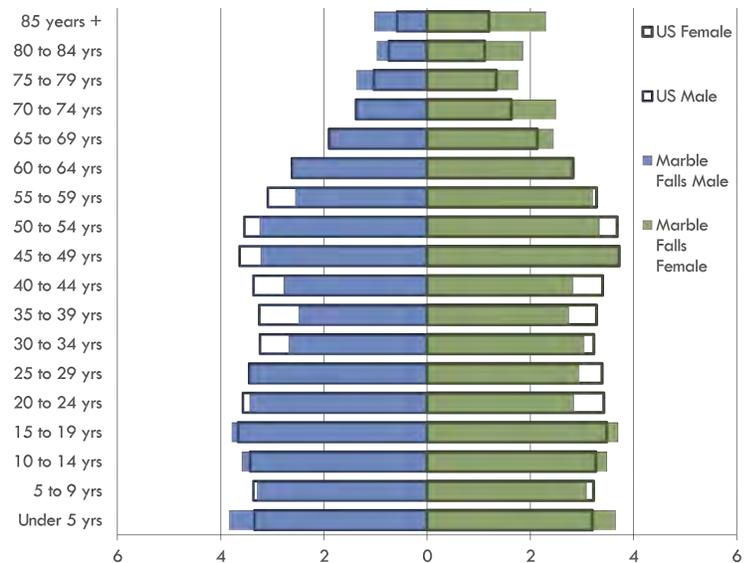
YEAR	MARBLE FALLS (PERSONS)	PERCENT CHANGE	CITY PERCENT OF COUNTY POPULATION	BURNET COUNTY (PERSONS)
1910	1,050	--	10%	10,755
1920	639	-39%	7%	9,499
1930	865	35%	8%	10,355
1940	1,021	18%	9%	10,771
1950	2,044	100%	20%	10,356
1960	2,161	6%	23%	9,265
1970	2,209	2%	19%	11,420
1980	3,252	47%	18%	17,803
1990	4,007	23%	18%	22,667
2000	4,959	24%	15%	34,147
2010	6,077	23%	14%	42,789
2014	6,185	2%	14%	44,963

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Age Distribution

When compared to the 2010 Decennial Census totals for the United States, Marble Falls has a greater percentage of the population aged zero to five, 10 to 19, and 70 and older (see Figure 1.5, *Age Distribution*). In 2010, 28.4 percent of the Marble Falls’ population was under the age of 19 and 13.2 percent was over the age of 70. In total, almost 42 percent of the population comprised the typically non-working portion of the population. When compared to the United States totals, the percentage of working-age people, ages 25 to 65, is lower in Marble Falls. Due to a current lack of housing opportunities, this trend may continue until additional housing options are made available. If the need for housing is not addressed, the City will continue as a reverse “bedroom community”. In other words, many people who work in the community may continue to live elsewhere. In 20 years, the current young population will be in their prime working age. Assuring that appropriate services are provided for all age brackets is an important consideration for the City. As a need for qualified employees within the community has been voiced by residents, additional job training opportunities for those entering the work field may be warranted.

Figure 1.5, Age Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010, DP-1-Geography: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010

¹ Marble Falls, Texas. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble_Falls,_Texas

Household & Family Income

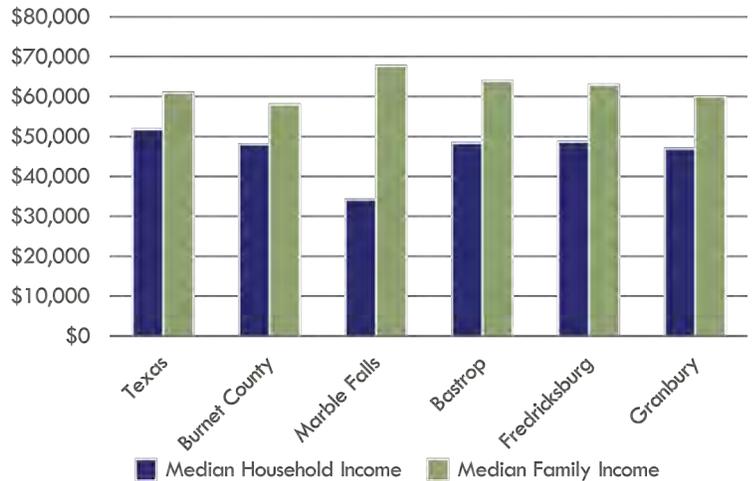
As illustrated in Figure 1.6, *Housing & Family Income*, median family income in Marble Falls is greater than all of the comparison cities, the County, and Texas. On the contrary, the median household income in substantially lower in Marble Falls than all of the comparison cities, the County, and Texas. This could indicate that the individual householders, or unrelated household units, are more economically disadvantaged than similar households associated

with families. This trend also highlights a need additional housing option at a variety of price points.

HOUSEHOLD & FAMILY INCOME

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, household income includes income from the householder and all other people (whether or not they are related) who are 15 years or older living in the same housing unit. Family income includes income from two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption who are residing together.

Figure 1.6, Household & Family Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics

Race & Ethnicity

The 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates illustrate that Marble Falls, and the entirety of Burnet County, is primarily white. As Table 1.2, *Race & Ethnicity*, indicates, Marble Falls is slightly more diverse than the County and two of the comparison cities while being less diverse than the city of Bastrop and the state of Texas. As the City continues to diversify, additional cultural, educational, and economic opportunities may arise.

Table 1.2, Race & Ethnicity

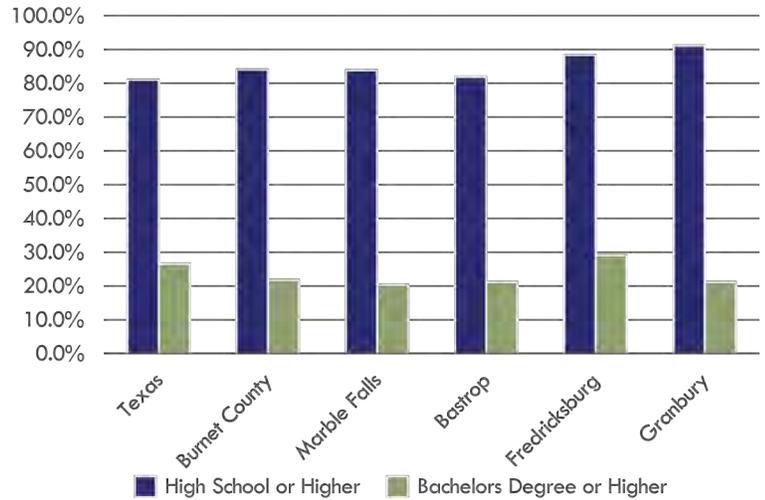
RACE & ETHNICITY	TEXAS	BURNET COUNTY	MARBLE FALLS	BASTROP	FREDERICKS-BURG	GRAN-BURY
White	74.4%	94.1%	90.8%	81.1%	95.1%	93.3%
Black or African American	11.8%	2.1%	5.4%	12.8%	0.8%	1.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native	0.5%	0.7%	0.1%	1.2%	0.2%	1.3%
Asian	4.0%	0.3%	1.7%	0.6%	0.0%	0.8%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	6.9%	1.7%	1.7%	2.6%	1.1%	2.3%
Two or More Races	2.3%	1.1%	0.2%	1.8%	2.7%	0.8%
Hispanic or Latino Descent	37.9%	20.6%	37.0%	21.3%	18.4%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey, DP05 ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates

Educational Attainment

As illustrated in Figure 1.7, *Educational Attainment*, Marble Falls has a greater percentage of high school graduates than Bastrop and Texas, is comparable with the County, and has a lower percentage than Fredericksburg and Granbury. However, the City has a lower percentage of residents with a bachelors degree or higher than all of the comparison cities, the County, and Texas. As the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center gets up and running, and other professional jobs move to the area, existing residents may be at a disadvantage in being hired due to lack of qualifications.

Figure 1.7, Educational Attainment



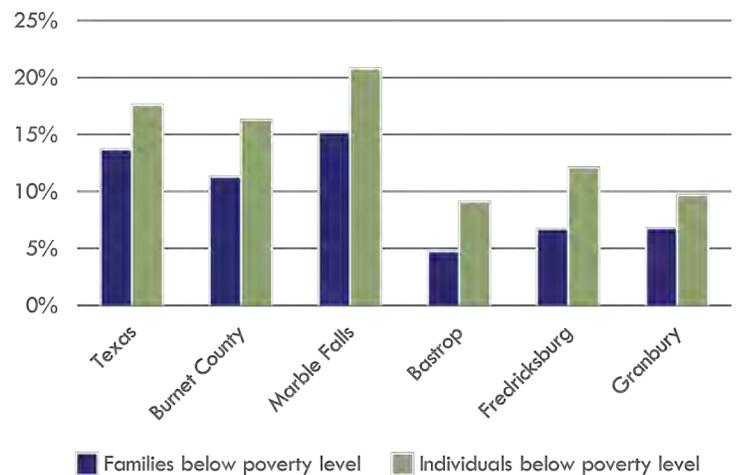
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey , S1501: Educational Attainment

Poverty Level

Marble Falls has a higher percentage of families and individuals whose income fell below the poverty level in the last year than all of the comparison cities, the County, and Texas. As illustrated in Figure 1.8, *Poverty Levels*, the number of individuals whose income fell below the poverty level is 8.7 to 11.7 percent greater in Marble Falls than in the comparison cities, while being only 4.5 percent greater than the County. Once again, providing the local workforce with additional learning and training opportunities can help equip them with skill sets which lead to higher paying jobs.

Figure 1.8, Poverty Level

(PERCENTAGE OF ALL FAMILIES AND PEOPLE WHOSE INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS IS BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey , DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics

What do we have to work on?

Through a series stakeholder interviews, a list of issues was identified for the City to consider when planning for the future. Following the stakeholder interviews, a consolidated list of issues was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) for their prioritization. See Figure 1.9, *Issue Prioritization by Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Groups* for the results of the CPAC exercise. The priorities determined by each individual CPAC group was then consolidated to determine a summarized total list of issues from highest to lowest priority. See Figure 1.10, *Issue Summary* for the total list of priorities.

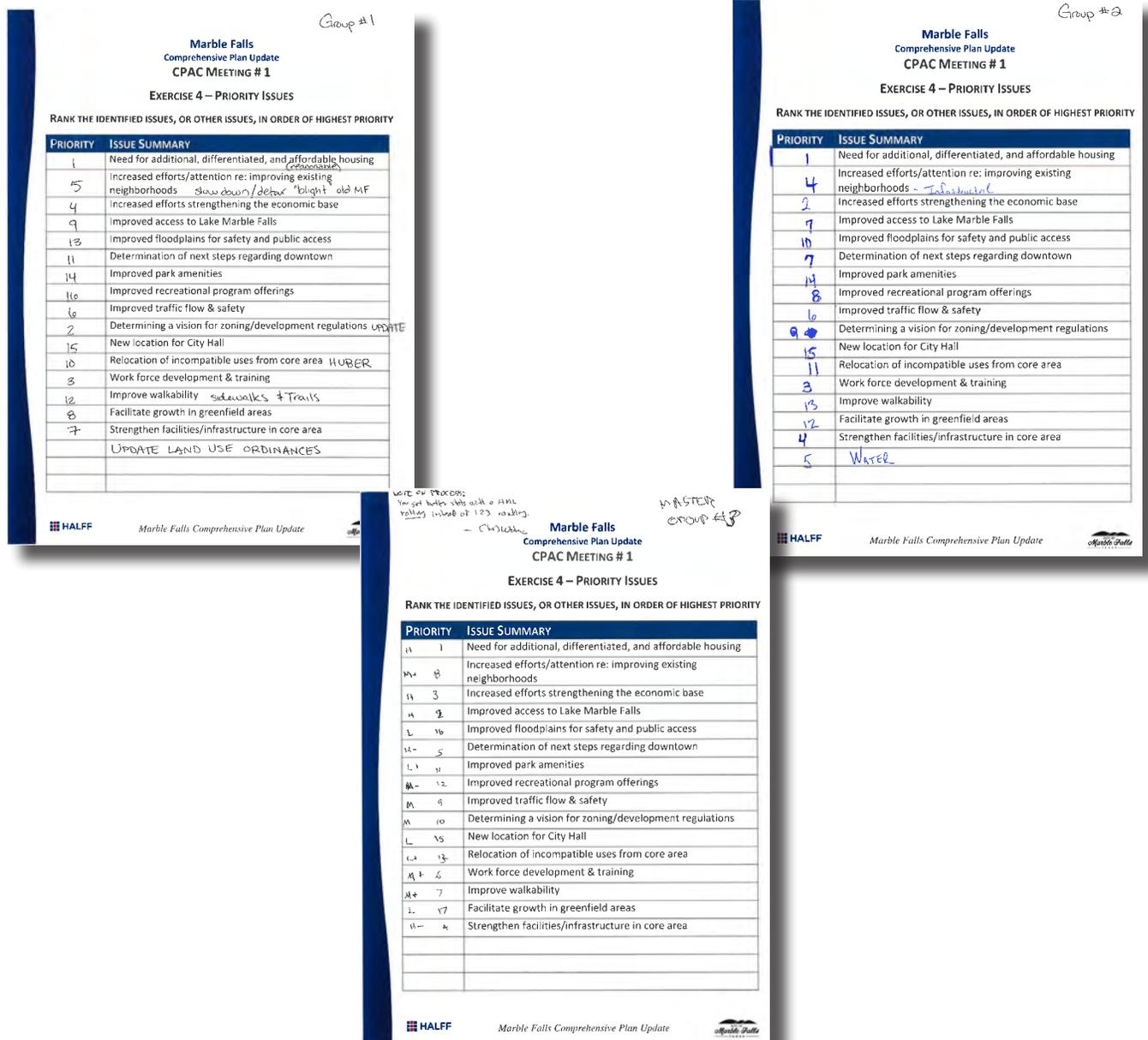


Figure 1.9, Issue Prioritization by Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Groups

During the first Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee meeting, members were split into three groups. Each group was given a list of the priority issues identified during the stakeholder interviews and asked to rank the issues from highest to lowest priority. Each group’s priorities are shown in the images above.

Figure 1.10, Issue Summary

Avg. Weighting	Priority Order	Issue Summary
1.0	1	Need for additional, differentiated, and reasonably priced housing
3.0	2	Increased efforts strengthening the economic base
4.0	3	Work force development & training
5.0	4	Strengthen facilities/infrastructure in core area
5.7	5	Increased efforts/attention re: improving existing neighborhoods
6.0	6	Improved access to Lake Marble Falls
7.0	7	Improved traffic flow & safety
7.0	7	Determining a vision for revised zoning/development regulations *
7.7	8	Determination of next steps regarding downtown
10.7	9	Improve walkability
11.3	10	Relocation of incompatible uses from core area
12.0	11	Improved recreational program offerings
12.3	12	Facilitate growth in greenfield areas
13.0	13	Improved floodplains for safety and public access
13.0	13	Improved park amenities
15.0	14	New location for City Hall
		Water**

**One CPAC group added specificity that land use ordinances needed to be updated*

*** Water was added as a priority issue by one CPAC group. In subsequent meetings, water will be added to the list and its priority further determined.*

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ENGAGEMENT and VISION



Introduction

First and foremost, the intent of a comprehensive plan is to ensure that a city progresses on a trajectory to best meet the wants and needs of its citizens. As part of the planning process, gaining public input provides crucial insight into the current and future needs of the people. By asking questions such as “what is working?”, “what isn’t?”, and “how would you improve it?”, important information can be gained about the desired vision for Marble Falls in the future.

Overview of Citizen Engagement Process

A variety of different engagement types were used to gain a well-rounded understanding of the public’s thoughts and ideas. Through the use of a variety of engagement strategies, different user types are provided a chance to voice their thoughts. The public engagement component of this Plan included seven stakeholder meetings, five meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, an on-line public survey, two public open houses, and four meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.



Summary of Citizen Engagement Process

Stakeholder Meetings

Over the course of three days at the onset of the project (June 2015), a series of seven meetings were held with a varied cross-section of public officials, City staff, stakeholders, business owners, and residents. These meetings helped to identify opportunities and challenges and potential solutions for the City. Approximately 50 representatives from the Marble Falls Independent School District School Board, Marble Falls TIRZ Board, Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Capital Improvement Program Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Highland Lakes Builders Association, Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, business owners, local newspaper, developers, and real estate agents were in attendance. Additional meetings were held with the Economic Development Corporation, City staff, and the City Council.



June 2015 Stakeholder Meeting

At the stakeholder meetings, attendees were asked to provide input on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, parks and recreation, livability, Downtown and tourism, business and economics, mobility and infrastructure, land use, and architectural standards. Throughout the different meetings, a series of trends regarding the needs of the city came to the surface. Many of these trends were similarly identified in the public survey.

Some of the key elements identified in the meetings are summarized below.

- Need for additional, differentiated, and reasonably priced housing
- Increase efforts to improve existing neighborhoods
- Increase efforts to strengthen the economic base
- Tourism
 - Provide a year-round attraction, more to do, and reasons for visitors to stay longer
 - The City is the central hub of commerce for the Highland Lakes area
- Improve access to Lake Marble Falls
- Need for floodplain mitigation
- Determine next steps regarding Downtown
- Determine a vision for revised regulations
- Improve park amenities and recreational program offerings
 - For tourism (catalyst for change)
 - For residents (improved quality of life)
- Improve walkability
- Improve traffic flow and safety
- New location for City Hall
- Relocate incompatible uses from core area
- Need for work force development and training



June 2015 Stakeholder Meetings



Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Throughout the course of the planning process, a 14 person Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) provided input and guidance to the Plan. The CPAC acted as an officially designated “sounding board” throughout the process. Their role was to assist with identification of issues and needs, to read, review, and provide recommendations as to the strategic directions of the Plan, and to assist with priority setting. There were five CPAC meetings held at key intervals throughout the process. Members of the CPAC included representatives of the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Capital Improvement Program Committee, Economic Development Corporation, Parks and Recreation Commission, Highland Lakes Health Association, Highland Lakes Builders Association, Chamber of Commerce, Burnet County Historic Commission, local business owners, among more.



June 2015 CPAC Meeting #1

During the first CPAC meeting, the committee was split into three groups and asked to complete a variety of exercises regarding visioning and guiding principles, identifying how they see the Plan helping the City move forward, preparing a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), and prioritizing the needs and issues identified during the stakeholder meetings. The results of these exercises are summarized in Figures 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, and 2.2.

Figure 2.1, CPAC 20-Year Vision Exercise Summary



Committee members were asked to choose one word, phrase, or sentence which “describes the vision” of what they want Marble Falls to be in 20 years.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Figure 2.2, CPAC SWOT Analysis Summary

STRENGTHS

GROUP 1

1. Natural resources
2. Potable water
3. Business opportunity
4. Medical facilities
5. Land availability
6. Regional commercial
7. Retirement/2nd home
8. Major highway

GROUP 2

1. Lake
2. Natural resources
3. Medical opportunities
4. Educational institution
5. Citizens
6. Friendly/welcoming
7. Beauty

GROUP 3

1. Lake
2. Natural beauty
3. Good neighbors
4. Retail shopping hub (sales tax)
5. Park system
6. Historical district
7. Ability to host events

OPPORTUNITIES

GROUP 1

1. Future growth (residential and commercial)
2. Railroad spur
3. Lakefront
4. Park system/recreation
5. Conventions

GROUP 2

1. Entertainment
2. Purple pipe
3. Sports complex
4. Convention center
5. Parks
6. New businesses
7. Better zoning
8. Downtown
9. Underutilization of lake
10. Tax base

GROUP 3

1. Lake/Downtown
2. Conservation of resources
3. Location
4. Increase home ownership

WEAKNESSES

GROUP 1

1. Land availability \$
2. Development cost
3. Housing (reasonable)
4. Work force
5. Limited thoroughfare

GROUP 2

1. Geographic limitations
2. Infrastructure – streets
3. No Downtown visibility/gateway
4. Business perception & restoration
5. FEMA/floodplain
6. Underutilization of lake

GROUP 3

1. Allocation of funds
2. Downtown visibility
3. Lack of industry – manufacturing
4. Affordability
5. Water
6. Lack of reasonably priced housing
7. Outdated police station
8. Debt

THREATS

GROUP 1

1. Land availability \$
2. Work force
3. Leakage
4. Zoning & land use ordinance

GROUP 2

1. No medium income housing
2. Water
3. Refocus toward 71/281
4. Traffic
5. Labor force (no drugs/qualified, not temporary)
6. Tax base

GROUP 3

1. Rapid growth
2. Lack of work force
3. Drought
4. Economic



Survey

An extensive Citywide public opinion survey was conducted as an on-line and paper questionnaire. The survey included a variety of topics such as demographics; quality of life; satisfaction with City services; transportation; housing and neighborhoods; parks, recreation, and trails; economic development; tourism; and prioritizing issues. A total of 521 survey responses were received, corresponding to approximately eight percent of the City's population. Respondents represented a variety of age groups, with the majority ranging from 35 to over 65. Nearly 60 percent of respondents live in Marble Falls and more than 50 percent work in the City. Thirty-eight percent of respondents have lived in the City for more than 10 years and 72 percent are likely or very likely to remain in the City for the next five years. Two-thirds of respondents own their home and 68 percent do not have children under the age of 19 living in their house. There were slightly more women than men who completed the survey (see Figure 2.4, *Survey Respondent Demographics*).

Results from the public survey illustrated a variety of trends regarding opportunities and issues in the City. Some key findings are listed below.

Overall Quality of Life in Marble Falls

- In general terms, over 70 percent of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the City in every category listed. The categories receiving the highest satisfaction ratings were Marble Falls as a place to retire, a place to live, and a place to raise a family. Fifty percent of respondents indicated that they feel the City, as a community, has changed for the better since they have lived there. See Figure 2.3, *How Satisfied Are You With Marble Falls*, for full results.

Figure 2.3, How Satisfied Are You With Marble Falls?

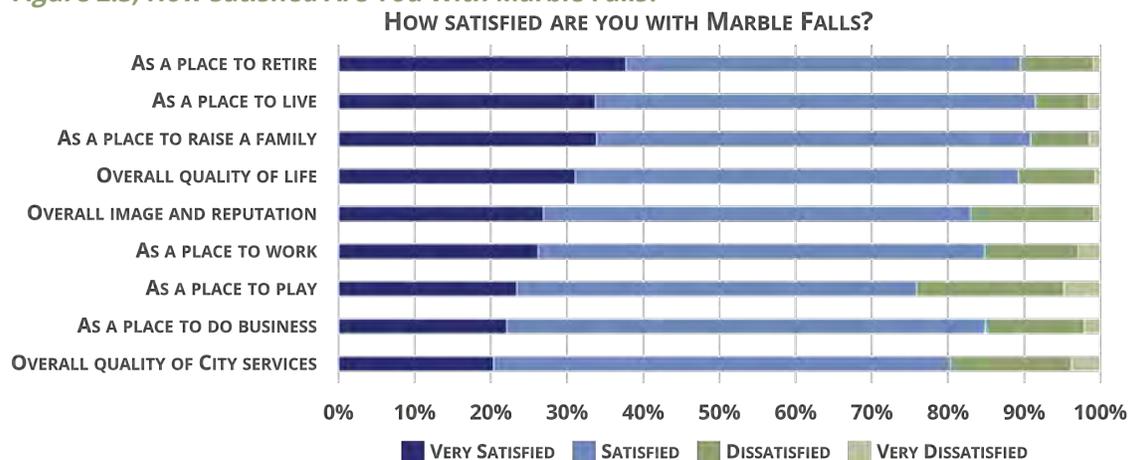
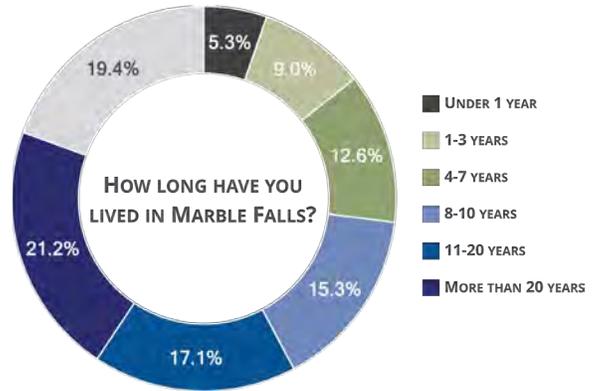
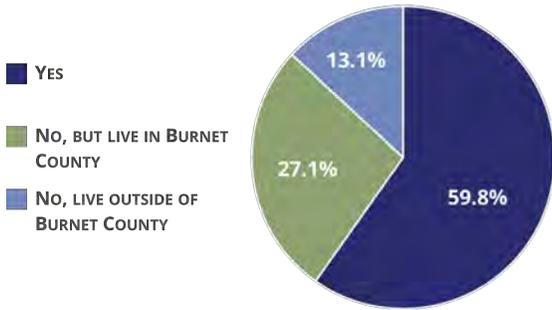
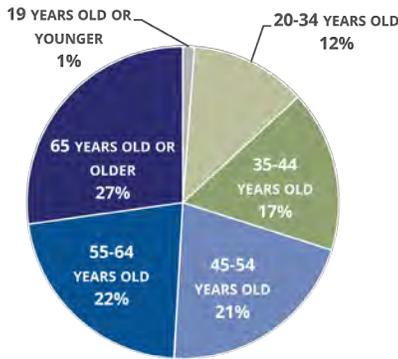


Figure 2.4, Survey Respondent Demographics

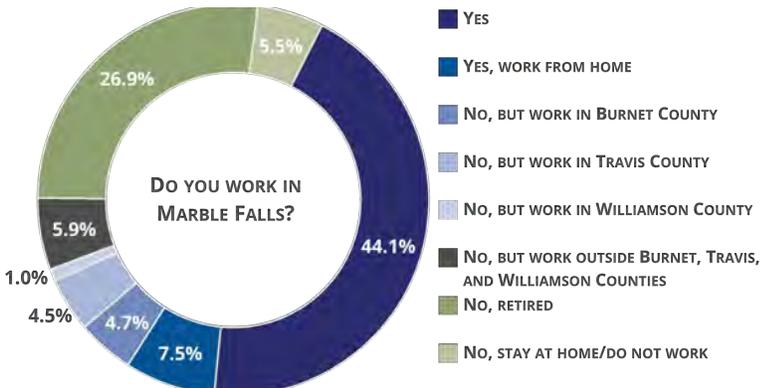
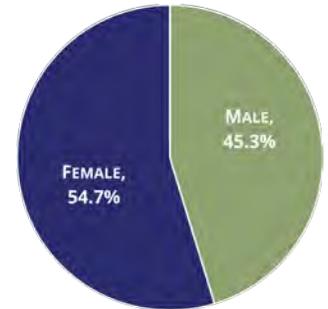
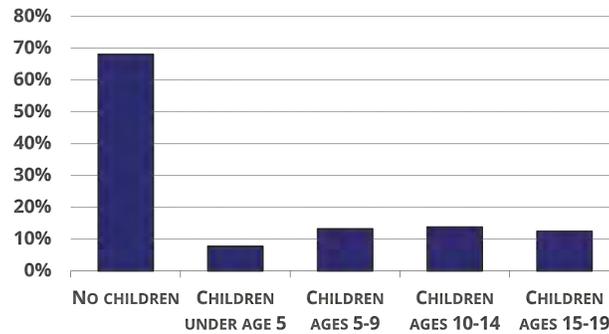
ARE YOU A RESIDENT OF THE CITY OF MARBLE FALLS?



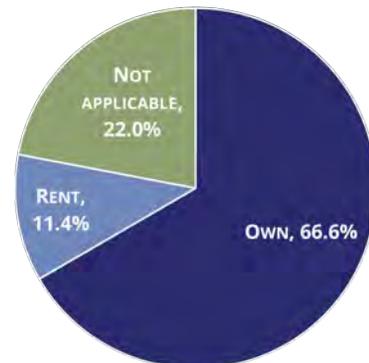
DO YOU OWN A BUSINESS IN MARBLE FALLS?



DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 19 LIVING IN YOUR HOME? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

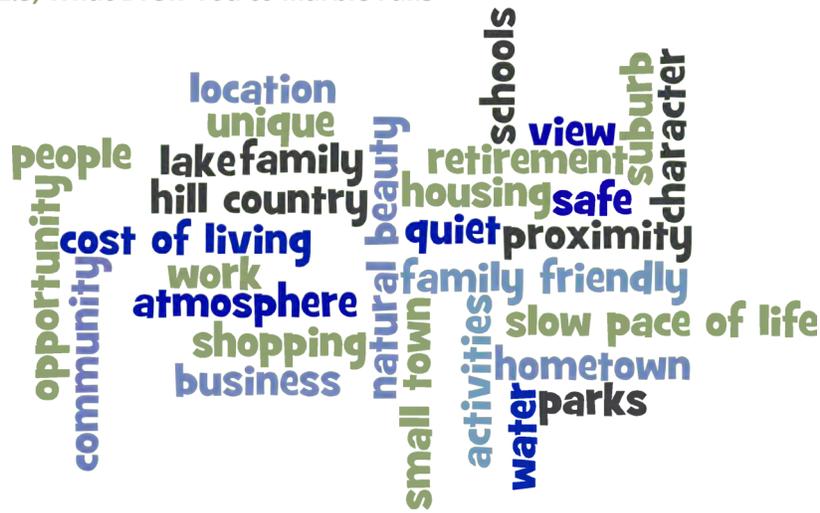


DO YOU OWN OR RENT YOUR HOME IN MARBLE FALLS?



- The main reasons that drew people to live in the City included Lake Marble Falls, the parks and natural beauty, the location, family, the “small-town feel,” and work opportunities, among other things. Displayed in Figure 2.5, *What Drew You to Marble Falls*, are some of the common reasons people listed as drawing them to the City. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that what first drew them to the City is still evident.

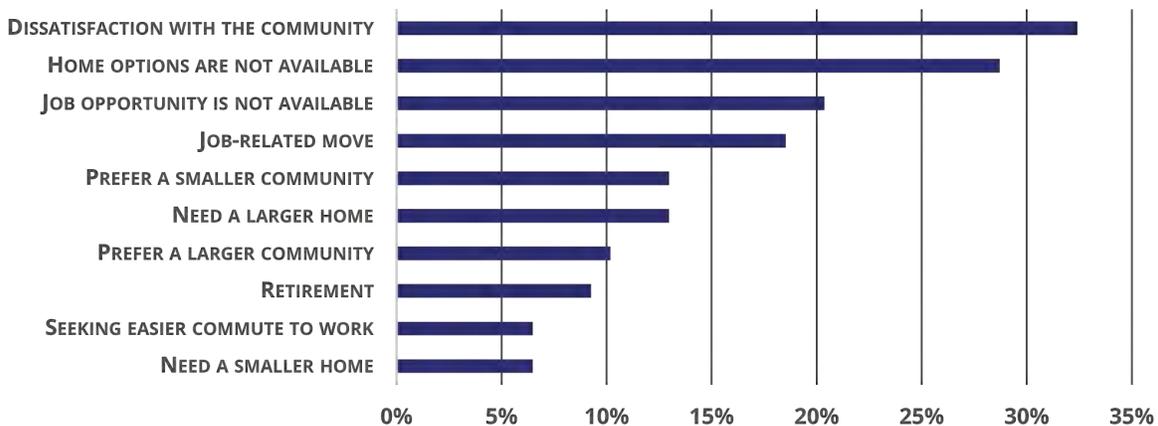
Figure 2.5, What Drew You to Marble Falls



- Of the 21 percent of respondents who indicated they were unlikely or very unlikely to remain in Marble Falls for the next five years, the top three reasons cited included dissatisfaction with the community, a lack of home options and job opportunities. Displayed in Figure 2.6, *Potential Reasons for Leaving Marble Falls*, are the survey results illustrating the potential causes for existing residents to leave the City .

Figure 2.6, Potential Reasons for Leaving Marble Falls

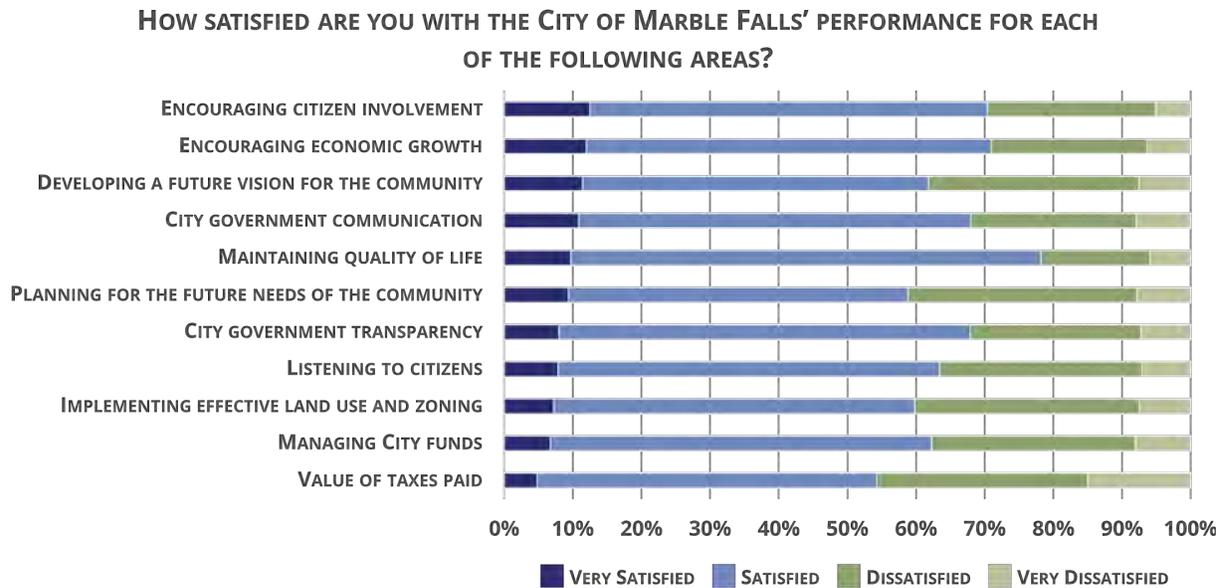
IF UNLIKELY, OR VERY UNLIKELY TO REMAIN IN MARBLE FALLS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, PLEASE TELL US WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS ARE CAUSING YOU TO CONSIDER LEAVING MARBLE FALLS?



Satisfaction with City Services

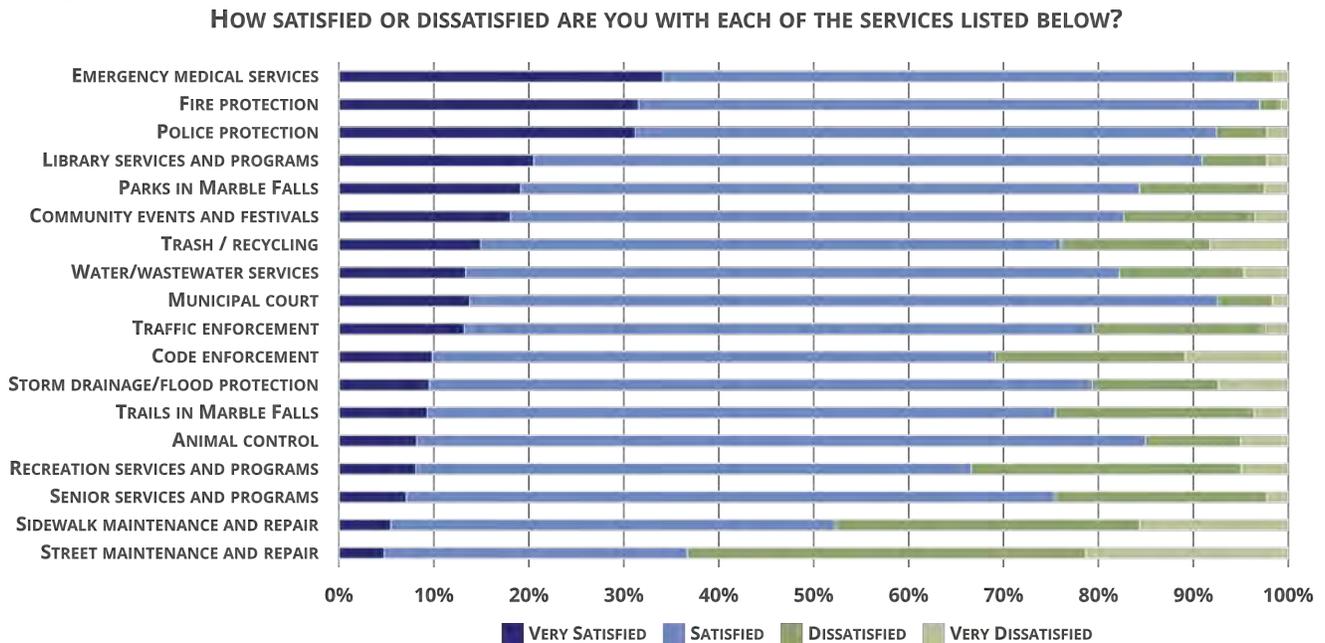
- In general, respondents were most satisfied with the City’s performance in encouraging citizen involvement, encouraging economic growth, and developing a future vision for the community. They were least satisfied with the implementation of effective zoning and land use, managing City funds, and the value of taxes paid. The full survey results are illustrated in Figure 2.7, *Satisfaction with City Performance*, on the next page.

Figure 2.7, Satisfaction with City Performance



- When asked how satisfied they were with a variety of services in the City, respondents were most satisfied with emergency medical services, fire protection, and police protection. As illustrated in Figure 2.8, *Satisfaction with City Services*, respondents were least satisfied with street and sidewalk maintenance and repairs.

Figure 2.8, Satisfaction with City Services

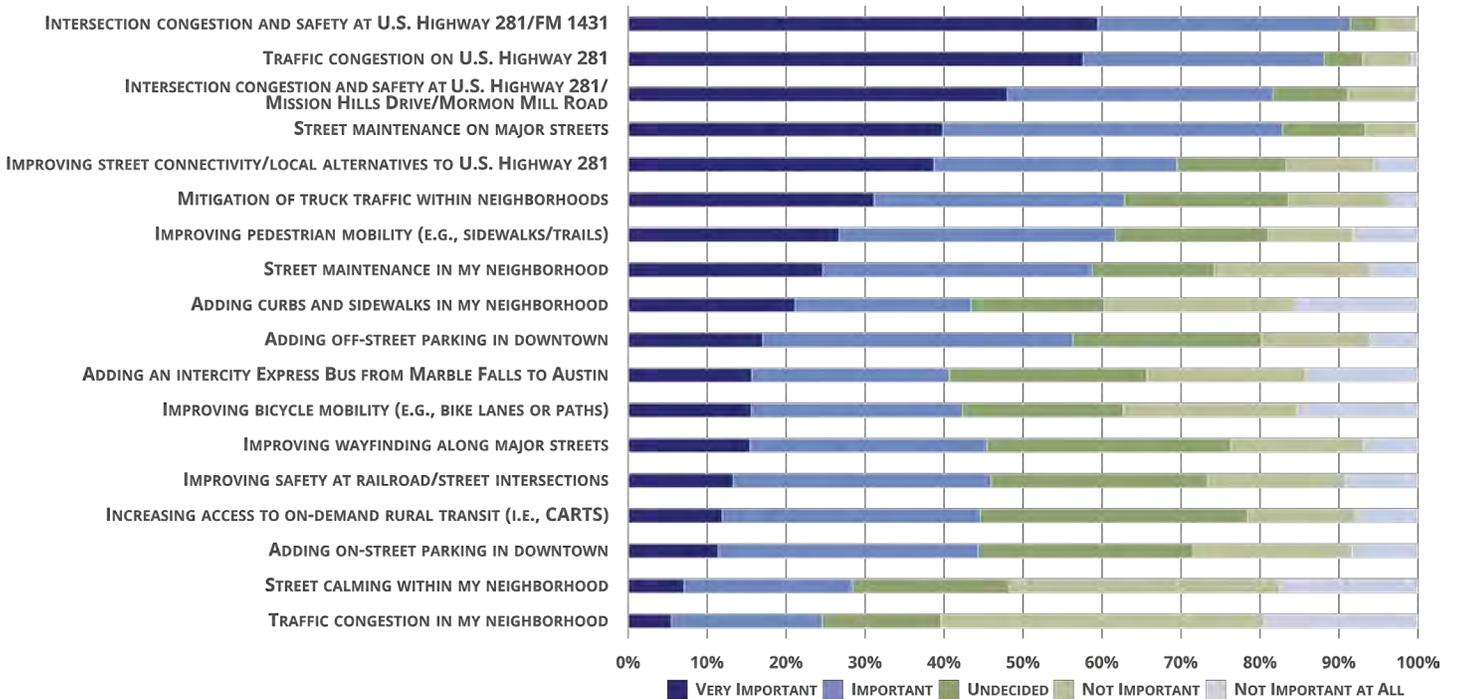


Transportation

- Respondents were asked to rate the importance of addressing a variety of transportation related issues. As displayed in Figure 2.9, *Transportation Issues*, on the next page, respondents indicated that the U.S. Highway 281/FM 1431 intersection, traffic congestion along U.S. Highway 281, and the U.S. Highway 281/Mission Hills Drive/Mormon Mill Road intersection were seen as the issues most needing improvement in the near future. These three issues were also selected as the top three priority issues with congestion along U.S. Highway 281 receiving over 500 percent more votes than any other issue.

Figure 2.9, Transportation Issues

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY OF MARBLE FALLS TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



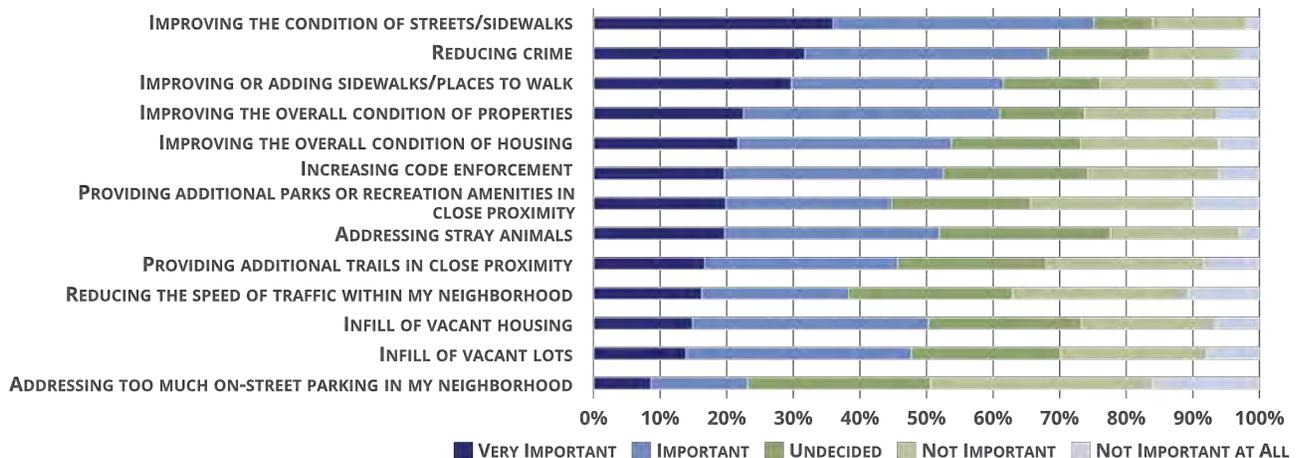
- Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding which streets need better sidewalks or trails for walking and bicycling. In general, respondents indicated a desire for walkable streets throughout the City, especially around key destinations such as Downtown, schools, shopping areas, etc. The streets most frequently identified as needing better sidewalks or trails included FM 1431, U.S. Highway 281, Main Street, Avenue N, Broadway Street, Gateway Parkway, Mormon Mill Road, and Pecan Valley Drive.

Housing & Neighborhoods

- The housing and neighborhood items rated with highest importance included improving the condition of streets and sidewalks, reducing crime, and improving or adding sidewalks and places to walk. Those rated with lowest importance included infill of vacant lots and housing, and addressing too much street parking in the neighborhoods. When asked to prioritize the issues, the three issues rated with the highest priority included improving the condition of streets and sidewalks, improving the overall condition of housing, and improving or adding sidewalks. See Figure 2.10, *Neighborhood Priority Improvements*, below.

Figure 2.10, Neighborhood Priority Improvements

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY OF MARBLE FALLS TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



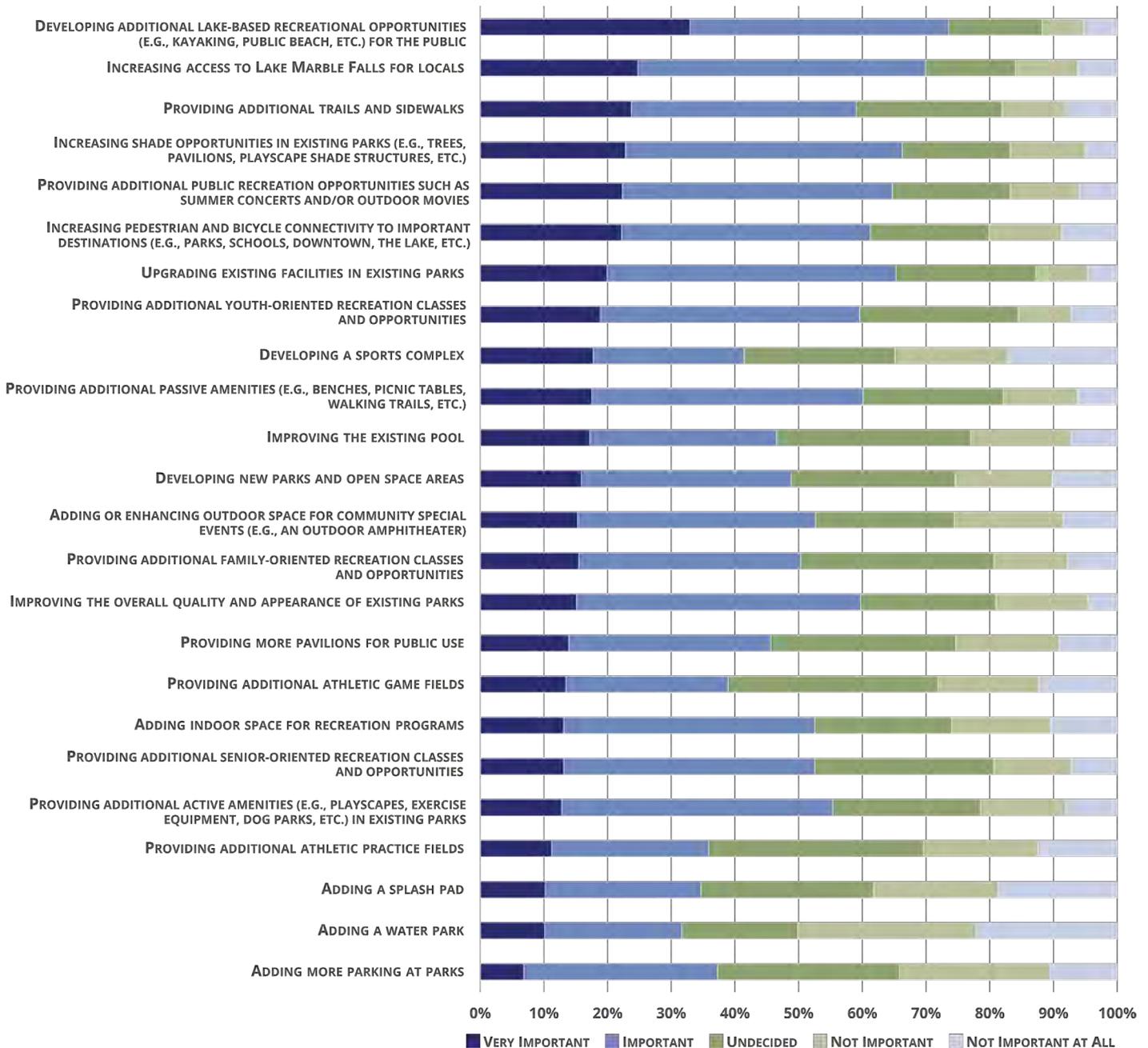
- Respondents were asked how likely they are to relocate to Marble Falls or move to another house in the City within the next five years. Of the 333 respondents who answered the question, 21 percent indicated they were likely or very likely to be in the market for housing in the City within the next five years. For those who were likely or very likely, 66 percent indicated the housing type they're interested in is available, 64 percent indicated the housing quality they're looking for is available, while only 54 percent indicated the housing they're interested in is reasonably priced in Marble Falls.

Parks, Recreation, & Trails

- The parks, recreation, and trails issues rated as most important included developing additional lake-based recreational opportunities, increasing access to the lake for locals, and providing additional trails and sidewalks. The issues rated as the least important included adding a splash pad, water park, and more parking at parks. See Figure 2.11, *Park, Recreation, and Trail Priority Improvements*, below.

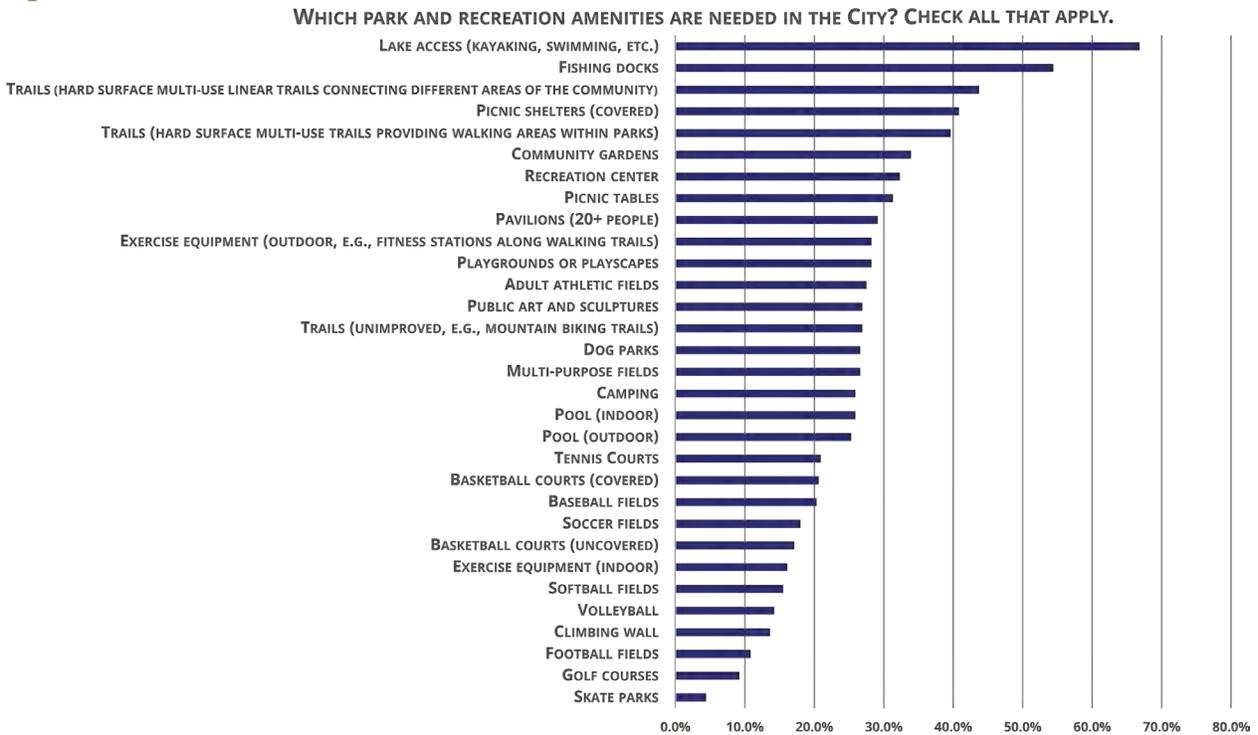
Figure 2.11, Park, Recreation, and Trail Priority Improvements

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE CITY OF MARBLE FALLS TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS ISSUES IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



- As illustrated in Figure 2.12, *Parks and Recreation Amenities Needed*, the top three park and recreation amenities respondents indicated as being needed in the City included lake access, fishing docks, and trails connecting different areas of the community. The amenities ranked as the lowest need included football fields, golf courses, and skate parks.

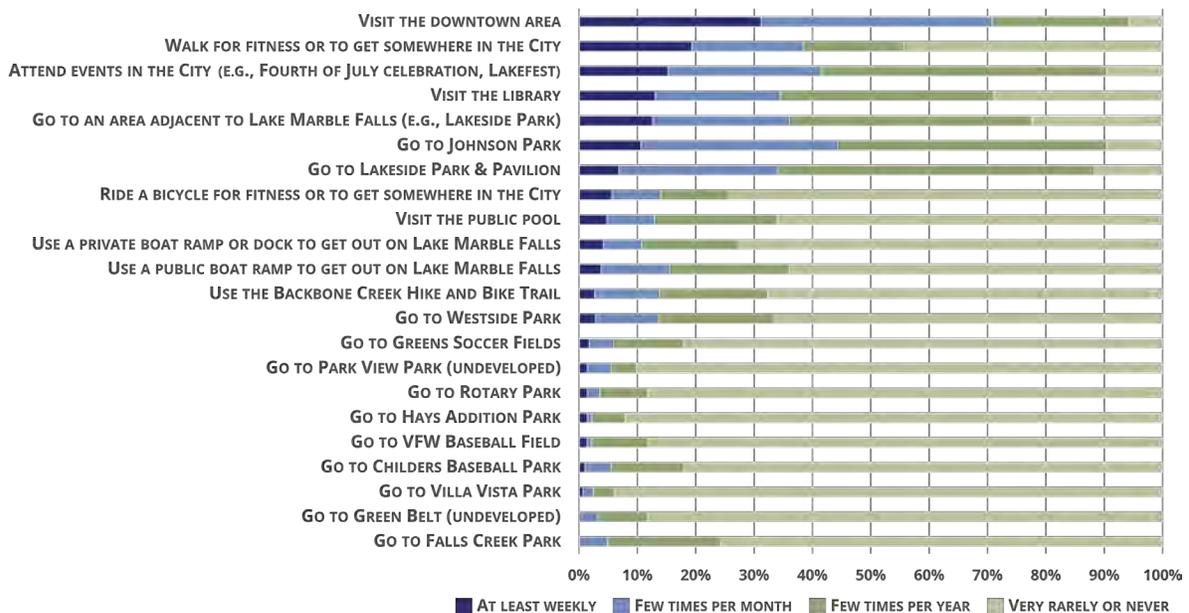
Figure 2.12, Parks and Recreation Amenities Needed



- The park and recreation facilities or events that are used or attended most frequently by respondents included visiting the Downtown, walking for fitness or to get somewhere in the City, and attending City events. The least frequented facilities included Villa Vista Park, the undeveloped Green Belt, and Falls Creek Park. It is worth noting that, as illustrated in Figure 2.13, *Frequency of Use*, with the exception of Johnson Park, Lakeside Park, and Westside Park, a low percentage of the respondents ever use the remainder of the parks. This may indicate that improvements are needed at these other parks.

Figure 2.13, Frequency of Use

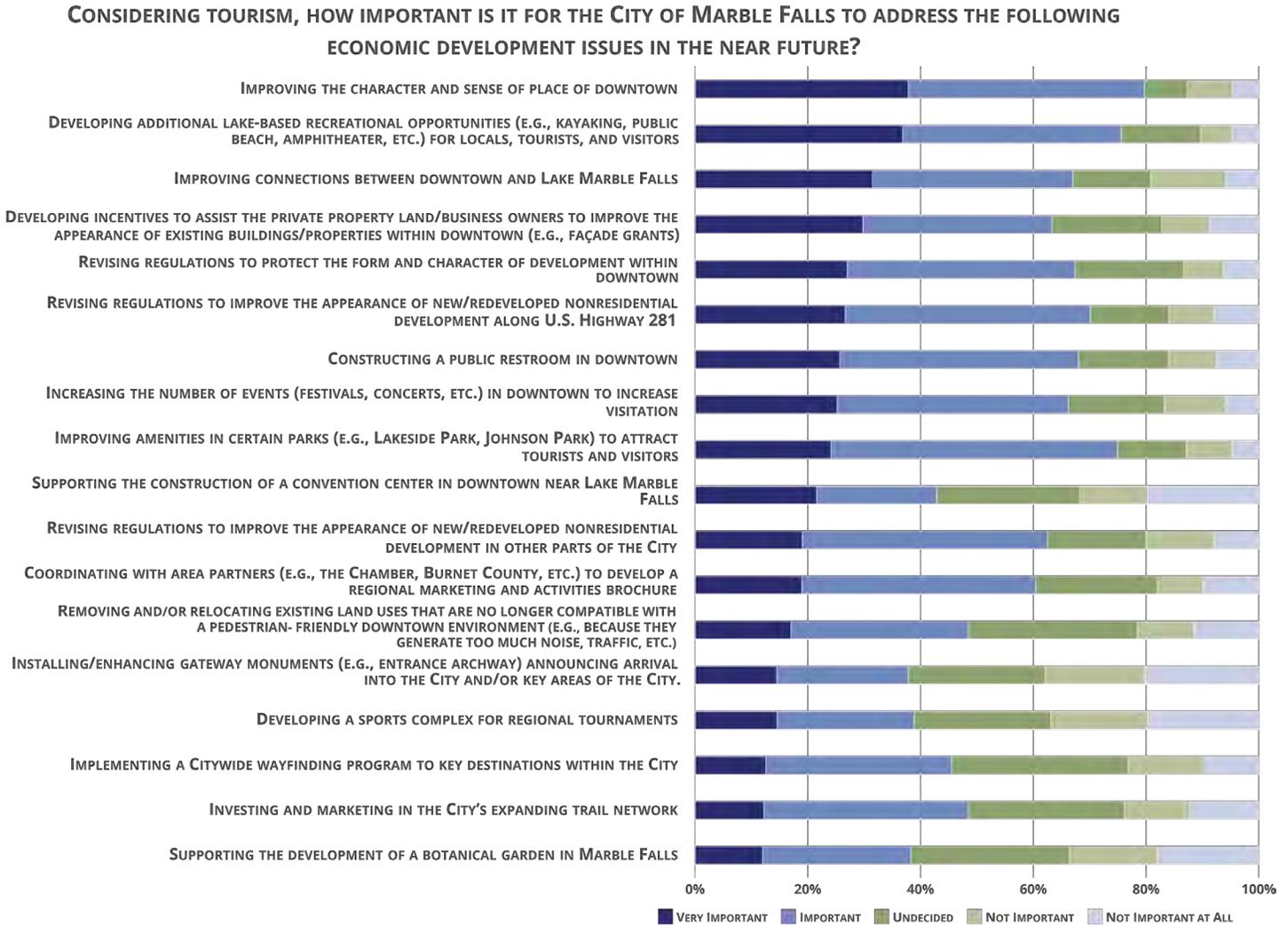
HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU USE THE FOLLOWING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES OR ATTEND EVENTS IN MARBLE FALLS?



Economic Development & Tourism

- When asked to rate the importance of economic development issues, improving the character and sense of place of Downtown, developing additional lake-based recreational opportunities, and improving connection between Downtown and Lake Marble Falls were listed as the most important to address in the near future. See Figure 2.14, *Tourism Related Economic Development Opportunities*, below.

Figure 2.14, *Tourism Related Economic Development Opportunities*

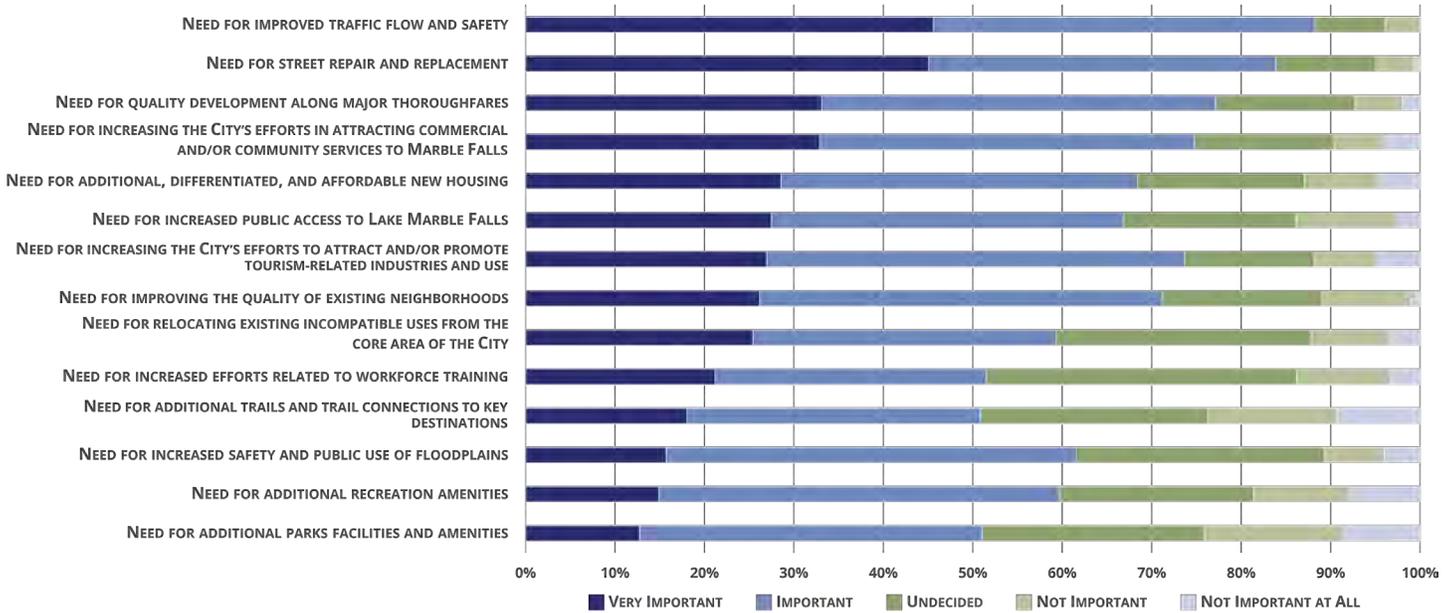


Priority Issues

- Respondents were asked to rate the importance of addressing a variety of overarching issues related to living in Marble Falls over the next five to 10 years. As seen in Figure 2.15, *Priority Issues*, on the next page, the issues indicated as most important included need for improved traffic flow and safety, need for street repair and replacement, and need for quality development along major thoroughfares. When asked to prioritize the list of issues, the top three priorities, from highest to lowest, were need for improved traffic flow and safety, need for street repair and replacement, and need for differentiated and reasonably priced new housing.

Figure 2.15, Priority Issues

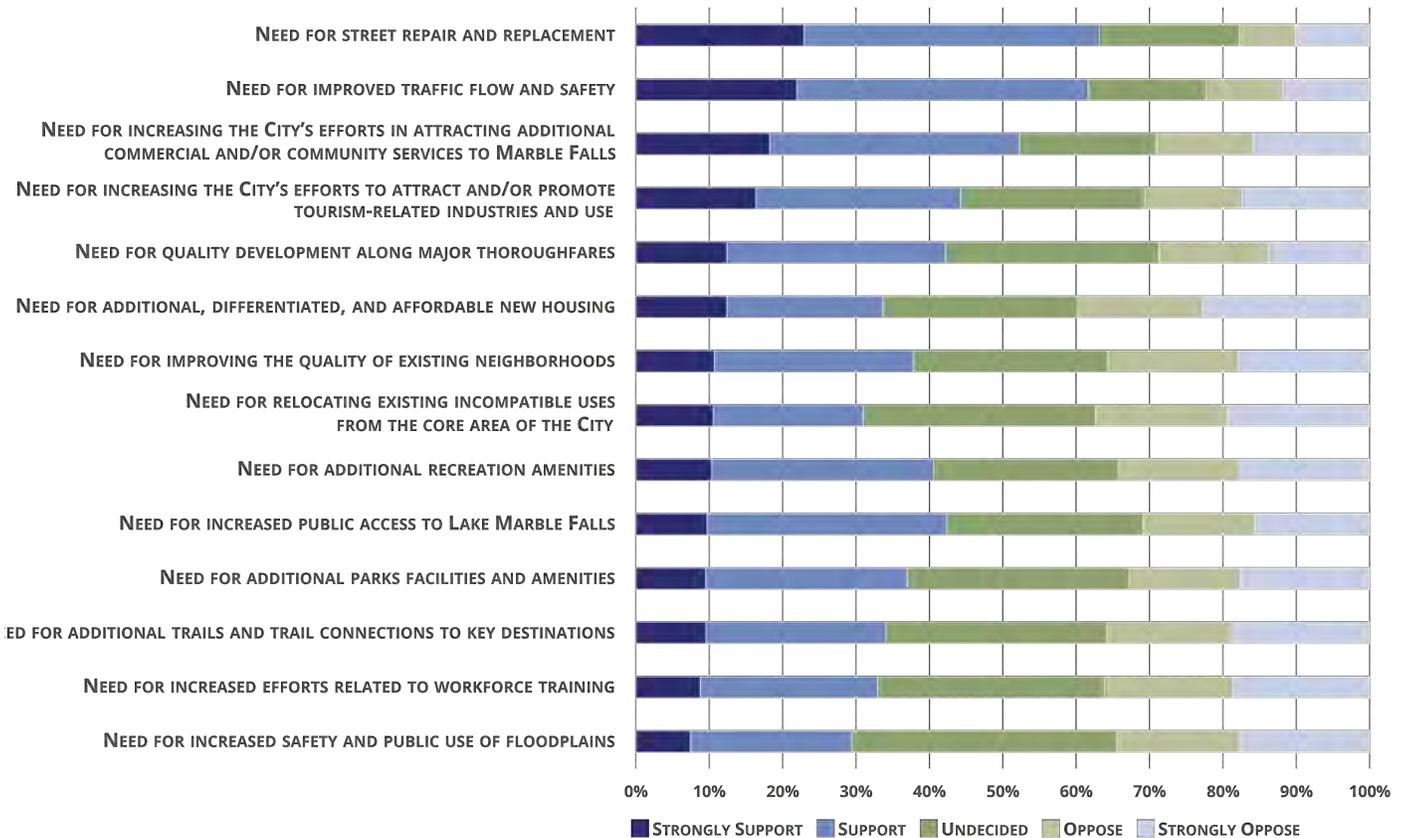
HOW IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT DO YOU FEEL IT IS FOR THE CITY OF MARBLE FALLS TO FOCUS ON EACH OF THESE OVER THE NEXT FIVE TO 10 YEARS?



- Respondents were asked to consider the same list of priorities and indicate how strongly they supported or opposed paying slightly higher fees or taxes in order to support the City implementing the priorities. The issues respondents most strongly supported paying additional funds for included street repair and maintenance, improved traffic flow and safety, and increasing the City's efforts in attracting additional commercial and/or community services to the City. See Figure 2.16, *Support for Implementation*, below.

Figure 2.16, Support for Implementation

HOW STRONGLY WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE PAYING SLIGHTLY HIGHER FEES OR TAXES, EITHER IN THE FORM OF INCREASED PROPERTY TAXES, A BOND ELECTION, OR ADDITIONAL FEES, FOR THESE SAME PRIORITIES?





August 2015 Open House

Public Meetings

At two key intervals during the planning process, open house public meetings were held to solicit feedback from the general community. The first open house was held in August 2015. A variety of exercises were used to gain input regarding areas of need in the City (e.g., transportation, revitalization, trail locations, etc.), economic development and tourism, prioritizing parks and trail issues, and the community's preferences regarding housing types, building form and architecture, street aesthetics, signage, and landscaping. A survey station was provided to allow attendees to complete the public survey while topics were fresh on their minds. A total of 79 people attended the first open house, providing valuable input towards the development of the Plan. Attendees came from Marble Falls, Johnson City, Horseshoe Bay, Granite Shoals, and Kingsland, with the majority coming from within the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The second open house public meeting was held in April 2016 and was attended by 47 people. The open house included an overview presentation of the planning process, the draft Plan, and provided attendees opportunities to voice their opinion regarding prioritization of City improvements and the Plan's recommended action items.

Some key results of the first open house exercises are listed below.

Transportation Issues/Improvements

- The majority of transportation issues and improvements needed were identified as being located along U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431. When asked to identify the two most problematic or unsafe intersections, the intersection most frequently selected was U.S. Highway 281/Mission Hill Dr./Mormon Mill Rd. All other intersections identified as unsafe were located along U.S. Highway 281 or FM 1431. Additionally, all areas identified as needing the "look and feel" improved were also along U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431.
- The top three transportation strategies selected as priorities to improve traffic safety and congestion within the City were to expand resources in order to improve the quality and condition of road surfaces, to identify



August 2015 Open House

a truck route that removes heavy, hazardous truck traffic out of neighborhood and Downtown areas, and to research alternatives to route internal, local traffic off of U.S. Highway 281.

Housing Needs in Marble Falls

- The stakeholder interviews identified a need for additional housing within the City. Open house attendees were shown examples of seven types of housing and asked to choose the types that are most needed within the City. The top four types, in order from the greatest to least amount of votes, were single-family detached with small lot and small homes, townhouses, duplexes, and apartments.

Areas Needing Reinvestment & Revitalization

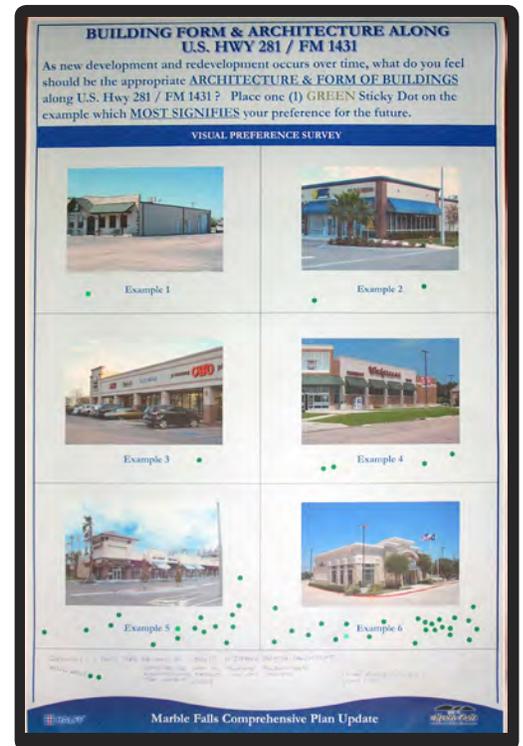
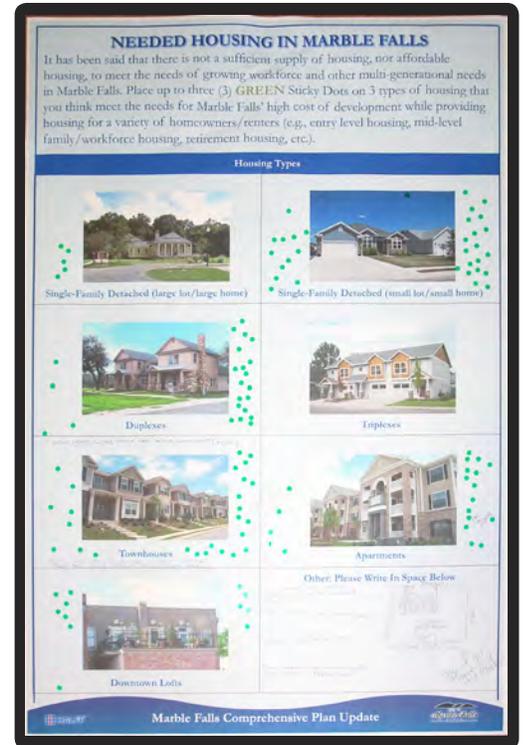
- Attendees were asked to help the City identify residential and nonresidential areas they felt should be prioritized for assistance with reinvestment and revitalization. Potential improvements could include improved residential code enforcement, incentives for streetscape and façade improvements, or new capital investments, among other things. The majority of responses were clustered in the quadrant of the City south of FM 1431 and west of U.S. Highway 281. Two main groupings of votes were located near Johnson Park and Lakeside Park, and the streets around the Marble Falls City Hall.

Park & Trail Priorities

- As noted in the survey, parks are a large draw for the City. In order to serve existing residents, attract new ones, and attract tourism dollars to the area, a variety of park priorities were listed for attendees to vote on. The top three priorities selected were to ensure that parks serve both residents and support tourism, provide greater access to Lake Marble Falls, and focus more City efforts towards improving the City's existing parks.
- When asked to vote on priority trail locations, the top four priorities included locating trails to serve residents and tourists (e.g., similar to Austin's Town Lake Trail), and locating trails to provide access to Lake Marble Falls, provide connections to parks, and provide connections to Downtown.
- The two types of trails rated as the most desired were crushed granite trails and shared-use paths. These trails received substantially more votes than all other options (concrete trails, sidepaths, buffered bike lanes, cycle tracks, on-street bike lanes, and sharrows).

Visual Preference Survey

- One of the stated purposes of the Plan was to reassess the community's vision for the future prior to undertaking needed revisions to the City development regulations. In this regard, a visual preference survey was included as part of the first open house public meeting. This comprehensive plan-scaled assessment evaluated public sentiment regarding the quality and extent of



regulatory improvements that could be appropriate for overall street view, building form and architecture, landscaping, and signage along U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431. While only considered as one part of the overall public engagement strategy, the community displayed strong preference for higher quality improvements for “overall street view” and “building form and architecture” (e.g., respondents chose the highest quality choice out of six choices for “overall street view” (almost 60 percent) and “building form and architecture” (over 50 percent). For landscaping and signage, respondents displayed preference for higher quality improvements, but the responses were more evenly distributed between the top two or three higher quality choices. These proposed improvements were further vetted during the Plan development process and will be made part of the City’s post-Plan implementation action agenda.

Some key results of the second open house exercises are listed below.

Future Land Use Plan

Meeting attendees were shown the Future Land Use Map (see Map 4.1, in Chapter 4) and asked to provide their comments. Comments received largely focused on the need for a truck route, the desire to maintain residential land use in current neighborhoods, and the importance of attracting people to Downtown Marble Falls.

Thoroughfare Plan Priority Segments

Attendees were shown Map 5.2, *Priority Thoroughfare Improvements* and asked to identify their three highest priority future thoroughfare connections. Key priority connections included all proposed routes between U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431 through the northwest portion of the City’s ETJ, the proposed principal arterial connecting eastern FM 2147 to FM 1431 via a new bridge east of the U.S. Highway 281 bridge, and the Nature Heights Drive extension.

Sidewalk and Trail Connections and On-Street Bike Lanes

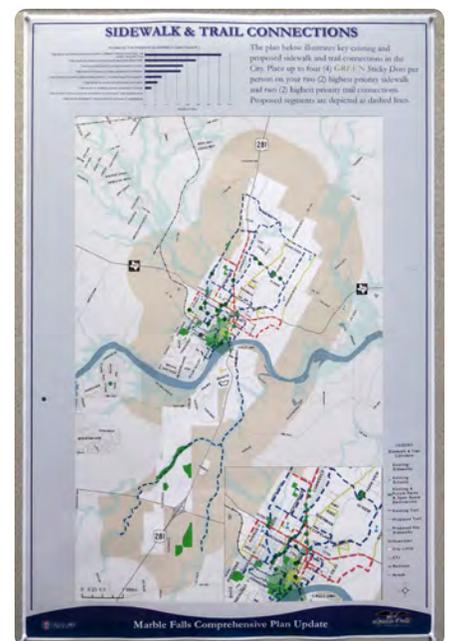
Attendees were shown the sidewalk and trail corridors and on-street bike lanes illustrated in Map 6.2, *Sidewalk and Trail Corridor Opportunities* and Map 6.3, *On-Street Bike Lane Opportunities*, and asked to choose their two highest priority trails, two highest priority sidewalks, and three highest priority on-street bike lanes. The two highest ranked trail connections were the completion of the City’s existing trail, with an extension from Westside Park to Childers Park, and a trail leading from Park View Park Site west towards U.S. Highway 281. The highest ranked sidewalk connection, with a strong majority of votes, was the completion of a sidewalk network along U.S. Highway 281. The highest ranked on-street bike lanes were along Mormon Mill Road and County Road 401.

Downtown Improvements

Meeting attendees were shown a variety of improvements recommended for Downtown and asked to choose their top three priorities. The top three improvements chosen by the public were implementing lake front improvements, identifying a truck route, and designing and constructing the creekwalk promenade.



The above photo was chosen by 51% of respondents when asked what they felt should be the appropriate “architecture and form” of buildings along U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431. This was the highest quality choice available.



Sub-Area Prioritization

A sub-area map, based on the City's fire zoning districts, was presented to attendees. They were asked to identify the sub-area they felt should be improved first and what types of improvements should be prioritized. The majority of responses indicated Downtown as the priority area needing improvements and character/placemaking and transportation/street improvements as the priorities.

Prioritized Plan Action Items

Meeting attendees were presented with a listing of all of the Plan's action items and asked to choose their priorities. The results of the public's prioritization was analyzed in conjunction with the prioritization by the City's elected and appointed officials to determine the priorities illustrated in Table 9.1, *Implementation Action Plan*.

Elected & Appointed Officials Meetings

A series of meetings with the City's elected and appointed officials, including the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Economic Development Board, were held throughout the planning process, culminating with a City Council adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on June _____, 2016. These boards and commissions provided valuable leadership and oversight, vetted the Plan, and will play a crucial role implementing Plan recommendations.

“Marble Falls is a great place to live, work, and play – a welcoming and inviting community with safe and family-friendly neighborhoods, where people of all ages can afford quality life-cycle housing surrounded by good neighbors.

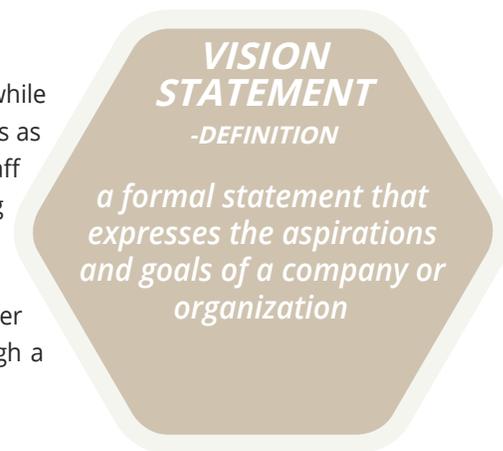
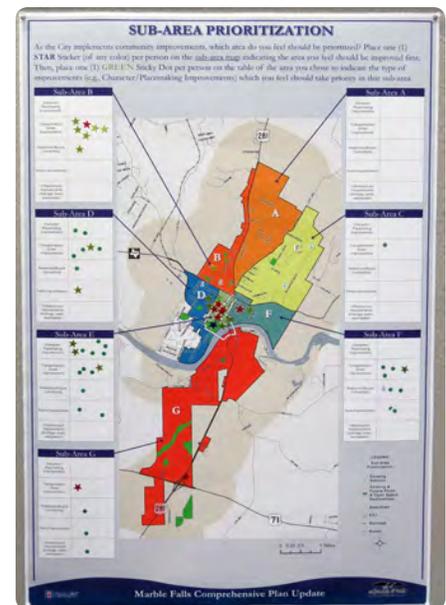
We value our unique, small-town character; yet understand that our economic success is dependent on being the economic hub for the Highland Lakes region; and due to our precious natural assets (e.g., Lake Marble Falls) – a tourist destination. In this regard, we proactively strive to balance being a livable and destination city.

Come join us in Marble Falls – It is a memorable place to visit and an even better place to live!”

Vision

The community's vision embodies a collective aspiration for the future, while defining the framework by which each Plan chapter shall follow. It functions as a tool for decision-making by elected and appointed officials, guides City staff priorities, and helps to build community consensus so everyone is working toward common future.

The vision was derived from early public engagement, including stakeholder meetings, the survey and open public house workshops, as well as through a visioning exercise by the CPAC.



Plan Goals

At the beginning of this planning process, five overriding Plan goals were identified in response to community issues. These Plan goals ensure policies and recommendations were consistent across each Plan chapter and in support of the community's vision. It is intended that these same guiding principles will be carried forth in all implementation policies, such that they should help to frame future decision-making.

- **Consolidated Vision** – Assessing and capturing a consensus vision for the future helps to build support for not only Plan adoption, but post-implementation actions such as new programs and operations, and capital projects, among others.
- **Protection and Access to Lake Marble Falls** – Hands down ... Lake Marble Falls is the City's greatest natural asset and best kept secret. Moving forward, this rich resource must be protected, while at the same time, the City strives to improve its connection and access to it. This could include increased connectivity via hike and bike trails, and better connections from the lake to Downtown, among other initiatives.
- **Stronger Neighborhoods and Housing** – During the day, Marble Falls benefits from an almost 8,000-person workforce; yet the nighttime population is just over 6,000 people. With the opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center near the City's southern terminus, increased efforts will be needed to capture this growing workforce (and property tax dollars) rather than neighboring cities.
- **Continued Economic Growth** – Even though the City benefits from a strong sales tax base, additional efforts can be made to further ensure the City experiences quality and sustainable growth over the long-term. This could include accommodating new high quality development south in the City and along the City's economic spine, while expanding efforts to revitalize the City's historical, cultural, and social hub in Downtown.
- **Increased Tourism and Year-Round Activity** – Similar to other destination cities in Texas, like Austin's Town Lake, Marble Falls' residents can greatly benefit from being a destination city. This includes more access to natural and cultural activities, year-round events and activities, better parks and recreation areas (e.g., lake access and trails), etc.
- **Multi-generational Interests** - As Marble Falls continues to grow and develop, key efforts and initiatives can further enhance the attractiveness of the community for all ages, including youth, young and middle-aged persons and families, and aging seniors. Through the provision of additional quality-of-life amenities, housing options in a variety of sizes and price points, and increased opportunities for quality education and employment, Marble Falls can stand out as a community in which multi-generational individuals choose to live and grow.



PLANNING FOR GROWTH



Introduction

The conditions for growth in Marble Falls have never been more favorable. Improvements to U.S. Highway 281 and the bridge across Lake Marble Falls, a rebounding economy and low gas prices, the opening of a new regional hospital serving the entire Highland Lakes area, a motivated community – each of these create opportunities for new growth and reinvestment in Marble Falls.

But, growth is not guaranteed, nor is all growth positive growth. In other words, the City cannot sit back and wait for growth to happen nor allow it to determine how the City gets built. On the contrary, the City must be proactive in its efforts to go after the opportunities which contribute to long-term success. Similarly, the City must protect itself against growth that, if done haphazardly or poorly, can detract from the long-term success of the community. It is in this regard that the community must make difficult, yet critical decisions in determining what the right balance between short-term gain and long-term investment is sustainable long into the future.

This chapter identifies different patterns of growth and recommends a predominant pattern for the City to move forward with. It analyzes the recent growth patterns and projected increases in population. It also identifies strategies and tools for helping the City move forward towards the envisioned future. It is, however, realistic in the understanding that the City is only one of many stakeholders in the development process. It is important to understand the market conditions that allow for successful private sector development. In order to create beneficial partnerships with the development community, finding the right framework for such partnerships is vitally important.

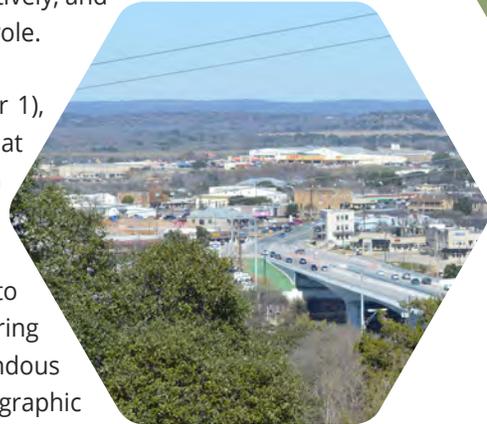




PAST AND CURRENT GROWTH TRENDS

Understanding the City's past growth trends is an important component in predicting where the City is going. This includes evaluating what conditions existed that may have influenced growth both positively and negatively, and understanding the regional influences that may also be playing a role.

As indicated in Table 1.1, *Historical Population Growth* (in Chapter 1), the City's growth rate and total population as a percentage of that of the county has varied widely over the past 100 years. Between the decades of 1980 and 2010, the City was seeing tremendous growth of 25 to almost 50 percent per decade. Much of this was related to an increase in tourism combined with growth related to the City being the economic hub of the Highland Lakes area. During this same time period Burnet County also experienced tremendous growth, much of which was focused in the southern part of its geographic area. This county-wide growth reflected a natural northern expansion of the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). As the City and county (and the nation) worked through the impacts and implications stemming from a slowdown in development activity caused by the recession, the southern part of the county continued to develop while growth in Marble Falls slowed significantly.



Today, with the opening of the Baylor Scott White Hospital in the southern most point of Marble Falls' City limits, an improved bridge over Lake Marble Falls, proposed improvements along U.S. Highway 281, renewed interest in developing both residential and commercial properties, and a renewed focus on improving the character of development and tourism potential of Downtown, the City appears to once again be poised for growth.



However, the City's percentage of the overall county population has also been decreasing. This is expected to continue due to the fact that the southern part of the county is on the outskirts of the Austin Round Rock MSA growth (and commute) area and will continue to develop. Meanwhile, the underlying geology below Marble Falls and its more remote location increases costs of development.

Predicting Growth

Determining the amount of projected growth is the next important step as it determines the number and types of houses needed, the configuration and capacity of new roads, expansions to water, wastewater, and other infrastructure, as well as many other important municipal functions that require many years of pre-planning. But, planning for accurate population growth is often an inexact science even under the most ideal circumstances. In truth, most population projection tools are based on an analysis and extrapolation of historical growth data. While this provides potential for accuracy if conditions generally stay the same, it oftentimes does not account for when significant changes occur. Making it more difficult is that truly accurate population counts are only gathered every decade during the Decennial Census. The in-between years are based solely on estimates being derived from historical trending data. As seen in the last Comprehensive Plan, trending projections can sometimes lead to inaccurate results. In this case, projections for growth were influenced by the exponential growth rates of the 1970s (almost 50 percent) and still significant growth rates (approximately 23.3 percent) over the past three decades. When one factor in the effects of the Great Recession (an unanticipated major event), the growth of the past decade and a half decreased to less than two percent.

Understanding how population projections are generated, and the importance they play in a city being able to proactively pre-plan for the future, it becomes clear that projecting the future population requires constant analysis and re-evaluation. While it can be inefficient to significantly overshoot the projections, it can be catastrophic to significantly undershoot them.

Fortunately, the City has a program in place where the Development Services Department analyzes population numbers on a semi-annual basis. It allows City staff to perform real-time monitoring of population changes in the interim years between the Decennial Census. It also allows the City to prepare refined projections long before the next Census can confirm actual counts. Currently, the City staff are monitoring growth trajectories for the number of new single-family, manufactured home, and multi-family housing units, and demolitions of the same. In addition, the City is monitoring active residential water meters and estimated populations of people residing in institutional facilities (e.g., juvenile and correctional facilities, skilled nursing care, among others). Using these methods, the City staff forecasted that Marble Falls increased an average 65 persons per year since 2010, which was an average of about 1.05 percent increase per year. Based on these actual numbers, the City staff identified the Texas State Data Center (TSDC) 1.0 Scenario as the projection model that looked most in line with what was currently occurring and most likely to continue to occur in the City until 2025.



Similarly, a population forecast was prepared for this planning process. Using historical data, population projections were created using several different models. These included an analysis of the TSDC’s 0.5 and 1.0 scenarios, Texas Water Development Board’s (TWDB) population estimates from the 2016 Regional State Water Plan, a linear regression and exponential growth analysis, as well as an analysis of recent growth trends (using a 0.9 percent compound annual growth rate) and school attendance.

Using this analysis, the projected Marble Falls population for 2040 ranged from a low of 6,888 people using historical growth rates based on school attendance, to a high of 18,509 people based on TWDB projections (see Figure 3.1, *Marble Falls Historical and Projected Population*). Considering the recent development influences identified at the outset of the chapter, it is anticipated that Marble Falls should start to see a faster rate of growth than has occurred over the past half-decade. But, it is also anticipated that it will be more measured growth, rather than the unbridled growth that existed in the 1970s and 80s.

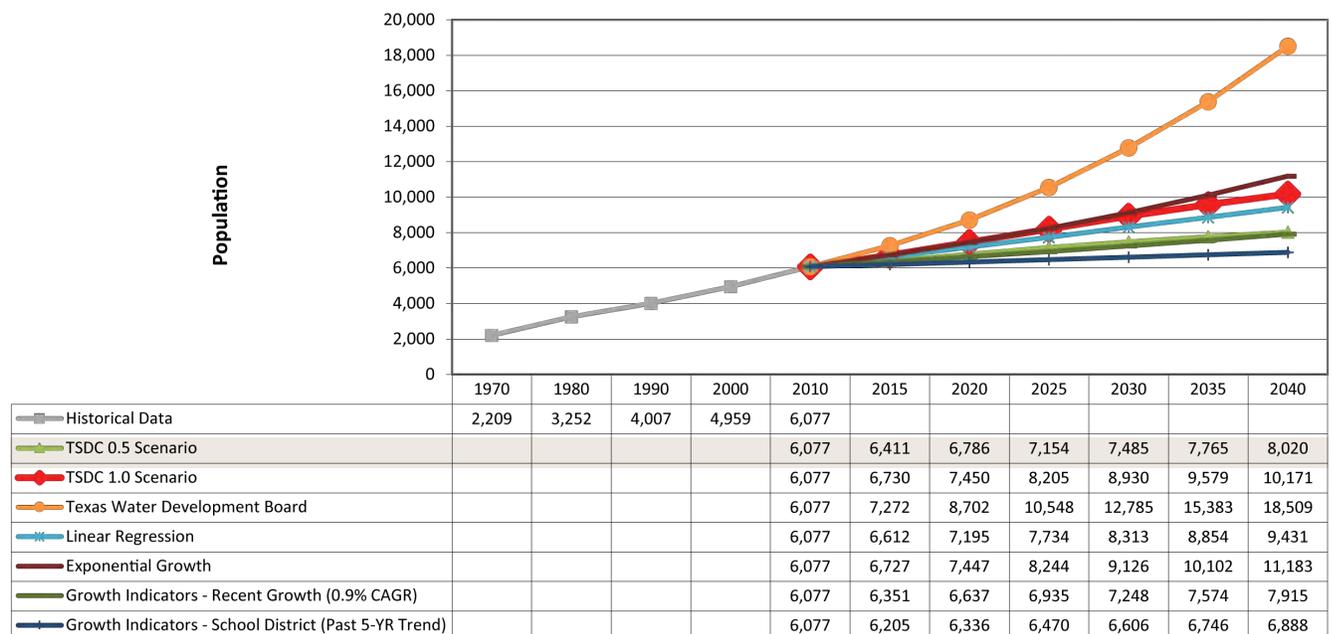
2040 PROJECTED POPULATION

Depending on a variety of different development factors, Marble Falls is anticipated to reach the following 2040 population:

10,171 people

For the purposes of planning for the future, an anticipated 2040 population of 10,171 people was chosen. This population projection number was chosen from the TSDC 1.0 scenario which is believed to reflect the best case scenario for the future population of the City. Notably, the City’s recent increase in growth rate has the potential to impact the 2040 projected population. However, this increase only includes one year of significantly higher than average data. Therefore, it is important that the City continue to monitor this increase in growth to determine long-term trends.

Figure 3.1, Marble Falls Historical and Projected Population





Where is recent growth occurring?

Understanding where existing development is occurring is a good predictor of where the market is indicating that land is developable under current conditions. It also helps to identify where private sector growth pressures may occur in the future.

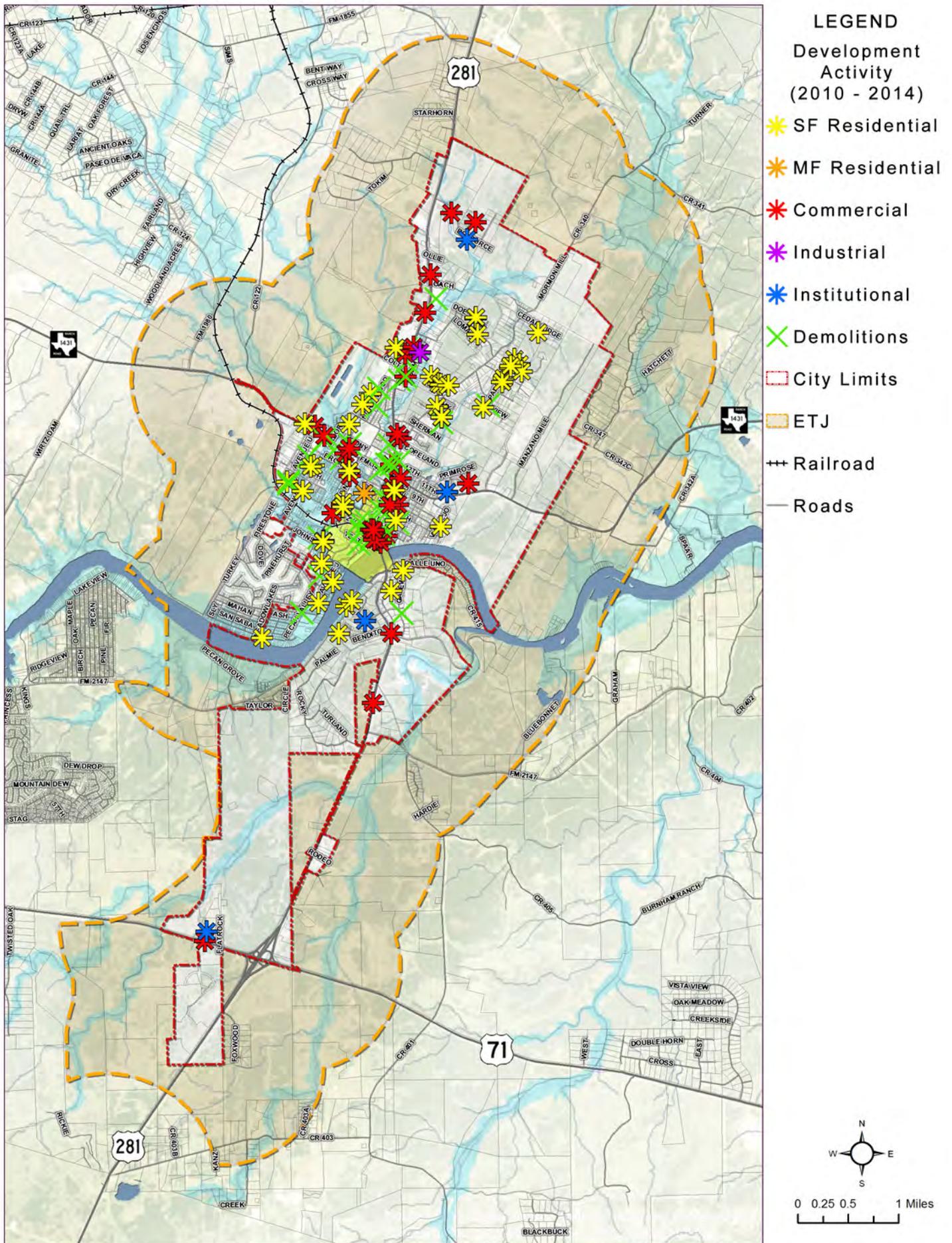


While the pace of development dipped as a result of the recession, it has slowly, but consistently increased over the past four to five years, as identified in the performance measures analysis prepared by the Development Services Department in the City's 2014/2015 Annual Budget. In recent years, the pace of growth has increased more rapidly. For example, the number of new residential permits issued in 2014 were more than the total issued in 2011, 2012, and 2013 combined.

This pace of growth is predicted to continue to increase due to the completion and opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in August 2015 and based on the development proposals recently approved or currently being processed. One such new development includes Gregg Ranch, an approximately 300 acre development proposed on the southwest corner of Texas 71 and U.S. Highway 281, across from the medical center. This development, which pursued and received approval for a voluntary annexation by the Marble Falls City Council on February 17, 2015, is slated to have as many as 1,500 homes potentially ranging from \$180,000 to \$250,000 in price. Due to its particular location, installation of site utilities is expected to be more cost efficient than in some other places in Marble Falls due to the underlying geology.

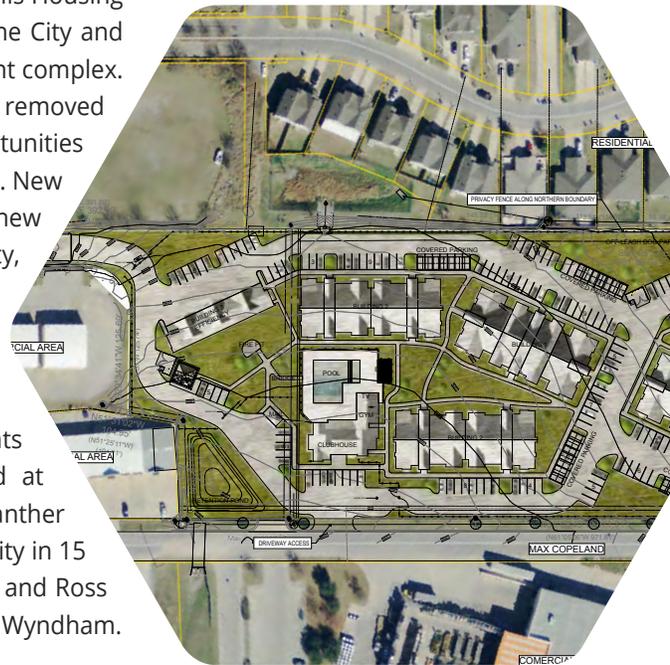
The location of growth over the past five years reflects that market trends are favoring new commercial growth predominantly in Downtown and along the City's two economic spines (i.e., U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431). Notably, a burgeoning new commercial sector has opened along Texas 71, starting with the development of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center. Residential development has been located within existing residential areas on lots already served by City

Map 3.1, New Development Activity (2010 - 2014)



utilities (see Map 3.1, *New Development Activity (2010 - 2014)*, on the next page). The only multifamily project (i.e., Oak Creek Townhomes) was permitted in 2011 just west of Downtown. It was a project in which the Marble Falls Housing Authority demolished over 50 post-war single-family units across the City and consolidated their residents into a new 80-unit multifamily apartment complex. This provided improved living conditions for affected residents, removed substandard housing from area neighborhoods, and provided opportunities for newer infill housing as part of neighborhood revitalization efforts. New institutional development (e.g., the new hospital on Texas 71 or a new church along La Ventana in 2014) was scattered throughout the City, while a single new industrial project was developed along Commerce Parkway.

More recently, the City has been processing several larger scale infill residential projects which would add approximately 330 new apartments in Marble Falls. These projects, currently called the Homestead at Mormon Mill Road (conceptualized at right) and the Residences at Panther Hollow, would be the first market-rate apartment units built in the City in 15 years. On the commercial side, the City has been working with CVS and Ross for new retail locations and a redevelopment timeshare project with Wyndham.



What should the form of growth look like?

As cities grow and change over time, several patterns of growth start to emerge. Historically, cities grew in a more nodal pattern starting with a main street and then adding contiguous residential areas developed in a highly gridded pattern of streets. Today, many of these areas now constitute a city's Main Street and historical neighborhoods. Over time, cities expanded their core downtown (i.e., their central business district or CBD) area and grew outward. This allowed for contiguous growth that oftentimes included a mix of uses in a walkable environment, all supported by a city's ability to provide public utilities and services. Rural residences or farms which supported the CBD and did not need City utilities or services were located on the fringe of the city.

With the advent of industrialization and the automobile, more land became accessible and available for development. When this was combined with the advent of zoning (with its associated separation of uses), cities effectively created an environment which favored sprawling, auto-oriented development which has now dominated the American landscape for the past century.

Today, there are several patterns of growth that cities exhibit as they grow outward. As detailed in Figure 3.2, *Patterns of Growth* (on the next two pages), they include patterns of growth that exhibit certain identifiable characteristics and can be characterized as nodal / district, linear, scattered, redevelopment / infill, or contiguous.

Oftentimes it appears that these patterns emerge in response to market conditions; the truth is that a city has a lot more influence and control than is credited. These growth patterns and their potential impact on the growth of Marble Falls are described in the next section.



Figure 3.2, Patterns of Growth

Upon a cursory look, most new development / redevelopment can be classified in one of the following patterns of growth. In reality, citywide development / redevelopment patterns oftentimes exhibit one or more of these classifications at the same time. For example, the new growth surrounding the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center provides an opportunity for a more nodal- or district-based growth pattern in that area. The market will then tend towards developing linear commercial strip development along U.S. Highway 281 towards Downtown, which may or may not be desirable. Without proper planning and a proactive implementation strategy, realization of the community's vision for the future will be left entirely to market forces.

SCATTERED



Scattered growth is oftentimes characterized by “leapfrog” development in which new growth skips over vacant and developable land resulting in a sprawling, inefficient land development pattern. Installation of utilities is not as cost effective since more infrastructure is needed to serve fewer connections per linear footage. Similarly, the provision of public services is not as cost effective or efficient because the same amount of service (e.g., police protection) is spread out over a wider area. Scattered development also oftentimes results in increased traffic congestion due to greater distances between uses.

CONTIGUOUS



Contiguous growth is characterized by new, greenfield development that gradually expands outwards from existing development. It is preferable over scattered land development because it allows for a gradual outgrowth of utilities and more cost effective provision of public services. While this form of growth is preferable, implementation in the real world is not a given, particularly when considering limits imposed by national and state land use controls and property rights protections.

However, there are certain mechanisms which a city has at its disposal to influence the timing and location of new development.

LEGEND

- Undeveloped Land
- Development Pattern
- Parks
- Marble Falls ETJ
- Meadowlakes

LINEAR



Linear growth is characterized by linear development predominantly along major highways and arterials. Due to the increase in prominence of the automobile in land use planning and design, the linear form of growth oftentimes results in auto-centric commercial strip development that can be found in most places in the country. More often than not, these areas have limited character and are not pedestrian-friendly. Strategies to fix some of the deficiencies in this form of growth typically revolve around making it higher quality.

If done correctly, linear growth can result in a contiguous development pattern that is cost effective for public utility installation and for the provision of public services. If done incorrectly (particularly in smaller cities), over-development of adjacent land uses can quickly overcome the capacity of the roadway to support the land uses it serves, thus decreasing quality of life by concentrating too much traffic and movement into the same linear corridor.

NODAL / DISTRICT



Nodal or district-based growth is a form of contiguous growth where a City focuses its energy in promoting, incentivizing, or requiring development within tightly defined areas which are adequately and efficiently served by public utilities and services. Oftentimes these areas of growth are defined because they exhibit a special character of development (e.g., Downtown).

When done correctly, implementation of this form of growth can yield significant investment and identifiable physical improvements in particular areas (e.g., Downtown or a newly developing commercial center). To the contrary, the same amount of investment may not be identifiable at all if scattered throughout the City. While there are many positive aspects associated with this form of growth, one negative aspect could be that certain areas feel like they are not receiving the same amount of attention.

REDEVELOPMENT / INFILL



Infill and redevelopment in existing cities is more preferable than developing on raw land on the city's fringe. This is because most of the supporting infrastructure (e.g., streets, water and wastewater, drainage, electricity, parks, police and fire protection, etc.) is already in place. Therefore, some of the positive aspects of infill or redevelopment of interior vacant lots include increasing the taxable value of property, increasing the number of utility connections (i.e., more paying customers) without requiring additional infrastructure, and providing opportunities to correct mistakes from the past. While not necessarily a negative, a focus on infill or redevelopment is often met with pressure from landowners who have available raw land or developers whose business model, or only experience, is based on greenfield development.

How does a city guide and support growth?

While the private sector is credited with creating the built environment, the city plays a critical role and makes the rules. In actuality, it is the combination of public and private sector actions that guide how and where a city grows over time.

Accordingly, the city is equipped with a number of tools for influencing the timing, location, and quality of development. Within this context, it is not the intent to stop or slow growth; rather it is to guide growth to areas which support the fulfillment of the city's envisioned future. Oftentimes this means supporting, and sometimes incentivizing growth so that it is located in areas that can be best served with public utilities and services in the most cost efficient manner as possible. Some of the tools available include:

- Long-range planning including this Comprehensive Plan and sub-area plans (e.g., the 2011 Downtown Master Plan and the 2012 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, etc.);
- Annexation and development agreements (see later in the chapter);
- Zoning, subdivision, and development regulations to guide the location, quality and character of development;
- Impact fees;
- Capital improvement projects (e.g., public sector projects that spur future private sector investment like the envisioned improvements to the Downtown lake front area);
- Public / private partnerships (e.g., utility cost sharing);
- Financing support (e.g., tax increment reinvestment zones (TIRZs) and public improvement districts).

Some of these strategies (e.g., impact fees) are programs that are currently being implemented by the City and are working correctly. In other instances, this Plan provides strategic recommendations for improvement.

Annexation

Annexation is a process by which a city extends its municipal services, regulations, voting privileges, and taxing authority to a new territory in a well thought out, responsible way. Cities can grow sensibly by balancing current responsibilities with the anticipation of new developments and increased tax base.

It is also a means by which Marble Falls can allow and manage growth without creating hardships for existing neighborhoods. The following are some of the reasons a city would choose to annex:

- To provide municipal services to developed and developing areas.
- To exercise regulatory authority necessary to protect public health, safety and general welfare in addition to guiding and assuring orderly development.

ANNEXATION

Annexation is the process of extending city municipal services, voting privileges, and taxing authority to a new territory in a well thought out, responsible way.

- To ensure that residents and businesses outside the corporate limits share the tax and maintenance burdens for facilities, streets and utilities.
- To enable the city to regulate the subdivision and development of land in an expanded extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

General Requirements for Annexation

Section 43.021 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes Marble Falls, a home-rule city, to fix municipal boundaries; extend those boundaries; annex areas adjacent to the municipality; and exchange area with other municipalities. The City of Marble Falls adopted a Home Rule Charter on June 26, 1986 (Ordinance No. 86-O-6C). The Texas Local Government Code specifies annexation laws. Before an area can be annexed, there are several requirements that must be fulfilled, including the following:

Area to be annexed must be contiguous to the city's corporate limits.

- Strip annexations less than 1,000 feet in width are prohibited unless initiated by the owner of the land.
- A city cannot annex additional land from strips less than 1,000 feet in width or from areas that are in the ETJ only because of the previous annexation of strips less than 1,000 feet in width.
- Two public hearings on a proposed annexation are required. Notice for each public hearing must be published in a local newspaper at least 11 days, but not more than 20 days before the hearing(s).
- Cities are required to submit applications to the U.S. Department of Justice for pre-clearance at the earliest date permitted by federal law, and after receiving pre-clearance, must allow residents to vote in the next municipal election.

A city may annex up to 10 percent of the amount of land area within its city limits each year. Should the city decide not to annex, the 10 percent can be carried over to the following year, but cannot exceed a maximum amount of 30 percent of the total land area within city limits. The 10 percent annual limitation does not apply if an area is annexed at the request of the property owners, a majority of the qualified voters of the area, a majority of qualified voters and the owners of at least 50 percent of the land in the area, or is owned by the municipality, a county, the state, or the federal government and is used for a public purpose. The 10 percent that can be carried over is in addition to the 10 percent allowable annexation for that year. Based on the City of Marble Falls' population of between 5,000 and 24,999, the City has a one mile ETJ (11,274 residents, July 1, 2014¹). Upon annexation, the ETJ of the city will extend a one-mile radius beyond the city's new boundary, until it abuts another city's established boundary.

¹ Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

AUTHORITY TO ANNEX

Marble Falls, as a home-rule city, may (under Texas Local Government Code Chapter 43) annex property both through voluntary and involuntary means.

• Voluntary annexation occurs when property owners petition the City to be included in the City's boundaries.

• Involuntary, or unilateral annexation, occurs regardless of whether property owners and/or residents in the affected area give their consent.

Services to be provided upon Annexation

Upon annexation, the city is required to provide essential services to the newly annexed area. These may include water and wastewater treatment, police protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, solid waste collection, operation and maintenance of roads and streets and street lighting, operation and maintenance of parks and playgrounds, and operation and maintenance of other publicly owned facilities and services. The services provided must be equivalent to those provided in a similar area of the city; however, services after annexation cannot be less than prior to annexation.

Prior to holding the first of the two required hearings, the city must compile a comprehensive inventory of services and facilities provided by public and private entities, directly or by contract in each area proposed for annexation. The inventory of service and facilities must include all services and facilities the municipality is required to provide or maintain following the annexation.

Annexation History

The City of Marble Falls has comprehensively recorded annexations since 1999. Every year since then, with the exception of years 2001 - 2002 and 2010 - 2011, the City has annexed land into the City. The annexed land has not, however, in most cases, amounted to the 10 percent of total acreage allowable per year (*see at right*). The City has then been able to carry over remaining acreages over to the next year in almost all cases. Since 1958, the City has annexed approximately 7,851 acres, with a majority of it occurring in the 1990s (*see Map 3.2, Annexation History (1950s to Present)*).

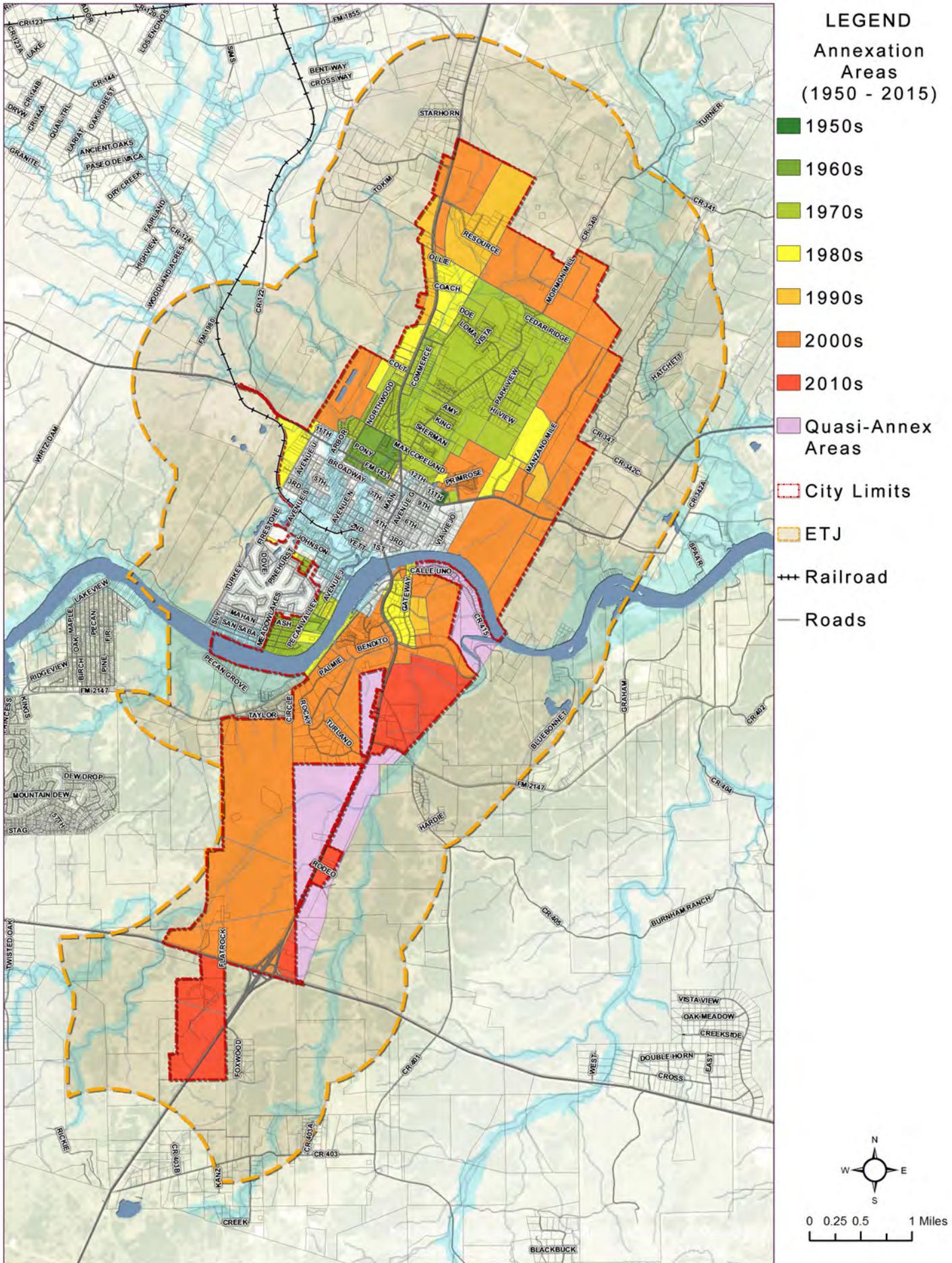
The City also has 855.631 acres that are quasi-within the City limits. This area is comprised of 666.763 acres known as the Roper land and Bradshaw tracts and 188.868 acres known as Los Escondidos (denoted in pink on Map 3.2, *Annexation History (1950s to Present)*). The Roper/Bradshaw areas were pursued for annexation by the City in 2012. Instead of being annexed at that time, the City executed a five-year development agreement pursuant to Texas Local Government Code 43.035 and Chapter 21, Subchapter G, which established these areas as temporary non-annexation areas. During the non-annexation period, these areas are subject to the City's land use controls, but do not receive public services and are not subject to City taxation. As specified in the approved development agreements, these 666.763 acres will automatically be annexed into the City limits in or near November 2017. The City acquired the water lines in the Los Escondidos area (the pink area directly south of Lake Marble Falls) in 2012 and replaced them in 2014. A portion of the owners within this geographic area have agreed to future annexation into the City.

As the City looks forward to further annexations in the future, state law requires that it prepare a three-year annexation plan for all annexations intended to occur unilaterally. This does not include areas in which property owners voluntarily request to be annexed. This plan allows the City to anticipate and direct growth and integrate service plans with its budget process and capital improvements plan to ensure that growth occurs in an efficient and logical manner.

LIMITS ON ANNEXATION

A city may annex up to 10 percent of the land area within its city limits each year. If a city chooses not to annex 10 percent, unused allocations may be carried forth into subsequent years up to an amount that does not exceed 30 percent. This does not apply to land area if an annexation is requested by the affected property owners.

Map 3.2, Annexation History (1950s to Present)





One of the highest priorities from the last Comprehensive Plan was to support the establishment of a regional hospital. Accomplishment of this priority has created new opportunities which will serve Marble Falls well if managed correctly.

Planning for Growth Policies & Recommendations

Policies

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future, this Comprehensive Plan must be considered and implemented each day when decisions are made by City staff and elected and appointed officials. As part of this daily decision making (whether on new plans (e.g., utility plans), budgeting, staffing, capital improvement programming, or on new land development applications being considered), the following growth policies should be considered:

1. Evaluate the fiscal implications of annexation to understand their impacts on City capital investments, staffing, operations, maintenance, and debt.
2. Promote contiguous, nodal/district, infill/redevelopment growth opportunities over linear or scattered growth. In other words, direct development towards already incorporated areas which are served by existing infrastructure and public services.
3. Prioritize annexation of commercial areas as designated on the Future Land Use Plan to maximize tax revenue and to create additional employment opportunities for others throughout the Highland Lakes region.
4. Use development agreements and voluntary ETJ agreements to protect the City's growth trajectory and to ensure implementation of the community's vision for the future.
5. Plan for the extension or upgrade of infrastructure to support growth in areas that have opportunities for infill, revitalization, or redevelopment.
6. Plan for the extension of infrastructure in areas of predicted growth as set out in Map 3.3, *Growth Plan*, later in this chapter.
7. Protect public access to Lake Marble Falls.

Recommendations

Objective 3.1 – Capitalize on the City’s increased demand for development by pursuing a growth strategy that contributes to the long-term success of the community.

During the previous Comprehensive Plan a primary focus was to create an opportunity to attract a regional hospital to the City. This was successfully accomplished with the opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in 2015. As a result of this accomplishment, there will be new demand for growth in the southern part of the City and elsewhere within and near Marble Falls. If managed correctly, this new demand (through development and impact fees, increased property and sales taxes, etc.) will further improve the City’s already strong financial standing, thereby allowing the City to pay down debt and make further investments in its future. These investments should be focused on creating new opportunities for growth with a particular emphasis on improving the overall quality of life for existing residents, increasing the attractiveness of the City for new residents, and furthering the City’s economic competitiveness (including capture of tourism dollars and investment) in the Highland Lakes region.

As the City looks towards its future growth areas, it is important to understand that the City is not able to expand its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) further to the south or west. As depicted on Figure 3.3, *Growth Constraints*, these are areas where the City’s ETJ abuts the ETJ of several surrounding cities. Consequently, as the City annexes more area in the ETJ, the ETJ will no longer move outward.

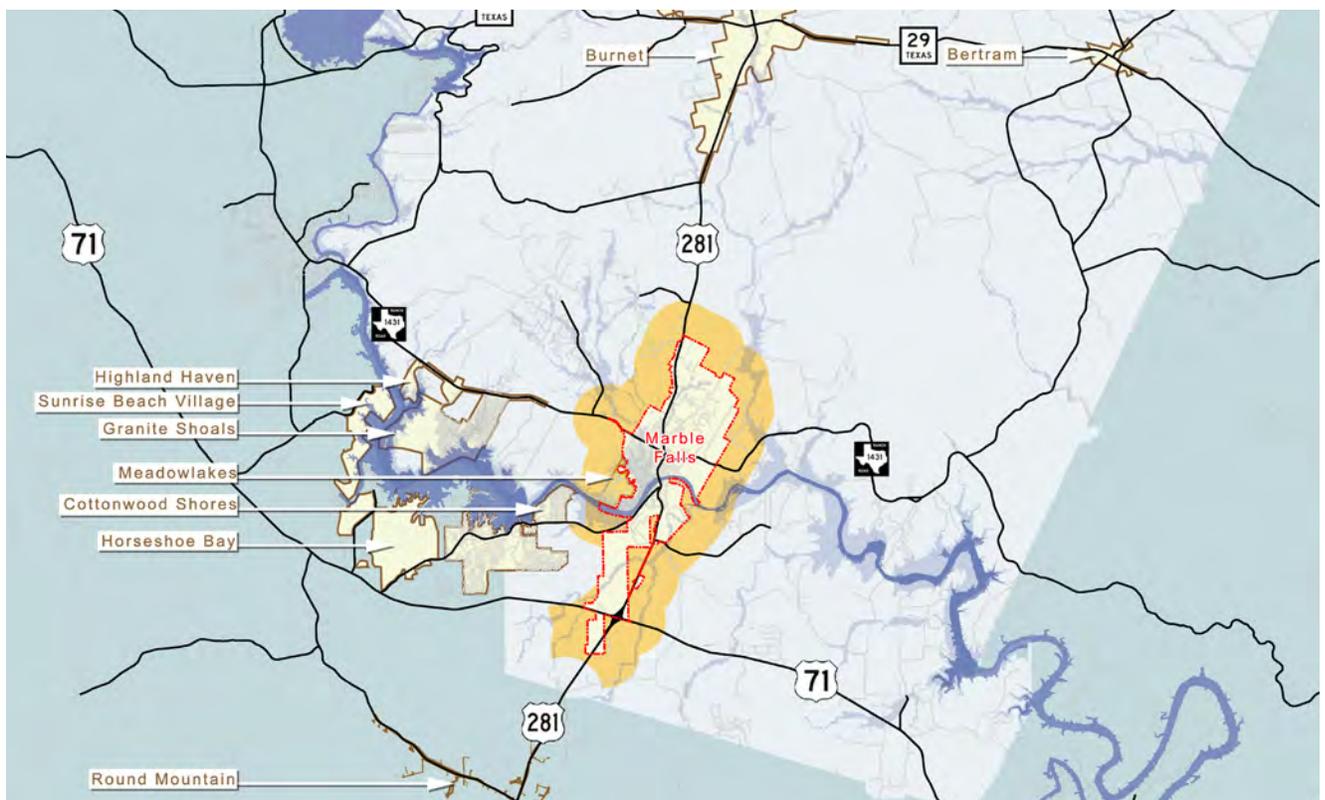


Figure 3.3, Growth Constraints

While there is opportunity to expand the City's ETJ to the north and east, and consequently grow in these directions, important decisions will need to be made to determine why and where the City should grow.

There are several reasons why a city may consider to annex within its ETJ. One is to be able to exert further control over certain portions of the ETJ so as to protect the city from uncoordinated, uncontrolled development which may otherwise occur. Another reason is to expand city limits for economic purposes. In this regard, a city annexes areas so that as new development occurs, the quality of the built environment meets the standards of the city and, if nonresidential, adds to the city's sales tax base. A third reason to annex is to further expand the city's ETJ so that it protects future growth areas.

However, as specified earlier in this chapter regarding services to be provided upon annexation, a city must also extend or otherwise provide all city utilities and services within a specified time frame. From that point forward, the city must then maintain this infrastructure and services in perpetuity. For this reason, it is oftentimes a good economic decision to focus energy on maximizing development in areas within the City limits and served by existing utilities and services.

One of the tools used to make these decisions is to have a proactive growth strategy which includes the necessary growth policies, practices, and regulatory instruments to facilitate successful implementation. One of the first strategies is to identify areas of potential primary and secondary growth. These areas, identified on Map 3.3, *Growth Plan* on page 52, set out areas of near-, mid-, and long-term strategic importance for the City. The plan is not intended to be a rigid regulatory mechanism; rather, it is intended to be a tool in guiding the development of a more defined three-year annexation plan.

The following actions are recommendations to achieve this objective:

Action 3.1.1 – Manage the City's pattern of growth concurrent with the provision and maintenance of adequate facilities and services.

Marble Falls should pursue annexation in a fiscally sound manner by evaluating and making decisions according to the fiscal benefits and consequences of that growth. Accordingly, the City should consider developing and utilizing a fiscal impact analysis tool to weigh the cost versus benefit of annexing property. This tool could be used to determine the potential expenditures versus revenues that may be associated with annexation of a certain property, or regarding a development proposal of a particular property. The tool could also be applied to the Growth Plan to help make decisions regarding potential capital improvements

GROWTH PLAN

The City's growth plan is not intended to be a rigid regulatory mechanism; rather, it is intended to be a tool to assist with long-range planning purposes.

The designated primary growth areas are identified as near-term annexation priorities while the secondary growth areas are areas which may warrant annexation in the mid- to long-term to protect the City's future economic and other interests.

that may be needed to provide “full municipal services” within two and one-half years from the date of annexation.¹

Action 3.1.2 – Pursue annexation of property designated as near-term growth areas on the City’s Growth Plan.

The City should consider developing a three-year annexation plan to clearly state the City’s intent for unilateral annexation of the designated near-term growth areas as set out in Map 3.3, *Growth Plan*. The southern growth areas are identified as near-term annexation priorities because the recent opening of the medical center and soon-to-be-constructed Gregg Ranch development will further increase development pressure at or near the U.S. Highway 281 and Texas 71 intersection and along the U.S. Highway 281 corridor back towards Downtown Marble Falls. While certain land use controls do exist in these areas, the City could be faced with undesirable land uses at this important gateway to the City and in what will one day become a commercial hub for the City and greater region. The growth area along U.S. Highway 281 north of the City is important for both strategic and economic purposes as this area is currently being developed with nonresidential uses (i.e., sales tax potential). It would further extend the City’s ETJ north providing protection against southward growth from the City of Burnet.

Action 3.1.3 – Pursue annexation of property designated as longer-term growth areas on the City’s Growth Plan.

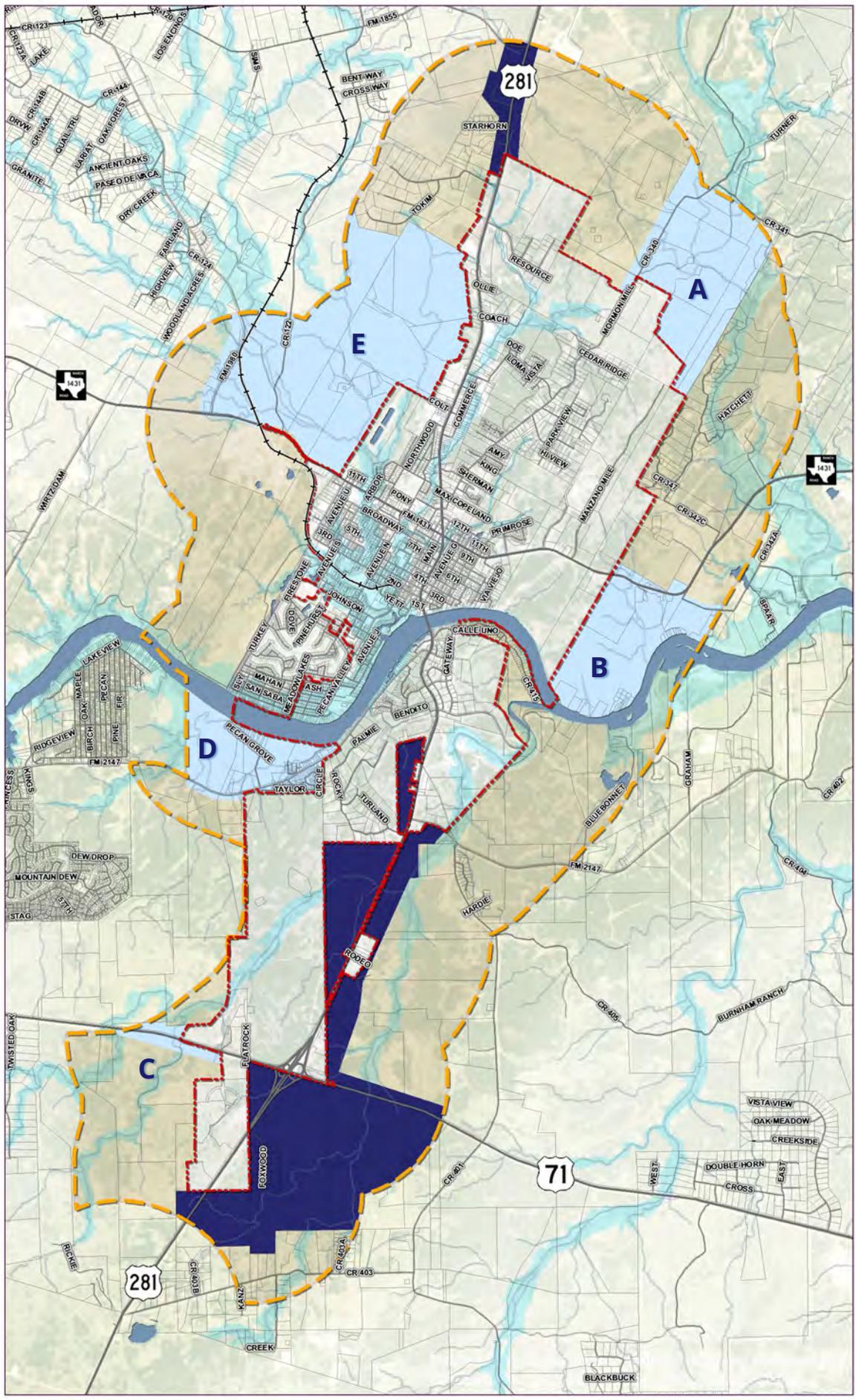
The City should consider developing a long-range general annexation plan for the designated longer-term growth areas as set out on Map 3.3, *Growth Plan*, on the next page. These areas have been identified as having strategic importance for protection as the City grows in the future.

- A. The large area to the northeast would provide greater protection of both sides of Mormon Mill Road and Manzano Mile. As the areas within the existing City limits begin to develop (e.g., the former Wind River Property), the areas just outside of the City limits will experience development pressure and could one day provide primary vehicular connections to the north.
- B. The large area predominantly south of FM 1431 provides the City greater protection as a eastern gateway to the City, protection of the river corridor, as well as for future residential development.
- C. The small area north and south of Texas 71 west of U.S. Highway 281 is an area that will start to develop as a means to capture sales tax dollars from those commuting or traveling to the medical center from residential areas west of the City. Overtime, this will become a primary gateway to the City.
- D. The large area on the west side of the City on the south side of the lake is currently undeveloped and has potential to provide a mix of residential (in areas outside of the floodplains) and protected land, thus maximizing public access to Lake Marble Falls.

¹ “Full municipal services” include police and fire protection; emergency medical services; solid waste collection; and operation and maintenance of streets and street lights, park and any other publicly-owned facility, building, or service (Tex. Local Gov’t Code, Section 43.056(b)).

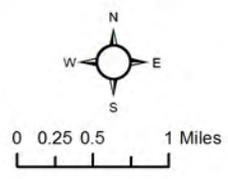


Map 3.3, Growth Plan



- LEGEND**
- Primary and Secondary Growth Areas
 - Near-Term Growth Areas
 - Longer-Term Growth Areas
 - City Limits
 - ETJ
 - Railroad
 - Roads

The Growth Plan illustrates strategically located near-term annexation priorities and areas that may warrant further evaluation and consideration regarding their longer-term economic and/or strategic importance.





With almost 5,327 acres of land vacant or undeveloped within the existing City limits, there is more than sufficient land available to accommodate the projected growth during the horizon of this Plan.

- E. The large area northwest of the City that is predominantly undeveloped should be protected as a means to protect the Backbone Creek watershed for water quality, flood protection, and recreational purposes.

Action 3.1.4 - Develop policies and incentives that encourage and promote infill development.

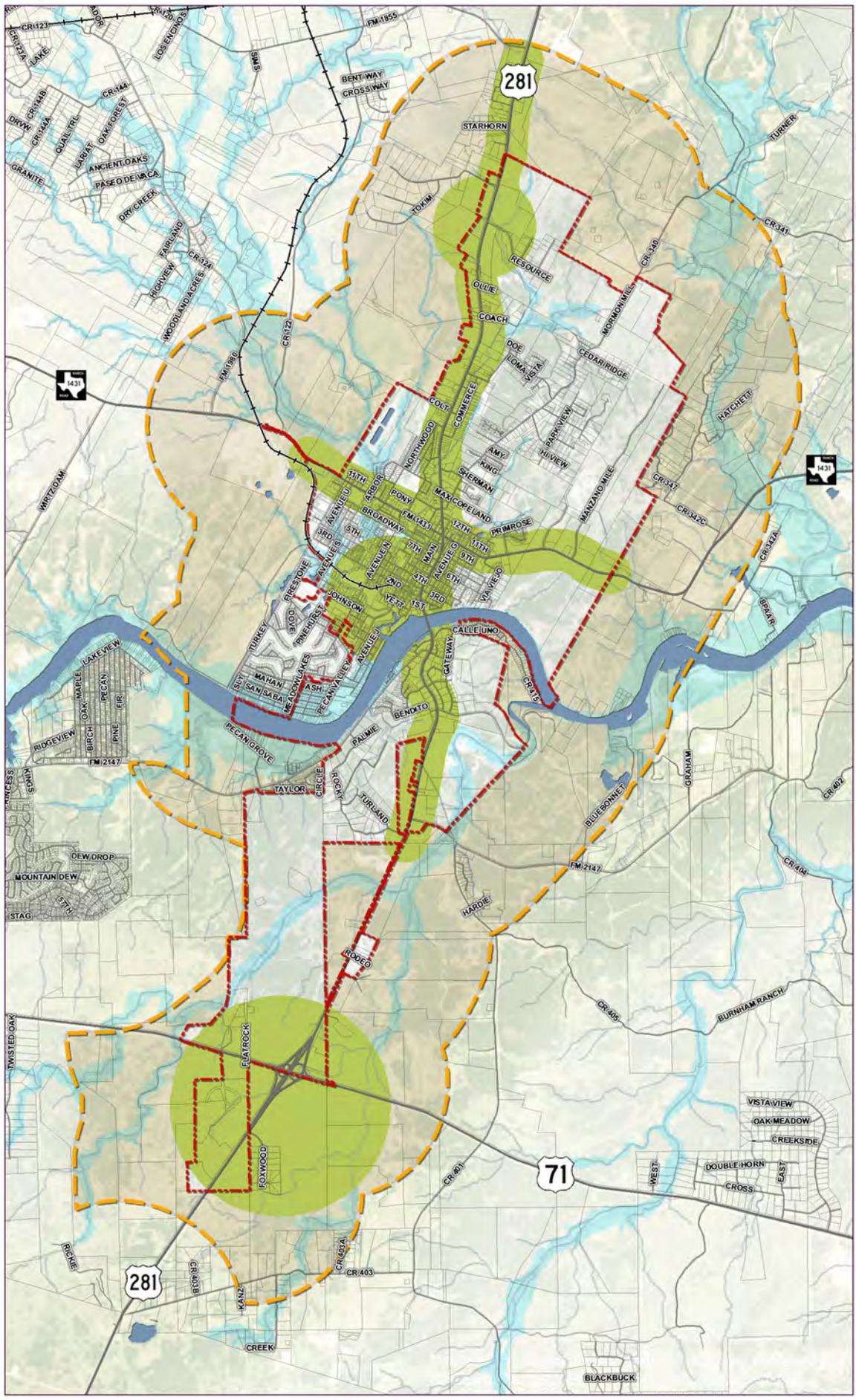
While the City should consider annexation and extension of the City's ETJ for potential strategic and economic purposes, the City's existing geographic extent and available land for infill, revitalization, or redevelopment is more than sufficient to accommodate all projected growth within the horizon of this Plan (see Map 3.4, *Priority Growth Areas*). Indeed, almost 5,327 acres of undeveloped land are within the City limits. This is in addition to the land that has been previously developed but could be revitalized or redeveloped. Since these existing areas are already served by public utilities and services, the City should prioritize its growth efforts to incentivize as much new growth in these existing areas as possible.

Implementation of this strategy could include creating incentives for infill development (e.g., density bonuses) if certain performance standards are met. For instance, a density bonus could be provided if certain community objectives are met such as minimum open space ratios, tree preservation, conservation of natural resources, buffering against adjacent and surrounding uses, heightened development standards, inclusion of quality of life amenities such as parks, trails, etc., or other standards deemed important to the community.

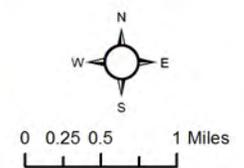
This could also include creating and adopting infill development standards regarding density (for residential uses), intensity (for nonresidential uses), and other dimensional requirements so as to ensure infill projects maintain or support the existing character of development. This could be particularly important for infill development in many of the older, historic areas. In other areas, a new character of development may be appropriate and may require new dimensional standards to facilitate the transition.



Map 3.4, Form of Growth & Priority Areas



- LEGEND**
- Priority Growth Areas
- Nodal & Linear Growth Areas
 - Infill Growth Areas
 - City Limits
 - ETJ
 - Railroad
 - Roads



Action 3.1.5 – Utilize growth management strategies to protect surrounding areas from poorly timed or low quality development.

Utilize growth management tools such as rural or agricultural zoning (with corresponding future land use designations), timing of capital investments, etc. to prevent premature and inappropriate development within the City's fringe areas before the City is ready. In this way, the City has at its disposal certain regulatory mechanisms which influence the sequencing and timing of development.

Action 3.1.6 – Promote green building practices and low impact development as part of private development.

As part of a growing trend to reduce the environmental impact of development, the City should support efforts private sector development that incorporate green building practices and/or energy efficiency. This could include an assessment of the City's zoning regulations to remove impediments and/or add incentives for green building practices. Examples of green building practices that should be considered include low impact development (which utilizes the site's natural resources as part of the overall stormwater management program), rainwater capture, tree preservation, night sky protection, xeriscaping, and pervious pavement, among others.

Action 3.1.7 – Assess and implement solutions to improve the City's resiliency.

Improving a city's resiliency is a planning trend that has received more attention since the last Comprehensive Plan was prepared. As seen from some of the structure losses occurring during previous flood events, assessing and mitigating natural and man-made hazards protects life and property and makes good economic sense.

Making communities more resilient involves recognizing and understanding the relevant hazards facing a community, knowing the conditions when a hazard event is imminent, and identifying and implementing solutions to minimize disruption to life and the economy after a hazard has passed. Accordingly, the City should assess the probable hazard events that are likely to impact the City and develop solutions to address identified issues. Implementation actions could include an analysis of the City for potential inclusion as a Firewise community, and better protections against development encroachments in floodplains, among other things.

"A Resilient City is one that has developed capacities to help absorb future shocks and stresses to its social, economic, and technical systems and infrastructures so as to still be able to maintain essentially the same functions, structures, systems, and identity."¹

¹ Working Definition, ResilientCity.org



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4

LAND USE, CHARACTER, and DESIGN



Introduction

A well-planned system of land uses, combined with a distinct sense of place and a quality built environment provides an effective foundation for a sustainable future. In particular, when citizens, property owners, investors and the development community have confidence that their time, effort, and monetary investments are valued and protected for the long-term, it provides certainty, security, and encouragement to do or invest more. Alternatively, when these protections are not in place, it breeds uncertainty and a tentativeness towards making the best long-term development decisions for the future.

True comprehensive planning, however, recognizes the relationship between land use, character, and design, and transportation, utilities, parks, community facilities, and capital improvements. Residences require access to and between different land uses. Different types of land uses require different types of utilities. Growth requires more community services (e.g., parks) or better efficiency. Capital improvements and expenditures must be well-placed and timed to support developing or redeveloping land use areas. Accordingly, each of these are interrelated and are needed to ensure a community thrives and prospers.

This chapter provides a 20-year policy framework for the compatibility of land use, the character of the community, and the quality of the built environment, including addressing the following:

- **Future Land Use.** A realistic and flexible Future Land Use Plan helps to direct land uses to meet current and future community desires for development and redevelopment while conserving sensitive natural resources (e.g., Lake Marble Falls).
- **Housing.** A diversified housing stock is an essential element which ensures a city can become a life-cycle community for its residents. This involves both diversified housing types and a range of price points so that





SENSE OF PLACE

A community with a strong sense of place has a strong identity or character which is felt and experienced by locals and visitors alike. A distinct sense of place creates a memorable experience for users.

young adults, families, retirees, and others are able to live and work in Marble Falls.

- **Downtown Revitalization.** Even though there will be new development pressure near the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, the City must not lose focus and attention on Downtown Marble Falls. To the contrary, new growth in the southern part of the City needs to be facilitated while protecting the heart and soul of the City.
- **Character and Placemaking.** An essential element of community building is the recognition that new growth, left unchecked, more often than not creates the same homogeneous form of development which exists all across the country. Fostering an appropriate quality and character of development, combined with actions that create a sense of place, will help to build a community that is uniquely Marble Falls.
- **Economic Development.** To further foster Marble Falls' position as a regional commercial hub, fostering economic development can be accomplished through encouraging development of new businesses in the community, expanding opportunities for place-based economic development, and providing increased workforce development opportunities.

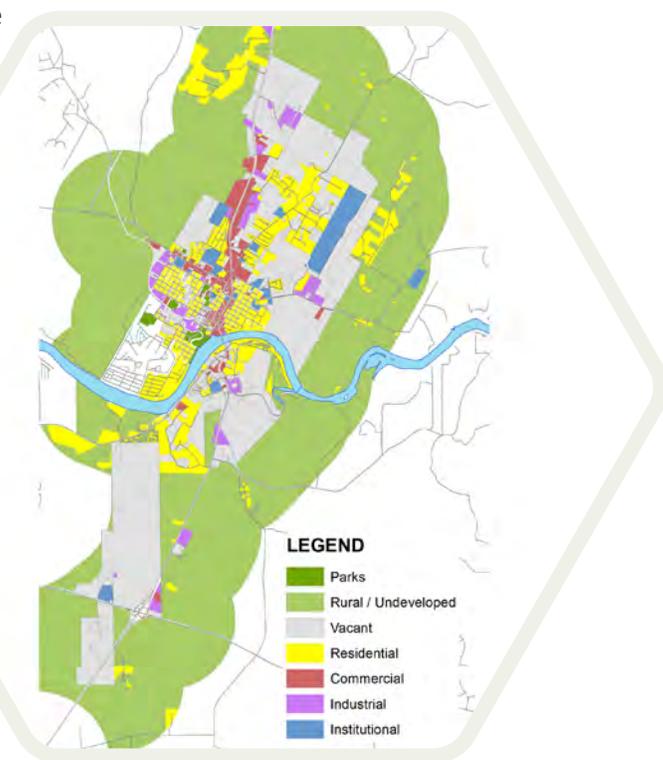
Existing Land Use and Character Conditions

Existing Land Use

The City is comprised of a combination of existing residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and open space developed land use areas. These areas are intermixed with and surrounded by vacant or undeveloped areas. For the purposes of this cursory existing land use analysis, undeveloped land within the City limits is classified as "vacant." In areas of the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), the undeveloped areas are classified as "rural / undeveloped."

Figure 4.1, Existing Land Uses

One of the primary purposes of analyzing existing land use is to get an overall feel for the composition of the City. It is a high-level analysis that provides background detail and understanding which helps create the framework for the modifications to the Future Land Use Plan. In this regard, it is of higher priority to understand the context of the City than to focus on each and every parcel. As part of this planning process, the analysis of existing land use (see Figure 4.1, Existing Land Uses and Table 4.1, Existing Land Use Percentages) shows that there is still a large percentage of the land within the City limits (over 50%) that is vacant (see also Map 3.4, Form of Growth & Priority Areas, in Chapter 3). This highlights the fact that much, if not all, of Marble Falls' projected growth could occur within the existing City limits. Approximately 12 percent of the City limits is existing residential lots, while 19 percent is commercial. As a percentage, the commercial areas of the City have increased over the past five years, while the overall percentage of residential areas has decreased. This is not unexpected as there has been little growth in new residential neighborhoods over the past five years.



Although not fully reflected on the Existing Land Use Plan, Marble Falls does not have defined areas of unique character, with the exception of Downtown. This can be primarily attributed to zoning and land use regulations which do little to create differing areas of character. In other words, besides differences in use, the performance standards set out in the City's Code of Ordinances establish minimums which will most likely result in the same character of development in all areas of the City.

Table 4.1, Existing Land Use Percentages

EXISTING LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	CITY LIMITS		EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)		TOTAL	
	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT
PARKS & OPEN SPACE	78	0.85%	0	0.00%	78	0.30%
RURAL / UNDEVELOPED	0	0.00%	14,682	88.94%	14,682	57.16%
VACANT	5,067	55.20%	0	0.00%	5,067	19.3%
RESIDENTIAL	1,194	13.01%	833	5.05%	2,207	7.89%
COMMERCIAL	376	4.10%	4	0.02%	380	1.48%
INDUSTRIAL	341	3.71%	93	0.56%	434	1.69%
INSTITUTIONAL	423	4.61%	27	0.16%	450	1.75%
OTHER	1,701 ¹	18.53%	868	5.26%	2,569	10.00%
TOTAL	9,180 ¹	100%	16,507	100%	25,687	100%

¹ For planning purposes, "Other" includes areas within Lake Marble Falls and within the City's rights-of-way which affects the total acreage calculations and overall percentages for the City.





As the City thinks about the tools to implement the community's envisioned future, modifications to the City's zoning regulations may be warranted in order to create different areas of unique character as new development/redevelopment occurs. This would be in addition to the additional character and placemaking strategies found later in this chapter.

Housing

According to the 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, there are 2,915 housing units in Marble Falls, an increase of 840 units, or 41 percent, since 2000. A detailed discussion of housing characteristics and development types follows.

Household Characteristics

As shown in Table 4.2, *Household Characteristics*, average household size has decreased from 2.51 persons per household in 2000 to 2.33 persons in 2014. Family households, which account for 55 percent of the occupied housing units in Marble Falls, have a larger average household size of 3.32 persons, compared to an average household size of non-family households of 1.13 persons per household.

The vacancy rate in Marble Falls increased from 6.9 percent in 2000 to 10.6 percent in 2014. Vacancy rates differ for owner-occupied and renter-occupied households. In 2014, 46 percent of the households are owner-occupied. The vacancy rate among owner-occupied housing units is 1.2 percent, compared to a vacancy rate of 5.4 percent among renter-occupied housing units.

The median household income of households in Marble Falls is \$36,567, a slight increase over the reported level in 2000 of \$30,880.

Table 4.2, Household Characteristics

	2000*	2010†	2014‡
Total Housing Units	2,075	2,764	2,915
Average Household Size	2.51	2.40	2.33
Family Household Size	3.20	3.47	3.32
Non-Family Household Size	1.19	1.08	1.13
Occupied Units	1,931	2,522	2,606
Vacancy Rate	6.9%	8.8%	10.6%
Owner Occupied Units	1,095	1,370	1,195
Rate of Owner Occupancy	56.7%	54.3%	45.9%
Owner Vacancy Rate	3.3%	0.0%	1.2%
Renter Vacancy Rate	5.7%	7.8%	5.4%
Median Household Income	\$30,880	\$36,908	\$36,567

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Decennial Census. †2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. ‡2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

Housing Stock Characteristics

As discussed, there are 2,915 housing units in Marble Falls as reported in 2014. Among those housing units, 1,726, or 59 percent, are single-family units; 508, or 17 percent, are duplex units; and 515, or 18 percent, are multifamily units (3+ units in a structure). Since 2000, duplex units have come to account for a larger share of the housing types, increasing from 9 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2014. Single-family and multifamily units also saw slight increases in the total number of units, but not significant increases in their representation among housing types (see Table 4.3, *Housing Type and Unit Breakdown*).

Table 4.3, Housing Type and Unit Breakdown

Housing Type	2000*		2010†		Percent change 2000-2010	2014‡		Percent change 2010-2014
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent		Total	Percent	
Single-family, Detached	1,186	57%	1,410	51%	19%	1,639	56%	16%
Single-family, Attached	77	4%	72	3%	-6%	87	3%	21%
Duplex	189	9%	230	8%	22%	508	17%	121%
Multifamily (3+ units)	338	16%	670	24%	98%	515	18%	-23%
Other	285	14%	382	14%	34%	166	6%	100%
Total	2,075		2,764		33%	2,915		5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Decennial Census. †2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. ‡2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

Marble Falls' housing stock is relatively young, with 39 percent of the housing units having been constructed since 2000. Table 4.4, *Age of Housing Stock by Housing Unit Type* also illustrates that multifamily construction has increased in recent decades. The 2014 American Community Survey reported that 51 percent of multifamily housing units were built since 2000. Similarly, 46 percent of duplex, triplex, and quadriplex housing types have been built since 2000. As the housing stock diversifies, families and residents of Marble Falls will have a greater choice in housing options, which will enable people to stay in the community as their housing needs change.

Table 4.4, Age of Housing Stock by Housing Unit Type

	Housing Units (Total)	Decade of Construction				
		1939 OR EARLIER	1940-1959	1960-1979	1980-1999	SINCE 2000
All Housing Types	2,606	60 2%	228 9%	432 17%	858 33%	1,028 39%
Single-Family (attached & detached)	1,497	4%	15%	22%	25%	34%
Duplex/Triplex/Quadriplex	746	0%	0%	10%	45%	46%
Multifamily	197	0%	0%	0%	49%	51%
Other	166	0%	0%	23%	33%	45%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates, B25127: Tenure by Year Structure Built by Units in Structure.



Housing Demand

Marble Falls' population is anticipated to grow from 6,137 people in 2014 to about 10,171 by the year 2040, an increase of 4,034 people. Based on housing characteristics in 2014, the anticipated population growth will require the addition of 1,968 additional housing units by 2040, for a total of 4,883 housing units (see Table 4.5, *Projected Demand for Housing*). This figure does not account for the number of aging homes that will need to be replaced.

Limited housing types can force people to leave a community as their housing needs change. As such, a variety of housing types can maintain a balanced housing market. Table 4.5, *Projected Demand for Housing* illustrates the demand for different housing types, assuming the same distribution rates of housing types in 2014.

Table 4.5, Projected Demand for Housing

PROJECTION OF HOUSING UNITS	Total Population		Housing Units (Total)	Housing Units (Occupied)	Occupancy Rate	Average Household Size
2000*	4,959		2,075	1,931	93%	2.51
2010 [†]	6,046		2,764	2,522	91%	2.37
2014 [‡]	6,137		2,915	2,606	89%	2.33
2040	10,171		4,883	4,365	89%	2.33
PROJECTION OF HOUSING TYPE	Single-Family, Detached	Single-Family, Attached	Duplex	Multifamily (3+ units)	Other	Total
2014	1,639	87	508	515	166	2,915
	56.2%	3.0%	17.4%	17.7%	5.7%	
2040	2,745	146	851	863	278	4,883
Additional Demand	1,106	59	343	348	112	1,968
Note: Projections for 2040 assumes same rates of average household size, occupancy rate, and distribution of housing types from 2014. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Decennial Census. [†] 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. [‡] 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.						

Cost of Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development established a threshold that housing costs should not exceed 30 percent of owner's income (or 25 percent for renters). One way to evaluate affordability in Marble Falls is to compare how incomes and home prices or rents are changing.

Between 2000 and 2010, rents and property value grew at higher rates than median household income, and between 2000 and 2014, property value and rents continued to grow while median household income declined slightly (see Table 4.6, *Household Characteristics*). This has resulted in a rise in home value to income ratio and monthly rent to income ratios, both indicating a decline in affordability in Marble Falls.

Table 4.6, Household Characteristics

	2000*	2010 [†]	Percent change 2000-2010	2014 [‡]	Percent change 2010-2014
Median Property Value	\$84,600	\$131,000	54.8%	\$164,100	25.3%
Median Gross Rent	\$511	\$704	37.8%	\$898	27.6%
Median Household Income	\$30,880	\$36,908	19.5%	\$36,567	-0.9%
Monthly Income	\$2,573	\$3,076	--	\$3,047	--
Home Value: Income Ratio	2.7	3.5	--	4.5	--
Monthly Rent: Income Ratio	0.2	0.2	--	0.3	--

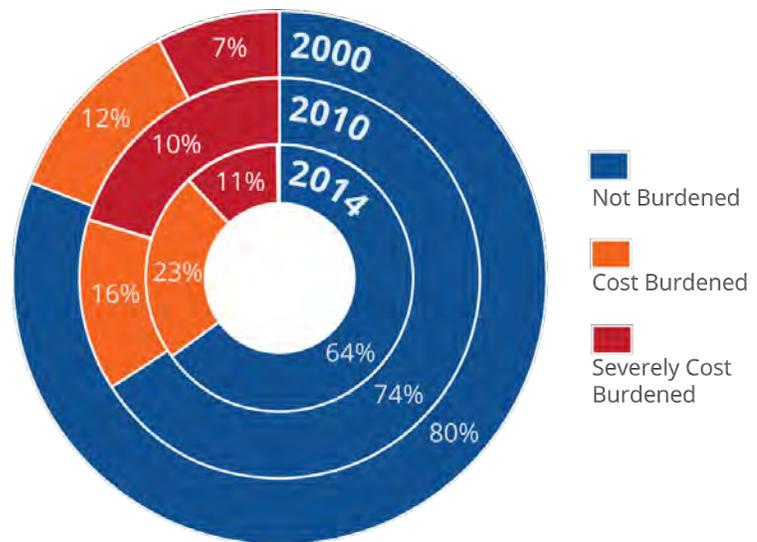
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Decennial Census. [†]2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. [‡]2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.

Cost Burdened Households

Based on a median household income of \$36,567 in Marble Falls, residents should not expect to spend more than \$914 on housing each month, including mortgage or rent, and other housing related costs such as utilities and regular maintenance.

Cost burdened homes are those households that spend more than 30 percent on mortgage or rent and related housing costs. In 2014, approximately 23 percent of households were considered cost burdened, with an additional 11 percent considered severely cost burdened (housing costs exceeded 50% of their household income). Today, more homes are cost burdened compared to 2000. In 2000, 80 percent of households were not cost burdened, and in 2014 that decreased to 64 percent. Likewise, severely burdened households have increased from seven percent of the households to 11 percent between 2000 and 2014 (see Figure 4.2, *Cost Burdened Households*).

Figure 4.2, Cost Burdened Households



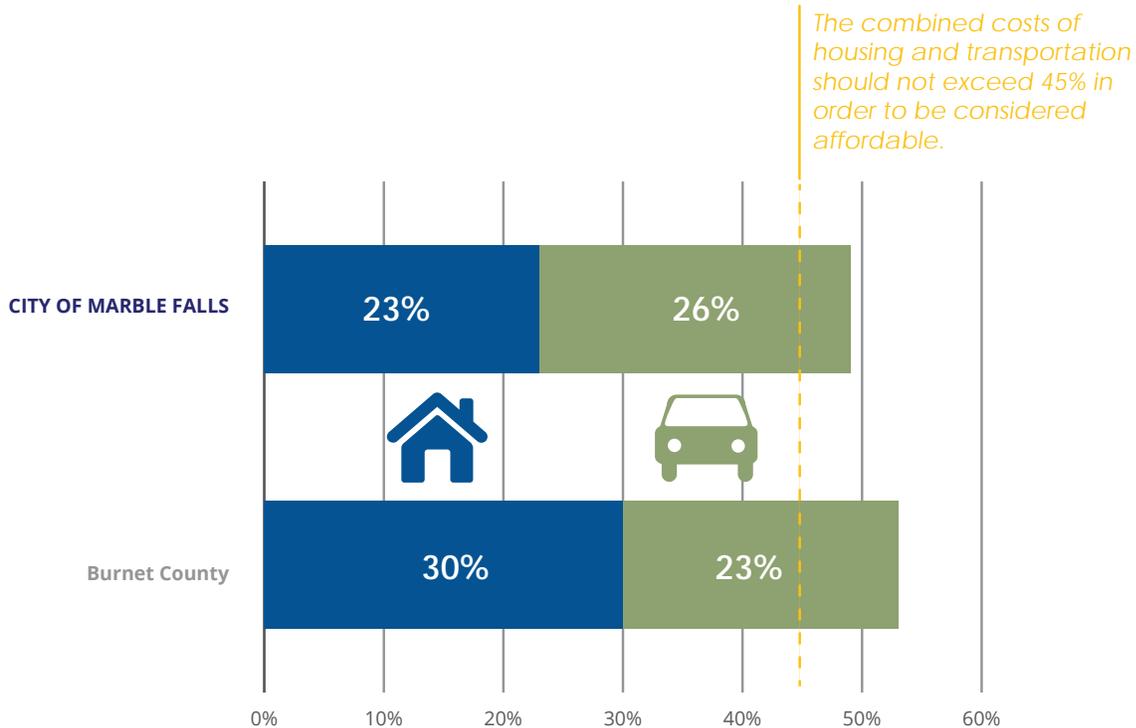
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Housing & Transportation Costs

Many efforts to evaluate the cost burdens on households don't take into consideration the cost of transportation. Transportation costs can fluctuate based on a home's location relative to daily trips, such as jobs, daily shopping trips, schools, and other daily travel needs. The combined costs of housing and transportation should not exceed 45%, with housing costs making up 30% of the household income and transportation accounting for 15%.

As shown in Figure 4.3, *Housing and Transportation Affordability Index*, in both Marble Falls and Burnet County, the average cost of housing accounts for an affordable level of income, but transportation costs push the combined cost of living higher than is considered affordable. Combined housing and transportation costs in Marble Falls consume approximately 49 percent of the income of a typical household, which would be considered unaffordable. However, housing accounts for a lower share of the typical household's income while transportation accounts for a higher share. This compares to Burnet County, where combined housing and transportation costs are higher, resulting in a more unaffordable level.

Figure 4.3, Housing & Transportation Affordability Index



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology. Housing and Transportation Affordability Index.



Housing Study

As part of this comprehensive planning effort a housing study was conducted to evaluate residents' opinions about housing in Marble Falls. Approximately 425 people responded to the survey, of which nearly 30 percent live in Marble Falls. Below are key findings of the housing survey.

- Sixty-seven percent of residents would like to live or continue to live in Marble Falls.
- Traditional single-family homes are the most popular housing type, with 93 percent of those surveyed responding they would consider a traditional single-family home in Marble Falls. Among other housing types, 16 percent said they would consider a townhome, 15 percent a garden home, 12 percent an apartment, and 11 percent a condominium.
- Survey respondents were asked to identify what price they'd be willing to pay for a home in Marble Falls. Twenty-seven percent said \$150,000 and lower. Over 12 percent were willing to pay over \$250,000 for a house and 6.6 percent responded that they prefer renting.
- Of those who answered that they would not like to live or continue living in Marble Falls, the top answer was that they liked where they currently live better (47 percent). This was followed by price (30 percent) and lack of options (26 percent).

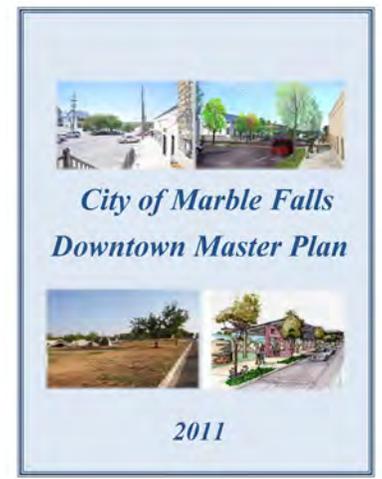


Image courtesy of Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB

Character & Placemaking

As identified as part of the early engagement activities of this comprehensive planning process, citizens still identify and feel that the City embodies a small town character. Indeed, as mentioned earlier in the Existing Land Use section of this Chapter, Marble Falls' does have development characteristics that range from rural to urban (in Downtown) (see Figure 4.4, *Understanding Differences in Character*, on the next page). However, the most prominent area of the City (in both terms of frequency of use and demand for new development) is the U.S. Highway 281 corridor which runs north-south through the entire City. This area is predominantly characterized by auto-oriented development that is the opposite of what one would characterize as “small town,” as it is comprised of a variety of establishments such as residences, small shops, and big-box retailers. As it stands, aside from sections near the Downtown, the most visible aspects of Marble Falls lack any defining features which set the City apart from other Central Texas cities.

Since the City is interested in preserving its “small town character” while striving to become a destination city, it will require both public sector actions and the assistance of private development. The City has already taken a proactive and positive first step by preparing the Downtown Master Plan (adopted in 2011). Implementation of this plan is one of many public sector projects that can and should be undertaken during the horizon of this Plan. In addition, other public improvements (e.g., gateway and wayfinding signage, existing corridor and neighborhood enhancements, etc.) and updated development regulations will start to incrementally improve the City so that Marble Falls will one day embody the vision set out by its citizens.



The City of Marble Falls Downtown Master Plan (adopted in 2011) contains a blueprint for creating a unique urban area of character within Marble Falls. If implemented, it will ensure that this area does not just become a destination for outsiders, but will continue to be the heart and soul of the community as it grows in the future.

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER

Figure 4.4, Understanding Differences in Character

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future for Marble Falls, it is not only important to consider where different types of residential, commercial, and industrial uses should be located; it is equally important to identify the embodied design characteristics which create differing areas of unique character¹ throughout the City. In this regard, planning and regulating the character of development will be the key difference between talking about Marble Falls as a destination and it actually becoming a destination.

RURAL



Rural character is established through large parcel sizes, high open space ratios, and very low site coverage. It is comprised of individual residences on large lots (e.g., estate lots), conservation subdivisions, ranches or farms, and areas of open space.

SUBURBAN



Suburban character is established through a high degree of “green space” protected as yards. Different than auto-oriented development, both residential and nonresidential suburban development deemphasize the automobile, have wider separation between uses, and have a more residential-type appearance (e.g., pitched roofs).

AUTO-ORIENTED



Auto-oriented character has become the dominant form of development found in Anywhere U.S.A. It is characterized by less openness and separation between uses and is dominated by the automobile through streets, driveways, parking lots, etc. It can be enhanced through improved building and development design.

URBAN



Urban character, oftentimes found in downtowns, is characterized by buildings being built close to the street (creating a sense of enclosure), parking either on-street, behind the building, or in public or private off-site parking lots. These areas have intense site coverage and a high degree of walkability.

¹ Lane. H. Kendig with Bret C. Keast. Community Character, Principles for Design and Planning. Washington: Island Press, 2010.

Economic Development

Economic development planning and initiatives in the City are largely championed by the Marble Falls Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The EDC is a Type B Economic Development Corporation funded by a half-cent sales tax collected in the City.¹ The primary mission of the EDC is to expand and retain business ventures in the City through assistance and incentives as businesses consider locating in Marble Falls.

In 2012, the Community and Economic Development Department of the LCRA developed a Strategic Economic Development Plan for the City of Marble Falls. The Plan was then updated in March 2013. Based on community input, data analysis, and an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Marble Falls, the Plan presented a series of goals and action items to improve economic opportunities within the City.

Plan goals included developing a program to attract businesses, creating a community marketing program, supporting the success of existing businesses and workforce education, further developing the business park, creating a competitive incentives program, encouraging entrepreneurship, and supporting the development of Downtown.

The Plan laid out initial action steps for the City, EDC, and other parties to take in order to meet the goals of the Plan within a specified time frame. Additionally, a series of recommendations related to each Plan goal provided feasible strategies the City and EDC could develop to help Marble Falls stand out as a great community in which to work and live.

Key Plan recommendations included, but are not limited to:

- Develop a long-term business attraction strategy, with three to five-year implementation actions. As part of the strategy, consider providing an annual tour of the available sites and buildings in the community.
- Join or maintain membership in regional business attraction groups such the Austin Chamber.
- Market Marble Falls to appropriate industries.
- Offer retention services to existing businesses and provide an annual forum to refresh them on the services available.
- Explore the possibility of public/private partnerships to develop a speculative building at the business park, thus illustrating the potential of the site.
- Develop a roundtable to bring local schools and business leaders together to determine strategies to better prepare students for employment in the City.
- Streamline permitting for new businesses.
- Consider developing infrastructure for entrepreneurs including support services, work space, and broadband infrastructure.
- Create a youth entrepreneurship program in the City.
- Consider developing a revolving loan/grant fund for entrepreneurs.



Updated March 2013
Prepared by the Community & Economic Development Department of the LCRA

¹ *About the EDC.* <http://www.marblefallseconomy.com/about-edc>



Land Use, Character & Design Policies & Recommendations

Policies

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future, this Comprehensive Plan must be considered and implemented each day when decisions are made by City staff and elected and appointed officials. As part of this daily decision making (whether on new plans (e.g., utility plans), budgeting, staffing, capital improvement programming, or on new land development applications being considered), the following land use policies should be considered:

1. Guide the types, patterns, and designs of different land uses using the Growth Plan, Future Land Use Plan, zoning map, and associated development regulations.
2. Protect the rural character of Marble Falls' extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) by preventing premature urbanization through the use of rural and open space land use designations and land use protections.
3. Protect the City's sensitive natural resources (e.g., floodplain) as areas of protected open space.
4. Encourage new development and redevelopment where adequate public services and utilities are already in place and have adequate capacity.
5. Ensure improved transitions between different types of land uses through adequate landscaping, screening, and buffering.
6. Ensure infill development will be compatible with existing and well-established land uses through appropriate use and site design regulations.
7. Promote and/or incentivize infill housing while protecting the quality and character of existing, well-established neighborhoods.
8. Promote public and/or private investment in neighborhoods to improve connectivity, improve property values, and support long-term vitality.

9. Foster the development of new neighborhoods that promote walkability connectivity, and social cohesiveness through adequately designed open spaces and common areas.
10. Foster the development of new neighborhoods that include a variety of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of a growing workforce and multi-generational life cycle community.
11. Promote public and/or private investment in Downtown Marble Falls that maintains or creates an urban, walkable, mixed-use environment in a manner that supports both local- and tourist-based economic development opportunities and public lake access.
12. Cultivate a predictable investment climate that attracts high-quality development practices (e.g., building form, architecture, and quality signage and landscaping) by protecting property investments from incompatible or ad hoc development decisions.
13. Promote public and/or private investments, projects, or actions that enhance the character and aesthetic attractiveness of the City's corridors, neighborhoods, and open spaces.
14. Protect and/or enhance areas and buildings of historic value in accordance with historic preservation guidelines and appropriate development standards.
15. Support and/or encourage workforce education and development opportunities in the community to help residents gain the knowledge and skills necessary to support current and future businesses and to be successful and competitive in the workplace.

Recommendations

Objective 4.1 – Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to promote development and redevelopment in a manner that creates compatible land uses and/or mitigates the impacts of non-compatible land uses.

The Future Land Use Plan and descriptive text captures the community's values and desired future regarding how, when, and where Marble Falls will grow over the Plan horizon. The Future Land Use Plan covers the entire area within the City limit and the ETJ, including both existing developed areas and undeveloped, greenfield areas.

The Future Land Use Plan was developed based on the community's vision (captured during the public engagement process associated with this Plan update) representing public sentiment about the desired future for the next 20 years and beyond. It was also developed using the City's current Future Land Use Plan, existing conditions, and the physical characteristics of the community.

It is a tool that is used for advance planning, allowing the City to be proactive in its decision-making rather than waiting and reacting to individual development proposals. It is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan, and at its core, is a guide to the future built and natural environment in Marble Falls. It provides a snapshot of where development and redevelopment will occur and what type it will be.

GREENFIELD

Greenfields are undeveloped or open space areas where no prior development activity has occurred. These areas are generally viewed as easier to develop because there are typically no preexisting issues or constraints to mitigate.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a guide. Although, the future land use classifications (particularly the descriptive text) form the basis for subsequent implementation (or modifications) of the City's zoning regulations, the future land use classifications within this chapter do not constitute zoning regulations in and of themselves.

Future Land Use Classifications and Descriptions

There are 10 designated future land use descriptions that make up the Marble Falls Future Land Use Plan. The classifications are delineated as follows:

- Parks and Open Space
- Ranch Rural and Estate
- Neighborhood Residential
- Transitional Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Corridor Commercial
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Downtown
- Institutional

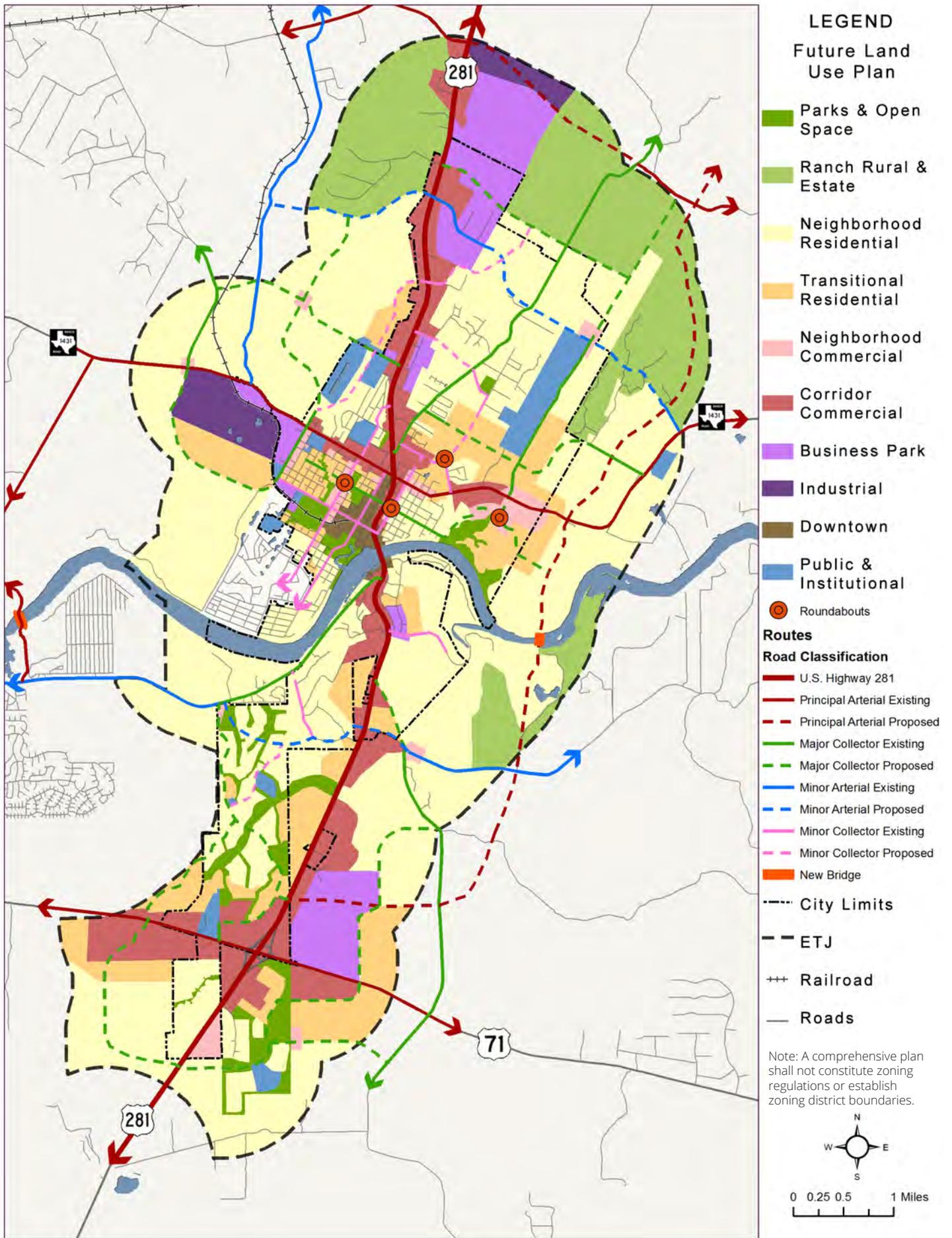
The Future Land Use Plan (*see* Map 4.1, *Future Land Use Plan*, on the next page) provides a geographic depiction of the future land use classifications as they apply to different areas within the City limits and ETJ. The pages that follow the map include written and graphic descriptions of each future land use classification, including an aerial image, one or more photo representative examples, and the following.

- **Intent & Characteristics.** A general description of the intent and characteristics of what an area located within this classification would embody.
- **Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses.** A list of proposed primary and secondary uses which can be used to help define which zoning classifications would be most appropriate to implement the intent of the future land use classification.
- **Zoning Districts.** Proposed relationship to the City's existing zoning districts.
- **Location & Development Qualifiers.** Proposed location and development qualifiers that should be considered during rezonings and/or development proposals.

Table 4.7, *Future Land Use Classification Acreage and Percentage Breakdown* (found following the classification descriptions) contains acreage and percentage breakdowns of each classification.



Map 4.1, Future Land Use Plan





Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Parks and Open Space (PO)

Intent & Characteristics

Parks and open spaces are an essential part of any community. They include public park land, trails, and open space areas that have been committed to public enjoyment and recreational pursuits. They also include privately owned areas that have been set aside for protection of natural resources or the common use and enjoyment of their users. These areas are often comprised of active (e.g., sports courts and fields) and passive recreation (e.g., trails) areas and natural or open space areas (e.g., floodplains or floodways).

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

Areas designated as parks and open space are predominantly comprised of existing public and private property that is designated as public and/or common open space. Consequently, these areas should be predominantly comprised of solely primary uses such as public parks and recreation areas, public and/or private golf courses, trails, and public and private lands within floodplains, or as part of stormwater management systems that are generally unsuitable for other types of development. Secondary uses, except special events (e.g. festivals, races, etc.), should generally not be allowed in areas designated as parks and open space. In some instances, new public parkland may be acquired and designed to serve multiple public uses (e.g., recreation and a fire station).

Zoning Districts

The parks and open space future land use classification is not intended to be implemented using specific zoning districts. Rather, the zoning regulations should specify minimum amounts of common areas and/or protected open space that should be required for new residential neighborhoods. In addition, greater protections (e.g., tree preservation, stream buffers, floodplain protections) should be improved in the City's Code of Ordinances and apply to all development as applicable.



Active Recreation



Active Recreation

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- Public parkland (including trails and associated access easements) should remain in public ownership and be designated on the Future Land Use Plan as such.
- During subsequent map amendments, private parkland should be designated on the Future Land Use Plan as parks and open space in instances where areas are designated as park, greenbelt, trail, or other publicly accessible common areas.
- Due to the potential higher traffic volumes associated with active parks (particularly those with associated sport courts and fields used for team play), active parks should be located on a collector roadway or greater functional classification.
- In instances where a public park has a publicly related secondary use (e.g., a fire station), the built environment of the secondary use should be designed in a way to not detract from the primary use as a park.
- Outside of the need for active sport courts and fields, priority should be given to acquiring and developing parkland that provides access to Lake Marble Falls or its tributaries, thereby creating a park/trail/open space network throughout the City.
- Park design, intensity of development, and the proposed uses/ activities should be compatible with the character of development it is intended to serve. By way of example, public squares or plazas are more appropriate in a downtown area with urban character than sport courts or fields. In rural character areas of the community, parks should have minimal built environment and maximize open space. In instances where the proposed park use is not fully compatible, design elements should be used to mitigate the incompatibility (e.g., planting buffers around the exterior of active areas in parks in rural areas of the City).
- New neighborhood parks should be developed concurrent with new residential development. Set asides of parkland, trails (and/or connectivity to on- and off-site trails), greenbelts, and sidewalks, should be required as part of development approvals.
- Areas designated on the Trails Plan (see Map 6.2, *Sidewalk and Trail Corridor Opportunities* in Chapter 6) should be set aside as common areas (whether donated as public parkland or protected with a public access easement) and developed as part of new development approvals so that a community-wide trail system is created over time. Land within or adjacent to floodplains provides ideal opportunities for drainage and a community-wide linear trail system, and thus should be considered as high priority areas protected for the common good.
- Since parks and trails are typically associated with high levels of pedestrian and/or bicycle mobility, enhanced accommodations should be considered including traffic calming techniques (for new parks in neighborhoods), crosswalks, and larger width sidewalks/trails in the vicinity.



Passive Recreation



Natural and/or Open Spaces



Natural and/or Open Spaces



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Ranch Rural and Estate (RR)

Intent & Characteristics

The Ranch Rural and Estate future land use classification is intended for lands that are, and will continue to be, sparsely populated and largely undeveloped. It is characterized by vast areas of land devoted to agriculture, ranching, large-lot rural residential, and the natural landscape. To maintain this rural character of development, developed areas should be subject to large lot-size minimums and setbacks. These areas are primarily found on the City's periphery, predominantly within the City's ETJ, although some areas are within the City limits. These areas would be served by roadways using rural cross-sections.

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Ranch Rural and Estate future land use classification include farming, ranching, stables and equestrian facilities, stock and poultry raising, dairy production, greenhouses and nurseries. These uses are intended to fit within the rural character of the area. In other words, these uses (e.g., stock and poultry raising, dairy production) are not intended to include commercial grade feedlots or agribusiness processing capabilities which may be more suitable in areas outside of the City's planning area. Individual residential lots (minimum 5 acres per lot) and large-lot single-family detached residential neighborhoods (minimum 4 acres per lot) without public utilities are also allowed.

The secondary uses of passive park or trail, institutional, and bed and breakfasts should be considered on a limited basis. The leasing of land for recreational purposes (e.g., campgrounds, animal harvesting, etc.) and conservation subdivisions (if surrounded by large amounts of open space) should be considered on a conditional use basis. In some cases, other commercial establishments could be considered on a conditional use basis if they are predominantly associated with serving rural uses or lifestyles.



Ranching or Farming



Large-Lot Rural "Estate" Residential

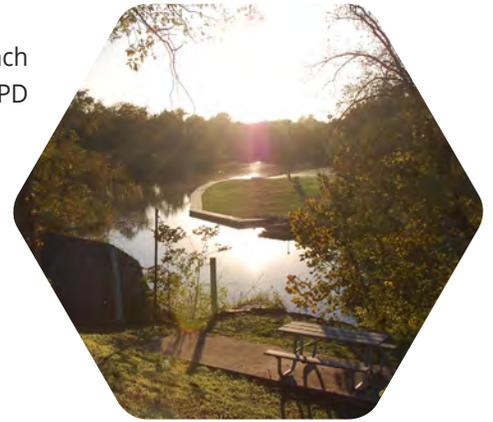
Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Ranch Rural and Estate future land use classification include AG, a modified RE-1, or PD for conservation subdivision developments.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- Since some of these lands will be working lands supporting farming, ranching, or other operations, there may be nuisances (e.g., noise, dust, the smell of fertilizer, etc.) associated within or nearby to areas in this future land use classification. In these instances, built structures (e.g., barns, pens, sheds, and feed storage) should be developed as far away from property lines as possible.
- For new large-lot residential “estate” neighborhoods, a minimum of four acres per lot should be considered using a large lot width (e.g., 300 feet) and front setback (e.g., 50 feet) to create the proper open space needed in a rural character environment. This will naturally provide for the large open space needed and will result in a low percentage of lot cover.
- New large-lot residential “estate” neighborhoods should contain some language on the plat or deed that indicates that there may be associated nuisances in the area. An associated property owners’ association would not be required in a new large lot “estate” neighborhood unless common areas were proposed as part of the new development.
- New large-lot residential “estate” subdivisions would also not require the installation of sidewalks or stormwater systems. However, property would need to be dedicated in areas identified for thoroughfares and trails on the Thoroughfare Plan and Trails Plan.
- New nonresidential uses (e.g., institutional, park, or commercial) should be designed with a rural character, meaning that they too should be designed with large setbacks (to create a “feel” of open space), with more emphasis on the open areas and less on the built environment. In this regard, higher intensity development should be screened from the public right-of-way.
- New roadways should be designed with a rural cross-section with open ditches rather than with curb and gutter.
- Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs should be minimized.



Passive Recreation



Natural and/or Open Spaces



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Neighborhood Residential (NR)

Intent & Characteristics

The Neighborhood Residential future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed primarily with new single-family detached residential subdivisions and their associated amenities, including park, trail, and open space areas and elementary schools. These areas are intended to be a mix of both suburban and auto-oriented character of development, where some developments may be dominated by the central driveway and garage (i.e., the automobile is the highest priority) while others may include slightly larger lots with a less emphasized rear detached garage and side driveway. In general, lot sizes and architectural styles are fairly uniform in these areas. Different from the Ranch Rural and Estate classification, the roadways within these areas are developed with an urban cross-section and have a much higher emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. In larger developments, strategically placed neighborhood serving parks are necessary. In some instances, an elementary school or other institutional uses may be necessary (e.g., a fire station).



Single-Family Detached

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Neighborhood Residential future land use classification include single-family detached residential, neighborhood-serving parks, trails, and open spaces.

The secondary uses of neighborhood or community parks (active or passive) intended for residents of the greater Marble Falls community should be considered on a limited basis. Golf courses, primary and secondary schools, institutional uses (e.g., a fire station), places of public assembly (e.g., place of worship or similar secular organization) and neighborhood serving nonresidential (i.e., day care services) should be considered on a conditional use basis. In addition, bed and breakfasts may be considered on a conditional use basis in the Old Township areas of the City.



Single-Family Detached

Zoning Districts

The current zoning district that may be appropriate to implement the Neighborhood Residential future land use classification include R-1, RE-1, and PD. Nonresidential uses would be developed using NC standards.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Neighborhood Residential developments should suggest a property owners' association to maintain all common areas including stormwater management systems, associated parks, trails, and greenbelts, etc. if these common areas are present.
- New Neighborhood Residential developments with a large number of lots (e.g., 250 lots or greater) should be required to have at least two points of access to a collector roadway or greater in functional classification and be served by a neighborhood collector roadway that does not allow driveway access. This neighborhood collector roadway should be developed in accordance with the standards set out for a minor collector cross-section.
- New nonresidential development (e.g., public neighborhood or community parks, golf courses, schools, institutional uses, places of public assembly, and neighborhood serving retail or services) should be located and take access from a collector roadway or greater in functional classification.
- Development approvals for new residential/nonresidential development should include dedication and development of thoroughfares and trails as set out on the Thoroughfare Plan and Trails Plan. This includes making connections between the internal sidewalk/trail system to off-site facilities (existing or proposed) as identified on the Trail Plan.
- New Neighborhood Residential developments designed as part of a planned development that include a mix of proposed uses (e.g. Transitional Residential) should include design considerations which mitigate or buffer less intensive uses (i.e., the single-family detached lots) from the more intensive uses proposed as part of the project.
- Location of dedicated property to serve the public good (e.g., a fire station site) should take into consideration community-wide priorities. For example, a proposed fire station site would need to be located on the periphery of a neighborhood, taking access from a collector or functionally greater roadway in order to maximize the ability to respond to other areas within the community in the shortest time possible.
- New Neighborhood Residential developments should be designed to include vegetative buffers (either natural or planted) between the new development and any abutting less compatible uses (e.g., corridor commercial uses).
- New Neighborhood Residential developments should be designed for both vehicular and pedestrian connectivity as set out in Chapter 5, Action 5.5.6, of this Comprehensive Plan.
- New nonresidential development should be designed in a manner that matches the character of development it is intended to serve. At a minimum, nonresidential development should meet the standards set out in the C-1, *Neighborhood Commercial* district found in the City's Code of Ordinances, as may be improved subsequently to this Comprehensive Plan update.
- New roadways should be designed with an urban cross-section with curb and gutter rather than with open ditches.
- Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs should be minimized in conformance with the connectivity standards set out later in this chapter.



Single-Family Detached



Places of Public Assembly



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Transitional Residential (TR)

Intent & Characteristics

The Transitional Residential future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed to a higher density and different housing types than what is allowed in the Neighborhood Residential classification. These areas are intended to be developed with an auto-oriented character, meaning that the automobile and its associated uses (e.g., roadways, driveways, garages, parking, etc.) are the predominant visual characteristic. In general, these areas are characterized by a variety of different lot sizes and housing types, including single-family attached (i.e., duplexes, triplexes, quadriplexes, townhouses) and multi-family (i.e., apartments), regardless of form of ownership. In some instances, Transitional Residential uses may be included as part of a larger planned development within areas designated as Neighborhood Residential. In these areas, the uses associated with Transitional Residential would constitute only a small part of the overall development with design features as set out below and in conformance with applicable zoning regulations.



Multi-family

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Transitional Residential future land use classification include single-family attached and multi-family residential, and neighborhood-serving parks, trails, and open spaces.

The secondary uses of neighborhood or community parks (active or passive) intended for residents of the greater Marble Falls community, neighborhood-serving nonresidential (i.e., day care and other residential-related commercial services), and institutional uses should be considered on a limited basis. Small lot single-family detached uses should be allowed as a limited use and a small portion of an overall planned development.

Golf courses, primary and secondary schools, and places of public assembly (e.g., place of worship or similar secular organization) should be considered on a conditional use basis. In addition, bed and breakfasts may be considered on a conditional use basis in the Old Township areas of the City.



Townhouse

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Transitional Residential future land use classification include R-2, RT-3, R-3, R-4, R-5, and PD. Nonresidential uses would be developed using NC standards.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New development should meet all of the location and development qualifiers as set out in the Neighborhood Residential future land use classification and those below.
- New Transitional Residential development should be designed in a manner that matches the character of development it abuts. For example, in an area where the development abuts the urban character of Downtown, the character of development should exhibit an urban character (i.e., a new townhouse project would have a zero or small front setback abutting the sidewalk and be served by parking accessed by alleys in the rear). In areas where the development abuts larger lot suburban or auto-oriented uses, the development should exhibit this character of development (i.e., a new townhouse project would have larger front setbacks and front access garages).
- Small-lot single-family detached houses may be included as part of an overall planned development, provided that these areas do not constitute more than 25 percent of the overall lots. If included, these areas should be served by rear access garages in alleys, leaving the front of the property to serve more pedestrian uses. If allowed as part of the planned development, the rear access garages may include second story granny flats.
- New Transitional Residential uses should be designed in a manner that provides for buffers against abutting property that is of less or more density or intensity. The degree of buffering (opacity) should be determined based on the difference between abutting uses. Buffers of multi-family apartment uses should require a masonry wall around all new developments that abut uses not designed within the same overall development.
- New Transitional Residential uses should be designed in a manner that is durable and does not detract from the property values of abutting land uses. In this regard, new developments should be designed with minimum masonry requirements and high level of landscaping in parking lots and other common areas.
- New development where a majority of the project is comprised of townhouse or multi-family uses should take access from a collector roadway or greater in functional classification.
- Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs should be minimized. Internal streets should take on a grid-based street pattern with high connectivity.



Duplex



Small-Lot Single-Family Detached



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Neighborhood Commercial (NC)

Intent & Characteristics

The Neighborhood Commercial future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed for nonresidential uses that are of an appropriate use, scale, and design that is compatible with abutting or nearby residential uses. These developments typically occupy much smaller footprints, have pitched roofs and less signage, higher levels of landscaping, and de-emphasize or screen parking in a manner that sets these areas apart from development found in the Corridor Commercial areas. In some instances, Neighborhood Commercial uses may be included as part of a larger planned development within areas designated as Transitional Residential or Neighborhood Residential. In these areas, the uses associated with Neighborhood Commercial would constitute only a small part of the overall development with design features as set out below and in conformance with applicable zoning regulations.



Retail

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial future land use classification include professional offices, food sales, convenience stores, general retail sales, personal services, medical or healthcare facilities, life care housing or facilities, restaurants, and parks, trails, and open spaces.

Secondary uses such as institutional uses (e.g., a fire station) and day care services should be considered on a limited use basis. Primary and secondary schools and places of public assembly (e.g., place of worship or similar secular organization) should be considered on a conditional use basis.

The primary and secondary uses associated with Neighborhood Commercial land uses have scale limitations based on the functional capacity of the roadway they take primary access from.



Professional Office

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Neighborhood Commercial future land use classification include C-1 and PD.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Neighborhood Commercial areas should be located and take access from a collector roadway or greater in functional classification.
- The gross floor area of nonresidential uses (excluding institutional and schools) in an Neighborhood Commercial area should be limited based on the type of street the development takes its primary access from. The maximum gross floor area should be as follows: local street (5,000 sf.); collector street (10,000 sf.); arterial street (25,000 sf.).
- New residential uses should not be allowed unless designed as part of an overall planned development and constituting no more than 25 percent of the land area devoted to the entire development.
- New Neighborhood Commercial uses should be designed in a manner that matches the quality and character of existing or future residential development the use abuts. In this regard, Neighborhood Commercial uses should be designed with no more than two stories and should include pitched roofs similar to residential single-family detached dwellings. These may or may not include dormer projections.
- Parking should be de-emphasized in Neighborhood Commercial developments by locating parking spaces and the front door to the establishment on the side rather than the front of the property. In this regard, it helps to maintain the residential character of the overall area by placing more focus on the residential looking building rather than the parking.
- In areas where residential uses are being transitioned to Neighborhood Commercial uses over time, on-street parking (if adequate room is available) should be allowed. The proposed reconfiguration of Avenue G (see Figure 5.10, *Avenue G Proposed Improvements* in Chapter 5) is a good example where off-street parking should be de-emphasized in favor of on-street parking. In these instances, streets and rights-of-way should be redeveloped with sidewalks, curb and gutter, and striped to delineate parking.
- The exterior appearance of Neighborhood Commercial developments should include a minimum of 75 percent brick, stone, stucco or masonry construction along any exterior wall that faces a public right-of-way and 25 percent brick, stone, stucco or masonry construction along all other exterior facades. This is exclusive of doors and windows, which should be designed and oriented in a similar fashion to that found in residential development. In other words, all exterior glass buildings would not be allowed.
- Sidewalks should be constructed along all public and private rights-of-way and include a designated and safe sidewalk connection to the main entrance of the building.
- No drive-throughs should be allowed in areas designated as Neighborhood Commercial unless located along an arterial roadway.
- Signage should be appropriately scaled to reflect neighborhood-serving uses.



Professional Office



General Retail



Transitioned Residential



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Corridor Commercial (CC)

Intent & Characteristics

The Corridor Commercial future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed to support local and regional businesses that rely on high traffic volumes and the visibility that is associated with being located along a major roadway. In this regard, Corridor Commercial uses are designated in certain areas along or adjacent to U.S. Highway 281, FM 1431, and State Route 71. These developments are typically comprised of various lot sizes and involve varying development intensities, from smaller locally owned shops to big box retail stores such as Home Depot. In these areas, the predominant character of development is focused on serving the automobile. In other words, the predominant view is comprised of roadways, and large to very large parking lots which either front the building or surround it. While accommodating the automobile will continue to be the predominant focus, improved street-side and parking lot landscaping, buffers, appropriately designed and scaled signage, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, higher quality building materials, and access management techniques (e.g., limited access points and inter-parcel connectivity) can help to soften the impact and improve overall quality and appearance of the City's main economic spines.



Professional Service and Office

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Corridor Commercial future land use classification are intended to serve both local and regional commercial needs and include all commercial and civic uses as set out in the C-3, *General Commercial* district in the City's Code of Ordinances. Uses normally associated with a Business Park could also be allowed as long as they were subject to the same standards set out for Corridor Commercial.

Uses such as the primary uses identified in the Transitional Residential future land use classification should only be allowed as a secondary use as part of a larger planned development where the associated residential uses comprise no more than 25 percent of the land area devoted to the overall development.



Big Box Retail

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Corridor Commercial future land use classification include C-3 and PD.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Corridor Commercial areas should be located and take access from an arterial roadway.
- New Corridor Commercial development should include improved standards for building form and architecture such as minimum roof line articulation, prohibitions against large expanses of blank walls, screened utilities, etc.
- The exterior appearance of new Corridor Commercial developments should include a minimum of 50 percent brick, stone, stucco or masonry construction along any exterior wall that faces a public right-of-way. An additional 25 percent should be brick, stone, or faux wood products or glass along any exterior wall that faces a public right-of-way. The use of untextured tilt up concrete panels; corrugated metal; smooth-faced concrete blocks; vinyl, composite, or non-decorative metal siding; plywood; and plastic should not be allowed.
- New Corridor Commercial development should have a front setback of 50 feet from the right-of-way, and a 20-foot landscape strip measured from the property line and exclusive of parking. In areas where a new Corridor Commercial redevelopment is being proposed, minimum accommodations should be allowed considering the existing constraints on the property. Rear setbacks or yards should be extended to 15 feet or 25 feet in the absence of an alley or recorded easement.
- New Corridor Commercial uses should be designed in a manner that provides for a minimum percentage of landscaping (i.e., large tree, small trees or shrubs, and ground covers) in required yards and parking lot landscaping. Consideration should be given to requiring or incentivizing native or xeriscape (i.e., low water) landscaping and / or the use of low impact development (LID) best practices to offset stormwater management requirements.
- New Corridor Commercial uses should be designed in a manner that provides for buffers against abutting property that is of less density or intensity. The opacity of the bufferyard should be scaled based on the difference in abutting uses.
- Signage standards should be improved for new development or redevelopment favoring monument signage rather than pole signage.
- Minimum lot sizes should not be required as long as all other minimum requirements (e.g., parking, landscaping, setbacks, etc.) are met without the need for a variance.
- Sidewalks should be constructed along all public and private rights-of-way and include a designated and safe sidewalk connection to the main entrance of the building.



Individual Retail



Individual Retail



Strip Retail



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Business Park (BP)

Intent & Characteristics

The Business Park future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed to support various employment opportunities predominantly related to light manufacturing or industrial, warehousing, etc. Similar to the City's existing business park and other areas within the City, development within the Business Park classification does require some minimal design features (e.g., landscaping) that improve the quality and appearance of the public rights-of-way. As the City seeks to attract major employers (not involving retail sales), this type of setting may be an attractive alternative to such things as office space located in strip centers along commercial corridors.

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Business Park future land use classification include flexible office/warehouse, logistics and distribution centers, data centers, corporate offices and/or campuses, and light manufacturing and industrial uses where operations are conducted within the building, generate little to no perceived off-site nuisances, and areas established for outdoor storage are fully screened from public rights-of-way and abutting non-compatible uses. In addition, certain commercial uses (e.g., indoor recreation such as bounce houses, or the sale of outdoor equipment such as tractors, construction or recreational vehicles, etc.) may also be appropriate.

Secondary uses such as institutional uses (e.g., a fire station) should be considered on a limited use basis. Primary and secondary schools and places of public assembly (e.g., place of worship or similar secular organization) should be considered on a conditional use basis. Retail or wholesale uses should be allowed on a limited basis provided that they are related to selling a product that is manufactured on site or their primary client base is related to supporting others who work in nearby business park areas.



Business & Technology Park



Corporate Office

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Business Park future land use classification include I-1, I-2, and PD.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Business Park areas should be located and take access from a collector roadway or greater in functional classification.
- Proposed uses related to outdoor storage, whether as a primary use or a secondary associated use, should be screened from all public rights-of-way by a six to eight foot tall opaque wood or masonry fence (depending on the height of the equipment or materials it is screening) and landscaping visible from the right-of-way.
- New Business Park development should have a front setback of 50 feet from the right-of-way, and a 25-foot landscape strip measured from the property line and exclusive of parking. In areas where a new Business Park redevelopment is being proposed, developments should be required to implement the maximum accommodations possible considering the existing constraints on the property.
- On developments not located within a planned Business Park complex and abutting non-Business Park uses, rear setbacks or yards should be extended to 15 feet or 25 feet in the absence of an alley or recorded easement or tied to height of the Business Park use, whichever is greater. In this regard, one foot of rear or side setback would be added for each foot of height above the minimum use of the adjacent district. In a planned Business Park complex, these provisions would only apply to buildings or structures abutting non-Business Park uses.
- In new Business Park development involving loading docks and bays, the loading areas should be oriented so as to not face the front property line or public right-of-way.



Light Manufacturing



Light Manufacturing



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Industrial (IN)

Intent & Characteristics

The Industrial future land use classification is intended for lands that will be developed to support light or heavy industrial and/or manufacturing uses that generate nuisances (e.g., noise, dust, light, etc.). These areas, while limited, do provide the City with opportunities for employment and economic growth, particularly when involving the extraction and processing of materials produced locally.

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Industrial future land use classification include those primary uses set out in the Business Park future land use classification. Some uses, such as scrap and salvage operations and stock yards should be a limited use. More intense uses, such as basic industry and resource extraction should be permitted by conditional use.

Secondary uses should be prohibited in areas designated as Industrial.

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Industrial future land use classification include I-1, I-2, I-3 and PD.

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- Since these uses oftentimes involve heavy truck traffic and sometimes rail access, new Industrial uses should be located and take access from an arterial roadway.
- New Industrial development involving heavy truck traffic should require the preparation of and compliance with a truck routing plan. In these instances, designated truck routes would be used to ensure there is



Extraction



Trucking

safe and adequate access to areas outside of Marble Falls and prohibit heavy truck traffic through Neighborhood Residential and Transitional Residential use areas.

- New Industrial development should be designed with large setbacks providing adequate area for buffering and/or screening of nuisances for abutting uses. In areas that front public rights-of-way, fencing and landscaping should be used to screen all outdoor operations and/or storage uses.
- To provide for the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens and visitors to Marble Falls, improved environmental regulations should be considered in the City's Code of Ordinances. These could include new provisions for noise, vibration, smoke emission, odors, toxic matter, and other nuisance hazards that could cause harm to abutting uses.
- In instances where existing Industrial operations are located in areas largely developed with non-compatible uses, the City should consider partnering to determine options and an action plan for relocation.



Manufacturing



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Downtown (DN)

Intent & Characteristics

The Downtown future land use classification is specifically designed to include a mix of uses developed with an urban character in a higher density, walkable environment. The Downtown area of Marble Falls is historically the central business district for the City and still remains both its cultural and economic hub. Today, it is predominantly comprised of commercial uses with minimal scattered civic uses. It is envisioned that this area redevelop with higher intensity commercial uses (e.g., Convention Center) and associated lake-based tourist attractions to improve the local economy and establish this area as a true regional destination attraction. In this regard, higher density residential uses (e.g., Downtown lofts and some uses set out in the Transitional Residential future land use classification) and prominent civic facilities (e.g., a redeveloped City Hall or parks and open spaces) would help create the live-work-play environment envisioned for this area. The features that contribute to the area’s “urban character” include taller, larger buildings set at sidewalk edge that occupy a majority of the lot, thus creating a sense of enclosure. Parking is typically accommodated on-street or in public or private off-site parking lots or structures. Vehicular circulation occurs along grid-based streets with wider sidewalks scaled for higher volumes of pedestrians. Walkability is at least an equal, if not greater, priority than vehicle access and circulation.



Institutional

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary and secondary uses allowed in the Downtown future land use classification include uses as set out in the MSD, *Main Street District* section of the City’s Code of Ordinances as well as convention center, pedestrian plazas, and Downtown lofts.

Secondary uses such as some Transitional Residential uses (e.g., townhouses and apartments) should be considered on a conditional use basis and should be designed as part of a larger mixed-use development with urban character.



Main Street

Zoning Districts

The current zoning districts that may be appropriate to implement the Downtown future land use classification include MS, PD, and in some cases R-3 and R-5.



Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Downtown development (residential and nonresidential) should be subject to a “build-to” requirement setting the front setbacks at the sidewalk edge and side setbacks along alleys to the pavement edge. This would prevent the typical “auto-oriented” form of development from being constructed and disrupting the otherwise urban environment. Exceptions to this should be made to accommodate proposed development which intends to construct a subset corner entrance, courtyard, or pedestrian plaza or outdoor public seating areas.
- New Downtown development should be designed to a minimum of two stories. The second story combined with minimal setback lines provides a sense of enclosure which creates the “look and feel” of an urban environment.
- New Downtown development should be designed in a manner that allows for appropriately designed awnings and covered porches.
- New Downtown uses should be designed requiring prominent building entrances, adequate façade transparency, and pedestrian-scaled signage (e.g., hanging signs) and other types of hand-crafted and/or unique signage appropriate for Downtown areas.
- New Downtown uses should be required to provide adequate sidewalk width to accommodate both an amenity area (for street trees, benches, trash cans, landscaping, etc.) and a clear walkway area. In some instances, additional width may be included to accommodate store front uses (e.g., streetside outdoor seating, etc.)
- New Downtown development should be incentivized to include vertical mixed-uses, including upper story lofts and offices.
- Decreased setbacks along water bodies and water courses should be considered provided that new Downtown development (residential and nonresidential) is designed to maximize pedestrian accessibility (e.g., trails, boardwalks, etc.) or accommodations (e.g., outdoor restaurant seating or plazas) in these areas.
- Parking should predominantly be accommodated on-street or in public or private off-street parking areas. For uses that require high volumes of traffic (e.g., convention centers and hotels), parking areas should be provided in public garages that are designed with façade treatments that contribute to the character of the Downtown environment. This could include screening the use via an attached liner building (nonresidential or residential) which masks the parking structure.
- In instances where Public & Institutional uses (or other non-Downtown uses) occur in areas designated as a Downtown future land use classification, they should be classified as Downtown to emphasize that the urban character of development is of higher priority than the associated use.



Retail



Downtown Loft



Pedestrian Plaza



Aerial Image courtesy Bing Maps

Public & Institutional (PI)

Intent & Characteristics

The Public & Institutional future land use classification is for lands that are intended for public and semi-public uses such as schools, government facilities, community centers, and hospitals. Activities taking place can draw large numbers of people and require adequate facilities be in place to handle the workers and visitors. These activities can take place during the weekend or during the work week at educational, medical, and government centers. Institutional activities can draw large numbers of people and generate considerable traffic.

Proposed Primary & Secondary Uses

The primary uses allowed in the Public & Institutional future land use classification include primary and secondary schools, government facilities, community centers, and hospitals.

Secondary uses such as medical offices should be considered on a limited use basis when constructed as part of the Baylor Scott & White hospital complex. In other areas of the City, medical complexes should be considered a commercial use. In addition, the secondary uses of passive park or trail should be allowed as part of other Public or Institutional uses not located within an area designated as Park or Open Space.

Zoning Districts

The Public & Institutional future land use classification is not intended to be implemented using specific zoning districts. Rather, the zoning regulations should specify that public facilities should meet the same (or higher) minimum nonresidential requirements as set out in the zoning district that the new building or use is being constructed within. In this regard, new public facilities should be of the same high level of quality as private development.



Government Facilities



Public Safety Services

Location & Development Qualifiers

The following location and development qualifiers should be considered as part of any rezoning or development proposal.

- New Public & Institutional areas should be located and take access from a collector roadway or greater in functional classification depending on the type and intensity of the proposed use. For example, new elementary schools should, at minimum, be located on collector roadways to accommodate heavy bus traffic, as well as traffic generated by staff and parents dropping their children off at school.
- Due to the civic nature of government buildings, new development should demonstrate a high standard in building form, materials, design and landscaping. Materials that reflect Marble Falls' character, such as locally extracted masonry, should be used whenever possible.
- The particular building form or architecture may vary depending on the function of the needs of the particular government facility or institution, but all public uses should be designed to serve vehicular and alternate forms of mobility. This includes complying with "Complete Street" best practices and meeting or exceeding the improved pedestrian standards set out elsewhere in this Plan (see Actions 5.5.1 and 5.5.6 in Chapter 5). This also includes providing appropriate facilities (e.g., bike racks) to serve those who wish to travel by bicycle.
- New Public & Institutional uses should be designed in a manner that matches the quality and character of the surrounding area. In particular, new Public & Institutional uses in the Downtown area should be designed with an urban character (i.e., buildings built to the sidewalk, parking either on-street or in off-street public parking lots, high lot coverage, limited landscaping, etc.). In other areas (e.g., rural areas), new Public & Institutional uses should include larger setbacks and buffering to maintain the rural character of the overall area.



Schools



Passive or Active Recreation



Hospital

Future Land Use Plan Breakdown

The Future Land Use Plan was developed to help guide decision-making for elected and appointed officials, City staff, residents, and the development community as they all work in partnership to help grow and develop Marble Falls.

As set out in the community's vision for the future, the City will be predominantly comprised of suburban type residential single-family detached housing (comprising approximately 13,346 acres or 52.44% of the community) (see Table 4.7, *Future Land Use Classification Acreage and Percentage Breakdown*). Intermixed will be pockets of higher density single-family attached housing (i.e., duplexes, townhouses) and multi-family housing providing a diversity of housing types and price points needed for a life-cycle, multi-generational community. Larger lot rural or estate housing exists in the northern part of the City.

The City's employment base will be predominantly located in two regional commercial and business park centers bookending the City on the north and south, while the City's civic, cultural, and tourism employment will be more focused in Downtown Marble Falls. Pockets of appropriately scaled neighborhood commercial nodes are provided to offer nonresidential services in and among the City's various neighborhoods.

The more intense heavy industry uses are consolidated into two areas, the north end of the City north of the City's business park, and south of FM 1431 just west of the City limits. These areas provide adequate land to accommodate these higher intensity uses, while buffering or otherwise protecting other areas in Marble Falls from their inherent nuisances.

Parks, open spaces, and trails are scattered throughout the City and will continue to grow as the City continues to expand and place higher priority on quality of life amenities important for a thriving community.

Table 4.7, Future Land Use Classification Acreage and Percentage Breakdown

FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	MAP COLOR / SYMBOL	ACRES	PERCENT
PARKS & OPEN SPACE	PO	803	3.18
RANCH RURAL & ESTATE	RR	3,479	13.78
NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL	NR	12,272	48.59
TRANSITIONAL RESIDENTIAL	TR	2,670	10.57
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL	NC	432	1.71
CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL	CC	2,356	9.33
BUSINESS PARK	BP	1,454	5.76
INDUSTRIAL	IN	503	1.99
DOWNTOWN	DN	163	0.64
PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL	PI	601	2.38
LAKE MARBLE FALLS AREA	-	523 ¹	2.07
TOTAL		25,257²	100.00

1 The acreage for Lake Marble Falls is estimated as being the remaining areas within Marble Falls City limits and ETJ and not designated as another future land use classification.
2 The total number of acres equals the land area within Marble Falls City limits and ETJ, minus the acreage included in the City of Meadowlakes City limits.



The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.1.1 – Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making regarding plans and projects for revitalizing/redeveloping existing development.

The Future Land Use Plan should be used in conjunction with the City's zoning regulations and policies set out in this Plan to change the character and quality of existing development in instances where public or private sector improvements are proposed. In particular, they should be used as part of:

- **Small Area Plans.** Proposed new small area plans (or sub-area plans).
- **Redevelopment Projects.** Proposed projects to revitalize or redevelop existing areas of the City which are already developed.
- **Infrastructure.** Proposed changes in land use as part of a zoning request or development approval should be a trigger to review conformity with the proposed Future Land Use Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Trail Plan, and other plans set out in the City's other specific master plans.
- **Public Facilities.** Proposed new City public facilities (including the Marble Falls Independent School District) in order to ensure that current level of service is not impacted and proposed improvements are maximizing efficiencies.
- **Budgeting and Capital Improvement Programming.** Annual preparation of the City budget and modifications to the capital improvement program or plan.

SMALL AREA PLANS

Small area plans are more detailed plans or studies of a particular neighborhood, district, or corridor. The City's existing Downtown Master Plan is an example of a small area plan.

Action 4.1.2 – Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making regarding proposed new private sector development in greenfield areas.

The Future Land Use Plan should be used in conjunction with the City's zoning regulations and policies set out in this Plan to guide decision-making regarding proposed new development in previously undeveloped greenfield areas. In particular, they should be used to help determine:

- **Desired Balance of Land Uses.** The land use mix within each future land use classification was determined based on community values and desires, the previous Comprehensive Plan (reflecting changing preferences and market-based realities), existing conditions and known planned projects, and nation- and state-based trends in development.
- **Character & Compatibility of Land Uses.** As set out in the location and development qualifier sections of each future land use classification, recommendations are provided to help identify recommendations for siting and design, and to improve compatibility between the proposed use and off-site abutting or nearby uses. In particular, recommended design features are intended to create different areas of unique character within the City (e.g., urban character in Downtown).

- **Timing of Development.** In some instances, proposed projects may be in conformance with the purpose and intent of the Future Land Use Plan, but may not be ready for development (e.g., the necessary public utilities may not be available or of large enough capacity to accommodate the proposed development). In these instances, proposed projects should be delayed until adequate public utilities are available.

Action 4.1.3 – Consider a comprehensive update to the City’s zoning regulations to implement the quality and character recommendations identified in each future land use classification.

Set out in the location and development qualifiers section of each future land use classification are recommendations intended to improve the quality and character of development in the City. The proposed recommendations are intended to restructure, and in some cases, consolidate or remove, zoning districts to base them on the quality and character of development, rather than predominantly by their permitted land uses. As such, it is recommended that the City follow up with a comprehensive update to the zoning regulations found in Appendix A, *Land Use Regulations*, of the City’s Code of Ordinances. The update should include review and modification of permitted, limited, and conditional use lists, site development regulations, and other applicable development regulations (e.g., landscaping and signage, as applicable).

Action 4.1.4 – Consider restructuring the zoning regulations to improve readability and usability.

The City should also consider restructuring the zoning regulations so that it is functionally organized by topic (i.e., zoning districts, permitted use lists, density and scale requirements, design standards, etc.) in order to improve the readability and usability of the entire document. This will provide for improved readability and usability of the regulations by those who use it most (e.g., the development community, real estate professionals, City staff, and elected and appointed officials, among others). By way of example, a single table of zoning districts and land uses could be created to easily signify which uses are permitted, limited, conditional, or prohibited in each zoning district rather than the current duplicate use lists that are spread throughout sections 610 through 800 in the City’s Code of Ordinances.

Objective 4.2 – Enhance the neighborhood quality and character of existing neighborhoods and areas.

One of the higher priority issues identified during the early engagement activities of the comprehensive planning process was the availability, affordability, and quality of housing. Even an early workshop with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Board focused more on housing issues than any other topic. This is not to be unexpected when tenants of prospective businesses are concerned that they will not be able to find adequate housing within the City for their employees.



Some cities tend to rely solely on new greenfield development to solve deficiencies in the existing housing stock. Other, more proactive communities understand that a community thrives better if it is comprised of well-established, quality neighborhoods, and is supported by continual new housing stock (and options) provided as part of new growth. For Marble Falls, it will require a combination of both existing neighborhood revitalization and new neighborhoods to adequately meet the needs of a growing population.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.2.1 – Consider an advocacy program to aid in code compliance and community clean up.

Many communities solely rely on an enforcement approach to zoning code compliance (e.g., weed abatement, debris removal, junk vehicles and equipment, dilapidated housing, etc.). In these communities, a code compliance officer identifies a violation and issues a citation for compliance. Reliance on this approach alone typically results in a negative impression (and sometimes confrontation) of what is otherwise an important governmental responsibility. To the contrary, Marble Falls could consider cross-training code compliance officers in conflict management/resolution best practices as well as to prepare useful informational brochures, list of resources, etc. for common code enforcement problems. This could establish the City as a partner or resource in helping home and business owners clean up or maintain their property.

Action 4.2.2 – Identify partnerships to rehabilitate the existing housing stock.

The conditions of existing structures and the maintenance of properties contribute to the health and well-being of City residents and portrays and provides insight into the trends of the neighborhood and greater community. In areas where a majority of the housing units appear to need rehabilitation or upkeep, it creates an impression that the community is in a state of decline. Alternatively, in areas where there are freshly painted houses and well-maintained properties, it creates an impression that the community is moving towards a more promising future. Consequently, a community must remain cognizant of its older housing stock and neighborhoods.

In addition to a proactive code enforcement advocacy program (see also Action 4.2.1), the City should consider identifying interested partners (e.g., businesses, churches, student groups, and various nonprofits) to improve the quality of the existing housing stock. This could include support of nonprofit organizations (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) who are proactively redeveloping housing in the City. Support could include reduced costs for lots which may have been acquired by the City, among other support initiatives. This could include the development of a more comprehensive pilot neighborhood housing program to identify potential partner organizations, available manpower, and resources.



Debris piles in neighborhoods oftentimes create negative impressions of a community and can lead to the further deterioration of a neighborhood quality over time.



Providing neighborhood improvements such as curbs and sidewalks adds to the quality of a neighborhood, provides for pedestrian safety and connectivity, protects street pavement integrity, and helps to control drainage.

Action 4.2.3 – Consider public or public/private infrastructure improvements to enhance existing neighborhoods.

As identified earlier in this chapter, there was a significant increase in housing development from the 1980s until the mid 2000's. Since 2010, housing growth has dropped to 0.4 percent according to Census data. Over the past year or two, there are obvious signs that this trend is quickly reversing back towards greater growth in new housing units. While this trend is positive, it does not negate the fact that approximately 46 percent of the City's housing stock is at or over 30 years old. It is at this age, that entire neighborhoods typically start to show significant signs of blight. This can have a negative affect on the City's economic development efforts. In fact, the availability, price points, and quality of housing and neighborhoods in Marble Falls has not been where it needs to be to attract the new employees being hired at the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center or for other new or existing businesses operating throughout the City. To the contrary, several of Marble Falls' municipal neighbors have been benefiting from this.

Further, established neighborhoods typically do not have the size, design, and amenities of new housing and neighborhood developments. However, many communities are now beginning to understand that older established neighborhoods have something that new neighborhoods do not – history, culture, proximity to Downtown, and a strong sense of community. In Marble Falls, this is particularly important as the City is refocusing its efforts in developing or redeveloping Downtown and its access to Lake Marble Falls as a regional employment and tourist destination. It is this type of public and public/private partnerships that start to have synergistic effects in other parts of the community. As such, Marble Falls has an opportunity to consider the revitalization and redevelopment of the already established areas just outside of, but accessible from, Downtown. This could include working with property owners to remove incompatible uses, and/or otherwise revitalize or redevelop



their properties to build off of, and take advantage of, the improvements currently being undertaken in Downtown.

On the City's end, this could also include investments in the established neighborhoods outside of Downtown to improve drainage and flooding issues (through implementation actions identified in the Flood Protection Planning Study), street conditions (through the addition of curb and gutter, new paving and reconditioning), pedestrian and bicycle connectivity (new or upgraded sidewalks and on-street bike lanes where appropriate), and parks and recreation improvements. In order to address the frequently vocalized resident request for street improvements, the need for connectivity, and to provide consistent neighborhood improvements, the City should evaluate the existing extent of curbs and sidewalks in neighborhoods. A consistent curbline adds an aesthetic rhythm to the neighborhood, protects the long-term integrity of street pavement, and controls drainage. Prioritization should be given to the completion of the curb and sidewalk network in all neighborhoods.

Action 4.2.4 - Consider developing small area plans for at-risk neighborhoods to identify a comprehensive action agenda for improvement.

As identified, there are a series of housing and neighborhood improvement programs and partners which can be implemented over time to improve the quality of the City's existing housing stock and overall neighborhoods (see also Actions 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3). Individually, many of these strategies will create positive improvements sporadically throughout the City. Alternatively, the City could consider a more proactive and comprehensive solution to improve targeted neighborhoods. In this regard, the City could prepare small area neighborhood improvement plans which identify a comprehensive and holistic set of recommendations for improvement. Potential improvements could include, but are not limited to, repaving deteriorating City streets; installing curb, gutter, and sidewalks, where appropriate; demolition and redevelopment of abandoned or derelict housing units; housing paint days; neighborhood clean-up days; the development of pocket parks or trail connections to the Citywide trail network; the installation of fiber optic cable; among other improvements. The purpose of the special area plan would be to engage and galvanize the local citizens to take ownership and pride in their houses and neighborhood, identify individual and community partners to implement solutions, identify an action agenda and necessary funding mechanisms for implementation, and to holistically improve one at-risk neighborhood at a time. Considering, the amount of investment being considered in Downtown, one potential area which may benefit from a special area plan may be the transitioning Old Township area of the City.

Action 4.2.5 – Consider developing a target-area capital investment program.

Successful implementation of some of these housing and neighborhood programs will require sufficient staffing and funding. One way to ensure that funding is available for implementation, is to develop a target-area capital investment program focused on infrastructure improvements within at-risk neighborhoods. The purpose of this program is to provide a dedicated source of annual funding to use to make improvements and to leverage against private reinvestment which may simultaneously occur as part of building and property rehabilitation and redevelopment.

Action 4.2.6 – Consider establishing a neighborhood outreach program.

Improved direct communication between the City and neighborhood leaders and residents provides an important mechanism for receiving input on hot button issues and disseminating information on City initiatives (including such things as road closures, rezoning cases, and community events), programs, as well as potential resources for improvement. In this regard, the City should consider pursuing multiple avenues for improved communication. This could include registration of homeowner association (HOA) representatives, list-serve mailings, annual gatherings, etc.

Action 4.2.7 – Continue to evaluate potential acquisition and demolition of dilapidated or unsafe structures or properties that have been subject to past flood events.

As identified in the 2014 Flood Protection Planning Study, there were over 80 structures identified that were located in areas subject to two- to 10-year flood frequency events, many of which are located along an unnamed tributary in the Old Township areas of the City. Although this alternative was not deemed to be one of the highest priorities for implementation, it is still important for the City to evaluate opportunities for removing these at-risk structures from harm's way. As is already evident upon evaluation of the City-owned property in this area, acquisition of these properties improves the neighborhood appearance and safety, provide opportunities for establishing protected open space, increases flood protection of the neighborhood and downstream areas, provides opportunities for recreation, and provides potential connections from Downtown to more distant neighborhoods outside of the Old Township area of the City.

Objective 4.3 – Improve housing choice for existing and prospective residents to Marble Falls.

In addition to the availability of existing housing stock, community preferences for the future have indicated that the City also lacks housing choice. Indeed, as people and families pass through various stages of their lives, their housing needs change. Diversifying housing types not only includes different housing products, but price points too. Having a range of housing options at various points is instrumental in creating a community that is attractive enough to entice new people to the community and to keep them in all stages of their lives.



HOUSING PALETTE

The general purpose of a “housing palette” is to consolidate residential lot and building standards into a single section within the City’s zoning regulations, rather than redundantly locating them in each residential and mixed use zoning districts. Subject to the maximum density and minimum open space requirements of each zoning district, this allows a developer the flexibility to utilize multiple housing types to best respond to market conditions.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.3.1 – Consider establishing a housing palette to direct the quality and design of new residential housing choice.

While the City’s zoning regulations do specify zoning districts, lot sizes, setbacks and other standards, it does little to specify the design and minimum quality that these new developments should meet. It also does little to facilitate the intermixing of compatible housing types (unless one pursues a planned development). To facilitate more consistency and predictability in the review process, the zoning regulations should be amended to establish a housing palette to allow multiple housing options within the same district, while still protecting overall intended character of the district. This would include establishing unique minimum (and sometimes maximum) dimensional standards for each housing type so that they can be allowed across multiple districts with the same predictability.

Objective 4.4 – Improve existing zoning regulations to create quality neighborhood character.

Currently, there has been a significant number of new predominantly residential subdivisions planned for south of Lake Marble Falls, including Flatrock and Gregg Ranch. Most of these have been approved through the Planned Development process, potentially because the land owners and developers were interested in providing quality development, but equally possible because the City’s zoning and development regulations did not provide enough flexibility to prepare a quality development.

Since housing demand is anticipated to grow concurrent with population growth, the City will need to accommodate an additional 1,968 number of residential housing units by 2040. While it is hoped that large numbers of these would occur

within redeveloped or vacant lots in existing developed residential areas of the City, it is likely that many will be located in new residential neighborhoods not yet planned or designed. Consequently, it is in the City's best interest to use regulations or incentives to enhance future housing conditions and quality neighborhood design throughout the City.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.4.1 – Consider improved neighborhood design for Planned Developments.

As evident by many of the recent new residential subdivisions being approved through the Planned Development process, it is an attractive option for land owners and developers to consider. However, planned developments should embody some of the best neighborhood design elements necessary to create a great, long-lasting neighborhood. As such, the City should consider including additional requirements into the Planned Development process. Improvements could include the establishment of some kind of focal point (e.g., a park, school, place of worship, or central green); equal treatment of both pedestrian and vehicular circulation (e.g., via sidewalks, crosswalks, mid-block and cul-de-sac pedestrian access easements, on-site trails, and off-site trail connections, etc.); a variety of dwelling types and price points; access to schools, recreation, and daily conveniences; an interconnected transportation network with multiple points of access; appealing streetscapes (e.g., could include entry monuments, boulevard collector streets, street trees, etc.); compatibility with off-site uses; protection of natural resources and set aside areas of publicly accessible common open space; allowances for on-street parking for non-neighborhood collector streets and other traffic calming solutions; and protection of historic sites and structures.

Action 4.4.2 – Consider improving the City's existing zoning and development regulations to implement the location and development qualifiers set out in the Neighborhood and Transitional Residential and Downtown future land use classifications.

Set out in the location and development qualifiers are a series of recommended regulatory improvements which should be considered as part of an update to the City's zoning and development regulations. These proposed improvements include such things as the establishment of property owners' associations to maintain all common areas; multiple points of access for large developments; conformance to the Future Land Use, Thoroughfare, and Trails Plans; the installation of district buffer yards to protect against abutting areas of different compatible uses; construction made of durable materials, among others (see also pages 77 through 80 and 89 through 90).



Objective 4.5 – Enhance the character and appearance of the community through private and public sector actions.

Identifying strategies to enhance the character of the City strengthens Marble Falls' uniqueness while allowing the City to respond to preferences of the community. As identified in the analysis of the community's existing character, opportunities to improve the appearance and feel of the City are found throughout the community. Through the implementation of varying scale improvements, Marble Falls' can further identify itself as a high-quality community valued by residents and stand out as a memorable year-round destination attraction for visitors.

The City's location along key thoroughfares (i.e., U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71), the local attractions (e.g., Lake Marble Falls), and the new Baylor, Scott and White Medical Center provide an opportunity to attract visitors to the City from throughout the region. Through the use of community enhancements which create a memorable sense of place, those who may have come to the City for a brief stop can be encouraged to stay and enjoy the community experience Marble Falls has to offer, thus bolstering the City's economy, enlivening the community, and creating repeat visitors. Locations for a variety of the actions listed below are illustrated on Map 4.2, *Beautification Plan*.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.5.1 – Utilize gateways, entry signs, and landscaping at edges of the City to indicate entrance into Marble Falls.

Gateways are a great way to define the edge of the City and announce entrance into the community. Distinct features help to differentiate Marble Falls from other surrounding communities and emphasize the City's unique character. As with other character and placemaking elements in the City, high-quality gateways visually communicate a sense of identity and pride in the community. As depicted on Map 4.2, *Beautification Plan*, consider the design and construction of gateways in the following locations.

Primary Gateways:

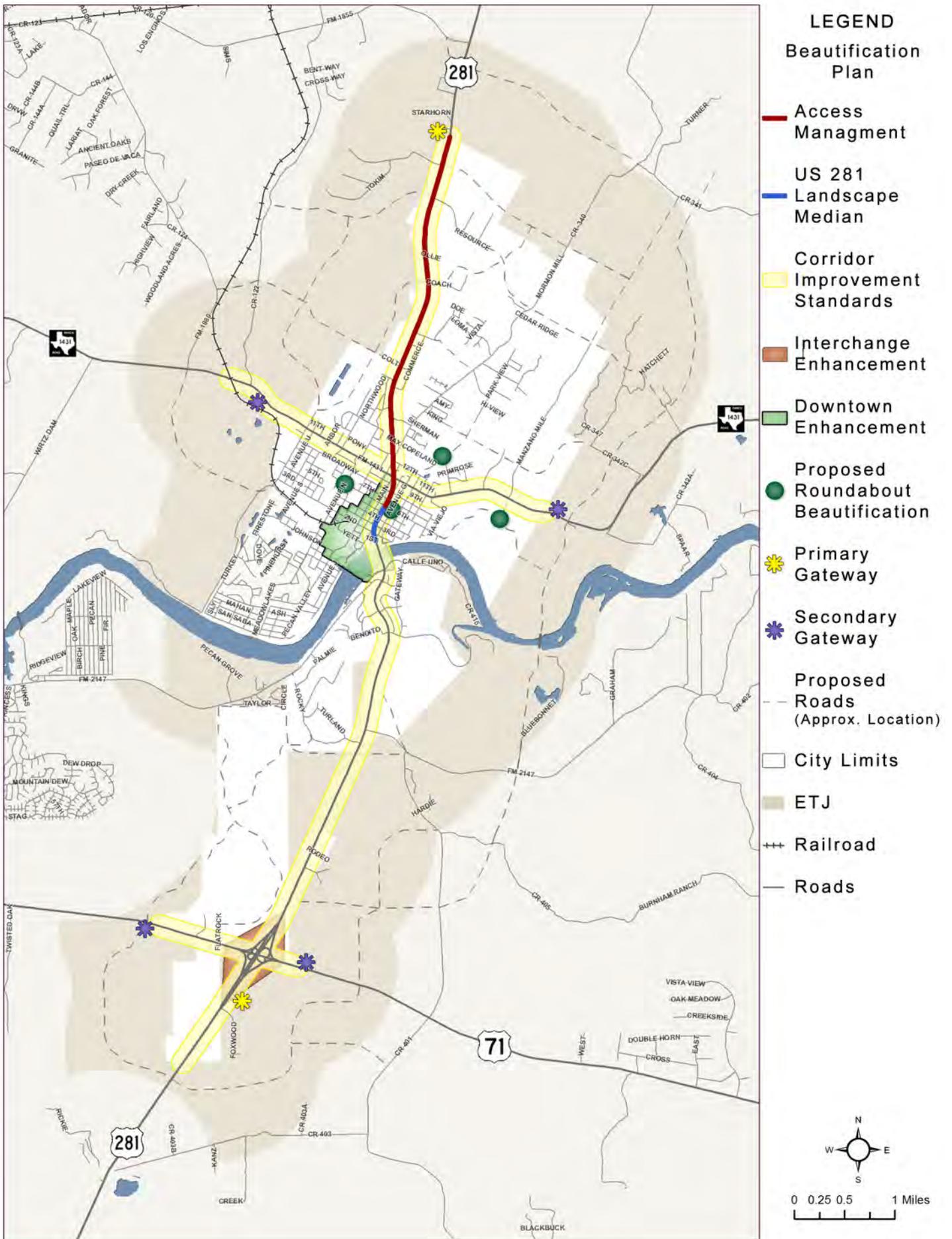
- U.S. 281 at the north and south City limits

Secondary Gateways:

- FM 1431 at the east and west City limits
- State Highway 71 at the east and west City limits

Primary gateways are located along the higher-speed U.S. 281. Consequently, these gateways should be larger in scale to increase visibility as drivers pass by. Key elements for the gateway enhancements include monument signage using local materials when possible, high-quality landscaping designed for longevity with low-maintenance, drought tolerant species, and energy-efficient lighting

Map 4.2, Beautification Plan



for evening visibility. Design of the monument signage should include “Marble Falls” and incorporate visual elements which bring to mind the City of Marble Falls (e.g., the City’s logo). While the landscaping may vary based on location, the two primary gateways should include the same monument signage. Figure 4.5, *Illustrative U.S. 281 Gateway*, below, illustrates a conceptual primary gateway design.

Secondary gateways are located along smaller arterial roads and are thus intended to be smaller in scale. The secondary gateways should include smaller signage using local materials when possible, high-quality landscaping in a simpler design, energy-efficient lighting, and incorporate “Marble Falls” and visual elements for community recognition.

Both primary and secondary gateways should be located on City-owned property or within the public right-of-way. The gateways and associated enhancements should be integrated into capital improvement projects. U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71 are under the authority of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and coordination with the agency will be required for the development and implementation of the primary and secondary gateways.

Action 4.5.2 – Coordinate with TxDOT to improve the appearance of the U.S. 281/State Highway 71 interchange.

Highway interchanges are high-frequented thoroughfare connections and are easily overlooked by passersby. The City should improve the appearance of the U.S. 281/State Highway 71 interchange through the use of enhanced landscaping (e.g., additional vegetation, river rock, etc.) and improved aesthetic treatments

Figure 4.5, Illustrative US 281 Gateway





Texas spring wildflower meadow¹



Improved highway abutments

¹ <http://www.keepbanderabeautiful.org/bearspringsblossom/wildflow.html>

of the overpass abutments. This improved appearance can leave a memorable image in drivers’ minds thus setting Marble Falls apart from other surrounding areas along each highway. Additional landscaping should include native, low maintenance, drought-tolerant species. For example, the addition of native wildflower meadows in the interchange areas currently dominated by grass would reduce maintenance requirements (i.e., mowing), provide seasonal color changes thus improving the visual quality of the area, and provide stormwater filtration and plant diversity for insects, birds, etc.

Action 4.5.3 – Coordinate with TxDOT to implement access management strategies along U.S. 281 from the Downtown boundary to the northern City limit.

Currently, large stretches of commercial parcels along U.S. 281, fronted by parking lots, are lacking driveway delineation. Drivers, in the absence of clear visual cues as to where to enter and exit U.S. 281, often use these large swaths of asphalt to drive parallel, sometimes opposite the direction of traffic on the road, before accessing U.S. 281. Without providing controlled access and egress from U.S. 281, motorists in the parking lots and on the road have no clear indication of where and when drivers may be entering their traffic flow. This creates significantly increased potential for both pedestrian and vehicular safety hazards. As voiced by residents during the public participation component of this Plan, drivers do not feel safe in these areas.

As previously indicated by TxDOT, there are plans to provide access management, including driveways and curb and gutter, in these areas (see Action 5.4.1 in Chapter 5). The City should work with TxDOT to push for the inclusion of sidewalks and landscape strips along this stretch of U.S. 281 to provide increased safety to pedestrians and improve the visual character of the corridor. Sidewalks along U.S. 281 should be a minimum of seven-feet wide and be setback from the face of curb by a minimum of five to ten feet. Sidewalks can be designed



Figure 4.6, Access Management

in a traditional configuration paralleling the road or could be designed using a meandering alignment (see Figure 4.6, *Access Management*, at right). Landscape strips should include a minimum of grass and street trees and further landscaping should be encouraged (see Action 4.5.6 below).

Action 4.5.4 - Coordinate with TxDOT to provide a central landscape median along U.S. 281 within the Downtown and nearby areas.

While Marble Falls' Downtown includes a portion of U.S. 281, there is no indication of this while drivers pass through the area. The City should coordinate with TxDOT to design and construct a center landscape median with incorporated left turn lanes from Sixth Street to First Street. The median would create a unique character along the U.S. 281 corridor in the Downtown area while also controlling left turn movements and increasing safety. The median should include a decorative paver strip around the edge and native, high-quality landscaping (e.g., trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers) within the center. See Figure 4.7, *U.S. 281 Landscape Median*, on the following page for an illustrative concept what a landscape median could look like along a portion of the recommended length of U.S. 281.

Action 4.5.5 - Design and install enhanced landscaping in coordination with the construction of traffic roundabouts.

As depicted on Map 4.2, *Beautification Plan* (and on Map 5.1, *Thoroughfare Plan*, in Chapter 5), four new roundabouts are to be located near the core of the City. Roundabouts, with their central unpaved island, provide perfect opportunities for high-quality landscaping. While drivers



Figure 4.7, U.S. 281 Landscape Median



are already slowing down to follow the curve of the roundabout, attractive landscaping further encourages calm driving (thus providing a moment to appreciate the scenery) and conveys that the City values the daily experience of community residents and visitors alike. Additionally, landscaped roundabouts reduce impervious coverage, provide seasonal interest, and can give local neighborhood residents something to be proud of. Roundabouts should be designed with a decorative paver edge and landscape elements (e.g., vegetation, masonry walls, landscape boulders, etc.) in the center (see Figure 5.10.4, *Illustrative Ave. G Roundabout Improvement* in Chapter 5). The decorative paver edge should be constructed with the same material used in the U.S. 281 landscape median.

While maintenance of roundabout landscaping would largely be handled by City staff, the City could consider approaching neighborhood residents regarding the creation of a volunteer program to help maintain the enhanced landscaping in their neighborhood.

Action 4.5.6 – Develop corridor improvement standards for U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71 to enhance the appearance of properties adjacent to these principle arterial corridors.

Motorists traveling along the U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71 can currently pass through Marble Falls without seeing any design characteristics



of particular note. While commercial development gravitates towards these arterial thoroughfares, unless required to do so, developers will frequently focus primarily on cost, construction time, and a typical business model rather than focusing on establishing a building and development site that is of high quality to improve the quality and character of Marble Falls. In undeveloped areas of these corridors, new quality development will have both an immediate effect on the site and provide more incentives for abutting and nearby properties to do the same (see Figure 4.8, *Illustrative U.S. 281 Corridor Improvements*, on the following page). While large portions of these corridors are currently developed, community growth driven by a number of factors will also lead to the revitalization and redevelopment of these parcels over the plan horizon.

During the first public open house of the comprehensive planning process, attendees were presented with a visual preference survey regarding their aspirations for the quality and character of the built environment along the City's main corridors. Although the visual preference survey included only a snapshot of opinions of those who live and work in Marble Falls, the results were in line with and validated similar sentiment and opinions identified in earlier stakeholder meetings and the online community survey. Together, the results indicate a strong community preference for improving the development quality and character of the City's main thoroughfares.

In order to ensure that these key corridors are ultimately developed to create high-quality corridors of note, the City should consider improving development standards, at a minimum, in the C-3, *General Commercial District* of the City's Code of Ordinances. As currently zoned, this would address the community's desire for improved development quality along the City's main thoroughfares, including U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71. The purpose of the improved standards would be to enhance the appearance (and long-term durability) of nonresidential properties adjacent to street corridors through improved:

- Building placement, form, architecture, and materials including consistent and larger setbacks, 360 degree architecture, wall and roof articulation, entry identification, and primary and secondary building material lists.
- Street-side, parking lot, and foundation landscaping including minimum percentages of required landscape areas; minimum planting requirements for trees, shrubs, and ground cover; and approved planting lists.
- Screening and buffering of unsightly outdoor storage materials, utilities, and equipment including more detailed fencing requirements and buffering between adjacent, less compatible properties.
- Lighting and sign controls.

While these enhancements reflect the sentiment of those who actively participated in the comprehensive planning process, additional engagement is recommended to refine the scale and scope of proposed improvements during the regulatory drafting process. In particular, the development community and land and business owners should be targeted in addition to the general community.

Figure 4.8, Illustrative U.S. 281 Corridor Improvements



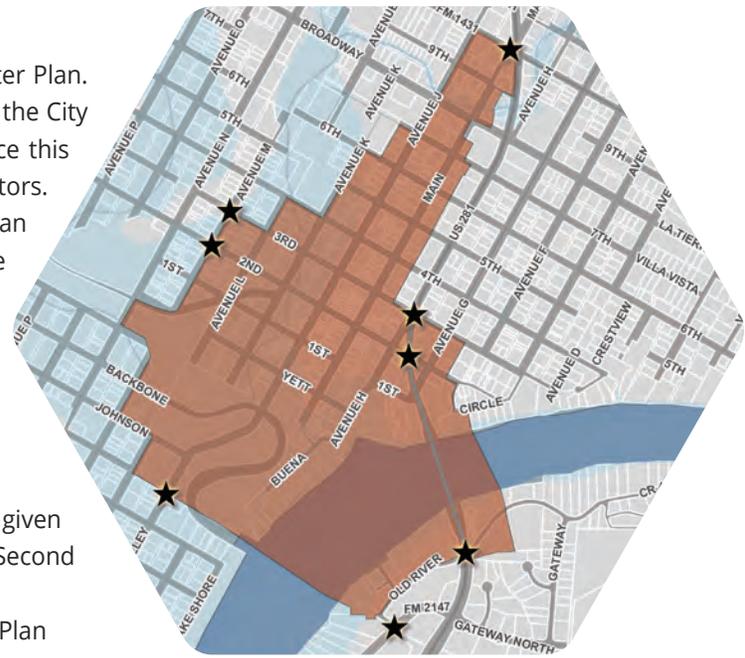
BEFORE



AFTER



Figure 4.9, Downtown Gateway Locations



Gateway locations as identified in the Downtown Marble Falls Master Plan

Action 4.5.7 - Enhance the City's Downtown district to create a strong identity in the heart of the City.

In 2011, the City adopted its Downtown Marble Falls Master Plan. While the Downtown already has a unique, artsy feel to it, the City should continue to implement the Plan to further enhance this area and set it apart as a destination for residents and visitors. Implementation of key elements laid out in the Master Plan will go a long way towards creating a unique character in the heart of the City. The City should consider prioritizing the implementation of the following elements from the Plan.

- Install the primary pedestrian corridor streetscape elements listed in the Plan such as street furnishings, decorative lighting, landscaping, wide, accessible sidewalks, and wayfinding signage. Priority should be given to the "experience-focused" streets (i.e., Main Street, Second Street, and Third Street).
- Design and implement the gateways identified in the Plan (see Figure 4.9, *Downtown Gateway Locations* and Figure 4.10, *Sample Downtown Gateway*) with priority given to the

Figure 4.10, Sample Downtown Gateway

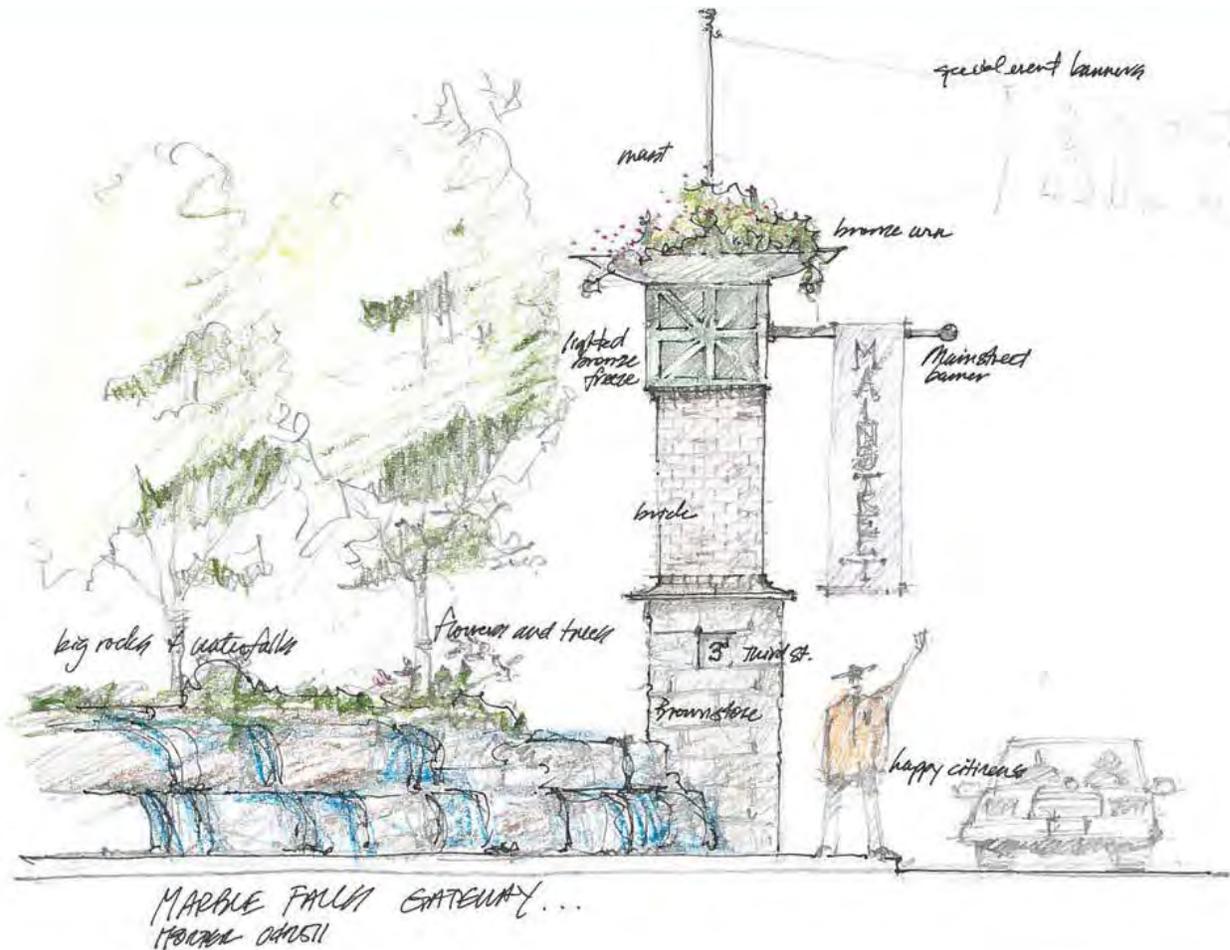


Image courtesy of local architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture, found in Downtown Marble Falls Master Plan

gateways at the intersection of U.S. 281 and Second Street and U.S. 281 and Third Street.

- Encourage and pursue mixed-use development and promote development of further commercial diversity in the Downtown to attract pedestrian traffic to the area.
- Design and construct a creekwalk promenade to provide pedestrians access to the City's natural environment in a unique, memorable way.
- Implement the parking recommendations listed in the Downtown Plan, namely removing angled and center lane parking from Main Street and exploring regulations to shift parking to the rear of buildings, to "movement-focused" streets, and shared parking areas in key locations.
- Improve alleys to allow their use for deliveries, employee parking, etc.
- Provide visual and physical connectivity between Main Street and Lake Marble Falls (see Figure 4.11, *Main Street/Lake Marble Falls Connectivity*).
- Complete the Downtown sidewalk network.
- Relocate City Hall to another location within the Downtown. Ensure the new building is designed using high-quality materials and aesthetics as this is a key element that visitors and residents will see and directly

Figure 4.11, Main Street/Lake Marble Falls Connectivity



BEFORE



AFTER

associate with the identity and pride of the City of Marble Falls.

- Provide a public restroom along Main Street. Consideration should be given to integrating it into the redesign of the City Hall parking lot once City Hall is relocated.
- Implement the design and construction of lake front improvements in the Downtown to provide greater and diversified lake access to users.
- Conduct a park master plan for Johnson, Lakeside, and Hays Addition Parks to determine appropriate upgrades and enhancements in order to provide further high-quality recreational opportunities in the Downtown area. Consider including pedestrian connections between the parks to provide full connectivity for events, etc.
- Contract with private developers to design and construct a high-quality hotel and conference center with associated parking, amenities, etc. to add vitality and increased activity in the Downtown.

Action 4.5.8 – Consider replacing the street signs in Downtown Marble Falls to identify entry and establish a special area of character.

One way to establish Downtown Marble Falls as a special place of character within the City is to utilize street signs. Updating and replacing the existing street signs within the planning area defined in the Downtown Master Plan could help to further create a sense of place within this important area of the City.



Action 4.5.9 – Establish a formal affiliation with Keep Texas Beautiful organization.

Keep Texas Beautiful is a nonprofit organization that has established local affiliates all over Texas. Through programming and education, Keep Texas Beautiful works with sponsoring cities to improve the overall community environment. In this regard, the City could establish a Keep Marble Falls Beautiful affiliation

help improve the City through litter prevention, community-wide beautification projects, and waste reduction.

Action 4.5.10 – Consider establishing a dark sky ordinance to protect nighttime skies.

Many people and communities across the country are realizing that standard lighting practices, as part of the normal development of the built environment, are ruining the view of our natural night skies. As such, many communities are now incorporating better lighting standards into their zoning and development regulations. Implementation of these lighting best practices, over time, result in glare reduction and reduced light trespass, lower energy usage, improved visibility that fosters a safer environment, improved public and environmental health, and better views of the beautiful Texas Hill Country night skies. Unlike many large metropolitan areas, the City still has the opportunity to make a long-term difference in protecting its night skies. In general, an outdoor lighting ordinance should include provisions for full cut-off fixtures that conform to the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IES) maximum lighting heights and illumination thresholds, and prohibited lighting. In addition, the regulations should specify an exterior lighting plan which helps City staff to determine conformance with the adopted provisions.

Action 4.5.11 – Consider applying to become an International Dark Sky Community.

After the City adopts a dark sky ordinance, the City should consider applying to become an International Dark Sky Community. Achieving this designation would signify that Marble Falls has shown exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through implementation and enforcement of a dark sky ordinance. Currently, there are only 10 certified communities within the U.S., including both Dripping Springs and Horseshoe Bay, Texas.

Action 4.5.12 – Consider improving the aesthetic appearance of City infrastructure (e.g., the water treatment plant) which is located in high-traffic public areas.

As boaters enter Marble Falls from the east and vehicles cross the U.S. Highway 281 bridge in a northern direction, the City's water treatment plant is one of the largest, clearly visible structures. As such, the City should consider incorporating enhanced aesthetic treatments (e.g., mural) to add ambiance and character to this entry to Downtown Marble Falls. As the water treatment plant is located adjacent to Lake Marble Falls, a water-themed mural is one appropriate option.



A water-themed mural can make a bold statement, improve the visual character of an otherwise unappealing structure, and create a memorable experience for viewers.

Image courtesy of Steve Ives.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/phillytrax/6187136785>

Objective 4.6 - Foster economic development in the community.

Economic development is one of those overarching municipal functions which involves complex partnerships to influence both public and private sector actions which sustain and stimulate economic development. Accordingly, a

city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) oftentimes spurs economic development through a series of physical development initiatives (e.g., establishing a business park, coordinating public-private partnerships, funding infrastructure enhancements, etc.) and programmatic initiatives. As is evident throughout this Plan, the City's EDC has been undertaking a series of physical improvements throughout the City (e.g., the public-private partnership to redevelop Downtown). This section involves recommendations related more to the EDC's programmatic initiatives.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 4.6.1 - Support EDC efforts to update the Strategic Economic Development Plan.

The Marble Falls Strategic Economic Development Plan was created in 2012 and most recently updated in 2013. As the City's EDC considers further advancing economic development strategies and initiatives, consideration should be given to updating the Strategic Economic Development Plan. An updated plan would include the status of the plan's recommendations, analysis of the community demographics and economic conditions today, and provide revised and/or additional strategic recommendations to lead the community towards an even stronger economy.

BUSINESS INCUBATORS
Business incubators strive to create jobs in a community, encourage entrepreneurial ventures and business retention, and diversify the local economy. Through the provision of support services and resources specifically targeted to young companies, business incubators support the development of entrepreneurial companies, helping them survive and grow during the start-up period, when they are most vulnerable.¹

¹ International Business Innovation Association. <https://www.inbia.org/resources/business-incubation-faq>

Action 4.6.2 - Support EDC efforts to increase entrepreneurial opportunities in the City.

Opening a business is a challenging venture and frequently people are discouraged from doing so by the hurdles they have to surpass in order to get through the start-up period. In order to support an entrepreneurial community in Marble Falls, the City should consider supporting or encouraging the development of a small business incubator site to provide flexible workspace at a low cost for small and emerging companies. This could be a partnership venture with the EDC, Central Texas College (CTC), and Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB, and could eventually lead to the establishment of a Small Business Administration (SBA) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) suitable to serve the entire Highland Lakes area. Priority consideration should be given to establishing this office in Downtown Marble Falls. The incubator should include a fully equipped office space at low cost (EDC provided) with initial and follow-along counseling at no cost (CTC provided). Eventually, a full time counselor provided as part of the SBDC satellite office could provide free assessments and intensive one-on-one counseling to new entrepreneurs. In some business incubators (e.g., the Temple, TX Business Incubator), services are provided to new and existing businesses.

Action 4.6.3 - Support EDC efforts to continue the expansion of the Marble Falls Business and Technology Park.

Although the EDC's business park has not received universal support, it none-the-less provides an important role in improving the economic competitiveness of the City. For many businesses who may need immediate space, access to shovel-ready sites can make the difference between relocating to Marble Falls or somewhere else in the Highland Lakes area. As such, the City should continue supporting efforts to expand shovel-ready sites until the 300-acre park is fully developed; provided that the economic return on investment continues to make sense.

Action 4.6.4 - Encourage the EDC to consider establishing a revolving loan fund to support the expansion of new businesses.

A revolving loan fund is a source of money from which loans are made to new small business owners who do not typically qualify for traditional financial services. In addition to providing access to office space and business tool resources, these entrepreneurs oftentimes also need additional seed money to get their businesses off the ground. As such, many EDC's consider establishing a revolving loan fund where small loans are made to new or growing businesses. When they are repaid (with interest), the original fund is replenished providing additional opportunity and capital for new loans to other businesses. If the program is managed effectively, the central fund continues to grow its assets over time.

Action 4.6.5 - Support EDC efforts to provide workforce development and education programs in the community.

During stakeholder interviews it was noted that much of the local workforce is not sufficiently equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to fill higher level professional and medical jobs which are being created in conjunction with the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center. In order to provide Marble Falls' residents and the local community a greater competitive edge in the job market, the City should consider partnering with the EDC and the CTC to organize workforce development and education programs. Currently, the CTC offers workforce education and training programs to meet the special needs of individuals and businesses, offering courses related to healthcare, licensed massage therapy, clinical medical assistants, pharmacy technicians, certified nurse aides, phlebotomy, and veterinary assistants.

To better identify how local education affiliates (i.e., CTC and the Marble Falls ISD) can better prepare the workforce for specific jobs, the City should consider establishing a business-education roundtable of local business and education leaders who should regularly meet two to six times a year. This could be a great way to connect those who teach skills development with those who utilize those skills in the workforce. This could also include providing more local learning opportunities in areas of local job demand, support for career days and fairs, among other related initiatives.



Action 4.6.6 - Support EDC efforts to increase the development of place-based economic opportunities.

Historically, many economic development programs focused solely on creating a framework that provided new (or relocated) businesses the lowest business costs, whether that involved reduced capital costs (e.g., City's extension of infrastructure) or lower annual operating costs (e.g., tax reductions, reduced utility fees, etc.). In today's mobile and talent driven economy, however, a quality and skilled workforce may be equally as important. This goes beyond simply providing training or education; rather it embodies the fact that more and more people are valuing quality of place which is affecting where they are willing to work. This is particularly important for younger generations who are now just entering the workforce and who will become the largest working cohort during the horizon of this Plan.

Today, many proactive communities are expanding and refocusing their economic development toolkits to include place-based economic considerations. Previously, a good community may be so labeled if it had good schools, attractive neighborhoods, safe streets, etc. While these will always remain important, an emerging determinant also involves an affiliation towards an area's embodied character and sense of place. In other words, many people are looking to be associated with a community that is not like anywhere else.

In this regard, Marble Falls has the opportunity to create a unique live, work, play destination that is like no other area in the Highland Lake area. It has the opportunity to truly capitalize on the City's unique natural and cultural assets, such as proximity and public access to Lake Marble Falls. Accordingly, the City should continue to support EDC place-based efforts to revitalize Downtown as part of an overall strategy to increase the long-term economic competitiveness of Marble Falls.

5

TRANSPORTATION



Introduction

A City's transportation system has a strong influence on the quality of life and economic potential of a community. A well-coordinated transportation system provides multiple modes of mobility to ensure residents and visitors can move in and through a city safely and with ease. When the system is working correctly, movement is relatively unnoticed and subconsciously contributes to the economic attractiveness of the area and higher quality of life. When the system is deficient, simple movement oftentimes results in higher levels of frustration and a perceived lower quality of life. In these cases, the transportation system subconsciously or consciously decreases the economic attractiveness of an area for both existing and prospective residents and businesses.

Beyond movement, many jurisdictions are also starting to realize that a visually unappealing transportation system can significantly detract from a City's overall quality of life. This is particularly important for communities, such as Marble Falls, that rely heavily on sales tax dollars as a predominant mechanism to fund City facilities and services. In other words, the visual appeal of roadways (which is sometimes all a tourist or passer-by might see) is widely recognized as having an impact on whether or not one might want to spend money in a City. As a result, there is increased attention to the design of roadways so that it either minimizes the impact on, or enhances the character of, the adjacent properties.

This chapter provides a 20-year policy framework for the future development of Marble Falls' transportation system including addressing:

- **Thoroughfare development.** An appropriately scaled Thoroughfare Plan will ensure long-term adequate connectivity through the City and ensure there are sufficient rights-of-way to expand the system as traffic demand and funding allows.
- **Traffic management.** In order to ensure an efficient flow of traffic along City roadways, the intended traffic carrying capacities must be preserved.



This relates to the access from the corridor to the adjacent land uses it serves.

- **Complete Streets.** In order to ensure that people have multiple options in moving in and around the City, appropriately configured roadways consisting of multiple modes of travel must be a priority.
- **Alternate Mobility.** Despite the City's (and most of the country's) focus on auto-oriented mobility, there does exist forms of mobility outside of the personal vehicle. As such, certain residents of the City do need, and do rely on rural transit. As the City continues to grow and mature, demand for these services will also continue to grow. Further, certain residents of the City may also favor alternate means of traveling to work particularly when traveling to areas in the vicinity of the suburban cities closer to Austin.

This chapter is closely coordinated with Chapter 4, *Land Use, Character, and Design* of this Comprehensive Plan as both the thoroughfare network and future land use areas work together to ensure appropriately scaled roadways adequately serve the adjacent land uses they will ultimately serve. This doesn't always mean that the ultimate configuration of a road will be constructed during initial development. Rather, in some cases, portions of a roadway may be developed to serve a lower intensity use in the short-term as long as the long-term right-of-way is protected until needed in the future.

The Complete Streets section of this chapter (particularly as it relates to sidewalks) is also closely coordinated with Chapter 6, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space* as it relates to and intersects with the City's off-street trail and on-street bike lane network. Together, these two chapters identify a long-term, multi-modal network of connectivity throughout the City.

Existing Transportation Conditions

Regional Transportation Network

Marble Falls is connected to the greater region via U.S. Highway 281, State Highway 71, Farm-To-Market (FM) 1431, and somewhat by State Highway 29. These four roadways form the basic framework of transportation facilities that provide for regional mobility in the area (see Figure 1.3, *Regional Context*, in Chapter 1, *Plan Introduction and Context*). These four thoroughfares can be further described as follows:

- **U.S. Highway 281.** U.S. Highway 281 is a five-lane roadway (including a center turn lane that extends almost the entire length through Marble Falls) that traverses Marble Falls north to south, bisecting the City east and west. Outside of Marble Falls, it extends 1,872 miles from North Dakota to Brownsville, Texas. It is the longest three-digit U.S. Highway in the country.¹ As it travels through Marble Falls it spans the Colorado River of Texas using a new bridge on which construction was recently

¹ Wikipedia. U.S. Route 281. Retrieved on 11/11/15.



The former "functionally obsolete" U.S. Highway 281 bridge which was removed between 2012-2014 during construction of a new bridge.



The new U.S. Highway 281 bridge completed in 2014 improved traffic congestion and safety in Marble Falls and provided new pedestrian connections across the Colorado River of Texas.

completed in 2014. It is currently the only crossing over the Colorado River for 20 miles downstream towards Austin and 10 miles upstream towards Kingsland. The new span consists of two side-by-side bridges each providing two travel lanes and six-foot wide sidewalks on the outer sides of both bridge. U.S. Highway 281 is the City's predominant north-south transportation and economic spine. North of the Colorado River, it is bounded on both sides by nonresidential development. South of the Colorado River, it is largely undeveloped all the way down to SH 71.

- **State Highway 71.** State Highway 71 is a four-lane undivided roadway east of the U.S. Highway 281 interchange as it extends towards Austin. Just west of the interchange, it transitions to a two-lane undivided roadway for the rest of its length. Recently, turn lanes have been added to facilitate safer access to the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center which opened in 2015. State Highway 71 is largely undeveloped on both sides in the area near Marble Falls.
- **State Highway 29.** State Highway 29 extends from Menard, Texas across Interstate Highway 35 (IH 35) in Georgetown to State Highway 95 north of Taylor, Texas. Although it does not pass through Marble Falls directly, it does provide connectivity for the region.
- **FM 1431.** FM 1431 is predominantly a four-lane undivided roadway, although it expands to a five-lane roadway (including a center turn lane) as it passes through the urbanized area of Marble Falls. It is largely used as a connection to the suburban cities in North Austin (e.g., Cedar Park, Texas) to the east and to the lakeside communities to the west. FM 1431 is the City's predominant east-west spine across the City and is intermixed with areas of residential and nonresidential development.



The intersection of U.S. 281 (shown) and FM 1431 is one of the busiest intersections in the City due to these corridors being the two commercial spines of the City.



Although State Highway 71 provides Marble Falls with greater regional connectivity, it remains largely undeveloped. With the opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, just west of the interchange with U.S. Highway 281, this corridor will start to see increased development pressure. Good access management strategies can help preserve the functional pass-through capacity of this corridor.

Regional Planning Initiatives

Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO)

The City of Marble Falls is a member community of the Capital Area Metropolitan Organization (CAMPO) which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties. CAMPO approves the use of federal transportation funds within the region and produces both the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). In addition, CAMPO coordinates regional transportation planning with cities and counties; the Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Capital Metro); the Capital Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS); the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA); the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT); and other transportation providers in the region.² As such, CAMPO has a lot of control over the transportation improvements funded in the region.

Marble Falls, as part of Burnet County, was approved to join the MPO by the CAMPO board in June 2013. Fortunately, at the time Marble Falls joined the MPO, CAMPO was undergoing their update to their RTP. The 2040 Regional 2 CAMPO 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. Adopted May 11, 2015.

Transportation Plan was adopted in May 2015. The RTP provides guidance regarding multi-modal transportation enhancements over the next 25 years. Through analysis of existing and projected conditions and system deficiencies within the MPO's jurisdiction, the RTP recommends a series of over 450 transportation improvements throughout the region.

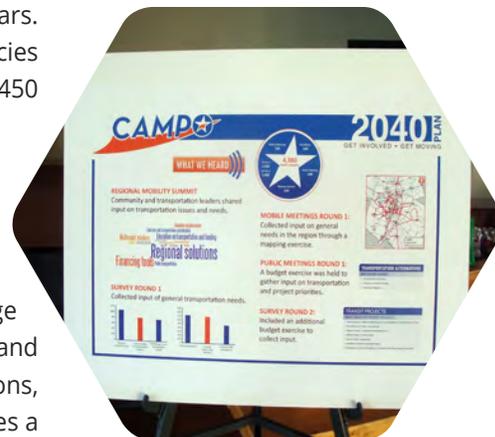
In both 2010 and 2040 mapping, the RTP identified U.S. Highway 281 and State Highway 71 west of U.S. Highway 281 as principle (major) arterials. It also identifies Meadowlakes Drive and the majority of FM 1431 located within Marble Falls as minor arterials. As one consideration, the RTP analyzes average travel time and maps out current travel delay for motorists in the morning and evening hours. In an effort to increase system capacity, multi-modal options, and reduce congestion throughout the planning jurisdiction, the RTP provides a list of recommended projects including road, transit, bicycle and pedestrian, and corridor studies.

Burnet County Transportation Master Plan

The Burnet County Comprehensive Transportation Plan was adopted in 2010. Based on public input, projected population growth from 2005 to 2035, future land use, and travel demand modeling, the Plan lays out a series of improvements and expansions to the Burnet County transportation network to be implemented over the next 20 years. The Plan estimates that the County population will grow by 246 percent by 2035 to approximately 94,400 people and employment will grow by 238 percent to approximately 34,010 jobs. The majority of employment growth is expected to take place in Marble Falls and Burnet, and along the State Highway 29 and State Highway 71 corridors. Travel demand modeling for 2035 found that the most congested areas in the County would be the U.S. Highway 281 bridge over Lake Marble Falls, the U.S. Highway 281 corridor from State Highway 71 to Marble Falls city limits, and along RM 2147 west of US 281. Improvement projects were prioritized in order to ensure that the transportation network remains adequate as the County grows. Evaluation criteria for prioritization included system connectivity, safety, mobility and accessibility, environmental impacts, economic development, public support, regional impact, funding, and partnerships. Figure 5.1, *Burnet County Thoroughfare Plan* illustrates the adopted Thoroughfare Plan that resulted from the Plan.

Local Transportation Concerns and Priorities

Time and again throughout the planning process, citizens voiced dissatisfaction with the state of the City's streets and sidewalks and the growing amount of traffic congestion. During the first open house public workshop, a question was asked about the most problematic intersections. Overwhelmingly, the U.S. Highway 281 and Mormon Mill Road intersection was identified as the least safe intersection (see top right, next page). Additional intersections of concern were identified at U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431, and predominantly at various spots along those two corridors.



On March 30, 2015, CAMPO held a public meeting in Marble Falls to receive feedback from citizens of the City, county, and the greater region on their Transportation Master Plan recommendations.

Figure 5.1, Burnet County Thoroughfare Plan



Reference the Burnet County Adopted Thoroughfare Plan on page 70 of the Burnet County Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

When asked about priority recommendations for moving forward, identifying a truck route that removes heavy/hazardous truck traffic out of neighborhood/Downtown areas and expanding resources (e.g., manpower, equipment, and funding) to improve the quality and condition of road surfaces within the City were the two highest priorities identified. Additional strong support for researching alternatives to route internal, local traffic off of U.S. Highway 281, adopting a Citywide Complete Streets policy, supporting an additional bridge connection across Lake Marble Falls, and making connections between existing roads to further improve connectivity (e.g., Resource Parkway to Mormon Mill Road and Manzano Mile) were identified.

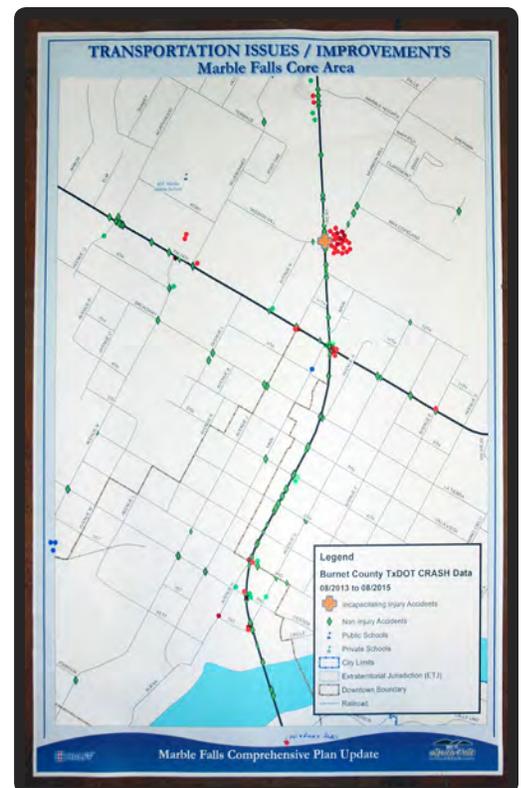
Similarly, in the online community survey, respondents were asked to identify specific streets or intersections that need improvements for safety or to reduce congestion. While a variety of locations were listed, the following intersections and corridors were noted most frequently:

- U.S. Highway 281 & FM 1431;
- U.S. Highway 281 & Mormon Mill Road & Mission Hills Drive;
- U.S. Highway 281 & Gateway N (2147);
- U.S. Highway 281 & 2nd Street;
- FM 1431 & Avenue E;
- FM 1431 & Avenue N;
- Avenue N;
- Broadway Street; and
- All the roads in the vicinity of Marble Falls Middle School.

In addition, the following topics were identified in early stakeholder engagement meetings and again from survey respondents.

- 2nd Street floods frequently and needs a higher bridge;
- Need to synchronize traffic lights that are close together;
- Provide locals with a safe alternate route off of U.S. Highway 281 but ensure those roads are not negatively impacted by the additional traffic;
- Provide a center turning lane all the way along U.S. Highway 281 to State Highway 71;
- Truck traffic through the City creates safety concerns;
- Ensure safe sight distance for drivers entering U.S. Highway 281 from driveways and intersections;
- Mixed opinions on the idea of a bypass around Marble Falls; and
- Need comprehensive street repair program rather than small spot fixes.

When asked to rate the importance of a variety of transportation related issues in the City, the highest rated issue, with 90 percent of respondents indicating it was either very important or important, was addressing the congestion at the intersection of U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431. Next



The red dots on the image above indicate public open house attendees' opinions on the two most problematic or unsafe intersections in the City.

Priority	Transportation Strategy
High	Identify a truck route that removes heavy/hazardous truck traffic out of neighborhood/downtown areas (addresses local traffic issues; not a regional truck traffic solution)
Medium	Redo signal timing along U.S. Hwy 281
Medium	Research alternatives to route internal, local traffic off of U.S. Hwy 281
Medium	Connect existing roads to improve overall Citywide connectivity (e.g., connecting Resource Parkway to Mormon Mill Road and Manzano Mile)
Medium	Conduct an access management study along U.S. Hwy 281 / FM 1431 to determine appropriate spacing of driveways, needed turn lanes, etc.
Medium	Adopt a Citywide policy that all streets need to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists (i.e., a Complete Streets policy)
Medium	Support another bridge connection across the Colorado River to provide multiple options for accessing areas to the south
Medium	Make improvements at low water bridge or railroad crossings to improve Citywide access and provide for more choices
Medium	Improve regulations to require interconnectivity between adjacent businesses for new development and redevelopment
Medium	Establish a traffic calming program where neighborhoods could implement ways to slow down traffic and improve safety in residential areas
Medium	Expand resources (e.g., manpower, equipment, and funding) to improve the quality and condition of road surfaces within the City
Other	Other: [Handwritten notes]

in importance, 87 percent of respondents indicated relieving traffic congestion along U.S. Highway 281 as very important or important and 80 percent of respondents indicated that addressing the congestion and safety at the U.S. Highway 281/Mission Hills Drive/Mormon Mill Road intersection is very important or important. Respondents were further asked to choose the most important transportation related issue in the City. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, addressing traffic congestion on U.S. Highway 281 received 58.1 percent more votes than the next most important item (see Figure 2.9, *Transportation Issues*, in Chapter 2).

The survey also asked respondents to rate the importance of the City focusing on a variety of overarching issues including items related to transportation, housing, tourism, employment, connectivity, and parks and recreation. Out of all the issues listed, the top two issues, as illustrated in Figure 2.15, *Priority Issues* in Chapter 2, were the need for improved traffic flow and safety (87% very important and important) and the need for street repair and replacement (82% very important and important). Finally, respondents were shown the same list of overarching issues and asked if they would support paying slightly higher fees or taxes for the priorities. Notably, at least 60 percent of the survey respondents who answered the question indicated they would support or strongly support paying slightly higher fees or taxes for both street repair and replacement and improved traffic flow and safety (see Figure 2.16, *Support for Implementation*, in Chapter 2).

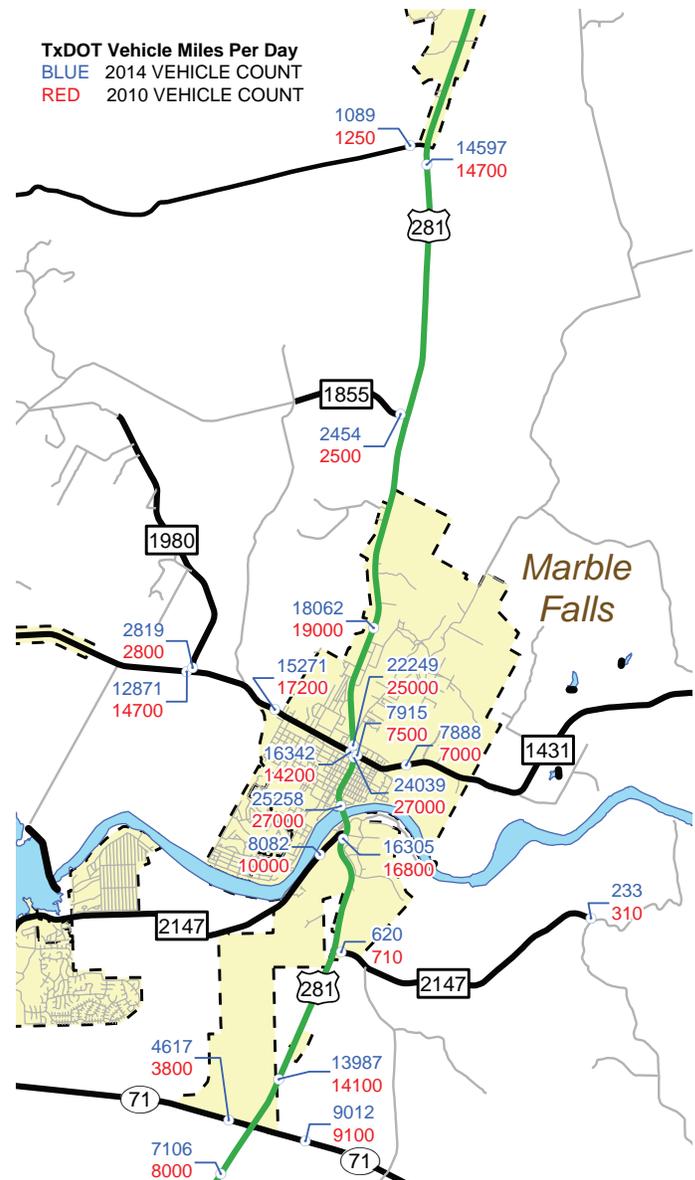
Traffic Count Trends

As identified in Figure 5.2, *TxDOT Average Daily Traffic Counts (2010-2014)*, the total vehicles per day at various locations had gone down over the five year period of comparison. For example, at the north end of the U.S. Highway 281 bridge traffic decreased approximately 6.5 percent over the five year period. This is the opposite trend that was identified during the last comprehensive planning process, where from 1996 to 2007, traffic counts were almost doubling.

While on the surface this may appear to be troubling, there may be logical explanations as to why traffic counts decreased during this time period. One is that fuel prices were on the rise at this time. Additionally, TxDOT undertook the replacement of the previous functionally obsolete bridge across Lake Marble Falls. Accordingly, regional pass-through traffic may have found alternative routes to avoid the delays created by construction of this major project.

Irrespective, local perception is that traffic counts are on the rebound and will predictably surpass previous maximums due to the opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center and the associated growth that will come along with it.

Figure 5.2, TxDOT Average Daily Traffic Counts (2010 - 2014)

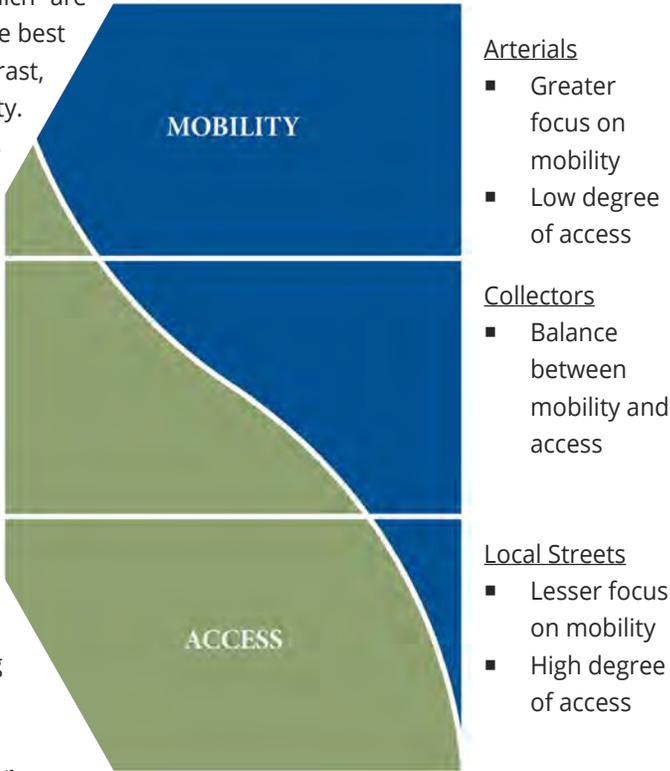


Functional Classification of Roadways

The City of Marble Falls, like many communities, faces the challenge of maximizing the operational usage of its existing transportation system. As shown in Figure 5.3, *Mobility Versus Access Diagram*, there is an inverse relationship between mobility and access. Facilities, which are expected to serve the highest mobility, typically function the best with lower access from surrounding land uses. In contrast, roadways, which serve access needs, offer lower mobility. By identifying roadways that need to serve higher mobility, the City can work with landowners whose properties abut these facilities to manage access locations and preserve right of way for future roadway widening. These actions prolong the operational mobility of roadways, and delay the need for roadway expansion, which is costly and disruptive to the local community.

- **Major Arterials.** Major arterials provide significant through traffic, roadside parking is rarely provided, and driveway access is rare, except occasionally in urban areas (e.g., downtowns). Speeds are medium to high. Major arterials typically receive traffic from minor arterials and major collectors. Commercial development is attracted to the visibility offered along major arterials, and tends to cluster at intersections. Signalized interruptions should be minimized and coordinated to optimize traffic flow. Examples of major arterials in Marble Falls includes U.S. Highway 281 and State Highway 71.
- **Minor Arterials.** Minor arterials provide connections between adjacent cities and cross-town connectivity, and create significant intersections with the major arterials, typically warranting signalization, as they also create an attractive location for business development. Minor arterials receive traffic via minor collectors and local streets, and occasionally parking lanes may be provided for roadside parking adjacent to the central core. Driveway access directly onto minor arterials is minimal, except in rural areas. Examples of minor arterials in Marble Falls include State Highway 29 and FM 1431.
- **Major Collectors.** Major collectors provide cross-town connectivity and create significant intersections with the major arterials typically warranting signalization. Major collectors receive traffic via minor collectors and local streets, and occasionally parking lanes may be provided for roadside parking where appropriate. Driveway access directly onto major collectors is minimal, except in rural areas. Examples of major collectors in Marble Falls include Mormon Mill Road, Manzano Mile, and County Road 401.
- **Minor Collectors.** Minor collectors provide localized connectivity between residential and commercial development, feeding traffic to major

Figure 5.3, *Mobility Versus Access Diagram*



collectors and minor and major arterials, creating significant intersections with the major arterials typically warranting signalization. Minor collectors receive traffic via local streets, and occasionally parking lanes may be provided for roadside parking where appropriate. Driveway access directly onto minor collectors is allowed. Examples of minor collectors in Marble Falls include Avenue N, Avenue J, and Second Street.

- **Local Streets.** Local streets provide direct driveway access to adjacent properties and often allow roadside parking.

An important step in determining the improvements needed to improve a City's thoroughfare system is to understand how the hierarchical system of roadways function and work together to move people in and around the City. Described in Table 5.1, *Roadway Functional Classification Characteristics*, are the characteristics of each type of roadway existing (or planned) in the City. The described characteristics include a roadway's purpose, functional role in the overall system, the appropriate number of lanes, typical roadway length and needed right-of-way, traffic volume design capacity, desirable spacing between each classification, access management needs, relationships to residential neighborhoods, and whether or not the roadway should or should not allow on-street parking, heavy or hazardous truck traffic, sidewalks, or bikeways.

Street Cross-Sections

The "typical" cross-sections shown on pages 126 through 128 represent desirable elements for each type of roadway shown in Table 5.1, *Roadway Functional Classification Standards*. Their most significant application will be for roadways in new locations and improvement projects. Existing roadways may operate functionally as a higher-order facility than their existing typical cross-section would indicate. In many cases, the cost – in absolute dollars and in community and environmental impacts – outweighs the potential benefit of upgrading the facility. In these cases, the functional role of the facility should be recognized and other strategies employed to maximize its operational functionality, such as access management and signal optimization. With that being said, there may be certain corridors that provide critical connections throughout the City. In this regard, key upgrades, extensions, and connections may be warranted to truly provide an interconnected and functionally efficient transportation system (see Action 5.3.2, later in this chapter).

As set out in Figure 5.4, *Typical Cross Sections* (on pages 126 through 128), a series of cross sections are identified which include community building elements beyond providing pavement for the movement of vehicles. These community building elements include such things as vegetative buffers, sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, center medians, etc. Indeed, many communities across Texas and the country have come to realize that a reliance on roads as solely for the movement of vehicles detracts from the other quality of life elements that make great cities.

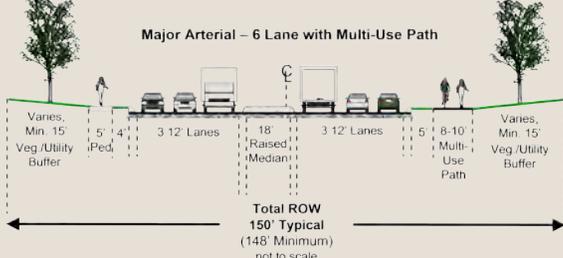
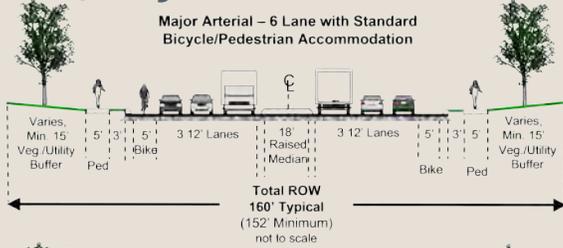
Table 5.1, Roadway Functional Classification Standards

CRITERION	MAJOR ARTERIAL	MINOR ARTERIAL	MAJOR COLLECTOR	MINOR COLLECTOR	LOCAL STREET
PURPOSE	Mobility is primary; access is secondary. Connects primarily to other arterials.	Connects primarily to major arterials and lower classification roadways. Access is secondary.	Collects traffic destined for the arterial network. Connects arterials to local streets; and sometimes for access.	Collects traffic destined for the arterial network. Connects arterials to local streets; and sometimes for access.	Provides direct access to properties. Intended to carry traffic to collector streets. Designed for slower speeds.
FUNCTIONAL ROLE	Serves the highest volumes of long-distance mobility and connects activity centers.	Serves high volumes of long-distance mobility and connects activity centers to major arterials.	Serves medium-distance mobility needs and connects lower to higher classification roadways.	Serves local-area mobility needs connecting local land uses to the regional system.	Provides the highest level of access to abutting land.
NUMBER OF LANES	4 to 6 lanes; may include a center turning lane with or without landscaped islands	3 to 5 lanes; may include a center turning lane with or without landscaped islands	Either 4 lanes or 2 with a center turn lane with or without landscaped islands	Either 2 lanes or 2 with a center turn lane	2 lanes
ROADWAY LENGTH	Typically > 5 miles	3 + miles	2 + miles	2 + miles	< 1 mile
ROW*	150 – 100 ft.	100 – 90 ft.	80 – 70 ft.	70 – 60 ft.	60 – 50 ft.
TRAFFIC VOLUMES (VPD = VEHICLES PER DAY)	20,000 to 60,000 VPD	5,000 to 30,000 VPD	1,000 to 15,000 VPD	1,000 to 10,000 VPD	100 to 3,000 VPD
DESIRABLE SPACING	Generally 5 miles or more	2 – 4 miles	1/2 to 2 miles	1/2 to 2 miles	Varies, at least 125 feet; grid pattern
POSTED SPEED	55 to 70 mph	45 to 60 mph	35 to 50 mph	25 to 40 mph	20 to 35 mph
ACCESS	State facility driveway guidelines apply. Urban area is highly developed.	State facility driveway guidelines apply.	State facility driveway guidelines apply.	State facility driveway guidelines apply.	Access / accommodation for non-vehicular traffic.
ON-STREET PARKING	Restricted	Restricted	May be permitted	May be permitted	Permitted
NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIP	Defines neighborhood boundaries	Defines and traverses neighborhood boundaries	Internal and traverses neighborhood boundaries	Internal	Internal
TRUCK ROUTES	Yes	Permitted	Permitted	No	No
BIKEWAYS	Permitted	Permitted	Yes	Yes	Yes
SIDEWALKS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

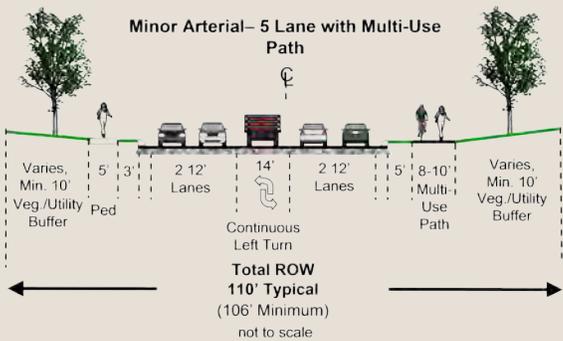
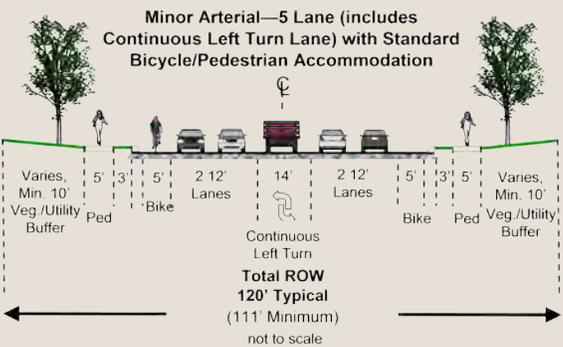
*Actual right-of-way requirements are determined in the subdivision regulations.

Figure 5.4, Typical Cross Sections

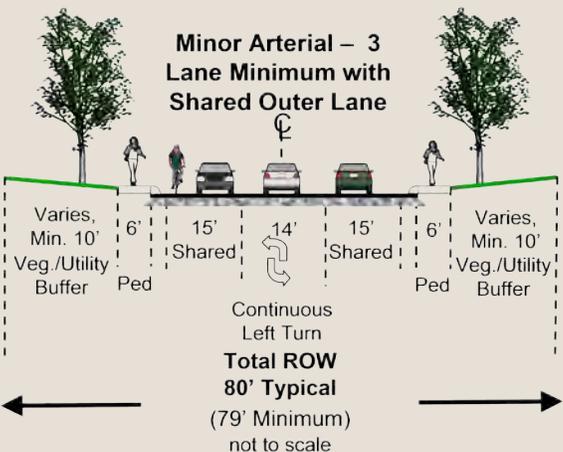
5.4.1, MAJOR ARTERIAL 6-LANE



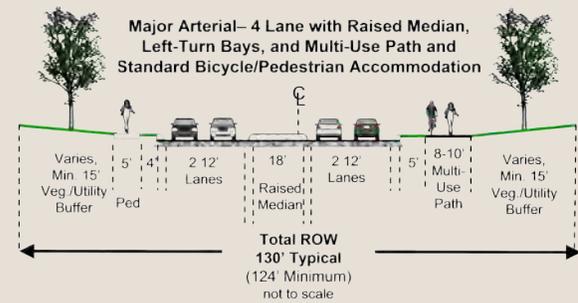
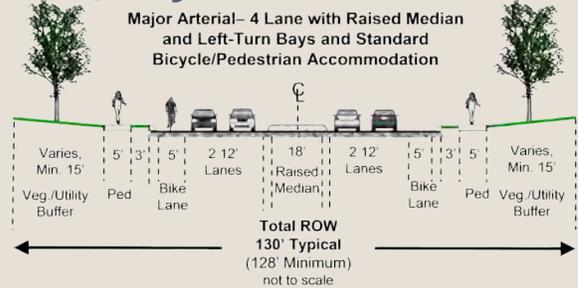
5.4.3, MINOR ARTERIAL 5-LANE



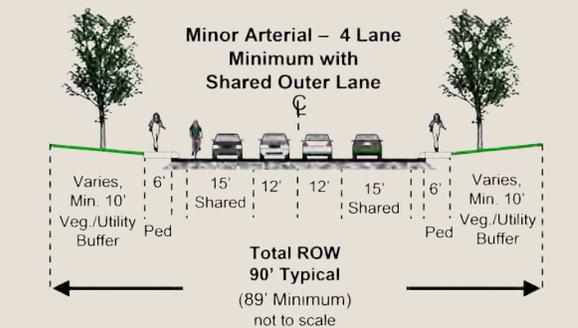
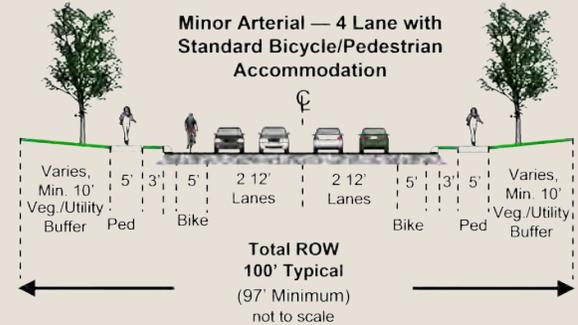
5.4.5, MINOR ARTERIAL 3-LANE



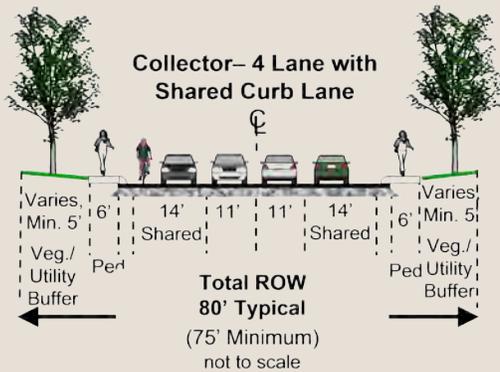
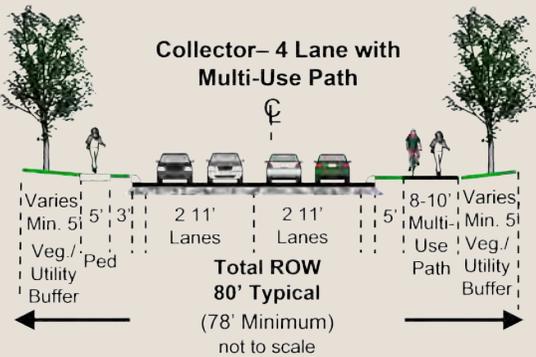
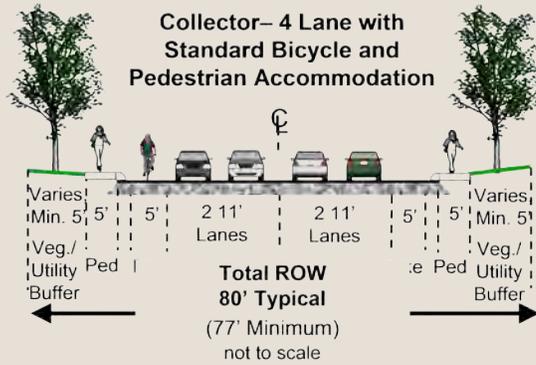
5.4.2, MAJOR ARTERIAL 4-LANE



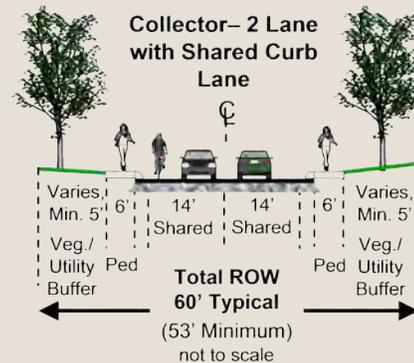
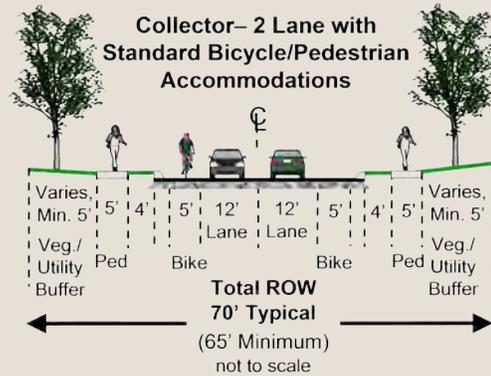
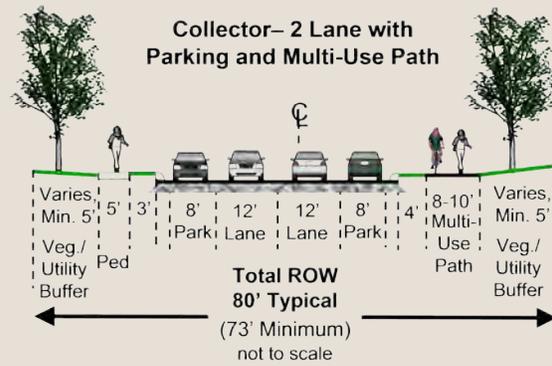
5.4.4, MINOR ARTERIAL 4-LANE



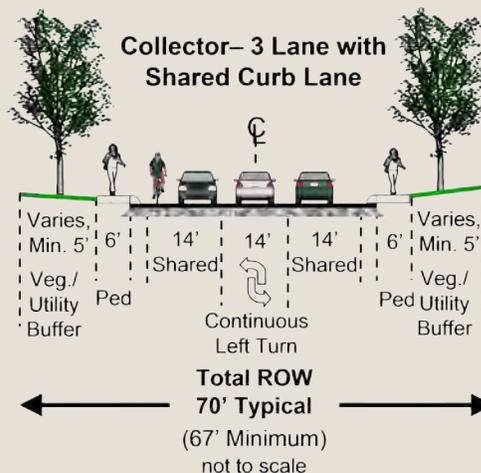
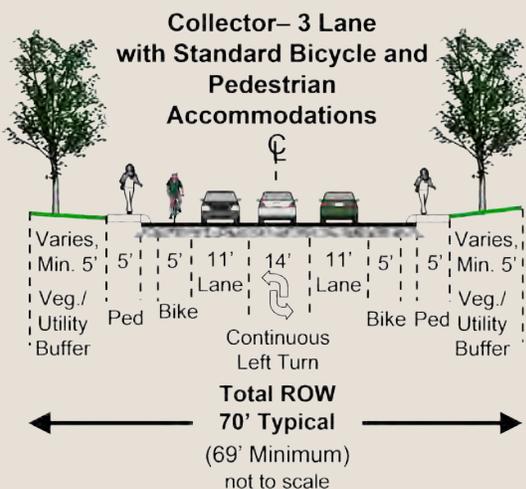
5.4.6, MAJOR COLLECTOR 4-LANE



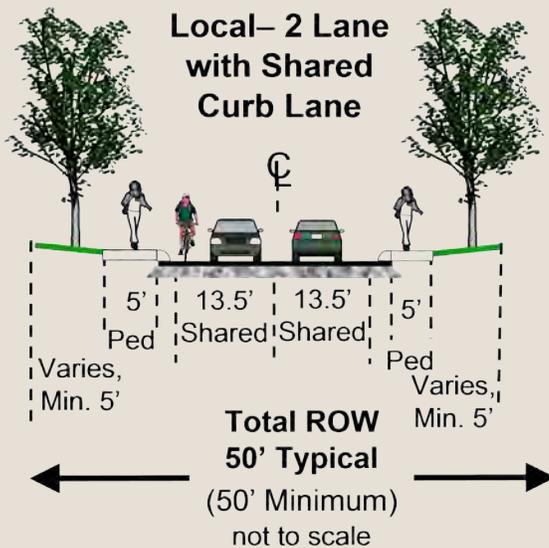
5.4.7, MAJOR COLLECTOR 2-LANE



5.4.8, MINOR COLLECTOR 3-LANE



5.4.9, LOCAL STREET CROSS SECTION



According to local stakeholder input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), these additional community building elements are as important to the community as they were during the last comprehensive planning process. Accordingly, these additional community building elements should be considered as the first option wherever possible. In some cases, the typical cross-section examples provided herein will not be appropriate to fit a particular need. In these cases, the City will need to adopt a policy which objectively determines how flexible the City's functional classification system and Thoroughfare Plan should be.

Access Management

Essential to managing traffic is preserving the capacities of the major and minor thoroughfare network described in the previous section. Inherently, the functional capacity of a roadway is affected by the following:

- Number of access points from intersecting streets, driveways, railroads, and intersections;
- Lack of synchronization of traffic control devices (e.g., stop lights);
- Presence or absence of acceleration, deceleration, or center turn lanes or a median; and
- Poorly coordinated traffic flow entering or exiting from adjacent properties.

The Transportation System Management (TSM) program is an approach to relieving congestion through better management and operation of the existing transportation facilities. It is an approach that is used by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to implement low cost, but effective strategies to enhance the existing capacities of roadways. Their strategies include, but are not limited to:



As depicted along a quarter-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 281 (from Lantana Drive to Colt Circle), approximately 41 driveway and intersection access points provide too many points of conflict which reduces the functional capacity of this stretch of roadway and can decrease safety.

- Intersection and signal improvements;
- Thoroughfare bottleneck removal programs;
- Data collection to monitor system performance; and
- Special events management strategies.¹

For Marble Falls, the functional capacity of U.S. Highway 281 is compromised in many sections where there are limited restrictions on points of access which significantly reduces the through capacity of the roadway. In this case, driveway access points should be minimized using various approaches including:

- Combining adjoining parking lots and reducing total driveway entries;
- Requiring access to properties from side streets; and
- Requiring access to properties from parallel roadways.

In the same regard, individual lots with separate driveway access points have been allowed on some roadways in the less developed areas of the City (e.g., Mormon Mill Road). In these areas, the functional capacity of these roadways will be diminished over time. Minimum driveway separation distances and requirements for marginal access roads serving new major subdivisions should be considered to prevent further deterioration of these important future connectors to the greater region.



In certain areas, a complete lack of a delineated driveway entrance allows drivers to access U.S. Highway 281 from any direction and at higher rates of speed.



Individual driveways reduce the functional capacity of a roadway while creation of a new local street protects road capacity by providing access at a controlled intersection.

Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions

Complete Streets

Complete streets are those that provide safe access for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are

¹ <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/tsm/>.



able to safely move along and across a complete street. When applied during the design or retrofit of a roadway, this policy will result in a transportation system designed with all users in mind. Benefits of complete streets include:

- More efficient streets that increase the overall capacity of the transportation network;
- Safer streets for walking and bicycling;
- A healthier community by encouraging walking and bicycling;
- Encouraging Marble Falls's youth to walk and bicycle to school, a key strategy to keep kids active and healthy; and
- Families will enjoy lower transportation costs by expanding and enabling choices in transportation.

Context Sensitive Solutions

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) refer to an interdisciplinary approach to design a transportation facility that is sensitive to community values. The policy dictates flexible roadway and development standards so that these facilities can respond to and be developed in harmony with the surrounding economic, social, and environmental context.

Many communities have learned that designing places around the automobile diminishes the quality of life of a community rather than enhancing it. A CSS approach results in roadways that protect and reflect the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and cultural values of the community while also improving or maintaining safety and mobility for roadway users.

CSS is used regularly with highway design and is a policy of the Texas Department of Transportation. Using the CSS approach with highway design helps alleviate the impact large roads have on the natural and human environment.

Alternate Mobility

While local and regional roadways are the foundation for the Marble Falls mobility network, additional modes of travel such as transit, biking, walking, air, and rail travel are important components of the overall system for movement of people and goods. A comprehensive mobility network can improve the quality of life for residents by offering more transportation choices. Furthermore, access to air and rail, in addition to roadway transport, fosters economic competitiveness and is often an important component of attracting business and industry to the area.

Freight Rail

Rail is integral to the community's economic development initiatives. A City of Marble Falls economic development initiative is focused on attracting new businesses to locate in the City. Under the land use aspect of this Plan, the decision to place future industrial land uses in proximity to existing lines on



the north and west sides of the City supports that initiative and was discussed further in the *Land Use, Character, and Design* chapter.

Passenger Rail and Transit-Oriented Development

Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority, also CMTA or CapMetro, the transit authority for the Austin metropolitan area, is advancing commuter rail service in the metropolitan area, extending into the suburban areas including Round Rock, Cedar Park, and as far north as Leander. They are also the owner of the rail lines that extend into Marble Falls.

Previously, the City of Marble Falls' Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and local advocates had been exploring the potential for extending the northwestern CMTA passenger rail service to Marble Falls. As proposed by the City, the route would utilize the existing freight rail spur that enters Marble Falls from the north and serves the existing plant just south of Downtown. An end-of-the-line station could potentially be located at the south end of Downtown allowing passenger rail connectivity to the greater Austin metropolitan area.

While CapMetro is indicating that they are not currently interested in extending its passenger rail service to Marble Falls, it is none-the-less a long-term initiative that could gain favor in the future, particularly as high-speed regional passenger rail lines get built and operated in various parts of Texas. Accordingly, this initiative needs to be identified for future consideration during subsequent Plan updates.

Transit Service

Although Marble Falls' current mobility system does not include regular transit service, the Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) provides demand-responsive service on a prearranged basis to prequalified elderly and low-





CARTS
Capital Area Rural Transportation System
For More Information:
RideCARTS.com
512/476 RIDE (7433)

STOPS & INFO

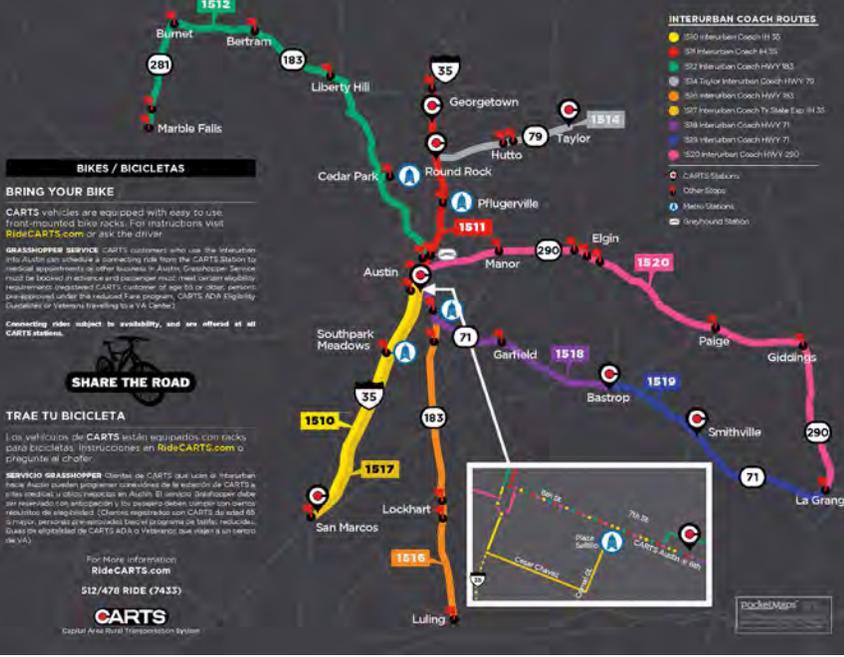
FULL TICKETING BUS STATIONS

- AUSTIN CARTS STATION**
2010 E. 6th St., Austin, TX 78702
- AUSTIN GREYHOUND STATION**
919 E. Koenig Lane, Austin, TX 78751
- BASTROP CARTS STATION**
310 Hospital Dr., Bastrop, TX 78602
- GEORGETOWN CARTS STATION**
3620 S. Austin Ave., Georgetown, TX 78626
- ROUND ROCK CARTS STATION**
402 W. Bowman, Round Rock, TX 78664
- SAN MARCOS CARTS STATION**
388 S. Guadalupe, San Marcos, TX 78666
- SMITHVILLE CARTS STATION**
3200 Northwest Loop 250, Smithville, TX 78957
- TAYLOR CARTS STATION**

STOPS

MUST HAVE EXACT FARE OR TICKET

ACC. ELGIN:
AUSTIN VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC
BERTRAM (SHELL STATION)
BURNET CITY PARKING LOT
DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN
DOWNTOWN HUTTO
ELGIN (MEMORIAL PARK)
ELGIN (VETERANS PARK)
GARFIELD LIBRARY
GIDDINGS (LIBRARY)
HUTTO HOME DEPOT
LA GRANDE DOWNTOWN (COURTHOUSE)
LA GRANDE WAL-MART
LIBERTY HILL (VALERIO STATION)
LOCKHART (CHEV)
LOCKHART (WAL-MART)
LULING (AMERICAN LEGION)
MARBLE FALLS CITY HALL
MARBLE FALLS WAL-MART
PAISLEY (GREYHOUND STATION)
TANGER OUTLET MALL
TAYLOR TEMPLE COLLEGE
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY CLASS (DREA)



The Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) provides demand responsive bus service (see above), regularly scheduled "out-of-town" service to Austin, Georgetown, Round Rock, Temple, and Burnet, and an interurban coach to U.S. Highway 183 (see green route at top).

income residents in Marble Falls and other Burnet County communities. CARTS enables transportation-challenged citizens to get to medical appointments and other necessary errands.

CARTS provides curb-to-curb "local service" for the citizens of Marble Falls where a CARTS bus (see above) picks a rider up at their home, drives them to a destination (e.g., medical appointments, work, shopping, city business, nutrition visits, or any other purpose), and then back home again. This provides essential mobility service for disabled individuals and others requiring special assistance. The service is available Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and requires 24-hour advance notice. CARTS also provides regularly scheduled "out-of-town" service on various days of the week to the cities of Austin, Georgetown, Round Rock, Temple, and Burnet.

CARTS also provides an interurban coach from two stops in Marble Falls through Burnet, Bertram, Liberty Hill, Cedar Park, to a lot on U.S. Highway 183 in north Austin. This provides the citizens of Marble Falls direct access to the Austin metropolitan light-rail system (access is at the Cedar Park stop) and a Greyhound bus terminal (providing bus connectivity nationwide). CARTS has recently leased a plot of City-owned land near the intersection of Avenue H, Broadway Street, and U.S. Highway 281 to serve as the new location for a transit depot (see image at right). The existing building on site is currently being redesigned to provide increased accessibility.



The future CARTS transit depot will be located at the City's historic train depot.

Air Travel

While there are no existing airports within the Marble Falls planning area, there are several located nearby. These include:

- **Horseshoe Bay Airport.** The Horseshoe Bay Airport is owned and operated by Horseshoe Bay Resort, Inc., and is one of the largest private airports in the United States. It includes a 6,000-foot lighted airstrip which can accommodate private aircraft and corporate jets up to a DC-9.² It is located west of the City.
- **Hebert Ranch Airport.** The Hebert Ranch Airport is a privately owned turf runway airport located to the north of the City. This airport is for private use only.
- **Slaughter Ranch Airport.** The Slaughter Ranch Airport is a privately owned turf runway airport located to the south of the City. This airport is for private use only.



Horseshoe Bay Airport
Image courtesy of Bing Maps

As the City continues to move forward with its economic development and tourism improvements, the City will increase its attractiveness as a regional destination. This could in turn increase requests for new private use airports (for aircraft or helicopters) within the City's planning area. Accordingly, the City should consider developing special use regulations to ensure safe use of these facilities and compatibility with nearby land uses.

Electric Vehicles

As the City and country move forward towards a more sustainable future, the use of electric vehicles will continue to grow either faster or slower dependent on the price and volatility of oil. Some of the latest market research shows that plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging equipment will continue to expand to serve the estimated 12 million EVs projected by 2023. While residential chargers are increasingly becoming a commodity, the demand for commercial and/or workplace chargers is more uncertain.³

Ride Sharing Programs

There are currently no ride sharing programs operating in Marble Falls. However, as the population continues to grow, this may become more important to residents. Accordingly, the City will need to develop protective regulations to ensure new ride sharing programs can successfully coexist with traditional taxi services in Marble Falls.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Facilities

Many jurisdictions across the country are increasing their attention to improving the quality of life for their current and future residents, which in turn increases the City's economic competitiveness. This is due to a burgeoning national demand for more bicycle and pedestrian access and community-wide connectivity. In fact, trails and bicycling are the second most popular activity in the United States⁴ and over 47 percent of Americans say they want more facilities in their communities.

² <http://www.horseshoebay.com/airport.html>.
³ Navigant Research. *Revenue from Electric Vehicle Charging Services is Expected to Reach \$2.9 Billion Annually by 2023*. February 19, 2015. (Retrieved from www.navigantresearch.com/newsroom).
⁴ Outdoor Recreation Participation Report. Outdoor Foundation, 2011.



One of the ways this is being accomplished is through improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. The City of Marble Falls Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP) identified cycling and pedestrian trails as a high priority item. Some of Marble Falls' parks currently have trails within them and there is a trail that extends along the east side of Whitman Branch from near Third Street to the baseball fields near Broadway. However, overall the City lacks trails that connect parks to neighborhoods and other community destinations. As part of Chapter 6, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space* (later in this Plan), a more detailed analysis will be undertaken as part of determining the community's priorities for interconnecting the parks and recreation system and recommendations for how to improve bicycle and trail connectivity in the City. The recommendations provided in Chapter 6 will work in coordination with the proposed cross-sections in this chapter. By identifying bicycle accommodation as an important component for future roadway construction and improvement projects in the typical cross-sections (see Figure 5.4, *Typical Cross-Sections*), Marble Falls is providing an additional approach for improving connectivity throughout the City.



The City's existing trail system is well appreciated among residents.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are also an important part of the City's transportation infrastructure as they provide safe pedestrian travel along the City's street system. Sidewalks should be developed in conjunction with all future development in accordance with the established ordinances of the City. Many areas have been developed in the past without the provision of sidewalks. There are areas of residential and commercial concentration that could have the propensity for people to walk to nearby destinations. Often, there are partial or discontinuous sidewalk provisions along one or both sides of a street in these areas of concentration. If completed, these sidewalks would encourage more people to walk to their destinations.

Sidewalks also oftentimes provide the "final connection" from individual parcels to a larger connected network of trails. Since so many existing areas of Marble Falls have not been developed with pedestrian sidewalk accommodations, sidewalk connectivity and recommendations will be addressed in this chapter and will be coordinated with improvements to a City-wide trail system that will also be explored in Chapter 6, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*, as a means to provide key linkages to the overall planned trail system and important key destinations in the City.



While outlying areas are often lacking sidewalks, sidewalks along Main Street in the City's Downtown area provide pedestrian connections to and through the area.

Mobility Policies & Recommendations

Policies

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future, this Comprehensive Plan must be considered and implemented each day when decisions are made by City staff and elected and appointed officials. As part of this daily decision making (whether on new plans (e.g., utility plans), budgeting, staffing, capital improvement programming, or on new land development applications being considered), the following transportation policies should be considered:

1. Create a mobility network of interconnected activity centers, corridors, and neighborhoods through a well-connected street layout that provides multiple route options to external destinations. This includes protection and development of future rights-of-way designated on the City's Thoroughfare Plan.
2. Adhere to "Complete Streets" principles, meaning new street and thoroughfare development or redevelopment provides for mobility options for all users, not just vehicular traffic.
3. Promote efficient and continuous regional connectivity through support, partnerships, and ongoing dialogue with Burnet County and the surrounding municipalities.
4. Protect the functional capacity of roadways in the City and ETJ by adhering to established access management strategies.
5. Utilize the established street cross-sections as part of all new road development and redevelopment.
6. Consider context sensitive design (CSS) as a means to ensure roadway improvements are appropriate for the character of the community or environment it serves.
7. Annually budget funding to adequately maintain the City's transportation system so that it remains safe and functionally capable of serving the transportation purpose it was intended for.
8. Optimize the number of street, sidewalk, and trail connection points to the existing street pattern and the emerging trail system.
9. Reduce truck traffic through Downtown and encourage alternative routes outside of established neighborhoods.
10. Promote improved safety and accessibility in established neighborhoods by allowing traffic calming and other design techniques throughout the City and ETJ. A variety of traffic calming methods are illustrated in Figure 5.5, *Traffic Calming Measures*, on the following page.

Recommendations

Objective 5.1 – Maximize coordination and partnerships with state, regional and other local partners to implement transportation improvements in an expedient and cost effective manner.

As identified in the analysis of existing transportation conditions earlier in this chapter, there is some general community concern regarding the existing conditions of the City's transportation system. Indeed, out of all the services

TRAFFIC CALMING

Figure 5.5, Traffic Calming Measures

Traffic calming involves the deliberate reduction of vehicular speed and/or cut-through volumes through the modification of street alignments and the installation of barriers. By “calming” the traffic, all system users (i.e., vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians) are provided greater safety, negative impacts of vehicles on neighborhoods are reduced, and non-vehicular transportation and street uses are encouraged. Examples of traffic calming measures include roundabouts, raised crosswalks, sidewalk bulb-outs, on-street parking, chicanes, and center islands, among others.

Raised Crosswalk¹



¹ Image courtesy of Richard Drdul - Traffic Calming Flickr Photoset, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3759526>

Sidewalk Bulb-out²



² Image courtesy of Richard Drdul - Traffic Calming Flickr Photoset, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3759499>

Chicane³



³ Image courtesy of Richard Drdul - Traffic Calming Flickr Photoset, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3759526>

Center Island⁴



⁴ Image courtesy of Richard Drdul - Traffic Calming Flickr Photoset, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3759523>



A successful transportation system provides balance between accessibility and mobility to create safety and efficiency in the movement of people and goods.

provided by the City, the provision of transportation-related services received the lowest satisfaction ratings. This clearly signifies that this particular issue is on the minds of the citizens and is affecting quality of life.

Fortunately, due to Marble Falls' status of being the regional employment and commercial hub of the Highland Lakes region, there are also a lot of interested stakeholders who have an interest in the success of the City's transportation system. This provides the potential opportunity for the City to leverage partnerships and resources in the name of improving the entire region.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.1.1 - Actively participate in state and regional transportation planning activities to promote funding and other improvements that benefit Marble Falls.

Being the newest member and northern most exurban community in the CAMPO region, the City needs to proactively participate, monitor, and lobby for money being competitively divided across the region. As set out in Table 5.2, *Regional Transportation Plan Projects Through 2040*, on the next page, CAMPO has identified a series of transportation improvements through 2040. Most of these projects are slated for 2040. These projects need a champion during subsequent updates to the short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP includes a four-year list of projects and is updated every two years. The City should also actively seek out other state or regional strategic planning groups that can aid the City as it pursues the funding and implementation of transportation improvements.

Action 5.1.2 - Proactively pursue mutually beneficial transportation projects with other area partners.

Serving the transportation needs of citizens, workers, and visitors to Marble Falls is one of those issues that does not stop at the City limits. As such, there is



Table 5.2, Regional Transportation Plan Projects Through 2040.

PROJECT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED YEAR	COST (IN MILLIONS OF \$)
Arterial Street Improvement Program	--	--	--	87.7
Arterial Street Improvement Program	--	--	--	12.0
Fixed Routes - Burnet County Interurban Routes	Burnet County	Implement a series of fixed routes to connect cities in Burnet County	2029	5.1
Intercity/Express Bus - Marble Falls to Austin	Marble Falls to Austin	Implement Express Bus Service	2035	4.3
Intermodal Facility - Marble Falls Station	Marble Falls	Upgrades to the current transit facility in Marble Falls to meet with ADA compliance.	Design in Progress	0.5
US 281	US 281 at Resource Pkwy	Construct signal	2040	0.6
US 281	2nd St - FM 1431 in Marble Falls	Increase safety by controlling access through addition of curb and gutter and sidewalk	2040	1.2
US 281	Lantana - Nature Heights in Marble Falls	Increase safety by controlling access through addition of curb and gutter and sidewalk	2040	1.4
US 281	FM 1431 - Lantana in Marble Falls	Increase safety by controlling access through addition of curb and gutter and sidewalk	2040	1.4
US 281	at FM 1431 in Marble Falls	Intersection improvements (excluding SE corner) including radius, ADA sidewalks and ped heads (pedestrian specific signals)	2040	3.9
US 281	at FM 1431 in Marble Falls	Intersection improvements (SE corner only) including radius, ADA sidewalks and ped heads (pedestrian specific signals)	2040	1.3
US 281	left turn lane from RM 2147E - SH 71	Reconstruct - 5 lanes, shoulders	2040	21.3
FM 1431	Marble Falls east county line - east of Sycamore Creek	Realign roadway including add 14' left turn lane and 10' shoulders	2040	42.6
FM 2147	3.2 miles west of US 281 (east city limit of Cottonwood Shores) - 0.5 miles west of US 281	Rehabilitate pavement and add shoulders	2040	35.9
FM 2147	at Flatrock Creek	Replace low water crossing bridge	2040	2.6

opportunity to proactively coordinate with other area partners to ensure more regional projects get implemented. In particular, the City could partner with other area municipalities such as Meadowlakes and Horseshoe Bay, as well as the Marble Falls Independent School District.

Objective 5.2. Maintain the City's transportation network as a well-functioning system.

A well-maintained and managed transportation network provides for the safety of system users. As such, it is important to balance building new roadways and retrofitting existing ones with maintaining the existing street inventory. During the engagement and analysis portions of the planning process, it was noted that there is a demand and need for street repairs throughout the community. This was the second highest priority noted by survey and open house participants. Additionally, when asked if they would support paying slightly higher fees or taxes for a variety of priorities, addressing the need for street repair and replacement received the greatest amount of support, with almost 62 percent of respondents indicating they would strongly support or support paying slightly higher funds to have this issue addressed. Considering the potential financial implications of this support, this strongly illustrates the community's desire for an improved street maintenance program.

In order to provide a well-maintained transportation network which contributes to motorist, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety; provides for efficient daily connectivity to places of work and play; and strongly impacts to the overall impression of the City for both residents and visitors, it is essential that adequate funding and staffing levels are provided to the appropriate City departments.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.2.1 - Ensure that adequate funding is dedicated for the maintenance of the City's road network.

In order to ensure that the City's existing road network can be adequately maintained in a routine, timely fashion, the City should analyze the need for additional street maintenance budget. The street maintenance budget must be adequate to cover operations and maintenance, transportation capital improvement projects, and the manpower necessary to upkeep the City's transportation network in a well-functioning state.

Based on the determined need for additional budget, consider utilizing a potential increase in sales tax dollars, the general fund, and/or the establishment of a transportation utility fee to help generate the street maintenance budget. The budget should then be used to address a prioritized list of maintenance needs which are identified in a survey of the City's streets (see Action 5.2.2).

**TRANSPORTATION
UTILITY FEE**

"A transportation utility fee is a fee assessed to residents and businesses, based on the traffic levels generated by each dwelling unit or business."¹

¹ <https://www.austintexas.gov/faq/what-transportation-user-fee>



A routine street repaving program helps maintain the City's streets in safe, well-functioning order. Image courtesy of Billy Hathorn. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Street_paving_in_Laredo,_TX,_2015_IMG_5515.JPG

Action 5.2.2 – Adopt a comprehensive routine street evaluation and maintenance program.

Evaluation and maintenance of the City's street network should be done in a comprehensive manner rather than as piecemeal operations when needs arise. As such, the City should consider developing a comprehensive street maintenance program which anticipates forthcoming maintenance needs based on the existing condition of roadways as well as anticipating the next time a recently repaired roadway will require maintenance. To allow for an overall understanding of the City's street maintenance needs, the City should conduct a windshield survey (i.e., observations made from a moving vehicle) of the street network once every three years with a more cursory overview analysis on an annual basis. Streets should be evaluated, categorized based on current condition, prioritized, and depicted on a color-coded map based on level of need and thus, priority. A list detailing the repairs and maintenance necessary should accompany the map. This windshield survey can be conducted in-house or the City can consider hiring an outside consultant. During the annual budget process, this prioritized list should be analyzed and a five-year transportation capital maintenance program should be maintained and updated.

Action 5.2.3 – Adopt a Street Repaving Program.

When considering street maintenance, it is common for municipalities to adopt a street repaving program which includes routinely repaving the City's street network based on a cyclical schedule. The City should consider developing a routine repaving program for all streets within the City limits. A generally appropriate time frame includes repaving approximately 10 percent of City streets once every seven to 10 years. By cycling through the City in this fashion, the road network can be perpetually maintained at a high-quality level. Preparation for repaving, including patching, leveling, etc. can be completed up to a year ahead of time to allow for a faster, more efficient repaving process.

Objective 5.3. Plan and expand the transportation network concurrent with growth.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, dissatisfaction with the state of the City's streets and sidewalks and the growing amount of traffic congestion was one of the most insistent and frequently heard comments that came out of engagement portion of this planning process.

This includes both current congestion and safety issues in certain locations as well as a need to plan ahead for the increase in traffic that accompanies the growth that everyone knows is coming. In order to maintain a high quality of life for residents and to remain competitive, local and regional transportation improvements will be needed. This does not mean that this growth has to come solely at the expense of the City budget and loss of community character. To the contrary, efforts can be made to ensure that new roads, particularly new arterial and collector roads, are properly planned, designed, and constructed concurrent with development. This requires proactive planning and in some cases, tough decision-making, as part of City capital improvement projects and private sector initiated development approvals.

As part of the analysis of the City's existing transportation system conditions and Thoroughfare Plan, it was apparent that many community-wide thoroughfare connections have already been missed and stronger adherence to the Thoroughfare Plan was needed.

Indeed, the future connectivity of the City, and therefore the ability to get in, through, and around the City, can largely fail or succeed long before the initial construction begins since so much of the corridor's potential is derived from its available rights-of-way width and opportunity for further extension elsewhere in the City. Therefore, thoroughfare planning and future rights-of-way protection is of the utmost importance to the City's long-term future.

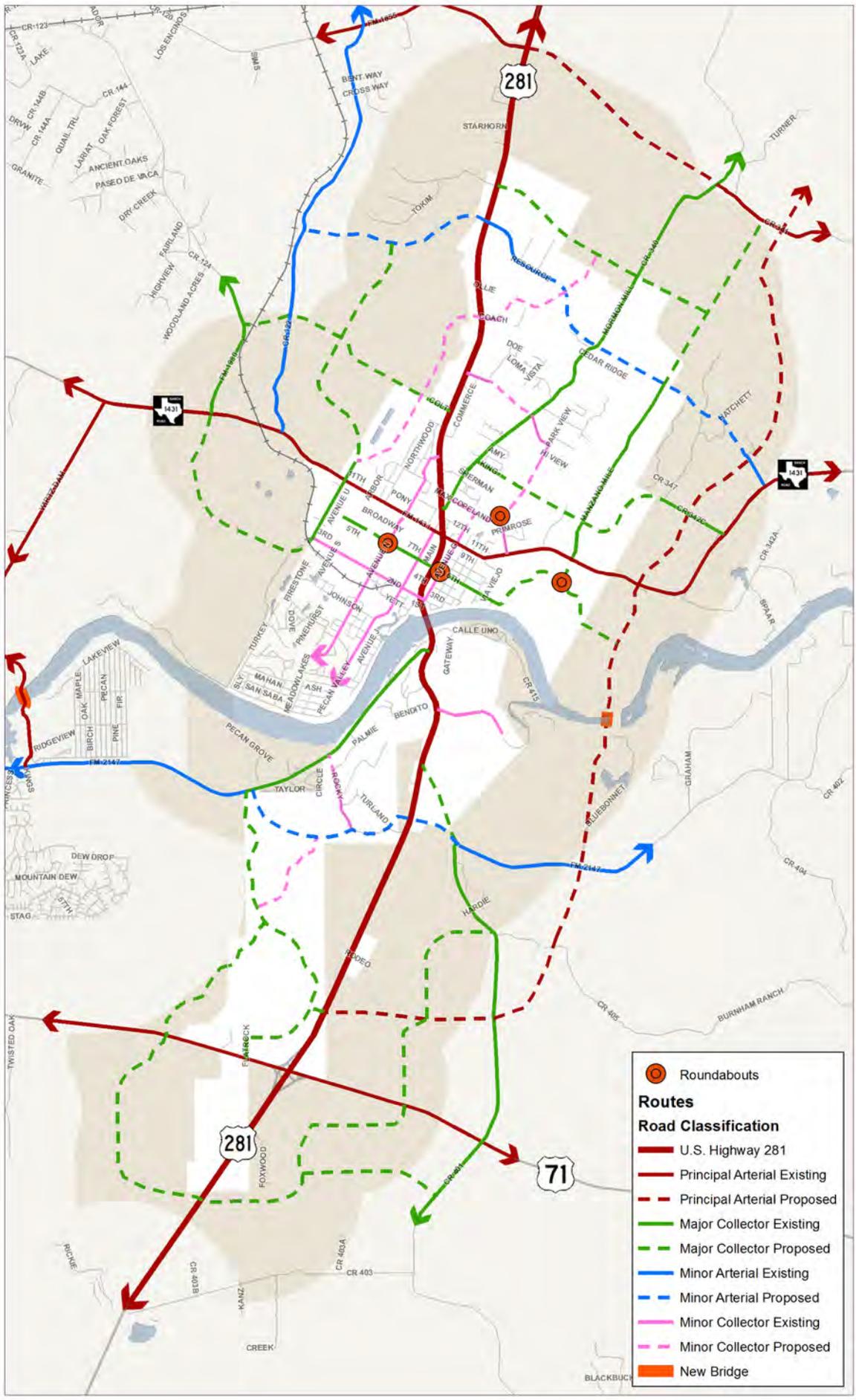
The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.3.1 – Utilize the Thoroughfare Plan as a prerequisite to decision-making regarding development proposals.

Utilize Map 5.1, *Thoroughfare Plan*, on the next page, to address transportation improvement needs and to preserve future rights-of-way needed to accommodate long-term development of the City's arterial and collector network. While the Thoroughfare Plan does not show design and construction alignments, it does show general locations of essential transportation connections that are needed to maintain a functioning and connected network over time. The protection of these alignments and acquisition of the necessary width of the right-of-way cannot be overstated. Consequently, the City should immediately consider modifications to the City's development regulations to require an evaluation of the Thoroughfare Plan prior to approving development or building permit applications within the City limits and subdivision approvals in the City's ETJ.



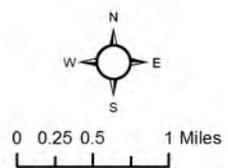
Map 5.1, Thoroughfare Plan

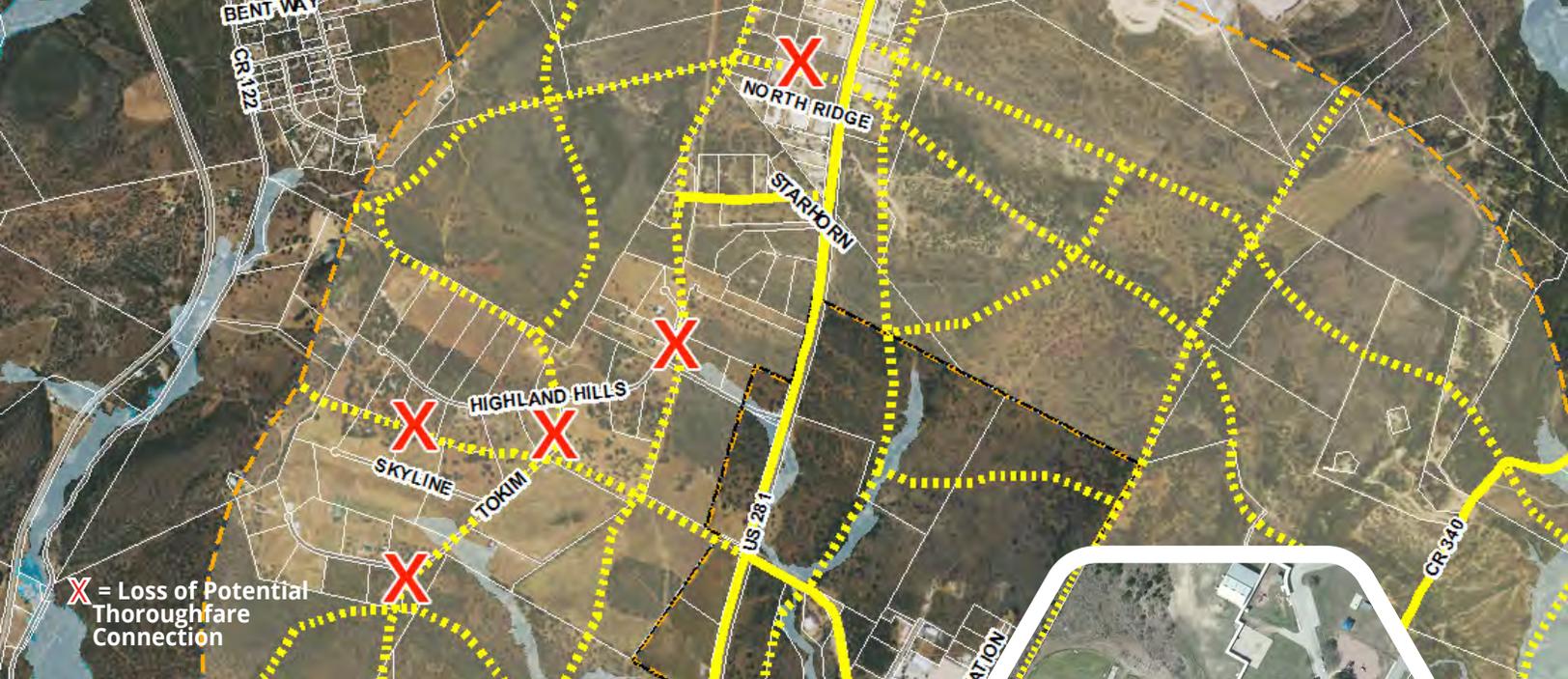


- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - ETJ
 - ++ Railroad
 - Roads

- Roundabouts
- Routes**
- Road Classification**
- U.S. Highway 281
- Principal Arterial Existing
- - - Principal Arterial Proposed
- Major Collector Existing
- - - Major Collector Proposed
- Minor Arterial Existing
- - - Minor Arterial Proposed
- Minor Collector Existing
- - - Minor Collector Proposed
- New Bridge

Note: Exact thoroughfare delineation subject to final design and engineering plans.





Previous plat approvals of residential and commercial subdivisions in the ETJ effectively negates the possibility of establishing adequate thoroughfare connectivity in the northwest portion of the City. As the continues to grow, these connections could have provided additional thoroughfare options and decreased congestion on U.S. Highway 281.

By way of example, one area where a perpetual loss of connectivity occurred was in the northwest portion of the ETJ. As seen in the photo at right, a platted subdivision (near Highland Hills and Tomkin Roads) now effectively prevents the development of at least four identified segments on the City's previous Thoroughfare Plan. The need to reference the Thoroughfare Plan during proposed development approval processes is particularly true for residential development as community opposition to a new road going through existing platted lots with houses is likely. A second example is an identified thoroughfare connection through the Marble Falls ISD administrative complex and buildings. These are but two examples of many where existing conditions would make the future previously proposed thoroughfare connections unlikely. This does not negate the possibility of future revitalization efforts or redevelopment allowing future connections. It does, however, necessitate the proposed thoroughfare system to be planned and designed in a manner that is the least disruptive to existing platted subdivisions, development, and buildings.



Creating a future thoroughfare connection, even in the name of community-wide connectivity, has limited potential through established civic institutions such as the Marble Falls ISD administrative complex.

Action 5.3.2 - Evaluate the near- and or mid-term potential to establish specific segments of the Thoroughfare Plan to proactively alleviate traffic impacts, facilitate areas of new growth, or to connect key destination points.

In most cases, new thoroughfares are oftentimes constructed as part of private development of new subdivisions or nonresidential development. A city may also self-initiate the development of a new thoroughfare segment either on their own or as part of a public/private partnership. This may be to spur new economic growth or for other purposes. The establishment of the Manzano Mile thoroughfare is a recent example of this. In other cases, the city may identify priority thoroughfare connections, which, if implemented, would help to reduce



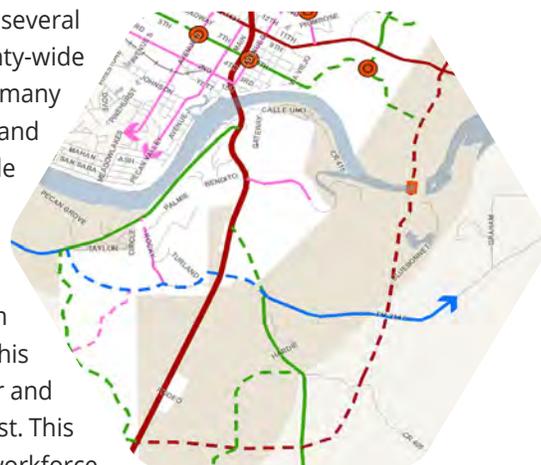
congestion on other roadways. This Plan identifies certain segments which the community has indicated are priority connections for the future. As set out in Map 5.2, *Priority Thoroughfare Improvements*, several segments should be evaluated for their near- or mid-term potential to be established. This evaluation should include potential partnerships (e.g., TxDOT, Burnet County, private development, etc.), the availability of funding or some other support, among other considerations, to determine if one or more of these can be added and prioritized in the City's capital improvement program. These priority segments include:

- Creating an east-west thoroughfare extension from Nature Heights Drive to Mormon Mill Road;
- Extending King Road to provide east-west access from U.S. Highway 281 to beyond Manzano Mile;
- Creating a local alternate to U.S. Highway 281 using Avenue J from FM 1431 to Second Street;
- Extending Flatrock Boulevard to a new collector leading through potential development areas just north of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center;
- Supporting county efforts to realign FM 2147, just west of Taylor Circle, to provide a direct connection across U.S. Highway 281 to the FM 2147 segment on the other side;
- Supporting county efforts to add a loop leading north from FM 1431 on the western side of the City, east along an extension of Resource Parkway, and rejoining FM 1431 east of the City limits;
- Supporting county efforts to add an additional bridge across Lake Marble Falls to the east of U.S. Highway 281; and
- Supporting county efforts to add a bridge connection on Wirtz Dam Road.

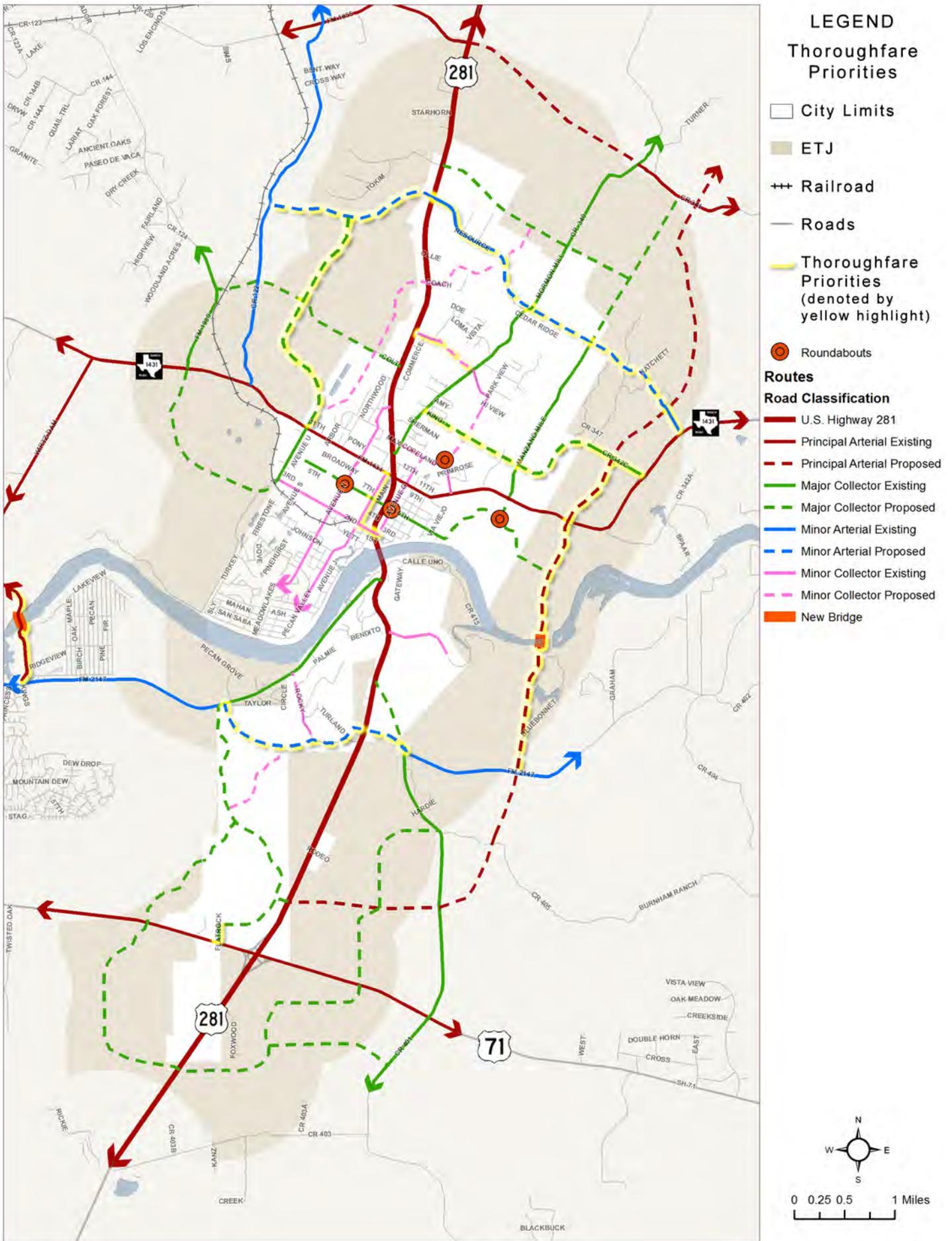
Action 5.3.3 - Work with area partners to implement long-term improvements to the City's and region's major arterial network.

As identified in the county's Transportation Master Plan, there are several identified arterial connections that are important to ensure county-wide connectivity as the county continues to grow in the future. While many of these are located in the county, several reach into the City's ETJ and all affect mobility options for citizens, workers, and visitors to Marble Falls. Consequently, the City should consider supporting the county and other regional partners (as feasible and necessary) to implement the projects that directly benefit the City. These could include the establishment of a bridge connection across Lake Marble Falls from Wirtz Dam Road and associated road improvements up to FM 1431. This would create an essential second connection across the Colorado River and provide better access into Marble Falls from the communities to the west. This could be particularly beneficial since a large portion of Marble Falls' workforce commutes in from the greater region. This could also provide potential long-term support for the county's proposed bypass # 1 (see Figure 5.1, *Burnet County Thoroughfare Plan* and Figure 5.6, *Burnet County's Proposed Bypass # 1*, at right). While community support for this proposal has divided opinions regarding its

Figure 5.6, Burnet County's Proposed Bypass # 1



Map 5.2, Priority Thoroughfare Improvements

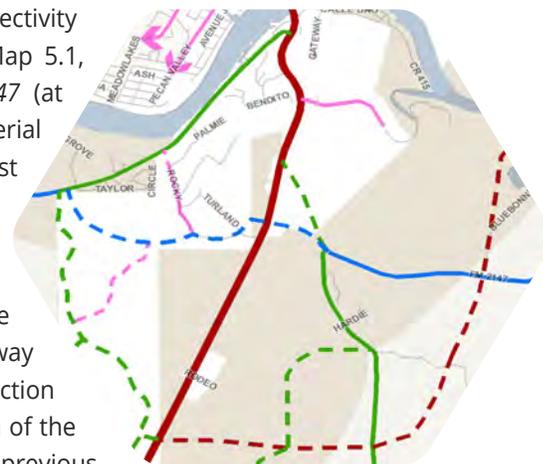


potential benefit to the City, if the county moves forward with it, the City needs to play a commanding role in the discussions particularly since portions of it lie within the City's ETJ, it connect into the City limits, and provides a third, eastern connection across the Colorado River. If done correctly, this could provide beneficial access into the City from areas east while providing an alternate route for heavy truck traffic that increases congestion along U.S. Highway 281 through Downtown.

Action 5.3.4 – Work with area partners to implement long-term improvements to the City's and region's minor arterial network.

There are several minor arterial connections that provide essential connectivity to the City's and region's major arterial network. As identified in Map 5.1, *Thoroughfare Plan*, and Figure 5.7, *Proposed Realignment of FM 2147* (at right), one essential east-west connection is FM 2147. This minor arterial connection provides connectivity from the communities to the west across the southern, developing portion of the City. As identified on the City's previous Thoroughfare Plan and Map 5.1, improving the alignment of FM 2147 to make a direct connection across U.S. Highway 281 makes it a much more viable route. As new development pressure occurs in this area, the opportunity to acquire the necessary rights-of-way could quickly disappear unless a proactive approach is taken. This action also includes support for a second minor arterial in the northern area of the City. As set on the county's Transportation Master Plan and in the City's previous Thoroughfare Plan, this could provide an east-west connection from the county's bypass through the City to FM 1855 and areas west.

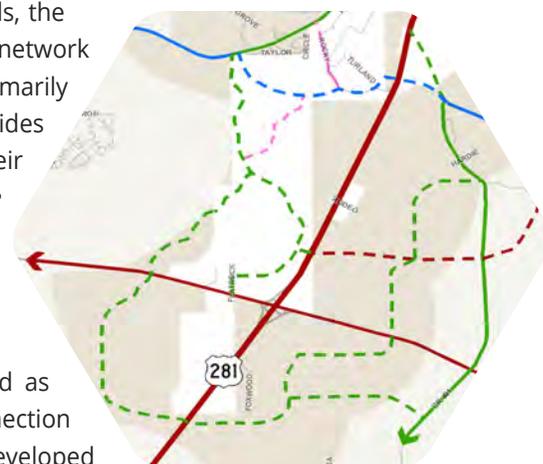
Figure 5.7, Proposed Realignment of FM 2147



Action 5.3.5 – Ensure implementation of the major collector thoroughfare system concurrent with new development.

While not intended to carry as much traffic as major or minor arterials, the major collector thoroughfare system is just as important. It is part of this network that provides the essential cross-town alternative connections which primarily serve the local transportation needs of the City. In other words, it provides the citizens of Marble Falls choices in how they internally get to their destinations throughout the City. As identified on Map 5.1, *Thoroughfare Plan*, the major collector thoroughfare system provides both east-west and north-south connectivity as an alternative to the existing, congested U.S. Highway 281 and FM 1431 regional thoroughfares.

Figure 5.8, Proposed Major Collector Loop South Marble Falls



In many cases, the major collector thoroughfare system is designed as a series of interconnected loops that provide a continuous connection throughout the City. One such internal loop will exist in the largely undeveloped areas south of the Colorado River (see Figure 5.8, *Proposed Major Collector Loop South Marble Falls*). As seen in other cases, the major collector thoroughfare system provides key out-of-city connections to the larger county thoroughfare system (e.g., Mormon Mill Road north towards County Road 340).

Action 5.3.6 - Proactively develop and improve an alternate local connector system to provide additional transportation choices for the citizens of Marble Falls.

While the major and minor arterials and major collectors serve both regional and local transportation needs, the development and improvement of certain local streets is recommended to establish a series of local connectors as an alternative to U.S. Highway 281. Denoted in pink in Figure 5.9, *Proposed Alternative Local Connector Network*, is a system of streets in the core of Marble Falls that consist of improved existing streets (e.g., Avenue G) and development of new connections which create a small internal network of streets that parallel the City's primary and congested north-south U.S. Highway 281 corridor. See also Figures 5.10, *Avenue G Proposed Improvements*, on the next page for a representative example of the types of improvements that can serve the needs of the citizens of Marble Falls.

Figure 5.9, Proposed Alternative Local Connector Network



Figure 5.10, Avenue G Proposed Improvements

One transportation issue that garnered a lot of public input was congestion along U.S. Highway 281 and the need for additional transportation options to improve local connectivity. While periodic recalibration of signal timing along U.S. Highway 281 can greatly improve and/or maintain through traffic, there will always be competition between a workforce commuting out to the greater regions and locals trying to move in and around the City.

One option is to improve a series of streets, like Avenue G, to improve local transportation choices. As illustrated in 5.10.1, *Existing Ave. G Traffic Flow*, Avenue G's traffic flow is oriented towards each street it intersects. In other words, traffic along Ave. G stops or yields each time it comes to a cross street. As proposed in 5.10.2, *Proposed Ave. G Traffic Flow*, the traffic flow could be reoriented in favor of Ave. G so that northbound traffic could exit off of U.S. Highway 281 on the one-way portion of Ave. G near the Visitor's Center and proceed north through a roundabout (illustrated in 5.10.3, *Schematic Improvement to Ave. G* and 5.10.4, *Illustrative Ave. G Roundabout Improvement*) without having to stop until FM 1431. Southbound traffic could flow south on Ave. G without stopping, except needing to turn right onto 2nd Street to exit back onto U.S. Highway 281 or cross into Downtown Marble Falls.

Ave. G itself would be redeveloped with two 12-foot free flowing travel lanes, two 8-foot parking lanes and two 5-foot on-street bike lanes. As part of the Future Land Use Plan, this segment of Ave. G would complete its already started transition from residential to commercial land uses. The standards for this area could be calibrated to maintain the residential character and appearance of these properties by requiring on-street parking (or small lots in the side or rear of the property), a residential appearance and scaled building, street trees, etc. The existing homes would transition great to professional service offices (e.g., dentists, lawyers, architects, etc.) among other similar commercial ventures appropriate for local businesses.

Ave. G would then be extended up to areas north via a new connection to Max Copeland Drive, Park View Drive, Mormon Mill Road, etc. providing a parallel connector option to U.S. Highway 281 for locals.

5.10.1, EXISTING AVE. G TRAFFIC FLOW



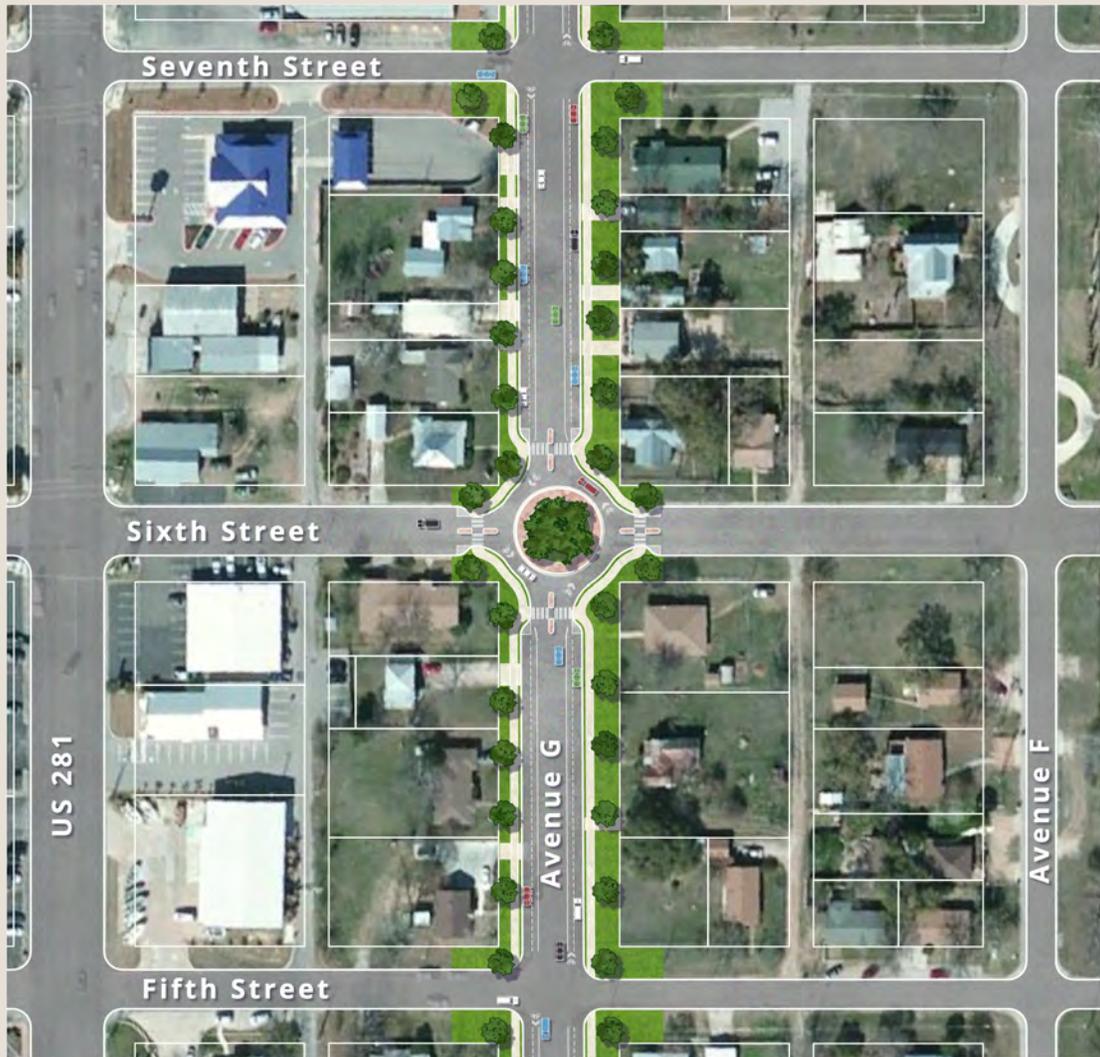
■ ■ ■ Primary Traffic Flow

5.10.2, PROPOSED AVE. G TRAFFIC FLOW



■ ■ ■ Secondary Traffic Flow

5.10.3, SCHEMATIC IMPROVEMENT TO AVE. G



5.10.4, ILLUSTRATIVE AVE. G ROUNDABOUT IMPROVEMENT



Action 5.3.7 – Address intersection congestion and safety concerns at Mission Hills Drive/Mormon Mill Road/U.S. Highway 281.

The Mission Hills Drive/Mormon Mill Road/U.S. Highway 281 intersection has been identified time and again as an area of key safety concerns for motorists. Concerns at this intersection relate to vehicle queue lengths inhibiting access to the adjacent Home Depot as well as motorists ignoring existing regulatory traffic signage. The City previously engaged in a transportation planning study to develop alternatives for this intersection. However, the alternatives developed were not strongly supported by City staff. In order to address the ongoing safety concerns at this intersection, the City should consider engaging in another transportation study to identify at least two viable transportation solutions. Solutions should include both short-term and long-term alternatives which consider short-term options such as restriping, signage, etc., and long-term options such as roadway realignment and new roads. The ultimate configuration of this intersection should consider the City's Thoroughfare Plan to address long-term Citywide connectivity and implementation of the improvements should be added to the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Action 5.3.8 – Adopt criteria to determine an objective approach regarding which street cross-section is appropriate for each functional classification as set out on the Thoroughfare Plan.

Identified in this Plan, and the previous plan, are a series of cross-sections which establish potential street configurations for each functional classification of roadway (see Figure 5.4, Typical Cross Sections and Table 5.1, Roadway Functional Classification Standards). In the City's subdivision regulations, Section 825 (m), Streets, of the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances, it specifies that "Street right-of-way widths shall be as shown on the thoroughfare plan and as defined by the corresponding roadway cross-sections on the thoroughfare plan and in the city's TCSS manual." On page 16-1 of the TCSS manual,¹ it specifies that right-of-way (ROW) specifications are set out in the subdivisions regulations. This discrepancy highlights that there is not a firm policy (or regulation) that is specifying the intended and allowable configuration of new roadways in the City. As such, it is recommended that the City update both the TCSS manual and subdivision regulations to clearly identify the default street cross-section for each type of functional classification within the City. In addition, the City should consider adopting a series of criteria which objectively identifies when changes to the default cross-section are allowed and what those changes can include. Implementation of cross-sections should be consistent across publicly and privately constructed road improvements and retrofits throughout the City and ETJ.

The changes to the TCSS manual, subdivision regulations, and the creation of criteria identifying alternate allowable cross-section configurations should be prepared using the Complete Streets policy (see also Action 5.5.1) and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) design allowances. This will ensure that new and

¹ The TCSS manual is the "Standard Construction Specifications of the City of Marble Falls" adopted March 1995 and last revised July 2003.

redeveloped streets incorporate accommodations for all users, and provide flexibility to protect and enhance environmental and historical features including mature trees, one-of-a-kind structures, etc. This will help to extend the City's thoroughfare network to all users while protecting the quality and character of the streets it passes through.

Objective 5.4. Implement and encourage traffic management strategies throughout the City.

Although the City has not yet reached its previous traffic volumes identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, it is anticipated that the opening of the Baylor Scott & White Medical Center will spur new growth opportunities throughout the City. These will most likely be in the form of new residential development and jobs. The City has also been making improvements to Downtown which will continue to increase the number of visitors to that area. Each of these will correspondingly also increase traffic volumes and congestion in the area.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.4.1 – Proactively coordinate with TxDOT to implement access management strategies and improvements along U.S. Highway 281.

Previous discussions with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have indicated that it is in their plan of action to implement access management strategies along U.S. Highway 281 through the northern portion of the City. As identified earlier in this chapter, there were several segments where the current interaction between the roadway and adjacent properties decreased the functional capacity of the roadway. What has not been as clear is what types of improvements TxDOT is willing to implement. Since the character of this important north-south corridor is so vital to the City's future as an economic and tourism hub, it is essential that the enhancements improve as many of the problems within the public rights-of-way that are warranted and feasible.

As such, the City should consider developing a complete plan of action as to the types of improvements envisioned by the City and where those improvements should take place. At a minimum, driveways should be removed and replaced with more defined access points. However, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to totally change the character of this corridor. So, in addition to access management strategies (e.g., closing driveways, left-hand turn lanes, etc.), the City should lobby TxDOT to also consider the addition of sidewalks (to City specifications set out Action 5.5.6, later in this chapter), street lighting, and pedestrian crossing improvements such as crosswalks, pedestrian signal crossing infrastructure, and ped heads (pedestrian specific signals). The City could also approach TxDOT about the possibility of installing medians throughout the designated Downtown area to improve the quality and character of this predominantly pedestrian zone.

In order to best leverage assets, the City should consider evaluating the possibility of undertaking multiple types of projects (e.g., sidewalk, street improvements,



trails, etc.) with multiple funding sources (e.g., City funds, grant funding) simultaneously to create comprehensive community upgrades.

Action 5.4.2 – Establish new regulatory provisions identifying a potential truck route in and near Downtown Marble Falls.

One of the concerns identified by the community during early public engagement efforts was the issue of heavy truck traffic being allowed in the original township area (i.e., west of U.S. Highway 281 and south of FM 1431). As such, the City should consider adding new provisions to the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances which specify defined truck routes in the City and which streets do not allow truck traffic. As part of the development of these post-adoption regulatory provisions, commercial truck traffic larger than a class 5 box truck, with the exclusion of buses and refuse collection vehicles, should be prohibited from entering the area now defined by the City's Downtown Master Plan and Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district as heavy truck traffic is detrimental to the pedestrian and other economic development actions being considered by the City in this area. In addition, due to the proposed roundabout identified on the Thoroughfare Plan for Avenue N and Sixth Street, heavy truck traffic should be prohibited on that street.

Action 5.4.3 – Evaluate the potential of improving identified low water crossings as a means to improve City-wide connectivity during heavy rains or floods.

As identified in the Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study Final Report, there were several identified low water crossings that, during times of heavy rains or flooding, would impede traffic flow in and through the City. In order to mitigate the worst of these crossings, the community identified several that should be prioritized for improvement as funding becomes available. These include:

- Main and Broadway;
- Broadway between Avenue L and N;
- Mission Hill Drive;
- Avenue N, south of the railroad tracks; and
- Nature Heights Drive.

Low water crossings and other drainage issues will be evaluated further in Chapter 7, *Public Facilities and Services*.

Objective 5.5. Explore opportunities to improve connectivity from final destinations (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, etc.) to a larger City-wide pedestrian and bicycle network.

Many of the older areas of Marble Falls were developed during a time where the predominant transportation focus was on accommodating the vehicle. Consequently, many of the City's established residential and commercial areas contain a low level of pedestrian accommodation. More recently, however, the City has been recommitting its efforts to create a stronger pedestrian network.

By way of example, the City has made several recent sidewalk improvements in and around Downtown and along the Manzano Mile corridor. On the private side, several new subdivisions (e.g., La Ventana, Wildflower, and Woodland Park) have included an internal system of sidewalks that is being established by the developer on entryways and in common areas and later by residential builders who are installing them on a lot-by-lot basis in conjunction with building construction.

In response to changes in nationwide preferences, more and more cities are understanding that a transportation system is not complete unless it meets the needs of all travelers. In this regard, “Complete Streets” are designed equally for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians where each are able to travel safely between areas of destination throughout the city. Today, changing conditions and community preferences are calling for even more increased attention to this issue. For these reasons, and more, it becomes part of the City’s overall economic competitiveness when compared to neighboring jurisdictions who may be doing a better (or worse) job providing the quality of life amenities that perspective residents are looking for. In Marble Falls, the City preferences for improved pedestrian and bicycle accommodations are similar to national trends where by over 60 percent of the people who responded to the online community survey indicated that this was very important or important to address. As such, the City will need to move forward with a plan of action to increase the overall bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and accommodations within the City.

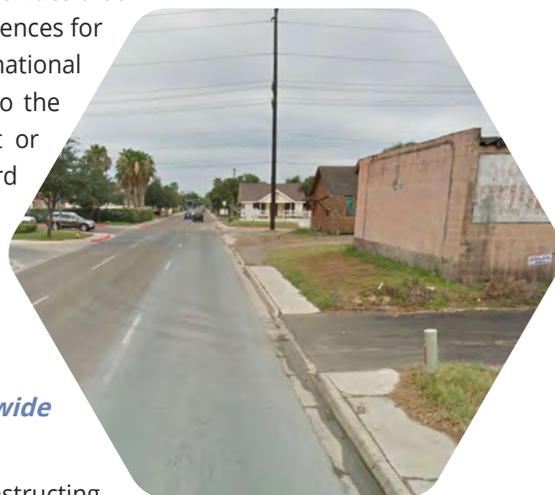
The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.5.1 – Adopt and ensure implementation of a Citywide “Complete Streets” policy.

Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy and commit to designing and constructing “Complete Streets” in the remaining areas of new development (and in any area undergoing revitalization or redevelopment). This will provide for the mobility and safety of all users of the system, rather than just vehicular traffic. A “Complete Streets” approach may be more problematic to implement on already established thoroughfares, however, it should be able to be applied during road reconstruction and/or streetscape improvement projects, where feasible and applicable. On thoroughfares that are constrained by narrow rights-of-way, only some “Complete Street” features (e.g., adding sidewalks) may be feasible through a redesign and retrofitting process.

Action 5.5.2 – Compile a detailed inventory of the existing sidewalk system throughout the City and ETJ.

Compile and map a detailed inventory of all existing sidewalk and crosswalk segments in the City. The inventory should include the type of construction materials used (e.g., asphalt/concrete, etc.), width, presence or absence



Illustrative example where an existing street (top photo) has been retrofitted with “Complete Street” accommodations as part of a reconstruction project within the City’s right-of-way.



of a landscape buffer between back of curb and sidewalk, the presence of impediments to travel (e.g., utility poles, landscaping, etc.), compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations and a condition assessment. This information should be mapped in Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software and should be used to facilitate the creation of a prioritized improvement program.

Action 5.5.3 – Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan separately, or in conjunction with a Citywide Trails Master Plan.

Using the detailed inventory compiled in Action 5.5.2, identify and prioritize key sidewalk segments along arterial and collector roadways which create the greatest potential to improve pedestrian connectivity to key destinations within the City. These key pedestrian destinations include Downtown, parks, trails, and schools. As set out on Map 5.3, *Pedestrian Improvement Opportunity Areas*, a 1/4 mile buffer has been applied to these destinations to determine the areas of greatest overlap. As a priority for funding, the City should try to maximize funding in areas that have the greatest impact to improve connectivity. As seen on Map 5.3, *Pedestrian Improvement Opportunity Areas*, the darker the brown shading, the more overlap there is of the 1/4 mile walkable distance from key destinations. As part of a Sidewalk Master Plan, or in conjunction with a Trails Master Plan, the City should identify certain sidewalk and/or crosswalk projects which could be included in a future Capital Improvement Plan.

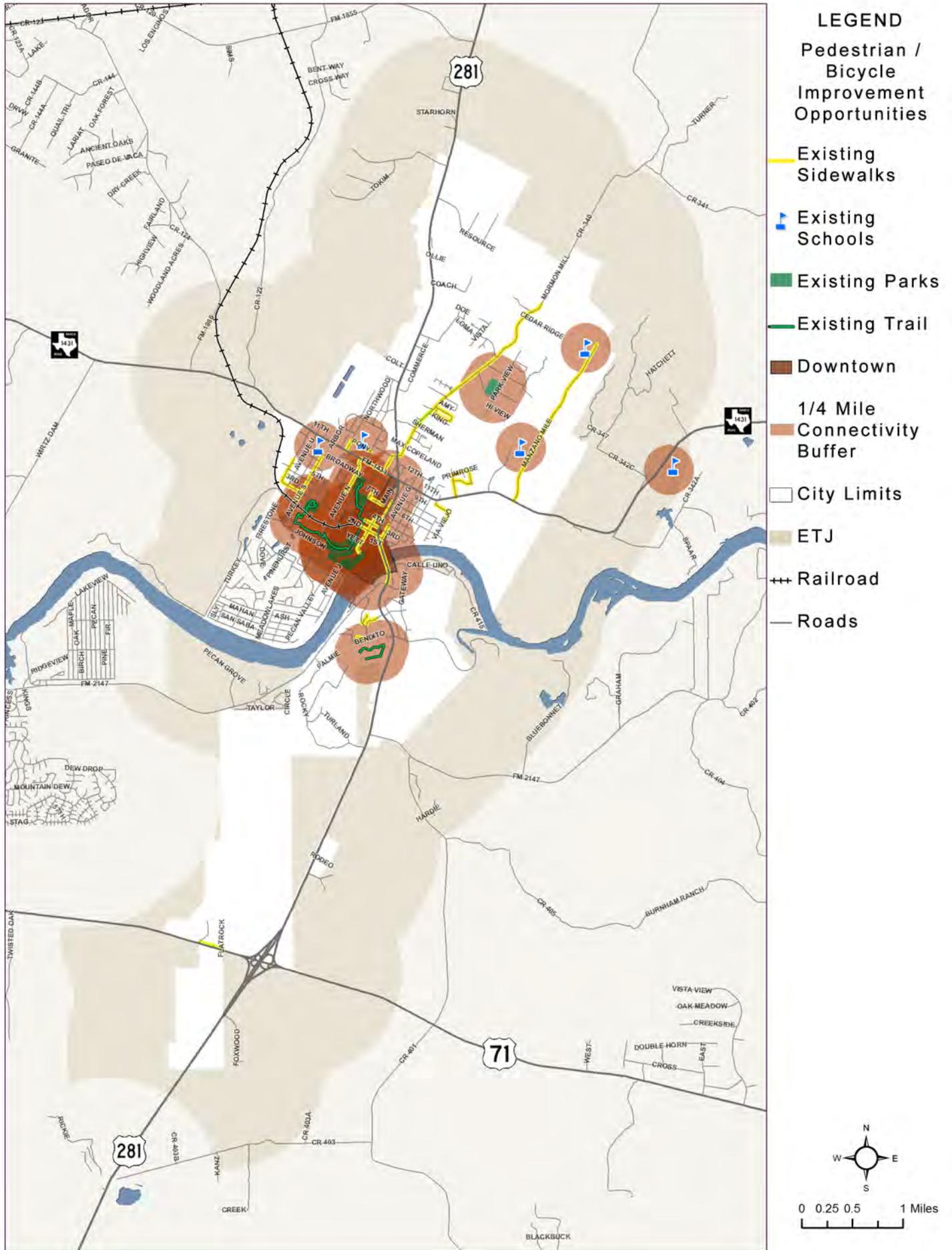
Action 5.5.4 – Consider increasing funding and other resources to improve sidewalk and crosswalk segments in key areas of the City.

Utilize potential increases in sales tax dollars or the general fund to establish and maintain a dedicated fund for sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and/or maintenance. This established fee could be applied to a prioritized list of projects based on the analysis completed in Action 5.5.2 or 5.5.3, above. In addition, this fund could also be utilized to create a sidewalk improvement fund whereby public money is used to seed or offset private lot owner costs to maintain their sidewalk adjacent to their property. This could be made available to all owners who meet certain criteria and are located in areas where sidewalks already exist (see Map 5.3, *Pedestrian Improvement Opportunity Areas*).

Action 5.5.5 – Implement sidewalk improvements as part of street improvement or redevelopment projects.

Integrate sidewalk improvements as part of street improvement or redevelopment projects where appropriate. This should include implementation of Complete Street accommodations particularly as it relates to connecting the community to a greater network of arterial or collector roadways, an on-street bicycle network, and the Citywide trail network (see also Chapter 6, Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space). It is important for the City to stay vigilant with implementation of sidewalk and Complete Street improvements as they provide for community wellness, improved connectivity, and set the bar for the standards to which private developments will also be held.

Map 5.3, Pedestrian Improvement Opportunity Areas



Action 5.5.6 – Consider amending the subdivision regulations to improve the design, safety, and usability of new sidewalks within the City.

Consider modifying Sec. 829, *Sidewalks*, of the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances to improve the design of sidewalks implemented as part of new construction. Currently the provisions require the standard width of pedestrian concrete walkways of “not less than four (4) feet within a residential subdivision on both sides of residential and collector streets, and sidewalks not less than five (5) feet ... for all nonresidential developments and along all perimeter arterials, for both residential and nonresidential developments.”² While this will make a marked difference within the community over time, many communities are realizing that these are insufficient to adequately accommodate the people that use them. Therefore, the City should consider increasing the widths of these sidewalk minimums to five feet for all local and collector streets within residential subdivisions. All major and minor collector streets designated on the City’s Thoroughfare Plan should have a minimum sidewalk width of six feet, separated by a landscape strip. All arterials designated on the City’s Thoroughfare Plan should have a minimum sidewalk width of seven feet on both sides of the street. Alternately, some cities have adopted standards which specify that a single ADA accessible 10-foot sidewalk / trail could be included only on one side of the street and a reduced sidewalk on the other side of the street. These exact specifications could be further analyzed as part of a Sidewalk Master Plan or Trails Master Plan.

The City could consider revising the standards to ensure that it applies to both public and private streets and that it includes mid-block crossing accommodations for any block length exceeding 800 feet (which is half of the length allowed as part of maximum block lengths set out in Sec. 828, *Blocks*, of the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances).

Updated subdivision regulations could also include the proactive installation of medians in the public right-of-way to accommodate safer pedestrian crossing near schools, parks, or other heavily visited public sites (e.g., to access trails). These areas could include a small pedestrian refuge to shorten the unprotected distance across busy arterial or major collector roadways.

Finally, the City should consider requiring new or redeveloped nonresidential development to provide sidewalk connections from the main entrance of the building out to the sidewalk located within the public right-of-way. This is to ensure a safe final connection from the public right-of-way of the street, through the parking lot and into the building.

Action 5.5.7 – Consider partnering with the Marble Falls Independent School District to implement pedestrian improvements to existing and new school sites.

In order to reduce the number of cars and buses bringing kids to school, the City should consider partnering with the Marble Falls ISD to pursue grant funding or to implement priority projects to create an alternate means for students to get to

² Sec. 829, *Sidewalks*, of the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances.



each elementary, middle, or high school within the City limits or ETJ. Our growing reliance on the vehicle has impacted how children get to school, resulting in negative consequences on the health and safety of our youth. Walking and bicycling to school is both a transportation as well as a health issue. Schools, particularly elementary and middle schools, account for 20 to 25 percent of the congestion in morning rush hour traffic.³

Objective 5.6. Support and encourage alternate forms of mobility for Marble Falls residents.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 5.6.1 - Evaluate the possibility of establishing railroad quiet zones within the City.

While most new railroad lines are developed far from City centers, most existing rail lines run right through the core of the cities they used to serve. Consequently, many Texas communities have one or more at-grade crossings for rail lines that pass through the City. These rail lines and crossings also tend to be located in proximity to residential areas, businesses and recreational areas (see at right), oftentimes disrupting quality of life, key thoroughfare connections, and adding congestion to an already congested thoroughfare system. This proximity also increases the potential for dangerous interactions to take place. Consequently, Congress passed legislation to mandate that train horns sound prior to entering such at-grade crossings.⁴



³ National Highway Transportation Administration, referenced in National Center for Safe Routes to School. Accessed 2011 May 26 from <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/what-percentage-morning-traffic-congestion-caused-children-being-driven-school>

⁴ 49 U.S.C.A. § 20153.

Currently, there are five at-grade crossings within the City limits and ETJ. As part of improvements to both the transportation system and overall quality of life for Marble Falls citizens, the City should consider undertaking a study to evaluate the potential benefits and fiscal implications of establishing a Quiet Zone on one or more of the City's most heavily traveled at-grade crossings or those closest to the City's residential areas.

"A quiet zone is a section of a rail line at least one-half mile in length that contains one or more consecutive public highway-rail grade crossings at which locomotive horns are not routinely sounded when trains are approaching the crossings. Localities desiring to establish a quiet zone are first required to mitigate the increased risk caused by the absence of a horn, through the use of Supplementary Safety Measures (SSMs)."⁵

Action 5.6.2 – Work in partnership with CAMPO, CARTS, Burnet County and other area partners to maintain and/or expand rural and/or fixed transit services to Marble Falls.

Explore ways to coordinate and/or partner with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and its associated Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) to support the current intermodal transit facility in Marble Falls, to establish an express bus service to Austin, and to implement a series of fixed routes providing connectivity between all cities within Burnet County. This could include development of a Burnet County Municipal Bus Route which could provide regular daily routes to connect neighborhoods with the Downtown and other areas of key interest.

Action 5.6.3 – Consider adopting new regulations for airports and heliports within the City.

The City should evaluate and consider adopting protective modifications to the zoning regulations requiring minimum design parameters and a special use permit for new heliports or airports within the City limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). This could include identifying appropriate zoning districts for new private use airports (i.e., AG) and heliports (i.e., AG, or as part of a commercial or industrial business in specified zoning districts). In addition, these protective regulations should specify maximum noise level protections for residential and office uses and exemptions for police, fire, hospital and other public safety uses.

Action 5.6.4 – Consider supporting and regulating the installation of plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging stations within the City.

The City should consider adopting improvements to the zoning regulations which differentiate PEV charging stations from those that dispense fossil or combustible fuels. In this regard, the City could allow for the installation of Level 2 and 3 charging stations and the charging of electric vehicles (EVs) within the Downtown area in association with on- or off-street parking. To the contrary, new fueling stations utilizing fossil or combustible fuels would only be allowed in Corridor Commercial areas.



Image courtesy of solarenergy-usa.com

⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration, Quiet Zones. Accessed 2015 Nov 18 from <https://www.fra.dot.gov/Page/P0689> and How to Create a Quiet Zone, <https://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/details/L03055>

Due to the projected increase in demand for EVs, it is recommended that the City proactively identify and support the installation of the first PEV charging station within the City.

Action 5.6.5 - Evaluate the potential of ride sharing programs in Marble Falls.

As the City continues to develop and experience population growth, the development of a ride sharing program such as Uber or Lyft could help provide alternate modes of transportation around the City. If significant demand arises, and these ride sharing programs seek to operate in Marble Falls, the City should evaluate the potential benefits to the community and develop appropriate regulations as necessary.



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6

PARKS, RECREATION, and OPEN SPACE



Introduction

Marble Falls, by the name alone, takes part of its identity from the invaluable natural resources in the area, namely Lake Marble Falls and large swaths of natural land. Located in Texas Hill Country, a region known for its natural beauty, the City has incredible opportunities to enhance the quality of life for residents and attract additional visitors by providing high-quality, diverse parks, recreation, and open spaces. Through the public participation component of the planning process, residents expressed a desire for an enhanced parks system, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the City, additional recreational opportunities, and increased effort to bolster the City's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

As such, this Chapter provides a 20-year policy framework for further development of the City's parks, trails, recreation, and tourism efforts including addressing the following:

- **Parks.** The provision of high-quality, well-maintained parks enhances the quality of life for residents, improves the community image, and contributes to the overall attractiveness of a city to those considering a new place to live. The City's current parks system is largely limited to the Downtown area. As Marble Falls continues to grow and develop, additional park resources will be needed throughout the entire community.
- **Trails.** A well-developed sidewalk and trail system provides opportunities for health and fitness, connectivity and exposure to parks and nature, and alternate modes of transportation for daily, close-to-home destinations. The City's existing sidewalk system is minimal and while the trail system is well-used, its extent is limited at this point. Use of the City's trail system requires automobile transportation to the trail unless the user lives in the immediate vicinity of Downtown. In order to provide equal opportunities



Swim lessons at Lakeside Pool



Access to water and shade make Johnson Park an inviting natural retreat.

for community-wide users to walk or bike to the trail, further development of the sidewalk and trail network is necessary.

- **Recreation.** A diverse, multi-generational recreation program provides opportunities for community interaction, educational and cultural development, and improved health and fitness. Existing recreational programs in the City are mostly geared towards children and youth, with some adult athletics. In order to provide opportunities for the entire population, regardless of age or socioeconomic status, expansion of recreation opportunities in the community is needed.
- **Tourism.** The City of Marble Falls has a unique opportunity for tourism-based economic growth. With its historic Downtown, access to Lake Marble Falls, and its current status a regional commercial hub, the City has numerous opportunities for tourism activities. In order to make Marble Falls stand out as an interesting tourist destination, different from other lake-oriented communities in the region, increased development of tourism-based marketing and activities are needed.

Past Planning Initiatives

City of Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan (2009-2039)

The City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan presented existing park and recreation conditions, highlighted key issues identified by the public, and analyzed overall parkland acreage and facility needs for the current and projected future population. Key issues identified in the 2009 plan included the need for more trails, more parks accessible to neighborhoods throughout the community (especially in the north, south, and east), more public boat ramps and swimming areas in parks, a multi-use sports complex, and better utilization of Lake Marble Falls. It was determined that neighborhood and community parkland acreage was adequate for 2008 but additional acreage would be needed by 2038. Key facility needs by the year 2038, based on level of service, were a football field and basketball, tennis, volleyball, and other multi-use recreational sports courts.



Families enjoying Johnson Park

Marble Falls Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (2012)

The City's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was last updated in 2012 and was intended to guide City decision-making from 2012 to 2017. Key plan goals included maintaining, updating, and enhancing existing parks and recreation facilities; providing a safe, accessible, and diverse parks and recreation system; conserving the City's natural, cultural, historical, and archaeological resources; and supporting efforts in the community to increase recreational programming. The plan provided a list of priority projects regarding repairs and upgrades to existing facilities, development of additional park and recreation amenities, and key major developments including a sports complex and pool/water park.



Water access at Johnson Park

Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study (2014)

In 2014, a Flood Protection Planning Study was conducted to determine potential flood reduction strategies for Whitman Branch and Backbone Creek. Through analysis of multiple alternatives, a creekwalk trail system connecting the Downtown to community parks, in conjunction with creek channel improvements, was determined to be a promising option which would reduce the risk of flooding, reclaim land for potential development, and provide recreation opportunities for the community.

Marble Falls Sports Complex (2012)

In 2012, a feasibility analysis for a proposed Marble Falls Sports Complex was conducted. The sports complex was proposed to provide state-of-the-art facilities for youth and adult athletics, hosting both local games and regional tournaments. The plan presented a market analysis, proposed building program with phasing and estimated project construction costs, potential economic and fiscal impacts, and funding potential for the complex. To date, the City has not acted on any plans for the sports complex.

Existing Conditions

Parks and Trails

The City's Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining 130 acres of parkland, trails, and special use areas including both City-owned and privately owned land. The existing parks system includes one pocket, three neighborhood, and seven community parks. There are two linear parks in the City, one of which includes the well-used 1.3-mile Backbone Creek Hike and Bike Trail which extends from Lakeside Park to Westside Park. The 0.8-mile Whitman Branch Hike and Bike Trail extends from Johnson Park to Childers Park and parallels City streets for the majority of its length. Special use areas maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department include the City Cemetery, Downtown, and the Granite Mountain Roadside Park (see Map 6.1, *Existing Parks and Trails*, on the next page and Table 6.1, *Marble Falls Parks and Recreation Assets*, on page 166).

Seven of the 13 community, neighborhood, and pocket parks include active recreation amenities and 11 include passive recreation opportunities. The City's parks are largely concentrated west of U.S. Highway 281, and south of FM 1431, and all of the City parks are located north of Lake Marble Falls. In fact, a large percentage of the City's most highly valued recreation amenities are located at Johnson Park, Lakeside Park, and Westside Park, all of which are within a one-mile radius of each other and within a one-quarter-mile radius of Downtown. While currently undeveloped, Park View Park Site, located in a residential neighborhood east of U.S. Highway 281, and Whitman Branch Greenbelt, located north of FM 1431 near the Marble Falls High School, hold potential to provide almost 17 acres of additional well-programmed park and recreation resources located beyond the core of the City.

Aside from the City's two hike and bike trails, there are no dedicated safe routes for bicyclists in the City. Similarly, the City's existing sidewalk network is minimal, thus providing few safe pedestrian options in the community. Fortunately, the City's existing street network includes many roads which are wide enough to accommodate on-street bicycle lanes and/or sidewalks. Considering the community's vicinity to nature and scenic views, the addition of increased pedestrian and bicycle facilities could improve quality of life for existing residents, entice new residents, and encourage additional tourism in the area.

As part of the proposed Flatrock Springs Planned Development District and the 71 - 281 Mixed Use Community, the City has potential to gain over 200 acres of additional community, neighborhood, and linear parkland south of Lake Marble Falls. Development of the 71 - 281 Mixed Use Community parkland will be the fiscal responsibility of the developers. Final designation of the fiscal responsibility and ultimate use of the Flatrock Springs parkland has yet to be determined.

Throughout the public participation component of the Plan, commonly held public preferences for particular parks and facilities in the community were identified. Public survey respondents were asked how frequently they use parks

Table 6.1, Marble Falls Parks and Recreation Assets

	Sport Courts	Sport Fields	Playground	Passive Rec. Areas	Picnic Facilities	Walking/Bicycling Trails	Meeting Hall/Rec. Center	Water Access or Related	Dog Park	Disc Golf	Pool	Skate Park	Other	General Location	Est. Acreage
Community Parks															
Childers Park		x			x	x								1310 Broadway Street	6.81
Johnson Park	x	x	x	x	x	x		x						230 S. Avenue J	18.70
Lakeside Park*	x			x	x		x	x			x			Buena Vista Drive	13.00
Lakeside Pavilion**							x							Buena Vista Drive	N/A
Greens Soccer Complex		x			x	x								1100 6th Street	8.31
VFW Park (Highland Park)		x		x										1009 Veterans Avenue	5.62
Westside Park			x	x	x	x	x		x	x				2nd Street and Avenue Q	13.30
Westside Park Community Center***							x							1704 2nd Street	N/A
Rotary Park****		x			x		x							1800 Colt Circle, Subunits #10 and #11	11.50
Neighborhood Parks															
Falls Creek Park / Skatepark					x	x		x				x		900 Yett Street	3.32
Hays Addition Park				x				x						Lakeshore Drive	5.23
Park View Park Site (undeveloped)				x										Park View Drive & Park Ridge Drive	11.94
Pocket Park															
Villa Vista Park	x		x	x										Villa Vista Way (7th Street)	0.66
Linear Parks															
Whitman Branch Greenbelt (undeveloped)	Pending Planning and Development												Mission Hills Drive	5.00	
Whitman Branch Hike & Bike Trail						x								0.8-mile trail	N/A
Backbone Creek Hike & Bike Trail						x								1.3-mile trail	5.0
Special Use Areas															
Granite Mountain Roadside Park					x									FM 1431	0.60
Downtown													x		1.00
City Cemetery													x	Johnson Street	20.00
Total Acreage															130.0
*Includes Kampers Korner property															
**Located in Lakeside Park															
***Located in Westside Park															
****Facilities not City-owned/leased - City-provides utilities and ground maintenance															

and recreation facilities in the City. The top amenities that were used on a daily or monthly basis included visiting Downtown, Johnson Park, the public library, and areas adjacent to Lake Marble Falls (e.g., Lakeside Park). In addition, 35 percent of respondents indicated that they walk for fitness or to get somewhere in the City at least a few times per month. It is clear that residents highly value the City's trail system and nearly 50 percent of survey respondents indicated they felt it was very important or important for the City to address the need for additional trails and trail connections to key destinations over the next five to 10 years.

During the stakeholder meetings, public open house, and Citywide public survey, additional key parks and trail-related issues were identified including the need for additional lake-based recreation and public water access. Over 70 percent of survey respondents felt it was very important or important for the City to provide additional lake-based recreational opportunities (both on land and in the water) for the public in the near future. A large portion of the property along Lake Marble Falls is privately owned so much of the lake's access is limited to those private owners and boaters. When asked about priorities for development of new facilities, be they active or passive, water or land-based, public open house attendees felt it was most important to ensure that parks and trails are developed to serve both residents and support tourism. Additionally, while planning for new parks or upgrades to existing parks, the City should ensure that the Downtown parks have adequate parking for both daily use and events. These parks are well-loved and excessive amounts of parking, if not planned for, can negatively impact the sites and the surrounding uses and peacefulness of the Downtown parks.

When asked to identify the amenities most needed in the City, the top items selected by survey respondents included lake access, fishing docks, trails, and picnic shelters. Upgrading aging facilities and the overall quality and appearance of existing parks was selected as very important or important by over 55 percent of survey respondents. In addition to City parks, the City Cemetery has also fallen into disrepair. It was also noted through public participation and site visits that dust and noise from nearby heavy machinery disrupts park users in the Downtown area. Relocating select industries from the core of the City could greatly improve the user experience in the parks.

Recreation

There are a variety of active recreation programs for children, youth, and adults in Marble Falls. While the majority of programming is offered by third-party providers, many programs take place on City parks, in the City's rental facilities, and at the City pool.

City-provided recreation programming for children and youth includes spring break activities and swim lessons for children age three through 13. A swim team and water exercise classes are provided at Lakeside Pool by the YMCA of the Highland Lakes. The Boys and Girls Club of the Highland Lakes provides activities such as day trips, multi-day camps, and sports clinics. Fall and spring baseball





Lake Marble Falls is one of the most highly valued amenities in the City.

and softball are provided for boys and girls ranging from age four to 16 by the Marble Falls Youth Baseball/Softball Association. Opportunities for football and cheerleading are provided for children in kindergarten through sixth grade by Marble Falls Youth Football/Cheer. Youth ranging from younger than six to over 15 years old are provided soccer recreation through the Granite Country Youth Soccer Association. The Marble Falls Adult Softball Association and a local adult soccer league offer athletic programs for adults in the community.

The Jolly Rodgers Paddle Co. provides non-athletic aquatic activities such as paddle boarding and kayaking on Lake Marble Falls. The City's newly opened Westside Park Community Hall provides rental space for additional recreation programs. Dance and karate lessons provided by local businesses are currently offered at the Westside Park Community Hall.

As illustrated in the listing of recreation programs above, programming in the City is primarily athletics-based. However, development or coordination of additional recreational programming is a challenge as there is no recreation coordinator on City staff. Without a recreation coordinator, further development of the City's programming falls on Parks and Recreation Department staff, who are already fully occupied with other parks-related tasks.

Public survey respondents, open house attendees, and stakeholders highlighted the need for additional recreational programming including youth-, family-, and senior-oriented classes and opportunities as well as indoor recreation space in the City. Over 55 percent of survey respondents indicated they felt it was very important or important for the City to focus on the need for additional recreation amenities in the next five to 10 years. Survey respondents also felt it was very important or important to provide additional public recreation opportunities such as summer concerts and outdoor movies. The addition of such public recreation programs could benefit residents and attract additional tourism.



Lakefest activities at Lakeside Park

Tourism

The City hosts a variety of events which are attended by both residents and visitors. These include lake-based events such as the popular Lakefest, as well as other community events including the Walkway of Lights, City Wide Garage Sale, Mayfest, Howdy-Roo, FiestaJAM, Sculpture on Main, Market Day, and the Highland Lakes Farmers Market. Currently, Marble Falls is a regional commercial hub, with limited opportunities encouraging visitors to stay for the day or weeknight. The majority of the City's tourist events are seasonal and held on weekends. Between the City's unique Downtown and access to the lake, Marble Falls has potential to become a first-rate tourist destination.

City residents recognize this potential and the potential impacts this could have on the community. Survey respondents indicated that increasing the City's efforts to attract and/or promote tourism-related industries and use was one of the top five issues that needs to be addressed in the City. Similarly, over 43 percent of respondents indicated they would support or strongly support paying slightly higher fees or taxes to support these City efforts.

There is already a large draw to the region for places such as Inks Lake and Longhorn Cavern State Parks, Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge, wineries, golf courses, etc. With the development of additional tourism attractions, the City can become another prime attraction in Burnet County and the entire Highland Lakes area.

As the City develops its tourism industry, it is important to include residents, businesses, and elected and appointed officials in the planning process. A well thought out, cooperative tourism plan can positively enhance a community and minimize the potential for negative impacts. However, without coordination and public involvement, a poorly planned tourism industry can negatively impact a community in a variety of ways (see Figure 6.1, *Potential Impacts of Tourism on a Community*, on the next page).

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

Figure 6.1, Potential Impacts of Tourism on a Community

POSITIVE¹

ECONOMIC

1. Contributes to income and standard of living
2. Improves local economy
3. Increases employment opportunities
4. Improves investment and development
5. Increases tax revenues
6. Increases opportunities for shopping
7. Creates new business opportunities

SOCIAL & CULTURAL

1. Improves quality of life
2. Facilitates meeting visitors
3. Promotes cultural exchange
4. Preserves cultural identity of host community
5. Increases demand for historical and cultural exhibits
6. Satisfaction of psychological needs

ENVIRONMENTAL

1. Protection of selected natural environments
2. Preservation of historic buildings and monuments
3. Improvement of the area's appearance

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

1. Heightens pride in community
2. Greater appreciation of local resources
3. More facilities and range of choices
4. More interesting / exciting place to live

Through a comprehensive approach to the development of a tourism industry, including public involvement and different points of view, communities can identify and resolve potential negative impacts prior to their development. Additionally, continual monitoring of the programs and resident attitudes allows the community to address issues quickly as they arise.

NEGATIVE¹

ECONOMIC

1. Increases price of goods and services
2. Increases price of land and housing
3. Increases cost of living
4. Cost for additional infrastructure
5. Seasonal tourism creates high-risk, under- or unemployment issues
6. Profits may be exported by non-local owners

SOCIAL & CULTURAL

1. Language and cultural effects
2. Unwanted lifestyle changes
3. Displacement of residents for tourism development
4. Potential to exclude locals from natural resources
5. Natural, political, and public relations issues

ENVIRONMENTAL

1. Pollution
2. Loss of natural landscape, open space and agricultural lands to tourism development
3. Degradation of landscape, historic sites, and monuments
4. Water shortages

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

1. Heightens community divisiveness
2. Increasingly hectic community
3. Feeling of loss of control over community future

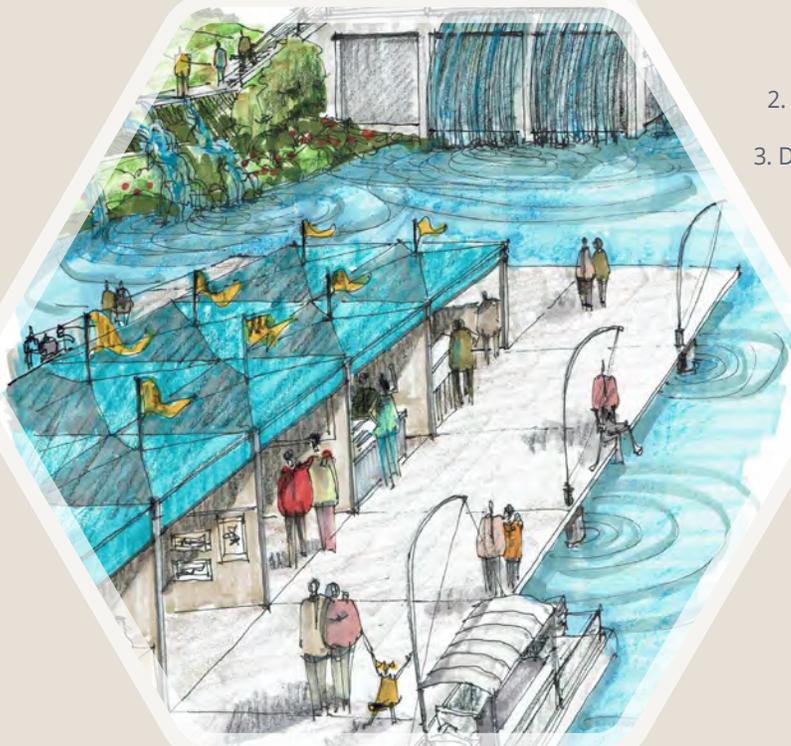


Image courtesy of Local Architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture

¹ Kreag, Glenn. "The Impacts of Tourism." University of Minnesota. < <http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/tourism/pdfs/ImpactsTourism.pdf>

Policies and Recommendations

Policies

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future, this Comprehensive Plan must be considered and implemented each day when decisions are made by City staff and elected and appointed officials. As part of this daily decision making (whether on new plans (e.g., street improvement plans), budgeting, staffing, capital improvement programming, or on new land development applications being considered), the following parks, recreation, and open space policies should be considered:

1. Systematically develop the parks, trail, and open space system in coordination with new growth and development.
2. Prioritize the revitalization of the Downtown parks system in concert with other Downtown redevelopment initiatives.
3. Promote partnerships with local stakeholders (e.g., Marble Falls ISD) and other third party providers to provide increased recreational opportunities in a cost effective manner. This could include transforming underused school yards into multi-purposed recreational and exercise facilities through such amenities as playscapes, sports courts and fields, walking/running tracks, etc.
4. Utilize linear open space along floodplains and drainageways as a means to provide public recreation and transportation connections to key destinations (e.g., parks, schools, library, senior center, and Downtown).
5. Prioritize increased connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and other key destinations using sidewalks, on-street bicycle lanes, off-street multi-use paths, and trails.
6. Utilize the Thoroughfare Plan and Trails Plan to ensure that key connections and appropriate design is considered in all new road development and existing street rehabilitation projects. This could include the striping of new on-street bike lanes as part of a repaving project or installation of a higher bridge to accommodate a future safe crossing envisioned as part of the overall Citywide trail system.
7. Ensure adequate staffing and budget to facilitate well-maintained parks, trails, and open spaces, and to provide quality recreational opportunities for residents.
8. Develop and utilize the City's parks, trails, and open spaces to provide quality of life amenities to existing residents and for tourism purposes.
9. Invest in community attractions and amenities that celebrate Marble Falls' unique natural and cultural attributes which set it apart from the rest of the Highland Lakes area.
10. Facilitate collaborative marketing efforts with local businesses and stakeholders, including promotional and networking resources, to promote Marble Falls regionally.

Parks Recommendations

Objective 6.1 – Ensure successful implementation and maintenance of parks and recreation resources.

A high-quality parks system provides opportunities for recreation, increased health and fitness, and enjoyment of the City's natural resources. In order to ensure the community is well-served both today and in the future it is key to put the appropriate policy framework in place. As development of the City continues, actions and decisions of the public and private sectors will help ensure the implementation of this Plan leads toward to desired vision of the community.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 6.1.1 – Update the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

The City's 2012 Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was designed to steer City activity and decisions from 2012 to 2017. In order to evaluate the current and future needs of the community, and to remain competitive for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) grant funding, the City should update the Marble Falls Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. The plan should include key public engagement such as stakeholder meetings, a Citywide public survey, and a public open house. A parks advisory committee can provide clear guidance for the plan. An updated inventory of the public, private, and quasi-private recreation facilities should be conducted in both map and tabular form. The plan should evaluate the current level of service for parkland acreage and facilities, develop target levels of service, and identify key deficiencies in a needs assessment. Park and recreation recommendations including such elements as land acquisition, park and facility development, park improvements, and policy recommendations should be based on public input and the needs analysis.

In order to further enhance the City's parks system, consideration should be given to developing a more in depth needs assessment and recommendations for the Downtown parks and any key parcels which can fill current deficiencies.

Throughout the plan update process and beyond, the City should continue to monitor the success of the parks and recreation system through user satisfaction surveys. These provide the City with valuable citizen feedback and allow for identification of potential issues as they arise.

As the population of Marble Falls continues to increase, the City should pursue acquisition of additional parkland to meet the community's growing need. The updated Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan should identify potential areas for acquisition as well as the projected time frame when the City should begin to pursue acquisition.

PARKS MASTER PLAN UPDATE TIMING

While the TPWD does not require a parks master plan update, it does place higher point value (during grant funding evaluation) on submittals that demonstrate a plan update has been done within the past five years.



Drainage corridors provide dual opportunities for environmental conservation and recreation.

Action 6.1.2 - Develop a parkland dedication ordinance and other subdivision design ordinances as necessary to ensure that adequate green space and parkland remain available as the City continues to develop.

As the City continues to develop, additional opportunities for coordination with developers to preserve or design and build open space, parks, and recreational amenities will arise. The City should consider establishing a procedure to require new developments to provide land area and/or development of amenities in areas of need.

Action 6.1.3 - Solidify agreement with Flatrock Springs developer to determine the ultimate use and responsible parties for the parkland to be dedicated as part of the planned development district.

The Flatrock Springs Planned Development District includes close to 120 acres of parkland in a currently completely unserved area south of Lake Marble Falls. To date, the ultimate use and fiscal responsibility for the development of this land has not been determined. The City should solidify the developer agreement and dedicate funding, as necessary, for the development of this valuable parkland.

Action 6.1.4 - Evaluate current Parks and Recreation staffing level and ensure that the department is sufficiently staffed.

The City's Parks and Recreation Department includes nine full-time and two seasonal staff. The staff are responsible for the upkeep of parks and trails, City Hall, the Development Services building, Police Station, Animal Control Facility, old Visitor Center, and the Public Works/Parks Office yard. In order to ensure that adequate manpower is available for all department tasks, the City should evaluate the current staffing levels. If current staffing is determined to be insufficient, the City should consider dedicating funding to allow hiring of additional staff members.



Action 6.1.5 – Ensure adequate staffing and resources are available to support increased recreational programming in the City.

In order to provide increased recreational programming in the City, staffing and resources should be evaluated to determine if existing levels are adequate to support additional programming. If found to be insufficient, the City should consider increasing staffing or coordinating with outside sources to allow for an expansion of current programs. For example, the addition of a Recreation Supervisor, responsible for coordinating and managing recreational programs and community events, would allow for expansion of the number and diversity of the City’s recreation programming, including both City and third party-provided opportunities, without over burdening the existing Parks and Recreation Department staff.

Action 6.1.6 – Work with developers and property owners to develop multi-use trails on greenways and other linear open spaces.

Key open space corridors such as drainageways and major creeks provide opportunities for protection and preservation of the floodplain, stormwater management, increased wildlife habitats, and public access to nature. Where possible and appropriate, the City should consider creating natural preserves and greenways in these key corridors. Coordination with developers and property owners to acquire access points and develop a trail system in these greenways can provide passive recreation opportunities and additional non-vehicular transportation options. An illustrative example of a potential trail alignment is depicted in Figure 6.2, *Illustrative Drainage Corridor Trail Concept*. The illustrated underpass under FM 1431 provides for a continuous trail corridor and safe crossing under a busy thoroughfare (with the exception of during high water flow events).

Figure 6.2, Illustrative Drainage Corridor Trail Concept



Action 6.1.7 – Preserve open space assets throughout Marble Falls.

Through the planned development process, the City should encourage the use of cluster developments and conservation developments. The City can use density bonuses and preservation credits to incentivize conservation of open space, greenbelts, and other natural areas. This is particularly important for the Backbone Creek watershed, as this area has and will continue to provide drainage and floodplain protection for the developed part of the City downstream. As this watershed is increasingly developed, it has the potential to further exacerbate flood problems. Alternately, further open space protection could provide multiple benefits including increased floodplain protection, habitat and ecosystem conservation, and passive recreational opportunities (see also Objective 8.2, in Chapter 8, *Infrastructure*).

Density bonuses are a tool that are oftentimes used to incentivize the protection, and in many cases, the public use of additional open space. In this regard, the City could consider establishing a minimum threshold of protected open space (e.g., 40% of the development will be undeveloped open space) necessary to do a cluster development or conservation subdivision as part of the planned development process. In exchange for additional protected open space (e.g., up to 50%), the City could allow smaller lot sizes, more dwelling units, or an increase in net buildable area (e.g., a 10% increase in net buildable area) which increases the developers overall net density for the project.

Action 6.1.8 – Pursue partnership with Marble Falls Independent School District (MFISD).

In order to avoid duplication of services and to provide additional high-quality parks and recreation opportunities, the City should pursue joint agreements with MFISD. This partnership could include joint use of existing MFISD and City-owned land and facilities, joint pursuit of land acquisition, and sharing the financial responsibility for the development of mutually beneficial facilities in the City.

Action 6.1.9 – Continue to pursue partnerships with other public and private organizations to leverage park and recreation investments.

The City currently holds agreements with a variety of private organizations which provide recreation programming. Pursuit of additional agreements with private organizations and developers, Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and Burnet County, among others, can allow for joint use of facilities and shared maintenance agreements, when feasible.

Action 6.1.10 – Evaluate the City's fee structure to ensure that private organizations using City parks and facilities are adequately offsetting the cost of maintenance.

The City currently holds agreements with athletic groups and other recreation providers for the use of City parks and facilities. Residents and groups can reserve use of park pavilions, sports fields and courts, the Johnson Park amphitheater, Lakeside Pool and Pavilion, and the Westside Park Community Hall. The City should evaluate the current fee structure to ensure fees are sufficiently contributing to facility maintenance costs.



Objective 6.2 – Focus funding and efforts to improve the City’s existing parks system.

The City currently has 109 acres of parks and a memorable Downtown. While the development of additional parkland is important, it is equally, if not more important to maintain the City’s existing parks in a high-quality, well-functioning state.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 6.2.1 – Improve existing parks and facilities.

The quality of parks and recreational facilities in a community leave a lasting impression on residents and visitors. As a potential tourist destination, maintaining a high-quality parks system is doubly as important. It was noted throughout the public participation process that existing parks and facilities are in need of upgrades and enhancements. It is clear that survey respondents understand the importance of providing well-maintained facilities as a tourist draw since over 72 percent indicated it was very important or important to improve amenities in certain parks (e.g., Lakeside Park, Johnson Park) to attract tourists and visitors.

In order to ensure the parks remain up-to-date, the Parks and Recreation Department’s regular maintenance should include routine safety inspections of playgrounds and routine equipment replacement schedules. The facilities provided should be selected with an emphasis on accessibility, safety, and low maintenance requirements. If followed, routine replacement schedules allow the City to recognize the need for funding prior to the development of potential safety hazards.

Action 6.2.2 – Provide and maintain high-quality parks which become part of the identity and a point of community pride for Marble Falls.

Marble Falls is continuing to develop. As a regional commercial hub, tourist destination, and small-town community surrounded by natural beauty, a high-quality parks system can become part of the community’s identity and a point of pride. The City should ensure that adequate funding and staffing is in place to maintain an attractive, safe, and appealing parks system. Maintaining an attractive parks system includes elements such as routine maintenance and repairs, as well as implementing well-designed landscaping. Improved landscaping areas can include vegetation, boulders, river rock, etc. In order to further enhance the character of the parks system, the City could consider instituting an “art-in-the-park” program. The City could partner with local and regional artists to provide context-specific art pieces which attract the eye and intrigue the mind.

Action 6.2.3 – Partner with neighborhood and other volunteer groups on select park and trail maintenance tasks.

Park maintenance is often a challenge for communities due to funding requirements. Many communities have improved the maintenance of their parks



Restrooms like this one at Westside Park should be incorporated into each community park



Art, sculptures, and other historical or cultural elements should be incorporated in every park



Historic section of City of Marble Falls City Cemetery

and trails by engaging neighborhoods and residents to fulfill this need. The City should consider encouraging additional adopt-a-park groups, and supporting and even partnering with neighborhood groups or park “friends” groups to assist with certain park maintenance needs.

Action 6.2.4 – Improve the City of Marble Falls City Cemetery.

The City’s cemetery has fallen into disrepair over the years. As the final resting place for loved ones, maintaining a well-kept facility communicates honor and respect to those who have passed and their families. In order to assist with maintenance requirements, the City should consider creating a “Friends of” group for the cemetery. Additionally, consideration should be given to creating a perpetual fund or donation fund to allow people to financially contribute to the maintenance of the site.

In addition to including modern day cemetery lots, there is a historic section of the cemetery. This area includes part of the heritage and history of the community of Marble Falls. In order to help preserve this cultural resource, if eligible, the City should consider pursuing a Historic Texas Cemetery designation for the site.

Action 6.2.5 – Evaluate the potential of existing, infrequently used parks that allow visual or physical connection to the lake.

As Lake Marble Falls is one of the most highly valued assets in the community, the City should evaluate the potential of existing, infrequently used sites which allow for visual and/or physical connection to the lake. In addition, the City should consider encouraging private and quasi-public entities to allow public access to key sites around the community.

Action 6.2.6 – Develop a revitalized plan for Downtown parks.

As the City strives to increase the vitality and unique character of its Downtown, the City should consider developing a revitalization concept plan for all of the Downtown parks. The design should consider the Downtown parks system as one large, high-quality park. This includes providing interconnectivity and planning appropriate uses for each park (some overlapping, some strategically unique).





Expansion of the City's sidewalk and trail network was one of the top priorities identified through public input.

With a re-imagined Downtown park network, Marble Falls can shine as a stand-out community providing access to commerce, natural resources, high-quality recreation, and a unique Downtown environment. In many cases, revitalized and redeveloped parks oftentimes have positive spillover effects on abutting and nearby neighborhoods. In this regard, improvements to the Downtown parks system could initiate additional private investment in other areas of Old Town Marble Falls. Providing enhanced connectivity to the redeveloped park areas through off-site trail connections could expand the positive effects to an even greater area.

Action 6.2.7 - Develop a concept plan for Park View Park Site.

Park View Park Site includes nearly 12 acres of undeveloped land in the currently underserved Mormon Mill neighborhood. The City should consider developing a concept plan for the property to determine its best use to fill current recreational gaps.

Action 6.2.8 - Coordinate with private developers on the design of key park and open space parcels being dedicated south of the river.

As previously mentioned, the City stands to gain over 200 acres of parkland south of Lake Marble Falls as part of two approved developments. The City should coordinate with the developers through the park design process to ensure the parks and trails meet current and future needs in the community.

Action 6.2.9 - Establish minimum design parameters for community, neighborhood, pocket, and linear parks.

In order to ensure that the parks system as a whole consistently provides for the needs of the community, the City should consider establishing minimum design parameters for each park classification. Design parameters should include diverse programming to attract and accommodate all users throughout the community. Included amenities should provide active and passive opportunities for all age groups and off-site pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding areas.



Example on-street bike lane which has been retrofitted on an existing street.

As part of the design parameters, the City should consider adopting a series of park design guidelines to steer the design and construction of new and improved parks and recreation facilities.

Trails Recommendations

Objective 6.3 – Develop a Citywide trail network to provide connectivity to and between residences, parks, schools, retail, and civic destinations.

In 2009 and again during the public participation component of this Plan, a top park and recreational need based on community input was to develop additional multi-use trails for recreation and transportation. Further development of the Marble Falls trails network will help support a healthy community by providing trail access to system users throughout the City.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

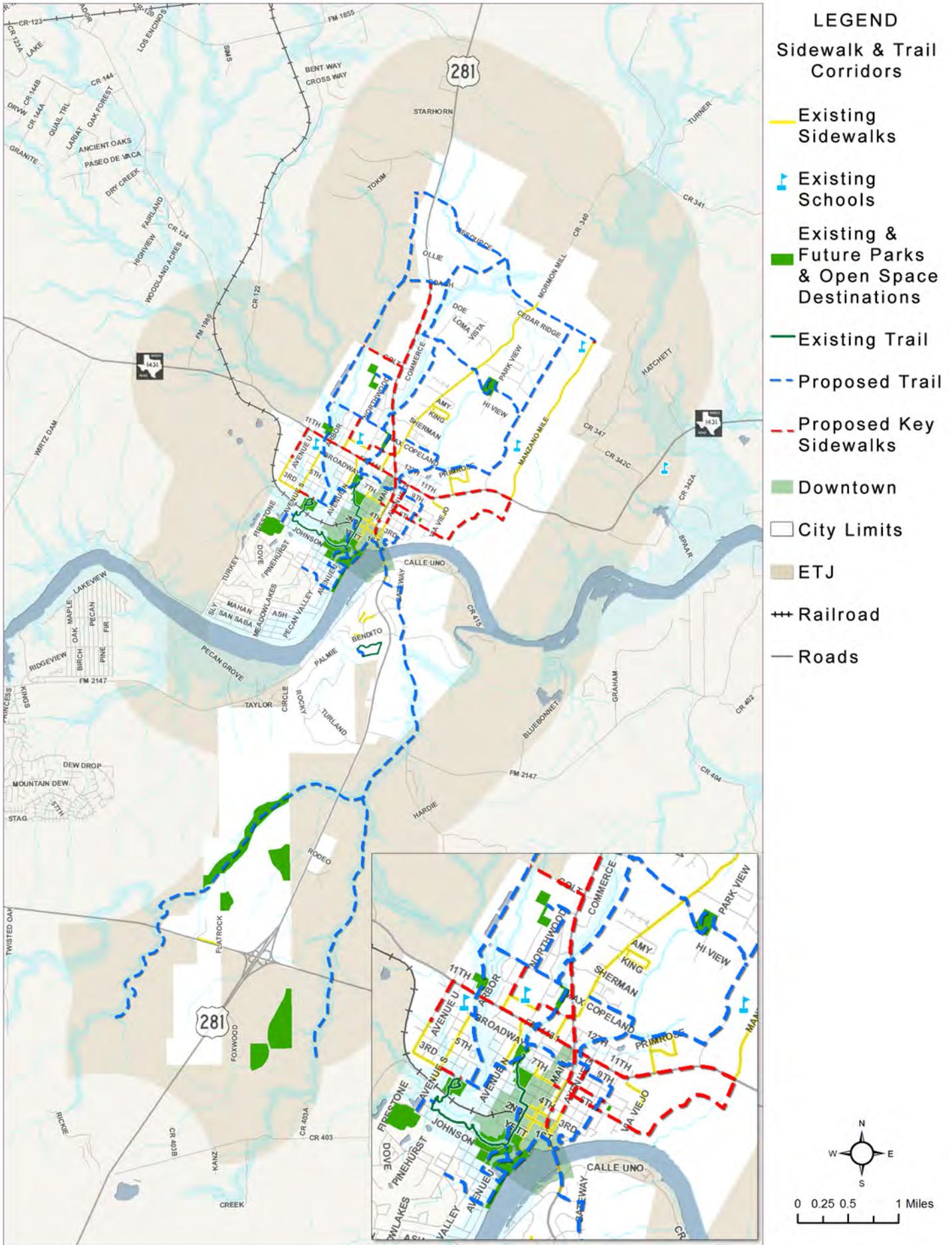
Action 6.3.1 – Develop a Trails Master Plan for the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

The City should consider developing a Trails Master Plan to analyze community-wide connectivity further in depth and plan for expansion of the system as the City develops. As development proposals are submitted to the City, use the Trail Master Plan to require incorporation of trails into site plans and plats of subdivisions, planned developments, and other suitable public and private facilities. In doing so, the City will be able to protect future trail alignments, improve inter-City connectivity, and require trail development as the growth occurs.

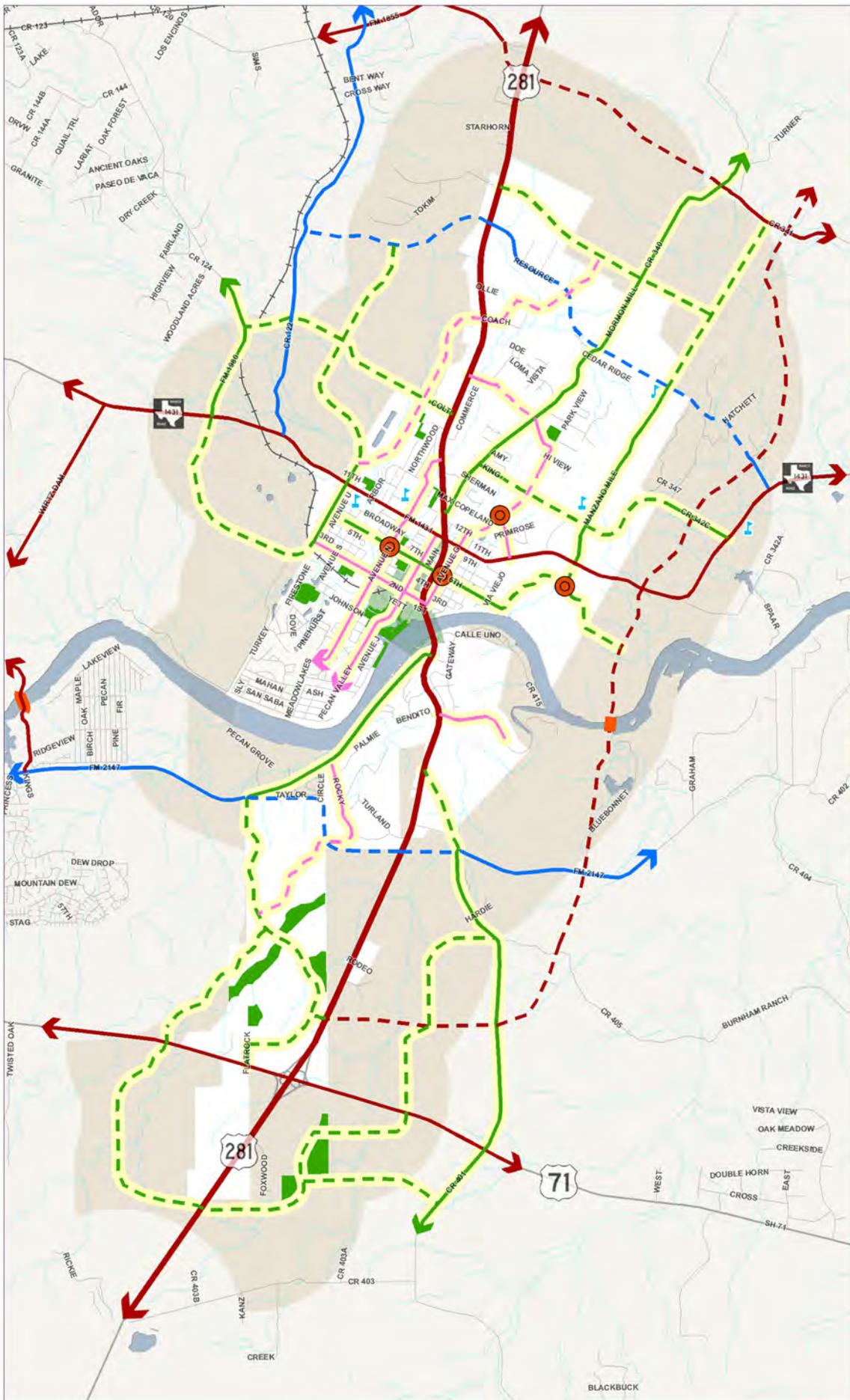
Action 6.3.2 – Improve connectivity within the City.

When asked, over 57 percent of public survey respondents indicated that they considered providing additional trails and sidewalks very important or important. Respondents indicated a desire for both trails and sidewalks providing community-wide connectivity as well as internal loop trails within parks. As the trail network is expanded, the City should prioritize key connections to Downtown Marble Falls as this is the recreation hub of the community. As such, trail connections should be provided to this area and Lake Marble Falls from the Northwood neighborhood, east of U.S. Highway 281, and south of Lake

Map 6.2, Sidewalk and Trail Corridor Opportunities

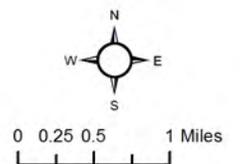


Map 6.3, On-Street Bike Lane Opportunities



- LEGEND**
- On-Street Bicycle Lanes
 - Existing Schools
 - Existing & Future Parks & Open Space Destinations
 - Proposed On-Street Bicycle Lanes
 - Downtown
 - City Limits
 - ETJ
 - Railroad
 - Roads
 - Roundabouts
 - Routes**
 - Road Classification**
 - U.S. Highway 281
 - Principal Arterial Existing
 - Principal Arterial Proposed
 - Major Collector Existing
 - Major Collector Proposed
 - Minor Arterial Existing
 - Minor Arterial Proposed
 - Minor Collector Existing
 - Minor Collector Proposed
 - New Bridge

Bicycle connectivity across the U.S. 281 bridge to southern parts of the City is intended to be accommodated by the recently constructed and expanded sidewalk.



Marble Falls. Continuing to provide additional connectivity between parks should also be a priority. Key sidewalk and trail connection opportunities are illustrated on Map 6.2, *Sidewalk and Trail Corridor Opportunities*, on page 180.

Action 6.3.3 – Consider updating the City’s collector thoroughfare system to include on-street bicycle lanes, where appropriate.

During an update of the City’s typical road cross-sections, ensure on-street bicycle lanes remain incorporated into the collector cross-sections. Currently, many of the City’s existing collector roads have adequate width for on-street bicycle lanes. The City should consider restriping key north-south and east-west thoroughfare connections to allow for increased safe bicycle transportation options in the community. Potential locations for key on-street bicycle lanes are illustrated on Map 6.3, *On-Street Bike Lane Opportunities*, on page 181.

Action 6.3.4 – Evaluate opportunities to improve undeveloped alleyways to increase Citywide connectivity.

As the City integrates additional trails into the fabric of the community, undeveloped alleyways provide potential trail locations. The City should evaluate its existing alleyways to determine viability, potential benefit to the overall system, and their likely usership.

Action 6.3.5 – Design and implement the creekwalk trail.

The 2011 Downtown Master Plan proposed a creekwalk and associated creek improvements along Whitman Branch Creek to provide better flood control, a key connection to Downtown, and connectivity between parks. The 2014 Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study then further investigated and confirmed the viability of this solution. In order to expand the community’s trail network, reclaim developable land, and provide a unique user experience for both residents and tourists, the City should consider designing and implementing the combination of Downtown creek channel improvements and creekwalk trail. Illustrative concepts and a conceptual layout as presented in the Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study Final Report and the Downtown Master Plan are shown in Figure 6.3, *Creekwalk Concepts* (below) and Figure 6.4, *Whitman Branch Creekwalk Conceptual Alignment* (on the next page).

Figure 6.3, Creekwalk Concepts



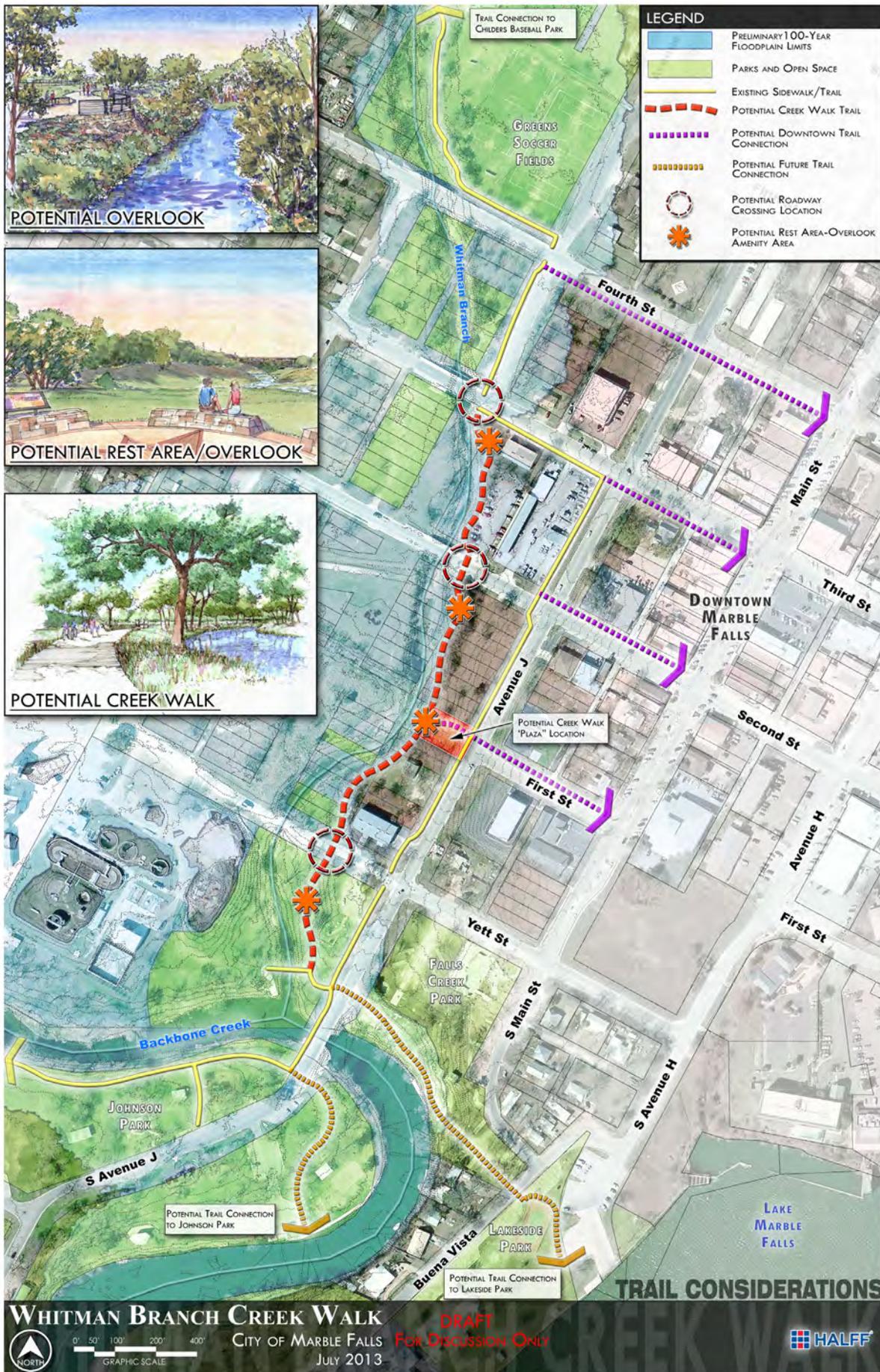
Development of the creekwalk trail could provide a user experience unlike any other in the community and in the entire Texas Hill Country.

Images (above and following page) courtesy of Half Associates, Inc., found in the Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study Final Report.



Image courtesy of Local Architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture

Figure 6.4, Whitman Branch Creekwalk Conceptual Alignment



Recreation Recommendations

Objective 6.4 – Provide diverse, multigenerational recreation programming.

Recreational programming in the City is currently focused largely on youth athletics. Public input received indicated a desire for additional youth-, family-, and senior-oriented recreation opportunities. Implementation of the following action items will allow the City to more clearly identify needs and address them appropriately.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 6.4.1 – As part of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan update, conduct a recreational programming assessment.

As the City updates its Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, consideration should be given to closely assessing the recreational needs of the community today and how needs will change as demographics shift. As part of the assessment, the City should evaluate the need for a gymnasium or other indoor recreation center. If it is determined that the community needs this facility, the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan should include recommendations as to potential locations, funding, and construction timing.

Action 6.4.2 – Increase regularly scheduled and special events in parks to encourage community-wide usage of the parks system.

In response to public desire and to take advantage of the natural surroundings in which Marble Falls is situated, the City should consider providing increased events in the parks system. These programs should include regularly scheduled events, such as a monthly movie night under the stars during summer months, as well as special events such as live concerts. Providing additional, varied community events in the parks will help to encourage community-wide usage of the parks system.

Action 6.4.3 – Increase athletic opportunities for all ages in the City.

The majority of athletics provided in the community are geared towards youth. Throughout the public participation, a need for additional adult athletic opportunities was identified. While the City currently has agreements with two adult athletics programs, consideration should be made to pursuing additional options.

Action 6.4.4 – Increase water-based recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

Time and again residents and visitors have expressed a strong desire for additional water-based recreation options in the City. As part of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan update, the City should identify specific locations for increased water activities, be it boating, swimming, kayaking, etc.

Action 6.4.5 – Consider additional third party recreational programming.

In order to provide increased recreational programming without over-burdening the parks and recreation budget, the City should consider coordinating with additional third party groups. The City should also explore options for third party non-competitive programming, such as regularly scheduled outdoor fitness classes in the parks.

Tourism Recommendations

Objective 6.5 - Increase the City's efforts to attract and/or promote tourism-related industries and use in Marble Falls.

Due to the City's prime location along Lake Marble Falls, its role as a regional commercial hub, and proximity to other regional tourism draws, the City has potential to become a well-visited tourist destination. The following actions will help guide the City's direction as it develops its tourism industry.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 6.5.1 – Develop a Tourism Master Plan.

In order to approach the City's tourism industry in an overarching manner, the City should consider developing a Tourism Master Plan. This plan would be used to determine the most viable, appropriate solutions to developing a comprehensive tourism strategy.

As part of a Tourism Master Plan, the City should evaluate implementing additional tourist attractions or strategies such as creating a Granite Mountain/Capitol Building of Texas Museum, encouraging local businesses to remain open during evenings and weekends to provide additional Downtown activities for residents and visitors, and establishing a Downtown entertainment district to include live music venues, restaurants, etc.

Action 6.5.2 – Improve pedestrian and boat access to the lake.

Water is part of the identity of Marble Falls, which is clearly illustrated as the City is named after Lake Marble Falls. As such, increased access to the water for both pedestrian and watercraft can create a greater draw to the City and enhance its identity as a pleasant small-town community, with unique opportunities for both commerce and water-recreation. As part of the public survey, respondents were asked to identify which park and recreation amenities are needed in the City. Over 66 percent (the highest percentage of all options) of respondents indicated that lake access is needed. Additionally, 72 percent of respondents indicated that encouraging the development of additional lake-based recreation opportunities for the public was very important or important.

There are currently three public boat ramps and one kayak launch in the City. These are located at Lakeside Park, Johnson Park, Hays Addition Park, and Falls Creek Park. Notably, during key stakeholder meetings it was made evident that many residents don't know about all four of these access points. In order to meet

“For a tourism-based economy to sustain itself in local communities, the residents must be willing partners in the process. Their attitudes toward tourism and perceptions of its impact on community life must be continually assessed.”¹

¹ Allen, Lawrence R. “The Impact Of Tourism Development On Residents’ Perceptions Of Community Life” 1988. Journal of Travel Research.

Figure 6.5, Proposed Waterfront Enhancements

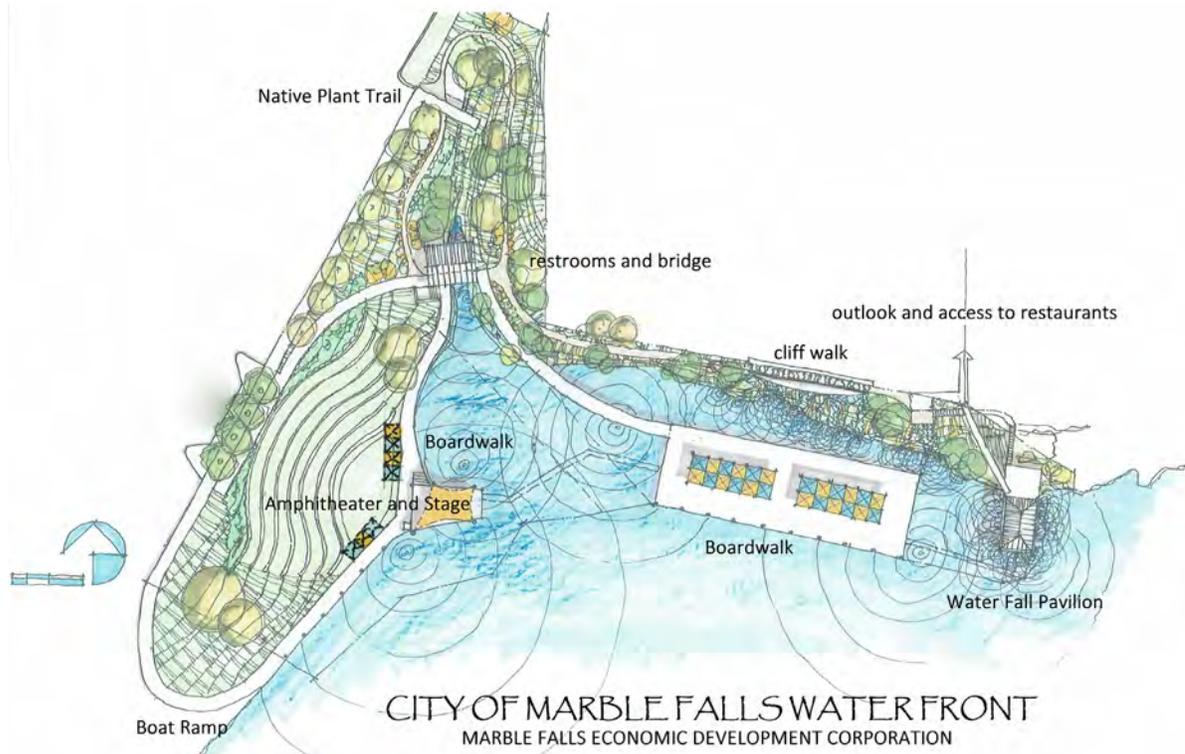


Image courtesy of Local Architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture

public desire and increase regional draw, the City should consider the addition of boat docks and tie offs to provide access to Downtown, providing increased pedestrian access to the lake, and further publicizing the existing water access locations.

Action 6.5.3 – Develop additional activities on the lake.

In addition to providing increased access to the lake, the City should consider developing additional activities on the lake. Such activities could include boat races (e.g., hand-made boats for youth, dragon boating), kayak races, triathlons, and events along the shores such as concerts, festivals, and sculpture exhibitions.

Action 6.5.4 – Support the Economic Development Corporation’s (EDC) efforts in developing lake front enhancements.

The Marble Falls Economic Development Corporation is currently working towards development of enhancements along Lake Marble Falls (see Figure 6.5, *Proposed Waterfront Enhancements*). Improvements to this area can attract both businesses and visitors to the community, increase the City’s sales and real estate tax base, and provide a fun, inviting environment for locals and visitors. As such, the City should support the EDC efforts to make the lake front enhancements a reality.

Action 6.5.5 – Ensure adequate policing of Lake Marble Falls as part of routine police safety rotations.

In order to maintain the health and safety of lake users, the City should ensure there is adequate policing and surveillance of the lake. Policing of the lake should be included as part of the routine police safety rotations conducted throughout



Downtown Marble Falls includes unique shopping opportunities as well as access to parks and recreation. Image courtesy of Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB

the City. In the future, this will be particularly important if the City is hosting lake-based events and/or on heavily trafficked weekends.

Action 6.5.6 – Continue to evaluate the need for a sports complex.

In 2012 the City commissioned a Marble Falls Sports Complex feasibility analysis. At this point the City should continue to evaluate the need for the complex. As overall Citywide tourism increases, or when need becomes more immediate, the City should proactively pursue funding for the facility.

Action 6.5.7 – Consider development of unique parks and recreation amenities to increase regional draw to the City.

In order to increase the draw to Marble Falls, the City should consider developing unique parks and recreation amenities that are not commonly found elsewhere in the region. Examples of such facilities include a botanical garden, tourism train depot, or elaborate playscape.

Action 6.5.8 – Support implementation efforts of a Marble Falls Conference Center located in Downtown.

There are currently development efforts in play to design and construct a state-of-the-art hotel and conference center in Downtown Marble Falls (see Figure 6.6, *Downtown Marble Falls Public Realm Improvements Concept*, on the following page). The City should continue to support EDC efforts and further capitalize on the synergistic opportunities that could occur during the same time. This could include additional capital projects regarding parks, trails, and their associated amenities; vehicular/pedestrian street or sidewalk improvements; wayfinding signage; streetscape enhancement (including art and sculptures), landscaping, etc. It could also include the relocation and redesign of a new City Hall that is integrated into the overall redevelopment efforts of the entire Downtown area (see also Chapter 7, *Public Facilities and Services*, regarding City Hall).



Action 6.5.9 – Develop a regional marketing campaign to attract varying user groups.

A variety of different user groups are already attracted to the greater Texas Hill Country region. In an effort to attract those user groups, such as golfers, outdoor enthusiasts, and boaters to visit Marble Falls, the City should consider developing a regional marketing campaign using websites, brochures, etc.

Action 6.5.10 – Following implementation of Downtown enhancements, re-evaluate potential for rural tourism train route.

Once Downtown enhancements, including elements such as lake front improvements, the creekwalk, etc., have been completed, the City should re-evaluate the potential for a rural tourism train route utilizing the Austin Western Railroad, which is owned and operated by Capital Metro. A Marble Falls-to-Llano steam train route could attract a unique user group to the City. The City could also consider creating a small railroad museum in the vicinity of the rail line to provide an additional point of interest.

Action 6.5.11 – Support efforts of the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB efforts to increase tourism opportunities.

The Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB publicizes events, things to see and do in the community, and lodging and dining information, among other things, in an effort to provide information for visitors and increase draw to Marble Falls. The City should support these marketing efforts to help further increase the regional draw.

Action 6.5.12 – Coordinate mapping and website efforts with the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB.

In order to provide potential visitors with a clear depiction of attractions in the area, the City could consider coordinating with the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB to create and maintain a tourism amenities map to include such places as Blue Bonnet Cafe and future City enhancements as they are completed. The City should also coordinate with the Chamber to update their “See & Do” page with additional photos to increase appeal and user-friendliness of the website.



The Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB publicizes community events such as Market Day on their website.

Image courtesy of Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB

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PUBLIC FACILITIES and SERVICES

Introduction

Public facilities and services play an important role in the day-to-day lives of residents, employees, and even guests of Marble Falls. The work of many public services is widely known, such as police and fire protection and the library. The City's public library can serve not only as a resource to local residents but as a destination for visitors. However, other public services such as drainage, water and wastewater, and street maintenance, which are critical to the daily function of a community, often go unnoticed.

Accordingly, the quality of life in Marble Falls is affected by the availability and quality of these public facilities and services. Hence, planning for them is a critical issue for community leaders and residents to address. As a city grows and changes over time, demand for high quality services also increases. In some cases, changing demographics and evolving technologies may also influence priorities or preferences for services and facilities.

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the adequacy of public facilities, how they may be impacting a department's ability to perform their services, and plan for future needs and expectations. The planning process helps to determine what factors are influencing expectations for public facilities and services and to establish a strategy for adequately planning for and financing these needs. The chapter will consider City Hall facilities, other City department facilities including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Development Services, Economic Development Corporation, fire and police services, and the Marble Falls Public Library.¹



¹ A number of public facilities and services available in Marble Falls are addressed as part of other chapters, including transportation and streetscape improvements (Chapter 5), parks and recreation facilities (Chapter 6), and infrastructure improvements (Chapter 8).



Image courtesy of Marble Falls Facebook Page

This chapter also provides a framework for future demands for these public facilities and services over the next 20 years. This chapter addresses the following:

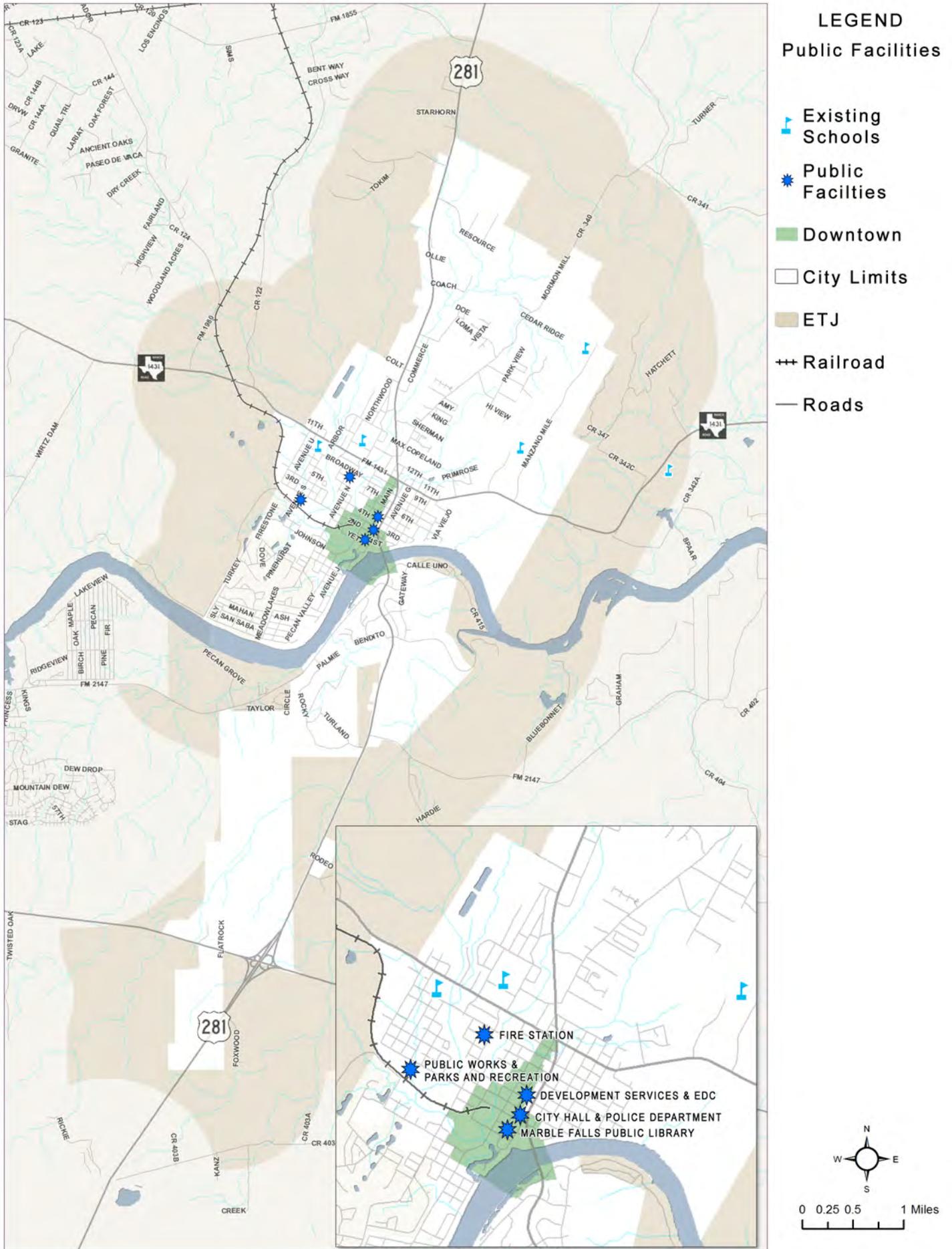
- **City Hall and City services.** Getting answers, paying bills, or attending meetings at City Hall may be the only time a member of the community, prospective business person, or developer, interfaces with the City government. A good first impression, responsive staff, and the efficient provision of City services are essential elements in building community trust, respect, and support.
- **Public safety.** Well-trained responders with adequate and appropriate facilities and equipment ensure residents and visitors to Marble Falls stay as safe as possible, or in emergency situations, receive the best care possible.
- **Public library.** A library program that responds to changing demands and expectations of the community provides value-added quality of life resources necessary for a growing city.

Existing Public Facilities and Services

Marble Falls provides a wide range of public services and facilities. These include library, fire and police services, storm drainage, development services, and water and wastewater services. As discussed in Chapter 2, *Engagement and Vision*, generally 70 percent of respondents to the public survey were either satisfied or very satisfied with the City. Specifically, 80 percent of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of City services.

An inventory of existing public facilities and services helps establish a base level of service that exists in the community (see Map 7.1, *Public Facilities in Marble Falls*). From there, one can better understand community needs and whether demands are being met now and in the future.

Map 7.1 Public Facilities in Marble Falls





Marble Falls City Hall

City Hall

Marble Falls City Hall is located at 800 Third Street. The building was originally built as a bank in the 1950s, but has since been retrofitted for municipal administrative offices and activities. Offices in City Hall include Administration, the City Manager's Office, City Secretary's Office, Finance Department, Human Resources, Municipal Court, and the Utilities (billing) Department. City Hall also includes the City Council Chambers and a council conference room, storage, and limited meeting space.

Approximately 12 people work in City Hall with roughly 75 to 85 people visiting the building each day (or about 18,675 to 21,165 people per year). While the building is meeting the current office space needs for the departments currently located in City Hall, there is no room for growth, potentially hindering staffing resources necessary for a growing community. Sufficient meeting space has also become an issue for City departments. Currently, the Council Chamber serves as the largest meeting space, but it oftentimes becomes overcrowded and presentations are sometimes challenging due to the configuration. Other limitations of City Hall include lack of executive-level meeting space and a staff break room. City leaders also reported mechanical and cosmetic issues such as a confusing building layout, inconvenient and inadequate printing and copying technology, and awkward mechanical equipment and locations. These inadequacies can hinder the City's ability to provide more advanced and efficient services that are now possible through modern technology, and are expected by City residents.

Development Services and Economic Development Corporation

The offices for Development Services and Economic Development Corporation are located a block north of City Hall at 801 Fourth Street. The building was previously occupied by the Library Thrift Store, but in 2011 was retrofitted for administrative offices for these departments. Development Services includes Planning, Building Division, Code Enforcement, and the GIS and Mapping Division.

The Development Services Department employs approximately eight people and the EDC employs two, the Executive Director and Business Development Coordinator.

The space has proven to be sufficient for existing staffing. Development Services has additional space for future staffing while the EDC is at their office space capacity. Both departments report having a shortage of storage as well as challenges with a high demand for the shared meeting space and limited parking that competes with Downtown parking needs.

Police Station

Police service is necessary for public protection and community law enforcement. Beyond strictly enforcing public safety, the Marble Falls Police Department (MFPD) plays an important role in ensuring a safe environment for residents, businesses, and visitors, and contributes to a positive quality of life in Marble Falls. According to the public survey conducted as part of this planning process, approximately 92 percent of survey respondents reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with police protection in Marble Falls.

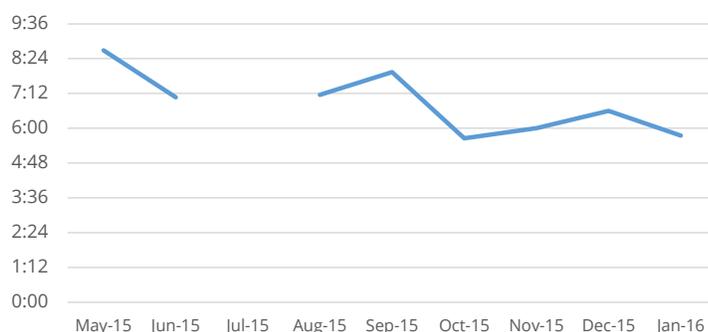


Marble Falls Police Headquarters

The jurisdiction for the MFPD includes all areas inside the City limits of Marble Falls, a 14.1-square-mile area. The Burnet County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and other areas surrounding Marble Falls, where MFPD cannot operate. The sheriff's office can also assist MFPD when requested. Marble Falls also has an interlocal agreement with Burnet County to provide inmate detention services at the Burnet County Jail, which is managed by the Burnet County Sheriff's Office.

In May 2015, the Police Department began collecting response statistics through its Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System (see Figure 7.1, *Police Service Call Average Response Times*). Since then the average reported response time for all service calls have ranged from a high of over eight-and-one-half minutes in May 2015 to just over five-and-one-half minutes in October 2015. While it is a very short snapshot of response times in Marble Falls, it does indicate that Marble Falls has a good response time, particularly for a rural community where response times tend to be longer.

Figure 7.1, Police Service Call Average Response Times



Note: July 2015 not available.
Source: City of Marble Falls Police Department, Average CAD Call Response Times, by Nature, May 2015 through January 2016.

The MFPD currently operates two facilities. The main police station is located at 209 Main Street. The Police Department has occupied this building since 1991 and today has 41 employees within its 6,600 square feet. The second building is a 5,300-square-foot office and warehouse facility on Commerce Street that holds two employees. The second building provides storage space and is used for investigative needs. The Municipal Court is located at City Hall.

Originally built in 1917, the main police station today suffers many mechanical and cosmetic issues that naturally occur with the normal aging of a building. The Police Department also has technological needs that the current building cannot effectively accommodate. There is no conference or meeting space at this location and the current space does not meet the overall needs of the existing staff. The City is currently in the design phase of a new main Police Department and Municipal Court facility. Other than the new main station and municipal court facility, there are currently no substations planned for Marble Falls.

The Police Department consists of five divisions, including Administration, Animal Services, Communication, Criminal Investigation, and Patrol. Staffing of the Police Department includes 17 sworn officers, two administrative support personnel, 10 dispatching officers, a school resource officer, and one additional support staff person. Due to the large daily influx of people in the community, the City's police staffing is compared to communities with similar numbers of Uniform Crime Report (UCR) offenses (Lockhart, Leander, and Bastrop) rather than solely reviewing the population of Marble Falls. Based on this comparison, the Police Department has determined a need for additional staffing, which is typically addressed through the annual budgeting process.

The vehicle inventory for the Police Department is extensive and includes the following: 16 marked patrol units; one marked SUV (driven by the Patrol Lieutenant); three CID unmarked SUVs; one CID pick up; one unmarked SUV (driven by the Patrol Captain); one animal control truck; one unmarked SUV pool car; one mobile command bus; one rescue vehicle; one patrol boat; one SWAT van; one golf cart; and four utility trailers. The department typically replaces vehicles at 100,000 miles. Equipment and vehicle needs are also addressed during the annual budgeting process.

Marble Falls Fire Rescue

The City of Marble Falls provides a high level of fire protection and emergency medical response to residents and properties within the City limits. The services provided by the Fire Department are a strong community asset, where approximately 96 percent of survey respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with fire and emergency medical services. The department is also currently awarded a positive ISO fire rating of three, on a scale of one (best) through 10 (worst).²

Areas in the ETJ are protected by the Marble Falls Volunteer Fire Department. The City also has interlocal agreements with Burnet County, Marble Falls Area EMS, and the City of Horseshoe Bay. As part of these interlocal agreements, Marble Falls Fire Rescue also provides mutual aid and automatic mutual aid to Burnet County and the communities of Burnet, Granite Shoals, Horseshoe Bay, and Spicewood.

Marble Falls Fire Rescue is housed in one 10,000-square-foot station located at 700 Avenue N, which was constructed in 1998. The department is comprised



² Fire rating based on the Insurance Service Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification system.

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SAFETY

Safety heavily influences the satisfaction with a community by its residents, visitors, and businesses, and contributes significantly to the quality of life in Marble Falls. A city's inclination to engage the residents creates transparency and openness between citizens and the city. This helps people to feel that they have a voice that matters, and thus enhances the quality of life of the community.

Community engagement can increase public awareness of safety issues and educate people on preventative measures as they pertain to improving and maintaining safety in a community. This, in turn, helps to unite citizens and the city around these mutual goals. Community programs such as National Night Out, Fire Prevention Week, and even station tours can foster civic engagement and reinforce a sense of community.

Marble Falls Police Department and Fire Rescue are both very active in engaging the community, a practice and policy that likely contributes to the satisfaction these services among residents.¹ The Police Department and Fire Rescue both participate in National Night Out, a statewide event focused on safety that encourages people to get out of their homes, get to know their neighbors, and allows City police and first responders to unite with the community they serve.

The Police Department regularly participates in public speaking events at various locations and organizations throughout the City. The Fire Department offers community training, including CPR and fire extinguisher trainings.

The Police and Fire Departments also engage the youth of Marble Falls. The Police Department participates in the Children's Day Celebration, an annual event for children, and Fire Rescue provides an annual fire camp for middle school students, teaching not only life-saving skills in the event of a fire, but also allowing them to see what it's like to be a firefighter. Both departments also participate in Career Days at the middle and high schools and other civic organizations.

Given the significant community benefits that community engagement offers, as the City regularly examines the budget and department programs, participation in these events should continue to be emphasized and even prioritized.

¹ See Marble Falls Public Opinion Survey results in Chapter 2, *Engagement and Vision*





of three divisions, including Administrative, Operations, and Prevention, with 15 full-time staff members, including the Fire Marshall, Fire Chief, Secretary, and 12 firefighters. The building has four apparatus bays, and the department's vehicle fleet includes a Fire Marshal vehicle and Fire Chief vehicle, an aerial platform truck, two fire apparatuses, a brush truck for wildland firefighting, and a rescue boat for water response. As it stands, the Fire Department is in need of additional administrative space.

In fiscal year 2014, there were a total of 1,301 fire and service related incidents reported (calls in to the station), including 844 (65%) emergency response service (non-fire) responses. The average response time was __ minutes. The desire for the department is four minutes or less. Over the past three years, total incident reports have remained relatively steady, yet have increased since the previous comprehensive plan. With growth occurring in Marble Falls, the call volume is anticipated to continue to increase.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan identified a need for a second fire station and, at the time, a north location was identified. Since then, development pressures have caused demand for future fire service to be shifted to the south side of Lake Marble Falls. Accordingly, a parcel of land was acquired as part of a planned development agreement south of Lake Marble Falls. Unfortunately, the parcel has limited access and has been deemed unsuitable by Fire Rescue.

Public Works and Parks & Recreation Department

The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments moved into new offices in 2010 at 1808 Second Street. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan reinforced the need for a new facility for these growing departments, particularly Public Works. The building was completed in 2010, followed by a new street maintenance facility adjacent to the offices. The office building is approximately 4,300 square feet in size and sufficiently serves the space needs for staffing, storage, and meeting space.

The Marble Falls Public Works Department oversees street maintenance, drainage, and water and wastewater facilities within the City limits of Marble

Falls. It also responds to emergency situations, such as waterline leaks, clogged sewer lines, and infrastructure issues that could impact the health and safety of the community. In addition to the office facility, the Public Works Department operates a street maintenance facility, water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, and irrigation farm.

The street maintenance facility located adjacent to the office building provides ample and flexible space for the staging, storage, and moving of materials. Storage space in the facility includes a 13,000-square-foot main warehouse as well as a maintenance yard used for storing vehicles, pipes, and base materials. The existing water plant is located next to the U.S. Highway 281 bridge on the north side of the lake, while the wastewater plant is adjacent to Johnson Park on Yett Street. The City also provides treated effluent for use as irrigation for a farm on the northwest side of town. In addition to these facilities, the City maintains a network of drainage facilities, including stormwater detention ponds and both underground and surface drainage channels. In recent years, the City adopted studies that analyzed and recommended improvements to drainage, water, and wastewater infrastructure. These include a Flood Protection Planning Study in 2014 and a Water and Wastewater Master Plan completed early in 2016. Recommendations for improvements to these facilities and infrastructure are summarized in Chapter 8, *Infrastructure*.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance, operation, and programming of the parks, trails, sports fields, swimming pool, and other locations across the City, including Lakeside Pavilion. The department consists of a Director, Parks Superintendent, and Administrative Assistant, and also employs Maintenance Technicians and seasonal employees for the maintenance, operation, and programming of the pool.

The department reports that the existing office facilities are sufficient for their current staffing, meeting, and storage needs. However, a need for additional staffing has been identified by the department. Additionally, as the community continues to grow there may be a further need for staffing increases in City departments, including Parks and Recreation. The budgeting process is the typical mechanism to identify and address staffing needs. As part of this evaluation, facilities should also be evaluated to ensure appropriate capacity is available.

Across the City, there are approximately 130 acres of parkland, trails, greenbelts, and other active and passive recreational facilities that are maintained by the City of Marble Falls. Future park and recreation needs were identified as part of this Plan, and recommendations are summarized in Chapter 6, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*.





Marble Falls Public Library

The Marble Falls Public Library is part of the Burnet County Library System. The service area for the Marble Falls Library includes the county and the surrounding region. In 2015, there were 87,392 Marble Falls Library cardholders.

Built in 1997, the main building for the Marble Falls Library, located at 101 Main Street, is approximately 15,200 square feet in size. The main building includes the following: one meeting room with a separate entry, one conference room, one storage room (which is used as a server room for the county), one work room, and three offices.

Marble Falls' Library is open six days a week with six full-time staff members plus volunteers. Similar to many library systems across the country, Marble Falls is slowly providing more online based eServices, such as eBooks, eMagazines, and eAudio books.

In addition to these electronic based services and hard copy circulation, the library also provides valuable programs for citizens of all ages. These include storytime for toddlers and preschoolers, monthly programs for school-age kids such as a Spring Break Stop, Summer Reading Club, and Summer Educational Camps, and book clubs, author visits, and eService training camps. The library also participates in other community events including school tours, Children's Day at the Park, and many other programs and events throughout the year.



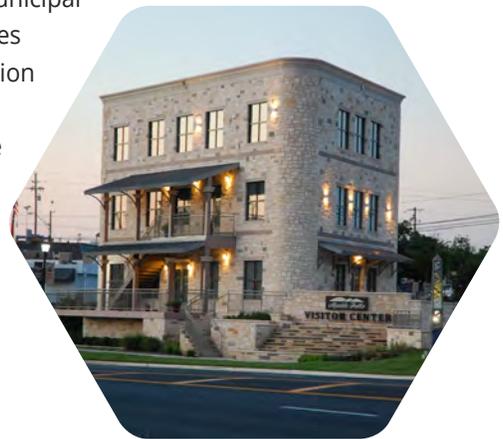
Image courtesy of the Marble Falls Public Library website

Policies & Recommendations

Policies

It is the City's goal to provide public services in a proactive and efficient manner. Technological advances allow cities to be more responsive and efficient today, yet often older buildings and facilities lack the capability to utilize these technologies effectively. The following policies regarding public facilities and services should be considered as part of the daily decision making of City staff and leaders.

1. Consider public facilities as economic development investments for the future. In this regard, facilities such as City Hall and public safety facilities should be of superior quality and located in prominent, accessible areas of the City (e.g., Downtown).
2. Evaluate and understand local growth trends to anticipate and proactively secure future sites for public facilities before land values become too expensive.
3. Consider the joint use of new sites to serve multiple public purposes (e.g., a new fire station co-located with a new park).
4. Consider capital and long-term maintenance costs when determining appropriate design and operation of new facilities. Facilities should be designed to provide for safe, productive, and efficient operations that minimize risk.
5. Invest in modern and energy efficient facilities that are responsive to needs and cost effective over the long-term.
6. Ensure that the City is a well governed, ethical organization that provides excellent customer service.
7. Consider proactive planning, followed by consistent plan execution and implementation through capital programs, staffing, programs, and operations.
8. Use technology and training to provide modern professional municipal services which are perceived or ranked as "top tier." New facilities should incorporate infrastructure at the time of initial construction which allow for upgrades over time.
9. New public facilities should set the bar for what quality, durable development should look like within the City.



Recommendations

Objective 7.1 - Consolidate City Hall services into a single location in Downtown Marble Falls.

City departments, excluding Police and Fire, are currently located in three different buildings, leading to confusion for visitors to City Hall and other departments. Consolidating certain City services to one location will provide more efficient and better service to the citizens of Marble Falls. Ideally Development Services and the EDC would also be located in City Hall, but space limitations have forced these departments to another location. Staff capacity, storage limitations, insufficient meeting space, and dated facilities are other issues reported by City leaders.

The City has a number of options for improving its situation. In the past, capacity issues were dealt with by purchasing buildings in the Downtown area to relocate certain City services. However, this contributed to separating departments and City services, resulting in the same problem the City faces today. Alternately, the City could search for a larger building in which to relocate or purchase land and build a new building from the ground up. Each of these options have their pros and cons that need to be evaluated with other considerations such as space and facility needs and costs.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

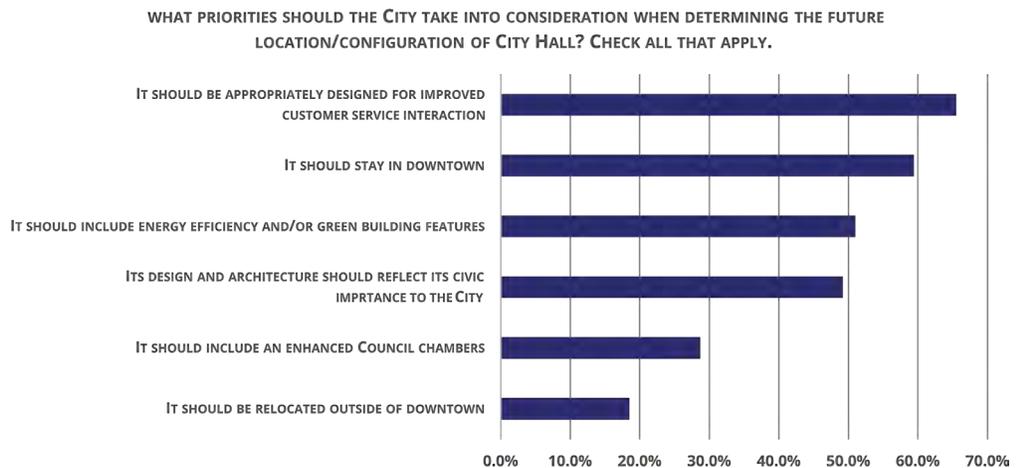
Action 7.1.1 - Complete a professional needs assessment.

The first step in determining the best course of action to address the facility issues with City Hall is to commission a study to conduct a complete space and function needs assessment of all departments that should be located at a new City Hall. This should include the existing departments in City Hall as well as, at a minimum, Development Services and the Economic Development Corporation.

Action 7.1.2 - Identify potential locations for a new City Hall.

Based on the results of the needs assessment, identify potential locations for a new City Hall, including existing buildings and available or vacant lots within the Downtown area. Research these potential locations to determine whether the new City Hall complex should be the adaptive reuse of an existing building or a newly constructed building (see Figure 7.2, *Community Feedback Regarding a New City Hall*).

Figure 7.2, Community Feedback Regarding a New City Hall



Responses to the online community survey.



Identifying a new location for the City Hall has been a highlighted priority by the community in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, the Marble Falls Downtown Master Plan, and in this Plan. While there have been other facility improvements which were deemed higher priorities, the existing City Hall will need to be replaced during this Plan horizon. Since the existing City Hall is already at capacity, this need will become particularly critical as the City continues to grow. Combining it with other critical reinvestments in Downtown could be a cost effective solution for the City.

Image courtesy of Local Architect Marley Porter with Living Architecture.

Action 7.1.3 - Determine a funding source for construction of a new City Hall.

For obvious reasons, identifying a funding source will be necessary for any new City Hall, whether it is the renovation and reuse of an existing building or constructing a new City Hall. Many funding tools are available to cities and each should be evaluated to select the best source for funding a new City Hall.

Objective 7.2 - Provide superior and efficient Police and Fire Department facilities and service coverage to adequately protect the Marble Falls community.

Marble Falls is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the community. As Marble Falls continues to grow, both in population and geographically, the City will need to evaluate the effectiveness of its police and fire services. This includes ensuring that facilities and equipment are sufficient, maintained, and technologically up-to-date; staffing levels are appropriate to handle existing and projected emergency and non-emergency call volumes; and police, EMS personnel, and firefighters are well-trained.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 7.2.1 - Build a new Police Station and Municipal Court Facility.

At the time of this Comprehensive Plan, the City of Marble Falls was in the design phase of a new main Police Station and Municipal Court Facility next to the existing fire station on Avenue N. The Police Department utilizes ever-evolving telecommunications, information technology, radio, and 9-1-1 technologies. To the furthest extent possible, the new building should provide the infrastructure to utilize the most up-to-date technology and equipment and provide flexibility for further upgrades over time.

Action 7.2.2 - Evaluate Police Department staffing and increase as necessary.

The primary factors that influence the Police Department's staffing needs include population growth, traffic, incident reports, and the fact that Marble Falls is a regional retail activity center. The Police Department has determined a need for additional staffing. Annually, through the budgeting process, staffing of the Police Department should be evaluated and addressed in order to maintain an effective police force in Marble Falls.

Action 7.2.3 - Complete a professional fire station location study.

The current Fire Department facility in Marble Falls is sufficiently sized for existing staffing levels, but requires general maintenance and repair and has exceeded its storage capacity. Department staff have identified a need for additional administrative space to allow for growth. As the community continues to grow and demand for fire services increases, Marble Falls should ensure that the department has adequate facilities and resources to maintain the high level of quality and safety the community has come to expect. In addition, new and anticipated growth in Marble Falls requires an additional four-man engine company to respond to incidents in the southern sector of the City. The parcel currently identified for the new fire station has limited access and has been deemed an unsuitable location by Fire Rescue.

Accordingly, a professional fire station location study should be undertaken to address two things: (1) rebuilding and possible relocation of the existing station, and (2) determining an appropriate location for a second station south of Lake Marble Falls.

Action 7.2.4 - Evaluate the need for a fire and emergency medical services training facility.

Training is a crucial component to maintain and improve the skills of the community's emergency responders. The Fire Department identified a current lack of training space, including a training tower. A training facility would help the City achieve an even lower ISO rating and could accommodate additional space for administrative services. This facility could serve not only the needs of the Fire Department, but could also be used by the Police Department or rented to other cities to train. Many jurisdictions partner with their unincorporated county and surrounding cities to develop and fund a joint training facility. Since Marble Falls is the regional hub of the Highland Lakes area, it would make logical sense that this facility be located within the City.

Objective 7.3 - Continue to offer a wide variety of library services and programs that respond to changing demands and expectations of the community.

Like any community service, the demands and expectations of the service can change based on the population and demographics as well as changing technology. As such, the library will need to regularly evaluate the expectations

on their services and make adjustments as necessary, including programs offered at the library, circulated materials and media, and facility space and amenities.

The library staff have also identified possible needs for computer classes for senior citizens, a computer lab, an enclosed area for children and families, and longer weekend hours.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 7.3.1 - Continue to grow eServices and related materials and media.

The library began providing eServices in 2012 when eBook usage began to rise. Today, the library annually adds new eServices to meet the growing demands of the community. As technology continues to advance and electronic media continues to expand, the library should continue to expand their eServices offerings and programs to meet the demand for this service.

Action 7.3.2 - Develop a library facility plan.

The library is truly a multipurpose building. The library offers public computers, printing services, and free Wi-Fi as well as classes and programs that target all ages. As Marble Falls and the surrounding communities in Burnet County continue to grow, so does the demand on the library for these services. The library staff have identified a number of possible program and facility needs, including a separated area for a computer lab, a need for a separated children's or family area, and simply expanding hours of operation of the library.

A library facility plan will help the City identify possible solutions to these facility needs. The facility plan should also analyze the demand for the expansion of the library facility, and evaluate the options of expanding the existing library or opening a second location in Marble Falls or Granite Shoals as the City continues to grow.

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INFRASTRUCTURE



Introduction

A community's infrastructure system includes the physical network of facilities that serve households and businesses with basic requirements. Planning for their growth and maintenance over time is crucial simply for the continued function of a community. Infrastructure systems can include transportation, utilities, water and wastewater, drainage, and many other systems that cities provide to help it function.

The City's transportation infrastructure is addressed in Chapter 5, *Transportation*. This chapter addresses the water, wastewater, and drainage systems. Master plans and studies for these elements have recently been completed and their findings are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan. This chapter coordinates with Chapter 3, *Planning for Growth* and Chapter 4, *Land Use, Character, and Design*, since utility and drainage elements are largely based on current population, projected growth, and recommended development patterns.

Many cities are recognizing the role infrastructure plays in shaping a community and how it impacts decisions made by local leaders. Communities find themselves challenged with meeting the varying demands for water in an environmentally conscious manner, while also ensuring a high level of wastewater treatment, stormwater management and flood protection, and clean and attractive natural water systems. As a result, this Plan pays increased attention to infrastructure and how it can achieve other goals of the Comprehensive Plan and enhance the community.

This chapter provides a 20-year policy framework for the future development of Marble Falls' infrastructure systems, including:

- **Water distribution system.** The City is challenged with serving the varying needs for water throughout the community in a fiscal and environmentally responsible manner. This includes not just water

IN·FRA·STRUC·TURE

The basic equipment and structures that are needed for a country, region, or organization to function properly.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary



consumption, but water demand for business operation as well as sufficient flow and reserves for fire protection.

- **Wastewater collection system.** Increases in water usage naturally lead to increases in wastewater. This requires the City to provide an adequate wastewater collection and treatment system which has minimal impact on the natural water systems. Through proactive planning, the City can utilize treated wastewater to promote reductions in potable water usage (e.g., for irrigation) and water conservation.
- **Drainage system.** Effective management of on-site stormwater runoff, combined with an appropriately designed and maintained drainageway system, can help mitigate the impacts of a large flood event. The utilization of proven best practices (e.g., low impact development) can transform these otherwise unattractive facilities into attractive community enhancements.

Existing Infrastructure Conditions

Water and Wastewater

In the face of sequential droughts and a growing population, water has become an invaluable resource. As the City grows and moves forward into the future, it needs to responsibly plan for the provision and use of water resources. With increases in the demand for water, so naturally come increases in the demand for wastewater collection and treatment.

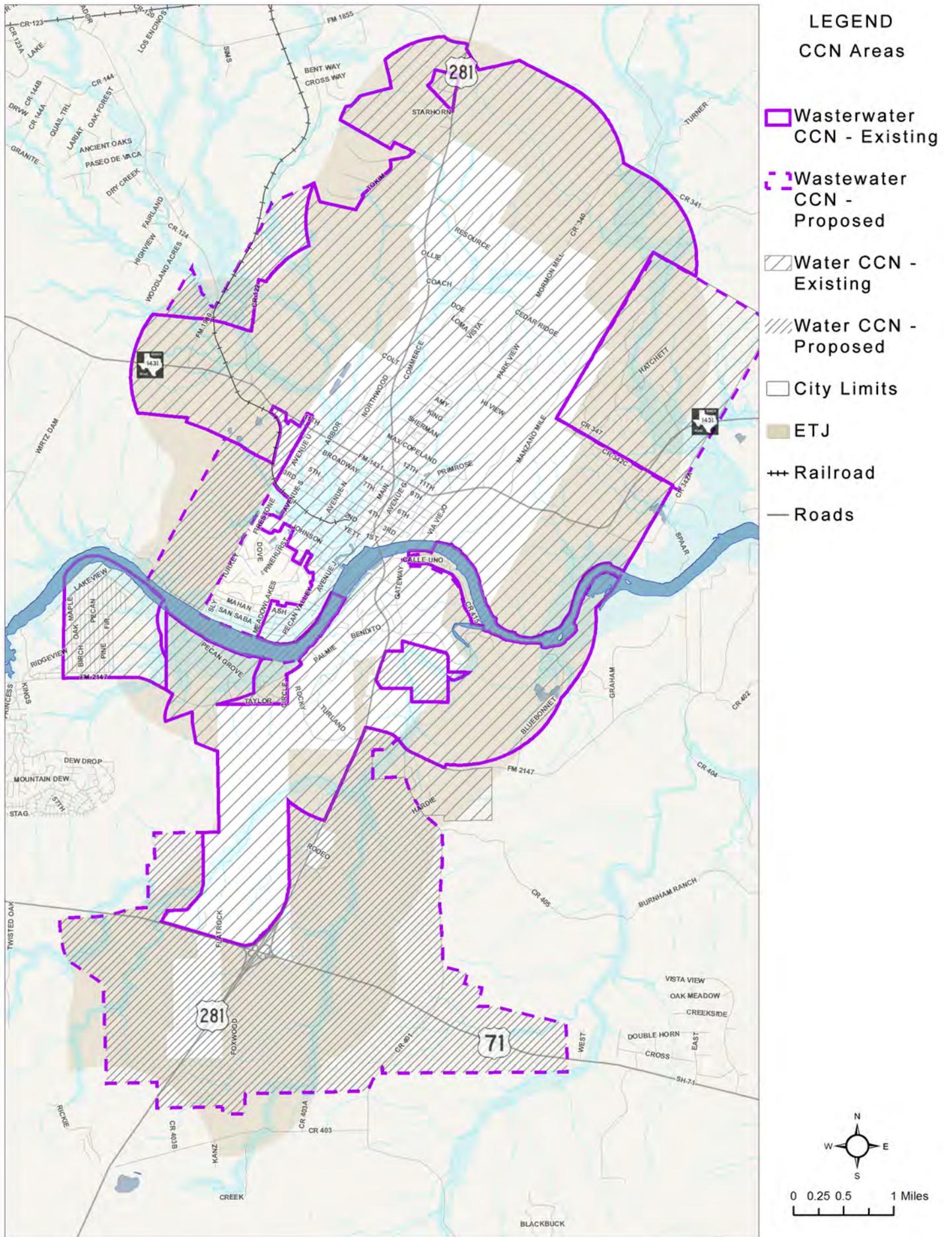
The City of Marble Falls currently provides water and wastewater services to properties within the City limits, and holds water and wastewater Certificates of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) over areas covering the City limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). At the end of 2015, the City submitted an application to amend their water and wastewater CCN areas to cover additional areas, including locations south of U.S. Highway 281 and the City limits (see Map 8.1, *Existing and Proposed Water and Wastewater CCN Areas*).

CERTIFICATE OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY (CCN)

A CCN gives an entity the exclusive right to provide retail water and/or wastewater utility service to an identified geographic area.

Public Utility Commission of Texas

Map 8.1, Existing and Proposed Water and Wastewater CCN Areas



Prior to drafting this Comprehensive Plan the City commissioned a consulting firm to develop an in-depth Master Water and Wastewater Plan. The purpose of this separate plan was to provide a detailed overview of the entire water and wastewater system and makes specific recommendations to meet demand for an approximate 30-year timeframe. The study area of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan included both the incorporated City limits and the ETJ of Marble Falls, an area approximately 38.44 square miles in size. While the plan covered the entire area for the water treatment and distribution system, it only covered the area south of Lake Marble Falls for the wastewater collection and treatment system. Information and recommendations from the Water and Wastewater Master Plan are summarized here.

Water Supply and Distribution

The City of Marble Falls currently holds a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) for water service to areas generally within the City limits; however, as previously mentioned, it has submitted an application to amend this CCN area to enlarge it. While Marble Falls owns and operates its own water distribution system, its source for potable water is treated raw water from Lake Marble Falls. The City has a supply contract with the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), providing for a maximum of 2,000 acre-feet per year. The City is responsible for furnishing, operating, and maintaining the pumping facilities, metering equipment, and distribution infrastructure.

The City's water treatment plant is located adjacent to, and northeast of the U.S. Highway 281 bridge over Lake Marble Falls. The plant was built in 1960 and underwent extensive remodeling in 1983 with additions in 2015 and 2016. It is regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Raw water is pumped from the lake through an existing off-site 18-inch raw water line directly to the water treatment plant from a remote intake structure located west of the water treatment plant site. Water is stored and treated at the water treatment plant prior to being pumped into the distribution system made up of predominantly eight inch water lines.

In order to understand water facility improvement needs, it is important to first understand the existing and projected demand for water. Based on current population estimates and equivalent living units (LUE), the Water Master Plan calculated daily average water use at 1.46 millions of gallons per day (MGD), and peak day water usage at 2.9 MGD or 2,015 gallons per minute (GPM). Today, peak water demand reaches current capacity of the water treatment plant. In 2044, peak water demand is projected to reach 4.95 MGD (see Table 8.1, *Water Demand Requirements*).

The ultimate capacity of the water treatment plant is 6.3 MGD. However, the design capacity is currently lower; the gravity filters can only treat 2.9 MGD and the raw water intake pumps have a capacity of 3.024 MGD. The Water Master Plan found that in order to meet peak demands of up to 2.9 MGD, the plant needs to operate around 23 hours at day, with two shifts of operational staff running the plant.



MARBLE FALLS WATER
DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE

While water comes from LCRA, the City of Marble Falls owns and operates its own water distribution system. Key components of the City's water infrastructure include a raw water pumping facility in Lake Marble Falls, raw water supply line, water treatment plant, ground reservoirs and elevated storage tanks, booster pump stations, water distribution lines, and pressure reducing valves.

Table 8.1, Water Demand Requirements

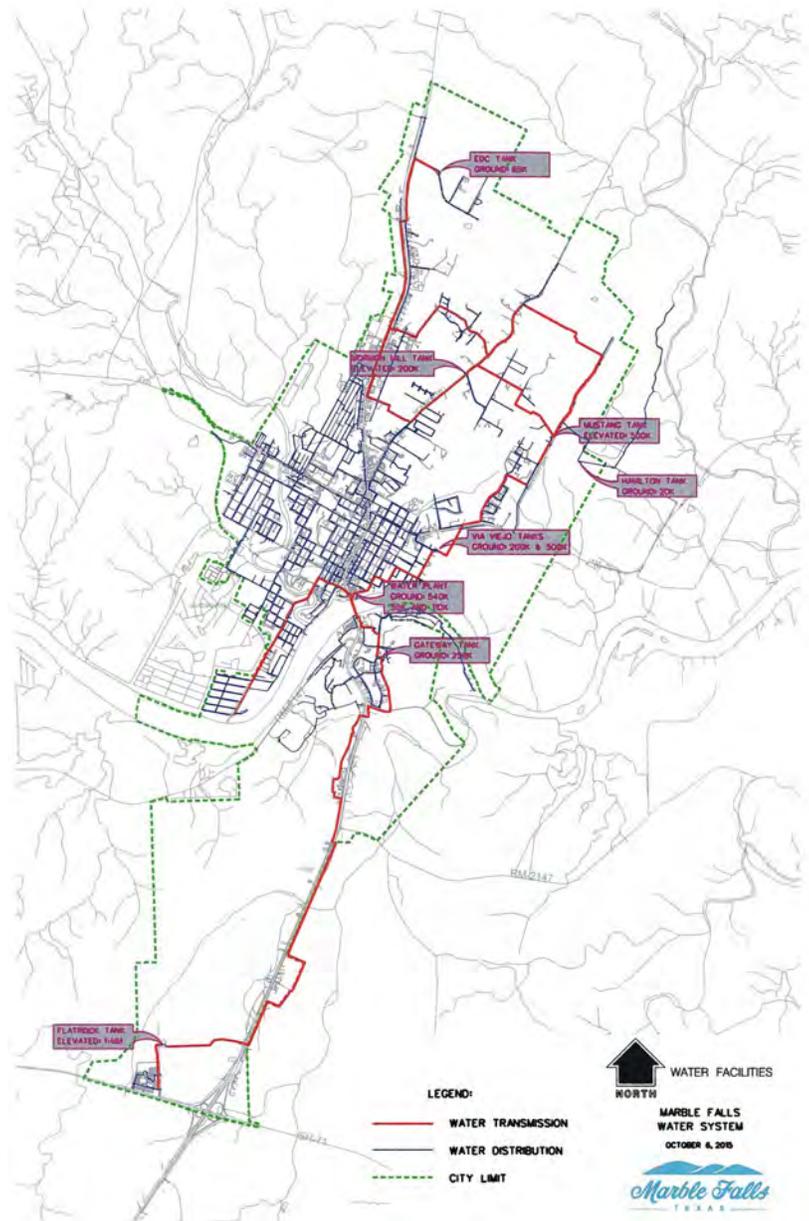
YEAR	POPULATION PROJECTION	EQUIVALENT LUE PROJECTION	PEAK DAILY DEMAND	
			MGD	GPM
2015	6,406	4,818	2.90	2,015
2024	8,011	6,044	3.64	2,527
2034	9,398	7,130	4.30	2,981
2044	10,785	8,217	4.95	3,436

Source: City of Marble Falls Master Water and Wastewater Plan: Volume 1 Water Plan. January 2016.

As part of the planning process of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan the Plant Superintendent, Public Works Director, and City Engineer identified a number of other operational concerns that affect the efficiency of the water treatment plant and water distribution system. Their operational concerns informed the recommended improvements. The Water Master Plan also evaluated the adequacy of the existing water pipe distribution system to deliver desired flow rates and residual pressures to all points in the network (see Figure 8.1, Marble Falls Water System). Marble Falls has both old and new water lines throughout the water service area, and water is also transported across Lake Marble Falls from the water treatment plant.

In 2013, Marble Falls began to more aggressively implement water conservation efforts. The City received assistance from LCRA to implement a Purple Pipe Program to irrigate parks and other City properties with wastewater effluent. By using wastewater effluent for this purpose, it is estimated that it saves the City and LCRA approximately 15 million gallons of potable water a year. In 2013, Marble Falls also changed its pricing structure for water rates to encourage water conservation among consumers by charging a higher water usage rate for higher water users. These efforts were implemented with the goal of reducing per capita water usage by two percent by 2019, among other goals for water conservation.

Figure 8.1, Marble Falls Water System



Source: City of Marble Falls Wastewater Master Plan, 2016.

Wastewater Collection and Treatment

The City of Marble Falls operates its own wastewater collection infrastructure and holds a sewer CCN to provide wastewater service over most areas within the City limits and parts of the ETJ (see Map 8.1, *Existing and Proposed Water and Wastewater CCN Areas*, earlier in this chapter). In late 2015, the City submitted an application to amend their existing wastewater CCN to expand it to the south and also to include unincorporated areas of the county. Key components of this system include gravity and pressure wastewater systems, lift stations, force mains, and a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP).

While the wastewater system runs on both sides of Lake Marble Falls, there is only one activated sludge WWTP on the north side of the lake. It is located at Yett Street and Avenue L along the Whitman Branch and was originally built in 1960. The oxidation ditch was constructed in the late 1980s, with modifications in the 1990s. The plant underwent additional upgrades in 2013 to add a reclaimed water system to improve treatment of wastewater effluent to Type 1 for use as landscape irrigation at City parks. As with water quality, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) regulates the quality of the wastewater system.

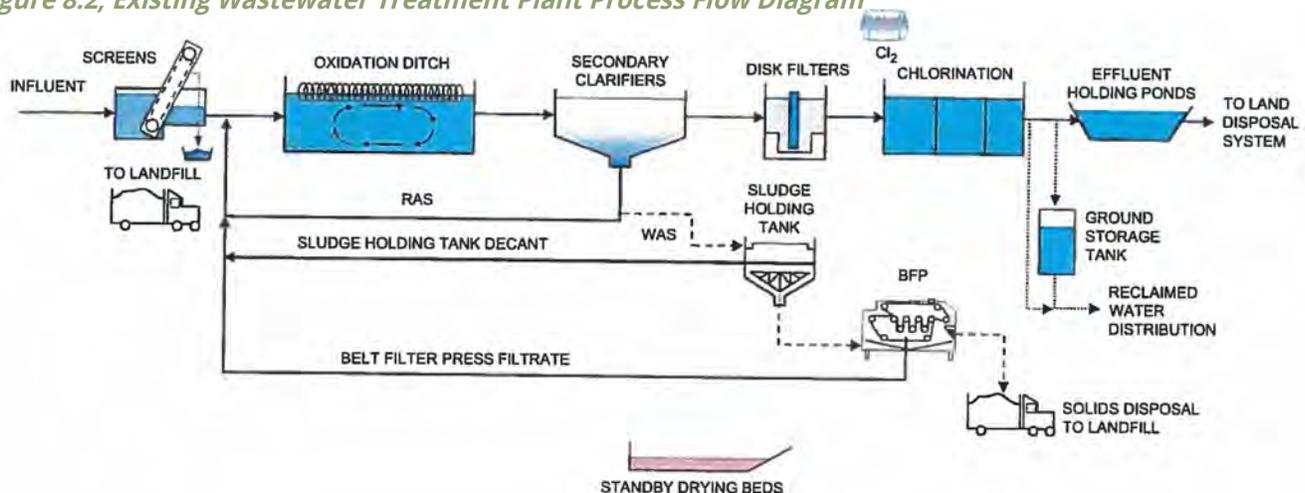
The WWTP takes in approximately 0.95 MGD of wastewater from approximately 2,620 customers. Wastewater is treated to Type 1 effluent, which the City uses to irrigate municipal parks as well as for irrigation on a farm north of the City. Sludge is further treated at the plant before being disposed of at a TCEQ permitted landfill. The current permit does not authorize land application of sewage sludge (see Figure 8.2, *Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant Process Flow Diagram*).

The City's existing wastewater collection system has old and new wastewater lines, force mains and pressure systems, and lift stations connecting the developed service areas both north and south of Lake Marble Falls. City staff have identified a need to upgrade aging infrastructure (some consisting of old clay pipes) because of issues with infiltration/inflow (I/I) of non-effluent water (see Figure 8.3, *Marble Falls Wastewater System*, on the next page).

Infiltration / Inflow

Older and aging wastewater systems oftentimes allow surface water to enter the system during rain events. This taxes the City's wastewater treatment plant as it now treating both normal levels of effluent plus the added rainwater.

Figure 8.2, Existing Wastewater Treatment Plant Process Flow Diagram



Source: City of Marble Falls Wastewater Master Plan, 2016.

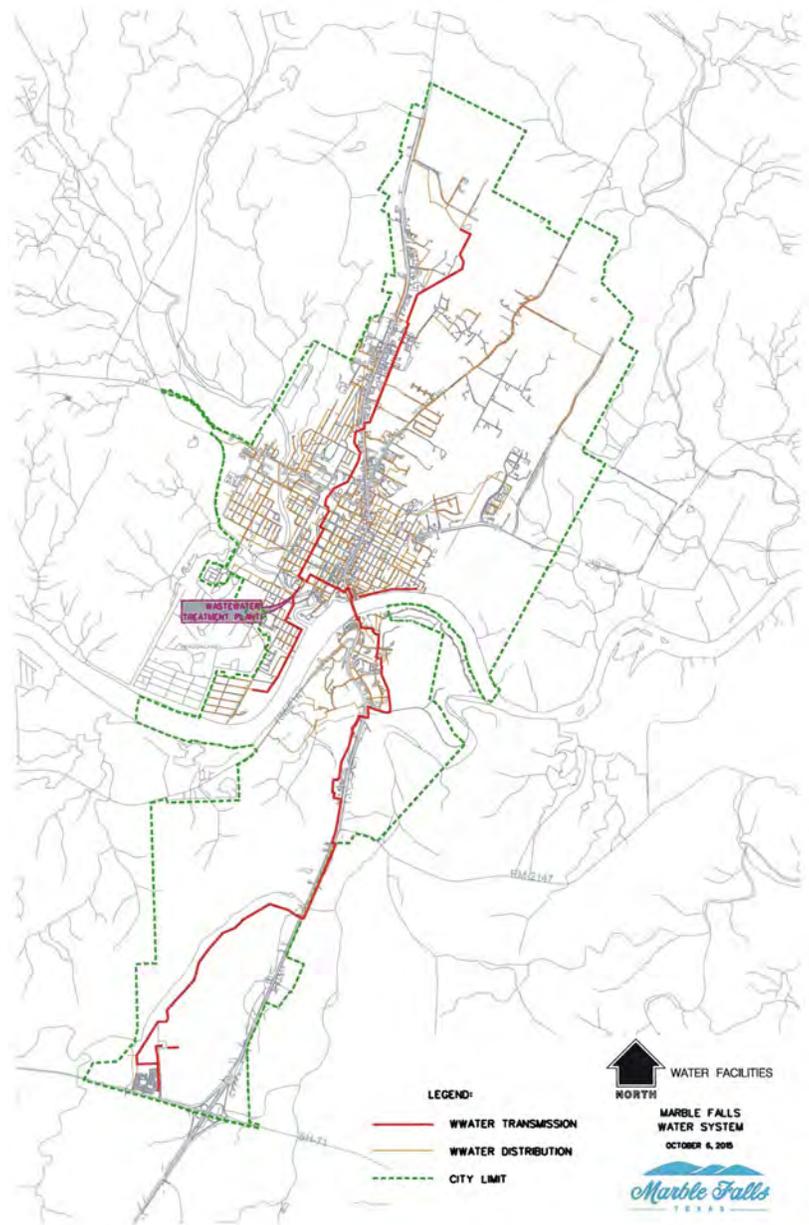


Figure 8.3, Marble Falls Wastewater System

As discussed, current population estimates and equivalent living units (LUE) yield a calculated daily average wastewater flow of approximately 0.95 MGD. The WWTP is permitted for an interim daily flow of 0.98 MGD, and a final phase daily flow of 1.5 MGD (up to a two-hour peak flow of 4.5 MGD in the final phase). The plant currently operates in the interim phase.

The City has begun the process to expand the WWTP to an average treatment capacity of 1.5 MGD. Following this expansion, the site will be at its design limit for treatment capacity. When flows exceed 75 percent of the 1.5 MGD (or 1.125 MGD), planning to locate a second WWTP on the south side of Lake Marble Falls must begin.

While the existing water collection system on the south side of Lake Marble Falls does not indicate capacity deficiencies, development pressures and known development projects have presented a need to expand the wastewater system to the south. However, land area limitations and site constraints at the existing WWTP limit its expansion to the final phase of 1.5 MGD. As such, the Wastewater Master Plan recommends construction of a second WWTP south of Lake Marble Falls. This will provide additional capacity beyond the permitted final phase of the existing WWTP.



Source: City of Marble Falls Wastewater Master Plan, 2016.

Drainage System

Simply stated, a community's drainage system operates to move stormwater from rain events. There are two primary components of a community's drainage system. The first is the natural areas and drainageways such as rivers, creeks, tributaries, ponds, lakes, floodplains, etc. The second component includes the man-made infrastructure improvements that control runoff from properties into the natural drainageways, including above and below ground drainage systems such as ditches, culverts, and gutters; retention ponds; dams; and even parks or open spaces designed to hold rising storm waters.

Marble Falls has three main creeks and contributing tributaries that drain into the Colorado River (or Lake Marble Falls). Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch are located north of the Colorado River, where Downtown Marble Falls and much of the developed area of the City are located. The area that drains into these creeks is known as the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed. On the south side of the Colorado River is the Flatrock Creek Watershed, which drains into Flatrock Creek, ultimately ending up in the Colorado River (see Map 8.2, *Marble Falls Watersheds and Drainage Areas*).

The drainage system is a critical component of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of a community. In many cases, the drainage system functions of storing and moving storm water go on seemingly unnoticed. Its purpose and importance becomes most apparent in major storm events when elements of the drainage systems, such as retention ponds, ditches, and the creeks, fill up with storm water. Failure of the drainage system can result in devastation of property, buildings, infrastructure, and even lives.

A watershed is an area that drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, river, or lake.

2007 FLOOD

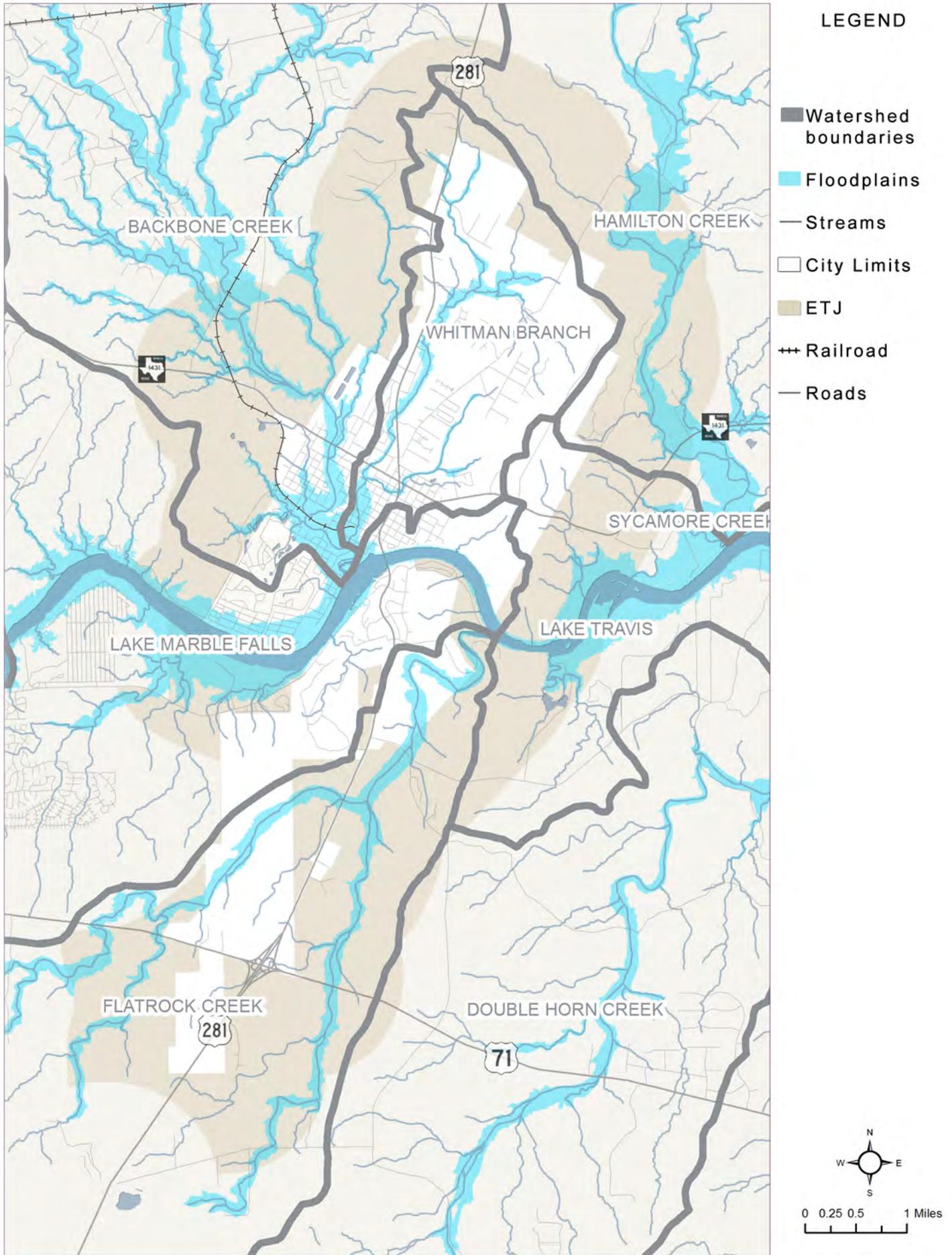
In June 2007, Marble Falls experienced record rainfalls that greatly affected the local community. Two lines of thunderstorms produced approximately 18 inches of rainfall over much of the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed. The Texas Almanac estimated that over 300 structures were damaged including approximately \$130 million in losses, with many bridge and culvert crossings being washed out. Additionally, several swiftwater rescues were necessary and multiple deaths related to the floods were reported.

As a result of this natural disaster, Marble Falls and other communities and entities applied for and received a Flood Protection Planning Grant from the Texas Water Development Board, resulting in a Flood Protection Planning Study for the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed. Throughout the planning process of this study public meetings and community input informed the data and recommendations. The study includes hydraulic and hydrologic analyses of flooding of the creeks, which resulted in base flood elevations for multiple storm events up to a 500-year event. These analyses allow for better planning and regulatory information for use in floodplain management. The plan also includes a flood reduction analysis for the City of Marble Falls which identified and prioritized recommendations for flood mitigation.

Summarized from Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study Final Report, March 2014



Map 8.2 Marble Falls Watersheds and Drainage Areas



Floodplain Management

The designated Floodplain Administrator for the City of Marble Falls is the City Building Official within the Development Services Department. The purpose of this role is to minimize losses due to flood conditions and accomplish these tasks through a number of regulations. Flood modeling done by the Flood Protection Planning Study indicated that Marble Falls has done an excellent job in prohibiting development within the floodplain.

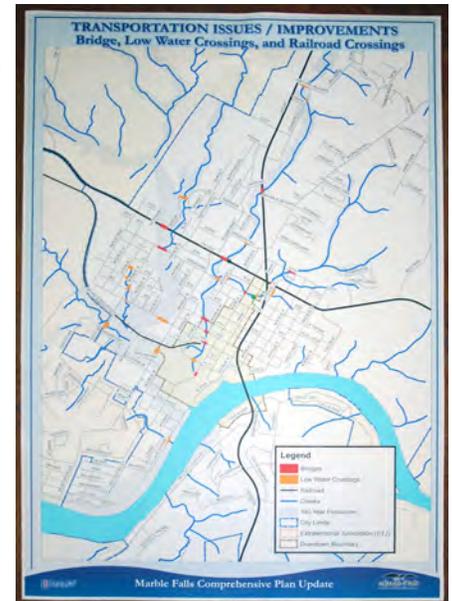
In order to maintain enrollment in the National Flood Insurance Program (provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency), the City must regulate FEMA floodplains. Enrollment in this program enables Marble Falls land owners to obtain more affordable flood insurance policies. Backbone Creek, Whitman Branch, Flatrock Creek, and their tributaries are shown on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), dated March 2012. The FIRMs show areas subject to flooding for the one percent annual chance flood (100-year flood), limits for the 0.2 percent annual chance flood (500-year flood), and other floodprone areas. Currently mapped floodplain areas are shown on Map 8.2, *Marble Falls Watersheds and Drainage Areas*, on the previous page.

In June 2007, the Marble Falls community and other local areas suffered immense losses from a flood. As a result of this natural disaster, the City of Marble Falls and other local communities and entities commissioned a Flood Protection Planning Study for the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed, north of the Colorado River. This study was completed in 2014 and included hydraulic and hydrologic analyses to develop flood hazard information for planning and regulatory purposes. It also produced base flood elevations for the existing and ultimate conditions for multiple rainfall events, up to a 500-year (or 0.2 percent) event. Finally, the study also identified, evaluated, and prioritized potential flood damage reduction alternatives for the City of Marble Falls. The recommendations of this study are incorporated into the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Flat Rock Creek Watershed, south of Lake Marble Falls, today consists primarily of large ranches. In 2007 it also experienced significant flooding, although the lack of existing development in the area resulted in a lower impact on life and property. The waters of Flat Rock Creek rose quickly and over-topped State Highway 71 and U.S. Highway 281 and washed out other local roadways. The creek also proved to be prone to flash flooding. The 10 inches of rain in the 2007 storm resulted in a 12-foot rise in the creek. The City of Marble Falls has an interlocal agreement with LCRA to manage stormwater runoff quality from new development projects within the City limits and ETJ.¹

Despite the less dramatic history of flooding in this area, it needs to be recognized that the Flat Rock Creek Watershed is prone to flooding and susceptible to damage in major storm events and should be managed and mitigated as development increases south of Lake Marble Falls.

¹ Source: Summarized from the LCRA Flat Rock Creek Watershed Poster, 2008.



Identified transportation issues associated with flooding of low water crossings.



Flat Rock Creek Watershed poster developed by LCRA.



Stormwater Runoff Control

During rain events, stormwater runoff will usually follow the natural contours of the land and head towards creeks and rivers. However, in developed areas such as Marble Falls, buildings change the natural flow and also create impervious cover, thus increasing runoff. As a result, the drainage system needs control devices such as drainage channels and retention ponds.

Drainage channels, such as surface ditches and gutters to underground drainage utilities, provide areas for water to flow other than a property or roadway. Retention ponds serve to store water so that drainage channels or natural drainageways are not inundated. They help to manage the volume of runoff from a property.

The design and construction of drainage infrastructure has the potential to greatly impact the community. First, the history of channelizing drainage areas has allowed debris to be carried off with stormwater runoff, introducing trash, pesticides, fertilizers, sediment, yard clippings, and other byproducts of development, consequently polluting the local waterways. The design of drainage features can help filter these pollutants in order to maintain clean drainageways and a healthy ecosystem. Public awareness also plays an important role in improving the quality of stormwater runoff.

Secondly, the design of drainage improvements provides a unique opportunity for a community to develop recreational spaces for its residents. Natural drainage areas and floodplains, when appropriately protected, become community assets. As communities have begun to recognize the value of access to the natural environment, more and more cities have developed trails along drainage channels and creeks, large regional detention areas as water features, or large floodplain areas that may typically be dry outside of flooding into parkland or sports fields.

Policies & Recommendations

Policies

In order to achieve the community's envisioned future, this Comprehensive Plan must be considered and implemented each day when decisions are made by City staff and elected and appointed officials. As part of this daily decision making (whether on new plans (e.g., street improvement plans), budgeting, staffing, capital improvement programming, or on new land development applications being considered), the following water, wastewater, and drainage infrastructure policies should be considered:

1. Continue to evaluate and understand growth trends to anticipate needs and proactively respond with land acquisition (to locate expanded infrastructure) or capital investments (for construction).
2. Coordinate infrastructure expansion concurrent with growth and development of the City.
3. Invest in upgradeable infrastructure systems that can expand with the planned future growth of the City.
4. Adhere to a continual and incremental approach to infrastructure repair and replacement. This will protect against large scale or system-wide deterioration of the City's infrastructure.
5. Strengthen intergovernmental, institutional, and public/private partnerships (where appropriate) to maximize cost savings and ensure optional provision of public infrastructure.
6. Proactively strive to reduce per capita water consumption of potable water through conservation, water reclamation, and other water stewardship programs.
7. Improve the City's resiliency by planning for and adapting to increased and more frequent drought and flooding conditions.
8. Monitor the need for additional protection of the Backbone Creek watershed to protect downstream development from potential large-scale flood events.
9. Incentivize the use of the City's natural and man-made drainageways and floodplains for important community purposes such as stormwater conveyance, open space protection, and recreation.
10. Modify the City's zoning and development regulations to ensure that new infrastructure and development does not degrade the City's greatest asset – Lake Marble Falls.
11. Modify zoning and development regulations to incentivize and/or require green building and low impact development (LID) best practices.



Recommendations

Objective 8.1 - Develop a well-planned and fiscally sustainable water and wastewater infrastructure system that efficiently and effectively serves the water and wastewater needs of the Marble Falls community.

In recent years, the City has invested funds in its water distribution infrastructure, including upgrading its existing water treatment plant, extending major water lines, and constructing water storage tanks.

Growth in Marble Falls is expected to continue. With this growth comes increases in water demand, including consumption by both households and businesses, concurrent with the need to ensure system pressures for adequate fire flow. In order to meet projected water needs, the City will not only need to ensure a sufficient supply of water, but also that the City's infrastructure can efficiently and effectively handle distributing the needed water.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 8.1.1 - Continue to pursue an application to amend the water and wastewater CCN areas.

Cities do not need to obtain a CCN in order to provide water or wastewater services in an uncertified area. With no other CCN holders in the immediate vicinity of Marble Falls, the City is the primary water and wastewater provider for the area. Securing the CCN, however, can protect the City's exclusive right to provide high quality water and wastewater services to future areas of growth.

At the end of 2015, Marble Falls submitted an application to amend the existing water and wastewater CCN areas, adding approximately 10,000 acres, much of which is located south of U.S. Highway 281 and the City limits. At the development of this Comprehensive Plan the amendment had not yet been approved. The City should continue to pursue this CCN expansion to protect their exclusive right to provide water and wastewater services in these future areas of growth.

Action 8.1.2 - Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan.

As discussed earlier, the water treatment plant is at capacity to deliver water based on peak demand. The Master Water and Wastewater Plan makes specific infrastructure recommendations, which are prioritized into schedules for "Immediate" (end of 2016), "Near Term" (end of 2020), "Intermediate 1" (end of 2024), "Intermediate 2" (end of 2034), and "Ultimate" (end of 2044). At the time of the writing of this Comprehensive Plan, the City was in the process of expanding the water treatment plant to 4.83 MGD and the WWTP to 1.5 MGD. The recommended capital improvement plan for water infrastructure improvements through the year 2044 totals approximately \$15.5 million. Immediate and Near Term projects are shown in Figure 8.4, *Immediate and Near Term Infrastructure Recommendations of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan*, on the next page.

Figure 8.4, Immediate and Near Term Infrastructure Recommendations of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan

PHASE	PROJECT NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION	POTENTIAL COST
WATER INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS		
Immediate	1 / 1A - Water Treatment Plant Gravity Filter Options <i>Add one or two 1.5 MGD gravity filters to expand existing plant treatment capacity; Replace chlorinator injectors and feed pumps; Connect to control system for “flow pacing.”</i>	\$2,535,300 to \$3,429,300, depending on option
Immediate	2 / 2A - Water Treatment Plant Raw Water Pump Station Options <i>Replace two or three raw water intake pumps to increase pumping capacity from lake.</i>	\$900,000 to \$1,320,000 depending on option
Immediate	3 - Water Distribution Line at Mustang Pressure Plane <i>Install 16” waterline from Via Viejo High Service Pump Station to existing 16” line at FM 1431 and Manzano Mile to improve efficiency during peak water usage.</i>	\$340,000
Immediate	4 - Water Storage Tank at Via Viejo <i>Demolish two existing and aging ground storage tanks at Via Viejo and replace with one 800,000 gallon tank.</i>	\$1,100,000
Immediate	5 - Water Well at Flatrock Pressure Plan <i>Install pump, piping and controls in existing 10” diameter water well.</i>	\$265,000
Total Probable Estimate of Cost for “Immediate” Improvements		\$5,140,300 to \$6,454,300 depending on options
Near Term	6 - Water Treatment Plant Filter Media and Underdrain System <i>The filter media is over 15 years old and needs to be inspected and replaced to comply with current TCEQ rules and regulations. Furnish and install equipment to replace filter media and underdrain system; Furnish and install required filter influent valves, filter-to-waste valves, rate-of-flow control valves, including all filter face piping and fittings and coatings; Install all electrical conduits and wiring from the filter control console to all valve actuators.</i>	\$994,000
Near Term	7 - Water Treatment Plant Clarifier Equipment <i>The existing Clarifier No. 1 needs maintenance repairs. Remove and dispose (off-site) of existing clarifier equipment at Clarifier No. 1; Furnish and install new clarifier equipment.</i>	\$870,000
Near Term	8 - Water Distribution Line at Gateway Pressure Plane <i>Install SCADA Controls at the Water Treatment Plant Site and Gateway Standpipe Site to allow 1 - 1,000 GPM High Service Pump at the Water Treatment Plant High Service Pump Station to be solely dedicated to filling the Gateway Standpipe; Close valves branching off of the existing 16” water line from the Water Treatment Plant to the Gateway Standpipe to eliminate water flow into the Gateway Park pressure plane from the existing 16” dedicated water line.</i>	\$50,000
Near Term	9 - Water Distribution Line at Flatrock Pressure Plane <i>Install a main-line PRV on the 16” Flatrock pressure plane water distribution line leaving the Gateway Standpipe site and connect to the Ridgemont Village pressure plane water line on the same site. This will allow the Flatrock pressure plane to serve the Ridgemont Village pressure plane and take the 2 - High Service Pumps and Hydropneumatic pressure tank at Gateway Park out of service.</i>	\$50,000
Near Term	10 - High Service Pump at Mustang Pressure Plane <i>Replace the 2 - 1,000 GPM High Service Pumps with 2 - 1,500 GPM pumps at the Via Viejo Pump Station to satisfy growing water demands in the Mustang, Mormon Mill and Business & Tech Park pressure planes, all of which are served by the Via Viejo Pumps; Upsize the yard piping from the new recommended Via Viejo 800,000 gallon tank to the pumps' suction header.</i>	\$500,000
Total Probable Estimate of Cost for “Near Term” Improvements		\$2,464,000
WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS		
5 Year (Year 2021)	W1 - Lift Station <i>Existing Flatrock Lift Station - 700 GPM capacity. Construct a 2nd Flatrock Lift Station Adjacent to Existing Lift Station within 5 years - Design to Reverse Flow to “New South Wastewater Treatment Plant.” 5 year - 4,400 GPM (3 - 2,200 pumps). Existing 700 GPM Lift Station still in service but Reverse Flow to New South Wastewater Treatment Plant.</i>	\$2,500,000
5 Year (Year 2021)	W2 - Force Main <i>4,600 L.F. 20” Force main from Flatrock Lift Station to New South Wastewater Treatment Plant to carry flows from the Existing Flatrock lift Station and Proposed Flatrock Lift Station No. 2</i>	\$1,150,000
5 Year (Year 2021)	W3 - Wastewater Treatment Plant <i>1 MGD “South” Wastewater Treatment Plant to be Constructed on 21.1 Acre Site located within the Flatrock Springs Development. Land for Effluent Irrigation not yet identified nor budgeted for.</i>	\$12,500,000
Total Probable Estimate of Cost for 5 Year Improvements		\$16,150,000
Source: City of Marble Falls Master Water and Wastewater Plan, 2016. Refer to referenced plan for detailed recommendations.		

Action 8.1.3 - Monitor the City's water usage and ensure provision of water supply based on demand.

The City is currently under contract with LCRA for a maximum of 2,000 acre-feet of raw water per year, or 1.79 MGD average. Based on existing water demand, the City is using approximately 82 percent of this contracted rate. Based on population and housing projections, there is a calculated raw water supply need of approximately 2,798 acre-feet per year by 2044. Raw water supply needs are based on population and housing data as well as water consumption data, which can escalate. Therefore, the City needs to continue to monitor its water usage and, when appropriate, initiate an increase in its raw water supply contract with LCRA to 2,800 acre-feet, or implement and enforce water demand reduction programs.

Action 8.1.4 - Periodically update the Master Water and Wastewater Plan.

Demands on water supply and wastewater treatment will change as the community grows, requiring periodic review and planning. The Master Water and Wastewater Plan should be updated every five years to evaluate and update water and wastewater demand and amend the project list, including updating estimated project costs.

Objective 8.2 - Promote flood protection and efficient stormwater management through the design and maintenance of a comprehensive drainage network.

Recent floods and record rainfalls heighten the concern for flood protection in Marble Falls. The City has identified a number of infrastructure projects to alleviate flooding potential and reduce flood damage in the City. Beyond infrastructure improvements, the City's policies and approach can be an effective and proactive tool for stormwater management. A regional and comprehensive approach to stormwater management can be more effective than the typical site-by-site drainage management.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 8.2.1 - Implement floodplain mitigation improvements in the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed.

The Flood Protection Planning Study completed in March 2014 identified, evaluated, and prioritized eight drainage projects the City of Marble Falls could implement to reduce flood damage in the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed. A scoring table prioritized these projects, and the study developed recommendations and details of potential funding sources for the top three projects, including:

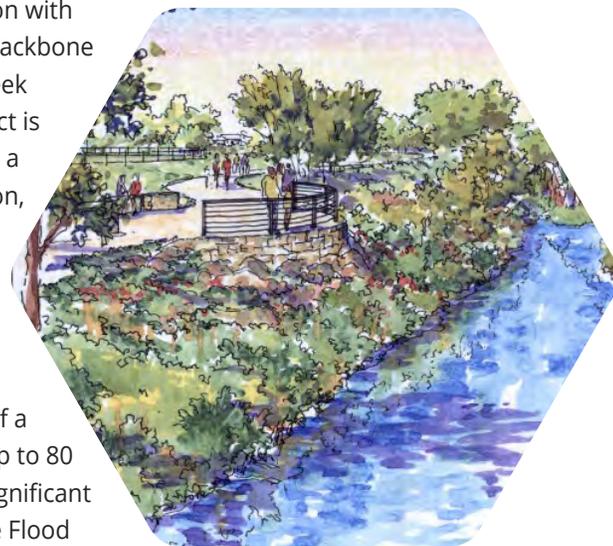
1. **Creekwalk Alternative** - The creekwalk alternative offers the City a means of efficient and beneficial development adjacent to the creek channel which is without the risk of typical hazards associated with development in close proximity to active streams. Components of the creekwalk



Workers clear debris from a local creek in Marble Falls after the 2007 flood.

Image courtesy of Wikipedia Commons

project include a trail along Whitman Branch that connects to Downtown Marble Falls as well as existing sidewalks and trails in nearby parks and amenities. Those options should be pursued in conjunction with Downtown creek improvements along Whitman Branch and Backbone Creek, which would allow for more development along the creek bank while actively providing flood mitigation. While the project is expensive as a standalone flood mitigation project, it provides a range of significant benefits including community beautification, recreation, and tourism. The most likely funding source would be TxDOT's Transportation Enhancement Program, a federally funded program for projects that integrate the surrounding environment in a sensitive and creative manner that contributes to the livelihood of the community, promotes the quality of the environment, and enhances the aesthetics of a roadway. Funded projects are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80 percent of allowable project costs. This application requires significant upfront planning and design, much of which is provided in the Flood Protection Planning Study (see also Action 6.3.5, *Design and implement the Creekwalk trail*, in Chapter 6, *Parks Recreation, and Open Space*).



The proposed Creekwalk project along Whitman Branch demonstrates how flood protection and drainage improvements can be combined to create signature community elements for residents and tourists alike.

Image courtesy of Half Associates, Inc., found in the Marble Falls Flood Protection Planning Study Final Report

Recommendations: It is recommended that the City pursue this alternative with the application for funding immediately.

- 2. Bridge Crossing Improvements** - The crossings of U.S. Highway 281 over Whitman Branch and Whitman Branch Tributary 1 frequently flood and require repair or rebuilding. As such, the Flood Protection Planning Study recommended modifications to the crossings to upsize them in order to allow vehicles to safely pass during larger flood events. TxDOT is the most likely funding source as it is a state maintained roadway. The City could also fund improvements for the crossings and receive reimbursement from TxDOT through a "pass through" funding mechanism commonly used by communities.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the City apply for TxDOT funds for this alternative and budget for the City's share of project costs. When these crossings are designed, they need to include adequate space to provide a safe, continuous underpass for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- 3. Unnamed Tributary Bypass** - This unnamed tributary south of FM 1431 flows into Backbone Creek. It was not included in the original scope but during the planning process it was discovered that this tributary was a significant flooding hazard. In order to significantly reduce flood impact, the flood waters from the sub-basin upstream of this tributary would need to be diverted to Backbone Creek instead of flowing through the tributary. The project scored poorly on the cost-benefit ratio, indicating the construction costs outweighed the benefits. But the project did have significant future economic benefit potential, low operation and maintenance costs, and long expected project lifetime. The cost was significantly high primarily due to the need to excavate granite. If local

quarries were willing to extract the granite at reduced or no cost, this project could be feasible.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the City pursue this alternative with local quarries to gauge the potential to reduce the cost. It is also recommended that a detailed hydraulic study be conducted on the unnamed tributary to better quantify the flood risk to the affected residential area such that additional development does not occur in flood prone areas. A more detailed analysis could be used to apply for funding under the FEMA Risk Map Program to include the unnamed tributary as part of a FEMA studied stream, expanding other funding opportunities through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant program.

The Flood Protection Planning Study also reported that flood mitigation alternatives identified in the study could be eligible for funding under the Texas Water Development Board's financial assistance program. Given the multiple funding resources and recent completion of the Flood Protection Planning Study, the City should begin to seek funding. The analyses and project descriptions included in the Study can be used in many applications, so it is recommended that the City capitalize on the recent completion of this Study.

Action 8.2.2 - Make low water crossing improvements to facilitate emergency management procedures.

The transportation network plays a critical role in emergency management during a flood. Flooded low water crossings not only present a community danger but can impede emergency vehicles. The City should identify critical low water crossings in the City and surrounding area which impede emergency vehicles and identify and evaluate potential solutions. Additionally, the City should coordinate with Burnet County to identify solutions for critical low-water crossings that impede emergency vehicles in more rural areas of the county surrounding Marble Falls (see also Action 5.4.3, regarding low water crossings and their effect on Citywide connectivity, in Chapter 5, *Transportation*).

Action 8.2.3 - Develop a comprehensive regional stormwater management plan.

As discussed, stormwater runoff is managed through a variety of ways, including site-specific detention and regional detention. Effective stormwater management utilizes a combination of these approaches. A comprehensive regional stormwater management plan will help to identify the appropriate approaches and areas to more effectively manage stormwater in Marble Falls.

This will be especially important south of Lake Marble Falls, where development is just beginning. In 2007, the Flatrock Creek Watershed also experienced significant flooding. However, there was less existing development in this area so the impact on life and property was less significant. The area is still prone to flooding during major storm events and its extent will worsen as development adds significant amounts of new impervious surface cover to the area.



An example of a regional stormwater detention pond cross-purposed as a neighborhood park and open space area.

This plan would also include a public awareness campaign to educate residents and businesses of their impact on stormwater runoff, such as erosion, impervious coverage, and irrigation practices.

Action 8.2.4 – Evaluate the feasibility of constructing regional stormwater improvements to eliminate and/or reduce floodplains on tributaries to Lake Marble Falls and for other multipurpose benefits.

Mitigating the impacts of stormwater can be accomplished through a variety of solutions, including site specific, local, and regional detention. The most common solution is site specific detention, where on-site detention or retention ponds are required on each parcel to mitigate rain events just for that particular parcel. Frequently ineffective regulations require all new development to install a large, fenced-in and unsightly detention pond. For master planned developments (e.g., new residential subdivisions, mixed-use developments, business parks, etc.), a larger, consolidated detention or retention pond is constructed to mitigate rain events for all associated parcels. Some cities, however, consider (or need, depending on the existing conditions of the watershed) a more comprehensive solution. In these instances, a city may consider regional detention which mitigates rain events over large areas and can be used to fix pre-existing drainage or flooding issues on existing development, or allow future development to connect to it rather than providing on-site detention. Although regional detention solutions can be more costly and complex to develop, it does provide the opportunity to capitalize on additional benefits not generally available to the other two solutions. First is that regional detention provides greater capacity to collect excess runoff in a watershed which has the potential of reducing downstream impacts throughout the watershed. This is the only solution that reduces downstream risks to flooding. Regional detention can also be used to reduce or decrease the floodplain delineation in downstream areas, which increases the available land for tax generating development. Finally, the design and construction of regional detention solutions provides a unique opportunity for a community to also develop additional quality of life amenities. Many communities have developed bike and pedestrian trail networks along drainage channels and creeks, which provide a natural network and attractive experience for both residents and tourists to the city. In some instances, large regional detention facilities are also designed to include parkland or sports fields that provide excellent recreational areas during normal conditions, while accommodating significant volumes of flood water during a 25-year or 100-year storm event. As demand for available taxpayer dollars becomes more competitive, implementing solutions that serve multiple purposes is a win-win for the community now and in the future.

Accordingly, the City should evaluate the feasibility of constructing regional stormwater improvements to eliminate and /or reduce floodplains on tributaries to Lake Marble Falls and for other multipurpose benefits. This could be done in conjunction with the comprehensive regional stormwater management plan, or as part of an independent study (see also Action 8.2.3).

Action 8.2.5 - Explore low impact development solutions for commercial, residential, or public infrastructure projects.

Goals for the drainage system are often mutually beneficial to goals for open space and quality of life in Marble Falls. As discussed earlier, the drainage system is largely comprised of natural features, including creeks and tributaries. Protection of these areas can yield one of the community's greatest assets; natural open space.

Additionally, man-made components of the drainage system such as drainage channels and stormwater retention areas, can also be designed in ways that provide quality of life and aesthetic benefits while still performing their task. Low impact design, such as bioretention, bioswales, and berms that can slow the speed of stormwater runoff can be effective in flash-flood prone areas.

The City should explore low impact development (LID) solutions as an opportunity to implement creative and effective stormwater management and water quality strategies to achieve these mutual benefits.



Objective 8.3 - Proactively expand environmentally friendly "green" initiatives.

In the face of droughts and resource depletion, Central Texas has been a leader in establishing green building practices. The City of Austin established one of the first municipal green building rating systems and rewards residents, businesses, and property owners for implementing these green practices. Environmentally

THE TRUTH ABOUT XERISCAPE

The word "xeriscape" tends to bring to mind gravel yards, rock features, succulents, and other "pokey" desert plants. In reality xeriscape can refer to so much more. Simply put, xeriscape refers to a landscape design that requires low water and low maintenance. Early xeriscape practices used cacti and succulents, accompanied by coordinating rock beds, because they were widely known to require less water than most leafy vegetation, and extensive areas of crushed granite or rock beds replaced lush lawns that required excessive watering.

Yet, as xeriscape practices have matured, landscapers and property owners have discovered a wide variety of plants and practices that do not result in a barren, desert-like environment. In fact, xeriscape goes beyond strictly the types of plants that are planted and includes how the landscape is set up. Rather than replacing lawns with crushed granite, attractive planting beds are significantly more water efficient than lawns and mulch does an even more effective job at keeping the ground moist and cool than rock beds. The City of Austin Watershed Protection Division has created a book of native plants that also identifies watering requirements.

Xeriscape can also refer to a more efficient design of the irrigation system. Drip irrigation is significantly more efficient than standard spray irrigation, having significantly less waste by sending all water directly to the roots. Combined with low-water plants and efficient landscaping layout, xeriscaping truly is an effective water conserving landscape practice.



friendly “green initiatives” can be fiscally beneficial to the City, residents, and business owners in Marble Falls. The City of Marble Falls already sees benefits from the Purple Pipe Program it started in 2013, saving approximately 1.5 million gallons of potable water a year by irrigating City property with effluent. Efforts to curb water consumption by consumers has also been in play with the City making changes to their water rate structure to reward low water consumers with lower rates.

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 8.3.1 - Continue to develop and implement the Water Conservation Program.

There are a number of tools and policies that are available to cities to encourage water conservation and improve the efficient use of water. By educating the citizens, business owners, and developers on methods of water conservation, an overall reduction in demand can be recognized. Some of these programs and policies may have maintenance and operation costs, but the community benefit may justify these costs. Possible programs may include:

- **Purple Pipe Program.** The City is able to save approximately 1.5 million gallons of potable water every year by distributing reclaimed water through the use of a ‘purple pipe’ network to irrigate the grounds of local schools, parks, government sites, and recreational facilities.
- **Drought-tolerant vegetation and landscaping.** The use of native plants, shrubs, trees, and even grasses that are more drought tolerate can reduce the need for constant watering of vegetation. Moreover, increasing planting beds and reducing lawn area can also reduce the need for water. The City should consider reviewing the development regulations to require or add incentives for installing drought-tolerant landscaping.
- **Reduce water loss through efficient irrigation.** Water is lost from the water system in a number of ways, including through the distribution system itself. Irrigation systems are another major source of significant water loss and inefficient use of water. Proper design and maintenance of irrigation systems is the most effective way to reduce losses. Where appropriate, the City could consider requiring and/or incentivizing the use of drip irrigation to minimize potential irrigation water loss.
- **Low consumption appliances.** Installation of low flow toilets, minimal use washing machines, and other devices can considerably reduce the demand on both the water distribution and the wastewater collection system. Energy efficient appliances can also support the City’s efforts to reduce the environmental impact of development beyond water resources.
- **Encourage rainwater harvesting.** Rainwater is more beneficial to landscaping than treated potable water and consumers can also benefit from lower water usage and utility bills. Furthermore, rainwater harvesting can reduce stormwater runoff, positively impacting the drainage system. Rainwater collection systems can have a large upfront



cost, deterring their installation. Consider incentives in the development regulations or rebate programs for residents and business owners to add rainwater harvesting systems to their properties.

- **Tiered water billing structure.** The City should continue to use a multiple tier rate structure where heavier users are charged at higher rates. This will encourage consumers to target lower usage levels.

Action 8.3.2 - Promote green building and energy efficiency as part of public development.

Beyond water conservation efforts, the City can execute other initiatives to promote environmental stewardship. While the City does not provide electric service and may not directly benefit financially from energy conservation efforts, energy efficient building practices and appliances can help the City in their efforts to reduce their overall environmental impact of development. Energy efficiency can provide long-term financial benefits to residents and business owners.

There are a variety of energy efficiency tools and practices. Some of these include solar panels that provide part or all of the electricity for a building, energy efficient appliances and HVAC systems, radiant barrier roofs and energy efficient windows, or even a tree program that increases the tree canopy can lead to lower energy consumption as the tree canopy can protect buildings from rising temperatures.



An example municipal police headquarters building using rainwater harvesting to reduce potable water use and assist with on-site irrigation.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Designing, constructing, and operating buildings based on “green” principles is a fiscally responsible and environmentally conscious practice. Across the nation, governments are “leading by example,” building and operating public facilities such as city halls, fire stations, police stations, and courthouses using sustainable building practices, encouraging the private sector to follow suit. Other than leading by example, governments benefit from lower operation and maintenance costs, extended infrastructure capacity, and reduced staff-related overhead and relocation costs when they utilize sustainable building practices compared to conventional buildings.¹

Several cities and government entities across Texas have been awarded USGBC LEED certification for using green building practices in public facilities, including the LCRA’s Western Maintenance Facility in Marble Falls (see photo at right), which received Silver status in 2012. Other recognized public facilities include Austin’s City Hall, which received Gold status in 2004; Denton Fire Station No. 7 (which received Gold status in 2007); Parman Library at Stone Oak in San Antonio (Gold status in 2012); a fire station in Sheldon (Gold status in 2015); and the Tarrant County Northeast Courthouse in Hurst (Silver status in 2016). Additionally, Frisco has applied for LEED certification for its recently constructed city hall.²

There are many organizations that recognize sustainable building practices. The most well known one is the USGBC, which has developed a workbook to assist government entities in their efforts to implement green building practices. Achieving recognition for sustainable building practices of public facilities is certainly not easy, but it demonstrates the City’s commitment to environmental protection and expectations for private sector development within the city.



Image courtesy of usgbc-centraltexas.org.

¹ US Green Building Council. Roadmap to Green Government Buildings. 2011.
² US Green Building Council. Project Directory. www.usgbc.org/projects

Furthermore, as the City looks to develop new public facilities, there is an opportunity to showcase green building practices. The U.S. Green Building Council has established green building practices and a rating system, called LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. There are four LEED rating levels. To promote green building among new developments in and around Marble Falls, the City should seek to achieve LEED-certified status of its building facilities.

Action 8.3.3 - Evaluate opportunities to expand the “Purple Pipe Program” to non-City users.

Currently, the City treats wastewater to Type I reuse standards as defined by the Texas Council for Environmental Quality’s Chapter 290 standards. About 1.5 million gallons of this reclaimed wastewater is used to irrigate the grounds of local schools, parks, government sites, and recreation facilities (see Action 8.3.1). Considering that the City is currently undergoing a WWTP expansion which would increase daily treatment capacity to 1.5 million gallons per day, this signifies that there is a significant amount of wastewater that could be reallocated to expand the Purple Pipe Program. This will allow the City to further reduce demand for potable water, while generating additional revenue possibly for the maintenance and expansion of the water / wastewater system. As less potable water is treated at the City’s water treatment plant, it further extends the life and capacity of the water plant facility and infrastructure and extends the time frame in which additional plant capacity may be needed in the future.

As such, the City should consider further expansion of the Purple Pipe Program to include additional public and private users, including commercial, industrial, and other users. This could also include research into potable water meter billing data to identify high usage customers who could potentially be converted to non-potable reuse water. It could also include developing an educational outreach program in which potential customers are then educated about the economic benefits of participating in such a program.

Action 8.3.4 - Consider modifying the City’s zoning and development regulations to improve water conservation efforts for landscaping.

Similar to using low impact development (LID) solutions for infrastructure projects, the City should consider incentivizing and/or regulating its use as part of normal land development practices. LID is an approach to land development that uses various land planning and design practices and technology to simultaneously conserve and protect natural water resources and reduce infrastructure costs, including the decreased demand for potable water for landscaping. As such, the City should consider modifying the zoning and development regulations to incorporate xeriscaping landscape design and maintenance practices, minimized sod application, low water irrigation, protections of existing tree canopy, and reductions in impervious surface area. These modifications could also include incentives for parking lot bio-swales, green roofs, rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, etc.

Objective 8.4 – Consider further support and encouragement of the City's fiber optic network.

Nationwide, the installation of fiber optic cable is expected to rise, further displacing standard installation of copper cable. This is occurring because there are several advantages to fiber optic, including significantly increased broad bandwidth (e.g., a single optical fiber can carry over 3,000,000 full-duplex voice calls or 90,000 TV channels), immunity to electromagnetic interference, low attenuation loss over long distances, among others.¹

The following actions are recommended to achieve this objective:

Action 8.4.1 – Evaluate opportunities for increasing public/private Citywide access to the fiber optic network.

Currently, some of the fiber optic infrastructure that serves the City is owned by LCRA. Due to the potential benefits that are provided, the City should further evaluate and encourage the expansion of fiber optic infrastructure in and around all parts of Marble Falls. This could include additional funding support (e.g., extension of lines to City facilities) and/or improvements to the City's regulations to incentivize the installation of fiber optic infrastructure. The City could also further evaluate opportunities for allowing placement within the City's rights-of-way in exchange for decreased franchise fees (rather than installing standard copper wires).

¹ Wikipedia. Optical Fiber. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optical_fiber.

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IMPLEMENTATION



Introduction

The success of this Comprehensive Plan will be measured through the lens of its implementation actions. In other words, only through implementation will the vision become reality. Indeed, implementation is the most critical component of any planning process.

While the preceding chapters of this Plan discuss how to achieve the desired vision, goals, objectives, and actions, this chapter identifies what the highest priorities are and who is responsible for them. It is through the process of implementation that actions get translated into specific policies, operational changes, financial investments (e.g., capital improvements), further studies, and new regulation.

Partnering for Success

Implementation, even more so than the planning process, will take coordinated effort from a host of community leaders, from individual citizens to appointed and elected officials to outside agencies and entities. Increasingly, jurisdictions are acknowledging that ultimate success involves a combination of City and non-City partners, including elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, and land and business owners, among others. This also involves the recognition that the City has a responsibility to partner with all local, state, and federal public and private partners that can be of assistance in bettering Marble Falls now and in the future. At a minimum, this includes:

- Marble Falls elected and appointed officials;
- City Administration and staff;
- Marble Falls Economic Development Corporation (EDC);
- Burnet County;
- Texas Department of Transportation;
- Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB;
- Marble Falls Independent School District (MFISD);

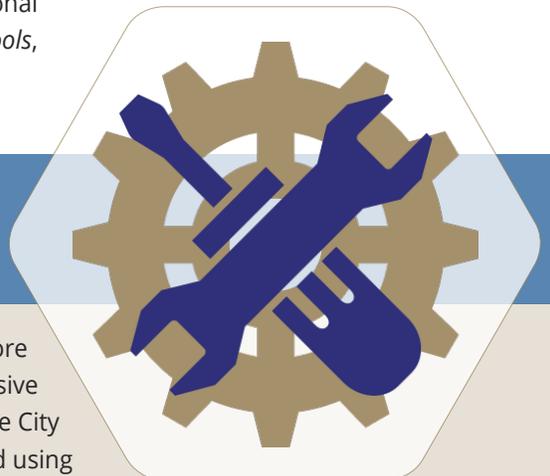


- Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA);
- Abutting local municipalities (on projects that benefit both jurisdictions);
- Other affected agencies and entities; and
- Area land and business owners and the development community.

Implementation Action Plan

Set out in chapters three through eight are goals, objectives, and specific implementation actions that can be accomplished at any point through the 20-year horizon of this Plan. These chapters also include background information, analysis, and guidance as to how these actions could be implemented over time.

This section of the Plan is intended to take those actions which could occur over a 20-year plan horizon, and prioritize them as to what comes first and next. In other words, this section identifies what the most important actions are and the order that the City intends to implement them. Set out in Table 9.1, *Implementation Action Plan*, on the next page, are the prioritized actions of this Plan into short-term (next 1-2 years), mid-term (3-10 years), and longer-term (10+ years) time frames, with those that will be ongoing once started marked as such. It also includes guidance as to the entities that should be involved (with the first name listed as lead) and what type of action it involves, including policies, operational changes, financial investments, studies, or regulations (see *Implementation Tools*, below, for additional explanation of the types of actions involved).



IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

It is oftentimes noted that planning is the easy part while implementation is the more challenging part. As such, successful implementation of the Marble Falls Comprehensive Plan Update 2016 will take coordination, innovation, and hard work on the part of the City and area partners. As detailed in this Plan, the objectives and actions will be achieved using the following types of implementation tools:



Operational Change.

New or changed programs, staffing, or operational procedures.



Policy.

Procedures or policies used to guide City decisions.



Financial Investment.

Capital improvement or general fund expenditures to improve the quality of Marble Falls.

Regulation.

Council adopted regulations used to guide development in the City.



Study.

Further study or investigation needed to determine the most appropriate solution.



Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Policy Action Recommendations								
	8.1.3	Monitor the City's water usage and ensure provision of water supply based on demand.	■			■	City	Policy
	4.1.1	Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making regarding plans and projects for revitalizing/redeveloping existing development.	■			■	City	Policy
	6.2.2	Provide and maintain high-quality parks which become part of the identity and point of community pride for Marble Falls.	■			■	City	Policy / Financial Investment
	4.6.2	Support EDC efforts to increase entrepreneurial opportunities in the City.	■			■	EDC / City	Policy / Financial Investment
	3.1.5	Utilize growth management strategies to protect surrounding areas from poorly timed or low quality development.	■			■	City	Policy / Regulation
	8.3.1	Continue to develop and implement the Water Conservation Program.	■			■	City	Policy / Operational Change
	5.3.1	Utilize the Thoroughfare Plan as a prerequisite to decision-making regarding development proposals.	■			■	City	Policy
	6.1.3	Solidify agreement with Flatrock Springs developer to determine the ultimate use and responsible parties for the parkland to be dedicated as part of the planned development district.	■				City / Development Community	Policy / Financial Investment
	3.1.1	Manage the City's pattern of growth concurrent with the provision and maintenance of adequate facilities and services.	■			■	City	Policy / Financial Investment
	4.2.1	Consider an advocacy program to aid in code compliance and community clean up.	■			■	City	Policy / Operational Change
	5.5.5	Implement sidewalk improvements as part of street improvement or redevelopment projects.	■			■	City / EDC	Policy / Financial Investment
	6.5.11	Support efforts of the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB efforts to increase tourism opportunities.	■			■	City / Chamber of Commerce & CVB	Policy / Financial Investment
	3.1.6	Promote green building practices and low impact development as part of private development.	■			■	City / EDC	Policy / Regulation
	8.3.2	Promote green building and energy efficiency as part of public development.	■			■	City / EDC	Policy / Regulation
	5.1.1	Actively participate in state and regional transportation planning activities to promote funding and other improvements that benefit Marble Falls.		■		■	City / CAMPO / TxDOT	Policy
	6.1.7	Preserve open space assets throughout Marble Falls.		■		■	City	Policy / Regulation

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Policy Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	6.5.12	Coordinate mapping and website efforts with the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce & CVB.		■			City / Chamber of Commerce & CVB	Policy / Financial Investment
	6.1.9	Continue to pursue partnerships with other public and private organizations to leverage park and recreation investments.		■		■	City / Area Partners	Policy
	6.1.8	Pursue partnership with Marble Falls Independent School District (MFISD).		■			City / MFISD	Policy / Operational Change
	4.1.2	Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to guide decision-making regarding proposed new private sector development in greenfield areas.		■		■	City	Policy
	6.2.8	Coordinate with private developers on the design of key park and open space parcels being dedicated south of the river.		■			City / Development Community	Policy
	5.5.1	Adopt and ensure implementation of a City-wide "Complete Streets" policy.		■		■	City	Policy / Operational Change / Regulation
	3.1.2	Pursue annexation of property designated as near-term growth areas on the City's Growth Plan.		■			City	Policy / Financial Investment
	5.1.2	Proactively pursue mutually beneficial transportation projects with other area partners.		■		■	City / Area Partners	Policy / Financial Investment
	6.3.3	Consider updating the City's collector thoroughfare system to include on-street bicycle lanes, where appropriate.		■			City	Policy / Financial Investment / Operational Change
	6.5.9	Develop a regional marketing campaign to attract varying user groups.		■			CVB / City	Policy / Operational Change
	5.3.3	Work with area partners to implement long-term improvements to the City's and region's major arterial network.			■	■	City / Area Partners	Policy / Financial Investment
	4.2.5	Consider developing a target-area capital investment program.			■	■	City	Policy / Financial Investment
	4.5.5	Design and install enhanced landscaping in coordination with the construction of traffic roundabouts.			■		City	Policy / Financial Investment
	5.5.7	Consider partnering with the Marble Falls Independent School District to implement pedestrian improvements to existing and new school sites.			■	■	City / MFISD	Policy / Financial Investment
	8.2.5	Explore low impact development solutions for commercial, residential, or public infrastructure projects.			■	■	City / EDC	Policy / Financial Investment / Regulation

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Policy Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	6.1.6	Work with developers and property owners to develop multi-use trails on greenways and other linear open spaces.			■	■	City / Development Community	Policy / Regulation
	5.3.4	Work with area partners to implement long-term improvements to the City's and region's minor arterial network.			■	■	City / Area Partners	Policy / Financial Investment
	5.3.8	Adopt criteria to determine an objective approach regarding which street cross-section is appropriate for each functional classification as set out on the Thoroughfare Plan.			■		City	Policy / Regulation
	8.1.1	Continue to pursue an application to amend the water and wastewater CCN areas.			■		City	Policy
	8.4.1	Evaluate opportunities for increasing public/private Citywide access to the fiber optic network.			■		City	Policy / Financial Investment / Regulation
	5.6.2	Work in partnership with CAMPO, CARTS, Burnet County and other area partners to maintain and/or expand rural and/or fixed transit services to Marble Falls.			■	■	City / Area Partners	Policy / Financial Investment / Operational Change
	3.1.3	Pursue annexation of property designated as longer-term growth areas on the City's Growth Plan.			■		City	Policy / Financial Investment
	5.6.5	Evaluate the potential of ride sharing programs in Marble Falls.			■		City	Policy / Regulation
Regulation Action Recommendations								
	4.1.3	Consider a comprehensive update to the City's zoning regulations to implement the quality and character recommendations identified in each future land use classification.	■				City / EDC	Regulation
	5.4.2	Establish new regulatory provisions identifying a potential truck route in and near Downtown Marble Falls.	■				City	Regulation / Policy
	4.1.4	Consider restructuring the zoning regulations to improve readability and usability.	■				City / EDC	Regulation
	8.3.4	Consider modifying the City's zoning and development regulations to improve water conservation efforts for landscaping.	■				City	Regulation / Policy
	3.1.4	Develop policies and incentives that encourage and promote infill development.	■				City	Regulation / Policy
	4.4.2	Consider improving the City's existing zoning and development regulations to implement the location and development qualifiers set out in the Neighborhood and Transitional Residential and Downtown future land use classifications.	■				City	Regulation / Policy



Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Regulation Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	6.1.2	Develop a parkland dedication ordinance and other subdivision design ordinances as necessary to ensure that adequate green space and park land remain available as the City continues to develop.	■				City	Regulation
	4.5.6	Develop corridor improvement standards for U.S. 281, FM 1431, and State Highway 71 to enhance the appearance of properties adjacent to these principle arterial corridors.	■				City / EDC	Regulation / Policy
	4.3.1	Consider establishing a housing palette to direct the quality and design of new residential housing choice		■			City	Regulation / Policy
	4.5.10	Consider establishing a dark sky ordinance to protect nighttime skies.		■			City	Regulation / Policy
	5.3.5	Ensure implementation of the major collector thoroughfare system concurrent with new development.		■		■	City	Regulation / Policy
	5.5.6	Consider amending the subdivision regulations to improve the design, safety, and usability of new sidewalks within the City.		■			City	Regulation / Policy
	4.4.1	Consider improved neighborhood design for Planned Developments.		■			City	Regulation / Policy
	5.6.4	Consider supporting and regulating the installation of plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) charging stations within the City.			■		City	Regulation / Policy / Financial Investment
	5.6.3	Consider adopting new regulations for airports and heliports within the City.			■		City	Regulation / Policy
Study Action Recommendations								
	5.3.7	Address intersection congestion and safety concerns at Mission Hills Drive/Mormon Mill Road/U.S. Highway 281.	■				City	Study
	4.5.3	Coordinate with TxDOT to implement access management strategies along U.S. 281 from the Downtown boundary to the northern City limit.	■				City / TxDOT	Study / Financial Investment
	4.6.1	Support EDC efforts to update the Strategic Economic Development Plan.	■				EDC / City	Study
	6.1.1	Update the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.	■				City / EDC	Study
	6.1.4	Evaluate current Parks and Recreation staffing level and ensure that the Department is sufficiently staffed.	■			■	City	Study
	6.2.6	Develop a revitalized plan for Downtown parks.	■				City / EDC	Study

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Study Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	7.1.2	Identify potential locations for a new City Hall.	■				City / EDC	Study
	5.3.2	Evaluate the near- and or mid-term potential to establish specific segments of the Thoroughfare Plan to proactively alleviate traffic impacts, facilitate areas of new growth, or to connect key destination points.		■		■	City	Study / Financial Investment
	6.5.10	Following implementation of Downtown enhancements, re-evaluate potential for rural tourism train route.		■			EDC / City	Study
	4.2.2	Identify partnerships to rehabilitate the existing housing stock.		■		■	City	Study / Financial Investment / Policy
	6.3.5	Design and implement the creekwalk trail.		■			EDC / City	Study / Financial Investment
	6.5.1	Develop a Tourism Master Plan.		■			City / CVB / EDC	Study
	8.2.4	Evaluate the feasibility of constructing regional stormwater improvements to eliminate and/or reduce floodplains on tributaries to Lake Marble Falls and for other multipurpose benefits.		■			City	Study / Financial Investment / Policy / Regulation
	4.2.4	Consider developing small area plans for at-risk neighborhoods to identify a comprehensive action agenda for improvement.		■			City	Study / Financial Investment
	5.5.3	Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan separately, or in conjunction with a City-wide Trails Master Plan.		■			City / EDC	Study
	5.5.2	Compile a detailed inventory of the existing sidewalk system throughout the City and ETJ.		■			City	Study
	6.3.1	Develop a Trail Master Plan for the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).		■			City / EDC	Study
	6.2.5	Evaluate the potential of existing, infrequently used parks that allow visual or physical connection to the lake.			■		City	Study
	6.1.10	Evaluate the City's fee structure to ensure that private organizations using City parks and facilities are adequately offsetting the cost of maintenance.			■	■	City	Study / Policy
	6.2.7	Develop a concept plan for Park View Park Site.			■		City	Study
	3.1.7	Assess and implement solutions to improve the City's resiliency.			■	■	City	Study / Financial Investment / Regulation

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Study Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	7.1.1	Complete a professional needs assessment.			■		City	Study
	7.2.2	Evaluate Police Department staffing and increase as necessary.			■	■	City	Study
	6.5.6	Continue to evaluate the need for a sports complex.			■		City	Study
	8.1.4	Periodically update the Master Water and Wastewater Plan.			■	■	City	Study
	6.3.4	Evaluate opportunities to improve undeveloped alleyways to increase City-wide connectivity.			■		City / EDC	Study
	6.2.9	Establish minimum design parameters for community, neighborhood, pocket, and linear parks.			■		City	Study / Policy / Regulation
	6.4.1	As part of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan update, conduct a recreational programming assessment.			■		City	Study
	7.2.3	Complete a professional fire station location study.			■		City	Study
	7.2.4	Evaluate the need for a fire and emergency medical services training facility.			■		City	Study
	8.2.3	Develop a comprehensive regional stormwater management plan.			■		City	Study
	5.6.1	Evaluate the possibility of establishing railroad quiet zones within the City.			■		City	Study / Financial Investment
	7.3.2	Develop a Library facility plan.			■		Burnet County / City	Study
Financial Investment Action Recommendations								
	5.2.1	Ensure that adequate funding is dedicated for the maintenance of the City's road network.	■			■	City	Financial Investment / Operational Change
	6.5.8	Support implementation efforts of a Marble Falls Convention Center located in Downtown.	■				EDC / City / CVB	Financial Investment
	6.5.4	Support the Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) efforts in developing lake front enhancements.	■			■	City / EDC	Financial Investment / Policy
	5.4.1	Proactively coordinate with TxDOT to implement access management strategies and improvements along U.S. Highway 281.	■				City / TxDOT	Financial Investment / Study

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Financial Investment Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	4.5.7	Enhance the City's Downtown district to create a strong identity in the heart of the City.	■			■	EDC / City	Financial Investment / Regulation
	7.2.1	Build a new Police Station and Municipal Court Facility.	■				City	Financial Investment
	4.5.1	Utilize gateways, entry signs, and landscaping at edges of the City to indicate entrance into Marble Falls.	■				City / EDC	Financial Investment / Policy
	6.5.2	Improve pedestrian and boat access to the lake.	■				City	Financial Investment
	8.1.2	Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Master Water and Wastewater Plan.	■			■	City	Financial Investment
	6.5.7	Consider development of unique parks and recreation amenities to increase regional draw to the City.	■			■	City	Financial Investment / Study
	4.5.8	Consider replacing the street signs in Downtown Marble Falls to identify entry and establish a special area of character.	■				City / EDC	Financial Investment / Operational Change
	6.3.2	Improve connectivity within the City.		■		■	City / EDC	Financial Investment
	4.5.4	Coordinate with TxDOT to provide a central landscape median along U.S. 281 within the Downtown and nearby areas.		■			City / TxDOT / EDC	Financial Investment
	4.5.2	Coordinate with TxDOT to improve the appearance of the U.S. 281/State Highway 71 interchange.		■			City / TxDOT / EDC	Financial Investment
	5.3.6	Proactively develop and improve an alternate local connector system to provide additional transportation choices for the citizens of Marble Falls.		■			City	Financial Investment / Study
	4.2.3	Consider public or public/private infrastructure improvements to enhance existing neighborhoods.		■		■	City	Financial Investment / Policy
	4.2.7	Continue to evaluate potential acquisition and demolition of dilapidated or unsafe structures or properties that have been subject to past flood events.		■		■	City	Financial Investment / Study
	4.6.3	Support EDC efforts to continue the expansion of the Marble Falls Business and Technology Park.		■			EDC / City	Financial Investment
	6.2.1	Improve existing parks and facilities.		■		■	City / EDC	Financial Investment
	5.5.4	Consider increasing funding and other resources to improve sidewalk and crosswalk segments in key areas of the City.		■		■	City / EDC	Financial Investment / Policy

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Financial Investment Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	6.2.4	Improve the City of Marble Falls City Cemetery.			■		City	Financial Investment / Operational Change
	4.6.6	Support EDC efforts to increase the development of place-based economic opportunities.			■	■	EDC / City	Financial Investment
	7.1.3	Determine funding source to construct a new City Hall.			■		City / EDC	Financial Investment / Study
	8.2.1	Implement floodplain mitigation improvements in the Backbone Creek and Whitman Branch Watershed.			■		City	Financial Investment
	5.4.3	Evaluate the potential of improving identified low water crossings as a means to improve City-wide connectivity during heavy rains or floods.			■		City	Financial Investment
	4.5.12	Consider improving the aesthetic appearance of City infrastructure (e.g., the water treatment plant) which is located in high-traffic public areas.			■		City	Financial Investment / Policy
	6.5.3	Develop additional activities on the lake.			■	■	City / LCRA	Financial Investment
	8.2.2	Make low water crossing improvements to facilitate emergency management procedures.			■		City	Financial Investment
Operation Change Action Recommendations								
	5.2.2	Adopt a comprehensive routine street evaluation and maintenance program.	■				City	Operational Change / Financial Investment
	4.6.5	Support EDC efforts to provide workforce development and education programs in the community.	■			■	EDC / City / Area Partners	Operational Change / Policy
	5.2.3	Adopt a Street Repaving Program.	■				City	Operational Change / Financial Investment
	6.4.4	Increase water-based recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.	■			■	City	Operational Change
	6.2.3	Partner with neighborhood and other volunteer groups on select park and trail maintenance tasks.	■			■	City / Area Partners	Operational Change / Policy
	7.3.1	Continue to grow eServices and related materials and media.	■			■	City	Operational Change / Policy
	4.5.9	Establish a formal affiliation with Keep Texas Beautiful organization.	■				City	Operational Change / Policy

Table 9.1, Implementation Action Plan (cont.)

RANK	ACTION #	ACTION RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY				INVOLVED ENTITIES	ACTION TYPE(S)
			SHORT TERM (1-2 YRS.)	MID TERM (3-10 YRS.)	LONG TERM (10+ YRS.)	ON-GOING		
Operation Change Action Recommendations (cont.)								
	6.4.2	Increase regularly scheduled and special events in parks to encourage community-wide usage of the parks system.		■		■	City	Operational Change / Financial Investment
	6.4.3	Increase athletic opportunities for all ages in the City.		■		■	City	Operational Change
	6.5.5	Ensure adequate policing of Lake Marble Falls as part of routine police safety rotations.		■		■	City	Operational Change
	4.5.11	Consider applying to become an International Dark Sky Community.		■			City	Operational Change / Policy
	6.1.5	Ensure adequate staffing and resources are available to support increased recreational programming in the City.		■		■	City	Operational Change
	4.2.6	Consider establishing a neighborhood outreach program.			■		City	Operational Change / Policy
	4.6.4	Consider establishing a revolving loan fund to support the expansion of new businesses.			■		EDC	Operational Change / Policy
	6.4.5	Consider additional third party recreational programming.			■	■	City / Recreation Partners	Operational Change





Implementation Champions

While it will take the efforts of many to successfully implement this Plan, there will be specific champions which will initiate and lead the efforts of individual aspects of implementation.

Plan Administration

Plan Champions

During the planning process, a strong public engagement strategy is used to accurately identify the community's vision for the future. A by-product of a robust and continual engagement strategy is that it oftentimes also identifies a key individual, or a group of people, who take on responsibility for being the Plan implementation champion(s). This may be for a specific Plan action or actions (e.g., updating the City's regulations), or for the entire Plan itself. Implementation champions can come from within the City (e.g., the Mayor, City Manager, Planning Director, a City Councilperson, etc.) or from within the community (e.g., a local prominent business owner, land owner, or activist). What is important, is that fostering these key individuals (or champions) is critical to the success of the Plan implementation.

Implementation Roles & Responsibilities

While implementation of this Plan will require the efforts of the entire community of Marble Falls, the City and its elected and appointed officials and staff will take on a large role and be tasked with initiating and coordinating the work of others. Accordingly, the following City entities will play a key role in these implementation efforts:

City Council

Through strategic direction meetings, annual budgeting, and other related decision making (e.g., they are the final decision making authority regarding development approvals), the City Council establishes overall action priorities and time frames by which each action will be initiated and completed. In some cases, they provide specific direction to the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Administration, and City staff.

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission is designated as an advisory board to the City Council and tasked with making recommendations related to the development and redevelopment of the City and its environs.¹ It primarily accomplishes this through its interaction with the rezoning and development process. Building upon this, the Planning and Zoning Commission should consider taking more of an ownership role of the implementation of this Plan. This could include preparing (in conjunction with City staff) an annual report of progress and recommendations as to the following years’ action plan. In addition, the Planning and Zoning Commission needs to ensure that each of their decisions are in-line with the vision, goals, objectives, and action policies of this Plan.

Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

The Marble Falls EDC is a Type B Economic Development Corporation funded by a half-cent sales tax collected within the City of Marble Falls. Its primary mission is the retention, expansion, and attraction of business and industry within the City. In other words, it does everything it can to foster a strong and long-lasting economy in Marble Falls, whether it is through expanding existing businesses, attracting new ones, building a strong workforce, and even supporting the expansion and revitalization of the City’s economic core – Downtown Marble Falls. In this regard, the EDC is an essential strategic partner in implementing the vision, goals, objectives, and actions of this Plan.

Administration and City Staff

As the executive branch of City government, the Administration and its staff are the technical experts and primary entity responsible for administering this Plan. To varying degrees, several City departments (e.g., Development Services, Public Works, etc.) have work programs which are integral to the success of this Plan. As such, they are vested implementers and should ensure that their annual work programs and budgets are reflective of the vision set by the community.

Education

As was evident through the planning process, a comprehensive plan is just that, truly “comprehensive.” It covers a wide variety of technical topics which affect various operations of City government. It includes background information on existing conditions, analysis of issues and alternatives, and provides direction as to an appropriate course of action to move forward. For those that were not as intimately involved in the process, it is important to convey not only the actions for moving forward, but also the reasons behind them. As such, it is important to educate appropriate elected and appointed officials on the strategic directions of the Plan. For City Council, this could include technical briefings by City staff during workshops prior to important decisions. For other boards and commissions, it could include a complete overview of the Plan itself followed by a question and answer session.

Plan Education
Providing individual training workshops to elected and appointed officials is recommended for any board or commission that may have a role in implementation.

¹ Sec. 17-20, of the Marble Falls Code of Ordinances.

About Imagine Austin

Imagine Austin is our plan for the future. Fueled by ideas and contributions from the Austin community, this 30-year plan for the city is based on Austin's greatest asset: *its people*. The plan lays out a vision for how the city can grow in a compact and connected way.

But unlike your typical municipal comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin also covers quality of life issues beyond land use, like investing in our creative economy and advancing healthy, affordable living. Together, your local government is partnering with you for a more livable and vibrant Austin.



<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/about-imagine-austin>

For those involved in the development process (including elected and appointed officials and pertinent City staff), it should include education about the development policies that are included in each substantive chapter of this Plan. These development policies are intended to affect public actions and projects, whether it is a new City regulation, program, or capital improvement expenditure. Education could take the form of a one-time training session, but it would more beneficial if the policies were incorporated into monthly meeting packets and materials, in some fashion.

It is equally, if not more, important to provide education to those who are not part of the City government, including land and business owners, the development community, and the general public. Education should, at minimum, include a City webpage dedicated specifically to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. This page should include a PDF of the Plan itself, the vision statement and guiding values, details on the near-term action agenda, a list of Plan-identified projects currently being implemented, annual reports of progress and successes, and details on opportunities to get involved. Additionally, identifying new projects (whether through signage, the newspaper, or social media) as part of "Plan Implementation" creates a strong foundation and connection between proactive planning and the City's wherewithal to follow through with implementation.

Implementation Funding

Between the City government and the EDC, there are a variety of actions that can be taken to implement this Plan. These include, but are not limited to, offering economic incentives (for relocation, expansion of workforce, site and building improvement, etc.), a fair and effective regulatory environment, well-timed capital improvements, and public/private partnerships. Funding, therefore, becomes a critical component of many of these actions. Funding for implementing the Comprehensive Plan will come from a variety of sources, including local resources such as the general fund (which is supported by property and sales taxes); voter-approved bonds; federal, state, and other grants; among other sources. In addition to these common and typical sources of funding, some cities also pursue the creation of special districts to help promote and/or incentivize new development or redevelopment both within the City limits and the ETJ.

VIDEOS



Join us!

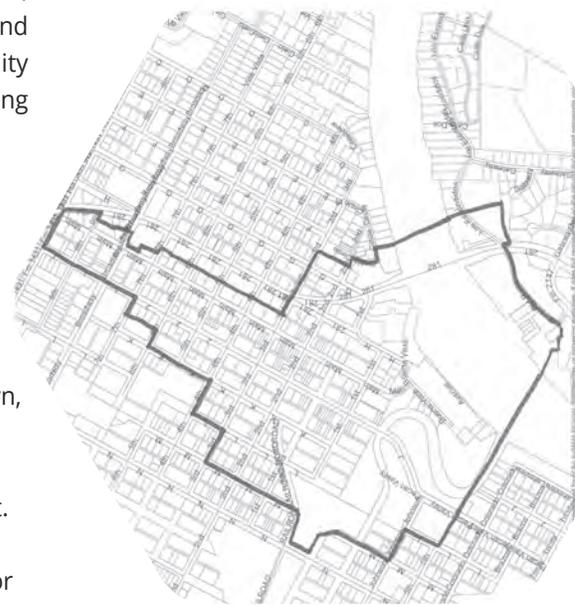


*Plan
Implementation
Webpage*

A dedicated Plan Implementation Webpage (e.g., Imagine Austin) is an essential step in educating the general public about the City's blueprint for the future.

While each of these special districts have their own unique statutory framework, they all have the same general objective – improving the overall quality and performance of the City's infrastructure and facilities, ensuring high quality development, and protecting and diversifying the local tax base. The following includes a brief descriptions of potential special districts:

- **Tax Increment Finance (TIF)/Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ).** A TIF or TIRZ district is an area where certain property tax revenue generated in the district is reinvested back into the district through development of infrastructure. As part of the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan, a TIRZ district was created in the Downtown area to help spur private sector reinvestment. The Downtown, urban character boundary established in this Plan utilizes the same boundary as the TIRZ district (see photo at right).
- **Public Improvement District (PID).** Chapter 372 of the Tex. Local Gov't. Code permits the formation of PIDs, which allow a city and/or county to levy and collect special assessments on property that is within the City or ETJ. Funds generated by the PID are invested back into the district.
- **Chapter 380/381 Economic Development Agreements.** Although not necessarily a special district, Chapter 380 and 381 Economic Development Agreements are similar tools used to encourage economic development within the state. These agreements allow the granting of certain incentives by cities to encourage developers to build within the jurisdiction. The incentives typically take the form of property tax abatements, loans or grants, commitments for infrastructure, or sales tax rebates.



A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) has been established in Downtown Marble Falls to spur public and private sector reinvestment. This is the same boundary used to create a special area of urban character comprised of mixed uses in a pedestrian friendly and walkable environment.

Additional types of funding and financing mechanisms can be found in the City of Marble Falls Downtown Master Plan (pages 85 through 88).

Plan Amendment

Based upon a thorough analysis of existing conditions and an intense public engagement program, this Plan establishes the community's vision for the future. But despite this, it still just reflects a snapshot in time. Indeed, in order to be achievable, implementation must remain flexible and allow adjustment to accommodate shifts in local and national social, economic, physical, and political changes over time. During the last comprehensive planning process, no one could have predicted the ensuing Great Recession that affected the global economy. But, nonetheless, it occurred and greatly impacted the City's action agenda. While this is an extreme example, there are many local and national trends which could change the direction of this Plan's vision and action agenda for the future. Consequently, it is recommended that the Plan be revisited on a regular and routine basis followed by warranted updates.

- **Annual Progress Report.** As a part of their work program, the Planning and Zoning Commission should prepare an annual report for submittal and discussion with the City Council. Status of implementation for the Comprehensive Plan should be included in these annual reports. Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year should be

recognized, in addition to identification and recommendations for needed actions and programs to be developed and implemented in the coming year. The annual report of the Comprehensive Plan implementation status by the Planning and Zoning Commission should be coordinated with the City's annual budget development process so that the recommendations will be available early in the budgeting process.

- **Annual Updates.** After the annual progress report is prepared, the Implementation Action Plan should be updated as part of an annual Plan amendment. The Implementation Action Plan update, or near-term work program, identifies near- and mid-term actions to be undertaken during the following year or soon thereafter. Annual Plan amendments also provide opportunities for relatively minor Plan updates and revisions, including changes to the Future Land Use, Thoroughfare Plan, and Trail Plan maps. A Plan amendment should be prepared and distributed as an addendum to the adopted Comprehensive 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 and City Council, and adopted in a manner similar to the Plan itself.
- **Five-Year Update.** A broader evaluation and update should be prepared every five years. This is typically more staff driven through input from various departments and elected and appointed officials. Spearheaded by the Development Services Department, this update involves a review of the existing plan to assess its successes and shortcomings with regard to implementation of the vision, goals, and objectives. The purpose is to evaluate the original assumptions regarding growth trends and issues and to determine if the remaining proposed actions strategies are still relevant. The update should include the following:
 - » A summary of Plan amendments and accomplishments to date;
 - » Changes in trends and issues since the previous Plan adoption (e.g., changes in the predicted growth rate and the physical boundaries of the City; demographic composition; community attitudes; or other social, environmental, or political issues which may affect the feasibility of implementation);
 - » Conflicts between decisions made and implementation actions yet to be undertaken;
 - » Changes in law, procedures, or programs which will affect identified implementation actions; and
 - » A comprehensive re-evaluation of the Implementation Action Plan.
- **10-Year Update.** Capturing, planning, and implementing the community's vision for the future is one of the most important actions a City government can undertake. In this regard, this Plan sets the stage for all subsequent implementation actions during the 20-year planning horizon. That being said, conditions, population composition, and City trends and concerns change over time. In order to ensure that the Comprehensive

Plan Amendments

It is recommended that this Plan be reviewed and updated regularly, including annual progress reporting.

Plan continues to provide the best and most appropriate guidance possible, the Plan should be taken through a full update process every 10 years. The 10-year update should include a comprehensive re-evaluation of the community's vision for the future, re-engagement of the public, and reanalysis of the issues and trends related to community growth, transportation, land use, parks and recreation, public facilities and services, and infrastructure. Action items identified in this Plan which have yet to be implemented should be evaluated to determine if they are still appropriate. Additionally, new action items should be identified as needed to keep the City progressing towards the high-quality place to live, work, and play that the community desires.



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