

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN FOR THE CITY OF FLORESVILLE

Introduction

The Future Land Use Plan is perhaps the most important component of a Master Plan. The Future Land Use Plan is not only a map indicating preferred patterns of future development, but also background and guidance to City staff and elected officials, the public, and the development community on why and how land should be utilized in particular areas of the community. At the core of the Future Land Use Plan are the promotion of public safety, health, and well-being, and the preservation of important community features. This Future Land Use Plan for the City of Floresville is incorporated by reference into the adopted Master Plan prepared for the City by M&S Engineering in 2012. This Plan assumes beyond a 20 year planning horizon.

Use of the Plan

The Future Land Use Plan should be particularly consulted by the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Staff in decision-making about changes to the zoning map and ordinance, the coordination of public improvements during the subdivision process, economic development activities, the consideration of revisions to sign regulations, landscape requirements, building codes, and the pursuit of grant funding.

A Vision for Floresville

From today through 2025 and beyond, the City of Floresville is known as a vibrant, many-faceted center of cultural diversity, history, and opportunity. Floresville is a good place to make new friends, raise a family, and build a community. Floresville has embraced its strategic location in the growing region, celebrates its diverse heritage, provides the familiarity of a small town lifestyle, and seeks a strong, well-planned and coordinated land use pattern that brings balance, character, and long-term value, and is applied fairly to all who share in its challenges and success.

Planning Context

Economic development and expansion in response to the Eagle Ford shale development is projected by most government and industry analysts to continue for the foreseeable future. The location for retail goods and services will take place (as it has been) along major arterial corridors due to factors such as visibility, ease of access, and location of utilities. Many other communities, in Texas and beyond, presently and in the past, have experienced rapid strip development during times of boom, following the factors above. This pattern carries the dangers of lost community identity and large areas of vacancy during the ensuing “bust” cycle, should it occur. At the same time, it also represents tremendous opportunity to develop the community and diversify its revenue sources.

The City has developed the Vision Statement (left), which articulates the desired future for the city and its residents.

Guiding Policies

Ultimately, the City is concerned about the enduring value of new development and has made the following determinations about its future growth:

1. Growth should be orderly and enduring. At a fundamental level, alongside the immediate short-term benefits, the community recognizes the long-term impact of the Eagle Ford phenomenon, its opportunities and threats to the ultimate development of the community and its quality of life.
2. The City recognizes the long-term economic potential and benefit of a regional retail corridor for US 181.
3. Congestion around the US 181/SH 97 intersection reduces the quality of life in the near term. Over the long term, congestion will reduce the desirability of the existing business landscape.
4. Distributing traffic flow across a grid system –an extension of the original town layout – can reduce congestion over the long term. Securing cooperation with developing properties to implement the extensions and connections identified in this plan is critical to the development of an orderly and enduring land use and transportation plan.
5. The City recognizes the FISD campus as an important center of community activity.
6. The City should continue a distributed approach to locating high density residential across its area, in order to provide a broad array of housing options, and avoid undue concentrations.
7. Development will continue along the 181 corridor northward to the Business 181 split, and southward to the other end of Business 181.
8. Development will begin to push out the SH 97 east corridor. The extensive floodplain areas to the west will limit growth in this area of the city's control.
9. There is a severe shortage of housing which is pushing land values high, and consequently the availability of affordable housing is limited. Increasing the housing supply is a top strategic priority for the City.
10. Areas north and east of US 181/SH 97 have desirable oak tree cover which will make desirable neighborhoods.
11. The area around the existing industrial park is well-suited for industrial use expansion. Concentrating industrial use here protects the industrial users and other areas from conflicts due to incompatibility.
12. The central part of Floresville, including the historic square, will be susceptible to degradation by uses that are inconsistent with its character. Revising the zoning ordinance is recommended to foster positive development and redevelopment. Moving away from “pyramid” or “cumulative” zoning will help meet this objective. An overlay district, or a specific, separate district for downtown, are potential approaches.
13. There are four gateways to the community which are identified on the plan:
 - Areas surrounding Business 181/US 181 intersection to the northwest;
 - Areas surrounding Business 181/US 181 intersection to the southeast;
 - The “park corridor” which connects City Park and the town center to the civic center and San Antonio River, along SH 97 west; and,

- An area around SH 97 east and CR 402.
14. A section of SH 97 east identified on the Future Land Use Plan (from the intersection of Standish St. and 11th Street, to approximately the end of Buttercup Lane) consists of a number of homes on lots of approximately 0.25 – 0.75 acres. As traffic on SH 97 east increases, these properties will likely face transition pressure. It will be therefore important to support this transition to professional office and personal service uses. Overlay zoning is one approach to facilitate this objective.

The Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is shown on Attachment A. This map depicts the location of residential and non-residential land uses inside the current city limits its extraterritorial jurisdiction, and beyond these limits in anticipation of growth.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF THE PLAN

The plan is designed to protect existing residential neighborhoods. As growth occurs, it will be important to recognize the existing areas with careful separation and buffering of uses. In addition, the Thoroughfare Plan has been designed to offer redundancy and options to facilitate access and circulation between residential and retail/commercial areas. The future Land Use Map reflects a potential “full buildout” of population, which provides ample market choice. It should be remembered that this build out will take much longer than the 10-15 year horizon contemplated in this plan; however, given some of the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the oil and gas boom, and generally the need to plan capital projects and facilitate transitioning between land uses, assumptions must be made.

The Plan includes three general groups of residential land use, of an approximate density to correspond to their intensity (and utility service planning).

Low Density Residential Land Use (< 4 units per acre)

This use is representative of traditional, single-family detached dwelling units, including larger-lot residences, and reflects the largest land use category. Low density residential land use areas are usually not located adjacent to major thoroughfares or other incompatible land uses, and are in proximity to existing single-family residential land use.

Medium Density Residential Land Use (4-8 units per acre)

This use generally includes two-family, attached dwelling units, such as duplex units, patio homes, and townhomes. Medium density land uses often provide areas for “empty nesters” who may not want the maintenance of a large-lot single-family home, and for young families who may find a townhome or duplex more affordable than a single-family home. It is anticipated that new areas for medium density land use will be developed in the future.

High Density Residential Land Use (4-16 units per acre)

At the top end of the density scale, high density typically includes apartments and condominiums in attached buildings. Generally, medium density uses should also be permitted in any area designated for high density use, as the Future Land Use Plan emphasizes flexibility as a stated goal. The plan includes several areas for multiple-family or higher density residential development. These areas have been located next to collectors or major arterials to promote ease of access and to avoid congestion. Multi-family complexes would be appropriate in density ranging from 4 to 16 units per acre. Densities proposed higher than this should require additional review of traffic impacts, location, and utility considerations.

NON-RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF THE PLAN

Retail Uses

Retail land use areas are intended to provide for a variety of retail trade, personal, and business services and establishments. Retail establishments generally require greater visibility than do other types of nonresidential land use (e.g., office, commercial). In response to this need, regional retail land uses have been designated along US 181 primarily, as well as smaller scale and boutique retail in the downtown area.

Commercial Land Uses

Areas designated for commercial land use are intended for a variety of commercial uses and establishments with outside storage, display and sales. Examples of such uses include automobile-related services, manufactured home sales, self-storage units, welding shops, and pawn shops. Commercial uses often locate along major thoroughfares not because they need the same level of visibility as retail uses do, but because they need the accessibility. The key difference is that commercial uses generally have a greater need for outside storage areas, and these areas tend to reduce the aesthetic quality of major thoroughfares.

Industrial Land Uses

The Eagle Ford phenomenon has given rise to a variety of oil and gas field service-related operations. These users need large, flexible space and large unimpeded outdoor storage area for supplies and equipment which is easily accessible by large and oversize vehicles. Because this use will continue to be critical to the economic vitality of the city, ample industrial space is envisioned. Careful, proactive encouragement is required, and land is sought to be suitable for industrial land use based on the following criteria:

- Access to an existing or proposed major arterial;
- Access to a railroad;
- Relatively flat or gently sloping site
- The site will not negatively impact the existing or proposed residential areas;
- A relatively large amount of land can be assembled in one area;

General planning criteria for industrial uses suggests that the minimum size requirements for preplanned industrial parks area about 200 to 300 acres. Approximately three to five percent of a city's land (0.2 to 0.3 acres per 100 persons) is often allocated to industrial uses. Due to the importance of industrial use mentioned above, a larger percentage has been allocated on the Future Land Use Map, and concentrated near the existing industrial park.

Civic and Institutional

Binding the residential and commercial uses together are the civic and institutional uses that support public space, public administration, utilities, and schools. These uses often have very specific land use

requirements. For example, schools must manage large populations, peak traffic flows, and indoor and outdoor activities. A wastewater plant is strategically located with respect to topography, as is an elevated storage tank that provides drinking water at a higher pressure. Land must be reserved for these types of facilities throughout the community. The existing school complex at Standish St. just east of US 181 is a focal point of activity in the community. The school district may find that expansion of this complex is limited and therefore additional areas should be sought within the growth area of the city.

Park and Open Space

There are numerous benefits associated with keeping open, green space in the community, both for the active and passive use of residents and visitors. Indeed, access to even modestly-developed parks has been shown to further “active living”. Many of the best areas for active recreation are also subject to flooding, and therefore not suitable for residential or commercial use. A greenbelt park system can be developed that provides further linkages across the community, located along floodplains. The San Antonio River forms a green boundary along the western edge of the city. The hike-and-bike trail, formerly a railroad, the civic center and the magnificent pecan trees of City park form a backbone to the city’s park system. Connections can be made along floodplain areas that traverse the city.

Open space is also an important land use technique to further the goal of compatibility. Uses which are specifically intense, such as industrial operations, should be buffered along the perimeter with open space.

USING THE MAP

The following exhibit is the Future Land Use Map, which has been prepared from the community-wide direction and the advice of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and reflects the anticipated balance of land uses necessary to meet Floresville’s needs beyond 2025. It has been prepared to meet the objectives of Texas Local Government Code §§213 and 395, as they relate to comprehensive planning and assumptions of land use. This map incorporates the goals, policies, and actions presented in this chapter. From time to time, the city may consider revising the plan (consistent with the goal of flexibility), based on changes to the growth and development of the city. At a minimum, the Planning and Zoning Commission should review the plan annually to ensure that it tracks and reflects the desired growth pattern of the city, and the external forces operating upon the city.

FUTURE THOROUGHFARES

Land Use and Transportation needs are inextricably related. In order to avoid congestion and a resulting degradation of the quality of life and image of Floresville (especially along the US 181 and SH 97 corridors), the Commission studied the extension of a grid roadway network to provide consistent and redundant options for traffic flow. It is expected that as development occurs, the road network will be extended approximately corresponding to the spacing identified on the Future Land Use Map.

Annexation Priorities

Voluntary annexation should be sought at all times, leaving involuntary annexations as an additional option for managing growth.

- The first priority is a progression to the US 181/Business 181 intersection on the northwest side. This represents a total distance of about two miles from the current city limits and should be

able to be accomplished on a voluntary basis. This area is designated as a first priority because significant retail development has emerged within the last two years, and the city reports multiple inquiries about property along both sides of US 181 extending to the north past the current development limit.

- The second priority annexation area is the southwest, towards the river along SH 97 to the civic center.
- The third priority is along US 181 south, approximately one mile from the current city limits to the FM 537/Business 181 intersection; and,
- The fourth priority is SH 97 (Standish St.) corridor east, as this will be the primary arterial corridor that supports the prime future housing area.
- Fifth priority is along FM 537 east towards the industrial park, to include the industrial park, near the intersection with CR 407.