



Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan Update

Introduction

CHAPTER 1

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Nacogdoches is an official public document that will serve as a blueprint for future development in the community. The plan will be a tool, utilized by the community, to guide future growth in an appropriate and desired manner and improve the quality of life of local residents. The plan will serve as a basis for policy decisions relating to the physical growth and economic development of Nacogdoches. In addition to providing a vision, goals and objectives to work toward over the next 20 years, the plan assesses the opportunities and challenges facing the City, identifies important policies and strategies, and establishes priorities for an aggressive implementation program that emphasizes specific actions and practical results.

This plan updates the City's current comprehensive plan, which was last revised in 1994. In addition, the new plan was coordinated and developed in the context of other studies and plans previously prepared by the City.

The Comprehensive Plan is designed to acquaint the reader with the City by highlighting existing conditions and characteristics while identifying the area's goals, expectations and priorities as well as specific action plans for achieving these goals. The plan addresses the physical aspects of planning such as land use and development; transportation facilities and improvements, and housing and neighborhoods. In addition, it addresses long-term policies that will guide shorter-term decisions regarding development review and approval, budgeting and fiscal management, and capital improvements programming. The Comprehensive Plan also sets the stage for more focused planning efforts, providing long-term perspective and highlighting how actions in one area can have implica-

tions in other areas, such as development patterns, adequate public facilities and preservation of area heritage.

Comprehensive Planning Authority

While cities in Texas are not required to maintain long-range development plans as in some other states, the Texas Legislature provided the following guidance to cities through Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code related to Municipal Comprehensive Plans:

The powers granted under this chapter are for the purpose of promoting sound development of municipalities and promoting public health, safety, and welfare.

State statutes enabling long-range urban planning by Texas cities also leave it up to these municipalities to determine what topics will be covered in their plans. Chapter 213 advises that a comprehensive plan may:

1. include but is not limited to provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
2. consist of a single plan or a coordinated set of plans organized by subject and geographic area; and,
3. be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

Why Should Nacogdoches Plan?

Local planning allows the City of Nacogdoches to have control over its destiny rather than simply reacting to change. Planning enables the City to proactively manage future growth and development as opposed to responding to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues.



The process required to update the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan may be more valuable to the community than the plan itself since the plan is ultimately only a snapshot in time. The planning process involves major community decisions about where and how much growth will occur, the nature of future growth, and whether the community can afford to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this growth. This leads to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to "quality of life" will be affected.

The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity for elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create. The plan development process provides a chance to look

broadly at programs for neighborhoods, housing, economic development and provision of public infrastructure and how these concerns may relate to one another. The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan represents a "big picture" of the City, one that can be related to the trends and interests of the broader region as well as the State of Texas.

Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve members of the general public in describing the type of community they desire. The process of plan preparation provides a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their vision of the community and the details of how that vision is to be achieved. The plan results in a series of goals and policies that, ideally, will guide the City in administering development regulations; in determining the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; and, in overseeing reinvestment and redevelopment efforts. The plan also provides a means of coordinating the actions of many different departments and divisions within the City.

Reasons for planning in Nacogdoches include:

- ◆ to ensure adequate facilities to meet the demands of future growth and development;
- ◆ to develop an efficient and effective growth pattern that reflects the values of the community;
- ◆ to ensure the long-term conservation and protection of the visual image and appearance of the community;
- ◆ to maintain the community's local heritage and culture;
- ◆ to involve local citizens in the decision-making process and reach consensus on the future vision of Nacogdoches and on how and where to develop; and,
- ◆ to develop an annual work program and prioritize improvements.

Intended Use of the Nacogdoches Plan

The Nacogdoches Plan belongs to the community and its citizens who generously offered their time and talents to create it. The ability to implement the plan is directly related to the amount of citizen participation and the sense of ownership derived from the process. The plan contains many components and serves numerous functions such as providing information, identifying existing conditions and characteristics, and establishing local governmental policies and strategies. By its nature, the plan is intended to serve all interests of the community and thus offers the following benefits:

- ◆ It states the intentions of City government regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, which creates a level of certainty for landowners and developers.
- ◆ It establishes local policy and provides guidance for future growth and development, which can be utilized by City leaders in their decision-making.

- ◆ It identifies programs and initiatives in the form of specific action statements, which provides the basis for a coordinated work program among City departments.
- ◆ It identifies capital improvement needs and priorities, which can be utilized by City management in annual budgeting and capital programming.
- ◆ It indicates the type, scale and density of future development and coordinates improvements, which notifies citizens of the anticipated pattern of development and its influence on private property.
- ◆ It serves as a blueprint for the area's future economic and physical development, which is useful to other local, State and Federal agencies engaged in the provision of programs, services and facilities.

Development of the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan

Citizen involvement is the cornerstone of the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan. A successful plan is identified not just with the elected and appointed officials of the City who adopt it, but with the entire community and its residents who helped draft it and want to see it followed and



maintained. Effective mechanisms for citizen involvement and debate were an essential part of the Nacogdoches planning process. Through this community involvement, the plan incorporates the community's values in terms of quality of life, character and scale of development, aesthetic appeal, and how new development should be integrated with the existing and future urban and rural fabric. Citizen participation in the planning study was accomplished through a variety of activities for community involvement and public information, including:

- ◆ The **Nacogdoches Planning and Zoning Commission** and **City Commission** were involved as participants in the plan development process through their representatives on the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) as well as through regular briefings from City staff.
- ◆ Six meetings were held with a **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee**, which injected local insight and perspective into the plan development process by identifying the community's strengths and weaknesses, reviewing each plan element, and providing input and suggestions to ensure the plan reflects local values and the vision for the future.
- ◆ **Key Person Interviews** were conducted on August 21-22, 2002, with small groups that included members of the City Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission, other key community figures such as business and industry leaders and major landowners and developers, and

representatives of neighborhood and civic groups and community service organizations. The purpose of these small-group interviews was to solicit the direct input of local residents concerning common perceptions, issues, problems, opportunities, constraints, assets and challenges in the City. This input was invaluable toward understanding the underlying issues and needs of the community and, specifically, the values and priorities of those who know best – citizens.

- ◆ A citywide **Community Forum** was held on September 30, 2002, during the early stages of the planning process. The purpose of the forum was to inform citizens about the comprehensive planning process and to solicit their input on current issues, improvement needs and future priorities for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update as well as the concurrent Parks Master Plan.
- ◆ A **Joint Workshop** was held with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission on June 9, 2002, with the purpose of reviewing and discussing each element of the draft Comprehensive Plan. A key task of the workshop was a priority-setting exercise to establish an initial action agenda for effective plan implementation.
- ◆ The final stage of the citizen participation process included formal **Public Hearings** prior to consideration of the recommended Comprehensive Plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission.

A Continuous Planning Process

The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan is a principal part of the overall, ongoing planning process of the City. The plan will serve as the basis for decisions regarding long-range development of the community, including necessary guidance for the City's development ordinances, which are the primary tools to implement the plan.

The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan should not be considered a static document but rather the result of a continuous process to gather and evaluate information and make informed decisions based upon constantly changing conditions. The plan is intended to be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed to maintain its applicability to current conditions and priorities of the City. At a minimum, the entire plan should be revisited every five years and revised as needed to ensure that it still reflects the true values and direction of the community. However, while the plan must be flexible to respond to changing needs, the community should remain steadfast in its vision and support for the core goals and objectives contained in the plan.

Essential Aspects of a Comprehensive Plan

The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan is a definitive source of information regarding the existing and future conditions and characteristics of the community. A thorough understanding of the community's past, present and future is needed to identify key issues and trends and formulate realistic goals, viable objectives, workable policies, and effective action plans. Ultimately the plan provides a solid foundation for making informed, sound and fiscally responsible decisions regarding the community's future growth and development and the adequate provision of facilities and services.

The plan is "comprehensive" in two ways: (1) geographically, since it considers the entire city and its surrounding growth areas, and (2) through the variety of issues and elements that are evaluated simultaneously to determine the best future course. For these same reasons, the plan is general since it cannot provide definitive answers in so many individual situations and with circumstances sure to change over time. Instead, the plan provides an overall policy framework to guide numerous public and private decisions.

Some elements of the plan are especially long-term and will become permanent factors in the ongoing development of the City, such as where roads and infrastructure will be extended, where various types of development will occur, and where property will be set aside in perpetuity as public lands.

The plan is optimistic and even inspirational—enough to challenge the community about its future. But it also provides clear direction through statements of action that indicate how to achieve the community's desired vision. The sign of an effective plan is when it is frequently cited at Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission meetings and regularly consulted in the business and development communities. Nacogdoches officials should expect and ensure that their plan is the "road map" for the City in the years ahead, providing practical guidance for every municipal function.

Finally, the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan should not be confused with zoning. Zoning is a legal mechanism enacted by the City that classifies land for specified uses, whereas the Comprehensive Plan is a more general guide for future growth and development. Zoning is a way for the City to influence and direct the community's development consistent with the desired urban form described by the Comprehensive Plan. The City's zoning ordinance is one tool used to implement the vision, goals, objectives and actions of the Comprehensive Plan.

Organization of the Nacogdoches Plan

The Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan is organized into 13 individual plan elements, which address the existing conditions, issues, goals, objectives and action plans for various facets of the community. These elements include:

Chapter One: Introduction – Outlines the purposes of comprehensive planning and provides background on the plan development process and associated citizen involvement activities.

Chapter Two: Community Profile – Documents the existing conditions of the City and includes data relating to historical, current and forecasted population and employment and local socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and trends.

Chapter Three: Vision & Goals – Expresses the shared present and future vision of area citizens. The vision statement is intended to provide a clear and concise summary of expectations for future development, economic opportunity, mobility, public facilities and services, recreational enjoyment, natural beauty, and other aspects of community life.

Chapter Four: Environment & Natural Resources – Ensures long-term conservation and protection of the unique and valued environmental attributes of

the City. This element also identifies areas where various environmental constraints could limit or influence future growth and development.

Chapter Five: Land Use – Illustrates the generalized pattern of future land use, including various types and densities of development. This chapter also provides recommendations regarding quality of development and the relationship between land uses.

Chapter Six: Transportation – Delineates the functional classes of existing and proposed major thoroughfares and identifies transportation network improvement needs.

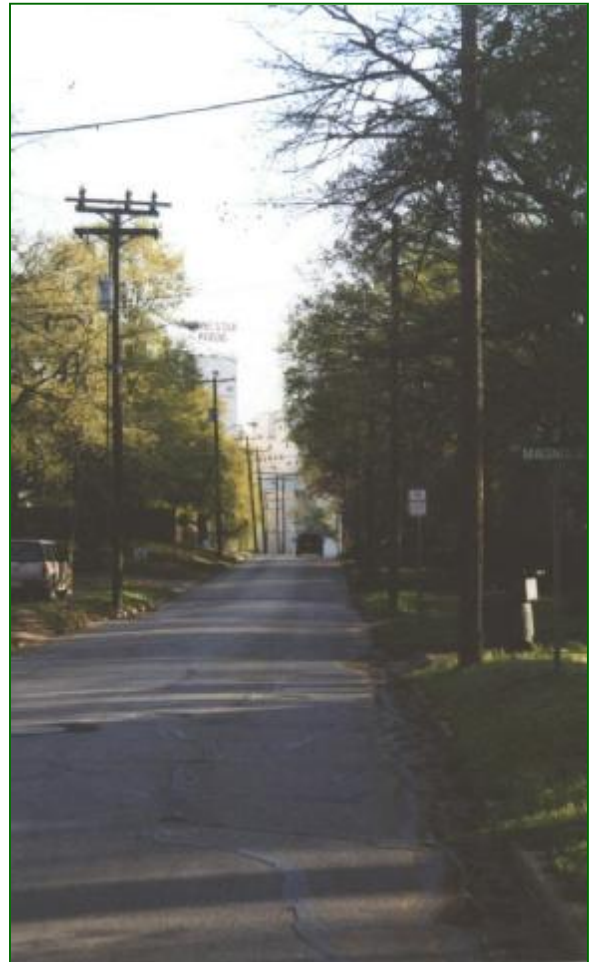
Chapter Seven: Utility Infrastructure – Provides a framework for the logical development, extension and upgrading of the City's infrastructure system, which includes potable water, wastewater and storm water services.

Chapter Eight: Housing & Neighborhoods – Summarizes issues and findings related to housing availability and affordability. Identifies specific ways the City can promote needed housing development and redevelopment and ensure viable and sustainable neighborhoods.

Chapter Nine: Community Facilities & Services – Examines key facilities and services in the community including the City fire and police departments and public library. The buildings, staffing, services, issues and priorities of each entity are documented.

Chapter Ten: Parks & Recreation – Summarizes the City's new Parks Master Plan, which was developed in conjunction with the Nacogdoches Comprehensive Plan Update. This element, and the larger Master Plan, are intended to clearly define the role of the City in providing parks and recreation facilities for its citizens over the next 20 years.

Chapter Eleven: Historic Preservation – Reviews the community's heritage; presents alternative programs, implementation techniques, and funding sources for preserving and enhancing the community's historic and cultural resources; and, recommends policies, programs and actions for promoting historic preservation and heritage tourism.



Chapter Twelve: Annexation – Evaluates the City's annexation outlook in terms of statutory capabilities and limitations, general fiscal and public service capacity, and demonstrated need to better manage and guide growth and development beyond the existing incorporated area.

Chapter Thirteen: Implementation – Provides direction and recommendations for implementing and periodically updating the Comprehensive Plan. This chapter also highlights major actions from each plan element that are considered top priorities for the initial three years of plan implementation activity.