

# CHAPTER 11: IMPLEMENTATION

## STRATEGIES





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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The importance of city planning can never be overstated. The future of Copperas Cove will be shaped with the policies and recommendations developed in this 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update. Based on this Plan, decisions will be made that will influence many aspects of the City's built and social environments. Copperas Cove has taken an important leadership role in defining its future, with the adoption of this Plan. The Plan will provide a very important tool for City staff and civic leaders to use in making sound planning decisions regarding the long-term growth and development of Copperas Cove. The future quality of life in Copperas Cove will be substantially influenced by the manner in which Comprehensive Plan recommendations are administered and maintained.

Changes in Copperas Cove's socioeconomic climate and in development trends that were not anticipated during preparation of the Plan will occur from time to time, and therefore, subsequent adjustments will be required. Elements of the City that were treated in terms of a general relationship to the overall area may, in the future, require more specific and detailed attention. Planning for the City's future should be a continuous process, and this Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a dynamic tool that can be modified and periodically updated to keep it in tune with changing conditions and trends.

Comprehensive Plan policies and recommendations may be put into effect through adopted development regulations, such as zoning and subdivision, and through capital improvement programs. Many recommendations within the Plan can be implemented through simple refinement of existing regulations or City processes, while others may require the establishment of new regulations, programs, or processes. This final chapter of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update describes specific ways in which Copperas Cove can take the recommendations within this Plan from vision to reality.

### **PROACTIVE & REACTIVE IMPLEMENTATION**

There are two primary methods of Plan implementation - proactive and reactive methods. To successfully implement the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and fully realize its benefits, both methods must be used in an effective manner. Both proactive and reactive actions that could be used by Copperas Cove are described within this chapter.

Examples of proactive methods include:

- Developing a capital improvements program (CIP), by which the City expends funds to finance certain public improvements (e.g., utility lines, roadways, etc.), meeting objectives that are cited within the Plan;
- Establishing/enforcing zoning regulations;
- Establishing/enforcing subdivision regulations.

Examples of reactive methods include:

- Rezoning a development proposal that would enhance the City and is based on the Comprehensive Plan;
- Site plan review; and
- Subdivision review.

## **THE ROLES OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

### **A GUIDE FOR DAILY DECISION-MAKING**

The current physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each new development that takes place, whether a subdivision that is platted, a home that is built, or a new school, church, or shopping center that is constructed, represents an addition to Copperas Cove's physical form. The composite of all such efforts and facilities creates the City as it is seen and experienced by its citizens and visitors. If planning is to be effective, it must guide each and every individual development decision. The City, in its daily decisions pertaining to whether to surface a street, to approve a residential plat, to amend a zoning ordinance provision, to enforce the building codes, or to construct a new utility line, should always refer to the basic proposals outlined within the Comprehensive Plan. The private builder or investor, likewise, should recognize the broad concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts become part of a meaningful whole in planning the City.

### **A FLEXIBLE & ALTERABLE GUIDE**

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to be a dynamic planning document for Copperas Cove – one that responds to changing needs and conditions. Plan amendments should not be made without a thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of proposed amendments. The City Council and other Copperas Cove officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies, and whether it will be beneficial for the long-term health and vitality of Copperas Cove.

At one to three-year intervals, a periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan with respect to current conditions and trends should be performed. Such on-going, scheduled re-evaluations will provide a basis for adjusting capital expenditures and priorities, and will reveal changes and additions that should be made to the Plan in order to keep it current and applicable long-term. It would be appropriate to devote one annual meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to reviewing the status and continued applicability of the Plan in light of current conditions, and to prepare a report on these findings to the City Council. Those items that appear to need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. By such periodic reevaluations, the Plan will remain functional, and will continue to give civic leaders

effective guidance in decision-making. Periodic reviews of the Plan should include consideration of the following:

- The City's progress in implementing the Plan;
- Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- Community support for the Plan's goals, objectives and policies; and
- Changes in State laws.

The full benefits of the Plan for Copperas Cove can only be realized by maintaining it as a vital, up-to-date document. As changes occur and new issues within the City become apparent, the Plan should be revised rather than ignored. By such action, the Plan will remain current and effective in meeting the City's decision-making needs.

### **COMPLETE REVIEW WITH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Comprehensive Plan should undergo a complete, more thorough review and be updated every five or ten years. The review and updating process should begin with the establishment of a steering committee. If possible, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (the committee formed to draft the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update) or the Planning and Zoning Commission should be in charge of periodic review of the Plan. Specific input on major changes should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders, and major stakeholders, developers, merchants, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City.

## **REGULATORY MECHANISMS**

### **GENERAL**

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Each zoning, development, and subdivision decision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable proposals contained within the Plan. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly in order to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making. Amending the Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance represent two major proactive measures that the City can take to implement the 2007 Comprehensive Plan recommendations.

### **THE ZONING ORDINANCE**

Zoning is perhaps the single most powerful tool for implementing Comprehensive Plan recommendations. The City's Zoning Ordinance should be updated with the recommendations contained within the chapters of this Comprehensive Plan. All zoning and land use changes should be made within the context of existing land uses, future land uses, and planned infrastructure, including roadways, water, and wastewater. The following are recommendations related to zoning regulations and processes.

#### **Zoning Text Amendments**

##### ***Design & Development Standards***

There are numerous recommendations within this 2007 Comprehensive Plan that relate to enhancing design standards. Their implementation will not only improve future development and interaction between land uses, but will also improve Copperas Cove's overall image and livability. Such recommendations involve landscaping, nonresidential building design, and compatibility, to name a few. These recommendations should be itemized and prioritized, and should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance accordingly. The City may consider a complete revision of its present Zoning Ordinance or the merger of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations into a Unified Development Code (UDC).

### **Other Standards**

The following list of changes should be made to the City's existing Zoning Ordinance text.

- Add New Definitions
  - Add new definitions to conform to State and Federal statutes (i.e., churches, telecommunications antennae, etc.).
- Add New Zoning Districts
  - Add the following residential zoning districts:
    - Single-family district with a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet.
    - Single-family district with a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet.
- Add/Amend Standards
  - Add standards consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the following:
    - Landscaping,
    - Coverage,
    - Screening,
    - Setbacks,
    - Driveways,
    - Building materials, and
    - Screening/buffering for single-family development.
- Amend Standards
  - Increase the minimum lot sizes for:
    - R-2 Two Family Dwelling District
    - R-3 Multi-Family Dwelling District

### **Zoning Map Amendments**

State law gives power to cities to regulate the use of land, but regulations should be based on a plan; therefore, Copperas Cove's Zoning Map should be as consistent as possible with the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Future Land Use Plan Map (**Plate 4-1**). It is not reasonable, however, to recommend that the City make large-scale changes in its zoning map changes immediately; therefore, it is recommended that the City prioritize areas where a change in current zoning is needed in the short-term and that efforts be concentrated on making such changes. In the long-term, consistent zoning policy in conformance with the Future Land Use Plan Map will achieve the City's preferred land use pattern over time.

## **THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE**

The act of subdividing land to create building sites has a major effect on the overall design and image of Copperas Cove. Much of the basic physical form of the City is currently created by the layout of streets, easements, and lots. In the future, the basic physical form of Copperas Cove will be further affected by such action. Requirements for adequate public facilities are essential to ensure the City's orderly and efficient growth.

### **Roadway Section Standards and Public Improvement Standards**

The adequate provision of transportation and access to, and possibly through, a tract of land is an important health, safety, and welfare consideration. In order to ensure that roadways will have available capacity to support population growth and related increases in traffic, the City requires specific rights-of-way and paving standards within the Subdivision Ordinance. It is recommended that roadway section and construction requirements should be amended to conform to the section recommendations within the Thoroughfare Plan of this 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update. Additionally, the City should periodically review and update all of its construction standards as appropriate.

## **WATER AND WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS**

The City maintains separate water and wastewater systems with a corresponding capital improvement program (CIP). It is recommended that the CIP be reviewed after this 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update is adopted to ensure continued validity. Notably, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan conducted a detailed water and wastewater study and included recommendations for the growth of the systems. Currently, many of the recommendations within the 1995 Plan are still valid.

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## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING**

Capital improvements are integrally linked to the City's Comprehensive Plan and its regulatory ordinances. A capital improvement such as a water treatment plant illustrates this concept in the following example:

*The Comprehensive Plan recommends areas for a particular type of development, the Zoning Ordinance reinforces Plan recommendations with applicable zoning districts consistent with that type of development, and the Subdivision Ordinance regulates the facilities (e.g., utility extensions, roadway widths, etc.) necessary to accommodate that type of development. The type of development that is recommended by the Comprehensive Plan and that is regulated and approved in accordance with the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance dictates the water treatment plant's size and capacity.*

It is in the City's long-term financial interest to invest regularly in the physical maintenance and enhancement of Copperas Cove rather than to undertake large improvement-type programs at longer time intervals. A modest amount of money expended annually on prioritized items in accordance with Plan recommendations will produce a far greater return to the City than will large expenditures at long intervals. A discussion of various possible funding mechanisms follows.

### **FUNDING MECHANISMS**

#### **Ad Valorem Taxes**

The following list contains possible actions that the City can take to increase its revenue stream so that it is able to reduce taxes.

- Concentrate on Improving Housing:
  - Copperas Cove's housing challenges have been discussed in detail within this Comprehensive Plan. When housing units are improved, their valuations will increase, thereby increasing their value. This increase in taxable value would eventually help the City to lower taxes.
- Protect Prime Retail Property:
  - Prime retail property should not be developed for a purpose other than retail. Retail sales tax revenue (supplementing ad valorem taxes) can be a major contributor to the City's overall budget, and the City's location along the highways provides prime locations for a variety of retail uses. This land should be preserved for retail use through zoning regulations, other less attractive sites should be encouraged to redevelop as office or residential uses.

- Attract Tax-Generating Businesses:
  - Attracting new business will be key to the City's ability to lower its tax rate.

It is extremely important for the City to have a budget that is balanced by revenue from residential and nonresidential uses - quality nonresidential development helps offset the cost of public services generally demanded by residential uses. The previously listed actions will help Copperas Cove create a necessary balance. Increasing revenue from other sources will eventually allow the City to lower the tax burden of its residents.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District(s)**

Tax increment financing (TIF) districts are special districts wherein tax revenues resulting from increased property values fund public improvements. The property tax rate paid by property owners is the same as paid in other areas of a city, but the additional tax paid on the increased property value would be allotted to a special fund that would finance improvement projects within a TIF district. It is recommended that the City investigate the feasibility of establishing a TIF district or districts to assist in financing public improvements in specific geographic areas.

### **State & County Funding**

Coordination with State agencies and with Coryell, Lampasas, and Bell counties is recommended for the joint planning and cost sharing of projects. A widely utilized example of State funding is the use of funds allocated by Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). TxDOT receives funds from the Federal Government and directly from the State budget that it distributes for roadway construction and maintenance across Texas. There are roads within Copperas Cove that would be eligible for such funds.

The City should work with Coryell, Lampasas, and Bell counties to secure increased county participation in projects that influence not only Copperas Cove, but also the counties as a whole. Citizens within the City of Copperas Cove are also citizens of various counties and they could benefit from such participation through improved park areas and roadways.

### **Various Types of Bonds**

The two most widely used types of bonds are general obligation bonds and revenue bonds. General obligation bonds, commonly referred to as G.O.s, can be described as bonds that are secured by a pledge of the credit and taxing power of the City and must be approved by a voter referendum. Revenue bonds can be described as bonds that are secured by the revenue of the City. A third type, certificates of obligation, commonly referred to as C.O.s,

can be voted on by the City Council without a Citywide election/bond referendum. It should be noted that if Copperas Cove chooses to adopt an Impact Fee Ordinance and bonds have been included in the assessment of impact fees, funds derived from impact fees could be used to retire bonds.

### **Impact Fees**

Chapter 395 of the Texas Local Government Code addresses the issue of developer participation in the construction of off-site facilities such as water, wastewater, and roadways. This State law allows cities in Texas to decide whether to assess fees for 1) roadway construction, 2) water service expansion, and 3) wastewater service expansion to new residential and nonresidential development. The City currently does not have impact fees; Copperas Cove should continue to investigate using Chapter 395 as a funding mechanism for roadway, water, and wastewater capital expenditures. Specifically, the City should follow the recommendation of the Impact Fee Advisory Committee's February 13, 2007 report.

The City has recently reviewed the issue of impact fees. The Mayor and Council established an Impact Fee Advisory Committee in August 2006. The committee researched the issues, including the advantages and disadvantages of using impact fees, and on February 13, 2007 submitted their report. The following is the committee's unanimous recommendation to the City Council:

“It is recommended that impact fees should be left as a future option and included in the comprehensive plan, but not implemented at this time. It is further recommended that the City engage in a public relations campaign regarding infrastructure cost and impact fees and that the City engage surrounding cities in discussions about a regional approach to impact fees.”

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## **CONCLUSION**

This 2007 Comprehensive Plan Update represents a planning process that involved a diverse group of people from throughout the community. The various elements of the Plan are based upon realistic goals, objectives, and recommendations for the City that resulted from an intense comprehensive planning process involving a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, citizens, City Staff, and elected and appointed officials. The Comprehensive Plan, once adopted, becomes the official policy of the City. To be fully effective, the Plan should be used on a daily basis to determine policy, thereby guiding Copperas Cove to realize its ultimate vision.

