



2040 DRIPPING SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT



APRIL 22, 2026

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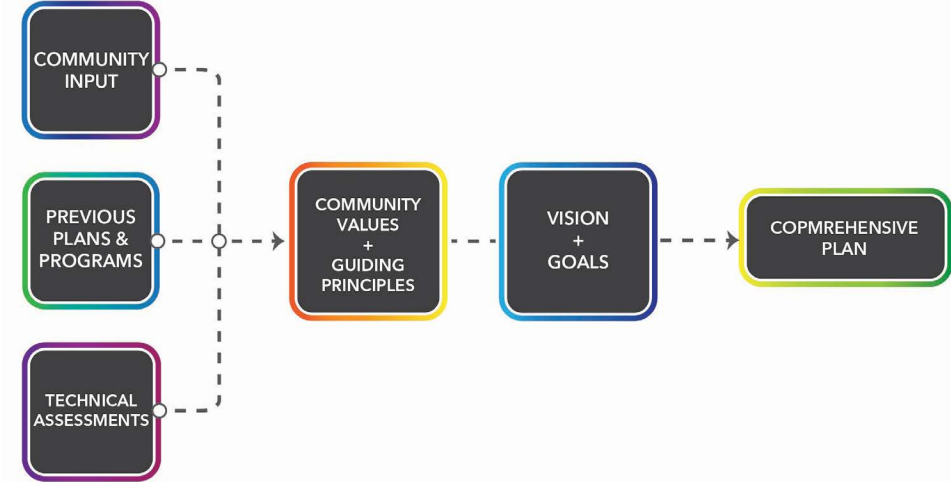
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE OF PLAN

The Plan is an advisory document that will guide the future evolution and changes in a community over the next 15-20 years. The Plan is a 'road map' for fostering a desirable and sustainable place to live, work, and visit. It establishes policies and strategies for advancing key community priorities, including land use and development, parks and open space, transportation systems, economic growth, and sustainable infrastructure. This Plan will serve as a guide to policy makers, community members, property owners and developers to help them understand the vision of the community, predict what uses could occur both on and near their properties, set the expectations for the physical form of development, and make informed land-use decisions.



PROCESS



The 2040 Comprehensive Plan process was initiated in February 2022. The process involved an extensive community outreach and engagement process that included a review of past relevant plans and programs in the city, and a detailed assessment of current conditions to help identify community needs and priorities.

Original 7 Key Elements	Final 5 Plan Elements
Infrastructure	Infrastructure & Facilities
Parks & Recreation	
Historic Preservation	Protecting Community Character
Land Use & Character	
Transportation	Connectivity & Corridor Enhancement
Housing	Housing
Economic Development Strategy	Economic Development & Funding

VISION STATEMENT

As the gateway to the Hill Country, Dripping Springs is committed to enhancing the community's unique identity by protecting its natural resources, rich history, and dark skies, while providing sustainable infrastructure to support our growing community. Through thoughtful planning and sustainable growth, we strive to maintain the character and quality of life that define our small-town spirit, ensuring that Dripping Springs remains a vibrant, resilient, and welcoming place for generations to come.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Vision Statement is derived from a Community's Core Values. Community values, or in planning terms, "Guiding Principles", are the non-negotiable core standards that the community's residents wish to maintain. Values must be acknowledged, honored, and constantly defended to ensure that change and development occur in accordance with them.

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan process identified a wide range of community values/guiding principles that guided the Plan process:

- **Preservation / Nature / Environment**
- **Rural / Country / Small Town**
- **Community / Friendly / Family-oriented**
- **Charming / Quaint / Local**
- **Historic / Cultural**
- **Dark Sky / Quiet**
- **Growing / Economic Opportunity / Balance**

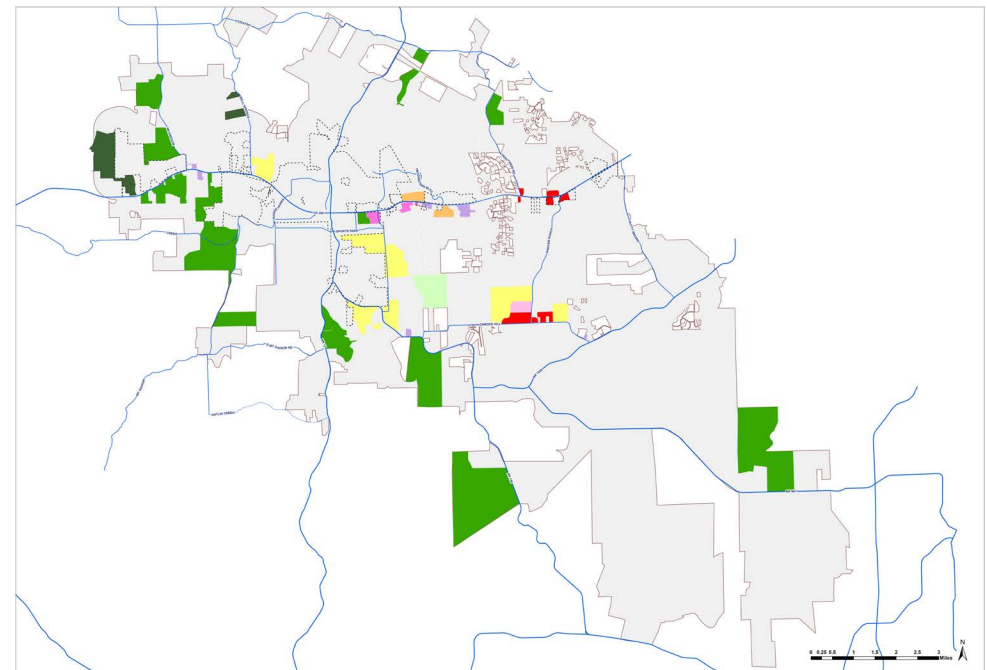


Figure 1. Proposed Development / Opportunity Area in the City and ETJ

PLAN ELEMENTS & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



Infrastructure & Facilities

Goal: Ensure utilities, infrastructure, and facilities are properly maintained and upgraded to serve community needs.

Objectives:

- Prioritize stormwater, wastewater, and water infrastructure improvement projects.
- Manage and maintain roadway infrastructure.
- Ensure quality maintenance and development of the public realm and streetscapes.



Community Character

Goal: Manage growth and development while prioritizing the preservation of the Hill Country character and the community's sense of place.

Objectives:

- Proactive approach to maintain Hill Country character, sense of place, and natural environment.
- Guide future growth and development so that it follows the Future Land Use plan and reflects the community's priorities and needs.



Connectivity & Corridor Enhancement

Goal: Provide an efficient and safe regional network of streets and highways.

Objectives:

- Partner with TxDOT to monitor corridor plans.
- Review and Update Transportation Master Plan.
- Monitor roadway improvements and expansions throughout City & ETJ.
- Monitor traffic impacts in corridor and throughout the City and ETJ roadway network.



Housing

Goal: Ensure and improve the quality of life for current and future residents by maintaining strong neighborhoods and providing housing options that meet the needs of community members.

Objectives:

- Explore options for development regulation in ETJ.
- Review and adjust current architectural standards.
- Expand housing options.



Economic Development & Funding

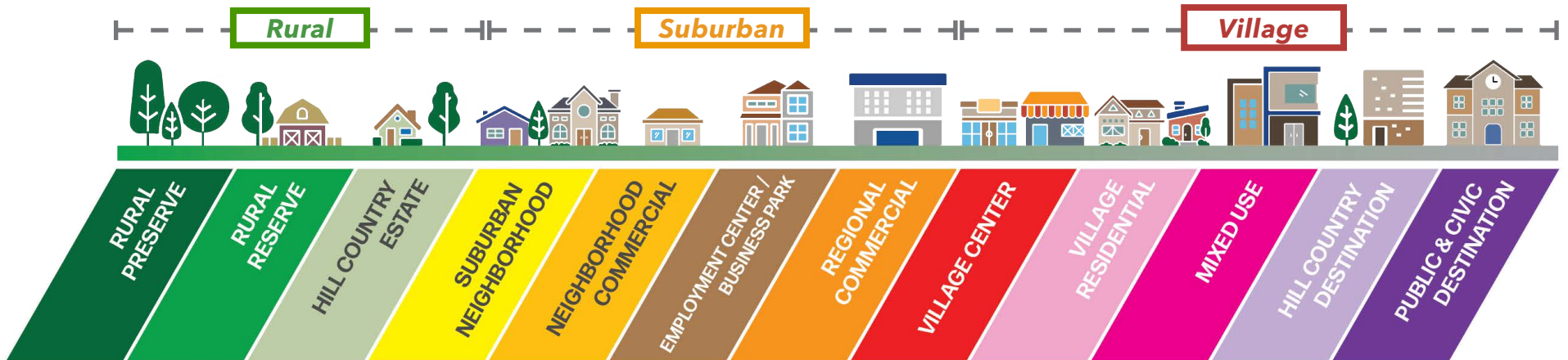
Goal: Encourage a balanced growth and foster a resilient and robust economy.

Objectives:

- Determine role of Economic Development Committee in advancing the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Foster expansion of tourism.
- Encourage Business Attraction and Retention.
- Funding Strategies / Policies

PLACE TYPES

A Future Land Use Map (FLUM) establishes and defines land use categories and applies it to all the land within the city and the ETJ. The FLUM guides future development and redevelopment by providing the decision-making bodies information on the intended land uses of future development. Typically, land use designations on FLUMs are one-dimensional (density-based) and may not provide enough specificity on the intended character of the land use. Place Types are an effort to provide character-based land use designations that help the residents and elected officials to better envision their community's future.



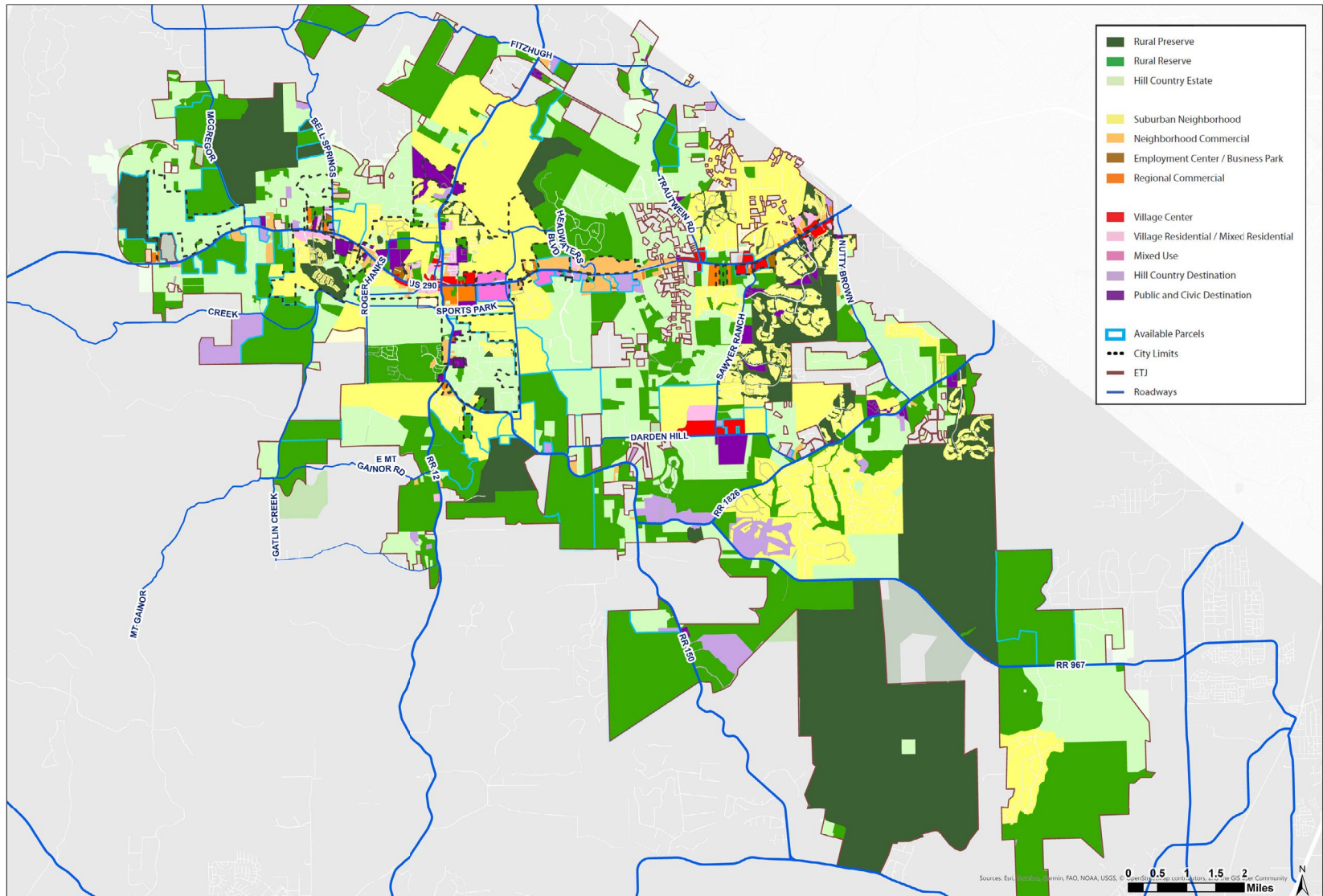


Figure 2. Future Land Use Map ETJ Scale

"The charm of Dripping Springs is due to the surrounding environment, and the small businesses that thrive here."

- Dripping Springs Resident





1 INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In November 2016, the City of Dripping Springs adopted its previous Comprehensive Master Plan; however, explosive growth and a vastly changing range of issues accompanying that growth in recent years, have pushed City and Planning officials to reassess the previous plan and update it as needed in 7 key areas that had been previously identified. Those seven areas in order of importance included:

Economic Development Strategy

Land Use and Character

Transportation

Infrastructure and Facilities

Housing

Parks and Recreation

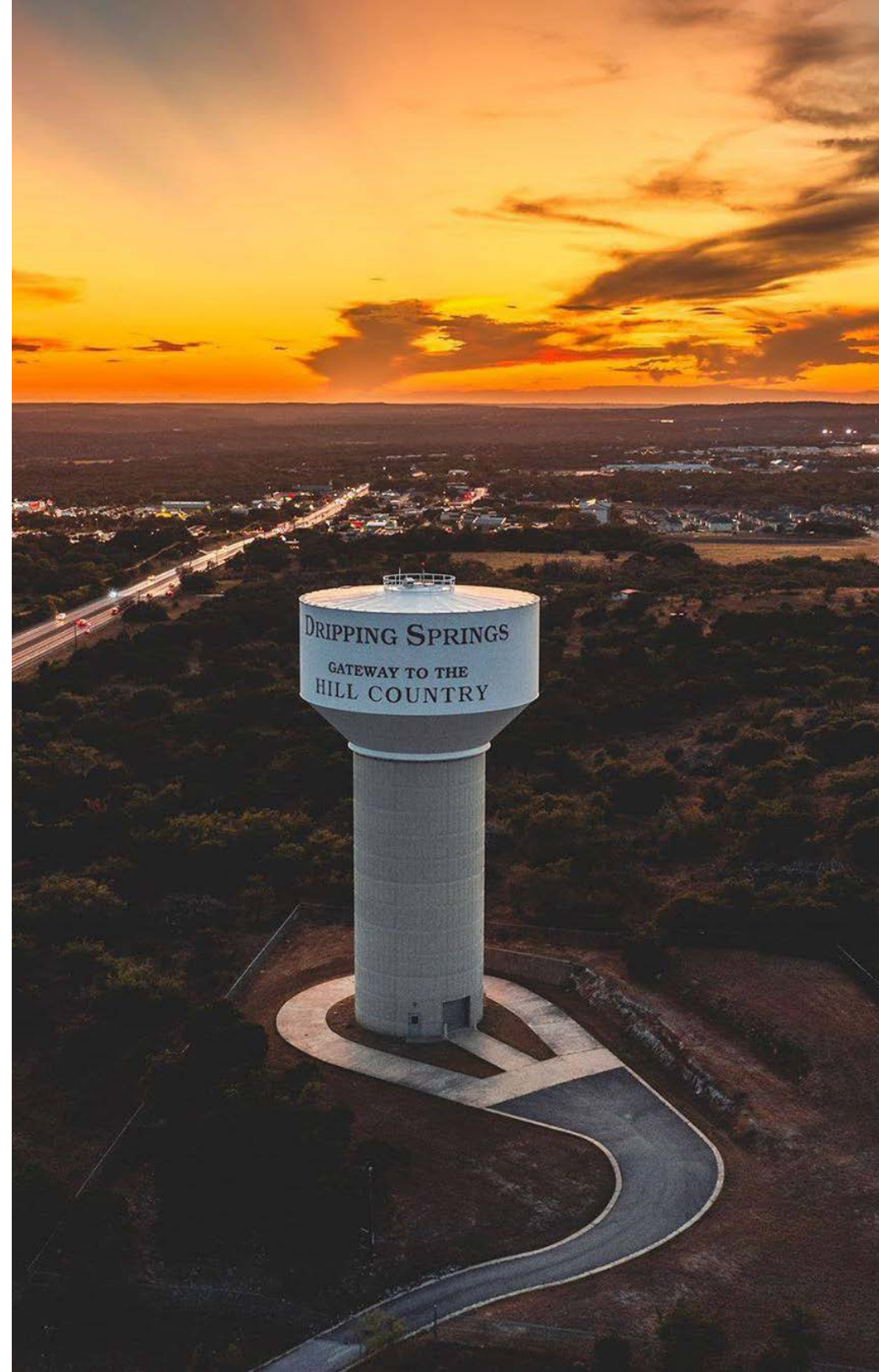
Historic Preservation

The Plan is an officially adopted policy document that establishes the goals for the future and provides direction for decisions affecting the use and development of land, preservation of open space, transportation systems, economic growth the expansion and maintenance of public facilities and services, and the relationship between land use patterns and fiscal policies.

This Plan is an advisory document that will guide the future evolution and changes in a community over the next 15-20 years. The Plan is a 'road map' for fostering a desirable and sustainable place to live, work, and visit. It establishes policies and strategies for advancing key community priorities, including land use and development, parks and open space, transportation, and sustainable infrastructure. This Plan sets the stage for more detailed planning through downtown and corridor plans, as well as other future small area plans, and development regulations.

The Plan will serve as a guide to policy makers, community members, property owners and developers to help them understand the vision of the community, predict what uses could occur both on and near their properties, set the expectations for the physical form of development, and make informed land-use decisions.

At the center of this Plan update is the opportunity for community members to re-evaluate the overall long-term community vision and policy direction for managing the built and natural environment in Dripping Springs. The update focuses on an analysis of key Plan Elements as defined by the citizens of Dripping Springs.



COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AUTHORITY

WHY IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPORTANT?

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 include but is not limited to;

- Provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities.
- Consist of a single plan or a coordinated set of plans organized by subject and geography.
- Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

As an advisory document, the City of Dripping Springs 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides the structure for future decisions made by the City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, and other boards, commissions, and committees that have an interest in the City of Dripping Springs. The Plan sets the framework for future land uses and infrastructure needs over time.

The City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission and other boards, commissions, and committees in Dripping Springs shall follow the guidance provided in this Plan to ensure the needs of the community are addressed over the next 15-20 years. The following highlights key considerations of what the Comprehensive Plan does and does not involve:

Provides a vision for future land use and guidance on how development should proceed in the City of Dripping Springs.

The Plan is NOT intended to establish legal zoning or review criteria for specific development proposals.

Provides overarching goals for economic development strategies for the community.

The Plan does NOT establish any formal economic development tool such as a tax incentive, tax credit, or rebate program.

Provides a framework for future revisions to the City Development Code.

The Plan does NOT provide the zoning code revisions. The code update is a follow up next step once the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted.

Provides guidance for property owners with respect to future land use in the City.

The Plan does NOT define site specific designs nor guarantee development proposals will be approved if it is not in the best interest of the community or is otherwise contrary to the goals of the Plan.

Provides guidance for future public infrastructure requirements such as utility and roadway enhancements and public amenities.

The Plan does NOT provide specific proposals for City improvements or improvements on any given parcel in the City.

Provides guidance for future mobility and access needs serving the City's urban arterial network and connections to neighborhoods and business districts in the City.

The Plan does NOT serve as an official document authorizing the construction or improvement of any road, trail, or other transportation facilities in the community.

Provides a general guide for the expansion and maintenance of utility infrastructure needs for the City.

The Plan does NOT serve as a detailed utility plan or infrastructure study.

COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

CHAPTER 2: VISIONING AND GOALS

The Visioning and Goals chapter shows the results of the public engagement process, and a breakdown of the community values and guiding principles. The Vision Statement serves as the basis for developing important guiding principles and subsequent goals, policies, and strategies.

CHAPTER 3: LAND USE

The Land Use chapter contains the mapping analysis and constraints, including the existing land use map, and future land use plan. It provides insight to the strategies for selecting opportunity areas following the study of existing neighborhoods and planned developments. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for managing future growth in a way that enhances the community character of Dripping Springs. The Future Land Use Map provides a roadmap for how to direct this growth while maintaining and enhancing the physical characteristics of the City.

CHAPTER 4: PLAN ELEMENTS

The Plan Elements support the Guiding Principles and help organize goals. The chapter breaks down each plan element by providing an overview, intent, and key considerations.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Strategies outlined in the Implementation Plan chapter respond to the goals, objectives and policies established by the Dripping Springs Comprehensive Plan. This section serves as a delivery framework and is intended as a guide for future decision making and programming.



APPENDIX ITEMS

A. Glossary of Terms

Definition of planning terms or programs mentioned throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Economic Analysis

Summary of the Dripping Springs housing market and overview of the demand and opportunities for residential development.

C. Community Context

Overview of the Existing Conditions of the City of Dripping Springs, and timeline of public engagement and community outreach.

D. Fiscal Impact Summary

Fiscal analysis based upon the preferred land use scenario in the Future Land Use plan.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY USE THIS PLAN?

CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

These bodies will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide long-term strategic planning for the city. It will help them consider proposals and ideas that come before them with respect to future development in the city. Both the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission will use the various recommendations to inform and guide other City plans and programs.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The various boards, commissions and committees in Dripping Springs will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide their ongoing oversight and to inform updates to the plans and procedures under their purview.

CITY STAFF

The City staff will use the Comprehensive Plan to guide their day-to-day functions, plan for future improvements and initiatives, and provide a framework for future development and regulatory code changes. The City staff will use the recommendations as a “guiding light” to shape future, more detailed plans and studies conducted by various entities to advance high priority and

ongoing planning efforts in the City.

DEVELOPERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Developers and property owners will use the Comprehensive Plan to understand how future public infrastructure reinvestments and redevelopments will advance over time. Property owners and local developers will acknowledge the Plan recommendations as they review their projects in coordination with the City on infrastructure needs collectively. Additional refinements will be required to help define individual project initiatives, necessary development agreements, and potential partnerships required to advance each initiative.

GENERAL PUBLIC

Residents of Dripping Springs will use the Comprehensive Plan to understand the long-term vision and policies for the City and the framework behind various City-led programs and initiatives to address the future development over the next several years.

RELEVANCE TO OTHER PLANS

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan establishes the vision for the community for the next 10+ years. It is the foundation for several documents that provide more detailed guidance on how Dripping Springs will evolve in the future. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan serves as an umbrella document over all documents within the City of Dripping Springs. In addition to the plans outlined in this section, the Plan guides other departments and functions including, but not limited to, water, police, fire, transportation, parks and recreation, and economic development.

The Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the previous 2016 Comprehensive Plan, and takes inspiration from its key elements in order to create a new vision, goals and implementation strategies going forwards.

Below is a list of plans referenced and reviewed as a part of the Comprehensive Plan process:

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2016)

The previous 2016 Comprehensive Plan set policy guidance related to the physical growth and economic development of Dripping Springs. The current Plan combines the relevant Plan elements from the previous 2016 Comprehensive Plan and merges them with updated Plan elements as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan process. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan replaces the previous Plan, including an update of the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and Implementation Guide.

CODE OF ORDINANCES

The City's Code of Ordinances was evaluated, and areas of recommended changes are referenced as strategies based on public and stakeholder input. An update to the Code of Ordinances is an important implementation strategy for achieving this plan's goals.

DRIPPING SPRINGS TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The Transportation Master Plan (TMP) serves as Dripping Springs' long-range Mobility Plan through the year 2040, covering both the City Limits and the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). It was prepared in response to rapid residential and commercial growth and increasing congestion, particularly along US 290 and RM 12, and forms the backbone of local and regional mobility. The TMP acts as a core implementation tool of the City's Comprehensive Plan, translating vision into a coordinated, phased, and multimodal transportation strategy that supports growth, protects character, and improves quality of life.

2014-2024 DRIPPING SPRINGS PARKS RECREATION OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Master Plan (2014-2024) established a 10-year vision and implementation framework for parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural open spaces within the City and ETJ. The plan identified trail and open space connectivity as a community priority, and provided guidance on preserving Dripping Springs' character, environment, and fiscal sustainability.

2025 DRIPPING SPRINGS PARKS RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

The City of Dripping Springs Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan is a long-range policy and investment plan that focuses on protecting natural resources, expanding park access, and providing recreational facilities and programs as the city grows. The Plan supports land-use strategies that balance growth with neighborhood-scale amenities and preservation of open space.

HAYS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The 2021 Hays County Transportation Plan Update is a long-range planning document that guides roadway and mobility improvements through 2045 to address rapid population growth, safety concerns, and connectivity needs while preserving the County's Hill Country character and environmental resources. The plan includes a countywide Thoroughfare Plan and serves as a flexible, updateable framework to prioritize transportation investments, improve regional mobility, and proactively manage growth while balancing community values and environmental stewardship.

HAYS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The Hays County Development Regulations establish a comprehensive legal and procedural framework governing land development in Hays County, and promote orderly growth while protecting public health, safety, water resources, and infrastructure. The regulations define approval authority, application processes, fees, timelines, and enforcement mechanisms. The document also details variance and appeal processes, administrative delegation, and long-term conservation tools.

PLAN PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan process was initiated in February 2022. The process involved an extensive community outreach and engagement process that included a review of past relevant plans and programs in the city, and a detailed assessment of current conditions to help identify community needs and priorities.

The public involvement process consisted of direct individual stakeholder/citizen interviews, monthly coordination with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), meetings with various agencies, utility providers and governmental departments, as well as public workshops. A complete discussion of the public involvement process can be found in the appendices.

The public involvement process validated the original 7 key plan elements that had been established by the City; however the hierarchy/importance of those 7 elements was reorganized and streamlined into the final 5 plan elements. Likewise, the process also provided the design team with a comprehensive understanding of the physical and fiscal opportunities and constraints in the City and County.

Concurrent to the public involvement process, the design team gained insight into the actual fabric of the City and County. In rethinking of the city as different types of “places” versus parcels or uses, the design team formulated development and preservation patterns throughout the City and County. A full discussion of the place types can be found in the appendices.

<i>Original 7 Key Elements</i>	<i>Final 5 Plan Elements</i>
Infrastructure	Infrastructure & Facilities
Parks & Recreation	Protecting Community Character
Historic Preservation	
Land Use & Character	
Transportation	Connectivity & Corridor Enhancement
Housing	Housing
Economic Development Strategy	Economic Development & Funding

Finally, the design team used the final 5 plan elements along with the reimagined place types of the City and County, to create an implementation plan that would usher in the changes identified by their analysis. While the overall process can generally be summarized in the linear graphic below, it is important to note that the planning process was very cyclical, regularly allowing inputs to reshape the overall outcome.

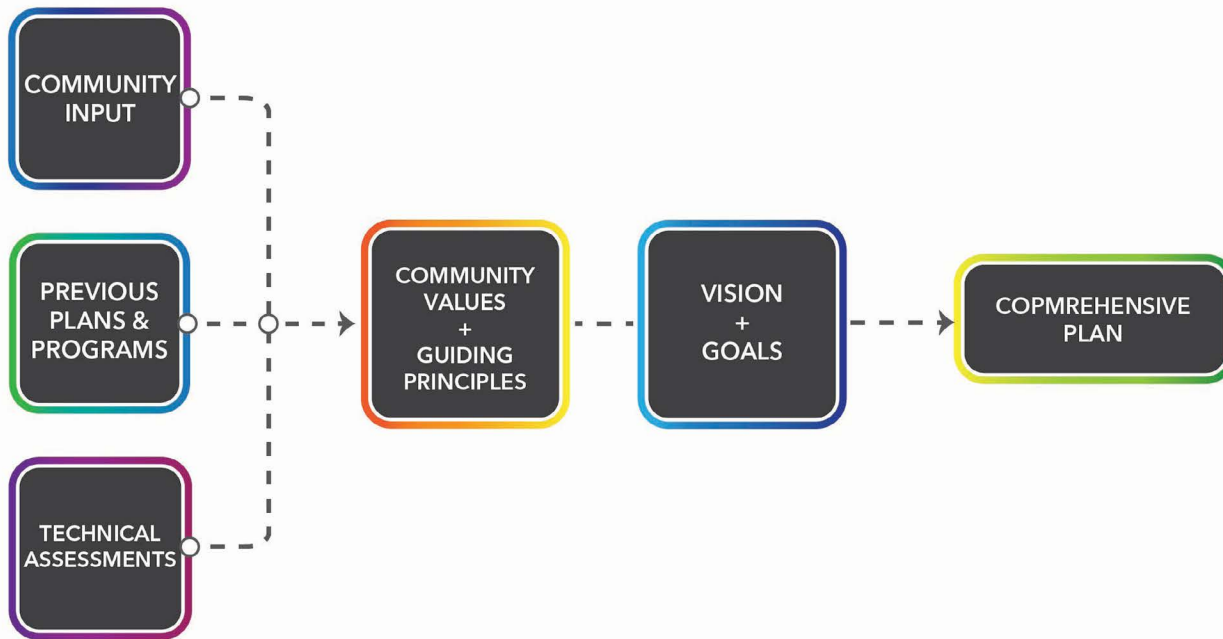


Figure 3. Comprehensive Plan Process

OVERALL TIMELINE

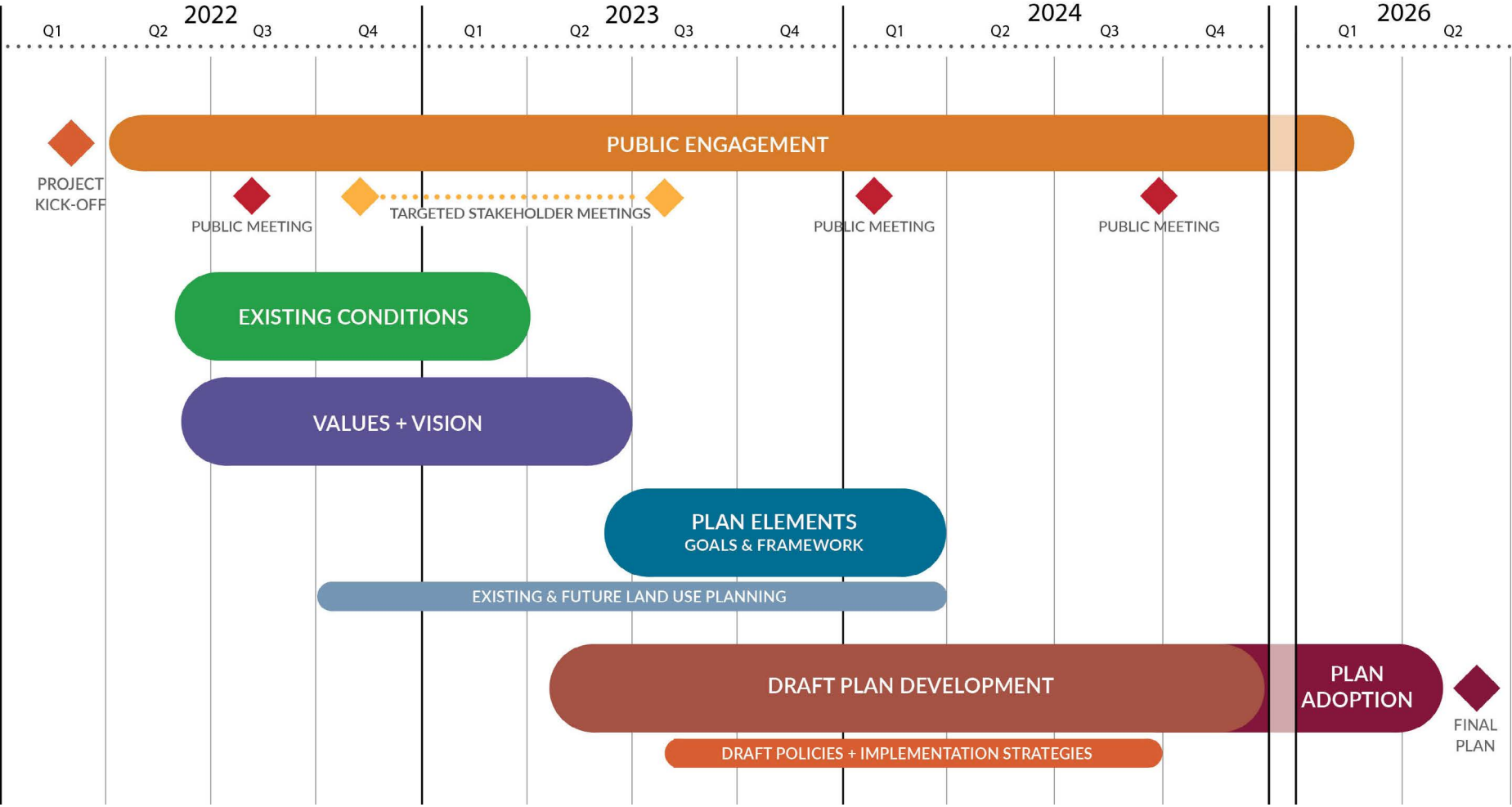


Figure 4. Comprehensive Plan Timeline

