



City of Tomball

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

**DRAFT** April 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Comprehensive Planning Process

A city's comprehensive plan is a long-range planning tool that is intended to be used by city staff, decision-makers, and citizens to guide the growth and physical development of a community for long periods of time. The state of Texas has established laws with regard to the way in which incorporated communities can ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens through a comprehensive plan. Tomball's Comprehensive Plan takes an implementation-focused approach by including measurable action items and metrics to track the progress of the Plan's recommendations.

## Legal Basis for Planning

State law gives municipalities the power to regulate the use of land, but only if such regulations are based on a plan. The authority of a city to create a comprehensive plan is rooted in Chapters 211, 212, and 213 of the Texas Local Government Code (TLGC).

Chapter 211 of the TLGC allows municipalities to adopt zoning, while Chapter 212 allows the governing body of a community to regulate subdivision development within the city limits, which varies depending upon the population of the community. It is important to note that a comprehensive plan is NOT a zoning ordinance but rather it is a tool to guide development, infrastructure, and land use decisions in the future. The comprehensive plan does, however, serve as a basis on which zoning decisions are made, as specified by Chapter 211 of the TLGC.

In Texas, cities are not required by state law to prepare nor maintain a comprehensive master plan, unlike some other states. However, Section 213 of the TLGC allows the governing body of a community to adopt a plan to encourage sound development decisions and promote public health, safety, and welfare. Texas cities can define the content and design of their plan, resulting in a long-range blueprint customized to meet their needs.



## Why Update the Comprehensive Plan?

When updating comprehensive plans it is essential to align them with evolving circumstances, incorporate new data, respond to changing community needs, and adapt to shifting priorities. Maintaining the currency of these plans ensures they retain their effectiveness in guiding development and fulfilling community objectives. The previous Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2019. Tomball has experienced a 16% increase in population between 2019 and 2022. Furthermore, the City has recently approved the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, along with the Water and Wastewater Impact Fee Update. The Comprehensive Plan Update is necessary to ensure alignment with the newly updated plans.

### Importance of Comprehensive Planning

- Ensure alignment with existing and ongoing plans and policies.
- Ensure strategic growth and development.
- Coordinate public and private investment.
- Involve local residents in the decision-making process.
- Ensure delivery of adequate public services to meet future population demands.
- Preserve and enhance the visual image and appearance of the community.
- Identify and prioritize capital improvements.



## Plan Components

01

### Community Snapshot

An analysis of the existing socioeconomic, demographic, and physical conditions to create a baseline for the development of the Plan.

02

### Vision and Guiding Principles

A vision statement encompassing the community's aspirations for Tomball's future. The vision extends to goals and guiding principles, which will direct the recommendations outlined in the Plan.

03

### Future Land Use Plan

A Future Land Use Map along with focus areas to guide where development should go and how growth will occur and be managed in Tomball.

04

### Transportation and Mobility

A Thoroughfare Plan including the proposed layout of streets based on the future land use pattern, traffic flow, and safety concerns.

05

### Economic Development

An assessment of the existing economic conditions and strategies to maintain and enhance the economic vitality of Tomball.

06

### Housing Assessment and Neighborhoods

An assessment of the existing housing stock, housing demand, and strategies for providing appropriate housing options to meet the needs of all community members.

07

### Recommendations and Implementation Plan

A list of action items related to each of the topics covered in the Plan to implement and monitor the recommendations of this Plan.





# CHAPTER 1

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# Community Snapshot

# CONTEXT

This Comprehensive Plan builds on Tomball's previous Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2019. The City has undergone notable transformations in its demographic and socioeconomic makeup, accompanied by a reevaluation of its future vision and priorities, prompting the need for this update.

This chapter provides an overview of the existing conditions in Tomball setting the foundation for the development of the different elements of the Plan. The community snapshot along with public engagement, market analysis, and future growth projects will guide the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Historic and Regional Context for Planning
- Planning Efforts Overview
- Demographic and Economic Update
- Existing Land Use
- Natural Features
- Opportunities and Constraints

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Tomball is located in Harris County, with the northern portion of the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) extending into Montgomery County. The City is part of the Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land metropolitan statistical area (Houston MSA).

State Highway 249 (SH 249) runs through the City connecting Tomball to Houston and College Station–Bryan. George Bush International Airport is located approximately 28.3 miles from Tomball. State Highway 99 (SH 99 or Grand Parkway) connects Tomball to New Caney to the east and Richmond to the south. SH 99 provides access to the major trade corridors of Interstate 45 (I-45), Interstate 69 (I-69), and Interstate 10 (I-10).

Beyond the region, Tomball is within approximately 150 to 225 miles of several other metropolitan areas in Texas, including Austin, San Antonio, and the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

Much of present day Tomball was given as a land grant to the heirs of William Hurd.

Drillers found oil just west of town.

Tomball City incorporated.

First hospital opened.

Tomball College, now called Lone Star College Tomball, opened.

Tomball Business & Technology Park opened.

1838

1907

1933

1935

1976

1987

1988

2009

2016

2022

The town, originally known as Peck, was renamed to **Tomball** in honor of Thomas Henry Ball - a prominent businessman and politician.

The original contract negotiated between Tomball and the Humble Oil and Refining Company (now Exxon Company, U.S.A.) provided free water and natural gas to Tomball residents for 90 years in exchange for drilling rights within the city limits.

Tomball adopted its home rule charter as a council-manager form of government.

First Comprehensive Plan adopted.

Tomball Business & Technology Park named a top industrial park in the U.S. by Business Facilities for a second consecutive year.





# PLANNING EFFORTS

Coordination with other planning efforts is crucial in developing an action-oriented and implementable plan. Planning efforts in Tomball since 2019 were reviewed to guide the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

## 2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The plan aimed to update and expand upon the Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2009. It set goals and guiding principles for public infrastructure improvements, land use, addressing mobility concerns, developing Old Town as an economic and cultural center, promoting economic development, and improving community facilities. The recommendations from the 2019 Comprehensive Plan were evaluated as part of this update to determine the progress achieved since plan adoption.

## 2023 WATER AND WASTEWATER IMPACT FEE UPDATE

This report documents Tomball's update of the water and wastewater impact fee land use assumptions and capital improvement plans that were previously updated in 2019. The impact fee update process included preparation of land use assumptions based on projected population growth for the next 10 years. According to this report, the population of Tomball is projected to grow at an annual average growth rate of 3.4% with the population reaching 14,245 in 2023. The future residential and non-residential development and infill developments identified in this report were used to inform the future land use plan illustrated in Chapter 3 of the Comprehensive Plan.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

The Parks, Recreation, and Trails System Master Plan, adopted in 2024, provides an action plan to develop a comprehensive and connected system of parks, recreation facilities, and trails with the goal to promote public health, social well-being, economic vitality, and enhancing quality of life. The plan also identifies potential funding sources for recommended park maintenance, renovation, and creation of new parks. Some of the key recommendations include improving Downtown parks and trails, creating design guidelines or standards for signage, and improved trail connections throughout the City.

## FY 2024 TO FY 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Strategic Plan outlines strategic initiatives and action strategies for improvements in Tomball. Action strategies relevant to this Comprehensive Plan Update include:

- Implement alley improvements in Downtown.
- Create a wayfinding program in Downtown.
- Implement components of the Comprehensive Plan (specifically improving the standards and connectedness of Uptown centers and the development of East/ West corridors including sidewalks and trails).
- Collaborate with the Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) on future annexations, growth, beautification, and infrastructure improvements.
- Consider adding trails along drainage ways with trailhead parking areas.
- Continue sidewalk program to connect neighborhoods to schools and parks.

## LIVABLE CENTERS DOWNTOWN PLAN

The Livable Centers Downtown Plan includes recommendations for enhancing transportation and land use in the downtown area. The plan aims to preserve and promote the unique sense of place in Tomball by focusing on the following objectives:

- **The Depot:** This area is envisioned as a central gathering space and cultural platform celebrating Tomball's history. It is designed to be an active multi-use event space and public park in the heart of Downtown.
- **Improving Streetscape and Pedestrian Linkages:** The plan recommends creating a hierarchy of streetscape enhancements and pedestrian pathways to define and connect the Main Street corridor, commercial zones, community and civic spaces, and residential neighborhoods. This aims to improve walkability and connectivity in Downtown Tomball.
- **Parking and Retail Loading:** The plan suggests developing a mix of clearly visible and accessible public parking options, including open lots and on-street parking, that are scaled to the downtown environment. This is intended to provide convenient access for pedestrians and visitors to nearby shops and businesses.

## ALLEY PEDESTRIAN ENHANCEMENTS PLAN

The City revitalized three alleys in Downtown Tomball with the goal of creating inviting spaces with public art, and improving store accessibility for pedestrians.

## 2021 MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Tomball Major Thoroughfare Plan, last updated in 2021, aimed to improve regional transportation and enhance connectivity within the City. State highways like SH 249 and SH 99 were crucial for moving large traffic volumes and providing more efficient access to local freeways and businesses. Major arterials such as Brown Road and Hufsmith Road were recommended to support these highways by accommodating high traffic volumes. Minor arterials will distribute traffic from major roads to collector roads and adjacent land uses, while collectors will facilitate traffic flow within local areas.

The plan identified three focus areas that required further examination.

- Focus Area 1 emphasized the need for additional connections in the northern part of Tomball to alleviate congestion on SH 249.
- Focus Area 2 highlighted the impact of construction on SH 249 without an underpass for Medical Complex Drive, hindering an east-west alternative route through the City.
- Focus Area 3 addressed an area outside the planning extent, primarily agricultural, requiring consideration of future land use to reflect the designated classification.

## 2040 HOUSTON-GALVESTON REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Houston-Galveston Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a plan that focuses on planning future regional roadways, transit routes, bike/pedestrian routes, and freight systems in the Houston MSA. Some of the key takeaways, as they relate to the City of Tomball, are that the areas north of SH 99 are likely to see population increases of between 2,500 – 5,000 and potentially a 500 – 2,500 increase in employment as the metro expands northward. By 2040, the Houston-Galveston region is on track to grow to 9.6 million people, an increase of 3.7 million people from 2010. To accommodate this growth, nearly 700 miles of high-capacity transit projects are identified in the long-range plan.



# DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC UPDATE

## POPULATION

Since 2010, the City of Tomball population has increased by 26.8%, adding more than 2,800 new residents. The 2022 population estimate for Tomball was 13,585 residents.

Figure 1. Population Growth

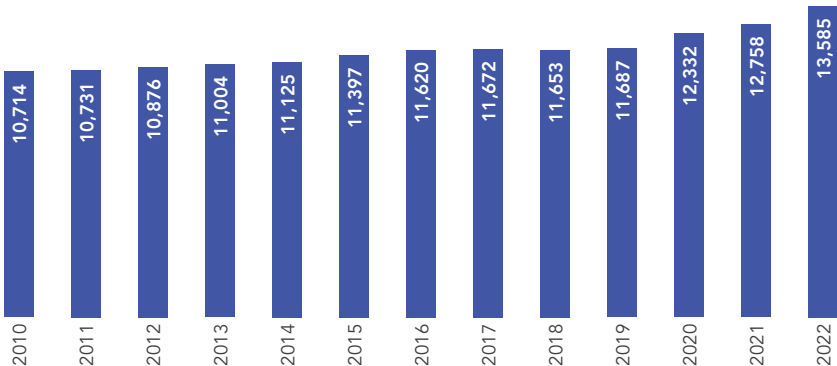
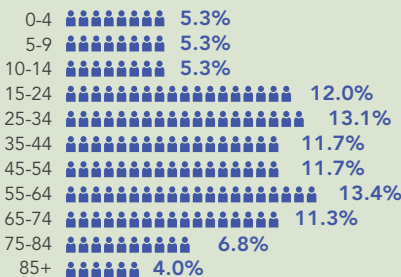


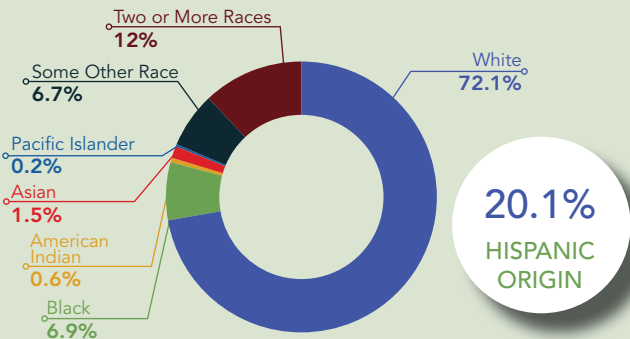
Figure 2. Key Demographics

## KEY AGE GROUPS



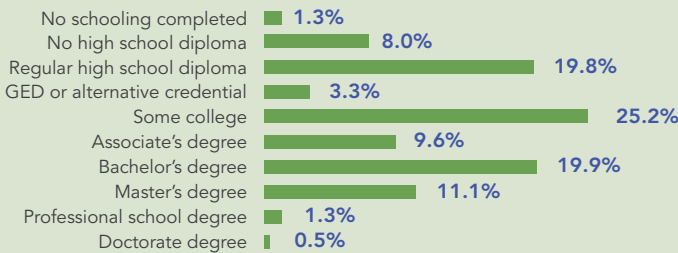
Source: ESRI 2023

## RACE AND ETHNICITY



Source: ESRI 2023

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (AGE 25+)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates

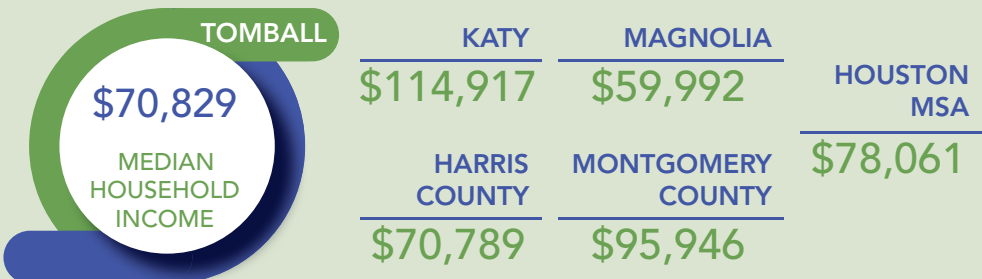
## COMMUTE PATTERNS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates

## WAGES AND INCOME

Income levels also drive housing prices, retail sales, and overall prosperity. In 2022, Tomball's median household income was \$70,829.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates

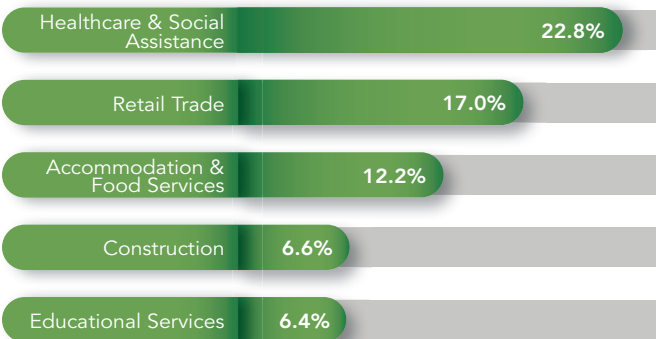
# TOMBALL-BASED EMPLOYMENT

Total employment at businesses located within Tomball has expanded over the past decade. In 2023, there were approximately 14,500 jobs at Tomball-based employers. Between 2010 and 2022, Tomball-based companies added 5,000 new jobs. Over the next 20 years, the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) projects Tomball’s employment base will expand by 21.8%.

# LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

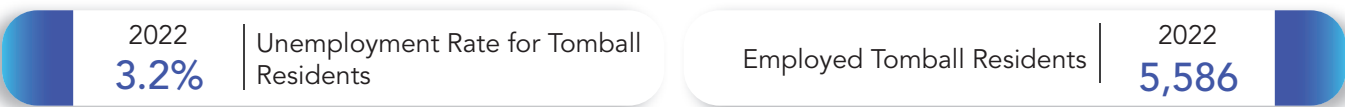
The number of Tomball residents in the labor force has increased over the past decade, but at a slower pace than population growth. The city’s unemployment rate for 2022 was 3.2%, significantly below the peak of 9.3% in 2012. Tomball’s economy and unemployment rate are linked to the greater Houston MSA economy. As regional economic activity expands or contracts, these effects ripple across the region. The city’s projected population growth indicates a strong supply of labor force participants over the next several decades.

**Figure 4.** Top Five Employment Levels by Business Establishment Location as a % of Total Location Employment (2023)



Source: ESRI 2023; Data Axle; TXP, Inc.

**Figure 5.** Unemployment Rate and Employment Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates

Detailed socioeconomic trends with regional comparisons are shown in Appendix A: Demographics.

**Figure 3.** Top Five Largest Employers



Source: Tomball Economic Development Corporation

# WHERE RESIDENTS WORK

About 4,000 residents commute outside the city each day for work. In a large metro area, it is not unusual for a significant number of people to commute for work. Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, about 85% of employees at Tomball-based businesses (or 13,000 workers) commute to the city each day for work. This indicates Tomball-based businesses can draw upon a regional labor market without overly relying on existing residents.

For 2022, 17.1% of Tomball residents worked from home. This is a larger percentage than the regional averages for Harris County and the Houston MSA. Remote or work-from-home jobs tend to be professional services jobs that pay high wages. However, more and more companies are asking employees to return to the office a few days a week.

# EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use provides context to identify key issues and opportunities and the basis for the development of the future land use plan. Map 2 on page 9 shows the existing land uses in Tomball and in the ETJ.

Agriculture/Rural land use dominates the majority of land in the city limits (30.2%) as well as the ETJ (52.6%). Rural landscapes often hold cultural significance and historical value as well as harbor diverse ecosystems. As we plan for the future of Tomball, preserving these landscapes is key for maintaining the small-town feel of Tomball.

The single-family residential land use is the most dominant residential use in Tomball, accounting for 23.5% of the total land within the city limits and ETJ combined. Multifamily residential only accounts for about 0.8% of the total land. A crucial aspect of the future land use plan will involve recognizing the necessity of boosting density and offering diverse housing options to accommodate population growth.

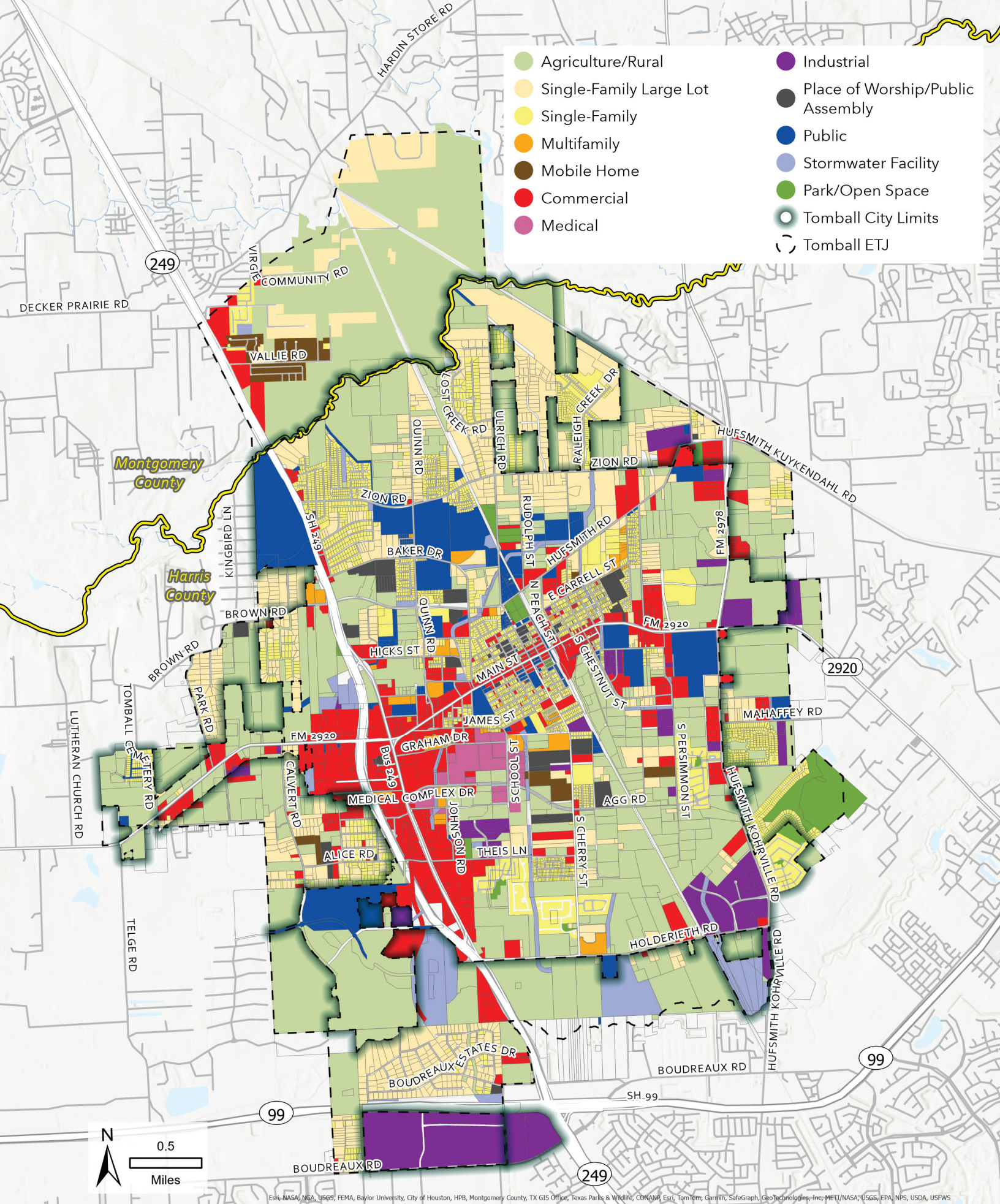
Embracing higher-density housing choices like townhouses, duplexes, and apartments can diversify housing availability across various price ranges, making Tomball an attractive destination for young families and professionals alike. Moreover, these options can play a significant role in encouraging Lone Star College graduates to remain within the Tomball community.

Commercial land uses form about 9.2% of the total land area, followed by Public (5.5%) and Industrial (4%). It is also important to note that Parks/Open spaces only account for about 1.2% of the total land area, presenting an opportunity for identifying more areas throughout the city where parks and open spaces can be located. According to the Parks, Recreation, and Trails System Master Plan, Tomball has 4.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents which is below the national average.

**Table 1.** Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	City Limits		ETJ		Total	
	Acreage	%	Acreage	%	Acreage	%
Agriculture/Rural	2,599.3	30.2%	2,783.8	52.6%	5,383.1	38.7%
Single-family Large Lot	1,024.4	11.9%	1,003.3	19.0%	2,027.7	14.6%
Single-family	970.2	11.3%	273.8	5.2%	1,244.0	8.9%
Multi-family	115.5	1.3%	0.4	0.0%	115.9	0.8%
Mobile Home	38.5	0.4%	83.6	1.6%	122.1	0.9%
Commercial	1,027.9	11.9%	246.1	4.6%	1,274.0	9.2%
Medical	119.2	1.4%	0.0	0.0%	119.2	0.9%
Industrial	542.4	6.3%	78.2	1.5%	620.6	4.5%
Place of Worship/Public Assembly	147.6	1.7%	20.9	0.4%	168.5	1.2%
Public	735.5	8.5%	34.4	0.6%	769.9	5.5%
Stormwater Facility	209.9	2.4%	197.0	3.7%	406.9	2.9%
Park/Open Space	55.3	0.6%	107.4	2.0%	162.7	1.2%
Right-of-way	1,021.3	11.9%	465.1	8.8%	1,486.4	10.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,607.00</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,294.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,901.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





Map 2. Existing Land Use



# NATURAL FEATURES

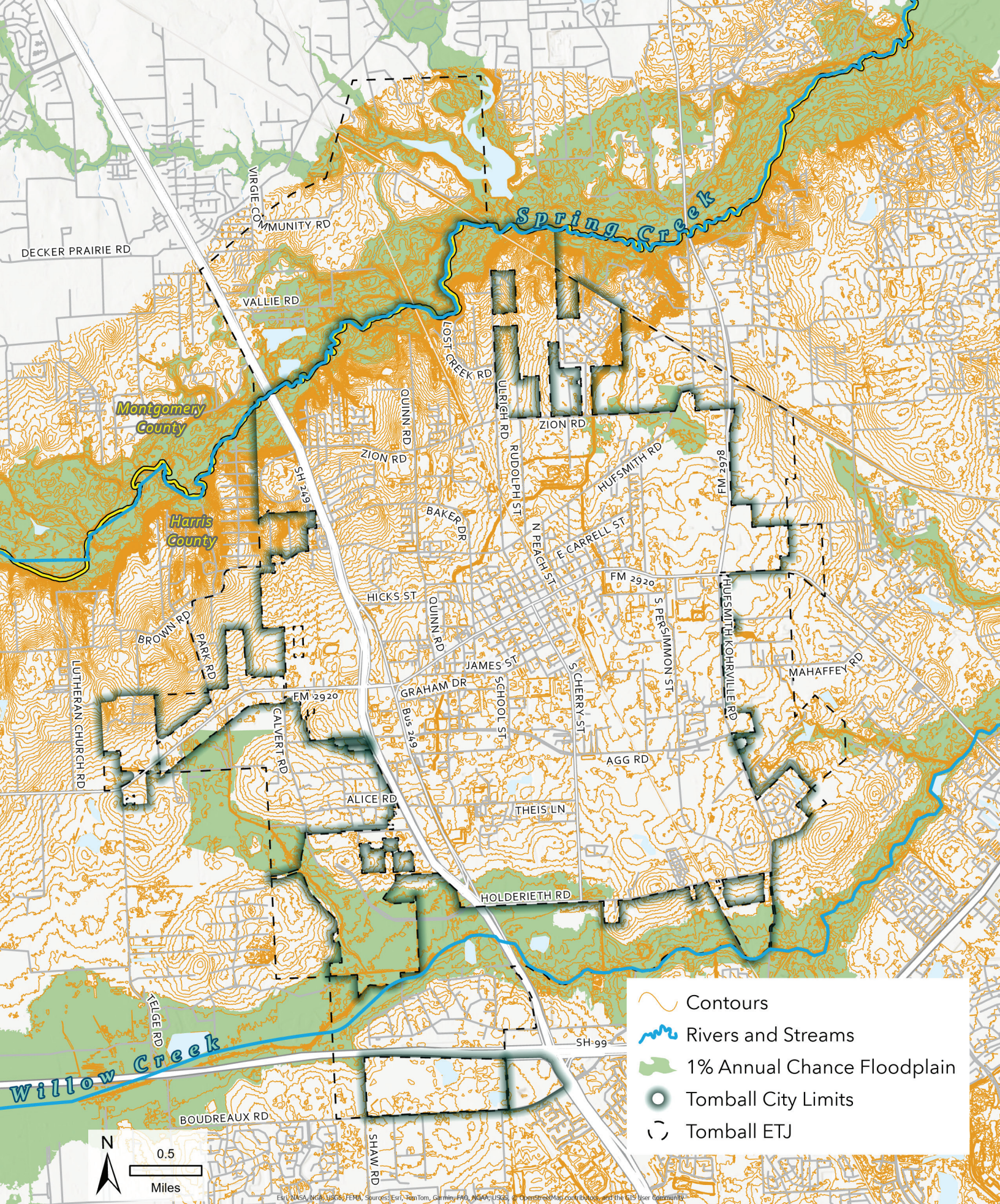
Preserving and responsibly managing natural resources is crucial for the sustainability and well-being of Tomball. The City of Tomball has access to various water resources. Spring Creek runs along the northern boundary of Tomball, and Willow Creek runs along the southern boundary. These provide access to recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. The City of Tomball Parks, Recreation, and Trail Master Plan recommends trail connections along Spring Creek to connect Spring Creek Park and Burroughs Park to Tomball. It also recommends trails along the CenterPoint Easement connecting the future Spring Creek Trail with Broussard Park Willow Creek on the south boundary.

The floodplain depicted in Map 3 on page 11, representing the areas with a 1% or greater annual chance of flooding, encompasses sections of both north and south Tomball, as well as a significant portion of the ETJ extending southward. Commercial and residential properties in these areas are at risk. It is advisable to limit development within these regions.

While most of the city is urbanized, there are pockets of greenspace throughout the city that offer recreational opportunities and scenic landscapes.









# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The existing conditions assessment helped identify opportunities for and constraints to development in Tomball. These opportunities and constraints are listed below.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Availability of Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped land parcels are dispersed throughout the city offering opportunities for potential future development. These areas should be developed as per the uses identified in the Future Land Use Map.

### Small-Town Charm and Feel

Located in the highly urbanized Houston MSA, Tomball offers the unique atmosphere of a small town with areas such as Old Town. The cultural heritage of the city should be preserved. The city can benefit from marketing and improving Old Town to attract visitors and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy its quaint ambiance.

### Existing and Proposed Active Transportation Infrastructure

Tomball's residents enjoy active lifestyles which are supported by the existing trails, sidewalks, and parks. The city continues to work on improving its pedestrian-bike infrastructure to offer improved recreational activities for its residents and visitors.

### Strong Education and Healthcare

Healthcare services and educational institutions employ about 29% of the total working population in Tomball with Tomball Independent School District (TISD), HCA Houston Healthcare Tomball, and Lone Star College being the biggest employers. These industries attract young families, graduates, and young professionals to the area while also offering ample opportunities for its residents to remain in the community in the form of jobs and high-quality education.

## CONSTRAINTS

### Limited Opportunity for New Development in Some Areas

The central core area is largely developed, indicating limited opportunities for new construction. Thus, emphasis should be placed on infill and redevelopment efforts for both residential and commercial uses.

### Difficulty Attracting Visitors

Visitor activity does not play a significant role in the Tomball economy. Out-of-town visitor spending and number of hotel rooms available have leveled off over the past few years. However, new catalytic projects and meeting space present opportunities to increase growth in this area.

### Lack of Affordable Housing Options

According to data from Redfin, the median sales price of a Tomball home has increased from \$155,000 in 2012 to \$395,000 in 2023. This far outpaces the growth in local income levels. Relative to other peer communities within the region, Tomball housing costs are more expensive than most communities. Likely related to increasing interest rates and building material costs, total home sales in Tomball have slowed from the peak in 2021.









## CHAPTER 2

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# **Vision & Guiding Principles**

# INTRODUCTION

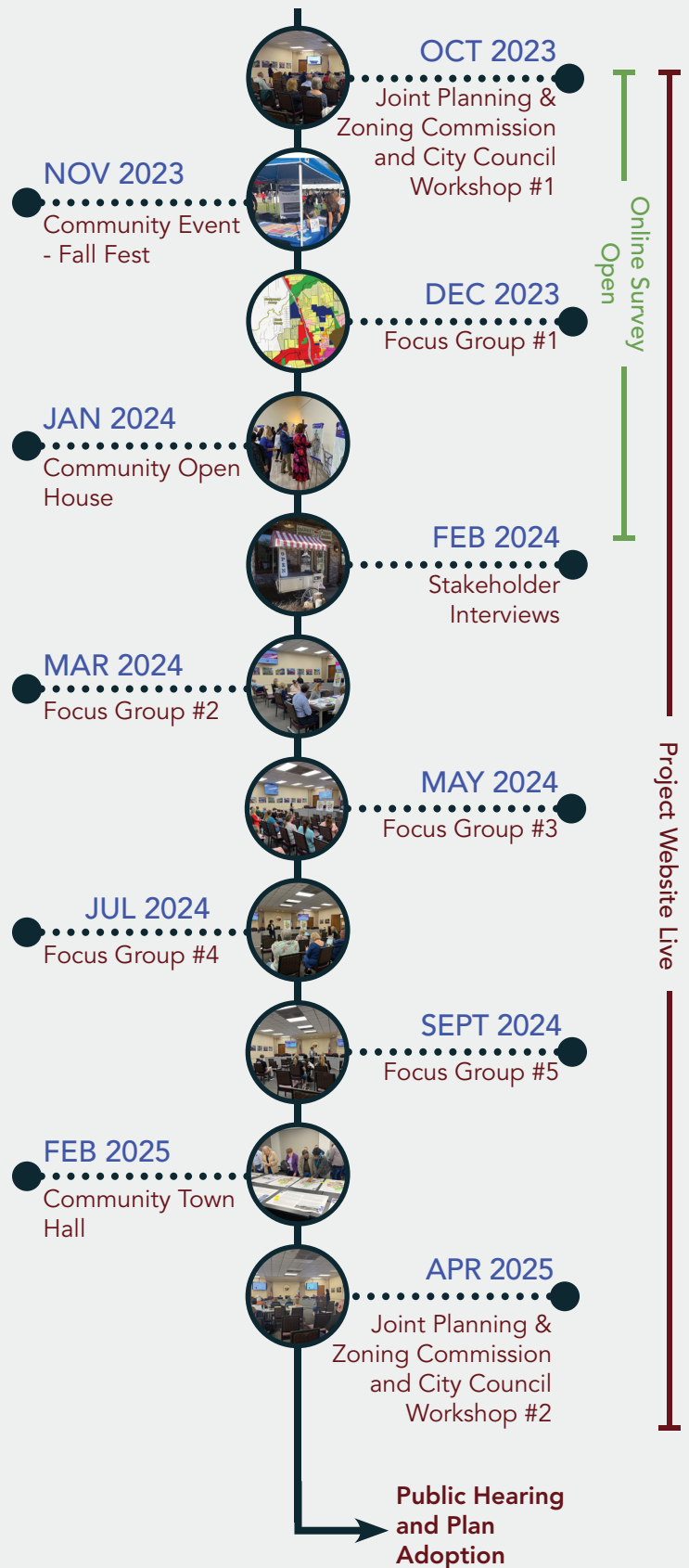
Engaging the community at every step of the process is crucial to ensure the success of any plan. The first step in this process is to provide a basic understanding of the comprehensive planning process and how community input will be utilized in the process. This chapter provides an overview of the comprehensive planning process and a description of how the community was engaged in the development of this Plan. Drawing from the assessment of current conditions and community feedback, vision and guiding principles were developed, which are further detailed in this chapter.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Comprehensive Plan Process Overview
- Public Engagement Summary
- Vision Statement
- Goals and Guiding Principles

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The public engagement process spanned 12 months and employed several engagement tools throughout the development of the Plan. Engagement methods included community events, community open houses, focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews, an online survey, website, and Joint Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council Workshops. Engagement activities conducted during the initial stages of the project, such as the open houses, online survey, and stakeholder interviews helped direct the vision, goals and guiding principles for this Plan. Other engagement tools, such as the joint workshops and focus group meetings, were conducted periodically throughout the process to guide Plan recommendations and provide feedback on Plan components. A summary of key takeaways from each engagement event was posted on the City website to ensure process transparency. A detailed summary of the feedback received is included in the Meeting Summaries.





# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is important to develop relationships with stakeholders and instill trust and support in the decision-making process. City staff, project partners, and the project team utilized various engagement methods and tools throughout the planning process to bring the right people together, educate them regarding the different elements of the Plan, and gather input in a structured, inclusive, and transparent method. The following public engagement methods and tools were used during the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

## FOCUS GROUP

The Focus Group included residents, business owners, and community members who are knowledgeable about the history of and have an interest in Tomball. The role of the Focus Group was to serve as advocates for the Plan and to guide Plan recommendations. The planning team held five meetings with the Focus Group.

## ONLINE SURVEY AND PROJECT WEBSITE

A project page was created on the City's website where the public could learn about the project and review project materials. An online survey was also used to gather input from the community about the future of Tomball. The survey asked questions regarding existing conditions in the area and the vision for what Tomball should look like in the future. The survey was available from October 31, 2023, to February 4, 2024.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Four stakeholder interview sessions were conducted on February 5, 2024, to gather feedback from community members and local organizations, Downtown business owners and residents, the business community, and the development community. The stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams. Each session included multiple participants and focused on discussions related to future land use, transportation, economic development, and Downtown preservation.



Focus Group #2, March 2024

## CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

The project team met with the City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission throughout the planning process to gather input from each group about the future of Tomball and provide periodic updates.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND OUTREACH EVENTS

Various community meetings and outreach events were held to allow the public to learn about the project and provide feedback on the Plan. Outreach events included attending existing community events such as the Depot Day Fall Fest on November 4, 2023. The project team also organized two community meetings which included informational and interactive elements. The purpose of these meetings and outreach events was to provide ample opportunities for the public to participate in the planning process and provide feedback about the Plan recommendations.

## COORDINATION WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS

The project team met with the Community Development Department, Public Works Department, and TEDC to gather feedback on specific topics and ensure cohesion with upcoming plans.



Community Open House, January 2024

## PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

### Most Desired Land Uses



### Greatest strengths

Small-town feel with access to great amenities



### Key Issues

- 01 Retaining the small-town feel as the community grows.
- 02 Lack of accessible and clearly marked parking in Downtown.
- 03 Industrial uses located south of Downtown detract from the Old Town ambiance.
- 04 Bringing people to the businesses on Main Street is a challenge.

### Key Opportunities

- Town-center type of development in synergy with Old Town.
- Potential for more mixed-use development such as boutique hotels, commercial kitchens.
- Expansion of farmers market.
- More awareness of what the EDC has to offer.

### Top Priorities

- Preserve green space.
- Create a vibrant Downtown and preserve the small-town atmosphere.
- Manage Tomball's growth in a smart way.
- Improve pedestrian safety and connectivity in Downtown.
- Market Tomball as a destination.
- Retain Lone Star College graduates and young professionals.
- Maintain and improve public water and wastewater infrastructure as the City grows.
- Provide transportation and job options for low-income communities.
- Provide high-quality and diverse housing options for young families and professionals.

### My Vision for Tomball is:

*"Keeping Tomball - Tomball."*

*"More walkability; more trails connecting parks and downtown and restaurants and coffee shops."*

*"Continued investment in infrastructure. Single family homes (starter homes). Community engagement through public spaces"*

*"I love Tomball and its small-town charm. As we navigate future challenges, particularly with anticipated growth and potential traffic congestion, preserving that warm, small-town atmosphere becomes crucial."*

# VISION, GOALS, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

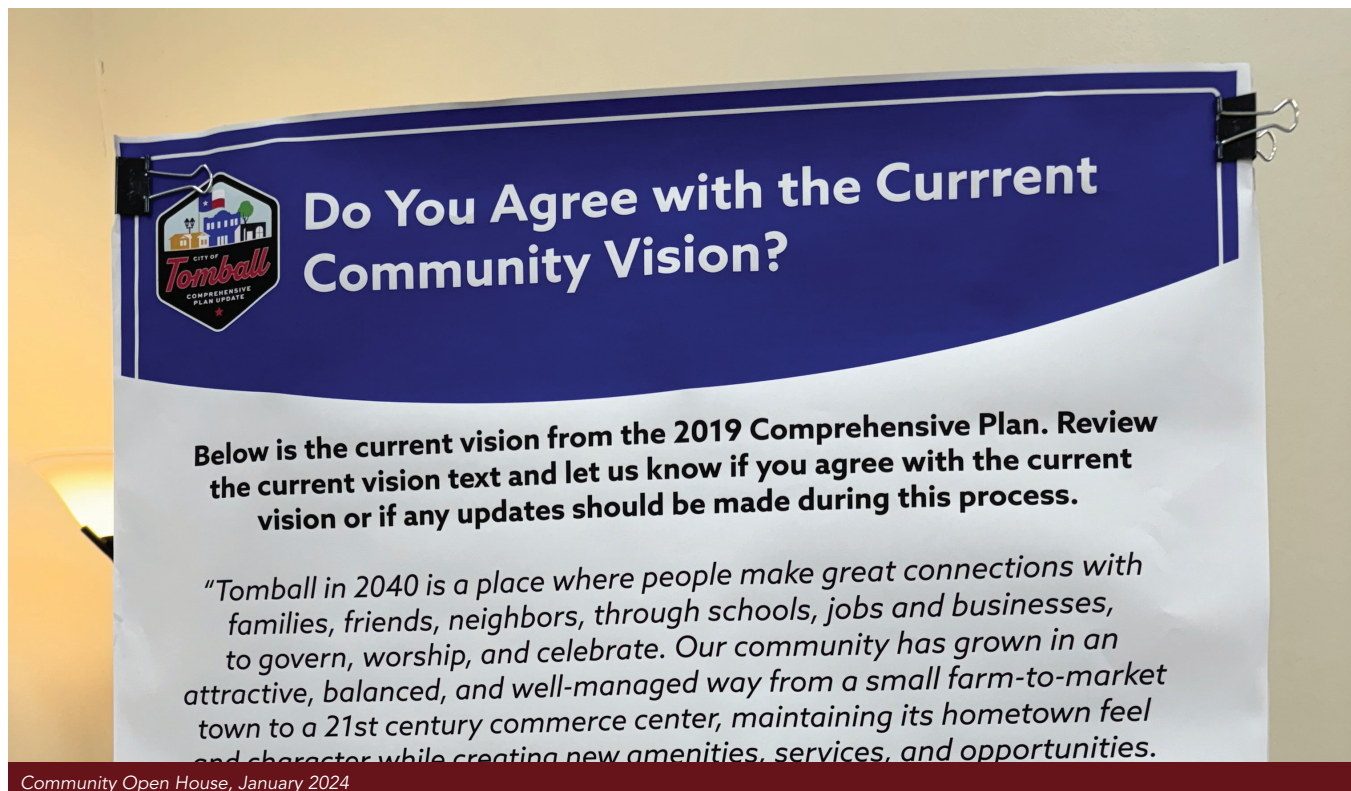
The vision statement sets the groundwork for future growth and development within the City of Tomball. A community-driven vision is crucial for the success of any plan. The vision is supported by the goals and guiding principles outlined in the following section. These guiding principles will serve as the basis for developing measurable action items to implement the Plan.

## COMMUNITY VISION

The vision was crafted during the 2019 comprehensive plan process with input from the community and stakeholders throughout the planning process. It mirrors the community's aspirations for Tomball's future. During this Comprehensive Plan Update, the current vision statement was assessed and revised to reflect changes in the community based on feedback received through the public engagement. The resulting vision statement has been shortened from the previous version and the terminology was changed to more accurately illustrate the vision.

## VISION STATEMENT

*Tomball is a vibrant destination that embraces its rich history, culture, and diversity while ensuring strategic growth and preserving its small-town charm.*



Community Open House, January 2024

## GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### Growth, Capacity, and Public Infrastructure

Systematically provide high-quality public infrastructure to support current and projected development in a quality, cost effective manner.



### Land Use and Development

Work with the development community to meet the needs of a growing community while protecting the valued small-town character of Tomball.



### Mobility

Strive to address mobility concerns by partnering with other jurisdictions as well as promoting alternative routes and modes across the community.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Continue to implement adopted City plans, specifically those related to water, wastewater, and drainage.
- Promote partnership opportunities for developing improved and resilient public infrastructure.
- Promote infill and redevelopment to take advantage of existing infrastructure.
- Monitor impacts of planned growth on water and wastewater capacity.
- Continue to invest in and provide high levels of public safety services to prioritize the City's commitment to ensuring public health, safety, and welfare.
- Consider public facilities as economic development investments for the future.
- Provide improved access to natural amenities.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Encourage new development, infill, and redevelopment.
- Promote development patterns that utilize existing infrastructure to its fullest capacity.
- Promote high-quality development that reflects Tomball's small-town feel.
- Encourage development with a mix of uses and walkable environment, both in Old Town and developing areas.
- Provide high-quality and diverse housing options for all.
- Preserve trees, green spaces, and natural areas.
- Create more entertainment and recreational opportunities for all age groups and income levels.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Improve transportation connectivity and access throughout the City.
- Address long-term pedestrian connectivity and parking needs in Downtown.
- Improve and plan active transportation infrastructure to promote active lifestyles through a pedestrian and bike trail network.
- Promote improved regional connectivity.
- Implement access management principles to protect the functional capacity of roadways.
- Reduce traffic congestion.





#### **Community Livability**

Continue to recognize Old Town as an important cultural center and historic asset of the community and enhance Tomball's sense of place and quality of life.

##### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Protect and encourage expansion of Old Town so that it grows as the City grows.
- Continue to promote events and festivals that attract people to the community and provide residents with opportunities for socializing and fellowship.
- Enhance the gateways and thoroughfares, complemented by wayfinding, to further enforce a sense of place upon arrival to Tomball.
- Prioritize new and improved recreation opportunities to meet the needs of a growing population.
- Promote beautification city-wide, including but not limited to, alley and gateway enhancements.



#### **Economic Development**

Identify areas of reinvestment and re-imagining so that all parts of Tomball contribute to a prosperous future.

##### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- Create a vibrant and welcoming Downtown while preserving its historic character.
- Promote and market Old Town as an entertainment destination for neighboring communities.
- Attract compatible retail development to Downtown and other growing areas as needed.
- Improve job opportunities and workforce training for Tomball residents.
- Encourage economic development and investment in the community and local, diverse businesses.
- Strengthen Tomball as a regional and local economic hub.
- Promote high-quality mixed-use development that is consistent with the existing character of the City.



Community Open House, January 2024





## CHAPTER 3

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# **Future Land Use**

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed description of the proposed Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and categories that will guide land use, budgeting, and development decisions as Tomball continues to grow. The FLUM is developed using the analysis of existing conditions presented in Chapter 1, community vision and goals outlined in Chapter 2, and assessment of economic trends and conditions presented in Chapter 5.

The primary purpose of the FLUM is to facilitate responsible and strategic growth, while simultaneously preserving the distinctive character of the City and enhancing overall quality of life. The arrangement of land use plays a significant role in influencing various functions within the City, including connectivity and mobility, access to recreational spaces, public health and safety, and availability of essential services. These interrelated factors collectively contribute to the establishment of a high quality of life, which is essential for enabling residents to age in place comfortably and for attracting young families to the area.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Future Land Use Map
- Future Land Use Category Descriptions
- Old Town Development
- Focus Areas
- Population Projections and Growth Scenarios

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Most Desired Land Uses



## Favorite Developments in Tomball



## Priorities for Old Town



## Other Comments





# FUTURE LAND USE

## FUTURE LAND USE VS ZONING

The FLUM is different from the zoning map in that it does not directly affect the regulation of land within the city limits or the ETJ. Rather, it should be seen as a guiding document for determining appropriate land uses and development types. It should be used by the City to guide decisions on proposed zoning and development standards. The following table shows a side-by-side comparison of the purposes, uses, and considerations of the FLUM and the zoning map.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP		ZONING MAP	
Purposes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Outlook for the future use of land and the character of development in the community.</li><li>▪ Macro-level, general development plan.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Basis for applying unique land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the City.</li><li>▪ Micro-level, site-specific focus.</li></ul>	
Uses			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Guidance for City zoning and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.).</li><li>▪ Baseline for monitoring the consistency of actions and decisions with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Regulating development as it is proposed, or as sites are proposed for the future (by the owner or the City) with appropriate zoning.</li></ul>	
Inputs and Considerations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Inventory of existing land uses in the City.</li><li>▪ Developing better area character and identity as a core planning focus along with basic land uses.</li><li>▪ The map includes a notation required by Texas Local Government Code Section 213.005: "A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries".</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ FLUM is referred to for general guidance.</li><li>▪ Other community objectives, such as economic development, redevelopment, flood prevention, etc.</li><li>▪ Zoning decisions should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.</li></ul>	

# FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND CATEGORIES

The FLUM includes proposed land uses for both the city limits and the ETJ. The proposed FLUM contains 12 land use categories. The following pages provide descriptions of the purpose and nature of each land use category, including suitable land uses, relevant factors to consider, and the recommended levels of density, intensity, and scale of development associated with each category.

## Intent and Character

This subsection provides a general description of the intent and intended character of development.

## Appropriate Land Use

This subsection provides guidance on the primary and, in many cases, secondary uses which may be appropriate in certain areas of the City and to update zoning district regulations.

## Considerations

This subsection provides guidance on proposed locations and development qualifiers which may be appropriate during zoning requests, development approvals, as well as during subsequent updates to the City's regulations.

## Compatible Zoning Districts

The compatible zoning districts provide guidance on which zoning districts are most compatible with each land use category based on typical or desired land uses within the district and similar development patterns. This list should not be viewed as exclusive and context of the area should be taken into consideration when making zoning decisions.

## Density, Intensity, and Scale

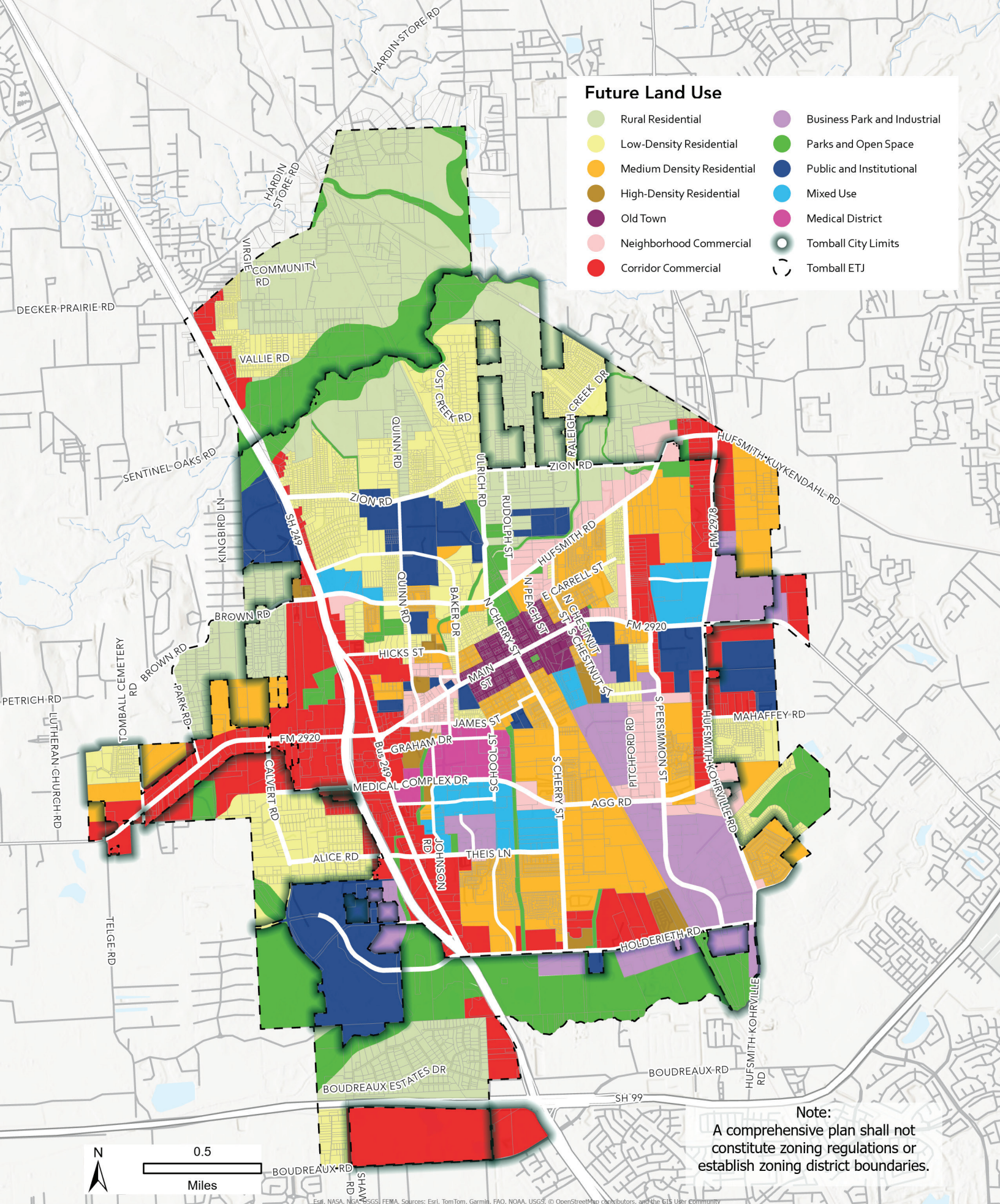
The recommended density, intensity (i.e., lot coverage), and scale for development in each land use category are located beneath the visual representations. Density is represented as dwelling units per acre (DUA) and should be referenced when considering land use decisions with new or redeveloped housing components. Intensity and scale should be considered based on a proposal's relationship to nearby residences and structures. For example, if immediately adjacent to a neighborhood, consideration may be given to limiting the scale of non-residential structures. Scale is referenced in stories, with one story being approximately 12 to 14 feet in height.

Density	Scale
The density for each category is identified for the individual district.	The number of stories appropriate is identified for each land use category.
Intensity	
Low: 0-50% lot coverage Medium: 50-75% lot coverage High: 75-100% lot coverage	

**Table 2.** Future Land Use

Land Use Category	City Limits		ETJ		Total	
	Acreage	%	Acreage	%	Acreage	%
Rural Residential	746	8.7%	1,899	35.7%	2,645	19.0%
Low-Density Residential	1,245	14.5%	704	13.2%	1,949	14.0%
Medium-Density Residential	1,494	17.4%	333	6.3%	1,827	13.1%
High-Density Residential	132	1.5%	0	0.0%	132	1.0%
Old Town	206	2.4%	0	0.0%	206	1.5%
Mixed Use	362	4.2%	0	0.0%	362	2.6%
Neighborhood Commercial	481	5.6%	62	1.2%	543	3.9%
Corridor Commercial	1,670	19.4%	570	10.7%	2,240	16.1%
Medical District	169	2.0%	0	0.0%	169	1.2%
Business Park and Industrial	655	7.6%	220	4.1%	875	6.3%
Public and Institutional	952	11.1%	125	2.4%	1,077	7.7%
Parks and Open Spaces	495	5.8%	1,401	26.4%	1,896	13.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,607</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5,314</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13,921</b>	<b>100.0%</b>







## Rural Residential

### Intent and Character

The Rural Residential land use category is intended to preserve the rural residential environment and support complementary uses such as mature woodlands, pastures, ranching, etc. This land use category includes large-lot single-family detached homes with large front yard and side yard setbacks. The homes in this category are generally farther apart than homes in Low-Density or Medium-Density Residential uses. This land use category should be buffered from higher intensity uses by Low-Density and Medium-Density uses.

### Appropriate Land Use

Single-family detached homes, agricultural enterprises, parks and green space, accessory dwelling units, home-based professions

### Considerations

- New non-residential development is appropriate where it is designed to reflect the rural character.
- Consider using aggregate measures for housing density to allow for the clustering of housing and the preservation of open space.

Compatible Zoning Districts: AG, SF-20

Density	Intensity	Scale
1-3 DUA	Low	1-2 Stories



Rural Residential, Tomball, TX



Rural Residential, Tomball, TX

## Low-Density Residential

### Intent and Character

The Low-Density Residential land use category includes suburban-style single-family detached homes in a traditional neighborhood pattern. Non-residential uses that support the residential development, such as parks, recreation facilities, and schools, may be appropriate in the area.

### Appropriate Land Use

Single-family detached homes, parks and green spaces, schools, public facilities, accessory dwelling units

### Considerations

- Stormwater detention should be integrated into the community to act as an amenity.
- Subdivisions should ensure connections to surrounding areas through enhanced sidewalks or multi-use sidepaths.

Compatible Zoning Districts: SF-20, SF-9, SF-7.5

Density	Intensity	Scale
3-6 DUA	Low	1-2 Stories



Single-Family Home, Tomball, TX



Single-Family Home, Tomball, TX

# Medium-Density Residential

## Intent and Character

The Medium-Density Residential land use category includes "Missing Middle" housing with varying densities such as duplexes and townhomes. This land use category is intended to promote housing diversity and affordability to serve a range of local employment types, income levels, and age brackets. Non-residential uses that support the residential development, such as parks, recreation facilities, and schools, may be appropriate in the area. This category can serve as a transition between lower-density and higher-density residential uses as well as commercial uses.

## Appropriate Land Use

Duplexes, quadplexes, single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes, patio homes, parks and green spaces, schools, public facilities

## Considerations

- New Medium-Density Residential development should be integrated into or complemented by the surrounding development.
- Non-residential mixed uses should be allowed provided they are part of a planned unit development and do not constitute more than 25% of the development.
- Medium Density Residential should be used as a buffer between single-family development and more intense uses.

Compatible Zoning Districts: SF-7.5, SF-6, D

Density	Intensity	Scale
6-12 DUA	Medium	1-3 Stories



Townhomes, Dallas, TX

# High-Density Residential

## Intent and Character

The High-Density Residential land use category is intended to provide multifamily housing with a varied density range based on location and context of development. This category can serve as transition between lower-density residential and commercial uses.

## Appropriate Land Use

Multifamily apartments and condominiums, parks and green spaces, schools, public facilities

## Considerations

- New High-Density Residential development should be integrated into or complemented by the surrounding development.
- Nonresidential mixed uses should be allowed provided they are part of a planned unit development and do not constitute more than 25% of the development.
- High-Density Residential should be used as a buffer between lower density residential development and more intense uses.

Compatible Zoning Districts: D, MF

Density	Intensity	Scale
12-20 DUA (Garden Style Apartments); 20-30 DUA (Modern/ Mixed Use Style Apartments)	Medium to High	3-5 Stories



Apartments, Richardson, TX



Apartments, Kyle, TX



## Old Town

### Intent and Character

The Old Town land use category is intended to preserve the historic charm and character of Downtown Tomball while providing diverse uses. Pedestrian experience should be prioritized in this area elevated by public spaces, active streets, engaging storefronts, and wayfinding elements. Old Town may consist of a mix of uses including residential, commercial, public and open space consistent with the existing character of the area.

### Appropriate Land Use

Single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes, patio homes, duplexes, quadplexes, patio homes, parks and green spaces, office, retail, entertainment, restaurants, and public facilities

(Secondary uses include bed and breakfast lodging, live-work buildings, places of assembly or event venues and home professions)

### Considerations

- Old Town development should encourage and be supported by on-street parking or public parking lots.
- New development should encourage building to the street at a pedestrian scale, with no parking between the front building facade on the street.
- Pedestrian enhancements such as wide sidewalks, pedestrian furnishings, and street trees should be emphasized.
- New development should be in synergy with the character of adjacent existing development to maintain the feel and historic character of Old Town.

#### Compatible Zoning Districts: OTMU

Density	Intensity	Scale
5-12 DUA	Medium	1-4 Stories



Old Town, Tomball, TX



Old Town, Tomball, TX

## Mixed Use

### Intent and Character

The Mixed Use District is intended to provide a mix of residential and non-residential uses to locate housing closer to jobs and services, ideally within walking distance. Similar to Old Town, pedestrian and active transportation should be prioritized in these areas to provide convenient access to destinations.

### Appropriate Land Use

Single-family attached homes, patio homes, duplexes, quadplexes, multifamily apartments and condominiums (if located adjacent to appropriate uses) parks and green spaces, office, retail, entertainment, restaurants, and public facilities

(Secondary uses include bed and breakfast lodging, live-work buildings, places of assembly or event venues and home professions)

### Considerations

- New development should encourage building to the street at a pedestrian scale, with no parking between the front building facade on the street.
- Pedestrian enhancements such as wide sidewalks, pedestrian furnishings, and street trees should be emphasized.
- New development should be in synergy with the character of adjacent areas.

#### Compatible Zoning Districts: NR, GR, O, D, SF-6, MF

Density	Intensity	Scale
5-20 DUA	Medium	3-6+ Stories



Mixed Use, Woodlands, TX



Mixed Use, Austin, TX

## Neighborhood Commercial

### Intent and Character

The Neighborhood Commercial future land use category is intended for commercial uses that are developed with the appropriate context, scale and design to complement residential development. These areas are intended to be accessible by both vehicles and pedestrians. This land use category should serve as a transition between lower intensity residential development and higher intensity commercial and industrial development.

### Appropriate Land Use

Retail, hotels, restaurants, personal services, offices

### Considerations

- Neighborhood commercial development should be located adjacent to an intersection of a collector street or greater functional classification.
- Neighborhood commercial could be appropriate as a stand alone development or as part of a mixed use planned unit development.

Compatible Zoning Districts: NR, GR, O

Density	Intensity	Scale
None	Medium	1-3 Stories



Neighborhood Commercial, Mandeville, LA



Neighborhood Commercial, Dallas, TX

## Corridor Commercial

### Intent and Character

The Corridor Commercial land use category is intended for predominantly nonresidential uses along high-traffic, regionally serving thoroughfares. The land uses are typically comprised of varying lot sizes and intensities predominantly serving the automobile. While these areas will always be auto-oriented, there is opportunity to improve bicycle/ pedestrian accommodations and to create a pleasing environment which leaves a lasting impression on residents and passers-by.

### Appropriate Land Use

Retail, hotels, restaurants, personal services, offices

### Considerations

- Development should gain primary access from an arterial street.
- Pedestrian enhancements should be a focus with comfort and safety taking priority.
- New development should include improved standards for building form and architecture, buffering, landscaping, and signage.

Compatible Zoning Districts: NR, GR, O, C

Density	Intensity	Scale
N/A	High	3-6+ Stories



Strip Retail, Lufkin, TX



Hotel, Bellmead, TX



## Medical District

### Intent and Character

The Medical District future land use category is intended to further capitalize on a unique, regionally serving area of Tomball. The HCA Houston Tomball provides a significant physical and economic footprint in the community. This area is intended to provide an emphasis on healthcare and supporting services.

### Appropriate Land Use

Hospitals, clinic, offices, lodging, long-term care, retail, and restaurants

(Secondary uses include private gathering spaces, local utility services, government facilities, and transportation uses)

### Considerations

- New development should allow for a variety of uses to create a self-sufficient campus.
- Active transportation connections to Old Town and Transitional Residential areas should be encouraged.
- Open space with a pedestrian focus should be a prominent component of the district.

## Business Park and Industrial

### Intent and Character

The Business Park and Industrial future land use category is intended to create employment opportunities. This area is intended to be located near adequate thoroughfares which provide convenient access for vehicular traffic including freight. These areas may require more intensive screening and buffering from surrounding development.

### Appropriate Land Use

Administrative, wholesaling, manufacturing (with no outdoor activity if located adjacent to residential uses), indoor warehouse, industrial business park, retail, office, manufacturing (with indoor or outdoor activity if located adjacent to higher-intensity commercial uses or where appropriate), warehouse/storage, industrial business park

### Considerations

- New development should include landscape buffers between any property that is a non-business park and industrial use.
- Outdoor storage should be designed in a manner that screens materials and equipment from public rights-of-way.
- New business park and industrial developments should be designed in a manner which orients loading docks and bays away from the front property line or public rights-of-way.

Compatible Zoning Districts: NR, GR, O

#### Density

None

#### Intensity

High

#### Scale

3-6+ Stories



Medical District, Tomball, TX



Medical District, Tomball, TX

Compatible Zoning Districts: O, C, LI

#### Density

None

#### Intensity

Low

#### Scale

1-3 Stories



Industrial Development, Tomball, TX

## Public and Institutional



### Intent and Character

The Public and Institutional future land use category is intended for areas that are for public and semi-public uses such as schools, government facilities and services, etc. Uses and buildings do not have dominant character; however, they should embody the character of the broader area (i.e., rural, suburban, or urban). Public and institutional buildings could be integrated or segregated from the abutting neighborhood fabric.

### Appropriate Land Use

Public facilities, government offices, schools

### Considerations

- New public and institutional should be located along a collector street or greater functional classification.
- New public and institutional civic uses should demonstrate a high standard of quality, including, building form, architecture, materials, landscaping, and signage.

Compatible Zoning Districts: All Districts

Density	Intensity	Scale
N/A	Low to Medium	1-3 Stories



Tomball Fire Department, Tomball, TX



Tomball High School, Tomball, TX

## Parks and Open Spaces



### Intent and Character

The Parks and Open Space future land use category is defined by its connection to natural, infrastructure, or recreation-related purposes that limit the development potential. This includes places dominated by floodplains, flood control and stormwater facilities, both passive and active recreation areas, and areas of natural interest. This type of land use category is located throughout a community, but strategic consideration should be given to providing it in relative proximity to residential areas to promote it as a community amenity.

### Appropriate Land Use

Active or passive recreation, playgrounds, trails

### Considerations

- Any development, public or private within this designation, should protect sensitive natural resources (e.g., stream corridors, floodplains, wetlands).
- New parks should be located along streets designated as a collector street or greater functional classification.

Compatible Zoning Districts: All Districts

Density	Intensity	Scale
N/A	N/A	N/A



Park, Tomball, TX



Park, Tomball, TX



The Old Town is roughly bounded by Baker Drive on the west, North Willow Street on the east, Epps Street on the north, and Tyler Street on the south. It houses a mix of uses, pedestrian infrastructure, and outdoor recreation. The boundary delineated in the map below is intended to guide development efforts within the Old Town area. As the areas within the core continue to grow and expand, this boundary might change. It should also be noted that this boundary is not the same as the Old Town Mixed Use Zoning District and is not regulatory in nature. The boundary was delineated to concentrate improvement efforts in the area to promote economic vitality, preserve community heritage, enhance social cohesion, and improve overall quality of life. A vibrant downtown will attract visitors, tourists, and businesses as well as provide recreational areas for residents of Tomball.

**Old Town Tomball**

Stovall Memorial Complex

Tomball Railroad Depot Plaza

Tomball Intermediate School

Legend:

- Proposed Wayfinding and Branding Elements**
  - Old Town District Sign
  - Parking Direction Sign
  - Public Parking Sign
  - Wayfinding Signage
- Existing Pedestrian Linkages**
  - Sidewalk
- Proposed Pedestrian Linkages**
  - Proposed Alley
  - Proposed Crosswalk
  - Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Bike Route**
  - FM 2920 Bike Route

Scale: 0.1 Miles

Map Sources: Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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## URBAN FORM

Small downtowns, such as Old Town Tomball, benefit from compact building layouts that promote walkability and accessibility to encourage pedestrian movement. It is ideal to have consistent building coverage reducing the gaps between parcels as much as possible. Downtown areas should have minimal setbacks between sidewalks and buildings to ensure maximum pedestrian interaction with adjacent buildings while using the sidewalk. The area should include adequate street furniture and lighting to make the area feel safe and comfortable for pedestrians. Many of these elements are already present in Old Town Tomball today.

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Maintaining the distinctive historic essence of the Old Town emerged as a consistent focal point across all public engagement methods utilized during the formulation of this Plan. Most of the historic properties in Tomball are concentrated within the Old Town area. The City of Tomball can adopt policies to ensure continued historic preservation. These policies are discussed in Chapter 7.

## DESTINATIONS AND LINKAGES

Old Town offers residents and visitors several destinations such as restaurants and bars, parks, boutiques, and historic attractions. While these destinations remain popular, there has been a significant turnover in properties. The City of Tomball along with Tomball Economic Development Corporation can leverage economic incentives to empower existing business owners as well as attract new businesses to the area.

Community members value being able to access these destinations on foot and bicycle. The City plans to continue improvements and redevelop existing alleys. While Old Town is generally walkable, there is limited bicycle and ADA-accessible infrastructure in the area. In addition, there is limited connectivity between the Old Town and other local and regional attractions such as Spring Creek Park. Map 6 shows the existing and proposed ped-bike infrastructure in Old Town to connect destinations within the areas as well as outside the area. As the City continues to grow, additional connections should be identified to continue these connections and improve active transportation infrastructure and safety throughout the community.



Outdoor restaurant seating in Old Town, Tomball, TX



Historic Main Street, Tomball, TX



Art Gallery in Old Town, Tomball, TX



## WAYFINDING, BRANDING, AND PUBLIC ART

Wayfinding and branding elements can help enhance the navigational experience and identity of the Old Town. Effective wayfinding elements will help visitors and residents locate points of interest and access amenities with ease. Branding involves creating a distinct visual identity and narrative for the area. Map 6 shows the locations of recommended branding and wayfinding elements in the Old Town. These locations are identified to strategically place district identity signs, amenities signs, and navigational signs to cultivate familiarity, community pride, and a sense of belonging among residents and visitors, concurrently drawing investment and stimulating economic growth. Furthermore, integrating public art elements can enhance the district's visual appeal. The City should identify suitable locations for public art installations and collaborate with local artists to add public art to the urban fabric of Old Town.



City Branding on Main Street, Tomball, TX



Wayfinding Signage on Main Street, Tomball, TX

## PARKING

Many people perceive parking to be in short supply in the Old Town. The Old Town has three public parking locations as well as on-street parking options for people visiting the area. The City of Tomball should conduct a parking survey to document the available parking spaces in the Old Town to identify if additional parking needs to be added. In the meantime, wayfinding signage, as shown in Map 6, should be installed to direct people to available public and on-street parking locations. Wayfinding signage along with improved pedestrian connectivity will make it easier for visitors to walk from parking locations to their respective destinations, making the experience more positive. This can also help with finding parking spots during outdoor events hosted by the City.

## PUBLIC AND OUTDOOR SPACE

The Old Town offers community members several outdoor recreational opportunities. Tomball Railroad Depot Plaza is the primary public space within Old Town. The City of Tomball hosts several events throughout the year at the Tomball Railroad Depot Plaza attracting a significant number of attendees.

Wayne Stovall Sports Complex is located on the northern boundary of the Old Town and Martin Luther King Jr. Park and is located on the southeast corner just outside the Old Town boundary, as shown in Map 6. The map also shows locations for proposed parks and open space locations as per the FLUM on page 27. The recently adopted Parks, Recreation, and Trails System Master Plan identified strategies and conceptual plans to improve these parks as well as introduce more recreational programming.



Depot Day Fall Festival, Tomball, TX



# FOCUS AREAS

In the development of the FLUM, certain areas within the City present unique development opportunities. Some areas were previously thriving commercial areas that have fallen into decline due to changes in commercial markets. Others are vacant properties that, with proper planning, can become quality developments that benefit the City economically and socially.

The Plan designates two focus areas – East Downtown District and Medical District within the City of Tomball. The inclusion of focus areas in the FLUM aims to channel focused development initiatives toward these areas, catalyzing positive transformation. These focus areas act as overlays, concentrating efforts and fostering a distinct identity for each area alongside the primary future land use designations. The following section provides an overview of existing conditions within the focus areas along with the vision for future development and implementation strategies to realize that vision.



HCA Houston Healthcare, Tomball, TX



Map 7. Proposed Focus Areas

## EAST DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

### Existing Character

The East Downtown District extends from Sycamore Street to North Willow Street along East Main Street. The area comprises a mix of residential, commercial, public, park, and industrial uses.

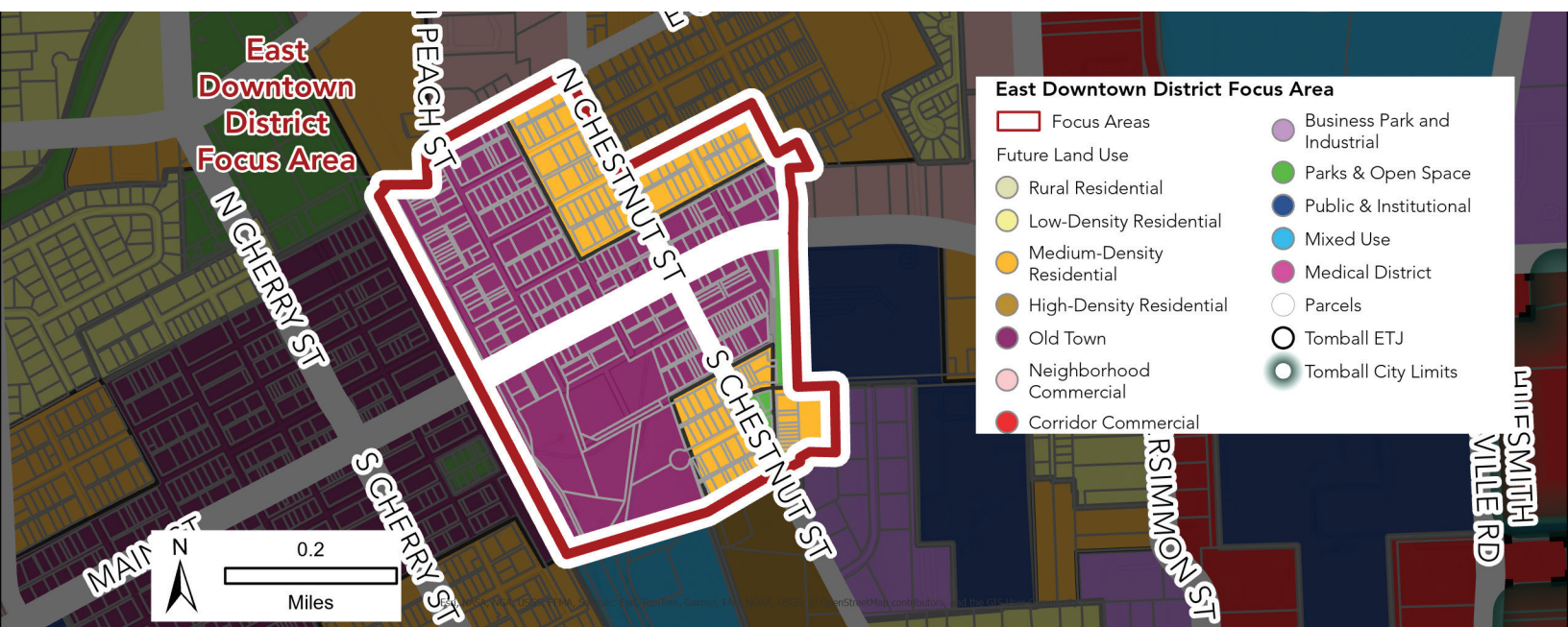
While certain sections of the East Downtown District fall under the Old Town, there is a disconnect between the east and west parts of the Old Town. The disconnect can be attributed to the physical barrier created by the railroad. There is a lack of pedestrian connectivity such as a safe and adequate crossing across the railroad.

### Strategies

- Leverage the Texas Main Street Program to revitalize East Main Street.
- The East Downtown District has several vacant properties along East Main Street. Attract local businesses to this area to improve the economic vibrancy of the area.
- Continue branding efforts in synergy with the Old Town.
- Provide accessible, convenient, and safe ped-bike infrastructure connecting destinations within the focus areas as well as destinations across the railroad. Map 6 shows recommended locations for pedestrian crossings along Main Street and Houston Street.
- Implement the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan to provide additional amenities at Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Once developed, the park will provide multiple recreational features for kids and adults.
- Engage the community in planning efforts and build partnerships with stakeholders and property owners on Main Street.
- Once safe pedestrian infrastructure is established, visitors to the Old Town can make use of available parking in the district. Implementing wayfinding signage throughout the area will assist visitors in locating parking facilities easily.

## VISION

This East Downtown District Focus Area is envisioned to be developed as an extension of the Old Town providing more opportunities for boutique retail, restaurants, and recreation uses while maintaining synergy with the Old Town District.





## MEDICAL DISTRICT

### Existing Character

The Medical District Focus Area includes HCA Houston Tomball and surrounding uses that will support the people employed in the Medical District. These land uses include proposed multifamily, medium-density residential, and mixed-use developments. The City of Tomball has emerged as a regional medical hub offering medical and supporting services to residents and visitors from the larger Houston area.

As the Medical District continues to develop and flourish, there will be a growing demand for housing across various price points to accommodate the workforce in the medical sector. This underscores the necessity for increased housing options, particularly high-quality multifamily developments complemented by nearby amenities such as grocery stores, boutique retail, dining establishments, and recreational facilities.

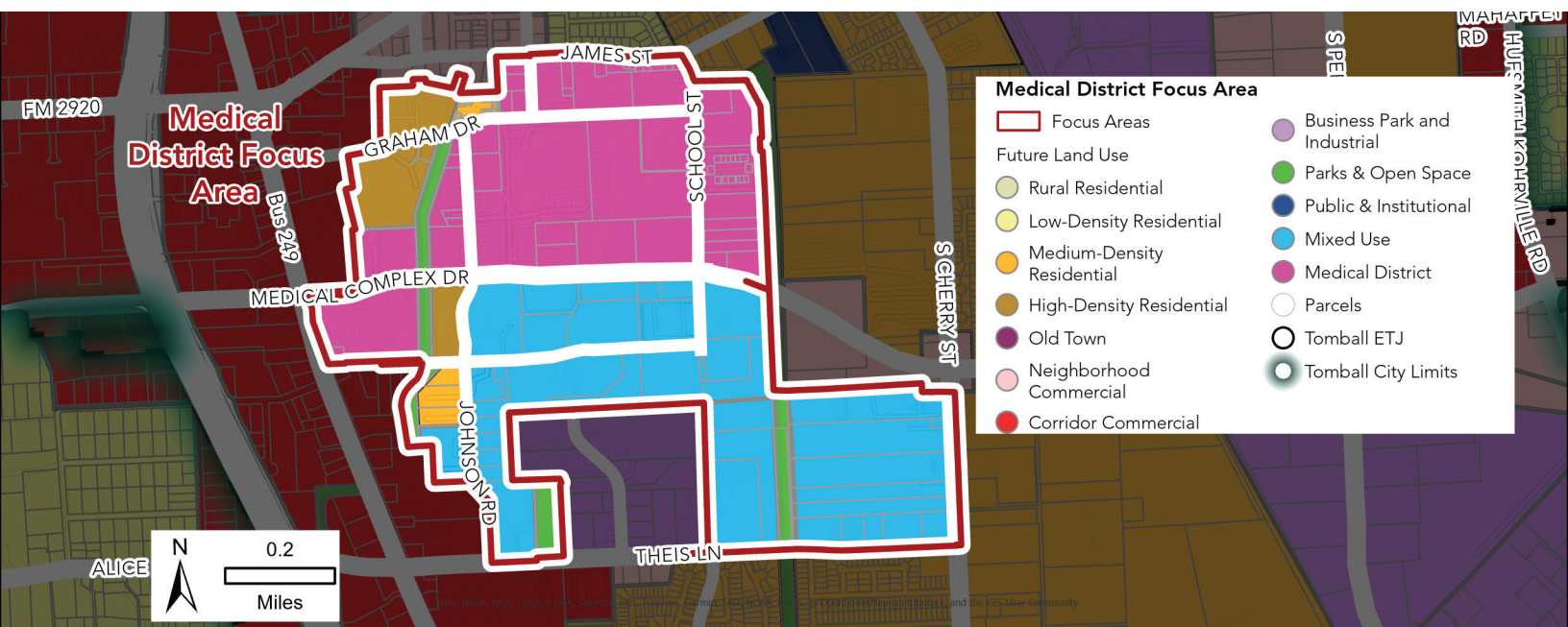
### Strategies

- Improve pedestrian infrastructure in the area.
- Promote the growth of small, local businesses like cafes, art galleries, and family-friendly entertainment venues, ensuring they are considerate of adjacent residential developments.

## VISION

The Medical District Focus Area is envisioned to be developed as a lively mixed use district predominantly catering to the people employed in the area. It will provide opportunities for recreation along with a variety of housing options, especially for young professionals and families. The area will provide opportunities for people to gather and access local restaurants, art, and shopping. The area should be complemented with accessible pedestrian network for people to access different amenities and services within the district.

- Utilize incentives and other applicable economic development tools to attract desired development types for the area.
- Create distinctive branding for the area and develop its image as an emerging community center for Tomball.
- Identify appropriate locations for parks and trail networks within the area.



# POPULATION PROJECTIONS AND GROWTH SCENARIOS

## ULTIMATE CAPACITY

Each land use category depicted on the FLUM comes with recommended DUA specified within the corresponding dashboard. These DUAs can be used to calculate the anticipated population of Tomball, or the ultimate capacity, in a scenario where all vacant acres develop under the prescribed densities.

Due to the external factors that influence development, such as market feasibility and political realities, it is important to note that properties may not develop consistently with their assigned module. The high and low DUAs are intended to serve as benchmarks as the City continues to monitor its development patterns and population growth.

## Methodology

Ultimate capacity is calculated per module using the following metrics:

- Vacant acres adjusted for residential mix from the land use module dashboards
- Right-of-way (ROW) assumptions based on traditional land use patterns
- DUA from the land use category dashboards
- Occupancy Rates (OR) for owned and rented dwelling units from the U.S. Census Bureau
- Persons per Household (PPH) from the U.S. Census Bureau

To determine the ultimate capacity, ROW must be deducted from the vacant acres, then the remaining acres multiplied by the high and low DUAs, occupancy rates, and PPHs. Once added to the existing population, both high and low capacities will inform the City regarding potential population estimates.

Figure 6. Ultimate Capacity Formula

Ultimate Capacity

=

Vacant acres adjusted for nonresidential development

–

Typical right-of-way (ROW) dedication

x DUA

x Occupancy Rate (OR)

x Persons per Household (PPH)

## Ultimate Capacity Estimates

**Table 3.** City Limit Ultimate Capacity

Future Land Use Category with Residential Component	Vacant Acres*	ROW	DUA Range		OR**	PPH**	Housing Units [(AC-ROW) X DUA]		Households (Units X OR)		Population (Households X PPH)	
			Low	High			Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Rural Residential	368.4	10%	0.3	1	92.8%	3	99	332	92	308	277	923
Low-Density Residential	83.1	25%	3	5	92.8%	3	187	312	174	289	521	868
Medium-Density Residential	801.5	30%	5	12	92.8%	3	2,805	6,733	2,603	6,248	7,810	18,744
High-Density Residential	100.1	30%	12	30	92.8%	2.11	841	2,102	780	1,951	1,646	4,116
Old Town	5.8	20%	5	12	92.8%	3	23	56	22	52	65	156
Mixed Use	185.7	30%	5	20	92.8%	2.11	650	2,600	603	2,413	1,273	5,091
Future Population							4,606	12,134	4,274	11,260	11,592	29,898
2023 Population in the City Limits***												14,201
Ultimate Capacity												44,099

**Table 4.** ETJ Ultimate Capacity

Future Land Use Category with Residential Component	Vacant Acres*	ROW	DUA Range		OR**	PPH**	Housing Units [(AC-ROW) X DUA]		Households (Units X OR)		Population (Households X PPH)	
			Low	High			Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Rural Residential	1,122	10%	0.3	1	92.8%	3	303	1,009	281	937	843	2,810
Low-Density Residential	168	25%	3	5	92.8%	3	377	628	350	583	1,049	1,749
Medium-Density Residential	539	30%	5	12	92.8%	3	1,888	4,531	1,752	4,205	5,256	12,614
High-Density Residential	0	30%	12	30	92.8%	2.11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Old Town	0	20%	5	12	92.8%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Use	0	30%	5	20	92.8%	2.11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Future Population							2,568	6,168	2,383	5,724	7,148	17,173
2023 Population in the ETJ****												3,621
Ultimate Capacity												20,794

\* Vacant acres adjusted to show the anticipated residential percentage for each category only, as indicated by its individual dashboard

\*\*ACS (2022) 5-Year Estimates; PPH based on 3.00 owner-occupied and 2.11 renter-occupied

\*\*\* Source: ACS (2023) 1-Year Estimates are used for consistency with the 2023 ETJ population

\*\*\*\* Source: ESRI 2023 ETJ Population Estimate

OR - Occupancy Rate, PPH - Persons Per Household, DUA - Dwelling Units Per Acre



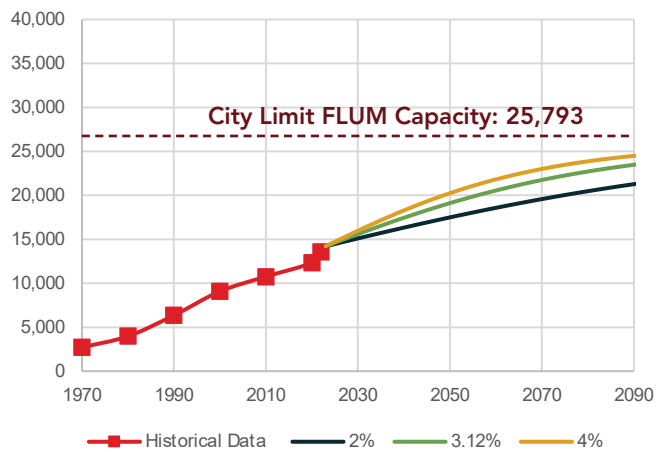
## GROWTH PROJECTION AND RATES

The City's ability to accommodate future growth can be determined by projecting Tomball's historical growth rates into the year 2050 against the ultimate capacity assessment in Table 3. The City's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is determined using the past five years of population growth as recorded by the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. Within the previous five years, Tomball has experienced a CAGR of 3.12%.

It is important to note that the City's ability to grow is inherently limited by its resources (e.g., land, utilities, infrastructure). It is anticipated that the City will experience an 'S-curve' trend (Figure 7 and Figure 8), where population growth levels out as the City approaches its carrying capacity, or maximum limit of growth based on available resources. Under this logistic growth rate, the population begins leveling out in the year 2050.

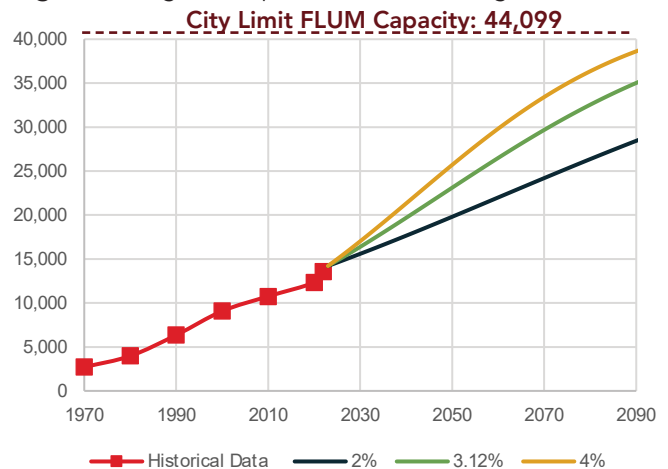


**Figure 7. Logistic Population Growth, Low Scenario**



Future Land Use Capacity, Low Estimate: 24,485			
Year	Population by Growth Rate (City Limit)		
	2.00%	3.12%	4.00%
2023	14,201	14,201	14,201
2024	14,329	14,400	14,456
2025	14,456	14,599	14,710
2026	14,583	14,796	14,963
2027	14,710	14,993	15,215
2028	14,836	15,189	15,464
2029	14,962	15,384	15,712
2030	15,088	15,577	15,957
2031	15,213	15,770	16,201
2032	15,338	15,961	16,442
2033	15,462	16,151	16,680
2034	15,586	16,339	16,916
2035	15,710	16,526	17,149
2036	15,832	16,711	17,379
2037	15,955	16,895	17,606
2038	16,076	17,077	17,829
2039	16,197	17,257	18,049
2040	16,318	17,435	18,266
2041	16,438	17,611	18,479
2042	16,557	17,786	18,689
2043	16,676	17,958	18,895
2044	16,794	18,128	19,097
2045	16,911	18,296	19,295
2046	17,027	18,462	19,490
2047	17,143	18,626	19,680
2048	17,258	18,787	19,867
2049	17,372	18,946	20,049
2050	17,486	19,103	20,228

**Figure 8. Logistic Population Growth, High Scenario**



Future Land Use Capacity, High Estimate: 39,608			
Year	Population by Growth Rate (City Limit)		
	2.00%	3.12%	4.00%
2023	14,201	14,201	14,201
2024	14,394	14,501	14,586
2025	14,587	14,805	14,977
2026	14,783	15,112	15,372
2027	14,979	15,422	15,773
2028	15,177	15,735	16,178
2029	15,376	16,050	16,588
2030	15,576	16,369	17,002
2031	15,778	16,690	17,420
2032	15,981	17,014	17,841
2033	16,184	17,340	18,266
2034	16,389	17,668	18,694
2035	16,595	17,998	19,125
2036	16,802	18,331	19,558
2037	17,010	18,665	19,993
2038	17,219	19,001	20,431
2039	17,429	19,338	20,869
2040	17,640	19,677	21,309
2041	17,852	20,017	21,749
2042	18,064	20,358	22,190
2043	18,277	20,700	22,631
2044	18,491	21,043	23,072
2045	18,706	21,386	23,512
2046	18,922	21,730	23,951
2047	19,138	22,074	24,389
2048	19,354	22,417	24,825
2049	19,572	22,761	25,259
2050	19,789	23,105	25,690

# FISCAL IMPACT

## FISCAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Future residential and economic development projects will enhance the quality of life for Tomball residents. At the same time, City cost of service will also increase to support these new developments. The purpose of this fiscal impact assessment is to examine if future developments, currently vacant land, will generate sufficient revenue to offset higher costs. Because different land use patterns create varying levels of tax revenue (e.g., sales tax at a shopping center or property tax from an apartment building), it is critical to understand if the future land use map is projected to generate enough revenue to pay for a similar level of services residents receive today. The analysis focuses on the average revenue by land use category and expenses by “cost unit” served. This approach assumes that future development will generate costs and revenues at the same average rate as the existing service population.

## MARGINAL VERSUS AVERAGE COST OF SERVICE

Most of Tomball’s growth will be new greenfield development versus redevelopment of existing properties (ex. South Live Oak and First Baptist Church). This will require Tomball to build new roads, fire stations, and libraries. When redevelopment occurs, cities can often take advantage of existing infrastructure. This is referred to as a “marginal cost” or the change in total cost when another unit is produced. For growing cities or greenfield developments with the ETJ, cities often must build new infrastructure and public facilities. The economic term that typically applies is “average cost” which is roughly equal to the total cost of providing services today divided by the current number of residents and businesses. This analysis relies on an average cost and average revenue methodology. This approach assumes that future development on mostly vacant land will generate costs and revenues at the same average rate as the existing population. The reality is that cities experience both marginal and average costs each year.

## COST OF SERVICE UNITS

For this analysis, the cost of providing services is based on the number of “cost units” served, which are the combination of total residents and Tomball-based jobs. In general, as the cost units increase, there is a need to hire additional public safety and other government employees. Other City revenues, such as franchise fees, also typically increase as the population and local employment base expands. For Tomball, the cost units represent the total population plus 50 percent of the estimated local employment base to account for the less frequent use of public services by businesses versus full-time residents.

**Table 5.** Average General Fund Cost FY 2024 Budget

Category	Units	Average Cost	Total Cost
Residents	14,201	\$1,642	\$23,322,397
Tomball-based Job	7,250	\$821	\$11,906,723
Total	21,451	N/A	\$35,229,120

Source: TXP, Inc.; City of Tomball, Texas Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget



## CURRENT GENERAL FUND TAX REVENUE SOURCES

Property tax and sales tax account for approximately 65 percent of Tomball's general fund revenues. In 2023, residential land use categories were 29.7 percent of the taxbase. For Harris County, residential land use categories were 54.5 percent of the taxbase.

**Table 6.** General Fund Budget Summary

Category	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Budget	FY2023 Projection	FY2024 Budget
Contributions	\$1,383,419	\$875,941	\$930,000	\$662,650	\$35,000
Fines & Warrants	\$307,568	\$309,283	\$310,250	\$248,250	\$295,250
Franchise Taxes	\$973,053	\$948,804	\$930,000	\$940,000	\$930,000
Interest	(\$15,621)	(\$10,335)	\$300,000	\$1,375,000	\$750,000
Other Revenue	\$291,446	\$151,385	\$220,050	\$235,000	\$143,000
Permits & Licenses	\$1,633,906	\$2,099,085	\$1,402,500	\$1,492,500	\$1,359,500
Property Taxes	\$3,511,281	\$3,915,320	\$4,750,000	\$4,655,000	\$5,225,000
Sales Taxes	\$13,361,050	\$16,312,753	\$15,390,000	\$16,516,000	\$15,700,000
Services	\$2,988,861	\$3,494,928	\$5,742,490	\$4,624,234	\$5,627,331
Enterprise Transfers In	\$2,671,317	\$2,021,994	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$27,106,280</b>	<b>\$30,119,158</b>	<b>\$31,975,290</b>	<b>\$32,748,634</b>	<b>\$32,565,081</b>

Source: City of Tomball, Texas Fiscal Year 2023 2024 Operating Budget



**Table 7.** General Fund Expenditures Summary

Category	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Actual	FY2023 Budget	FY2023 Projection	FY2024 Budget
Administrative	\$348,812	\$383,036	\$519,200	\$432,750	\$627,800
Building Permits and Inspections	\$382,202	\$369,924	\$475,400	\$479,000	\$612,150
Mayor and Council	\$48,948	\$58,874	\$93,230	\$60,950	\$82,800
City Secretary	\$334,455	\$403,799	\$572,800	\$514,800	\$475,100
Human Resources	\$408,710	\$531,622	\$589,100	\$565,800	\$524,700
Finance	\$927,993	\$822,872	\$830,300	\$822,350	\$1,061,850
Information Systems	\$705,256	\$751,470	\$1,216,400	\$1,493,600	\$2,024,800
Legal	\$108,315	\$132,075	\$145,000	\$145,000	\$160,000
Non-Departmental	\$1,204,414	\$1,158,371	\$1,267,981	\$1,569,531	\$3,188,470
Police	\$6,139,796	\$7,118,719	\$8,448,010	\$7,633,600	\$8,023,700
Municipal Court	\$391,261	\$416,675	\$516,850	\$465,400	\$563,000
Community Center	\$147,307	\$171,666	\$196,825	\$188,300	\$201,600
Fire	\$2,793,883	\$3,213,085	\$3,359,300	\$3,290,850	\$3,550,300
Emergency Management	\$15,183	\$5,856	\$24,500	\$22,750	\$27,950
ESD #15	\$770,847	\$973,685	\$3,095,150	\$1,785,200	\$2,395,150
Public Works Administration	\$60,290	\$79,960	\$284,550	\$229,200	\$311,400
Garage	\$170,497	\$188,680	\$178,100	\$189,800	\$208,050
Parks	\$988,534	\$792,529	\$1,402,300	\$1,368,480	\$834,900
Streets	\$1,409,200	\$1,387,333	\$2,879,050	\$2,265,750	\$2,372,800
Sanitation	\$1,734,249	\$1,914,289	\$1,980,200	\$2,122,200	\$2,268,700
Engineering and Planning	\$563,340	\$628,399	\$1,182,960	\$908,900	\$1,121,000
Facilities Maintenance	\$1,031,576	\$1,027,128	\$913,400	\$940,875	\$1,635,900
Transfer Out to Hotel Occupancy	\$126,000	\$126,000	\$126,000	\$126,000	\$126,000
Transfer Out to Health Insurance	\$2,327,000	\$2,461,081	\$2,720,000	\$2,720,000	\$2,831,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$23,138,067</b>	<b>\$25,117,129</b>	<b>\$33,016,606</b>	<b>\$30,341,086</b>	<b>\$35,229,120</b>

Source: City of Tomball, Texas Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget



# POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Estimates for City and ETJ population and household growth were derived from the future land use map by land use category. The fiscal impact is based on the city adding approximately 17,500 residents. Employment estimates were calculated using regional employment data, historic growth trends, and the number of jobs per developed commercial and industrial acre.

# PROCESS FOR ESTIMATING FUTURE COSTS AND REVENUES

The first step in the assessment was to evaluate the growth in households and population by future land use category. The second step was to approximate the average taxable value per Future Land Use Map category using data from the Harris County Appraisal District. Based on land use density per category and existing similar properties in Tomball, an average taxable value per unit and acre was determined. These values represent a blended average of older and newer properties. The third step was to estimate sales tax revenue per worker. Tomball specific sales tax data by industry was obtained from the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. The final step was to estimate general fund revenues.

# NET FISCAL IMPACT

The following table summarizes the net general fund fiscal impact of the proposed FLUM at full build out in constant 2024 dollars. The figures in the table below assume ETJ areas are voluntarily annexed as they develop. This simplifying assumption is necessary in long-term forecasting. The proposed FLUM would increase the City's annual general fund revenues by approximately \$41.4 million and increase the Tomball's annual general fund expenditures by approximately \$40.9 million. This results in a net positive fiscal impact of approximately \$0.6 million.

Table 8. Net Fiscal Impact of Future Land Use Map for New Development (City and ETJ)

General Fund Revenue	
Sales Tax	\$16,506,945
Property Tax (M&O)	\$9,785,389
Other General Fund Revenue	\$15,134,069
Total General Fund Revenue	\$41,426,403
General Fund Costs	
Residents	(\$28,481,588)
Jobs	(\$12,374,484)
Total General Fund Costs	(\$40,856,072)
Net Fiscal Impact	\$570,331

Source: TXP, Inc.









## CHAPTER 4

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# **Transportation and Mobility**

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of Tomball's existing transportation conditions and outlines key plans that will shape its future transportation landscape. The chapter covers the Major Thoroughfare Plan, Active Transportation Plan, and the arrangement of the street right-of-way by functional classification, all of which are integral components of Tomball's transportation framework.

The Major Thoroughfare Plan serves as a roadmap for the City's transportation network, guiding the development of major thoroughfares and transportation corridors. The Active Transportation Plan focuses on enhancing non-motorized transportation options such as walking and cycling, promoting a more vibrant and accessible city.

Additionally, the chapter discusses street typical cross-sections, which define the design standards for various types of streets within Tomball. Each street typical cross-section is provided with context-driven guidance, so that each road serves the needs of the community. The streets plan outlines the City's strategy for managing and improving its street infrastructure to accommodate current and future transportation needs.

By analyzing existing transportation conditions and aligning with community goals and economic trends, Tomball's transportation plans aim to facilitate responsible growth while preserving the City's character and enhancing the quality of life. This Plan is crucial for ensuring connectivity, access to amenities, healthcare, safety, and overall well-being of residents, contributing to a vibrant and sustainable city for years to come.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Existing Conditions
- Thoroughfare Plan
- Functional Classifications
- Active Transportation Plan
- Design Standards and Considerations

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Priorities for the Future of Tomball

01

Building and maintaining quality roadway infrastructure

02

Managing commuter traffic and reducing congestion

03

Ensuring all transportation facilities are well-connected

## Other Comments



Design and connect downtown, to nearby neighborhoods for humans, not cars.



Sidewalks that connect to playgrounds and recreation.



I am aging and would like easy transportation to downtown Houston so I could visit the museum, shops, and restaurants and not make the "killer-drive." Also, I've developed two routes to avoid driving Main Street between 2-5pm. The school pickup traffic is insane.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## BASELINE AND FUTURE NETWORK

To evaluate and make appropriate adjustments to the Thoroughfare Plan element of the Comprehensive Plan, the planning team conducted a network analysis using the Travel Demand Model developed and maintained by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC).

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13-county Southeast Texas region, H-GAC is responsible for the fiscal management and administration of the region's federal and state transportation investments. One of their primary functions is developing and maintaining the federally mandated Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which addresses capital investments in the metropolitan area. A robust travel demand modeling process to technically inform the type and sizing of the transportation network is part of the MTP planning process. The 2045 travel demand model focuses on the region's existing and financially committed highway and arterial network and serves as the basis for this assessment.

## LINK LEVEL CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Map 10 on page 52 shows a graphical depiction of the future traffic volumes on major roads in Tomball using data from the H-GAC demand model. Road adequacy was determined by comparing the forecasted daily volume with the road's estimated carrying capacity. A road determined to be inadequate for future volumes indicated a needed change in thoroughfare plan classification based on Table 9.

After appropriate classification changes to facilities on Medical Complex Drive, and with the numerous new proposed connections that will enhance connectivity, the link level analysis revealed that all roadways are expected to operate at acceptable operational conditions. However, it is important to remember that other elements will contribute even more heavily to the successful operation of all transportation in Tomball. Efficient intersection design, appropriate lane channelization (space for left- and right-turn movements), and traffic control/signalization will be critical to effective travel facilities for Tomball's residents and visitors. Several of these hyper-local design solutions are presented later on page 65.

## CONNECTIVITY

Often overlooked as a solution to congestion and transportation delays is increasing transportation network connectivity rather than widening lanes or increasing right-of-way. New research has shown that highly connected street networks can accommodate future traffic demands more effectively than traditional street widening by dispersing traffic more evenly across the transportation network<sup>1</sup>. Improving connectivity within the City of Tomball may lie outside of the traditional major thoroughfare planning process as the development of local roads is a crucial piece of improving circulation within the community.

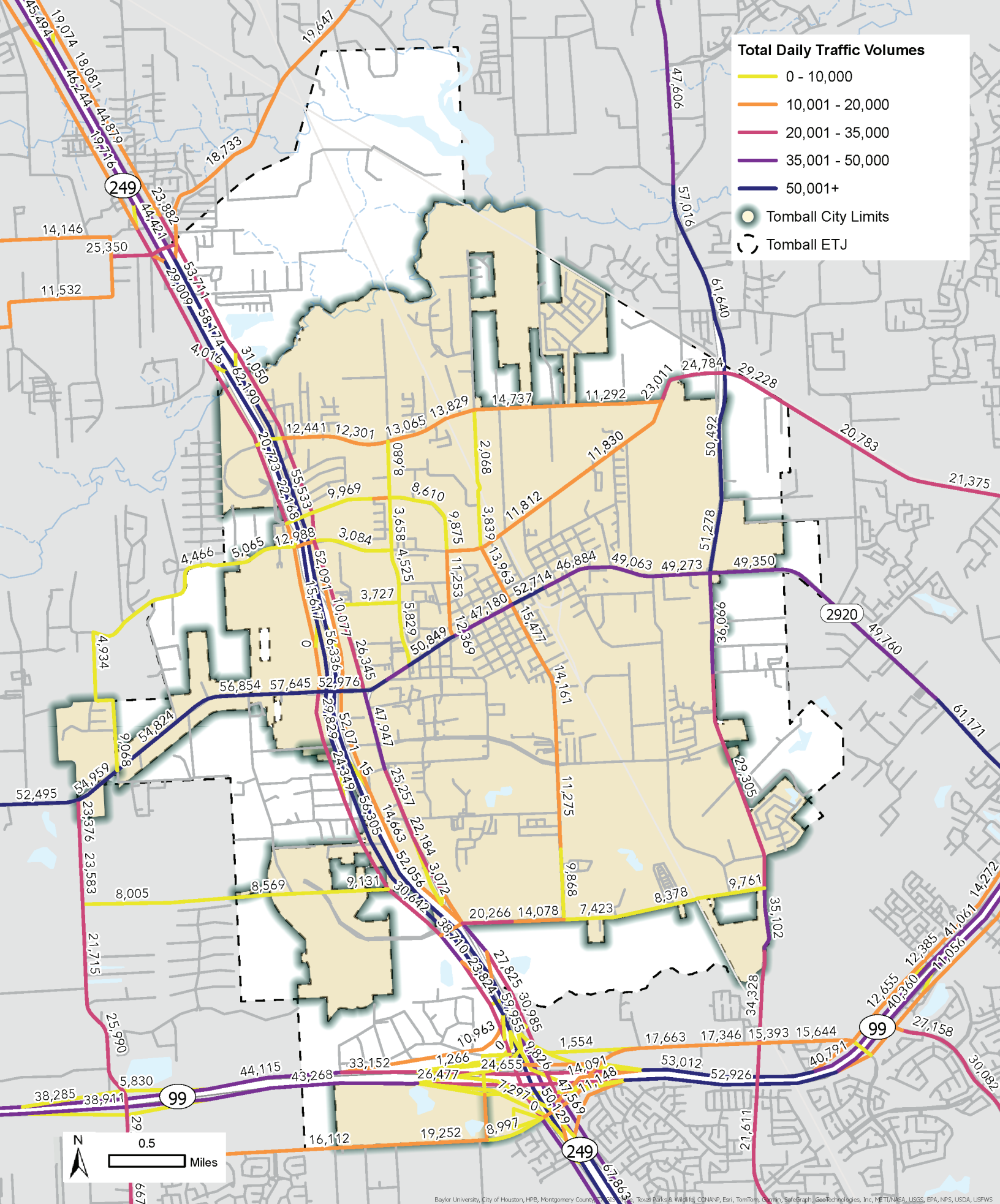
Modulating subdivision regulations such as block length maximums, connectivity ratios, requirements for multiple access points, cul-de-sac limitations, and integrating pedestrian and bicycle pathways are effective methods for improving subdivision connectivity outside of right-of-way acquisition. Ensuring sufficient connectivity within and between developments can help produce more walkable environments as well.

**Table 9.** Planning Level Estimates of Typical Daily Vehicular for Roadways

Route Type	Lanes	LOS E Capacity
Freeways	4 lane freeway	80,000 vpd
	6 lane freeway	125,000 vpd
	8 lane freeway	165,000 vpd
City Arterials	2 lane arterial <sup>1,2</sup>	17,100 vpd
	4 lane arterial (undivided) <sup>1</sup>	34,200 vpd
	4 lane arterial (divided)	38,000 vpd
	5 lane arterial (center turn lane)	36,000 vpd
	6 lane arterial (undivided)	52,300 vpd
	6 lane arterial (divided)	58,000 vpd
	One way street (per lane)	11,000 vpd
<sup>1</sup> Apply 20% reduction if no left turn lanes provided in corridor		
<sup>2</sup> Apply 5% increase for continuous center turn lane		

Source: NCTCOG (North Central Texas Council of Governments)

<sup>1</sup> Tasic, I., Zlatkovic, M., Martin, P. T., & Porter, R. J. (2015). Street Connectivity versus Street Widening: Impact of Enhanced Street Connectivity on Traffic Operations in Transit-Supportive Environments. Transportation Research Record, 2494(1), 57-68. <https://doi.org/10.3141/2494-07>



Baylor University, City of Houston, HPB, Montgomery County, Texas Parks & Wildlife, CONANP, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc., METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

Map 10. Traffic Volume Map

# THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The Thoroughfare Plan is composed of the Thoroughfare Map and the Thoroughfare Classification System. The map identifies where each thoroughfare should be located and how the thoroughfare system functions as a whole. The classification system outlines the specific standards that each thoroughfare should be design for to function at its optimum level and to achieve the relevant transportation goals.

## THE THOROUGHFARE MAP

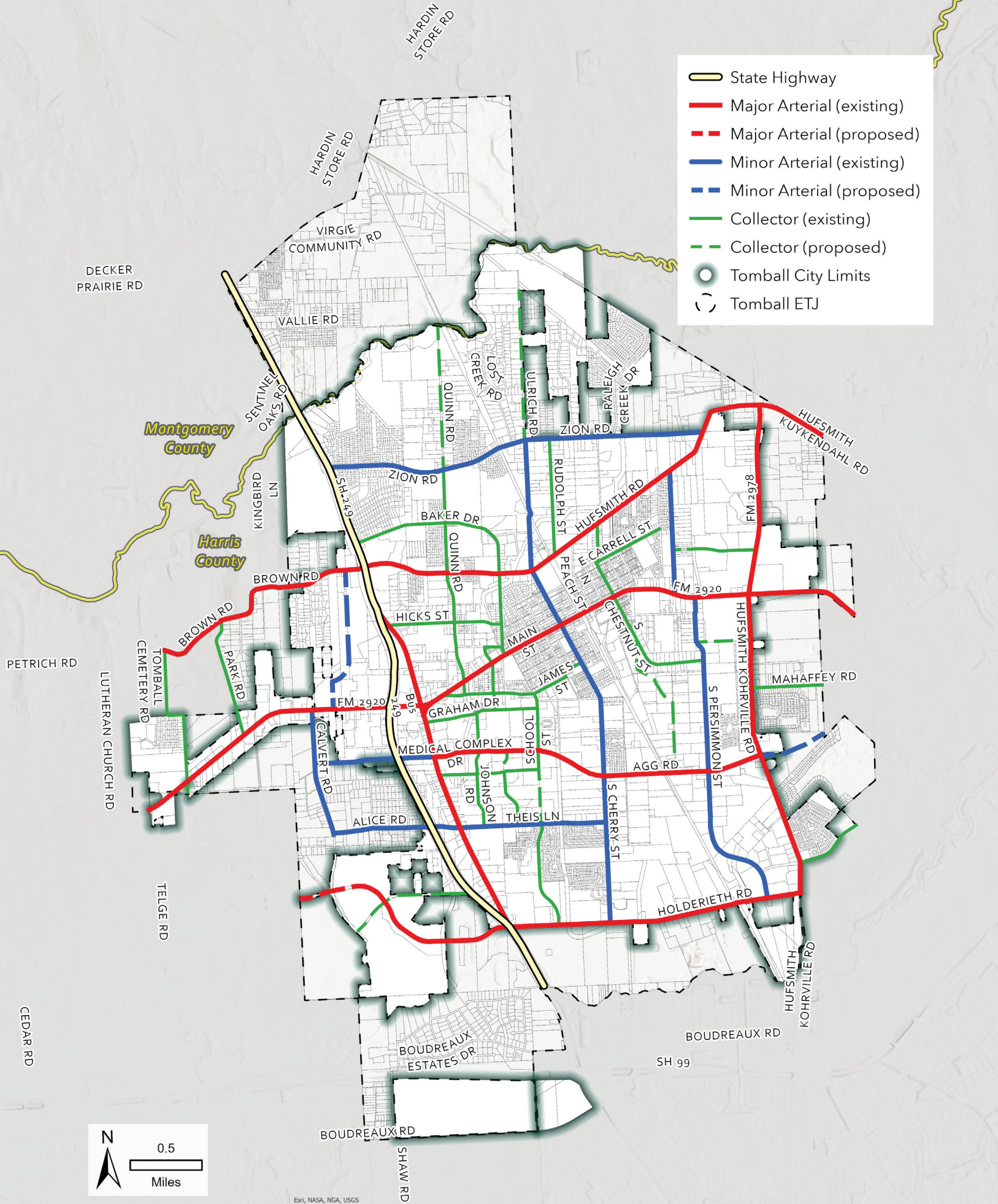
The Thoroughfare Map has been updated to account for roadways constructed or extended since the maps were published in the Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTP) in 2019, to reflect the changes in roadway classifications, to verify alignment with the thoroughfare plans for adjacent jurisdictions, and to reflect changes in land use patterns and Future Land Use designations.

The Thoroughfare Map adopted in the 2019 Master Thoroughfare Plan proposed the expansion or extension of several new major/minor arterials as well as new collectors to service new residential development south of Downtown Tomball. Many of these roadways have been built in recent years, while others are still awaiting construction. The revised Thoroughfare Map reflects these developments and removed any roadways that are no longer going forward in the construction process. Any new roadways are now shown as “existing” instead of “proposed” and places where conceptual alignments have been engineered and realigned are now revised accordingly.

To better align with the community’s FLUM and future/current transportation demand, a number of proposed collector routes were included to serve existing residential development as well as industrial development in southeast Tomball. Additionally, stakeholder feedback indicated the need for more connections in northern Tomball north of Zion Road, particularly in connecting residents to the park assets along Ulrich Road.







**Map 11.** Tomball Master Thoroughfare Plan

# FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

## OVERVIEW

The functional classification system underpins local, state, and national roadway design guidelines and manuals. It categorizes streets based on their role in the transportation network, balancing access and mobility. As the functional classification tier increases, mobility increases, but land access decreases. Conversely, as the classification tier decreases toward local streets, land access increases, but mobility decreases.

While the functional classification system provides a framework for transportation planning, it is not without limitations. One key limitation is that it may not adequately account for the diversity of street typologies and contexts within a city. Streets often serve multiple functions and may require a more nuanced classification system that considers factors such as land use, context, and community priorities.

This section provides the recommended configuration for pedestrian and vehicular areas within the right-of-way for each roadway classification identified in the Thoroughfare Plan. State and federal standards and guidelines are important starting points for transportation planning, but cities should develop street classification systems that better align with their goals for safety, growth, development, and character.

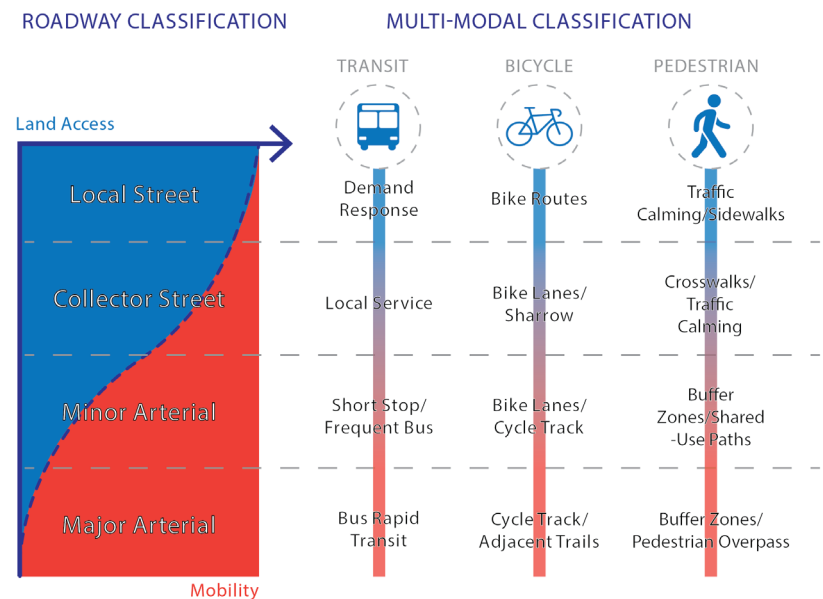
By creating more tailored classification systems, cities can ensure that their transportation networks are not only efficient but also reflect the unique needs and values of their communities.

## FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE

The functional classification of roadways involves defined engineering design standards but also offers some flexibility due to overlapping characteristics between classes. Here are key guidelines to follow:

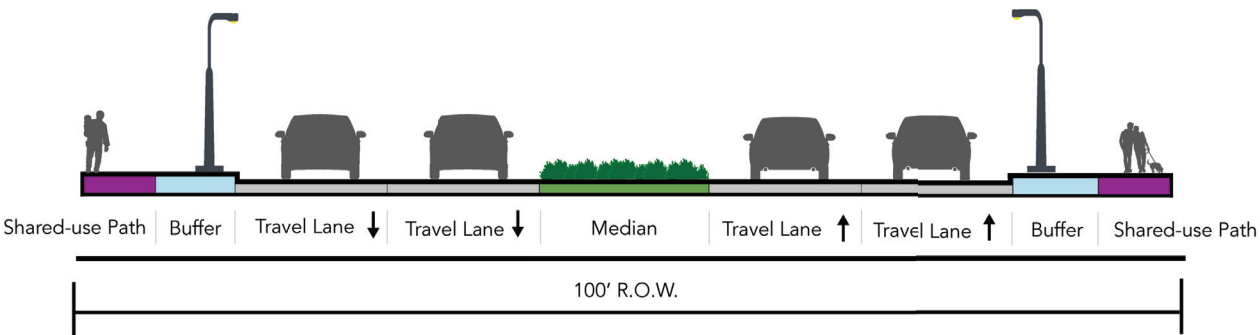
- Consider the primary purpose of the roadway: Is it for local access or through traffic? Always consider adjacent land uses and the impacts that road design may have on local businesses and the quality of life for residential areas.
- Evaluate existing roadway features like right-of-way, lanes, traffic volumes, medians, on-street parking, and road segment length. Examine speed characteristics based on observed and desired speeds.
- Verify that the facility's operation aligns with its assigned classification. Significant deviations may require reevaluation or the creation of a new class.
- Consulting a registered Professional Engineer is strongly recommended for future updates to roadway classification.

**Figure 9.** Land Use Access and Mobility for Roadway Classifications



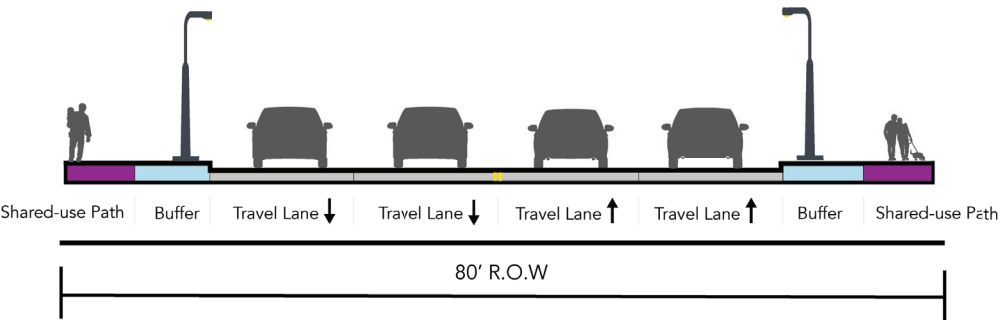
# MAJOR ARTERIAL - TYPICAL 100' ROW

Major arterial streets are designed to deliver traffic from collector streets to freeways, and between urban centers at the highest level of service possible. They carry high volumes of traffic and are often designed to manage high-speed vehicular traffic. Major arterials are typically long, continuous routes that serve substantial areas of a city.



# MINOR ARTERIAL - TYPICAL 80' ROW

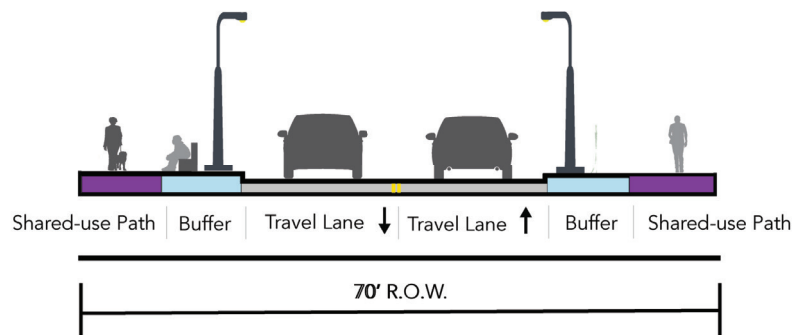
Minor arterial streets serve to distribute traffic from major arterials to collector streets. These are the streets that offer accessibility to community areas and directly serve residential and commercial areas. They provide balance between access and mobility, often have lower speed limits than major arterials, and may include more traffic control devices.





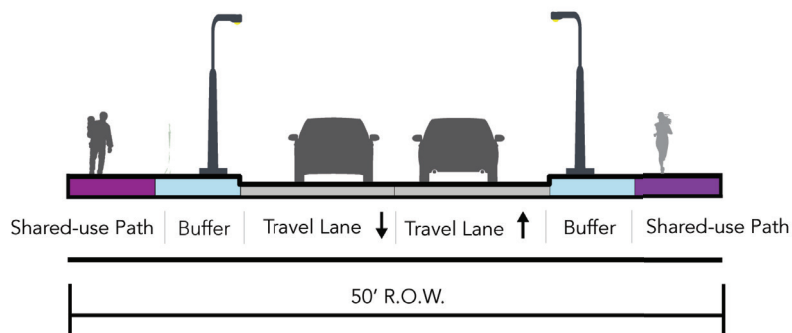
## COLLECTOR - TYPICAL 70' ROW

Collector streets serve a critical role in the roadway system by gathering traffic from local streets and funneling it to the arterial network. They provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential, commercial, and industrial areas. The design of collector streets often considers accommodation for multiple modes of transportation, such as bicycles and pedestrians.



## LOCAL - TYPICAL 50' ROW

Local streets primarily provide direct access to residences, businesses, or other abutting property. They offer the lowest level of mobility and usually carry a low volume of traffic. The design of local streets is often focused on quietness, low speeds, and landscaping, prioritizing the needs of local residents and direct-access users over through-traffic.



# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation, such as walking, cycling, or using a wheelchair. It is important for several reasons:

- Active transportation promotes physical activity, which can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.
- Unlike motorized transportation, walking and cycling produce zero emissions, which helps reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and contributes to better environmental health.
- Active transportation is more affordable than driving, as it does not require fuel or vehicle maintenance, leading to cost savings for individuals and communities.
- Walking and cycling can improve the quality of life in communities by creating opportunities for social interaction and reducing traffic congestion.

One important piece of analysis when developing an active transportation plan is identifying the most unsafe roads and intersections, as these are often ideal candidates for pedestrian infrastructure improvement such as sidewalks, bike lanes, or trails.

Map 12. shows the distribution of crash locations across the City of Tomball in the 5-year period between 2019 and 2023. Many of the most dangerous roadways in Tomball are TxDOT owned and maintained. A list of high injury intersections and roadways is provided in Table 10 and Table 11 below.

**Table 10.** High Injury Intersections

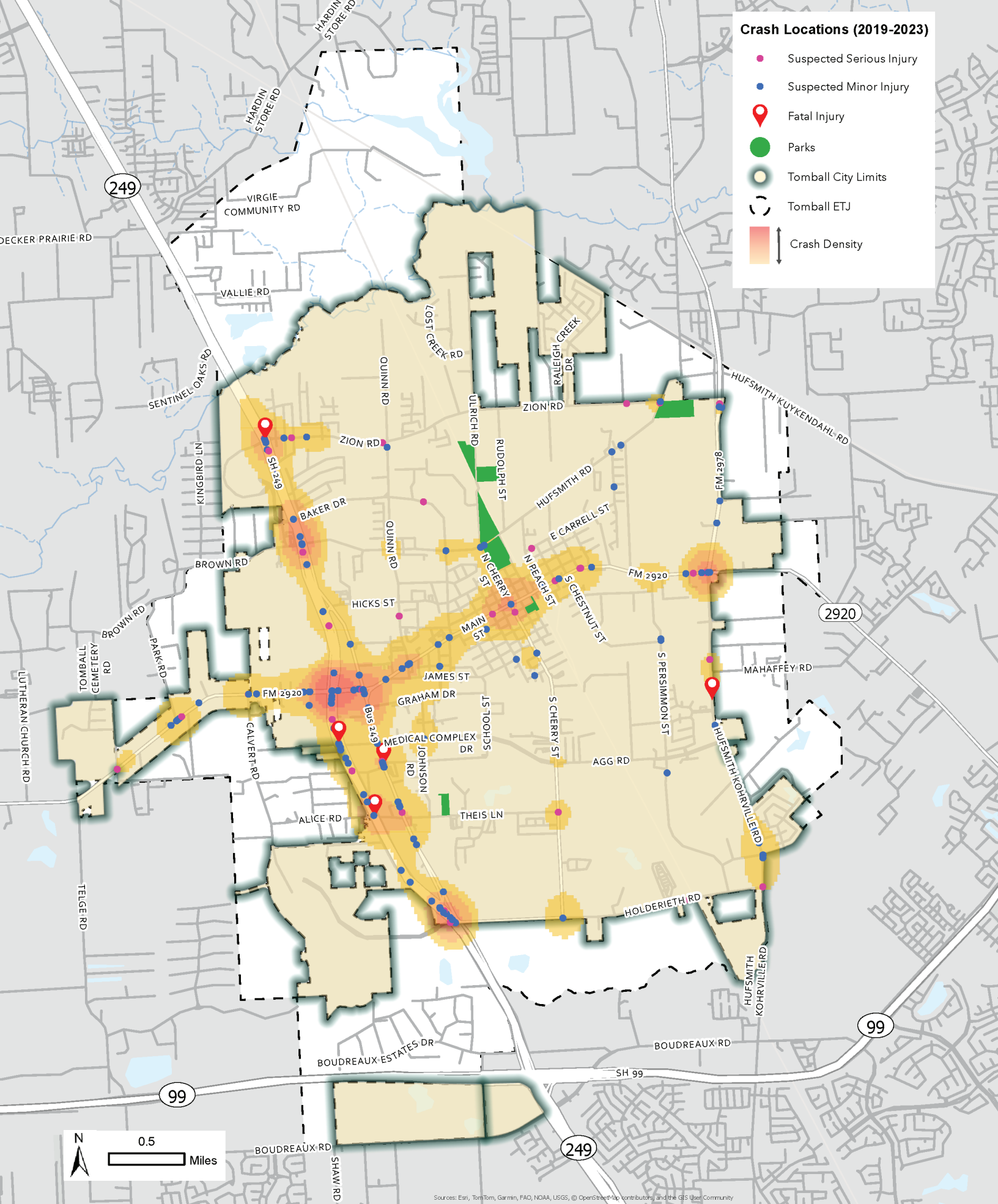
Intersection
SH 249 & Zion Rd.
FM 2920 & FM 2978
BUS. 249 & Hirschfield Rd.
FM 2920 & Bus. 249
Hufsmith Rd. & Zion Rd.

**Table 11.** High Injury Roadways

Roadway
SH 249
BUS. 249
FM 2920/Main St.
FM 2978
Zion Rd.



E. Main St, Tomball, Tx



Map 12. Tomball Crash Analysis



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Active Transportation Plan is a strategic framework that focuses on promoting and improving non-motorized modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, and other forms of human-powered travel. The goal of an Active Transportation Plan is to create safe, convenient, and accessible infrastructure and policies that encourage people to choose active modes of transportation for their daily trips.

The key focus areas for this Active Transportation Plan include increasing sidewalk connectivity in Old Town Tomball as well as increasing connectivity between Tomball's parks and recreation assets.

Extending pedestrian connectivity along Cherry Street and other key arterials were also identified as a priority. Main Street and Zion Road were identified as relatively high crash corridors within the city and should be prioritized for active transportation projects that reduce pedestrian conflicts on these roadways.

Harris County has a significant network of proposed regional trails that will go towards supporting Tomball's active transportation investments. Currently Harris County has proposed to connect Spring Creek Park and Burroughs Park via an approximately 7 mile trail that closely follows the northern boundary of Tomball's City limits. Along Tomball's southern boundary a 6 mile trail is planned to connect several Harris County projects and will terminate along Willow Creek. Additionally, there are a large number of proposed trails/sidewalks that Harris County has proposed along State maintained ROWs that may go towards improving safety along high traffic corridors.

## FACILITY DESIGN OVERVIEW

Implementing active transportation in communities with a limited history of prioritizing pedestrian infrastructure can be a significant challenge. Such efforts often require substantial political will and may be implemented incrementally, potentially leading to gaps or inconsistencies in the active transportation network. Despite these challenges, designing streets that accommodate multiple user types is essential for achieving the community's stated economic and quality-of-life goals. To guide the design of facilities proposed in the active transportation plan, it is valuable to reference a wide range of successful designs from both the United States and international contexts.

## DESIGN REFERENCE

Below is a curated list of recommended design resources to guide the development of new active transportation facilities. These manuals compile best practices from leading design organizations and serve as valuable references for city staff. They should be used alongside relevant federal, state, and other professional statutes and standards to ensure excellent facility design.

### Topic: Bicycle Facilities

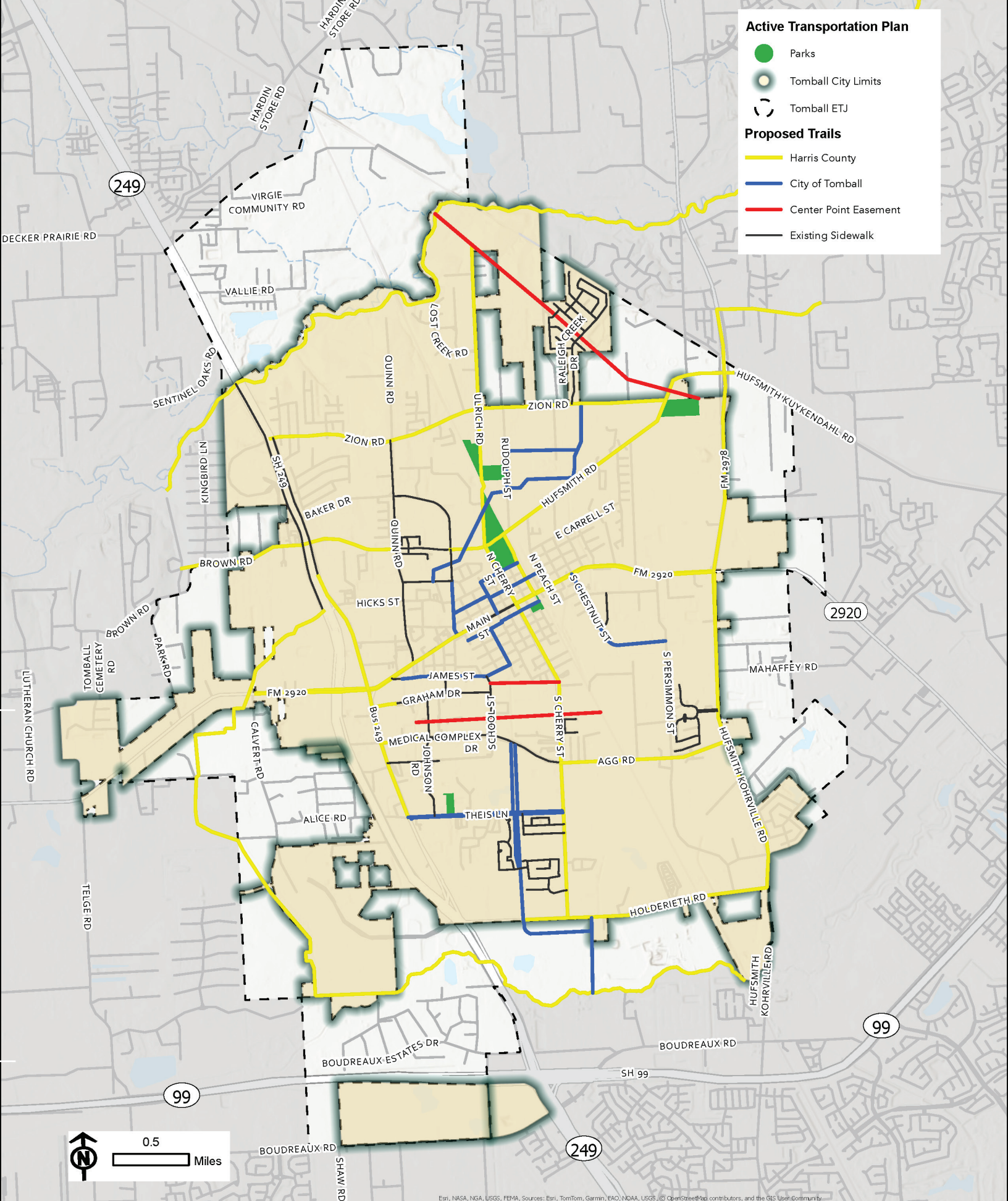
- Guide for development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO)
- Bikeway Selection Guide (FHWA)
- Separated Bike Planning and Design Guide (FHWA)
- Design All Ages and Abilities Bicycle Crossings (NACTO)
- Urban Street Design Guide (NACTO)

### Topic: Pedestrian Facilities

- Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities (AASHTO)
- Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System (FHWA)
- Urban Street Design Guide (NACTO)

### Topic: Traffic Control and Safety

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (FHWA)
- Improving Intersections for Pedestrians and Bicyclists (FHWA)



Map 13. Tomball Active Transportation Plan

# DESIGN STANDARDS AND CONSIDERATIONS

## CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN

Recent trends in thoroughfare planning practices have provided opportunities for greater flexibility in thoroughfare design. This new trend better complements surrounding land use by creating roadway standards based on the users of the facility and the surrounding context.

The “Context Sensitive Solutions” (CSS) Design Manual, written by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Congress for the New Urbanism, provides a guide on how this emerging practice can be implemented during the thoroughfare planning process.

Opportunities for multi-modal corridors that advance economic development and create a safer, more efficient transportation system, arise when the context of a roadway is considered during the planning and design process. The context sensitive approach has been adopted by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and has already been successfully implemented in thoroughfare planning processes in other cities across the state of Texas. The Thoroughfare Plan should advance the concept of flexible roadway design for multi-modal purposes by taking advantage of context sensitive design principles.

## PROCESS OF DESIGN

The process of designing CSS roadways is similar to the process of designing traditional thoroughfares in that automobile traffic is considered with traffic counts, traffic demand, and level of service information gathering efforts.

However, the difference is that automobile traffic is only one element considered, among numerous others, in the design of CSS roadways. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) released a publication entitled “An ITE Recommended Practice: Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities.” This publication outlines various principles that should be considered during the design process to arrive at a solution for a context sensitive roadway project. These principles are as follows:

- The project satisfies the purpose and needs as agreed to by a full range of stakeholders. This agreement is forged in the earliest phase of the project and amended as warranted as the project develops.
- The project is a safe facility for both the user and the community.
- The project is in harmony with the community, and it preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic and natural resource values of the area; in other words, exhibits context sensitive design.
- The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people’s minds.
- The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources (time, budget, and community) of all involved parties.
- The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community.
- The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community.
- The City should explore the possibilities of CSS solutions on any of its joint projects with TxDOT.



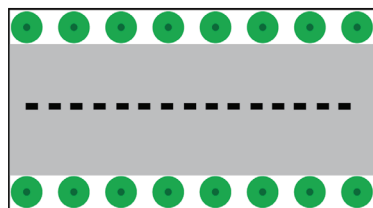
# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TOOLBOX

## Traffic Calming Strategies

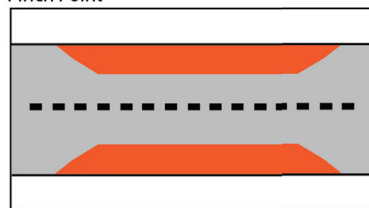
Traffic calming strategies are crucial components of urban design, as they play a vital role in creating safer and more livable cities. These strategies, such as raised crosswalks, chicanes, curb extensions, and others, are designed to reduce vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian safety, and enhance the overall quality of the urban environment. By slowing down traffic and creating more pedestrian-friendly spaces, these design features can help reduce the number and severity of traffic accidents, making Tomball's streets safer for everyone.

Additionally, traffic calming measures can improve the overall quality of life in urban areas by creating more pleasant and inviting streetscapes. They can also help encourage non-motorized modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling, by making these modes more convenient and safe. Overall, traffic calming strategies are essential tools for creating vibrant, safe, and sustainable cities for the future.

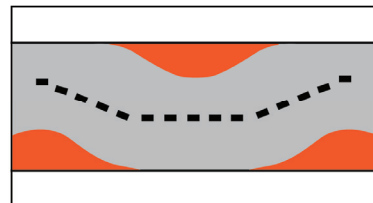
Street Trees



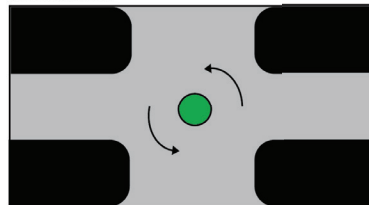
Pinch Point



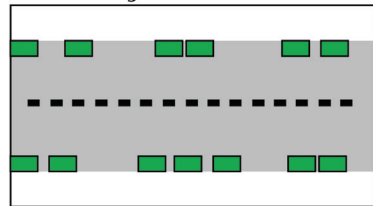
Chicanes



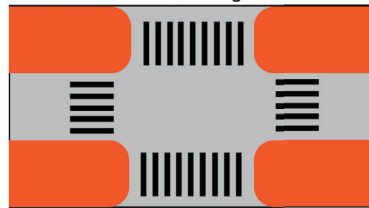
Roundabout



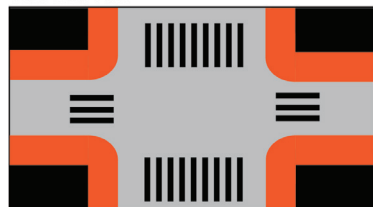
Parallel Parking



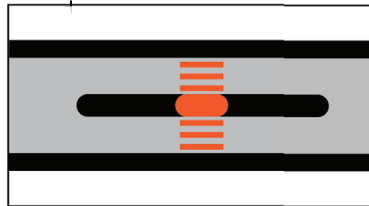
Marked Pedestrian Crossings



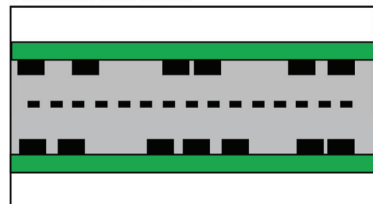
Curb Bulbouts



Pedestrian Island



Protected Bike Lanes



## DESIGN STANDARDS

The design standards for each roadway classification are outlined below. Right-of-way widths shown are for greenfield development scenarios. Existing roadways may require alternative designs in a retrofit or not change based on conditions. Standards with additional detail beyond just volume can help private and public stakeholders design roads that provide the most benefit to the community.

**Table 12.** Thoroughfare Classification Standards

Standard	Local	Collector	Minor Arterial	Major Arterial
<b>Average Daily Traffic (ADT)</b>	< 800	< 2,500	> 18,000	> 32,000
<b>ROW (Right-of-Way)</b>	50'	70'	80'	100'
<b>FOC (Face of curb to Face of Curb)</b>	33'	38'	64'	96'
<b>Lanes</b>	2	2	4	4
<b>Lane Width</b>	15' (parking permitted)	10'-11'	10'-12'	11'-12'
<b>Median Width</b>	---	---	24'	24'
<b>Design Speed</b>	20-30 MPH	30-35 MPH	35 MPH	45 MPH
<b>Driveways</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>
<b>Parking</b>	Both sides	No	No	No
<b>Tree Lawn</b>	5', both	8', both	8', both	8', both
<b>Sidewalks/ Shared Use Path</b>	5', both	6' both w/2' striped buffer	10', both	10', both
<b>Bicycle Lanes</b>	No	6', both	No	No
<b>Buffer (Sidewalk to ROW line)</b>	---	5' both	5' both	5' both

<sup>1</sup> Only driveways for nonresidential uses or residential uses with 8 or more dwelling units

## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GUIDANCE

Transportation safety improvements encompass a broad range of strategies beyond traditional traffic calming measures. These approaches aim to enhance safety for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Here are several key strategies:

### Design Street for the Desired Speed

Design streets to consciously or unconsciously encourage drivers to travel at safe speeds. This may involve using design elements such as narrower lanes, street trees, and curb extensions to visually narrow the roadway and encourage drivers to slow down. Conventional roadways with large roadway widths and significant clear zones may cause drivers to unconsciously increase their speed even when there is a low posted speed limit.

### Separate Modes

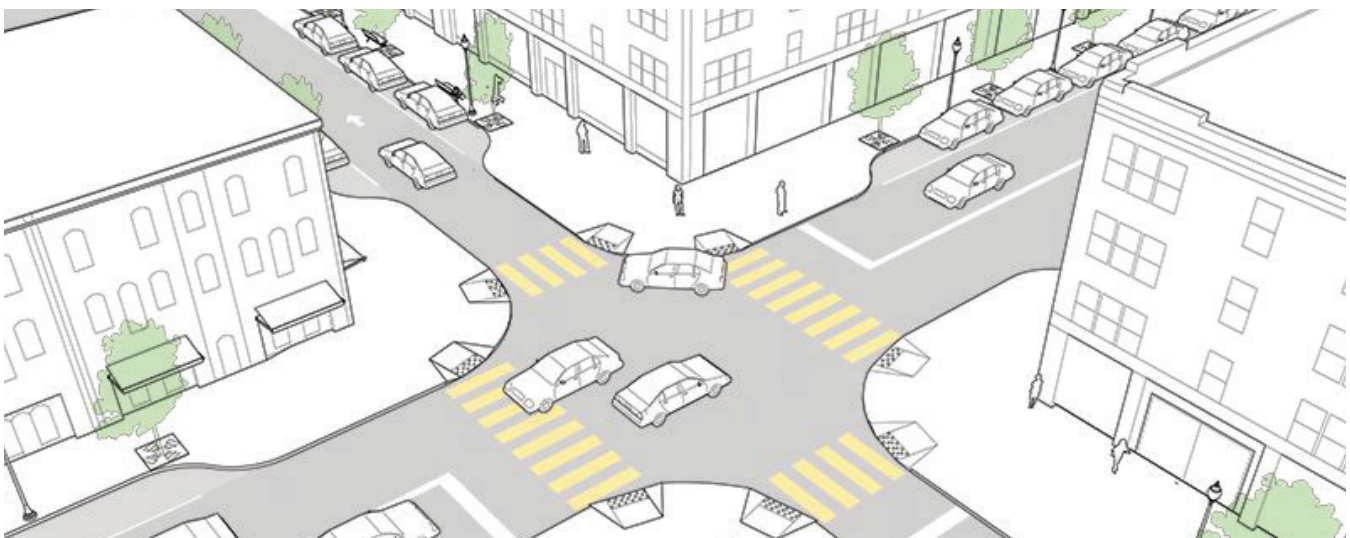
Separating modes of transportation is another key strategy that can help improve safety. This includes creating protected bike lanes that are physically separated from vehicle traffic, as well as pedestrian islands that provide safe crossing points.

### Reduce Traffic Volumes

Reducing traffic volumes may include implementing traffic calming measures, such as speed humps and chicanes, to reduce speeds and deter cut-through traffic in strategic locations. A more impactful approach, rather than simply widening lanes or pavements which can compromise safety, is to focus on enhancing connectivity, especially within subdivision regulations. This strategy can foster the creation of additional routes, dispersing the transportation load more evenly throughout the City.

### Prioritize Vulnerable Users

To prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users several strategies can be implemented. Complete streets policies ensure that streets accommodate all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, by incorporating features such as protected bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, and traffic calming measures. Designing infrastructure with these users in mind, such as creating pedestrian-only zones and improving visibility through lighting and signage, can enhance safety.



*Pedestrian Intersection Improvements*  
Source: NACTO Urban Design Guide





## CHAPTER 5

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# **Economic Development & Fiscal Resilience**

# INTRODUCTION

Tomball's economic development efforts over the past decade have been a success. Catalytic industrial developments such as Interchange 249 and pending retail projects such as The Grand at 249 represent the types of projects looking to expand and locate in the community. Tomball's location within a growing region and well-defined target industries has increased tax revenues and created greater job opportunities.

The challenge all communities face is balancing short-term economic development activity with longer-term community goals related to tax base diversification, redevelopment of older properties, small business expansion, and corporate office recruitment. Looking to the future, Tomball must balance the demands of growth with the development of infrastructure and quality of life amenities. Land use policies, infrastructure investments, and incentive agreements are some of the primary tools Tomball will use to support projects that would have a positive benefit on the community.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Community Feedback on Economic Development
- Economic Development Partners
- Strategies for Continued Economic Development Success

# WHAT WE HEARD

As part of the comprehensive plan process, a series of virtual stakeholder meetings were held to discuss current and future economic development opportunities. Participants identified the importance of attracting new businesses, providing ongoing support for downtown, increasing quality of life amenities to attract young professionals, and diversifying housing options. Parking issues within Old Town were widely discussed as a top issue. Participants also believe that improving walkability would encourage more residents and visitors to support downtown businesses. Overall, Tomball's economic development efforts are working, but participants think the community needs to continually focus on job attraction and retention as well as encourage a variety of housing options so people can both live and work in Tomball.

## Types of retail and services that Tomball needs more of

01

Sit-down, full-service dining

02

Entertainment, recreation

03

More/better healthy grocery options

## Other Comments



Concerned about the high turnover and loss of businesses on Main Street.



Need vibrant outdoor entertainment spaces offering evening and late night dining, drinking and fun.



Need more mixed-use developments and varied housing options.



Potential for boutique hotels and large meeting space for conferences.



# A STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

The Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) is a nonprofit entity focused on job growth by attracting new industries and helping existing companies expand. The TEDC is a Type B Corporation created pursuant to the Texas Development Corporation Act of 1979. The TEDC was formed in November 1994, after the citizens of Tomball voted to pass a ½ cent sales tax dedicated to economic development. The TEDC is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Tomball City Council.

The TEDC is actively implementing its Strategic Work Plan (2020-2024). This work plan is centered on the following four goals:

- Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)
- Attraction & Recruitment
- Development/Redevelopment of Old Town
- Education & Workforce Development

TEDC's initiatives and activities are aligned with stakeholder feedback. There was consensus that TEDC is well-positioned to lead Tomball's economic development efforts.



# POSITIONING TOMBALL FOR CONTINUED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS

Tomball's location within the greater Houston region will continue to make it an attractive site for residents and businesses. SH 99/Grand Parkway provides a positive and meaningful impact on Tomball's economic development opportunities. While the FLUM identifies the uses most appropriate for continued growth, Tomball will need to consider additional strategies and public policy initiatives that better position key areas and corridors for economic development projects.

The combination of stakeholder interviews, an economic and real estate assessment, and new economic development projects highlight the areas of importance. The following economic development focal areas identify the key issues facing Tomball over the next decade.

## PRESERVE AND PROTECT OLD TOWN

Tomball's authentic Main Street makes the community stand out from neighboring cities. As new growth occurs throughout the region, downtown improvements will be needed to attract and retain visitor activity (residents and tourists). Continued improvements in wayfinding, parking, sidewalks, and lighting are critical to get visitors to stay longer and spend money. Tomball already has several successful downtown festivals, but stakeholder feedback also focused on increasing other activity so businesses would stay open longer.

## SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEDC'S CATALYTIC PROJECTS

TEDC owns several parcels that form two strategic catalytic projects in the core of the City. The South Live Oak Redevelopment Project is envisioned as a mixed-use development that would extend Main Street activities east of the railroad tracks. The First Baptist Church Project is an ambitious 4.6 acre site that preserves some of the existing buildings while increasing entertainment, arts, and cultural amenities. TEDC is in the planning stages of these projects and anticipates some form of a public-private partnership for their redevelopment. The City will likely be an active participant in this process.



Old Town, Tomball, TX

## EXPLORE HOW HOUSING TYPES SUPPORT TALENT ATTRACTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholder participants indicated that Tomball is struggling to attract young professionals. Historically, families would move to Tomball because of the quality schools and affordable single-family housing prices. As single-family housing prices dramatically increased over the past decade, younger families and professionals sought out high quality, but less expensive, multifamily housing (ex. townhomes or condominiums). Tomball is like many other Texas cities struggling with the right mix of housing types. As these housing decisions are made, economic development implications such as labor force availability and talent attraction should be considered.

## ENCOURAGE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF OLDER PROPERTIES THROUGHOUT THE CITY

As Tomball ages, existing structures in key corridors and intersections will need to be refreshed. The opening of SH 99/Grand Parkway will continue to attract numerous retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses to this highway corridor. This could put additional pressure on older locations that have marginal returns on investment. Tomball already has the Business Improvement Grant and Old Town Façade Improvement Grant programs. TEDC and the City should reevaluate what level of incentives are needed to upgrade existing businesses and the complete redevelopment of larger sites.

## ATTRACT A HOTEL WITH EVENT VENUE

Visitor activity does not play a significant role in the Tomball economy, but an appropriately sized upscale hotel with an event venue could create new tourism activity. This type of facility would likely be located near a highway for access and visibility. A feasibility study would be needed to refine regional demand. Attracting an additional hotel would increase the local hotel occupancy tax (HOT). These HOT funds could then be used as an incentive and pay for eligible projects in Old Town.



South Live Oak Area Aerial (Source: TEDC)



South Live Oak Development Concept (Source: TEDC)







## CHAPTER 6

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# **Housing, Neighborhoods, & Sense of Place**

# INTRODUCTION

Healthy neighborhoods can foster well-being and enhanced quality of life for residents. Neighborhood enhancement and housing needs are closely interconnected. Upgrading neighborhood features—such as amenities, appearance, and infrastructure—can enhance overall quality of life and draw new residents. On the other hand, meeting housing needs guarantees that the community provides sufficient and suitable living spaces for both current and future populations.

This chapter presents an assessment of Tomball's existing neighborhoods and housing stock to inform strategies that can meet the diverse needs and aspirations of its residents. It also includes strategies to preserve and enhance the overall character of the community. Additionally, the chapter recommends housing programs that the City can use to meet both current and future housing demands.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Existing Housing Conditions
- Community Amenities
- Community Character and Neighborhood Enhancement
- Aligning Community Character with Housing Needs
- Neighborhood and Housing Programs

# WHAT WE HEARD

## Desired Housing Types

01 Large-Lot Single-Family Residential

02 Patio Homes

03 Small-Lot Single-Family Residential

04 Townhomes

## Other Comments

- Housing structures in Old Town need upkeep.
- Need more residential development in downtown including patio homes and condos adjacent to downtown.
- Preserve historic properties.
- Young families need to be able to afford houses in Tomball.
- Need more mixed income housing.
- Need to prioritize affordable housing options for young professionals.



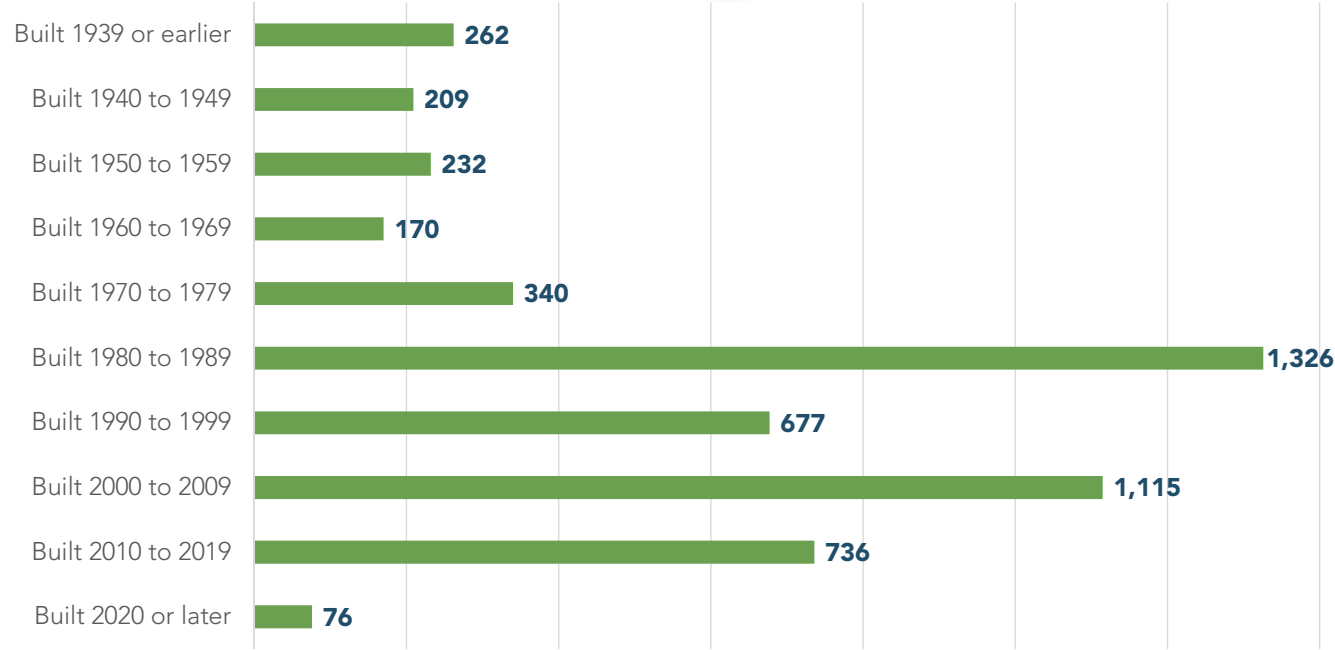
# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

According to the 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Tomball has 5,123 housing units, with 7.2% currently vacant. About 61% of the renters in Tomball are cost-burdened, meaning that they pay 30% or more of their household income as rent.

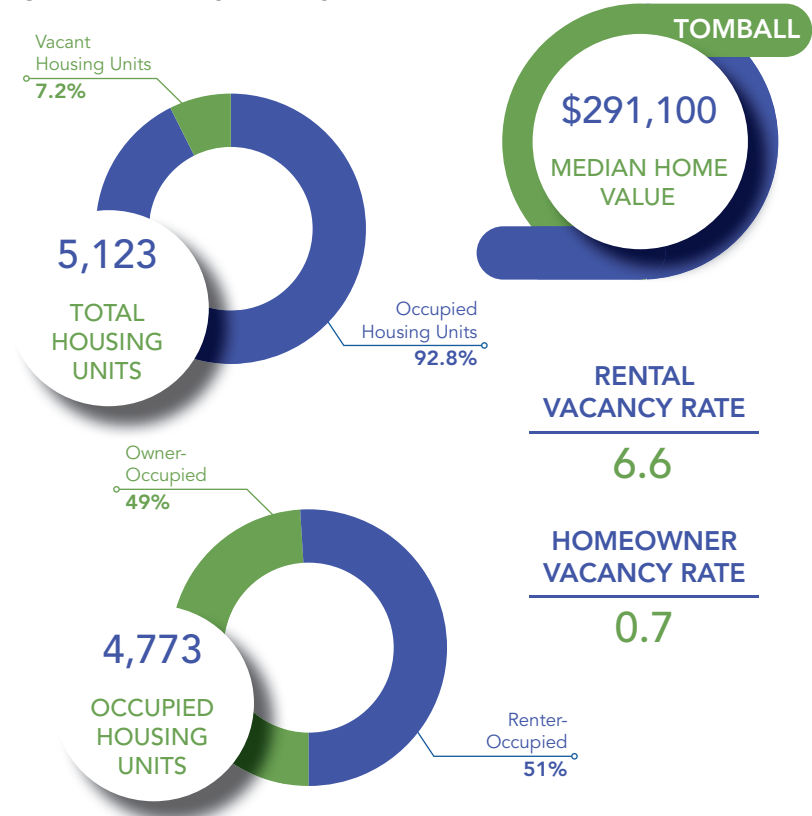
Over time, homes naturally age and require extra care to ensure their safety and viability. About 24% of the housing units in Tomball were built in 1979 or earlier. As homes age, they pose maintenance challenges, including settling or cracking foundations, repairs or replacements of fences, roofs, doors, and siding, as well as upkeep of lawns and landscaping. The City should factor in these maintenance issues when evaluating the risk of neighborhood decline, particularly in Old Town. The majority of the housing units in Old Town were built after 1980 with a significant number units built in 2000 and later.

Figure 10. Year Housing Structure Built



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 11. Existing Housing Stock



New single-family housing trends tend to be correlated with population growth. Since 2010, 131 single-family housing units per year have been permitted. According to data from Redfin, the median sales price of a Tomball home has increased from \$155,000 in 2012 to \$395,000 in 2023. This far outpaces the growth in local income levels. Relative to other peer communities within the region, Tomball housing costs are more expensive than most communities. Likely related to increasing interest rates and building material costs, total homes sales in Tomball has slowed from the peak in 2021. Over the past decade, Tomball averaged 500 homes sales per year.

Tomball has a more diverse housing stock as compared to its peer communities, Katy and Magnolia. The majority of the existing housing stock in the City consists of large-lot single-family residences. Although the City does provide some housing options in various sizes and price ranges, there is a need for more affordable housing for younger families, recent graduates, and young professionals. This need was highlighted through the community engagement process that included an online survey, stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, and community open houses. To address this demand, the City should consider incorporating a variety of housing types, such as patio homes,

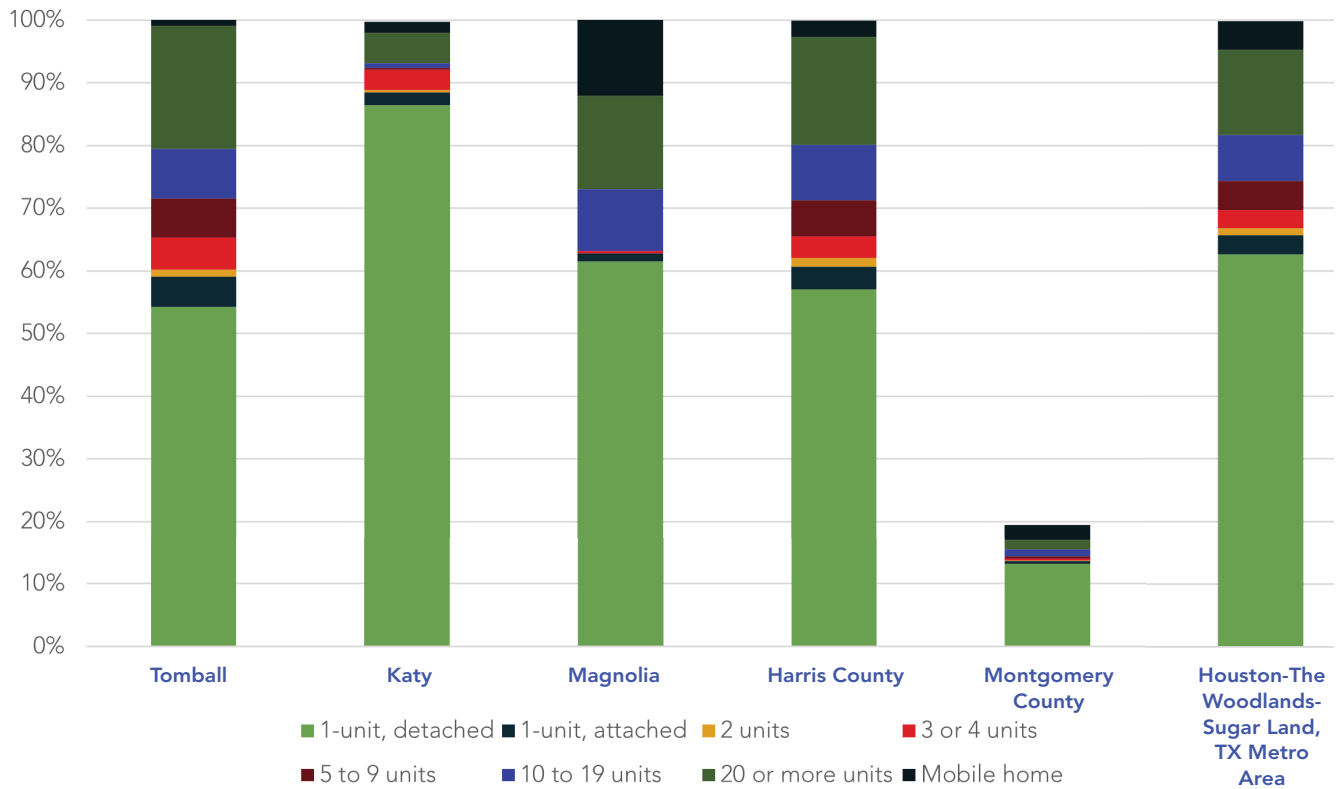
condos, and high-quality apartment units. These housing options should be developed as infill projects in Old Town and surrounding areas, as well as in new developments in vacant lands designated as medium-density residential areas on the FLUM (Map 5 on page 27). The infill and new housing development should be in synergy with the existing character and small-town charm of Tomball.

**Table 14.** Housing Type Comparison

Housing Structure	Tomball	Average Peer (Katy and Magnolia)
1-unit, detached	54.2% (-)	74.0%
1-unit, attached	4.9% (+)	1.7%
2 units	1.1% (+)	0.2%
3 or 4 units	5.1%(+)	1.8%
5 to 9 units	6.3%(+)	0.2%
10 to 19 units	7.9%(+)	5.3%
20 or more units	19.7% (+)	9.8%
Mobile home	0.9% (-)	7.0%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.0% (-)	0.1%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Figure 12.** Housing Type Comparison





Single-Family Detached House, Tomball, TX



Apartments, Tomball, TX



# COMMUNITY AMENITIES

## NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES

The proximity to amenities and services significantly influences both the quality of neighborhoods and the residents' overall quality of life. Map 14 shows the available amenities in city limits, including parks, healthcare, fresh produce, convenience stores, and schools, as well as the locations of residential developments.

Generally, Tomball neighborhoods benefit from convenient access to amenities such as grocery stores, convenience stores, healthcare facilities, and schools, all within a short drive. Additionally, several neighborhoods are situated near public parks. As the City continues to grow and more housing develops, there will be a need to increase the number of amenities. The FLUM (Map 5 on page 27) identifies areas where future residential growth is proposed. The following is a broad overview of the available amenities within the community:

### Parks and Recreation

While there are several public parks spread throughout the city limits, there is a lack of pedestrian connection between these parks. The Parks, Recreation, and Trails System Master Plan recommends future trail connections to connect public parks. These should be prioritized in the implementation of this Plan.

### Medical Services

Tomball serves as a regional healthcare hub in the larger Houston area. The recommendations outlined for the Medical District Focus Area will help provide better services and amenities for people employed in the healthcare industry.

### Fresh Produce

Stores providing access to fresh produce are concentrated along SH 249. The City should assess potential locations for additional stores in the northern and northeastern parts of the community.

### Public and Institutional Facilities

Access to public and institutional facilities is crucial for residents as it supports their well-being, education, safety, and overall quality of life. Schools were identified as assets during several public engagement events. The City should consider providing safe pedestrian and bike access to schools where appropriate.

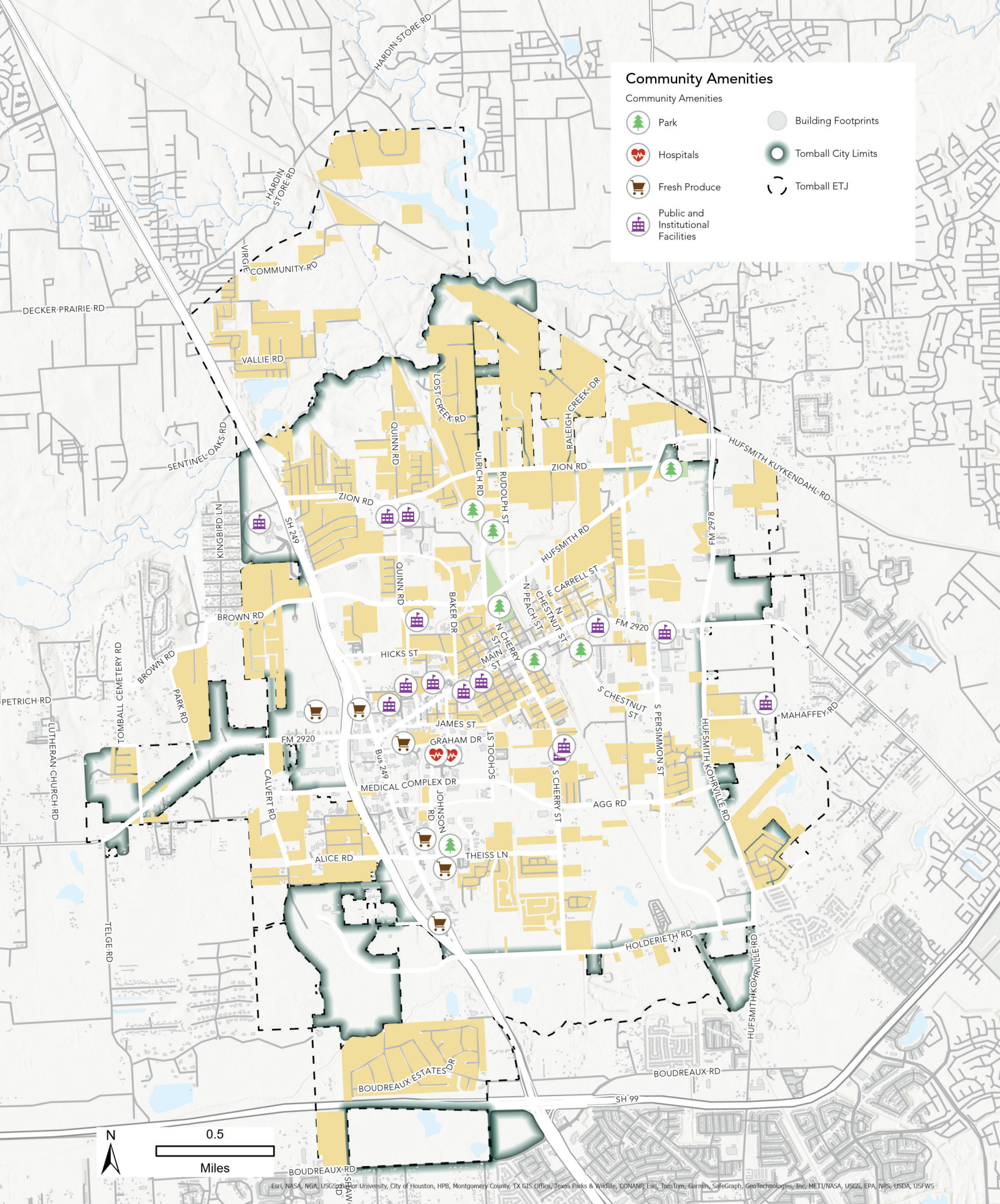


Tomball High School, Tomball, TX



Medical Facilities, Tomball, TX





Map 14. Community Amenities



# COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT

The character of a community shapes the perceptions of both residents and visitors, achieved through the cultivation and upkeep of unique and appealing aesthetics. By employing diverse strategies to preserve and elevate its character, Tomball can distinguish itself from other communities. While the word “character” is broad and encompassing, a variety of design recommendations and guidelines can be implemented to ensure the City is leaving a positive impression on residents and visitors. Design recommendations and guidelines to help achieve community character include, but are not limited to:

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities are tangible ways to enhance the visual appearance of a community and increase its character. Recreational facilities and activities are positive and attractive features that often serve to sustain neighborhoods, enhance community perception, and heighten the sense of pride and identity associated with the community. The City of Tomball should continue to implement the recommendations of the recently adopted Parks, Recreations, and Trails System Master Plan.



Juergens Park, Tomball, TX

## PLACEMAKING AND DESIGN

Placemaking is the action of creating a space that helps facilitate public interaction. Through design, location, or amenities, these places serve as focal points within a community and often help facilitate community identity and pride. Examples of placemaking areas include, but are not limited to, neighborhood parks, public pavilions, lifestyle centers, town centers, and shopping centers. It is also reflected in building design to create a distinctive look and feel for an area. The Tomball Depot Plaza, parks, and Main Street are some areas that offer opportunities for placemaking.



Tomball City Hall Plaza Space, Tomball, TX

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Tomball is home to a unique downtown known as Old Town. The area is made up of several historic and eclectic buildings that add to Tomball’s character and beauty. While preserving the character of these older structures is important, there is a necessity for upkeep and continued improvements. This can be achieved through a variety of incentives such as:

- Zoning Overlays
- Conservation Districts
- Historic Rehabilitation Incentives
- Direct Subsidies or Grants
- Preservation Easements



## GATEWAYS

Gateways are features or streetscape elements that help orient visitors to the area and help signify an entrance to the City. There are two primary classes of gateways - major and minor gateways.

### Major Gateways

Major gateway features or elements are typically located on major thoroughfares such as highways. Due to the high speeds at which vehicles are traveling, major gateways are generally larger in scale and contain designs that allow travelers to understand they are entering Tomball. These entryways serve as great locations for gateway signage and monuments, inviting people into the community. An example of major gateway scale signage in Tomball is located at the intersection of SH 249 and FM 2920. Additional major gateway monuments are suggested to be located along SH 249 at the northern city limits boundary from the north and at Holderreith Road from the south. The proposed gateways will create a sense of arrival for residents and visitors.

### Minor Gateways

Minor gateways are meant to help create an identity for a community on the street level. These features should be designed in a unified manner to enhance continuity and link elements to major gateway features. Minor gateways in Tomball can include entrances to cultural districts such as Old Town Tomball. A gateway signage for Old Town Tomball is currently located at the intersection of East Elm Street and West Main Street. More gateway signage for Old Town Tomball is suggested to be located at the intersection of Baker Drive and West Main Street and along Cherry Street to provide distinctive branding for Old Town.

## WAYFINDING AND BRANDING

Wayfinding signage in a city involves a mix of images, monuments, and physical signs to establish where you are. Strategically placed signage for both pedestrian and vehicular use allows for maximum visibility and utilization. The design of signage throughout the city should maintain consistency and may include directional signage, roadway and gateway signage.

Branding is a city symbol and slogan located on city-sponsored signage and public spaces to perpetuate a brand. It can be incorporated in gateway signage, street signs, district flags and other opportunities. Tomball should continue to incorporate lighting fixtures, stone, and landscaping features associated with new development.



Gateway Monument, Tomball, TX

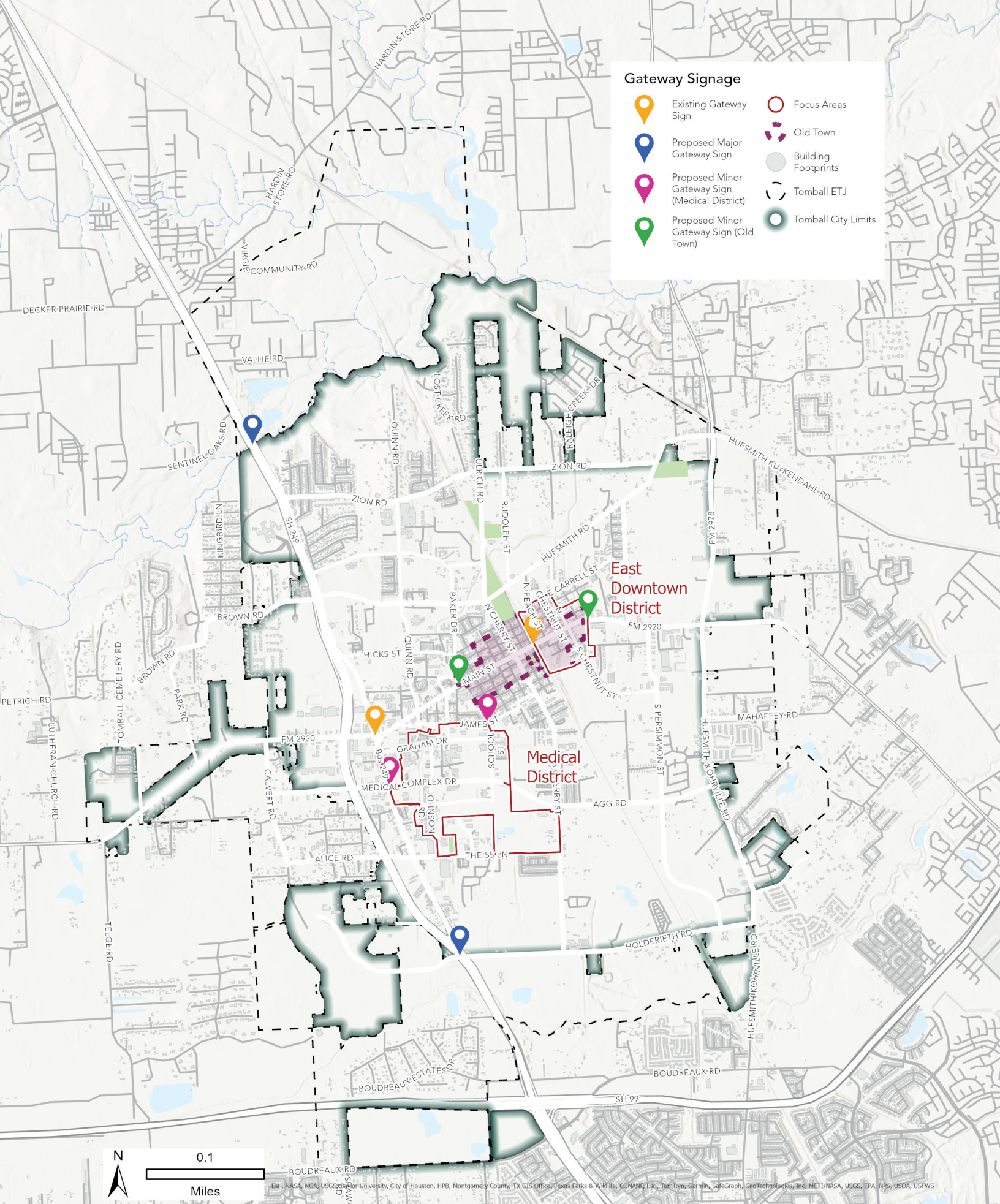


Old Town Gateway Sign, Tomball, TX



City Branding, Tomball, TX





**Map 15. Existing and Proposed Gateway Signage**



## PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

An important part of the visual makeup of a neighborhood involves the streetscape and the degree to which it provides access to all its users. The streets should not diverge from the urban fabric of the surrounding area but should complement it. Tomball aspires to be an active community that promotes healthy lifestyles. Creating streets that can be easily accessed by all age groups, abilities, and modes of transportation can help achieve this goal.

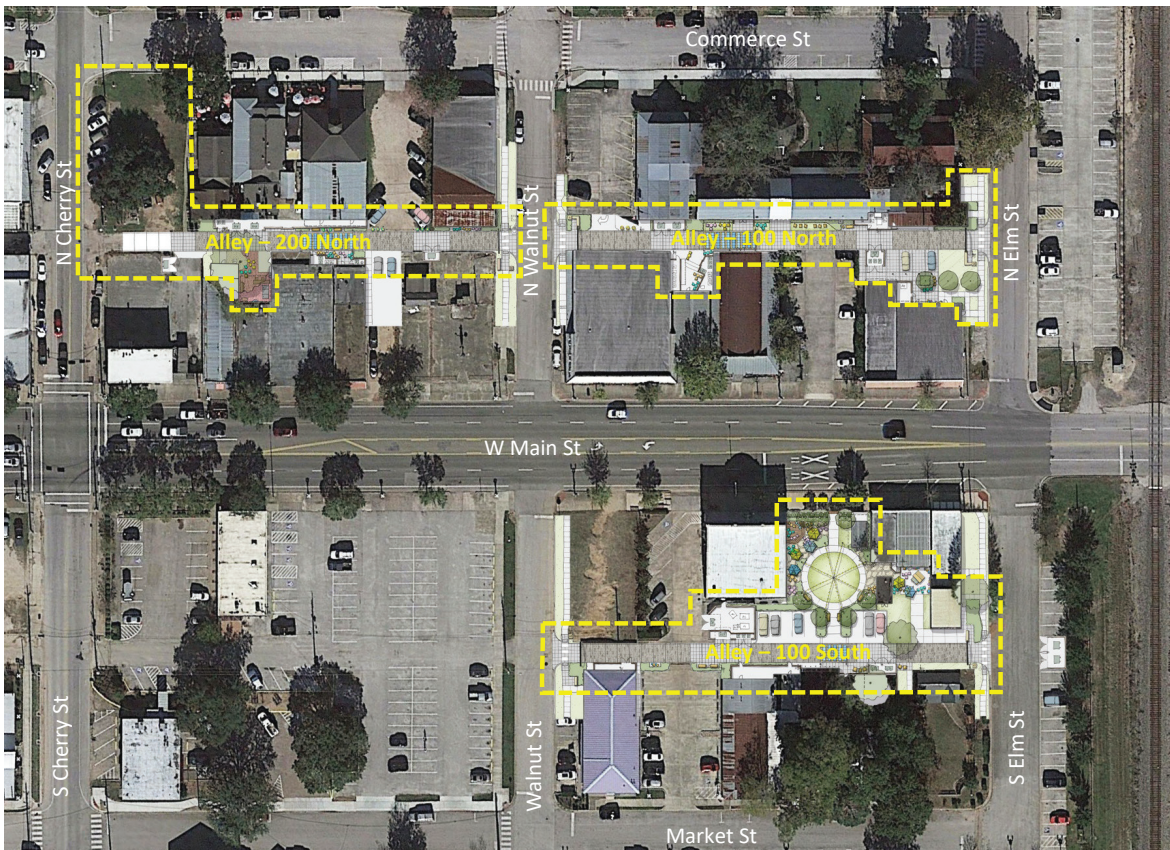
Some strategies to create more pedestrian-friendly streets include:

- Design streets in a grid pattern to increase pedestrian connectivity.
- Ensure that sidewalks are wide and that canopy trees are located between the sidewalk and the curb for enhanced safety and shade.
- Maximize the visibility of architecturally distinctive cultural facilities, civic facilities, and open space corridors.
- When possible, allow for utilities to be placed underground to minimize visual clutter.
- Limit the length of the street blocks.



Existing Alley, Tomball, TX

As part of the Strategic Work Plan 2023-2024, the TEDC has plans to enhance existing alleys along Main Street as shown below and has outlined design goals for the same. Some of the design goals include creating gateways, providing seating, incorporating decorative lighting, attracting foot traffic to Old Town businesses, and providing special focal areas for festivals. The City should continue to partner with TEDC to plan and implement enhancements to other alleys in Old Town, as proposed in Map 6 on page 34.



Alley Enhancement Locations, Tomball, TX (Source: TEDC)





Alley Enhancement Rendering, Tomball, TX (Source: TEDC)



Alley Enhancement Rendering, Tomball, TX (Source: TEDC)



# ALIGNING COMMUNITY CHARACTER WITH HOUSING NEEDS

## PROMOTING INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Residential infill refers to the development of a single lot within an existing neighborhood and may or may not be currently served by the City's utilities. Where the market is viable, Tomball's vacant lots present an opportunity for new development that fills vacant areas, continues to enhance existing neighborhoods, and takes advantage of existing utilities and road infrastructure. Desirable residential infill locations are those areas with available lots, access to existing City infrastructure, and within the city limits.

In addition to annexation and outward growth, infill and redevelopment opportunities can allow the City to grow more efficiently. Stabilizing and reinvigorating the core will ensure that all of Tomball grows and prospers. Infill development and development on previously undeveloped land, also known as greenfields, are equally important for overall community health, stability and economic success. Redevelopment within core areas requires a completely different approach than development on greenfield sites. It is only through public and financial support that revitalization of core areas can be achieved.

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

As indicated in the public engagement, there is a desire in the community to provide housing to attract young families and ensure housing for seniors. "Missing Middle Housing" is a term that describes a range of multi-family housing, including small single-family residential, duplexes, and small-scale multi-unit buildings that complement single-family neighborhoods. These housing types are important because they help provide more affordable housing options for people in different phases of the housing cycle, including young families, young professionals, empty-nesters, and the elderly. Each of these housing types can vary in price point and model. It is possible to have a mixture of affordable and premium points for each type and they can be available for lease or for purchase. The City can incorporate design standards to support the construction of high-quality homes in the Unified Development Code.



## ADAPTIVE REUSE FOR OLD RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN DOWNTOWN AND OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS

The City can utilize several tools to preserve and rehabilitate historic residential buildings in Downtown and other historic neighborhoods. One effective tool is adaptive reuse, which involves repurposing buildings that have exceeded their original function to accommodate new uses. Adaptive reuse not only revitalizes these structures but also stimulates reinvestment in neighboring properties that may have long been vacant.

It is important to recognize that adaptive reuse may not be suitable for every historic building. The City should collaborate with local officials to identify any regulatory and market challenges and work closely with property owners to determine the appropriateness of adaptive reuse for each property.

Local regulations can present hurdles to changing the use of existing properties. Zoning regulations, for instance, might prohibit certain new uses if they do not align with the property's current zoning designation. Alternatively, zoning requirements could demand additional features such as parking spaces or open areas that may not be feasible on the property. Moreover, modern building codes often pose compatibility issues with older structures. The City should conduct a thorough assessment to identify any regulatory barriers to adaptive reuse and consider updating regulations accordingly. Some potential updates could include:

- Creating a separate adaptive reuse overlay district to encourage planned reuse of structures in historic neighborhoods.
- Treating adaptive reuse projects as a distinct land-use or development type to facilitate reuse without requiring rezoning.

Source: American Planning Association | PAS QuickNotes No. 80



Adaptive Reuse, Tomball, TX



Adaptive Reuse, Tomball, TX



# NEIGHBORHOOD AND HOUSING PROGRAMS

Successful housing strategies involve a variety of techniques, both public and private, and require cooperative actions by property owners, tenants, the City, local organizations, and volunteer groups. While personal investment in property is a key component for attractive neighborhoods, the City may also positively impact and encourage private investment by creating and maintaining livable neighborhoods.

Tomball currently has a number of Public Improvement Districts, or PIDs, which is a tool used to fund specific public improvements and maintenance within the district by using assessments against the property owners within the area. This is one of many tools that can be used to fund public improvement and spur private investment in neighborhoods. Additional recommended housing and neighborhood improvement programs are described below.

## RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

### Neighborhood Conservation Districts

A neighborhood conservation overlay district (NCOD) is a zoning tool used to preserve, revitalize, protect, and enhance significant older areas within a community beyond what is specified in the standard code. The conservation overlay regulations are applied in addition to standard zoning regulations and will usually take precedence.

### Home Improvement Programs

The City can leverage funds to provide financial assistance to homeowners for home repairs and modifications. The funds can be provided as a grant for home improvements or as a partial grant where the homeowner will match funds granted by the City.

### Small-Scale Developer Program

The City can establish a support program designed to cultivate and train small-scale housing developers, improving their skills and effectiveness. This initiative could be particularly advantageous in fostering fair investment opportunities in underrepresented communities. (Example: Austin Small Developer Training Program)

### Faith-Based Partnerships

The City could collaborate with local civic and faith-based organizations to offer more substantial support to residents in the community. Involving a City building official and a builder would ensure technical expertise and coordination. While the City might seek

some financial contributions for repairs, it is expected that most of the materials, labor, and effort will be donated and volunteered.

### Housing Tax Credit Program

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Program is a key tool for channeling private investment into the creation and maintenance of affordable rental housing for low-income families. Eligible participants receive tax credits to reduce their federal tax burden in return for developing or preserving affordable rental units.

### Community Land Trust

Community Land Trusts (CLT) are nonprofit organizations managed by a board that includes CLT residents, local community members, and public officials. They offer sustainable shared equity homeownership opportunities for families and communities. In this model, the CLT retains ownership of the land, while the homeowner purchases only the house, often at a more affordable price.

### Tax Increment Financing

The City can leverage Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to capture increased property tax revenues resulting from enhanced property values in a designated area to reinvest in needed housing development projects.



## CHAPTER 7

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# Recommendations



# INTRODUCTION

The vision for this Comprehensive Plan Update is based on the input received through robust community involvement and analysis conducted during the process. To achieve the vision of this Comprehensive Plan, a number of actions are recommended that support the goals of the plan.

Recommendations in this chapter are organized by the five Goals listed in Chapter 2, and include the following:

- Growth, Capacity, and Public Infrastructure
- Land Use and Development
- Mobility
- Community Livability
- Economic Development

This planning effort builds upon the previous plan by preserving existing recommendations that are still applicable today and updating them as necessary. Through this update, the existing recommendations have been evaluated, and certain recommendations have been removed or revised based on whether the recommendations have been completed or are no longer applicable.

This chapter outlines descriptions of the individual recommendations in the implementation plan. The implementation plan in the following chapter goes into further detail to prioritize the implementation of the recommendations by establishing a time frame for initiating that action and assigning involved entities to assist with implementation.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Action Framework
- Recommendations



# ACTION FRAMEWORK

The vision, goals, and guiding principles of this Plan provide the foundation for City leadership to make policy decisions for Tomball's sustainable growth and development. The recommendations of this Plan represent the individual actions, policies, or capital improvements that, if implemented, would assist the City in achieving the established vision. Recommendations described in this chapter take the form of actions, studies, programs, or capital improvements to be completed by the City, partner agencies, or the community. They are organized by the five goals identified in Chapter 2. For each goal, a number of objectives and actions are listed to support the goal. The diagram below illustrates the framework for the implementation plan and the relationship of the vision, goals, objectives, and actions.

## GOALS

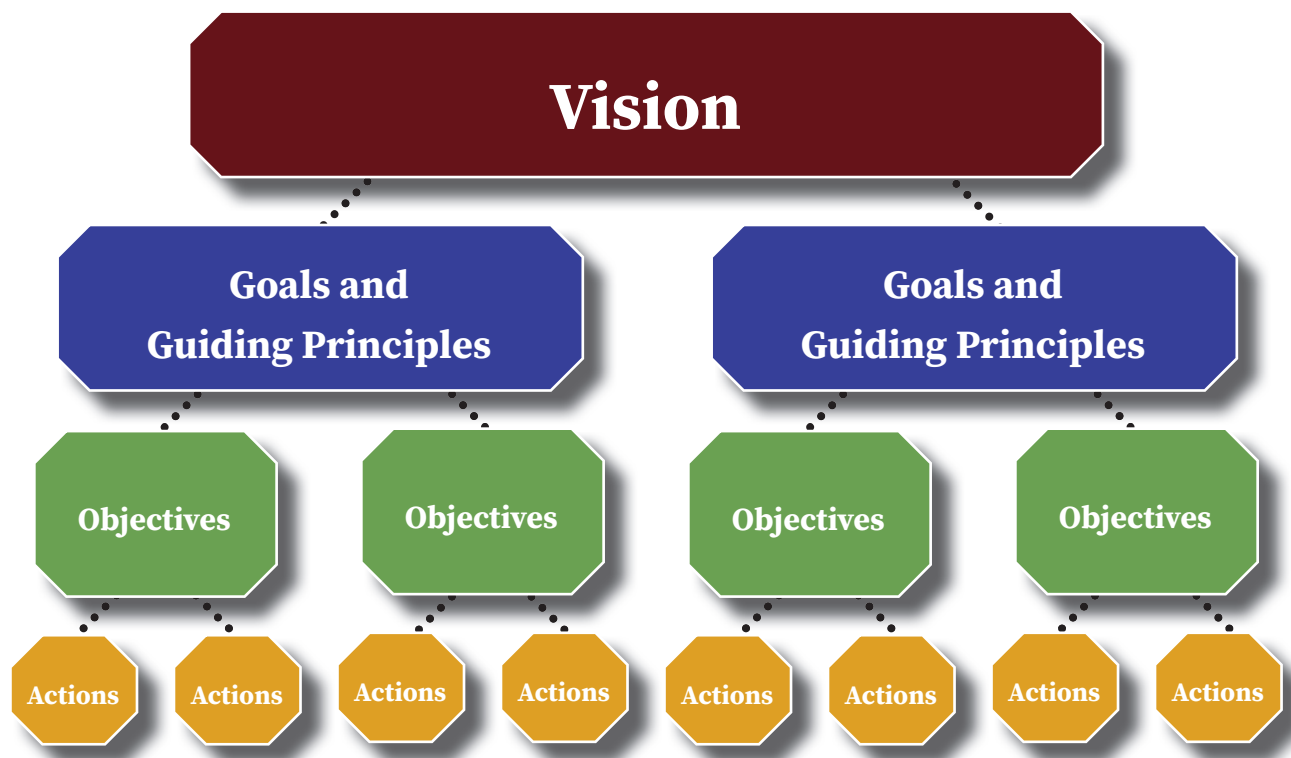
Goals describe the desired outcomes for individual plan elements. It provides a more refined direction than what is provided in the overall plan vision. The goal statements are supported by guiding principles that provide further detail about the intent of each goal.

## ACTIONS

Actions include specific strategies or steps to take in order to reach an objective. Action items are specific enough to include a recommended time frame for implementation, partners or agencies for implementation, and, in some cases, a potential cost.

## OBJECTIVES

Objectives are intended to provide more measurable direction beyond what is captured by the overall plan goals. They help to further organize plan actions into functional topics addressing a particular issue related to specific plan elements and action outcomes.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



## GROWTH, CAPACITY, AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Systematically provide high-quality public infrastructure to support current and projected development in a quality, cost effective manner.

### Objective GC 1.1: Annually monitor implementation of the City's infrastructure master plans to identify the need for an update.

#### Action GC 1.1.1: Prepare an update to the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to incorporate consistent findings related to this Comprehensive Plan.

The CIP is a multi-year process for evaluating the relative importance of all capital needs of the City of Tomball. The purpose is to conduct an orderly, progressive development of the City of Tomball. The CIP helps to itemize projects that require money which is not regularly allocated in annual operating budget. Although the City has done a great job in preparing capital improvement project lists as part of the development of the City's infrastructure master plans, all of the community's capital investment needs (from water and wastewater, to public safety, to community image and enhancement, etc.) should be evaluated and ranked against each other in accordance with the community's priorities for the future. While the City has an existing CIP, many cities consider updating the ranking and prioritization criteria based on new findings developed as part of their comprehensive plan. As such, the City should consider modifying the CIP to ensure future capital expenditures correspond to the comprehensive and competing list of priorities set out in this Plan. This should occur during the next CIP update. Moving forward, the CIP should also identify how new projects will impact long-term operations and maintenance expenses, personnel costs, and ongoing upgrades and replacements.

#### Action GC 1.1.2: Update the Water and Wastewater Master Plans every five years.

Although the City just completed an update to the City's Water Master Plan (2018) and Wastewater Master Plan (2017), it is important to continually evaluate the effectiveness of implementation and changing conditions to identify the need for an

update. This will become particularly important if there are significant changes to the City's composition of land use over time. As such, the City should annually monitor the need for updates to these two plans and budget accordingly.

#### Action GC 1.1.3: Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan concurrent with need.

The 2018 Water Master Plan identifies a series of capital improvement projects to ensure the City has the requisite water supply and distribution infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing Tomball population through 2042. The plan identifies a series of project needs totaling \$16.7 million by 2022, \$25.8 million by 2027, \$6.2 million by 2042, plus \$1.9 million in in-house projects—for a grand total of \$50.7 million. These projects focus on a few key priorities, including:

- Adding water supply capacity through groundwater wells and surface water from North Harris County Regional Water Authority
- Increasing emergency water storage capacity by adding ground storage tanks
- Improving system pressure by adding booster pumping capacity, a new elevated storage tank and constructing larger water lines
- Increasing available fire flow by adding a new elevated storage tank and looping dead-end water lines

These projects are based on assumptions of population growth and expected types and locations of new development. Moving forward, the City should monitor changing conditions and budget appropriately to meet these time frames, or accelerate or slow them down as may be necessary.



**Action GC 1.1.4: Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Wastewater Master Plan concurrent with need.**

The 2017 Wastewater Master Plan identifies a series of capital improvement projects to ensure the City has the requisite wastewater treatment capacity and collection infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing Tomball population through 2042. The plan identifies a series of project needs totaling \$10.5 million by 2022, \$20.3 million by 2027, and \$7.7 million by 2042—for a grand total of \$38.5 million. These projects focus on a few key priorities, including:

- Adding wastewater treatment capacity through plant improvements and expansions
- Additional analysis, rehabilitation, and repair of inflow and infiltration issues
- Upgrading and expansion of wastewater lines and lift stations

These projects are based on assumptions of population growth and expected types and locations of new development. Moving forward, the City should monitor changing conditions and budget appropriately to meet these time frames, or accelerate or slow them down as may be necessary.

**Action GC 1.1.5: Continue to coordinate with the North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA) and other area partners to ensure long-term water supply.**

As set out in the 2018 Water Master Plan, the City will need to secure additional water supply through 2042. This includes the addition of 2.88 millions of gallons per day (MGD) of groundwater supply by 2022, 1.44 MGD of groundwater supply by 2027, and three MGD of water supply (groundwater or surface water) by 2042.

**Action GC 1.1.6: Annually review the Master Fee Schedule to ensure adequate revenues for long-term system sustainability.**

As a means to provide high quality water and wastewater services and to make sure that Tomball stays economically competitive, the City should consider a predictable and pragmatic approach to utility rates and development impact fees. This should include a periodic evaluation of rates and fees to ensure the availability of on-going sufficient revenue to fund operations, maintenance, capital improvements, and long-term debt service.

**Action GC 1.1.7: Monitor water capacity and incorporate water conservation efforts in alignment with the water conservation plan to ensure sufficient water supply to support future growth and demand.**

While water is more prevalent in this region of Texas, water conservation should still be a priority as a means to reduce overall demand. This improves the City's ability to respond to periods of drought and reduces or delays the need for system expansion. The City can influence the reduction of water consumption through increased regulations, education, and programs that promote water conservation. This may include irrigating public areas with reclaimed water and programs such as rainwater harvesting.

**Action GC 1.1.8: Update the Waste and Wastewater Impact Fee based on the updated Future Land Use Map in this Comprehensive Plan.**

The recently adopted 2023 Water and Wastewater Impact fee Update uses the land use density and growth projection estimated from the 2019 Comprehensive Plan to develop population and commercial acreage projections for the City. The Water and Wastewater Impact Fee projections should be updated base on the land use density and growth projection estimates of the new Comprehensive Plan.

## **Objective GC 1.2: Consider policies and procedures to ensure meeting growth demands and changing regulatory requirements, while being respectful to the community's desired character.**

### **Action GC 1.2.1: Continue to monitor new regulations and requirements to ensure the existing infrastructure systems remain in compliance with changes in federal and state regulations.**

The City should strive to be aware of and prepared to address any pending state and regional regulations that impact the development community. This is particularly important as the region considers changes stemming from Atlas 14 and other drainage-related requirements.

## **Objective GC 1.3: Establish approaches to minimize flooding events and the corresponding damage in developed areas, while still positively contributing to an improved community character.**

### **Action GC 1.3.1: Implement the City's Master Drainage Plan.**

The City's adopted Master Drainage Plan identifies a strategy to reduce the community's susceptibility to future storm events. Moving forward, the City should continue to prioritize proposed projects identified for inclusion in the City's list of capital projects.

### **Action GC 1.3.2: When reviewing development proposals, evaluate cumulative impacts to hydrologic system function and performance.**

Development can have a significant impact on the hydrology of a site and while drainage requirements may be met, localized flooding still occurs. Moving forward, the City should identify proposed improvements to private land development which promotes alternatives for increased pervious treatments and improved hydrological function.

### **Action GC 1.3.3: Evaluate opportunities for multi- functional drainage improvements in Old Town.**

Although Old Town was developed under a different regulatory framework, a comprehensive evaluation of drainage issues and improvements is needed as part of a broader effort in revitalizing the core of the City. This includes localized drainage improvements and potential opportunities for regional drainage solutions which could also function as recreational areas. The Kleinwood Municipal Utility District provides a good example of a multi-functional walking garden and stormwater retention facility established on several vacant lots which were susceptible to flooding.

### **Action GC 1.3.4: Improve coordination with Harris County regarding necessary maintenance along the county's drainage corridors.**

Identify opportunities to improve coordination with Harris County Flood Control District to improve their frequency of maintenance along the Spring and Willow Creek drainage channels.

## Objective GC 1.4: Provide comprehensive parks and trail facilities.

### Action GC 1.4.1: Partner with other jurisdictions and entities in the provision of recreation opportunities.

The nearby Spring Creek Park and Burroughs Park are large regional parks that provide recreational benefits and opportunities to the Tomball community. As the City explores ways to increase recreational offerings in Tomball, it should identify opportunities to partner and/or support the future of these parks (as may be beneficial to the City). These partnerships, and other partnerships (like public-private or private enterprises), could provide the opportunity for the City to expand offerings while minimizing the overall commitment and burden upon the City.

### Action GC 1.4.2: Ensure that park and recreation projects are included on the CIP project list and consider park development fees to be assessed on new development.

It is important to proactively include parks and recreation projects as part of the City's CIP projects. This builds the case that the park system should be viewed as vital community infrastructure. Similar to other development fees for community infrastructure, the City should consider development fees for park development. This could be in the form of an impact fee. Alternately, it could be established through the development of a parkland dedication and development ordinance (see also Action GC 1.4.4).

### Action GC 1.4.3: Explore ways to maximize the use of recreational opportunities in floodplains and regional detention areas.

A significant amount of Tomball's remaining open space is located in flood-prone areas or used for detention purposes. There is a number of ways that passive recreation offerings can be programmed into these spaces at a lower cost of investment. Often time the spaces merely need to provide access and unpaved trails or the creation wet pond that remain outside of flood events. Finding a purpose such as open space with recreation element can help mitigate the development pressures in hazardous areas.

### Action GC 1.4.4: Evaluate the need for developing a parkland dedication and development ordinance and other subdivision ordinances 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.

## Objective GC 1.5: Provide effective police and fire services to support future growth and development.

### Action GC 1.5.1: Annually evaluate the need to improve or increase existing police and fire services to align with anticipated population growth and ensure appropriate level of services for new development areas.

It is important to ensure that police and fire services are adequately equipped to handle the demands of a growing population and new development areas. By annually evaluating needs, municipalities can proactively address the needs of their growing populations and ensure that police and fire services remain effective and responsive. This approach helps maintain public safety and enhances the quality of life in new development areas.

### Action GC 1.5.2: Undertake a Fire Department facility study to prepare for long-term station development to align with population growth.

It can be challenging for small-town departments to meet the national standards for response times. As the City grows over time and traffic congestion increases, it will become more difficult to meet these standards and could have a negative affect on the City's ISO rating. ISO standards indicate that all built upon areas of the City are to be within 11/2 miles of a fully equipped first-due engine company and within 21/2 miles of a fully equipped ladder service company.





## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Work with the development community to meet the needs of a growing community while protecting the valued small-town character of Tomball.

### Objective LU 2.1: Implement the future land use plan to promote development that results in the desired character for Tomball.

#### Action LU 2.1.1: Evaluate new development applications to ensure it results in the desired character areas set out in the Future Land Use Plan.

New development applications should be evaluated to ensure they perpetuate the desired character set out in the Future Land Use Plan. This will be accomplished through the decision-making approval process regarding development and redevelopment. The transition of the Future Land Use Plan from being solely use-based to now identifying differing areas of character is intended to provide increased flexibility for the development community, where a focus on the resulting character of development is of higher importance than just the type of use or structure on the lot. Moving forward, additional flexibility should be considered with a focus on ensuring the siting of long-term compatible land uses.

#### Action LU 2.1.2: Ensure that business parks and industrial development are built and maintained in a manner that is respectful to neighboring land uses.

As a means to reduce conflict between abutting land uses and the overall quality and character of the built environment, it is important to transition or buffer land uses that contain activities that are less compatible to other non-similar uses. This can be accomplished by “stepping down” land uses from more intense to less intense uses, implementing buffer regulations to preserve open space, and/or strengthening landscaping requirements to soften the transition between uses that have differing intensities of development and operations.

#### Action LU 2.1.3: Utilize the development review process to ensure parks, trails, sidewalks, and other amenities are considered at the time of development and redevelopment.

All development proposals should be evaluated for consistency with the City’s established master plans, including thoroughfare, trails, and drainage plans. This is particularly important for new residential development, but could also affect new nonresidential development and redevelopment. The highest priority is the dedication of land or acquisition of an access easement to facilitate growth and connectivity of the citywide trail and drainage system. An additional priority would be developer assistance in constructing or dedicating trails or recreational amenities as part of new development or redevelopment.

#### Action LU 2.1.4: Guide compatible development to create a Medical District with complimentary land uses and improved connectivity to Old Town.

The Comprehensive Plan details the Medical District Focus Area (refer to Map 9 on page 39). The City should ensure that this district incorporates the planned mixed-use spaces, medical facilities, and both medium- and high-density residential areas as depicted in the Future Land Use Map (Map 5 on page 27). Additionally, the development should feature recreational amenities, including parks and trails, as well as pedestrian infrastructure to link the district with Old Town.

Work with TEDC to attract appropriate businesses to the Medical District to ensure that people residing in, working in, and visiting the area have access to quality recreational amenities .

### **Action LU 2.1.5: Leverage the Texas Main Street Program to revitalize East Main Street.**

The Texas Main Street Program, managed by the Texas Historic Commission, provides resources and technical assistance to preserve and revitalize Main Street communities across Texas. The City should utilize this program to enhance economic vitality, achieve preservation objectives, and revitalize both Old Town and the East Downtown District Focus Area (Map 6 on page 34 and Map 8 on page 38).

### **Action LU 2.1.6: Work with TEDC to attract local businesses to East Downtown District to improve the economic vibrancy of the area.**

The TEDC provides a variety of incentives and resources to support economic development in Tomball. The City should work to link interested business owners with these resources to attract suitable businesses to East Downtown and to enhance and sustain the economic vitality of existing businesses in the area.

### **Action LU 2.1.7: Assess the feasibility of financing tools in Old Town, East Downtown, and Medical District to incentivize developers and to fund infrastructure required for large redevelopment projects.**

In Texas, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones are implemented under Chapter 311 of Texas Local Government Code. These districts capture certain property tax revenue generated in the district and then reinvest it back into the district through the development of infrastructure and improvements. TIRZs operate with the idea that the cyclical connection between property tax revenue generated by private investment within the district, when applied to public investment within the district, creates a snowball effect in which redevelopment is encouraged and accelerated. The City should assess the feasibility for new TIRZ for Old Town, East Downtown, and Medical District to incentivize redevelopment in these areas.

## **Objective LU 2.2: Evaluate City policies to ensure that Tomball has enabling regulations and incentives to advance desired character while maintaining a responsive and flexible development process.**

### **Action LU 2.2.1: Review and evaluate development codes to align with the community's vision for the future as set out in this comprehensive plan.**

Use the comprehensive plan to develop indicators and metrics through which the City's current zoning, subdivision, and other development regulations can be evaluated to determine required regulatory amendments to ensure consistency. As part of the ongoing Unified Development Code (UDC) update, inconsistencies between the newly adopted plan and the existing code can be identified along with items for procedural or substantive update, and recommended next steps.

### **Action LU 2.2.2: Evaluate the need for new or revised zoning districts to increase development opportunities and improve the character of development.**

As set out in the Chapter 3 Future Land Use, the City may be better served by establishing new or revised zoning districts and standards to facilitate the creation of differing areas of character in the City. As part of the ongoing UDC update, the zoning districts can be revised to align with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Updates could include exploring the addition of zoning districts to encourage missing middle housing types and encouraging infill development.

### **Action LU 2.2.3: Continue to evaluate and make necessary improvements to the development review process.**

To maintain the overall positive impression of the Tomball City government, it is important to continue to identify opportunities to promote a development process that is responsive and predictable. This positive assessment of the Community Development Department will help foster a business-friendly atmosphere and encourage continued growth of local entrepreneurship. The City's creation and use of the Development Guide is a good example of the types of efforts which make the development review process easier to navigate. Additionally, the City should conduct an annual review and update of the Master Fee Schedule to ensure that fees are commensurate with the effort to process development applications.

### **Objective LU 2.3: Promote development that creates complimentary relationships between differing land uses.**

#### **Action LU 2.3.1: Encourage the location of support services such as schools, parks, small-scale employment, and retail that is compatible with the surrounding residential character.**

The location of community facilities and services and limited commercial services within and near existing and proposed neighborhoods has the potential to create mutually-beneficial synergies and a higher quality of life. The Appropriate Land Uses sections of the Chapter 3 Future Land Use does provide for some flexibility in locating compatible secondary uses (e.g., parks, schools, public facilities, and limited commercial services) near residential land uses. Successful implementation of this will require revisions to the City's Development Code to ensure appropriate compatibility is achieved between differing intensities of land uses.

#### **Action LU 2.3.2: Require that new residential developments provide pedestrian linkages to parks, schools, and other public facilities, where appropriate.**

Proximity and accessibility to parks, schools, trails, and other public facilities has been shown to improve the quality of life and positively impact property values. This is a benefit to both individual residents and the overall City tax rolls. As such, the City should evaluate the Development Code and review process to ensure that new development connects and/or integrates these types of amenities into their overall designs. Implementation of this could be a public action (e.g., a school located within a neighborhood), private action (development of a segment of the overall citywide trail system), or through a public/private partnership (e.g., a public park within a neighborhood). The overall intent is to create quality, complete, and enduring neighborhoods which will serve Tomball residents long into the future.

### **Objective LU 2.4: Protect the rural character and continued ranching or agriculture uses, where appropriate, to maintain the rural lifestyle in Tomball.**

#### **Action LU 2.4.1: Work with area partners to develop educational materials explaining opportunities and benefits for rural land preservation.**

As a means to protect the highly desired small town atmosphere of Tomball, development patterns should promote opportunities to preserve open space and natural areas. This will require both the City and area partners to encourage the development community to embrace methods of preservation. This may also require improvements to the City's Development Code to ensure larger lot neighborhoods and subdivisions have lot and building standards which result in a rural character (i.e., larger lot sizes, widths and setbacks). Alternately, the same rural character could be achieved with smaller lot sizes and larger amounts of open space (i.e., conservation subdivisions).



## **Objective LU 2.5: Increase housing choice by allowing for a mix of styles, densities, and price ranges located within appropriate locations.**

### **Action LU 2.5.1: Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to identify appropriate areas for, and development of, transitional residential.**

A need for more varied housing options for young families and seniors was identified during the public input process. The community expressed a need for more large-lot single-family residential, patio homes, small-lot single-family residential, and townhomes. Too often, these types of non-single-family detached products are developed as an island with limited supporting amenities. But, if developed properly, these types of housing (including multi-family) can become an effective transition between lower-intensity single-family detached uses and higher-intensity nonresidential uses. As set out in Chapter 3 Future Land Use, the City has the opportunity to promote appropriately located transitional residential housing at various locations. These uses could include attached residential products, senior housing, or multi-family. The close proximity would provide the transitional residential areas with access to community services (e.g., retail or medical) in a walkable/urban environment. It is also a benefit to these areas because there are more people living in close proximity to the jobs, retail shops, civic uses, and other similar nonresidential uses predominant in these areas. As part of the Unified Development Code Update, the City can incorporate design standards to support the construction of high-quality homes.

### **Action LU 2.5.2: Promote and facilitate infill development, especially in Old Town to utilize existing infrastructure and reduce sprawl.**

Encouraging infill development in Old Town can revitalize underused properties and enhance local attractions while preserving the charming, small-town atmosphere of Tomball. To achieve this, the City should implement development standards that highlight local characteristics in new projects. Additionally, the City should assess which types of uses would be suitable for areas targeted for infill development. This approach will foster a more comfortable environment for active transportation, allowing residents to better engage with their surroundings and boost the area's economic vitality.

## **Objective LU 2.6: Maintain and enhance the overall quality of existing housing stock in Tomball.**

### **Action LU 2.6.1: Continue to promote the revitalization of existing housing stock, especially in areas near Old Town.**

Existing housing stock should be retained when possible, as it contributes to the desired character of the community. Existing housing, however, gets neglected during times when there is a greater focus on greenfield development on the periphery. Accordingly, the City should work to promote renovation throughout the older, existing areas of Tomball. This could include establishing a home rehabilitation program for owner-occupied housing units (e.g., those promoted by Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs). It could also include partnering with non-City entities (e.g., community groups) to enhance existing neighborhoods (e.g., annual community clean up days, etc.).

### **Action LU 2.6.2: Establish neighborhood quality standards and monitor through establishing a conditions inventory GIS parcel data.**

To ensure that residential neighborhoods stay vibrant, review and monitor the quality of housing units to proactively anticipate signs of disinvestment. Establishing and documenting neighborhood and housing quality conditions or metrics using GIS promotes a quantitative evaluation, which in turn helps highlight areas for targeted investment. Quantitative analysis also promotes a transparent and defensible reasoning for public investment.

**Action LU 2.6.3: Identify and prioritize neighborhood revitalization activities within the City's Capital Improvement Plan.**

Strategically identify revitalization projects (e.g., street enhancements) to be implemented in areas in need of stimulation to promote overall neighborhood improvement.

**Action LU 2.6.4: Ensure the incorporation of a variety of housing for new and infill development to provide affordable housing options for residents including young families and seniors.**

Engage proactively with developers to collect feedback and address any shortcomings in existing processes. Make sure developers are informed about available resources and incentives, and regularly review and update protocols based on feedback and evolving development trends.



*Duplex Example (Location Unknown)*



## MOBILITY

Strive to address mobility concerns by partnering with other jurisdictions as well as promoting alternative routes and modes across the community.

### **Objective MO 3.1: Maintain, through regular review, a transportation plan that supports the planned growth and development patterns within Tomball while promoting public safety.**

#### **Action MO 3.1.1: Partner with the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), Harris County, and the City of Houston to understand and influence the changes in regional travel patterns that impact Tomball.**

The traffic that travels in and through Tomball is a direct reflection of the transportation decisions occurring both within Tomball and the greater region. As such, the City should actively partner with H-GAC, Harris County, and the City of Houston to monitor and influence regional transportation decisions impacting Tomball. This involves participating in regional transportation discussions and monitoring the planned and funded projects near Tomball as set out in H-GAC's Draft 2045 Regional Transportation Plan, the City of Houston's Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (e.g., acquiring ROW for Holderrieth Road), etc. Appropriate changes should be evaluated, considered, and integrated into the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTP).

#### **Action MO 3.1.2: Prepare an update to the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan.**

A Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTP) is a more detailed planning effort that focuses solely on improving the citywide short- and long-term mobility needs of the City. It further refines the policies and actions contained in this Plan and uses performance management principles, measures, and benchmarks to craft solutions which optimize the entire system. While it analyzes a variety of different transportation metrics, its primary focus is to develop short- and long-term strategies for implementation, and identification of transportation related capital improvement projects, cost estimates, and project selection and prioritization. The Comprehensive Plan includes an update to the MTP as illustrated on Map 11 on page 54. The City should continue to update the MTP every five years as transportation needs and priorities change.

#### **Action MO 3.1.3: Consider, where appropriate, an Industrial Street Classification within the Major Thoroughfare Plan to accommodate heavy commercial vehicles and development of truck routes within the City limits.**

Tomball has a large percentage of industrial development, and this number is increasing each year. Heavy commercial vehicles cause higher levels of street degradation and require wider travel lanes and turning radii as well as potential provision for off-facility sidewalks or oversized side-paths. An Industrial Street Classification will keep heavy commercial vehicles on roads that are made to support their impacts and will provide increased levels of safety for all users of the Tomball transportation system.

#### **Action MO 3.1.4: Consider the establishment of a transportation impact fee program which includes all roadways identified in the Major Thoroughfare Plan.**

A transportation impact fee program can help fund transportation infrastructure improvements by charging fees to new developments, ensuring that all roadways identified in the MTP are adequately supported. This would include developing a fee structure that fairly distributes costs among new developments based on their impact on the transportation network. By implementing a transportation impact fee program, municipalities can ensure that new developments contribute to the cost of necessary infrastructure improvements, helping to maintain and enhance the transportation network as the community grows.



## **Objective MO 3.2: Reduce and manage traffic congestion.**

### **Action MO 3.2.1: Develop and implement a corridor timing strategy and other Transportation System Management (TSM) solutions for major thoroughfares in conjunction with other transportation agencies.**

Synchronization of signalized intersections is a traffic management tool used to prioritize traffic signals and improve traffic flow along corridors. Properly timed consecutive signals allow traffic to proceed more smoothly, benefiting both pedestrians and vehicles. Over time, however, changes in traffic patterns, infrastructure, and technology can reduce the effectiveness of this approach, as has been observed in Tomball. Moving forward, the City should regularly collaborate with TxDOT and Harris County to update and refine signal timing strategies as new technologies and data-driven solutions become available, ensuring the system continues to maximize traffic flow and minimize congestion.

### **Action MO 3.2.2: Perform safety audits at high accident locations to minimize the congestion- related impacts of crashes.**

A road safety performance examination audit should be performed on high accident existing roads or intersections by an independent audit team. The audit should not only address motorized traffic but consider all potential road users.

### **Action MO 3.2.3: Make improvements to east/west thoroughfares through public and private investment.**

Many of the east/west thoroughfares through Tomball are not designed for the now high amounts of regional commuting traffic they encounter on a daily basis. Since the last Major Thoroughfare Plan Report (2009) was prepared, several east/west corridors have been added and improved, including Zion Road (now a major east/west minor arterial with connections across the entire City and with a connection under the Tomball Tollway) and Medical Complex Drive (now a four-lane major arterial parkway terminating at the Tomball Tollway). These have helped to create additional east-west crosscity connectivity for the Tomball community. Moving forward, particularly as it relates to accommodating regional traffic patterns, these roadways will need to be upgraded to safely handle the anticipated high volumes of traffic.

## Objective MO 3.3: Develop and Implement context-sensitive transportation options.

### Action MO 3.3.1: Draft a comprehensive context sensitive solutions policy and submit to all transportation agencies for their consideration.

A context-sensitive solutions (CSS) policy should be prepared to ensure commitment from the City and other agency officials regarding the character and treatment of roadway improvements in Tomball. This is particularly important in a community that values maintaining its small-town charm. This approach is intended to inform other jurisdictions of the desired outcomes for community thoroughfares. As streets are redeveloped or improved, signature elements (e.g., the drainage swales which help to create a rural character along many of the City's roadways) should be identified for possible protection prior to finalizing design and construction plans. An interdisciplinary group of landscape architects, planners, or urban designers should be included as early in the process as possible when a street is considered for improvement. Preliminary engineering reports should be used to identify solutions that combine appropriate best practices and design standards, while also exploring specific strategies to preserve the character building signature elements of that street. Standard cross-sections should be used for guidance, but should maintain flexibility and be adjusted as necessary using CSS.

### Action MO 3.3.2: Develop objectives, detailed standards, and guidelines for the treatment of public streetscapes to improve safety and walkability; recommendations should address street trees, street lighting, street furniture, traffic calming, and other pertinent issues.

Establishing clear standards and policies for Tomball's street system will help provide direction for how pedestrian, parking, freight, landscaping, driveway access, etc. will be accommodated within the public realm of the right-of-way. This direction will be valuable for both the general public, the City, and the development community regarding the City's preferences and expectations for Tomball's streets. This should be undertaken as part of the update to the City's Major Thoroughfare Plan (MTP) Update (see Action MO 3.1.2). Follow up modifications to the City's Development Code would be warranted.

### Action MO 3.3.3: Continue to partner with area agencies and stakeholders to implement the improvements set out in the FM 2920 Access Management Study (2008).

Although the study covered a much broader geographic area, it did include specific recommendations to improve the multi-modal flow of traffic and other users in and through Tomball. A series of recommendations were specific to Downtown Tomball which may still be warranted, including raised medians (with pedestrian refuges), widening and improving sidewalks, adding wayfinding signage, etc.

## Objective MO 3.4: Expand and Improve Local Transportation Infrastructure to provide more choice.

### Action MO 3.4.1: Provide accessible, convenient, and safe ped-bike infrastructure connecting destinations within the identified focus areas as well as destinations across the railroad.

The community identified a need for more walkability in Downtown Tomball as well as more trail and sidewalk connections to key destinations throughout the City including proposed sidewalks downtown and along Agg Road and Persimmon Lane east of the railroad. Improving the connectivity of the ped-bike network is a crucial step in providing residents with more transportation choices for getting to and from daily necessities.

### **Action MO 3.4.2: Implement the recommendations of the Major Thoroughfare Plan included in the Comprehensive Plan.**

Implementing the recommendations of the Major Thoroughfare Plan included in the Comprehensive Plan is crucial for expanding and improving local transportation infrastructure because it provides a strategic framework for developing a cohesive, efficient, and interconnected network of roadways that accommodate a more complete range of transportation modes.

## **Objective MO 3.5: Protect the community from hazards related to ground transportation.**

### **Action MO 3.5.1: Pursue grade-separated rail crossings for reducing street/rail conflicts, where feasible.**

To enhance safety and reduce conflicts between rail and road traffic, the City should pursue grade-separated rail crossings where feasible. Grade-separated crossings, such as overpasses or underpasses, eliminate the potential for vehicle-rail collisions by clearly separating the roadway from the railway. Efforts should also aim to minimize the number of rail crossings to improve overall traffic flow and safety. Alternative solutions should be evaluated during the planning process to address specific needs and constraints. Additionally, this initiative could be integrated with a Quiet Zone Study to further reduce noise impacts on nearby neighborhoods.

### **Action MO 3.5.2: Use technology to improve safety at grade crossings that cause the least environmental harm (e.g., automated horn systems).**

When applicable, new technologies such as automated horn systems at grade crossings can be used to increase danger awareness and safety levels. The goal is to install devices that increase the public's awareness of their surroundings and the dangers that are present. In the age of smartphones, people are operating at a lower awareness level than ever before and audio devices such as these can really make a difference.

### **Action MO 3.5.3: Identify strategic locations to implement traffic calming measures to reduce speeds and deter cut-through traffic.**

Traffic calming strategies such as chicanes, curb bulbouts, or even just street trees all are proven methods for reducing the speed of traffic and improving safety particularly in downtown and residential contexts. These tools should first be added to strategic locations that have a history of traffic incidents or crashes and from there expanded to other key locations throughout Tomball.

### **Action MO 3.5.4: Incorporate transportation safety guidance in road design standards.**

Tomball should update its road design standards to align with the latest safety guidelines and best practices, ensuring a transportation network that is safer, more efficient, and inclusive for all users. By incorporating contemporary standards from authoritative sources like the AASHTO Green Book, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and NACTO's Urban Street and Bikeway Design Guides, a city can create streets that better accommodate a variety of transportation modes, from cars to pedestrians, cyclists, or regional transit riders. Updating road design standards allows for the integration of proven safety measures, such as proper lane widths, effective traffic control devices, pedestrian-friendly intersections, and traffic calming features, all of which help reduce accidents and fatalities.



## **Objective MO 3.6: Establish an on- and off-street trail network to connect key destinations in Tomball.**

### **Action MO 3.6.1: Enhance and maintain pedestrian safety through the inclusion of well-designed streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic control devices, and school routes throughout the City.**

Pedestrian and bicyclist safety should be improved through the inclusion of enhancements to streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic control devices, and school routes. Pedestrian safety may also be improved with targeted enforcement of traffic safety laws along prominent pedestrian routes

### **Action MO 3.6.2: Monitor long-term needs for an on- street active transportation network in Tomball.**

Although a system of on-street bike lanes has not been a priority for the Tomball community, FM 2920 does include a signed and striped shoulder bicycle route. As the City continues to grow, the City should reevaluate the need for establishing a dedicated on-street bicycle network.

### **Action MO 3.6.3: Prioritize and implement recommendations of the active transportation plan include in this Comprehensive Plan.**

One of the key objectives of this plan was to establish an on-and off-street trail network to connect key destination in Tomball and implementing this Plan's proposed active transportation network is one of the first steps in achieving that goal.

### **Action MO 3.6.4: Implement the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan to enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other amenities in the city.**

Implement the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan to activate parks and other areas, such as Martin Luther King Jr. Park. Once developed, the park will provide multiple recreational features for kids and adults. Applying the recommendations will help improve key destinations that are not currently connected along the existing pedestrian network.

### **Action MO 3.6.5: Identify appropriate locations for parks and trail networks within the Medical District.**

Strategically select locations for parks and trail networks that enhance community well-being, provide recreational opportunities, and preserve natural landscapes.

## **Objective MO 3.7: Enhance parking opportunities in the Old Town area.**

### **Action MO 3.7.1: Implement wayfinding signage throughout the Old Town area to assist visitors in easily locating parking facilities.**

Implementing wayfinding signage in the Old Town area can significantly enhance the visitor experience by making it easier to locate parking facilities. Conduct a thorough survey of Old Town to identify key locations where signage is needed, such as main entry points, intersections, and near popular destinations. Map 6 on page 34 identifies locations for potential parking signage in Old Town.

### **Action MO 3.7.2: Conduct a parking management plan to document the available parking spaces in Old Town Core to identify if additional parking needs to be added.**

A parking management plan is a comprehensive strategy designed to optimize the use of parking resources. It includes a thorough evaluation of current parking facilities, encompassing both on-street and off-street spaces, and examines their usage and turnover rates. The plan seeks to meet present and future parking needs through various strategies, such as enhancing signage, enforcing time restrictions, and integrating technology for real-time parking updates and mobile payments. It may also propose new parking facilities if required. By involving stakeholders and gathering community input, a parking management plan ensures that parking remains accessible, efficient, and sustainable, thereby improving the overall experience for residents, businesses, and visitors.



## COMMUNITY LIVABILITY

Continue to recognize Old Town as an important cultural center and historic asset of the community and enhance Tomball's sense of place and quality of life.

### Objective CL 4.1: Expand on the success of Old Town as a source of community pride, entertainment, commerce, and employment.

#### Action CL 4.1.1: Identify alternative financing solutions to address the growing infrastructure needs of Old Town.

Preserving the character and small-town feel of Old Town was a high priority for the Tomball community. This is particularly difficult while at the same time working towards growing and expanding what is working well in downtown. Moving forward, the City should continue to focus on improving the infrastructure and facilities which serve the Old Town area. This could include redevelopment of public streets and pedestrian accommodations, adding area furnishings and amenities (e.g., adding a public restroom on the north side), increasing public space, and other such enhancements which support the small business establishments prevalent in the area. This could be achieved by exploring financing opportunities with the Tomball Economic Development Corporation to address façade improvements and growing infrastructure needs in Old Town. Also, this may require evaluating the feasibility of employing public finance mechanisms such as Tax Increment Reinvestments Zones (TIRZ). A TIRZ can be used by local governments in Texas to spur development in designated areas that may be underdeveloped or blighted. In general, the creation of these zones incentivizes growth through initial public investments that are repaid through future increases in assessed value of properties within the zone. To establish a TIRZ, local governments must first define the area the zone will be comprised, prepare a financing plan, hold a public hearing on the zone's creation, and allow property owners potentially included in the zone to protest inclusion. The financing plan and a plan for development is also put forward to the local taxing units within the zone. In Texas, those taxing units can decide on their own level of participation in the TIRZ (from 0% to 100% of incremental tax revenue). A board put together for the TIRZ must only approve the plan for it to be approved and initiated by the local government. Additional financing mechanisms (e.g., a BID and PID district) could also be considered.

#### Action CL 4.1.2: Support regular events, activities, and celebrations and develop/expand venues to host them.

Old Town is a unique destination in Tomball which attracts both residents and regional visitors. Strong downtowns thrive as a result of a combination of reasons, one of which is a diversified events calendar and regular programming. As such, it is recommended that the City continue to evaluate opportunities for additional, diversified events in and around downtown to provide an enhanced quality of life for residents and increase the area's local and regional draw. As visitation to Old Town continues to grow, consideration may be warranted to identify additional investments (e.g., street tree replacement program) or other interventions (e.g., outdoor display of merchandising regulations or increased enforcement) which may be needed to help facilitate daily, weekly, and seasonable operations and annual events and festivals.

#### Action CL 4.1.3: Develop a Tourism Strategic Plan that includes the creation or enhancement of destinations and event venues in Tomball to identify and implement appropriate strategies for expanding tourism in Tomball.

Tomball has positioned itself as a must see destination in the Houston metropolitan area and continues to grow its economic base through tourism. As such, the City should work closely with the Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC), the Tomball Economic Development Corporation and other area partners to support and attract local businesses which bring visitors to Tomball. This may involve the preparation of a Tourism Strategic Plan to identify appropriate collaborative strategies for growing tourism in Tomball. It may also involve increased promotion of Tomball through extensive advertising to cover all media outlets (i.e., radio and television promotion, print and Internet advertising,

social media, and direct mail). One such promotion could include an outreach ad campaign to nearby communities to cross promote Tomball area hotels for out-of-city sports tournaments. In this regard, the City is looking to capture additional overnight stays and other sales tax generating activity in Tomball.

**Action CL 4.1.4: Develop and implement a strategy to develop public art and cultural amenities in Old Town.**

The addition of public art in Old Town promotes the overall desired character. This area is intended to be the cultural heart of the community and art, like the sculptures at Railroad Depot Plaza, is an expression of the City's heritage. As such, the City should further identify opportunities to add public art in the Downtown area which celebrates Tomball's history and heritage.

**Action CL 4.1.5: Develop marketing and branding efforts specifically targeting tourists with advertising campaigns to visit Old Town and stay overnight.**

To attract tourists to Old Town and encourage overnight stays, a comprehensive marketing and branding strategy should be developed. This involves creating a unique and appealing brand identity that highlights Old Town's distinctive features, such as its historical landmarks, cultural events, and local cuisine.

**Objective CL 4.2: Develop a citywide plan for beautification, which would include gateways, wayfinding signage, enhanced landscaping, etc.**

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**Action CL 4.2.1: Establish a program to fund community image enhancement projects in Tomball.**

Identifying strategies to enhance community pride and image is an important investment in creating a strong and sustainable community. These investments provide the opportunity to create a sense of place, a sense of pride, and sense of ownership for the citizens of Tomball. Oftentimes, these investments increase the attractiveness and quality of place, which then become important economic development talking and selling points when trying to recruit new businesses to the area in addition to being inviting to prospective residents.

Through implementation of these improvements (see Map 6 on page 34 and Map 15 on page 82), Tomball can further set itself apart as a community that "embraces growth and prosperity without comprising its' sense of place and charm." This can be accomplished through strategically located gateways, signage, wayfinding and branding elements as proposed in this Plan. The City could assess the potential of using Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds for implementing this action item.

**Action CL 4.2.2: Develop and implement a wayfinding signage program in Tomball.**

Wayfinding systems include information and signage intended to guide and enhance people's understanding and experience moving in and through a community. Wayfinding can also be an important economic development tool as jurisdictions are oftentimes competing for the same tourist and visitor dollars. A successful wayfinding signage system provides visitors the tools they need to successfully navigate the City, helping them to discover unique events, attractions, and destinations on their own. For Tomball, this is particularly important in Old Town in order to provide visitors with necessary guidance to public parking. Moving forward, the City should consider a comprehensive wayfinding signage system denoting key destinations and important landmarks (e.g., City Hall, Old Town Tomball and the Depot, Tomball ISD High School and stadium, Lone Star College, the Medical Center, etc). This could also include coordinating a phone app with the GTACC, wayfinding and informational kiosks in Old Town, printed maps and brochures, etc



### **Action CL 4.2.3: Develop marketing and branding materials that promote Tomball's quality of life and business climate.**

To effectively promote Tomball's quality of life and business climate, marketing and branding materials should highlight the town's unique attributes and advantages. These materials should showcase Tomball's vibrant community, excellent schools, and diverse recreational opportunities, emphasizing the town's family-friendly atmosphere and rich cultural heritage. Additionally, they should highlight the thriving local economy, supportive business environment, and strategic location that make Tomball an ideal place for businesses to grow and prosper. Utilizing a mix of digital and traditional media, including engaging social media content, informative brochures, and eye-catching advertisements, can effectively communicate these messages. By presenting a cohesive and attractive image, these marketing efforts can attract new residents, visitors, and businesses to Tomball, reinforcing its reputation as a great place to live, work, and invest.

### **Objective CL 4.3: Capitalize on opportunities to further create a defined sense of place in Tomball.**

#### **Action CL 4.3.1: Actively inventory, monitor, and manage trees to maintain the health of existing Tomball urban forest.**

To properly capture the benefits of beautification investment by the City, it is necessary that significant trees are maintained and that younger trees are able to grow into trees of significance. This effort will include establishing best practices for the maintenance of trees on City property and street trees within the public rights-of-way. This may involve the adoption of City policies on tree planting and removal policies and who is responsible for tree maintenance in the public rights-of-way. It may also necessitate the consideration of a tree preservation ordinance.

#### **Action CL 4.3.2: Enhance public landscaping along prominent corridors and entries into Tomball.**

Landscaping enhancements along key corridors and activity centers are intended to help improve the overall aesthetic appeal of Tomball. Focusing efforts on these prominent areas will result in more exposure and return on investment for the City.

#### **Action CL 4.3.3: Consider replacing and enhancing street signage throughout Tomball to improve community identification.**

Street name signage provides an opportunity to continue emphasizing the identity of Tomball. A simple City logo integrated onto street signs provides a quick sense of place, especially along the fringe or edges of the community. Additionally, the implementation of this signage standard can provide an improved sense of unity and community identity between subdivisions which is often lacking between different developments. Oftentimes, a City will create a green street sign for the entire community and then a different colored street sign (e.g., brown or blue) for the downtown area or other special areas of the City.

#### **Action CL 4.3.4: Identify opportunities to protect and promote Tomball's historical and cultural history.**

Many communities are refocusing their economic development toolkits to include more place-based economic considerations. Previously, communities were labeled good if they were safe and had good schools and attractive neighborhoods. While these remain important, an emerging determinant in residential and business relocation decisions is the association with a City's embodied cultural and historical assets and sense of place. Accordingly, the City should continue to identify opportunities to highlight and market many of Tomball's unique and significant historical and cultural stories.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Identify areas of reinvestment and re-imaging so that all parts of Tomball contribute to a prosperous future.

### Objective ED 5.1: Maximize economic benefits from Tomball's medical district.

#### Action ED 5.1.1: Establish a Medical District Specific Area Plan in order to institute land use policy and development standards that promote and protect Tomball's medical industry.

HCA Houston Healthcare (i.e., the Medical District) is a significant regionally-serving destination in Tomball. As the Houston Metropolitan Area continues to grow and age, demand for these types of services will only increase. Although the area is not in need of revitalization, there are opportunities for increasing the synergy between the anchor institutions of this area and complimentary services. The intent of creating a specific character area on the Future Land Use Plan is to promote partnerships between different sector of the medical industry (e.g., additional medical offices, independent and senior living, etc.). These partnerships should help broaden employment opportunities and medical services offered.

#### Action ED 5.1.2: Provide improved connections to the Medical District from the community's businesses and activity centers.

This effort is intended to improve the Medical District's integration with the overall Tomball community, making it a valued place for medical services and for those employed or visit there. This may include the development of a circulator that connects the Medical District with Old Town and other area services, dining areas, and destinations. For nearby connections (e.g., those envisioned along the Tomball Parkway), it may require public investment into street infrastructures and plazas to help promote these linkages and the proper environment. For those businesses outside of the Medical District (e.g., those envisioned along the Tomball Parkway), it may require public investment into street infrastructures and plazas to help promote these linkages and the proper environment.

#### Action ED 5.1.3: Encourage growth that supports the district's role as a healthcare hub while promoting compatible, sustainable, and community-enhancing uses.

TEDC and the City should review and update Tomball's overall incentive policies to align with the Comprehensive Plan. Each project and incentive request should be viewed within the context of TEDC's goals and strategies as well as the recommendations within the Comprehensive Plan. A healthcare-related project will likely require a different return on investment than a destination entertainment project. The City and TEDC should have an agreed upon framework for how, when, and where incentives are appropriate.

## **Objective ED 5.2: Maintain a balance in the differing economic sectors to promote sustainable economic health for the community.**

### **Action ED 5.2.1: Pursue and encourage entertainment options for local Tomball residents.**

As Tomball population growth continues, it is important to provide a wider variety of entertainment choices. Private development will typically be the provider and consequently, it is important for the City to be a partner and/or be flexible in bringing these opportunities to Tomball. In some instances, it may be appropriate for the City to consider public-private partnerships for these entities. This may include partnerships related to the provision of public open space or updating City ordinance to better reflect emerging regulatory changes.

### **Action ED 5.2.2: Create and leverage incentives that promote a favorable environment for the development of a hotel with event space that can contribute to the broader economic and community development objectives.**

As the community continues to grow, a hotel that includes meeting and event space would be a logical economic development target. This facility would need to be appropriately sized for Tomball. Even if the City and TEDC offer incentives to support the meeting and event space, Tomball should make sure there is sufficient market demand for the hotel portion of the project.

### **Action ED 5.2.3: Support and encourage the redevelopment of older properties, enhancing the city's overall vitality and attractiveness.**

Tomball has a variety of new and old businesses spread throughout the city. In a growing community, economic development efforts tend to focus on attracting new businesses. However, older shopping and retail centers should be redeveloped and enhanced. TEDC already has the Business Improvement Grant and Old Town Façade Improvement Grant programs. TEDC and the City should continually reevaluate what level of incentives are needed to upgrade existing businesses, older shopping centers, and the complete redevelopment of larger sites. As part of this strategy, TEDC should have discussions with property owners regarding redevelopment opportunities.

## **Objective ED 5.3: Build and support partnerships with local and regional entities and economic stakeholders.**

### **Action ED 5.3.1: Continue to work with TEDC to support the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan and other City pursuits related to economic development.**

TEDC is the community's lead organization for attracting new businesses, promoting business retention and expansion, and coordinating economic development efforts. TEDC's economic development initiatives will need to align with the Comprehensive Plan. At the same time, the City might need to make changes and updates to the Plan to enable catalytic economic development projects. The City and TEDC should continue collaborating on economic development projects and proactively identify updates to the Comprehensive Plan that position Tomball for long-term success. In addition, TEDC has financial resources that could be used to help implement the sections of the Comprehensive Plan related to economic development.

### **Action ED 5.3.2: Support workforce preparation in local schools and colleges.**

It is widely understood that a quality education is increasingly a critical component of an overall economic development work program. Tomball already benefits from excellent primary and secondary schools, and the local college-level system. Moving forward, the City should continue to work with the Tomball Economic Development Corporation to identify partners to offer workforce development and education programs in association with existing or future Tomball businesses.



**Action ED 5.3.3: Work closely with the Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) and Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) to support local businesses and increase employment opportunities.**

Work with GTACC and TEDC to enhance their existing business attraction, retention, and expansion program (BRE) program. Work with these partners to identify opportunities to express appreciation to local companies for choosing to do business in Tomball; to educate existing business owners about potential resources available to them (i.e., City or EDC programs and incentives); to help business owners in identifying problems and mitigating potential risks; and to identify and facilitate connections between existing businesses and suppliers. Maintaining and expanding existing businesses is an essential component of any economic development program, and as such, should continue to be supported on an ongoing basis.

**Action ED 5.3.4: Support the redevelopment of catalyst projects (South Live Oak and First Baptist Church) that represent significant transformative opportunities.**

TEDC owns several parcels that form two strategic catalytic projects in the core of the city. The South Live Oak Redevelopment Project is envisioned as a mixed-use development that would extend Main Street activities east of the railroad tracks. The First Baptist Church Project is an ambitious project that preserves some of the existing buildings while increasing entertainments, arts, and culture amenities. These two projects will require input and support from citizens, elected officials, and City staff. TEDC and the City will need to continually communicate on key issues for this public-private partnership to succeed.



South Live Oak Concept (Source: TEDC)



## CHAPTER 8

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# Implementation



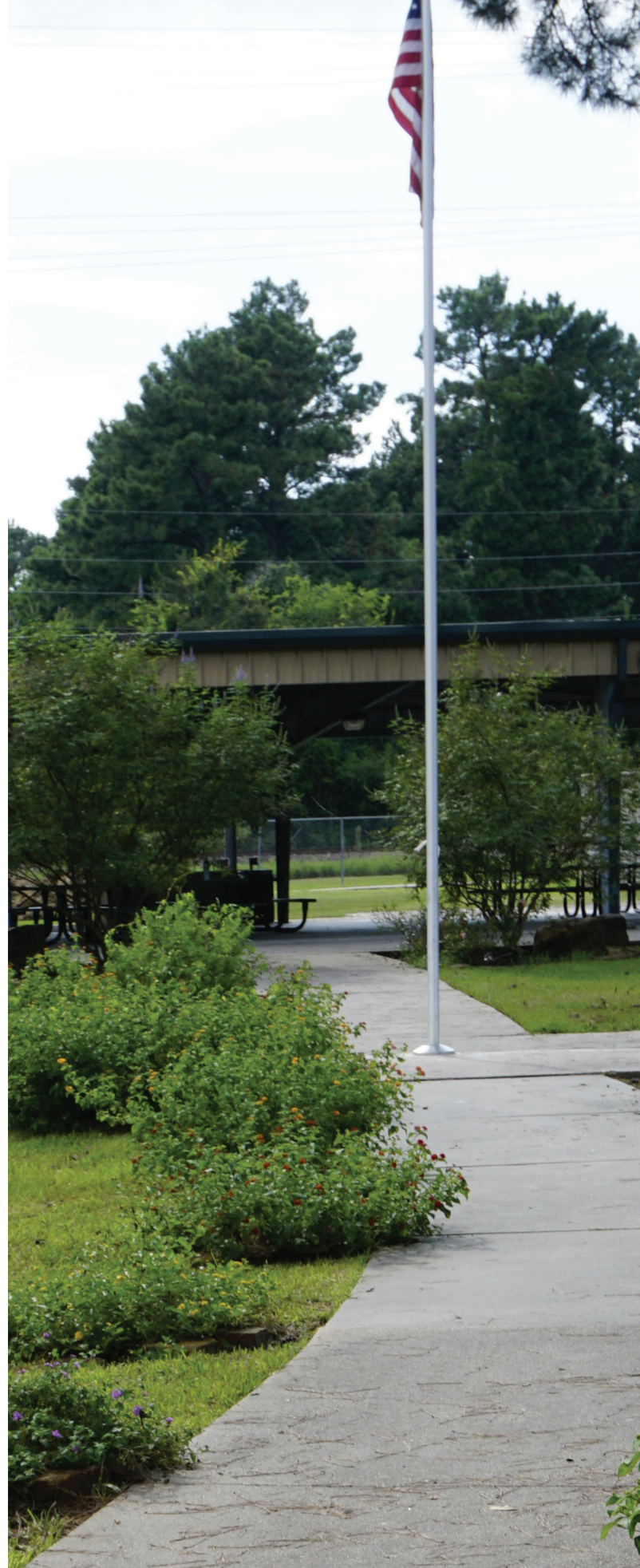
# INTRODUCTION

Implementation is an essential element of the comprehensive planning process. An implementation plan serves as a detailed roadmap, outlining action items, responsible entities, and timelines. A well-crafted implementation plan is key to the success of the comprehensive plan, ensuring accountability and efficient use of city resources for priority actions. The impact of a comprehensive plan is measured by the effectiveness of the recommendations and policies in the plan. Recommendations can be implemented through amendments to development regulations like zoning and subdivision ordinances or physical improvements such as the construction of roadways and trails. Many recommendations can be achieved by refining existing regulations or processes, while others may require additional community input and support from local organizations and private partnerships.

The implementation plan outlined in this chapter is shaped by feedback from the community, stakeholders, and City staff, addressing the issues and priorities identified in this Comprehensive Plan. It is crafted to ensure that the recommendations made throughout the planning process are actionable, meeting both the short-term and long-term needs of the community.

## THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES:

- Implementation Best Practices
- Implementation Action Plan



# IMPLEMENTATION BEST PRACTICES

## PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE STRATEGIES

Plan implementation is often achieved through one of two methods: proactive and reactive implementation strategies. While both are effective in putting the recommendations of this Plan into action, using a balance of both approaches will better set the City up for success in this goal. Examples of proactive and reactive strategies are provided below.

### Proactive Strategies

Proactive strategies are those that the City leads in seeking implementation of the Plan's recommendations and actions. City-initiated efforts are effective because they may occur immediately but may prove costly regarding staff time and City resources. Examples include:

- Updating policies, such as Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs), thoroughfare plans, and development codes to achieve the recommendations identified within this Plan
- Initiating zoning changes within target areas to encourage development that is compatible with the land use designations within this Plan
- Acquiring property from private individuals and entities in strategic locations to ensure responsible development and engineering practices

### Reactive Strategies

Reactive strategies involve opportunities brought to the City on a case-by-case basis rather than those the City seeks out independently. These strategies rely on elected and appointed officials to act with the recommendations of this Plan in mind, placing further emphasis on the continuing updates and communication of the Plan suggested in this chapter. Examples include:

- Assessing rezoning requests against the intent and purpose of the future land use categories established in this Plan
- Reviewing development applications for compliance with the adopted development standards and the intent of this Plan
- Updating the recommendations and actions of this Plan based on public feedback and initiatives

## IMPLEMENTATION EDUCATION

An essential part of implementation is education about the role and significance of the Comprehensive Plan. Public education about the Comprehensive Plan builds consensus on the initiatives in the plan and gains buy-in from the community. When the community supports the plan for the future development of Tomball, the plan receives the consensus it needs to successfully implement the initiatives of the plan.

Regular education and training should be offered to City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Staff, and other individuals with a direct role in the implementation of the plan. Training is intended to update or educate participants so that those involved with the plan are always informed about the current status of the Comprehensive Plan. Training initiatives should include:

- A review of the goals and guiding principles that guide the plan's recommendations
- An overview of segments of the plan that most directly relate to their responsibilities and purposes
- Discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each individual entity and its function regarding plan implementation
- Implementation tasking and priority setting that allows each group to establish their own short and long-term agendas.
- A review of current plan initiatives and status updates on the progress of recommended implementation strategies.



Focus Group Meeting



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

No single individual or entity is responsible for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. There are multiple aspects of the plan that require participation by various parties, such as the adoption of regulations, administration of the development code, and partnering with different public and private organizations. Each individual or group involved with the Comprehensive Plan has a vital role to play in the implementation of the plan based on their authority or expense.

### City Council

The key responsibilities of the City Council are to establish priorities, set time frames for when actions should be initiated and completed, and determine the financial resources to be made available for implementation efforts. The City Council works with outside entities or provides direction for City Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission to implement the initiatives of the Plan.

### Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission is charged with making recommendations to the City Council regarding zoning and the Comprehensive Plan. In this role, the Planning and Zoning Commission acts as the connection between City Staff and City Council. It is important for the commission to remain knowledgeable about the Comprehensive Plan and to make sound recommendations in the best interest of the City.

### City Staff

City Staff is involved in the most direct application of the Comprehensive Plan. They are responsible for administering the plan through the zoning ordinance, subdivision codes, and other regulations influenced by the Comprehensive Plan for the built environment through the administration of these ordinances.

### Tomball Economic Development Corporation

The Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) is a nonprofit organization formed in 1994, after citizen approval of the 4B Economic Development Tax. It is a legal entity with the statutory authority to spend economic development sales tax dollars. In this regard, the TEDC is a strategic partner in implementing the vision, policies, and actions of this Plan.

### Outside Organizations

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is not solely on the City resources. Entities like private developers, federal agencies, or local nonprofit organizations are useful resources to implement specific recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. These entities can provide resources and support for elements of the plan to assist the City in completing particular tasks. Partnerships can take the form of public-private partnerships (PPP), grant funding, establishment of programs, and other various methods. The following list of partners is not exhaustive, but provides examples of outside entities that can be beneficial to the success of this plan:

- Harris County
- Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
- Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC)
- Tomball Independent School District (TISD)
- Adjacent local cities (on projects that benefit both jurisdictions)
- Additional affected agencies and entities
- Area property and business owners and the development community



Community Open House



## UPDATING THE PLAN

This Plan is intended to serve as a guide for policy decisions and to reflect the community's vision for the future. As such, the Plan is not a rigid document but a living tool that should be revisited and revised, if necessary, depending on the City's changing economic, physical, and social composition. The Plan must be reviewed for accuracy as the City grows to ensure continued alignment with the vision and guiding principles.

### Annual Progress Reporting

Following adoption, the City should assign a responsible body, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission or another citizen committee, such as the Focus Group, to provide an annual progress report on the status of the Comprehensive Plan to City leadership. This annual review will ensure that the Plan is reviewed critically every year for the relevance of content and the appropriateness of the Plan's recommendations and actions. With assistance from staff, the responsible body may present a report card on the City's implementation from the year prior. This report should be coordinated with the yearly budget and can be used as an opportunity to celebrate the City's achievements and reflect on what can be improved in the coming year.

### Annual Updates

Following the annual progress reporting, the implementation action plan should be reviewed and updated as part of an annual plan amendment. This annual amendment will allow the City to update the implementation plan and identify near-term actions for the coming year. Annual Plan amendments also provide opportunities for relatively minor Plan updates and revisions as needed, including changes to the Future Land Use, Major Thoroughfare Plan, and Focus Areas.

### Five-Year Audit Diagnostic

In addition to the annual reviews discussed above, the City should conduct a thorough audit of the Plan's outcomes and content every five years following the Plan's adoption. Such review should be a joint effort between all involved departments and officials and should include a review of the Plan's successes and shortcomings as it relates to implementing the community's vision for the City. During this process, staff should work to identify any necessary revisions, either mundane or comprehensive, to organize potential revisions to the document. Topics of interest should include any shifts in demographic composition, economic factors, and societal factors that may impact the trajectory of the City.

### 10-Year Update

The Plan sets the stage for all subsequent implementation actions in the 10-year planning horizon. Environmental conditions, population composition and City trends and concerns change over time. To ensure that the Plan continues to provide the best and most appropriate direction possible, it should be taken through a full update process every 10 years.



City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Joint Workshop

# IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

The most common issue with comprehensive plans is the lack of actionable recommendations that clearly outline the initial steps that a city must take to begin implementing the Plan. The following implementation table provides individual actions that will help achieve the vision established by the community. The table is organized by the five goals identified in the plan and includes several action items related to the goal. For each action, an associated timeframe for implementation, involved entities, and action type are identified to assist with planning and completing the action.

The previous comprehensive plan update was informed by extensive community input and resulted in many action items that are still relevant today. In developing the recommendations for this 2024 Comprehensive Plan update, recommendations from the 2019 Comprehensive Plan were reviewed to identify action items that have not been completed, are still relevant to guide development in the City, and align with the guiding principles and vision of the plan.

## ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

The actions are based on the recommendations listed in Chapter 7. The action key provides the reader with a simplified reference number for the specific action item. The reference numbers are based on the topic of the recommended action and contain a two-letter abbreviation and an associated reference number. The number is accompanied by a short description of the action, which is further detailed in the previous chapter.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

This Plan provides a phased approach to implementation to help the City identify achievable actions in the new future and distinguish them from long-term actions that might need extensive studies and preparation. The recommended actions are categorized into the following time frames.

### Short-Term (1-2 years)

Actions that are typically “low-hanging fruit” or easier to achieve because they do not require a large amount of capital.

### Mid-Term (3-10 years)

Actions that may require more planning and capital than the short-term 3-year horizon.

### Long-Term (10+ years)

Actions that generally need a large amount of capital, require significant planning and coordination for completion or other steps must take place before implementation. In some cases, there may be opportunities to make some initial progress in the short- or mid-term.

### Ongoing

Recommendations that do not have a specific timeframe for implementation, are continuously being implemented, or should be revisited regularly throughout the life of the recommendation or implementation of the Plan.

Action				
Action #	Action items			

Implementation Time Frame				
Short	Mid	Long	Ongoing	

# INVOLVED ENTITIES

Assigning the key entities responsible for following through on an action is essential to implementing the suggested recommendation. This portion of the table identifies the departments, groups within the City, and potential partnerships that may assist with completing the action. Communication with these individuals and groups is essential to explain their roles and expectations when implementing this Plan.

# ACTION TYPE(S)

Successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will take coordination on the part of the City and area partners. The various actions in the table have been identified by one of five action types: Operational Change, Policy, Financial Investment, Study, or Regulations. This distinction assists the City in identifying the individuals or groups responsible for carrying out the action and plan for proper resources and staffing. The categories of tools are further detailed as listed below:

- **Operational Change** - New or altered programs, staffing or operational procedures.
- **Policy** - Procedures or policies used to direct City decisions.
- **Financial Investment** - Capital improvement and/or funds improve the quality of Tomball.
- **Study** - Additional study or investigation needed to determine the most appropriate solution.
- **Regulation** - Council adopted regulations used to direct development in the City.

Involved Entities

Involved Entities

Action Type

Action Type





Goal #1: Growth and Capacity							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Goal 1- GROWTH, CAPACITY AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: Systematically provide high-quality public infrastructure to support current and projected development in a quality, cost effective manner.							
Objective GC 1.1: Annually monitor implementation of the City’s infrastructure master plans to identify the need for an update.							
GC 1.1.1	Prepare an update to the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to incorporate consistent findings related to this Comprehensive Plan.				■	Public Works	Operational Change / Financial Investment
GC 1.1.2	Update the Water and Wastewater Master Plans every five years.				■	Public Works	Study
GC 1.1.3	Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Water Master Plan concurrent with need.				■	Public Works	Financial Investment
GC 1.1.4	Annually budget the necessary funds to implement the recommendations of the Wastewater Master Plan concurrent with need.				■	Public Works	Financial Investment
GC 1.1.5	Continue to coordinate with the North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA) and other area partners to ensure long-term water supply.				■	Public Works / NHCRWA	Policy / Financial Investment
GC 1.1.6	Annually review the Master Fee Schedule to ensure adequate revenues for long-term system sustainability.				■	Public Works/ Community Development	Policy
GC 1.1.7	Monitor water capacity and incorporate water conservation efforts in alignment with the water conservation plan to ensure sufficient water supply to support future growth and demand.	■				Public Works	Policy / Operational Change

Goal #1: Growth and Capacity							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
GC 1.1.8	Update the Waste and Wastewater Impact Fee based on the updated Future Land Use Map in this Comprehensive Plan.	■				Public Works	Study
Objective GC 1.2: Consider policies and procedures to ensure meeting growth demands and changing regulatory requirements, while being respectful to the community's desired character.							
GC 1.2.1	Continue to monitor new regulations and requirements to ensure the existing infrastructure systems remain in compliance with changes in federal and state regulations.				■	Public Works	Policy/ Regulation
Objective GC 1.3: Establish approaches to minimize flooding events and the corresponding damage in developed areas, while still positively contributing to an improved community character.							
GC 1.3.1	Implement the City's Master Drainage Plan.	■				Public Works	Financial Investment
GC 1.3.2	When reviewing development proposals, evaluate cumulative impacts to hydrologic system function and performance.				■	Public Works	Policy / Regulation
GC 1.3.3	Evaluate opportunities for multi- functional drainage improvements in Old Town.		■			Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
GC 1.3.4	Improve coordination with Harris County regarding necessary maintenance along the county's drainage corridors.	■				Public Works / Harris County	Policy / Operational Change

Goal #1: Growth and Capacity							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective GC 1.4: Provide comprehensive parks and trail facilities.							
GC 1.4.1	Partner with other jurisdictions and entities in the provision of recreation opportunities.				<div></div>	Public Works	Operational Change / Financial Investment
GC 1.4.2	Ensure that park and recreation projects are included on the CIP project list and consider park development fees to be assessed on new development.			<div></div>		Public Works	Policy / Operational Change
GC 1.4.3	Explore ways to maximize the use of recreational opportunities in floodplains and regional detention areas.				<div></div>	Public Works/Community Development	Policy / Regulation
GC 1.4.4	Evaluate the need for developing a parkland dedication and development ordinance and other subdivision ordinances to ensure that adequate green space and parkland remain available as the City continues to develop.			<div></div>		Community Development	Policy / Regulation
Objective GC 1.5: Provide effective police and fire services to support future growth and development.							
GC 1.5.1	Annually evaluate the need to improve or increase existing police and fire services to align with anticipated population growth and ensure appropriate level of services for new development areas				<div></div>	Fire/Police	Study/Financial Investment
GC 1.5.2	Undertake a Fire Department facility study to prepare for long-term station development to align with population growth.		<div></div>			Fire	Study



Goal #2: Land Use and Development							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
GOAL 2–LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT: Work with the development community to meet the needs of a growing community while protecting the valued small-town character of Tomball.							
Objective LU 2.1: Implement the future land use plan to promote development that results in the desired character for Tomball.							
LU 2.1.1	Evaluate new development applications to ensure it results in the desired character areas set out in the Future Land Use Plan.				■	Community Development	Policy
LU 2.1.2	Ensure that business parks and industrial development are built and maintained in a manner that is respectful to neighboring land uses.	■				Community Development	Policy / Regulation
LU 2.1.3	Utilize the development review process to ensure parks, trails, sidewalks, and other amenities are considered at the time of development and redevelopment.				■	Community Development	Policy / Regulation
LU 2.1.4	Guide compatible development to create a Medical District with complimentary land uses and improved connectivity to Old Town.				■	Community Development	Policy / Regulation
LU 2.1.5	Leverage the Texas Main Street Program to revitalize East Main Street.		■			Community Development	Study
LU 2.1.6	Work with TEDC to attract local businesses to East Downtown District to improve the economic vibrancy of the area.				■	TEDC	Study
LU 2.1.7	Assess the feasibility of financing tools in Old Town, East Downtown, and Medical District to incentivize developers and to fund infrastructure required for large redevelopment projects.		■			TEDC	Study

Goal #2: Land Use and Development							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective LU 2.2: Evaluate City policies to ensure that Tomball has enabling regulations and incentives to advance desired character while maintaining a responsive and flexible development process.							
LU 2.2.1	Review and evaluate development codes to align with the community's vision for the future as set out in this comprehensive plan.				■	Community Development	Regulation
LU 2.2.2	Evaluate the need for new or revised zoning districts to increase development opportunities and improve the character of development.	■				Community Development	Regulation
LU 2.2.3	Continue to evaluate and make necessary improvements to the development review process.				■	Community Development	Operational Change / Regulation
Objective LU 2.3: Promote development that creates complimentary relationships between differing land uses.							
LU 2.3.1	Encourage the location of support services such as schools, parks, small-scale employment, and retail that is compatible with the surrounding residential character.				■	Community Development	Regulation
LU 2.3.2	Require that new residential developments provide pedestrian linkages to parks, schools, and other public facilities, where appropriate.				■	Community Development	Regulation
Objective LU 2.4: Protect the rural character and continued ranching or agriculture uses, where appropriate, to maintain the rural lifestyle in Tomball.							
LU 2.4.1	Work with area partners to develop educational materials explaining opportunities and benefits for rural land preservation.				■	Community Development	Operational Change

Goal #2: Land Use and Development							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective LU 2.5: Increase housing choice by allowing for a mix of styles, densities, and price ranges located within appropriate locations.							
LU 2.5.1	Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to identify appropriate areas for, and development of, transitional residential.				<div></div>	Community Development	Regulation
LU 2.5.2	Promote and facilitate infill development, especially in Old Town to utilize existing infrastructure and reduce sprawl.				<div></div>	Community Development	Regulation
Objective LU 2.6: Maintain and enhance the overall quality of existing housing stock in Tomball.							
LU 2.6.1	Continue to promote the revitalization of existing housing stock, especially in areas near Old Town.				<div></div>	Community Development	Policy / Financial Investment
LU 2.6.2	Establish neighborhood quality standards and monitor through establishing a conditions inventory GIS parcel data.			<div></div>		Community Development	Policy / Operational Change
LU 2.6.3	Identify and prioritize neighborhood revitalization activities within the City’s Capital Improvement Plan.				<div></div>	Public Works/ Community Development	Policy / Financial Investment
LU 2.6.4	Ensure the incorporation of a variety of housing for new and infill development to provide affordable housing options for residents including young families and seniors.				<div></div>	Community Development	Policy



Goal #3: Mobility							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
GOAL 3–MOBILITY: Strive to address mobility concerns by partnering with other jurisdictions as well as promoting alternative routes and modes across the community.							
Objective MO 3.1: Maintain, through regular review, a transportation plan that supports the planned growth and development patterns within Tomball while promoting public safety.							
MO 3.1.1	Partner with the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), Harris County, and the City of Houston to understand and influence the changes in regional travel patterns that impact Tomball.				■	Community Development/ H-GAC / Harris County / City of Houston	Policy
MO 3.1.2	Prepare an update to the City’s Major Thoroughfare Plan.		■			Community Development	Study
MO 3.1.3	Consider, where appropriate, an Industrial Street Classification within the Major Thoroughfare Plan to accommodate heavy commercial vehicles and development of truck routes within the City limits.	■				Community Development	Policy / Regulation
MO 3.1.4	Consider the establishment of a transportation impact fee program which includes all roadways identified in the Major Thoroughfare Plan.		■			Community Development	Policy / Financial Investment
Objective MO 3.2: Reduce and manage traffic congestion.							
MO 3.2.1	Develop and implement a corridor timing strategy and other Transportation System Management (TSM) solutions for major thoroughfares in conjunction with other transportation agencies.		■			City Management / Harris County / TxDOT	Study / Operational Change
MO 3.2.2	Perform safety audits at high accident locations to minimize the congestion-related impacts of crashes.	■				Police	Study






Goal #3: Mobility							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
MO 3.2.3	Make improvements to east/west thoroughfares through public and private investment.	■				Public Works	Financial Investment
Objective MO 3.3: Develop and Implement context-sensitive transportation options.							
MO 3.3.1	Draft a comprehensive context sensitive solutions policy and submit to all transportation agencies for their consideration.			■		Community Development	Study / Policy
MO 3.3.2	Develop objectives, detailed standards, and guidelines for the treatment of public streetscapes to improve safety and walkability; recommendations should address street trees, street lighting, street furniture, traffic calming, and other pertinent issues.	■				Public Works/ Community Development	Study / Regulation
MO 3.3.3	Continue to partner with area agencies and stakeholders to implement the improvements set out in the FM 2920 Access Management Study (2008).	■				Public Works	Financial Investment

Goal #3: Mobility							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective MO 3.4: Expand and Improve Local Transportation Infrastructure to provide more choice.							
MO 3.4.1	Provide accessible, convenient, and safe ped-bike infrastructure connecting destinations within the identified focus areas as well as destinations across the railroad.		<div></div>			Public Works	Financial Investment
MO 3.4.2	Implement the recommendations of the Master Thoroughfare Plan included in the Comprehensive Plan.	<div></div>				Public Works	Financial Investment
Objective MO 3.5: Protect the community from hazards related to ground transportation.							
MO 3.5.1	Pursue grade-separated rail crossings for reducing street/rail conflicts, where feasible.			<div></div>		Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
MO 3.5.2	Use technology to improve safety at grade crossings that cause the least environmental harm (e.g., automated horn systems).		<div></div>			Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
MO 3.5.3	Identify strategic locations to implement traffic calming measures to reduce speeds and deter cut-through traffic.				<div></div>	Public Works	Study
MO 3.5.4	Incorporate transportation safety guidance in road design standards.	<div></div>				Public Works	Policy / Regulation



Goal #3: Mobility							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective MO 3.6: Establish an on- and off-street trail network to connect key destinations in Tomball.							
MO 3.6.1	Enhance and maintain pedestrian safety through the inclusion of well-designed streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic control devices, and school routes throughout the City.				<div></div>	Public Works	Policy
MO 3.6.2	Monitor long-term needs for an on- street active transportation network in Tomball.			<div></div>		Public Works	Study
MO 3.6.3	Prioritize and implement recommendations of the active transportation plan included in this Comprehensive Plan.				<div></div>	Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
MO 3.6.4	Implement the recommendations of the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan to enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other amenities in the city.	<div></div>				Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
MO 3.6.5	Identify appropriate locations for parks and trail networks within the Medical District.	<div></div>				Public Works	Study
Objective MO 3.7: Enhance parking opportunities in the Old Town area.							
MO 3.7.1	Implement wayfinding signage throughout the Old Town area to assist visitors in easily locating parking facilities.	<div></div>				Public Works	Study/ Financial Investment
MO 3.7.2	Conduct a parking management plan to document the available parking spaces in Old Town Core to identify if additional parking needs to be added.	<div></div>				Public Works	Study

Goal #4: Community Livability							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
GOAL 4–COMMUNITY LIVABILITY: Continue to recognize Old Town as an important cultural center and historic asset of the community and enhance Tomball’s sense of place and quality of life.							
Objective CL 4.1: Expand on the success of Old Town as a source of community pride, entertainment, commerce, and employment.							
CL 4.1.1	Identify alternative financing solutions to address the growing infrastructure needs of Old Town.	■				City Management	Study/ Financial Investment
CL 4.1.2	Support regular events, activities, and celebrations and develop/expand venues to host them.				■	Marketing	Financial Investment
CL 4.1.3	Develop a Tourism Strategic Plan that includes the creation or enhancement of destinations and event venues in Tomball to identify and implement appropriate strategies for expanding tourism in Tomball.		■			Marketing/ Community Development	Study
CL 4.1.4	Develop and implement a strategy to develop public art and cultural amenities in Old Town.		■			Marketing	Financial Investment
CL 4.1.5	Develop marketing and branding efforts specifically targeting tourists with advertising campaigns to visit Old Town and stay overnight.		■			Marketing	Financial Investment
Objective CL 4.2: Develop a citywide plan for beautification, which would include gateways, wayfinding signage, enhanced landscaping, etc.							
CL 4.2.1	Establish a program to fund community image enhancement projects in Tomball.		■			City Management	Financial Investment
CL 4.2.2	Develop and implement a wayfinding signage program in Tomball.	■				Public Works/ Community Development/ Marketing	Financial Investment

Goal #4: Community Livability							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
CL 4.2.3	Develop marketing and branding materials that promote Tomball's quality of life and business climate.					Marketing/ TEDC	Financial Investment
Objective CL 4.3: Capitalize on opportunities to further create a defined sense of place in Tomball.							
CL 4.3.1	Actively inventory, monitor, and manage trees to maintain the health of existing Tomball urban forest.					Community Development	Operational Change
CL 4.3.2	Enhance public landscaping along prominent corridors and entries into Tomball.					Public Works	Financial Investment
CL 4.3.3	Consider replacing and enhancing street signage throughout Tomball to improve community identification.					Public Works	Financial Investment
CL 4.3.4	Identify opportunities to protect and promote Tomball's historical and cultural history.					Marketing	Policy



Goal #5: Economic Development Implementation Action Plan							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
GOAL 5–ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Identify areas of reinvestment and re-imaging so that all parts of Tomball contribute to a prosperous future.							
Objective ED 5.1: Maximize economic benefits from Tomball’s medical district.							
ED 5.1.1	Establish a Medical District Specific Area Plan in order to institute land use policy and development standards that promote and protect Tomball’s medical industry.		<div></div>			Community Development	Study
ED 5.1.2	Provide improved connections to the Medical District from the community’s businesses and activity centers.				<div></div>	Public Works	Policy
ED 5.1.3	Encourage growth that supports the district’s role as a healthcare hub while promoting compatible, sustainable, and community-enhancing uses.				<div></div>	TEDC	Policy
Objective ED 5.2: Maintain a balance in the differing economic sectors to promote sustainable economic health for the community.							
ED 5.2.1	Pursue and encourage entertainment options for local Tomball residents.				<div></div>	TEDC / GTACC / Community Development	Operational Change
ED 5.2.2	Create and leverage incentives that promote a favorable environment for the development of a hotel with event space that can contribute to the broader economic and community development objectives.		<div></div>			TEDC / GTACC / Community Development	Study/ Financial Investment
ED 5.2.3	Support and encourage the redevelopment of older properties, enhancing the city’s overall vitality and attractiveness.				<div></div>	TEDC / GTACC / Community Development	Operational Change

Goal #5: Economic Development Implementation Action Plan							
Action #	Action Recommendation	Implementation Time Frame (years)				Involved Entities	Action Type(s)
		Short-term (1-2)	Mid-term (3-10)	Long-term (10+)	On-Going		
Objective ED 5.3: Build and support partnerships with local and regional entities and economic stakeholders.							
ED 5.3.1	Continue to work with TEDC to support the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan and other City pursuits related to economic development.				<div></div>	TEDC	Operational Change / Financial Investment
ED 5.3.2	Support workforce preparation in local schools and colleges.				<div></div>	TEDC	Financial Investment
ED 5.3.3	Work closely with the Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) and Tomball Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) to support local businesses and increase employment opportunities.				<div></div>	TEDC / GTACC	Policy
ED 5.3.4	Support the redevelopment of catalyst projects (South Live Oak and First Baptist Church) that represent significant transformative opportunities.		<div></div>			TEDC	Policy / Financial Investment

