

# 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF BELTON, TEXAS



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CITY OF BELTON COUNCIL RESOLUTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: VISION.....1

CHAPTER 2: GOVERNMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES.....3

CHAPTER 3: EXISTING LAND USE & TRENDS.....6

CHAPTER 4: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.....14

CHAPTER 5: CITY SYSTEMS.....19

CHAPTER 6: CITY PROCESS & PROCEDURES.....27

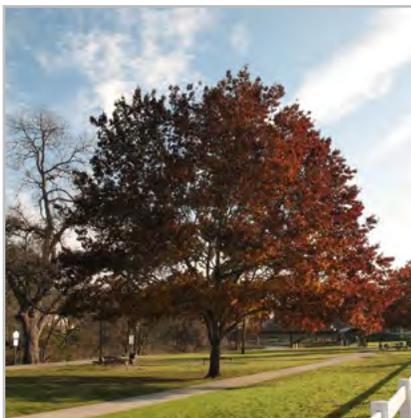
CHAPTER 7: SPECIAL PLACES & DISTRICT IDENTITY.....35

CHAPTER 8: HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN.....43

CHAPTER 9: FUTURE VISION & IMPLEMENTATION.....54

CHAPTER 10: APPENDICES.....56

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....63



# CITY OF BELTON COUNCIL RESOLUTION

LGC - Sec. 213.003. ADOPTION OR AMENDMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

- (a) A comprehensive plan may be adopted or amended by resolution following:
  - (1) a hearing at which the public is given the opportunity to give testimony and present written evidence;  
and
  - (2) review by the municipality's planning commission or department, if one exists.
- (b) A municipality may establish, in its charter or by ordinance, procedures for adopting and amending a comprehensive plan.

The City of Belton 2030 Comprehensive Plan is Belton's long range policy document adopted and amended by the City Council. This plan establishes a vision for Belton, provides policy guidance for growth and development and contains both action items and BIG ideas to help implement the vision.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## USES OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The City of Belton 2030 Comprehensive Plan is the policy document that guides Belton land use into the future. How does Belton maintain its high standard of living and high quality of life while balancing growth and development challenges? Belton's small town feel, historic downtown, schools and parks are the pride of this community. Community spirit, volunteerism and resident participation are a cornerstone of Belton's civic pride.

## PROCESS

The initial step of the process was for the city to form a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board that would be the sounding board and guide for the overall process. The Advisory Board and the Stakeholder Groups met periodically to review all the information and to provide comments and guidance.

The strategy of data gathering, public input, and assembling a document for the city to use for the future planning was a process that has been very successful in prior projects. Data gathering has multiple phases. First and foremost, information from the city was validated by multiple stakeholder meetings. Separately, on the ground surveying of existing conditions were analyzed and extended into opportunities and constraints. This spatial analysis was then converted into an analysis by topic in a final Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) matrix so that anyone can review the information either by map or by topic. Reaching out to the public was three-fold. First was a simple, high level postcard survey of very broad questions that were handed out all over the city during the on ground investigations. Later, a comprehensive online survey was posted to reach out to the city as a whole. Finally was the public hearings advertised in the normal media channels, to allow the general public to comment.

Between the surveys, on-site analysis, information from the city, and the stakeholder focus groups, the process moved to a mode of making decisions on land use, annexation, and policy that were in sync with the existing philosophy. From this intensive process, a Future Land Use Map was created in a style that suited the level of information that the city wanted to see. Revisions to the map went through several rounds of adjustment according to existing projects, policies, and economic development actions already in the works.

In the end, the process was aimed at creating a future vision for the city that allowed measured growth, economic development, and ultimately working toward an enhanced quality of lifestyle for the residents.

The project looked at several topics that comprise the city's future growth and development. Some of the topics were assessed in a detailed manner such as current development patterns and getting feedback from various stakeholder groups. Sectors of the city such as the wide variety of public services were given more of an overview so that if we saw useful connections and leveraging of services or institutions, then these could be woven into the narrative of city recommendation. Part of this analysis was to develop, where opportunities presented themselves, more refined scenarios in terms of pulling multiple parties together for a stimulus project. These are presented as opportunities that if met with optimism, could be acted upon and potentially make significant impacts on a local district or series of blocks. Finally, some measures were discussed that considered a broader application of aesthetic criteria such as designating certain corridors with overlay rules. These could be as simple as signage and screening of storage areas or could take on a more expanded set of criteria. The level of criteria is not established here but would require a separate endeavor of analysis and discussions to accomplish the right balance of city benefit.



# INTRODUCTION

Belton is the county seat of Bell County and is located in one of the fastest growing Metropolitan (Temple- Killeen- Ft. Hood) areas in both Texas and the country. The 2010 census recorded Belton's population at 18,216 and the most recent estimate for January of 2017 is 21,214 residents. The city is expecting to maintain this current rate of growth and, by the year 2030, the population is anticipated to be between 30,000 to 35,000 residents. This growth places pressure on the current utilities, other infrastructure, schools, services, and parks that can be addressed through planning process.

People are moving to Belton to experience a higher standard of living, historic downtown, Nolan Creek, the town's proximity to two lakes and lots of nature, including award-winning schools and warm weather.

Belton must manage this growth while keeping its great quality of life with walkable neighborhoods near nature and culture. How does the city sustain their open space and natural assets? How does Belton provide a mix of housing types and affordability while still maintaining their higher design standards? How does Belton increase their tax base to better sustain the city economically? How does Belton leverage its location at the crossroads of the new I-14/US 190 and the improved Interstate 35 (I-35) to enhance the city? How does Belton make it the desired place to call home in Central Texas? One concept that seems to have risen through all the discussions is that Belton is interested in taking advantage of the growth in Central Texas, but in a strategic and managed fashion to maintain the high quality of living that the residents enjoy.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide to assist city leaders in making decisions about how their city should grow and develop. Our life in cities is deeply affected by the patterns that we build around us. Do we walk to our destinations and/or for recreation? Do we drive our cars? Is cycling encouraged? Do we have the quality types of places to spend with our families? All these questions, and so many more, are addressed by Belton's city leaders and having a comprehensive conversation in the city that can be distilled into a guiding policy is an important tool for reference by local leaders.

The process is simple; learn as much as possible about the city through literature review and an extensive process of site investigations. Once the physical city is well understood, interview as many people as possible to complete the information about the physical city but also the social city. What are the social issues, the financial issues, the relationships that make the city strong? How do the spaces and places in the city work for the residents? The process seeks to understand the city as much as possible. The next stage of the process is to apply this knowledge to plans and policies that can inform city leaders as decisions are being discussed. A Future Land Use Map is developed to indicate best types of uses for areas in a general fashion so that leadership can consider the merits of all cases and make adjustments as needed. A map that indicates gateways and significant corridors that deserve special treatment is developed so that issues of the city's image can be addressed. Central Avenue is a prime example of the great work already being developed with this idea in mind.

The final chapter in the policy guide strives to set an agenda for future actions to work toward so that the city has an integrated comprehensive plan and strategic plan as a complete set of policy guides for smart decisions moving forward financially, physically, and socially.

# INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is a document that is intended to be a living document to respond to market trends and social waves of change. This plan will need to be reviewed in detail periodically and updated to keep it relevant. This document, as a high level vision, is a perfect companion for the strategic plan that forms the more specific goals for the city to develop the CIP and budgets so that the city stays on track with improvements. The strategic plan outlines in detail the steps to accomplish goals for the various aspects of the city. The comprehensive plan is a higher level vision document looking beyond the physical constructions and improvements and suggests that there are cultural and programming topics that may be addressed that would be vital for stimulating economic activity in the city. In some cases, these may be related to physical improvements and in others, more of a regulatory shift. This viewpoint is taken from a much higher overall image of the city and its potential accomplished in the short term and setting long term goals.

The 2030 Comprehensive Plan's goals are:

- Inspire Belton with not only a plan but also big ideas to help shape development and design
- Provide a thoughtful framework for land use development decisions, both as a policy guide for what uses should be developed where and looking at short term as well as long term goals
- Facilitate continued quality development
- Maintain and further develop a walkable city
- Provide a plan for more entertainment, shopping, and restaurant options in Belton
- Build on the many ideas presented by the community from the online and postcard surveys and the stakeholder meetings
- Create enhancements along important corridors throughout the City
- Encourage the development of quality, safe neighborhoods in Belton
- Link development with road networks to enhance both
- Recognize and collaborate with institutions in their development, such as Bell County, UMHB, BISD, BEDC
- And most importantly, for Belton to continue reaching for the highest possible quality of life for its residents.



# CHAPTER 1

# VISION



## VISION

### CITY VISIONING: LEVERAGING THE POWER OF PREVIOUS PLANNING

All of the efforts regarding the update to the comprehensive plan are intended to be in concert and supportive of the successful planning efforts from past short and long range planning. To move forward with an updated plan for the city that makes sense, the first stage is to review past documents and strategies to separate out the successes and leverage these for a more focused and guided future planning.

The city began a strategic planning process back in 2000 and ultimately developed a broadly accepted document culminating in the initial strategic plan. The process of review has occurred every year, and guides the annual budgeting to continue to be valid and current. "[The City of Belton Strategic Plan](#)" 2017-2021, is the latest document of these efforts and from this emerged the vision:

***“Belton is the Community of Choice in Central Texas, providing an Exceptional Quality of Life.”***

It is valuable to understand these beginnings and to reference this document, so it has been placed in the appendices for reference.

Updating the comprehensive plan has to be guided by this Vision and yet the Vision is broad enough to allow room for it to be interpreted and evolutionary as the years pass by and new situations drive the economy, markets, social issues, and decisions. The efforts in the Comprehensive Plan document are to add definition to the Vision according to the information gathering that this process undertook. The 1, 2, and 3 year Strategic Plan Goals are also incorporated, and as necessary, reflected upon.

### CITY VISIONING: THE MISSION STATEMENT

***“Enhancing Belton’s quality of life through visionary leadership that preserves its character while planning for its future.”***

These two overarching statements then, in turn, were divided into six categories that have associated outcome statements for a more defined strategy of targets:

1. ***Governance***; Belton’s governance is fair, transparent, and fiscally responsible.
2. ***Public Safety***; Belton is safe and family friendly.
3. ***Quality of Life***; Belton has an outstanding quality of life for its citizens.
4. ***Economic Development***; Belton has a vibrant, diverse, and flourishing business community.
5. ***Connectivity***; Belton is a fully connected community with active and engaged citizens.
6. ***Parks/ Natural Beauty***; Belton has dynamic recreational opportunities and natural beauty.



The mission of the comprehensive plan, aside from being an overall policy guide for the city, is to also to support and guide strategic initiatives as described in the Strategic Plan. There is an important phrase listed in both the Vision Statement and the Mission Statement: “Quality of Life.”

This is truly at the heart of what these efforts are all about. This simple goal speaks to having quality infrastructure, exceptional educational opportunities, and economic strength and opportunities. The city should consider further enhancing strong social networks and activities and choices that allow community members to enjoy a healthier lifestyle, and a wide variety of spaces to play and meet friends and family. These recreational and social activities will allow citizens to refresh and continue to be contributing members of the Belton community.

All of these topics contribute to a high quality of life. Stressors in a community can discourage economic activity, fragment families, and impact issues of safety, and these stressors come from many sources. The Comprehensive Plan Update strives to address as many aspects as possible, while continuing to support the ongoing efforts in motion.

The Vision has to be in the forefront, and the comprehensive plan will build bridges of policy in support of these goals.

### STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENTS

Primarily the strategic plan is a hierarchy plan of goals and tasks that specify responsible parties and funding sources and then prioritizes these for the purpose of strategic budgetary processes. This document is immensely important to guide the budget priorities and the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Dollars are budgeted and priorities assigned and this document looks out for a three year period but is updated every year. The relationship of the strategic plan to the comprehensive plan is that the latter is intended to be a higher level policy guide that would then inform and guide the creation of the strategic plan. The strategic plan is, in essence, the hard tools to guide the city budget toward achieving the goals of the comprehensive plan.

In Belton’s Strategic Plan, the document is organized around six goal categories:

- Governance
- Public Safety
- Quality of Life
- Economic Development
- Connectivity
- Parks/ Natural Beauty

Belton is blessed with a very active community of residents that are engaged with the community on many challenging issues on a wide variety of levels. The strategic plan outlines some of these efforts with the section on “Reoccurring Community/Policy Initiatives.” In this section a sampling of efforts is listed.

The strategic plan outlines in detail the steps to accomplish goals for the various aspects of the city. The comprehensive plan takes this a step further by looking beyond the physical constructions and improvements and suggests that there are cultural and programming topics that can be addressed that would be vital for stimulating economic activity in the city. In some cases these may be related to physical improvements and in others, more of a regulatory shift.

# CHAPTER 2



# GOVERNMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES

## GOVERNMENT FACILITIES & SERVICES

### CITY OF BELTON GOVERNMENT

Overall results of the survey completed by approximately 400 residents of Belton show that city residents are very satisfied and proud of their local leadership. The consistency of quality leadership over the past several years has helped reinforce Belton as a premier place to live and do business.

### CITY COUNCIL

The City Council selects the City Manager and makes policy decisions, including approving the budget, appointing citizens to advisory boards and establishing and adopting city-wide policies.

### CITY MANAGER

The City Manager deals with the day-to-day operations of the city, which includes overseeing all departments, keeping up to date on city-related matters and giving informed advice to the City Council.

As a home-rule city, Belton residents have the freedom and responsibility to participate in government. City Hall is located at 333 Water Street and houses the City Manager's Office, Administration, Information Technology Department, Public Information Officer, and the Planning Department.

The Public Works Department is located at 1502 Holland Road on the east side of Belton and houses Public Works, Engineering and Internal Services. Their responsibilities are to oversee and support infrastructure planning, design, and construction, as well as maintenance operations for water and sewer, roads, city facilities, and city vehicles. It includes engineering, facilities and fleet maintenance, streets and right of way, and utility operations.

Belton's Finance Department is located at Finance & Utilities Building at 100 South Davis Street and is responsible for city finances, and the collection, investment, disbursement and documentation of all city funds. They prepare the city's annual budget and annual comprehensive financial report.

The municipal court operates at the Police and Courts Building. The Court Business Office operates at the same location as the Finance Department where they process Class C misdemeanors. A part time municipal judge appointed by City Council presides over the court and a city attorney prosecutes all cases.

The Parks and Recreation department is located at the historic Harris Community Center at 401 N. Alexander, west of downtown. This facility also houses the council chambers along with meeting and event spaces.

### LIBRARY

The [Lena Armstrong Public Library](#), located downtown at 310 East 1st Avenue, was named after a longtime head librarian who retired in 1998. The library has 24,000 items including many genealogy texts which Lena Armstrong was the major impetus behind. The library is a major resource for the history and genealogy for all of Belton and Bell County. The library has stayed current with the times by providing e-books available for reading by patrons, internet access for the community and free driving permit practice test, programs for children, interlibrary loan availability and TexShare databases.



## POLICE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The [Belton Police Department](#) is located east of downtown at 711 E. 2nd Avenue. The police station was built in 1990. Renovations and expansion have recently doubled the size of the police facility to approximately 17,000 square feet. The police department is organized into three divisions: administration, operations, and support services divisions. The Belton Police Department became the first Bell County law enforcement agency to be “Recognized” (accredited) by the Texas Police Chiefs Best Practices Recognition Program.

The Belton Police Department (BPD) provides law enforcement services and has strong partnerships with the residents and businesses of Belton. They operate under a Prevention Focused model of Community Policing. Officers are assigned areas of responsibility, known as sectors, as part of a geographic responsibility approach. Prevention is the focus of all police operations. They proactively seek out ways to interact with the community in order to enhance the quality of life in Belton. All members of the Police Department are committed to building partnerships with citizens, businesses, community groups, and other organizations to reduce crime and solve problems that threaten Belton’s excellent quality of life. BPD’s guiding principles are: prevention of crime; reduction in underlying issues leading to criminal activity, community safety, building partnerships with the community, and quality of life enhancement.

Citizen Involvement is a source of pride for the Belton Police Department. The CHIPS (Citizens Helping in Police Services) program, which was formed in 2011, is a volunteer program designed to deter crime through visible presence using volunteers to help patrol parks and festivals. CHIPS volunteers must be graduates of Citizen Police Academy, which is a program promoting understanding through education by exposing community members to the various facets of law enforcement during a 10-week program. BPD participates annually in the National Night Out crime prevention event by hosting approximately 20 neighborhood block parties throughout Belton. Traffic is a major concern for the police department due to area growth and two major interstate highways. Overall crime rate in Belton was down for the past two years.

In 2015, BPD, in partnership with the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) opened the Central Texas Regional Firearms Training Center to provide a centralized law enforcement training facility in the region. The facility includes classroom buildings and a state of the art firearms range.

Code Enforcement and Animal Control personnel are located in the same office and cross trained to maximize effectiveness. There is an animal shelter in Belton operated by Bell County.



## FIRE AND EMERGENCY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The [Belton Fire Department](#) has approximately 30 firefighters on staff. Their jurisdiction covers 75 miles of Bell County for emergency medical services and 20 miles of the city limits for fire protection and emergency medical services. They have disaster mutual aid agreements with area citizen volunteer agencies. Belton has mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with surrounding fire departments and a regional mutual aid agreement with the CTCOG.

The Fire Department is current with the fire code and is in the process of reviewing the most current code (2015) for future adoption. The City of Belton meets most of the code, while the ETJ meets fire protection standards.

The Fire Department and Police Department have a good relationship and work well together to ensure the safety of Belton's residents. There are two fire stations: The Central Fire Station is located at 203 S. Penelope (downtown) and Fire Station No. 2 is at 420 Sparta Road which is in the northern part of Belton. In the future, especially as the city grows to the south and west, an additional fire station may be needed based on population..

A report by the ICMA Center for Public Safety Management was completed in 2011 ([Final Report Fire Operations and Data Analysis City of Belton, Texas June 2011](#)) which analyzed all aspects of Belton's Fire Department and provided several recommendations to help the fire department run more effectively, many of which have been or are being implemented.



# CHAPTER 3

# EXISTING LAND USE & TRENDS



## EXISTING LAND USE & TRENDS

To begin the process of an update to the City of Belton Comprehensive Plan, there has to be a complete review of Belton's past so that all modifications in land use assignments and design standards are appropriate to both the existing context, but also the historical past.

There are numerous theories and trends in planning today and several trends attempt to reach back in time to mimic public space proportions and building scales. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), Form Based Code, Smart Code, and others have great aspects, but may not always be the right choice for an area. One trend strongly supported here will be planning toward a more walkable community so that automobile use can be lessened and healthy walking promoted. One key planning and land use feature of this concept is to incentivize a more mixed set of land uses. The essence of this is to promote having all of the daily needs within a quarter mile radius walk from the residence. Generally this is about five minutes of walking. This goal is not going to be achieved everywhere, but there are many areas within Belton where this may be possible. An example of getting this idea to work is promoting small footprint grocery stores to begin working into the fringe areas of established neighborhoods. Large grocery stores can not achieve this due to the amount of parking required.

Transformations like this happen over the course of time, lots of time. Of course one of the most challenging aspects will be resistance from less intense uses, like neighborhoods, allowing denser residential at the fringe. The Design Standards can handle much of this concern with well-considered adjustments for this kind of housing. In older sections of Belton there are existing small stores that serve the neighborhoods. People were coming and going from this store on foot or by bicycle. There were a few parking spaces and overall the store site was only about a ¼ acre in size; right-sized for the service area.

Within new subdivision proposals, criteria can begin using an analysis of the quarter mile access to services to evaluate if residential areas may be too expansive without intervening neighborhood services. This also speaks to the road network and making sure that the nature of the street organization is pervious enough to allow good migration of traffic and good access to small commercial enterprise.

### COMMERCIAL

Starting with the downtown area, there has been much discussion about not having adequate parking downtown. This is usually the case for cities to have this feedback from residents and visitors. The fact is that there seems to be plenty of space, it just might not be evident or within close proximity of the destination. Working on good orientation signage and a downtown shared parking masterplan will do much to resolve this issue. Where possible, the city may want to investigate shade structures or awnings to provide necessary protection from the weather. In many cases this may be in conflict with historic preservation goals and just not possible.

In the heart of Belton is the Downtown area with Nolan Creek passing along the southern edge. Within the creek corridor there is ample space for continuing parkland and trail improvements. The downtown area has a variety of activities to take in with shopping, eating, and sightseeing. More diversity is needed for enhance the visitor experience and throughout the survey period, it became evident that there is a lot of interest to have more sit-down restaurants in the downtown area. As is often the case with County Seats, much of the downtown real estate is tied up with governmental uses displacing potential retail or restaurant uses. This creates a two-fold issue of loss of property tax value, and also not contributing to tourism assets for visitors.

As with all cities, the concentration of commercial uses are aligned along the major roadways. Residential areas are behind these strips of commercial activity. The typical dynamic of a car leaving a neighborhood and entering the major roads is how the relationship of residents and neighborhood servicing commercial areas interact. To relieve traffic loading on the major roads, current and long-standing planning practice attempts to incentivize neighborhood services to locate on the edges of neighborhoods in a manner to prevent the need of entering the major roads for a high quantity of trips made. The "Neighborhood Store" is almost a dying model that is in need of resurrecting. Well placed stores can serve this niche market successfully, but it will require allowances by the neighborhoods, appropriate site locations, and the business community accepting and developing these smaller markets. Often times these neighborhood-servicing stores find their best successes when located closer to denser housing such as multiple family site or other denser products. Likewise, in older areas of town, there are small-scaled stores that would benefit with up-zoning the density of the surrounding properties to a denser residential zoning which could trigger redevelopment and more stability with the small commercial interests. Several locations observed

had the right conditions for this kind of action. The city should consider holding small neighborhood workshops on specific areas to have this discussion.

Currently there is a concentration of high quality retail in the district near the intersection of Sparta Road and Main Street with three major anchored retail centers and grocery, as well as a myriad of other shops and fast food. Establishing other significant commercial areas away from here and attached to a transportation network that offers dispersal would go a long way to easing traffic to this one area and create less person-miles of travel overall. The areas of Loop 121, Lake Road, River Fair, and Commerce Drive have this potential as does I-14/US 190 and I-35, or potentially at a later time, FM 1670 and Shanklin Road once residential neighborhoods expand in this area.

In conjunction with a review of the transportation master plan, there are several significant locations where the city might consider incentives or public-private partnerships (3Ps) to land larger retail centers or even a regional mall. One such area observed was the west side of I-35 at Shanklin Road. There is a planned roadway that will be a new main north-south corridor and the major east-west corridor is already in place. The beauty of this site is that it will draw a lot of clientele from nearby communities bringing a greater economic impact than a more internal center. Many more opportunities are evident around Belton edges with major intersections.

The City of Belton has already put in motion significant utilities to stimulate the attractiveness of the I-35 corridor located in the southern portion of the city for major commercial investment. This area as well as the westward corridor of I-14/US 190 are the two major growth corridors for major commercial enterprise. As the residential development continues to rise in the south, a grocery store will be needed in this area. The northwest areas have significant opportunity for growth out Lake and Sparta Roads. Much of this area will see high value residential and will be in much need of significant grocery, building supply, and other commercial retail and restaurants to prevent trips coming all the way into Main Street. Ultimately, once the markets and infrastructure arrives, the intersection of I-35 and Shanklin Road (east) has a great potential of another significant retail/grocery center. That market is further out and may not mature until 2025-2030.

### RESIDENTIAL

Belton has a rich mosaic of residential neighborhoods that support a broadly varying demographic of residents. Certain pockets demonstrate high levels of affluence, while other areas show working class or middle income homes, and there are also low income neighborhoods in a few places. Looking at demographic data, the cross section of homes in Belton roughly corresponds to the data of household income distribution. The largest percentages, from about 12% to almost 20% (total of 46%) are household incomes ranging between \$50,000 to \$150,000, generally about half the population of the city. The data continues to show that about 5% are above that range and the remaining are evenly distributed below that range. Overall the majority of Belton residents are working class and seem to have a strong connection to the city. This tells us that housing needs are important at just about all levels of income below \$150,000 per year income.

There seems to be some trends evolving that are changing this evaluation. There were several upscale neighborhoods being developed in Belton at the time of the assessment along the Leon River and northwest and southwest of the city. With the current annexation strategy in place laying out the boundaries of the extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), the stage is set for further upscale neighborhoods to



be developed within the next decade and depending on the extension of utilities.

Separately there is a strong sentiment in the city regarding historic preservation and this is evident with the wonderful preservation efforts, in the historic neighborhoods.

West of Main Street and south of Nolan Creek are older neighborhoods serving a mixed economic level of households. There are many great qualities in these neighborhoods including mixing of uses and a seemingly stable community in terms of not seeing the volatility in the market with gentrification, major redevelopment and displacement, etc. Services appropriate to this area are near at hand as are parks and schools. Streets like Pearl Street have housing stock that is architecturally valuable and exemplary for these neighborhoods and should be encouraged to maintain higher levels of maintenance. Some examples are well maintained. Areas in this district such as the Belton Senior Center, near Mitchell Circle have multiple elements; school, parkland, senior center, housing, ball field, and a neighborhood store, contain all the elements so that likely it becomes a social center for this particular district. It is important to take a detailed look at this area and develop strategies and work with the neighborhood churches to understand the dynamics and then emphasize the value of the district with improvements to strengthen the relationships between the elements and the surrounding neighborhoods.

In terms of maintaining a solid diversity across the city and an invested workforce, this neighborhood is very valuable to Belton and should be guarded against degradation. Degradation can come in many forms in such a place. One possible scenario is gentrification where market forces create a condition where affordable homes are sought after by the younger generations seeking to live near the city center and Nolan Creek. The effect is that the community bonds get fractured and housing prices go up raising property values. The pressure of higher taxes and the lure of selling for a higher price than expected, stimulates a rapidly energized market.

The northern stretches of the city including the ETJ are comprised of a highly mixed areas with large areas of industrial and heavy to lighter commercial but residential are included along the Leon River and stretching toward Belton Lake. High quality neighborhoods are closer to the lake and appearing to cover a broad price range. There is much more land to develop in the area to continue to support middle and higher income neighborhoods.

The Stillhouse Hollow Lake area as well should be seeing an increase in a variety of residential developments. There are some moderate and higher value neighborhoods in the area but only in pockets. This is still a very rural area. The new Three Creeks subdivision has seen rapid development, thereby allowing the market to continue to cater to mid to higher value homes and neighborhoods. This subdivision and the newer one accessed from Lake Road in the north are also adding neighborhood amenities not previously seen including trail networks that should ultimately connect city wide if possible.

The southeast side of Belton along the Lampasas River are very nice horse farms nestled in the bottom lands and forests. This is a beautiful landscape and will certainly attract the home builders. Once utilities are made available in this area the development pressure will ensue. There could be much value for the city to capture the river and floodplain in fee simple or easement ownership as a linear parkland that would connect to multiple important locations in the city including Nolan Creek. Land development here may consider cluster development and leaving as much open space as possible to preserve the trees and beauty of this place. With the floodplain, that might just be the only thing possible. Dense high-end condos townhomes or other products would contribute more diversity to the residential market and even professional office market, but the key would be granting enough density to leave the open space preserved and unmodified.

As mentioned in the commercial section above, each of these areas will need small neighborhood services commercial areas to assist in minimizing daily trips and lessening the burden on the major roadways.

## INDUSTRIAL

Industrial development is an important land use component in Belton. The Belton Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was created in 1990 and operates under the state's 4A Sales Tax Program, an initiative introduced and supported by the Belton city council. Acceptable projects for the BEDC are governed by State Law for 4A Corporations and by policies established by the board of directors and the Belton City Council. Each year the BEDC assists new companies interested in establishing operations in the City of Belton, encourages expansion of local companies,

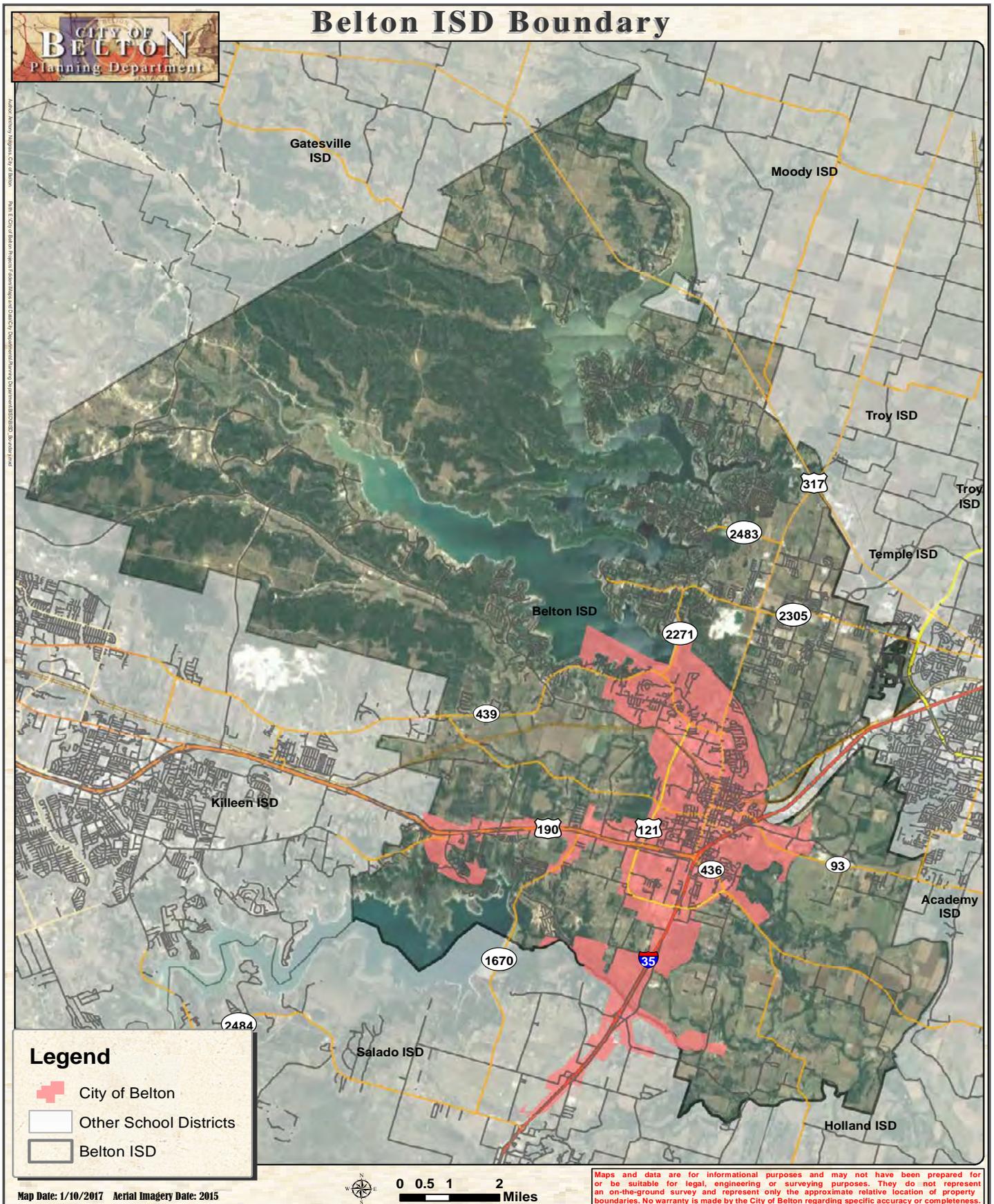
continues developing the Belton Business Park, and supports infrastructure projects in the community to spur growth. The BEDC mainly focuses on industrial development that provides primary jobs in the Belton area. The Belton Business Park contains a mixture of uses along Loop 121 and US 190, but the majority of the Business Park is zoned for Light Industrial uses. The BEDC recently acquired the former Rockwool site from the city to allow more opportunities for light industrial development. The comprehensive plan emphasizes the preservation of most of Belton's industrial land base for future job growth and the industrial and service needs of the region, and to provide for compatibility between industrial areas and more sensitive land uses. The city and BEDC encourage the establishment and expansion of industrial uses that strengthen and diversify the local economy. The Future Land Use map identifies appropriate areas for future industrial growth, so as to minimize impacts on surrounding land uses, especially less intensive residential land uses.

### INSTITUTIONAL

Belton contains a large number of institutional uses, including educational, religious, medical facilities, charitable organizations, and county and state properties, among several other non-taxing entities. Belton is the county seat and contains several Bell County buildings throughout the city, such as the Courthouse, Justice Center, Engineer's Office, 911 Communications Center, maintenance facilities and several other properties with the Belton city limits. Prominent educational uses include the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, a growing university with a current enrollment of 3,900 students, and Belton Independent School District, a large 6A school district with a total of 10 campuses, administration office, and bus barn in the Belton city limits. There are also several growing religious institutions in Belton, such as First Baptist, United Methodist, Church of Christ, Christ the King, and many other churches in the Belton community. Charitable organizations in Belton include the Cultural Activities Center, Senior Center, Hope for the Hungry, Helping Hands Ministry, Body of Christ Dental Clinic, Heart of Central Texas Independent Living Center, and other important organizations that provide a great benefit to Belton citizens.



# BELTON ISD BOUNDARY



## SCHOOL FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### BELTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The City of Belton has one school district, [Belton Independent School District \(BISD\)](#), which serves approximately 11,000 students, of which around 3,600 are in the City of Belton. BISD also extends into Belton ETJ and unincorporated Bell County, parts of Temple, and Morgan’s Point. City of Temple residents have just slightly fewer students in BISD than City of Belton. BISD has a great reputation and is a source of pride for Belton residents. Families with children often seek out homes in the BISD school district.

BISD predicts that elementary campuses will be at or near capacity in 2019, middle schools in 2020 and high schools in 2021. Continued steady growth for the district led to the compilation of [“Roadmap to BISD 2025”](#). This vision plan addresses the need to build a new elementary school, a new comprehensive high school and improvements to existing facilities.

The citizens of Belton would like to see as many new facilities as possible built within the Belton city limits with suitable infrastructure provided. The cost of these new facilities will require the passing of bonds across the vast BISD to help incur the cost of construction.

The City of Belton Planning Department works with BISD to make the process and development of the new schools along with any modifications to the existing schools and their facilities as seamless and easy as possible. BISD has an interest in a more diversified and industrial tax base within the district to help them grow and continue to be the pride of Belton.

BISD has a great relationship and partnership with University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB). They have a variety of partnerships and a sharing of facilities that continue to showcase the spirit of cooperation that is as source of pride for the City of Belton.

### UNIVERSITY OF MARY HARDIN-BAYLOR

Another source of pride for Belton is the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#) established in 1845 is Texas’s longest continuously operating college. UMHB is also growing steadily with around 3,900 students enrolled currently. The UMHB campus has been growing along with its student population and the new stadium, Crusader Stadium, is a source of pride for all of Belton. In 2011, UMHB developed a [Campus Master Plan](#) to show their commitment to working with the City of Belton as the campus changes and grows. Its central location between Nolan Creek and adjacent to several historic districts provides many opportunities along with some challenges as it grows to meet its special academic market.

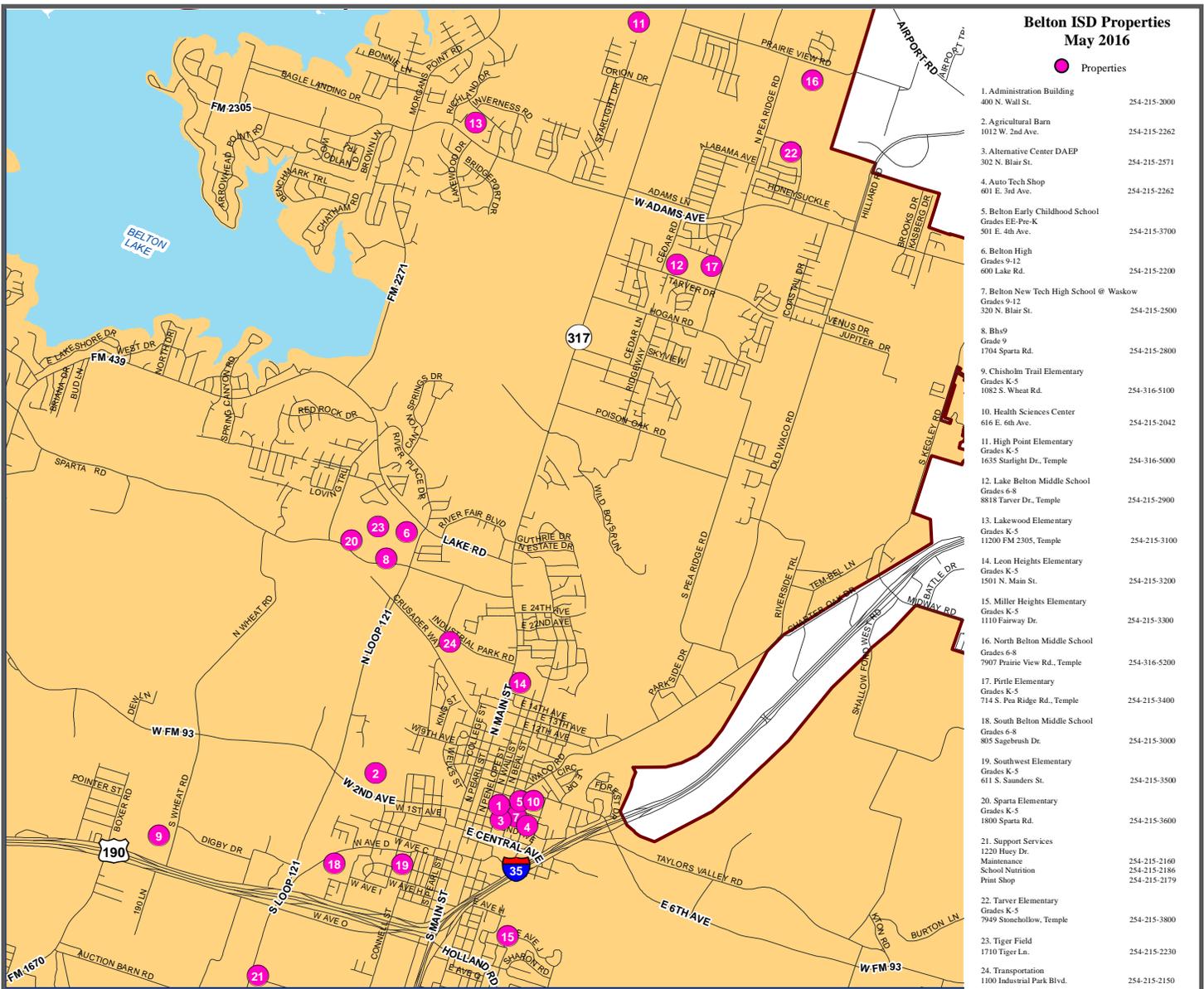
A new [performing arts center](#) is under construction as part of the UMHB Master Plan. It’s located at the corner of Main Street and MLK Jr. Avenue and will be an asset to both the university and the Belton community. A strategic plan for 2011-2018 makes clear UMHB’s vision to be “the university of choice for Christian higher education in the Southwest.”

The staff of UMHB would like to see some improvements to the “gateway” road (6th Avenue) to their campus and older streets and intersections surrounding their campus. The city is already in the process of re-designing and improving 6th Avenue to make it more aesthetically pleasing and efficient. The preliminary design of

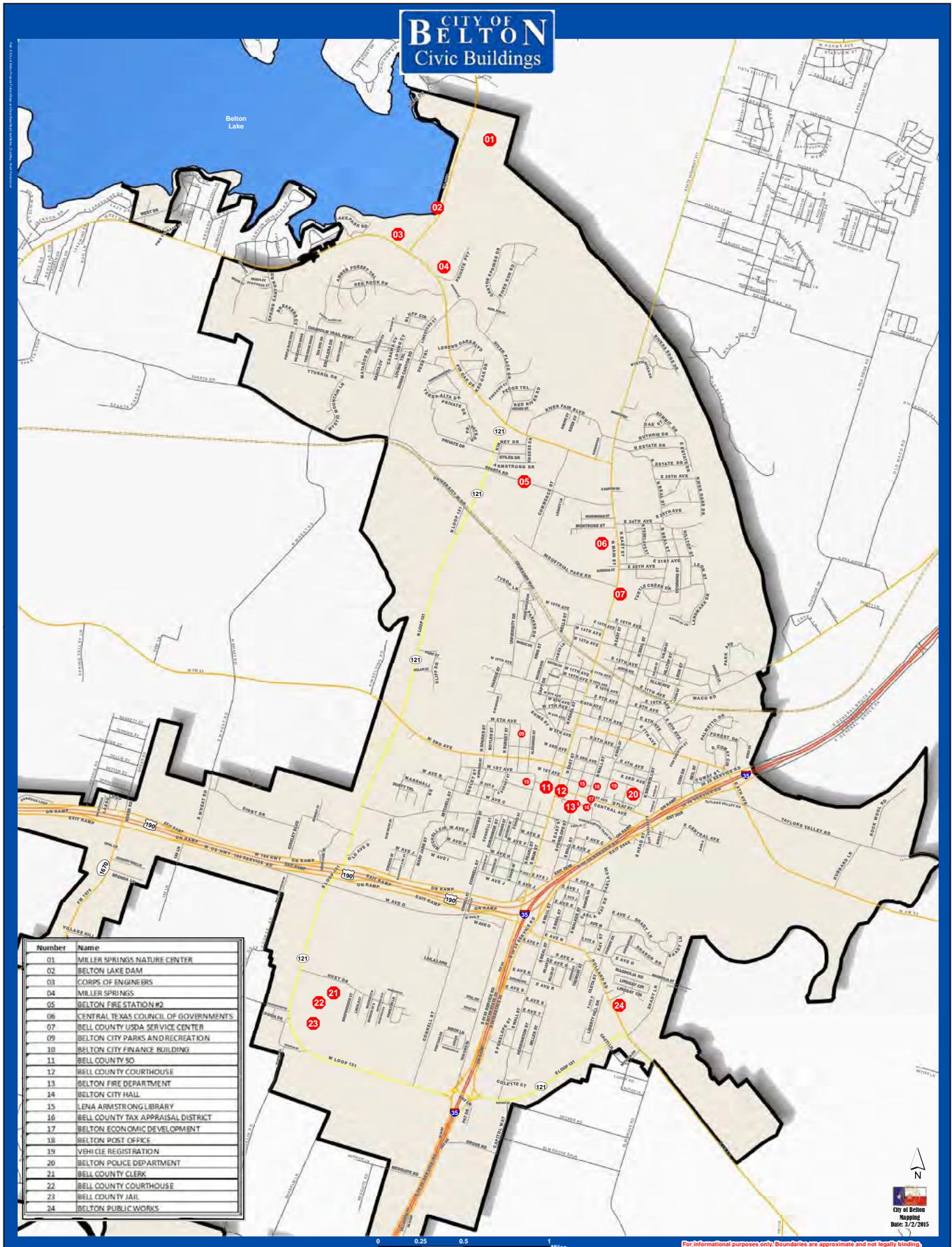


the intersection MLK Jr. Avenue and North Main Street has been completed and a maintenance and upkeep program is a part of the transportation plan for some of the other streets around the campus. The connection of MLK Jr. Avenue (also known as West Ninth Avenue) over Nolan Creek by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is complete along with improvements to West Ninth Avenue (between Loop 121 and Cliff Drive and west Harris Street and University Drive).

A continued open and positive dialogue between the City of Belton, UMHB and BISD will ensure quality facilities that serve both their students and the community are built and developed in the places where they best serve their users and that the partnerships between the schools and the community continue.



# CITY OF BELTON CIVIC BUILDINGS



# CHAPTER 4

# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is essential to determine how land will be utilized in the future to provide for organized and effective development. Transportation corridors and the availability of water and wastewater utilities are crucial for land use decisions. It is essential to review the existing land uses and historical patterns of development, as these often have a significant effect on future land uses. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is Belton's visual guide to future planning, illustrating the general location of a variety of land use categories within the current city limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The FLUM provides a guide for both zoning and infrastructure decisions. The map also indicates various land use types such as residential, commercial, industrial, and open space, and is shaped partly by city policies related to land development. The map includes land use features – including centers and corridors that direct the location and intensity of various land uses. The Design Standards Type Area Map is a component of the FLUM that includes existing and projected growth in 15 areas within the city limits. The FLUM is the big picture for the future vision of the city; whereas, the Type Area Map is more specific and contains applicable standards and land uses permitted in area. Overall, the FLUM is a generalized representation of the future land uses for Belton and is not intended to be parcel specific.

### LAND USE CATEGORIES

The FLUM establishes the general distribution, location, and extent of land uses, including agricultural, parkland, open space, residential, office, retail, commercial, industrial, and institutional. Each of the land uses are shown as color gradients that vary according to the Zoning Districts. The FLUM is a living document with the flexibility to be amended to reflect changing development trends. The land use categories are intended to provide general direction to policymakers and others responsible for helping to shape the Belton's future. Individual zoning changes should be generally consistent with the FLUM.

#### AGRICULTURAL/PARKLAND/OPEN SPACE

This land use category includes areas associated with agricultural, recreation and open space areas. The agricultural areas are undeveloped or vacant land situated on the fringe of an urban area and used for agricultural purposes. The recreational areas are city-owned parks and recreational facilities that are either developed or undeveloped. Open spaces reflect areas close to bodies of water, unsuitable for development due to physical problems such as flooding, as well as providing for preservation of natural areas. The FLUM identifies a potential linear park system along bodies of water.

#### RESIDENTIAL

This land use category facilitates existing and future development primarily for dwelling units that range in density. These residential areas generally allow for greater densities near major corridors and activity and employment centers and lower densities throughout the city and close to rural areas. Master planning of neighborhoods is encouraged and should include neighborhood parks and open spaces. Schools, churches, and other civic and institutional facilities are appropriate secondary uses and should incorporate design features to mitigate impacts on neighborhoods.

#### OFFICE

This land use category includes office uses compatible with retail and multiple family. In some areas, office uses are located on the fringe just outside of lower density residential neighborhoods. Office development is compatible with residential neighborhoods since the hours of operation are typically during the day and not disruptive to residents. In many instances, professional, financial, medical and other similar uses provide services for local residents. The office areas are often utilized as a transitional use between higher intensity uses and lower density residential development.

#### RETAIL/COMMERCIAL

This land use category includes a variety of retail and commercial uses primarily for buying and selling of goods and services. Neighborhood service retail development typically serves neighborhood areas, and are located in these areas to serve local residents and office development. Retail development contains shopping areas generally located along or at the intersection of major collectors or thoroughfares to accommodate higher traffic volumes. The commercial areas identified in the FLUM promote development or redevelopment of existing commercial corridors and are generally automobile-oriented. The areas along Interstate 35 and I-14/US 190 promote large-scale, regional

commercial development that serves the Belton community, as well as consumers from areas outside the city limits.

### **INDUSTRIAL**

This land use category supports industrial uses that accommodate the manufacturing, production, and processing of consumer goods. Industrial uses should be located in areas with accessibility to major highways, rail lines or other means of transportation. These areas are intended for industrial and employment land uses that may generate traffic and noise and that may require outdoor areas for storage or manufacturing/assembly. These are important for the city's economic development and should be developed in a way to minimize negative impacts on surrounding uses. The Belton Business Park is an example of an area that promotes light industrial development and the area along Taylor's Valley Road is an example of an area that promotes heavy industrial development.

### **INSTITUTIONAL**

The institutional land use category is intended for existing and future schools, civic uses, churches, and other public uses. The areas shown on the FLUM are based on existing land uses that include major institutions in Belton, such as Bell County, Belton I.S.D., First Baptist Church, and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

### **LAND USE CENTERS**

The Land Use Centers are surrounding key intersections in areas within the City of Belton. Land use centers are areas for activity and development that provide convenient access to employment, goods and services. These land use centers are important to the future economic vitality of the city and have the potential to be served by urban infrastructure, which may offer the opportunity for higher intensity land uses. In some areas on the FLUM, centers are identified in areas that are not presently served with utilities, and it could take several years for these utilities to reach each center.

### **LIFESTYLE CENTER**

Lifestyle Centers are retail-oriented areas that serve the retail needs of consumers in the area. Lifestyle Centers shall include design elements such as well-developed landscaping within and along entrances, pedestrian areas and pathways. Lifestyle Centers contain mixture of uses, including leisure amenities such as retail shops, discount stores, restaurants, grocery stores, business and medical offices, family-oriented entertainment, medium and high density residential, and neighborhood services.

### **MIXED USE CENTER**

Mixed Use Centers are large-scale commercial areas that generally serve as a regional shopping destination. Mixed Use Centers provide goods and services citywide and regionally. Mixed Use Centers contain a diverse collection of mixed uses such as general retail uses, large big-box retailers, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, entertainment uses, hotels, and high density residential. This center has the potential for a more diverse mixture of land uses and intensity levels than either lifestyle or neighborhood centers. Mixed Use Centers are designed for automobile access and circulation and should be close to or directly served by major arterial streets.

### **COMMERCIAL CENTER**

Commercial Centers are small-scale commercial areas that serve several neighborhoods, as well as the entire city. Commercial Centers contain clusters of businesses, often at major intersections, and shopping centers. These areas are served by major arterial streets that provide a variety and depth of goods and services not available in neighborhood centers. These areas will often contain shopping centers, eating establishments, convenience stores, and other retail-oriented establishments.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**

Neighborhood Centers are small, compact, low-intensity and low-traffic generating developments that generally support the day-to-day demands of surrounding neighborhoods for goods and services. The core of the Neighborhood Center should contain a diverse mixture of land uses and intensity levels. Neighborhood Centers are encouraged to develop as mixed use centers that primarily serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood, with a limited number of businesses or specialty stores serving a larger area. This center contains a variety of small scale retail shops, drug stores, convenience stores, eating establishments, offices, and personal and business service establishments.

## **COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY**

Commercial Corridors are roadways characterized primarily by a concentration and distribution of retail and commercial uses. Commercial Corridors can accommodate intensive commercial uses and high levels of traffic. While the character of these corridors is mainly commercial, residential areas are nearby and impacts from commercial uses must be mitigated as appropriate. Additionally, the city encourages new medium- to high-density residential development along commercial corridors, particularly as part of mixed-use development. These corridors frequently carry large traffic volumes and must balance significant vehicular through-traffic capacity with automobile and pedestrian access to commercial property. The FLUM identifies significant commercial corridors throughout the City.

### **INTERSTATE 35 AND INTERSTATE 14/HIGHWAY 190**

These areas are primarily focused on commercial highway frontage uses. This area contains opportunities for mixed uses, hotels, new car dealerships, multi-story office buildings, and other similar commercial uses. Outdoor storage should be limited in these areas to preserve the streetscape of these important gateways. If light industrial uses are proposed along these corridors, recommend the buildings are setback 300-500 feet from the right-of-way or a planned development is proposed to create a building storefront with exterior materials that comply with the city's Design Standards for commercial development.

### **LOOP 121**

This area is retail oriented and should contain a mixture of medium and high density residential, retail shopping areas, offices, eating establishments. There are some existing single family homes located along Loop 121 on properties that may eventually be converted to retail uses. Institutional uses, such as Belton Independent School District and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor have properties with existing and proposed development along Loop 121, and future uses adjacent to those areas should be compatible with these institutions. The Bell County Expo and Equestrian Center encourages the opportunity for large retail shopping areas, eating establishments, and hotels close by due to the amount of traffic this use generates.

### **EAST 6TH AVENUE/FM 93**

This East 6th Avenue/FM 93 area is very similar to Lake Road, an area in transition in which single family lots are undergoing change and being converted into business uses. This area contains established businesses, as well as vacant lots and older homes which will transition into new retail development that incorporates the city's Design Standards. There has been re-development of existing sites such as the conversion of the former HEB to Main Street Crossing, a new retail center with 3-4 suites that has significantly improved the visual aesthetics along this roadway. East 6th Avenue/FM 93 is a major gateway from Interstate 35 into the city and has the potential for the development and re-development of existing uses into office and retail uses. The city recognizes that 6th Avenue is an important and major gateway into Belton and is creating a plan to improve this corridor in the future, similar to Central Avenue. The city is planning to create a visually appealing streetscape with pedestrian features, such as an improved sidewalk network, attractive landscaping, ornamental street lights, and benches.

### **MIXED USE CORRIDORS**

There are potential mixed-use corridors within the city in which the development and redevelopment of areas may contain a mixture of residential, office, and limited retail uses. The northern portion of Main Street, just south of the Lampasas River, Lake Road west of Loop 121, and FM 93 west of Main Street are corridors that may contain these mixed-uses. The Design Standards includes 15 Type Areas within the Belton city limits that state the uses appropriate in each Type Area. These areas are primarily residential, but there may be some opportunities for mixed-use development, where appropriate. The Design Standards includes the requirement to create transitions between low intensity and high intensity land uses.

## **FUTURE LAND USE MAP AMENDMENT PROCESS**

The Future Land Use Map may be amended through a similar procedure used to rezone a property, except approval of the amendment may be by resolution rather than an ordinance. A Future Land Use Map amendment request form should be submitted to the Planning Department no later than the last business day of the month.

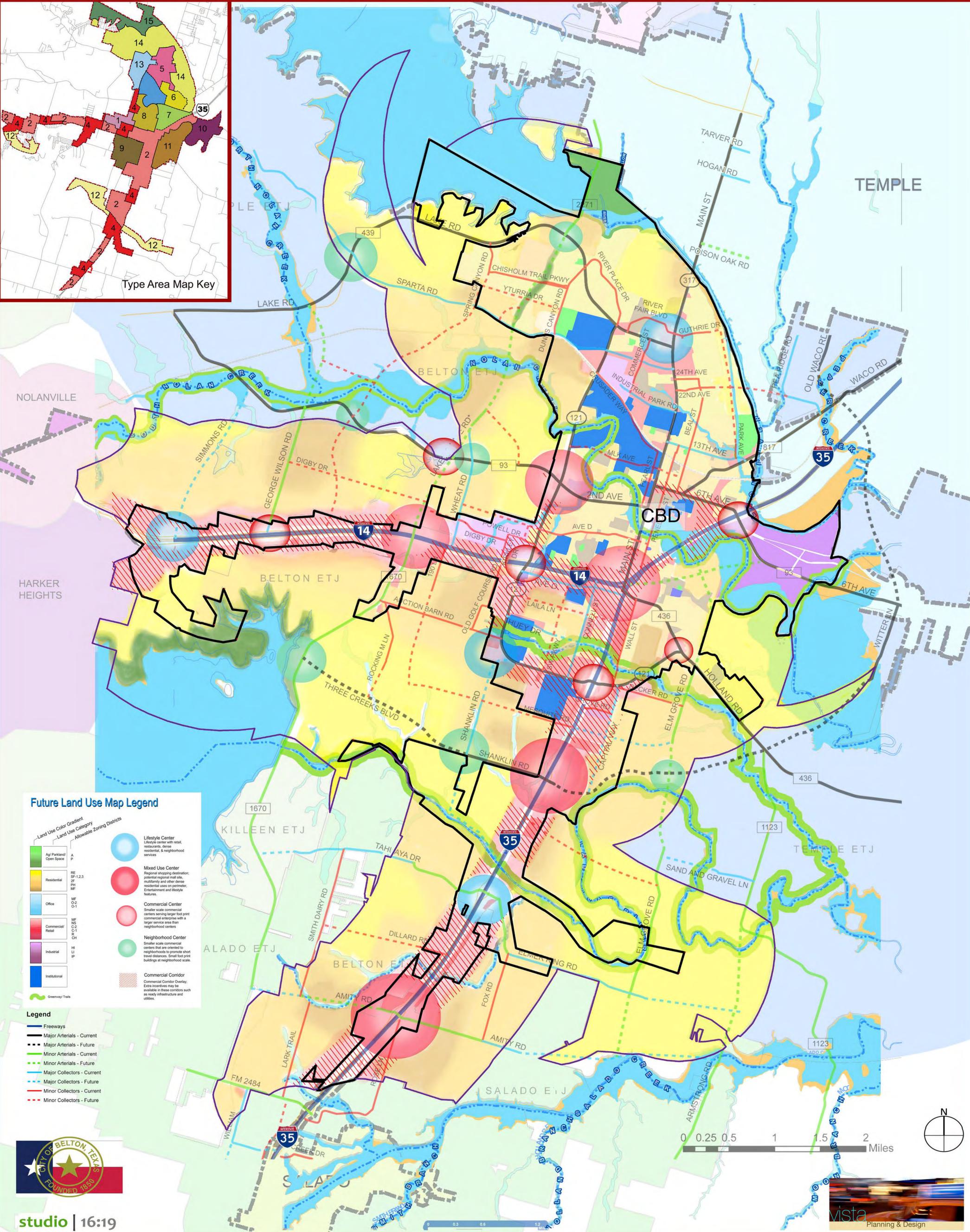
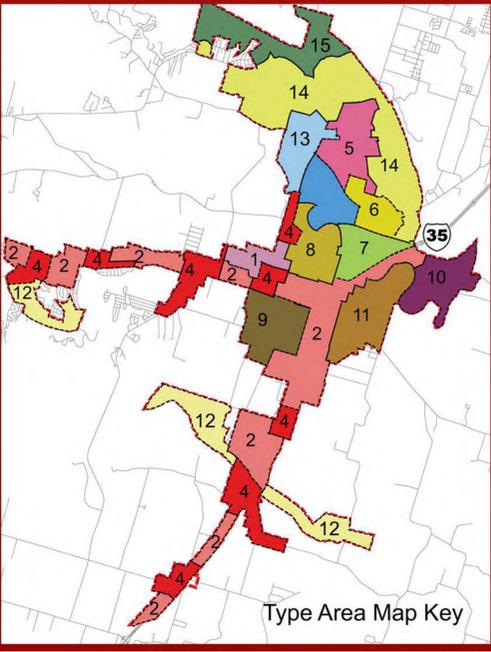
When providing a reason for this future land use amendment request, the applicant should describe how and why the proposal is consistent with the **evaluation criteria** below.

1. The proposed change would be more consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's existing goals, objectives, and policies.
2. The proposed change would better fit with predominant uses and development pattern in the surrounding area.
3. Conditions in the area have changed sufficiently to warrant the proposed amendment (either map or text amendment).

The Director of Planning is responsible for review of all FLUM amendment requests and upon completion of staff review, public hearings will be scheduled for the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. A website listing of the proposed amendment is required 10 days prior to the first scheduled public hearing.

Every proposal which is recommended favorably by the Planning and Zoning Commission shall be automatically forwarded to the City Council for setting and holding of public hearings. If the proposal is recommended for disapproval by the Commission, the request shall not be forwarded to the City Council unless the applicant requests an appeal to the City Council.

# THE CITY OF BELTON FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



## Future Land Use Map Legend

Land Use Color Gradient	Land Use Category	Allowable Zoning Districts
Green	Ag/Parkland/Open Space	A, P
Yellow	Residential	RE, SF-1,2,3, 2F, PH, MF
Light Blue	Office	MF, O2, O-1
Red	Commercial/Retail	MF, NS, C-1, C-2, C-3, CH
Purple	Industrial	HI, LI, IP
Dark Blue	Institutional	

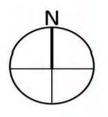
Center Type	Description
Blue Circle	<b>Lifestyle Center</b> Lifestyle center with retail, restaurants, dense residential, & neighborhood services.
Red Circle	<b>Mixed Use Center</b> Regional shopping destination; potential regional mall site, multifamily and other dense residential uses on perimeter, Entertainment and lifestyle features.
Pink Circle	<b>Commercial Center</b> Smaller scale commercial centers serving larger foot print commercial enterprise with a larger service area than neighborhood centers.
Green Circle	<b>Neighborhood Center</b> Smaller scale commercial centers that are oriented to neighborhoods to promote short travel distances. Small foot print buildings at neighborhood scale.
Hatched Area	<b>Commercial Corridor</b> Commercial Corridor Overlay. Extra incentives may be available in these corridors such as ready infrastructure and utilities.

### Legend

Thick Solid Line	Freeways
Solid Black Line	Major Arterials - Current
Dashed Black Line	Major Arterials - Future
Solid Green Line	Minor Arterials - Current
Dashed Green Line	Minor Arterials - Future
Solid Blue Line	Major Collectors - Current
Dashed Blue Line	Major Collectors - Future
Solid Red Line	Minor Collectors - Current
Dashed Red Line	Minor Collectors - Future

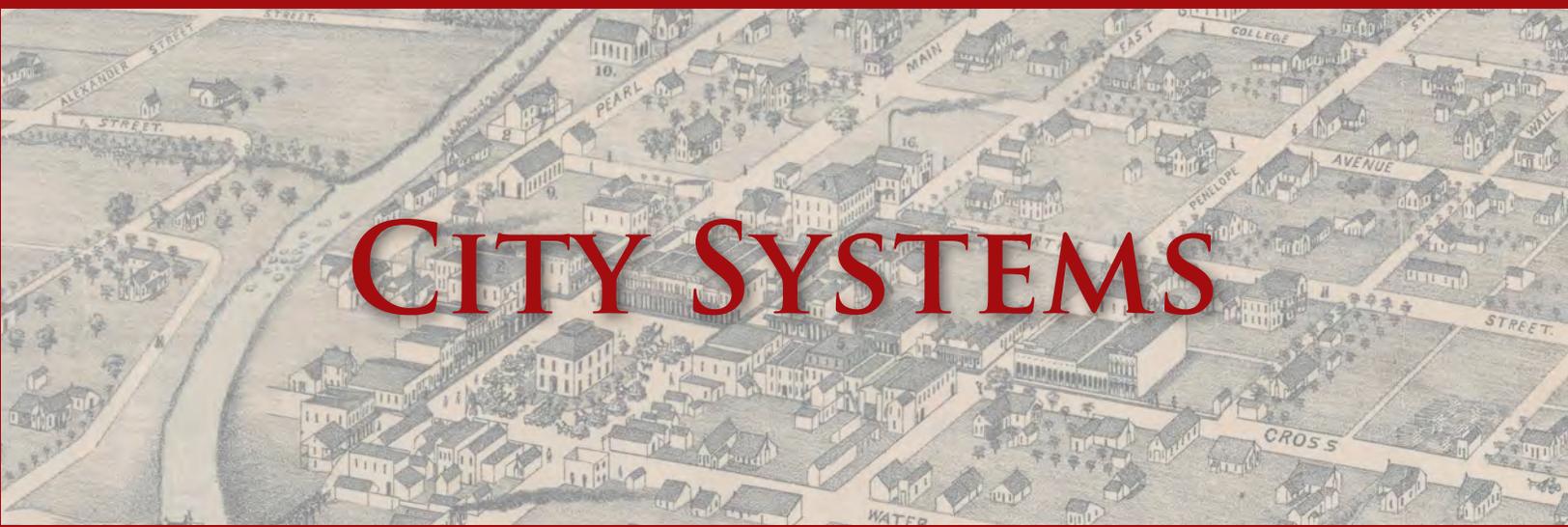


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# CHAPTER 5

# CITY SYSTEMS



## CITY SYSTEMS

### STRATEGIC PLAN

The [City of Belton Strategic Plan FY 2017-2021](#) was published on October 1, 2016. The objective of the strategic planning in Belton helps the city identify long range problems and solutions.

The City of Belton Engineering Division is currently working on the funding and design enhancement of the Street Entry Corridor on 6th Avenue. This important gateway is a major entry way to UMHB for potential students in addition to being a major access point off of interstate. The city is also working with TXDOT during the planning and design for the widening of North Main Street (SH 317) to four lanes with a center median from where the four lane section currently ends in Belton, north towards FM 2305 in Temple, another goal listed in the plan.

- Plan Enhancement for 6th Avenue (FY 2017)
- Secure Lake to Lake Road ROW (FY 2017)
- Upgrade 6th Avenue based on Plan (FY 2018)
- Secure Lake to Lake Road ROW and Identify Phased Construction Funding (FY 2018)
- Repair/replace Central Avenue Bridge east of IH 35 in Shirt Tail Bend (FY 2018)
- Repair/replace Central Avenue Bridge in Yettie Polk Park (FY 2019)

Another project adjacent to Central Avenue is the design of the first phase of a redevelopment plan on East Street, from Central Avenue to north of 1st Avenue. This project proposes to upgrade East Street to look more like the renovated Central Avenue and is being done by the city.

Implementing the street maintenance plan, as part of a five year maintenance plan completed in 2014, is another strategic plan goal. The intent of the street maintenance report was to assess existing pavement conditions of the roadways under the maintenance of Belton's Public Works Department. It also identified maintenance treatments and their associated cost for each type of roadway.

The goals specified as part of the plan were:

- Improve all non-local (arterial and collector) roadways ranked below a Satisfactory rating to at least a Satisfactory rating within five years, including reconstruction of failed street segments.
- Maintain all non-local (arterial and collector) streets so that no segment drops from Good or Satisfactory to Fair during the 5-year plan period.
- Maintain all local (residential) streets so that Good and Satisfactory streets do not drop below Satisfactory during the 5-year plan period.
- Maintain all local (residential) streets so that segments rated Fair do not drop below Fair during the 5-year plan period.
- Reconstruct all Failed local segments within five years.
- Pave unpaved roads to improve to Good condition.

This maintenance plan is intended to help defer more extensive and expensive maintenance is thorough in nature . The [5-Year Roadway Maintenance Plan](#) was funded and is being implemented by the Engineering Department, based on available funding.

A preliminary design and cost estimate for the realignment of MLK Jr. Avenue and North Main Street Intersection has been prepared to help improve traffic flow and safety at this intersection which is at the corner of UMHB and adjacent to the new performing arts center.

Right of way for Lake to Lake Road, from I-14/US 190 to FM 439 will be secured as part of the strategic plan goals and this process is expected to be complete by 2025. This foresight and planning for future transportation and growth is a great example of Belton's proactive government.

## TRANSPORTATION

### PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The HOP is operated by [Hill Country Transit District](#) and coordinates many types of service for residents of a nine county area including Belton. It has service for passengers with disabilities and a “fixed route service”. The Belton Route is Route 610 and has an hourly service with several stops including UMHB, Wal-Mart, and the Justice Center and also connects to Route 200 which connects to both Harker Heights and Temple. The HOP also has “special transit service” or STS which provides transportation to individuals with disabilities who need it.



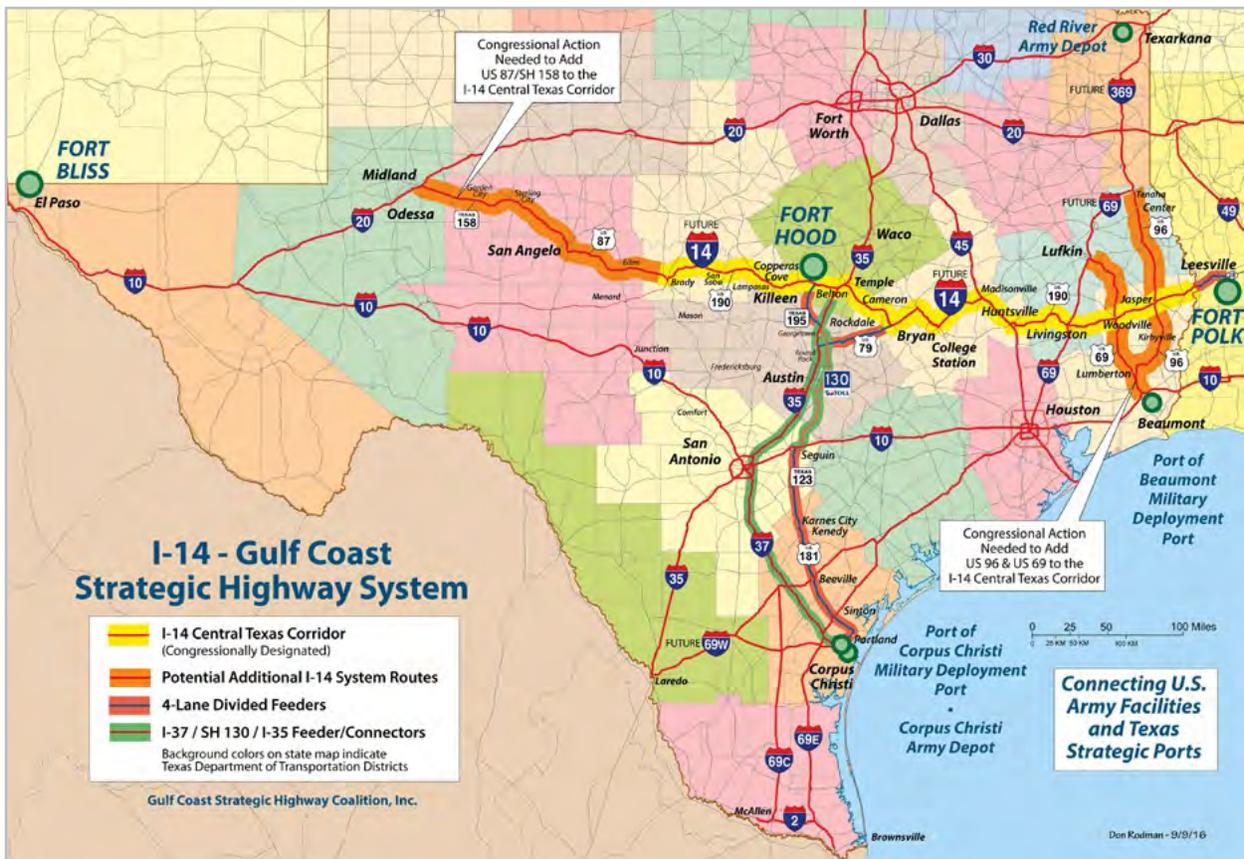
### THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The [Belton Thoroughfare Plan Update](#) was completed in 2015 by Lee Engineering. Lee Engineering analyzed the geometric design standards for ROW width, traffic lane numbers and widths, and median widths. They noted a discrepancy between the previous thoroughfare plan (2001) and 2006 Comp Plan Standards which they corrected. They also studied the plans for the surrounding adjacent communities to help better understand how Belton’s network fits in, is affected by and influences the regional network.



### INTERSTATE 14/US 190

The US 190 corridor as it runs through Bell County and Belton is now dual named I-14/US 190. It is also being called “[The Gulf Coast Strategic Highway](#)” and “The Central Texas Corridor.” It is located along portions of I-14/US 190 to meet transportation needs for U.S. Army facilities in both Texas and Louisiana.



The Texas Transportation Commission voted in April of 2016 to submit an application for the 25 mile stretch of I-14/US 190 in Bell County to become the first section designated as I-14/US 190 as this portion of I-14/US 190 has already been upgraded in many places to interstate standards.

The Comprehensive Plan Team Members suggest heavier landscape screening and trash maintenance for the City of Belton's section of I-14/US 190. The establishment of a tree planting program and landscape improvements at all exits is recommended for aesthetic purposes.

### **INTERSTATE 35**

Interstate 35 as it moves through Belton and Bell County has been under construction as improvements to it are made. As these improvements are completed we need to make sure Interstate directional and mileage and city limits signs are kept up to date. The intersection at Loop 121 is an important heart of Belton intersection and entry point into the city.

Also in the I-35 corridor is the expansion of the sewer main that will have the capacity to serve many new developments along the corridor. It's expected to intensify the land development activities and boost both the economy and employment in these zones. The future land use map will have allowances for typical highway commercial but will also be looking to attract significant regional retail as well to the area.

Shanklin Road on the transportation plan is shown as a major arterial connecting to Three Creeks and Temple's proposed outer loop that will connect to Waco Road. We recommend further study of this connection and further study of the Three Creeks Road that extends further south.

## **UTILITIES AND OTHER CITY SERVICES**

### **DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN**

The City of Belton originally adopted a [Drought Contingency and Water Conservation Plan](#) in 2009 and most recently updated the plan in 2014 to comply with Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Belton is required to submit a plan every five years and to report annually on its implementation.

The city works to conserve water by ensuring water is accounted for through high standards of meter maintenance and by keeping conservation in mind when reviewing and improving process. As part of the City of Belton's water conservation program, 6,200 water meters across the city were replaced or retrofitted with automatic meter reading technology.

Recognizing the need for efficient use of existing water supplies, the city complies with TCEQ guidelines and requirements governing the development of water conservation and drought contingency plans for public water suppliers. The city provides the general public with important aspects of the Drought Contingency and Water Conservation plan as needed in the form of electronic notifications, public notices, press releases and mailings.

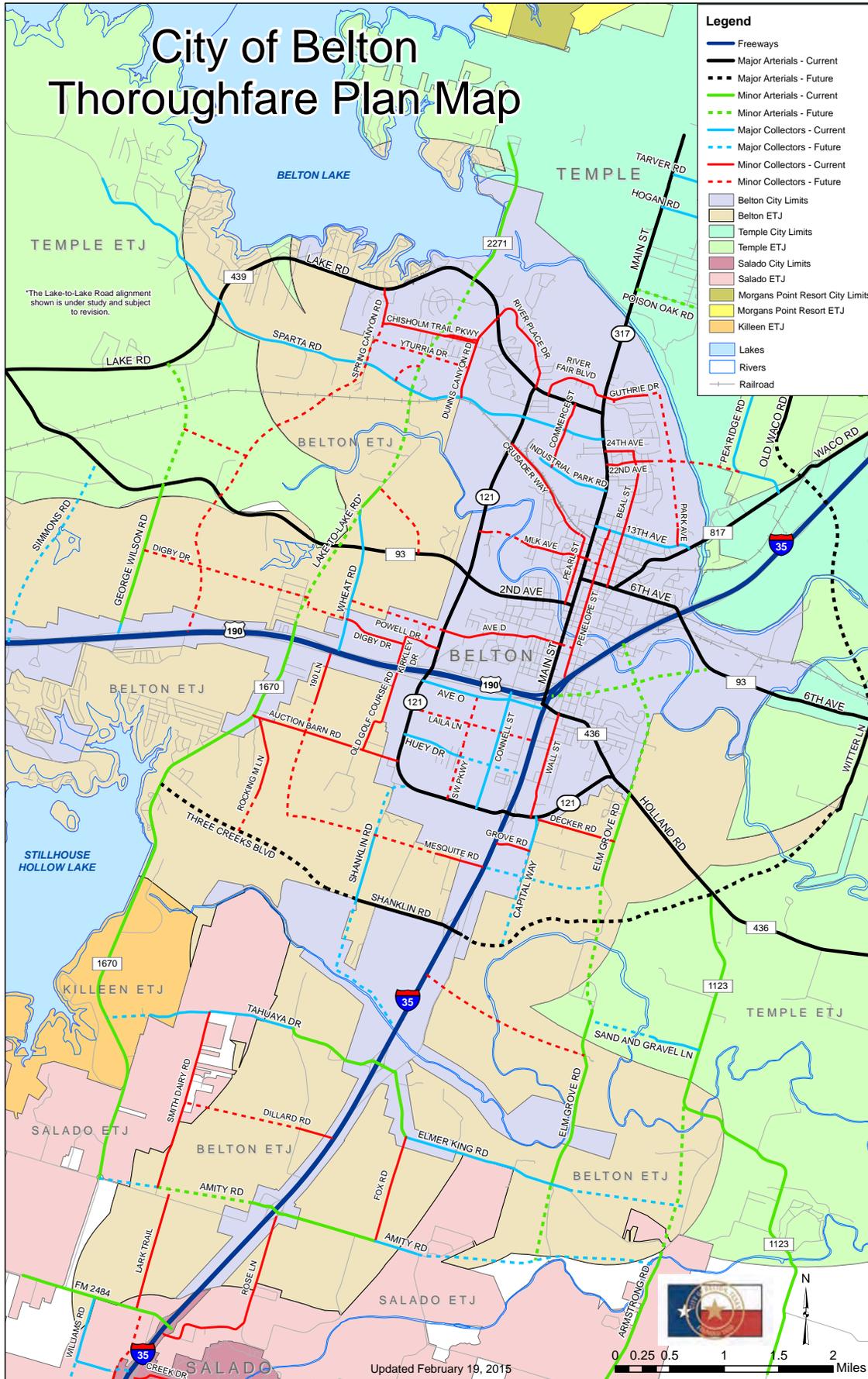
Belton also coordinates its efforts for water conservation with the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group of which it is a member.

### **STORM WATER MANAGEMENT**

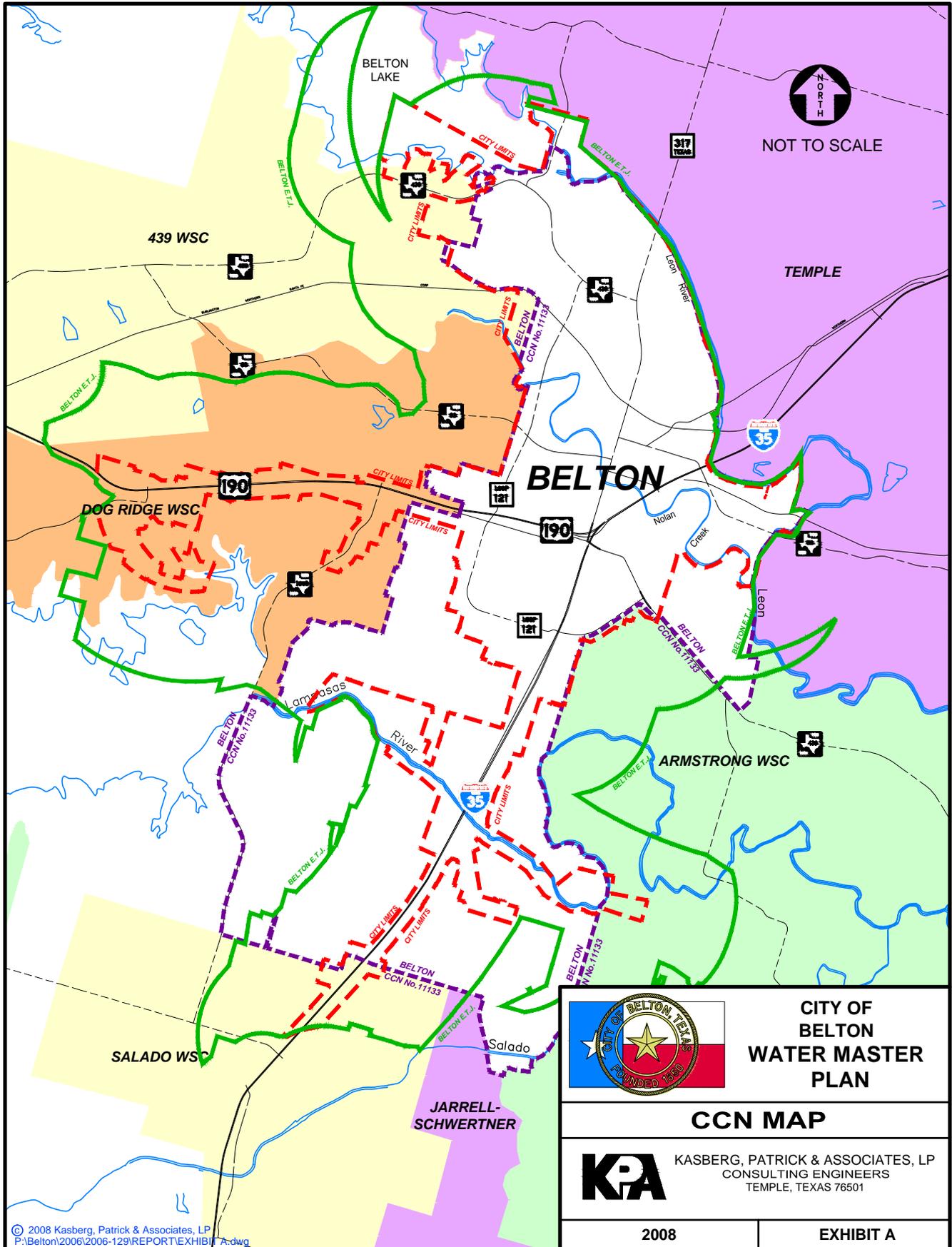
Due to the nature of weather in Central Texas and the number of waterways in and around Belton, flooding and stormwater management is an important component the city proactively manages. The latest storm water management program was prepared in May 2014 by Lockwood, Andrews and Newnam, Inc. titled, "[City of Belton Storm Water Management Program](#)" as required by TCEQ regulations for permit coverage (General Permit No. TXR040000 for Phase II Cities). The city actively works to reduce the discharge of pollutants to streams, creeks and other waterways (waters of the United States) to the maximum extent possible (MEP) through the use of "Best Management Practices."



# CITY OF BELTON THOROUGHFARE PLAN MAP



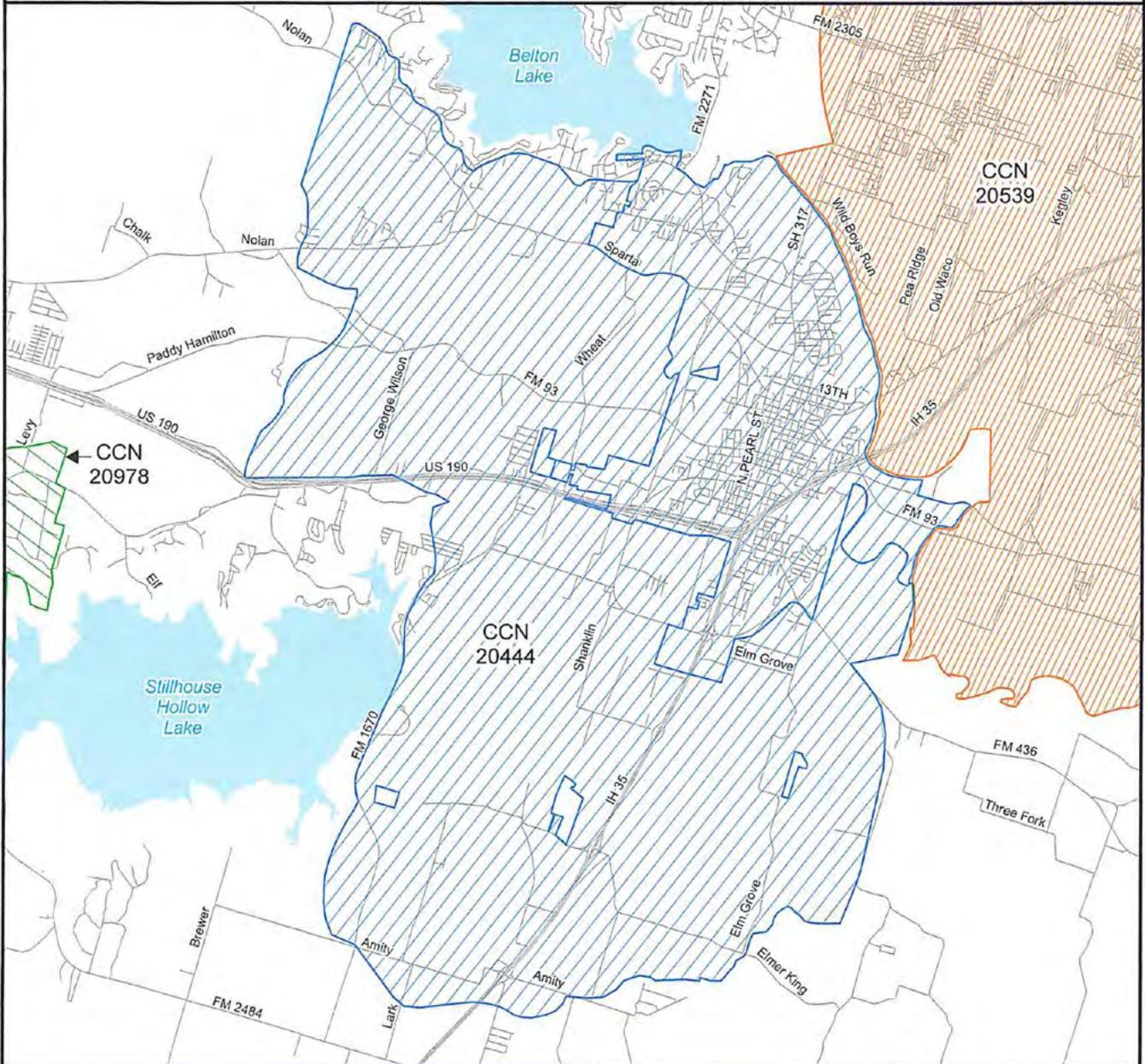
# CITY OF BELTON WATER CCN MAP



© 2008 Kasberg, Patrick & Associates, LP  
P:\Belton\2006\2006-129\REPORT\EXHIBIT A.dwg

# CITY OF BELTON WASTEWATER CCN MAP

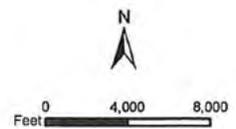
**City of Belton**  
**Sewer Service Area**  
**CCN No. 20444**  
**PUC Docket No. 44646**  
**Amended CCN No. 20444 in Bell County**



Public Utility Commission of Texas  
 1701 N. Congress Ave  
 Austin, TX 78701

**Sewer CCN Service Areas**

- 20444 - City of Belton
- 20539 - City of Temple
- 20978 - City of Harker Heights



Map by: Kristy Nguyen  
 Date created: September 19, 2016  
 Project Path: n:\Final Maps\44646.mxd

The report outlines the City of Belton Best Management Practices (BMPs) and each of their required minimum control measures (MCM). A schedule is included as part of the five year permitting period outlined in the report. A dedicated stormwater coordinator is part of the Engineering Department and coordinates with all city departments.

Implementation of the SWMP will require the work and coordination of several city departments. The 2015 report outlines several goals with the responsible departments in an easy to understand matrix.

### WASTEWATER

The City of Belton provides sewage, or wastewater service, to residents through the Temple-Belton Wastewater Treatment Plant. The City of Belton, jointly with the City of Temple, provides funding for the plant with Belton owning 25% and Temple 75%. At this time the plant takes care of all of Belton's wastewater needs. Temple and Belton have contracted with the Brazos River Authority to operate the plant since 1975.

The Temple Belton Wastewater Treatment Plant (TBWWTP) serves the entire City of Belton. The Miller Heights Trunk Sewer in Belton is at capacity and an expanded wastewater treatment plant will be needed as development occurs along I-14/US 190, the improved I-35 and all of the area in South and West Belton. Sanitary sewer is proposed to extend south along I-35 to encourage development along the I-35 corridor. The City of Belton Wastewater CCN map represents the area the city has the right to serve.

As part of Belton's continued effort to provide proactive and planned management of their assets, they updated city's [Wastewater Master Plan](#) in 2014.

### WATER PLAN

The City of Belton is under contract with [Bell County WCID No.1](#) to provide water to Belton residents as part of Belton CCN No. 11133. BCWCID No. 1 is rated a "Superior Water System" by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Drinking water for Belton's CCN comes from Lake Belton. Bell County WCID No. 1 serves 250,000 residents as part of their service area.

The [City of Belton Water Master Plan](#), was completed in 2008 and recently updated in 2015 by Kasberg, Patrick and Associates (KPA). This plan presents a comprehensive approach for improvements and expansion necessary for providing safe drinking water now and into the future without any unforeseen costs.

The area along I-14/US 190 to west of town is served by Dog Ridge WSC, with some areas closer to the lake being served by 439 WSC. To the South some of the area served from west to east are served by Salado WSC, Central Texas WSC, and Armstrong WSC.

As the city grows, there are challenges associated with extending service to areas served by other CCN's. Negotiation and cooperation, along with an open dialogue are key to the growth of Belton.



### WASTE/RECYCLING

Belton provides waste management services to residents and small businesses through [Waste Management](#). Larger businesses requiring a dumpster may contract with one of seven providers for a large container. These contractors are found on the Belton's website. More information about the containers, pick up times and garbage schedule is available on the city's website.

### PHONE/CABLE/INTERNET

There are a variety of service providers and packages available in Belton and the prices therefore are competitive. AT&T, Oncor, Centrovision, Spectrum, Direct TV, Grande Communications, Bell County fiber and Dish TV are available in most areas. The city is currently developing a process to ensure internet and cable services are provided to all new residential subdivisions and businesses.

Internet is an essential service that should be available to all areas in Belton; however, there have been issues with companies not providing cable and internet service to new developments, particularly to new residential subdivisions. It would be prudent to research and identify the location of all fiber that currently exists in the City limits. Future planning efforts should focus on the expansion of the fiber optic network.

### PRIVATE WELL SERVICE

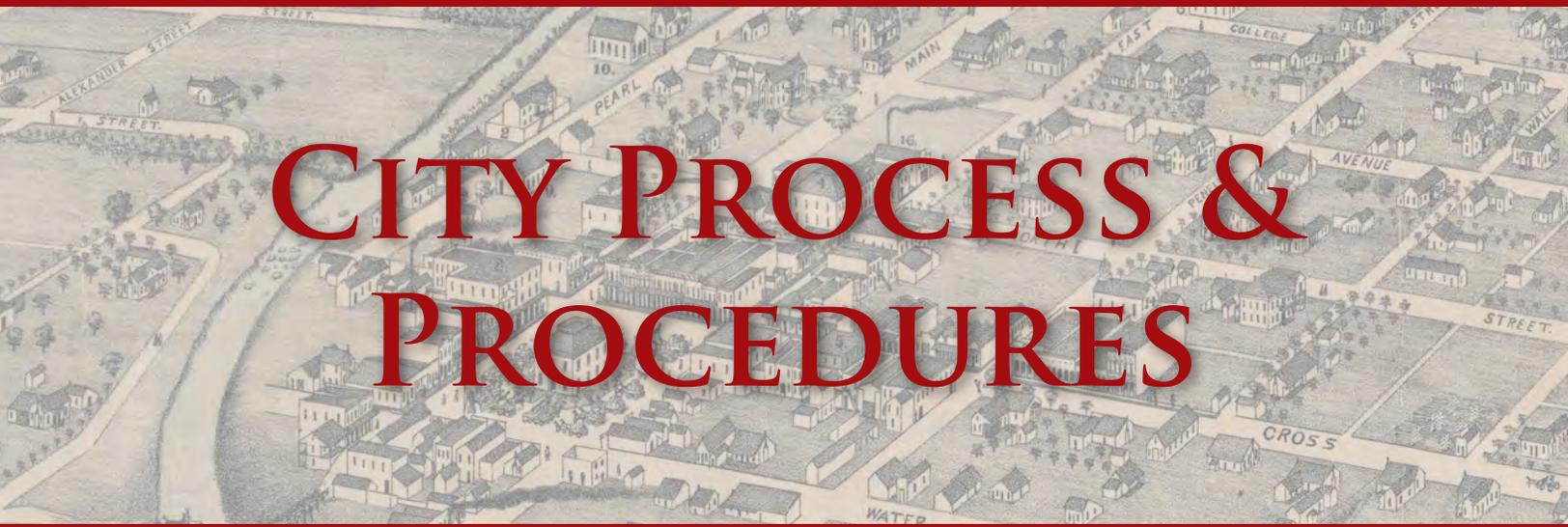
[Clearwater Under Water Conservation District \(CUWCD\)](#) manages the groundwater in Bell County so residents not on city service must be regulated through them.

### ON-SITE SEPTIC

The Bell County Health Department monitors and permits on site sewerage systems for Bell County residents not on city sewer, subject to City of Belton approval. The Planning Department coordinates with BCHD to process plat reviews and permit requests with on site septic.



# CHAPTER 6



# CITY PROCESS & PROCEDURES

# CITY PROCESS & PROCEDURES

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Department is responsible for the city processes of zoning, subdivision and site planning, historic preservation, construction plan review, and permitting and inspections.

The quality of growth in Belton is ensured by implementing high standards for new development, construction and encouraging maintenance, preservation and reinvestment in existing properties within the city. Long range planning is another key element that the Planning Department utilizes to help plan for Belton’s future. The Planning Department directs this report that combines a comprehensive view of all the elements of Belton as we move towards the year 2030.

The City of Belton Planning Department is located at 333 Water Street in City Hall and consists of a planning director, building inspectors, GIS analyst, and planning clerks. It is under the direction of the city manager.

## DESIGN STANDARDS

The [City of Belton Design Standards](#) can be referenced on the city’s website under Planning and Zoning along with several other documents. Below is a list of the resources available.

- Boarding Homes Ordinance
- Comprehensive Plan
- Design Standards
- Facade Improvement Grants
- Floodplain Ordinance
- Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Mobile Food Vendor Permit
- Sign Ordinance
- Street Renaming and Facility Naming Policy
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Thoroughfare Plan Report
- Thoroughfare Plan
- Zoning Ordinance
- Building Application Checklist
- Plat Application Checklist

The City of Belton Design Standards is a great resource that explains the approval process for a developer or homeowner to get projects approved. It outlines the Design Standard Type Areas and shows where they are located and has a land use table that illustrates what uses are allowed permitted by right, what uses require a specific use permit and what uses are not allowed in each type area.

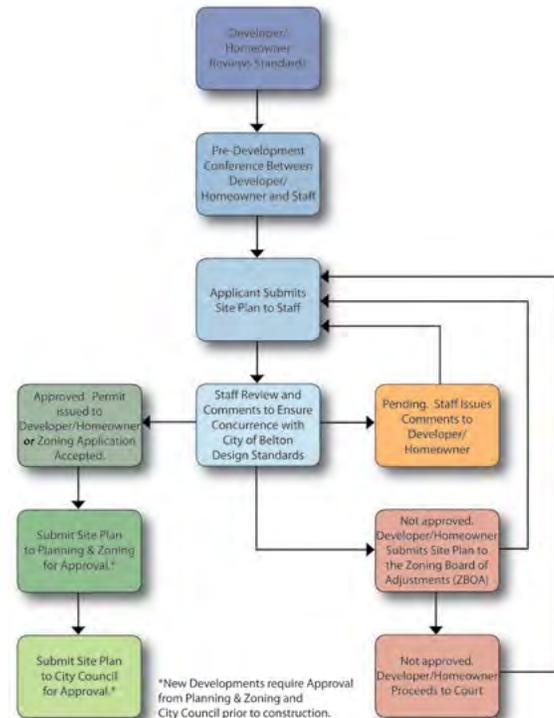
Site development standards are outlined in great detail in the handbook and these were written to “support, enhance and maintain the City of Belton’s sense of place.” The standards provide outlines and details for ensuring well thought out design, planning and construction occurs in Belton’s built environment that also respect’s Belton history.

The standards are divided as follows:

- Site development standards
- Building design standards
- Landscape design standards
- Tree protection
- Preservation and mitigation

## GIS INFORMATION

The [Geographic Information Systems](#) (GIS) department is located within the Planning Department. In addition, the city has an online GIS mapping system available for use by residents and developers. It provides a wide variety of information pertinent to planning and engineering and is a great resource. The latest aerial available on the website is the 2015 aerial.



Several maps are also available on the city’s website to view and or download such as a street map, a zoning map and a map outline parks and schools.

The mission of the GIS department is “To efficiently and effectively provide geospatial information and applications to city employees and the public in order to enhance city operations, improve decision making, and provide better public service.”

Several interactive maps are available on the city’s website that provide a variety of information of zoning, land use and development information to the public. These maps are continuously updated.

### BELTON CITY COUNCIL

Serving as the legislative branch of the city government, as well as writing policies for the city, Belton’s City Council looks at the city’s major projects, development and infrastructure improvements and city growth.

They help guide Belton into the year 2030 through strategic planning. They are elected by the people of Belton to serve at large with two year overlapping terms, which expire in May. The Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem are members as well as five other members for a total City Council number of seven. Community members can address the Council during the Public Comments section at the start of each council meeting.



The Council appoints the city manager, city attorney, city clerk, and municipal judge. It also appoints Belton citizens to various boards and commissions along with approving the annual budget and the ad valorem tax rate- or property tax. They also approve rates for city goods, services and fees. They are responsible, as directed by city charter and Texas state law to approve city contracts and purchases.

Agendas are available prior to the meetings and minutes are available following approval. Applications to serve on a committee are available in the city clerk’s office and the city’s website.

The Belton City Council meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Harris Community Center in the Wright Room.

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

The Planning and Zoning Commission (P and Z) members are appointed by City Council and are responsible for advising the city council on issues of zoning, platting and public improvements along with guiding them in all aspects of the comprehensive plan and making recommendations for any amendments to the plan.

They are the first step in the approval of subdivision plats, making recommendations to City Council. P and Z reviews and makes recommendations on zoning change requests and subdivision plats. They draft rules and regulations for the platting and subdivision of land and make recommendations to City Council.

### ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS

The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) is a quasi-judicial board that considers appeals for zoning matters and is also appointed by City Council. They take action on variances for non-conforming land uses. There are five regular members and two alternates. They don’t have a regular meeting but meet when requests for variances are submitted, usually on a Thursday at 5:30 in Harris Community Center. The public must be notified with at least 10 days of notice for all appeals hearings.

### BUILDING CODES

Building codes are written for the safety of all citizens and Belton works hard to be up to date on all their codes. Belton has simplified the process for citizens obtaining permits for construction projects recently (August of 2015)

implementing an online system for the process known as the “MyPermitNow” or “[MyGovernmentOnline](#)” customer portal. It allows contractors and residents to apply and pay for permits, submit plans via pdf, and to track the progress of the application to the permit. Customers can also use it to request inspections and view all associated reports.

Paper applications can also be picked up and submitted in person at the Planning Department office in City Hall at 333 Water Street or emailed to [planning@beltontexas.gov](mailto:planning@beltontexas.gov) or by fax to (254) 933-5822.

Requesting an inspection time and date online is a feature allowed by the software and users must provide at least a 24 hour notice for the request to be considered. Inspectors enter inspection results in the field to ensure that users receive the results in near real-time via e-mail or through the customer portal.

The City of Belton is up to date with their building codes.

- 2009 International Building Code
- 2009 International Residential Code
- 2009 International Mechanical Code
- 2009 International Plumbing Code
- 2009 International Fuel Gas Code
- 2009 International Existing Building Code
- 2009 International Energy Conservation Code
- 2009 International Fire Code
- 2011 National Electrical Codes

A large part of the International Building Codes is dealing with fire prevention and fire safety in regard to the construction and design of buildings. It does this through many instances, setting the criteria for such things as location and size of exits, and requiring exits to be accessible and unblocked. Fire protection systems, interior and exterior finishes and materials are also discussed. Consideration of disabled access and structural integrity are also key elements of the building code.

These codes apply to new construction along with alterations and additions to existing buildings. Thus, some of Belton’s older buildings are not code compliant.

## ENGINEERING

The City of Belton Engineering Division is responsible for the planning, design and review of public infrastructure within the city and the extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ), capital improvements construction, floodplain management, and traffic engineering.

The City of Belton adopted its latest construction Design Manual and Standard Details in June of 2002, with only minor edits or additions since its adoption. This current manual covers the basic standards and details for streets, driveways, parking, sidewalks, drainage, water, wastewater, and environmental topics. The Design Manual is currently being reviewed and re-written to include a wider range of details for new construction.

The [City of Belton Design Manual Standard Details](#) has sections divided into nine subject areas:

- Streets and Roadways
- Driveways
- Off Street Parking
- Drainage
- Water
- Wastewater
- Pipe Embedment
- Backfill
- Environmental

This document was originally prepared in June 2002 and the updated document is currently being reviewed and re-written.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY

A resolution outlining Belton’s framework for growth was adopted in June 2016. It outlines land to be considered for

future annexation while still “promoting orderly and sustainable growth” which is a goal of the city. It charges the Comprehensive Plan with identifying additional growth centers and anticipated linkages and planned transportation corridors in the ETJ for potential annexation. Also ongoing and developing growth patterns shall be identified and considered for annexation as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

This framework helps guide the City of Belton in developing the city in a logical manner. [The Growth Management Framework](#) is available online.

Cities in the state of Texas have the authority to annex areas within their extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). A city’s ETJ is a legally designate area of land located within a distance, determined by population, outside their corporate limits. Belton’s population of under 25,000 residents and over 5,000 defines a one mile ETJ.

The current annexation plan was adopted in compliance by a state of Texas requirement for all cities to have an annexation plan by the end of the year, 1999. All future annexations were required to comply with allowed exceptions making Belton exempt from a three year plan. The plan indicates no future annexation will contain more than 100 residential tracts.

Different types of annexation are full purpose, where the city provides all services and voluntary which is when property owners request annexation.

Future development is protected when the city’s Land Use standards and building codes are extended to an annexed area by ensuring quality design and construction occurs with existing standards. As soon as an area is annexed it comes under the planning, zoning, building inspections, code compliance and other enforcement regulations of the City of Belton providing a better standard of living for residents in many instances. Unregulated areas outside the city’s limits can cause adverse impacts which cannot be regulated while that property is outside a city’s jurisdiction. This can come in the form of incompatible uses, environmental contamination, unsafe structures and impacts on existing streams, creeks and drainage ways.

Considering how any potential annexations will affect the city fiscally now and in the future is a major tenant of the City of Belton’s Growth Management Policy Resolution. Any new land within the city limits of Belton shall have city services, and extension of utilities and street maintenance come at a cost which may or may not be offset by anticipated revenue.

A good growth management framework alleviates any jurisdictional conflicts with abutting municipal governments. Belton should consider boundary adjustments with all adjacent municipalities where an exchange of ETJ makes sense and is in the best interest of both parties and the citizens affected by an exchange.

The Growth Management Plan for the City of Belton is very thorough and considers annexation based on several policy statements. The policy statements are:

1. Existing or planned level of development
2. Service Delivery Needs
3. Protection of public health, safety and welfare
4. Intergovernmental regulations
5. Fiscal considerations

The issuance of non-annexation agreements for properties appraised for ad valorem tax purposes as land for agricultural, wildlife management or timber use under Subchapter C or D, Chapter 23, Tax Code is also outlined in the resolution.

Belton is in a great position to move into the future. The city has been very proactive in annexing areas along existing and proposed transportation corridors. An exhibit illustrating the history of annexation is located in the Appendix. The Interstate 35 corridor to the south towards Salado and the Highway 190 corridor to the west, natural areas of growth, have already been annexed. The Thoroughfare Plan developed in 2015 also looked at anticipated growth areas and transportation corridors such as the planned Lake to Lake Road which extends from FM 439/Lake Road to I-14/US 190, ultimately connecting Stillhouse Hollow Lake to Belton Lake. This proposed arterial roadway lies partly in Belton’s ETJ and partly within the city limits. This road is intended to alleviate traffic on SH 317 and Loop 121 and

also create great opportunities for neighborhood centers at prominent intersections.

The growth for the City of Belton must be planned and managed well. Any annexation must be of benefit to both the city and to the property owner. This resolution does an outstanding job of outlining the logical needs for annexation while also ensuring that growth is planned and its impact on the current citizens of Belton is carefully considered.

**POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

Belton’s growth has been at a steady and a consistent rate since the late 1970’s with ten year growth rate percentages in the upper teens, low twenties starting in the late 1970’s. In 1970 the population of Belton was 8,696 and current estimates have the 2017 population being over 20,000. The City of Belton estimated a population of 21,214 for January 1, 2017 by calculating new residential building permits based on the average household size.

Below is a chart from the U.S. Census and gives a number 20,547 for 2015 based on historical trends. This chart is shown adjacent to the State of Texas Census Data and shows how Belton’s population has grown along with the State of Texas.

CITY OF BELTON CENSUS DATA			STATE OF TEXAS CENSUS DATA		
1970	8,696	6.50%	1970	11,196,730	16.90%
1980	10,660	22.60%	1980	14,229,191	27.10%
1990	12,476	17.00%	1990	16,986,510	19.40%
2000	14,623	17.20%	2000	20,851,820	22.80%
2010	18,216	24.60%	2010	25,145,561	20.60%
Est. 2015	20,547	12.80%	Est. 2015	27,469,114	9.20%

*Source: U.S. Census Data and “Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015”. Retrieved July 2, 2016.*

This gradual rate of growth has allowed the city to maintain its small town feel and great quality of life, and in addition, has allowed City Council to be selective about the quality of development through the use of the Design Standards. Development standards are considered higher in Belton than in surrounding communities by many in the building community.

As part of the Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood MSA (a designated statistical area denoted by the United States Office of Management of Budget) it is important to note the population changes in the adjacent communities within the MSA. Temple’s growth has been similar to Belton’s, growing at comparable percentages while Killeen’s population growth was much higher in recent years, with a 47.2% growth from 2000 to 2010. Though Killeen’s population is more closely tied to Ft. Hood’s growth and expansion the entire MSA has benefited from Fort Hood becoming the largest U.S. military installation and home to the 1st Calvary Division. This MSA includes Belton which is the fifth largest municipality in the MSA and stretches over three counties, Bell County, Coryell County to the Northwest and Lampasas County to the west. Most of the MSA is within Bell County with Belton being centrally located in this statistical area at the intersection of I-14/US 190 and I-35.

**Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood Metropolitan Area**

HISTORICAL POPULATIONS		
Census	Population	%±
1960	118,058	----
1970	159,794	35.40%
1980	214,656	34.30%
1990	255,301	18.90%
2000	330,714	29.50%
2010	405,300	22.60%

*Annual Estimates of the Population of Metropolitan and Micropolitan United States Census Bureau, Population Division. Retrieved 2010-03-25*

## CITY OF BELTON'S POPULATION PROJECTIONS

POPULATION PROJECTIONS			
Year	SB-1*	Variable**	Variable***
2000		14653 (Census)	14653 (Census)
2001		15000 (x 2%)	15000 (x 2%)
2002		15300	15300
2003		15600	15600
2004		15900	15900
2005		16200	16200
2006		16700 (x 3%)	16700 (x 3%)
2007		17200	17200
2008		17700	17700
2009		18200	18200
2010	20088	18216 (Census)	18216 (Census)
2015		20000	20400
2020	23236	22000	22850
2025		24200	25600
2030	26088	26700	28600
2035		29300	32100
2040	28188	32300	36000
2045		35500	40300
2050	29593	39000	45100
2055		43000	50500
2060		47000	56600
2065		52000	63400
2070		57000	71000
2075	500000	63000	79500

\* SB-1 (Senate Bill-1) Estimate, developed by RPK Engineers in 1999, ending in 2050

\*\* 10% projection each 5 year increment, 2015-2075

\*\*\* 12% projection each 5 year increment 2015-2075

Killeen is the largest city in the MSA with a population of 127,921 in 2010 and Temple the second largest with a population of 66,102 in 2010.

Other communities of significant size in the MSA are Fort Hood, Copperas Cove, Harker Heights and Gatesville.

From the table below you can see that Belton's growth has been trending similar to that of the overall MSA yet the growth has been slightly slower.

Population projections are important in helping a city to properly plan for its growth in terms of infrastructure, schools, and other city services. It's not an exact science but one based on historical and national trends.

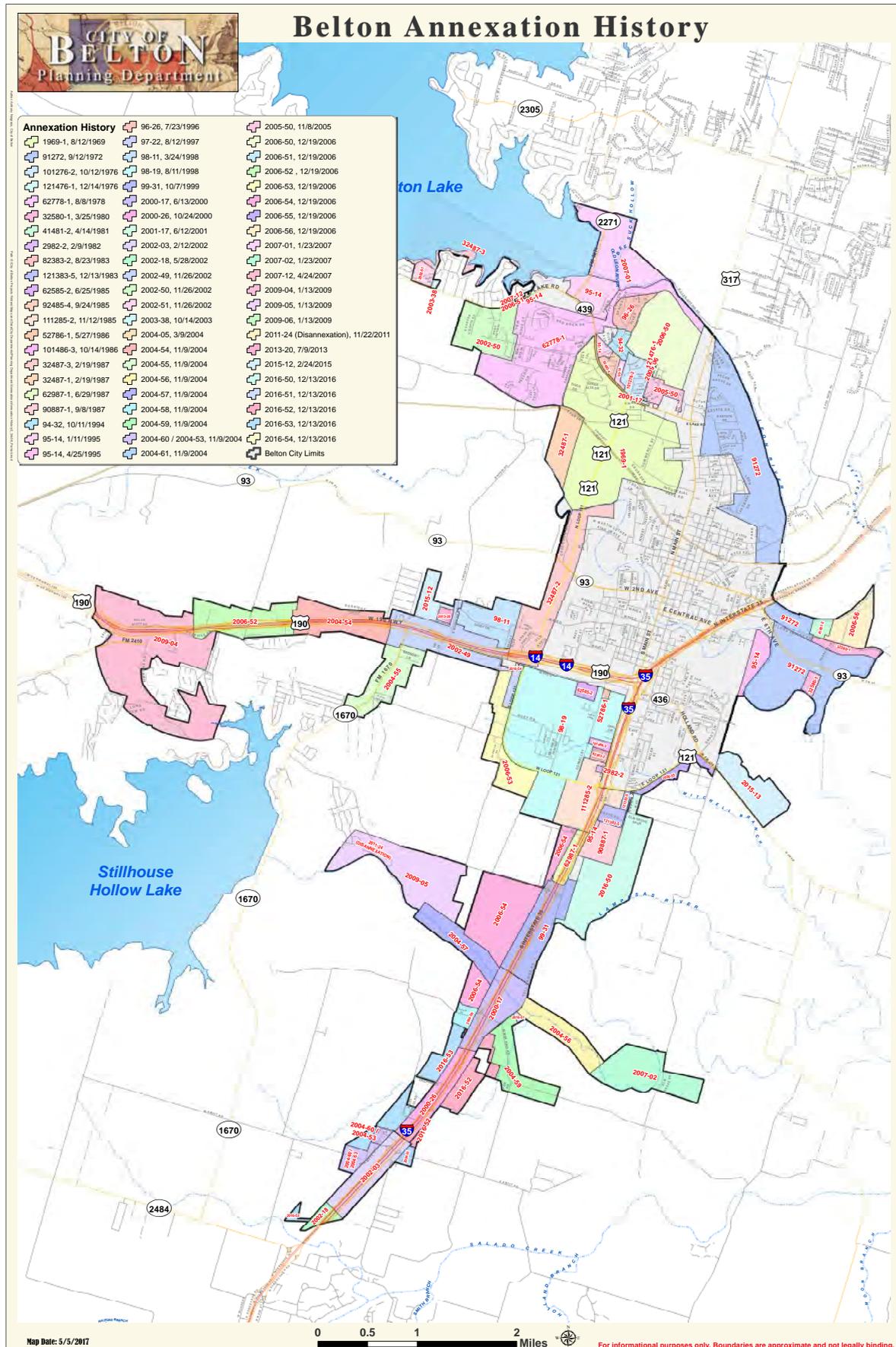
One thing that Belton has in its favor is that the Belton ETJ has lots of room for future growth and development to the west and to the South and Southeast of the city limits which is primarily agricultural land at this time. Also, as far as estimating Belton's ultimate buildout, its established ETJ identifies how the City of Belton will grow in respect to the surrounding communities as almost all of the open land around Belton has been designated as ETJ for either Belton, Temple, Killeen, Harker Heights or Salado. There are also smaller pockets for development and redevelopment where the city borders Temple to the North and Northeast.

If you use Belton's current growth model the city will have a population of around 23,550 in 2020, almost 28,000 in the year 2025 and approximately 33,200 residents in 2030 which is almost double the estimated population the city was in 2005. That's significant growth.

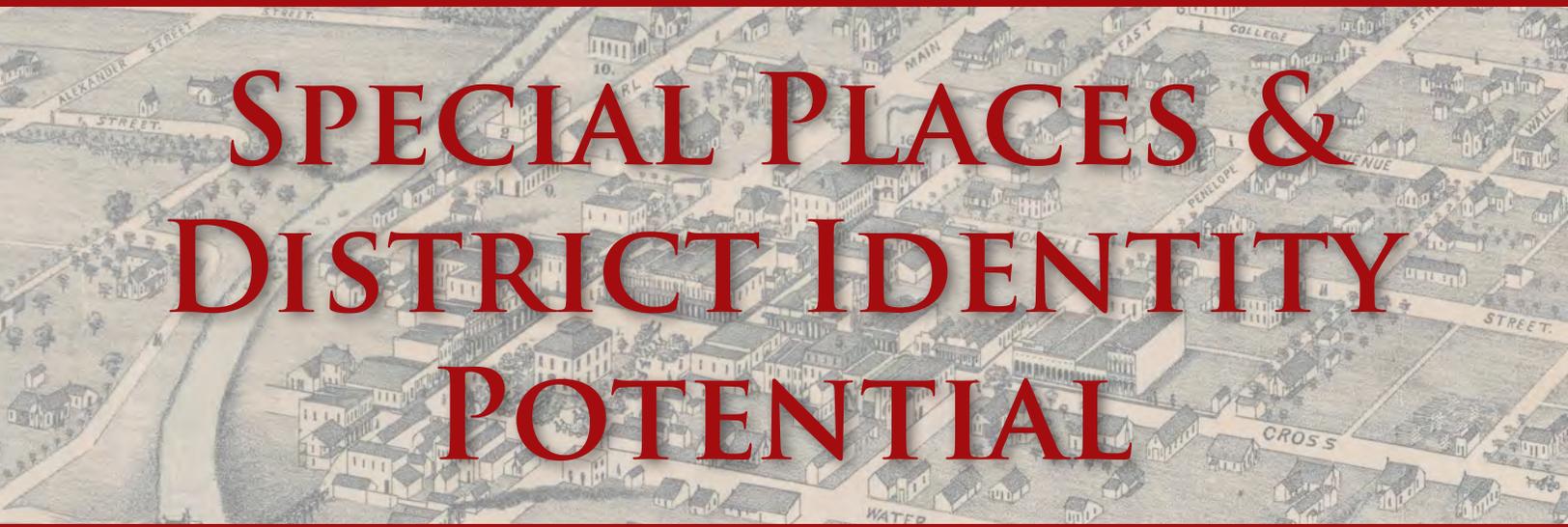
Several factors can affect this population growth. The designation of I-14/US 190 as Interstate 14, the next east west interstate, will most likely increase population. Also, both UMHB and Belton ISD are predicting strong growth for their institutions and though not all people who work and attend these schools will live in Belton, many will. The City of Belton predicts that when the construction is complete on I-35, there will be significant development of a variety of businesses adjacent to the corridor. Further away from the corridor, residential development will tend to spring up both as workforce housing in some areas and, when neighborhood services are more available, prominent neighborhoods where the land is more scenic.

Any major changes to the population of Ft. Hood will also affect Belton though not to the same degree as those communities closer to the base. Currently many Belton residents work outside the community in neighboring towns, with easy access to I-35 and I-14/US 190 it makes it easy for people to choose to live in Belton due to its great quality of life and schools, but work elsewhere. According to our survey of Belton residents of which 284 residents completed, over half (56.4%) of residents work outside the city. Temple has more of a mixed workforce with several industries and businesses that could be adversely affected by changes to economy. One of the great advantages Belton has as the county seat of Bell County is that several government agencies are located in Belton and the type of jobs provided by these agencies are quality employers.

# CITY OF BELTON ANNEXATION HISTORY MAP



# CHAPTER 7

A detailed historical map of a city district, likely from the late 19th or early 20th century. The map shows a grid of streets, numerous buildings of varying sizes, and a river or canal on the left side. Labeled streets include Alexander Street, Main Street, East College Street, Penelope Avenue, Cross Street, and Water Street. A large building complex is visible in the center, possibly a government or institutional building. The map is rendered in a classic woodcut or engraving style.

# SPECIAL PLACES & DISTRICT IDENTITY POTENTIAL

## SPECIAL PLACES & DISTRICT IDENTITY POTENTIAL

Discussion of special places and districts is a valuable topic since the whole purpose of the comprehensive plan update is to keep the City of Belton focused on what the essential mission of the city is. The overall city goal is to be a place offering a high quality lifestyle. To evolve a city that has these high standards means that there has to be many places with special characteristics so that a diverse population can find their own unique sense of place and well-being. Cities that have districts with distinct characteristics offer vibrancy to the city. It is this characteristic that allows a city to thrive with more diverse places of activities and enhanced tourism opportunities.

### *Belton: the hidden secret!*

Belton has one over-riding special characteristic unique to a city that borders a main interstate; that of being detached from that interstate. There are both negative and positive aspects to the specific corridor running through Belton but for now, the discussion is how relatively hidden Belton is to the traveler on the freeway. To a degree, Belton hasn't suffered the accelerated freeway frontage development that can give a negative identity to a city. The development there gives the appearance of being detached from the city. Curious travelers that want to see Belton have to remove themselves from the freeway and take one or two select roads into the city.

### NOLAN CREEK

The open space downtown and the centerpiece - Nolan Creek - are certainly the most revered jewels of Belton. Coupled with and empowering the experience are other special components such as the Courthouse Square, and the associated shopping and dining experiences. There has been so much effort developing this area into a wonderful destination. Festivals and other activities are programed, and good retail and dining places established. There are still much that can be accomplished to continue to strengthen the district.

Nolan Creek is not just the center of downtown attraction, it also serves as the center of a regional trail network reaching out in some directions but with the potential of spreading throughout the city. Looking at the regional hydrology, there is the Leon River in the north, the Lampasas River in the South and right between is the Nolan Creek. Local tributaries connect and reconnect each part of the system to reveal a braided network of creeks and drainage valuable for an extensive trail network. Other cities that have this landscape trait have captured and leveraged this system for great benefit to the city. Those cities became known for their extensive trail system and they became a social corridor with runners, cyclist, joggers, and baby strollers as well as an economic engine attracting enterprise that wanted that kind of city atmosphere for their employees. This is an asset that the City of Belton must acquire as soon as possible because it will become much more expensive in just a short amount of time or the opportunity disappears forever with private development isolation.

Acquisition is mostly in three different forms. If the price is right and there are other elements to be constructed, then the city may consider a fee simple purchase of the property. Other cities have bought up vast amounts of properties when they become flooded from natural events. Nolan Creek may be a corridor that has major flooding events of this magnitude. The second way is to purchase access or utility easements along the creeks and drainage areas or in sensitive natural areas. The ownership remains with the overall property owner but the city has the right to place a trail through that space. Some master planned communities or subdivisions



may enjoy the marketing value of striking this kind of a deal with the city. The third manner, (similar to the second form), is to design future trail alignments throughout the region, into the overall trails master plan which may be part of the overall parks and recreation master plan. Texas Parks and Wildlife as well as other state and national institutions have lots of grant funding available for these projects as long as the projects are incorporated into the city master plan process and approved as the official policy document for the city.

Developing infrastructure and activities along this asset is another layer of city improvements that make Belton a desirable place to live. Already multitudes of people can be seen in and around Nolan Creek, fishing, getting their feet wet, kayaking, tubing, festivals, and more. Adding new elements in key locations that can absorb the larger groups of people are the next steps in the system such as more zones for whitewater activities of tubing and kayaking.

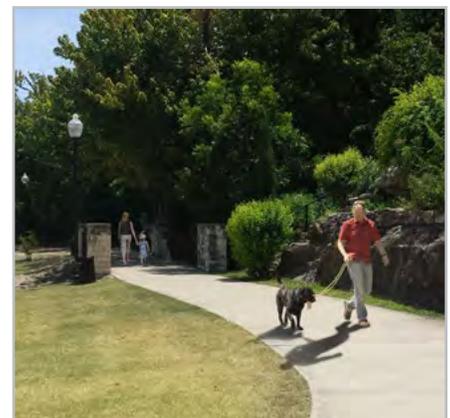
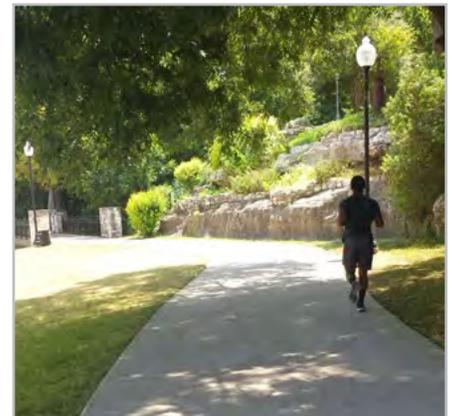
Investing in the parks, recreations, trails, and open space of a city is one of the most expensive prospects for a city but one that will return much more value over the long term. These assets are extremely valuable for cities to attract large, high quality commercial and residential development, the kind of investment that the City of Belton has expressed that they would like. Currently Belton has invested a great deal and has already seen the benefits of this investment. This tradition needs to continue incrementally through large and small actions. Developing the future vision for parks, trails, and open space that extend to the ultimate boundaries of the city is the first requisite step to continue the process so that all future development responds to that requirement in the master plan with land or easement concessions.

**PARKS AND TRAILS**

In other places in the overall comprehensive planning, a full parks, trails, open space master plan will be included. Just to touch upon the value of parks and trails from a planning standpoint, along with transportation and land use, the overall provision of parks, trails, and open space is one of the most valuable assets for a city and its consideration in land use planning is just as important as any of the other components. Cities that have developed great assets like these enjoy a much higher quality of life. These systems attract better economic activity, contribute to much better overall health, mitigate heat island and green house gases, enriches biodiversity, contribute to a healthier mental state of being, and strengthen the social networks of a city. The system needs to be prevalent throughout the city and a resident should be able to access it within a few minutes of walking. One standard is a five minute walk which for an established city to insert in, can be very challenging. Having a wide variety of spaces in this system is also important so that recreation and sports are served; peace in natural places is available, linear systems for jogging and biking both for mobility and health, and more variations. Where there is a city with a high quality of life, there will be an extensive system of parks, trails, and open space.

**COURTHOUSE SQUARE AND THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT**

As the County Seat, Belton enjoys having the Bell County Courthouse anchoring the heart of the city. The grounds and the associated streetscape already serve local festivals and events. In April, the Art and Wine on the Square is a much anticipated event with local arts and crafts accompanied with nice wine selections for tasting and local musicians complimenting the enjoyable event. Community leaders are on hand enjoying the event or volunteering their time for their favorite cause.



Nearby and on the same weekend was the annual Turtle Fest attracting large crowds and celebrating lots of the volunteerism within the city.



Since the downtown area is such a magnet for all of the assets that are located there, it makes sense to review all of the potential enhancements that can be action items considered in the future. Already on the menu for building and business owners to take advantage of are the façade grants offered by the city. Simply improving the fronts of buildings enhances the qualities of the downtown area. To offer up a short list of some additional items that may or may not be in the works, we can consider the following: shade, restaurant diversity, residential units on upper floors, intertwined small events or showcases, coordinated calendar, signage and way finding, parking analysis, and a governmental facilities utilization plan (There is much underutilized space occupied by city and county uses removing valuable lands from the tax roles).

The city is currently in the process of completing a series of “Downtown Development District” signs which will be installed throughout the city to encourage more visitors to the downtown district. Belton has several “Welcome to Belton” signs at key entrances to the city already. The new sign family builds upon the existing and proposed Gateway signs but are designed with more of a focus on downtown.



The goals of the “Downtown Development District” sign program were:

1. Define and identify the Downtown Development District area perimeter.
2. Visually Create a sense of places
3. Help visitors find their way to and around downtown.
4. Highlight Belton’s many assets, features, amenities, and destinations.

The businesses that occupy the ground floors of the square should be businesses that cater to the people that visit the square such as retail shops and restaurants. This will add new vitality to the street as more people come to the square for shopping, dining, meetings in restaurants, and just being out enjoying the day. Larger events such as festivals are scheduled but more can be done at regular intervals on smaller scales. Some cities use volunteers as city ambassadors to greet people with information and guidance on what to see. Music and arts prevalent in the streets around the square add an aura of magic and special allure as the guitarist strums or the artist brushes a new painting. Small things add much to the vitality.



Keep in mind that the downtown is not an isolated place. There are several aspects of Belton that can connect here. Some of these linkages may include a future Arts District, significant redevelopment of underutilized property, city-wide trails, historic walking tours, and more.

**ARTS DISTRICT(S)**

The addition of places in a community that focus on the visual arts, both as exhibition spaces and retail spaces, adds a wonderful layer to the cultural fabric of the city. Tourists can visit Belton for parkland and Nolan Creek, restaurants, shopping, historic education such as the Courthouse and Bell County Museum; but having the visual arts occupying a strong presence is somewhat missing. Experiencing a district with a strong emphasis on the arts is a very powerful driver of commercial activity for both restaurants and retail. The district notion is powerful since one place may be considered a destination and the visitor wants to go to that particular shop, but two or more places clustered together is a stronger draw with a visitor enticed to see all of the shops.





Currently there are not any areas particularly known as the destination for seeing a variety of visual arts. If there is a community interest, there are some areas with the potential to stimulate the creation of an arts oriented district supported by small scale cafes, coffee shops, and fine dining. Places to consider are areas that can link the downtown with Nolan Creek, side streets of historic buildings, smaller scale historic residents in and around downtown, places that have special qualities that just need that one essential ingredient to make it an instant destination; all make wonderful small scale districts. Arts can be intertwined in this short stretch and art festivals can spread out over the parkland below. If an expansion of the trail system was created to connect the spaces along Nolan Creek, then an even more powerful series of spaces can be activated. Being wedged in this manner adds a great linkage from the creek and parkland to downtown and provides further depth to the places to see for folks spending time downtown. The Courthouse Square is an important feature of a potential Arts District and hosts the Art and Wine Festival each year. Historic downtown buildings are creating attractive murals on the building façades, creating a destination for visitors.



Beyond the downtown area and as Belton grows, there is an increased need to expand and strengthen arts and cultural activities in other parts of the city. The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB) campus contains the Visual Arts building and the Performing Arts Center that is currently under construction. The UMHB campus and surrounding properties along North Main Street area strong component of a future arts district. The historic buildings along Main Street have and could contain uses complimentary to this district such as an art or photography studio, for example. New businesses have been established in North Belton, such as That Art Place and Board and Brush which could also create additional destinations within a potential Arts District.



Schools also provide quality entertainment for the community. Many residents of Belton are parents with kids going through the public school system. Parents and grandparents as well as extended family are always attending shows and performances of the young people from this community is a resource for many events for tourism and entertainment. Community members mentioned that they would like a central place to find out what is going on in their community that compiles all the activities from the schools, university, civic clubs, restaurants (live music), city festivals and events, and parks district so they can more readily find things to do. This list needs to be celebrated by having it advertised in all social media and other resources.

**PERFORMING ARTS**

The proposed [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Performing Arts Center](#) is anticipated to be a great addition to the arts and culture scene in Belton and is intended to draw from Belton and Bell County. The \$20 million facility will have:

- 546-seat theater with proscenium stage, fly space, and orchestra pit
- 2,000-square-foot performance lab which can be used as an ensemble room, a classroom, a venue for small-scale productions and recitals, or a room for receptions or other social gatherings
- 2,000-square-foot practice room which can double as a classroom
- Scene shop with 18-foot ceilings so scenery can be built and stored there
- Costume shop which can double as a classroom
- Cast dressing rooms which can be reconfigured for classroom use
- Box office with an outside walk-up window for selling tickets prior to performances
- Spacious lobby area for patrons which can also be used for small recitals, dinners, or receptions



**BELL COUNTY MUSEUM**

[Bell County Museum](#) is centrally located at 201 N. Main Street. Part of its complex is the historic Carnegie Library Building. The museum was established in 1991 and serves all of Bell County with its permanent collections along with having a variety of traveling exhibits showcased at the museum. The museum relies heavily on volunteers and has many programs for people of all ages.



**ENTERTAINMENT**

There are opportunities to develop an arts district downtown with a mix of restaurants, antique stores, art galleries.

**CRUSADER STADIUM**

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB) has a variety of sports entertainment available with six Division III sports for both men and women. The [new Crusader stadium](#) has proven very popular with both the university students and the citizens of Belton. UMHB and the City of Belton can work together more to spread the word about all the activities on campus available to the public.



**THE BELL COUNTY EXPO CENTER**

The [Bell County Exposition](#) building encompasses more than 100,000 SF and hosts large and small concerts, rodeos, trade, hobby shows, and several other events. The Main Arena is the largest area and has a Special Events Room and an Assembly Hall. There is a large plaza outside the main arena to allow for more exhibit or performance spaces. The Expo has initiated plans to expand exhibit space, and construct an equestrian center and additional parking. The 220,000 square feet equestrian center is currently under construction and will include an 850-seat performance arena and a warm-up arena with horse stalls. This expansion will be a great addition for both Bell County and the City of Belton.



One need that has been identified is hotel rooms and an adjoining conference center. The city is actively engaging with prospects to highlight the opportunities here.

**RESTAURANTS AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

Many residents responded on their online survey or during the stakeholder meetings that there was a lack of nice, sit-down, family restaurants in Belton and they would like more variety in their choices. They tend to travel to the surrounding communities for family entertainment like bowling, movies, and shopping. Belton residents would like to see more available high quality entertainment downtown and throughout town.

**UNIVERSITY DISTRICT**

Since the university is a large institution, it becomes its own district and therefore paying close attention to the edges where the university and city interface occurs, is a place that holds a lot of dynamics. One key potential is adding activities that cater to the captive market of students in Belton. Previously mentioned was the challenge for the city to not lose their talented youth graduating from high school to the bigger cities. Working the edges of the university into vibrant set of land uses and activities that are attractive to the younger generation can go a long way toward solutions to this issue. As mentioned in the section on institutions as a land use, here again the edges may not always be compatible. The university can work on integrating these edges so that compatibility is more than simply scaling



CITY OF BELTON DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARKING



buildings down at neighborhood edges but works in land uses that serve as transitions serving neighborhoods as well as the university and its students. Coffee shops, book stores, places of quietness and respite are valuable for both institution and neighborhoods.

Along the commercial edges; the neighborhood services, restaurants, coffee shops and higher traffic generating enterprise, is the normal trend development and if pedestrian access is well defined, it can serve the university without increasing traffic levels.

### SPECIAL NODES OF MIXED USE ACTIVITY

In some cases, the morphology of a specific district or location may lend itself to becoming a unique and special place. An example of this might be in the larger intersections of the city where large retail may have assembled. These types of areas may transform into more of a lifestyle center where a wide variety of uses become part of the mix, including: employment, retail, shopping, grocery, residential, restaurants and entertainment, etc. A particular element to the success is to have denser residential closely associated with the commercial development to stimulate walking. The other design ingredient important to this recipe is for all this walking space to be well defined and well designed. Locations that are significant due to their natural qualities have a different set of rules and imperatives. Preserving what is special and allowing high quality development to occur taking advantage of the place can also create a special place. It is important to identify these places that have special characteristics and ascribe a unique set of rules for the development or redevelopment. Getting a framework in place now will prevent an action that could destroy what is special about that place. An overlook may become a parking lot, or a place along the creek may have a use that doesn't leverage the context of place to the fullest. Sometimes these places may be a unique intersection of five streets or at angles embedded within a culturally rich neighborhood. Taking advantage of these qualities stimulates the development of place-sensitive projects that could strengthen the neighborhood, or the tourism opportunities, or the life in the streets downtown.

An extension of this idea is with Gateways and Corridors that hold special qualities or need to possess special qualities due to their location. The difference between these special places and gateways and corridors is that gateways and corridors are the first introductions of a visitor to the city. They set the tone for how wonderful the city may be. Additionally, these places that have a higher standard of aesthetics are part of the elements that give pride to a city and the residents. Enhancing special places such as these can stimulate more activities around city beautification thereby triggering a higher sense of pride in the city. Gateways are special because they introduce a city to anyone that arrives there. Entering through these places sets the tone for what the expectations are. A city with hundreds of billboards and gravel driveways has a very different appeal to those places that are well landscaped, have clear welcome signage that is well maintained and good wayfinding. It is here that Belton can set the bar for the overall image of the city. Visitors of a place will come away with lasting memories.

Other corridors to be studied for the appropriate level of improvements are the freeways traversing the city; I-35 and I-14/US-190. Typically a gateway of significance will be accompanied by a corridor with overlay enhancements. Many of the leading corridors into cities are in fact heavily commercial and even industrial in nature. The corridor overlay is not a tool for land use as much as it IS a tool for visual quality. To be effective in industrial or heavy commercial



corridors, consider signage regulations including billboards as well as screening and landscape requirements. Successful implementation of these two strategies will go a long way to the visual enhancement of the corridor. Central Avenue is a great example of good progress toward corridor enhancements. The improvements of street trees, special paving, signage, street furniture and lighting all surrounding the commemoration of our armed forces is becoming a tourism draw by itself. Accomplishing this stimulates businesses to engage in their own improvements to store fronts and parking lots. Certainly there is more to be done but the work is moving in a positive direction.



Other corridors to be studied for the appropriate level of improvements are the freeways traversing the city; I-35 and US 190, soon to be transformed into I-14/US 190. As mentioned above, minimal treatments that can go a long way toward the visual enhancements may be limited to signage controls including billboards as well as screening and landscape requirements. Just by adding street trees and screening storage and refuse areas are a big step. These corridors have an important economic function and everyone understands that. Small steps can reap large returns.



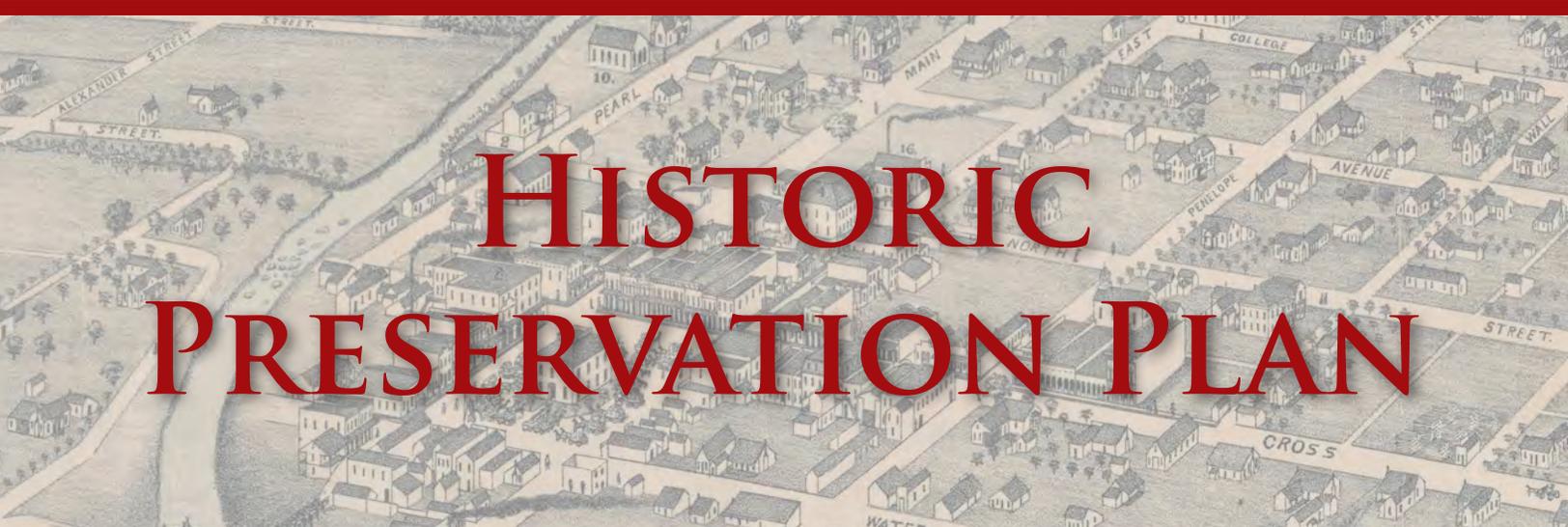
South Main Street is another important corridor. A much smaller scale, this becomes a much different level of enhancement. Entering the city from the south, there is much highway frontage that may be ripe for redevelopment, uses of which would depend on the type of access it has now and in the future. The City of Belton may find value in discussing the aesthetics of the road connection under the US 190/I-35 interchange where Main Street begins. This could be the site of a significant arts installation or a well-designed landscape entry project. Cities have taken advantage of spaces like these to create enhancements that become focal points and even iconic for the city. As mentioned above in the section on arts district potential. The east side of Main Street businesses have a drainage area that could be part of a stimulus project of restaurants and shops along a quiet wooded corridor.



The future Lake to Lake Road, ROW acquisition in phases now, will be a significant corridor servicing both commercial and residential sections of the city on the west side of Belton. Once completed, it will bring efficient connection to large capacity roads helping out the dispersal of traffic and relieving transportation pressures. It will be a well-traveled road and as such, will need to have a design aesthetic that will be appealing. The road section should accommodate bike lanes as well as multiple lanes of traffic both ways. Signage regulations should be in place from the beginning to keep from grandfathering older and visually unappealing signs.



# CHAPTER 8

A detailed historical map of a town, likely from the 19th century, showing a grid of streets and various buildings. The map is rendered in a light, faded style. Visible street names include Alexander Street, Pearl, Main, East College, Penelope Avenue, North, Cross, and Water. The buildings are depicted with varying rooflines and architectural details, suggesting a mix of residential and institutional structures. The map is overlaid with the title text.

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

## BELTON PRESERVATION PLAN

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Belton Preservation Plan is to expand on the goals and objectives identified in the Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Preservation Plan is a guiding document for the City of Belton to utilize in planning for the future while still maintaining the historic resources. Belton is known for its outstanding architectural history, and many residents and visitors are attracted to the city for the atmosphere this historic setting provides.

### USE OF THE PRESERVATION PLAN

The historic preservation plan is intended to guide a comprehensive preservation program for Belton. It will be used by the city to guide and monitor preservation efforts in the community. Businesses, property owners and members of the general public may also use the plan to learn about the preservation program and the status of preservation efforts. Preservation is a part of many community interests, including housing, sustainability, livability and economic development, the plan seeks to balance broader community objectives while achieving its core mission of retaining historic resources.

### ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT

The administrative component of the preservation program provides its operating framework, including the staff that manages daily activities and the Historic Preservation Commission that administers adopted policies and standards.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Historic Preservation Commission is responsible for reviewing Certificates of Appropriateness requests for Belton properties in locally-designated historic districts. The Historic Preservation Commission shall consist of five members. Members must be a resident of the city and have lived within the city for a minimum of 12 months immediately prior to appointment. At least one member shall be an owner-occupant of a property with historic overlay zoning. Members of the Commission are to have a demonstrated interest or competence in, or knowledge of historic preservation. The responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission are outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

The City Manager or his designee shall appoint a qualified city official or staff person to serve as Historic Preservation Officer (HPO). The planning department will be responsible for coordinating the city’s preservation activities with those of state and federal agencies and with local state, and national preservation organizations. The HPO also serves as the primary City staff liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission and has been delegated administrative review authority for some types of projects that would otherwise be reviewed by the full Commission.

<b>CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS CASE ACTIVITY 2013-2016</b>				
COA Case Activity	2013	2014	2015	2016
Cases Approved by Historic Preservation Commission				
Total Number of Cases	18	19	17	14
Cases Approved Administratively (by Historic Preservation Officer only)				
Total Number of Cases	13	24	18	15

## PRESERVATION VERSES CONSERVATION

Both of these terms have a viable use within the determinations of the commission. In the words of the National Park Service:

*“Conservation and preservation are closely linked and may indeed seem to mean the same thing. Both terms involve a degree of protection, but how that protection is carried out is the key difference. Conservation is generally associated with the protection of natural resources, while preservation is associated with the protection of buildings, objects, and landscapes. Put simply conservation seeks the **proper use of nature**, while preservation **seeks protection of nature from use.**”*

*“Conservationists sought to regulate human use while preservationists sought to eliminate human impact altogether.”*

Certainly preservation tends to take the lead with most commission actions but there are landscapes within the City of Belton that may also qualify under the conservation terminology. The importance of bringing this topic up is simply to broaden the perspectives of the commission through a larger lens of viewing the historic value of land and structures within the city. Belton as a city is historic and with this viewpoint, the landscape around it also has value if positioned in a way that supports the preservation of places whether buildings, squares, or cemeteries. What histories are to be revealed with the horse farms in these ETJ regions of the city? What history lies upon the Lampasas or the Leon Rivers? What photographs exist of the original Courthouse Square?

## THE HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

The city has designated five distinct areas called out as historic districts. These areas are the heart of the remaining structures and places that exhibit true value for Belton. Many of the homes have been lovingly restored, some areas are within the UMHB Campus and owned by the university. These are the shining stars of the Historic Preservation Commission within Belton.

What about the high value assets outside these districts. The Historic Preservation Brochure and the charges assigned to the commission clearly state that structures outside of districts can have the acknowledgment of the commission as well but the descriptions are not as aligned or clear. But how are these places and structures not within districts being designated, described, supervised, acknowledged and celebrated? According to the City Ordinance No. 2012-18, 29.5, #5; Responsibilities of the Commission; “Recommend and confer recognition upon the owners of historic landmarks or properties within historic districts, subject to ratification by the City Council.” This infers that historic designations only occur within the Historic Districts that have been designated. Alternatively, the Historic Preservation Brochure reads that the designation may occur outside of Historic Districts. This later perspective should be embraced as the proper methodology. With Districts, there will be a unifying characteristic so that a district has an historic feel with a collection of structures of value. A singular historic structure will not have the district appeal but is no less valuable as an asset or as part of the story of Belton.

Through the city assessment process, several locations in the city had structures that were not within any of the designated districts but were certainly of great historic value. One homestead appears to have been on an acreage tract, likely a farm, and then subsequently surrounded by the increasing growth of the city. The land area shows up on a 1940s land census map as already partitioned through subdivision, and the earlier map of Augustus Koch shows that portion of the city as the edge of the growth.

These are just as valuable as those structures in the Historic Districts. The context existing today may not be the most desirable or the most compatible but the structures are indeed worth lots of effort and investment for preservation. The city has façade grants as a program to assist with structures but a different level of assistance may be needed. Special assistance programs for valuable properties under pressure and decay could come in a variety of ways including a focus group identifying grants at the state and national level to assist. The Historic Preservation Ordinance outlines the idea of outright acquisition of properties as well. If there is a need of a facility in an area of town then maybe this could solve two problems; preservation and facility needs. In some cases these structures may lend themselves to being home for institutions of a wide variety. Art museums, educational facilities, administrative offices, and other uses often times have the financial wherewithal to acquire these structures and rehabilitate or maintain in a sustainable manner if not restorative manner. A city has many needs and there are buildings that can fill these needs.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

The historic context in Belton is utilized to organize information for existing historic resources, based on a cultural theme within a certain time frame and geographic area. These contexts describe the importance of development in areas that often contain historic properties. The three overall themes in relation to development are described below.

### **Early Settlement (Nolan Springs/Nolandville), 1840–1850**

Early settlement began in this area in the late 1840s. When Bell County was established in 1850, the small settlement of Nolan Springs, named for adventurer Philip Nolan, was chosen as county seat and renamed from Nolanville to Nolandville. Nolan Creek, a tributary of the Leon River that runs through the center of town, was also named after Philip Nolan. Matilda Connell and her husband, Thomas J. Allen, donated 120 acres out of the Matilda F. Connell League for the town. Henry B. Elliot surveyed the area, and E. Lawrence Stickney created a plat of the town in a generally north-south/east-west grid pattern. The town was laid out with a large central courthouse square as its focus. The first town lots were advertised for sale in the Galveston newspaper in 1850. Joe Townsend and A. T. McCorcle were among the first merchants to build stores. A post office was then established, and the town's name changed to Belton, in 1851.

### **Commerce and Business, 1870–present**

The 1870's saw a boom with building, new businesses and new enterprises. A Belton group organized the Belton Telegraph company that provided daily quotes of the cotton market. In the 1970's, the Belton Woman's Commonwealth began under the leadership of Martha White McWhirter and several other prominent Belton women. This group separated from the town's established Protestant churches and formed an economic cooperative. In 1887 they opened the three-story Central Hotel and later operated a steam laundry and several nearby farms. The group also founded the town's first library in a room in the hotel. In 1879 a fire destroyed much of the town's central business district, but the stores were quickly rebuilt. A new Renaissance Revival courthouse, designed by architect Jasper N. Preston, was constructed in the late 1870s, and by the mid-1880s Belton had a population of 4,000, daily mail and stagecoach service, three newspapers, an opera house, five schools, steam grist and flour mills, two hotels, thirteen grocery stores, and three banks. During this period Belton also developed into a processing and shipping center for the region's growing cotton crops. The first cottonseed oil mill was built in the town in 1879, and a number of cotton gins began operating. Today, Downtown Belton contains a variety of retail stores, restaurants and office buildings with large walking trails connecting Downtown to other areas in the City.

### **Educational Institutions, 1881–present**

The City of Belton assumed control of its public schools in 1881. Elections were held that determined that they should be under the control of the board of trustees. The first session began in 1882, under the superintendency of Chas. E. Williams, with a total of 7 teachers and enrollment of 300 students. At this time, there were no buildings or supplies available for public schools in Belton. An election for a school tax was conducted that resulted in a large majority in favor of the tax and the public school system began to grow. The Belton City Schools ranked with the best schools of the state and were recognized as an auxiliary to A&M College, the State University and the best universities in the state under denominational control. The earliest record of public education for area African American students dates



from 1882 when Mrs. Aleck McGee was hired to teach the African American school. Professor Thomas Breckenridge Harris became the first African American High School in 1890. The name West Belton School was chosen in 1900 and a new building was constructed in 1936 for African American students. By petition, the school was named T.B. Harris after the revered former principal. T.B. Harris closed its doors in 1966 and Belton schools were integrated the following year. Today, the Belton Independent School District expands to several cities, encompassing 198.6 square miles and has a student enrollment of over 10,800 students on 15 campuses and employs more than 1,700 employees.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor was founded by the Republic of Texas in 1845 as “Baylor Female College,” the female department of what is now Baylor University. The University began at Independence in Washington in 1886, due to the changing demography of Texas and relocation of the local railroad made it increasingly difficult for college students to get transportation to Independence. The Baptist State Convention of Texas moved the Male Department to Waco, Texas and consolidated with Waco University, retaining the name Baylor University. The Female Department moved to Belton, Texas and became known as Baylor Female College. Academically the college has always emphasized the liberal arts. At the turn of the century it had two degree programs, classical and English. These programs evolved into the B.A. and the B.S. degrees approved by the State Department of Education, which in 1912 recognized Baylor Female College as “a college of the first rank,” and in 1913 began accepting its graduates as teachers without further examination. Today the liberal arts form the core courses for such programs as nursing, business, and education. In 1925 Baylor Female College was renamed Baylor College for Women. In 1926 it was admitted to the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities and in 1927 to the American Association of Colleges. By 1978 the college had been reorganized as a university with five schools: arts and sciences, creative arts, business, education, and nursing and was renamed University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Today, UMHB has a student enrollment of about 3,900 students and employs more than 400 full-time faculty and staff members.

The Belton Academy was founded in 1887 by Professor Charles Wedemeyer, a Baylor graduate and former teacher and administrator of Baylor University, Crane College, and Waco University. Charles H. Wedemeyer built this home in 1891, adjacent to the Belton Academy, where he taught many area leaders. The academy served as an intermediate school with a four-year course of study that included classes in English grammar, higher arithmetic, history of England, algebra, geography, geometry, Latin and Greek, anatomy and physiology, German, English and American literature, chemistry, philosophy, New Testament Greek, botany, geology, astronomy, political economy, and logic. In the 1896-97 school year, there were 99 students enrolled. In the beginning, the school was a male academy, but by 1895 had become co-educational. The Belton Academy was an approved intermediate school whose graduates were admitted to the freshman class of the University of Texas without examination. The Belton Academy closed in 1911 and moved to Temple in 1912. The Wedemeyer house still exists today and is listed on the National Register as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

In 2012, the City of Belton enacted Ordinance 2012-18 creating the Historic Preservation Overlay District and enabling the Historic Preservation Commission with the appointment of five board members, to administer the ordinances for the districts. With this action the position of a Historic Preservation Officer was also created to work with the activities of the commission. The purpose of the overlay districts, the commission, and the Historic Preservation Officer is a matter of “...protection, enhancement, and preservation of landmarks and districts of architectural, archaeological, educational, and general welfare of the public.”

The intentions of this ordinance and the entities it creates or enables is to:

- Protect and enhance the landmarks and districts, which represent distinctive elements of Belton’s historic, architectural, and cultural heritage.
- Foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past.
- Protect and enhance Belton’s attractiveness to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided.
- Ensure the orderly, efficient, and appropriate growth and development of the city.
- Promote economic stability and prosperity of the community by encouraging the most appropriate use of historic properties within the city.
- Encourage stabilization, restoration, and improvements of such properties and their values by offering incentives for rehabilitation.

The city through the work of the commission has designated areas within the city that are to have this overlay district. On the maps and related documents, the areas have been designated as such due to the importance of the “contributing” features of the district.

To be considered as contributing, a feature must:

- Embody the significant physical features as characteristics of the district, or adds to the historical association, historical architectural qualities, or archaeological values identified for the district.
- The feature was present during the period of significance relating to the documented significance of the district.
- The feature possesses historic integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance is the portion of the Belton Zoning Ordinance that outlines the basic regulations and processes for historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted most recently in 2012.

Topics addressed by the preservation ordinance include:

- Creation and operation of the Historic Preservation Commission
- Designation procedures for local landmarks and historic districts
- Basic procedures for alteration and demolition of locally-designated historic resources

### INCENTIVES AND BENEFITS

The incentives and benefits component of the preservation program includes the tools that assist property owners in maintaining historic resources. Effective preservation programs offer special benefits to stimulate investment in historic properties, encourage owners to follow appropriate rehabilitation procedures, and assist those with limited budgets. Owners of designated historic properties in Belton may be eligible for one or more of the incentive and benefit programs described below.

### LOCAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAMS

The city has created a historic preservation tax exemption program in which historically significant properties will be eligible to receive a tax abatement for up to 5 years on the pre-improvement value of the structure.

### FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Facade Improvement Grant Program is established to encourage quality exterior rehabilitation in Belton’s historic business district. Any commercial property within Belton’s Downtown Development District is eligible for grant funds. Facade Grant funds focus on exterior work (visible to the traveling public) on storefronts, commercial buildings, and commercial residential buildings in the Downtown Development District.

Facade grants are available on a 50/50 matching basis with a cap of \$10,000 per façade adjacent to a public street or alley, with a maximum two facades eligible for a grant. A downtown building with two street facing facades is eligible for a maximum grant of \$20,000.

### **LOCALLY-DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Belton has five locally-designated historic districts containing a total of 438 properties. Owners of properties in these districts have special responsibilities overseen by the Historic Preservation Commission. They are also eligible for special incentives and benefits.

In addition to the special incentives and benefits available, residents often choose to live in a locally-designated historic district because of the unique character, and the stability provided by a design review process that ensures the compatibility of new construction and alterations to historic structures. Such stability can protect quality of life and property values.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate,

and protect America's historic and archaeological resources. There are a total of 40 Belton properties listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. The Downtown Belton Commercial Historic District and Baylor Female College Historic District are historic districts listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

### LOWER WEST BELTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Lower West Belton Historic District contains an excellent range of buildings constructed between 1870 and 1935. Sixty-one percent of the buildings in this district are contributing historic structures. There are a total of 41 properties in the LWBHD. According to the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission (1990), Belton developed gradually, resulting in no consistent pattern of lot sizes or building setbacks. Both one- and two-story buildings are present in this district. The buildings in the Lower West Belton Historic District represent the evolution of local patterns of construction from the 1870s through the 1930s.

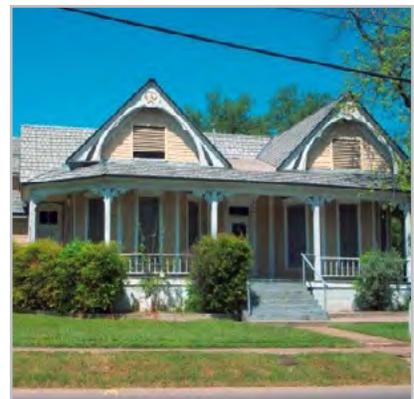
The Lower West Belton Historic District contains primarily residences, with a few commercial buildings on Main Street. The earliest house was built in 1870, and only six buildings were constructed after 1935. Architectural styles represented in the district include Greek Revival, Queen Anne, Folk National, Folk Victorian, Classical Revival, Second Empire, and Craftsman.



### SOUTH MAIN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The South Main Historic District (SMHD) contains buildings constructed between 1880 and 1935. All of the buildings in this district are contributing historic structures. There are a total of 10 properties in the SMHD. According to the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission (1990), Belton developed gradually, resulting in no consistent pattern of lot sizes or building setbacks. With the exception of the Muelhouse House at 620 South Main, all of the buildings in this district are one story in height. They are substantially smaller than the houses found on North Main Street, although many of them were built during the same time period. The contrast between the more grand mansions on North Main and these smaller dwellings in the SMHD illustrates an important geographic distinction between the different sections of the city during its development.

The South Main Historic District contains the following architectural styles: Queen Anne, Folk National, Neoclassical, Tudor, and Craftsman.



### DOWNTOWN BELTON COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

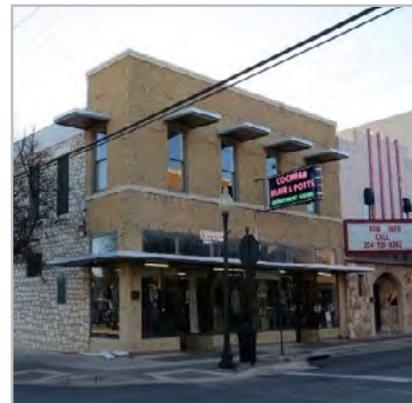
The Downtown Belton Commercial Historic District (DBCHD) contains buildings constructed between 1870 and 1959. Forty-six percent of the buildings in this district are contributing historic structures. There are a total of 120 properties in the DBCHD. According to the National Register of Historic Places nomination for this district, dated 1990, most of the historic commercial buildings in Belton are located downtown, near the courthouse square. They are generally long, narrow, and rectangular in plan, although some buildings occupy more than one lot and the depths of buildings vary. In some cases, multiple storefronts are contained within a single building. These buildings are mostly constructed of load-bearing masonry (limestone or brick); some have been covered with stucco. They feature slightly pitched roofs behind parapets. Decorative detailing includes arched window openings, pilasters, brickwork, pressed metal cornices, and cast iron storefront elements. Some buildings retain a flat awning beneath transom windows, but many storefronts have been updated with new canopies, large plate-glass display windows, and other alterations.

Downtown commercial buildings reflect three distinct periods of construction and architectural styles. The earliest buildings, built between the 1870s and the 1910s, are generally two-part commercial block structures with Italianate or Renaissance Revival elements. It is likely that the 1876 county courthouse, built in the Renaissance Revival style, influenced the design of nearby buildings. Most of these buildings are relatively tall and have a strong vertical orientation, with tall narrow arched windows, extended parapets, masonry pilasters and quoins, and cast iron columns or pilasters.

Buildings of the 1910s and 1920s are less vertically oriented (more boxy) and usually constructed of brick. One-story buildings are also common in this era. Designs are less ornamental, with fewer arched windows and more simple parapets and cornices. Some of the buildings from this era reflect a Spanish Mission or Spanish Colonial Revival influence.

During the 1920s and 1930s, only a few commercial buildings were constructed in Belton, due to the depressed economy and declining cotton industry. The former bus station at 206 North Main Street and the former Beltonian movie theater at 219 East Central Avenue are the primary examples of this period of construction and represent the Art Moderne and Art Deco styles, respectively.

Architect-designed buildings in the district include the Bell County Courthouse (1876, J. N. Preston and Sons), the Carnegie Library (1905, Smith and Moore) at 201 North Main Street, and the U.S. Post Office (1918, James A. Wetmore) at 200 North Main Street.



### CENTRAL BELTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Central Belton Historic District (CBHD) contains buildings constructed between 1895 and 1959. Sixty-seven percent of the buildings in this district are contributing. There are a total of 77 properties in the CBHD. The CBHD contains residences constructed from the 1890s through the 2000s, with the majority of historic properties dating from the early decades of the 20th century, when the cotton industry fueled a population and building boom. Fewer homes in this area were built after 1940. The earliest homes in the district feature detailed ornamentation in the Queen Anne and Folk Victorian styles. After the turn of the century, the Arts and Crafts Movement led to more simplified ornamentation, such as the exposed bracketed eaves and tapered porch supports found on Craftsman homes. The bungalow form (a boxy shape with a low-pitched roof and wide eaves) became popular, and many bungalows were built in the Craftsman style. Craftsman details were also applied to the modest Folk National house forms built from the mid-1800s well into the 1900s.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the need for efficient, affordable housing led to the rise of a type of house now known as Minimal Traditional – that is, a relatively small (usually one-story) dwelling that utilized traditional building forms, but with minimal, if any, ornamental details. Only a few of these homes are found in the Central Belton Historic District, since most of those lots had been built out by World War II.



### NORTH CENTRAL BELTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

The North Central Belton Historic District (NCBHD) contains buildings constructed between 1870 and 1959. Seventy percent of the buildings in this district are contributing. There are a total of 194 properties in the NCBHD. The earliest homes in the district include many in the highly ornamented Queen Anne style and a few in the similar the Folk Victorian house, in which Queen Anne-style ornamentation was applied to Folk forms. Early homes also include many modest Folk National residences, and an 1870 Greek Revival house. The district contains a diverse mixture of architectural styles and house forms; pre-1900 houses also include an example of high-style Italianate architecture and a Gothic Revival house, both built around 1895. The Revival movement is well-represented, with about a dozen Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Greek Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival homes, mostly built during the period 1900–1930.

After the turn of the century, the Arts and Crafts Movement led to more simplified ornamentation, such as the exposed bracketed eaves and tapered porch supports found on Craftsman homes. The bungalow form (a boxy shape with a low-pitched roof and wide eaves) became popular, and many bungalows were built in the Craftsman style. Craftsman details were also applied to the modest Folk National house forms built from the mid-1800s well into the 1900s. However, Craftsman houses are less prevalent in this district than in other historic areas of the city, particularly West Belton.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the need for efficient, affordable housing led to the rise of a type of house now known as Minimal Traditional – that is, a relatively small (usually one-story) dwelling that utilized traditional building forms, but with minimal, if any, ornamental details. Only a few of these homes are found in the North Central Belton Historic District, since most of those lots had been built out by World War II. This district contains many Minimal Traditional houses.



### HISTORICAL ASSET WAYFINDING:

What improvements or actions in the city call attention to the history of the city? How is a resident or visitor to know where to go to see historic buildings and places? A quick internet search reveals a few maps that give visual aide to beginning this identification. The famous Augustus Koch map of 1881, “A Bird’s Eye View of the City of Belton”, depicts Belton’s beginning days centered on the Courthouse Square. Only a handful of blocks comprise the rest of the city in all directions at this point in time. Soon after, the Sanborn Map and Publishing Company came through and drafted maps of Belton in 1885. These maps, also highly valued for their historic record, cover much of the same area as the Augustus Koch map a few years earlier. The Sanborn Maps were for assessing fire insurance liability in urbanized areas. These maps are incredibly interesting and useful as an educating tool.

As Belton seeks to add depth to the historic assets of the city, one aspect to be looking for are interpretive tools to bring this history out to the people. High quality signage showing map copies of the Koch and Sanborn maps may be placed around the courthouse square for tourism interests. These information elements can be coupled with wayfinding signs such as unique street signs so that people know that they are in a historic district. Directional signage can call out significant landmarks such as the one already on-site in Belton calling out the AME Church in West Belton.

Some cities place a lot of effort in recording the oral histories of the places of historic quality. Seeking out the oldest of the families with multi-generational ties to the city and the land, open up a treasure trove of histories handed down by stories and memories. These gems of the history of Belton are disappearing fast and if not captured could be lost.

Lying on the eastern side of downtown quietly sits a cemetery. Established in 1851, the South Belton Cemetery is the final resting place for veterans of the War of 1812, Indian Wars, San Jacinto, Mexican War, and the Civil War. There are also two 1936 State historical markers on site. The Belton Historical Commission is to be congratulated on the intensive research and marvelous job in documenting the grave sites and mapping these with a sign at the front for visitors to see where their relatives are or for the historian to grasp the depth of history gathered within the fence line. Other interpretive signage is present as well giving glimpses into the history that has shaped the city. There needs to be some level of action to map the histories of all historic places and structures to the extent reached with the cemetery, to add depth to the history and the story of Belton. There is work yet to be done to restore monuments and continue interpretation and education programs.

Part of this legacy of commemoration is evident with the improvements on Central Avenue and the signage and pavers commemorating the veterans of wars. This was enhanced by streetscape improvements and continues the legacy of the strong military ties that the City of Belton honors. These are pieces to the overall puzzle. Building a comprehensive package to included tourist maps, public signage, events, walking trails and more so that tourist and more importantly, residents and school-age children, continue the knowledge and the legacy of historical preservation in all its manifestations.

Bell County Museum has a commanding presence in downtown and has an impressive collection and program. Although there are some events that carry out into the community, it would be very important for the museum to expand the programming to engage more closely with the Belton Preservation Commission and curate more intensive programs for the benefit of supporting preservation throughout Belton. Understanding that the museum is a county facility, the

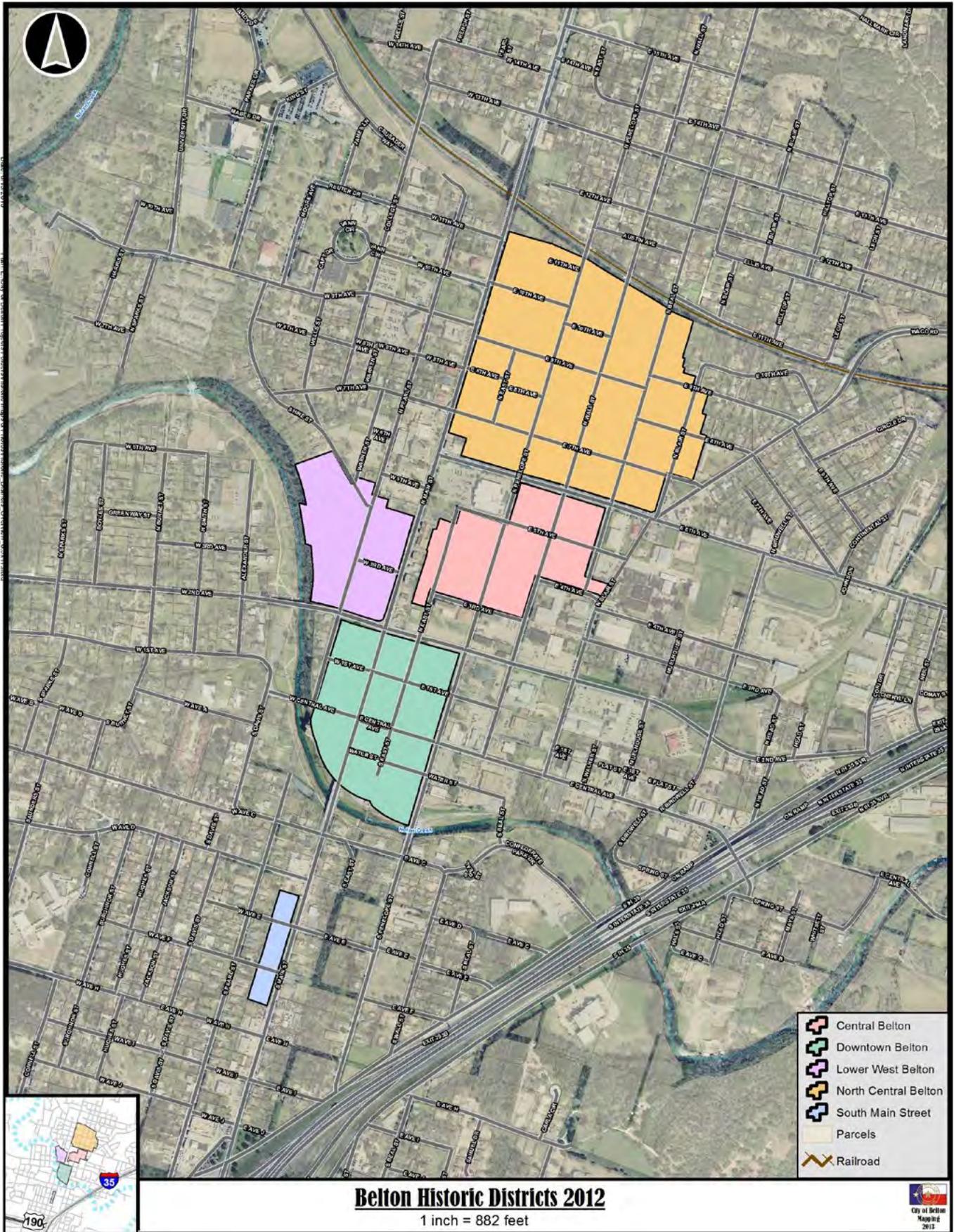
county's history is just as important to Belton and therefore encouraged to see the commission engaged beyond its boundaries and assist the museum. Building a synergistic relationship would be valuable for both institutions.

Analysis of historic maps and the buildings represented there, and comparing these to present day conditions is within itself an interesting and revealing exercise. This may have already been performed. There are lots of buildings that can be easily compared on the ground. This information would add lots of value with wayfinding and interpretation.

Layers of preservation, buildings vs districts: The districts in Belton defined by the Historic Commission are well known to the locals. Another layer of history should include the individual structures, historic places both natural and like the cemetery. A wayfinding infrastructure can code these layers into different kinds of tourism experiences whether it's a walking tours, driving tours or destinations to spend time in. More documentation of these places and a complete inventory of these online and in brochures would enhance the experience of the cultural heritage tourist and contribute more assets for educational purposes. By building up this kind of information and the associated infrastructure of wayfinding and walking trails, then there becomes a stronger attraction for visitation and a better asset for education. As this resource becomes available, marketing materials can be developed for both online consumption and as pamphlets on Chamber and EDC shelves. Another aspect that is a little more subtle is that there are plenty of academic and professional historians that look for information like this. A book project can tie together lots of fragmented information and once published, can contribute to greater cultural tourism. Many cities market their historical assets aggressively and with great response. Belton is well underway having the tremendous stock that has already been restored and available for touring.



# BELTON HISTORIC DISTRICT 2012



# CHAPTER 9



# FUTURE VISION & IMPLEMENTATION

# FUTURE VISION & IMPLEMENTATION

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACTION ITEMS

- Inspire Belton with not only a plan but also big ideas to help shape development and design
- Provide a thoughtful framework for land use development decisions, both as a policy guide for what uses should be developed where and looking at short term as well as long term goals
- Facilitate continued quality development
- Maintain and further develop a walkable city
- Provide a plan for more entertainment, shopping, and restaurant options in Belton
- Build on the many ideas presented by the community from the online and postcard surveys and the stakeholder meetings
- Create enhancements along important corridors throughout the City
- Encourage the development of quality, safe neighborhoods in Belton
- Link development with road networks to enhance both
- Recognize and collaborate with institutions in their development, such as Bell County, UMHB, BISD, BEDC
- And most importantly, for Belton to continue reaching for the highest possible quality of life for its residents.

## CHAPTER 1 - VISION ACTION ITEMS

- Incorporate the goals of the Strategic Plan that are high level goals.
- Provide guidance or support for the process of review and update.
- Provide clarity to the focus of the Strategic Plan leading to CIP implementation process.
- Establish the validity of city programming and regulatory actions within or outside of the Strategic Plan actions.

## CHAPTER 7 - SPECIAL PLACES & DISTRICT IDENTITY ACTION ITEMS

- Acquire additional property along Nolan Creek to expand the trail network and create a regional connection to other communities.
- In coordination with the Nolan Creek Master Plan, create a downtown master plan and an arts and culture master plan.
- Through the conduit of a downtown association, develop or update strategies that are focused on the revitalization of the downtown area including signage (already being done), parking analysis, targeted business types, residential stock, historic stock and historic walking tours, etc.
- Develop a regional trail system that connect where ever possible to the adjacent jurisdictions. If possible, through that plan, create the condition making Belton the regional hub for cycling and bike touring.
- Develop a cultural calendar and identify gaps in potential offerings and weekends city wide. Coordinate these with the downtown calendar and the county activities.
- Develop a downtown calendar that is comprehensive and have a downtown map showing the stores and restaurants.
- Develop a “Top Ten Things To Do While in Belton” list and post around town. One city has these in bathrooms and elevators.
- Conduct an evaluation of the downtown and associated district to identify the “next big thing” as a cultural asset for the city.
- In conjunction with the county, conduct an assessment of all facilities downtown or an overall facilities master plan for governmental properties. Identify the highest and best use strategies that have the best benefit for tax value and governmental efficiencies.

- Work with BISD on coordinating school functions, performances, and exhibitions so that these can be a part of the community calendar. Leverage these assets for more city-wide events such as a marching festival or visual arts exhibits from area schools in public places downtown.
- Balance automotive and pedestrian needs with the infrastructure.
- Develop overlay ordinances that address specific requirements for the gateways entering the city and the corridor that are special and needing an enhanced appeal due to their significance for the city.
- Develop a system of correlating the goals and objectives above with the city Thoroughfare Master Plan to see how each area of improvement can be enhanced or what areas of the city may need to be considered in the future for enhanced programming or development incentives.

## **CHAPTER 8 - HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ACTION ITEMS**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

These historic preservation goals have been established in order to provide a long term, desirable direction for the City's historic preservation and enhancement efforts.

#### **GOAL 1: PROMOTE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION.**

- Promote adaptive reuse of historic properties.
- Use historic districts to stabilize neighborhoods and enhance property values.
- Continue to implement historic tax exemption ordinance for historically significant properties located in local historic districts and locally designated landmarks.

#### **GOAL 2: COORDINATE PRESERVATION WITH EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AND BEAUTIFY PUBLIC STREETS AND GATEWAYS.**

- Beautify East Street and Penelope Street downtown, using preservation principles.
- Replace historic markers located at significant historic places.
- Achieve Certified Local Government (CLG) status to receive funding, technical assistance, and other preservation successes.
- Install historic district identification street sign toppers.

#### **GOAL 3: BUILD A STRONG HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM FOR BELTON.**

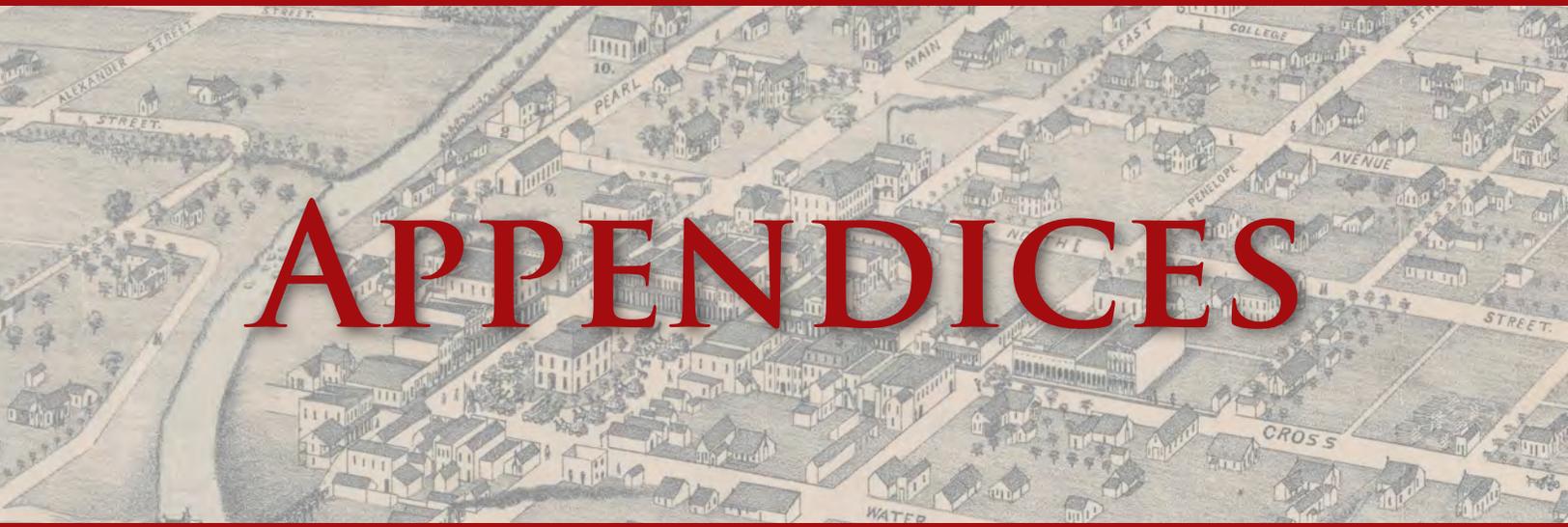
- Develop a wayfinding system and walking tour programs.
- Place out in public some of the historic maps and information; bring out history into the public realm.
- Revitalize the Belton Standpipe and create a public park around this historic structure.
- Involve the Bell County Museum for information and orientation for tourism.
- Explore methods to promote Historic Belton.

#### **GOAL 4: ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF BELTON'S SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES.**

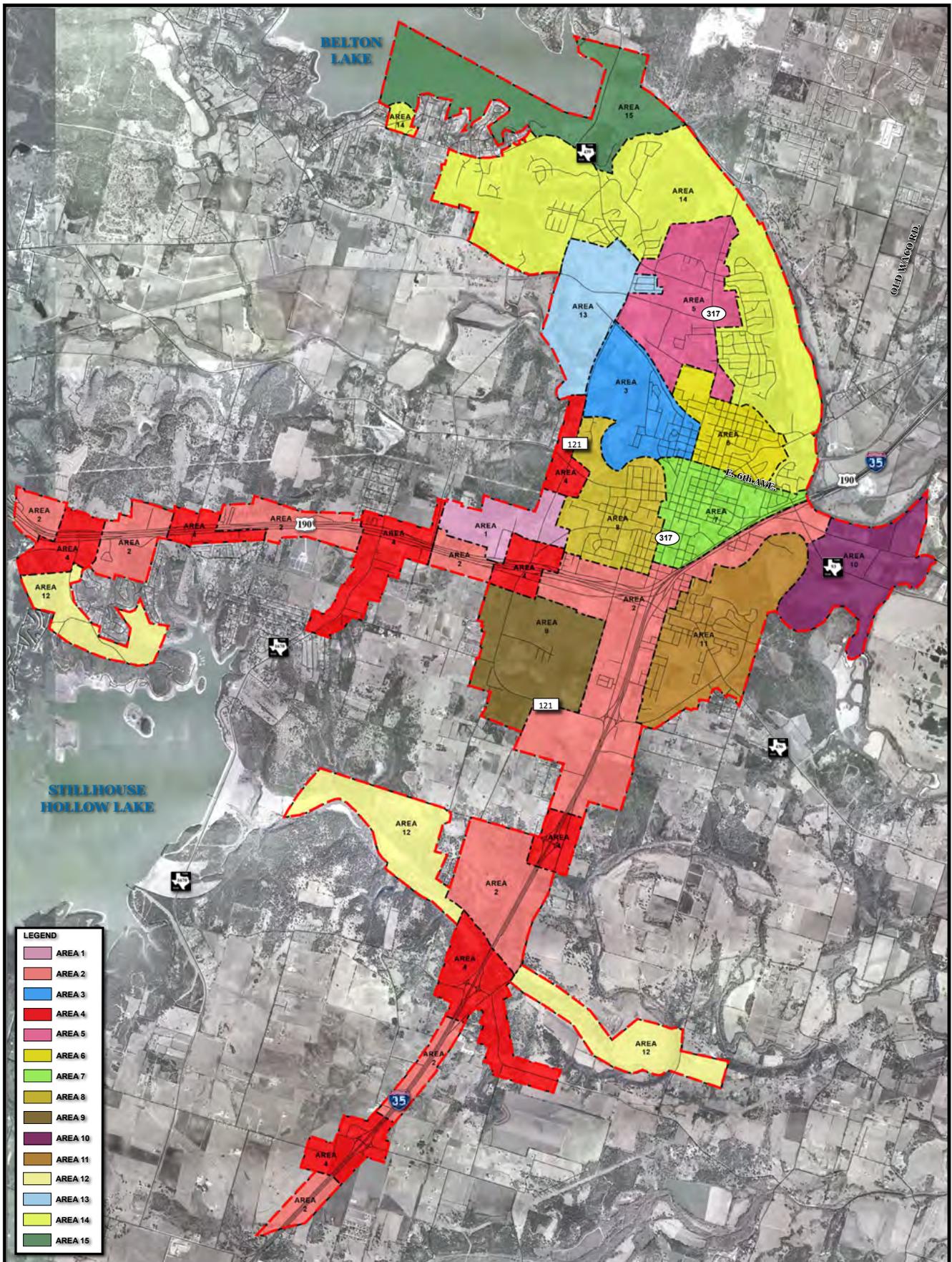
- Develop a layered list of historic preservation to include districts, individual properties, natural landscapes of historical significance (if present), cemeteries, and others. Index and map these in a comprehensive manner.
- Develop design guidelines for properties located within the local historic districts and individual landmarks.
- Continue to seek out best practices from other cities of similar sizes.
- Highlight National Preservation month and focus on important topics.

# CHAPTER 10

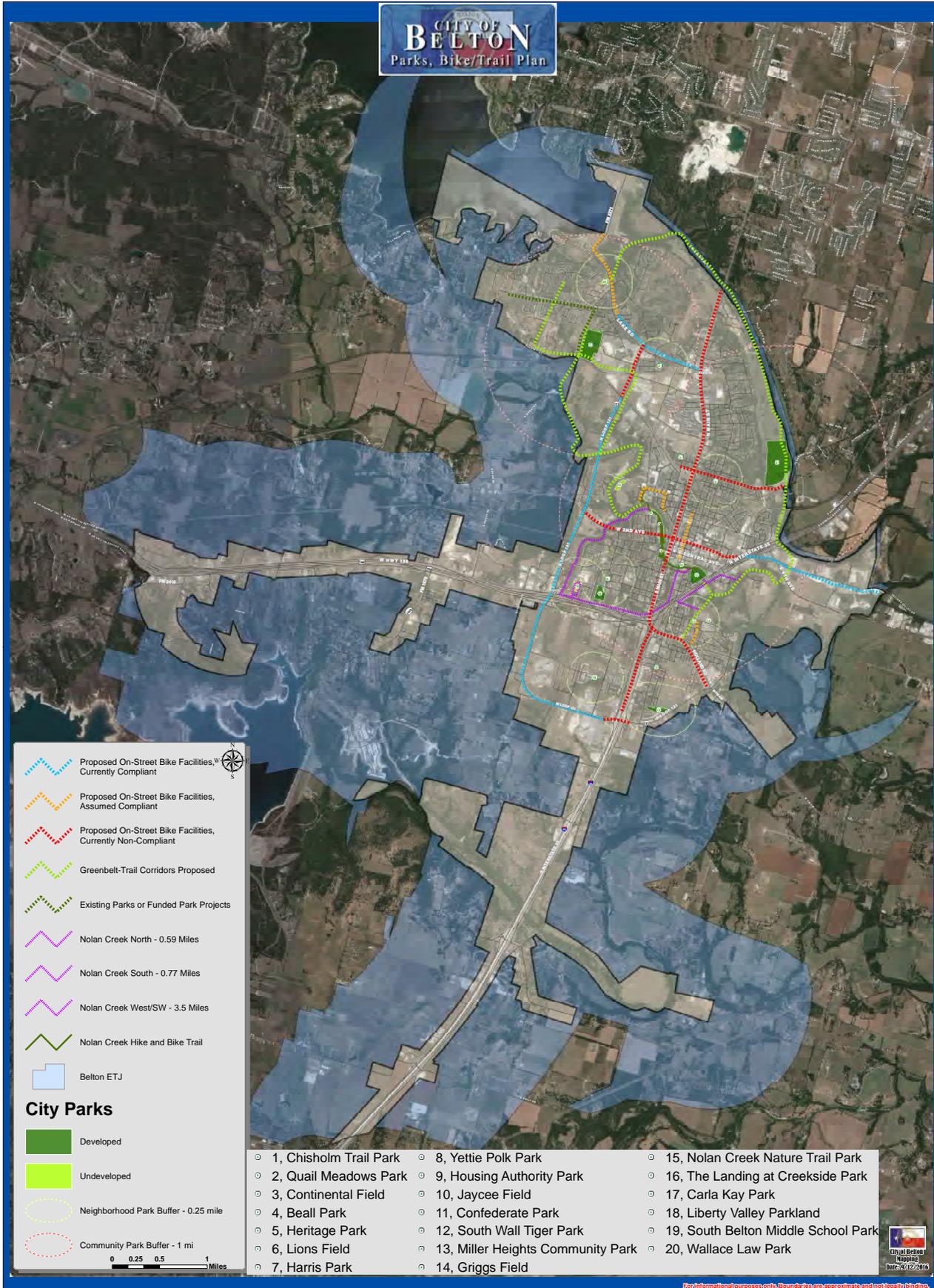
# APPENDICES



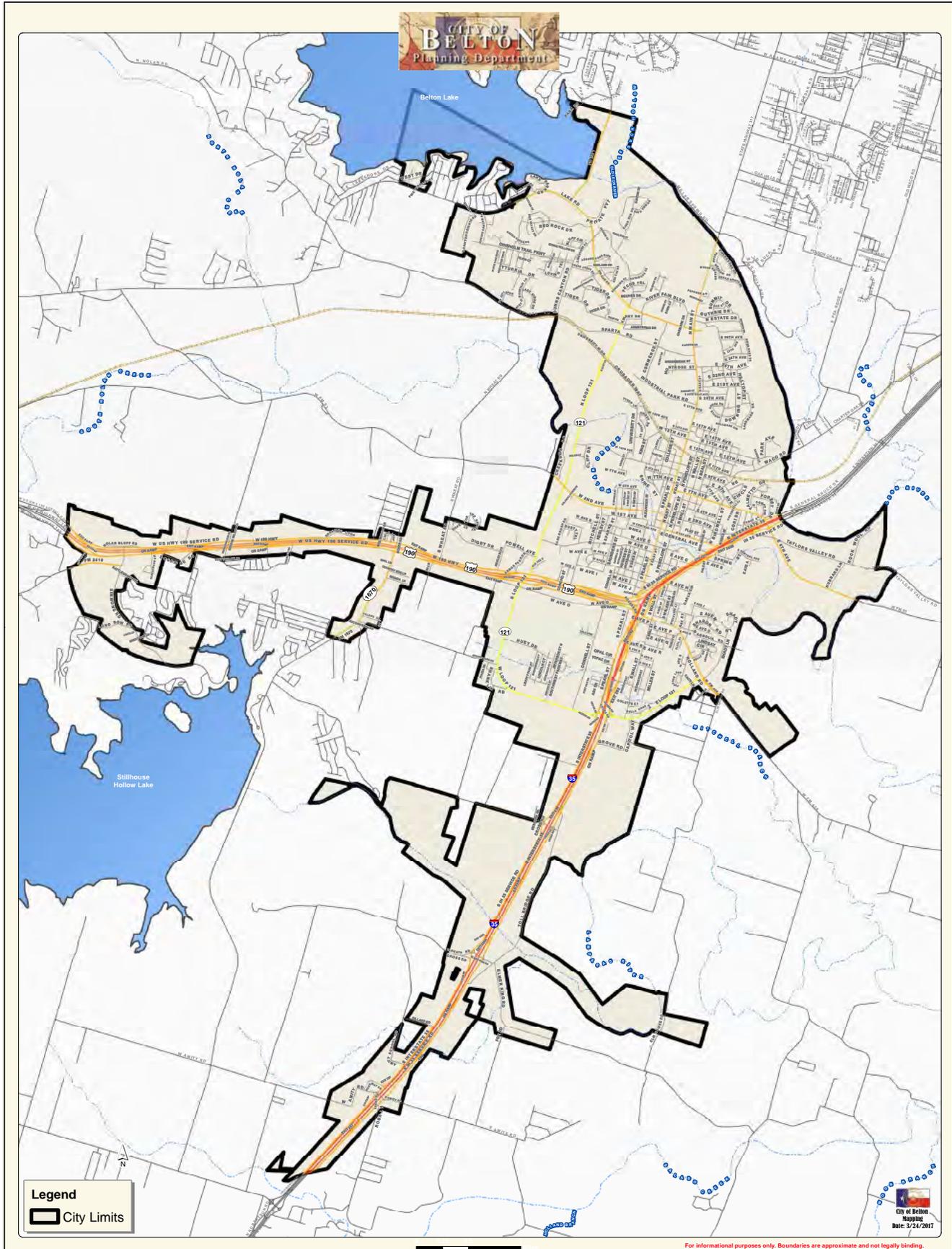
# CITY OF BELTON TYPE AREA LOCATION MAP



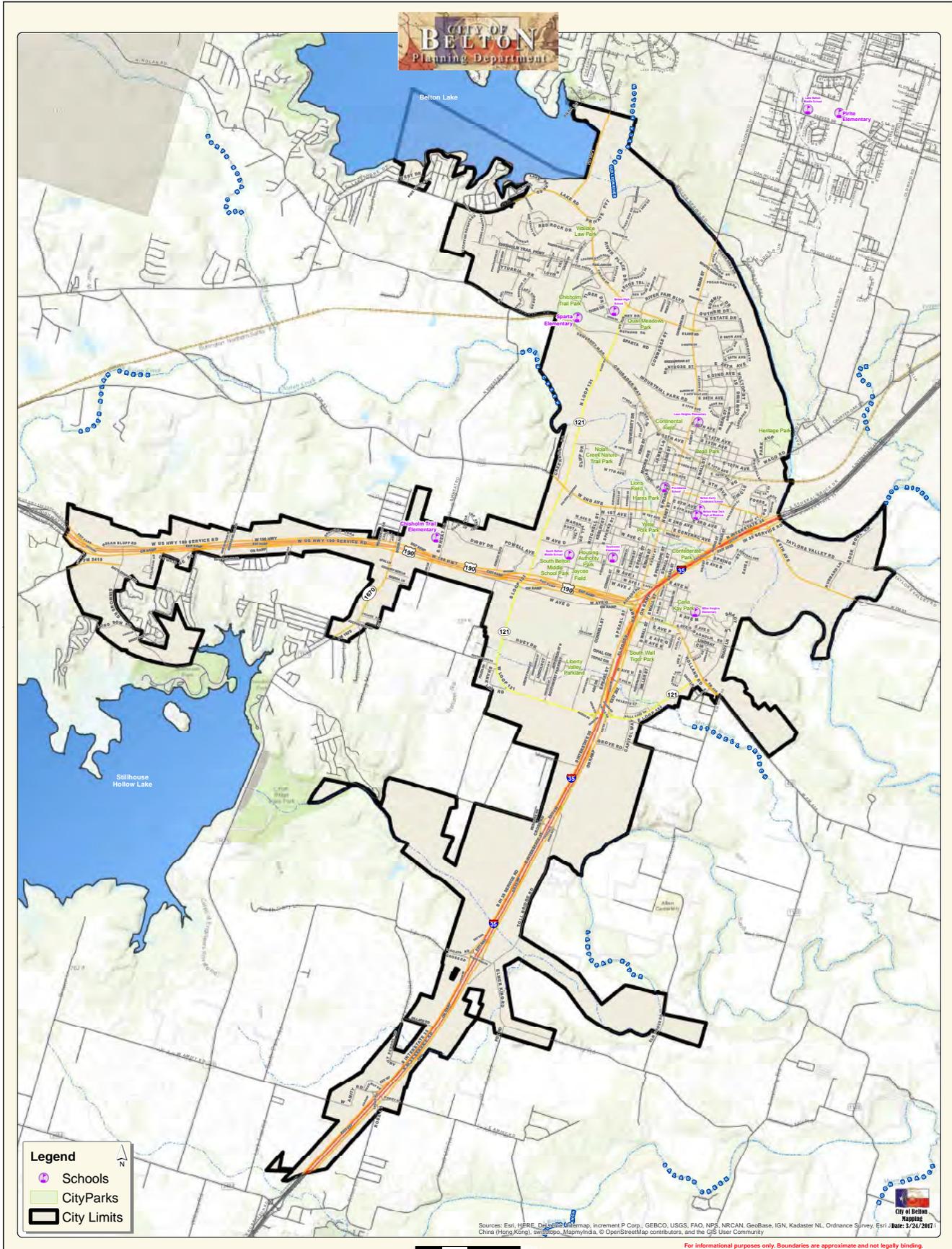
# CITY OF BELTON PARKS & BIKE TRAIL PLAN



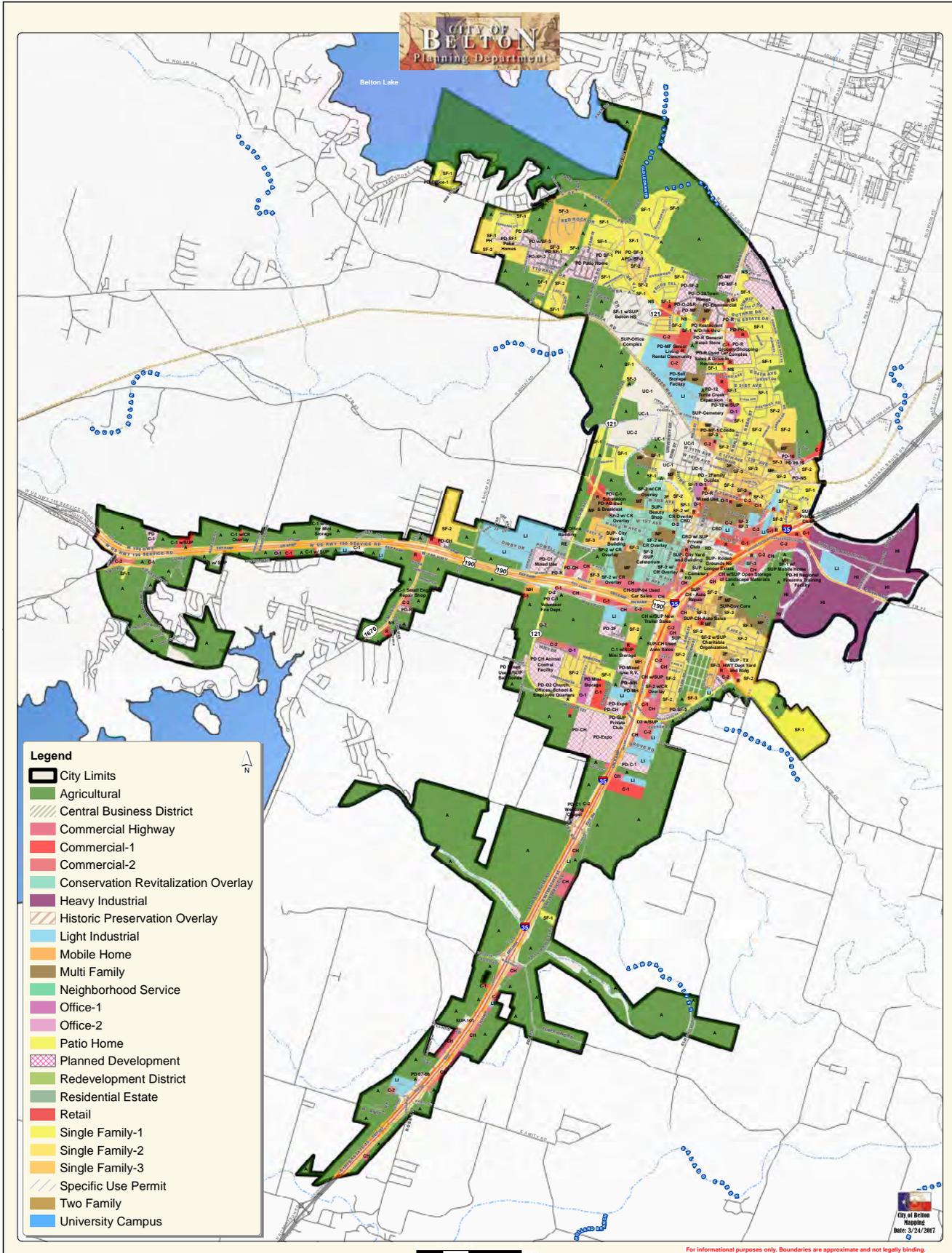
# CITY OF BELTON CITY LIMITS MAP



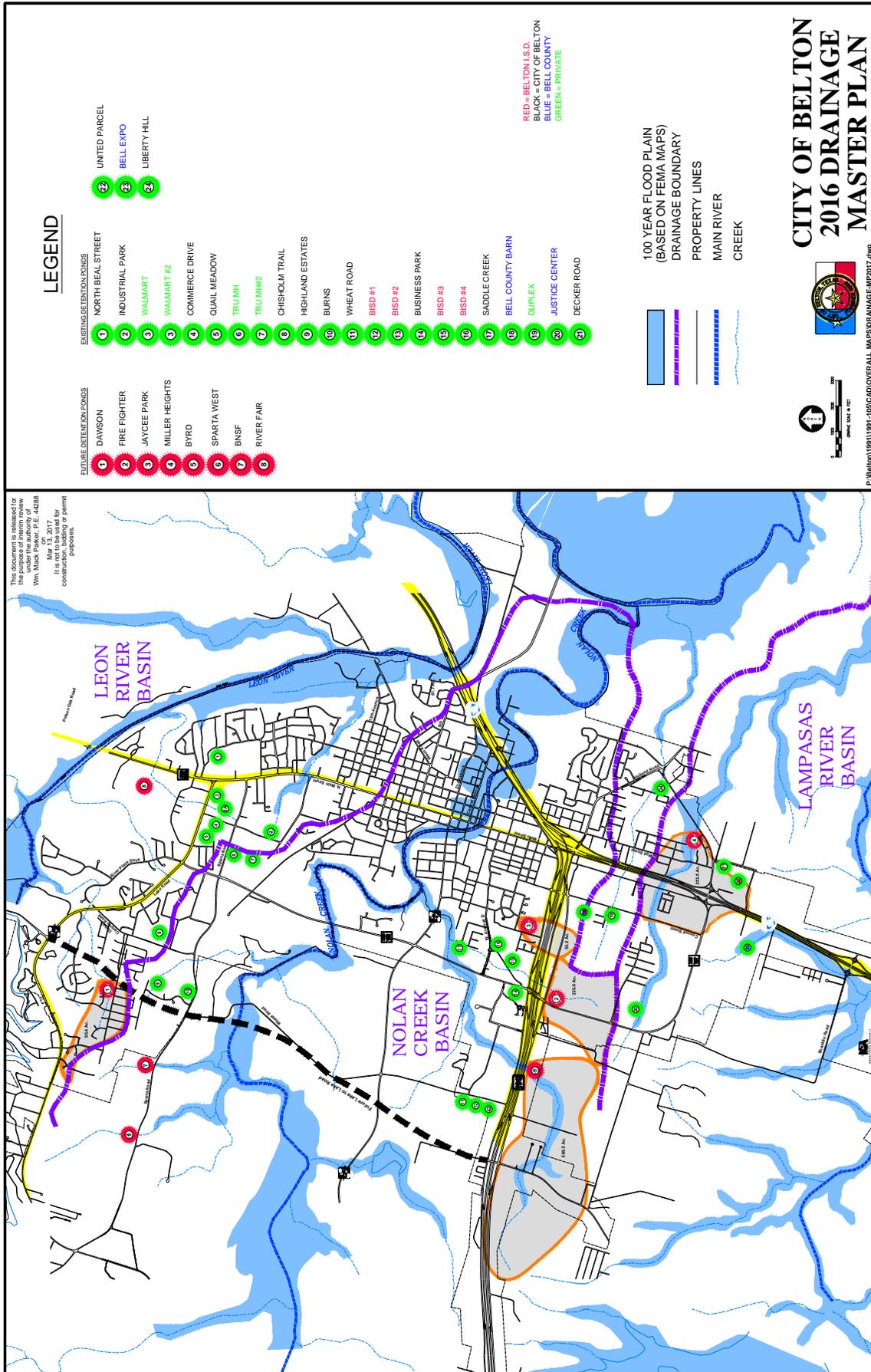
# CITY OF BELTON PARKS AND SCHOOLS



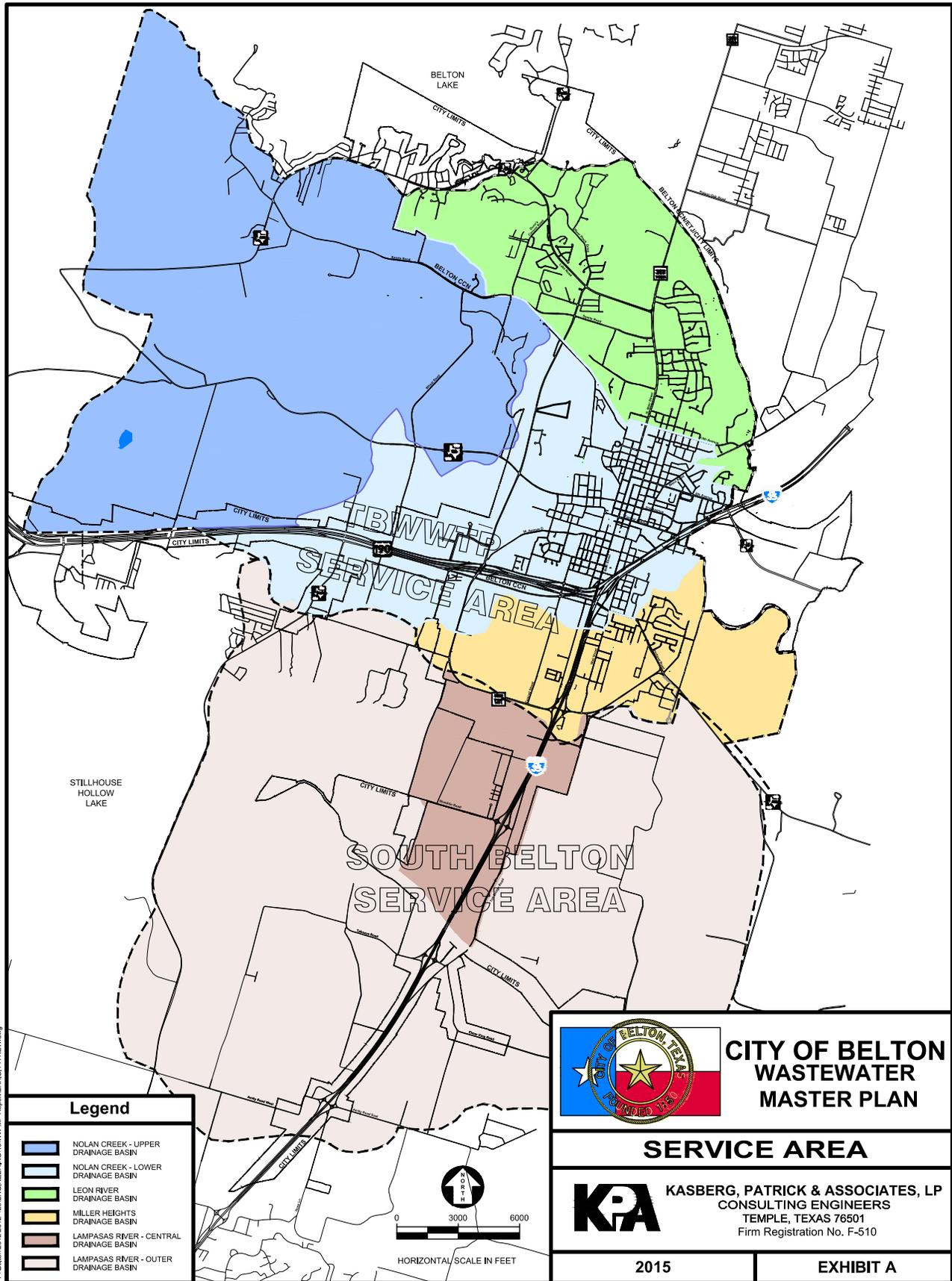
# CITY OF BELTON ZONING

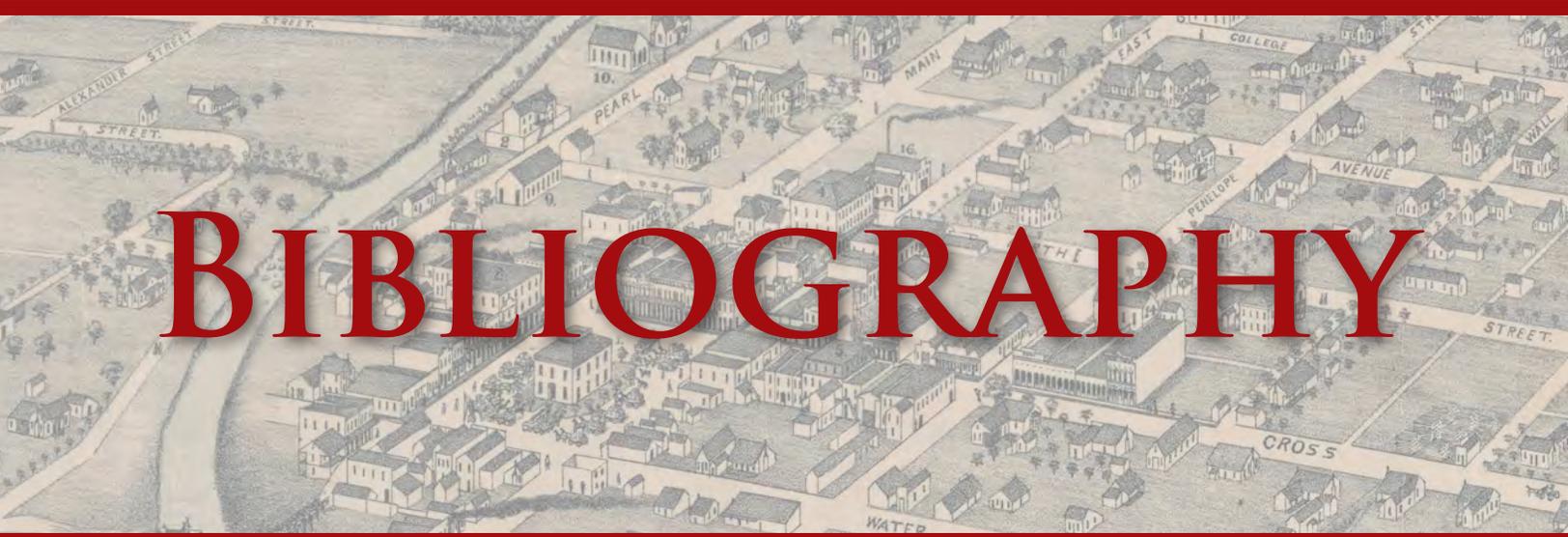


# CITY OF BELTON 2016 DRAINAGE MASTER PLAN



# CITY OF BELTON WASTEWATER MASTER PLAN





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