



The Elgin Comprehensive Plan acts as the City’s long-range guide for the physical growth and development of the community. Developed through a year-long process in 2008 and further developed by the Advisory Committee during the first half of 2009, the Plan was officially adopted by City Council on October 22, 2009. As an official public document and a statement of the community’s future vision, the Plan provides a tool for the City to guide growth in a desired manner and improve the quality of life for Elgin residents. In order to achieve this, the Plan:

- Provides a general blueprint for future development and redevelopment in the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).
- Documents anticipated issues, trends, opportunities, and challenges facing the community.
- Defines a series of Guiding Principles that together form a future vision for the community.
- Identifies policies to guide daily decision-making for elected and appointed officials.
- Establishes a set of specific strategies and priorities to see the vision of the Plan achieved in the desired time frame.

### **Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan**

The underlying purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a foundation for the City’s development codes and ordinances. Though the Plan itself does not carry the legal authority to regulate development, municipalities that adopt zoning regulations must do so “in accordance with a comprehensive plan” (Texas Local Government Code §211.004). This requirement ensures that development regulations are not arbitrary, but guided by a broader policy framework for orderly growth and development in the community.

The Plan also provides an opportunity for coordination among the many different elements that are associated with growth and development. It addresses the topics of land use and development, transportation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, parks and recreation, and economic development. Though some of these topics are dealt with individually in detailed studies (such as the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan), the Plan addresses the interconnected relationships among the City’s core elements. Addressing issues related to growth and service provision in a proactive and coordinated manner helps the City achieve its ultimate objective of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of residents.

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As an exercise in long-range planning, the Plan also provides an avenue for the community to establish its preferred vision for the future. Though visioning may seem idealistic, it is critical to the planning process because it identifies the core values that residents want to see carried through to the physical environment. Elgin’s future vision is expressed in the seven Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles discussed in Chapter 3 that were developed by the community during the planning process.

The Plan is intended to be used by City officials and departments to guide decisions regarding growth and development, capital improvements, and annual work programs. Outside of the City government, the Plan can be used by developers and residents to anticipate the community’s future direction and type of growth.

### Scope of the Comprehensive Plan

The term “comprehensive” is a fitting way to describe the Plan because it:

- Addresses a range of issues including transportation, land use, utility infrastructure, parks and recreation, and economic development as well as the way these various elements influence each other.
- Incorporates data and recommendations from other studies completed by the City and other governmental agencies.
- Considers growth and development issues within the City and its extra territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).
- Plans for a long-range time horizon of 20 years.
- Is based on both technical analysis and citizen input to provide a well-rounded approach to community issues and solutions.

### Relationship to Other Plans and Documents

Elgin residents, City staff, and City officials have been actively engaged in the development of several plans and studies in recent years including *Envision Elgin (2004)*; the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (2006)*; and the *Elgin Station Initiative (2007)*. These documents, as well as others, support the foundation for the Plan, providing not only important background information, but also recommendations that are incorporated into the Plan implementation priorities. While the Plan is in no way intended to replace these topic-specific studies, it does bring together the major findings of the various documents into one plan. This helps ensure that the documents are working together under a common set of Guiding Principles and a coordinated implementation strategy. **Exhibit 1.1:** Supporting Plans and Documents, lists the documents used to prepare the Plan and briefly describes the role of each in the Plan’s development.

## Exhibit 1.1: Supporting Plans and Documents

Plan/Document and Year	Key Topics	Relevance to 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update
<b><i>Comprehensive Planning Report: 1998</i></b>	Growth and Development Land Use Housing Infrastructure Transportation	Provides the starting point for the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update. Identifies long-standing issues and priorities in the community.
<b><i>Envision Elgin Community Development Strategy: 2004</i></b>	Community Values Education Job Retention & Growth Historic Preservation Quality of Life Sustainable Planning Tourism Regionalism	Documented “Core Values”, which provide a starting point for the Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles. Identified goals, objectives, and strategies for each topic that are incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan’s implementation program.
<b><i>Elgin Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan: 2006</i></b>	Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Trail Connections	Proposed parks, trails, and golf courses were incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan as well as the Parks and Public Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan.
<b><i>Elgin Independent School District Demographic Update: 2006</i></b>	Population growth in Elgin ISD’s service area.	Results were used to verify population projections for the Comprehensive Plan.
<b><i>Elgin Station Initiative and Related Growth Trends: 2007</i></b>	Transit-Oriented Development Passenger Rail Economic Development	Findings from this study regarding the fiscal, environmental, and community benefits of transit-oriented development helped shape the Future Land Use Plan.
<b><i>Retail Market Study: 2008</i></b>	Economic Development	Key findings are incorporated into Chapter 10, Implementation.
<b><i>Feasibility Study for Rail, Logistics and Distribution Services: 2008</i></b>	Economic Development	Key findings are incorporated into Chapter 5, Transportation and Chapter 9, Economic Development.

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates, 2008.

### Elgin’s Comprehensive Planning Process

The public process to update Elgin’s Comprehensive Plan began in January 2008 approximately ten years after the adoption of the previous Plan. The magnitude of changes that had occurred in Elgin and the Austin metropolitan region since the 1998 Plan required a fresh start and a thorough process that would engage community leaders, City staff, and residents. The City hired a consulting team led by Wilbur Smith Associates in association with TRC Engineers and IPS Group, to lead the planning effort. Major milestones in the planning process are chronicled through the timeline on the following pages.

## Comprehensive Plan Timeline of Events

### December 2007

*Kickoff Meeting  
with City Staff  
Appointment of  
Comprehensive  
Plan Advisory  
Committee*

### January 2008

*Advisory  
Committee Kickoff  
Meeting  
Stakeholder  
Interviews  
Community  
Forums*

### March

*Community  
Forums: Base  
Studies  
Advisory  
Committee  
Meeting: Base  
Studies*

### April

*City Council  
Update  
Advisory  
Committee  
Meeting: Growth  
Scenarios*

### May

*Advisory  
Committee  
Meeting: Preferred  
Growth Scenario  
Community  
Forums: Preferred  
Growth Scenario*



*Elgin residents attended the first round of Comprehensive Plan Community Forums in January 2008 to kickoff the planning process.*

The planning process included three levels of public involvement at critical stages in the Plan's development.

- The general public was engaged through a series of community forums to get broad-based input and ideas. Each set of meetings was held on two different evenings during the same week to give residents more than one opportunity to attend and avoid scheduling conflicts. The forums were widely publicized via the Elgin Courier, and flyers were created in both English and Spanish. The City also provided free babysitting and secured sponsors for door prizes to encourage attendance. The meetings provided a forum for residents to get an update on the planning process and provide feedback through a combination of small group discussions and comment forms.
- A Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was established at the beginning of the planning process to provide a forum for more detailed discussion and guidance. The Advisory Committee was comprised of a group of 14 dedicated volunteers who represented various facets of the community. Membership included three City Council members, three Planning and Zoning Commissioners, one member of the Economic Development Corporation, three City staff members, and four residents (one from each Ward). It should be noted that midway through the planning process one of the citizen representatives was elected to City Council, which resulted in three resident representatives and four City Council members on the Committee.
- City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission were given regular updates on progress of the Plan for further discussion and review.



*Elgin residents were put to work at Comprehensive Plan Community Forums in March (above) and September (below), to provide their thoughts and ideas as to how the community should grow and develop.*



The close involvement of the community in developing the Plan was extremely important to ensure that the Plan is consistent with local values, issues, and priorities. From the start, when almost 100 residents attended the first community forum, it became clear that Elgin residents were committed to help determine and shape the future of their community.

**Continuing the Planning Process**

Elgin is a dynamic community that is continually responding to changes in demographics, the economy, and development trends. All of these factors cannot possibly be predicted, particularly in today’s rapidly-changing environment, even in a long-range planning effort. As a result, regular maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan is critical to ensure that it continues to be an effective tool for the community. Recommended Plan updates (described further Chapter 10, Implementation) include both minor and major amendments:

**Comprehensive Plan  
Timeline of Events  
(continued)**



- Minor amendments should occur on a regular basis, possibly once a year, as new data becomes available and local conditions change. Minor adjustments ensure the Plan is flexible enough to respond to changing needs while maintaining the overall vision.
- Major amendments should occur every five years. Major amendments provide an opportunity to step back and revisit the Plan in its entirety identifying new issues that have emerged as well as those that have lost their relevance.

### **Organization of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Plan is organized into 10 chapters which are briefly described below:

1. Introduction: describes the purpose and scope of the Plan while also providing a brief overview of Elgin’s planning process.
2. Community Profile: provides an introduction to the City, including Elgin’s regional and historical context. Recent demographic and socioeconomic data is summarized to identify local trends as well as to project future population growth.
3. Guiding Principles: documents the seven Guiding Principles that shaped the planning process. Cumulatively the Guiding Principles represent Elgin’s future vision.
4. Land Use and Development: presents Elgin’s current development patterns and illustrates the community’s desired growth pattern through the Future Land Use Plan and accompanying narrative descriptions.
5. Transportation: describes Elgin’s existing transportation system and proposes a future transportation network through the Thoroughfare Plan with supporting typical cross sections.
6. Water Resources: documents the City’s existing water infrastructure and identifies necessary future improvements.
7. Drainage: documents the City’s existing drainage issues and identifies necessary future improvements.
8. Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities: identifies Elgin’s existing parks, recreation, and public facilities as well as future needs.
9. Economic Development: identifies potential for economic growth in the Elgin area based on community input, previous studies, and current City initiatives.
10. Implementation: outlines a strategy for successful implementation for the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.