



Elgin is in a state of transition. Over the last 10 years Elgin’s population has doubled, and by 2028 the population is expected to grow to three times its current size. In addition, over the last several years residential development has significantly increased on the City’s west side, into Travis County. As a result of these population increases in Elgin and surrounding areas, traffic on US 290 (Elgin’s primary arterial between Elgin and Austin) has increased considerably, leading to increased congestion, unpredictable travel times, and reduced air quality. At the same time, a significant portion of residents in Elgin need to commute to Austin regularly for employment, healthcare, education, and shopping. This growth necessitates that future growth be planned with proactive land use strategies and mobility choices to ensure that Elgin retains its own distinct sense of place and character.

Elgin’s elected officials and government, business, and community have come together to express a collective vision for how they want their community to grow in the future. The Elgin Comprehensive Plan, a 20-year plan (through 2028) for physical development and growth, articulates that vision and provides guidance for how to achieve these goals. Through an extensive public outreach effort, the Plan outlines seven community-driven principles to guide the future of Elgin and articulate the community’s philosophy of how growth and development should occur:

- Preserve the local history, natural landscape, and creative spirit that together give Elgin its unique sense of place.
- Connect the community and region to ensure that all residents have access to safe and affordable modes of transportation.
- Foster sustainable development patterns that are accessible and accommodate the diverse needs of all residents, especially those of future generations.
- Regulate development in a manner that facilitates economic growth while also ensuring that the built environment respects the local character and values of the community.
- Attract the kind of development that strengthens the property tax base, provides local employment, and improves the diversity of options within the community.
- Promote development that creates a safe community now and in the future.

- Balance the traditions and values of the old with the innovation and diversity of the new.

This Plan provides a framework for focused urban growth that will integrate Elgin’s rural character with sound community development, burgeoning local economy, and effective management of the City’s public and private resources to sustain and enhance quality of life for residents. The Plan also provides an opportunity for coordination among the many different elements that are associated with growth and development in a proactive, coordinated effort to help the City achieve its ultimate objective of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of residents.

Each chapter of the Plan outlines key issues and opportunities for future growth and development related to: land use and development, transportation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, parks and recreation, and economic development. The following highlights key findings and opportunities for future growth in Elgin:

### Land Use

Effective land use planning is essential to achieving the desired vision for Elgin’s future. A **Future Land Use and Development Plan**, illustrating the community’s vision for the general location, intensity, character, and type of development throughout the study area, was developed as part of an extensive community outreach effort. Several key opportunities exist for Elgin to effectively build upon its strengths and grow in a sustainable way:

- Promote compact, infill development to fill in the “gaps” of vacant lots and enhance the architectural character of housing around historic Main Street.
- Preserve Elgin’s strong agricultural base by directing services and development away from agricultural development and encourage efforts to retain existing agricultural uses through conservation easements and other mechanisms.
- Encourage industrial and commercial growth to provide a jobs-to-housing balance in Elgin, effectively allowing citizens to live and work in the same area.
- Develop transit-oriented development to promote passenger rail, provide residents with additional housing, commercial retail options, and mixed use development to support further economic development.
- Encourage additional development to occur in an orderly manner where services are already offered, and focus efforts towards strategic annexation of land along key corridors to provide for new residential development.

- Revamp the development code to ensure that future development meets the aesthetic, sustainable, and pedestrian-friendly environment that residents expect for the future.

### Transportation

A well-coordinated transportation system is instrumental for enhancing mobility, for providing economic development opportunities, and for increasing a community's quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan includes a **Thoroughfare Plan** that will help the City of Elgin plan for long-term transportation needs, maximize the use of their existing system, and preserve and acquire rights of way for future bicycle, pedestrian, passenger rail, multimodal amenities, and roadways as land is developed. Opportunities over the planning horizon for achieving these goals include:

- Promoting opportunities for passenger rail to safely and efficiently provide alternative transportation options that enhance mobility for residents and visitors and provide economic development opportunities for Elgin.
- Providing enhanced bicycle and trails network to enhance safety, mobility, and connectivity in Elgin and to promote desired land uses.
- Identify corridors essential to the primary arterial system to preserve or acquire right of way, and establish negotiation strategies to acquire portions of right of way through the development review process.
- Provide intersection improvements to increase mobility on congested streets
- Encourage a well-connected, grid street structure to provide greater mobility and walkability, and work with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to provide alternative access in addition to US 290.

### Water and Drainage Facilities

Providing the infrastructure for current and future development is essential if Elgin wishes to grow in the ways articulated in the future vision. A number of opportunities exist to meet the infrastructure needs of current and future residents:

- Evaluate the present water system, including water supply, treatment capacity, and distribution system network to ensure that adequate infrastructure remains in place to support current and future populations in Elgin.
- Expand and upgrade the water treatment plant based on systematic evaluations.

- Over time, develop additional water rights and construct new wells.
- Investigate opportunities to acquire additional utility service area for the water system in Elgin.
- Implement recommended drainage projects developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan efforts to effectively:
  - Monitor ordinances and construction standards to limit watershed impacts and minimize any expansion of flood-prone areas.
  - Maintain and enhance drainage channel capacity to prevent flash-flooding in Elgin.
  - Provide a formal network of storm water collection and recharge.
  - Design drainage facilities to accommodate stormwater runoff and flooding.
  - Provide drainage easements to improve and maintain natural drainage channels.
  - Ensure proper zoning and restrictions for new development to ensure proper drainage and to avoid flooding risks.

### **Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities**

Parks are essential in providing recreational, educational, and health benefits as well as strengthening cohesion within a community. In looking towards the future, the Comprehensive Plan ensures that the community is supported by the adequate number of acres of park and recreational facilities to meet the needs of the projected population. The City's **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2006-2015** is still current, and this Comprehensive Plan outlines and extends the efforts of that plan through 2028:

- Connect park and recreational network through hike and bike trails for residents to promote connectivity and accessibility.
- Enhance and expand sidewalks to provide public safety and mobility choices.
- Evaluate and acquire land for park facilities as new development occurs.
- Plan for future parks and recreational facilities by requiring new developments to contribute land or funds for parks.
- Create a diverse array of parks, including neighborhood and pocket/mini parks throughout Elgin.

- Provide a recreational facility to meet community needs and consider opportunities, such as a Sports Complex, to host sporting events in Elgin and attract visitors.
- Promote sustainable design for public facilities to reduce environmental impacts, promote resource and cost efficiency, and provide for future generations.

### **Economic Development**

A strong, diversified economy in the City of Elgin is critical to the well being of the residents of the City. The City's economic development efforts have been assisted through strategic partnership with the Elgin Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Greater Elgin Chamber of Commerce. The Comprehensive Plan outlines an existing local economic profile, key issues to consider, and identifies opportunities and initiatives for the community to guide its growth and development based on the local values expressed by its citizens:

- Attract industry and retail development in Elgin to diversify the tax base.
- Allot specific areas in Elgin for industrial and commercial development to create a strong employment base.
- Create and support new employment generators so that residents may live and work in Elgin.
- Retain and expand local business revenue to support Elgin's local tax base.
- Support efforts to bring healthcare facilities and related development to Elgin.
- Support branding strategies, such as visual gateways and aesthetic enhancements, in Downtown Elgin to create a sense of place and to attract visitors.
- Support passenger rail and transit oriented development options to attract visitors to Elgin and enhance economic development efforts.
- Proceed with efforts to revitalize Elgin's downtown core and promote business development.
- Provide incentives for businesses to relocate in Elgin, and steer incentives towards industrial and commercial development that is desirable for the future growth of Elgin.

The final element of this Plan used the community guiding principles and the findings from each of the chapters to create five functional area goals for growth and development:

- Goal 1: Initiate physical development improvements to promote safe, accessible, and sustainable development patterns,
- Goal 2: Establish a sense of place,
- Goal 3: Improve connectivity and mobility choices,
- Goal 4: Establish an employment center and develop the local economy, and,
- Goal 5: Enhance access to services, schools, parks and medical facilities.

These goals have been utilized to create specific objectives and action items that will aid Elgin in achieving its vision over the planning horizon. This detailed **Implementation Plan** provides a full list of “objectives” and “action” items identified throughout the planning process, provides a time frame for implementation, identifies a responsible party, and highlights the most critical action items for prompt implementation.

The plan implementation strategies provided in this Plan are categorized into “Immediate”, “Short Term”, “Mid Term”, and “Long Term” implementation actions to address needs through the planning horizon of 2028. The immediate plan of action is designed to “kick start” implementation activities by the City and other public and private partners by addressing those projects that can be immediately undertaken or are so pressing as to require immediate action. The subsequent, phased implementation strategies will help guide future actions, and are meant to evolve over the planning horizon.

With the implementation of this Plan and with the support of community-minded leaders and investors, the vision residents have for Elgin can emerge. If realized, the future is bright. It will be a compact and walkable Elgin, offering regional passenger rail options, providing greater opportunities for residents to live and work in town, supporting dependable services, and promoting the rich history and agricultural integrity that Elgin is known for. This future is ripe for the picking, but the time to begin is now to ensure that growth and development plans are undertaken proactively and cohesively, in anticipation of what the future has in store for Elgin.