



PLAN

PORT LAVACA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

5-YEAR REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 13, 2021

Acknowledgements

The Plan Port Lavaca, dated September 12, 2016, calls for a review of the Comprehensive Plan annually. Unfortunately, with the Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts which City staff has been involved in over the past 4 years, this annual Comprehensive Plan review has not occurred. Committee members, Planning Board and City staff contributed to identifying completed tasks and accomplishments that have occurred since 2016, in order to provide this 5-year Review. With this effort there is a renewed focus on the Comprehensive Plan with plans to establish a “Visioning” Committee, comprised of representatives from various boards and committees in the community, and meet in March 2022 to provide input in the budget and capital improvement planning process for FY 2022-23.

City Council

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Rosie Padron, District 4

Jim Ward, District 5

Ken Barr, District 6

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Planning Board

Mike Elgin, Chairman

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Justin Weaver

Sheryl Cuellar

Betty Birdwell

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Introduction

The Chapter 9 Action Plan of the 2016 Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan serves as a “to-do list” for City staff and officials. The Plan Port Lavaca calls for a review of the Comprehensive Plan annually. Unfortunately, with the recovery efforts which City staff has been involved in over the past 4 years since Hurricane Harvey, this annual Comprehensive Plan review has not occurred. In an effort to regroup and refocus on the Comprehensive Plan, the Advisory Committee, Planning Board and City staff have compiled the following list of tasks and accomplishments, completed or actively underway, which have occurred since 2016, to serve as a 5-year Review Document.

Action Plan: 5-year Review

1. CONSIDER ADOPTING DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS:

Director of Dev. Services/Planning Board

Topics for a workshop tentatively scheduled for October 25 include

- Updates to the Manufactured Home Ordinance
- Updates to Sign Ordinance

2. WORK TO IMPROVE THE DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT AREAS THROUGH VARIOUS ACTIVITIES:

Director of Dev. Services/City Manager/ Port Commission

- We are reviewing the Waterfront Master Plan prepared by Kendig Keast Collaborative in 2012 and are working to prepare an advertisement for a Request for Qualifications in order to select a consultant to perform a “next step” Master Plan Study with the newly purchased Smith Harbor as a focus.
- In 2021 the City has received a \$13.5M CDBG-Mitigation Grant to construct a Living Shoreline breakwater to reduce the impacts to the Bayfront area from storm surge
- In 2021 the City has received a Boating Access Grant and Planning Grant for a new timber breakwater to protect the Nautical Landings Marina
- The five-year CIP includes plans to improve the entrance to the Bayfront Park and provide attractive crosswalks at the intersection of Main St. and Commerce Street at the heart of the downtown and waterfront area.
- In 2020/21, using Port Commission and General Fund dollars, as well as FEMA funds, improvements were made to the City Harbor including 1) upgrades to the lower concrete dock, 2) new finger piers, and 3) new vinyl bulkhead, concrete walk and handrails along the east side of Scully’s Restaurant. A construction contract will be awarded in September 2021 to make improvements to the Upper Dock at City Harbor and provide ADA access from Fulton Street.
- The five-year CIP includes funds to demolish and grade the site of the old freezer plant at the corner of Fulton and Harbor to provide a safe and pleasant looking area to attract development.

3. AMEND THE SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE:

Director of Dev. Services/Planning Board/Parks Department and Board

Scheduled for a workshop on October 25, we will discuss with Council proposed updates to the Subdivision Ordinance

4. CONTINUE PARKS IMPROVEMENTS AT WILSON AND BAYFRONT PARK:

Parks Department and Board

Wilson Park:

- Concession Stand/Restroom/Press Box Building was renovated in 2020
- A new parking lot with 29 spaces plus 2 ADA spaces, and an underground drainage system was constructed in 2020
- A new Skate Park is in the design phase and will be constructed in late 2021/early 2022 with added lighting and sidewalks

Bayfront Park:

- Completed Reconstruction of the Bayfront Fishing Pier in 2019
- Installed a new recycled plastic playscape with the “LaBelle” ship theme in Jan. 2020
- Completed upgrades to handrails at the large Pavilion and sidewalk improvements in 2020
- Completed Parking Lot and sidewalk improvements of the east end of the peninsula along with solar lighting in 2021
- Applied for and received a \$200,000 TPWL grant for a multi-use walk/bike path with solar lighting and other amenities, scheduled to bid in October of 2021
- The City’s Five-year Capital Plan includes improvements to the entrance of the Bayfront Park to provide an exit turn lane and ADA access from Main Street into the park.

5. CONTINUE PROACTIVE AND ASSERTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Code Enforcement Officer

- The City has employed a full-time Code Enforcement Officer
- Code Enforcement is working with the Appraisal District to identify substandard housing with unpaid taxes, which may be candidates for a tax sale to get the property into hands to renovate or demolish the structure.
- City staff has adopted a philosophy of working with the citizens towards code COMPLIANCE vs. code ENFORCEMENT and has seen positive results.

6. FOCUS EFFORTS ON HISTORICALLY AND CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT AMENITIES (Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, Main Street Theatre, and Old Fire Station)

- In 2020, all asbestos and pigeon feces were abated from the Old Fire Station. All the suspended ceiling was removed, and new glass was placed in the windows and new gutter and downspouts were installed.
- Bid documents are being prepared to paint the exterior of the structure for bid in late 2021.
- A construction contract will be awarded in September 2021 to renovate the exterior of the Southern Pacific Train Depot building with budgeted General Fund dollars.
- The City Events Committee initiated a monthly Farmer's Market event called Depot Days in July 2021
- With the onset of COVID in early 2020, efforts to work with the Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre have been stalled.

7. ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE UPCOMING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ACTIONS:

The City budgets \$25,000 each year for matching Façade grants and welcomes working with developers using 380 Agreements. The City actively pursues grant funding to leverage City dollars towards the costs of infrastructure improvements. Examples are:

- 2019 TxCDBG for sewer system upgrades on San Antonio, Benavides and MLK
- 2019 TPWL Trails Grant for Bayfront Park
- 2019 TPWL Boating Access Grant for the Nautical Landings Breakwater
- 2019 CDBG-DR grant for street and drainage improvements in the Original Townsite
- 2021 CDBG-MIT grant for a Living Shoreline to protect downtown and the waterfront area during storm events

8. BEAUTIFY THE COMMUNITY WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ITS CORRIDORS:

- The City conducted a Sweep into Summer Cleanup event in June of 2019
- The City conducted a Sweep into Spring City-wide Cleanup event in April 2021
- The City continues its City-Wide Cleanup where City crews pick up small construction debris and bulk in one of 4 areas of the City during the third week of each month.
- The 2021-22 Budget includes \$100,000 for landscaping and gateway sign improvements

9. PROMOTE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN PORT LAVACA:

- As part of the lease agreement with Miller's Seafood, they will advertise in the Calhoun County Visitor's Guide promoting their working oyster dock at City Harbor as a tourist destination
- As part of the lease agreement with Poor Boy Bait Shop in Smith Harbor, they will advertise in the Calhoun County Visitor's Guide promoting their bait shop for local and visiting fisherman
- The City is working to hire a full time camp host at Lighthouse Beach, who will help promote not only the assets at Lighthouse Beach but educate visitors to the campground/beach one-on-one to other tourism opportunities in the City

10. LAND USE AND RECREATION:

- The Planning Board and Council utilize the adopted Land Use Plan when considering approval of concept plans for proposed new development
- The City has acquired one new pocket park in Claret Crossing Subdivision as part of a 380 Development Agreement

11. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION:

- The City contracts for regular mowing and trash pick-up of the SH 35 median
- Developed an online city-wide sidewalk map in 2020, linked on the City's website
- A new sidewalk is included along at least one side of all newly constructed streets
- Enforcing the requirement that new sidewalks be constructed along the street of all commercial and multi-family development
- Constructed a new sidewalk on Tilley Street from Half League to Bonorden in 2019
- Constructed a new sidewalk on Houston Street from Newlin to SH 35 in 2020
- Constructed new sidewalk on both sides of Jackson Street in front of J-R Elementary School in 2020
- Constructed new sidewalk on one side of West George Street from Half League to Border in 2021
- Constructed a new sidewalk on Bauer Street from Oren to Austin in 2021, except one block where the sidewalk will need to be constructed on the street side of the existing curb line due to very steep driveways
- Sidewalks on one side of the street are part of the street construction plans for Ezell Street and East George Street in 2021/22
- We are in the planning stages of a redesign of the welcome signs to Port Lavaca

12. INFRASTRUCTURE:

- UV Disinfection System at the WWTP was replaced in 2020
- A new waterline was installed on SH 35 between the Chaparral Motel and WalMart in 2020
- A new PVC waterline was installed to replace an old cast iron line on Brookhollow Drive in 2020
- Lift Station Assessment Study was completed by Urban Engineering in January 2020
- 13 non-working fire hydrants were replaced in 2021
- The Lynnhaven Lift Station is being reconstructed with increased capacity and discharge directly to the WWTP in 2021
- AECOM, an engineering consultant, has been hired to conduct a Water Systems Planning Study to consider options for a backup water supply
- AECOM, an engineering consultant, has been hired to conduct an Expansion Study of the Lynn's Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant
- We are currently bidding a Phase 1 project to link both Elevated Water Storage Tanks with a 12" waterline

13. COMMUNITY CHARACTER:

- The City is participating in the HOME Program and in the process of working with qualifying families that applied in 2018. It is anticipated that of the 9 original 2018 applicants, 5 will make it through to completion and construct a new home.
- One substandard residential structure was demolished in 2019
- The 2021-22 budget includes funds for demolition of one substandard structure. This will be a topic in a Council Workshop slated for September 27, 2021.

14. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- We are still working with the RESTORE program on a project to clean up barges in Smith Harbor
- We have provided the water utilities as an incentive to a new Hampton Inn currently under construction
- We are proposing to provide water and sewer utilities to a new Burger King to be located near Wal-Mart
- We are responding to inquiries from extended stay hotels planning development in Port Lavaca

15. LAND USE AND RECREATION: (Teen Center) – No Activity

16. TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION:

- We are looking into the feasibility of hosting an electric vehicle charging station in Port Lavaca
- In 2020 a permit was approved for an additional taxi service in Port Lavaca

17. DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS:

- In 2020 all of the streetlights were converted to LED to provide brighter light at night
- In conjunction with planned improvements to the entrance to Bayfront Park, the crosswalks at Main and Commerce Streets will be enhanced
- We are looking into grant opportunities for downtown streetscape improvements and have had informal discussions with TxDOT about traffic calming ideas and even converting downtown Main Street to a one-way street.

Moving forward with New Focus

City staff is in the process of recruiting volunteers for a “Visioning” Committee to work with staff in providing priorities and direction for continued efforts to implement this plan, as well as engage new ideas to facilitate and attract growth and development in our community. This committee will be comprised of a representative from each of various boards and committees, as well a few from the general public. It is expected that each of the members of the current Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee will be transitioned to members of the “Visioning” Committee.