

7. Implementation



Implementation is a critical part of any plan’s success. Preceding chapters of this 2015 Plan Update discuss how to achieve the desired vision and goals for the future of Ennis. However, successful implementation requires a well-planned strategy, especially given the need to adopt a new approach towards growth. The implementation strategy is to identify methods to strengthen the focus area recommendations through an alignment of the City’s regulatory framework, funding priorities, and incentive policies.

Specifically, this section makes several recommendations for improvements both to the public realm and to private development standards. In addition, Chapter 7 establishes community priorities and potential funding sources. This section also identifies regulatory recommendations in order to implement key elements of the plan in a manner that is consistent with the plan’s vision.

The implementation recommendations are organized into the following components:

- Future Studies
- Regulatory Framework
- Implementing Plan Elements
- Prioritization
- Funding and Incentives
- Protecting Natural Areas and Landscapes
- Next steps
- Conclusion



7.1 Future Studies

Studies concerning the Focus Areas

Kaufman Corridor Study

A Kaufman Corridor Study should include:

- Evaluation of the market potential for cottage manufacturing and other entrepreneurial uses
- Appropriate land use along the length of the corridor
- Considerations and merits to take Business 45 off system
- Urban design and streetscape recommendations for the overall visual improvement of the corridor and to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists
- Funding options that include public-private-partnership opportunities and incentive policies including the creation of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District
- A phasing plan to identify specific public investment actions that can serve as a catalyst for private investment

Lake Bardwell Growth Area

A more specific study for this area should include the following components:

- Quality neighborhoods associated with the lake and associated USACE controlled land
- Potential for mixed use development associated with SH34 and US287 including a marina
- The recreation potential of Lake Bardwell in addition to what is currently provided by the USACE – it is suggested that this be studied as a component of the proposed citywide Parks Master Plan (see below)
- Refining the alignment of the proposed Lake Loop Trail
- Refining the alignment of the Lake Ring Road
- Implementation measures that will benefit the quality of development, e.g., single loaded roads alongside parks and open space areas

Downtown

A Downtown master plan is currently in the process of being prepared for the City.

Additional Citywide High Priority Studies

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan:

The existing Ennis Parks Master Plan is 15 years old and has limited relevance based on the recommendations in this 2015 Plan Update. Therefore, it is now necessary to prepare a complete new citywide Parks Master Plan to address parks, recreation, and open space including natural areas. The 2015 Plan Update reviewed the provision of parks only on a

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

cursory level but identified some key focus areas for future growth. The purpose of a Parks Master Plan is to inventory and analyze the specific details of the city's park and open space system, assess its functionality and recommend land acquisition and improvements to meet future recreation and open space needs. A specific suggestion is that the potential of Lake Bardwell as a recreation destination for the Ennis community be studied as part of a Parks Master Plan. The new Parks Master Plan is also required to be considered for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department grants for outdoor recreation, indoor recreation, and trails.

Trails and Bicycle Route Master Plan:

The network of trails recommended as part of the 2015 Plan Update needs to be studied, reviewed, and prioritized by means of a Trails and Bicycle Route Master plan that considers multi-use pathways for biking, walking, jogging, and other forms of active transportation. Ideally, such a Trails Plan should be done in concert with a new Thoroughfare Plan in order to accommodate bicycle routes as an alternative mode of transportation. In order to ensure that the trail system is developed in a consistent manner and is safe and easy to use, trails should be developed based on a set of design standards. In addition to mandated state and national standards¹² that shape certain safety and accessibility factors, a set of design standards should be developed specific to Ennis for trail width, trailheads, bridges, access points, pavement markings, and overlooks. These design standards should present an aesthetic or "brand" for the community's trail system. In addition to prioritizing trail segments, such a plan should identify funding tools and partnerships for implementation.

Thoroughfare Plan Update:

An update of the City's Thoroughfare Plan should include multi-modal transportation and an evaluation of the recommended modifications to the Thoroughfare Plan per the 2015 Plan Update.

Floodplain Protection Plan:

Creeks and their floodplains have tremendous value in terms of trail connections, flood management, and providing habitat for wildlife. In order to preserve and manage these areas for public use, public safety, water quality, and the protection of open space, this 2015 Plan Update recommends a citywide floodplain protection plan. The major component of such a plan would be the development of a detailed hydraulic and hydrology study that identifies the fully developed 100-year floodplain at anticipated build-out conditions for all major drainage corridors in the city. It is important to consider fully developed conditions in order to ensure the long-term health and quality of floodplains and economic sustainability of the city. Furthermore, protecting the floodplain at fully developed

¹² Source: American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities; Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG/TAS); Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS); Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (TMUTCD)



conditions affords more opportunities for recreational uses—including trails, nature exploration, and open space preserves—along creek corridors.

Low Priority Studies

Streetscape / Gateway Design Study

The prime opportunity for most cities to establish a distinctive and recognizable image is a street environment populated with people. Consequently, monumental gateways to the city, enhanced landscaping along roadways, and the design of public spaces (including sidewalks and plazas) are key to conveying Ennis's image. The 2015 Plan Update recommends gateways at various places in Ennis, e.g. the east and west side of Downtown, at the north edge of the city along IH45, the interchange of IH45 and US287, and along US287 where it crosses Mustang Creek. A streetscape/ gateway design study should consider aesthetic issues along street corridors, such as a preferred plant species; materials for monuments; pavement patterns; and standards for street lights, signage, benches, trash receptacles, etc. It should also identify the location of major and minor gateways into Ennis and include typical designs for monumentation, pavement treatment and landscaping. The strategic location, layout and design of sidewalks, storefront spaces, and public plazas may be considered as part of a Streetscape / Gateway Design Study.

7.2 Regulatory Framework

The City of Ennis' Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1985. It has been amended periodically since its adoption, but it is outdated with respect to addressing current planning practices and trends. This section lays out the regulatory priorities for the City as a whole (i.e., the whole zoning ordinance) and also identifies some critical areas that will need additional modifications to implement the focus area strategies for Kaufman corridor, Lake Bardwell Growth Area, and Downtown. The last section identifies other amendments needed to implement general recommendations in this plan update.

Overarching and Key Regulatory Recommendations

The City's current zoning ordinance will need to be updated and modernized to meet current state law, planning practices and trends. Specifically, the following major issues will need to be addressed:

- **Number of zoning categories:** Evaluate the number of zoning districts, special districts, and overlays. Currently there are 21 base zoning districts and seven special districts including overlays. The combination of base zoning and special districts adds several more zoning categories to the City's zoning map making it unnecessarily complicated. In addition, there are few meaningful differences between some of the zoning categories and with careful consideration; several of these should be consolidated and streamlined.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

- **Zoning ordinance organization and readability:** Given that the ordinance is 30 years old, it does not include several of the advances in ordinance organization and use of graphics. For example, in order to understand all the standards that apply to one zoning district, several different sections of the zoning ordinance have to be consulted. The purpose and intent of each zoning district is in Part One, Article VI, the standards for the district are in Part Three, Articles X through XIII, and supplementary standards for parking are in Part Three, Article XV. In addition, the amendments to different sections of the ordinance have not been consistently incorporated into the body of the zoning ordinance. In several instances, the amendments are appended to the main ordinance. This could create problems since applicants or reviewers can easily overlook any of these amendments.
- **Consistency of application of development standards:** Other than amendments that address specific design elements (landscaping and building design) in the Planned Development (PD) district, development standards in all other districts mainly address land use, height, setbacks, screening, and parking. Adjacency to single-family residential uses requires height transitions and buffers and there are some limitations on outdoor storage of materials.

Typically, cities have more tools in their zoning toolbox to address all areas of the built environment including, landscaping and streetscaping, building design, tree preservation, screening and buffering, historic preservation, etc. Several of these items are differentiated and tailored based on the vision for a specific area or corridor. This is not to imply that Ennis needs to implement all of these listed items as required for all development. At the very least, selected standards needed to implement the vision should be applied consistently to all properties within a specific area or corridor. For example, one property along Ennis Avenue may be zoned as PD and required to meet higher building design and landscaping standards. The property adjoining it on the same corridor may not be zoned PD and as a result does not need to meet the same level of building design or landscaping. This results in a situation where there is no certainty of outcomes within a specific area or along a certain corridor, especially when properties within the area or along the corridor share the same vision for development.

- **Submittal requirements:** Currently, there are no clear guidelines or requirements for submittal for different types of permits and applications other than those for development in a PD district.
- **Streamline and clarify administrative provisions and process:** Currently, administrative duties and roles are not clearly defined nor are the processes for different types of applications clearly laid out in the ordinance.



Zoning Recommendations for the Focus Areas

Kaufman Corridor

As identified in this plan update, the Kaufman corridor is an important redevelopment opportunity for the City. In addition to the corridor being an important catalyst for a new economic development strategy, it needs to be aligned with a tailored set of zoning regulations that implement the specific vision for the transformation of the corridor. Although a detailed plan for the Kaufman corridor is recommended, the following table provides an example of a framework that can be adapted to create the ultimate zoning structure for the corridor.

Table 7.1 – Kaufman Corridor Zoning Framework Sample

Development Framework Element	Recommendations
Purpose / Intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended to allow for a long-term transition from its current smaller scale auto-service and industrial character to an eclectic mix of cottage industrial, live-work, urban living, retail sales and service, office and innovative commercial uses.
Land Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cottage Industrial uses with specific attributes including small-scale manufacturing of specialized products that justifies and encourages local entrepreneurs and a more nuanced economic development strategy. • Allow a range of retail sales, service, office, light assembly, live-work, and urban living uses. • Identify possible business incubation and industries that may take advantage of the local labor force while creating new business areas to focus on (culinary arts, cottage food industry, craft brewing, etc.).
Building Placement and Development Standards	
Building placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require new buildings or additions to existing buildings to be built at or close to Kaufman Street to create a “street wall” definition and improve the pedestrian experience along the street. Limit the frontage of surface parking lots along Kaufman Street. A “street wall” implies the creation of a “wall” with buildings placed immediately adjacent to the street/sidewalk. A street wall has a “void” if there is a surface parking lot adjacent to the sidewalk/street. • Establish a “build-to line” or build-to zone” instead of a setback, especially along Kaufman Street. A build-to line is the line at which the principal building’s front and/or side façades are to be built. A build-to zone is the area within which the principal building’s front and/or side façades are to be built.
Parking placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking to be located behind buildings or in the middle of the block. Limit the frontage of surface parking lots along Kaufman Street. • On-street parking to be added along Kaufman Street and along east-west side streets as and when improvements to public streets are made.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

Development Framework Element	Recommendations
Building Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varies from three stories to one story. Maximum three stories allowed.
Building Frontage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require a minimum width of a block (more than 50%) along Kaufman Street to be occupied by a building, especially at street intersections. This then limits the frontage of surface parking along Kaufman Street, especially at street intersections.
Off-street parking strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove parking requirements based on specific use types. Establish the same off-street parking ratio (one space per 300-400 sq. ft.) for all commercial uses in order to facilitate a long-term market-based transition of uses. Establish a reduced parking rate for residential uses. Shared parking should be permitted within 1,000 feet of the site.
Neighborhood Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building heights limited to two stories within 50 feet of single-family residential uses. Keep existing vegetation or enhance vegetative buffer between existing single-family residential neighborhoods and new development. Screen or limit placement of loading/unloading or service areas that are next to existing residences.
Building Design Elements	
Building Orientation and Entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings to be oriented towards Kaufman and towards intersections. Require at least one primary pedestrian entrance at corners or along the Kaufman frontage.
Roof Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple flat roofs with parapet with sloping roof accents (corners, towers, awnings, etc.).
Minimum Façade Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a minimum requirement for doors and windows along Kaufman Street. Limit large expanses of blank walls.
Façade Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create interest for pedestrians walking along the street by establishing a horizontal rhythm (20'-30') and vertical articulation. This can include the repetition of certain vertical elements on a building façade to establish a pedestrian scale along the street front. This rhythm may be expressed by changing materials, or color, or by using design elements such as doors and windows, columns and pilasters, or by varying the setback of portions of the building façade. Allow flexibility in how facades are treated to create street level interest.
Building Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow more flexibility for new buildings and conversions of existing metal buildings with updated facades using architectural metal, masonry, or similar combination of cladding materials. Limit use of pre-fab or corrugated metal buildings with blank walls.
Streetscape & Landscape Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate streetscape improvements along Kaufman with the transformation of the current cross section of Kaufman into a street with on-street parking, wide sidewalks, bike lanes, etc. Include street trees, street lighting, cross walk treatments, and other pedestrian amenities along Kaufman Street.



Lake Bardwell Growth Area

The Lake Bardwell Growth Area includes not just the improvements around the Lake to take advantage of recreational opportunities, but also private development standards to implement the vision for new lake associated neighborhoods and commercial/mixed use development along US287 and SH34. The City should evaluate zoning ordinance modifications to implement the type of quality mixed use and walkable neighborhoods envisioned in this 2015 Plan Update including requirements for:

- A mixture of complimentary land uses that includes housing, retail, offices, commercial services, and civic uses to create economic vitality;
- A range of housing types and lot types (urban living, townhomes, patio homes, cottages, manor, and estate homes);
- Neighborhood design which is sensitive to environmental features of the site such as trees, creeks, and significant slopes and leverages them as opportunities to create greater value;
- A network of vehicular and pedestrian connectivity that balances neighborhood integrity with transportation needs, market demand for development, and regional access;
- Single loaded roads to provide both visual and physical access to parks and open space;
- A variety of community gathering spaces, parks, plazas and entertainment opportunities that are well connected with convenient walking and cycling access;
- Reinforcing streets and trails as public spaces that encourage walking and biking; and
- Flexibility in the siting and design of new developments to anticipate changes in the marketplace while establishing human-scaled residential and non-residential buildings.

Downtown

Ennis is currently in the process of creating a master plan that will lay out the future vision for Downtown Ennis. Much of Downtown Ennis' buildings and blocks were developed prior to the institution of the current zoning structure. It was designed with pedestrians in mind. As a result, it has an eclectic mix of uses, and as seen by the block structure, it is compact and provides appropriate transitions to adjoining neighborhoods.

The City's existing Central Area zoning district does not address any of the elements that will be critical to implementing the future vision for Downtown. The zoning for Downtown Ennis will need to be amended to create a tailored zoning tool that implements not only the overall vision for walkable mixed use, but also the nuances of the different neighborhoods that are within Downtown. Functional urban design standards requiring building design

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

elements that support walkability and that are compatible with the historic context should be adopted. A form-based code or similar zoning tool should be calibrated and developed based on the specific recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan.

Other regulatory recommendations

This 2015 Plan Update includes several recommendations for the city's major corridors namely US287, Ennis Avenue, and IH45. Regardless of the specific tool utilized (whether as an overlay or base zoning), the City should consider amending the zoning ordinance to implement these nuanced recommendations for the different corridors. Of highest priority is the US287 Bypass corridor, which is mostly undeveloped. Consequently, creating a unified set of standards can have an immediate impact on the city as new development occurs.

In addition, the City should evaluate its subdivision regulations to ensure implementation of the City's Thoroughfare Plan, and Trails and Bicycle Route Plan with respect to right-of-way dedications and easements needed. The subdivision regulations will also need modifications to implement the City's parks and open space needs through a park dedication ordinance.

7.3 Implementing Plan Elements

Texas Local Government Code (TLGC) requires cities to establish zoning that is consistent with a Future Land Use Plan. As a result, one critical element of implementation is to establish a development review process that evaluates development proposals against adopted Plan Elements such as the Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) and Thoroughfare Plan, etc. This includes rezoning requests, special use permit requests, and subdivision requests. The land use specific recommendations in Chapter 5 should then be used to evaluate development proposals that allow for discretionary decisions such as zoning change requests. This is specifically useful to ensure there is an alignment of public benefit with public investment when public incentives are requested. In cases where the FLUP is inconsistent with market and development trends, the City should establish a process to amend the FLUP based on changing conditions.

7.4 Prioritization

There are many recommendations and actions to address a variety of needs in the city included in this 2015 Plan Update. While some have been identified, others projects will be brought forward based on opportunities and market trends. Some may be driven by the public sector and others may be driven by the private sector looking for incentives.

Given the wide range of projects vying for public funding, there is need for a rational methodology for the city to prioritize projects and identify which ones it needs to support in order to maximize overall community impact. In addition, some actions may be immediate



in nature and require faster implementation, while others can be accomplished over a longer period of time, or wait until funding sources have been developed or a private development partner has been identified.

The following describes general prioritization recommendations that the City should consider during its budgeting and capital improvements programming process.

Overall Prioritization Strategy

Prioritization of actions recommended by this 2015 Plan Update should be based on the following criteria noted here and reemphasized throughout this document:

- **Support for the goals of the focus areas** – Kaufman Corridor, Lake Bardwell Growth Area, and Downtown. How a particular project or initiative builds on or implements any of the focus area recommendations should be one of the highest priorities moving forward. This is already occurring with the City currently undertaking the Downtown Master Plan initiative.
- **Improve and support quality of life** - Focus on initiatives that lead to the quality of life outcomes as identified in this 2015 Plan Update, namely:
 - Diversified employment base
 - Increased housing options – quality and range
 - More shopping, dining and entertainment options
 - Access to a variety of recreation amenities
 - Protecting the natural environment and rural landscape to ensure access to and the enjoyment of natural areas including wildflowers
- **Funding, need, and timing** – For prioritization purposes, responses to the following questions need to be considered:
 - What is the cost of the project relative to the return of investment to the public sector?
 - What are the long-term life-cycle costs?
 - What private and other public (state, regional, and federal) funding can be leveraged?
 - Is the project shovel ready and possible to achieve at relatively low cost?
- **Economic development** – One key principle of the 2015 Plan is the recommendation to diversify the city’s employment base and decrease the leakage of retail sales tax. To that end, evaluating how well a project does in terms of either of these two will be important as the city moves forward.

7.5 Funding and Incentives

Investment is risky, particularly in the economic climate of today. Before private investment occurs, the market needs to be reassured of the future conditions and status of

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

an area. Public investment not only creates a more appealing environment to stimulate private investment, but it also demonstrates to private investors the level of commitment and attention that City leaders and staff afford to key community issues. Public investment in key areas can also “catalyze” private investment and careful consideration should be given to projects that can provide such benefits.

Public Funding

Public funding is limited, and therefore needs to be targeted to where it can provide the greatest benefits. The prioritization criteria established in Section 7.2 should be used to help identify the best and most appropriate projects for the application of public funding.

Not all projects can be funded through one single public funding source and neither is it appropriate to do so. Instead, different “buckets” of dollars should be identified that are appropriate for different types of improvements based on the scale and impact of the improvements.

Different local government funding sources may be available for the funding of needed infrastructure and projects to implement this 2015 Update Plan. In some cases, when an associated private development project is of a considerable size, some of the identified public improvements could be combined with private investment. However, along Kaufman Street, there is an opportunity to partner with TxDOT to implement the transformative vision for the Corridor. For other projects, there needs to be a commensurate fit between the scale of the improvements and the funding source used to finance it. Based on such a categorization, the improvements needed to implement the vision can be categorized under two major classes:

- ***Common infrastructure***
This references any major regional-scale public infrastructure project such as regional drainage or major reconstruction of city streets that provides citywide benefits. Funding for such projects could be from bond funding or currently authorized capital improvement program (CIP) funds given the larger scale and citywide impact of such projects. In addition, the City should continue to pursue Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for infrastructure improvements and evaluate the potential to implement an impact fee for streets, water, and wastewater as allowed by State Law.
- ***Project specific improvements (enhancements, beautification, and landscaping)***
This includes offering project-specific or more traditional incentives to a specific development project including funding of public infrastructure benefitting specific properties or blocks, specifically in the three focus areas. This could include incentives through Chapter 380 Agreements or reimbursements to developers or property owners through the creation of special districts such as Tax Increment



Financing (TIF) Districts or Public Improvement Districts (PID). It also includes the use of Ennis Economic Development Corporation (Ennis EDC) funding. Ennis EDC is a 4-B corporation that allocates half of the city's sales tax revenues in three different areas – industrial development, Downtown development, and retail/commercial development. Assuming Ennis has capacity within the available two cents sales tax, an allocation to parks should be considered as well.

Additional Funding Options

- ***Impact fees***

In Texas, cities can charge impact fees in order for private development to pay its proportional share of the costs of major public infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, and wastewater facilities) needed to serve the development. These fees are proportional to the impact that new development has on the city's infrastructure. Ennis currently has no impact fee provisions. As development momentum increases and the need to finance additional public infrastructure rises, Ennis should consider undertaking an impact fee study in order to reduce the tax burden of new development on existing residents.

Economic Development Incentive Policy

This section provides general policy guidance to city staff and elected officials to consider city incentives. An incentive policy for Ennis should be inclusive of the entire City with a focus on the quality of life outcomes as identified in the 2015 Plan Update. Consistent with this Plan Update, priority should be placed on the three focus areas, while ensuring overall and cohesive economic development for the city.

In this context, there are a wide range of Chapter 380 grants that are available to the City through Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code. Incentives should be provided through long-term reimbursement for private sector infrastructure investments that implement the focus area initiatives delineated herein. Incentives should also be used to complement direct city, state or federal investments (through the CIP and other listed city funding programs) that advance the focus area and quality of life goals in this Plan Update.

The goal of City incentives including the creation of special districts should be to incentivize the types of development this 2015 Plan Update envisions and not to incentivize business-as-usual projects that do not add to any of the quality of life goals outlined in this plan. More specifically, Chapter 380, 4-B, and other incentives including the creation of any special districts such as a TIF/TIRZ should be considered for the focus areas as follows:

- In the Lake Bardwell Growth Area, development patterns and improvements that embrace the lake as a natural asset with destination retail, entertainment, and

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update

multifamily development at Hwy34 and US287 that transitions to walkable neighborhoods with a range of housing options, should be encouraged.

- In Downtown, those projects that reinforce the history of the original commercial core and building stock, add more entertainment and urban living options, while providing appropriate transitions to the adjacent neighborhoods should be encouraged.
- In the Kaufman Corridor, incentives should encourage redevelopment patterns that bring cottage manufacturing and entrepreneurial uses to the neighborhoods in addition to complementary infill residential and live-work uses.
- Improvements such as trails, sidewalks, and park amenities within focus areas should be incentivized in conjunction with 4-B industrial development projects to the extent there can be complementary quality of life benefits to the city as a whole. The following describes a real world example of such an approach, specifically as it may relate to industrial development.

Quality of Life Outcomes through Economic Development

The purpose of incentives is to have win-win situations for both the public and private side of development. Incentives are often offered to the type of businesses a city wants to attract. Ennis is not different; the Ennis EDC is closely involved with incentives for retail and industrial developments. Rather than being viewed as a one-sided approach with incentives for prospective industrial development only, the City should look for improvements that also bring quality of life benefits to the community as a whole during the negotiation process. The following describes an example of such an approach. The Future Land Use Plan includes large areas of industrial land. In fact, this Plan Update does not preclude the expansion of the industrial component of Ennis. However, important considerations are: the location and aesthetic appearance of the new industrial uses, the role it should play in supporting the vision of the city, and any additional quality of life benefits it brings to Ennis.

7.6 Protecting Natural Areas and Rural Landscapes

One of the guiding values of the 2015 Plan Update is protecting the natural environment, while another is the welcoming of visitors to Ennis. Key to this is the protection of rural land (typically found in the city's ETJ and beyond) where bluebonnets and other wildflowers draw many visitors to Ennis. The opportunity of a community to access and enjoy areas of natural integrity and beauty is also considered as one of the five quality of life outcomes envisioned for Ennis. The conservation development tool is discussed further in Section 5 and the City should create the programs to implement it.



Another important tool the City has in protecting its rural and agricultural land is its infrastructure policy. This Plan Update proactively identifies areas within the city that are conducive to growth (e.g., the Lake Bardwell Growth Area) while recognizing areas where development should be limited (east of IH45). This is due to current lack of infrastructure, future cost of infrastructure (being generally on the downstream side of the city) and the need to preserve the rural agricultural land and safeguard the blooming of wildflowers. Generally, the City can influence growth in the ETJ with an infrastructure policy that prioritizes water and wastewater utilities within areas targeted for growth while limiting utility expansion to areas where it is not desirable. This assumes the City controls the provision of utilities in the ETJ by buying out any private Certificates of Convenience and Necessity (CCNs) within these areas.

7.7 Next steps

Ennis is at a crossroads. If current industrial-focused economic development policies and priorities are not changed, Ennis will continue to stagnate compared to other cities in the DFW Metroplex with respect to attracting its fair share of quality residential and retail growth. In order to continue to be relevant in the future and become a choice community for new residential and retail development, Ennis will need to change its course by incentivizing quality retail and residential development in addition to diversifying its employment base. This Plan Update lays out a strategy for quality of life outcomes that is tailored to the Ennis context. The successful implementation of the plan requires the following:

1. Evaluating and revising the city's regulations (zoning, subdivision, streets, etc.) to be consistent with the city vision and quality of life goals.
2. Establishing a clear process to apply the recommendations in this Plan Update to development proposals and rezoning requests.
3. Apply the prioritization criteria as established in this Plan Update to rank projects (CIP and other), programs, and operational requests (personnel), during the city's budgeting process
4. Create a "business plan" for Ennis based on the vision and quality of life goals of this Plan Update. Create an integrated management system that combines strategic thinking with the vision and goals articulated by Ennis citizens through this Plan Update document. The City Commission should work closely with city staff to develop this management system to help direct its own destiny rather than allow future events to do so. Ultimately, it should guide the way the City and its entities does business and helps it determine how it should invest its time (personnel) and resources (tax revenues).
5. Undertaking the additional studies as needed and as funding is available.

7.8 Conclusion

This Plan Update is only a start. It establishes an overarching vision with specific goals that are focused on quality of life outcomes for Ennis. In reality, this Plan Update is intended to help guide the City with respect to its key business activities and programs. It will require the City Commission, City staff, boards and commissions, and citizens to all be committed to the principles and goals of this Plan Update. These quality of life goals should become the basis for all decision-making in the City. Whatever else changes, these goals represent the wishes of Ennis residents and a direction for the future.

Moving forward, flexibility with respect to being able to accommodate market changes will be key. The world and the greater DFW Metroplex is changing at an ever increasing pace and many of those changes can affect the city and its potential for future growth. This Plan Update is set up to be flexible, as long as the core goals of the plan are met. It should be reviewed on a periodic basis, to insure that it is adjusted to any changes that can impact the city.

Fundamentally, changing Ennis' growth trajectory will need Ennis' leaders to be bold. They will need to be willing to make tough choices and acknowledge the need to think outside the box to take some risks. They should be willing to recognize that boldness today may yield the type and quality of growth that Ennis residents are looking for in addition to greater benefits and future savings for the city. However, that boldness should always be balanced with careful consideration of the impact of the actions that are undertaken on behalf of the Ennis community.

This 2015 Plan Update is more than just a plan. It is the community's dream of a bright future for not only everyone that lives in Ennis today, but also for future residents and businesses that the community would like to bring into Ennis.