



4.0

Housing and Neighborhoods



INTRODUCTION

Housing needs and issues are a core element of community and urban planning. Shelter is among the most basic of human needs. For most individuals and families, the ongoing cost of a home or apartment is also one of the largest expenditures within their overall cost of living – but also at the heart of attaining what has come to be an integral component of the “American Dream.” At a community-wide scale, residential land uses typically represent the majority of developed acreage within a city. The physical arrangement of buildings and related spaces to accommodate the way people live dictates much about a community’s “fabric.” In this way, residential land use serves as a starting point for other essential community “building blocks,” such as schools, parks and neighborhood stores and services. In turn, a community must take action in a variety of arenas – utilities, streets and transit, schools, commercial development, parks and trails, and so on – to influence the location and type of housing it will have to offer.

On Housing and Neighborhoods in Plainview

Plainview’s long-term economic future and viability as a community is inextricably tied to its housing conditions. Housing is central to almost any discussion about City affairs, no matter whether the focus is on economic development opportunities, student enrollment trends at Wayland Baptist University and South Plains College, or the ability to simply walk from one neighborhood to another. Through the plan development process, during public meetings and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee discussions, several issues and concerns were expressed related to housing in the community. These discussions formed the basis of several issue statements, along with analysis of existing conditions, review of current housing-related plans and policies, and examination of expected future growth trends.

The following statements bring focus to this chapter and illuminate the community’s values, expectations and priorities for addressing housing needs in Plainview. The reason for a focus on housing is evident: there is minimal new housing and few home builders; which is compounding a gap in available mid-range housing; and aggravating a demand for higher quality rentals and apartments. Various neighborhoods require a “facelift” and are in need of revitalization to avoid further decline and loss of integrity. Plainview’s current housing challenges may be succinctly summarized: How may the City spark increased reinvestment in aging housing stock and older neighborhoods?



The answer is not as simple. Identifying the appropriate players and funding sources for housing improvements offers a long list of potential options. Any long-term solution will require many levels of partnership, whether between City and federal government, and/or between neighborhoods, homeowners, and developers.

While one challenge is to address future housing needs, another task is to sustain the integrity of existing neighborhoods. Having a diverse stock of housing – new and old, large and small, is instrumental in offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households, regardless of economic stature. Besides price and location, another consideration is the design of neighborhoods. The residential development that occurred in Plainview during the latter part of the 20th century departed from the established town settlement pattern around the core of the City. New suburban developments emerged in areas generally disconnected from the traditional street grid and diverse land uses, eliminating walkability and increasing vehicle miles travelled per day.

New housing development needs to reflect growing demand for traditional neighborhood-style patterns that are once again integrated into the existing fabric of the community. This new development should be located near other uses for ease of access, accessible to local services, offering transportation options, and preserving resources through innovative subdivision design.

This chapter brings together potential solutions and strategies that can serve as immediate, mid-term, and long-range initiatives to improve existing housing and neighborhood conditions.

PURPOSE

From the onset of this planning process, housing and neighborhood conditions have been a significant priority as Plainview's citizens have underscored the need to attract more families and businesses to the area, to address poor housing conditions, the lack of housing diversity and deteriorating neighborhoods. The purpose of this chapter is to address Plainview's existing and future housing issues and priorities within the context of its existing housing stock, new construction activity, and projected population growth; in order to identify solutions to ensure the community meets its existing and future housing needs. This will be accomplished by providing access to safe, quality, and affordable housing within livable, attractive neighborhood environments. Furthermore, the types of housing,

their arrangement and design, and integration of open space and amenities contribute significantly to the quality, appearance and character of the community. The City's economic health relies, in part, on its ability to preserve its well-established neighborhoods while planning for the development of new living environments that meet the physical, social, and economic needs of its residents.

As mentioned, any long-term strategy or solution will require joint partnerships and funding initiatives between homeowners, developers, the social service community, and the City.

This chapter is divided into two sections:

- 1) a discussion of the trends affecting existing neighborhoods and future housing availability; and
- 2) recommendations, strategies and actions for maintaining and improving Plainview's housing and neighborhoods; those existing and those planned for the future.

CURRENT HOUSING MARKET TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

National Housing Trends

In planning for the City of Plainview's future, current housing-related issues and demand must be understood through the lens of national housing patterns and trends, beginning with how the concept of 'family' has changed over time. Recent data released by the U.S. Census Bureau suggests that, over the next few decades households will be evolving to accommodate more individuals, empty-nesters and city-lovers; none of whom particularly want the big yards and long commutes they may have grown-up with as children. While there will still be a significant market for those things, it will equate to a smaller portion of the overall housing demand. According to Daniel Pimlott, in a 2008 *Financial Times* article, "demand for new homes on the outskirts of U.S. towns has fallen spectacularly in the last three years, while foreclosures and speculative building have created a far greater supply of homes than there are buyers. At the same time, soaring fuel costs have made the long commute to work that much less attractive. The result is that farmland close to cities that has often been the seedbed for new housing developments is becoming less

valuable to builders, at the same time as farmers want more of it.”¹

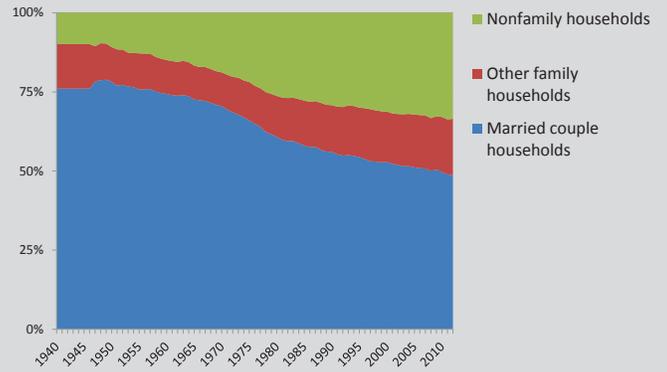
According to the National Association of Realtors’ 2011 Community Preference Survey, 58 percent of respondents indicated a preference for “a (blended) neighborhood with a mix of houses and stores and other businesses within an easy walk.”² As with many U.S. towns and cities, the current mixture of housing on the ground – especially those built within the pre-recession time frame from 1975 to 2005 or so – doesn’t come close to matching the stated preference for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods. The communities and businesses that take account of these emerging preferences for smaller homes and more pedestrian-focused neighborhoods will be the ones that are the most livable, and ultimately the most successful.

What appears to be surfacing is a diverse and changing array of household types and circumstances that smart planners, developers, and cities will seek to accommodate. As the U.S. Census data reveals, the growing parts of the housing market are non-family households, smaller households including people living alone, unmarried couples, single-parent households with kids, and older households. The declining parts of the market are larger families, married couples, two-parent households, and couples with only one breadwinner, though each of these categories clings to a significant share of the total.³

As indicated in **Figure 4.1, Households by Type, 1940-2012**, in general, married-couple households have declined sharply since the 1950s, from over 75 percent of all households then to about 50 percent now. The major share of that change has been an increase in “non-family households” consisting of singles or persons not “related to each other by birth, marriage or adoption.” Average household size has reduced, from about 3.7 persons in 1940 to about 2.6 persons now. Family households have dropped from about 3.8 persons to about 3.1 persons (refer to **Figure 4.2, Average Household Size: 1940-2012**).

1 Daniel Pimlott, U.S. Builders forced to sell off holdings.” Financial Times, July 18, 2008.
 2 Benfield, Kaid. “How the evolving housing market will help sustainable communities.” Switchboard Newsletter, Natural Resources Defense Council. http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/kbenfield/does_the_housing_market_still.html
 3 Benfield, Kaid. “Meet the Modern American Family: What does it mean for Sustainability?” Switchboard Newsletter, Natural Resources Defense Council. <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/11/22/1229331/meet-the-modern-american-family-what-does-it-mean-for-sustainability/>

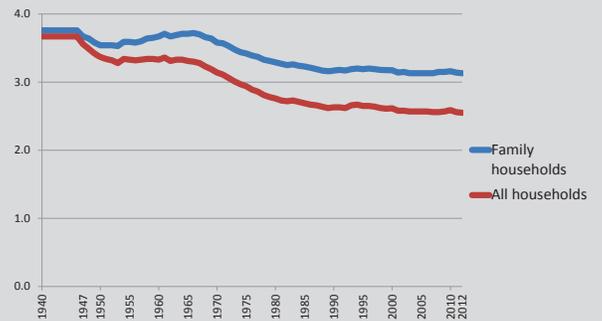
Figure 4.1, Households by Type: 1940 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1940, and Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1947-2012.



Figure 4.2, Avg. Household Size: 1940 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1947-2012.



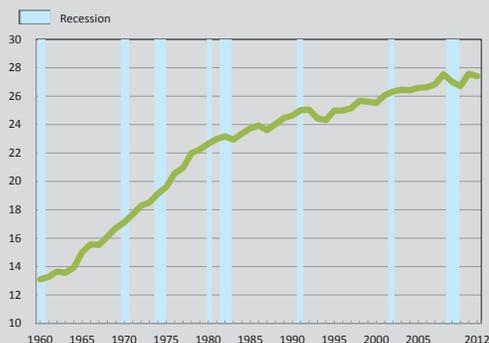
Figure 4.3, Median Age at first marriage by sex: 1890 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1947-2012. Data for years prior to 1947 are from decennial censuses.



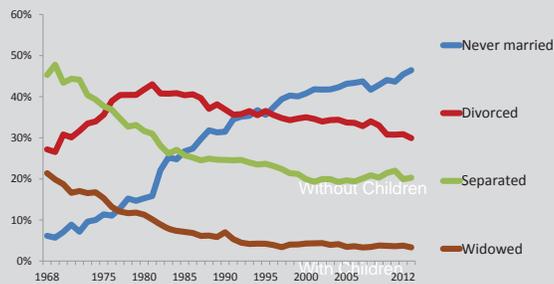
Figure 4.4, Percent of households with one person: 1960 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1960-2012.



Figure 4.5, Children under 18, living with mother only, by mother's marital status 1968 - 2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 1968-2012. Note: Separated includes married, spouse absent. Direct identification of both parents began in 2007, resulting in the ability to identify children living with 2 unmarried parents.



With respect to marriage, as indicated in **Figure 4.3, Median Age at First Marriage by Sex: 1890-2012**, people are marrying later than they used to, if they marry at all. Among other relevant statistics, the number and portion of people living alone has risen steadily and significantly for decades (refer to **Figure 4.4, Percent of Households with one Person: 1960-2012**, previous page). So has the number of unmarried couples living together, nearly eight million today compared with only around three million as recently as 1996. Even the number of unmarried couples with children has doubled in less than 20 years.

The portion of children living with two parents has dropped dramatically from 1960, from just under 90 percent of all children in 1960 to around 70 percent in 2012. Statistically, almost all of the change can be explained by a dramatic increase in the portion of children living with single moms. However, as illustrated in **Figure 4.5, Children under 18, living with Mother only, by Mother's Marital Status: 1968-2012**, it's not for the conventional reasons: the percentage of kids living with widowed, separated, and divorced mothers has actually decreased in recent decades; while there has been a sharp increase in the portion of children living with never-married mothers.

What is 'Livability?'

Livability can be defined as, "the sum of the factors that add up to a community's quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities."¹

¹ Partners for Livable Communities. <http://www.livable.org/about-us/what-is-livability>

Demographics

The following indicators provide an overview of housing within Plainview. All data, unless otherwise noted, is referenced from the 2000, 2010 U.S. Census Bureau and/or 2009-2011 American Community Survey, Three-year Estimates, which the U.S. Census Bureau conducts periodically between decennial census years, as noted.

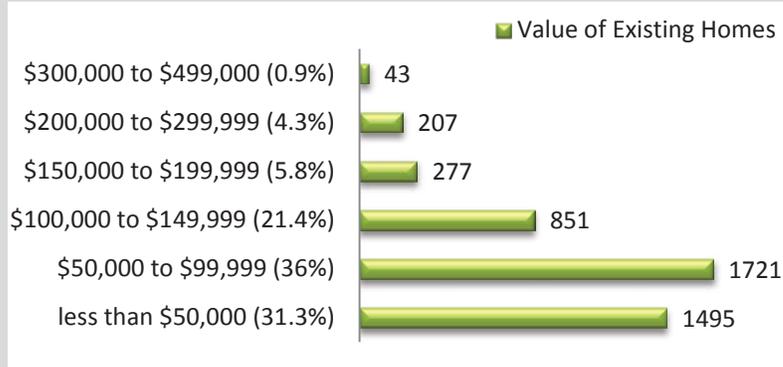
Of Plainview's resident population, 87.9 percent were born in the United States, compared to the Texas state average of 82.5 percent. The estimated median age in Plainview in 2010 was 30.0 years, which is somewhat younger compared to the statewide median (33.6 years). Also, similar to the State of Texas as a whole was the percentage of households having one or more persons age 65 or older—24.0 percent in Plainview and 21.0 percent statewide. Significantly, 47.8 percent of Plainview households had one or more persons under age 18, compared to the state average of 38.6 percent. Across the board, a higher portion of Plainview households are occupied by younger families with children.

Housing Characteristics

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that in 2010, Plainview had 8,703 total housing units, 88.4 percent of which were occupied (7,696) and 11.6 percent (1,012) were vacant. With respect to housing tenure, 57.8 percent (4,445) of the occupied housing units were owner-occupied and 42.2 percent (3,251) were renter-occupied. Based on the 2009-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), Three-year Estimates, among homeowner-occupied units, the vacancy rate was estimated to be 0.0 percent, compared to 3.4 percent for rental units. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the vacancy rate for homeowner-occupied units was 1.9 percent; and the rental vacancy rate was 11.6 percent. The delta between the 2010 U.S. Census and 2009-2011 ACS reflects the presumption that housing vacancy will become increasingly scarce.

67.3 percent of Plainview's housing units (3,216 units) were estimated to be valued below \$100,000; half of which were valued below \$50,000. 21.4 percent, or 851 housing units were valued between \$100,000 and 149,999; and 5.8 percent were valued between \$150,000 and 199,999 (refer to **Figure 4.6, Value of Existing Homes**, next page).

Figure 4.6, Value of Existing Homes, 2009-2011



Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey, Three-year Estimates

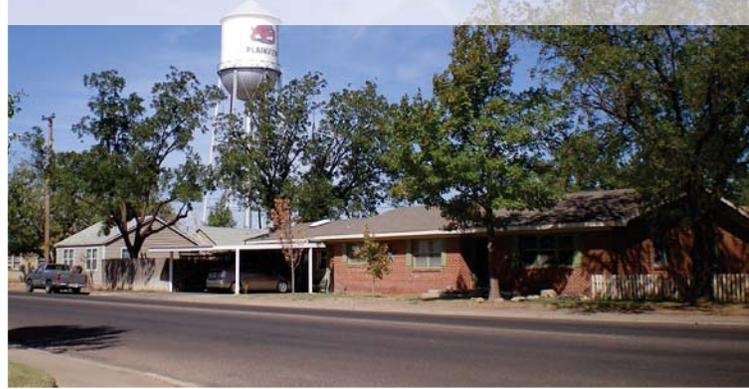
Housing Types and Diversity

Plainview's composition of housing types needs to accommodate the spectrum of life cycle stages: college students, young professionals, families, empty nesters, and seniors. As indicated in **Figure 4.7, Housing Types in Plainview, 2010** (next page), Plainview has a narrow range of housing types. 76.9 percent of the existing owner-occupied housing units are single-family detached. Rounding out the rest of the rental housing market, though, is a smattering of single-family, duplex, and multiplex dwellings. Some of these units are accessory apartments and mobile homes.

The Plainview Municipal Code allows for a modest range of housing types in specific zoning districts. While the density and parking requirements of multi-family units warrant transitions and buffering from single-family homes, duplexes and townhomes offer affordable alternatives to single-family homes and maintain the architectural and spatial character of a neighborhood. Townhome developments involve the use of a site for three or more attached dwelling units, each occupied by one household and separated by vertical sidewalls. Unlike apartments, townhomes typically offer a front yard, backyard, and personal parking space. However, these amenities are much smaller in scale than ones for single-family homes, requiring far less maintenance and less up-front cost for the lot. Common open space, connections to trails and public parks, and

77.5 percent of owner-occupied homes in Plainview are single family detached units. Will this typology meet the needs of Plainview's future residents?

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Sidewalks on both sides of the street would enable neighborhood residents to get some exercise and get to know one another.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



A new subdivision in Plainview. As discussed within Chapter 3.0, Mobility, street trees provide rhythm and character to a streetscape. What additional amenities would improve this street without significantly affecting the affordability of the homes?

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

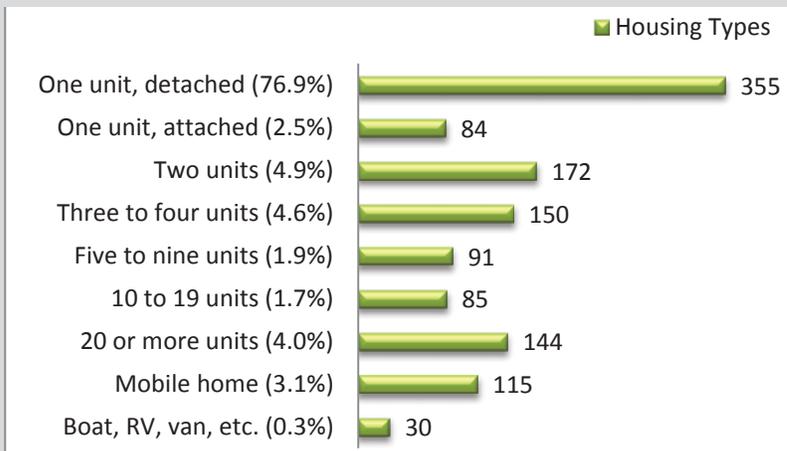


Much of Plainview's housing stock is worthy of renovation.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Figure 4.7, Housing Types in Plainview, 2010



Source: 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

proximity to mixed uses help to mitigate any sense of yard deficiency while creating a greater sense of community among homes.

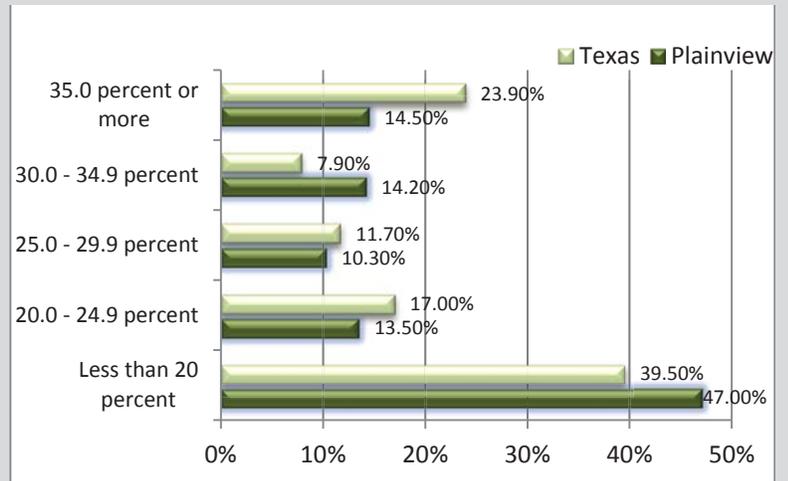
Given the diversity and age distribution of the City's population, it is essential to have a balanced housing stock that supports a "life-cycle housing" philosophy. This involves the notion that a wide range of housing types, styles, and price ranges should be available so that residents can readily make lifestyle transitions within their own community as they age (e.g., from "starter" housing, perhaps into a larger dwelling to accommodate a family, then perhaps into an "empty nester" situation, and finally into a downsized space and/or "assisted living" or full-time care facility as health conditions dictate). Furthermore, senior housing options are especially important in most all U.S. communities today as the nation is still at the front end of the Baby Boomer retirement wave of the next several decades. Units marketable to households that are "downsizing" should both be permitted and encouraged in appropriate locations. Options may include appropriately-scaled duplex homes, patio homes, townhomes, and multi-family structures. Additionally, as there is a market for suburban-style living in detached single-family homes, they should be developed on more connected, grid-like street networks. These networks should feature multiple connections (and, preferably, multiple modes of travel) to the major street system and, eventually, to the broader regional transportation system (discussed in detail in **Chapter 3, Mobility**).

Housing Affordability

The two essential factors in housing affordability are incomes and home prices in a market area. The following indicators capture various aspects of the income picture in Plainview:

- Income Comparison.** The generally low cost-of-living environment in Plainview is reflected in area income levels. The estimated median household income is \$36,444, compared to \$50,266 statewide. Additionally, only 6.8 percent of local households and 7.9 percent of families had incomes above \$75,000 compared to 11.6 percent and 13.3 percent respectively for all of Texas. At the \$100,000 level, only 5.6 percent of Plainview households and 7.2 percent of families were above this point versus 12.0 percent and 14.6 percent respectively in the state. Finally, 1.3 percent of households and 1.7 percent of families in Plainview exceeded \$150,000 median income relative to 4.4 percent and 5.5 percent respectively statewide.

Figure 4.8, Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative, based on 2010 U.S. Census

- Incidence of Poverty.** According to the 2009-2011 American Community Survey, in Plainview, 18.7 percent of families and 23.2 percent of individuals are listed as below the federally-defined poverty level; compared to 13.8 percent of families and 17.8 percent of individuals statewide.

A common way of gauging housing affordability is to consider monthly owner costs relative to household income. Shelter costs are typically considered excessive when they surpass 30-35 percent of household income. **Figure 4.8, Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income**, reflects that 28.7 percent of housing units with a mortgage in Plainview were estimated to be spending 30 percent or more on housing in 2009, compared to 31.8 percent statewide. Just over one-sixth (14.5 percent) locally were at the 35 percent or higher threshold.

On the other hand, a solid majority (60.9 percent) of Plainview home owners who were carrying mortgages in 2009 were devoting less than 25 percent of their incomes to housing costs. This is where the benefit of a lower-cost environment is evident, especially since the majority (47.4 percent) of owners were paying less than 20 percent toward housing. For those owners without a mortgage, only 10.7 percent were putting more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs, compared to 13.9 percent for all of Texas, which illustrates the long-term benefits of home ownership for most people after a mortgage is fully paid.

Focusing again on the income side of the housing affordability equation—and given a median household income of \$36,444 in Plainview during 2010—the median household should be aiming to

Table 4.1, Affordable Monthly Housing Cost

Percent of Median Household Income	Required Income to Qualify	Affordable Monthly Housing Cost (30% of income)
170%	\$61,955	\$1,549
150%	\$54,666	\$1,367
125%	\$45,555	\$1,139
100%	\$36,444	\$911
75%	\$27,333	\$683
50%	\$18,222	\$455
30%	\$10,933	\$273

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative, based on 2010 U.S. Census

pay no more than \$911 monthly toward housing costs (including utilities), with an absolute maximum of \$1,063 per month (35%). **Table 4.1, Affordable Monthly Housing Cost**, shows the monthly "affordability" (30% of income) amount for households at various points above or below the area's estimated median household income **Table 4.2, Home Loan Thresholds in Hale County, 2010**, compares the amount of discretionary income that could be allocated toward monthly housing expenses, for the median value of owner-occupied units in Plainview, which has increased from \$56,900 in 2000 to \$72,400 in 2011 (compared to \$82,500 to \$127,500 statewide, respectively), factoring-in costs associated with a variety of fixed-rate, 30-year home loan structures. The median household income in 2010 could afford to

Table 4.3, Renter Occupancy

	2010 SF1*		2009-2011 Three-Year Estimates	
	Percent (%)	Estimate	Percent (%)	Estimate
Texas	36.3	3,237,580	36.4	3,189,189
Hale County	35.4	4,198	37.5	4,431
Plainview	38.7	2,940	42.2	3,251
Big Spring	38.7	3,199		
Brownfield	32.8	1,032		
Lamesa	27.8	987		
Levelland	35.2	1,700		
Littlefield	30.3	702		
Pampa	27	1,921		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

* SF1 refers to Summary File 1: 2010 Census of Population and Housing

purchase a home valued above the median value of a typical home within the City of Plainview.

The Housing Rental Market

As indicated in **Table 4.3, Renter Occupancy**, according to the 2009-2011 American Community Survey Three-year Estimates, the percent of housing units in Plainview that are renter-occupied (42.2 percent), for Hale County (37.5 percent), and the state (36.3 percent), is trending upward compared to the 2010 U.S. Census data. The percentage of renter-occupied housing units in Plainview may be influenced by a more transient population associated with Wayland Baptist University, South Plains College, and Covenant Hospital Plainview. Of the comparison communities, Levelland also has a branch of South

Table 4.2, Home Loan Thresholds in Hale County, 2010

		FHA Regular Loan (5.375% interest)				VA Regular Loan (5.375% interest)				Conventional Loan (6.0% interest)			
Percent of Median	Median Household Income	Maximum Sales Price	Loan Amount	Cash required at Closing**	Monthly Housing Cost*	Maximum Sales Price	Loan Amount	Cash required at closing**	Monthly Housing Cost*	Maximum Sales Price	Loan Amount	Cash required at Closing**	Monthly Housing Cost*
170	\$61,955	\$161,500	160,180	6,447	\$1,553	\$164,750	\$168,127	\$6,387	\$1,546	\$166,500	\$141,525	\$30,836	\$1,550
150	\$54,666	\$142,150	\$140,988	\$5,674	\$1,367	\$146,250	\$149,248	\$5,781	\$1,372	146,500	\$124,525	\$27,245	\$1,364
125	\$45,555	\$118,500	117,531	\$4,730	\$1,140	\$121,500	\$123,991	\$4,970	\$1,140	\$122,500	\$104,125	\$22,936	\$1,140
100	\$36,444	\$94,750	\$93,975	\$3,782	\$911	\$97,250	\$99,244	\$4,175	\$912	\$98,000	\$83,300	\$18,537	\$912
75	\$27,333	\$71,250	\$70,668	\$2,844	\$685	\$72,250	\$74,251	\$3,372	\$682	\$73,500	\$62,475	\$14,138	\$684
50	\$18,222	\$47,500	\$47,112	\$1,896	\$457	\$48,750	\$49,749	\$2,586	\$457	\$49,000	\$41,650	\$9,739	\$456
30	\$10,933	\$28,500	\$28,267	\$1,138	\$274	\$29,000	\$29,595	\$1,938	\$272	\$29,500	\$25,075	\$6,238	\$275

* Monthly Mortgage Payment is based on 30 percent of income, and includes monthly mortgage payment, hazard insurance, property tax, utility costs, maintenance, and mortgage insurance.

** Total cash required at closing includes downpayment and closing costs.

Source: Affordability Calculator available at www.ginniemae.gov based on 2010 Median Household Income.

Multi-family residential units in Plainview. How could the design of these units better acknowledge the street?

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Does this multi-family development have shared recreational amenities? The entrances deserve greater separation from the parking lot.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



An older apartment complex in Plainview.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

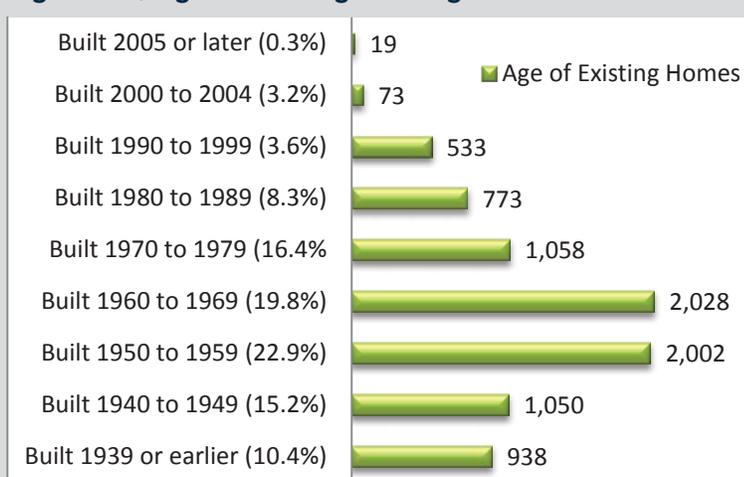


A new dormitory under construction on the Wayland Baptist University campus. The entrance faces the campus.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Figure 4.9, Age of Existing Housing Stock



Source: U.S. Census, 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates
Data Source for 2005 or later is City of Plainview Building Permits Dept.

Plains College, which may attribute to a higher than average renter occupancy rate.

With respect to gross rent, according to the ACS 2009-2011 Three-Year Estimates, 76.4 percent of the 2,646 occupied units paying rent, pay between \$300 and \$749 per month. Regarding gross rent as a percentage of household income, persons paying in excess of 30 percent of their household income has increased from 34.3 percent in 1999 (2000 U.S. Census) to 38.9 percent in 2011 (2009-2011 ACS Three-Year Estimates), although the median rent has only increased \$154.00 in that time period (\$419 in 1999 compared to \$573 respectively).

Rental properties, especially those with distant/absentee ownership, usually warrant ongoing scrutiny regarding code compliance.

Housing Vacancy and Turnover

At any given point in time, a portion of the housing stock is vacant. These vacancies are essential to a healthy functioning housing market (and the City's economic development). When vacancy rates are too low, demand for housing will push up rents and prices as consumers vie for scarce units. When vacancy rates are high, new households can be accommodated by the existing stock of housing, and the demand and prices drop. Of Plainview's 8,703 housing units, 1,012 units (11.6 percent) are estimated to be vacant, though the quality and viability of some of the vacant units may be questionable.

According to the 2009-2011 American Community Survey Three-year Estimates, of the 7,691 occupied housing units in Plainview, 48.6 percent of the householders moved in to their housing unit in 2005 or later; compared to 51.7 percent for all of Texas, which has continued to absorb significant new populations in general, especially

Table 4.4, Housing Sales in Plainview

Year	Homes Sold	Average Sale Price	Median Sale Price	Total Sales Volume
2007	205	\$92,210	\$75,950	\$18,882,492
2008	204	\$88,219	\$79,750	\$17,996,709
2009	153	\$103,718	\$91,000	\$15,868,871
2010	143	\$112,456	\$102,500	\$16,081,252
2011	133	\$104,006	\$96,500	\$13,832,781
2012 *	121	\$106,833	\$94,000	\$12,926,736

Source: 2012 Multiple Listings Survey

* 2012 MLS data spans from 01/01/12 to 12/04/12

as the economic recession impacted other parts of the nation more severely. Plainview's influx of householders may be attributable to a variety of factors, including changing household needs of emergent or growing families, expanding employment requirements or attrition rates within the major employers' workforce.

Age of Housing Stock

Plainview's limited growth rate over recent decades is reflected in the age of its housing stock, much of which is old and in need of maintenance or rehabilitation. Typically, housing needs significant repairs after 20 years. 68.3 percent of Plainview's housing units are over 40 years old (6,018 units); 25.6 percent of which were constructed before 1950; 42.7 percent were constructed during the 20-year

period between 1950 and 1969; and 28.3 percent constructed between 1970 and 1999. Only 73 houses (0.9 percent) have been constructed since 2000 (refer to **Figure 4.9: Age of Existing Housing Stock**).

Housing Needs

As discussed in **Chapter 1.0, Introduction**, based on a projected annual growth rate ranging from 0.25 to 1.2 percent through 2040, Plainview's population is anticipated to grow from 22,194 persons (2010) to about 25,000 persons (target population); which represents an increase of just under 3,000 people. From 2009 to 2011 the average household size was estimated to be 2.8 persons. Assuming this number remains steady, Plainview will add approximately 38 households per year to the year 2040. This is a conservative estimate since it does not account for the number of homes that will be needed to replace housing units that are functionally obsolete or demolished.

Looking at the bigger picture over the next three decades allows for a more balanced view as to what type of growth is possible. 38 households per year equates to approximately 1,070 housing units of various types the City will require to accommodate its projected population and maintain a healthy, balanced housing market. Rather than seek a comparable ratio of ownership to rental units over time, there should be a focus on increasing the owner-occupied units.

Table 4.5, Number and Value of Residential Construction Permits

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*
Single Family Res.		5	8	3	2	1
Duplex / Multi-family Res.					2	3
Relocate Single Family Res.			33		3	
Res. Garage / Carport	31	3		34	16	27
Res. Remodel / Addition	51	46	47	86	148	72
Total	82	54	88	123	171	103
Value of Residential Construction Permits						
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Single Family Res.		\$1,045,000	\$751,500	680,400	\$325,000	\$400,000
Duplex / Multi-family Res.					\$30,000	\$753,000
Relocate Single Family Res.					\$12,000	
Res. Garage / Carport	\$93,584	\$76,661	\$50,719	\$51,711	\$30,148	\$82,114
Res. Remodel / Addition	\$323,509	\$260,625	\$295,790	\$309,098	\$1,811,846	\$449,368
Total	\$417,093	\$1,382,286	\$1,098,009	\$1,041,209	\$2,208,994	\$1,684,482

Source: City of Plainview Building Permits and Inspections Dept.

* 2012 information is through November.

Recent Construction and Sales

As displayed in **Table 4.4, Housing Sales in Plainview**, while the number of homes sold annually has dropped by 40 percent over the last five years, the average sale price has steadily increased. This home sale price illustrates that Plainview housing prices are reasonable, relative to incomes and the market is still active with buyers and sellers, just not as many. **Table 4.5, Number and Value of Residential Construction**, is very revealing and echoes *Figure 4.9, Age of Existing Housing Stock*. Plainview's housing construction market has experienced a significant slowdown over the last decade or so, with less than 100 homes constructed. Interestingly, the average construction price of new homes built between 2008 and 2012, reflect a more robust investment in home size and quality than the average home sales during the same period.

Affordable Housing: Federal Assistance

The Federal government offers various housing assistance programs to help individuals and families find affordable housing. The Section 8 program, also known as Housing Choice Voucher program, is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides rent assistance to qualified renters.

Section 8 is a rent voucher program that allows participants to find a house, townhouse or apartment of their choice and use the voucher to pay for all or part of the rent. It can be any rental unit located in any neighborhood, including privately-owned apartments. The amount of rental assistance will depend on the total income of one's household.

Table 4.6, Recipients of Section 8 Vouchers

Year	Recipients
2012 *	350
2011	441
2010	572
2009	493
2008	501
2007	418
2006	510
2005	614
2004	590
2003	465

* 2012 figure is through September

Source: Hale County Housing Authority

The goal of the Section 8 voucher program is to provide a healthy and safe place to live at a very reasonable rent cost. The requirement to qualify is straight-forward and is determined by a local Public Housing Authority. In general, it depends on total annual income, size of family and how long one has lived within the United States.⁴

The Hale County Housing Authority administers the Section 8 program in Plainview and the public housing program in Hale Center, of which there are 60 units (duplexes and triplexes).

As of September 2012 there was a three to four month waiting list of 140 applicants for Section 8 housing vouchers. **Table 4.6, Recipients of Section 8 Vouchers**, indicates the fluctuating demand for Section 8 vouchers over a 10-year period. The Hale County Housing Authority has expressed concern that the dwelling units (houses and apartments) that accept Section 8 vouchers are substandard and in need of significant repair.

Housing Trends and Issues: What does this all Mean?

In the final analysis, what are the numbers revealing and do they provide a complete picture, with respect to the economic trends and issues impacting Plainview's housing market? To summarize the findings and assumptions to this point:

- Utilizing available financing mechanisms, and with a modest down-payment, a family with a median household income can afford to purchase a home that is 25-30 percent more expensive than the median value of a home in Plainview.
- Because there are few local home builders in the area, and factoring in the price of land, the family will most likely not be able to afford to build a new home, and will therefore have to choose from a very slim selection of available homes for sale (less than 1.4 percent of existing housing stock in 2012).
- 70 percent of the available homes are valued below \$100,000, so they will be affordable, but they may not be in the best condition or location.
- 77.5 percent of these homes will be a detached unit with four to seven rooms. As discussed in Chapter 1.0, *Introduction*, Plainview's typical household is younger and family size is larger than comparable

⁴ "Low Income Housing Voucher." Copyright © Housing Voucher. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.housingvoucher.org/landers/search/112-section8-v1/>

communities and the state average; with more young people living at home. Almost half of the available homes will be at least 40 years old, and in need of some level of repair.

- With little to no discretionary income to afford significant repairs, on a home that may or may not be suitable for the family size, a family has few options.
- 48.6 percent of the householders in occupied units moved into their homes in 2005 or later. Almost 80 percent of Plainview's householders have occupied their home no longer than about 20 years. In that there has been very little growth in Plainview during this time suggests either, A) a high degree of transience within the community, where in-migration and out-migration is essentially balanced; or B) there is a lot of movement of Plainview residents, from one home to another.

But does this tell the complete story? As discussed, the condition, quality, affordability and availability of housing within a community reflects economic development trends, with respect to the types of jobs currently available and how the community is trying to position itself in the regional market; and the business and industry it is trying to retain and attract. To a large extent, the median income among local households in Plainview is dictated by the chief employers in the area. But there are national trends that are impacting the housing equation as well. While Plainview's population growth has been relatively flat for the last 20 years or so, growth has been further impeded by the international and national economic recession. Indeed, the State of Texas has weathered this storm much better than most states in the country, and as a result, has experienced significant in-migration from other states, which has increased competition for jobs as well as housing. Recent signs of economic recovery and growth are encouraging and major employers are only now beginning to hire additional employees.

The national recession has had a significant impact on the banking industry. Beginning in 2008, bank lending practices became extremely stringent. Though the Federal Reserve continued to pump money into the system at an unprecedented rate, less and less of it was finding its way to consumers and commercial borrowers. Instead, it was being used to prop-up speculators and financial firms. At the same time, across the board, job loss reduced demand for loans from both businesses and households. Irrespective of which

came first, the tightening of lending practices or the slowing demand, economic growth came to a screeching halt. In recent months consumer and home owner loans have become much more available, especially for first-time home buyers. However, anecdotal information suggests that there is a large population in Plainview that cannot pursue conventional loans because of a poor credit history. Despite the improved economy, lending is not available to them, or they do not have the capital resources for the down-payment and closing costs, so they must settle for renting, which is estimated to compose 42.2 percent of the available housing units in Plainview.

Housing and Economic Development

Housing options are part of the economic development equation. In the future, as the community markets its business parks and industrial sites, prospective employers will zero-in on the quality of life of its employees. Where do the single professionals live and play? Can a young family afford a home? How is the school system? Attracting (and retaining) businesses is directly tied to the supply and price range of housing types. Maintaining this balance between jobs and housing is important so residents can live and work in their community. With the close proximity of Lubbock, Plainview will directly compete with the upscale apartment, townhouse and retail options only 45 minutes away.

Indeed, maintaining a balance between financially rewarding jobs, the local economy, and how this is reflected in the quality of housing is very important. Not only does this balance factor-in to quality of life, it may also influence the siting of new businesses in Plainview. Attracting new business relies upon the host city having an adequate supply of decent housing for potential workers. Even retaining businesses and providing for their expansion relies upon a healthy housing market that offers adequate choice in housing and living environments.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are too few quality housing options and that business attraction may be more difficult due to the lack of adequate and available workforce housing. While adequate jobs are an asset, it is indicative of a need to be wary of the implications of a jobs-to-housing imbalance. Longer commutes and lower quality of life are possible results of a local housing market that has a scarcity of housing units at varying prices.

PLAN FOCUS AREAS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following principles are to be applied to the City of Plainview's housing strategy:

- Diverse housing types and price points to accommodate a broad demographic and socioeconomic composition.
- Preservation and prioritization of the existing, built environment over greenfield development.
- Quality neighborhood design that emphasizes contiguity and system-wide connectivity, with special emphasis on transportation and utility linkages.
- Complementary land use patterns that promote a balanced mix of residential, civic, and commercial functions.
- Design standards that meet the current or future needs of persons with a disability, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The following focus areas provide strategies, actions and initiatives to guide and direct housing and neighborhood priority improvements in Plainview:

- Focus Area 4.1: Ensuring diverse and affordable housing options for the future;
- Focus Area 4.2: Strengthening neighborhood integrity;
- Focus Area 4.3: Designing neighborhoods and communities as special places.

FOCUS AREA 4.1: ENSURING DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Strategy 4.1.1: Enable a range of diverse housing types and increased densities to fulfill the future housing needs of a diverse population.

As discussed within the **Current Housing Market Trends and Conditions** section of this chapter, there are several national social trends that are

impacting the way people live, which also affects their housing, neighborhood and community needs. For many people, the definition of "family," and its requisite composition of two parents (husband and wife), two children and their dog, Spot; living in a detached, single family home on Elm Street, no longer represents the modern American Dream. Diverse housing types are needed to fill the array of requirements of the contemporary individual, couple and family.

Plainview's Zoning Ordinance outlines a range of residential zoning districts, within which several housing types can be sited and constructed. Housing types include:

- 1.1. Boarding or Rooming House
- 1.2. Dormitory
- 1.3. Garden (Patio) Home
- 1.4. Guest Houses
- 1.5. Manufactured Housing (U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Code)
- 1.13. Servant's, Caretaker's or Guard's Residence
- 1.14. Single Family Dwelling, Attached
- 1.15. Single Family Dwelling, Detached
- 1.16. Townhouse or Row Dwelling
- 1.17. Travel Trailer Park
- 1.18. Two-Family Dwelling
- 1.19. Zero Lot Line House
- 3.76. Industrialized Housing

Table 4.7, Area and Density Regulations, summarizes Section 32 of the Plainview Municipal Code, which provides minimum lot size and maximum allowable density for the various residential zoning districts. It would appear that the diversity of housing types would more than adequately cover the breadth of housing requirements for Plainview's citizens. However, Chapter 32 does not specify density and minimum area requirements for several housing types, including Guest Houses, and Servant's, Caretaker's or Guard's Residence.

Actions and Initiatives

1. For new residential developments, award a density bonus to encourage the provision of multiple housing types within a neighborhood. In connection with the discussion regarding patterns of growth in **Chapter 2.0, Growth Capacity and Management**, specifically, cluster and conservation development

approaches, consider requiring inclusion of multiple housing types in developments that exceed a certain density threshold. For example, as a potential condition for awarding a density bonus to such developments that will preserve a greater amount of permanent open space in return for smaller lot sizes, another housing type besides single-family detached dwellings (e.g., zero lot line patio homes, town homes, etc.) could be required when lot sizes are reduced beyond a certain point.

2. Award a density bonus to encourage the provision of “affordable” units within new residential developments.

Consider the use of density bonuses, through the City’s zoning ordinance, to reward projects that provide for a certain number or percentage of reduced-price units that are more affordable than current market-rate units. The density increment helps to offset the financial impact to the developer while meeting affordable housing needs in the community. A development would be allowed a certain amount of additional residential density over and above the maximum limit allowed by existing zoning. In return, the designated units may be restricted to occupancy by certain target groups (e.g., seniors, disabled, veterans, persons/families meeting certain income criteria) and/or the units must remain affordable over time and multiple re-sales of the property. The zoning ordinance can also establish certain criteria to govern when a density bonus is appropriate with regard to

compatibility, adequate site area, adequate parking, etc., and to ensure consistent design and finishes for the designated units.

Strategy 4.1.2: Rehabilitate existing housing stock.

The condition of structures and the maintenance of properties contribute to the health and welfare of residents, as well as the appearance of neighborhoods and the larger community. Housing that appears in need of upkeep can create the impression that a community is in a state of decline. Freshly painted and well-maintained homes are indicative of a positive community with a promising future. Frequent turnover of residents and the loss of “pride of ownership” are often reflected in how residences are maintained. In areas where smaller, lower-value dwellings have transitioned to rental properties, absentee ownership and/or negligent landlords can also undermine efforts to maintain the quality and stability of a neighborhood. The cumulative effect of inadequate maintenance can undermine whole blocks, as well as entire multi-family complexes.

The community must remain cognizant of its older housing stock as rehabilitation and reinvestment will become increasingly important to the integrity and vitality of neighborhoods within the original City core. There are distinct neighborhood differences as most of the housing in the central neighborhoods is older and warranting reinvestment. Code enforcement and basic building maintenance are critical issues in these neighborhoods. Comments by residents

Table 4.7, Area and Density Regulations

Zoning District	Symbol	Min. Lot Area Square Feet (SF)	Dwelling Units (DU) per Acre
Single Family Residential - 1L	R-1L	8,500	3.5
Single Family Residential - 1	R1	7,000	4.5
Single Family Residential - 2	R2	6,000	5.5
Duplex and Garden (Patio) Home	2F	3,500	9.5
Single Family Attached Residential	SF-A	3,500	12.0
Multifamily Residential District - 1	MF-1	10,000 SF or 1,500 SF/DU	15.0
Multifamily Residential District - 2	MF-2	10,000 SF or 1,500 SF/DU	23.0
Manufactured Housing (HUD Code)	MH-1	5,000	5.5
Manufactured Housing (HUD Code) - Park	MH-2	10 acres or 4,500 SF/DU	7.5

at public meetings indicated concerns about external appearance and the need for removal of blighted properties, particularly in those areas that serve as neighborhood gateways. Some residents suggested the need for stricter regulations or better enforcement of existing requirements. Others emphasized the need to improve basic cleanliness and property maintenance.

Effective code enforcement is needed to ensure that basic standards are upheld, which stabilizes individual properties and safeguards the entire vicinity. But code enforcement and nuisance abatement only go so far, requiring the City to intervene to ensure the eventual removal of blighting influences that are beyond restoration.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Employ a pro-active code enforcement strategy that first offers helpful assistance to property owners in complying with municipal codes rather than a punitive approach, so that enforcement resources may be targeted to the worst areas and offenders. This can also involve cross-training of enforcement personnel in conflict management and resolution.
2. To reduce the quantity of rental housing units and encourage home-ownership within Plainview, develop a rental housing conversion program. This would involve the City providing an incentive to encourage the conversion of single-family rental units to owner-occupied units. This supports the level of home ownership that will strengthen and revitalize established neighborhoods.
3. To improve the quality of housing, partner with various businesses, churches, student groups, or various nonprofits to assist with the rehabilitation of existing housing. Develop a pilot neighborhood housing rehabilitation program to ascertain the organization, manpower, skill sets and materials needed to address key housing issues.

Strategy 4.1.3: Strengthen the ability of local organizations to work on housing issues in existing neighborhoods.

Appearance is also correlated to community pride in ownership, perception, property values, maintenance costs, and quality of life, where each can be influenced positively or negatively. While private owners can and should work to maintain

their properties, there are other housing groups that can offer technical or financial assistance. Complex rehabilitation projects can oftentimes only be completed with the help of a third-party organization that addresses housing issues on a professional basis.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Establish partnerships with area businesses, student organizations, college and university programs, churches and nonprofits, such as the Plainview Habitat for Humanity, to coordinate the construction of homes on vacant parcels; the materials and other costs of which can be donated to further incentivize neighborhood infill.
2. Promote with various community organizations neighborhood pride and stimulate resident involvement in neighborhood improvement activities, including seasonal "clean up, fix up" events, and "Neighborhood Pride" days focusing on beautification. Take advantage of national holidays, such as "Arbor Day," as an event to celebrate the planting of street trees in neighborhoods.

Strategy 4.1.4: Advance the development of an organization to focus on housing and neighborhood-related improvements.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Establish a Community Development Corporation for the City of Plainview.
Community development corporations (CDCs) are non-profit, community-based organizations that anchor capital locally through the development of both residential and commercial property. Community development corporations are typically neighborhood-based, 501(c) (3) non-profit corporations, with a board composed of at least one-third community residents, that promote the improvement of the physical and social infrastructure in neighborhoods with populations significantly below the area median income. Many CDCs perform a wide variety of roles, including housing, commercial, and retail development, as well as leading community planning, assisting with community improvement programs (improved lighting, streetscapes, and the like) and providing social services. **Table 4.8, Range of Community Development Activities Carried Out by CDCs**, summarizes a survey conducted by

the Urban Land Institute within 23 National Community Development Institute (NCDI) member cities that possess CDCs. The survey underscores the extremely diverse roles CDCs play within communities, illustrating the potential CDCs have to facilitate significant and vital change within a community.

2. Develop a demographic profile related to the purchasing power of area workers. Coordinate with the Plainview / Hale County Industrial Foundation and the Plainview Association of Realtors, and others who monitor and/or can provide insights about housing-related inquiries and concerns of major employers, small businesses, and economic development prospects exploring opportunities in Plainview and the surrounding area. Of particular interest should be the socioeconomic profile and

potential home purchasing power (or rental needs) of workers in the area’s identified target industries.

Strategy 4.1.5: Promote residential development in Downtown.

Pursue the strategies related to promotion of new residential and mixed-use activity in downtown Plainview. Numerous studies have illustrated that when people live in a relatively “urban” environment, they bring new foot traffic to the area (especially on evenings and weekends); additional retail, service and entertainment demands which can spur the immediate market; and expectations for a safe and hospitable environment in which to live, recreate, and host guests and visitors. So amenities and security are both necessary to create a favorable environment for more extensive residential living in and around the City’s Commercial Historic District.

Table 4.8, Range of Community Development Activities carried out by CDCs	
Types of Programs and Activities Carried Out by Community Development Corporations	Percent of “Capable” CDCs Reporting
	Activities were Conducted in 1999
Housing Development including both rental and homeowner housing. CDCs steadily increased their draw from a relatively fixed pool of local housing dollars and other community development resources.	94 percent
Planning and Organizing including neighborhood planning, community organizing and advocacy work, community safety, neighborhood cleanup, and other programs that require active participation of residents and businesses.	80 percent
Homeownership Programs including down-payment assistance, owner-occupied housing rehabilitation, pre-purchase counseling, emergency repair, and other programs to help support or increase the cadre of homeowners in low-income neighborhoods.	69 percent
Commercial and Business Development including commercial district improvement and promotion programs, business technical assistance and financing, commercial building renovation and construction, industrial loft retention, and others.	60 percent
Workforce and Youth Programs including job-readiness training, skills development, youth employment and training, leadership training, and so on.	55 percent
Community Facilities including health clinics, schools, senior and community centers, homeless shelters, transportation improvements and programs, and other community-use infrastructure.	45 percent
Open Space including community gardens, parks improvement and 29 percent maintenance, greenway development and management, etc.	29 percent
Source: 1999 Urban Land Institute survey of CDCs in 23 NCDI cities. Number of respondents = 163.	

Actions and Initiatives

1. Develop zoning code provisions to enable and encourage alternative residential development typologies, including lofts, residential over retail, townhouses and multi-family units.
2. Work with the Plainview Main Street Program to identify potential residential development opportunities within the Downtown Commercial Historic District.
3. Consider financial, regulatory and other types of incentives (e.g. expedited review, floor area or density bonuses) to encourage Downtown housing.
4. Identify and pursue technical and financial assistance through which to incentivize the abatement of toxic materials in historic structures worthy of renovating.

Strategy 4.1.6: Identify, recognize and incentivize restoration of historically significant housing.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Work with the Plainview Main Street Program and Texas Historical Commission to conduct a Standing Structures Survey of historically significant structures 50 years or older, that may qualify for Texas State Standing Structures listing and/or National Register of Historic Places listing.
2. As historic homes and commercial structures are restored in Plainview, work with the Main Street Program and the Texas Historical Commission to develop a commemorative

plaque that interprets the historic significance of the property.

3. Work with the Plainview Main Street Program to develop a series of holiday season-specific gifts that commemorate special structures, such as a Christmas tree ornament (ball) with a rendering of the historic structure.

According to Plaquemine, Louisiana Main Street Manager, Kristine Hebert, the sales of Christmas ornaments over the years raised over \$5,000 which paid for a new hardwood floor for the National Register-listed, Old City Hall building.

Strategy 4.1.7: Raise awareness of the benefits of implementing the regional building requirements outlined within the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

Actions and Initiatives

1. Work with South Plains College and the Plainview Hale County Industrial Foundation to design and produce literature outlining the financial and energy savings benefits accrued through implementing IECC requirements.
2. Work with South Plains College and the Plainview / Hale County Industrial Foundation to conduct a series of workshops and public education sessions regarding the individual and community benefits of implementing IECC requirements.

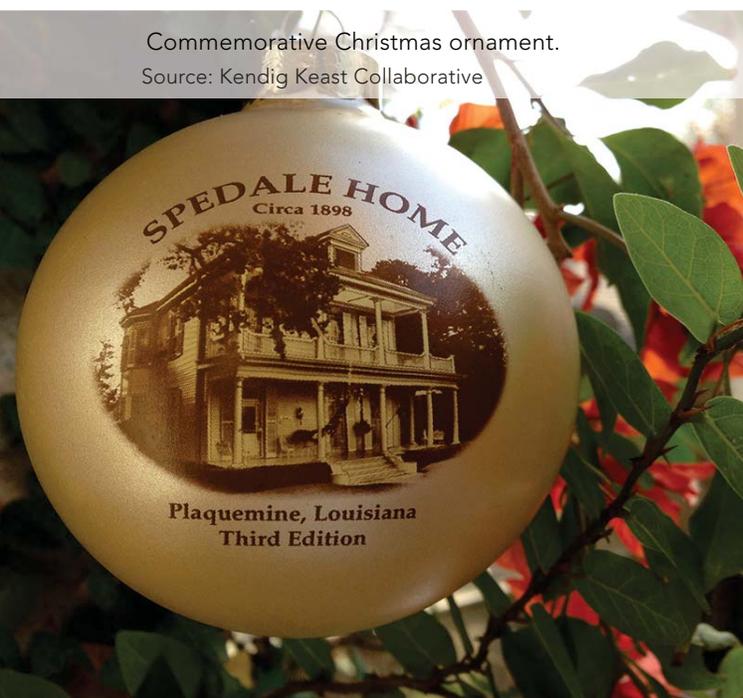
On Neighborhoods

Providing quality housing and neighborhoods is fundamental in creating a desirable place to live. Neighborhoods are the foundation of any community as they are places where residents live, recreate, interact, and call home. When well-designed and protected, neighborhoods are a source of community pride. When poorly designed, marketed with few amenities, or allowed to decline over time, they detract from the appeal of the entire community. The condition, availability, and choice of housing are important to the integrity of neighborhoods and to the quality of life of residents. Sustainable, diverse, attractive, and vibrant neighborhoods enhance economic development, improve livability, and maintain property values and the City's tax base.

This is where this Housing and Neighborhoods

Commemorative Christmas ornament.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative





FOCUS AREA 4.2: STRENGTHENING NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRITY

Strategy 4.2.1: Promote opportunities for improvements in existing neighborhoods.

While the impacts of history, neglect due to poverty, and inappropriate surrounding land uses may make recovery difficult for some neighborhoods, most offer an opportunity for renewal and long-term viability.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Encourage redevelopment in target areas through incentivizing infill redevelopment in Plainview neighborhoods. Such a program could target lots that have recently demolished structures so that those lots are put back onto the market and tax rolls.
2. Form a target-area capital investment program focused on infrastructure improvements within at-risk neighborhoods. The purpose of this program is to provide a dedicated source of annual funding for use in making improvements and leveraging private reinvestment through rehabilitation, redevelopment, building additions, and/or infill development.
3. Review the feasibility for infill development and redevelopment based upon the costs of land purchase and development. Infill development can help meet the need for additional housing units in the community. While the current zoning ordinance may not be raising unnecessary barriers to housing infill, there may be opportunities to make it easier to create additional housing types within the Downtown area and near to Wayland Baptist University.
4. As will be discussed in **Chapter 6.0: Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources**, focus on park and recreation improvements



Plaque commemorating historic home.
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

section of the Comprehensive Plan links back to all other plan elements in terms of physical factors like neighborhood design and character, buffering of residential areas from incompatible uses and development intensities, traffic calming, convenient and safe circulation options for pedestrians and bicyclists, and overall community aesthetics. Attentiveness to neighborhood conditions by individual homeowners is essential to maintain residential stability over time. However, as some neighborhoods age, private covenants eventually lapse, and rental properties proliferate. Careful enforcement of City building and property maintenance standards can make all the difference in preventing a gradual erosion in conditions that may accelerate into blight if left unchecked.

Neighborhood Integrity

In addition to ensuring the design and development of sustainable new neighborhoods, Plainview should also work to safeguard the long-term integrity of its older housing areas. Established neighborhoods often lack the size, design, and amenities of new housing development. However, many communities are beginning to understand that, in return, older neighborhoods offer intangibles such as history, culture, proximity, and a stronger sense of community. In Plainview, some older areas have been well maintained while others require infill development, infrastructure improvements, and further revitalization efforts.

All of this points to a continuing, essential role for City government, along with other partners, such as community development corporations, other non-profits, faith-based organizations, schools, and neighborhood and civic associations to support and revitalize local neighborhoods.

as a means for elevating neighborhood viability. Highlight the importance of clean, safe, well-maintained, inter-connected and vibrant neighborhood parks as an anchor for strong, established neighborhoods where residents and kids use public spaces and interact on evenings and weekends. Another neighborhood-scale open space amenity is the creation of neighborhood gardens, which can be located in existing parks or as a temporary use on vacant lots.

5. Emphasize neighborhood outreach and coordination. Pursue multiple ways to maintain communication links to neighborhood leaders and representatives, such as through less formal neighborhood associations and/or councils where organized homeowners associations have lapsed over time (and require a certain level of voting and/or owner participation to be considered active). Such forums can prove valuable for inviting “grass roots” input into (and notice of) capital improvement priorities, park and public facility upgrades, street and infrastructure projects, pending zoning cases, crime prevention activities, code compliance initiatives, etc. Establishing a community-wide association or network of neighborhood councils can also lead to annual gatherings and/or other periodic meetings and seminars on issues of interest to all neighborhoods.

Strategy 4.2.2: Enhance neighborhood identity through edge and perimeter treatments.

Promote neighborhood identity and pride through special street signage and/or potential installation of small monument signs and landscaping at entries to older neighborhoods that have never had these identity features.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Implement attractive gateway signage and landscape compositions at principal neighborhood entrances.
2. As Plainview’s Street and Traffic Department replaces street identification signage, install decorative signage to distinguish streets within particular neighborhoods from streets outside of neighborhoods.

Quality Neighborhood Design

Contemporary subdivision design too often overlooks the time-honored elements of what makes a neighborhood appealing and sustainable for the long term. Typical features of a quality neighborhood design include:

- Some focal point, whether a park or central green, school, community center, place of worship, or small-scale commercial activity, that enlivens the neighborhood and provides a gathering place.
- Equal importance of pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Street design accommodates, but also calms, necessary automobile traffic. Sidewalks along or away from streets, and/or a network of off-street trails, provide for pedestrian and bicycle circulation (especially for school children) and promote inter-connectivity of adjacent neighborhoods.
- A variety of dwelling types to address a range of needs among potential residents (based on age, income level, household size, etc.).
- Access to schools, recreation and daily conveniences within relatively close proximity to the neighborhood, if not within or at its edges (such as along bordering major streets).
- An effective street layout that provides multiple paths to external destinations (and critical access for emergency vehicles) while also discouraging non-local or cut-through traffic.
- Appealing streetscapes, whether achieved through street trees or other design elements, which “soften” an otherwise urban atmosphere and draw residents to enjoy common areas of their neighborhood. Landscape designs consistent with local climate and vegetation.
- Compatibility of fringe or adjacent uses, or measures to buffer the neighborhood from incompatible development.
- Evident definition of the neighborhood “unit” through recognizable identity and edges, without going so far (through walls and other physical barriers) as to establish “fortress” neighborhoods.
- Set-aside of conservation areas, greenbelts or other open space as an amenity, to encourage leisure and healthful living, and to contribute to neighborhood buffering and definition.
- Use of local streets for parking to reduce the lot area that must be devoted to driveways and garages, and for the traffic calming benefits of on-street parking.
- Respect for historic sites and structures, and incorporation of such assets into neighborhood design.

FOCUS AREA 4.3: DESIGNING NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES AS SPECIAL PLACES

As new developments appear west and south of town, the City of Plainview is presented with opportunities to guide neighborhood design. As much as these residential and mixed-use projects are a product of market demand, they are also influenced by the City's regulatory oversight. Most new residential areas are developed as independent subdivisions rather than as dynamic neighborhoods that are connected to other uses and destinations. Based on citizen concerns and comments about existing neighborhoods and development, it is important to use regulations and incentives to enhance future housing and site design. Such efforts, partnered with investments in infrastructure, parks, and public education, will make the City more attractive for future residential development.

Strategy 4.3.1: Enhance existing neighborhoods and design new neighborhood developments to engender a sense of community and neighborhood integrity.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Require drought-resistant species of street trees in all new residential developments, which must be coordinated with utility placement to avoid problems as the street trees grow.
2. Require tree preservation for residential development and especially for infill development and redevelopment in neighborhoods with mature tree canopies. Required open space ratios and density transfers will allow increased flexibility in subdivision design to avoid loss or disruption of mature stands of existing vegetation.
3. Require open space ratios for residential districts to allow sufficient common areas to effectively separate and buffer incompatible adjacent uses. Provide density bonuses to offset the transition area.
4. Require a perimeter bufferyard around single-family neighborhoods – regardless of the surrounding land use. A portion of the required open space would be used to meet this standard. The scale of the bufferyard would be commensurate with the intensity of the adjacent use. Arterial streets would be factored in to ensure sufficient visual protection and to mitigate noise and other impacts.
5. At the time of platting, require public access easements that provide for direct linkages and connectivity between developments and to recreational trails, parks, schools, commercial and civic institutions.
6. Provide regular maintenance of pedestrian amenities including crosswalks and signals, replacing obsolete traffic signs and synchronizing traffic signals (refer to Chapter 3.0: Mobility, for appropriate pedestrian mobility improvements).
7. Reflect a suburban character type, e.g. suburban commercial, for nonresidential development adjacent to low-density neighborhoods. Incorporate suburban design standards to ensure improved compatibility, such as:
 - comparable building heights or, alternatively, performance standards allowing increased height on larger parcels with increased separation and open space requirements;
 - building design standards relating to roof type and material, wall materials and colors, and architecture that is “residential” in massing, character and appearance;
 - floor area ratios to control building bulk and scale;
 - site design standards relating to the placement of parking, material storage, and service uses; and
 - environmental standards for noise, lighting, debris, etc.
8. Incorporate street layout and design standards into the subdivision regulations to accomplish traffic calming objectives without creating discontinuous streets. Standards may include collector street offsets or jogs, curves, and narrowed street sections (refer to Chapter 3.0: Mobility, for appropriate traffic calming improvements). On-street parking also serves to slow traffic.

9. Adopt a street connectivity index that would increase the number of street connections in a neighborhood and improve directness of routes. The purpose of connectivity requirements would be to create multiple, alternate routes for automobiles and create more route options for people on foot and bicycles. Features of the ordinance should include:
 - an appropriate connectivity index (street links divided by street nodes);
 - requirements for connecting local and collector streets to adjacent developments to ensure a minimum level of external connectivity; and
 - requirements to establish pedestrian routes between land uses. This is particularly important where natural features make it impractical to connect streets.
10. Use zoning to encourage higher-density housing near major roadways, and as a buffer to single-family detached housing areas, while not adding to zoning complexity. This can be done within a "Mixed Use Urban Corridor District" designation by providing an incentive for increased housing density in transition areas near arterial streets.

Strategy 4.3.2: Incentivize the planning and development of complete neighborhoods with overlay district designation.

Actions and Initiatives

1. Consider establishing a Neighborhood Empowerment Zone overlay district for proposed new neighborhood developments.

Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZs) can be created by a City Council under the provisions of Chapter 378 of the Texas Local Government Code. Through creation of a NEZ the City is allowed to contract to abate and/or refund all or a portion of taxes, including personal property and sales taxes, if the City makes findings that the zone will promote:

- (a) the creation of affordable housing, including manufactured housing, in the zone;
- (b) an increase in economic development in the zone;
- (c) an increase in the quality of social services, education, or public safety provided to residents of the zone; or
- (d) the rehabilitation of affordable housing in the zone (Sec. 378.002).

A NEZ is beneficial in revitalizing areas within a municipality that are in need of physical, economic, and social rehabilitation. A NEZ has greater flexibility and power to remove unwanted elements from the area and promote new housing, business, and social services than a local government has, in and of itself. Specifically, within a NEZ, a municipality may waive or adopt fees for construction of new buildings, including inspection and impact fees; enter into agreements, not to exceed 10 years, for refunds of municipal sales tax for sales made within the zone; abate municipal property taxes, subject to a time limit; and set performance standards to encourage the use of alternative building materials that will benefit the environment through reduced maintenance needs and/or energy consumption.

To create a NEZ, the City must adopt an ordinance or resolution with findings, that the zone will contribute to the economic development of the City. A City may reserve the

Neighborhood and special district signage enhancements, Houston, Texas.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



"Jandoor Gardens" neighborhood entrance feature, Houston, Texas.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



right to limit the term or duration of a NEZ it creates or consents to being created. Further, the City may limit the timing, term and number of debt issues and refinancing of debt as may be appropriate to coordinate debt repayment with the term or duration of the special district.

Strategy 4.3.3: Utilize the USGBC LEED for Neighborhood Development (ND) to evaluate neighborhood design.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has developed a building performance rating system entitled, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). There are several categories of LEED with which to evaluate the performance of various types of buildings, including, but not limited to:

- *LEED for New Construction (NC)*,
- *LEED for Schools*, *LEED for Healthcare*,
- *LEED for Homes*, and
- *LEED for Commercial Interiors*.

In 2007, the USGBC introduced *LEED for Neighborhood Development (ND)* as a means of taking the green certification concept beyond individual buildings and applying it to the neighborhood context. Co-developed by the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED-ND takes a broad approach to neighborhood sustainability, reflecting the most current research and ideas about smart, green, sustainable, and well-designed neighborhoods.

LEED-ND contains a set of measurable standards that collectively identify whether a development or proposed development of two buildings or more can be deemed environmentally superior, considering the development's location and access, its internal pattern and design, and its use of green technology

and building techniques. These standards include prerequisites (required as a baseline for sustainable neighborhood development) and credits (additional best practice standards for sustainable neighborhood development). LEED-ND encourages strategies that conserve resources such as reinvesting within existing neighborhoods, cleaning up contaminated sites, protecting natural areas, and facilitating connections to the surrounding community. The LEED-ND Rating System is organized into three basic sections:

- Smart Location and Linkage (SLL)—where to build;
- Neighborhood Pattern and Design (NPD)—what to build; and
- Green Infrastructure and Buildings (GIB)—how to manage environmental impacts.

Smart Location and Linkage (SLL): Where to Build

Selecting and planning for the location of development is fundamental to environmental sustainability and an important determinant of how much residents will walk or drive. Even if a building or larger development uses high-performance, green construction techniques, a poor location that destroys natural areas, requires people to drive long distances, or exposes people to toxic substances will likely overshadow the benefits of green construction. Redeveloping previously developed sites and “infill” sites (which are surrounded by previously developed land) is a key smart growth strategy.

As discussed in **Chapter 2.0, Growth Capacity and Management**, building in favorable locations uses land efficiently and preserves open space, ecological areas, and agricultural land around cities. It also tends to cluster housing, jobs, stores, and public spaces together. When these conveniences are within easy reach, it makes public transit, cycling, and walking more feasible and reduces the length of car trips.

As discussed within **Chapter 3.0, Mobility**, good connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles—both within a neighborhood and to surrounding areas—are essential for a neighborhood to capitalize on a smart location. This means frequent street connections and pathways to surrounding areas, a high degree of internal connectivity, and few barriers—such as cul-de-sacs or difficult-to-cross streets—to adjacent areas and uses. Research

shows that walking and physical fitness increase with greater street connectivity, measured by the number of intersections per square mile.⁵

Neighborhood Pattern and Design: What to Build

Once planners or developers have decided where to build, they have to decide what to build. Should there be homes? Shops? Parks? Which activities will the neighborhood be designed for? What will it look like, and how will it feel to walk through? The Neighborhood Pattern and Design section of LEED-ND addresses some of these topics. It encourages strategies like walkable streets, diverse and compact neighborhoods, high quality public spaces, reduced dependence on automobiles, and community participation in design.

While it is important to separate and buffer incompatible land uses there are advantages to mixing residential, commercial, and live-work land uses. The diverse uses of *blended neighborhoods* tend to support each other and reinforce a sense of neighborhood character, while decreasing the need to travel long distances for goods, services, or work. Uses can be mixed within the same neighborhood—such as when homes are located next to a corner store—or even within the same building—such as live-work spaces or ground-level shops with housing or office space above them.

Additional categories within Neighborhood Pattern and Design include Walkable Streets, Reduced Parking and Transportation Demand, Bicycle-Friendly Design, and Mixed Uses and Community Spaces.

Green Infrastructure and Buildings: How to Manage Environmental Impacts

Even if a neighborhood has a great location and layout, it won't have excellent environmental performance without thoughtful and innovative green design. The Green Infrastructure and Buildings section includes strategies such as incorporating energy and water efficiency, reusing older buildings, recycling materials, reducing stormwater runoff, and eliminating pollution sources.

Beyond actually pursuing LEED-ND certification for a proposed development project, another approach is to evaluate the quality of existing neighborhoods using the LEED-ND checklist. For most neighborhoods, this process will involve three main steps:

5 S. Handy, "Understanding the Link Between Urban Form and Nonwork Travel Behavior," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 15 (1996): 183–98. R. Ewing and R. Cervero, *Travel and the Built Environment*, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 76 (Summer 2010):1.

LEED-ND as a Basis for Financial Assistance

In 2010, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that it would consider LEED-ND's location criteria when awarding competitive housing grants, including its Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants. This includes LEED-ND-based standards for such things as transit service, proximity to neighborhood shops and services, sensitivity to environmental features, and the amount and character of nearby development. Grant-giving organization and agencies, can use LEED-ND in a similar way, incorporating standards for smart and sustainable development into their project selection process.

1. Evaluate the neighborhood.

Work with local governments or other community organizations to conduct an audit of a neighborhood using the LEED-ND categories, prerequisites and credits. A checklist at the end of the ***A Citizen's Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development*** can be used to aid the evaluation (refer to sidebar).

2. Focus on strengths and weaknesses.

Identify areas where the neighborhood or community performs well under LEED-ND. Where it does not, solicit stakeholder input on community needs.

3. Respond with a plan.

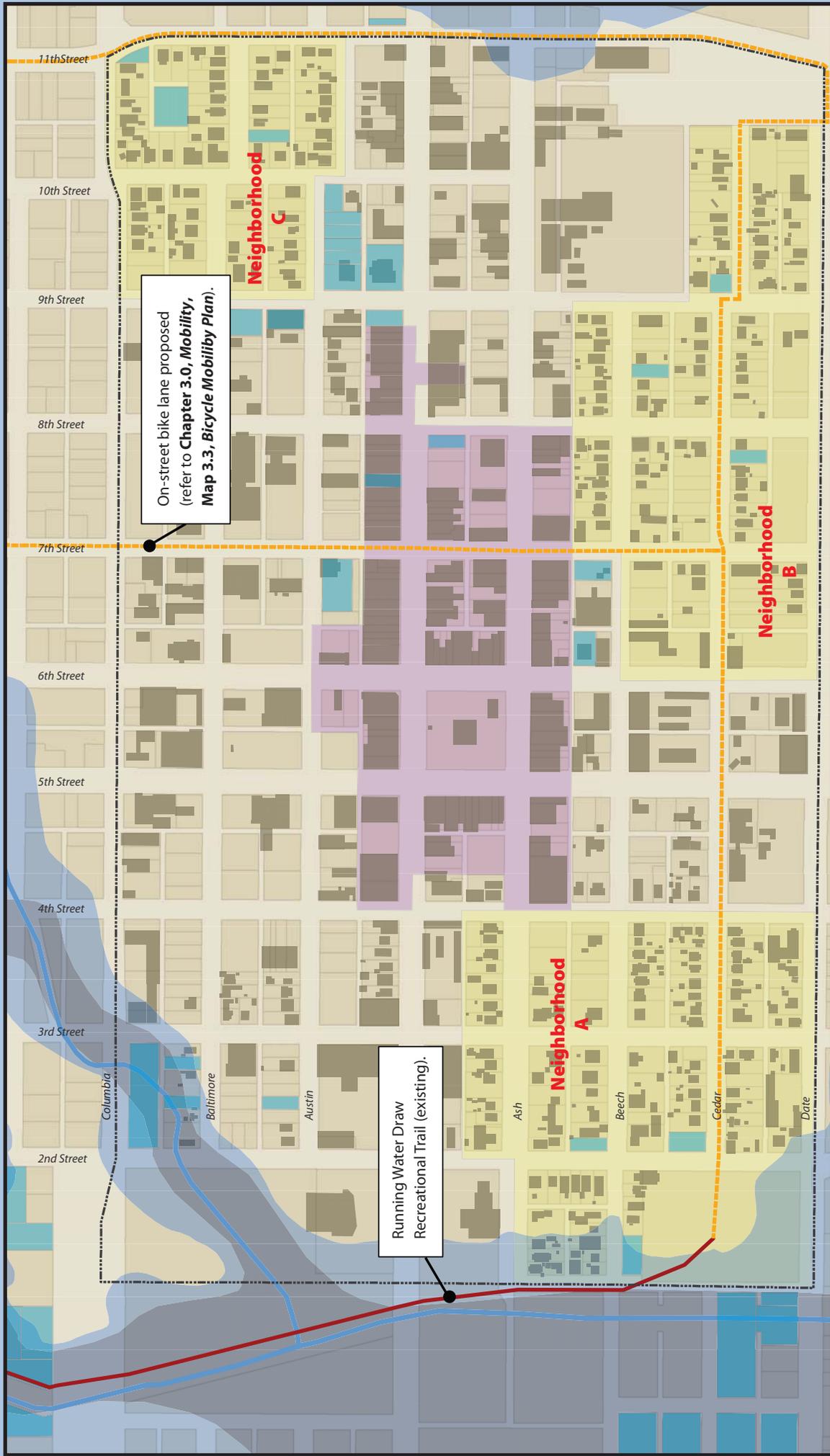
Propose retrofits, targeted redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, or other measures that build on the neighborhood's strengths and address its weaknesses. The level of detail and effort can vary widely—from an informal list of suggestions to a detailed design and policy proposal that becomes the backbone of a neighborhood plan. If a neighborhood is already the focus of a planning effort, participation in that process is essential to ensure that it addresses the needs you have identified and protects the neighborhood's strengths.⁶

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT

The goal of the Priority Improvement Project (PIP) is to illustrate how to improve neighborhood and commercial integrity and viability in an area of mixed land uses.

6 Natural Resources Defense Council, *A Citizen's Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development*, www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/files/citizens_guide_LEED-ND.pdf.

Map 4.1, Priority Improvement Project - Neighborhood Enhancement - Existing Conditions



Legend:

- Neighborhoods
- Historic District
- City-Owned Property
- Proposed On-Street Bike Lane



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

As indicated on **Map 4.1, Priority Improvement Project, Neighborhood Enhancement: Existing Conditions**, the PIP is defined on the west and east by two significant four-lane arterials, Columbia Street (Business 27) and Date Street respectively. 11th Street to the north, and 2nd Street to the south are both significant collectors. The PIP is bisected by 5th Street (U.S. Highway 70), a four-lane, undivided major arterial corridor which runs east to west; and Broadway, Street, which runs north to south.

The PIP is composed of varying land uses, all of which are fragmented, suffering from blight and in need of significant infill. There are three, relatively intact residential areas within the PIP:

Neighborhood A

This neighborhood is located in the southeastern quadrant of the PIP, the eastern boundary of which flanks Date Street. The neighborhood is composed of approximately seven blocks of fairly concentrated residential development. Immediately south of this neighborhood is Running Water Draw, the 100-year floodplain of which borders the southern side of 2nd Street.

Neighborhood B

This neighborhood is located within the northeastern quadrant of the PIP and flanks Date Street on its eastern edge. The neighborhood is composed of seven blocks of residential, mixed with commercial along Date Street. Approximately 50 percent of the parcels are vacant.

Neighborhood C

Neighborhood C is in the northwestern quadrant of the PIP area and flanks Columbia Street. It is composed of four blocks of concentrated residential development between 9th and 11th Streets. The core of the northeastern block has a large parcel of City-owned property. This is one of the few neighborhoods within the City that has fairly continuous sidewalks.

Commercial Historic District

Within the central portion of the PIP is Plainview's National Register of Historic Places-listed Commercial Historic District. In the center of the district is the Hale County Court House. There is a concentration of one to two-story commercial buildings lining each street within the Historic District. With the exception of 5th Street, all of the streets within the Commercial Historic District are paved with brick.

USGBC LEED-ND Sustainable Neighborhood Development Checklist

This informal checklist summarizes all credits and prerequisites in the LEED-ND Rating System. The checklist can be used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a development proposal, site plan, existing neighborhood, or even a zoning code or neighborhood plan. It can be used as a source for standards and thresholds to include in plans, regulations, designs, or topic-specific policy efforts, although the LEED-ND Rating System itself can provide additional detail for this task.

Please note that this checklist is a simplification and is not LEED-ND itself, which requires sophisticated verification of compliance with standards and provides a much more authoritative evaluation. The checklist can be found within the document entitled, *A Citizen's Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development*, which can be downloaded at www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/files/citizens_guide_LEED-ND.pdf

The LEED ND checklist is organized into the following topics:

1. Smart Location and Linkage

- Location
- Ecosystems and Open Spaces
- Contaminated Sites
- Transit-Accessible Locations
- Cycling Facilities
- Jobs and Housing Proximity

2. Neighborhood Pattern and Design

- Walkable Streets
- Compact Development
- Neighborhood Connections
- Mixed Uses
- Affordable and Diverse Housing
- Parking and Transportation Demand
- Parks and Recreation
- Universal Design
- Community Participation
- Local Food
- School Access and Design

3. Green Infrastructure and Buildings

- Construction Techniques
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- Energy Production and Distribution
- Water Efficiency and Conservation
- Stormwater and Wastewater
- Green Building Process
- Historic and Existing Building Reuse
- Heat Islands
- Recycling and Reuse
- Light Pollution

Bicycle Mobility Plan

As discussed within Chapter 3.0: Mobility, a Bicycle Mobility Plan is recommended; and is composed of designated, on-street bicycle lanes and off-street recreational trails. The PIP is bisected by an east-west on-street bike route along 7th Street and a north-south on-street bike lane which enters the PIP along Date Street and then shifts one block westward to Cedar Street, at 7th Street. This bike lane follows Cedar Street to its terminus at 2nd Street, where the bike lane connects with the existing Running Water Draw recreational trail.

Neighborhood Enhancement Recommendations

Many of the following improvements are illustrated within **Map 4.2, Priority Improvement Project, Neighborhood Enhancement:**

1. Research the history of each of the neighborhoods and identify a distinguishing characteristic that makes the neighborhood unique. It may be a name, or the predominant occupation of the neighborhood's residents - something that can be celebrated through signage, landscaping, or maybe something sculptural.
2. At significant neighborhood entrances, develop prominent gateway features to announce that one has entered the neighborhood.
3. Develop a neighborhood gardening program using City-owned vacant parcels within each neighborhood.
4. As discussed within **Chapter 6.0, Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources**, to reduce the distance traveled to access neighborhood and community parks, develop a centrally-located park within each neighborhood using vacant, City-owned parcels.
5. Work with the Main Street Program to encourage the establishment of a small, neighborhood grocery store within walking distance of each neighborhood. Incentivize the development of neighborhood grocery stores through expedited permitting and applying for Certified Local Government grant funding.
6. Plant drought-tolerant, indigenous street trees on all interior and perimeter neighborhood streets.
7. Construct sidewalks on both sides of all interior and perimeter streets within neighborhoods.
8. Have the Plainview Police Department work with residents to develop a Neighborhood Watch program for each neighborhood.
9. To more easily distinguish neighborhood residents from non-residents, develop a small, neighborhood sticker to place on residents' automobiles.
10. Research property ownership and develop a database of vacant, available residential parcels within neighborhoods. Work with area realtors, Habitat for Humanity and other organizations, to infill vacant parcels with new residential housing.
11. Develop a database of neighborhood residents in need of funding to restore their homes. Include estimated household income and other relevant statistical information required by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) in order to apply for HUD's Home Investment Partnership Program.
12. Develop an affordable starter home, "accessory dwelling unit" housing prototype, under 1,000 square feet, that will fit on small neighborhood parcels and may attract single individuals or younger and/or older couples interested in living closer to Downtown. Utilize the back alley as principal vehicular access to detached garage and proposed, "accessory dwelling units," described in Housing Strategy 4.1.1. This configuration will enable the main dwelling unit to be located closer to the street, to promote social interaction between people sitting on their porch and residents taking a stroll.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are common and popular in many communities to accommodate elderly parents or relatives ("granny flats"), young adult family members wanting to live independently but close by, or local college students in need of basic, low-cost housing. It also provides another affordable living option within neighborhoods—and a rental income opportunity for homeowners.

Using the Priority Improvement Project area, establish a legal avenue through which to demonstrate the utility of an ADU prototype; involving the creation of a separate garage apartment or separate living area on a lot containing a pre-existing home. ADUs can be regulated in a variety of ways to address

Map 4.2, Priority Improvement Project - Neighborhood Enhancement



Street Trees
To provide shade and enhance neighborhood character, residential streets should be lined with drought-tolerant street trees.
Source: www.gskernsmy.com

Accessory Dwelling Units
Small and affordable, accessory dwelling units can provide a comfortable living environment for a single family member or a college student.
Source: www.accessorydwellings.org

Alternative Housing Types
To appeal to diverse home buyers, the City should incentivize the construction of alternative house types that may be of a reduced square footage to appeal to older couples or individuals.
Source: katrinacottagehousing.org/

Sidewalks
To improve pedestrian mobility and neighborhood connectivity, city blocks should have continuous sidewalks. At corners, sidewalks should have hand-capped, accessible ramps and striped street crossings.
Source: www.bigelowhomes.com

Entrance Features
Decorative features consisting of a column, ornamental street light and plaque, placed at neighborhood entrances can evoke a sense of arrival and create a distinct neighborhood edge.
Source: KendigKerstCollaborative

Neighborhood Park
A small park, located on existing, City-owned property, will enhance neighborhood pride and sense of place, and give children a local place to play.
Source: www.flickr.com/photos/

Neighborhood Grocery Store
Small grocery stores, within walking distance of neighborhoods, can provide fresh meat and produce, and other staples, so residents do not have to drive.
Source: www.walkscore.com

Community Gardens
Community gardens provide a good way for neighbors to get to know one another as they work together to grow fresh herbs and vegetables. Gardens can be constructed in City-owned as well as vacant City-owned land.
Source: www.visualizeashua.org

Legend:

- Bike Lane
- Neighborhoods
- Historic District
- City-Owned Residential Infill
- Commercial Infill
- Neighborhood Park
- Proposed Housing
- Street Tree Enhancement

N

[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]

bulk, setback, and lot coverage issues; residential density; and parking, safety, and other potential concerns. Some ordinances aim to limit the leasing of such units through provisions disallowing separate utilities and utility billing, separate trash collection, or the establishment of a separate house number and mailing address on a lot.

Commercial Enhancement Recommendations

1. Install "Historic District" street identification signage at all intersections within the National Register of Historic Places listed Commercial Historic District.
2. On 5th Street, 7th Street, and Broadway, at the entrances to the Commercial Historic District, install interpretive signage stating that one has entered the district. Describe the district's period of historic significance and contributing features and elements to the district's integrity.



Case Study: The Austin Alley Flat Initiative

The Alley Flat Initiative is a joint collaboration between the University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development (UTCSD), the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC), and the Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC). The Alley Flat Initiative proposes a new sustainable, green affordable housing alternative for Austin. "Alley Flats" are small, detached residential units, accessed from Austin's extensive network of underutilized alleyways. Each Alley Flat is designed to a \$105,000 budget and a minimum of three stars on the Austin Energy Green Building Program Single Family rating tool.

The initial goal of the project was to build two prototype alley flats- one for each of two families in East Austin – that would showcase both the innovative design and environmental sustainability features of the alley flat designs. These prototypes were built to demonstrate how sustainable housing can support growing communities by being affordable and adaptable.

The long-term objective of the Alley Flat Initiative is to create an adaptive and self-perpetuating delivery system for sustainable and affordable housing in Austin. The "delivery system" would include not only efficient housing designs constructed with sustainable technologies, but also innovative methods of financing and home ownership that benefit all neighborhoods in Austin.¹

1. University of Texas, Center for Sustainable Design and the City of Austin. Austin Alley Flat Initiative. <http://www.thealleyflatinitiative.org/vision>



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]