

Planning and Development Department

Update of FY2004-2005 Approved Strategic Plan

Strategy #1: We will continue to revise and guide the development process through the use of progressive building and development codes/standards.

- Revise the technical standards for infrastructure construction. *Over the past year, weekly coordination meetings have been held among engineering staffs from College Station, Bryan, and the development community to review our technical standards for water, wastewater, streets, and drainage. This coordination group will begin work formulating guidelines for unified drainage design guidelines in mid-January 2005.*
- Adopt the 2003 International codes. *The 2003 International Building and Fire Codes were adopted by City Council on December 21, 2004, and became effective January 1, 2005.*
- Initiate rezoning to implement results from Small Area Plans. *A number of properties were identified and presented to the City Council at the September 23, 2004 Workshop, as possible city-initiated rezonings, or Comprehensive Plan Amendments, to provide consistency between the Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Plan. At the workshop meeting, City Council directed staff to contact landowners on an individual basis and report their level of receptivity back to the Council after the first of the 2005 calendar year.*

Staff has made contact with the landowners of the four main properties presented on September 23rd, and will also work with members of the Redevelopment Implementation Team (referred to under the 10th bullet, below) to make contact with owners of possible redevelopment properties, and present this information to Council as well.

- Prepare design standards for big box and large retail developments. *On October 21, 2004, City Council adopted an amendment to Section 7.9 of the Unified Development Ordinance, regarding Non-Residential Architectural Standards. This ordinance now applies architectural requirements and additional streetscape standards to all commercial structures not located in the M-1, M-2, NG and R&D zoning districts.*
- Modify standards for sexually oriented enterprises. *On September 23, 2004, City Council adopted a number of revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance, including an amendment to Article 6, allowing the single remaining sexually oriented business in College Station (Silk Stocking) to remain as a legally conforming use.*

- Revise the drainage ordinance. *Revisions to the current Draining Ordinance are currently being discussed in ongoing weekly meetings among the engineering staffs from College Station, Bryan, and the development community.*
- Revise the Subdivision Regulations. *Director of Public Works Mark Smith has been placed on temporary assignment as Special Project Manager, specifically to oversee the complete overhaul of the Subdivision Regulations. This effort is currently underway, with a series of public input forums and subcommittees scheduled for Spring 2005, and adoption later in Summer 2005.*

The revisions will entail the reworking of Chapters 3, 9, 11 and 13 of the City Code in order to cohesively bring all of them into the UDO under Article 8. In order to accomplish this in an orderly and timely manner there will be four areas of discussion and three or four groups formed to study and help reform and refine these areas. Volunteers will be sought to serve on these groups. The areas to be considered are:

- *Platting Procedures (all phases)*
 - *Assurance For Completion And Maintenance Of Improvements (performance bonds)*
 - *Public Participation Policies (oversize participation)*
 - *Requirement For Public Improvements (development guidelines)*
- Revise the technical standards for site design. *A list of site design elements, such as pavement and curbing details for drive aisles and fire lanes, is being reviewed by staff, with a team meeting scheduled in late January 2005. Current discussions have taken place among staff regarding the level of inspection necessary to uphold site design standards that may be considered. Nevertheless, staff continues to receive requests for such standards and details from the development community.*
 - Update the Northgate design district ordinance. *Members of the Planning & Development staff are currently working in coordination with staff from the Economic Development Department to update the Northgate Ordinance, Section 5.6 B. of the Unified Development Ordinance. Initial discussions have been held with the Design Review Board regarding the overall approach needed for this ordinance amendment.*

A series of public forums with Northgate merchants and property owners has been scheduled for January 12, 14, and 18, 2005, to solicit input from all affected stakeholders. P&Z and City Council consideration of the updated Northgate District Ordinance is anticipated for Spring 2005.

- Establishment of redevelopment plan and implementation team with the Economic Development Department. *The Redevelopment Implementation Staff Team has been established, with representatives from the Economic Development and Planning & Development Departments. On January 14, 2005, the Redevelopment Team will meet to review redevelopment strategies and projects, and also examine possible changes needed for the Redevelopment Zoning District within the UDO.*
- Ordinance updates for clarification including: non-conforming uses, signs, joint/shared access, site development standards, etc. *On September 23, 2004, City Council adopted a number of amendments to Articles 1-11 of the Unified Development Ordinance, including development regulations, parking requirements, signage, and specific use standards. Further amendments were considered on October 21, 2004, clarifying standards for commercial banners.*
- Become a best practice development review process City. *A number of changes are currently taking place within the Department in an effort to become a “Best Practice” Department:*
 - *Department restructuring and renaming to consolidate planning positions within Long Range Planning and Development Review, under a single work group, designed to equip a greater number of staff to assist customers through the various short- and long-range development processes.*
 - *Staffer-on-Call (SOC) Schedule, a rotation of professional planning staff members available to assist walk-in customers or callers at any time during normal office hours. This is being implemented to ensure that staff availability exists at all times for development customers who need information or advice on any development related issue or project.*
 - *Office space changes, including a new Customer Resource Center in the front receiving area, a new department conference room, and opened entryway area into the main Department office area. A number of additional office changes are being currently being considered, in order to provide a more customer-friendly, professional environment, and to arrange staff within appropriate work groups.*
 - *Paul Zucker, FAICP, of Zucker Systems, Inc., was hired to conduct an organizational review of the Department, and to provide additional review and advice regarding development review process improvements.. Mr. Zucker visited College Station on December 13-15, 2004, and conducted a series of meetings with city staff, as well as external customer focus group meetings. A final report of Mr. Zucker’s visit is anticipated in the next few weeks.*
 - *Interdepartmental Communication – Ongoing internal “Development Briefing” meetings are being held among staff from a number of*

departments involved in Development issues, to be sure all staff are briefed on organizational changes and current development projects.

- *Community Forums – The first Quarterly P&DS Department Forum is scheduled for Friday, January 21, 2005, 11:30am to 1:30pm at the College Station Conference Center. Bi-weekly small group customer breakfast meetings with the Department Director are also currently being scheduled, beginning Thursday, January 13, 2005. The objectives of these forums are to share information on recent changes within the Department, and to receive ongoing input and suggestions from our customers.*
- *In the coming months, the overall Best Practice focus will involve communication improvements (internal and external), customer service improvements, development review process changes (cycle times), and training methods for staff.*
- *Annual reviews of UDO and Comprehensive Plans. On September 9, 2004, staff presented the Annual Review of the UDO and Comprehensive Plan to the City Council. On September 23, 2004, City Council adopted the first annual amendment of the UDO, including a number of ordinance clarifications and improvements.*
- *Website updates and improvements. Several new features have been added to the P&DS website to facilitate communication with the community about development in CS. On the D&DS homepage, a section has been added called "NEW" which is updated weekly with any new projects occurring in our department, as well as any new development in CS. One of our best new features is the New Development Map which shows what development projects have been submitted over the past several months and where they are located. Also provided is a weekly-updated link of all submitted development projects, as well as detailed information about each project.*

Another new link is provided to Planning & Zoning Commission agendas, for easier access, as well as a link for our DRB agendas, at the request of some of our customers. In addition to these new features, staff has also updated the Unified Development Ordinance with all the new amendments recently approved by City Council. On December 9, 2004, City Council approved the purchase of Click2Gov Planning and Zoning module Software License and Services Agreement with Sungard HTE, which will allow direct on-line customer access to development review process information regarding their particular projects.

Strategy #2: We will support regional transportation planning.

- *Annual Transportation Summit. The city will host the 4th annual Brazos Valley Transportation Summit on March 23-24, 2005. The purpose of the*

Summit is to bring together transportation decision makers within the area and to develop a regional perspective on addressing transportation issues.

- *Utilize the MPO to encourage the County to develop a transportation plan. The city continues to work with the Bryan-College Station Metropolitan Planning Organization, Brazos County, and the City of Bryan to develop a unified transportation plan for Brazos County.*
- *Develop an intermodal transportation action plan. This project will develop an action oriented, performance based policy document to address local and regional transportation issues for each transportation mode including streets and highways, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, air transportation, and rail transportation.*

Strategy #3: We will provide for a well planned community

- *Provide Neighborhood Services. There are two components to Neighborhood Services: the Neighborhood Partnership Program and Historic Preservation. The Neighborhood Partnership Program has expanded to 29 registered associations and continues to offer monthly Seminar Suppers. The Seminar Suppers give board members of associations a chance to network and benefit from educational presentations on local and regional topics. Staff continues to communicate with associations through electronic Neighbor FYI's, printed correspondence, and personal consultation and meetings.*

An association recognition program was launched January 2005 to encourage associations to hold regular meetings, communicate with City staff, and foster community in their neighborhoods. Staff also supports the Historic Preservation Committee in furthering Project HOLD: Historic Online Library Database by starting a volunteer program to sustain the library, as well as facilitating a Historic Preservation Strategic Planning process for 2005.

- *Implementation of Bike Master Plan. This project will implement several components of the Bikeway and Pedestrian Masterplan including improving bicycle parking through a grant program, improving bicycle awareness and education, and adding new on-street and off-street bicycle facilities.*
- *Guide growth through planned annexation. City-initiated annexation is currently being discussed as part of the Planning & Zoning Commission Annual Plan of Work for 2004-2005. The P&Z will review possible properties to be included in a 3-year annexation plan, and forward a recommendation on to City Council later this year.*