

NEIGHBORHOOD INTEGRITY



3

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of a city. Neighborhoods are places to live, raise families, and socialize with friends and neighbors. For most people, purchasing a home is the largest financial investment they will make. However, housing choice is not based solely on the value of property. Homeowners are also interested in the schools their children will attend, the parks they will enjoy, the type of development that is planned for the surrounding areas, and the roads they will travel. Strong neighborhoods are not just a collection of houses within a subdivision boundary; neighborhoods also contribute to a unique sense of place and community identity, with residents contributing to partnerships, leadership, and civic involvement. In many ways, a community is only as strong and sustainable as its neighborhoods.



The desire for strong neighborhoods that meet housing demand and contribute to quality of life has been in the forefront of community debate since College Station's founding. The need to provide infrastructure to developing off-campus neighborhoods served as one of the primary reasons for the incorporation of College Station. Seventy years later, the City continues to balance its role as home to one of the largest public universities in the nation with the need to provide excellent services to the residents that make College Station their home.

As the home of Texas A&M University, College Station is home to thousands of University students every year. Growth in the community has always been tied to the growth of the University; however, the permanent population has been less than the student enrollment until 2007. With on-campus housing available for only 10,000 students, the majority of students live off-campus in apartments and other rental properties including duplex, townhome, and single-family residences. This integration of the student population with the permanent population creates a unique community where school spirit is apparent in almost all facets of daily life. On occasion however, lifestyle differences between the student households and the family households cause tension in neighborhoods. Issues related to noise, property maintenance, and on-street parking are even more prevalent as market influences make purchasing homes for conversion to rental or investment property more attractive.

As residential construction continues, College Station must consider the long-term viability of its newest neighborhoods and how they fit into the community fabric. Neighborhoods should capitalize on what sets them apart from other neighborhoods, while creating a seamless transition between different housing types and adjacent land uses. Building community and neighborhood integrity includes building strong organizations. Promoting homeowner and neighborhood associations is an important aspect of developing neighborhood integrity. These associations provide opportunities for localized decision making and community ownership that contribute to sustaining the attractiveness and marketability of neighborhoods.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the strategies and actions that encourage attractive, livable neighborhoods that meet the City's housing needs. Issues such as property maintenance, compatibility of adjacent land uses, neighborhood traffic, rental housing, and historic preservation have an impact on the quality and stability of neighborhoods. The focus of this chapter is the continued viability and long-term protection of College Station's residential neighborhoods.

This chapter identifies some of the existing conditions specifically facing neighborhoods and outlines major planning considerations facing the City. This is followed by the goal, strategies, and action items for implementation.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

Early College Station neighborhoods developed around parks and schools, in proximity to major University entrances, and bordered by commercial land uses on major thoroughfares. The majority of neighborhoods in College Station developed after 1970, due in large part to the University opening admission to women and minorities in the late 1960s. These developments are large, multi-phased subdivisions that take access from the City's thoroughfare system, with limited connectivity between subdivisions. These neighborhoods are primarily single-family detached housing developments. There is very little neighborhood-oriented commercial activity within walking distance and those proposed uses adjacent to established residential neighborhoods have been protested on many occasions by the homeowners.

Collectively, College Station neighborhoods provide a variety of housing types. There are more than 35,000 dwelling units in College Station. Multi-family units make up 56% of those units; however, this percentage decreased from 64% in 1990. New single-family home construction has been strong in College Station since 2000 and a

consistent for-sale inventory of less than six months indicates a stable housing market.

Rental Market

Housing costs in College Station are among the lowest in the State and in the Nation, with a cost of living 23% below the national average. Market opportunities have resulted in real estate investors converting existing single-family homes to rental housing. Between the 1990 and 2000 Census, the percent of renter-occupied single-family homes fell from 13% to 11% of the occupied housing stock. The American Community Survey (2005-2007) suggests that this percentage has risen again to 13%.

The majority of College Station's 35,000 housing units are occupied by renters (48% in renter-occupied units and 30% in group quarters). The continual use of property for rent may have long-term implications for the quality of housing in College Station. These properties are often not maintained at the same level as owner-occupied housing units. This can lead to an aesthetic disparity between owner-occupied houses and rental homes, negatively impacting the character of a neighborhood as well as overall property values.

A large majority of Texas A&M University students live off campus. Many of these students live in apartment complexes, but students can be found throughout the community and in almost every neighborhood (see [Map 3.1, Student Population](#)).

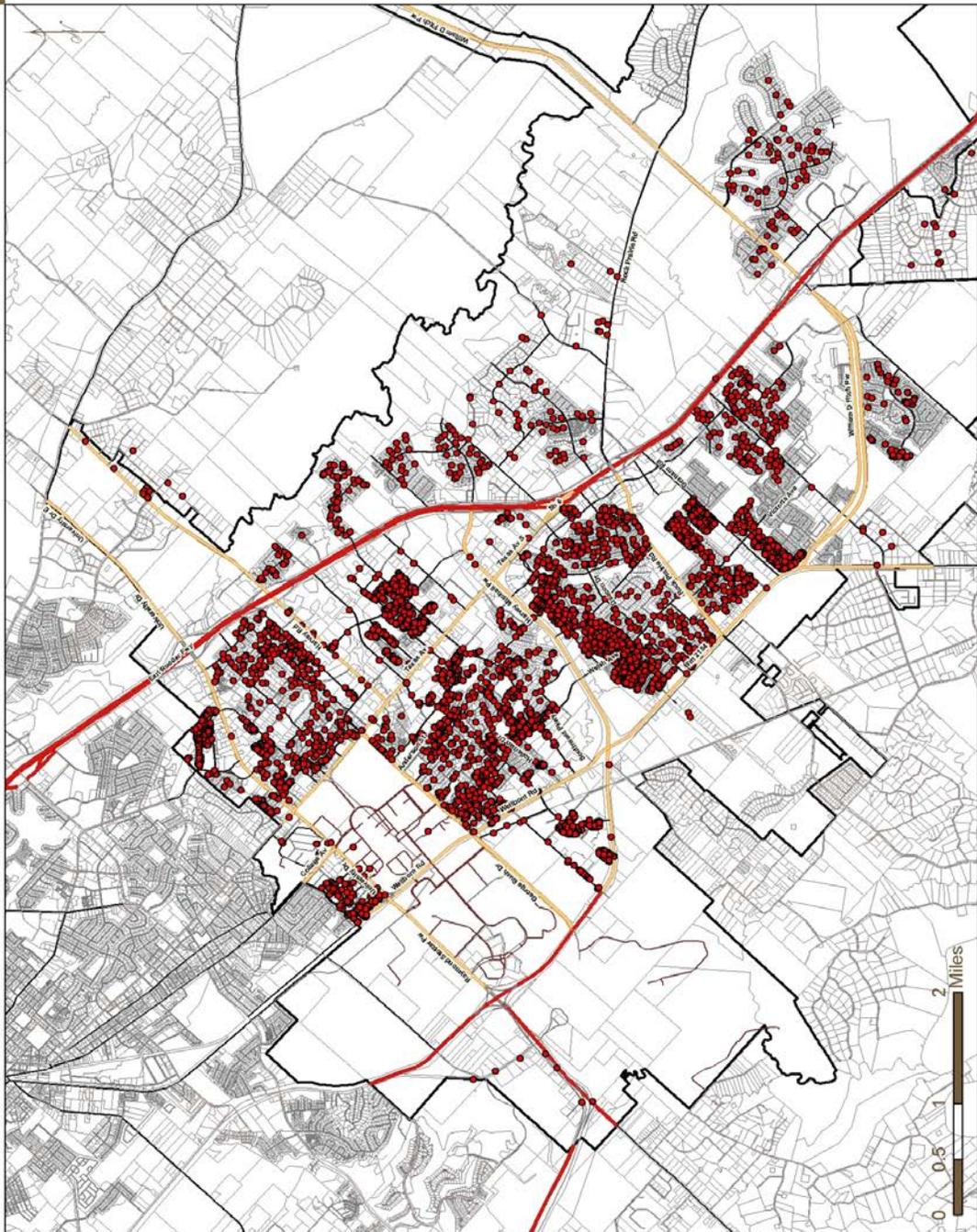
Housing Conditions

In 1995, a comprehensive housing condition survey was completed for the 1997 Comprehensive Plan (see page 3-5 for definitions used in classifications). This windshield survey of all housing units in the City and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction found that a majority of housing units in College Station (89%) were in good condition. An additional 10% were found to be in deteriorating condition, and fewer than 1% were found to be dilapidated. Within the City limits, good and deteriorating housing units made up 99% of the housing stock.

This survey is further complemented by research done for College Station's 2005 Consolidated Plan. Surveys were completed by Texas A&M University students focusing on low and moderate income census blocks. The updated survey rated over 5,000 housing units as excellent, conservable, substandard, or dilapidated in the City Limits (see page 3-5 for definitions used in classifications). Only 1% (63 units) was evaluated as dilapidated, and 10% (584 units) as substandard. Of the homes found to be dilapidated or substandard, 81% were found in low- and moderate-income areas. Additionally, these homes made up 17% of all the homes in low- and moderate-income areas, compared to 7%

Map 3.1
Comprehensive Plan
Student Population
2007 - 2008

- Legend**
- Student Addresses
 - City Limits



SOURCE: City of College Station Planning & Development Services Department

in higher income areas. These census blocks also have a high number of rental properties and non-family households, which may indicate high student populations as they are in close proximity to the University.

Age of Housing Stock

Housing quality can often be tied to the age of the housing stock. As can be expected of a 70-year old city, only 10% of the housing stock is more than 40 years old compared to 21% in Brazos County and 34% in Texas. The majority of homes in College Station were built after 1990, and one-quarter of housing units in College Station have been constructed since the 2000 Census.

Overall, the housing stock in College Station is in moderate to good condition. Areas in close proximity to the University with large concentrations of rental properties are facing more rapid deterioration than other areas in town. As housing begins to age in College Station, the City could see a greater rate of demolition in the core neighborhoods of the City.

Code Enforcement and Noise Violations

The City of College Station has an active code enforcement program that enforces violations and deals with nuisance issues such as junked vehicles, trash, tall grass, and property maintenance. Since 2008, over 13,000 enforcement actions have been processed across the City (see [Map 3.2, Code Enforcement Cases - 2008-2009](#)).

The City's Police Department is tasked with enforcing noise ordinances, and every year an average of 1,800 calls made to the Police Department are for noise complaints. Noise complaints rise every fall during football season and as new students arrive, then level off through the spring semester. A majority of calls are found in the core of

Housing Condition Definitions from 1997 Comprehensive Plan

Good: Satisfactory or better condition. There is no visible evidence of physical or cosmetic problems.

Deteriorating: Visibly in need of structural and/or cosmetic repairs and may not be in compliance with existing City codes.

A "deteriorating" unit can be reasonably repaired to be brought into code compliance.

A "deteriorating" dwelling unit could exhibit roof damage, foundation cracks, damage to structural elements, damage to permanent improvements such as driveways, patios, and siding, extensive peeling paint, neglected/overgrown landscaping, or similar problems. Without repair or maintenance, a "deteriorating" unit could quickly become "dilapidated."

Dilapidated: Visibly severe structural problems that threaten the health and safety of their occupants, and warrant condemnation or removal. "Dilapidated" structures could require extensive repairs and rebuilding in excess of the structure's market value.

A "dilapidated" dwelling unit could exhibit extensive roof damage, foundation shifting/movement, extensive damage to structural elements, extensive damage to permanent improvements, exposed wall systems, non-maintained landscaping, or similar problems.

Housing Condition Definitions from 2005 Consolidated Plan

Excellent: Houses that have been built in the last five years. These houses were well maintained and did not obviously require any repairs.

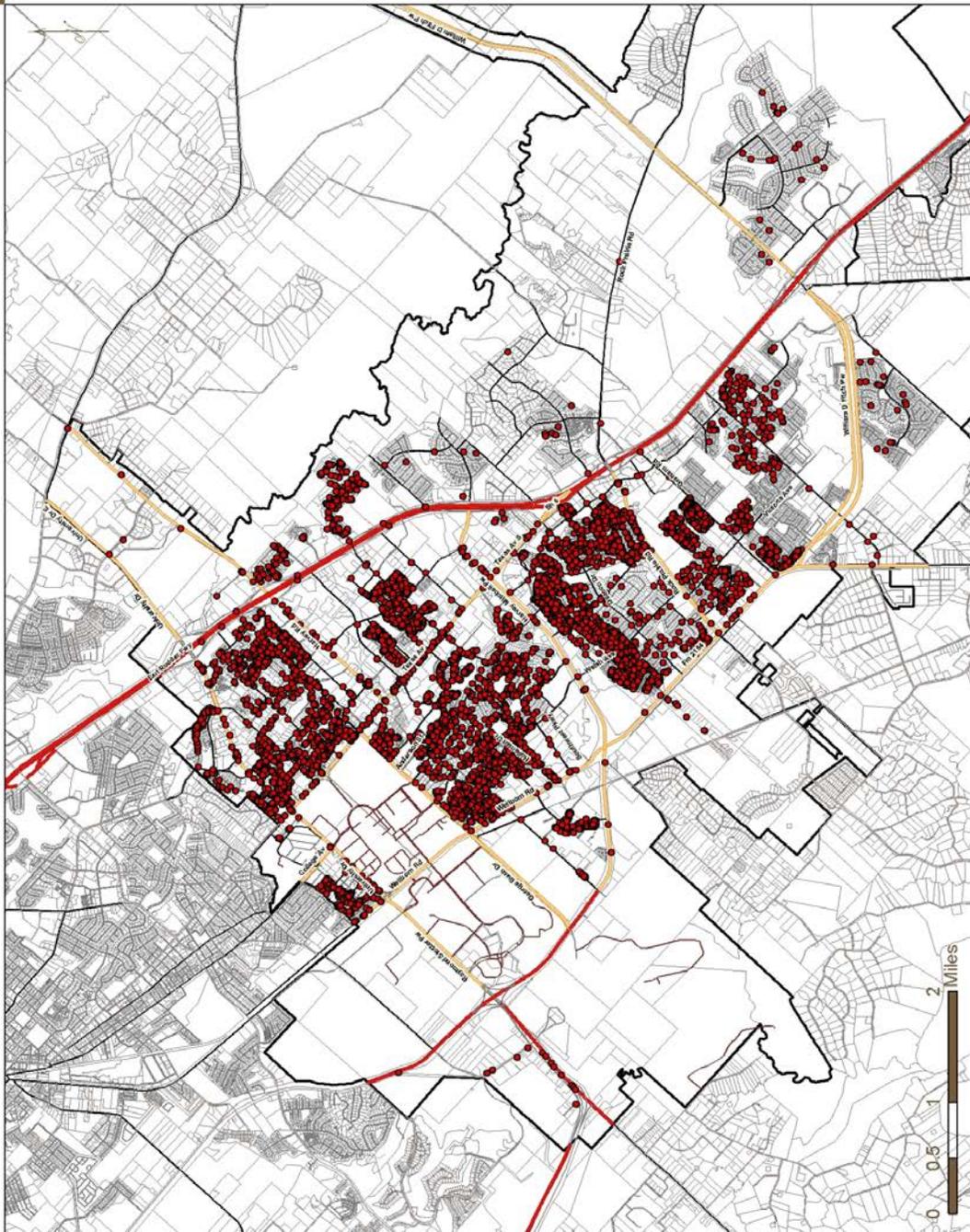
Conservable: Houses that are currently maintained and in generally good repair. Any required work is minor and can be accomplished in one weekend. Improvements include painting and repair of screens.

Substandard: Houses that require significant repair. A substandard unit is one that need additional repairs that are more than required in normal maintenance such as a damaged wall, plumbing problems, broken windows and overall general repairs.

Dilapidated: Houses that do not provide safe or adequate shelter and endanger the health, safety, and wellbeing of the occupants. Repair costs could exceed 50% of the value of the house. Such units have one or more critical defects or a combination of a number of deficiencies to the extent as to require considerable repair or inadequate construction. Defects, in addition to those listed above for substandard units include: Holes, open cracks, loose, rotten, or missing materials over large areas of the foundation, walls, or roof Sagging roof ridges, eaves, or out of plumb walls; Extensive damage caused by fire, storm, flooding, termites, etc.

Map 3.2
Comprehensive Plan
Code Enforcement Cases
2008-2009

- Legend**
- 2008-2009
 - City Limits



SOURCE: City of College Station Planning & Development Services Department

the City, but noise concerns can be found throughout the City (see [Map 3.3, Noise Violations](#)).

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

During the comprehensive planning process, College Station citizens identified several issues facing the City in promoting attractive and livable neighborhoods. At the forefront is the community relationship with Texas A&M University and the rental market centered around student housing. Neighborhood traffic management, parks and greenways, infill and adjacent land uses, and neighborhood planning were also considered important.

The Town/Gown Relationship

As the cornerstone of the community, Texas A&M University significantly contributes to community identity. With room for less than one quarter of the 48,000 person student body in on-campus housing, student housing will continue to be provided around the community. Multi-family units make up 56% of all residential units in College Station (see [Map 3.4, Multi-Family Areas](#)), and economic conditions have led to the conversion of single-family homes into rental properties.

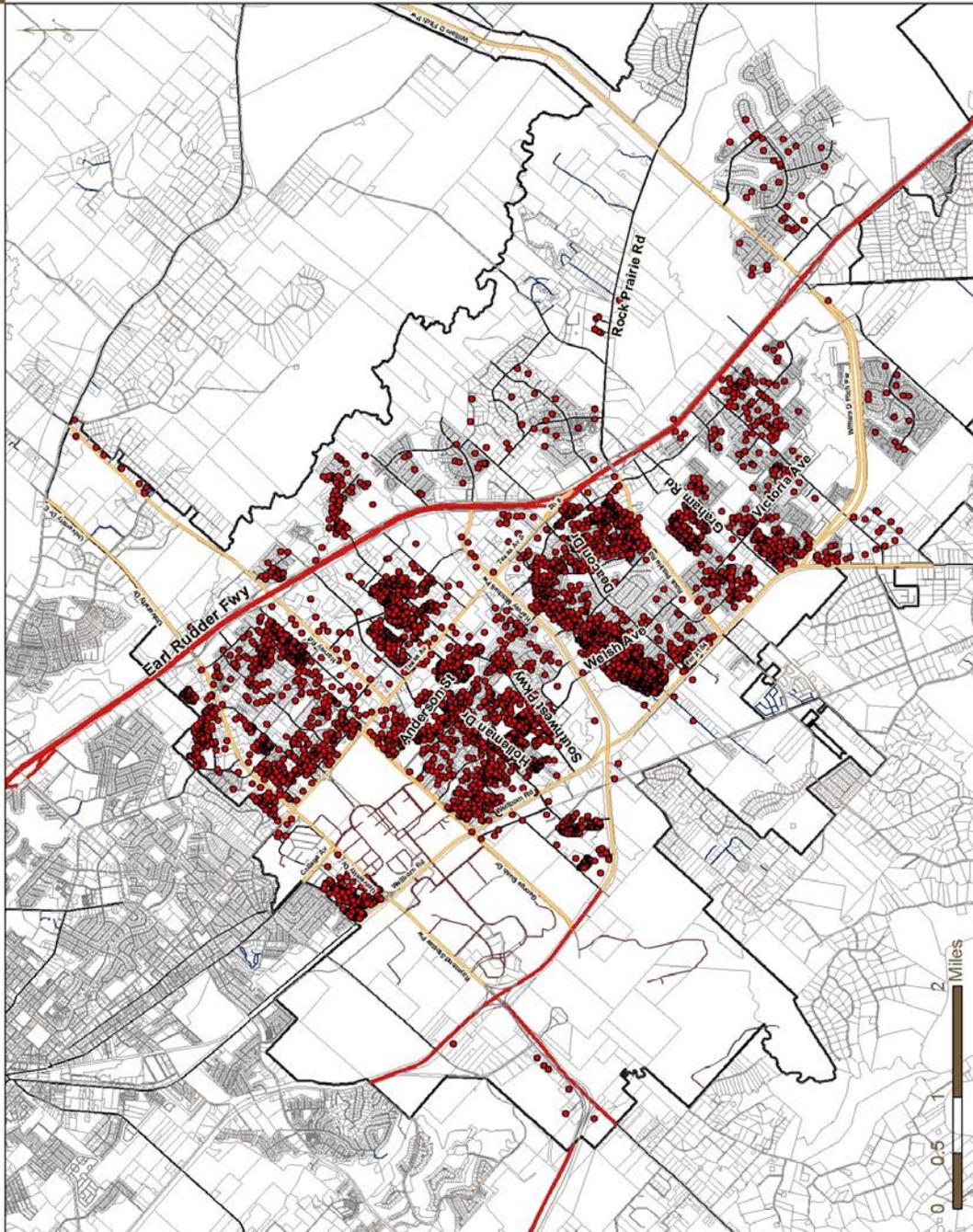
These conversions have sparked a number of policy debates over the years, most recently through the Strong and Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative in the winter of 2007/8. Working with neighborhoods, developers, investors, students, and University administrators, College Station staff identified a number of issues related to the influx of renters into traditionally single-family neighborhoods:

- **Noise.** One of the most discussed issues by homeowners regarding tenant properties in single-family neighborhoods was the noise generated from loud stereos, parties, and other social gatherings. While current ordinances restrict noise that can be heard beyond common property lines after 10 p.m., there is a perceived lack of enforcement from residents who make complaints. The College Station Police fielded over 1,800 loud party calls in 2007, with the majority during the fall semester.
- **Parking.** Generally, parking issues revolve around the lack of adequate off-street parking for three to four drivers in a house. With large parties and social events, on- and off-street parking becomes a major concern for emergency vehicle access as well as the allowance of parking for other residents. A few neighborhoods have requested to restrict parking on one or both sides of the street due to lack of access. Another concern is parking on lawns and blocking driveways, both of which are currently prohibited.



Map 3.3
Comprehensive Plan
Noise Violations
2000 - 2008

- Legend**
- Noise Violations
 - City Limits



SOURCE: City of College Station Planning & Development Services Department

- **Property Maintenance.** Owner residents have expressed concerns about the lack of maintenance of tenant properties. This includes everything from routine repairs to maintaining landscaping. While there has not been an established correlation between the maintenance of tenant properties and owner-occupied properties, property maintenance will continue to be a concern for older neighborhoods as the housing stock ages. The City has adopted the 2006 International Building Code which includes a Property Maintenance Code. Several enforcement actions have been taken since the code became effective in June 2007.



Property maintenance has a significant impact on neighborhood character. These pictures represent two extremes in the maintenance of homes in older, established neighborhoods.



- **Communication.** Effective communication is one of the central challenges in maintaining productive relationships between the City and neighborhoods, and between neighbors. While some neighborhoods have open communication with all of their residents and with the City, several others have commented on problems with engaging their renter population and obtaining information from the City.
- **Sprawl.** Previous efforts by the City have tried to focus dense, rental development catering to students in close proximity to the University.

However, since most of these areas are built out, greenfield development, including multi-family and rental subdivisions, are moving further south, away from campus.

These issues are most apparent in areas close to the University, but examples are present across the entire City. Tension regarding these issues is most apparent where tenant-occupied homes are not the majority housing type in the neighborhood. Established neighborhoods often view the conversion to rental or investment homes as a threat to the integrity and identity of neighborhoods.

The student housing and rental market also poses significant challenges in building and sustaining neighborhood associations. Most renters within College Station are students – a transient population. It becomes difficult to implement long-term solutions and lasting organizations that serve a population that will turnover every four to six years.

Neighborhood Traffic Management

Throughout the public input process for the Comprehensive Plan, transportation concerns ranked high for many citizens. While there is certainly a continued need for new road facilities, many of the comments provided focus on neighborhood transportation issues such as cut-through traffic, on-street parking, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian paths.

One of the biggest concerns is the location of major thoroughfares through and adjacent to neighborhoods. Thoroughfares help to maintain connectivity; however, they have not always been designed in a way that is sensitive to residential uses. In older neighborhoods, thoroughfares are generally fully integrated into the street network, and with a higher degree of connectivity that more evenly disperses traffic. More recent developments place thoroughfares on subdivision edges, which has contributed to the canyon-like effect fences have on roadways and a lack of visual interest on new thoroughfares. Coupled with the increased use of cul-de-sacs and loop streets, many new developments have not provided connectivity that assists in distributing traffic volumes. The Thoroughfare Plan has been designed to provide for streets that can be integrated into neighborhoods, and should be designed to suit the context of the surrounding areas through context sensitive design (see **Chapter 6: Transportation**).

While most College Station neighborhoods have sidewalks (as required of all new residential development), often times they have limited connections to commercial areas or to a larger sidewalk network. Current sidewalk standards allow six-foot sidewalks to be located at back of curbs or four-foot sidewalk with a planted buffer. The City's 1999 Greenways Master Plan calls for major trail systems; however, only pieces of those trails have been acquired and/or built. Most through-City bicycle traffic is accommodated on bike lanes and routes on existing City roads.

Neighborhood Parks and Greenways

Neighborhood parks often serve as the center of interaction between neighbors. Homes adjoining a park typically maintain higher property values than other homes in the same neighborhood. Continuing to provide neighborhood parks and recreation services is important to maintaining community identity.

College Station's nationally-accredited and award-winning parks system helps to shape the character and identity of the neighborhoods that surround them. Providing active and passive recreational spaces, hiking, entertainment, and educational opportunities, College Station parks are central to the community. Both of College Station's earliest neighborhoods developed with integrated

Greenways are linear open space corridors that follow natural features such as creeks and rivers and their floodplains or man-made features such as utility, road or rail corridors. Greenways are a resource that serve a variety of functions including but not limited to floodplain management, protection of open space and wildlife and plant habitats. Trails within a greenway can provide alternate transportation, recreation and health benefits. Greenway trails also create connections to parks, neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, cultural and historical areas and shopping centers.

parks – Brison Park in Southside and Thomas Park in Eastgate. College Station’s citizens continue to have high expectations for the provision of park facilities and the development of new facilities (see **Chapter 5: Parks, Greenways, and the Arts**).



Brison Park was developed as an integral component of the College Park subdivision in the 1920s. This commitment to the preservation and provision of open space and parks is still alive in College Station today.

Not all open spaces are parks. Greenways provide much of the natural open space in and around the City, and are largely focused around the floodplain. In addition to flood control, greenways also provide for natural buffers between adjacent land uses and connect other parks and open space throughout the community. Although there has been preservation of some floodplain through the City’s Greenways program, the City has seen development encroach into the

floodplain. Overall, there is general public opposition to developing in the floodplain, especially around existing residential development. The 2009 Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways plan (proposed as part of **Chapter 5: Parks, Greenways, and the Arts**) will specifically address ways to encourage connectivity of greenways and methods for the conservation and acquisition of those properties.

In addition to parks and greenways, public and private landscaping contributes to the attractiveness of the City’s neighborhoods. Neighborhoods in the core of College Station have dense landscaping and mature trees. Many citizens have expressed the desire to minimize clear-cutting and preserve existing stands of trees. This would be especially beneficial for new neighborhoods as they would have established landscaping rather than small trees and shrubs that take many years to mature. The City currently has streetscaping requirements for multi-family and non-residential construction on private property, and may consider expanding these to single-family development. The City has also increased its own efforts, making streetscaping a requirement on all City-constructed thoroughfares.

Infill and Adjacent Land Uses

Adjacent land uses have an impact on neighborhood character and identity. Non-residential and multi-family properties can develop out of character with adjacent single-family residences. Lighting, noise, and traffic are just some of the issues that arise, as well as the aesthetic issues of non-residential buildings adjacent to single-family homes. Buffering, architectural, and lighting standards are currently in place for

As Amended 12-10-15 | Neighborhood Integrity

non-residential uses in the City. These standards were adopted in 2003 and 2004; however, neighborhoods often feel these standards are insufficient to deal with incompatible adjacent uses.

These uses can be accessible to the neighborhood and developed in a way that provides a seamless transition from residential to non-residential uses. Small-scale office or neighborhood retail uses are appropriate directly adjacent to neighborhoods provided that they are an integrated component of the neighborhood with adequate buffering and transition for noise, light, and parking intrusions. Multi-family uses should also be designed as a component of the neighborhood instead of as islands of development with no relationship to their neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods also face intrusion from out-of-character single-family infill development. As College Station attracts more retirees and alumni back to the community and as property values increase, areas close to the University will become targets for redevelopment. Already, older homes in the Southside neighborhood have been torn down in favor of larger homes – some serving as weekend homes for alumni – changing the character and identity of that neighborhood.

With an increase of teardowns, gentrification is becoming a more relevant issue than in the past. The City should evaluate the impact of single-lot redevelopment on existing residents – taking care to minimize the displacement of permanent residents priced out of their neighborhoods as property values increase. This may become more relevant in the core neighborhoods closest to the University as older housing stock become the focus of rehabilitation and infill efforts.

Historic Preservation

The history and heritage of College Station is an important component of defining its identity. The original neighborhoods of College Station have faced changes since they first developed for professors and University staff. The City recognizes historic homes and buildings through its local Historic Marker program, which provides the property owners with social recognition and the public with some historic educational benefits; however, the marker status does not offer property protection or additional regulation.

College Station recently adopted a Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinance. As part of this effort, a historic resources windshield survey was also conducted for two areas of the City (see **Map 3.5, Historic Resources Windshield Survey Areas**). The resources survey includes brief



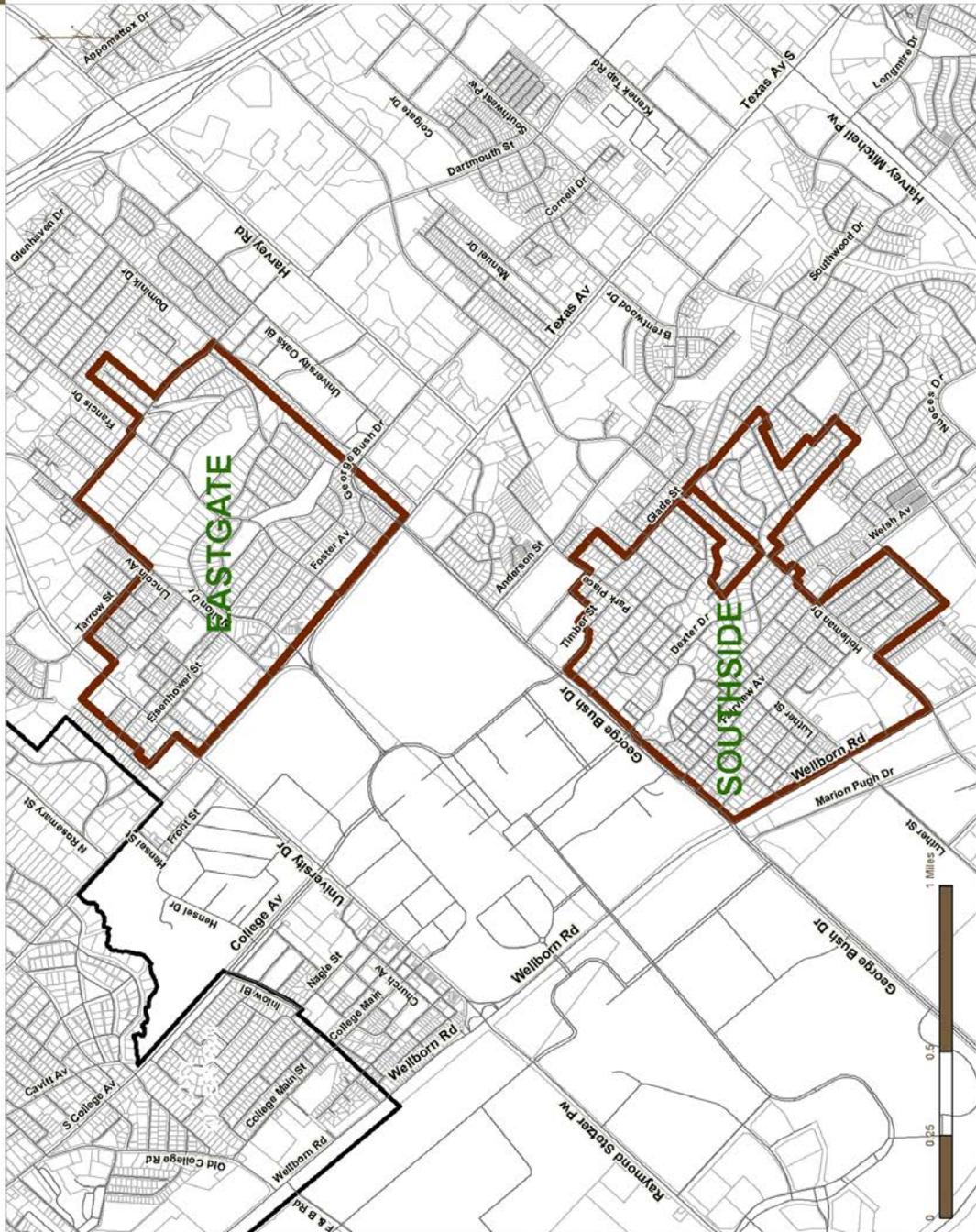
Gentrification is a process of redevelopment that results in the displacement of the original residents of a neighborhood due to increased property values. Gentrification occurs when homes and land are redeveloped in an existing neighborhood and cause a subsequent rise in adjacent property values that existing residents may not have the income to pay. Socio-economic shifts can result in changes in the original neighborhood's culture and character.

College Station Comprehensive Plan

Map 3.5
Comprehensive Plan
Historical Resources
Windshield Survey
2008

Legend

- Survey Areas
- City Limits



SOURCE: City of College Station Planning & Development Services Department

As Amended 12-10-15 | Neighborhood Integrity

histories; statements on architectural, historic and cultural resources of significance; and maps detailing areas within the survey that best represent potential historic districts.

A comprehensive historic preservation plan would assist in prioritizing the City's preservation efforts. A historic preservation plan should include continued research on the City's historic areas and properties, identify new areas to survey, and identify assistance and incentives for preservation efforts. The plan should also identify ways to educate and communicate to the public the importance of historic preservation.

New Neighborhoods

New development plays a key role in the changing character of the City. New residential neighborhoods can have an impact on traffic patterns, property values, and quality of life. A number of College Station's most recently developed neighborhoods have been developed primarily as rental property. Houses are built with four bedrooms and four bathrooms to appeal to investors and parents looking to purchase and rent to students. It is common that within months of completion of the initial phases, parking, noise, trash, and other code violations become problematic, negatively impacting the quality of life of residents and surrounding neighborhoods. New standards for high-density residential areas are needed to address these issues.

New residential subdivisions should also be designed to fit within the existing fabric of the community and designed to complement the natural environment. Sustainable neighborhoods should be developed with integrated parks that are easily and safely reached on foot or bicycle and have identifiable borders and entries. Development policies should encourage the clustering of homes to reduce environmental impacts on sensitive areas like floodplains and provide for common areas of recreation and play that are easily accessible to residents. Perimeter treatment standards for fences, signage, and landscape may be used to provide unique identity and distinct borders for new neighborhoods. Context sensitive designs for thoroughfares should encourage buildings to face onto streets where practicable, and provide adequate multi-modal transportation options to and through the neighborhood. Additionally, connectivity in and around neighborhoods should be encouraged to help disperse traffic rather than funnel it onto one or two major roads.

Neighborhood Planning

The City of College Station currently coordinates services for neighborhoods through its Neighborhood Services Division. Neighborhood Services was created in 1999 out of a need for neighborhood planning, as evidenced in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan. Neighborhood Services originally focused on neighborhood plans,



producing the Eastside Small Area Action Plan and the Eastgate Neighborhood Plan. Currently, Neighborhood Services focuses on promoting the development of neighborhood and homeowner associations and currently serves to provide assistance to 54 of these registered associations (see **Map 3.6, Neighborhood Partnerships**).

The City should take a more comprehensive and continually-active approach to establishing a cohesive neighborhood planning program that includes planning initiatives tied to the neighborhood planning areas set out in **Chapter 2: Community Character**, a single point of contact for neighborhood organizations in problem solving, and education and outreach programs to neighborhoods and residents about City services and training opportunities.

The City should focus on providing leadership training and assistance in capacity building for neighborhood associations. Neighborhood-focused services should begin tracking community identity and character indicators to help identify neighborhoods in transition so that the City can allocate resources to specific areas of need.

Most importantly, the City should enhance its public engagement process through additional public education and outreach. Many of the issues that typically arise in the development process that frustrate neighborhoods happen because of a lack of communication and a lack of knowledge about the process. A comprehensive education and outreach program should be developed that provides opportunities to learn about neighborhood planning and the overall development process.

Existing Regulations

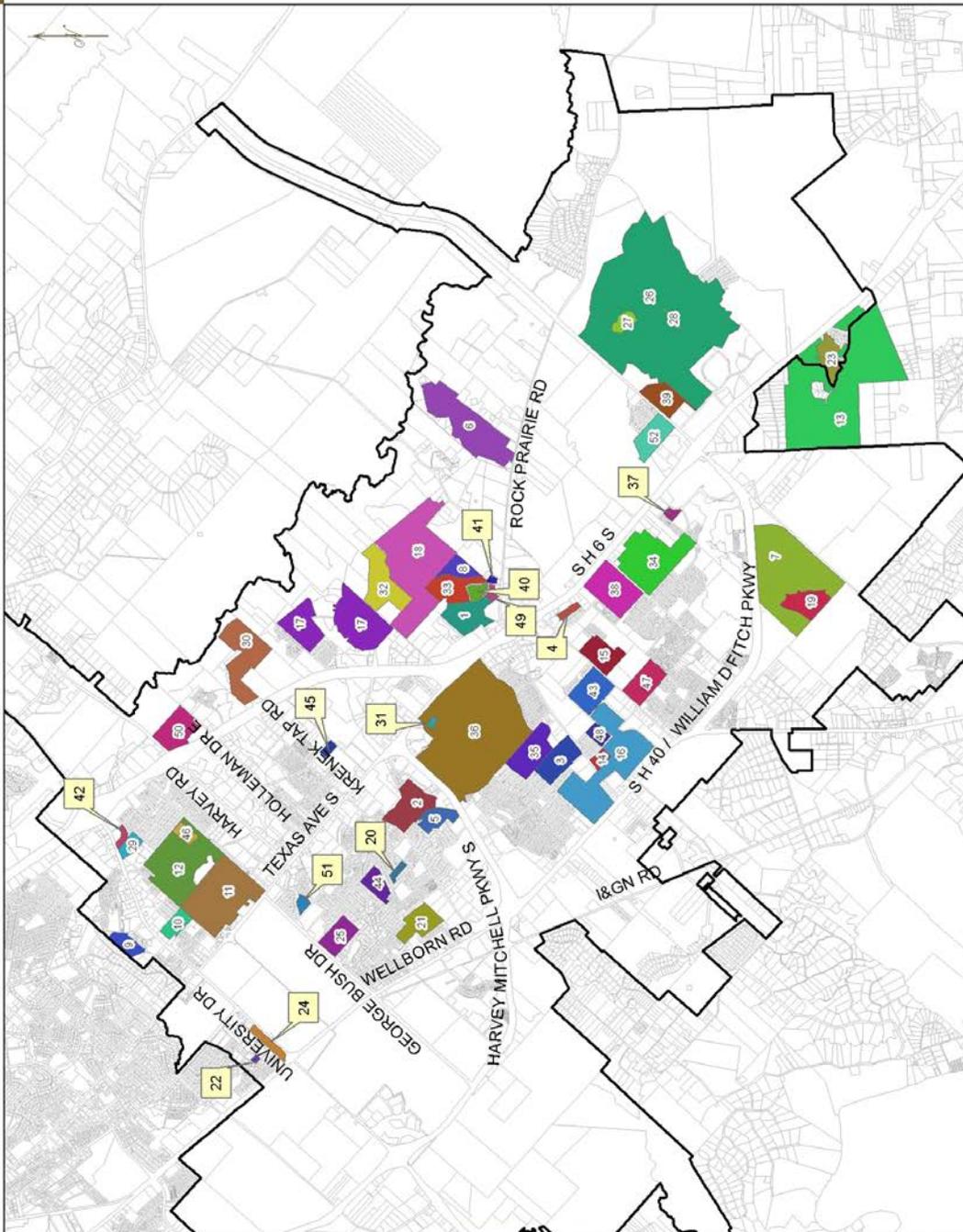
The City has a variety of existing regulations aimed at preserving neighborhood integrity. The most recent ordinances passed by City Council include the Historic Preservation Enabling Ordinance and the Single-Family Overlay Ordinance. The Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted in September 2008 to assist in the preservation of College Station's unique historical assets. The Single-Family Overlays were developed to help mitigate some of the issues associated with teardowns in established neighborhoods. There are two types of overlays, the Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay and the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (see descriptions on page 3-18). Each is intended to assist neighborhoods in establishing consistent setbacks, building mass, lot coverage, and tree preservation in established neighborhoods. Currently, the City has one Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay, but it does not have any historic districts.



College Station Comprehensive Plan

Map 3.6
Comprehensive Plan
Neighborhood
Partnerships
of College Station

- Legend**
- 1-Lebanon
 - 2-Ole Creek
 - 3-Randon Heights
 - 4-Bridle Gate Estates
 - 5-Camelot
 - 6-Carter Lake
 - 7-Castlegate
 - 8-Chadwick
 - 9-Chimney Hill
 - 10-College Hills
 - 11-College Hills Estates
 - 12-College Hills Woodlands
 - 13-Core of Nacogdoch
 - 14-Denonshire
 - 15-Dove Crossing
 - 16-Eldersis
 - 17-Emerald Forest
 - 18-Fairfire
 - 19-Gardens at Castlegate
 - 20-Lawyer Street
 - 21-Lincoln Center
 - 22-Louise St
 - 23-Nacogdoch
 - 24-Northgate District Association
 - 25-Oakwood
 - 26-Pebble Creek
 - 27-Pebble Creek Garden
 - 28-Pebble Creek Palo
 - 29-Post Oak Forest
 - 30-Rainree
 - 31-Regency South
 - 32-Sawdust
 - 33-Shadowcrest
 - 34-Southern Plantation
 - 35-Southwood Valley
 - 36-Southwood Valley
 - 37-Spring Creek Townhomes
 - 38-Springbrook
 - 39-Stone Forest
 - 40-Stonebridge
 - 41-Stonebridge Court
 - 42-Sunmeigen Dr - Glen Haven
 - 43-Sun Meadows
 - 44-The Knoll
 - 45-Terrace Pines
 - 46-University Preserve
 - 47-Westfield Village
 - 48-Williams Court
 - 49-Wellshire
 - 50-Wellwood
 - 51-Wolf Pen Creek
 - 52-Woodland Hills



SOURCE: City of College Station Planning & Development Services Department

Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay (NPO)

This district is intended to provide standards that preserve single-family neighborhoods by imposing neighborhood-specific yard, lot, and open space regulations that reflect the existing character of the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay does not prevent construction of new single-family structures or the renovation, remodeling, repair or expansion of existing single-family structures, but, rather, ensures that new single-family structures are compatible with existing single-family structures.

– UDO Section 5.9.D.1

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO)

The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCO) is intended to protect and preserve single-family neighborhoods through a district that is focused on the specific needs of the neighborhood. NCO districts are based on in-depth study of the existing neighborhood conditions, and should be used to protect unique assets and qualities of the neighborhood. Conservation districts may be used for neighborhoods that offer a distinct character that its residents and the City wish to preserve and protect. It differs from the Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay in that it allows neighborhoods to choose from a variety of standards to address neighborhood specific issues.

– UDO Section 5.9.D.2

The City has adopted the 2006 International Building Codes that include a Property Maintenance Code and a Residential Code. These ordinances cover the minimum maintenance standards expected in the City, and set out the standards for new construction for residential homes. The City does not have any codes that address material or landscaping requirements for single-family residential construction. Buffer requirements and height limitations exist in the City for multi-family and non-residential development located adjacent to existing single-family. These requirements establish minimum setbacks and buffer area, fencing, and landscaping standards that must be met to provide a visual barrier between these uses.

The City currently has ordinances that regulate the number of unrelated persons that may reside in a dwelling unit through its definition of a family in the Unified Development Ordinance. Currently, that number is four unrelated persons.

In 2009, the City began requiring the registration of single-family and duplex rental properties. The purpose of the registration is to provide the City with a local point of contact for rental residences that can be used to address code enforcement and policing issues. The City also adopted regulations detailing host responsibilities for parties held in residential areas holding both the property owner and any other residents of the property responsible for noise, sanitation, and parking violations as a result of a party.

GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

College Station residents have been clear in their desire to promote strong and sustainable neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee has addressed neighborhood integrity through establishing the goal for the Comprehensive Plan *to protect the long-term viability and appeal of established neighborhoods*. The associated strategies and actions outline the steps the City will take in meeting this goal.

Strategy 1: Identify, protect, and enhance elements that contribute positively to neighborhood identity.

- **Asset Mapping.** Identify and map community wide assets that contribute to College Station’s identity as exhibited in **Chapter 2: Community Character**.

- **Neighborhood Specific Planning.** Utilize neighborhood plans to further identify and outline protection options for neighborhood-specific elements that contribute to neighborhood integrity.
- **Strategic Long-Range Planning.** Adopt recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan that help establish and protect neighborhood identity.
- **Sustainability.** Promote sustainable design of developing neighborhoods.
- **Historic Preservation.** Establish a historic preservation program that includes preservation ordinances, design guidelines, and educational and promotional programs.
- **Neighborhood Associations.** Encourage establishment of homeowner, neighborhood, and tenant associations for all residential developments to ensure a direct, cooperative means for residents of an area to maintain neighborhood standards.
- **Predictable Infill.** Continue to utilize and adapt Single-Family Overlay regulations to protect neighborhood development patterns.
- **Environmental Protection.** Develop regulations and incentives that protect and preserve the natural environment in and around College Station including tree preservation, floodplain and greenway management, design flexibility, and growth management policies.
- **Transportation Options.** Promote multi-modal, context sensitive transportation connectivity to improve safety on neighborhood streets through the adoption of the Thoroughfare Plan; the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan; development regulations; and capital improvement plans that insure these facilities are constructed in accordance with adopted plans.
- **Enhanced Aesthetics.** Develop standards for streetscaping, perimeter treatment, and signage for new residential subdivisions.
- **Neighborhood Funding Support.** Continue to fund and expand the Neighborhood Grants program for neighborhood activities such as gateways, landscaping, and other permit application fees.
- **Attractive Public Facilities.** Enhance the standards for maintenance of public facilities such as streets and parks to ensure that these facilities are attractive assets for a neighborhood.

Strategy 2: Identify and minimize elements that detract from community identity.

- **Neighborhood Specific Planning.** Utilize neighborhood plans to help identify neighborhood-specific issues that detract from neighborhood identity and integrity, and develop options to minimize those issues.
- **Housing Maintenance Trends.** Maintain inventories of housing conditions by neighborhood to monitor trends in housing maintenance and upgrades, as well as signs of deterioration.
- **University Growth.** Monitor student enrollment and student housing trends to track impacts on the local housing market, including pressure for additional student-focused housing in new locations.
- **Code Enforcement.** Create an effective code enforcement program that expediently and efficiently resolves code violations, including:
 - Develop methods to address noise violations – including working with Texas A&M University police – to establish weekend patrols for noise, as well as public intoxication and other violations.
 - Create a system for the public to monitor enforcement complaints and track their resolution.
 - Prioritization of enforcement activities based on input from neighborhood plans.
- **Property Maintenance Standards.** Increase enforcement resources to ensure that minimum property standards are being upheld.
- **Public Maintenance Standards.** Enhance the standards for maintenance of public facilities such as streets and parks to ensure that these facilities are attractive assets for a neighborhood.
- **Absentee-Owner Housing Policies.** Adopt the strategies found in the Strong and Sustainable Neighborhoods Report for managing the impacts of rental and absentee-owner housing. – *Item complete.*
- **Parking Standards.** Develop programs and policies to better manage on-street parking such as:
 - Coordinate with Texas A&M University regarding construction activities and/or special events to prevent excessive on-street parking in adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Consider options to streamline neighborhood traffic management processes to address traffic calming and parking concerns in established neighborhoods.

Strategy 3: Identify and implement tools to ensure that infill or redevelopment adjacent to or within a neighborhood is sensitive to its surroundings.

- **Asset Mapping.** Identify and map areas for redevelopment as outlined in **Chapter 2: Community Character**.
- **Redevelopment.** Utilize neighborhood plans to further identify appropriate infill and redevelopment options, as well as to develop appropriate protection options for redevelopment that is incompatible with neighborhood plans.
- **Gentrification.** Create methods to identify, track, and minimize the undesirable effects of gentrification in established neighborhoods.
- **Compatible Infill.** Establish development regulations to address the compatibility of infill or redevelopment in established neighborhoods and the transition of land uses around the fringes of such neighborhoods, including regulations relating to height, setback, buffering, architectural style, lot coverage, landscape protection, and other development standards.
- **Regulatory Obstacles.** Evaluate City codes to identify and remove regulatory obstacles to desired, compatible infill development and revitalization activity.

Strategy 4: Develop, implement and maintain, through regular review, neighborhood plans.

- **Neighborhood Programming.** Establish a neighborhood program that provides a single point of entry into the City organization oriented to addressing neighborhood issues and coordination of all City programs.
- **Public Engagement.** Create communication, education, and training programs for neighborhood representatives to encourage stability, cross-communication, and development of skills to help neighborhoods make the best use of the resources available to them. Develop programs to increase public engagement in the planning process to keep citizens aware of development issues as they arise so that there is adequate time for review and understanding by the citizens before construction occurs.
- **Data Monitoring.** Improve data collection and mapping regarding neighborhood opportunities and challenges.
- **Market Analysis.** Monitor nationwide trends in private development of student-oriented housing, as well as strategies used by other cities with major universities to address compatibility concerns associated with the location and design of such development.

- **Neighborhood Specific Planning.** Establish neighborhood-specific plans which provide clear guidance for evaluating the appropriateness and compatibility of individual developments and their particular intensities and impacts within the context of the existing, desired community identity and conditions.
- **Character-Based Development.** Adopt a character-based approach to development regulation as outlined in **Chapter 2: Community Character** to increase flexibility and ease and encourage the implementation of planned developments which feature mixing of housing types and integration of other supportive uses and neighborhood amenities in a well-designed setting.