

INTRODUCTION



The College Station Comprehensive Plan: 2009-2030 is a statement of the community's vision for the future and provides strategic direction to guide change providing for growth while maintaining a high quality of life. This Plan is comprehensive in the true sense of the word. Every aspect of the City's planning strategy is tied closely to the Vision created through intensive community participation. This Vision guides the City's initiatives, organizational and departmental business plans, and the responsibilities of City personnel and appointed boards. The Comprehensive Plan is the guiding policy document for the decisions made on behalf of the community.



College Station's Comprehensive Plan was several years and thousands of citizen volunteer hours in the making. It represents how the citizens of College Station want their community to grow.

BACKGROUND

The City of College Station is located in Brazos County in south-central Texas. The City lies within the Dallas-Houston-San Antonio triangle and is within a four-hour drive of more than 14 million people.

College Station is home to a diverse population, unique neighborhoods, a quality school district, preserved natural areas, and great access to shopping, recreation, and the arts, all adding to its unique quality of life. College Station has over 1,300 acres of beautifully maintained public parks and sports facilities, provides several nature trails, miles of bike paths, and accommodates sports leagues of various kinds, and has an enviable record of hosting State and National tournaments. College Station consistently reports one of the lowest crime rates in the State, making it one of the safest, most family-friendly places in Texas. The College Station Independent School District is one of the top 10 school districts in Texas, with *Newsweek Magazine* recently naming A&M Consolidated High School one of America's Top High Schools (2008).

College Station is also home to Texas A&M University, one of a select few universities with land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant designations and offering a number of degree programs ranked among the top 10 in the Nation. Texas A&M University recently ranked third nationally in "Best Value" among public universities by *U.S. News and World Report* (2008). With a student enrollment approaching 50,000 and a 5,000-acre campus, it is the State's second largest public institution of higher education as well as the fifth largest in the Nation. Texas A&M University brings diversity of race, culture and nationality to College Station, reflecting much of the vibrancy, tradition and spirit that make it a special place. College Station benefits from



tourism fueled by collegiate sporting events at Texas A&M University and the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, one of the region’s most popular tourist attractions.

College Station businesses and residents enjoy a strong local economy. College Station hosts the region’s largest employer (Texas A&M University), a significant amount of the region’s retail activities, and most of the region’s tourist attractions and hospitality accommodations.

What is Planning?

Planning is the process that considers the physical, social and economic aspects of the community and examines the connections between them. Planning is how we make decisions about the future of our city. The goal of planning is to further the welfare of our community by creating convenient, equitable, healthy, efficient, economically viable and attractive places for current and future generations.

LEGAL BASIS

The TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, SECTION 213.002, allows municipalities to adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the municipality and to promote sound development, public health, safety, and welfare. Municipalities may define the content and design of the comprehensive plan, which may include, but is not limited to, content relating to land use, transportation, and public facilities, and may be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

A municipality may also define the relationship between its comprehensive plan and development regulations by providing standards for determining the consistency required between the two. The City of College Station requires that zoning changes be in compliance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The City has established and appointed a joint Planning and Zoning Commission. The TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE tasks the Commission with the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan and providing a recommendation to the City Council for action. The Commission is also responsible for reviewing changes or amendments to the Plan and making recommendations to the Council on the same.

PLANNING AREA

For the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan, the planning area is described as the City limits of College Station, as it exists in 2009, and a five-mile radius around the City (the future Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of the City). The City is authorized, by TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, SECTION 42.021, to extend aspects of its development regulations into its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, a three and one-half mile radius beyond the current City limits. Once College Station’s population exceeds 100,000 residents, the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction will become five miles. It is projected that College Station’s population will exceed 100,000 within the timeframe of this Plan.

The planning area encompasses approximately 220 square miles and includes land in portions of Brazos, Grimes and Burlason counties. The

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction directly abuts the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of the City of Bryan to the north and lies very near the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of the City of Navasota to the south.

PLANNING HISTORY IN COLLEGE STATION

College Station has engaged in City planning since its inception in 1938, establishing its first Zoning Commission and adopting a zoning ordinance shortly after incorporation. The earliest document that resembles a comprehensive plan for the City is the Brazos Area Plan, a regional-scale plan dating from the early 1960s. The City adopted several interim reports in the mid-1970s before adopting its first City-specific plan in 1975. The first contemporary comprehensive plan was adopted in 1980 and updated in 1989. In 1997, the City adopted the current Comprehensive Plan, which has undergone numerous updates and amendments since its adoption.

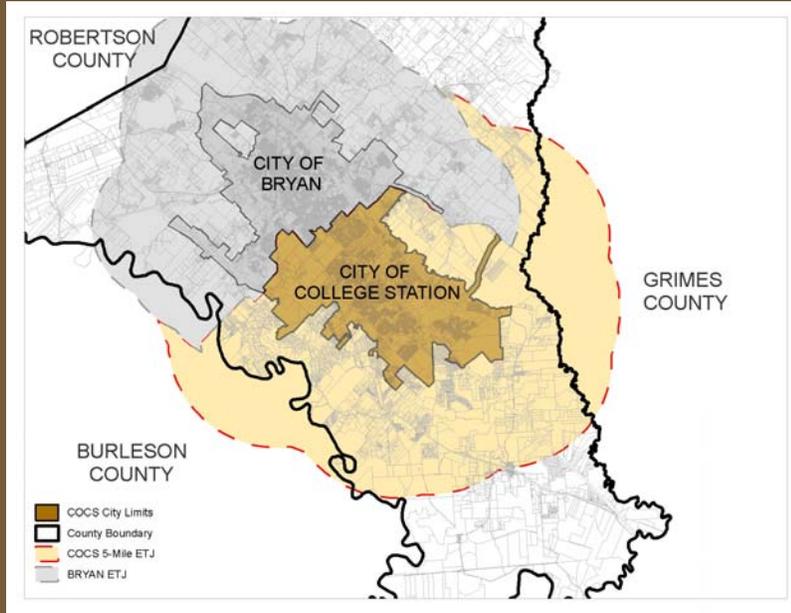
A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Although the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1997, work began on the Plan in 1994, so information used to craft specific recommendations and actions dates back even further than the Plan's adoption date. Since 1997, approximately 20 small area and neighborhood plans have been developed in an attempt to keep the Plan up to date and relevant to College Station residents. However, the Comprehensive Plan has not been reviewed holistically since its adoption.

College Station has experienced significant growth since the Plan was adopted in 1997. College Station's population has increased by almost 50%, building permits have been issued for over 6,500 single-family homes, and College Station has increased in size by over 7,000 acres.

As of 2009, the City consists of over 49 square miles and has a population estimated in excess of 90,000 residents. It is estimated that the City has grown by more than 55,000 residents and 27 square miles

FIGURE 1.1
Planning Area



This map represents the planning area for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan. The planning area extends five miles from the City limits in most areas and includes approximately 220 square miles.



What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan is a statement of the community's vision for the future and a guide to achieving that vision. Generally, the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to anticipate growth and to guide that growth in a manner that provides College Station with a balance of land uses that promote economic growth while retaining the quality of life. The Comprehensive Plan is not a "zoning regulation" and it does not affect existing approved zoning. Instead, it provides the foundation for making changes or developing new regulations that implement an identified vision and associated goals and policies.

since 1980. Though population is projected to increase at a more modest pace over the next 20 years, it is still projected to increase by another 40,000 persons by 2030.

In addition, while the number of students continues to increase, the percentage of the population consisting of college-aged residents is decreasing. In 1990, 60% of College Station's population was students; today, that proportion is less than half.

The continued growth that College Station is experiencing can result in various development patterns, each with its own positive and negative aspects. A plan that is current and comprehensive is essential sustaining a high quality of life. The City of College Station Comprehensive Plan builds upon the City's previous efforts at planning and will be used to guide decisions, both public and private, that will shape the City for years to come.

PLANNING PROCESS and PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In 2006, the City Council initiated the process of updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. From the beginning, the City Council has worked to make certain that the Plan reflects the vision and aspirations of the City's residents and responds to the specific opportunities and challenges facing College Station. The City Council has used a variety of methods to engage citizens in the comprehensive planning process.

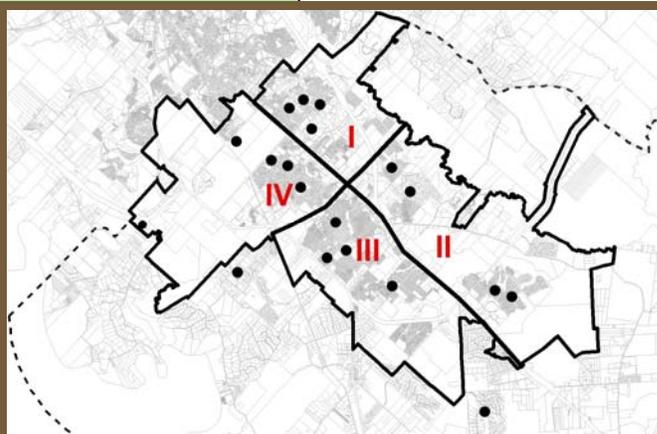
Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

In July 2006, the City Council appointed 18 citizens to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, with five additional members being added in August 2008. The appointments, drawn from more than 100 applicants, represented four geographic areas of the City. Additionally, there were 21 members on the Advisory Committee

who represented the home building industry, Texas A&M University, the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction, and various area organizations and inter-governmental entities such as the City of Bryan and the Texas Department of Transportation.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was established to:

- Advise the Planning and Zoning Commission, City staff, and the consultant team on policy matters and community issues relating to the development of the Comprehensive Plan;



Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) members were chosen from over 100 applications and represent the four quadrants of the City shown above. Representatives from the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and various inter-governmental agencies also served on the Committee.

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- Review draft Plan elements and reports prepared by staff and the consultant team;
- Forward recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission;
- Create subcommittees of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, as needed;
- Monitor and assist public participation and involvement in the comprehensive planning process; and,
- Interact with citizens and citizen groups to develop and promote interest and involvement in the planning process.

Staff Resource Team

A Staff Resource Team was created as an advisory body to the consultant team during the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Team includes representatives from various City departments that will be instrumental in implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Staff Resource Team's responsibilities included:

- Identifying issues and concerns during the development of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Identifying and solving potential problems during future implementation of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Reviewing and recommending modifications as necessary on the policy and program recommendations made in the Plan elements and reports;
- Gathering and disseminating information to and from various City departments; and,
- Serving as advocates and consensus builders during the comprehensive planning process.



The planning process offered numerous public input opportunities, including specific focus group meetings, a Citizens' Congress, a City-wide survey, two Open House events, and various public meetings.

Focus Group Meetings

In October 2006, a series of focus group meetings was held over two days to solicit input and ideas from community residents. More than 100 residents provided input on 13 varied topics ranging from historic preservation to economic development.

The City of College Station
Comprehensive Plan

Citizens Congress

- Entertainment •
- Food •
- Door Prizes •
- Kids' Art Contest •

Share Your Vision!

The City of College Station is hosting a community meeting to gather input on our Comprehensive Plan update. The Plan guides decisions about the future growth and development of the City. In order to create the Plan, **We Need Your Vision For College Station!**

**Monday
December 4, 2006
at 6:00 p.m.
College Station Hilton**

College Station Comprehensive Plan - Your Community, Your Plan!

For more information, please contact
College Station Planning & Development
at 579.764.3570 or by email at
CompPlan@csstx.gov

Visit our website at
www.csstx.gov/CompPlanUpdate
for more information about the
Comprehensive Plan Update

Citizens' Congress

In December 2006, the Citizens' Congress was held, attracting more than 400 residents. At the Congress, residents began shaping the vision and goals contained in this Plan.

City-Wide Survey

In January 2007, a survey was distributed to every home and business in the City with their monthly utility bill. Nearly 2,500 completed surveys were returned, a 9% return rate, which further assisted in the development of the vision and goals contained in this Plan.

Visioning

Beginning in September 2006, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee met regularly to develop the Plan. The Advisory Committee and the Planning and Zoning Commission forwarded the recommended vision statement to the City Council in May

2007. Following the statement's adoption by the City Council, the Advisory Committee prepared working goals that were presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council in August 2007.

Community Open House

In March 2009, two Community Open House events were held in different locations to receive feedback on an overall draft of the Comprehensive Plan. Individual stations were set up to display the various Plan elements and maps, highlight significant action recommendations, address questions, and allow informal dialogue and formal acceptance of public comments and feedback. The open house format was held over several hours on two evenings. Approximately 120 residents attended these events.

First and Next Step Workshops

A series of joint workshops with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council was held over several months, providing an opportunity for their detailed review and consideration of the draft Plan. The last of these workshops included a discussion of implementation, including the identification of Plan implementation priorities, timing, and responsible departments or entities. The outcome of this exercise is incorporated into a summary action table in **Chapter 9: Implementation and Administration**.



Adoption

Two public hearings for formal adoption of the Comprehensive Plan were held in May 2009.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A vision statement is a reflection of the community's desires for the future – and one of the most important parts of the Comprehensive Plan. The vision statement was the first formal product created in the comprehensive planning process; all other elements were developed with the vision as a guide.

FIGURE 1.2 Vision Statement

College Station, the proud home of Texas A&M University and the heart of the Research Valley, will remain a vibrant, forward-thinking, knowledge-based community which promotes the highest quality of life for its citizens by ...

- Ensuring safe, tranquil, clean, and healthy neighborhoods with enduring character;
- Increasing and maintaining the mobility of College Station citizens through a well planned and constructed inter-modal transportation system;
- Expecting sensitive development and management of the built and natural environment;
- Supporting well planned, quality and sustainable growth;
- Valuing and protecting our cultural and historical community resources;
- Developing and maintaining quality cost-effective community facilities, infrastructure and services which ensure our City is cohesive and well connected; and,
- Pro-actively creating and maintaining economic and educational opportunities for all citizens.

College Station will continue to be among the friendliest and most responsive of communities and a demonstrated partner in maintaining and enhancing all that is good and celebrated in the Brazos Valley. It will continue to be a place where Texas and the world come to learn, live, and conduct business!

Why do we need an updated Plan?

The City is updating the Comprehensive Plan in order to determine the City's vision for the future; decide which types of development opportunities are compatible with the vision; determine where and how the City should grow; provide guidance in making land use decisions; preserve and improve the integrity of neighborhoods and overall quality of life; and promote economic development.



This Plan is truly intended to be the Comprehensive Plan for the City of College Station. To that end, the Plan derives its principal direction from the adopted community vision statement. This statement, developed over a period of months, with input from hundreds of community residents, establishes the vision that the citizens of College Station have set forth for the City. This vision statement is the starting point for the Comprehensive Plan. From the vision statement the City Council has developed their strategic initiatives, which, coupled with this Plan, aid in the formation of the City's organizational and departmental business plans. These efforts culminate in the individual actions and responsibilities of the City Council, the City's personnel, and appointed citizen boards and commissions.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

This Plan should be of interest to City residents, home buyers, investors, developers, students, business owners, and others interested in how College Station proposes to respond to the opportunities and challenges likely to appear in the next 20 years.

Specifically, the following chapters are included in the Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 2: Land Use and Community Character

The purpose of this chapter is to establish strategies and actions that enable effective planning for future growth, neighborhood protection,

new development, and redevelopment. Along with the text and illustrations in this chapter, **Map 2.1, Concept Map**, and **Map 2.2, Future Land Use & Character**, depict the strategies visually.

FIGURE 1.3
Green College Station

College Station is clear in its desire to promote a green community through wise land use and resource conservation and the City Council has identified **Green College Station** as one of its strategic issues. Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process, citizens encouraged the protection of resources and the greening of College Station. Because of this, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee has included specific goals, strategies and action recommendations that embrace the ideas of wise land use and resource conservation in the Plan.

College Station's Comprehensive Plan supports and promotes **Green College Station**, including the following ideas:

- **Greening the City through tree planting and preservation**
- **Open space conservation**
- **Preservation of the natural environment – riparian buffers, floodplains, and greenway protection**
- **Public land acquisition – natural features and open space preservation**
- **Green building incentives for private development**
- **Sustainable neighborhood design**
- **Historic preservation**
- **Interconnected multi-modal transportation system – bicycle, pedestrian, transit and greenway connections**
- **Appropriate infill development, redevelopment, reinvestment, rehabilitation and revitalization in the core of the City**
- **Dense mixed-use development in appropriate areas**
- **Natural resource stewardship – conservation, preservation and restoration**
- **Sensitive rehabilitation of infrastructure in the City's core**
- **Consolidated City facilities and services**
- **Facilities and service practices that encourage resource conservation and protection**
- **Reduced urban runoff**
- **Green technologies and practices**
- **Water conservation and re-use**
- **Preservation annexation to preserve rural character**



Chapter 3: Neighborhood Integrity

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.

Chapter 4: Economic Development

This chapter identifies, defines and analyzes the major components and program elements impacting and driving economic development, redevelopment, and reinvestment in College Station. It provides a brief overview of the existing condition of the local economy including an outline of major planning considerations. This chapter also establishes strategies and actions that will promote a strong and diverse economy. Finally, it serves as the foundation for the development of a more detailed economic development master plan and reinvestment strategy.

Chapter 5: Parks, Greenways and the Arts

The purpose of this chapter is to recognize and ensure the continued protection and enhancement of leisure and recreation opportunities available to the residents of College Station through parks, greenways and the arts. This chapter sets the framework for the City's parks and recreation system and greenways program for the next two decades, including the adoption of the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Master Plan and the Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan also discussed in **Chapter 6: Transportation**.

Chapter 6: Transportation

The purpose of this chapter is to ensure orderly and integrated development of the community's transportation network, considering not only facilities for automobiles, but also transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. This chapter includes **Map 6.6, Thoroughfare Plan – Functional Classification**, which identifies the network's roadway needs for the next 20 years. It also includes an overview of the planning considerations associated with the City's transportation needs and a discussion of context sensitive solutions. It also serves as the foundation for the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan.



Chapter 7: Municipal Services and Community Facilities

The purpose of this chapter is to recognize College Station's current service levels and to plan for the expansion of City services such as Police, Fire, Sanitation and various utilities, by providing the foundation for the creation and implementation of the City's various master plans and departmental business plans that are intended to support the planned growth and development pattern described in **Chapter 2: Community Character**.

Chapter 8: Growth Management and Capacity

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the necessary policy guidance and associated strategies and actions to enable the City of College Station to manage its ongoing physical growth and development in a sensible, predictable, and fiscally responsible manner. It highlights the need to encourage additional infill development, absorb additional population in appropriate areas within the current City limits, and manage Extraterritorial Jurisdiction growth.

Chapter 9: Implementation and Administration

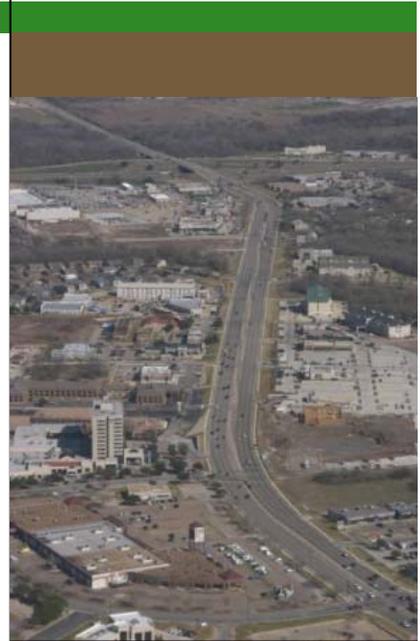
The purpose of this final chapter is to establish accountability for the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and provide guidance on the processes to maintain its relevance to the City and its citizens.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In the development of a comprehensive plan, it is important to have a solid foundation on which to base future expectations. The *College Station: Existing Conditions* report, an appendix to this Plan, provides the background, trends, projections, and assumptions that serve as the existing conditions and context in which the Plan is based.

In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the existing conditions, a number of different types of elements have been identified. These elements include physical characteristics of the natural and built environment as well as demographic and economic profiles of the community. Specifically, this section describes the following topics: background, demographics, economic development, land use, public facilities, and transportation.

The development of the *College Station: Existing Conditions* report was an important and necessary exercise to understand the current state of the City, as well as future opportunities and challenges. Recognition and evaluation of the City's current population and recent population trends provides information that can be used to guide growth and determine future public facility and service demands.



Demographics

The demographics of College Station are slowly shifting. Until recently, college students made up the majority of the City's population. Today, the number of permanent residents living in the City surpasses the number of student residents. Residents of retirement age are the fastest growing segment of the population. In addition, Texas A&M University is growing at a slower rate than the City, further altering the ratio of permanent residents to students. The expectations of and levels of services sought by vested, permanent residents may be different than those that have been previously provided to a historically transient population.

The market may see an increase in the demand for housing to accommodate an aging population, which may offer the opportunity for the City to explore integrated life-cycle housing options.

The current park system is geared to an active population; however, the City may see greater demand for more passive recreation opportunities in the future.

The City may also need to explore the possibility of attracting more full-time, professional employment opportunities to the community as a method of retaining Texas A&M University graduates and attracting other young professionals and families to the area. College Station is unique in that, with the exception of one, all of its leading employers are involved in either public service or the medical sector.

Development

As is expected with the continued development of College Station, traffic has increased exponentially on some of the primary roadways. It is important that the City evaluate its current thoroughfare network and look at alternative transportation methods. Specifically, the City has the opportunity to look at its current subdivision requirements and evaluate the impact that disconnected development (i.e., cul-de-sacs) has had on the traffic levels of its major roadways.

One of the biggest impacts on the future of College Station may be the trend of development in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. If development continues at its current rate and intensity, future economic development opportunities may be lost as available land is cut off from the City by sprawling residential subdivisions.

TABLE 1.1
City of College Station
Projected Growth

Year	Population
2000	67,890
2001	72,020
2002	75,752
2003	78,309
2004	80,214
2005	81,930
2006	84,116
2007	86,227
2008	88,337
2009	90,448
2010	92,559
2011	94,669
2012	96,780
2013	98,891
2014	101,001
2015	103,112
2016	105,223
2017	107,333
2018	109,444
2019	111,555
2020	113,665
2021	115,776
2022	117,887
2023	119,997
2024	122,108
2025	124,219
2026	126,329
2027	128,440
2028	130,551
2029	132,661
2030	134,772

SOURCE: City of College Station
Planning & Development Services

- People aged 50 and older are the fastest growing cohort, with an increase of 84% between 1990 and 2000

Household Size and Composition

- Average 2.32 persons per household
- 58% of households are non-family households
- 25% of all households are non-family households made up of one person
- Only 23% of the households are family households with more than two people

Snapshot

The following are selected facts related to College Station. More detailed information on these topics can be found in *College Station: Existing Conditions*, a report developed in preparation for this Plan and updated on an annual basis.

Population Growth

- Average annual growth rate of over 2.1% since 1990
- 20-year population estimate is approximately 134,000 in 2030

Texas A&M University Growth

- Average 1% annual increase in enrollment since 2000
- Student enrollment is currently projected to cap at 50,000

Age of Population

- Median age is 21.9, due mainly to the large number of college students
- 52% of the population in 2000 was between the ages of 15 and 24





Income

- Household incomes greater than \$50,000 up from 14.1% in 1990 to 26.9% in 2000

Housing

- Total housing stock is over 35,800 units
- Over 9,800 new units have been added to the housing stock since 2000
- Over 5,400 permits for new single-family home construction between 2000 and 2008
- Average home price rose to over \$166,800 in 2008 – up from \$118,600 in 2000
- Median home price was \$144,200 in 2008
- Average monthly inventory was 5.7 months in 2008
- Total number of sales annually has increased over 100% since 2000
- Average rent per square foot for multi-family units is \$0.71
- Average rent per square foot for all Texas metro areas is \$0.77

Housing Occupancy

- Occupancy rate of 95% for all housing types
- 21% of units are owner-occupied
- 91% of persons who live in owner-occupied units are in detached single-family homes
- Over 7,700 people were reported as renting single-family homes in 2000
- 48% of housing units in College Station are renter occupied (not including dormitories), housing 53% of the population
- Overall, 69% of the City's population resides in renter occupied units (including dormitories)

Employment

- Major employers: Texas A&M University, College Station Independent School District, Reynolds & Reynolds, City of College Station, Scott & White, College Station Medical Center



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- 2009 unemployment rate is 4.3%, up slightly from the 2006 annual rate of 4.1%; however, still lower than the Texas and National rates (6.7% and 9%, respectively)

Economic Development

- Approximately 4.64 million square feet of retail space, or 53.32 square feet per capita, which is higher than the National average of 43.3 square feet per capita

ETJ Growth

- 18% of the lots platted between 2000 and 2008 are in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Parks and Recreation

- 51 parks which total 1,305 acres of parkland – 34 neighborhood parks, eight community parks, seven mini parks, two regional parks, and an arboretum
- 14.3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

College Station Independent School District

- Seven elementary schools, two intermediate schools, two middle schools, one alternative campus, and one high school
- 9,202 students enrolled in College Station ISD schools during the 2007-2008 school year

Traffic Volumes

- Decreased in some areas in the core, increased in southern College Station
- Wellborn Road (FM 2154) – 13.5% average annual growth rate of traffic between 2000 and 2006
- University Drive – 10% average annual growth rate of traffic between 2000 and 2006