

CHAPTER 12 – IMPLEMENTATION

Planning is a continuous process. Completion of the Comprehensive Plan is by no means an end in itself; rather it is a new beginning. The purpose of the Implementation chapter is to provide direction and recommendations for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and for continued planning. Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan is the initial steps in achieving the vision articulated in the planning process. Early in the process, **key community issues** were identified and now serve as the basis of goals, objectives and actions, the foundation of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is the City's guide for government officials and citizens in making decisions regarding land use, thoroughfare development, community facilities construction, infrastructure improvements and extensions, park enhancements, and downtown revitalization.

In addition to the goals, objectives and actions, plan implementation includes the following tools. The Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations use the Future Land Use Plan as a general guide for decision-making in zoning cases and subdivision plat review approvals to ensure that development and redevelopment are consistent with the policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) addresses street, water and sewer infrastructure and facility improvements. The Annual Budget looks at the general operations and maintenance of city facilities, and the repair of rights-of-way for street and highway improvements. Special programs and new initiatives may be used to put recommendations into action.

The series of proposed implementation actions are specific steps that should be taken to implement the Plan. Some actions may be simple and others will require substantial funding. Others may call for the formation of a new committee, or identify the need for a specific study. In addition to such "new" initiatives, the continuation of ongoing City policies and programs is recommended in many instances.

To be truly useful, the recommended actions need to be considered as to their importance and achievability. The following spreadsheet, **Figure 12.1 – Implementation Actions**, contains the goals, objectives, and actions

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recommended in the foregoing chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Identifying actions in terms of importance (prioritization) provides the opportunity for the Steering Committee, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council to consider which actions the City should tackle first. Each action has been carefully considered in terms-of the impact it will have balanced with the ability to achieve it. Of course each action will be considered with respect to its budgetary requirements.

Commitment to Implementation

The many hours devoted by the citizen based Steering Committee and Planning and Zoning Commission to shaping the Comprehensive Plan attest to their desire for attaining the agreed upon vision for Stephenville. In appointing a representative citizens' Steering Committee, the City's leaders sought to involve the entire community in the planning effort. The effort and time contributed by citizens, committed to betterment of their community, require that actions be taken to carry out the recommended policies and proposals.

The most important method of implementing the Stephenville Comprehensive Plan comes from the day-to-day commitment by elected and appointed officials, City Staff members and citizens. The Comprehensive Plan must be understood as a useful and capable tool to direct the City's future. The Future Land Use Plan and Thoroughfare Plan should be displayed and made available for easy reference by officials, staff and citizens. The Comprehensive Plan should continually be referenced in planning studies and zoning case reports as well as informal discussion situations. High visibility will make the Plan successful, dynamic and a powerful tool for guiding Stephenville's future growth.

The Continuous Planning Process

This Comprehensive Plan must be constantly scrutinized to ensure that its goals, objectives and recommended actions continue to reflect changing community needs and attitudes. Above all, it must be used. Each new development, redevelopment, and even tax incentives, need to be considered with the intent of achieving the vision and goals set forth in the Plan.

Circumstances will continue to change in the future and the Stephenville Comprehensive Plan will require modifications and refinements to be kept up-to-date and current. Some of its proposals will be found unworkable and new solutions will continue to emerge. Needed refinements and changes should be carefully noted and thoroughly considered as part of the **Plan Updates** and **5-Year Major Plan Revisions**. As change occurs, however, Stephenville's vision should remain the central theme and provide a unifying element. The Plan's importance lies in the commitment of citizens to agree on Stephenville's purposes for the future, and to apply that consensus in continuing efforts that focus on the betterment of their community.

Major Updates of the Comprehensive Plan

Major updating of the Comprehensive Plan should ideally occur every five years. These updates will ensure renewal and continued utility of the Comprehensive Plan for use by the City officials and staff. Annual Plan amendments from the previous four years should be incorporated into the next major Plan update. Plan updates will be a significant undertaking involving City officials, departments and citizens. Consultant services may be utilized if needed. The result of the major Plan updates will be a new Comprehensive Plan for the City, including new identification of up-to-date goals, objectives, policies and implementation actions.

Annual Plan Amendment Process

Annual Plan amendments can provide opportunity for relatively minor Plan updates and revisions such as changed conditions—in future land use designations, implementation actions and review of Plan for consistency with ordinances and regulations. A Plan amendment should be prepared and distributed as an addendum to the adopted Comprehensive Plan. Identification of potential Plan amendments should be an ongoing process by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff throughout the year. Citizens, property owners, community organizations and other governmental entities can also submit requests for Plan amendments. Proposed Plan amendments should be reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Plan amendments

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should be adopted in a manner similar to the Plan itself. This process includes public hearings, citizen input and consideration of action by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. Plan amendments should be adopted by resolution.

Reports of the Planning and Zoning Commission

As a part of their annual Plan of Work, the Planning and Zoning Commission should prepare an annual report for submittal and discussion with the City Council. Status of implementation for the Comprehensive Plan should be included in these annual reports. Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year should be recognized, as well as identification and recommendations for needed actions and programs to be developed and implemented in the coming new year. The annual report of the Comprehensive Plan implementation status by the Planning and Zoning Commission should be coordinated with the City's annual budget development process so that the recommendations will be available early in the budgeting process.

Implementation Responsibility

The responsibilities for the actual initiation and monitoring the goals, objectives, and actions of the Comprehensive Plan lie with the following groups:

Citizens are responsible for bringing their concerns and problems to the City Staff. They should continue to be involved in implementation and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan.

City Staff should review all the development issues associated with zoning and subdivision of land for compliance with the stated objectives and Future Land Use Plan. Continuous monitoring of planning activities will aid in identifying the need for revisions and updates. Preparation of the annual budget and Capital Improvements should incorporate the actions and projects recommended in the Plan.

Using advisory committees, public meetings and community workshops, town meetings, public forums, newsletters, citizen comments, media releases and public notices can inform and involve citizens in continued

planning. Methods and activities for public participation should be carefully chosen and designed to achieve meaningful and effective involvement.

Planning and Zoning Commission should use the Comprehensive Plan as a tool for decision making for growth, development and redevelopment to assure the projects are in accordance with the Plan. On a yearly basis they should submit an annual report of the activities and achievements as well as recommendations for future planning initiatives.

City Council should receive and act upon recommendations that are in accordance with the vision, goals, and objectives of the Plan. As an integral participant in the continuous planning process, the City Council should provide overall policy guidance and consider issues and changes when they are a logical extension of the stated purpose of the Comprehensive Plan.

With a new Comprehensive Plan in place, Stephenville has the necessary guidelines and recommended actions that will enable the City to successfully continue its tradition of progress.

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