

**Section 5**

**PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN**

City of Lancaster Comprehensive Plan

# **PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Public Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the expectations that a community's residents have regarding certain public services and the facilities needed to provide those services. Public buildings that house the various governmental and service functions of a municipality are generally of two types: (1) those that require a nearly central or common location and that serve the entire municipal area, and (2) those that serve segments of the community on a service-area basis. The City Hall is an example of a governmental building that serves the entire community, while a fire station represents a public building that has a service-area relationship.

The demands for public building space at all levels of government usually increase as the population served grows and as the level of service expands. As a general rule, as communities grow in size, its citizens require increased levels of service. Lancaster has 234 full-time and 14 part-time municipal employees. Based upon a similar ratio, approximately 435 full-time and 26 part-time employees will be required, when the City reaches a projected population of 50,000 to accommodate the essential municipal functions at the same service level that exists in Lancaster today. New facilities will be needed to house additional employees and to replace existing municipal facilities as the City grows in the future.

## **EXISTING PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES**

It is appropriate to review the status of existing municipal buildings as a basis for determining the future changes and additions that will likely be required. The following sections are a general evaluation and explanation of existing buildings and facilities<sup>5-1</sup>.

### **City Hall**

The present City Hall (located at 211 North Henry Street) occupies 10,000 square feet of building space, and is located in the downtown area. This building contains most of the City's administrative offices including City Management, Finance, and Personnel. Approximately 58 municipal employees currently work at this location.

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<sup>5-1</sup> All information within this section and within the Comprehensive Plan documents characteristics within the City as they existed in 1999.

## **Police Department**

The City's current police facility is located outside of the downtown area at 1501 North Dallas Avenue in the Public Safety Building, which also houses Fire Station #1. The police and fire facilities together occupy 16,000 square feet of building space. The police department currently employs approximately 58 people.

## **Fire Department**

Lancaster has three fire stations at the present time with a total of 49 employees. As mentioned previously, Fire Station #1 is located at 1501 North Dallas Avenue, within the Public Safety Building. Fire Station #2 maintains 3,700 square feet of building space at 3132 North Houston School Road. And Fire Station #3 is located at 1960 West Beltline Road and occupies 6,500 square feet of building space. Considering that Fire Station #1 occupies half of the building space at the Public Safety Building, the total area currently occupied by the Fire Department in Lancaster is approximately 18,000 square feet.

## **Public Library**

The City's current library facility is a new facility located in the Community Park. At present, there are seven employees working at this location.

## **Public Works and Animal Control**

The main part of the Public Works Facility is currently located at 700 East Main Street. It currently occupies 11,300 square feet, and also houses the Animal Control Department. In addition, an Equipment Maintenance Service facility is located at 521 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on 4,032 square feet of land area, and a maintenance yard that is approximately 600 square feet is located at 629 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The City also operates two water pump stations, which are located at 624 West Pleasant Run Road and 3648 Ames Road, respectively, with 650 square feet and 400 square feet in land area, respectively. The total land area currently used to support the Public Works Department is approximately 16,980 square feet.

## **Community Facilities**

The community facilities presently operated by the City include the Community House located at 100 North Henry Street, occupying an area of 2,425 square feet. The City also maintains the Activity Building and Lions Club facility on a 20,619 square feet land area, located at 211 East Center Street. In addition, the City of Lancaster maintains the Country View Golf Club at 240 West Beltline Road, which, together with its maintenance building, occupies an area of 9,400 square feet. The City also maintains a facility at 200 West Beltline Road that is referred to as the Lions Club Park and this facility, together

with the accessory building, occupies 825 square feet of land area. The 120-square foot gazebo at 205 North Dallas Street and the 600 square-foot Kids' Park at West Beltline Road are also City-owned community facilities that provide services to the residents of Lancaster.

## **FUTURE PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES**

Most public buildings tend to be fairly long-term investments. Therefore, they should be initially constructed with the concept of future expansion incorporated into the facility. The following is an estimate of future public building and service facility needs, projected based upon the estimated potential population of Lancaster (refer to the Future Land Use Plan element for further explanation).

### **City Hall**

At present, the Lancaster City Hall facility is generally considered to be at capacity; it is recommended that within five years a detailed facility analysis be conducted. This analysis will help determine if a new site will be necessary for a new City Hall, or if the existing building can be rehabilitated and expanded to accommodate the additional expected numbers of employees. Generally, it is very expensive to rehabilitate and expand existing buildings, which would also entail bringing an existing structure into compliance with new laws and regulations (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], new fire and health codes, etc.), and it is often more economical to construct new facilities instead. Due to its central location and the historic importance of Lancaster's downtown, it is suggested that the City Hall building (new or expanded) remain within the old downtown vicinity, to the extent possible. Consolidation of County, State and Federal and local municipal offices should be considered if the City Hall is relocated or expanded.

Based upon the future projected population of 50,000, the City of Lancaster could eventually employ close to 435 full-time and 26 part-time employees, of which approximately one-fourth could be required to be located within the City Hall building.

### **Fire Stations**

City services such as fire stations are generally located with respect to thoroughfares and time of response. The present fire stations will satisfy Lancaster's short-term facility needs for fire protection. The state standard for adequate fire protection is a service area radius of 1.5 miles for each fire station. Based on this standard, as expansion of the City occurs toward south of Beltline Road, at least two new sites will eventually be needed for additional fire stations. Since the cost of land acquisition typically increases dramatically when properties within an area begin developing, the City should seek to acquire

both sites within the next five years while land costs remain stable. Development of the two future fire station sites should coincide with development of the surrounding area.

Currently the Fire Department employs 49 personnel to serve a population of 25,609 people. Assuming that this personnel-to-population ratio remains similar in the future, a projected population of 50,000 will require approximately 90 employees within the Fire Department to serve the City.

## **Police Station**

The present police station is located in the newly constructed Public Safety Building on Dallas Avenue. Assuming that the current population-to-building-space ratio is consistent in the future, a projected population of 50,000 persons will require a police station with approximately 15,000 square feet of floor area. The current facility has a total of 16,000 square feet, which is shared between the Police Department and Fire Station #1. It is therefore recommended that the City begin identifying alternative sites for additional police sub-stations, and purchase the property for such sub-stations within the next five years.

The ratio of two officers for every 1,000 persons serves as a national average for cities with populations between 10,000 and 50,000 people. Adhering to this standard, approximately 50 officers are presently required to serve the City; with 58 persons currently employed within the Police Department, the City is adequately serving its population. Based on the same standard, approximately 95 police officers will be required to serve a projected population of 50,000 persons.

## **Public Library**

Library facilities are usually provided on an as-needed basis in response to community needs. The American Library Association supports a general standard of 0.75 square feet per library patron. Based upon this standard, the current population of 25,894 requires approximately 19,000 square feet of library space. A new library facility, which is a part of the Recreation Center and Community Park site, has been constructed which will meet the needs of the City for the foreseeable future. By the year 2020, the City of Lancaster will need a library of approximately 35,700 square feet to serve Lancaster's projected population of 50,000.

Currently, seven employees work at the public library. Assuming that the present employee-to-population ratio will remain the same in the future, approximately thirteen employees will be needed to serve the projected population of 50,000 people.

## **Public Works and Animal Control Facilities**

The current 16,980 square feet of land area utilized by the Public Works and Animal Control Departments is generally adequate for the purpose of serving the present population, but as the City increases in population the demand for such services will likely increase. Therefore, conducting a detailed facility analysis for these departments in the near future is recommended, this analysis will help to determine the building and storage space needs for future facilities. Assuming that the area-to-population ratio remains similar in the future, approximately 31,600 square feet of land area will be required to house adequate Public Works and Animal Control Departments for a future projected population of 50,000 people.

Currently, about 40 people are employed by the Public Works and Animal Control Departments. If this ratio remains consistent in the future, the City will require approximately 75 employees in these departments to provide this population with a similar level of services that exist in the City today.

## **Community Facilities**

The City's current Community House and Activity Building provides a variety of services to the City's residents. The City is currently building a new recreation center facility in the community park on the east side of Lancaster. The requirements and recommendations for future City-owned parks and recreational facilities have been discussed in detail in the 1997 Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan for the City of Lancaster. It is recommended that the City conduct an update of this plan every five years, along with a facility analysis, to determine the size and type of new community facilities that may need to be constructed.