

11 | IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

A crucial part of any Comprehensive Plan is the Implementation Strategy. Without a clear and realistic approach to action, the vision expressed by a community through its plan may never be realized. While a plan cannot mandate all the specific actions that will be taken during the many years (and decades) of its implementation, the Implementation Strategy should give a community's leaders and stakeholders a set of priorities for immediate action, a menu of possible actions and partners for implementation, and a structure that relates the various action items to one another.

This chapter provides the framework of key action steps to achieve the City of Lancaster's vision of its preferred future. It begins by explaining the process used to identify action items. Then it describes the role of various partners in plan implementation. Next, it provides a framework for organizing the many potential action items that help Lancaster achieve its vision. This framework includes a recommended process for modifying and refining the action agenda over time. Finally, the Implementation Matrix lists the action items that are most important for immediate, short-term action. This table includes information about timing and partners for each action item.

It is important to note that the communities that are most successful at achieving their long-term vision are the ones that establish a tradition and reputation for collaboration, partnership and accountability. In Lancaster, supportive, long-term relationships should begin with the elected and appointed leaders at City Hall. They should involve Lancaster residents, businesses, non-profits, property owners and other local, regional, state and federal government agencies. Strong relationships leads to productive collaboration. This collaboration, in turn, brings additional resources of funding and expertise to the table. Additional resources and community support for the plan's implementation continues political support and encourages continuing investment and implementation. Since the ultimate goal of a comprehensive plan is a community that remains desirable and thriving over time, actions by all partners must contribute to this success.

Implementation Strategy Development Process

Potential implementation strategies for this Plan were identified throughout the planning process, and suggestions were received from a wide variety of stakeholders. During the initial phases of the planning process – when the focus was on understanding current conditions, examining future opportunities and creating a shared vision for the future – suggested implementation measures were simply noted. These suggestions were received through methods including:

- Input and brainstorming with the public via community events, online surveys and individual discussions;
- Stakeholder interviews;
- Planning team technical analysis and review of best practices from other communities;
- Coordination with concurrent planning efforts involving the City and other agencies;
- Discussion and direction from staff; and
- Discussion with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), the City of Lancaster Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Lancaster City Council.

As the plan's direction was determined – through agreement on Guiding Principles and the policies found in the individual Plan elements – those suggested implementation measures could be evaluated in terms of their importance to the vision and policy direction established for this community. The consultant team's assessment of the value of particular action steps led to a list of potential implementation items for discussion with CPAC. The recommendations presented below reflects CPAC's input as well as the professional judgment of the consultant and City staff.

Overall Implementation Strategy

Each of the topical plan elements includes a set of implementation measures to address the issues covered in that element. In addition to these topical implementation measures, some action steps address the Comprehensive Plan as a whole. These items are also important for Lancaster's successful implementation of this plan. These overall implementation measures are listed below.

- Communicate to Lancaster residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders about Lancaster's progress in plan implementation.
- Conduct an annual review of progress in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, reporting on progress and comparing results to targets and to other similar communities.
- Develop a Comprehensive Plan checklist for use in evaluating development proposals, zoning applications and infrastructure projects for consistency with the Plan's principles and direction.
- Educate staff about the policy direction and use of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly those on the 'front line' working with customers.
- Engage the community in periodic (quarterly or annual) review of action on top Comprehensive Plan implementation priorities.

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Implementation Partners

A desirable and long-lasting community is the result of many individual choices made over time by many people and organizations. The local government's actions play an important part, of course. But many other choices also contribute to the community's long-term success. Each time an individual or a family decides between renovating a home in an existing neighborhood and moving to a new neighborhood (or another community), the vitality of that existing neighborhood is strengthened or challenged. When a business or industry decides to locate in a particular community, that business decision affects the community's ability to attract related businesses and employees. A community group's annual celebrations may be the foundation for a distinctive community identity as well as economic benefits from tourism.

In the implementation chapter of this plan, major partners are described. Their support and commitment play an important role in the implementation process.

City of Lancaster

The City of Lancaster is the key implementer of this plan. For all items in the Implementation Strategy matrix, the City will have a role. In many cases, the City of Lancaster has the primary role. In other cases, a different partner has the primary role. If an action item is important to the plan's goals, but is not an area of City responsibility, the City would be expected to play a support role, assisting the primary entity with accomplishing that task. For example, the City does not control primary and secondary education, so it would play a support role to the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD) on action items that relate to schools.

Within the City of Lancaster organization, these leaders and agencies are expected to have significant involvement in the plan implementation.

- Mayor and City Council
- City Manager
- City Attorney
- Development Services
- Equipment Services and City Facilities
- Finance Department
- Fire Department
- Economic Development Corporation
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Police
- Public Works
- Quality of Life and Cultural Services Department
- Recreation Development Corporation
- Zoning Board of Adjustments

Other Local and Regional Government Entities

Coordination with other local governmental entities will assist with the provision of the quality services and facilities necessary for the prosperity of the community. Such local governments include:

- Dallas County
- Lancaster Independent School District
- Other Independent School Districts
- Adjacent municipalities—Dallas, Wilmer, Hutchins and DeSoto
- DART
- North Central Texas Council of Governments

State and Federal Agencies

State and Federal agencies provide funding for plan implementation, particularly for capital improvements such as roads or parks. Their programs and regulations may also help achieve the community's vision. These agencies include, but are not limited to:

State of Texas

- Commission on Environmental Quality
- Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Department of Transportation
- Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism
- Historical Commission
- Parks and Wildlife Department

Federal Agencies

- Commerce Department
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Housing and Urban Development Department
- Transportation Department

Businesses and Private Sector Partners

A community cannot achieve a successful future without investment by businesses and non-residential property owners and developers. These individual decision-makers and the investments they make create job opportunities, grow the tax base and provide the goods and services needed by local residents. Major employers can play an important role in defining economic development priorities and opportunities for additional business attraction. Small businesses and local entrepreneurs provide insight into the community's ability to attract and retain the individuals who are creating tomorrow's companies. Developers and builders shape the future of the community's new development and revitalization. Real estate agents, brokers and bankers affect the community's ability to make change and to attract new owners and investors.

Many of these private sector interests are represented by organizations. The Best Southwest Chamber of Commerce is one of the private sector organizations that should be partners in implementing this plan for Lancaster.

Community and Non-profit Organizations

Community and non-profit organizations have a particular issue or area of focus that make them valuable partners for plan implementation. Their leadership and members may contribute time, energy, expertise and other resources to programs and initiatives that make a community special. Arts and cultural organizations often play an important role in this way. Homeowners Associations and other neighborhood groups can bring attention to issues in their area and can mobilize members to take action in support of the plan's implementation. Lastly, groups of people who enjoy a common activity can help implement the plan. For example, cycling groups can be instrumental in providing insight into the locations for most effective new investment in bike lanes or facilities.

Individuals, Households and Families

This plan describes a vision for Lancaster's future that reflects the wishes and desires of the many Lancaster residents who participated in its creation. Those individuals, and their friends and families, must continue to be partners in carrying out the plan. Individuals can play a role through their own investments and buying decisions. They can participate on committees and volunteer for events that complete plan projects. In addition, they should remain involved as active champions and should provide feedback on progress through regular communications (in person, in print and online) with the City of Lancaster.

Implementation Measure Framework

The individual Action Items are grouped into six categories, so similar actions can be coordinated. These categories are explained as follows:

Capital Investments (C)

The public sector itself makes significant investments that help implement this plan. Facility master plans that determine major capital improvements, such as water or sewer system expansions, should locate and size facilities in accordance with the Land Use Element of this plan. Individual capital projects should support the plan in both their location and their design. By following this plan in making capital investments, the community can be sure that its limited funds are being used in a fiscally responsible matter to achieve the community's established goals. Efficient and effective capital investment gives the community essential infrastructure for its future, and if this infrastructure is designed and sized according to the plan, it will also achieve the community's desired character. Land acquisition for capital projects is included in this category.

Education and Engagement (E)

Education is an important part of plan implementation because the vision this plan describes requires a change from 'business as usual'. Making that change means that residents, property owners, businesses, non-profit organizations and local governments will all need to think and act in ways that differ from past practice. Educational programs provide the information all these decision-makers need so they can choose to act in ways that achieve the plan. Community engagement will continue to be important as the plan is implemented. It builds awareness, benefits from the best ideas and energy of people throughout the community and broadens participation and action.

Financial Incentives (F)

The public sector can use incentives so private property owners and developers can more economically build projects that achieve the community's desired character. These incentives range from reductions in development fees or processing times, to tax abatements, to investment in a project's infrastructure or other features. Economic development incentive programs should be evaluated and refined so they support and encourage the development envisioned by this plan, and so they discourage development that is contrary to this vision.

Guidelines (G)

Guidelines provide decision-makers and investors with direction and information about the community's desired development pattern and design, community character or priorities. They are recommendations, not requirements. For this reason, City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff will consider them but must use judgment to determine whether a particular proposal is consistent with the community's desires reflected in the guidelines.

Programs & Partnerships (P)

The programs and operations provided by local government or the private sector also play a role in implementing the community's plan. Activities and programs create the attractions and excitement that bring people to events in a revitalized gathering place. Maintenance of streets and parks demonstrates the city's commitment to ensure that its residents enjoy the quality of life envisioned by the plan. Annual budgets are usually the means to fund these programs, so decisions must be made each year about the appropriate level of investment in this aspect of plan implementation.

Many plan implementation programs require a partnership with organizations in addition to the City of Lancaster. These partnerships are included here.

Regulations (R)

Unlike guidelines, regulations are adopted by City ordinance and do establish requirements to be followed in the design and construction of public or private developments. The City's zoning and subdivision ordinances are important tools for implementing the comprehensive plan, so refinements or amendments to these or other regulations may be needed to encourage the development envisioned by the plan.

Studies (S)

For some of the capital investments, new incentives or programs, the first step is to conduct a more detailed study of the issues to determine the most effective actions to take. These studies are included as individual implementation measures. Until they are completed, the specific actions that will have the greatest benefit investment or program design cannot be determined.

Tracking (T)

No matter how thoroughly considered a plan has been, its implementation will be affected by changes that occur after its adoption. These may be national or global events, such as an economic boom or bust; they may be changes in the funding sources for specific action items. As implementation occurs, the actual experience may demonstrate that projects can move more quickly or need to take more time. For all these reasons, a comprehensive plan should have a mechanism to track progress and to review and revise its implementation approach over time.

Top Priority Implementation Measures

The implementation matrix below shows the items that are recommended for immediate action. These Short-term action items (Timing Category #1 in Appendix 1) are most important to begin immediately after plan adoption. There should be notable accomplishment on these items within the first two fiscal years after the plan is adopted. While a list of longer-term implementation measures is provided in the appendix, the measures for action in the next two years need the most attention and need to be funded in City (or other budgets) now.

The implementation matrix lists each of these top priority action items identified for implementation of this plan. These action items are organizing according to the Implementation Framework described above. The matrix also indicate which of the eight plan strategies benefit from each action item. A key describing the Plan Strategy abbreviations in Table 11.01 can be found at the bottom of the table.

Table 11.01 Top Priority Implementation Measures

Implementation Strategy	Primary Plan Strategy	Supportive of Additional Plan Strategies
Capital Investments		
Prepare a new Capital Improvements Program for capital projects in the next five years that implement this plan and catalyzes desired growth.	I	LU, T, PF
Education and Engagement		
Communicate with the development community, property owners and other stakeholders about the new opportunities resulting from this Comprehensive Plan's development policies.	LU	ED
Provide information and education that make realtors and lenders aware of Lancaster's character, strengths and amenities.	CCD	HP

Implementation Strategy	Primary Plan Strategy	Supportive of Additional Plan Strategies
Use a 'common-sense' approach to implementation by providing information and assistance to the property and business owners in the historic district.	HP	
Educate staff about the policy direction and use of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly those on the 'front line' working with customers.	All	
Financial Incentives		
Evaluate the City's Economic Development Strategy and update it to effectively implement this plan. Include particular focus on medical, logistics, entertainment, aviation and information technology sectors.	ED	
Adopt design incentives for key districts identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	CCD	LU
Create incentives for restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures.	HP	CCD
Programs & Partnerships		
Increase staffing levels to support plan implementation projects.	LU	All
Create a downtown business owners' association, BID or other similar organization to take the lead on Town Square events, activities, marketing and other enhancements.	HP	ED, OS&R
Regulations		
Evaluate the City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance districts, procedures and application. Update these to effectively implement this plan -- specifically focusing on regulations that permit the place types as described in this chapter to be created.	LU	All
Evaluate the City's Subdivision Ordinance and update the ordinance to effectively implement this plan as current standards and regulations may not be geared towards a dense, urban mixed use pattern as identified in several place type scenarios.	LU	All
Review regulations and procedures and revise as necessary to streamline mixed use area development.	LU	CCD, HP
Consider revising codes and ordinances to reflect the five types of street contexts that were developed in the comprehensive plan to provide more uniform standards for road construction and expansion in Lancaster.	T	I, CCD
Update the Master Thoroughfare plan to reflect changes in the Comprehensive Plan.	T	CCD, I
Address future water and sewer demands within areas not already served, and revise utility plans and construction priorities to support the preferred growth scenario and avoid investment in areas not planned for urban uses.	I	LU
Update the City's Parks and Trails plans so they effectively implement this comprehensive plan.	OS&R	
Adopt Historic Area guidelines as regulations.	HP	LU, CCD
Evaluate the policies and procedures governing the existing Historic Preservation Overlay (HPO) sub-areas and the Downtown District and sub-district design guidelines. Make changes to these policies, regulations and guidelines consistent with the Plan's Place Types, so the process for investment in these areas is clearer and streamlined.	HP	LU, CCD

Implementation Strategy	Primary Plan Strategy	Supportive of Additional Plan Strategies
Studies		
Participate in the North Central Texas region's processes for evaluating and designing commuter rail and high-speed rail service so these plans can provide the greatest benefit for Lancaster residents and businesses.	T	ED, I
Update the 2006 Streetscape Plan and 2006 Trails Plan to reflect recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, including an emphasis on bike and pedestrian infrastructure expansion in the city.	T	
Conduct a market analysis and feasibility study for hotels in Lancaster -- along I-35 or I-20, in Campus District, and in/near Town Center.	ED	
Create a more realistic implementation schedule for the new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and Trails Masterplan Plans so they effectively implement this comprehensive plan.	OS&R	
Update the Streetscape Master Plan of 2006.	CCD	
Evaluate the types of service the city currently provides and the services the city would like to provide, identifying gaps between current services and preferred services, and create strategies to bring them into alignment.	PF	
Look at service-area type facilities and review service efficiencies and coverage areas to identify what facility improvements will be needed as Lancaster grows. Areas of concern that have been identified include fire coverage in the LanPort area as development continues on the eastern side of the city.	PF	
Tracking		
Establish a fiscal impact analysis process for new development and redevelopment, so decision-makers can consider the costs and benefits to the City and the community when they make decisions on proposed projects.	ED	LU
Communicate to Lancaster residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders about Lancaster's progress in plan implementation.	All	
Conduct an annual review of progress in implementing the Comprehensive Plan, reporting on progress and comparing results to targets and to other similar communities.	All	
Develop a Comprehensive Plan checklist for use in evaluating development proposals, zoning applications and infrastructure projects for consistency with the Plan's principles and direction.	All	
Chart Key		
LU - Land Use T - Transportation I - Infrastructure ED - Economic Development OS&R - Parks	OS&R - Open Space, & Recreation CCD - Community Character and Design HP - Historic preservation PF - Public Facilities	

Longer-Term Implementation Measures

Appendix A1 provides a list of all identified implementation measures. The top priority, short term action items are included in the Appendix. Mid-term action items (Timing Category #2 in Appendix 1) should see accomplishment in years three through ten after plan adoption. These items may have a lower priority or may require additional funding from a bond program or other means that cannot be secured in the short-term. Long-term action items (Timing Category #3 in Appendix 1) should be accomplished in years eleven through twenty of plan implementation. On-going action items (Timing Category #4 in Appendix 1) are items that require continuing attention and investment, year after year.

Staff Tracking Information

Additional information about these action items will be provided to City staff, for their use organizing people and resources to complete the priority action items. This additional information includes:

- City Council Strategic Direction. Plan implementation also achieves the overall strategic goals set by the City Council for all activities related to this community. This part of the appendix lists the City Council's Goals that benefit from the action item. Abbreviations for the City Council's Strategic Focus Areas are:
 - FS: Financially Sound;
 - CE: Civic Engagement;
 - HV: Healthy, Safe & Vibrant Community;
 - CW: Professional & Committee City Workforce;
 - QD: Quality Development; and
 - SI: Sound Infrastructure.
- Lead Entity. The partner with primary responsibility for achieving that action item.
- Support Entity. The partners that provide assistance to the lead entity as it carries out the action item.
- Intervention Level. The intervention level reflects the extent to which the City must proactively invest resources (dollars, staff time, political will, policy or regulatory change, etc.). It ranges from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most aggressive.
- Public Sector Cost. The cost to the public is presented symbolically to represent an order of magnitude investment to achieve the community's vision. The symbols indicate:
 - \$ Reflects a City action, but a minor cost up to approximately \$50,000.
 - \$\$ Represents projects like planning or urban design studies with a cost up to approximately \$250,000.
 - \$\$\$ Represents projects like land acquisition or construction with approximate costs between \$250,000 and \$1 million.
 - \$\$\$\$ Represents major projects with approximate costs over \$1 million.
- Potential Funding Sources. If particular funding sources have been identified, they are listed here. If no specific funding source is identified, the City of Lancaster's general fund is expected to provide resources and funding is expected to occur through the City of Lancaster's annual budget process.

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