RURAL & Resilient

COMMERCE 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Commerce 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Adopted August 2025

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Note From Mayor

Hello Commerce!

It is my pleasure to introduce the Commerce 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The 18-month development of the Plan envisions where we could be in 20 years and the steps needed to prepare. The Plan serves as a long-range guidance document for Commerce's growth and development.

Growth patterns are changing rapidly, and this plan assists in addressing and preparing for those changes. The Plan includes actions addressing growth in development, transportation, quality of life, and infrastructure improvements/sustainability. Additionally, the Plan includes a Parks Master Plan identifying the offerings of our current parks and improvements/additions needed over the next 20 years. Thank you to the Commerce Parks & Recreation Board for their assistance in the development of the Parks Master Plan.

The actions identified in the Plan are grouped for execution by short-term, mid-term, long-term, and ongoing actions. It is essential that we recognize the actions of the Plan are ever-changing based on changing environments and go beyond any single leader in office.

On behalf of the City Council, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, City Staff, Community Partners, and to You, the community, for sharing your ideas and contributions to the development of the plan. We've reached a major milestone in the adoption of the Plan, but it can't stop there. We must remain diligent in adhering to the tenants of the Plan and adjusting the Plan as our environment changes. The Commerce 2045 Comprehensive Plan will help guide the preparation for growth in Commerce for the next 20 years. We built this Plan together, and together, we will use it to move Commerce forward!

Let's go!

Teddy Reel, Mayor, Commerce, Texas

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Introduction

A comprehensive plan plays a vital role in providing a long-term vision for community development. Commerce's Comprehensive Plan intends to help determine when, where, and how growth occurs in the City by creating attainable, proactive, short-term actions.

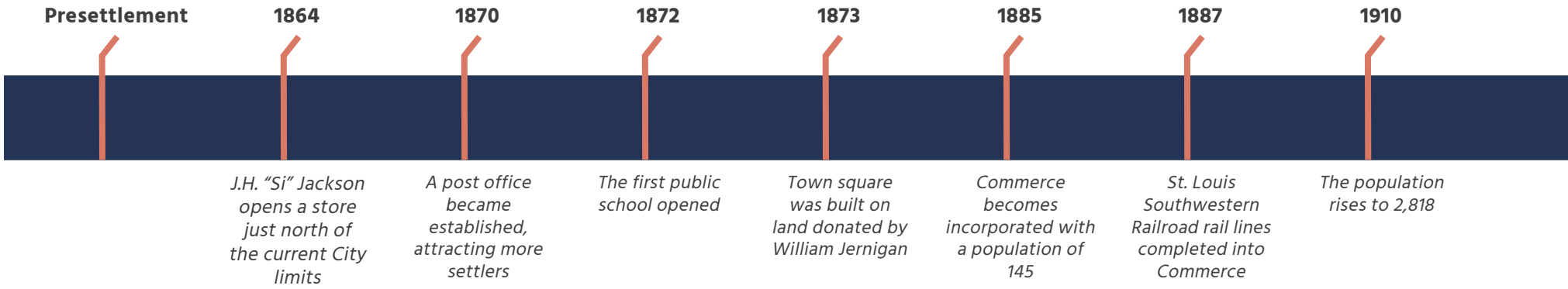
Commerce is located in Hunt County, approximately 67 miles northeast of Dallas. Situated at the juncture of state highways 50, 11, 24, and 224, Commerce provides an appealing rural setting away from the urban environments of Dallas and Denton. Along with being the home of East Texas A&M University, accessibility, a wide variety of recreational sites and facilities, and a close-knit feel make Commerce a desirable destination for people of all ages. Current conditions indicate that the City has a great opportunity to enhance its planning for future growth and development. This Community Snapshot chapter provides historical context, a demographic profile, and information on the physical features of the City.

Heritage & Culture

The opening of William Jernigan and Josiah Jackson's business, at what would become 1213 Washington St., in 1872 marked the birth of Commerce, Texas. The opening of the South Sulphur River bridge in 1870 created great economic opportunity and opened the door to the creation of Commerce. By 1885, the town had grown and incorporated on September 25.

Commerce Public Library

Figure 1. Historical Timeline



Over the next few decades, railroads brought tremendous growth to Commerce. The St. Louis Southwestern Railway, also known as the Cotton Belt, completed expansion through Commerce, connecting the town with Texarkana, Sherman, and Fort Worth. Rail connections to Paris and Ennis were formed in 1890 through the Texas Midland Railroad. By 1907, a ten-bay roundhouse was added to the town east of downtown, making Commerce a railroad hub. Railroad access transformed the town, especially in the area east of Park Street. This became a major cotton-pressing location, including multiple cotton gin seed oil mills, cotton presses, and even a pesticide plant in the 1960s. Railroad access also played a role in convincing William Leonidas Mayo to relocate East Texas Normal College (now East Texas A&M University) from Cooper to Commerce.

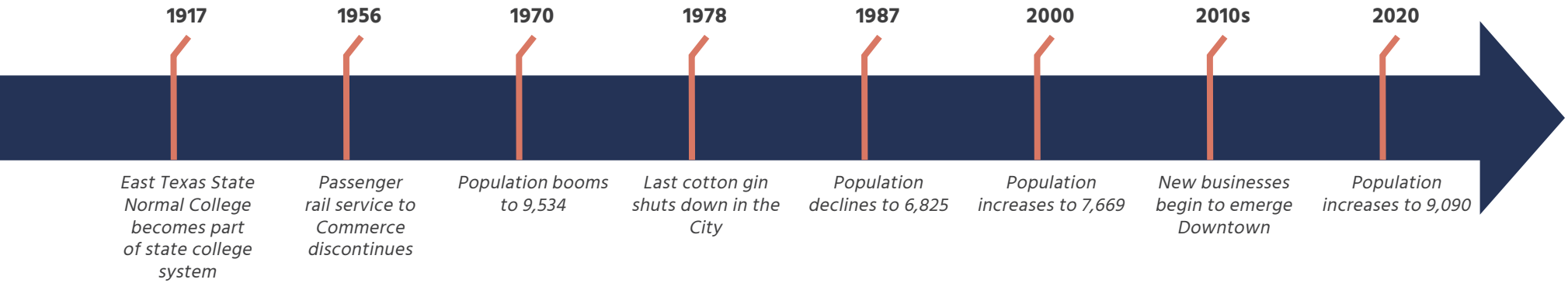
Downtown Commerce quickly thrived and became the center of commercial and civic life. A fire in 1897 struck this rapid growth, destroying an entire block of Main Street. When rebuilt, the town expanded the width of the street from 40 feet to 80 feet. This was the first of multiple fires in downtown, the last being in 1984.

Commerce Chamber

While tremendous growth was occurring in the town due to rail access and the thriving cotton industry, practices of the cotton South crept their way in. Public spaces and businesses, especially downtown, became racially segregated. Commerce's African American population was forced to the eastern side of downtown, an area that was under-served and heavily industrialized. This area is known today as Norris Community and is still home to much of the City's African American population. In 1965 the schools became desegregated, and by 1968, the City approved an open housing policy. In the years since, Commerce has been making measured progress toward maintaining equity and high quality of life for all its residents.

Although the City's population decreased in the late 1970s through the early 90s, 2000 brought a population increase. Commerce's population rose from 6,825 to 7,669, and the population has continued to increase steadily. The 2010s brought revitalization to downtown. Many storefronts were restored to their historical look, and the addition of new businesses has attracted college students and community members back to downtown.

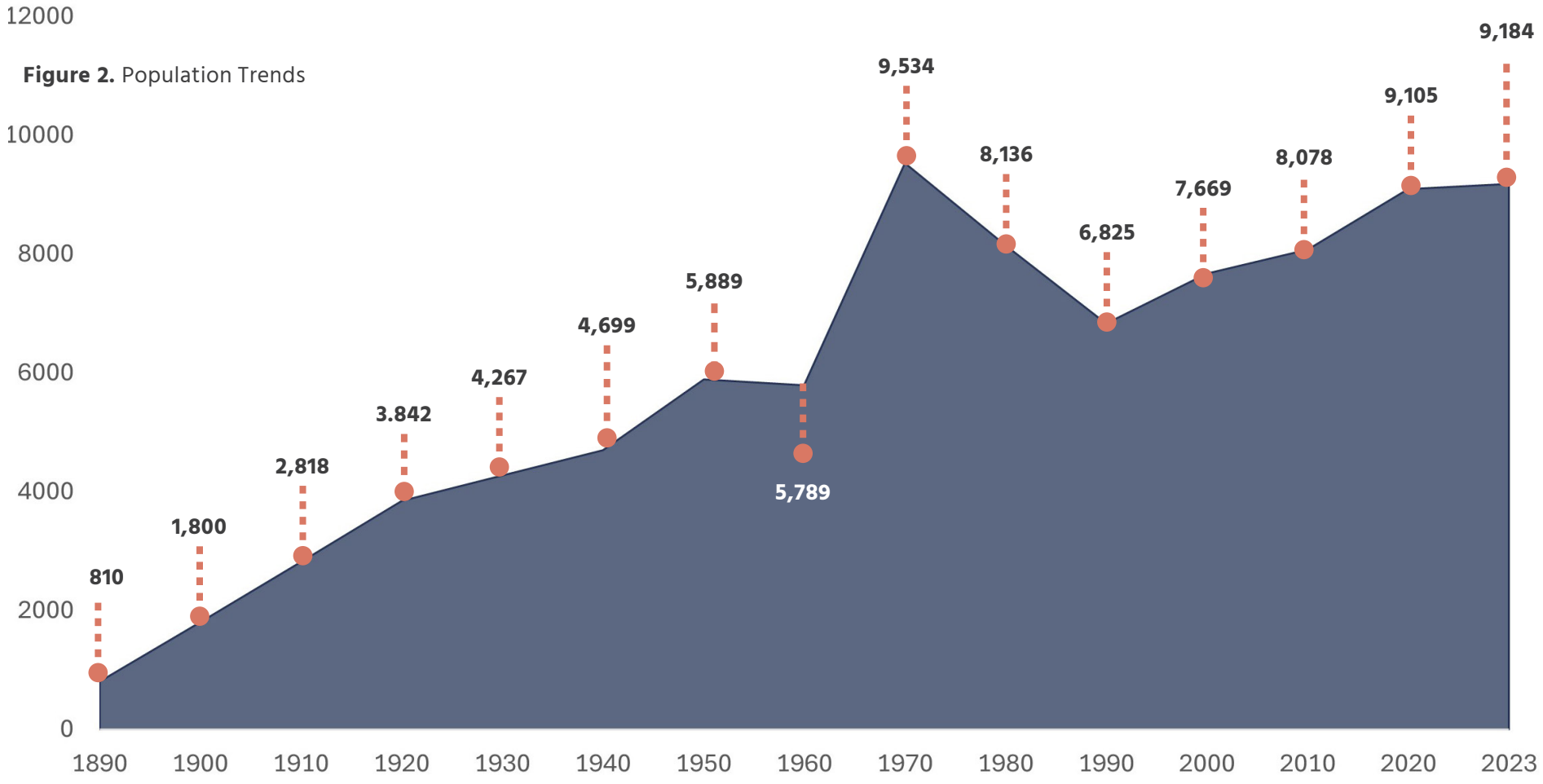
Originating from a small store just North of the current City limits, Commerce has grown and evolved into a city with over 400 businesses and a major state university. Industries are steadily expanding, and the City boasts of its close-knit character and thriving entrepreneurial spirit.



People & Place

The demographic analysis offers insight to the population characteristics of Commerce. The analysis presented in this section will help inform this Plan's recommendations.

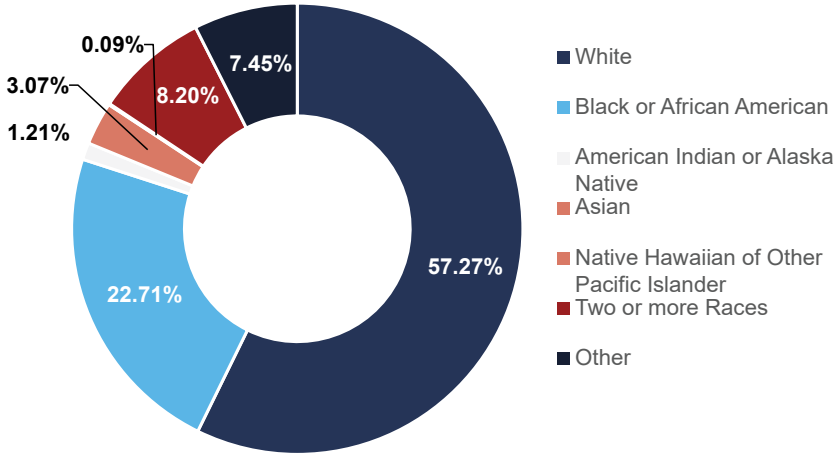
Figure 2. Population Trends



Race & Ethnicity

As of 2022, the majority of the population of Commerce is White (57%); however the City also houses a significant African American population (23%). Those who identify with Two or More Races is next at 8% followed by those who identify as Other (7%), the Asian (3%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (0.10%) populations. The Hispanic or Latino community has more than doubled since 2010, now comprising nearly 17% of the City's total makeup.

Figure 3. Percent of Population by Race (US Census, 2023)

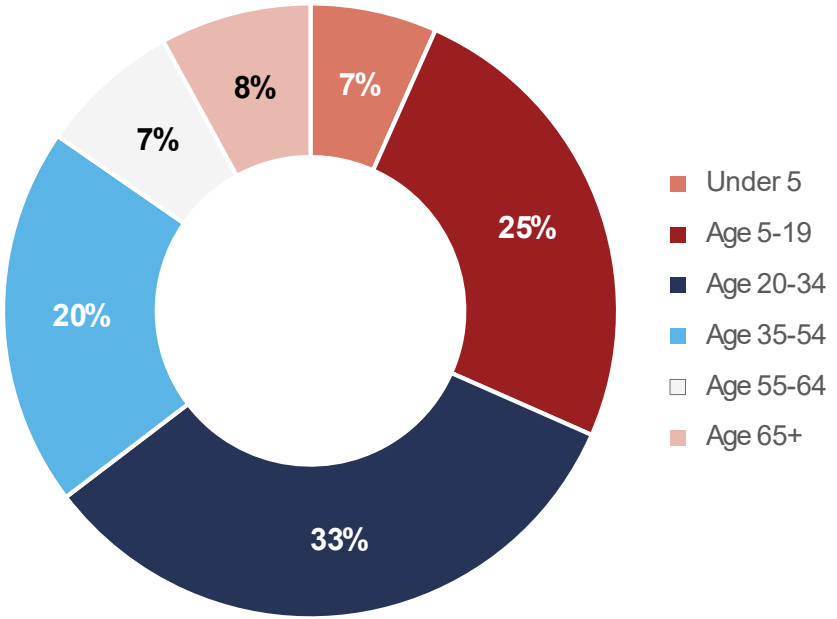


Age Distribution

Age patterns help Commerce plan for appropriate services, housing, jobs, and quality of life amenities.

The largest portion of Commerce's population is between the ages of 20-34. The presence of East Texas A&M is a driving force in the City's saturation of this age range, which captures the age of the average college student. The next largest portion of Commerce's population are those characterized as "young", between the ages of 5-19. This denotes families with children. The labor force, comprised of the 20-34 and 35-54 cohorts, makes up just over half (53%) of the total population. This indicates a strong economic presence and speaks to the City's entrepreneurial spirit.

Figure 4. Percent of Population by Age (US Census, 2023)

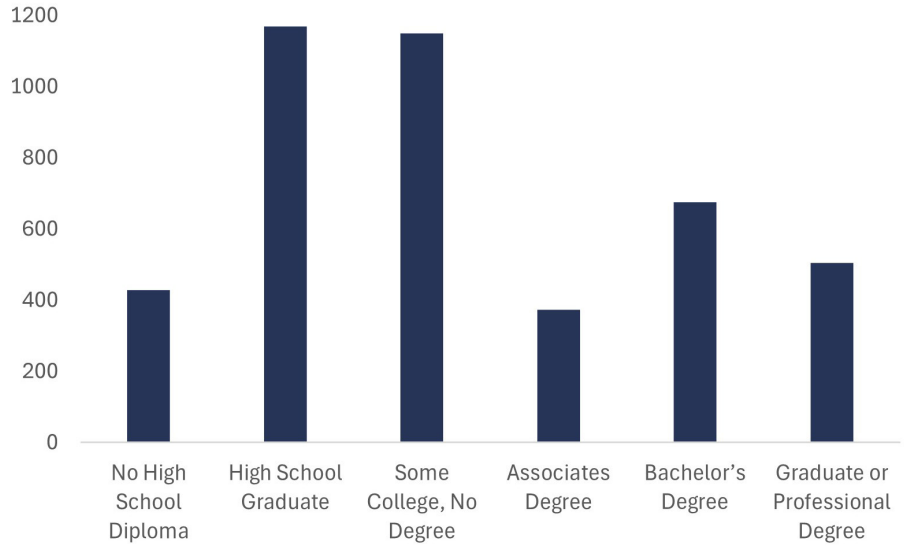


Economic & Industry Trends

Educational Attainment

In Commerce, nearly 25 percent of residents have graduated high school, while just over 15 percent have attained a Bachelor's degree or higher. A community's long term growth and prosperity can be positively impacted by a skilled worker base. Commerce can take steps to prepare its high school graduates for the workforce and jobs of the future, with the ultimate goal of overcoming economic adversity.

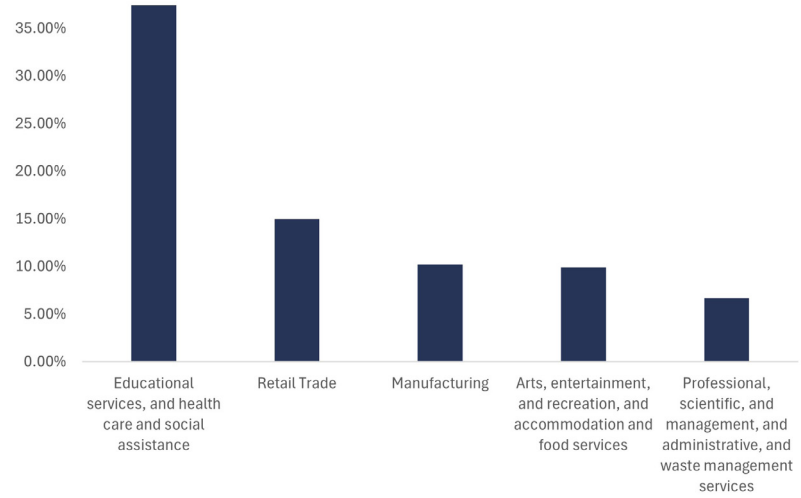
Figure 5. Educational Attainment (US Census, 2023)



Employment

Commerce has 4,191 people over the age of 16 who are considered eligible to enter the workforce. As of 2022, approximately 5.3% of the workforce population is unemployed, which could be due to lasting effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2021 to 2022, the City's employment grew at a rate of 2.34%. Commerce's top industry is the Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance sector, accounting for nearly 38% of all jobs. This is expected to be the City's largest industry with the presence of a major university. However, one way to increase a community's resiliency is to diversify the economy, so it is not as vulnerable to outside threats. A variety of employment sectors reduces the likelihood of struggles in a single sector to affect the City's overall economy.

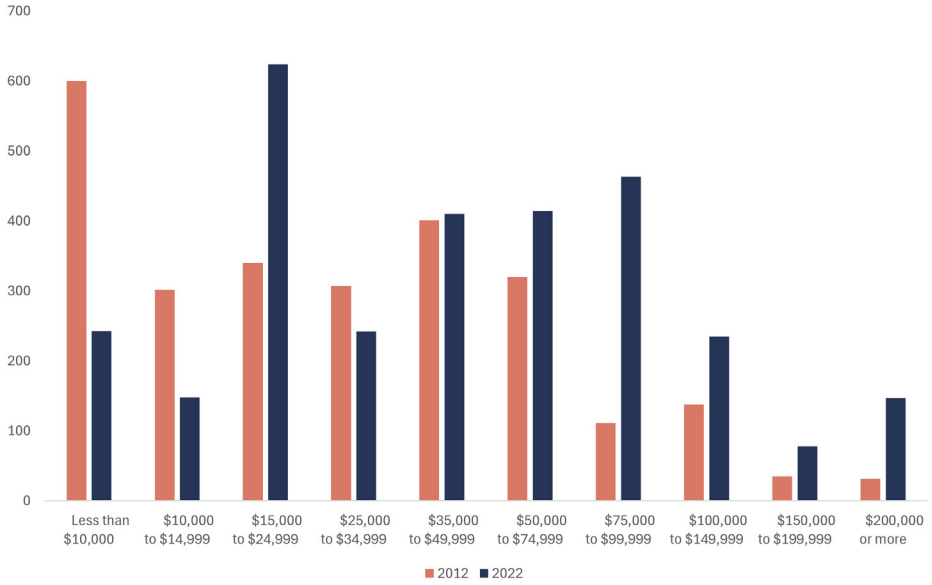
Figure 6. Top Industry Sectors (US Census, 2023)



Income

Commerce's median household income is $41,382, lower than the Hunt County median of $69,253 and the Texas median of $73,035. This comparison indicates a low presence of residents with disposable income that local retail and commercial developments could capture; however, it is important to note that the median household income increased nearly 56% from $26,555 to $41,382 in the ten-year period from 2012 to 2022, outpacing the State's median income growth of 46%.

Figure 7. Household Income (US Census, 2023)

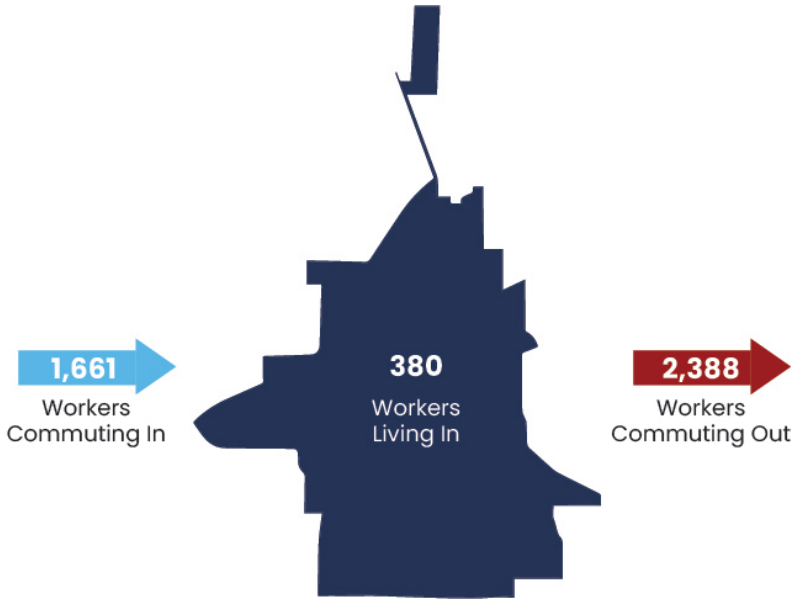


Mobility

Approximately 89.6% of Commerce residents have access to at least one car. The remaining 10.4% of people depend on other modes of transportation to get to jobs, school, or to run errands. Transit improvements can help meet the needs of these households, especially for short trips.

The average commute time for Commerce residents is 17.3 minutes, and 73.4% of workers drive alone. Approximately 5.2% of the workforce carpool, 10.5% walk, and 4.2% use other means to get to work. As of 2022, 1,661 workers commute into Commerce from surrounding cities, 380 workers live in Commerce, and 2,388 residents work in communities outside of Commerce's city limits. Bringing in high-paying employers will help retain Commerce's workforce and attract qualified workers from surrounding cities.

Figure 8. Worker Mobility (LEHD Mobility, 2022)



Housing Opportunity

Household Composition

Commerce's housing composition includes 57.7% family households and 42.3% non-family households. Family households are characterized as having one or more related people, whereas non-family households are individuals living alone or sharing with non-relatives (roommates). As of 2022, 31.2% of families live with at least one child under 18. Families with children under 18 have slightly increased since 2010, showing a gradual trend toward young families and first-time homeowners choosing to live in Commerce.

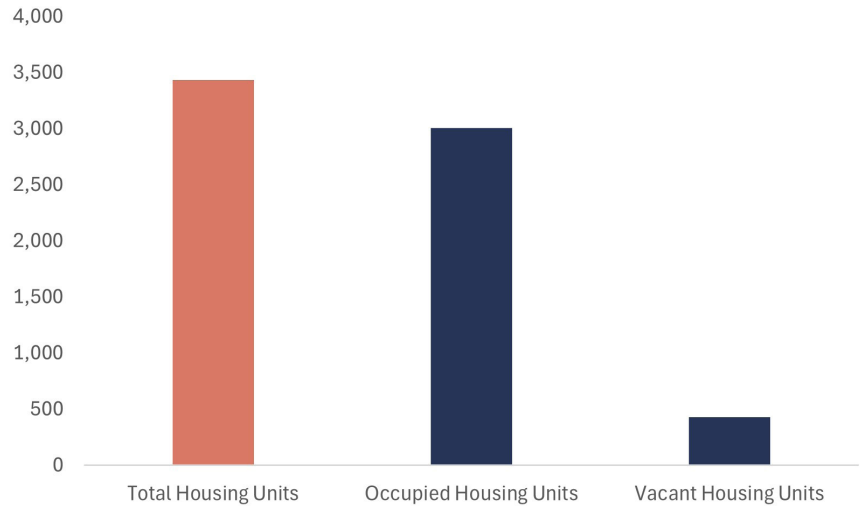
Households with one or more residents over the age of 65 comprise nearly 32% of the City's total occupied housing, remaining consistent with the corresponding percentage from 2010. This indicates that the City retains the same attraction for retirees and speaks to a need to address aging in place in Commerce.

The City's largest housing percentage is single-family detached, at 48.7%, followed by apartments with five or more units, at 31.9%. Although the demand for single-family homes will likely continue, the housing stock in Commerce can build upon existing housing diversity. An increase in "missing middle" housing, or medium-density housing types that generally fall between single-family detached and large multifamily developments, could be beneficial.

Occupancy Rates

As of 2022, the City of Commerce has 3,004 occupied housing units. Roughly 40% of these are owner-occupied, and 60% are renter-occupied. Over the past decade, rental units have remained more prevalent than owner-occupied units; however, the margin between the two has increased, meaning Commerce's rate of renters is increasing. Since most people consider homeownership a long-term commitment, high ownership rates generally mean residents have a long-term interest in the community's future development.

Figure 9. Occupancy Rates (US Census, 2023)

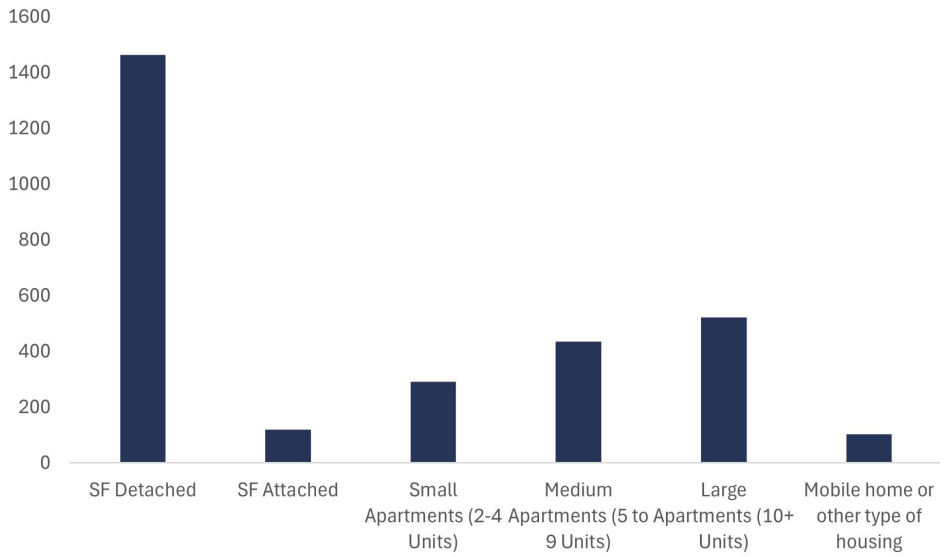


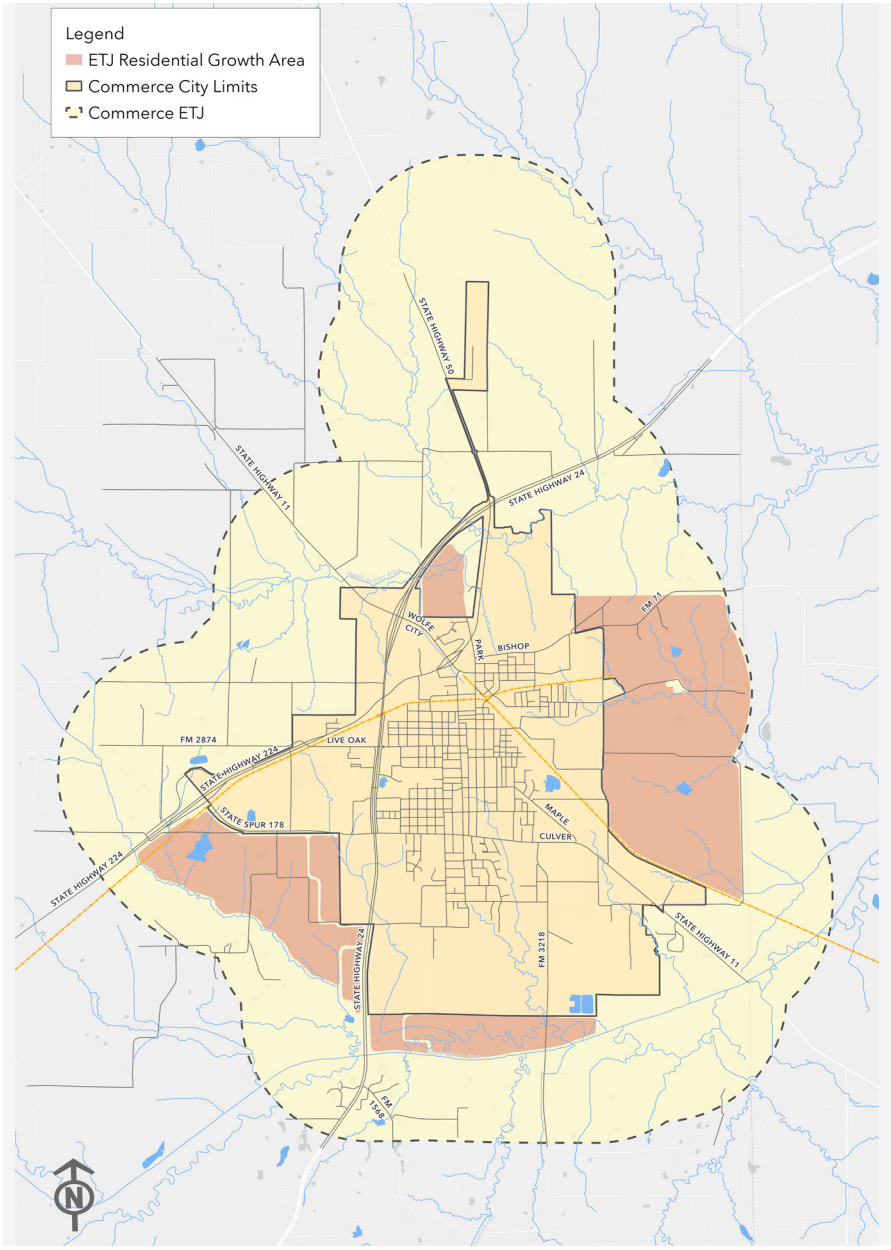
Housing Stock

Of the 3,004 occupied housing units, 1,464 are single-family detached, 522 are in large apartment units, 435 are in medium-sized apartment units, and 291 are in duplexes. “Missing middle” housing, which includes the housing types that fall between single family detached homes and large apartment complexes, accounts for just over 30% of the total occupied housing stock.

The majority of Commerce’s housing was built between 1960 and 1979, and the next largest portion was built between 2000 and 2009. Areas of older housing may be candidates for rehabilitation and provide for some missing middle housing and age-in-place opportunities.

Figure 10. Housing Stock (US Census, 2023)





Map 1. Residential Growth Areas

Housing Attainment & Affordability

It is recommended that households spend at most 30% of their income on housing costs. Households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened. In 2022, 52% of renter households spent 30% or more of their income on housing, while 22.4% of homeowners with a mortgage did the same. While the housing cost burden for owners with a mortgage is below state and county averages, the housing cost burden for renters in Commerce is well above state and county averages.

This data may be skewed due to the prevalence of student housing within the City. As students are generally not high wage earners, this could be a contributing factor in 52% of the households being cost burdened.

Figure 11. Monthly Renter Costs as a Percentage of Income: Rent (US Census, 2023)

% of income spent on household costs	Commerce	Hunt County	Texas
Less than 20%	19.1%	27.9%	25.1%
20% to 24.9%	11.2%	13.7%	13.4%
25% to 29.9%	17.7%	10.8%	11.7%
30% to 34.9%	6.0%	7.8%	9.2%
Greater than 35%	46.0%	39.9%	40.5%

Figure 12. Monthly Homeowner Costs as a Percentage of Income: Mortgage (US Census, 2023)

% of income spent on household costs	Commerce	Hunt County	Texas
Less than 20%	60.0%	42.2%	45.9%
20% to 24.9%	9.5%	12.7%	16.2%
25% to 29.9%	6.0%	13.2%	10.6%
30% to 34.9%	2.4%	9.0%	6.8%
Greater than 35%	22.0%	22.8%	20.6%

Location

Physical Context

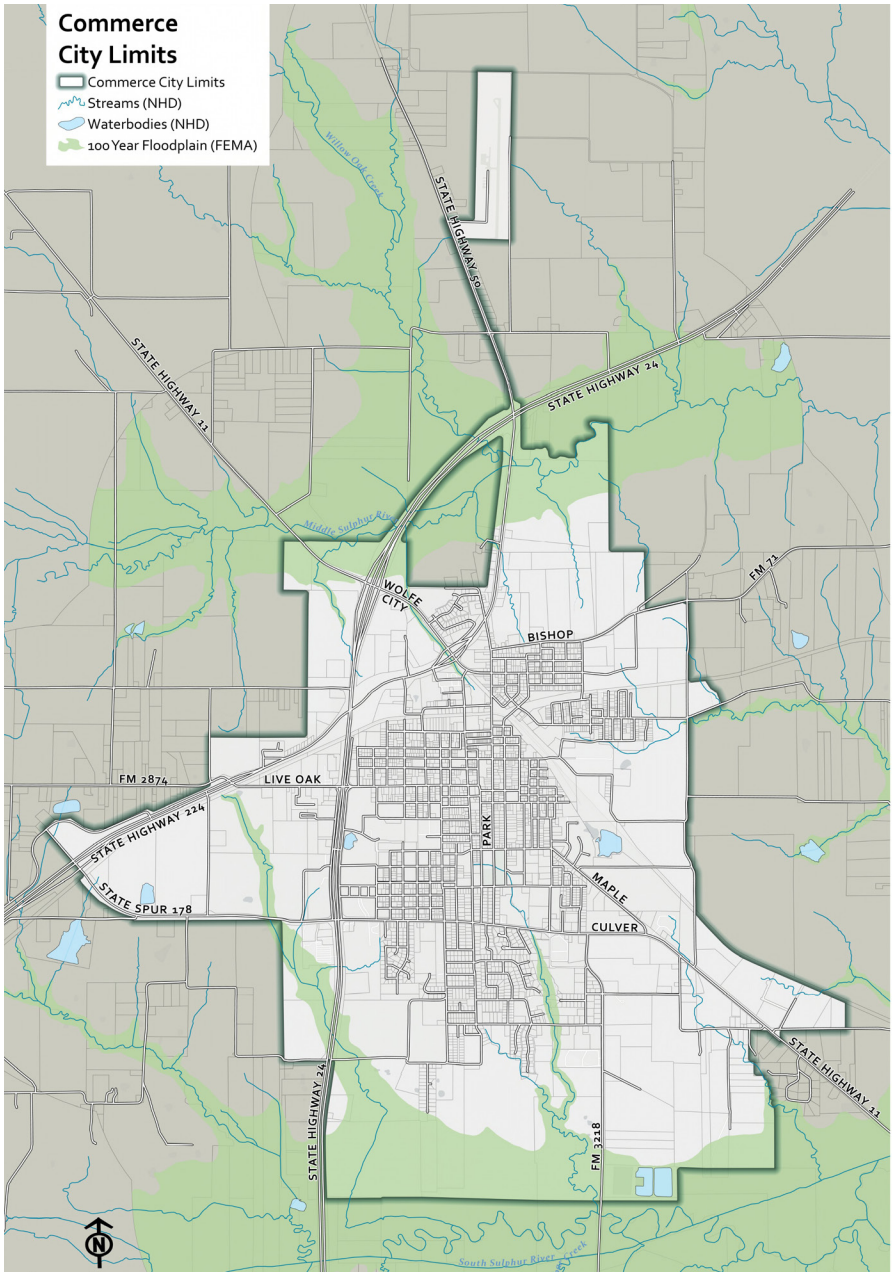
The City of Commerce is located in Northeast Texas and is the second-largest city in Hunt County. Just 45 miles south of the Texas/Oklahoma border, Commerce sits in the heart of the Texas Blackland Prairies. Commerce is 15 miles northeast of Greenville, 20 miles northwest of Sulphur Springs, 38 miles southwest of Paris, and 53 miles southeast of Sherman. Within its total area of 8.0 square miles, the City sits at the juncture of four major state highways: 50, 11, 24, and 244.

Natural Features

Commerce is situated just south of the Middle Sulphur River, part of the Red River watershed. This River forms part of the City's northern border, running past the north side of Commerce and into Jim Chapman Lake.

Named the "Bois d'Arc Capital of Texas," the City is located in the geographic center of the native range of the bois d'Arc tree, also known as the horse apple or Osage orange tree. The state's second largest bois d'Arc tree, "Big Max", is located in City limits and recognized by the National Forests Famous and Historic Trees.

Commerce is also in the Blackland Prairie, which is characterized by rich soils and a high degree of plant diversity. Due to its favorable conditions for farming and building development, much of the Blackland Prairie soils were overtaken by agriculture in the nineteenth century and urbanization in the 20th century, so a significant part of this habitat has been reduced.

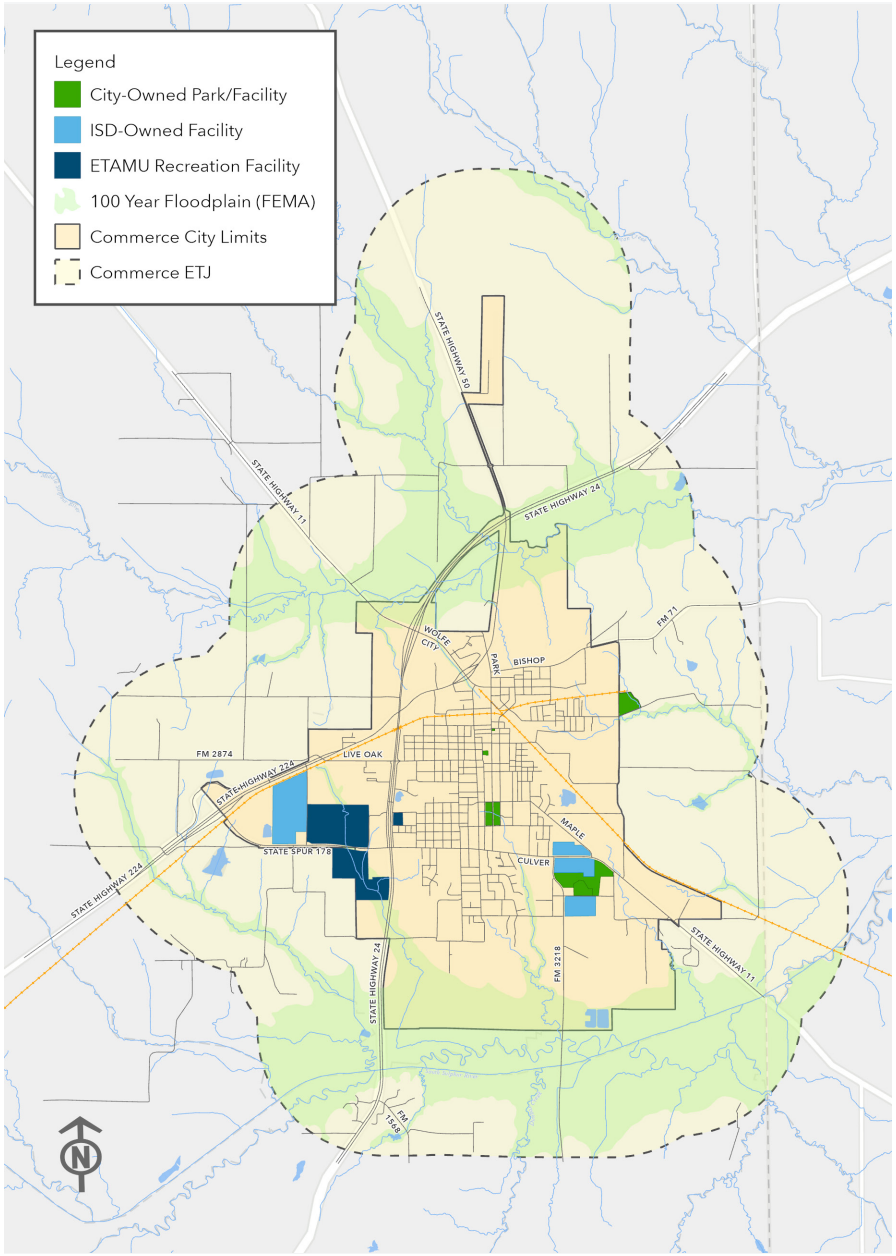


Map 2. Commerce City Limits

Parks

Within its eight square miles, Commerce has four notable existing areas for recreation:

- Centennial Park, located on Sterling Hart Drive on the City's east side, offers leisurely activities for all ages. It has picnic tables for gathering, play areas for children, a walking path, a skate park, and a 9-hole disc golf course.
- Eddie Moore Sports Complex is adjacent to Centennial Park. Facilities include lighted baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, a concession stand, and a play area. Local T-ball leagues and softball tournaments are often hosted at the Sports Complex.
- Ivory Moore Park, named after the man who was AEast Texas A&M'sfirst African American administrator, Commerce's first African American city council member, and first African American mayor, is located on the northeast side of Commerce. The park saw a recent update in 2022 with the installation of new playground and exercise equipment. Additionally, the park includes a lighted baseball field, a pavilion with electricity, grills, picnic tables, and a full basketball court.
- City Park is centrally located and saw major renovations in 2023 with the creation of the Splash Pad. This is a main attraction for kids of all ages, especially in the summer months. The park also boasts amenities for people of all ages, including a lighted baseball field, a pavilion with electricity, horseshoe pits, grills, picnic tables, a playground, and a full basketball court.



Map 3. Commerce Parks and Recreation Facilities

Planning Framework

Analysis of Past Plans

Previous local planning efforts should be considered when developing a comprehensive plan to ensure coordinated recommendations for the study area. This section provides an overview of relevant plans and their applicability to the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

City of Commerce 2024 Strategic Plan

The City of Commerce adopted the 2024 Strategic Plan in 2004. This Plan serves as a blueprint for the City with outlined long-term vision and goals. The following vision statement identified in the Strategic Plan will be retained for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan:

"The City of Commerce will be a vibrant, self-sustaining community where families can put down roots in the soil and grass of a rural setting, raise their children safely, pursue a quality education, and still have access to the amenities of the DFW Metroplex."

The four objectives identified in the 2024 Strategic Plan were to

- Develop new revenue streams
- Develop sustainable infrastructure
- Improve the appearance of the City
- Improve quality of life

The Plan identifies strategies for each of these objectives, along with lead contributors and deadlines. The 2045 Comprehensive Plan will craft goals and recommendations to promote achieving these objectives.

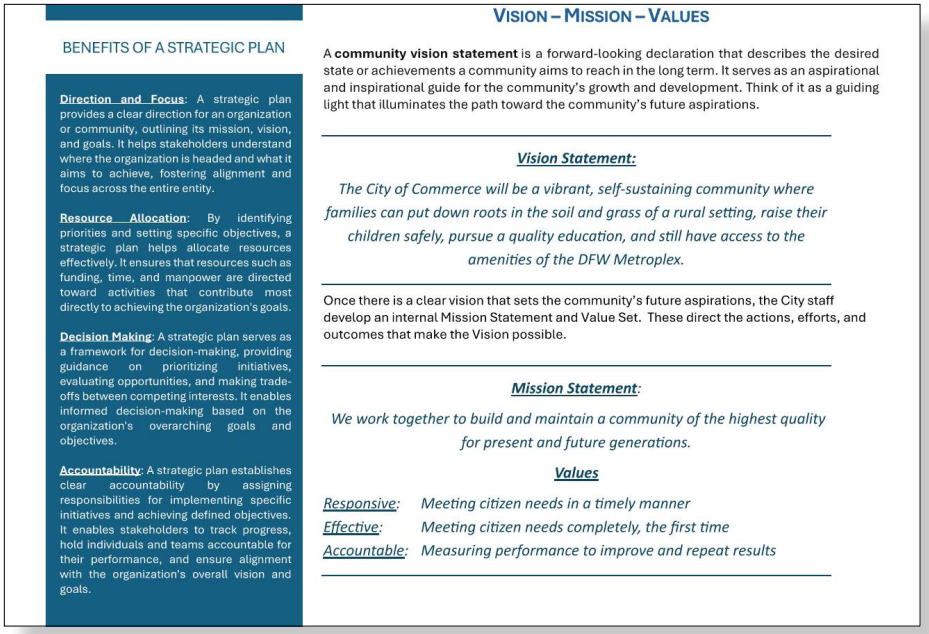
2024-2027 Strategic Plan

Adopted in February 2024, the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Development is focused on the goals for development within the City of Commerce over the next three years.

Similar to the 2024 Strategic Plan, the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Development identified the following key objectives to be prioritized for the plan's longevity:

- Develop new revenue streams
- Develop sustainable infrastructure, corresponding with growth
- Establish and maintain a long-term identity
- Improve the quality of life
- Improve the appearance of the City

These objectives will be used as the guiding principles for the 2045 Comprehensive Plan and help formulate the plan's recommendations and goals.



BENEFITS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

Direction and Focus: A strategic plan provides a clear direction for an organization or community, outlining its mission, vision, and goals. It helps stakeholders understand where the organization is headed and what it aims to achieve, fostering alignment and focus across the entire entity.

Resource Allocation: By identifying priorities and setting specific objectives, a strategic plan helps allocate resources effectively. It ensures that resources such as funding, time, and manpower are directed toward activities that contribute most directly to achieving the organization's goals.

Decision Making: A strategic plan serves as a framework for decision-making, providing guidance on prioritizing initiatives, evaluating opportunities, and making trade-offs between competing interests. It enables informed decision-making based on the organization's overarching goals and objectives.

Accountability: A strategic plan establishes clear accountability by assigning responsibilities for implementing specific initiatives and achieving defined objectives. It enables stakeholders to track progress, hold individuals and teams accountable for their performance, and ensure alignment with the organization's overall vision and goals.

VISION – MISSION – VALUES

A **community vision statement** is a forward-looking declaration that describes the desired state or achievements a community aims to reach in the long term. It serves as an aspirational and inspirational guide for the community's growth and development. Think of it as a guiding light that illuminates the path toward the community's future aspirations.

Vision Statement:

The City of Commerce will be a vibrant, self-sustaining community where families can put down roots in the soil and grass of a rural setting, raise their children safely, pursue a quality education, and still have access to the amenities of the DFW Metroplex.

Once there is a clear vision that sets the community's future aspirations, the City staff develop an internal Mission Statement and Value Set. These direct the actions, efforts, and outcomes that make the Vision possible.

Mission Statement:

We work together to build and maintain a community of the highest quality for present and future generations.

Values

Responsive: *Meeting citizen needs in a timely manner*
Effective: *Meeting citizen needs completely, the first time*
Accountable: *Measuring performance to improve and repeat results*

OBJECTIVES

A Strategic Plan begins with a look at current conditions and begins to aspire to a desired future. Then a set of Objectives are drafted that are key issues or challenges that must be faced to accomplish the desired future. Finally, Strategies and Action Steps are established that direct the allocation of resources and assets for the organization to make the desired future possible.

Within the Council Retreat in the Summer of 2023, the City Council identified five Objectives that they felt were crucial to the community's ability to create its future... rather than having outside forces determine the future of the community. Subsequently, a series of three Town Hall meetings were held to obtain feedback from community stakeholders. Based on the feedback received during these meetings, the Objectives were reduced to four and they are ranked by the priority established by community stakeholders.

Develop New Revenue Streams

The socio-economic condition of our community is well below that of the average community in Texas. The median household income for Commerce is $37,684 per year. (*The median household income considered to be poverty is $39,900 per year*.) Thirty-six percent (36%) of Commerce households have a total household income of $25,000 per year or less.

This means that the cost of growth and rehabilitation of existing systems cannot be carried by local taxpayers alone. New revenue streams that simply add to the existing taxpayers' bill will not be sustainable. Revenue from other stakeholders and external sources will be necessary to accomplish the desired future.

Develop Sustainable Infrastructure

The fundamental infrastructure of a community is the systems needed to provide basic services such as water, sewer, solid waste, and streets. Without these critical services in place, it is difficult for a community to grow and prosper.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop New Revenue Streams
2. Develop Sustainable Infrastructure
3. Improve The Appearance Of The City
4. Improve Quality Of Life

The City of Commerce Downtown Plan

The City of Commerce Downtown Plan was adopted in January 2023 and serves as an overall strategy and guideline for future development in downtown Commerce. A Downtown Master Plan was developed as part of this planning effort, and strategic areas were identified for improvement and development. Actions and strategies were formulated to achieve the goals identified for the Downtown Core. Actions were broken into two key categories- Master Plan actions, which include projects illustrated in the Master Plan, and Operational and Programming actions, which include efforts intended to build resources to generate activity and interest in Downtown.

Goals and Recommendations in the 2045 Comprehensive Plan will be made in coordination with the City of Commerce Downtown Plan's goals to promote achieving these objectives.

2

LAND USE

Introduction

This chapter plans for the future land use pattern in Commerce. It begins by evaluating existing land uses and recognizing a need to carry over uses not expected to change within the next 20 years. Future land use categories are developed to address new development and anticipated redevelopment, driven by the community's goals.

The intensity and arrangement of land use affect various aspects of city management, such as infrastructure demands, traffic levels, quality of life, and economic growth. Efficient land use organization enables cities to expand in a structured and sustainable way. Planning for future land uses provides the City with greater certainty about development and supports more effective planning.

Balanced land uses ensure residents have needed resources. This Comprehensive Plan aims to create an ideal mix of land uses by evaluating existing uses and identifying appropriate locations for future uses.

This chapter utilizes existing conditions, scenario planning, and community feedback to create a Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to guide Commerce's future land development. The following sections of this chapter are:

- Existing Land Use Analysis
- Population and Growth Projections
- Future Land Use Plan
- Development Dashboards and Types
- Land Use and Development Goals and Actions

What We Heard

Participants at the August 2024 open house voiced strong support for increasing the walkability of the community and adding new entertainment options throughout the City. Additionally, the participants pointed out the need for high quality, affordable housing options in the community.

Figure 13. What uses would you **emphasize** on the Future Land Use Map

	Public Comment
1	Master planned communities; Maintained multifamily housing
2	Decent, affordable that doesn't require a huge investment
3	University village that is walkable; elevated walkway
4	Safe walkable connections
5	Kids and teens need a space to go

Figure 14. What **building patterns or development** do you love and why?

	Public Comment
1	Walkability and connections to corner stores
2	Better community access to university
3	(Walking options) missing middle housing
4	Restaurants downtown

Figure 15. What land uses are **needed or missing** in Commerce?

	Public Comment
1	Shopping for essentials in every quadrant
2	Missing middle and garage apartments
3	Retirement community and resources
4	Neighborhood gathering spots
5	Norris community needs walkable shopping

Figure 16. What **building patterns or development** do you prefer Commerce avoid?

	Public Comment
1	No big box stores
2	Car dependent sprawl; Disconnected housing.
3	Food deserts

Population Projections

Commerce has experienced moderate but steady population growth since 2010, increasing from 8,078 residents in 2010 to 9,266 in 2024 according to the Census Bureau. This accounts for an average annual growth rate of 1.03% during that period. The City can expect to maintain or exceed this growth rate in the future. New residential development in the City and the continued growth and expansions of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, along with the continued growth of ETAMU will support growth in Commerce in the future.

Figure 16 breaks down three projections for population growth in Commerce over the next 5, 10, 20, and 30 years. The three projections are based on the most likely average annual growth rates based on previous growth and future development. The three projected growth rates are 1.1%, 1.5%, and 1.9%, with the 1.5% average annual growth rate being the most likely.

Figure 17. Growth Projections

Time Period	1.1% Growth	1.5% Growth	1.9% Growth
2024 (Current)	9,266	**9,266**	9,266
2029 (5 year)	9,787	**9,982**	10,180
2034 (10 year)	10,337	**10,754**	11,185
2044 (20 year)	11,532	**12,480**	13,501
2054 (30 year)	12,866	**14,484**	16,297

= *Most likely growth scenario*

Existing Land Use Analysis

Understanding the type and location of existing land use within the City is important. This provides a basis for creating the FLUM by carrying overuses that are not expected to change within the next 20 years.

Within City limits, approximately 65% of the land is developed. The primary land uses in Commerce include single family, improved acreage, industrial, and public/semi-public. A large portion of the public/semi-public land is occupied by East Texas A&M's (ETAMU) campus. Other land uses, such as commercial, large-lot residential, manufactured home, multifamily, office, retail, right of way, railroad right of way, and utility land uses are scattered throughout the City. These developed areas are often bordered by vacant or underdeveloped land, including floodplain zones. An analysis conducted during this planning process reveals that a substantial amount of land within the City limits remains available for development.

Within City limits, 16% of land is located within flood hazard areas and is generally unsuitable for future development. Therefore, the remaining 84% of land in Commerce is developable. In the ETJ, 33% of land is part of the floodplain and the remaining 64% is developable.

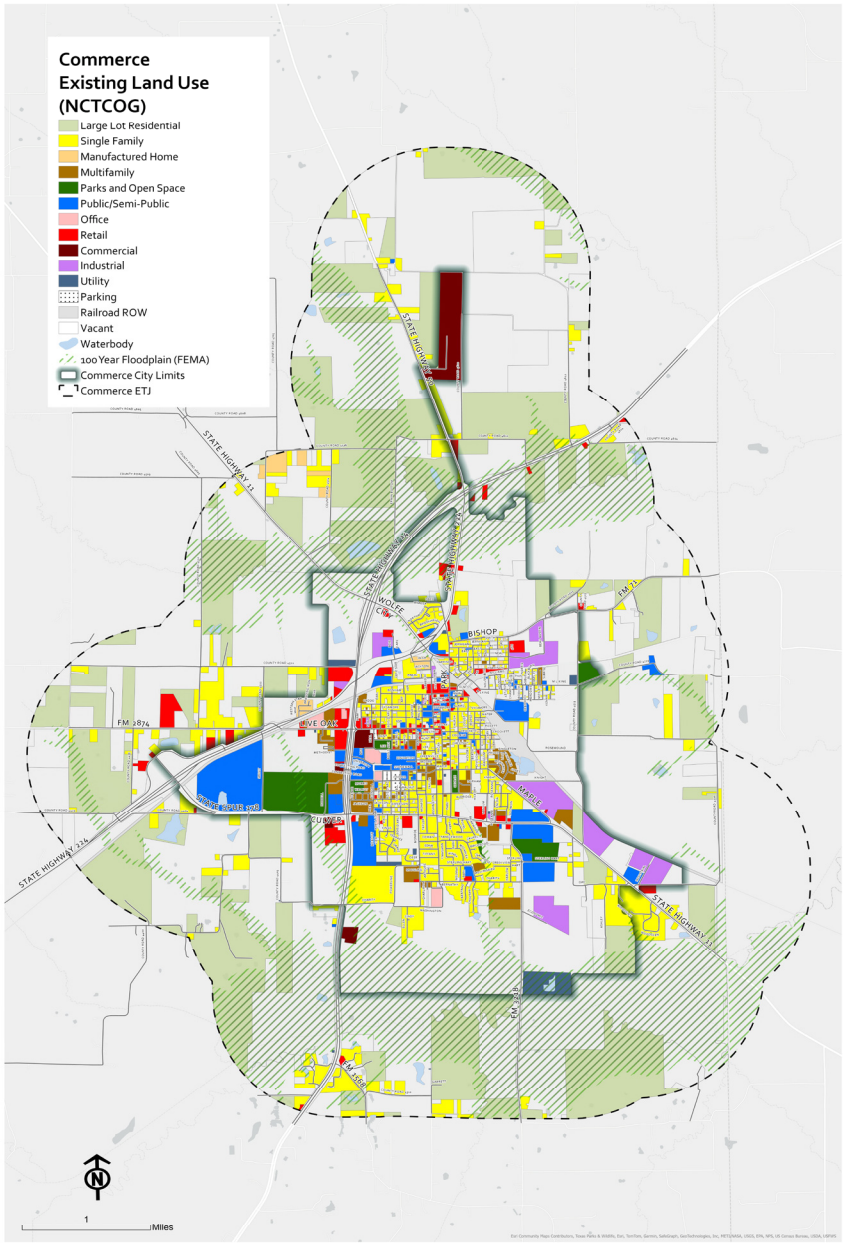
Several factors have shaped Commerce's development. Most non-residential growth is concentrated along the State Highway 224, State Highway 24, and State Highway 11 corridors. The expanding campus of East Texas A&M University has also spurred nearby retail and multifamily residential development. Meanwhile, industrial development is primarily situated on the eastern side of the City.

The Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is the area outside City limits that indicates the City's future growth and service areas. Commerce's ETJ extends one square mile around City limits, with most of the land remaining vacant. Approximately 26% of the ETJ is currently occupied by large-lot residential developments.

Figure 18. Existing Land Use Table

Land Use Category	Acres (City Limits	% (City Limits)	Acres (ETJ)	% (ETJ)
Commercial	129	2.4%	0	0.0%
Improved Acreage	286	5.3%	1,785	13.1%
Industrial	211	3.9%	0	0.0%
Large Lot Residential	163	3.0%	3,523	25.9%
Manufactured Home	26	0.5%	34	0.3%
Multifamily	174	3.2%	-	-
Office	33	0.6%	-	-
Parking	11	0.2%	-	-
Parks and Open Space	169	3.2%	0	0.0%
Public/Semi-Public	408	7.6%	9	0.1%
Railroad ROW	104	1.9%	27	0.2%
Retail	144	2.7%	63	0.5%
ROW	814	15.2%	367	2.7%
Single Family	707	13.2%	586	4.3%
Utility	55	1.0%	0	0.0%
Vacant	1,896	35.3%	6,351	46.6%
Waterbody	33	0.6%	89	0.6%
No Data			793	5.8%
Total	**5,364**	**100.0%**	**13,628**	**100.0%**

Map 4. Existing Land Use Map



Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is an essential tool for planning the future development and character of Commerce and its Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ.) The map serves as a visual guide of the community's desired future land uses, but it is not a prediction. While it does not replace a zoning map, which specifies development requirements for individual parcels, it provides guidance for long-term zoning and development. Effective land use planning helps ensure compatibility among land uses, enhances quality of life, and promotes economic vitality by strategically managing residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

The development of the Future Land Use Map begins by analyzing existing land uses. Known future developments are also considered to plan for development types in undeveloped areas. The proposed land uses and development types were chosen based on their potential to realize the community's vision, benefit of the residents of Commerce, and maintain existing community character.

Development Proposals and the Future Land Use Plan

Development proposals that differ from the intended land use on the Future Land Use Map should be evaluated using several key criteria:

- Will the proposed change enhance the site and surrounding area?
- Is the necessary infrastructure already in place or cost-effective to provide?
- Does it align with community goals and objectives?
- Will it impact adjacent residential areas negatively or positively?
- Is it compatible with adjacent uses in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects?
- Does the proposed use benefit the public health, safety, welfare, and long-term economic well-being of the community?

Proposals that do not align with the Future Land Use Plan should be assessed on their own merits, with the applicant responsible for demonstrating how the proposal meets these criteria and supports community goals. If such proposals offer significant benefits to the City, they should be approved, and the Future Land Use Map should be amended accordingly.

Zoning and the Future Land Use Map

Zoning changes must align with the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, taking into account factors such as timing and site suitability at the time of the request. The City evaluates zoning changes based on these factors and the Future Land Use Map but is not obligated to approve changes solely because they align with these documents. Applicants are responsible for demonstrating that their request aligns with adopted policies and benefits the community.

While the zoning map should generally correspond with the Future Land Use Map, the latter does not enforce specific development requirements. Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code requires that zoning regulations align with a Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency.

Reactive and Proactive Use of Zoning and the Plan

Both proactive and reactive strategies can be employed to implement zoning changes that might impact the Future Land Use Plan. Proactive strategies involve preemptively assessing future development needs and updating the Future Land Use Plan accordingly. On the other hand, reactive strategies respond to immediate development proposals that may not align with the current Future Land Use Plan. When such proposals arise, the City must assess whether they adhere to existing zoning regulations. Approving developments inconsistent with the Plan can lead to discrepancies in land use and zoning, potentially complicating future planning efforts.

To avoid these issues, it is crucial for the City to consider amending the Future Land Use Plan before rezoning land. Additionally, any necessary amendments should be recommended alongside rezoning requests to streamline the amendment process.

Future Development and Existing Infrastructure

In planning for future development and growth, addressing concerns about existing infrastructure is crucial. When existing streets, parks, and other facilities need significant improvements, residents may question the benefits of expanding development.

Generally, industrial and retail uses contribute more revenue through job creation, increased sales and property taxes, and other economic activities, which can offset costs to the city. On the other hand, residential growth frequently demands more resources than it yields in ad valorem tax revenue over the life of a development, but can stimulate retail expansion, thereby increasing revenues. By balancing these considerations, future development will prioritize infrastructure readiness and community input to ensure sustainable growth that enhances the collective well-being of the community.

Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Dashboards

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) identifies 12 land use categories, ranging from low density residential to industrial uses. Each category includes a description, visual representation, and development characteristics in a dashboard format, as illustrated throughout this chapter.

- Agricultural
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed (Medium) Density Residential
- University Neighborhood
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Business
- Heavy Industrial
- Downtown
- Public/Institutional
- University
- Parks and Open Space

The Future Land Use dashboards include various elements that help define the character and type of development that is appropriate within each land use category. The components and terms used in the land use dashboards are described in the following paragraphs.

Land Use Descriptions

Each dashboard includes the land use title, its corresponding land use color, and a general description outlining the category's purpose, intended uses, and design characteristics. These descriptions serve as a framework for any anticipated development or redevelopment of each area.

Visual Representation

A visual representation is included in each dashboard to provide an example of the primary development type that is appropriate for each land use. These images are for reference purposes only but should be referenced when considering the built form of development inquiries.

Density

The recommended residential density for development in each land use category is included in each dashboard. Density refers to the number of dwelling units located in a specific area and is represented as dwelling units per acre (DUA). Residential categories will include a target density range, however, design and context are also important considerations when assessing development impact.

Appropriateness

Each dashboard includes an appropriateness table with ranges on a scale of zero (○○○○) to four (●●●●) markers, where no marker means a use should likely be prohibited, and four markers mean a use should likely be approved. The following development types have been identified and assigned an appropriateness in the table analysis. It is important to note, that these are general categories and are not intended to describe all allowable uses or specific zoning districts.

- Single-Family (SF), Detached
- Single-Family (SF), Zero Lot Line
- Single-Family Attached (SFA), Duplexes
- Single-Family Attached (SFA), Townhomes
- Tiny Homes/Cottage Courts
- Multiplexes (≤ 8 units)
- Multifamily (> 8 units)
- Local Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Food Truck Park
- Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban
- Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale
- Light Industrial
- Manufacturing
- Civic/Open Space

Single-Family (SF), Detached

One housing or dwelling unit on an individual lot. These dwellings are typically individually owned and may be built singularly or within larger neighborhoods.

Single-Family (SF), Zero Lot Line

A dwelling unit where one side of the house is built directly on the property line, maximizing the use of the lot's space. These dwellings are also commonly known as patio homes.

Single-Family Attached (SFA), Duplexes

Two housing or dwelling units on a lot, usually sharing a wall. Similar in character and style to single-family detached housing.

Single-Family Attached (SFA), Townhomes

Multi-story, narrow homes sharing walls with neighboring units, typically arranged in rows or small clusters.

Tiny Homes/Cottage Court

One small, detached dwelling unit that is typically under 500 square feet in size. Can be arranged around a shared court that is visible from the street.

Multiplexes (≤ 8 units)

Residential building where several individual units are housed within the same structure, often vertically stacked and accommodating up to 8 units per lot.

Multifamily (>8 units)

Similar to multiplexes, but with 8+ units per lot and may include multiple buildings on one lot, creating a complex.

Local Commercial

Small-scale local businesses and establishments catering to the immediate surrounding community or neighborhood. Uses include, but are not limited to restaurants, medical offices, retail establishments in individual buildings or small retail centers, and other local employment generators.

Regional Commercial

Large-scale developments aimed at both local and regional consumer bases. Developments are strategically located along busy thoroughfares with a mix of amenities such as indoor/outdoor entertainment venues, major retail stores, and corporate offices.

Food Truck Park

Designated area where a mix of food trucks and vendors can gather together to sell their culinary goods. Communal seating and gathering spaces are often included.

Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban

A blend of residential, office, retail and/or other uses within a single building or development. Developments may be horizontal mixed-used (next to each other) or vertical mixed-use (stacked). Vertical mixed-use typically features ground-floor restaurants or retail spaces to enhance pedestrian activity. Downtown scale developments are characterized by lower density with building heights that blend with surrounding residential areas.

Mixed Use Urban, Large Scale

A blend of residential, office, retail and/or other uses within a single building or development. Developments may be horizontal mixed-used (next to each other) or vertical mixed-use (stacked). Vertical mixed-use typically features ground-floor restaurants or retail spaces to enhance pedestrian activity.

Light Industrial

Industrial activities for the production or assembly of goods on a smaller scale. These operations typically occur indoors, where manufacturing, warehousing, and related activities avoid generating nuisances (noise, odor, dust, etc.).

Manufacturing

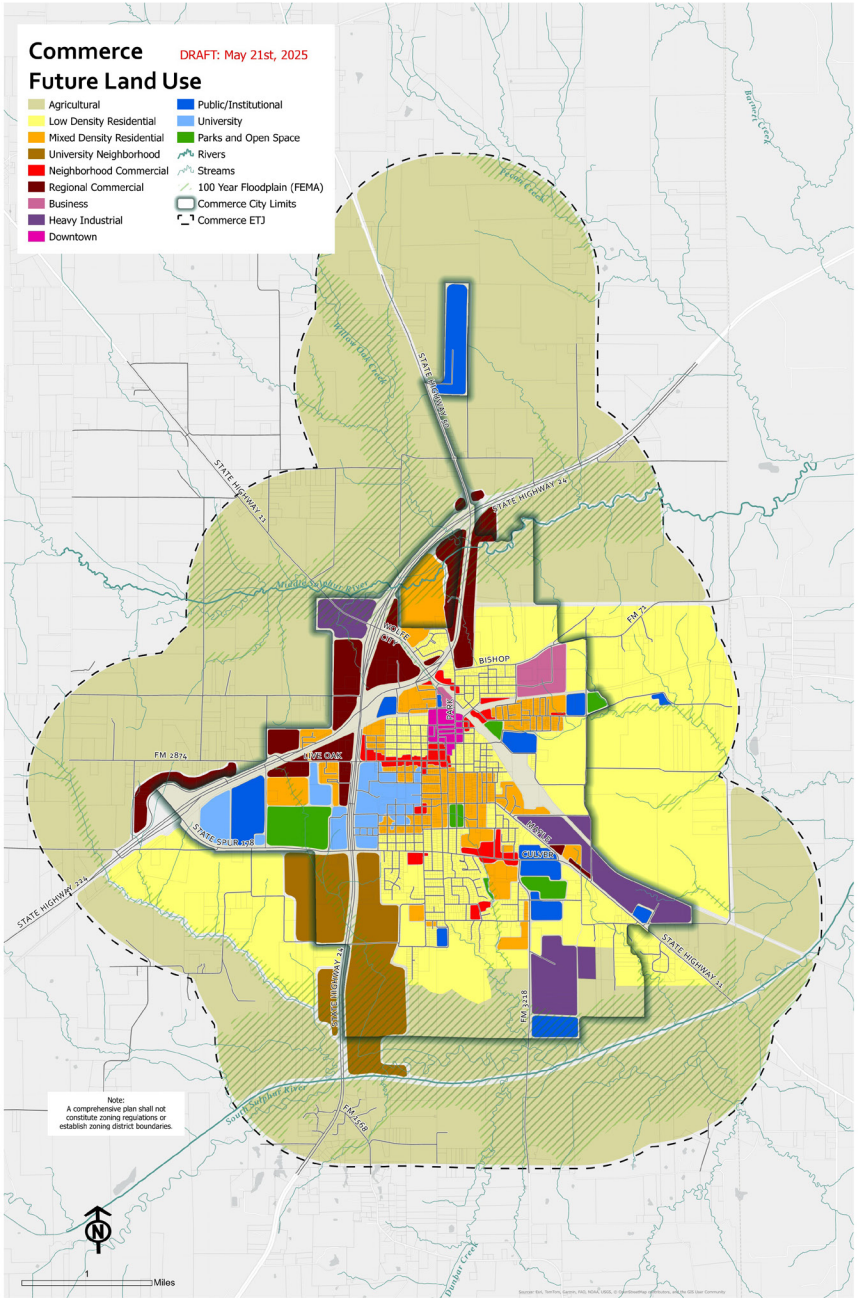
Industrial development intended to serve local or regional markets. This development type includes larger shipping operations and may produce more-than-average noise and waste. This development type is incompatible with residential uses and should be screened from adjacencies.

Civic/Open Space

Property serving as a conservatory, passive, or active recreational space. Open Spaces range from parks to riparian buffers and encourage social gathering and environmental protection.

Future Land Use Map

Land Use Category
Agricultural
Low Density Residential
Mixed Density Residential
University Neighborhood
University
Public/Institutional
Neighborhood Commercial
Regional Commercial
Business
Downtown
Heavy Industrial
Parks and Open Space



Agriculture

The Agriculture land use is meant to preserve a rural residential environment and promote complementary uses such as ranching, active crop cultivation, and harvesting. This designation should be dominated by large parcels, grazing, cultivation, and agricultural structures. Large-lot residential homes and small-scale commercial development that support agricultural activities may be appropriate for this designation.

Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	●●●●	*Large lot development to maintain rural character.*
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	●○○○	*May be appropriate if compatible with adjacent homes.*
Regional Commercial	○○○○	
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

Low Density Residential

Low Density Residential uses refer to single-family detached residential structures, representing the largest portion among residential categories. Typically located alongside other single-family homes, these areas are solely designated for residential purposes and do not include nonresidential uses. Lot sizes in low density development will range from 7,000 to 12,000 square feet. While various lot sizes may be used, development density should fall between two to six dwelling units per acre.

Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	●●●●	
SF, Zero Lot Line	●●○○	*May be appropriate if development scale and intensity is located in transition zones*
SF Attached, Duplexes	●○○○	*Appropriate if the scale is similar to surrounding uses*
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	●○○○	*May be appropriate to provide services to adjacent residential*
Regional Commercial	○○○○	
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

Mixed Density Residential

The Mixed Density Residential typically consists of neighborhoods with single-family detatched and single family attached dwelling units such as duplexes and townhomes. This land use can also range in density and include small-scale apartments. Mixed Density Residential areas allow for housing forms that may exceed individual lot coverage limits if the development adheres to the maximum allowable intensity guidelines. Density in these areas will fall between six to ten dwelling units per acre.

Development Type	Appropriateness	Considerations
SF, Detatched	●●○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	●●●●	
SF Attached, Duplexes	●●●●	
SF Attached, Townhomes	●●●●	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	●●●○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	●●●○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	●○○○	*May be appropriate if development scale and intensity is located in transition zones for more intense uses.*
Local Commercial	●●○○	*May be appropriate to provide services to adjacent residential*
Regional Commercial	○○○○	
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	●●○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

University Neighborhood

The University Neighborhood land use is characterized by concentrated multi-family housing developments that accommodate a large number of residential units per acre, such as tall apartment buildings, condominium complexes, and mixed-use developments. East Texas A&M University's needs should drive residential density and supporting commercial, which may shift based on attendance, staffing, and student-housing policy; however, compatibility with surrounding development will remain a priority. These areas will typically have densities over 18 dwelling units per acre.

Development Type	Appropriateness	Considerations
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	●●○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	●●○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	●●●●	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	●●●●	
Local Commercial	●●●○	*May be appropriate to provide services to adjacent residential*
Regional Commercial	●●○○	*May be appropriate to provide services to adjacent residential*
Food Truck Park	●●○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	●●●●	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	●●●●	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

University

East Texas A&M University is the primary function of the University land use. Uses within this district focus on supporting students, faculty, and staff with necessary offices, educational facilities, university-owned housing, and commercial services. Surrounding development should support the University's students, faculty, and operational systems by incorporating existing roadway and trail networks, providing opportunities for student and faculty integration into the community.

EAST TEXAS
A&M

Development Type	Appropriateness	Considerations
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	●●●●	
Local Commercial	●●●○	
Regional Commercial	●○○○	
Food Truck Park	●●○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	●●●●	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	●●●●	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

Public/Institutional

The Public/Institutional category encompasses the Commerce's governmental, institutional, educational, and religious institutions, such as fire and police stations, schools, places of worship, and land used by the City for storage or facilities. The Future Land Use Map reflects existing uses of this type; however, these uses are appropriate within any of the other future land use categories. As Commerce's population expands, development within these areas should focus on enhancing essential services and infrastructure to support community needs at both local and citywide levels adequately.

Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	○○○○	
Regional Commercial	●●○○	*May be appropriate for hospitals and medical uses*
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land uses refer to areas designated for shopping, employment, and commercial services to Commerce residents and visiting populations. Development within this category is strategically located along major road corridors and significant intersections to ensure convenient access for everyday needs such as dining, convenience stores, and local retail. Neighborhood Commercial uses can also be located within residential districts, as long as these uses blend with the neighborhood fabric and serve the surrounding community. Areas in this category should accommodate a variety of scales and services to retain businesses and attract visitors to Commerce.

Development Type	Appropriateness	Considerations
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	●○○○	*Appropriate to support mixed-use development.*
Multiplexes (>8 units)	●●●○	*Appropriate to support mixed-use development.*
Local Commercial	●●●●	
Regional Commercial	●●○○	
Food Truck Park	●●●○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	●●●●	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	●●○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	●○○○	*Appropriate for makers spaces.*
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

Regional Commercial

The Regional Commercial land use designation includes large-scale retail and commercial uses and other goods and services for purchase. This includes businesses such as banks, big-box retailers, and lodging. These uses will be primarily located along major corridors such as SH 11 and SH 24 and buffered from single-family residential developments to ensure desirable development patterns.

Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	●●●●	
Regional Commercial	●●●●	
Food Truck Park	●●●○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	●●○○	*Appropriate if integrated with larger, regional commercial development.*
Manufacturing	●●○○	*Appropriate if integrated with larger, regional commercial development.*
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

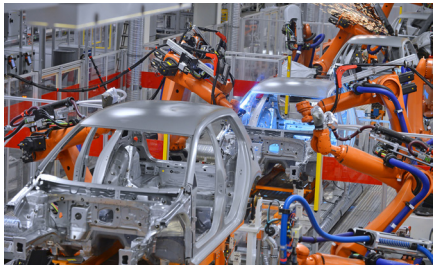
General Business

This land use designation encompasses a range of light industrial, office, and flex-space developments, catering to distribution, warehousing, and related operations. Businesses in these areas play a vital role in fostering local employment opportunities and bolstering the City's tax revenue base. These areas should be positioned along major thoroughfares and carefully aligned with neighboring uses to reduce potential conflicts for both future businesses and residents.

Development Type	Appropriateness	Considerations
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	●●○○	
Regional Commercial	●●●○	
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	●●●●	.
Manufacturing	●●●●	
Civic/Open Space	●○○○	*Appropriate for preservation and drainage mitigation.*

Heavy Industrial

High-intensity industrial practices characterize the Heavy Industrial land use. This includes manufacturing, distribution, and related operations. Businesses in these areas are also essential for creating local jobs and enhancing the City's tax revenue. Given their intensive nature, these areas require substantial space and should be strategically located near major thoroughfares, while also ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses to minimize potential conflicts for both future businesses and residents.



Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	○○○○	
Regional Commercial	●●○○	*Appropriate to support and serve the needs of workers in this area.*
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	●●●●	.
Manufacturing	●●●●	
Civic/Open Space	●○○○	*Appropriate for preservation and drainage mitigation.*

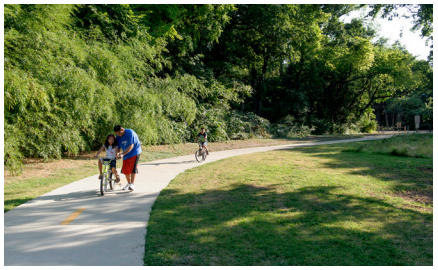
Downtown

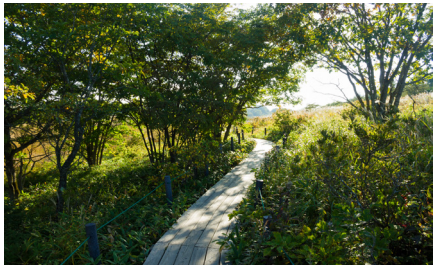
The Downtown land use encompasses all uses identified in the City of Commerce Downtown Plan, including the Downtown Core located along Washington Street, Main Street, and Alamo Street, the Flexible Residential Neighborhood comprised of nearby existing neighborhoods, and the Core Transition located between the non-residential and residential uses. The Downtown land use also incorporates the civic uses located adjacent to the Downtown Core, such as City Hall, the Library, and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as parks and open space. High-density development should enhance walkability, ensuring pedestrian interaction with Downtown establishments along the street. Integration of public spaces within Downtown should foster both passive and active pedestrian activity.

Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	●●●○	*Appropriate for small lot sized and historic single family homes.*
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	●●●○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	●●●○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	●●○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	●●○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	●●●●	
Regional Commercial	○○○○	
Food Truck Park	●●●●	*Appropriate in vacant areas in Downtown.*
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	●●●●	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	

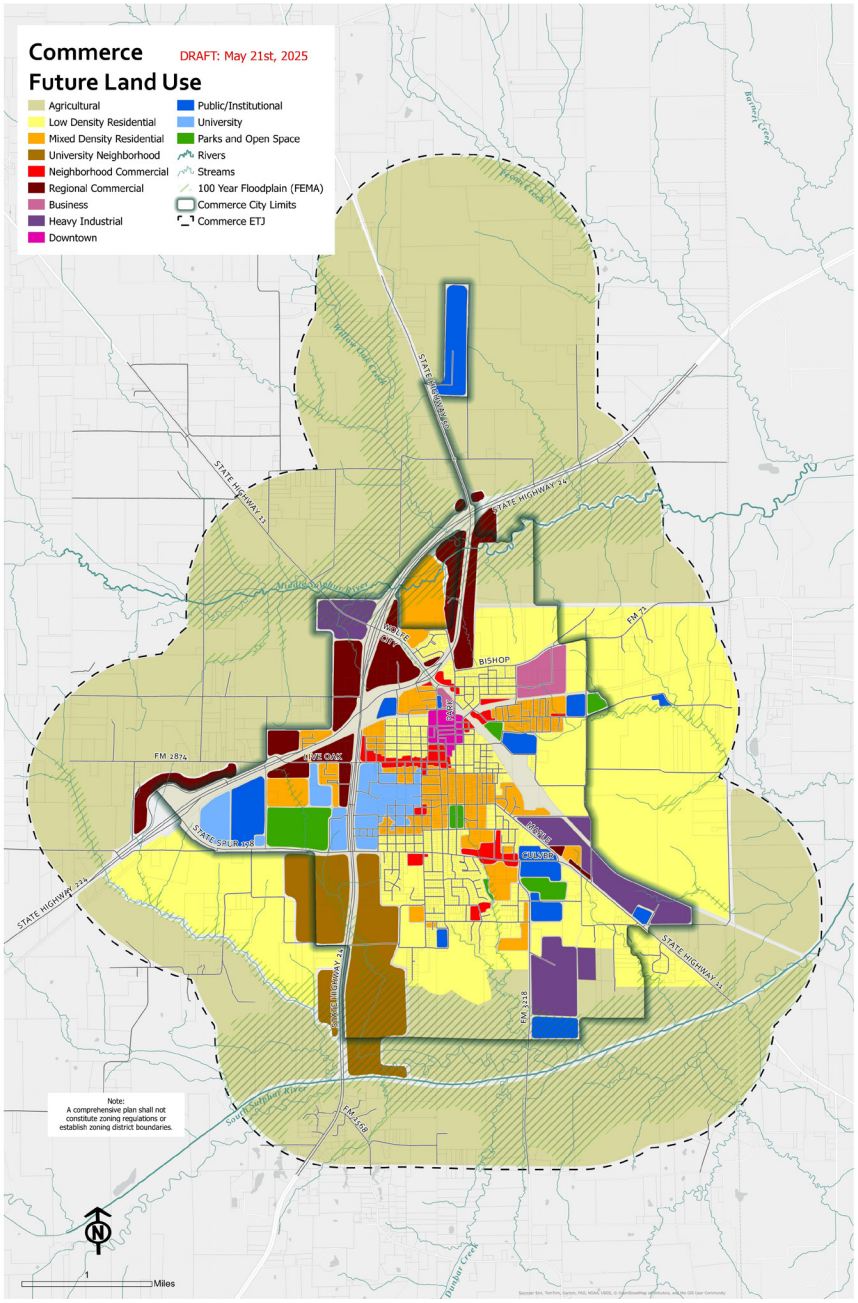
Parks & Open Space

The Parks & Open Space category encompasses Commerce's private and public parks system and gathering spaces. These areas connect residents and visitors to outdoor spaces and preserve Commerce's natural and ecological assets. These types of uses can also be appropriately integrated into any of the other future land use categories.





Development Type	*Appropriateness*	*Considerations*
SF, Detatched	○○○○	
SF, Zero Lot Line	○○○○	
SF Attached, Duplexes	○○○○	
SF Attached, Townhomes	○○○○	
Tiny Homes/ Cottage Courts	○○○○	
Multiplexes (<8 units)	○○○○	
Multiplexes (>8 units)	○○○○	
Local Commercial	○○○○	
Regional Commercial	○○○○	
Food Truck Park	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Downtown Urban	○○○○	
Mixed-Use Urban, Large Scale	○○○○	
Light Industrial	○○○○	.
Manufacturing	○○○○	
Civic/Open Space	●●●●	



	Land Use Category	Acres (City Limits)	% (City Limits)
	Agricultural	459.7	8.6%
	Business	98.8	1.8%
	Downtown	54.1	1.0%
	Heavy Industrial	408.1	7.6%
	Low Density Residential	1,817.2	33.9%
	Mixed Density Residential	624.9	11.7%
	Neighborhood Commercial	139.4	2.6%
	Parks and Open Space	183.4	3.4%
	Public/Institutional	398.6	7.4%
	Regional Commercial	412.4	7.7%
	University	283.0	5.3%
	University Neighborhood	484.2	9.0%
	Total	**5,364.0**	**100.0%**

3

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

Introduction

The transportation system is an integral part in guiding Commerce's future developments. Land use and transportation decisions are closely related, affecting housing, open spaces, and economic development. As one of the most visible and permanent elements in the community, the transportation system also has great impacts on residents' daily lives.

A good transportation system provides a range of mobility options that are safe and accessible for all users regardless of race, ability, or income.

This chapter focuses on Commerce's transportation system using current traffic data. It will discuss thoroughfare planning, the City's existing transportation conditions, the thoroughfare network development, with recommended strategies provided at the end.

City Park Trails in Commerce, Texas. (Source: FNI)

What is a Thoroughfare Plan?

Commerce currently does not have a thoroughfare plan, but Hunt County recently updated its thoroughfare plan in 2022. Thoroughfare planning establishes a framework for Commerce's long-term mobility and guides the decision-making process. By identifying transportation issues and needs, a thoroughfare plan provides the City with guidance on addressing these needs and facilitating future developments.

The key attributes of a thoroughfare plan include:

Role as a Policy Document

All thoroughfare plans set policies for orderly development of the roadway network that emphasize network connections, roadway capacity, and stakeholder/public engagement. They identify the general location and type of facilities required to support growth.

Long-Range in Scope

All thoroughfare plans are focused on addressing long-range transportation needs to manage forecast growth. The planning horizon for implementation is typically 20 years or more.

Focused on Right-of-Way (ROW) Preservation

A key component of the thoroughfare plan is to create a mechanism to preserve land for future roadways so that an effective and efficient roadway can be developed over time to support growth as it occurs.

Thoroughfare Plan Map

All thoroughfare plans include a map of the proposed roadway recommendations. The map identifies and integrates existing thoroughfare plans to produce a clear and consistent vision for the development of the roadway network.

Public Engagement

Public involvement is a crucial element in all thoroughfare plans, where various stakeholders express their transportation needs and concerns. Public and stakeholder input should occur throughout the plan development process through public meetings, stakeholder workshops, and online surveys.

Living Document

The thoroughfare plan is subjected to constant revision and amendment. It is typically updated every 5 to 10 years (frequency of update depends on how quickly the region is developing) to provide considerations for accommodating the changing growth patterns in the City.

Existing Conditions

Major Roadways

Map 5 on page 53 shows all major, minor and local roadways in the City of Commerce. Map 2 on page 7 shows highways that are designated truck routes by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

SH 11

State Highway 11 (SH 11) is a principal arterial that runs from US 69 near Whitewright to US 59 near Linden in Cass County. In Hunt County, SH 11 cuts through Wolfe City and Fairlie before entering Commerce. The highway overlaps with State Loop 178 to the west and then with SH 24 going north.

SH 24

State Highway 24 (SH 24) is a principal arterial that runs from Paris in the northeast and merges into I-30 near Campbell, which is located southwest of Commerce. SH 24 serves as a major north-south corridor in Commerce and connects the City with nearby areas. It is also the only TxDOT-designated truck route going through the City.

SH 224

State Highway 224 (SH 224) is a principal arterial that cuts through the northwestern portion of Commerce. SH 224 merges into SH 50 at the intersection with SH 24.

SH 50

State Highway 50 (SH 50) is a principal arterial that begins north of Commerce in Ladonia and merges as a 2-lane undivided roadway into SH 224 at the intersection of SH 24. It cuts through the northern portion of Commerce and its ETJ.

State Loop 178

State Loop 178 is an east-west principal arterial located South of Downtown Commerce. It serves as an important thoroughfare for Commerce residents and East Texas A&M University students and staff.

FM 71

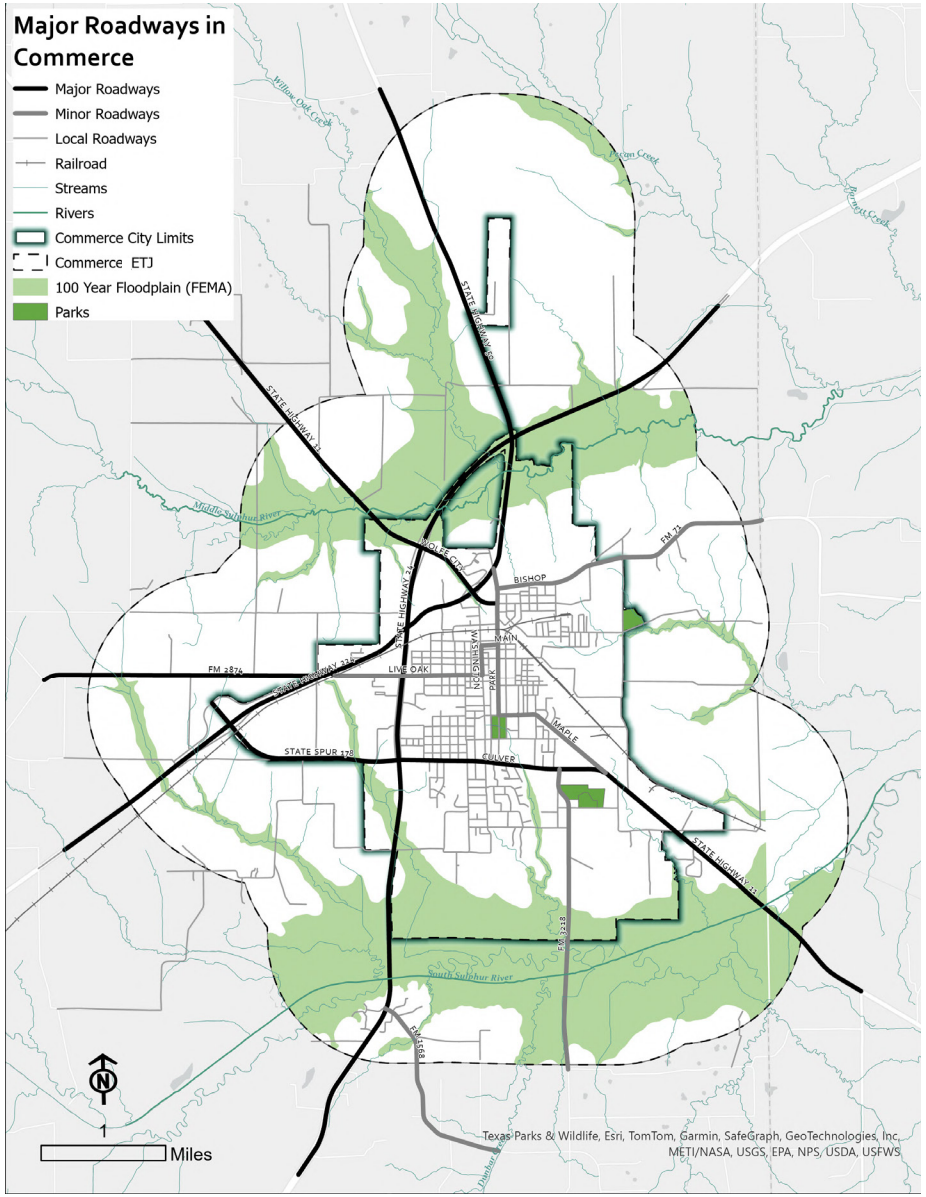
Farm Road 71 (FM 71) is a major arterial in the northeast portion of the City. It runs east-west and provides connections to communities around Jim Chapman Lake and Cooper Lake State Park east of Commerce.

Park Street

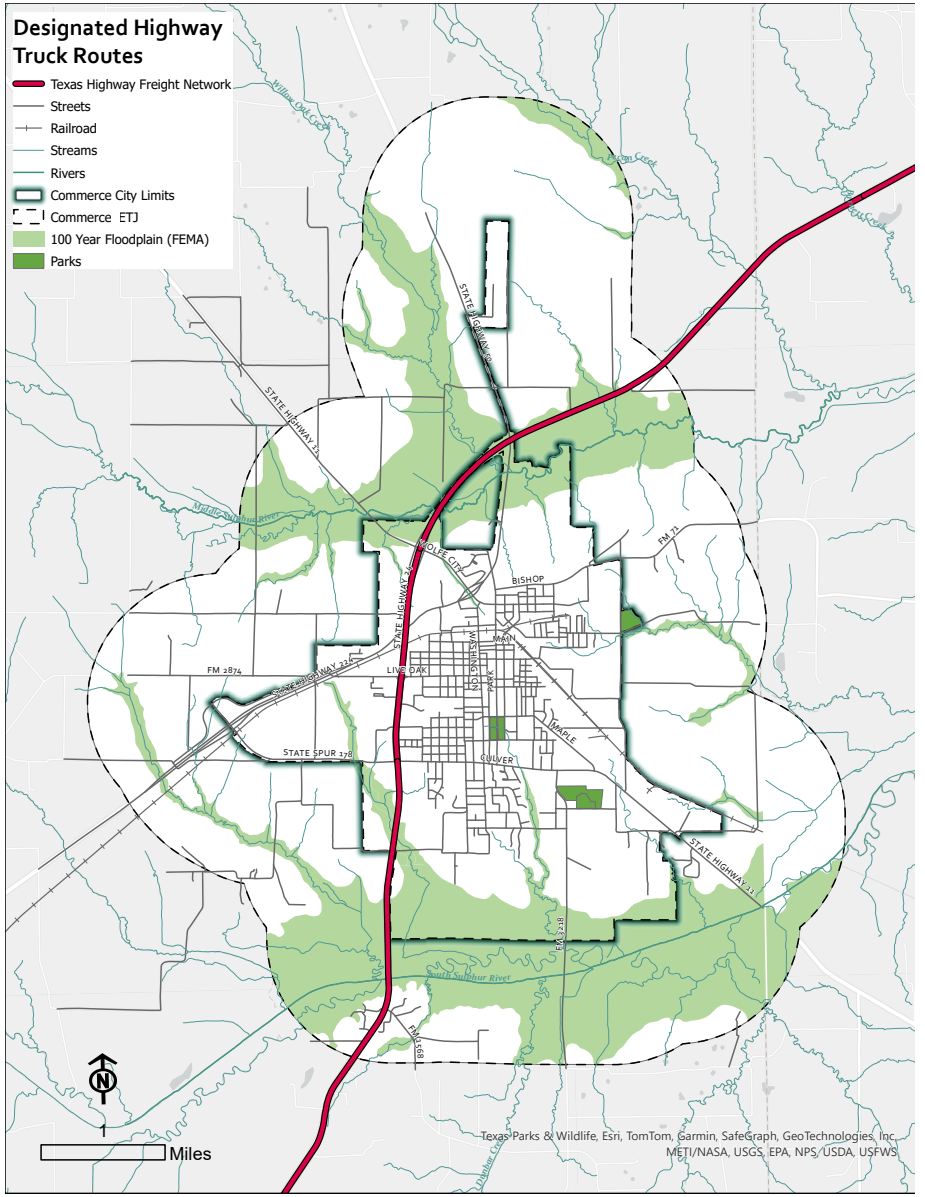
Park Street is a major arterial providing north-south connection in the City. It plays a crucial role in connecting neighborhoods with Downtown Commerce.

Live Oak Street

Live Oak Street is a east-west collector in the central portion of Commerce. It serves as a connection between Downtown Commerce to principal arterials SH 24 and SH 224.



Map 5. Major Roadways in Commerce



Map 6. Texas Highway Freight Network

Overview of Functional Classification

Functional classification is a hierarchical system that categorizes all roadways in Commerce based on their common characteristics and functions. Characteristics unique to each classification include the geometric design, speed, traffic capacity, and access to adjacent lands. Functions range from providing mobility for through traffic and major traffic flows to providing access to specific properties.

Freeways, Highways and Frontage Roads

These facilities serve long-range regional, statewide and national connectivity. The impact of these facilities on the mobility and needs in the City is essential to consider when evaluating and planning the transportation network. The City of Commerce currently has multiple highways crossing through, including SH 11, SH 224, SH 24, SH 50 and State Loop 178, providing regional access to surrounding municipalities, counties and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

Frontage roads are also significant as they provide important access and congestion relief adjacent to limited-access freeways.

Arterials

Arterials focus on moving regional traffic across longer distances within and beyond the City. Next to freeways, these types of thoroughfares typically carry the highest amounts of traffic and have the highest operating speeds.

Major Arterials

Major arterials are designed to allow large volumes of traffic to operate at a high level of mobility. A major arterial is designed for longer-distance trips and provides access to major activity centers and adjacent cities. SH 24 is an example of a major arterial.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials connect traffic from collectors to primary arterials. They are designed to accommodate moderate traffic volumes at relatively low speeds and often extend to a larger geographic area compared to collectors. FM 71 is an example of a minor arterial.

Collectors

Roadways designated as collectors are designed for short trips and low speeds. They serve primarily to connect trips to higher functional class facilities and on moving traffic between neighborhoods and different areas within the City. The number of lanes can range from two (2) to four (4) depending on the current or future demands and potential development.

Sometimes collectors are broken down into major and minor collectors. Major collectors provide higher levels of mobility, handle more traffic, and have fewer driveways and intersections than minor collectors. Live Oak Street is an example of a collector thoroughfare.

Local Streets

Local streets are focused on providing access to homes in residential neighborhoods where speeds are less than 30 miles per hour (mph), and traffic volumes are the lowest. In most cases lane striping is not implemented, and on-street parking is permitted, depending on the surrounding uses and building types.

Local streets are typically not designated on a thoroughfare plan as they do not require right-of-way dedication. As new development occurs, local streets are typically preserved and built by the developer. Once the development is complete, the city or county takes over maintenance and ownership of the right-of-way.

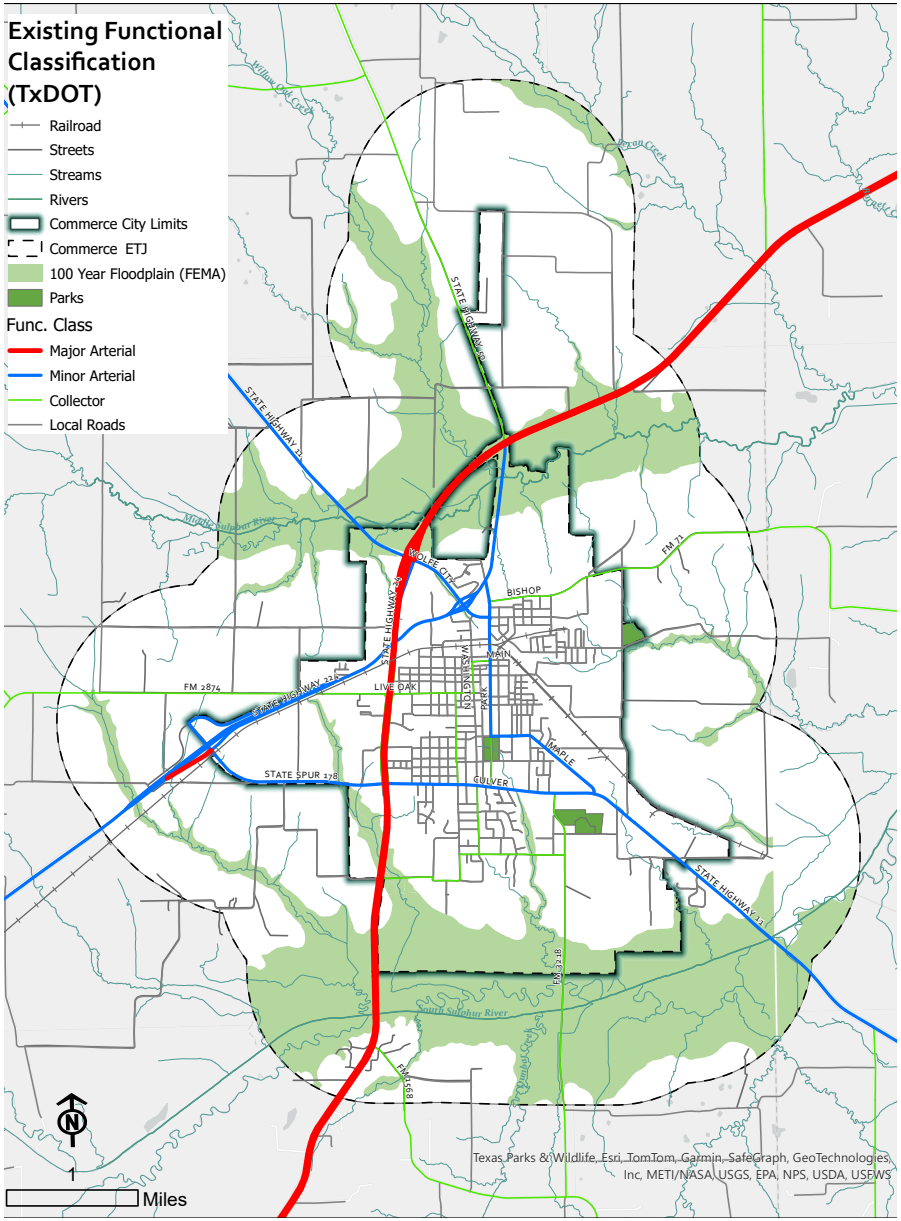
Existing Functional Street Classification in Commerce

Commerce's existing functional classification designations, outlined in Figure 19, define the roadway network into six classes, including arterial A and B, primary collector street A and B, secondary collector, and local residential street. The Right-of-Way is defined in Section 3.1 of the City's Subdivision Ordinances.

TxDOT functional classifications for the City of Commerce is shown on Map 7.

Functional Street Classification	Minimum Right-of-Way width (feet)
Arterial, divided (Type A)	120'
Arterial thoroughfare, undivided (Type B)	100'
Primary collector street (Type A)	80' industrial
Primary collector street (Type B)	60'
Secondary collector	50'
Local residential street	50'

Figure 19. Existing Functional Street Classification in Commerce



Map 7. Existing Functional Classification

Crash Analysis

According to the data from TxDOT's Crash Records Information System (CRIS), there were 587 crashes reported in Commerce from January 2019 to June 2024. 22 crashes resulted in serious injuries and 6 crashes resulted in fatal injuries (see Figure 20). Driver inattention is the major contributing factor to these accidents, followed by failure to control speed and yield right-of-way.

Map 8 on page 57 shows that most of the crashes occurred on major TxDOT-maintained roadways in Commerce. Approximately 25% of all crashes (157 crashes) occurred on SH 24. SH 11 and SH 224 each had 38 crashes. Considering that the major TxDOT-maintained roadways see the highest traffic volumes, it is not unusual that most crashes occure on them as well.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes

As shown in Figure 21, there were 8 crashes that involved a bicyclist or a pedestrian. One crash resulted in a fatality on SH 24 and one crash resulted in a serious injury on State Spur 178 (see Map 9 on page 57).

Compared to all crashes, pedestrians and bicyclists sustained an injury or a fatality at almost three times higher rate. This observation suggests that despite a lower number of bike/ped crashes, outcomes of bike/ped crashes are more severe than vehicle-only crashes.

Crash Severity	Number of crashes	Percentage
Fatal Injury	6	1.02%
Serious Injury	22	3.8%
Minor Injury	52	8.9%
Other*	507	86.4%
Total	**587**	**100%**

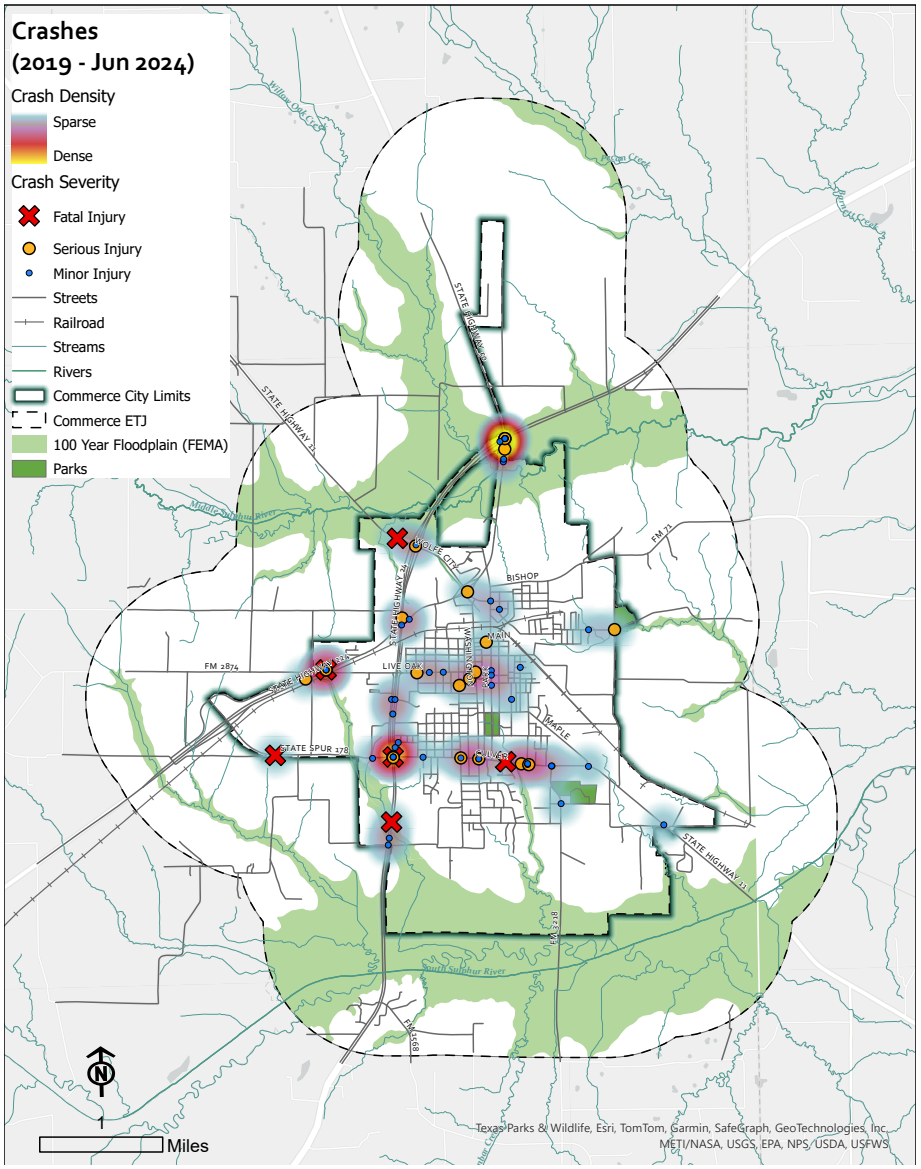
*Other includes crashes resulting in a possible injury, no injury, and an unknown injury level.

Figure 20. All Crashes in Commerce from January 2019 to June 2024

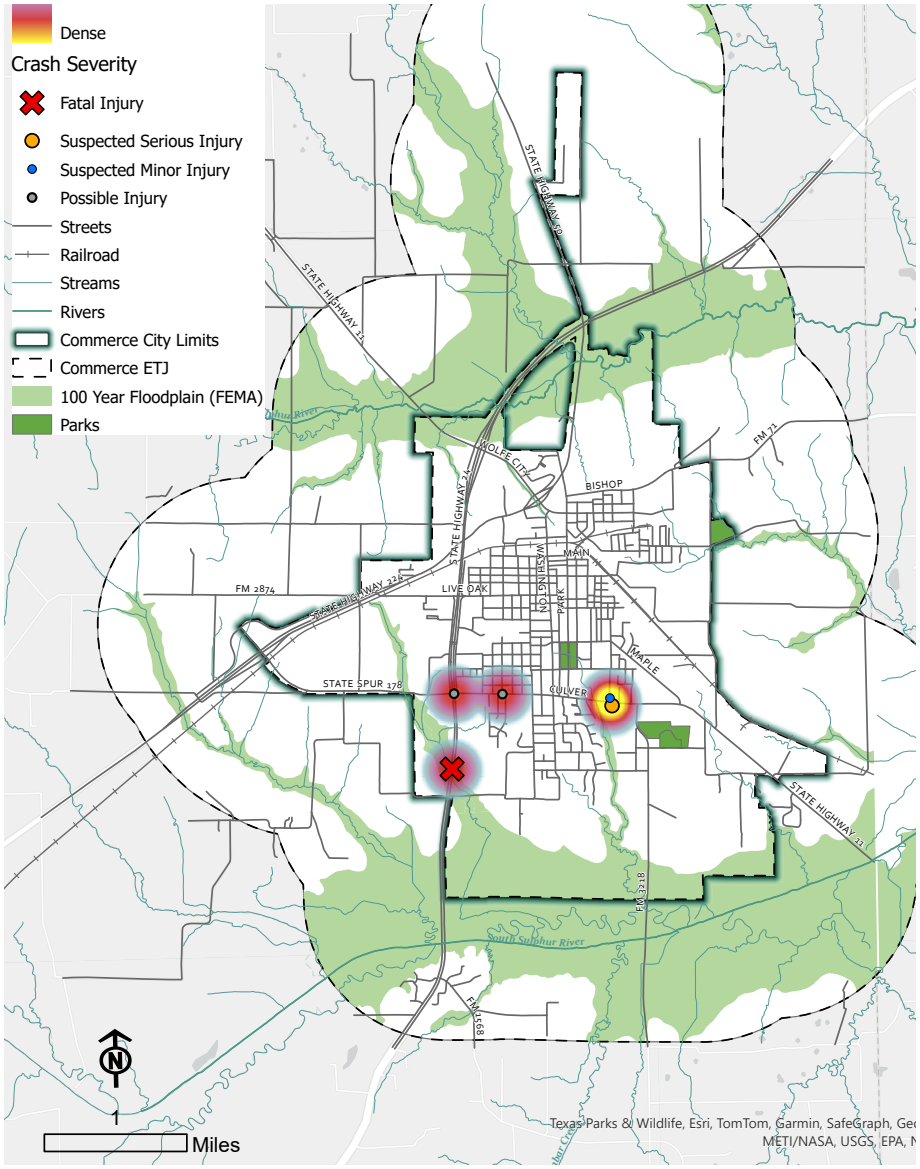
Crash Severity	Number of crashes	Percentage
Fatal Injury	1	12.5%
Serious Injury	1	12.5
Minor Injury	1	12.5
Other*	5	62.5
Total	**8**	**100%**

*Other includes crashes resulting in a possible injury, no injury, and an unknown injury level.

Figure 21. Bicycle/Pedestrian Crashes in Commerce from January 2019 to June 2024



Map 8. All Crashes in Commerce from Jaunary 2019 to June 2024



Map 9. Bicycle/Pedestrian Crashes in Commerce from Jaunary 2019 to June 2024

Traffic Generators

To better plan for the future needs of Commerce's transportation system, it is vital to understand existing traffic generators in the City as well as future traffic generators based on development plans. Figure 22 on page 59 lists, and Map 10 on page 59 shows the existing and future traffic generators identified in Commerce. This information will help guide the thoroughfare plan development and future transportation improvements.

Major Existing Traffic Generators

East Texas A&M University

East Texas A&M University is the biggest traffic generator in the City. As of Fall 2023, the university has an enrollment of around 12,000 students. The growing student population is expected to increase traffic volumes in the area as well.

Downtown Commerce

The Downtown area includes several key destinations, including the City Hall, Public Library, and Farmers Market. They can collectively generate high traffic flows.

Walmart Supercenter

The Walmart Supercenter is located along SH 24 in the southwest portion of Commerce. As the largest and primary grocery store, it creates high volumes within the area throughout the day.

City Park

City Park is one of the four parks in Commerce. With its central location in the City and a great variety of amenities in it, the park is a popular gathering place for residents, especially during weekends or holidays.

Commerce Middle School and High School

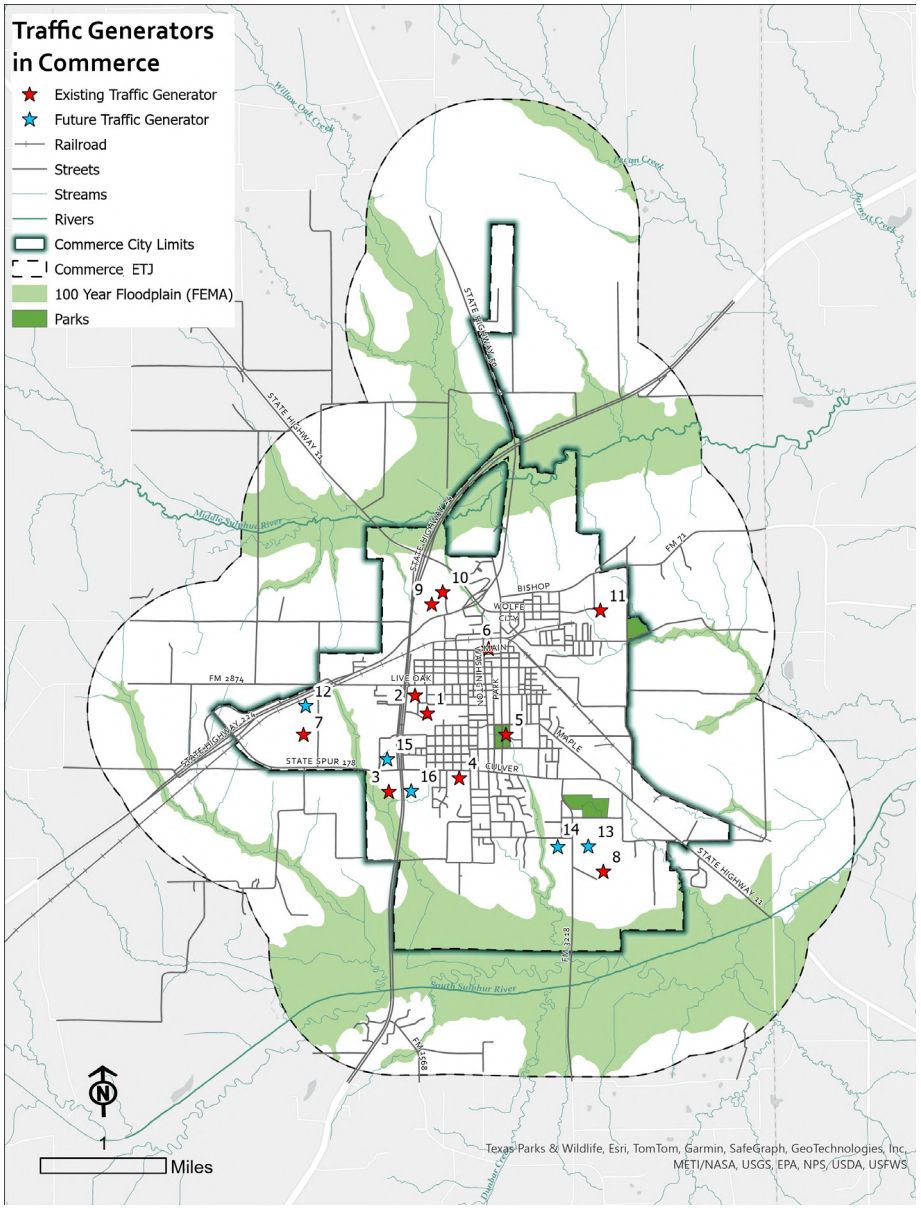
Commerce High School is currently located in the western portion of the City, between SH 224 and State Loop 178. Commerce Middle School will also be relocating to be adjacent to the high school. The schools will generate high traffic volumes in the area during the morning and afternoon rush hours.

Heavy Industrial Uses

A number of industrial plants are located in the northern and southwestern portions of the City. These manufacturing facilities generate high levels of truck traffic along major thoroughfares.

Future Traffic Generators

Future growth in Commerce is expected to occur in the southern portion of the City. There will be new residential developments along FM 3218, which will generate new traffic to the area and into the central portion of Commerce as well. In the southwestern portion of the City, East Texas A&M University is expanding its campus near the intersection of SH 24 and State Loop 128. The new facilities is expected to generate new traffic flow to Commerce.



Map 10. Traffic generators in Commerce

Number	Traffic Generator
Existing Generators	
1	East Texas A&M University
2	Memorial Stadium
3	Walmart Supercenter
4	Brookshire's
5	City Park
6	Farmers Market
7	Commerce High School
8	Hydro
9	Esquire Manufacturing
10	Quality Concrete Production
11	Legacy Corp
Future Generators	
12	Commerce Middle School (New Location)
13 & 14	New Residential Developments
15 & 16	East Texas A&M University Expansion

Figure 22. Existing and Future Traffic Generators in Commerce

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes provide insights into historical roadway demand and help identify roadways in need of rehabilitation, reconstruction or expansion.

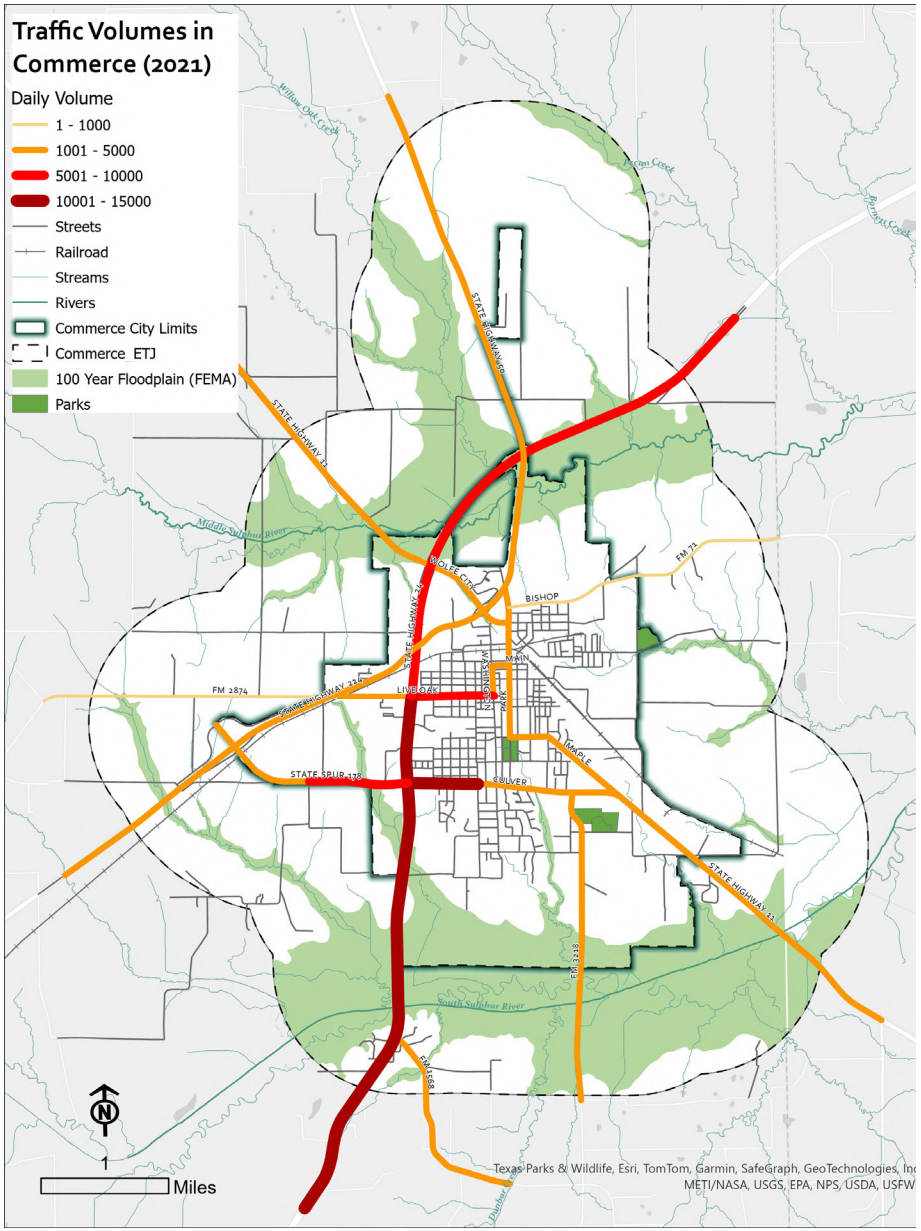
Historic Traffic Volumes

TxDOT collects Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data on TxDOT-maintained roadways. It reflects the traffic volume in previous years and serves as an indicator for understanding roadways that may reach capacity, experience congestion, and may need the City's attention.

Most major roadways in Commerce experienced an increase in AADT from 2018 to 2022 (see Figure 23). SH 24 remains the busiest roadway in the City, with over 11,000 vehicles using it every day at the intersections of Live Oak Street and State Loop 178. SH 24 also carries a significant amount of traffic in the City. The southwestern portion of Commerce near the City limits boundaries recorded over 10,000 vehicles every day.

Location	Annual Average Daily Traffic by Year					Growth Rate (2018-2022)
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
SH 11 at SH 224	860	12,58	1,356	1,446	1,427	65.93%
SH 24 at City Limits Boundary	9,297	10,215	7,615	10,962	10,238	10.12%
SH 24 at ETJ	5,839	6,225	5,639	7,134	6,147	5.27%
SH 24 at State Loop 178	9,004	10,964	10,967	10,559	11,023	22.42%
SH 24 at Live Oak Street	8,344	10,178	10,145	11,302	12,195	46.15%
SH 50 at Country Road 4611	1,641	1,920	1,728	1,986	1,855	13.04%
FM 71 at ETJ	615	585	598	489	574	-6.67%
State Loop 178 at Maple Street	2,908	2,699	3,858	4,379	3,903	34.22%
State Loop 178 at SH 224	1,604	1,146	1,221	1,412	1,336	-16.71%
State Loop 178 at SH 24	7,314	7,373	7,669	10,526	9,550	30.57%
Park Street at SH 224	1,452	1,710	1,577	1,503	1,442	-0.69%
Park Street at Elm Street	2,460	2,469	3,268	2,954	3,174	29.02%
Live Oak Road at SH 24	5,240	6,986	6,217	6,155	6,370	21.56%
Wolfe City at SH 224	1,438	1,906	1,929	2,065	2,131	48.19%

Figure 23. Annual Average Daily Traffic in 2018 to 2022. (Source: TxDOT)



Map 11. Traffic Volumes in Commerce in 2021

Review of Existing Plans

Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan Update 2022

The Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan was updated in 2022 to address the growth and new challenges the County is facing. This document creates a framework to guide the County's feature transportation development. The plan includes a map that outlines all existing and proposed roadway networks in the County (see Map 12 on page 63). The plan envisions Hunt County's transportation system as one that supports multi-modal mobility, connectivity, and safety.

Recommendation

The plan recommends the County and its cities implement several short-, medium-, and long-term projects, which will widen existing roadways and/or construct new lane facilities and sidewalks. These projects are primarily in other cities in Hunt County. The plan also recommends the County to work with TxDOT, NCTCOG, and local governments to conduct corridor studies. Figure 24 summarizes all recommendations that are relevant to the City of Commerce.

Roadway	From	To	Type
CR 1096 / 1040 / 4518 / 4509 / 8089	Hunt County Line	SH 24 in Commeerce	Corridor Study (Proposed)
CR 4611	SH 11	SH 24	Long-term Improvement -- Complete as 4 lane urban arterial
SH 224	SH 11	Greenville Outer Loop	Long-term Improvement -- Complete as 4 lane rural arterial
FM 71	SH 50	Hunt County Line	Long-term Improvement -- Complete as 2 lane rural arterial

Figure 24. Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan Recommendations in Commerce

NCTCOG Mobility 2045 Update

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a regional planning organization that develops plans, programs and policies that aim to improve regional mobility and address the region's biggest transportation challenges. Their Mobility 2045 plan was adopted in June 2022 and a 2050 Update is currently underway. As Hunt County is part of the NCTCOG's planning area, the Mobility 2045 Plan includes recommendations in and nearby the City of Commerce that need to be considered in the Thoroughfare Plan development. The recommendations are listed in Figure 25 and illustrated in Figure 26.

Facility	Project Type	Lanes	Est. Cost
1. SH 24 (CR 4511 to SL 178 / Culver Street)	Regionally Significant Arterial Improvements	2023 - 4 2045 - 4	$4,900,000
2. IH 30 (Spur 302 to E of CR 3203 (Hopkins County Line))	New or Additional Freeway Capacity	2023 - 4 (Freeway), 4 (Frontage Divided) 2036 - 6 (Freeway), 4 (Frontage Divided)	$475,000,000

Figure 25. NCTCOG Mobility 2045 Recommendations in/near Commerce

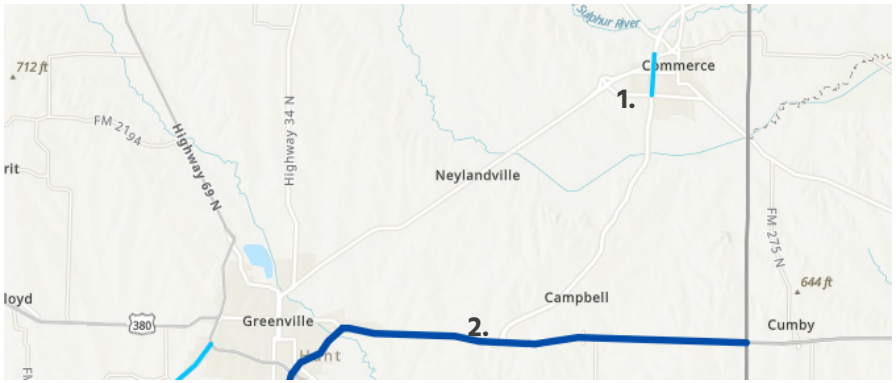
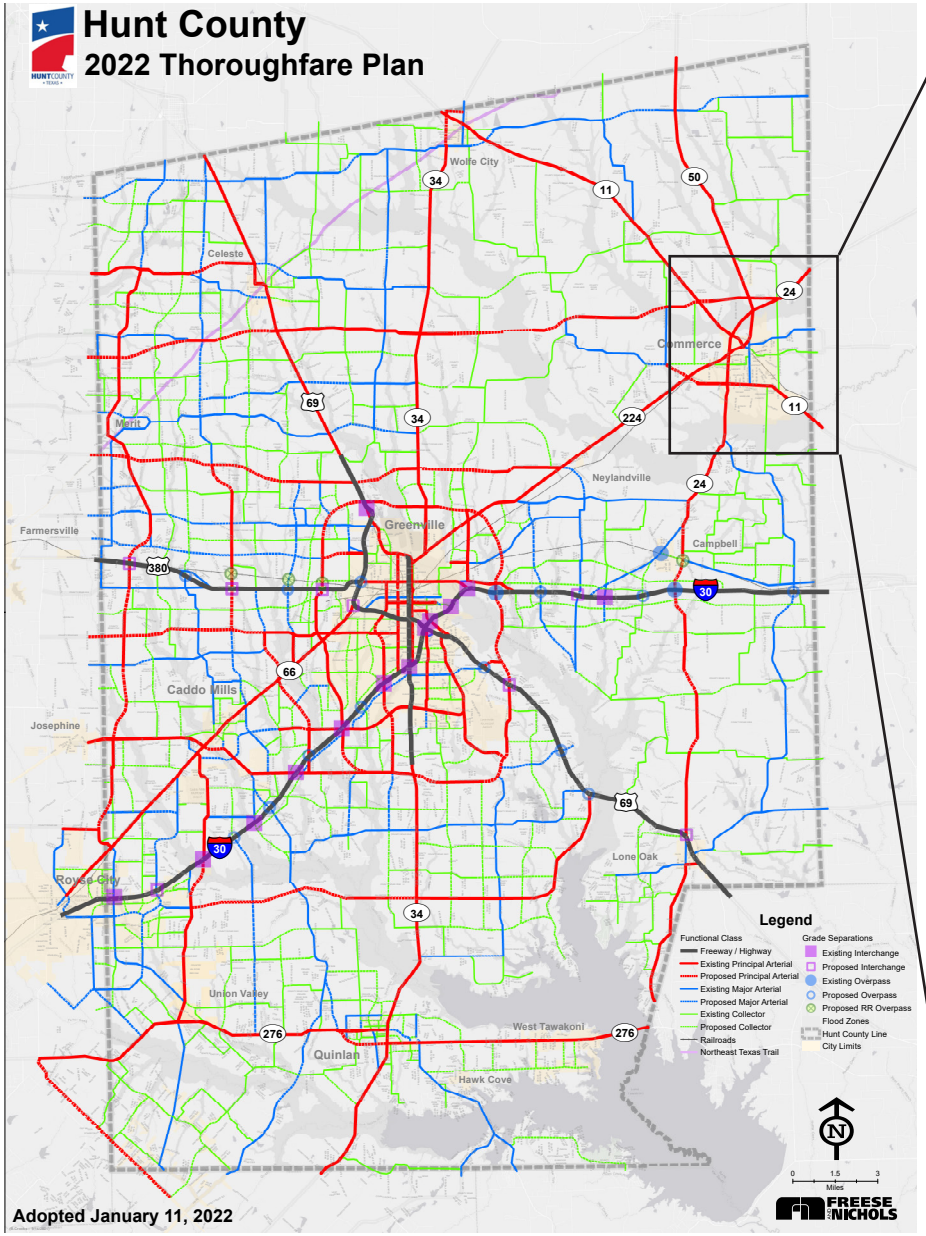
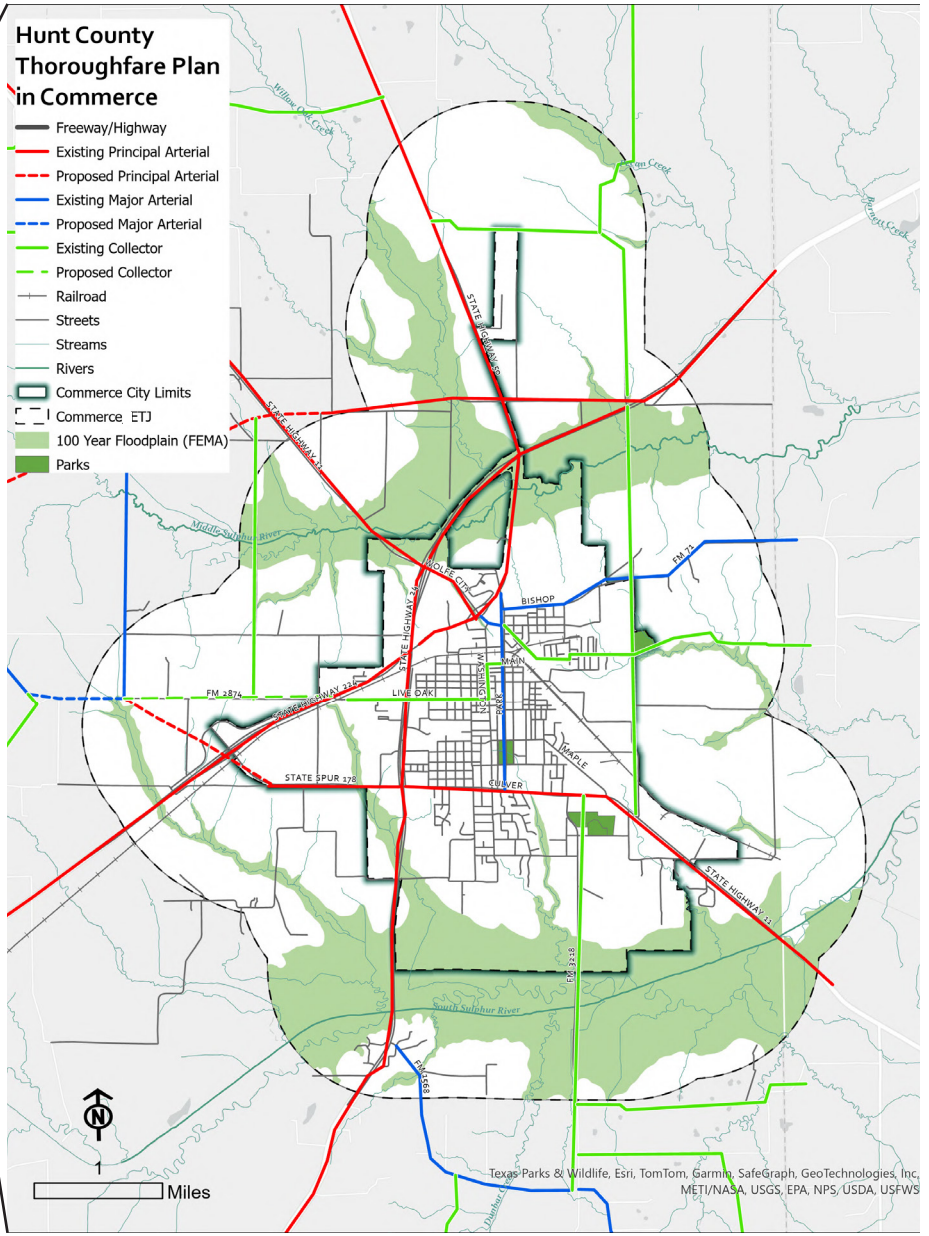


Figure 26. NCTCOG Mobility 2045 Map in/near Commerce



Map 12. Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan



Map 13. Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan in Commerce

TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study

In response to the 2005 Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Act, TxDOT collaborated with its Bicycle Advisory Committee to investigate the development of a statewide bicycle tourism trail network.

These tourism trails have the potential to attract bicyclists from around the United States, showcase communities across the state, and boost economic development. The development of a bicycle tourism network in Texas is envisioned to be a long-term collaborative process built incrementally over many years in partnership with multiple public, private, and nonprofit partners.

Recommendations

TxDOT recommends a cross-state spine type of trail, which would be a shared-use path around 13 miles north of Commerce, going along and building on the currently existing Northeast Texas Trail. It also recommends a regional route going from northeast of Celeste through Greenville, also 13 miles west of Commerce. For more information on the TxDOT study and the Northeast Texas Trail, see the North East Texas Trail / TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study section on page 67.

Figure 27. TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trail Study Network in the North-East Texas

City of Commerce Downtown Plan 2023

The City adopted the Downtown Plan in January 2023. The plan is intended to provide an overall strategy and guidelines for what future development could look like in the area, including the streets and links to and from Downtown Commerce.

Recommendations

One of the key areas for improvement is the Downtown streetscape, specifically on Main Street, Alamo Street, and Washington Street. These improvements aim to enhance walkability and the safety of pedestrians while accommodating the need for vehicle movements. Examples of streetscape improvement include narrowing vehicular travel lane widths, improving pedestrian sidewalks/shared-use paths and crosswalks, and re-striping angled parking spots. The plan also proposes improving the pedestrian experience by adding lighting and wayfinding on Downtown streets.

City of Commerce 2024 Strategic Plan

Commerce's Strategic Plan serves as a comprehensive blueprint that guides the City's long-term vision and goals. It envisions Commerce as a vibrant and self-sustaining community that supports families. The plan outlines four objectives that are essential to achieve its vision, in which the numbers two and three directly relate to the City's transportation system.

- Develop new revenue streams
- Develop sustainable infrastructure
- Improve the appearance of the City
- Improve the quality of life

Recommendations

The plan recommends that the City continue the Street Maintenance and Street Reconstruction Programs. Both programs provide funding and guidance to begin the task of updating and improving the traffic infrastructure of the community. The programs are updated annually.

Issues, Needs and Opportunities

Issues, needs, and opportunities were identified based on input from the public, stakeholders, and an analysis of existing conditions.

Issues and Needs

Aging Infrastructure

The deteriorating condition of roadways throughout the City, particularly roadways in rural areas and in the historic Downtown area, has been identified as a key issue in the City's Strategic Plan and also during the thoroughfare planning process.

Keeping the roadways in good condition would greatly benefit the City of Commerce as good roads reduce vehicle wear and travel times, improve safety, and support economic growth.

Floodplain

The City of Commerce has at least four major floodplains in its area. Floodplains and flooding present a barrier to development as well as significant challenges for the City's transportation system and infrastructure. Frequent flooding has direct impacts on roadway safety, accessibility, and maintenance costs. Flooding in the City has already caused significant damage and further deterioration of many roadways, necessitating costly repairs and prolonged closures.

Aging infrastructure on Main Street, Commerce, Texas. (Source: Google Street View)

Sink hole on a roadway caused by a flash flooding. (Source: TxDOT)

Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Bicycle and pedestrian accessibility has also been identified as a key issue in the City of Commerce. With over 10% of residents walking to work every day, and more than 4% using other means to work, such as bikes, rideshare (or working remotely), pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Without safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian routes, individuals, particularly children, the elderly, and those with mobility challenges, also face barriers that restrict their ability to engage in physical activities, ultimately impacting public health. Prioritizing automotive travel over biking and walking can also contribute to the City's inequities as lower-income residents often have fewer transportation choices.

The issue of pedestrian access has been identified primarily in the East Texas A&M campus area. The campus sees high pedestrian and bicycle activity from students and employees and has a 4-lane divided SH 24 cutting directly through the campus. Lack of high-visibility pedestrian crossings and high speed limits pose safety risks for all pedestrian and bicycle users that needs to be addressed.

Dedicated bike lane, W. Neal Street, Commerce, Texas. (Source: Google Street View)

Continued Growth

According to NCTCOG 2045 Population Projections, the City of Commerce's permanent population is estimated to grow from 9,184 in 2023 to 9,998 in 2045, which presents a growth rate of 0.39% a year.

East Texas A&M student body presents mostly a temporary population (4 years on average) in the City of Commerce. The university's enrollment has increased by 7% from 2022 to 2023 and by 15% from the pre-pandemic period. With the planned campus expansion in the southwest area of the City, the enrollment is expected to continue to grow, possibly even at a higher rate.

Growing population, permanent or temporary, presents potential challenges with continuously increasing traffic on roads, congestion, faster roadway deterioration, and a greater need for alternative modes of transportation. The implication and challenges that come with growth need to be addressed in order to develop an efficient thoroughfare network in the City of Commerce.

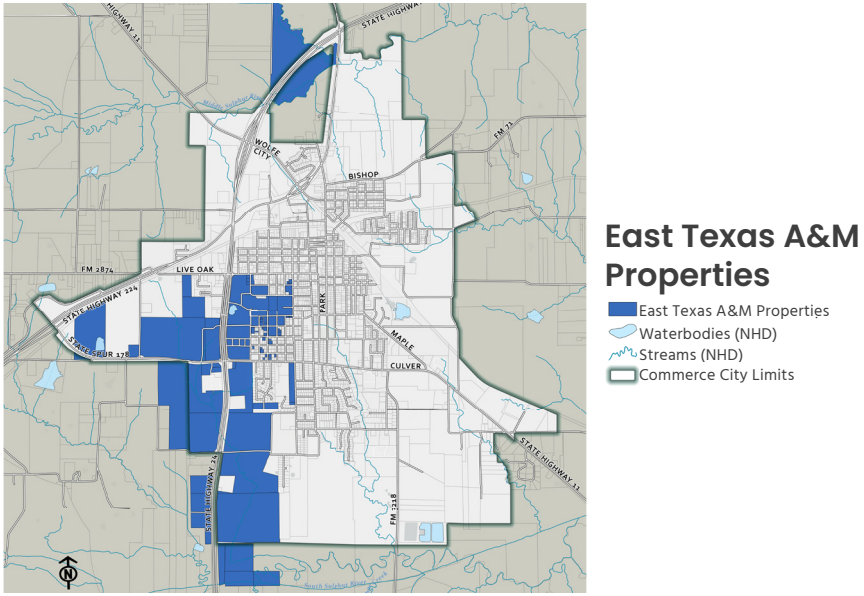


Figure 28. East Texas A&M Properties

Opportunities

Decommissioned Railroad Tracks

The abandoned old railroad tracks running through the City of Commerce present a unique opportunity for a Hike and Bike trail. Hike and Bike trails are dedicated pathways designed for walking, jogging, and cycling, providing safe and scenic routes for outdoor recreation and transportation.

To successfully implement this initiative, collaboration with local government agencies, environmental organizations, and community stakeholders will be essential. Additionally, engaging with rail companies and securing funding through grants or partnerships can help ensure the project's viability. The benefits of this transformation include increased property values, reduced traffic congestion, and the potential to attract tourism, all while fostering a stronger sense of community and environmental stewardship.

North East Texas Trail / TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trails Study

The Hike and Bike trail in the City could possibly connect The to the North East Texas Trail, located approximately 13 miles north of Commerce. The trail is also a part of the TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Study, which proposes new trails around 13 miles west of Commerce going through Greenville. The City is encouraged to collaborate with TxDOT, Hunt County, municipalities involved in the TxDOT plans, and the North East Texas Trail Coalition (NETTC) to potentially develop a Hike and Bike connection from Commerce to the proposed trails and/or promote Jim Chapman Lake as a potential trail destination.

Old railroad tracks, Oneal Street, Commerce, Texas. (Source: Google Street View)

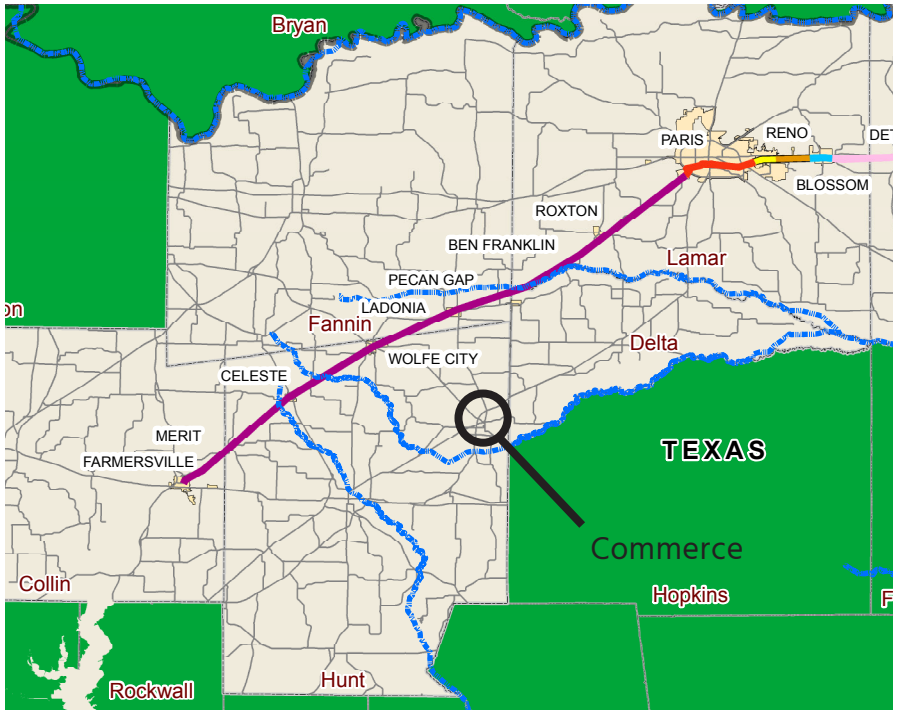


Figure 29. Northeast Texas Trail in Hunt County (Source: NETTC)

Thoroughfare Plan Network Development

Process

The process of developing the updated thoroughfare network plan involves a comprehensive approach to ensure an efficient movement of people and goods throughout the City. Key considerations and steps include:

Review of Existing Conditions

- Review existing plans, major projects, travel patterns, and design standards.
- Addres key issues and needs, ensuring relevant agency coordination and consistency and integration with the broader regional transportation network.

Create Roadway Network Redundancy

- Create additional east-west and north-south parallel connections to the major corridors to allow more even distribution of traffic across the network.
- Identify and re-mediate barriers to network development, provide alternatives to known bottlenecks.

Align the Network with the Future Land Use Plan and Anticipated Development Projects

- Ensure that the transportation infrastructure can accommodate the needs of expanding residential, commercial, and industrial areas, supporting the city's growth and future development.
- Promote context-sensitive design in thoroughfare plan development

Utilize Existing Right-of-Way Wherever Possible

- Minimize the need for new land acquisition to reduce costs and potential disruptions to established areas.

Aligning the Network with Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan

- Align the City's transportation plan with the latest Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan to ensure consistency between the plans and to facilitate collaboration.

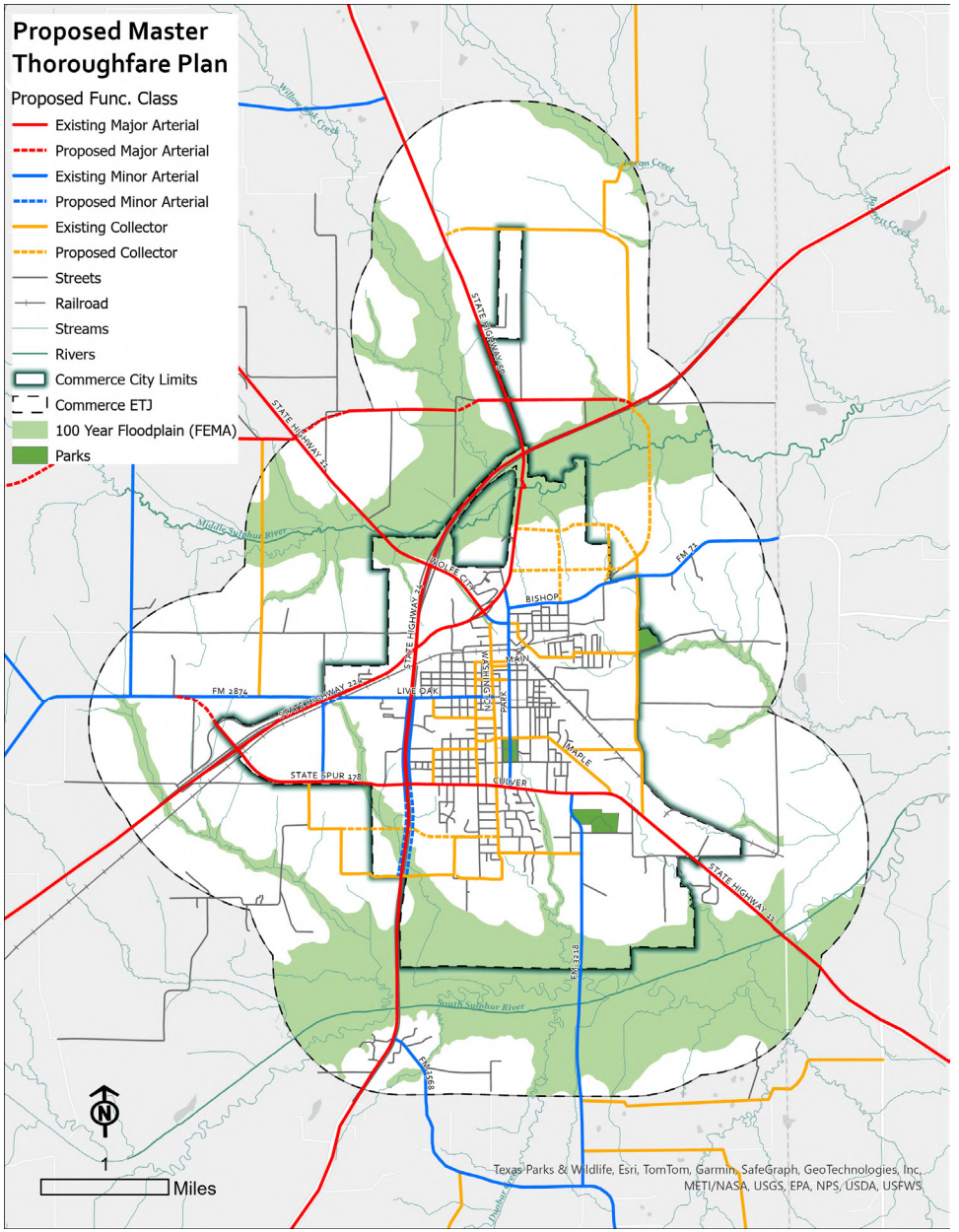
Preserving Right-of-Way for Future Needs

- Thoroughfare planning is a proactive measure that incorporates future infrastructure projects, such as road widening, new roadway connections and bike/ped facilities, without significant disruption or additional land acquisition.

Key Changes

The proposed City of Commerce Master Thoroughfare Plan is shown in Map 14. The 2022 Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan provided a strong basis for Commerce's Thoroughfare Plan development. Key changes from the Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan include the following:

- Extending frontage roads south of State Loop 178 to provide a parallel alternative to SH 24 as East Texas A&M expands and increases student population.
- Denser collector network around Downtown and East Texas A&M to provide better flow of traffic.
- New collector roadways proposed in the southern and northern portion of the City to create north-south and east-west connections and preserve right-of-way before development occurs.



Map 14. Proposed Master Thoroughfare Plan

Thoroughfare Design Standards

To provide flexibility in the Plan, thoroughfare design standards were developed to accommodate a variety of land uses adjacent to both urban and rural rights-of-way, including potential future developments.

Guidelines for roadway design standards come from a variety of sources. These include:

- The most recently adopted Hunt County Subdivision Regulations and Engineering Design Standards.
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, latest edition.
- Transportation Research Board, Highway Capacity Manual, latest edition.
- Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, latest edition.

Typical design standards are shown in Figure 30.

Recommended Design Standards

The recommended design standards are based on a review of typical design standard guidelines and consultation with City officials and key stakeholders. The revised design standards for the City of Commerce are shown in Figure 31 and Figure 32 on page 71 and are followed by illustrated cross-sections of each classification from Figure 33 to Figure 45. These design standards provide consistency with the surrounding Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan, options for multi-modal elements, and more flexibility in adapting to the changing environment and in developing the City of Commerce thoroughfares.

Roadway Characteristics	Freeway	Major Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector	Local Street
Roadway Spacing	2-10 miles	1-2 miles	0.25-1 mile	0.1-0.25 miles	200-500 feet
Facility Length	15+ miles	5-15 miles	1-5 miles	0.25-1 mile	<0.25 mile
Volumes (vehicles/day)	100,000+	35,000-80,000	10,000-35,000	1,000-10,000	<1,000
Right-of-Way Width (feet)	300-500	100-120	70-100	60-70	50-60
Number of Lanes	Main + Frontage Roads	4-6	3-5	2-4	2
Median	Yes	Typical	Optional	Not Typical	No
Speed Limit	55-75	35-55	30-45	25-35	<30

Figure 30. Typical Roadway Characteristics based on Functional Class (Source: 2022 Hunt County Thoroughfare Plan)

Roadway Class	Area Type	Number of Lanes	Min. Right-of-Way Width (feet)	Min. Pavement Width	Median	Min. Buffer/ Parkway (feet)	Min. Sidewalk (feet)	On-Street Parking
Major Arterial	Urban	6	120′	72′	16′ - 20′	8′	10′ - 12′	No
	Urban	5	100′	62′	CTL*	8′	8′-10′	No
	Urban	4	100′	48′	Optional	8′	8′ - 10′	No
Minor Arterial	Urban	4	100′	48′	Optional	5′	5′ - 6′	No
	Urban	4	80′	44′	Optional	5′	6′ - 8′	No
	Urban	3	70′	36′	CTL*	5′	6′ - 8′	No
Collector	Urban	2-3	50′ - 60′	22′ - 36′	No/CTL*	5′	6′	Yes/Optional
Local Street	Urban	2	50′	30′	No	5′	5′	Yes

*CTL - Continuous Turn Lane

Figure 31. Proposed Urban Thoroughfare Design Standards for City of Commerce

Roadway Class	Area Type	Number of Lanes	Min. Right-of-Way Width (feet)	Min. Pavement Width	Median (feet) (flush/ drainage)	Min. Shoulders (feet) (inside/ outside)	Min. Sidewalk (feet)	On-Street Parking
Major Arterial	Rural	5	100′	62′	CTL*	4′/8′	Optional	No
	Rural	4	100′	48′	Optional	4′/8′	Optional	No
Minor Arterial	Rural	4	80′	44′	Optional	6′	Optional	No
Collector	Rural	2	60′	24′	No	6′	Optional	Optional**
Local Street	Rural	2	50′	30′	No	4′	Optional	Optional**

*CTL - Continuous Turn Lane | ** On-street parking on shoulders may be permitted if gently sloped stabilized shoulders are provided for a minimum of 7 feet in width beyond the edge of pavement. | Note that the assumption is that minor arterials will be upgraded to major arterials as justified by travel demand

Figure 32. Proposed Rural Thoroughfare Design Standards for City of Commerce

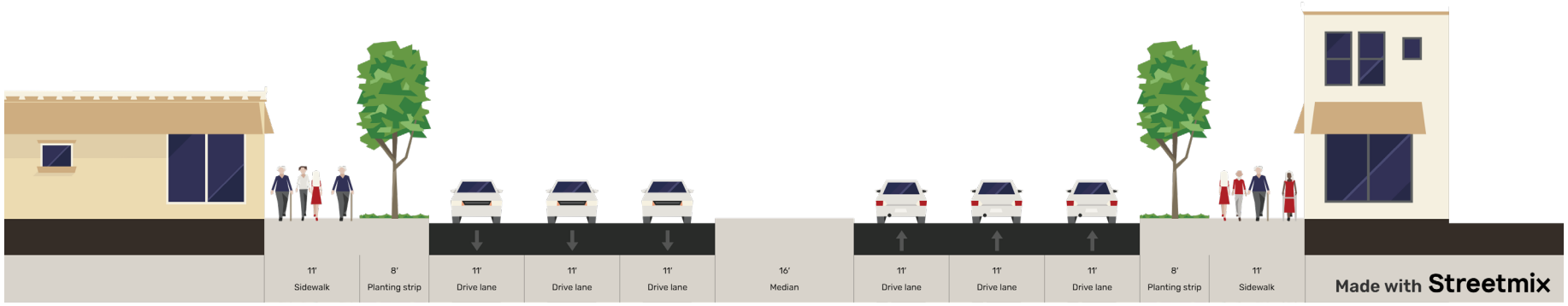


Figure 33. Urban Major Arterial 6-Lane Cross-Section

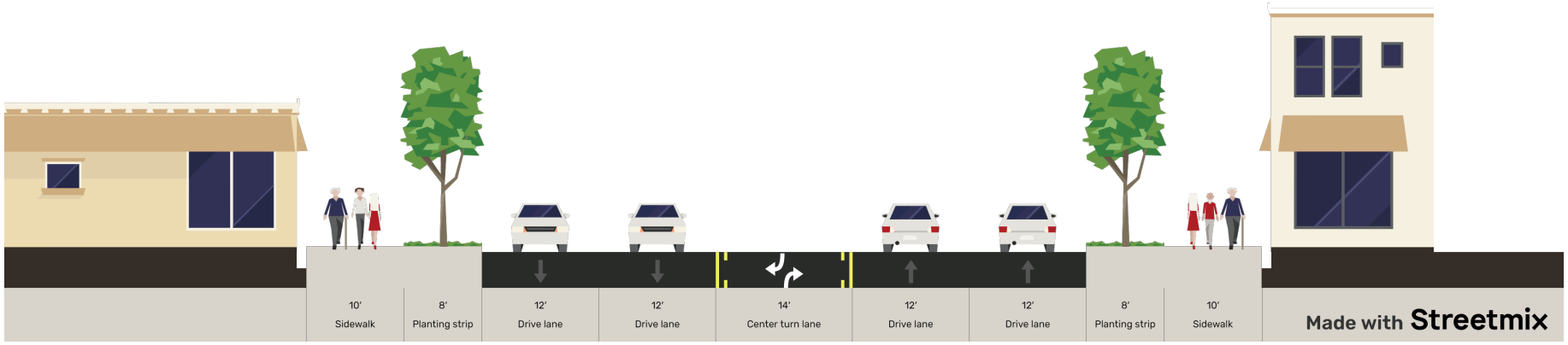


Figure 34. Urban Major Arterial 5-Lane Cross-Section

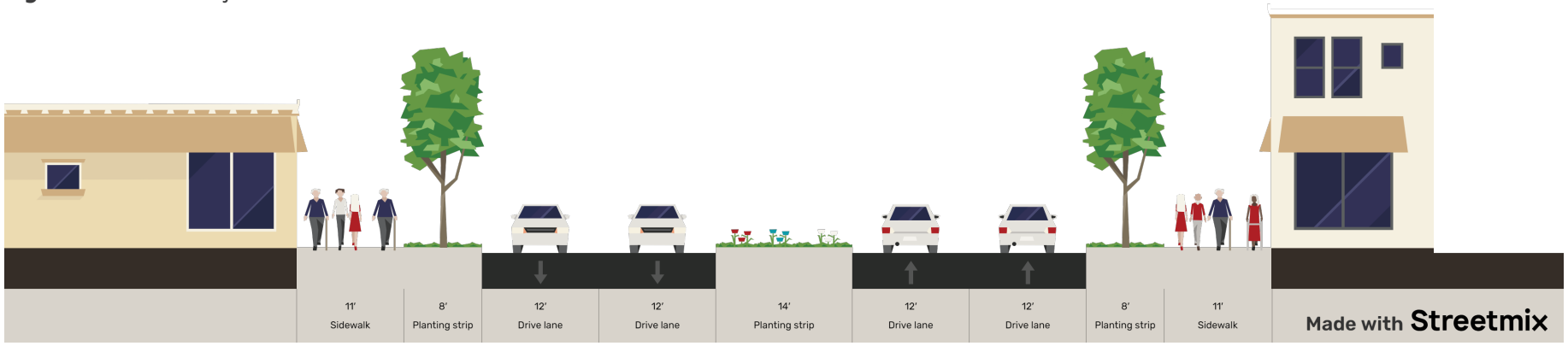


Figure 35. Urban Major Arterial 4-Lane Cross-Section

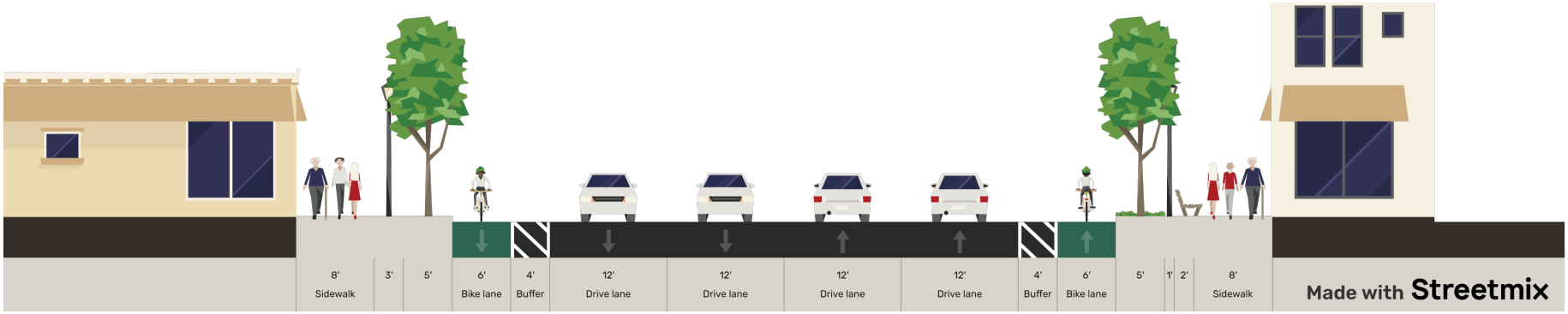


Figure 36. Urban Minor Arterial 4-Lane 100-Feet Cross-Section

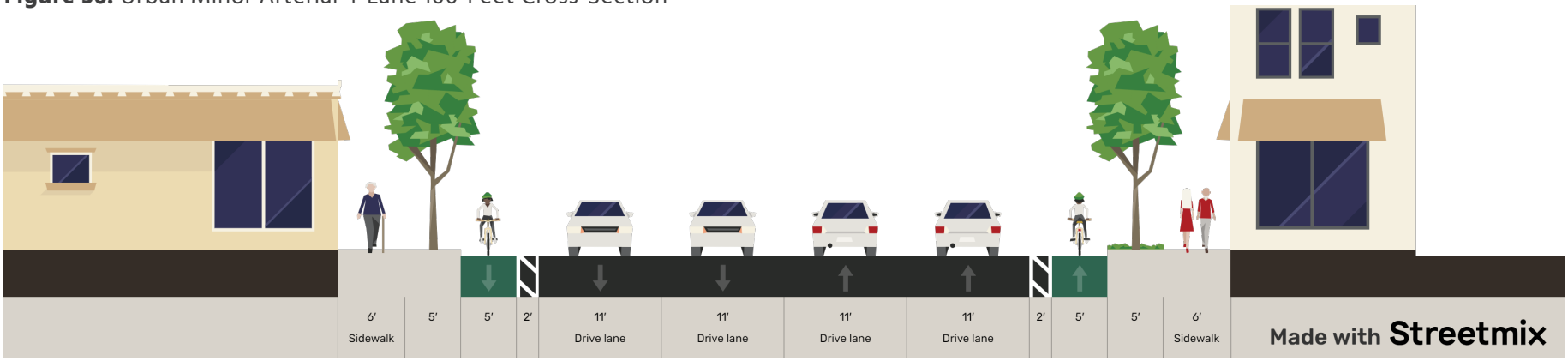


Figure 37. Urban Minor Arterial 4-Lane 80-Feet Cross-Section

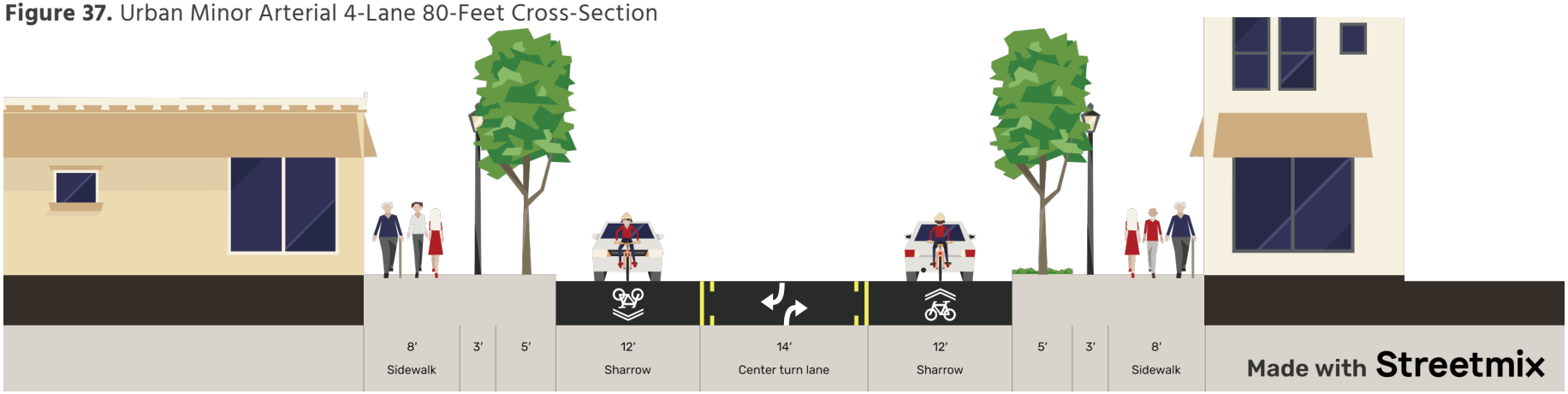


Figure 38. Urban Minor Arterial 3-Lane Cross-Section

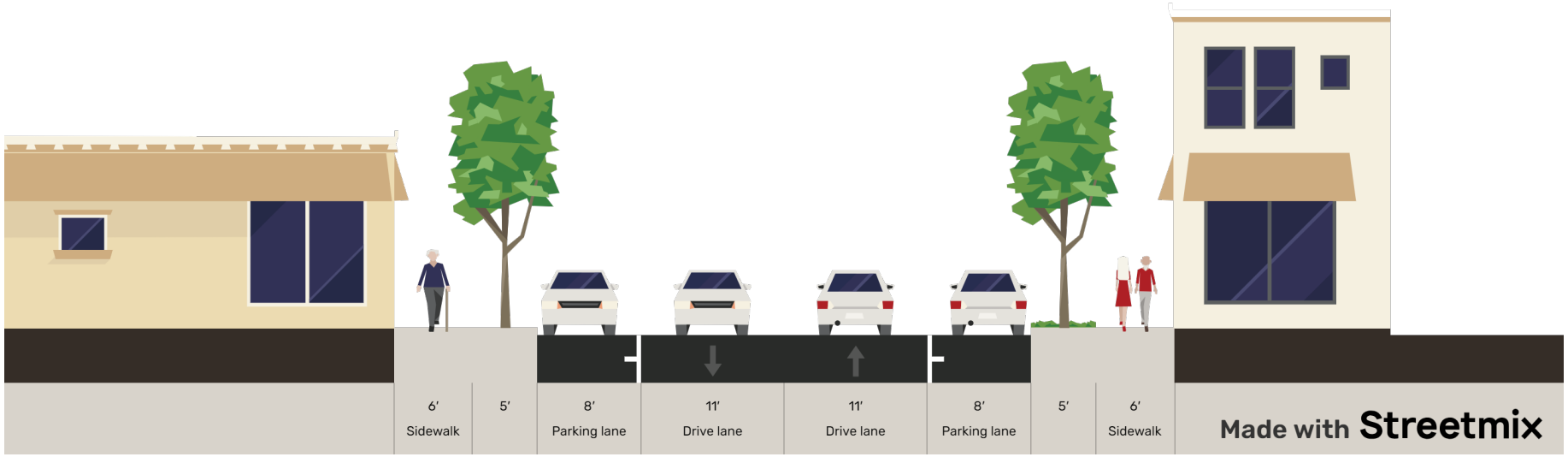


Figure 39. Urban Collector 2-Lane Cross-Section

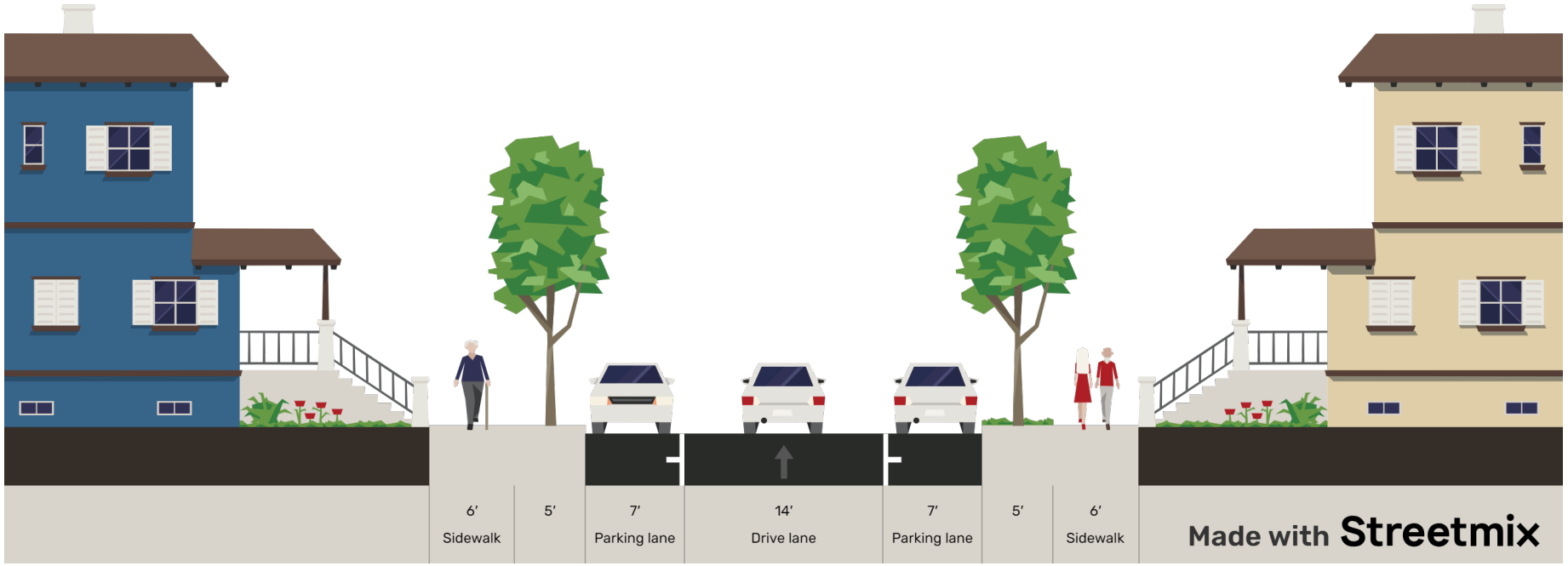


Figure 40. Urban Local Street 2-Lane Cross-Section

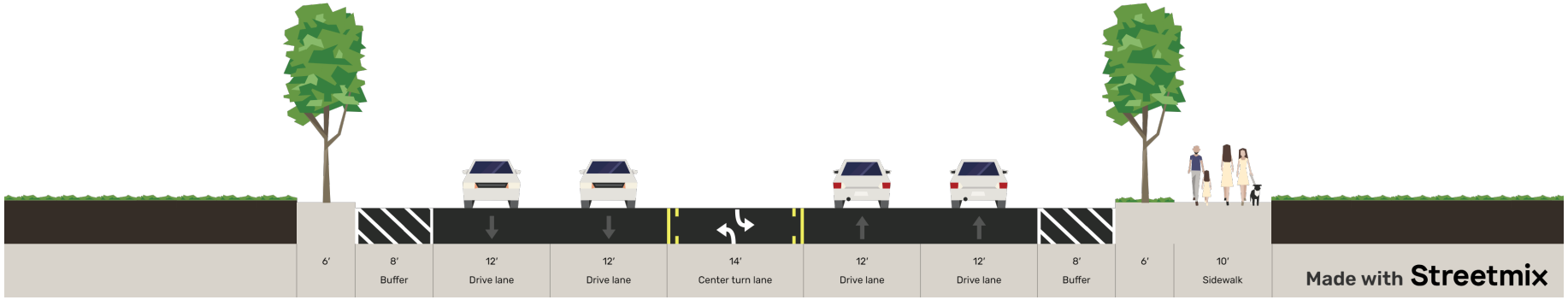


Figure 41. Rural Major Arterial 5-Lane Cross-Section

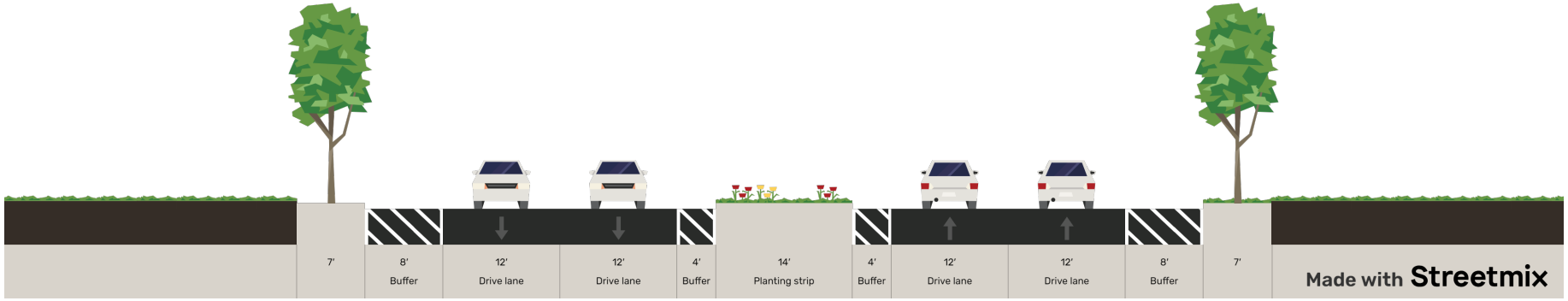


Figure 42. Rural Major Arterial 4-Lane Cross-Section

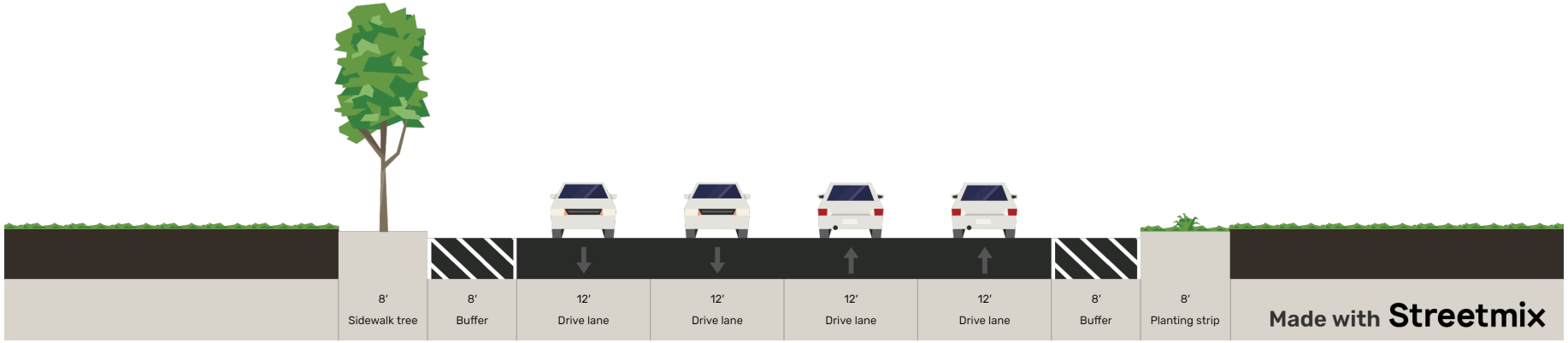


Figure 43. Rural Major Arterial 4-Lane Cross-Section

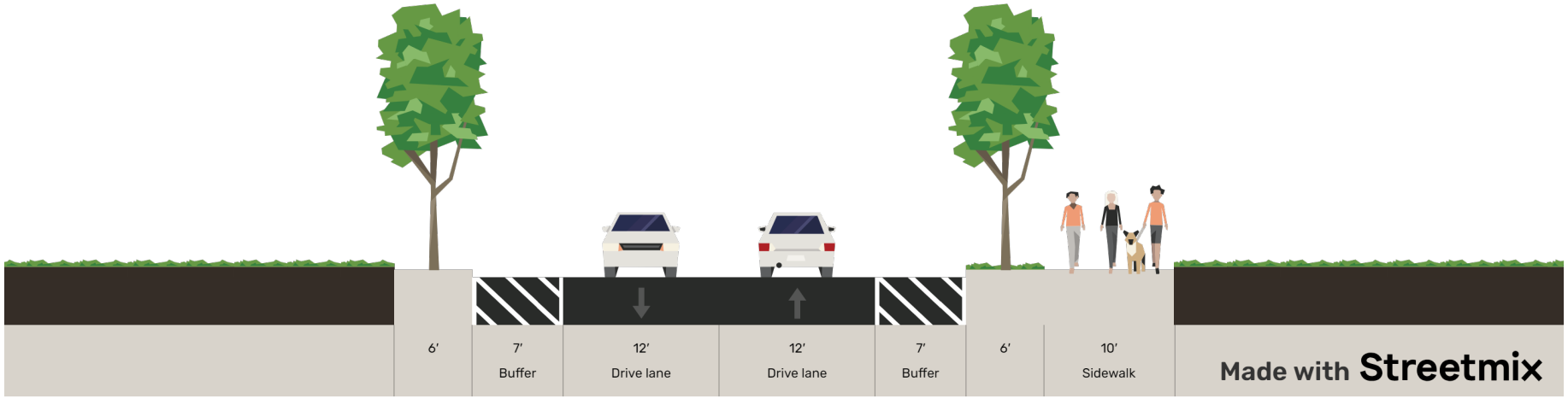


Figure 44. Rural Collector 2-Lane Cross-Section

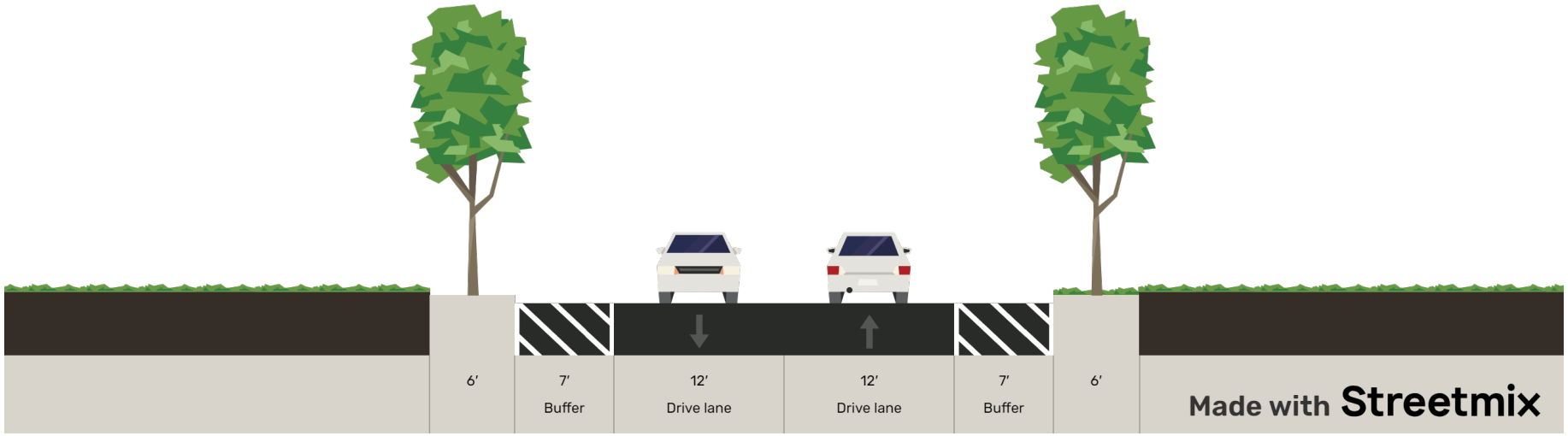


Figure 45. Rural Local Street 2-Lane Cross-Section

Recommended Strategies

Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure

As the City of Commerce grows and evolves, addressing the challenges of deteriorating infrastructure is vital to ensuring a safe, efficient, and economically vibrant transportation network that meets the needs of all residents. The City should invest in asset management to maintain acceptable mobility levels and prevent unnecessary roadway expenditures to ensure that roadways are kept in acceptable conditions.

Asset Management

Asset management is a process designed to reduce roadway and bridge life-cycle costs while maintaining an acceptable level of risk and quality of service. It provides data-based solutions to justify capital investments and ensures cost-effective and sustainable levels of network performance. As part of asset management, the City is encouraged to continue the Street Maintenance and Improvement Programs, and create and regularly update a city-wide inventory of pavement condition.

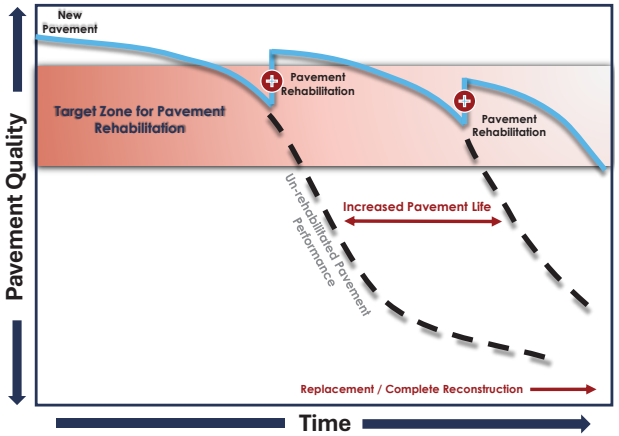


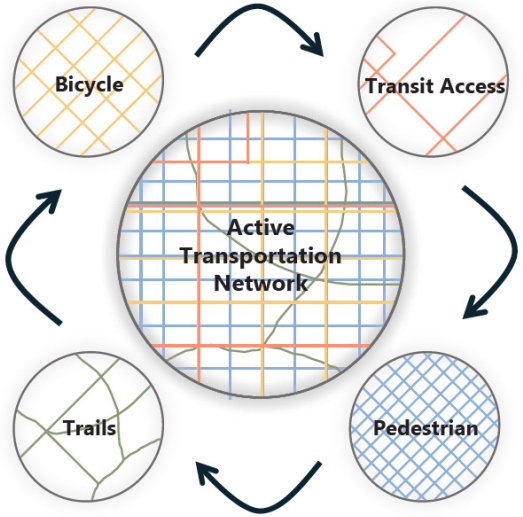
Figure 46. Pavement Life-Cycle Curve

Alternative Mobility Study

To create a safer, more inclusive, and resilient transportation system, it is essential to invest in infrastructure that enhances alternative mobility options such as bicycle and pedestrian networks in the City of Commerce. The study could identify potential areas for bike/ped connections, improvements to existing sidewalks, ADA-compliance of existing bike/ped facilities, roadway segments and intersections, candidates for road diets, as well as potential funding sources including public/private partnerships.

Examples of appropriate studies may include but are not limited to:

- Active Transportation / Complete Streets / Micromobility Study
- Parks and Recreation /Trails Study
- ADA Assessment Study
- Transit / Rideshare Feasibility Study



Flood Mitigation

Developing effective flood management plans is essential to protect roadways and improve overall resilience. The City is encouraged to address floodplain management and develop resilient infrastructure strategies to mitigate the effects of flooding, ensuring reliable transportation networks for residents and businesses alike.

Resiliency Plan

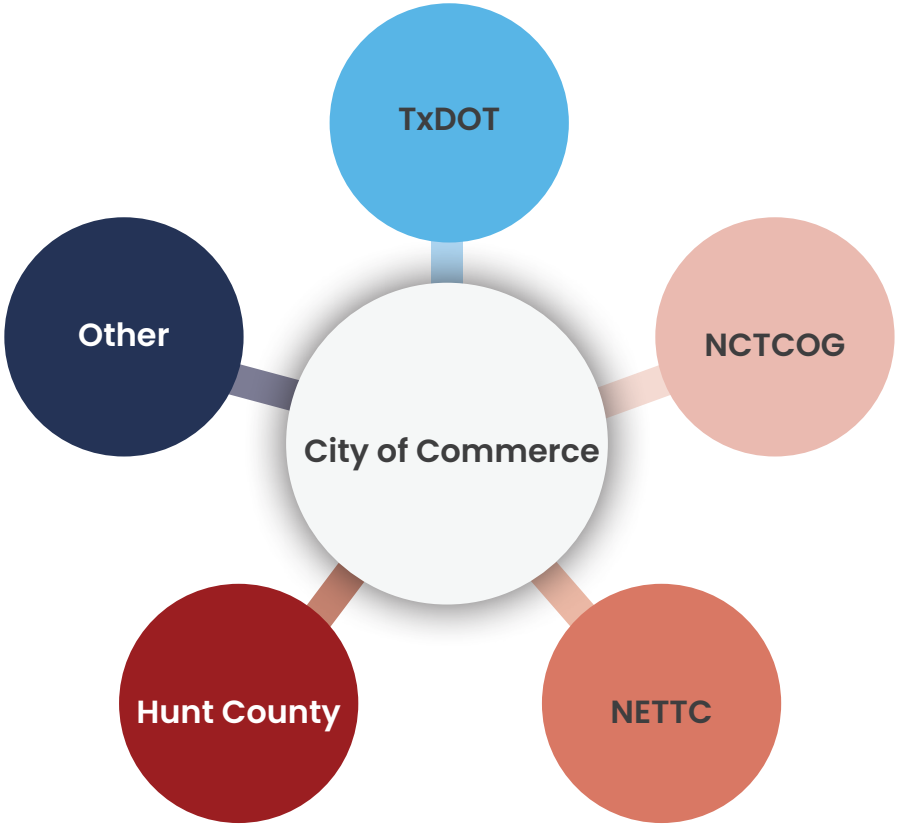
Developing a Resiliency Plan would provide the City with a comprehensive plan to strengthen the resilience of Commerce's transportation system to a range of potential hazards, including flooding. It would determine the severity and frequency of flooding, potential improvements such as investment in drainage systems, flood barriers, elevated roadways and other appropriate systemic and/or location-specific measures to protect against future flooding events, available funding sources, and agency collaboration.

Agency Collaboration

Frequent and effective collaboration with other regional and state agencies is crucial for the successful implementation of any plan or project in the City of Commerce.

TxDOT is a key partner in maintaining and enhancing on-system roadways, including potential traffic, bike and pedestrian improvements and other safety features on these routes through the City. Fostering a good relationship with TxDOT, NCTCOG, and Hunt County can be useful in implementing projects beyond the City limits (such as the Hike and Bike Trail, flooding issues, etc.) and finding appropriate resources to fund projects in the City.

Key disruptors affecting transportation. (Source: TxDOT Statewide Resiliency Plan)



Funding Opportunities

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The Highway Safety Improvement Program is a federal program designed to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-state-owned roads. This program would be appropriate for the City of Commerce as it can provide essential funding for the maintenance and rehabilitation of roadways, particularly those in rural areas or often-flooded areas where safety improvements are critically needed.

TxDOT Local Government Projects (LGP) Program

TxDOT's LGP Program assists local governments in Texas with the planning, design, and construction of transportation projects by providing available surplus materials to any local government. Distributed materials may include surplus materials on hand or new materials. Commerce could collaborate with TxDOT to access funds for roadway maintenance and improvements.

HSIP integrates the Safe System Approach. (Source: FHWA)

TxDOT Traffic Safety Grants

Traffic Safety Grants are funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and administered through TxDOT. Examples of Traffic Safety Grants include increased enforcement, traffic safety training, and driver behavior education and outreach programs to reduce fatalities, injuries, and crashes on Texas roadways. Program areas include reducing impaired driving, discouraging distracted driving, and encouraging the use of driver and passenger seat belts.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

The Safe Streets for All program aims to enhance roadway safety through comprehensive planning and implementation of safety measures. Funding for planning can also include a demonstration project to support an application for implementation assistance. For Commerce, this funding could support projects that improve pedestrian and cyclist safety, especially in high-traffic and bike/ped areas such as the Downtown, City parks, schools and around the East Texas A&M campus.

Safe Streets and Roads for All logo. (Source: USDOT)

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The Safe Routes to School program focuses on making it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. This program is highly relevant for Commerce, providing funds to develop and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities, ensuring safer routes for students traveling to and from local schools.

Transportation Alternatives-Set Aside Program (TASA)

The Transportation Alternatives-Set Aside Program allocates funding for projects that enhance non-motorized transportation options. Commerce could leverage this program to build and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities, promoting active transportation around the downtown area and the East Texas A&M campus.

Rural Surface Transportation Grant (RSTG)

The Rural Surface Transportation Grant supports projects that improve and expand transportation infrastructure in rural areas. This funding opportunity is ideal for Commerce, as it can help address the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of rural roadways, ensuring better connectivity and accessibility throughout the city's outskirts.

Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF)

The TWDB FIF offers financial assistance for planning and implementing flood control projects. Commerce could apply for these funds to develop and enhance flood management strategies, reducing the risk and impact of flooding on roadways and other infrastructure. Funding is available for projects in the preliminary planning phase, construction or rehabilitation phase, nature-based solution activities, and other categories such as warning systems or educational programs.

Safe Routes to School logo (Source: Valley Transportation Authority)

TWDB logo (Source: TWDB)

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4

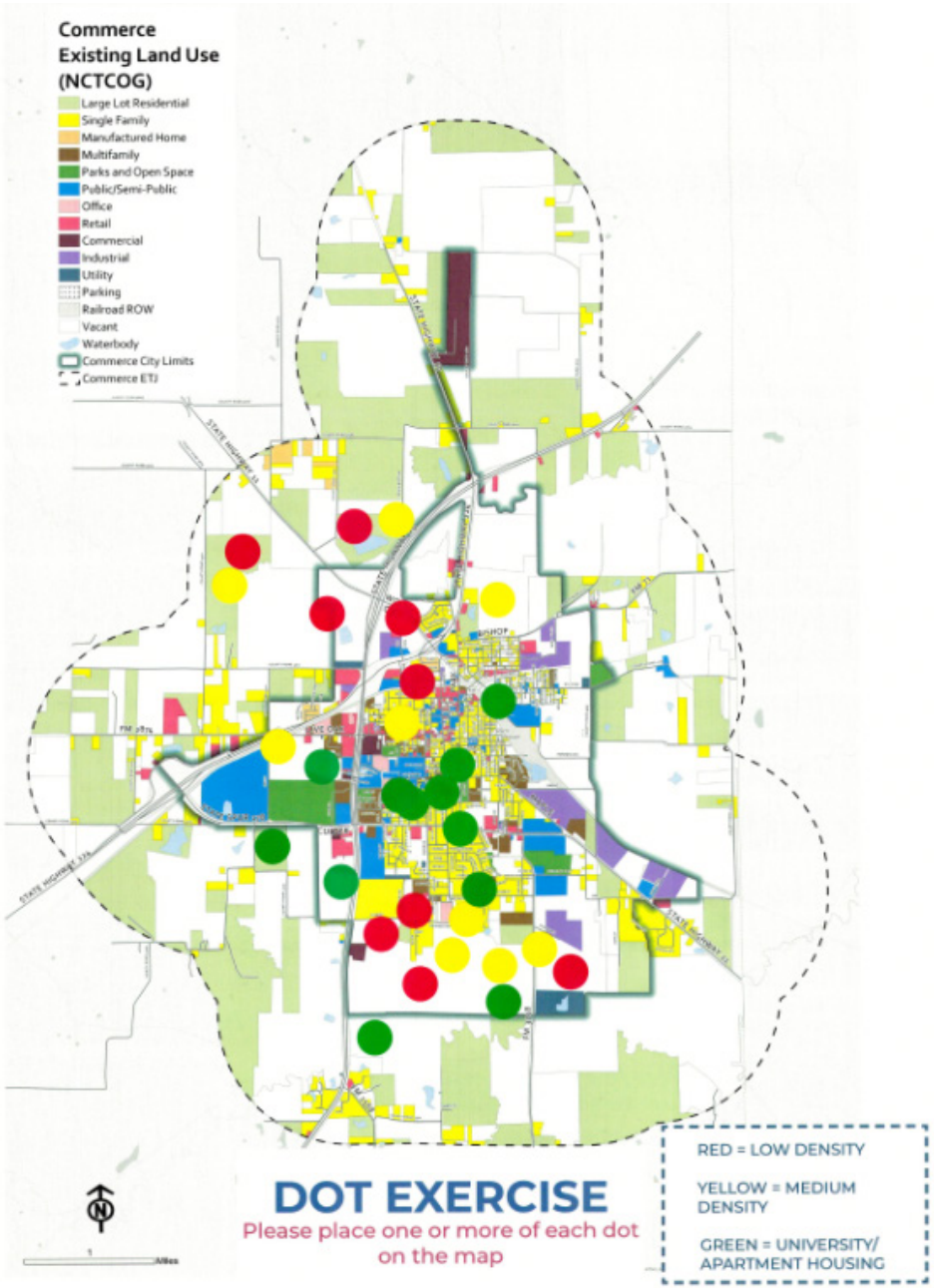
HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Introduction

The adequate supply of quality and affordable housing significantly impacts the quality of life of residents in a community. At a basic level, housing functions as an element of community infrastructure by stabilizing and directing community resources and ensuring quality of life. This chapter provides an assessment of the existing housing stock in Commerce and an overview of community character. The chapter also lists housing programs and strategies that the City can leverage to satisfy its existing and projected housing needs as well as strategies for neighborhood enhancement.

Topics of discussion include:

- Public input received related to housing and community character
- Existing housing stock
- Neighborhood character and enhancement
- Recommended strategies



What We Heard

Participants at the August 2024 open house voiced strong support for increasing the availability of medium-density housing and expanding housing options for university students, reflecting a desire for balanced growth and more housing choices in the area. Large lot, estate-style single-family residential was also identified as a desirable and appropriate housing type, especially for areas that are difficult to serve with City utilities.

Figure 47. What housing types are **lacking** in Commerce?

	Public Comment
1	Master planned communities; Maintained multifamily housing
2	Decent, affordable that doesn't require a huge investment
3	Affordable housing
4	$200-$300k homes
5	Homes not sitting on top of each other
6	Classy retirement & assisted living

Figure 48. What makes Commerce a good place to **live**?

	Public Comment
1	Cost of living
2	Small rural community
3	No traffic
4	Green Space and slow pace
5	"I love my neighbors!"

Figure 49. How will future Generations **live and thrive** in Commerce?

	Public Comment
1	Make Commerce an attractive commuter town
2	More job opportunities
3	Better links to the University
4	Pathways from ISD to jobs
5	Child care

Figure 50. What does your neighborhood **need to thrive today and in the future?**

	Public Comment
1	Better communication
2	"Less junky homes"
3	More sidewalks
4	Entertainment for teens and college students

Housing Assessment

Housing Profile

Housing in Commerce is characterized by smaller household sizes and a far lower percentage of owner-occupied households. This is partially explained by the presence of ETAMU students, who are also more likely to have been living in their current housing unit less than a year compared to the average Hunt County resident. Of note, while a higher percentage of households in Commerce have access to a computer compared to households in Hunt County, a slightly lower percentage of Commerce residents have access to broadband internet. Mean travel time to work is notably lower in Commerce than in Hunt County; however, as the jobs centers of DFW expand outward, this metric should be monitored to assess the time and cost burden of commuting on Commerce residents.

The increase in home values in the City slightly outpaced the increase in local income levels. The median home value has increased by 63.4% from $72,700 in 2012 to $114,700 in 2022, during which time median household income increased by approximately 64.2%. The percentage increase in home values lags behind Hunt County which experienced an increase of 100% between the same period.

Figure 51. Housing Profile

	Hunt County, TX	City of Commerce
Owner-Occupied Rate	69.9%	39.6%
Persons per Household	2.70	2.37
Median Home Price	$184,000	$114,700
Median Gross Rent	$913	$1,120
Living in same house as 1 year ago	84.2%	70.6%
Households with a computer	93.9%	96.2%
Mean Travel Time to Work	31.4 minutes	17.3 minutes
Households with a broadband internet subscription	85.5%	81.3%

Housing Typology

As established in Chapter 1, Commerce consists of a more diverse housing stock compared to Hunt County and the state of Texas. About 48.7% of the total housing stock consists of detached single-family residential units, followed by large apartments (10 or more units), small apartments (up to 4 units) and single-family attached dwellings. While Commerce has a diverse range of housing options, a need exists for owner-attainable housing and high-quality medium-density or "missing middle" housing to meet the needs of both residents and students who call Commerce home.

Half of all Commerce residents are between the ages of 20-54, highlighting a need for housing options suitable for younger professionals and families without sacrificing housing options that cater to retirees and support aging in place. Public feedback has underscored the necessity for more affordable housing solutions, including small-lot single-family homes, patio homes and townhouses.

Figure 52. Housing Profile

Year	Median Home Value Hunt County	Median Income Hunt County	Median Home Value Commerce	Median Income Commerce
2012	$93,700	$45,170	$72,700	$26,555
2013	$93,500	$44,858	$75,600	$24,744
2014	$92,000	$44,898	$71,700	$19,301
2015	$94,400	$45,197	$67,000	$21,836
2016	$96,400	$45,643	$69,300	$19,090
2017	$105,000	$49,319	$76,500	$22,429
2018	$114,500	$51,928	$72,000	$24,640
2019	$123,300	$54,959	$70,800	$28,135
2020	$135,800	$57,467	$80,400	$34,946
2021	$151,800	$61,053	$94,800	$37,684
2022	$184,000	$66,885	$114,700	$41,382

Housing Attainability and Affordability

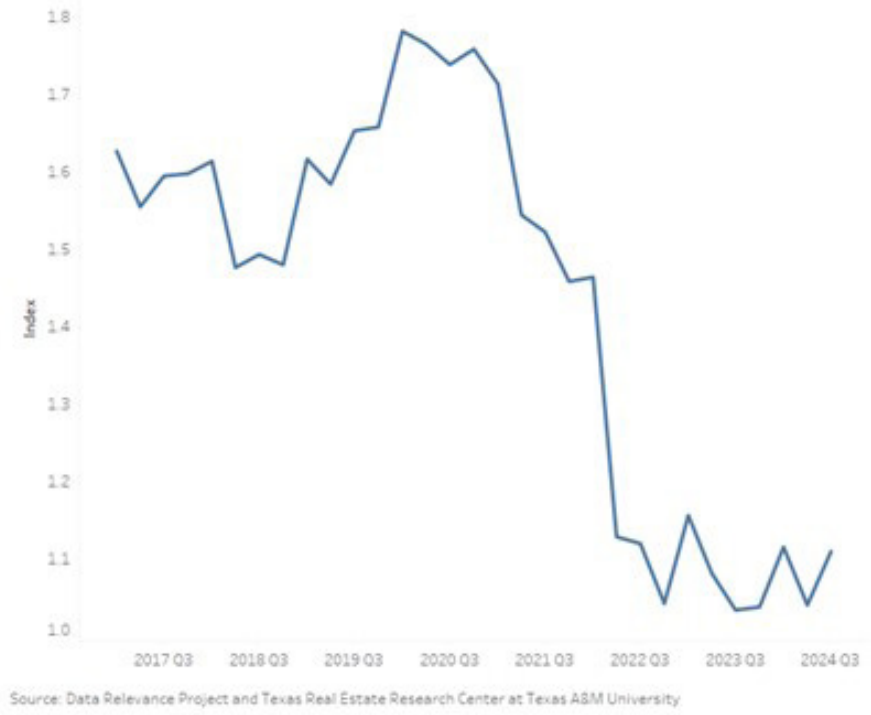
Housing affordability in Texas has eroded significantly over the last half-decade. Although price escalations accelerated during and after COVID, along with mortgage interest rates, these escalations began in the late 2010s as demand for housing in the state exceeded supply.

The Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University tracks the ability of individuals in a given location to afford a home purchase through the Texas Housing Affordability Index (THAI). THAI reflects the relationship between the median family income in a locale and the computed amount required to purchase a median-priced home. The required income is derived from the current mortgage interest rate, the down payment, and the lender's required mortgage debt-to-income ratio, or qualifying ratio. The qualifying ratio is a measure of the monthly mortgage payment to the borrower's gross monthly income. For example, a qualifying ratio of 25 percent means the monthly mortgage payment (principal and interest) cannot exceed 25 percent of the borrower's gross monthly income. A higher THAI indicates relatively greater affordability. A ratio of 1.00 means that the median family income (MFI) is exactly sufficient to purchase the median-priced home. A THAI above 1.00 means the MFI exceeds the required income to purchase a median-priced home. Conversely, a THAI below 1.00 indicates the MFI is not sufficient to purchase the median-priced home (source: Texas A&M University Real Estate Center).

The THAI shows that affordability in Texas dipped briefly from early 2018 to early 2019, rebounded in late 2019 and peaked around 1.8 THAI in late 2020 during the heart of the COVID period. Beginning in 2021, housing affordability plummeted to almost 1.0 due to a combination of low interest rates and demand far exceeding supply. In the Dallas-Plano-Irving metropolitan division (which includes Hunt County), affordability dipped below 1.0 THAI both in 2023 and 2024.

Providing adequate and affordable housing requires an understanding of the types of housing people need, how much they need, and what they can afford to purchase, maintain or rent based on their income and household expenses.

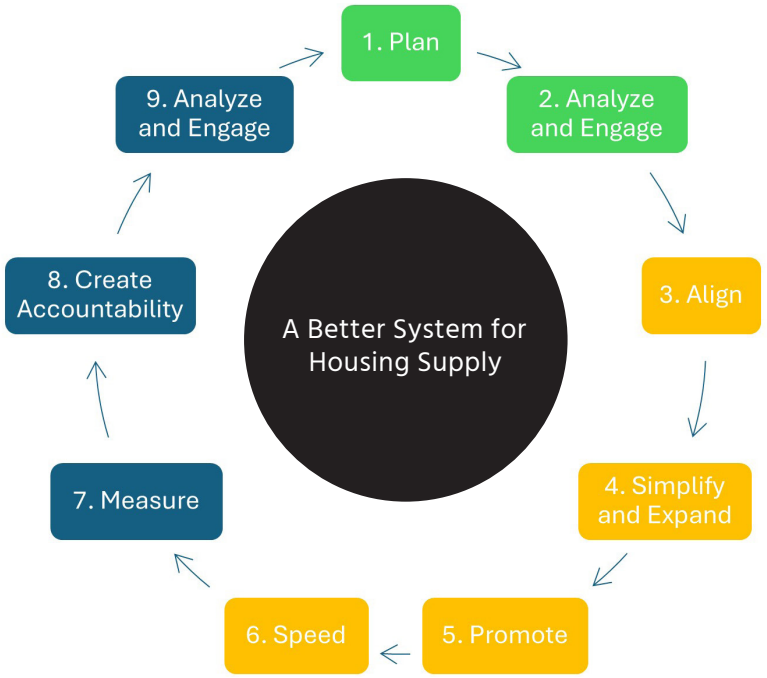
Figure 53. Texas Housing Affordability Index (Data Relevance Project and Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University)



The American Planning Association, in collaboration with the National Association of Home Builders, Mortgage Bankers Association and National Association of Realtors, developed the following general approach to ensuring housing supply matches current and future community demand. The first and second step (to create a plan and vision, analyze housing and engage the community to identify housing goals) are addressed through this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. the remaining seven steps involve a continuing process to identify areas of improvement in the City's development ordinances and building codes, to streamline processes to permit housing, to measure the effects of these changes, and to repeat the process. This can be done through a focused housing study, updates to this Comprehensive Plan, an ongoing stakeholder committee or task force devoted to studying housing, or any combination. The approach is as follows:

1. **Plan:** Create a plan that will meet your vision, clarify expectations and set a blueprint for policy reform.
2. **Analyze and Engage:** Understand your needs, trends and gaps. Engage stakeholders and residents to set common goals.
3. **Align:** Reform your regulatory system to fit your plan.
4. **Simplify and Expand:** Make codes and zones simpler with added flexibility and choice.
5. **Promote:** Provide incentives and support for the housing you've planned.
6. **Speed:** Streamline permitting and reviews to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
7. **Measure:** Track and report on your progress.
8. **Create Accountability:** Adapt and evolve your approach based on performance and changing needs.
9. **Analyze and Engage:** Understand your needs, trends and gaps. Engage stakeholders and residents to assess progress on goals embraced in the plan.

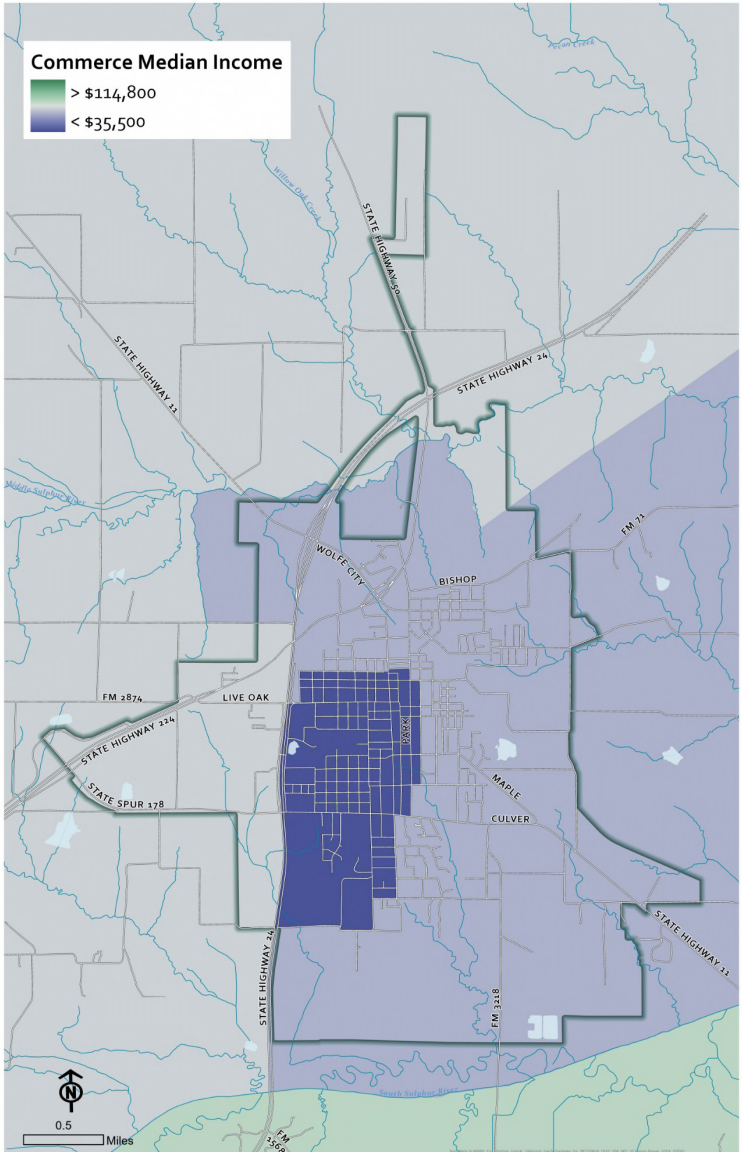
Figure 54. Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook (American Planning Association)



Housing Cost Burden

In a Fall 2024 Pew Research Center survey, 69% of Americans said they were “very concerned” about the cost of housing, up from 61% in April 2023. Figure 10 (Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income) compares the percentage of median household income that goes directly to housing costs based on the occupant’s income. This includes not only payments for mortgages but also real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities (electricity, gas, water, and sewer); notably, it does not include costs related to maintenance and upkeep of a home. Census data show that over one third of Commerce households spend over 30% of their income on housing while nearly 2/3rds spend at least 20% of their income on housing.

Figure 55. Median Household Income by Census Tract



MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS						
Hunt County	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Less than $20,000	**18**	**17**	**14.6**	**13.3**	**12.4**	**10.3**
Less than 20 percent	1.6	1.5	1	1	0.8	0.7
20 to 29 percent	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.1	1.1	0.8
30 percent or more	14.5	13.8	12.1	11.2	10.5	8.8
$20,000 to $34,999	16.6	16.1	16.2	16.5	16.3	14
Less than 20 percent	4.4	3.7	3.3	3.1	2.6	2.7
20 to 29 percent	3.3	3	3.3	3.2	3.3	3
30 percent or more	9	9.3	9.6	10.2	10.3	8.4
$35,000 to $49,999	12.8	11.8	11.6	11.4	11.8	11.9
Less than 20 percent	5.5	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.3	3.4
20 to 29 percent	3.9	4.1	3.7	4	3.6	3.1
30 percent or more	3.3	3.1	3.1	2.7	3.9	5.4
$50,000 to $74,999	16.5	16.6	17.9	17.4	16.7	16.4
Less than 20 percent	9.9	9.5	9.7	9	8.8	7.7
20 to 29 percent	4.7	4.8	5.2	5.2	5	5
30 percent or more	1.9	2.3	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.7
$75,000 or more	32.1	34.8	36	38.3	40.2	45.1
Less than 20 percent	27.2	29.1	30	31.3	32.2	34.1
20 to 29 percent	4.1	4.9	5.1	5.9	6.3	8.1
30 percent or more	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.7	2.9
Zero or negative income	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.6	0.9	0.8

Figure 56. Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (US Census)

MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS						
City of Commerce	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Less than $20,000	**20.8**	**21.9**	**25.2**	**29.2**	**34.5**	**36.0**
Less than 20 percent	0.4	0.3	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.5
20 to 29 percent	1.5	2.3	2.7	3.3	4.6	4.1
30 percent or more	19	19.2	21.3	24.6	28	30.4
$20,000 to $34,999	**18.6**	**20**	**18.6**	**18.3**	**15.7**	**15.4**
Less than 20 percent	4.8	4.6	4.5	2.9	1.6	2.6
20 to 29 percent	4.4	4.8	5.2	4.9	6.1	4.7
30 percent or more	9.5	10.7	8.9	10.6	7.9	8.1
$35,000 to $49,999	**13**	**12.8**	**12.1**	**11.8**	**10.8**	**9.8**
Less than 20 percent	2.1	3.6	4.6	4.4	4	5.5
20 to 29 percent	6	3.9	4.1	3.6	3.9	2
30 percent or more	4.9	5.3	3.5	3.8	2.9	2.3
$50,000 to $74,999	**13.8**	**15.2**	**16.1**	**12.7**	**10.4**	**9.7**
Less than 20 percent	6.3	9.6	10	8	7.3	7.8
20 to 29 percent	5.3	4.5	4.6	4.1	2.8	1.5
30 percent or more	2.2	1.1	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.3
$75,000 or more	**30.7**	**24.8**	**21.8**	**19.7**	**20.5**	**18.7**
Less than 20 percent	26.7	23.1	20.7	18.9	19.8	18.2
20 to 29 percent	3.6	1.7	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.5
30 percent or more	0.4	0	0	0	0	0
Zero or negative income	**2.1**	**4.6**	**5.7**	**6.5**	**6.5**	**8.1**

Figure 57. Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (US Census)

Infill Housing

Commerce has seen recent successful infill development within the City. While any new supply is capable of positively addressing the demand for housing in Commerce, high-quality infill housing should be designed to fit contextually into each neighborhood. While final design and layout is typically up to the builder, municipal ordinances often dictate the boundaries within which housing is built, including setbacks, height, and density. When these requirements are not well-suited for various types of housing, new housing supply will be constrained and/or inappropriate to the context.

Recent infill housing in Commerce has taken on various forms. The following is an overview of constructed housing by form and construction method.

Detached Single-Family

This is the most typical style of home in Commerce and in Texas. A detached home that is constructed on a vacant platted lot is considered infill when it utilizes existing infrastructure such as utilities, street access, and drainage. Minimal additional considerations are required to accommodate this type of housing if the property is already zoned, but some allowances may be needed on infill lots such as setback adjustments or averaging or flexible parking arrangements if a lot is exceptionally small.

Container Homes/Modular Homes/3D Printed Homes

These building types function the same as other housing types on this list. The primary distinction lies in construction methods, which are typically more standardized than wood or steel-framed, site-built structures, with a significant portion of the construction process occurring off-site through a manufacturing process or through an on-site method such as 3D printing. While demand for each building type varies across markets, the high cost of traditional construction methods has driven interest in these methods. As these methods add to the overall housing supply similar to traditional housing, the preferred method for regulation is through a combination of health and safety standards and design standards rather than biasing ordinances in favor of or against certain construction methods.

Duplex and Multi-Plexes

Duplexes and Multi-plexes are housing developments with multiple attached units under the same roof. Duplexes typically have two units and generally match the design characteristics as single-family homes. Multi-plexes generally consist of 3 to 8 units in the same building and share design characteristics with the surrounding neighborhood.

Tiny Homes

Homes that are generally less than 400 square feet and are moveable as a unit are referred to as “tiny homes”. These are distinct from manufactured homes in that they are not regulated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, though they can be regulated by building codes. While tiny homes can contribute to the affordable housing supply of Commerce, they may also have negative effects on the scale and character of an established neighborhood and may lack the permanence of traditional housing. Tiny homes are also popular as short-term rentals because they are simple and relatively inexpensive to acquire, clean and maintain. To reduce impacts to the character and scale of existing neighborhoods, tiny homes should generally be developed as new or infill communities of multiple tiny homes.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

ADUs are secondary dwelling units that are either integrated with the primary residential structure or within an accessory building, such as a detached garage. ADUs function independently of the main structure with separate entries, kitchens, sleeping areas, and bathrooms, but often share utilities. Benefits of ADUs include a secondary source of income for the property owner and an incremental increase in housing supply and density that doesn’t disrupt the character of low-density neighborhoods. They also have lifecycle and aging-in-place benefits discussed in the following section.

Other Infill Housing Considerations

Cost-effective housing is often driven by a combination of zoning and land use regulations and building codes. Just calibrating zoning ordinances will not fully enable the construction of housing alternatives if building and fire codes are written in a way that indirectly discourages the construction of certain housing types. When considering the adoption of or amendments to ICC codes such as the International Residential Code, International Building Code, and International Fire Code, the City should ensure that it is coordinating with builders and the development community to gain a complete understanding of the implications and effects of different regulations. Often costs associated with multi-story, multi-unit buildings on infill lots can exceed the value of a project if fire sprinkler, elevator and ADA requirements are all applied. This can result in projects not being constructed, which perpetuates vacant lots, or developers scaling up projects, assembling land, and building housing that is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. Commerce is like most Texas cities in that it lacks medium-density housing types like small multi-plexes (4-9 units), cottage courts, and three and four-plexes. These building types can often be built at or close to single-family house scale but are smaller and shorter than block-scale apartment buildings. Ownership of these building types can in some cases qualify for conventional financing, allow the owners to occupy a unit and rent the remaining units to create passive income streams.

The City can also work with builders and property owners to identify funding gaps that prevent development. Many banks will not lend money for certain projects because they are less common than other types of projects and, consequently, are more difficult for banks to evaluate. While Commerce is not a CDBG entitlement community due to its population, it still has tools available to encourage the construction and rehabilitation of housing. Notably, Commerce qualifies for loan guarantees and grants under the Rural Housing Service through USDA and the Department of Agriculture. Other tools such as HOME grants, PRO Housing grants, and establishing or expanding the City's NEZ and TIF zones can help to mitigate some costs and increase the supply of affordable housing, while other programs pair City and financial lender resources to buy down the cost of constructing new or repairing existing homes (see "Rebuild ABI" example on page 101).

Lastly, the City can encourage the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). ADUs are livable secondary buildings that meet the definition of a living unit but are smaller and often located behind the main house. ADUs provide both supplementary housing for renters and students who otherwise can't afford of don't desire a mortgage, and supplementary income for property owners, which can often mean the difference between a home remaining affordable or becoming a cost burden to the property owner. Depending on lot size, existing single-family properties can often accommodate ADUs with the main home without adversely impacting neighborhood character.

Hood River Oregon Case Study

To fund the development and preservation of affordable housing, the City of Hood River (pop. 8,313) prepared an Affordable Housing Strategy to identify a more diverse set of potential funding sources. In addition to traditional funding options, Hood River explored using tax increment financing to fund identified priorities such as affordable housing, pursuing a General Obligation Bond backed by property tax, and development income to provide developer incentives and acquire land for affordable housing. Additionally, the strategy identified partner funding sources available at the local, regional and state levels to fund a variety of housing programs. (Source: Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook)

Life Cycle Housing

A Pew Research Center survey finds that nearly 79 million adults in the United States, or 31.9 percent of the adult population, live in a "shared household," meaning one in which two or more adults not intimately attached live in the same home. Feedback during public meetings described in this Plan indicates that Commerce residents are concerned about being priced out of their homes and having to leave their neighborhood or leave Commerce. Like other demographics in Commerce, seniors over the age of 65 benefit from housing that is affordable, functional and provides access to amenities and resources, particularly medical care and pharmacies.

Specific policies that facilitate aging in place are:

- Housing that is ADA-compliant and/or utilizes universal design techniques;
- Housing with reduced lot sizes and yards to minimize maintenance;
- Housing that within a short drive or walk to services and amenities;
- Housing that is attainable and attractive to residents of all ages.

A Stanford University study found that even unrelated children and elderly adults living in close proximity to each other produced beneficial effects for both (source: "Hidden in Plain Sight: How Intergenerational Relationships Can Transform Our Future.") However, as elderly adults become unable to care for themselves or maintain their homes, they may move in with other family members or to assisted living. Though they fulfill the need for care and shelter in different ways, each of these separate arrangements constitute important elements of the city's housing supply. The City can support aging-in-place by enabling the creation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and allowing for senior housing, including independent living, age-restricted apartments, and assisted living and memory care within most zoning districts.

Adaptive Reuse

The City can utilize several tools to preserve and rehabilitate historic residential buildings in downtown and other historic neighborhoods. One effective tool is adaptive reuse, which involves repurposing buildings that have exceeded their original function to accommodate new uses. Adaptive reuse not only revitalizes these structures but also stimulates reinvestment in neighboring properties that may have long been vacant.

However, it's important to recognize that adaptive reuse may not be suitable for every historic building. The City should collaborate with local officials to identify any regulatory and market challenges and work closely with property owners to determine the appropriateness of adaptive reuse for each property.

Local regulations can present hurdles to changing the use of existing properties. Zoning regulations, for instance, might prohibit certain new uses if they do not align with the property's current zoning designation. Alternatively, zoning requirements could demand additional features such as parking spaces or open areas that may not be feasible on the property. Moreover, modern building codes often pose compatibility issues with older structures. The City should conduct a thorough assessment to identify any regulatory barriers to adaptive reuse and consider updating regulations accordingly. Some potential updates could include:

- Creating separate adaptive reuse overlays to encourage planned reuse of structures in historic neighborhoods.
- Treating adaptive reuse projects as a distinct land-use or development type to facilitate reuse without requiring rezoning.
- Revising the building code standards to protect public health and safety without requiring cost-prohibitive structural modifications or building material replacements.

Source: American Planning Association | PAS QuickNotes No. 80

Maintenance and Age of Housing

While a large portion of Commerce's housing stock has been constructed since 2000, over time, houses naturally show signs of aging and require additional attention to maintain their safety and overall condition. Over time, homes naturally age and require extra care to ensure their safety and viability. Within the majority of Commerce, at least half of homes were built in 1979 or earlier (2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates).

To identify areas with a higher concentration of older homes that may need preservation, rehabilitation, or maintenance, an analysis of the age of housing at the Census Block level was conducted. Figure 12 illustrates the percentage of structures built in 1979 or earlier within the city limits and ETJ. The majority of these older structures are concentrated in and around downtown, with a significant portion of the homes being built in 1979 or earlier. Neighborhoods where 31-50% of structures were built in 1979 or earlier (highlighted in yellow on Map 1) should also be targeted for implementing historic preservation incentives for homes that meet DHS standards. Homes built in 1979 will be eligible for the historic register by the end of the decade. These homes are also most likely to be in need of major repairs or contain hazards such as obsolete wiring, deteriorating pipes, inefficient windows and insulation, asbestos, and lead paint.

As homes age, they also pose maintenance burdens such as settling or cracking foundations, repair or replacement of fences, roofs, doors, and siding, and care of lawns and landscaping. Larger homes and properties typically impose a greater maintenance burden than smaller properties and homes. The City should consider the impacts of these features on future homeowners when assessing the potential for neighborhood decline.

Neighborhood decline frequently occurs when the cost of housing is misaligned with the prevailing household income, as it is in many areas of Commerce. Consumer Price Index (CPI) does not adequately reflect the cost of housing and homeownership in measures of inflation, including materials, contractor services, and interest payment on mortgages and home equity loans. These costs may even outpace inflation in many cases, since they depend on availability of goods and services and lending rates.

Spending to purchase and improve housing units is treated as investment and not consumption in the CPI. Interest costs (such as mortgage interest), property taxes, real estate fees, most maintenance, and all improvement costs are part of the cost of the capital good and are also not treated as consumption items. These non-consumption costs of owned housing are out of scope for the CPI under the cost-of-living framework that guides the index (BLS Fact Sheet, "Rent and Rent Equivalence", July 2024).

While this analysis provides a broad overview of housing age in various neighborhoods, it does not assess the current condition of historic or older homes within those areas.

To gain a clearer understanding of housing conditions, a detailed housing analysis was conducted as a follow-up to this initial assessment, as outlined in the following section.

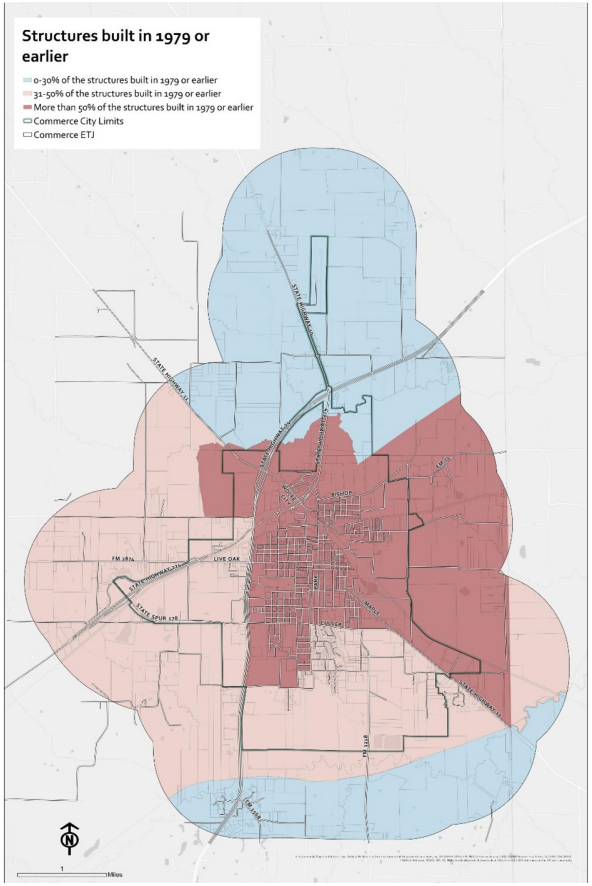


Figure 58. Homes in Commerce by Year of Construction

Identifying Housing Strategy

As housing and neighborhoods age, their needs will manifest in different ways. By classifying housing and neighborhoods according to their characteristics and needs, discrete strategies for ensuring housing stability and value can be identified. The following categories generally describe the needs of housing in Commerce based on age and condition:

New

Homes and neighborhoods built within the last decade.

Perpetuate

Older generation of homes (less than 50 years) where neighborhoods are in sound condition.

Revitalize

Older generation of homes (less than 50 years) where neighborhoods are showing signs of decline

Rehabilitate

Oldest generations of homes (more than 50 years) that are in need of significant ongoing maintenance

Conserve/Preserve

Older homes that contribute significantly to the historic fabric of Commerce

Goals & Strategies	New	Perpetuate	Revitalize	Rehabilitate	Conserve/Preserve
Goal: Maintain current conditions as next generation of owners moves in					
Homeowner education and outreach to first-time homeowners	X	X	X	X	
Increase connectivity to parks and amenities	X	X	X	X	X
Foster communication between HOAs and the City	X	X	X		
Utilize code enforcement as a source of education for owners	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct regular neighborhood assessments to identify signs of decline	X	X	X	X	X
Observe trends in maintenance and obvious signs of cost burden	X	X	X	X	X

Goals & Strategies	New	Perpetuate	Revitalize	Rehabilitate	Conserve/Preserve
Goal: Stabilize existing neighborhoods to prevent rapid change					
Regular communication and outreach between HOAs and the City	X	X	X		
Monitor short-term rentals	X	X	X		X
Work with ETAMU and the CISD to identify changing occupancy trends and housing demand	X	X	X	X	X
Goal: Increase value gradually and induce beneficial improvements over time					
Use incentives to overcome maintenance cost burden through grants and fee waivers	X	X	X	X	X
Make targeted improvements to neighborhood infrastructure, including streetscape rehabilitation and parks and trails improvements			X	X	X
Goal: Stop decline and increase new investment					
Continually identify and prioritize dilapidated or dangerous properties to facilitate rehab or demo			X	X	
Evaluate zoning regulations and related codes, including building codes, to unlock value (e.g., ADUs, lot splits, small-scale infill housing)			X	X	X
Identify maintenance gaps evidenced by deferred maintenance such as failing roofs, foundations, broken windows, etc.			X	X	X
Incentivize appropriate new construction or rehabilitation by helping to bridge funding gaps in exchange for meeting minimum construction standards			X	X	X

Housing Programs

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ)

Today, Commerce utilizes a Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) that enables the City to incentivize investments in housing within the zone through reduced permit fees, lien forgiveness and property tax reduction.

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ)

A Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) is a special-purpose district that can significantly improve the quality of life for residents by fostering development and providing essential services. An NEZ is a designated area within a city aimed at promoting affordable housing, economic development, improved social services, education, public safety, or the rehabilitation of affordable housing.

1. **Creation of the Zone:** A city can create an NEZ if it determines that doing so will promote one or more of the following:
   - Creation of affordable housing,
   - Economic development.
   - Improvement in social services, education, or public safety.
   - Rehabilitation of affordable housing.

3. **Adoption of the Zone:** To officially create an NEZ, the city's governing body must adopt a resolution that includes, a determination that the zone will promote the goals mentioned above, a description of the zone's boundaries, a finding that the zone will benefit public health, safety, and welfare, and a finding that the zone meets certain tax code requirements.

4. **Municipal Powers:** Once an NEZ is established, the city has several powers to support it, including, waiving or adopting fees related to building construction and inspections, providing refunds of municipal sales tax on sales made in the zone for up to 10 years, providing municipal property tax abatements.

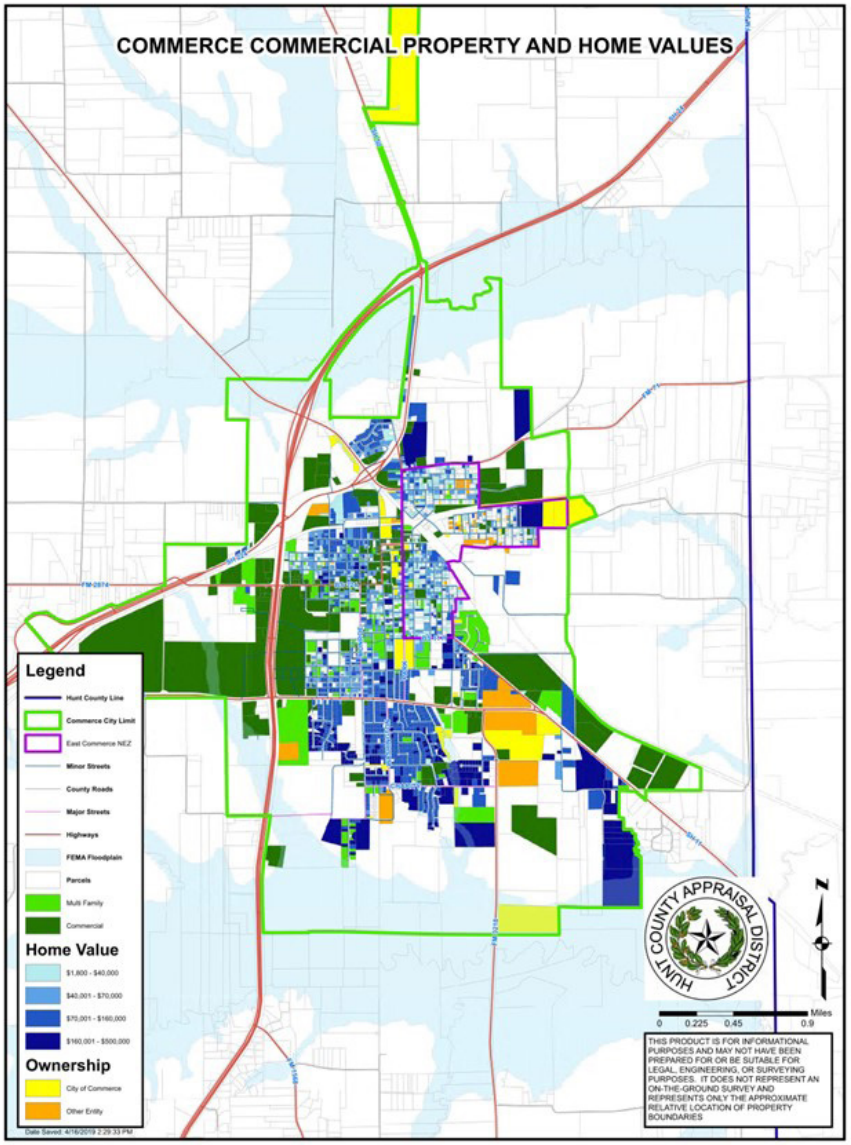


Figure 59. NEZ Current Boundaries

Home Improvement Incentive Programs Case Studies

The Cleburne Pride Home Improvement Incentive Program

The City of Cleburne's incentive program, The Cleburne Pride Home Improvement Incentive Program, is designed to encourage investment in Cleburne's single-family housing stock by providing homeowners with financial incentives for making certain exterior improvements to their properties through a matching funds incentive program. The program applies to single-family homes that are at least 30 years of age. Objectives of the program include:

- Improving neighborhood "curb appeal"
- Supporting community pride in ownership
- Revitalizing and rehabilitating older residential structures for the purpose of preservation and protection of the ad valorem property tax base
- Offering the potential for energy cost savings as a byproduct of certain improvements

In general, the program provides reimbursement to the property owner of up to $5,000 based on a maximum 30% program match for eligible exterior improvements to single-family homes located within the city limits of Cleburne. Eligible projects must have a minimum cost of $4,000.

Abilene Rebuild ABI Residential Infill Development Program

The City of Abilene offers the Rebuild ABI Residential Infill Development Program to promote and encourage the construction and renovation of quality, affordable housing in certain designated areas. To accomplish this goal, the City has created several incentives and partnered with local financial institutions to buy down the cost of housing through equity payments and incentives, including waived permit and tap fees, new sidewalk, and demolition costs.

Non-Profit and Faith-Based Partnerships Case Studies

Other Texas cities have partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Austin to provide virtual homebuyer education programs that assist prospective homebuyers with budgeting, avoiding predatory lending, building and improving credit, home maintenance tips, and individualized work plans.

Cities also collaborate with local civic and faith-based organizations to offer more substantial support to residents in the community. Involving a City building official and a private builder can increase education and training to plan and conduct repairs while leveraging the community volunteerism capabilities of local organizations. While the City may participate financially in certain costs or support the organization's efforts, most of the materials and labor would be donated and volunteered (see Christmas in Action of Johnson County).

Student Housing

With the growth of ETAMU, housing demand has increased both on and off campus. This demand puts pressure on surrounding neighborhoods and can limit the supply of housing for permanent residents of Commerce. New housing built for students is often constructed to be taller and denser than the surrounding neighborhoods, which can erode community character and fabric without careful design considerations. Neighborhood character west of Monroe Street is significantly different than the character east of Monroe, which is an area primarily built as single-family housing. Future growth in student housing demand will put pressure on these neighborhoods to accommodate those needs both through existing housing stock and new stock.

Missing middle housing strategies can be employed to accommodate housing that is aligned with students' needs while maintaining community character. Incremental density increases adjacent to the University (for example, between Monroe and Washington Streets) could take the form of 2-8 unit structures in a two-story configuration that maintains the scale and character of the single-family and multi-family structures in the same area. To further protect the scale of existing units, larger structures may be concentrated near the ends of blocks and along the Monroe Street frontage opposite existing higher-density units. This densification strategy has the added benefit of providing investment and highly-visible new residents within walking distance of commercial buildings and building sites.

Lastly, required minimum parking ratios should be reduced or considered for elimination on lots or blocks adjacent to the University. Reducing parking not only reduces initial costs of construction, but also allows for more efficient use of the lot and greater design flexibility.

Community Amenities

The proximity to amenities and services significantly influences both the quality of neighborhoods and the residents' overall quality of life. Figure 14 shows the distribution of community amenities within Commerce's city limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), as well as the locations of residential developments. While pedestrian access is partially available to many of these amenities, sidewalk connections are inconsistent and primarily limited to commercial portions of major thoroughfares such as Monroe Street, Maple Street, and Live Oak Street. The following is a broad overview of the available amenities within the community:

Public Parks

This is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

Healthcare

The City is serviced by Hunt Regional Emergency Medical Center at Commerce which is located along State Highway 24. This facility operates as emergency care only and has no inpatient facilities. The nearest hospital is Hunt Regional Medical Center in Greenville, roughly 20 miles away. A need for improved medical services within the City was emphasized during public engagement events.

Fresh Produce & Convenience

Stores providing access to fresh produce are limited to Brookshire's and Walmart. Although Brookshire's is within walking distance of a large portion of Commerce, most residents must traverse Culver Street, which is a state highway without adequate continuous sidewalks or crossings. Walmart is located on the west side of Highway 24, far from residential neighborhoods and the crosswalks linking the east and west sides of the university campus, making access to Walmart difficult even by bicycle.

Schools

The Commerce Independent School District operates a High School, Middle School and two elementary schools (one Pre-K through 2nd grade and one 3rd through 5th grade). None of the schools could be considered convenient to access by pedestrians from the majority of Commerce neighborhoods, particularly Commerce High School, meaning children in Commerce in most cases will rely on personal vehicles or school buses on a daily basis. The ISD draws children from outside of Commerce City Limits, including the neighboring city of Campbell.

North Commerce/Norris Community

Of note, there are no fresh food services or other amenities on the northern side of Commerce, particularly within the Norris Community. This forces residents to rely on personal vehicles to shop for necessities or traverse the city on foot or by bicycle with little to no existing pedestrian or bicycle accommodations outside of the sidewalks adjacent to public housing along Sunrise Street.

While the implementation of complete streets principles found later in this chapter may improve connectivity, a strategic plan specific to the Norris Community should be developed to identify strategies for attracting amenities within the community.

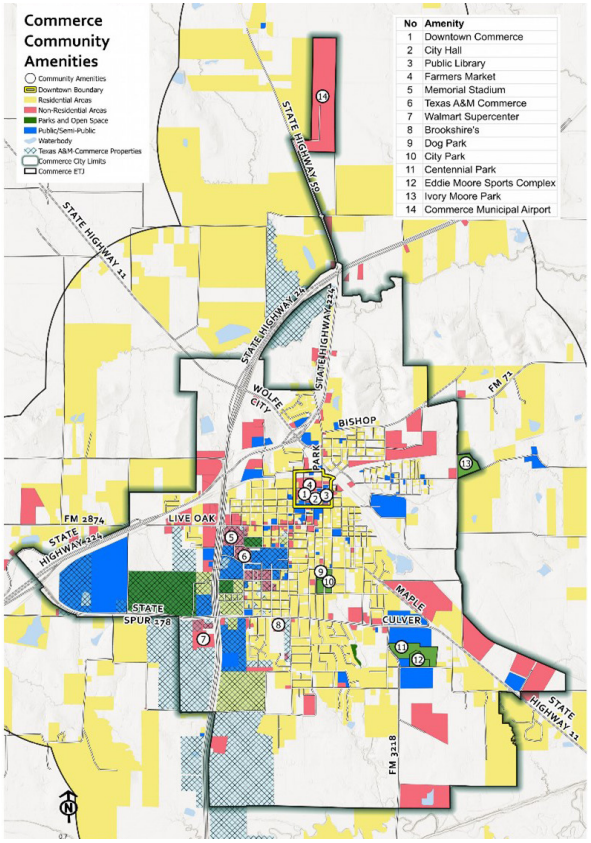


Figure 60. Community Amenities

Neighborhood Character & Enhancement

Character

Neighborhood character refers to the unique and distinct identity or quality of a place. It is how individuals experience a space. Natural, visual, cultural, economic, and social characteristics all imbue character to a place. Planning strategies and intervention can reinforce and enhance neighborhood identity by creating memorable public spaces, supporting local businesses, and preserving cultural heritage.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI), a national non-profit organization, published Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places, a report intended to link health care and land use.

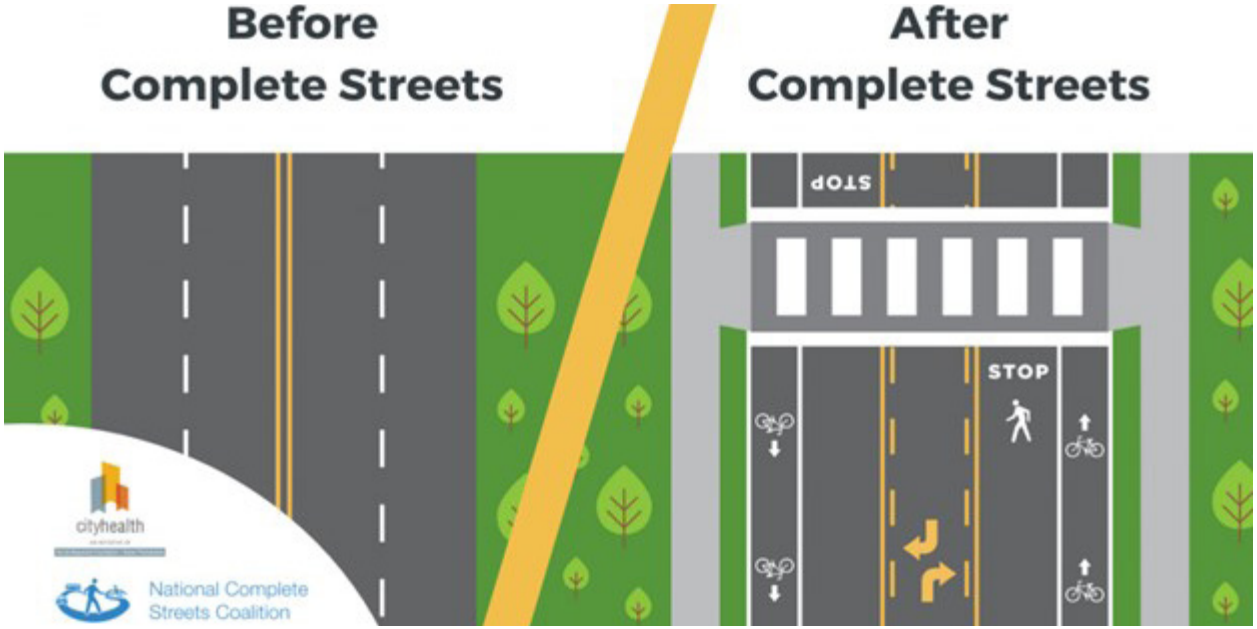
The Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places are as follows:

1. **Put People First:** design communities that put community health first and consider health impacts ahead of time.
2. **Recognize the Economic Value:** changing lifestyle preferences indicate that walkable, mixed-use, and transit-rich communities are more highly valued and create economic engines in cities.
3. **Empower Champions for Health:** use community engagement to further community health goals.
4. **Energize Shared Spaces:** activation of the public realm enlivens communities and provides additional opportunities for physical activity and community interaction in the outdoors.
5. **Make Healthy Choices Easy:** ensure that environments are safe so that making healthy choices will not be discouraged by perceptions of safety.
6. **Ensure Equitable Access:** design for all ages and abilities, focus on safe and accessible routes to schools and integrate land use with transportation, addressing all modes and transportation users.
7. **Mix It Up:** a variety of land uses, building types, and public spaces can improve both physical activity and social interaction, which necessitates the updating of regulations and standards.
8. **Embrace Unique Character:** integrate open space planning and revitalization of existing community centers to base city design on existing assets and character areas.
9. **Promote Access to Healthy Food:** food access must be considered with every new development, including reconsidering grocery store size standards and access to existing stores.
10. **Make It Active:** use urban design guidelines to further community health goals by collocating activities, upgrading walking and bicycling infrastructure, and encouraging shared-use facilities.

Promotion of community character also extends programs that increase community engagement and activity, such as block parties, events and National Night Out. The City should ensure that all residents are informed and have the ability to participate in these programs, which encourage community-building and cohesion.

City of Grand Prairie – "Big Event"

Inspired by the success of community cleanup and work events at Texas A&M University in College Station, the City of Grand Prairie instituted one of the first City-sponsored Big Event programs throughout Grand Prairie. The event brought together dozens of volunteers to clear garbage, mow lawns, and conduct minor repairs. The net result increased community engagement and awareness and improved neighborhood livability.



Urban Design

Community branding and design plays a crucial role in conveying a community's goals and vision. It should not only celebrate the community's rich history but also communicate its current values and future aspirations. Effective branding can significantly support community planning efforts, attract visitors, and strengthen community cohesion. Elements of branding may encompass consistent use of unique materials or colors, a unified signage system, and the establishment of distinctive landmarks throughout the City. Downtown areas, as the focal point of many communities, are typically the initial focus for community branding efforts, setting the tone for the entire area.

Integrating urban design elements into community and neighborhood planning can enhance existing spaces, creating urban environments that are more comfortable, visually appealing, and inclusive. This integration of design elements yields various benefits for the community, including improvements in health, social engagement, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. For instance, enhancements to streetscapes can promote better health outcomes, encourage physical activity, create safer environments, and more. This does not require every street in Commerce to be upgraded or given sidewalks; the City can identify priority routes for pedestrians and cyclists and target improvements to make these routes safer and more convenient for multiple modes of travel. This approach is referred to as "complete streets".

Key priority routes for complete streets elements:

- Sycamore Street (connecting Norris Community to Downtown)
- Washington Street (connecting Downtown to City Park)
- ML King Drive (connecting Norris Community to Park Street corridor)

Urban Design Elements

The following are basic urban design elements that can be incorporated into the City's development code to create well-designed places.

Streetscapes and Public Spaces

Commerce has been recognized by the State Legislature as the "Bois d'Arc Capital of Texas", a distinct representation of the city's history and natural setting. This representation can be turned into a graphic representation on City branding elements such as signs and entryway features, promoting Commerce's unique identity.

Well-designed streetscapes are not only functional, they can add to the aesthetic of the community by incorporating living and hardscape elements that are unique to each neighborhood or to Commerce. Native plantings and landscape can be incorporated into stormwater management to improve flood conditions and enhance the appearance of the streetscape.

New neighborhoods should incorporate accessible parks and open space that serve new residents without overburdening the City's existing parks. These open spaces should be intentionally designed and not remnant spaces or areas having limited commercial value.

Figure 61. Bioswale on a street corner

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage can also consistently represent a City's brand. Currently, the City and ETAMU share entryway signage but wayfinding signage is exclusive to ETAMU. Wayfinding signage that incorporates both City of Commerce and ETAMU elements can visually link the two largest institutions in Commerce, increase community cohesion through branding, and make it easier to navigate the city for new residents, students and visitors.

Figure 62. Wayfinding with city branding

Community Art

Community art programs and organic design elements were rated highly by attendees of the August 2024 open house. These elements can also promote neighborhood cohesion and character. Partnerships with community institutions such as the Northeast Texas Children's Museum and the ETAMU Department of Art could be leveraged to facilitate the installation of permanent or revolving arts projects throughout the city, blending elements of Commerce's history or identity and furthering collaboration between the institutions.

Other community branding elements recognize the historic character or identity of a neighborhood or street. Existing elements that should be maintained or enhanced include Historic Bonham Street and the Norris Community.

Figure 63. Art collaboration project between City of Arlington and University of Texas at Arlington.

Building Design

New development should be integrated with the size and appearance of existing buildings. Key components of integration are height, roof style and pitch, window size and orientation, presence of porches and garages, and front door orientation. While state law currently prohibits cities from regulating specific building materials, the elements above contribute in much the same way as specific materials and can be built into a regulatory incentive structure to achieve similar results. One such regulatory method is to establish a points system whereby new buildings must achieve a certain number of "points" by providing a number of desirable elements; this gives the builder control over which elements are included in the development while providing a baseline of standards to ensure compatibility.

Another method used by an increasing number of cities is pre-approved building plans. Usually licensed by an architect or designer to the City, pre-approved plans have been used by cities in Texas and elsewhere in the U.S. to achieve predictability and expedite permitting processes versus developing and reviewing plans from scratch.

Accessibility

Because of its relatively compact form, Commerce already has numerous examples of housing conveniently located near businesses. While these development forms are more commonly horizontal "mixed use" rather than vertical, they function in much the same way by providing convenient or unimpeded access to businesses and services on foot or by bicycle. In these areas, cars are not only not necessary, it is often more convenient to not use a car or get on the roadway. Maintenance of community character is still a consideration, and zoning should provide for businesses that are complementary to neighborhoods and serve an essential role for immediate residents. Buildings themselves, including parking areas, should be designed and laid out for convenient access for non-vehicle users at a scale that maintains the scale of the neighborhood.

Figure 64. Infill housing in Commerce next to older housing

Figure 65. Medium density residential with access to commercial uses

Density and "Missing Middle" Housing

Because Commerce hosts a campus of Texas A&M University, examples of medium and high-density housing are more abundant in Commerce than many cities of similar size. While the variety of housing is an element of Commerce's character, new housing can erode this character if it is not carefully planned.

While there is a place in Commerce for additional high-density units near ETAMU, housing within and along the periphery of low-density single-family neighborhoods should be designed to respect the form of those neighborhoods. In general, high-density residential development should not extend east of Washington Street, north of Live Oak Street, or south of Culver Street. Instead, housing development in these areas, whether designated as student housing, market-rate, or tax credit housing, should be limited to low-density and medium-density housing, otherwise known as "missing middle". Promoting density in these areas will enhance the university neighborhood character, provide student housing and help businesses along key corridors remain successful by providing a critical mass of customers throughout the year.

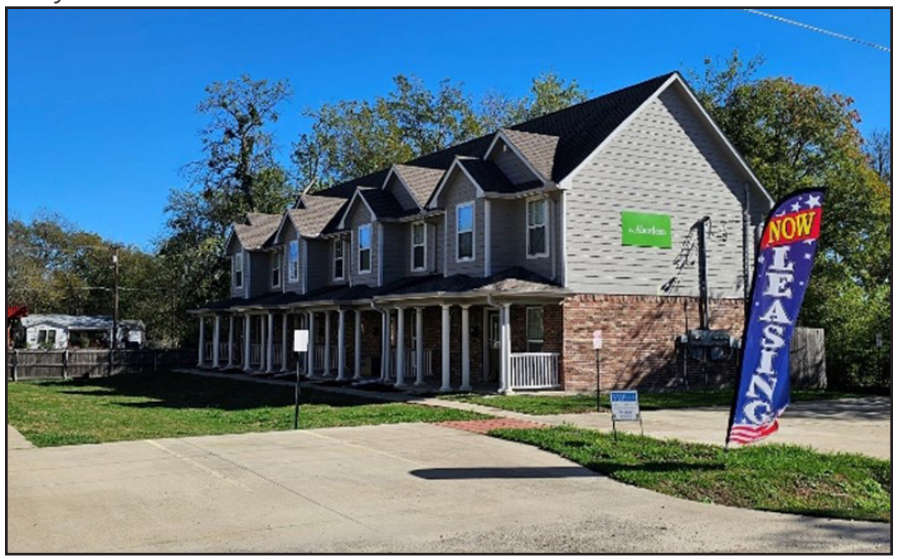


Figure 66. Medium-density housing in Commerce

"Missing Middle" Housing

"Missing Middle" housing is a term that describes a range of multi-family housing, including small single-family residential, duplexes, and small-scale multi-unit buildings that complement single-family neighborhoods. These housing types are important because they help provide more affordable housing options for people in different phases of the housing cycle, including young families, young professionals, and empty-nesters. Each of these housing types can vary in price point and model. It is possible to have a mixture of affordable and premium points for each type and they can be for rent or sale.

Because missing middle housing products often resemble the form of housing constructed at the turn of the twentieth century, when American towns were urbanizing and developed a distinctly "American" character, constructing (and preserving) them also provide a path to maintaining a small-town feel while simultaneously meeting the city's changing housing needs. Integrating missing middle into existing neighborhoods is a way to promote incremental and compatible change rather than disruptive transformations, preserving the culture and character of the neighborhood while still increasing housing availability and options.

Missing middle products are also a good transition between land uses or land uses of higher to lower scale, in that it can act as a buffer between lower-density residential developments and higher-density residential, mixed-use or commercial developments. This practice also puts more residential units closer to goods and services within those mixed-use or commercial areas, improving access.

Conclusion

That most housing in Texas and even in the United States tends to result in either single-family residential (detached or duplexes) or high-density residential (such as large apartment complexes) is not purely a function of market forces. A complex set of factors extending back to the establishment of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) in the 1930s has resulted in legal and financial frameworks that favor construction of these housing types. Building codes also have a significant influence on the type of residential construction that is economically feasible, with the cost of construction increasing significantly when more than 3-4 units are proposed in a building due to additional access and fire code requirements such as rated assemblies, fire suppression systems, riser rooms, elevator access, and ADA features. These requirements often result in much larger economies of scale being needed to produce housing, resulting in much larger development.

Cities can begin to tackle this problem and encourage the development of medium-density housing development and redevelopment by examining building and fire codes, along with zoning codes, to identify changes that address cost-prohibitive standards. Working with financial institutions to address barriers to lending is also a key component of unlocking missing middle housing development and, in turn, unlocking additional housing supply at a scale that is appropriate to many neighborhoods, particularly older neighborhoods that already have a variety of housing and are built on a grid layout with little to no HOA restrictions.

Recommended Strategies

Strategies
1. Prepare a dedicated housing study to identify needs and potential strategies for addressing housing challenges and opportunities.
2. Identify areas with pervasive underdeveloped or underutilized commercial or non-residential zoning and evaluate for zoning changes to allow for residential development.
3. Identify and register vacant properties and buildings
4. Work through the code enforcement process to educate homeowners and address housing that is dilapidated or neglected
5. Explore amendments to the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and adopted ICC codes, such as the existing building code, residential code and building code, to remove barriers to constructing infill housing.
6. Communicate with ETAMU to understand future student housing needs and the potential impacts on existing neighborhoods.
7. Host regular forums for local builders and developers to understand barriers to infill housing and opportunities to increase supply in a way that respects existing neighborhoods.
8. Improve housing and destination connectivity by restriping or reconfiguring roadways with high observed or expected mode share for bicycles and explore or institute “complete streets” concepts on the highest-capacity City thoroughfares or those with high trip generators such as parks and schools.
9. Extend the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone to western Commerce.
10. Utilize state and federal funding sources to address or “buy down” the cost of housing or increase equity for individual home buyers

Recommended Strategies

Strategies
11. Focus on life-cycle housing and aging-in-place by exploring home repair programs and non-profit partnerships, and making allowance for senior-friendly housing within older neighborhoods.
12. Encourage neighborhood gatherings such as block parties and National Night Out participation and consider additional community-wide programs.
13. Engage and collaborate with institutions and community stakeholders such as ETAMU the Northeast Texas Children's Museum, and the Chamber of Commerce to develop and execute community branding and beautification programs through community art projects, signage and branding.
14. Fund sidewalk improvements and construction along key mobility corridors through development fees.
15. Work with the Norris Community and key stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for housing and community elements that enhance the community identity and opportunities for engagement.

5

PARKS MASTER PLAN

Introduction

Parks Master Plan Purpose

Parks and recreation opportunities are crucial for enhancing the quality of life for residents of Commerce. Development of a high-quality parks and recreation system is a long-term process, and decisions about park amenities and recreational programs should not be made in isolation. Rather, a cohesive vision for the community's parks and recreation system must be established and then guidance provided toward incremental implementation over time. This Plan, in concert with the overall Comprehensive Plan, provides that guidance.

This Parks Master Plan (PMP):

- Identifies the implications of current community demographics and projected population growth as it relates to parks and recreation.
- Analyzes the current state of the City's parks, recreation and open spaces.
- Identifies parks and recreation deficiencies and needs.
- Establishes goals and recommendations for the next five to 10 years.
- Prioritizes improvements to the parks and recreation system.
- Aids the City in seeking funding opportunities.

This document should be used as a planning tool by City staff, elected and appointed officials, citizens, and the private development community to understand community desires and move toward long-term community success. The Plan is intended to help coordinate local efforts for Commerce and to work in conjunction with Hunt County, area school districts, local organizations and sports leagues.

Benefits of Parks

Access to quality parks and recreation is an important component of a high-quality community. Planning for a successful, equitable parks system ensures that all residents can experience the following key benefits.

Overall Well-Being Benefits

- Contact with nature helps to improve overall well-being and quality of life.
- Recreation provides multi-generational opportunities for mental, physical, social and emotional stimulation.

Health Benefits

- Access to nature and recreation increases frequency of fitness and improves psychological health.
- Play provides crucial developmental opportunities for children.
- Physical activity helps to reduce obesity, depression and many other health problems.

Environmental Benefits

- Parkland helps to mitigate climate, air and water pollution impacts.
- Preserved open space protects vital habitat for plants and wildlife.
- Parks foster environmental stewardship in citizens.

Economic Benefits

- Parkland increases property values within close proximity.
- Quality parks and recreation can attract new residents and businesses.
- Unique park and recreation amenities can encourage tourism and associated economic benefits.

Planning Process and Time Frame

In 2024, the City commissioned Freese and Nichols, Inc. to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan and Parks Master Plan. The Plan's analysis, vision and goals, recommendations, and prioritization were developed to create this overall guiding document for parks and recreation development.

The planning process included a variety of public engagement opportunities to allow community input to help shape the Plan. Engagement opportunities included a parks-focused Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) meeting, an online public survey and a community open house. Detailed documentation of the public input process can be found in the appendix, Parks and Recreation Supplemental Information.

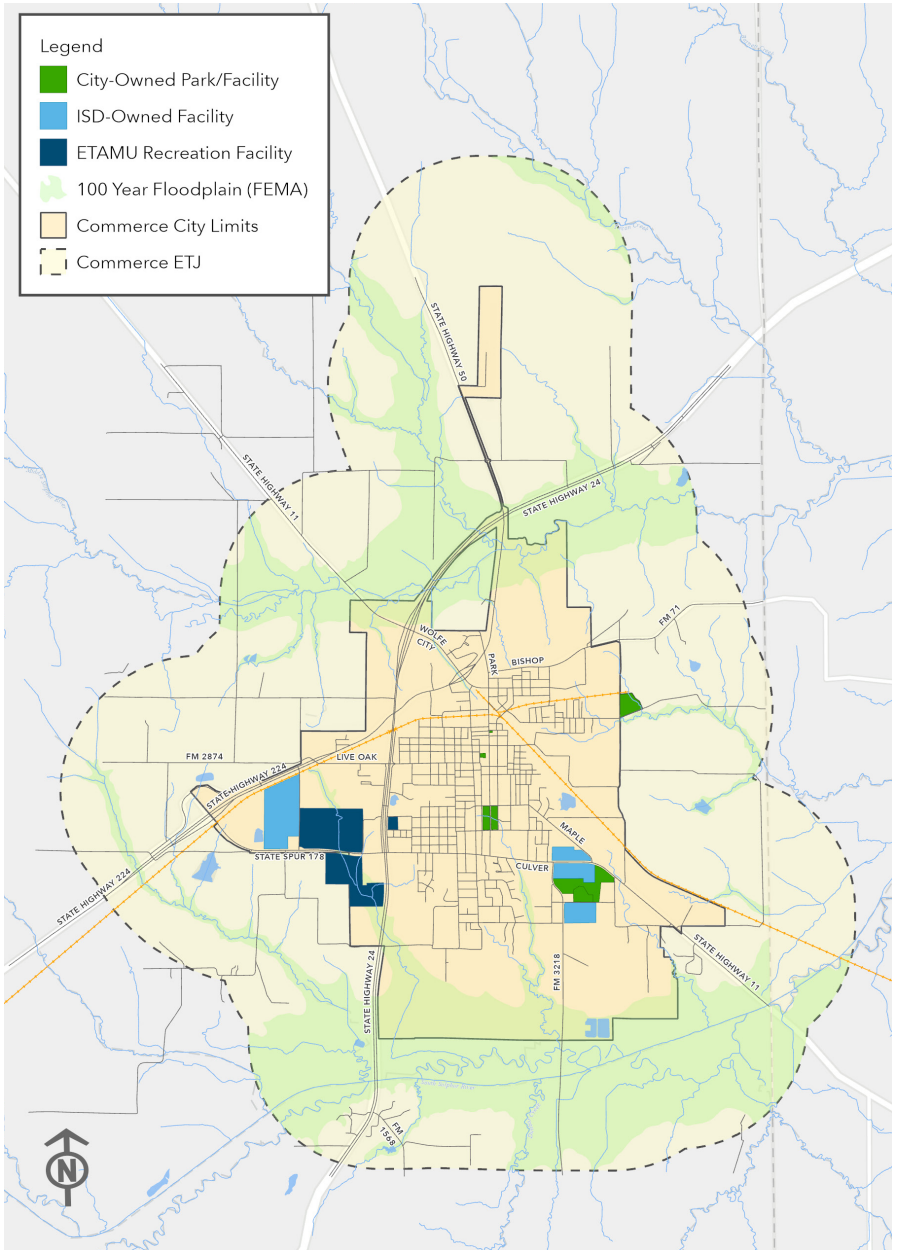
This Plan is intended to address parks and recreation needs over the next five to 10 years. Recommendations should be re-evaluated periodically to ensure they are still valid. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department master plan guidelines recommend updating the Plan every five years or before any new major developments occur that significantly change the parks and recreation needs of the City's residents.

Planning Area

The study area for this Plan includes the entirety of Commerce's city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), totaling approximately 21.3 square miles (see Map 15). The City is located in Hunt County, approximately 15 miles northeast of Greenville, the county seat. Commerce is the largest community located within the Commerce Independent School District. East Texas A&M University (ETAMU) is located in the southwest portion of the City. ETAMU is a large landowner and contributes to a large young adult population in the City.

The City of Commerce is the primary governmental entity responsible for providing parks and recreation facilities for its citizens. ETAMU also provides the community with some parks and recreation facilities in the areas adjacent to its campus. Additional planning area information can be found in Chapter 1, Community Snapshot.

Map 15. Parks and Recreation Planning Area

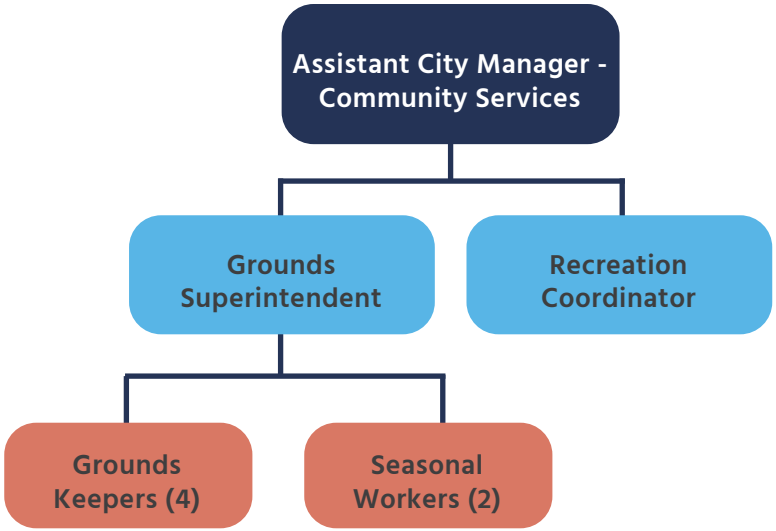


Parks and Recreation Department

The Commerce Parks and Recreation Department is the primary department responsible for planning, maintaining and developing the City's parks and trails, as well as planning and operating community festivals and events. The Department includes six full-time staff members, four of whom focus on park maintenance, plus two seasonal workers. Parks and Recreation maintenance staff also maintain non-parkland owned by the City. This effort requires approximately 30-40% of their weekly time.

At present, there is a desire to convert the two seasonal workers to one full-time position and add at least one or two more groundskeepers while maintaining the two seasonal positions (March-August). As new facilities and events are considered in the future, it will be crucial to ensure that there are sufficient staff available to operate and adequately maintain these areas/events.

Figure 67. Parks and Recreation Department Organization

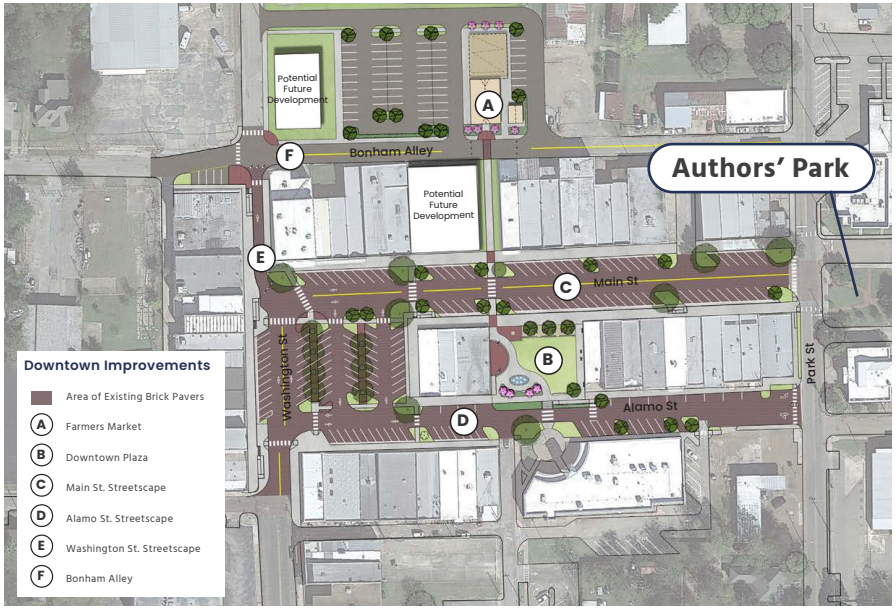


Previous Planning Efforts

The City created a parks master plan many years ago. However, the City has seen notable change since then and this Plan functions as a new Parks Master Plan.

The City of Commerce Downtown Plan was adopted in January 2023 and serves as an overall strategy for future development in Downtown Commerce. A new plaza is proposed in the center of Downtown which could include elements such as an event lawn, performance stage, water feature, outdoor games and shaded seating. The Plan also included recommendations for an enhanced Farmers Market with associated outdoor event and dining areas. Both of these proposed projects will provide recreational opportunities for the community. Notably, Authors' Park is located at the east end of the Downtown Plan area and, if appropriately developed, can contribute to the success of Downtown activities (see Figure 68).

Figure 68. Downtown Master Plan



Community Demographics

Commerce's population has been growing moderately over the past 10 years. The largest cohorts of the population today include young adults ages 15 to 24 (see Figure 69). This is largely due to ETAMU being located in the City. As the City considers recreational opportunities, it will be important to provide diverse opportunities that are appropriate for residents of varying ages.

Additionally, the City's population is projected to continue growing moderately over the next five to 10 years, with the projected population reaching 11,185 by 2035 (see Figure 70). Parks and recreation opportunities should increase accordingly to provide quality facilities and programming for the growing population.

Reference Chapter 1, Community Snapshot for additional information about community demographics and previous planning efforts.

Figure 69. Age Distribution

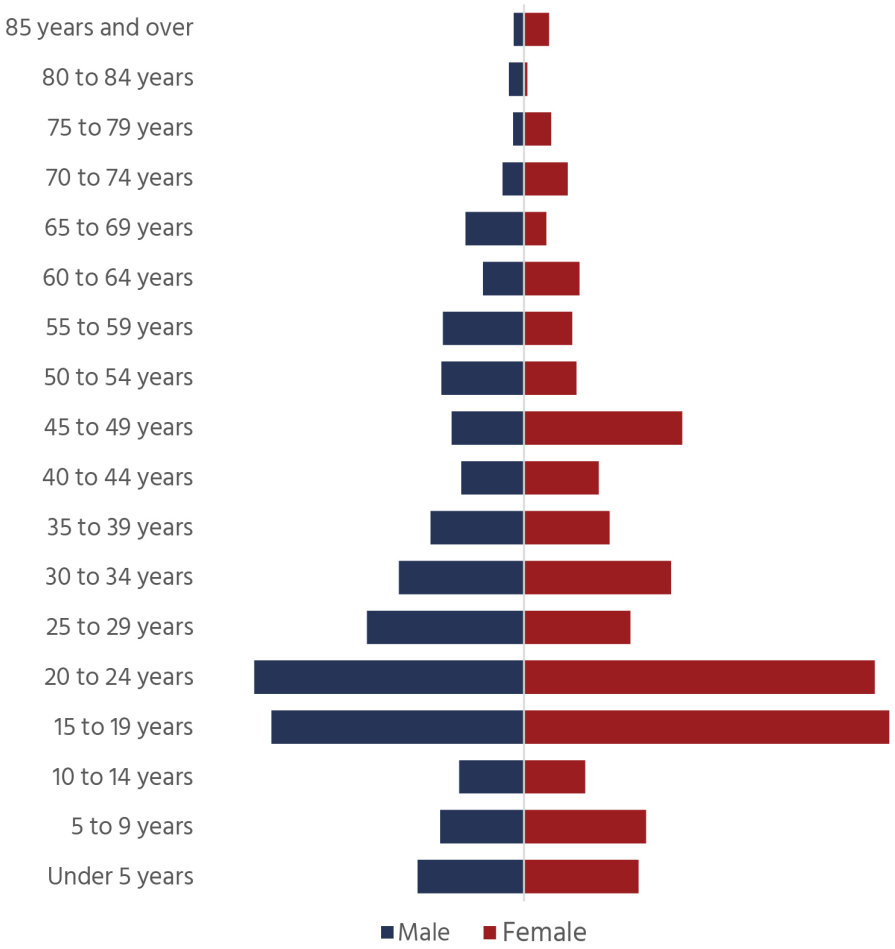


Figure 70. Population Projections

Year	Projected Population (1.9% CAGR)
2030	10,180
2035	11,185

Growth Area

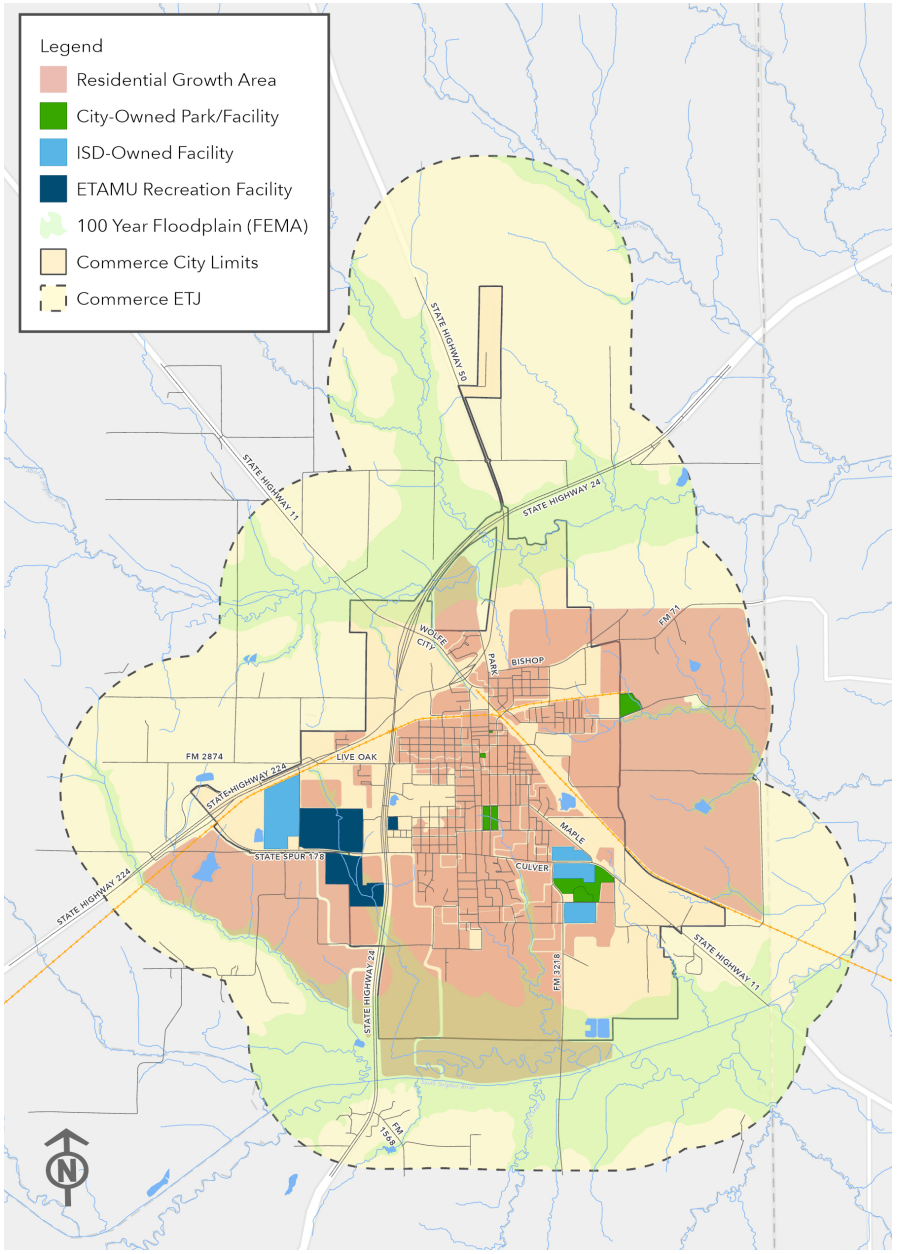
As seen in the population projections in Figure 70, the City's population is projected to continue growing moderately. In 2024-2025, some of the significant in-progress residential developments include:

- Southeast corner of FM 3218 and Charity Road: Approximately 270 single-family detached residential units
- Southwest corner of FM 3218 and Charity Road: Approximately 102 single-family attached residential units
- Pritchard Road in the northeast quadrant of the City: 60 planned single-family residential lots

There is potential for future residential development throughout the eastern and southwestern portions of the City and ETJ. The western portion of the ETJ north of SH 224 lacks access to public utilities so large-scale subdivisions are not viable in this area. The pink areas on Map 16 include areas where current or future development could potentially include a residential component (based on the Future Land Use Map found in Chapter 2, Land Use).

As the City considers the future of its parks system, it is important to locate parks in close proximity to residential areas. Future parkland acquisitions and/or development should aim to provide adequate parkland resources to serve any under-served neighborhoods in these areas (see the Needs Assessment section later in this PMP for parkland service area maps).

Map 16. Residential Growth Area Map



Parks and Facility Inventory

Park Classifications

Parks and open space systems include a variety of different types of parkland that meet the varying recreational needs in a community. Types vary by size, function, typical amenities and service area. As the City grows and new park spaces are acquired, an adopted classification system should be used to guide the development for each type of park.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks provide passive recreational opportunities to a concentrated population within an immediate proximity (e.g., a playground and/or picnic area in a residential area). While in a less residential context, Authors' Park is a local example of a pocket park.

Typical Size: 1/4 to 1 acre

Service Area: 1/4-mile radius in immediate neighborhoods

Characteristics and Considerations: Pocket parks should be located within close proximity to medium-/high-density residential areas. They are often located at the street edge and should be safely accessible by pedestrians. These parks are often built by developers and can be operated and maintained by a homeowners association or the City.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are the foundation of a well-balanced park system and provide the daily park experiences for residents. They serve as the social centers for residential districts in an active and passive capacity for a wide variety of age groups. There are no neighborhood parks in Commerce.

Typical Size: 3 to 10 acres

Service Area: 1/4- to 1/2-mile radius

Characteristics and Considerations: These parks should be located in the center of neighborhoods with good public access. At least one side of the park should front a residential street. Sites should drain properly and be suitable for a variety of uses such as playgrounds, sport courts, trail access and areas for family functions. Safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access is important. Locations in flood areas should be avoided.

Community Parks

Community parks are larger in size and serve a broader population than neighborhood parks. They are intended to meet the recreational needs of several neighborhoods. Park development should protect desirable natural amenities and include active and passive activities for all ages. City Park is one local example of a community park.

Typical Size: 10 to 100 acres

Service Area: 1- to 2-mile radius

Characteristics and Considerations: Whenever possible, these parks should be adjacent to desirable natural resources and have amenities such as athletic fields, pools, playgrounds, sport courts, picnic areas and restrooms. Community parks should be connected to citywide trail networks and be conveniently accessed by cars. Park programming should include adequate space for off-street parking.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are the largest type of park for a typical community's park system. However, since they are largely dependent on the character of land available for recreation, many communities do not have a regional park. The size varies depending on the purpose and character of the site. Regional parks provide recreational amenities for the entire community and even serve as a hub for surrounding communities. There are no regional parks in Commerce.

Typical Size: Varies from less than 10 acres to several thousand acres

Service Area: Up to 50-mile radius, depending on site features

Characteristics and Considerations: Regional parks often help to protect and showcase valuable natural resources such as habitat preserves or bodies of water. These parks include a very wide range of active and passive recreation opportunities and can be an economic generator by attracting sports tournaments, ecotourism or hosting large events. Typical amenities include destination playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, trail systems, water activities, unprogrammed open space, and preserved natural areas. These parks can be located almost anywhere in the community. They should be accessible by car and connected to citywide trail networks.

Greenbelts and Linear Parks

Greenbelts and linear parks are often located along linear natural or man-made features (e.g., creeks or utilities, respectively). These parks often connect two or more parks or points of interest in a city. They are also used to protect wildlife and natural processes or provide for floodways or stormwater drainage. There are no greenbelts or linear parks in Commerce.

Typical Size: Varies based on surrounding environment

Service Area: Varies based on amenities

Characteristics and Considerations: Greenbelts and linear parks include amenities for walking, jogging, bicycling and/or hiking. When property adjacent to creeks and floodplains is developed, floodplain property should be dedicated to the City. The City should not purchase floodplain property unless it provides an opportunity to preserve key natural resources and/or provide a link to another park. The City should also be careful in accepting dedication of linear parks unless they provide trail links or useful recreation. Acquisition of linear parks, if small in size, can burden maintenance budgets.

Special Use Parks

Special use parks can have a wide range of uses. However, parks are designated as special use when the park facilities are oriented toward a single purpose. Eddie Moore Sports Complex is a local example of a special use park.

Typical Size: Varies

Service Area: Varies

Characteristics and Considerations: Special use parks serve varying user groups based on the programming. The location of the park within the community will vary based on available land and appropriate adjacent uses. Typical examples of special use parks include golf courses, skate parks, aquatic facilities, tennis complexes, ballfield complexes, nature centers or historic sites. These parks can be operated and maintained by the City or a private enterprise.

Commerce Parks and Facilities

The City-owned park system includes nearly 70 acres within six parks and recreation facilities (see Figure 71 on next page). The parks range in size from less than one acre to over 30 acres. The system includes one pocket park, three community parks, one special use park and one recreation center. City-owned parks are largely concentrated in the central and eastern parts of the City (see Map 17 on page 125).

The City-owned parks include opportunities for active and passive recreation. Active recreation refers to structured activities for individuals and teams that often require specialized facilities such as baseball, soccer and football. Passive recreation refers to unstructured activities that typically do not require specialized equipment or facilities such as jogging, picnicking and fishing. Most of the City-owned parks include athletic and picnic facilities. However, there are currently minimal aquatic recreation options and trail facilities.

The Commerce ISD schools include a variety of athletic facilities and playgrounds (see Figure 72 on page 124). The ISD recently vacated its old middle school and moved into a new building. The City has an opportunity to use the old middle school gym for public recreation purposes. Other than this, no ISD facilities are available for public use and there is no desire from the ISD at this time to explore a joint use agreement.

As previously mentioned, some of the ETAMU recreation resources are available for public use. The hike and bike trail includes a 4-mile, unpaved circuit and is open to the public. Potential use of these trails, however, does depend on weather and maintenance. Outdoor Adventure has an 18-hole disc golf course open to the public. For indoor recreation and fitness opportunities, community members over the age of 16 are able to purchase a membership to the Morris Recreation Center; however, the membership cost is prohibitive for many people.

Playground at Ivory Moore Park

Skate Park at Ivory Moore Park

Figure 71. Commerce Parks and Facilities

Map Label	Park/Facility Name	Address	Acres	Classification*	Active Facilities																	Water Recreation					Passive Recreation							Misc.		
					Baseball Field	Softball Field	Standalone Backstop	Soccer Field	Football Field	Multipurpose Practice Field	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court - Sand	Volleyball Court - Indoor	Pickleball Court	Concession Stand *	Skate Park	Disc Golf Course	Walking/Biking Trail (# miles)	Fitness Equipment *	Golf Course (public)	Fishing Pier	Canoe/Kayak Launch	Boat Ramp	Swimming Pool	Splash Pad	Dog Park	Playground	Horseshoe Pits	Table/Picnic Tables *	BBQ Grill *	Picnic Shelter/Pavilion	Outdoor Event Space	Community Recreation Center	Restrooms *	Parking *
City-Owned Parks																																				
1	Authors' Park	1200 Park St.	0.15	P																												1	1			Y
2	Centennial Park	333 E Sterling Hart Dr.	30.45	C				4		4							1	1										2		Y						Y
3	City Park	2300 Park St.	13.77	C	1						1								0.3							1	1		Y	Y	1			Y	Y
4	Ivory Moore Park	CR-4517	14.70	C	1		1				1									Y								1		Y	Y	1			Y	Y
5	Eddie Moore Sports Complex	FM 3218	8.87	SU	3	1	4									Y																			Y	Y
City-Owned Recreation Facilities																																				
6	City Gym	1512 Pecan St.		N/A							1					Y																			Y	
City-Owned Total			**67.94**		**5**	**1**	**5**	**4**	**0**	**4**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0.3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**4**	**0**	**3**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**5**

** P = Pocket, C = Community, SU = Special Use, Y = Yes*

Dog park at City Park

Skate park at Centennial Park

Splash park at City Park

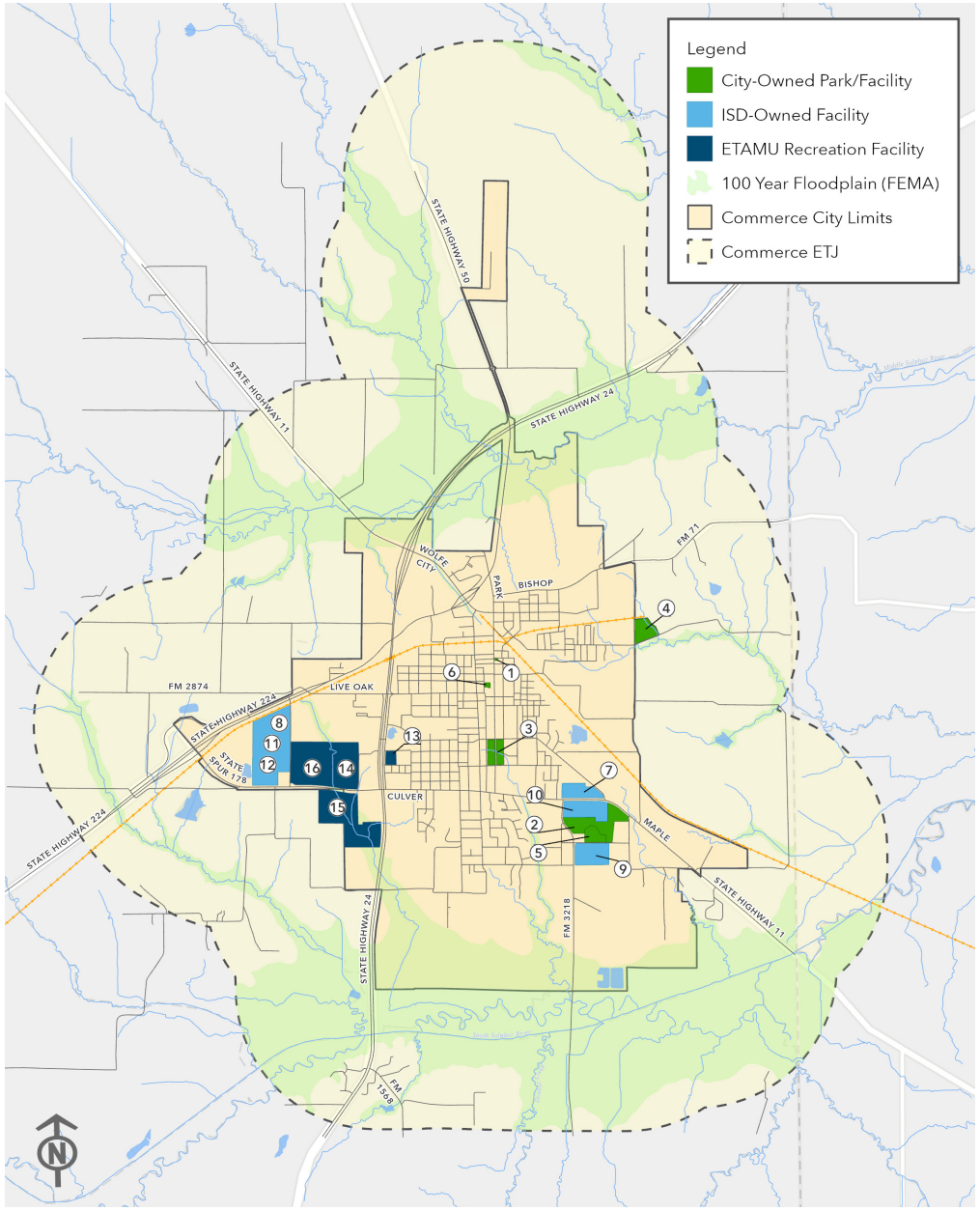
Figure 72. School District and University Facilities

Map Label	Park/Facility Name	Address	Active Facilities																	Water Recreation					Passive Recreation							Misc.		
			Baseball Field	Softball Field	Standalone Backstop	Soccer Field	Football Field	Multipurpose Practice Field	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court - Sand	Volleyball Court - Indoor	Pickleball Court	Concession Stand *	Skate Park	Disc Golf Course	Walking/Biking Trail (# miles)	Fitness Equipment *	Golf Course (public)	Fishing Pier	Canoe/Kayak Launch	Boat Ramp	Swimming Pool	Splash Pad	Dog Park	Playground	Horseshoe Pits	Table/Picnic Tables *	BBQ Grill *	Picnic Shelter/Pavilion	Outdoor Event Space	Community Recreation Center	Restrooms *	Parking *
Commerce ISD Facilities																																		
7	Old CISD Middle School Gym	606 Culver St.							1					Y																		1	Y	Y
8	CISD Multi-Purpose Building & Baseball/Softball Complex	3850 Sregit Dr	1	1			1	4						Y																			Y	Y
9	Commerce Elementary School	2900 FM 3218							1																1				1					Y
10	AC Williams Elementary School	615 Culver St.					1	1	1																2		Y		1					Y
11	Commerce Middle School	3680 Sregit Drive							1																									Y
12	Commerce High School	3800 Sregit Drive	1	1	2		1	1	1	2		1		Y																				Y
East Texas A&M University Recreation Facilities																																		
13	Morris Recreation Center	2350 TX-24							2		2		2					Y						1				Y		1		1	Y	Y
14	Cain Sports Complex	2301 Hubbell Dr.		2				1		4	4		2															Y		1			Y	Y
15	Hike and Bike Trail	5251 Culver St.															4																	
16	Outdoor Adventure	2320 TX-178 Spur														1																		
School District and University Total			**2**	**4**	**2**	**0**	**3**	**7**	**7**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**2**	**4**	**8**

Figure 73. Park/Facility Identifier for Map 17

No	Park/Facility Name
City Parks	
1	Authors' Park
2	Centennial Park
3	City Park
4	Ivory Moore Park
5	Eddie Moore Sports Complex
6	City Gym
Commerce ISD Facilities	
7	Old CISD Middle School Gym
8	CISD Multi-Purpose Building & Baseball/Softball Complex
9	Commerce Elementary School
10	AC Williams
11	Commerce Middle School
12	Commerce High School
East Texas A&M University Recreation Facilities	
13	Morris Recreation Center
14	Cain Sports Complex
15	Hike and Bike Trail
16	Outdoor Adventure

Map 17. Commerce Parks and Facilities Map



Authors' Park

Classification: Pocket

Location: 1200 Park Street

Size: 0.15 acres

Facilities:

- Gazebo
- Small outdoor event space
- On-street parking

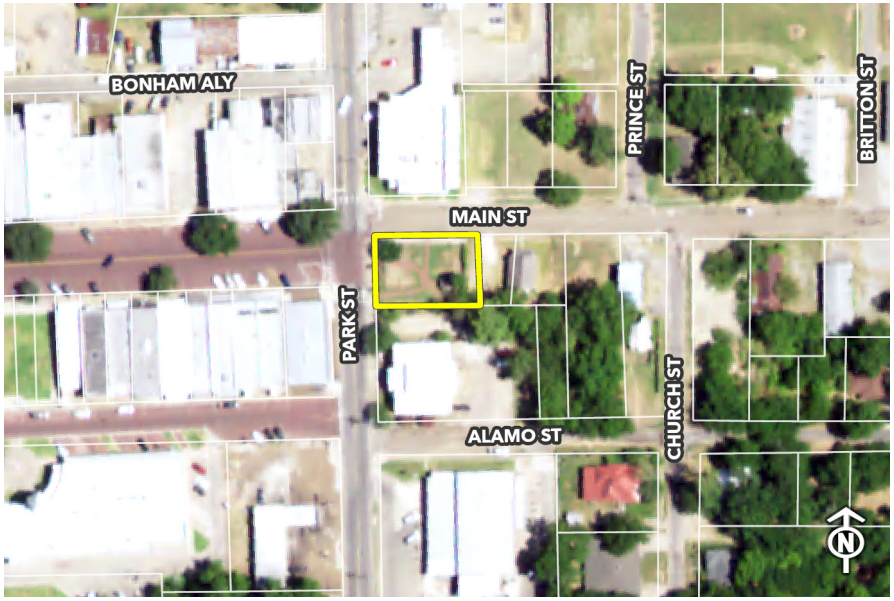
Authors' Park, located in Downtown Commerce, is a pocket park directly adjacent to the Commerce Public Library. The park is accessible to visitors of Downtown and the library by sidewalks throughout the district. There is also a parking lot adjacent to the park to the rear of the library that is available for visitors.

The park is currently minimally programmed with benches, a gazebo, a pollinator garden and brick sidewalks. The majority of these areas are in good condition.

A conceptual plan was previously developed for this park which included enhancements adjacent to the library to create interactive exhibits and a flexible event space, among other things.

Potential opportunities for improvement:

- Further program the site as an extension of the library and Downtown (e.g., context-appropriate play area, art installation, shaded seating, outdoor classroom space).
- Connect to other parks, specifically Ivory Moore Park, through a the citywide trail network.
- Continue to coordinate with the library to host events in the park.



Gazebo and benches in park

Centennial Park

Classification: Community

Location: 333 E. Sterling Hart Drive

Size: 30.45 acres

Facilities:

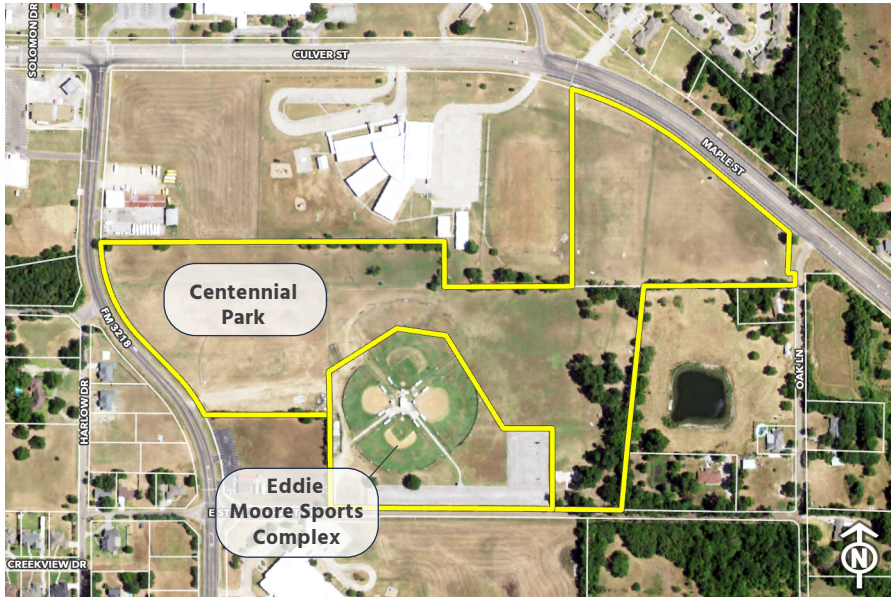
- Four multipurpose practice fields
- Four soccer fields
- Skate park
- 9-hole disc golf course
- Two playgrounds
- Picnic tables
- Off-street parking

Centennial Park, located on Sterling Hart Drive in the City's southeast quadrant, is a large park that offers activities for all ages. It has picnic tables for gathering, two play areas for children, a skate park and a 9-hole disc golf course. The park is directly adjacent to the Eddie Moore Sports Complex and supports sporting events that occur at the complex. A drainage channel runs through the eastern end of the park and water ponding in the area inhibits park and practice field use at times.

The area south of the park is currently being developed with single-family housing, which will encourage greater use of the park by new residents in the area. The park's infrastructure is aging and one of the playgrounds is unsafe for use and should be replaced. The lighting infrastructure throughout the park should be improved to increase safety.

Potential opportunities for improvement:

- Replace at least one playground.
- Create a loop trail around the park.
- Improve lighting.
- Replace park signage.
- Evaluate feasibility of creating drainage pond north of the playgrounds.
- Replace wooden bridges over the drainage channel.
- Formalize parking near FM 3218.



Disc golf and walkways near east end of the park

City Park

Classification: Community

Location: 2300 Park Street

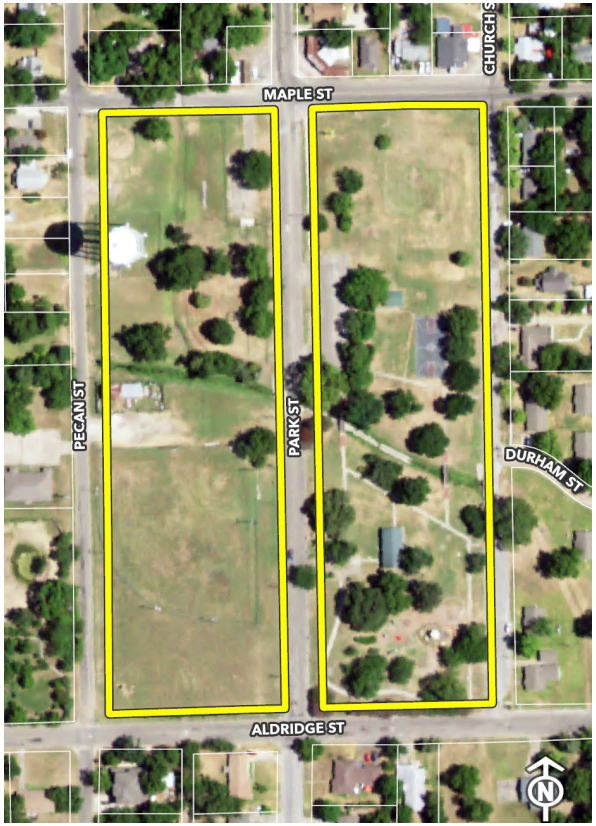
Size: 13.77 acres

Facilities:

- Baseball field
- Basketball court
- 0.3-mile walking trail
- Playground
- Splash pad
- Dog park
- Picnic tables and grills
- Picnic pavilion
- Restrooms
- On- and off-street parking

City Park is centrally located and had major renovations in 2023 with the creation of a large splash pad. This is a main attraction for kids in the community, especially in the summer months. The park also has a lighted baseball practice field, a pavilion with electricity and grills, picnic tables, a playground with some ADA accessible infrastructure, and a full basketball court. Notably, Park Street runs directly through the middle of the park.

There are a few key items of concern in City Park that should be addressed in the short term. There is a creek that runs directly through the middle of the park, which is causing erosion on the banks and threatening the two vehicular bridges that cross the creek. The pavilion and restrooms in the park are subject to frequent vandalism.



Playground with small shade structure

Potential opportunities for improvement:

- Remove or replace the fans in the pavilion.
- Install security cameras.
- Develop a streambank restoration plan.
- Improve ADA access to the playground.
- Improve sidewalk access to the park.
- Connect the park to a citywide trail system.
- Add trees along the walking path through the park and along Park Street to provide traffic calming.
- Provide improved park signage.
- Consider adding a volleyball court.

Ivory Moore Park

Classification: Community

Location: CR-4517

Size: 14.70 acres

Facilities:

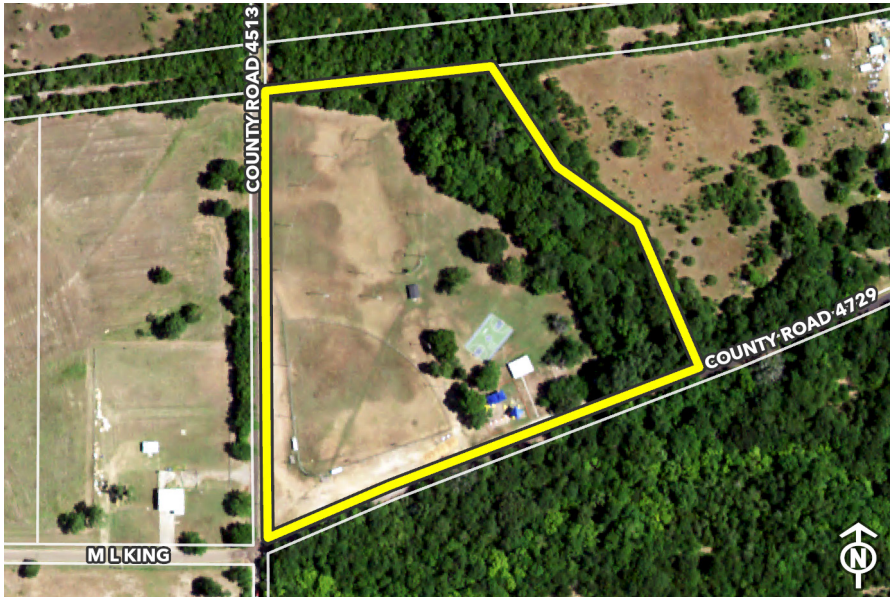
- Baseball field
- Standalone backstop
- Basketball court
- Fitness equipment
- Playground
- Picnic tables and grills
- Picnic pavilion
- Restrooms
- Off-street parking

Ivory Moore Park is located in the northeastern portion of the City, along the eastern city limits. The park is accessible by vehicle, but there are no sidewalks or trails providing safe non-vehicular access. The park is surrounded by wooded and/or minimally developed land and is notably far from most of the residential areas in the City. Since the location is hard to get to, lighting, security and frequent vandalism are issues at this park.

The park includes a variety of passive and active amenities, the majority of which are in good condition. A new, inclusive playground and outdoor fitness equipment area were installed in 2022.

Potential opportunities for improvement:

- Further activate the park to help with passive surveillance.
- Create a loop trail and connect to a citywide trail network.
- Renovate the restrooms.
- Install security cameras and enhanced lighting.
- Improve park signage.
- Level the field area near the standalone backstop.



Fitness equipment

Eddie Moore Sports Complex

Classification: Special Use

Location: FM 3218

Size: 8.87 acres

Facilities:

- Three baseball fields
- Softball field
- Four standalone backstops
- Concession stand
- Restrooms
- Off-street parking

Eddie Moore Sports Complex is adjacent to Centennial Park. Facilities include new lighted baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, concession stand and restrooms. Local T-ball leagues and softball tournaments are often hosted at the Sports Complex.

The complex is currently undergoing a $1.5 million renovation to redo the fields and replace the existing incandescent lighting with more modern LED lighting. These updates will allow the City to host larger events and tournaments at the park.

Potential opportunities for improvement:

- Install security cameras throughout the park to reduce vandalism.
- Replace or significantly renovate the concession stand and restroom.
- Improve park signage.
- Provide trail connections to other city parks.
- Install new lighting outside of the sports fields to improve park safety.
- Install new spectator seating.

Entrance to the Complex from the parking lot

City Gym

Classification: Facility

Location: 1512 Pecan Street

Facilities:

- Basketball court
- Concession stand
- Restrooms

The City Gym is currently in a state of disrepair and is not open to the public. The City currently lacks the resources to make the necessary updates to reopen the gym. Based on its condition, it may be best to demolish the building. The building houses a fair amount of stored equipment that will need to be relocated elsewhere.

Following the opening of a new middle school, the City is working with Commerce ISD to utilize the gym in the former Commerce Middle School as a new City recreation center. As the City moves forward with this plan, it will need to consider what types of recreation options it wants to provide for the community. If desired, smaller spaces should be considered for non-athletic programming, small fitness classes, and rentable community rooms, among others things.

Exterior of City Gym

Interior of City Gym

Commerce Recreation

The City of Commerce offers a variety of seasonal festivals and events for residents. These events are free to the public and have seen steady community attendance in recent years. The primary recurring locations for events are Centennial Park or Downtown Commerce.

Youth athletic leagues/camps and library programming (e.g., reading groups, teen activities, arts/crafts) are the primary recreation programs for Commerce children. Aside from the library programming, there are limited options for teens. The City may want to consider sponsoring or otherwise supporting additional programming, including further non-athletic programs to diversify options for the City's youth population.

Senior bingo is offered on a weekly basis and they have annual trip to the state fair. There are currently no City programs specifically geared toward adults. The community has voiced a desire for programs for both adults and seniors. The City should evaluate opportunities for both athletic and non-athletic adult recreation programs such as adult softball leagues and additional senior citizen events.

Youth athletics

Senior recreation

Figure 74. Commerce Recreation Programs and Events

Event/Program Name[1]	Age Group				Location	Season	Fee	Estimated Attendance				
	12 and under	Age 13-18	Adults	Seniors				2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Festivals/Events												
We Care Fair	X	X	X	X	City Park	Summer	$0	N/A**	200	200	200	200
National Night Out	X	X	X	X	Centennial Park	Fall	$0	N/A**	200	250	350	400
July 4th Fireworks	X	X	X	X	Centennial Park	Summer	$0	N/A**	200	200	300	300
Norris Family Picnic	X	X	X	X	Ivory Moore Park	Summer	$0	N/A**	200	200	200	200
Bois d'Arc Bash	X	X	X	X	Downtown Commerce	Fall	$0	N/A**	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Downtown Pop Up Shop	X	X	X	X	Downtown Commerce	Fall	$0	N/A**	0	100	100	100
Christmas Tree Lighting/ Parade	X	X	X	X	Downtown Commerce	Fall	$0	N/A**	250	350	400	400
Annual Public Safety Christmas Event	X	X	X	X	Police Dept./ Downtown Commerce	Fall	$0	N/A**	0	100	200	200
Miracle on Main Street	X	X	X	X	Downtown Commerce	Fall	$0	N/A**	300	300	300	300
Recreational Programs												
Baseball/Softball	X	X (up to 15)			Eddie Moore	Spring	$65	N/A**	175	169	160	220
Basketball	X				City Gym/Middle School	Winter	$65	128	113	126	165	145
Soccer	X	X (up to 13)			Eddie Moore	Fall	$65	N/A**	113	135	149	137
Baseball/Softball Summer Camp	X				Eddie Moore	Summer	$40	N/A**	6	9	25	21
Soccer Summer Camp	X				Eddie Moore	Summer	$40	N/A**	10	11	16	16
Basketball Summer Camp	X				City Gym/Middle School	Summer	$40	N/A**	13	0	19	24
Library Programs	X	X	X	X	Public Library	All	$0				500/mo.[4]	1600/mo.[4]
Senior Bingo				X (60+)	First Baptist Church[3]	All	$0	0	0	0	150-200/ mo.	150-200/ mo.

[1] City run or operated by other vendor on City property [2] Program/event was canceled in 2020 due to COVID [3] Privately owned facility [4] 2024 saw grand re-opened of renovated library

Needs Assessment

Assessment Methodology

This Plan uses a multifaceted analysis to help determine the parks and recreation needs of the Commerce community. The needs assessment analyzes whether those needs are being met and what types of improvements or changes would be beneficial for the City. Existing parks and recreation opportunities are analyzed in terms of public opinion, the location and quantity of parkland, the quantity of facilities within parks, and natural resources in the City.

The needs assessment includes three parts: demand-based, standards-based and resource-based. The use of multiple assessment methods helps to establish an understanding of key parks and recreation needs and inform Plan recommendations to address those needs.

Eddie Moore Sports Complex (renovations as of March 2025)

Demand-Based Assessment

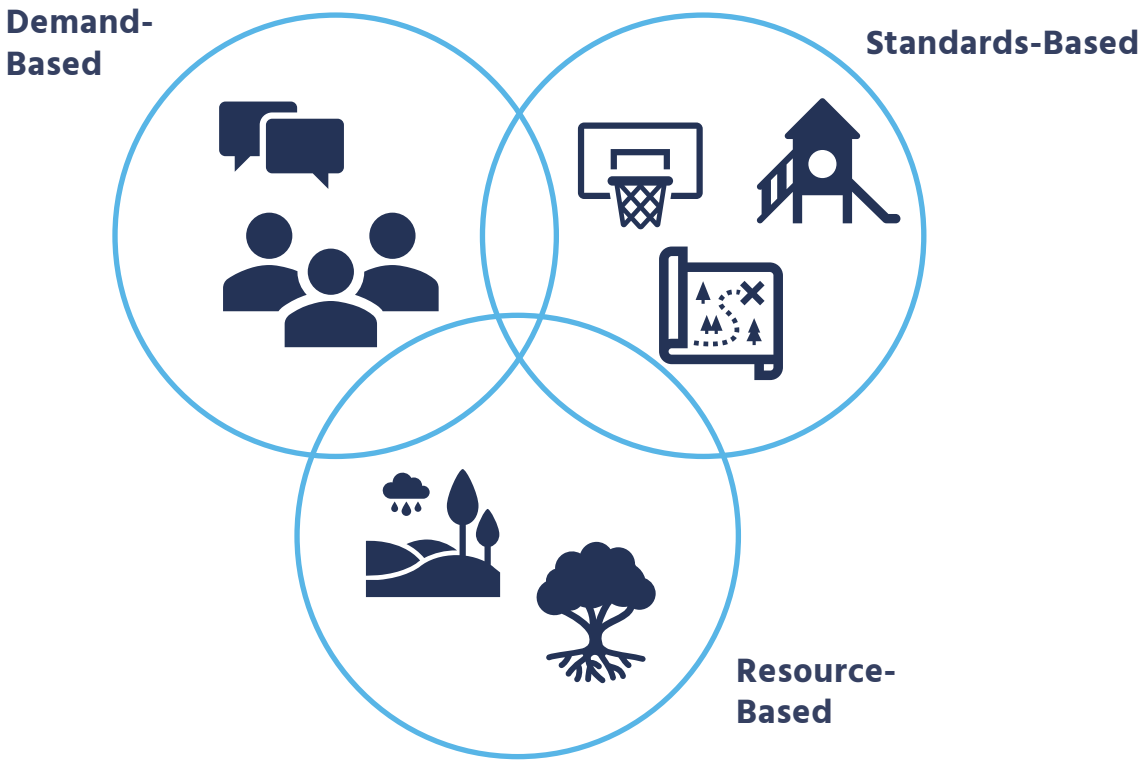
The needs assessment starts with a demand-based assessment. This includes an analysis and summary of public feedback to identify what the community wants and expects from the parks and recreation system, and how this compares to its current state.

Standards-Based Assessment

The standards-based assessment then analyzes parkland acreage, location and amenities in comparison with the needs and location of the current population and future growth areas. This is used to determine an appropriate target level of service for the Commerce community and identify surpluses or deficits.

Resource-Based Assessment

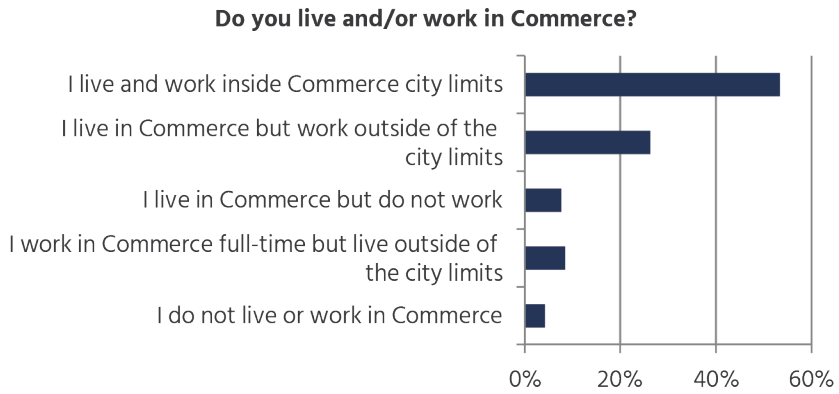
Lastly, the resource-based assessment evaluates the City's existing physical, man-made and natural resources to identify opportunities to leverage for public recreation benefit.

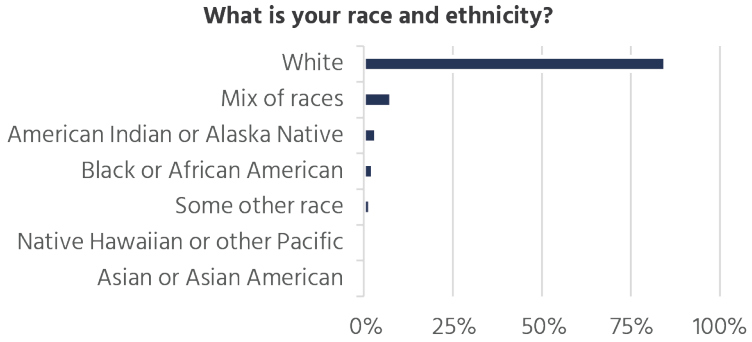


Demand-Based Assessment

The demand-based assessment is a reflection of the community's needs, as expressed by residents through public engagement opportunities. Community engagement included a parks-focused CPAC meeting, an online public survey and a community open house. The following pages present highlights from community input. It is important to remember that highlights are presenting varying opinions from Commerce residents and/or park users and may differ between the various engagement opportunities and questions. Additional public engagement information such as advertisements and complete survey questions can be found in Appendix X, Parks and Recreation Supplemental Information.

Figure 75. Survey Respondent Demographics



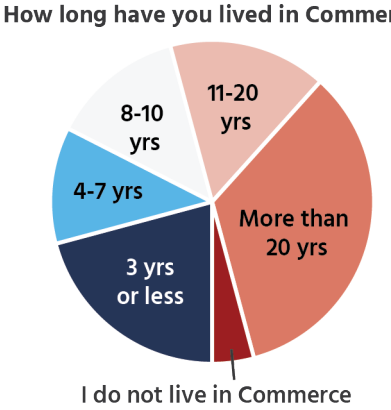


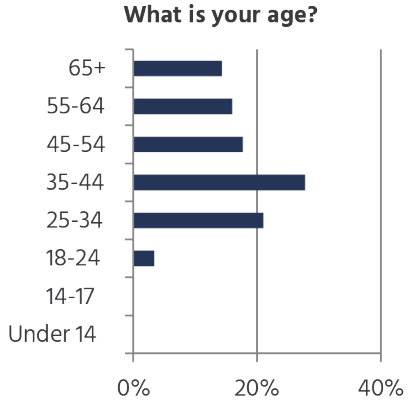
(9% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin)

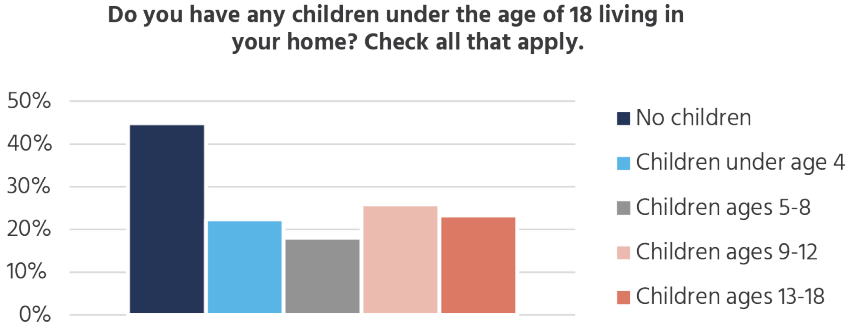
Public Survey

A 25-question public survey focusing on parks and recreation was conducted during the planning process to gather input from a wide range of Commerce citizens and stakeholders. The survey was open for one and a half months and received 125 responses.

Survey respondents represented a diverse range of ages with the largest portion of respondents being between the ages of 35 and 44. Respondents included individuals with and without children living at home. The majority of respondents both live and work in Commerce, with a large percentage having lived in the City for many years.



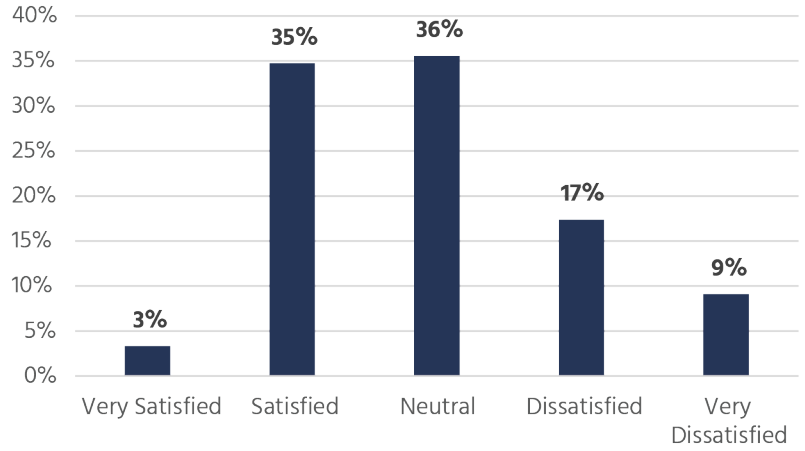




Overall Satisfaction with Parks and Recreation

Various factors impact a community's perception, use, and approval of a parks and recreation system, as is reflected in the mixed responses from Commerce residents (see Figure 76). While some respondents expressed satisfaction with the opportunities available, many felt neutral about the parks and recreation opportunities available, suggesting that the current opportunities meet basic expectations but have room for improvement. Some also noted dissatisfaction, indicating an opportunity for improvement in addressing community needs.

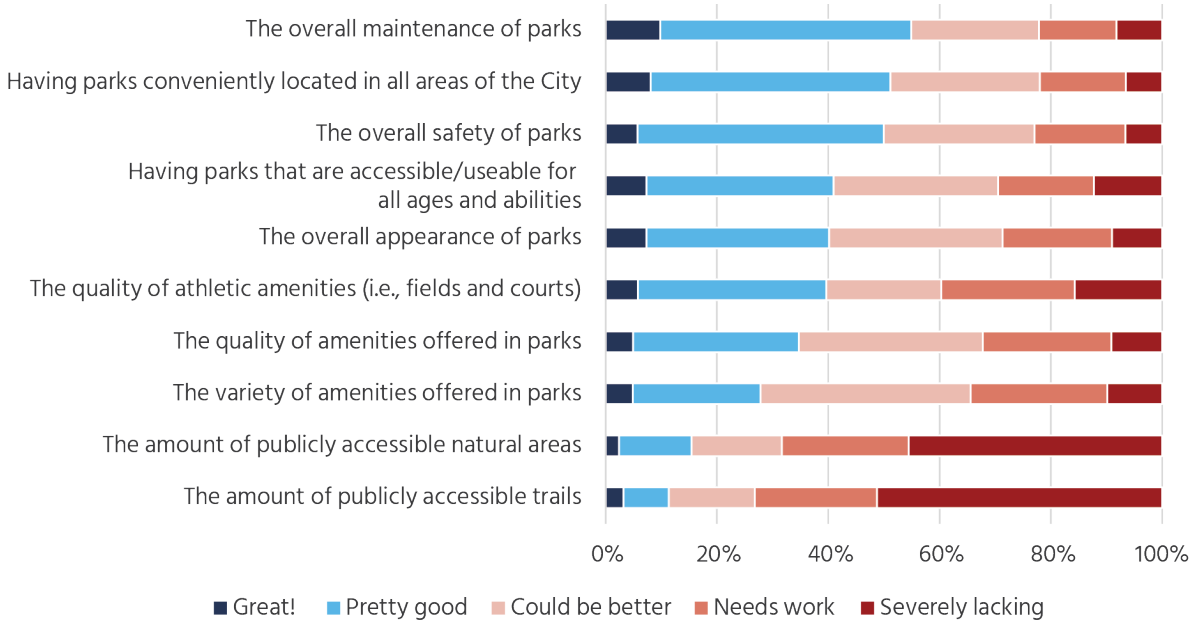
Figure 76. How satisfied overall are you with the parks and recreation opportunities in Commerce?



Rating the City's Parks and Recreation System

When evaluating specific amenities offered, respondents identified safety, maintenance and convenient park locations as strengths (see Figure 77). Accessibility for all ages and abilities also received generally favorable responses, though some indicated that improvements could be made. On the other hand, publicly accessible trails and natural areas stood out as areas of concern, with many respondents perceiving them as insufficient or in need of significant enhancements.

Figure 77. How would you rate the City in the following categories?



Greatest Parks and Recreation Assets

Identifying a community's greatest parks and recreation assets helps to determine areas or amenities to preserve and possibly further enhance. The word cloud in Figure 78 illustrates responses, with larger text being submitted by more respondents. When asked, survey respondents noted the splash pad as a cherished community asset. Other notable mentions included City Park and its large trees, and Ivory Moore Park, referred to as a "hidden gem" for its varied amenities and well-maintained green spaces.

Figure 78. What are the City's greatest parks and recreation assets?

Greatest Parks and Recreation Challenges

No matter the size or quality of parks, there are always opportunities for improvement to better meet the needs of the community. Respondents highlighted the importance (and lack) of a citywide trail network for recreation as well as enhancing connectivity by adding sidewalks/safe walking paths to improve access to parks and recreation facilities (see Figure 79). Other safety improvements, such as increasing lighting and enhancing visibility in more secluded areas were also frequently mentioned as ways to encourage greater park use.

Respondents expressed concern with the current state of park facilities and amenities. Many expressed the need for updating broken equipment, addressing vandalism, ensuring regular maintenance and expanding indoor recreational opportunities to better serve residents of all ages. Respondents surmised a need for additional funding to allow for these issues to be addressed.

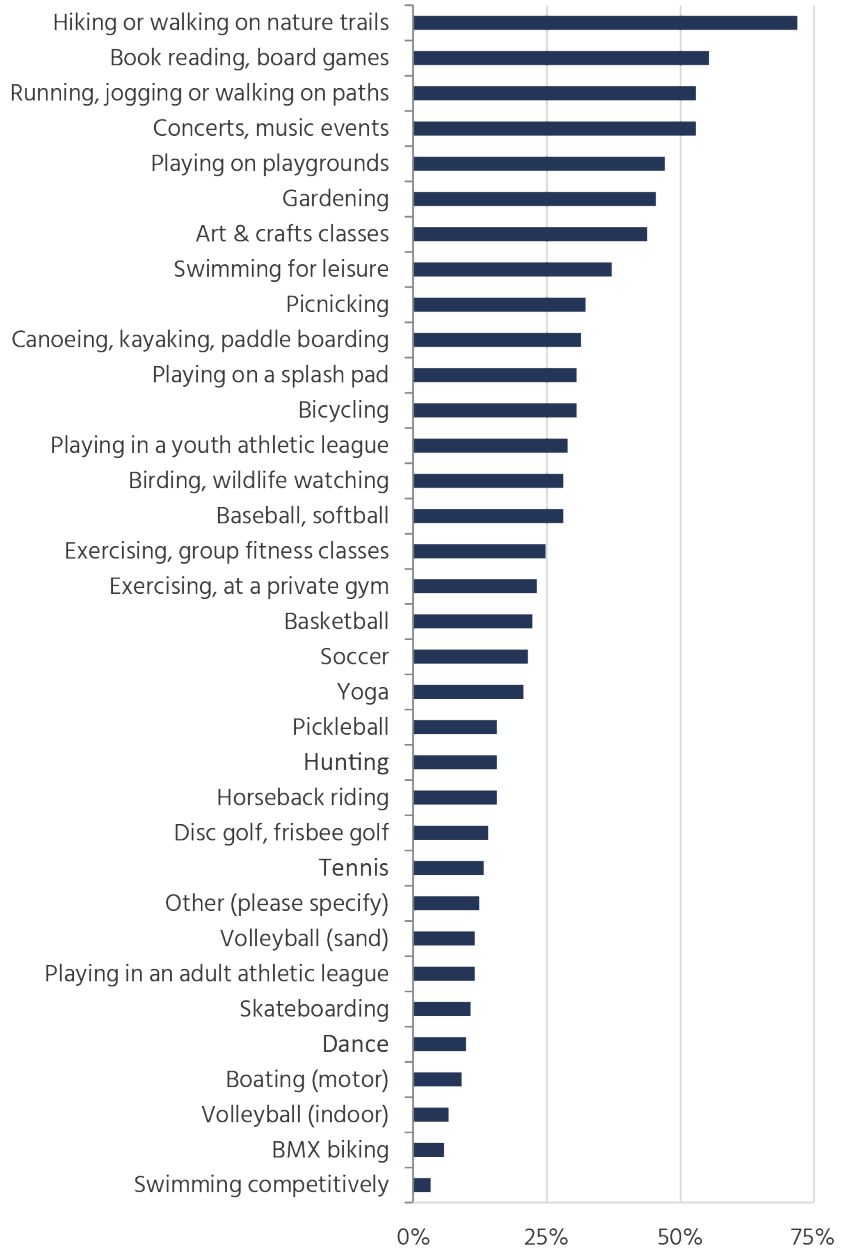
Figure 79. What are the City's greatest parks and recreation challenges?

Favorite Recreational Activities

Understanding the community's favorite recreational activities is important when designing parks and programs that align with residents' interests and priorities. Among the responses provided, two of the top three involve the use of trails. Other top ranking activities include book reading and board games, concerts and music events, and playing on playgrounds.

Notably, when asked on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not likely at all and 5 being extremely likely), how likely people would be to walk or bike to a park or recreation facility, assuming it was close enough and had comfortable bike/pedestrian routes, the average rating was 3.94, indicating respondents' support for a more robust trail network.

Figure 80. What are your and your family's favorite recreational activities? Check all that apply.



Recreational Programming

Providing recreational options for all age groups is essential to ensure that the needs of everyone in the community are met. When asked about level of satisfaction with current recreational programming, the highest levels of satisfaction were for programs for children up to age 8 (see Figure 81). Programming opportunities for teens, young adults and adults received the lowest satisfaction, with many expressing dissatisfaction or no opinion, suggesting a gap in engagement.

In terms of which age group has the greatest need for recreational programming moving forward, responses suggest that children and teens have the greatest need for programming (see Figure 82). Responses vary for adults and seniors, but of those over age 19, senior adults (55+) were ranked as having the greatest need for recreational programming. With an aging population nationwide, this follows trends seen in many communities throughout Texas and beyond.

Figure 81. How satisfied are you with recreational programming opportunities in Commerce for people in the following age groups?

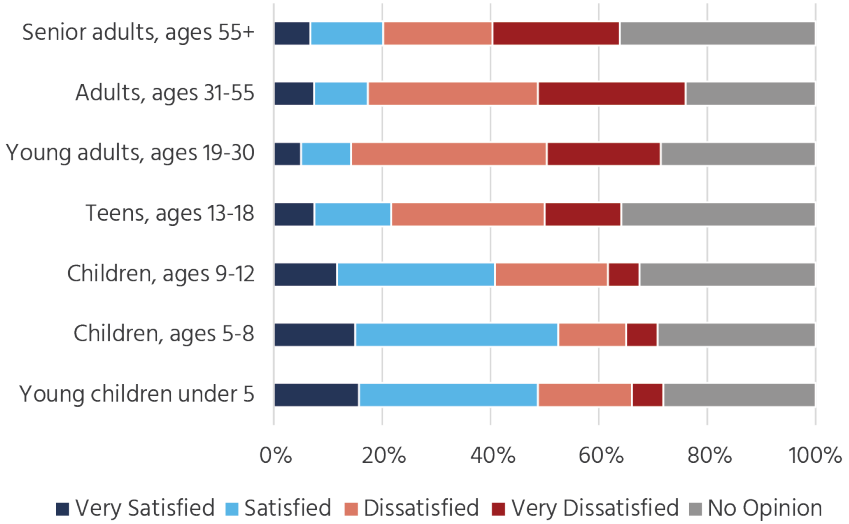
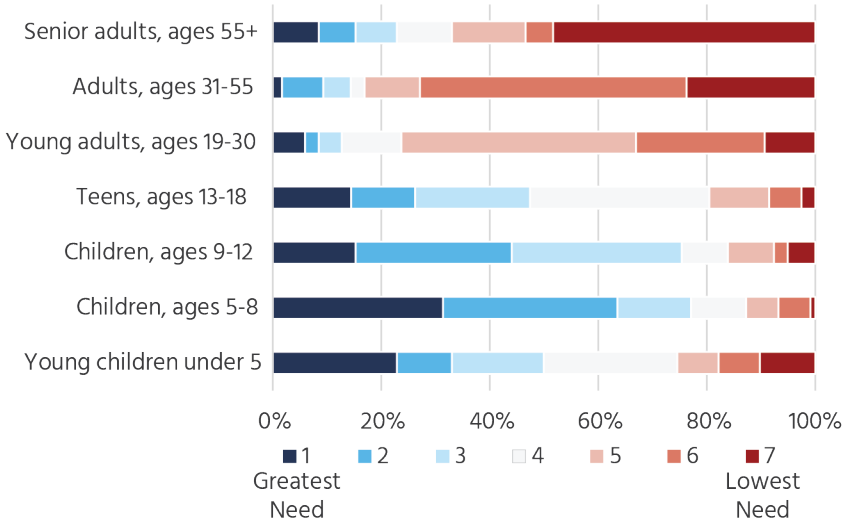


Figure 82. Which age group do you feel has the greatest need for recreational programming? Rank your answers from 1 to 7.

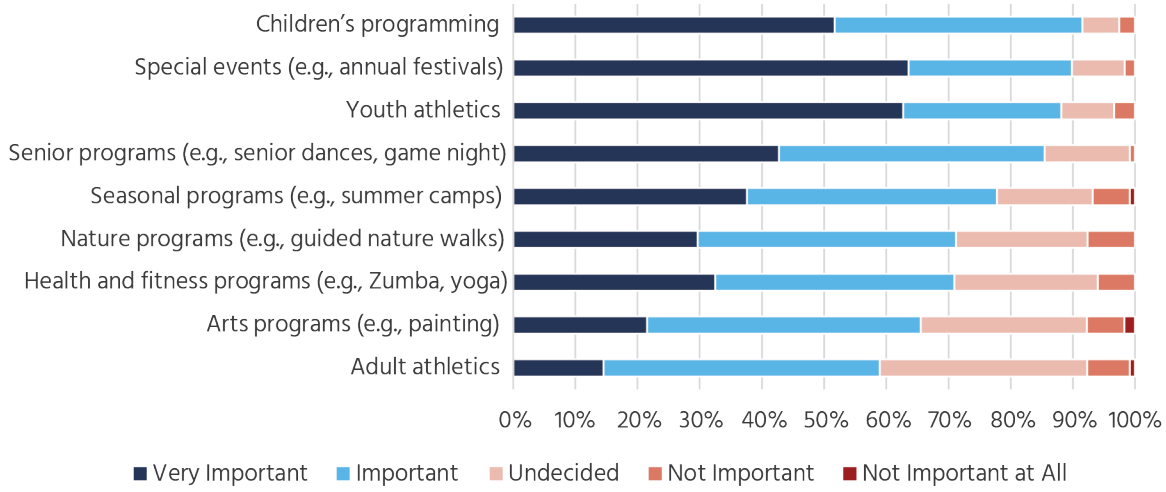


Future Recreational Programming

Commerce has many opportunities to continue improving its parks and recreation offerings. When asked about the importance of offering a variety of recreational programs, respondents expressed strong support for youth athletics, special events and children's programming, emphasizing the high demand for activities geared toward younger age groups. Senior programs also garnered significant support.

Notably, all programming options were ranked as very important or important by nearly 60% of survey respondents. This shows a strong desire for additional programming of all types.

Figure 83. How important is it for the City to provide or support the following types of recreational opportunities?

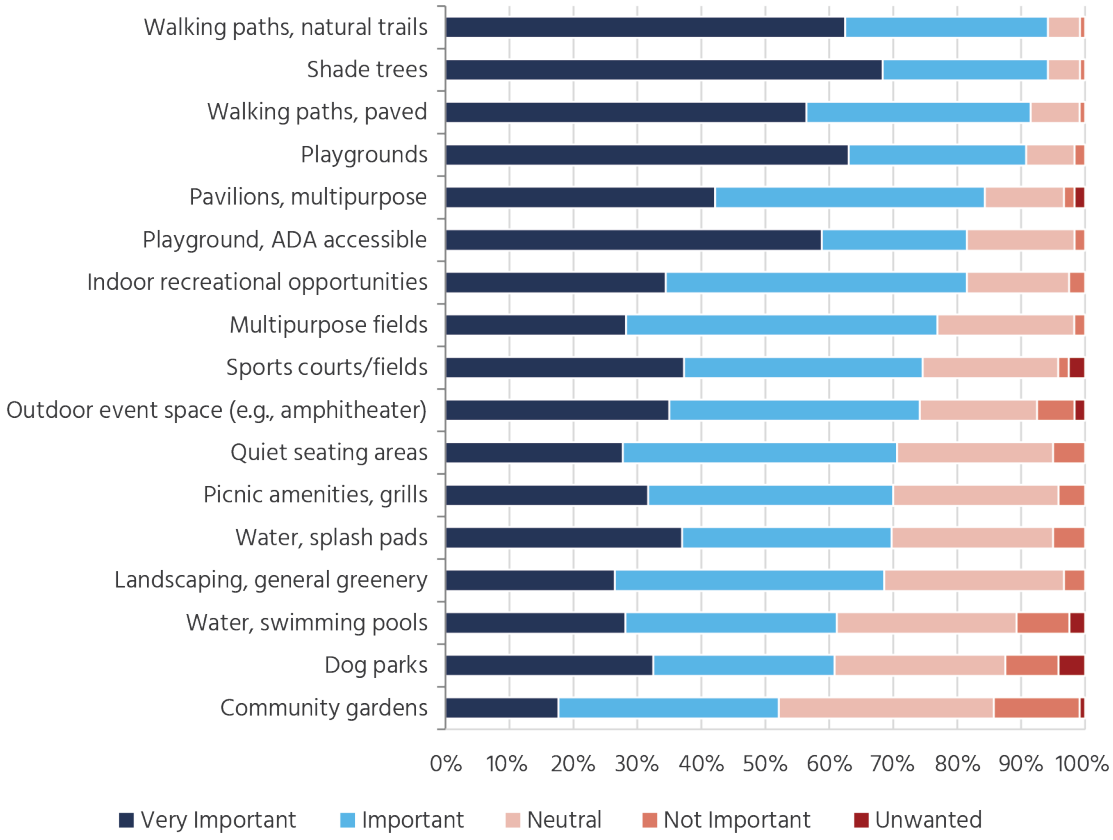


Future Park Amenities

When asked about the importance of providing certain amenities at parks and recreation facilities, natural trails, shade trees and paved walking paths were ranked as very important or important by over 90% of respondents. Playgrounds, multipurpose pavilions and indoor recreational opportunities were other top ranking amenities.

Similar to rankings for recreational programming, all amenity options were ranked as very important or important by over 50% of survey respondents.

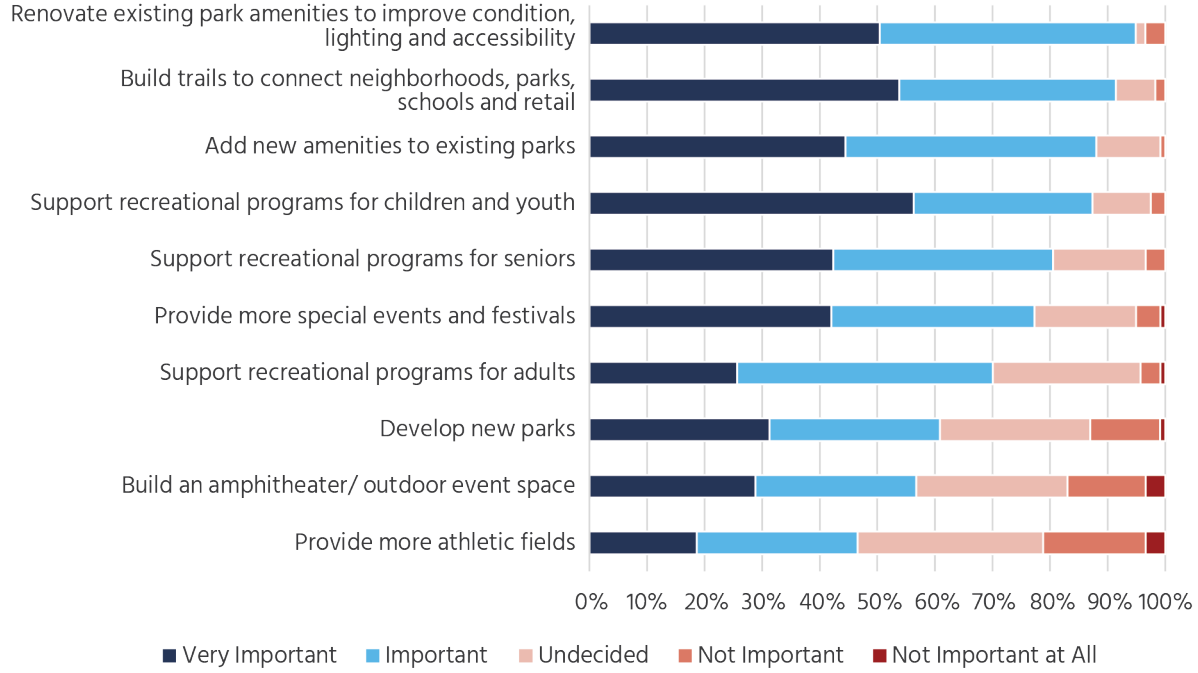
Figure 84. How important is it for the following amenities to be provided in Commerce parks and recreation facilities?



Potential City Actions

There are many potential actions the City could take to improve and maintain the current parks and recreation system in Commerce. When considering both important and very important responses together, the top potential actions include renovating existing park amenities to improve condition, lighting, and accessibility; building trails to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and retail; and adding new amenities to existing parks. Notably, developing new parks was still rated as important or very important by over 60% of respondents, but appears to be a lower priority than improving existing parks, building trails and providing recreational programming.

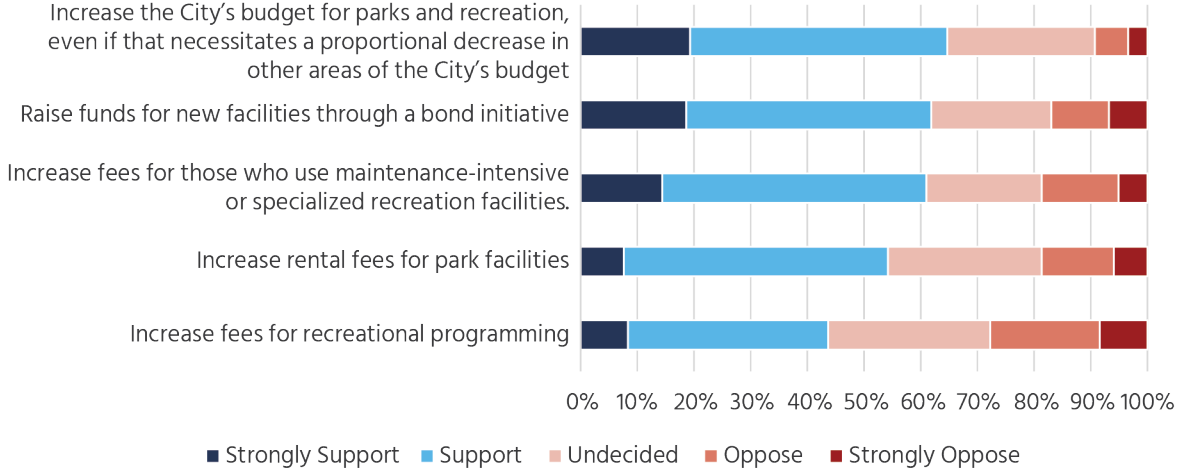
Figure 85. How important is it for the City to provide or support the following types of recreational opportunities?



Parks and Recreation Funding

Securing additional funding for parks and recreation may be essential to meeting the needs of Commerce residents. When asked about their support for various financing strategies, respondents were most supportive of increasing the City's budget for parks and recreation and raising funds for new facilities through a bond initiative. As the City considers various funding options it should maintain transparent communication with the public and strive to evaluate community support from a larger respondent group.

Figure 86. How strongly would you support or oppose the following financing strategies?



Standards-Based Assessment

The standards-based assessment analyzes parkland in terms of acreage, location and number of park facilities. It identifies the current level of service and whether it is meeting the community's needs. Levels of service represent a specific acreage of parkland or number of facilities needed per given population.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publishes their Agency Performance Review annually. It presents data and insights from over 1,000 parks and recreation agencies around the country. This information was referenced throughout the standards-based assessment as a baseline comparison.

Three types of standards were examined in this assessment: acreage, location and facilities.

Acreage Level of Service

The acreage level of service defines the quantity of parkland acreage as a ratio to population. The results are expressed as park acreage per 1,000 residents. The analysis examines whether there is sufficient parkland for residents today and in the future.

Spatial Level of Service

The spatial level of service looks at the location and distribution of different park types to identify underserved areas and where new parks may be needed.

Facility Level of Service

The facility level of service defines the number of park facilities needed to meet the community's recreational needs. Standards are expressed as a ratio of facility per population size (e.g., one playground per 2,000 residents).

Open space area at Centennial Park

Playground at Centennial Park

Acreage Level of Service

Different types of parks serve different community needs. Pocket, neighborhood and community parks, cumulatively thought of as close-to-home parks, are generally focused on recreational benefits for nearby residents. In addition to local residents, regional parks serve a population beyond the immediate community. Greenbelts/linear parks provide passive recreation opportunities for the whole community, while special use parks serve a focused user group (e.g., sports complex providing athletic recreation options).

Commerce's parks system includes nearly 70 acres of City-owned parkland, with the majority of acreage included in three community parks. Some of the parks include undeveloped open space, but there are no fully undeveloped parks. While the Eddie Moore Sports Complex is a special use park, it is contiguous with Centennial Park, thus making them function as one larger park. There is one small pocket park located in Downtown next to the library. This space is largely unprogrammed and primarily serving recreational needs during events at this time. There are no neighborhood parks in the City.

According to the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the median community with less than 20,000 people had 12.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.[1] A target level of service has been defined for Commerce through comparison with the NRPA Agency Performance Review and an understanding of the community's goals.

Existing and target levels of service per park type are listed in Figure 87 on the next page. The City does not have any existing regional parks. In consideration of the community's feedback on where to prioritize parks and recreation spending (i.e., improving existing parks, developing trails and supporting additional recreational programming) and an understanding that regional parks often require substantial acreage and are not appropriate for all communities, no acquisition of regional parkland is recommended in this Plan. This should not, however, preclude the City from capitalizing on an opportunity for regional parkland if one should arise in the future.

The City's total combined level of service today is 7.4 acres per 1,000 residents. This Plan sets a target level of service of 8.25 acres per 1,000 residents. The target is intended to be achievable and aspirational. Considering the total of all park types (including those without target levels of service), there is a current parkland deficit of 7.8 acres, with a future deficit that grows as the population increases toward its projected 2035 population.

The City is primarily lacking close-to-home parkland, specifically pocket and neighborhood parks, today and in the future, as listed in the "surplus/deficit acreages" columns in the table. The City should consider opportunities for additional close-to-home parks in areas with new development in the future. To the extent possible, pocket parks should be developed and maintained by homeowners associations. Based on the City's large amount of community parkland, it will be important to enhance pocket and neighborhood amenities (e.g., playgrounds, basketball courts, picnicking) within these parks, and safe access to them, to ensure that they can help meet the daily recreational needs for residents in the vicinity.

If properly located and developed with bicycle and pedestrian trails, greenbelts/linear parks can greatly contribute to citywide connectivity to parks and other points of interest. There is no specific target level of service for linear parks. However, there is strong community desire for a citywide trail network. The City should evaluate opportunities to provide linear parks as an option for residents of all ages and abilities to exercise, recreate, enjoy their natural surroundings and connect with the greater community.

National Recreation & Park Association 2024 Agency Review

Total Parkland per 1,000 Residents (communities under 20,000 people):

- Lower Quartile = 6.0 acres/1,000 people
- Median = 12.6 acres/1,000 people
- Upper Quartile = 20.9 acres/1,000 people

https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/

1 https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/

Figure 87. Parkland Acreage Level of Service

Park Classification	Existing Level of Service (LOS)		Recommended Level of Service (2025)			Recommended Level of Service (2035)	
	Existing Acreage (2025)	Current LOS (based on 9,184 population)	Recommended Target LOS (2025-2035)	2025 Recommended Acreage	Surplus/Deficit Acreages (2025)	2035 Recommended Acreage (based on 11,185 pop.)	Surplus/Deficit Acreages (2035)
Close-to-Home Parks							
Pocket Parks	0.15	0.02 Ac/1,000 Residents	0.25 Ac/1,000 Residents	2.3	-2.1	2.8	-2.6
Neighborhood Parks	0	0.0 Ac/1,000 Residents	3 Ac/1,000 Residents	27.6	-27.6	33.6	-33.6
Community Parks	58.9	6.4 Ac/1,000 Residents	5 Ac/1,000 Residents	45.9	13.0	55.9	3.0
Close-to-Home Parks Subtotal	**59.05**	**6.4 Ac/1,000 Residents**	**8.25 Ac/1,000 Residents**	**75.8**	-16.7	92.3	-33.2
Other Parks							
Regional Parks	0	0.0 Ac/1,000 Residents	0 Ac/1,000 Residents	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Greenbelt/ Linear Parks	0	0.0 Ac/1,000 Residents	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special Use Parks	8.9	1.0 Ac/1,000 Residents	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Parks Subtotal	**8.9**	**1.0 Ac/1,000 Residents**	Varies	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
All Park Types	**68.0**	**7.4 Ac/1,000 Residents**	**8.25 Ac/1,000 Residents**	**75.8**	**-7.8**	**92.3**	**-24.3**

The bottom row includes all park types (including those without target levels of service) and an overall recommended level of service of 8.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The total 2025 and 2035 surplus and deficit calculations are based on all park types combined (e.g., 68.0 existing acres - 75.8 recommended acres in 2025 = 7.8 acre deficit)

Negative numbers = acreage deficits

Spatial Level of Service

Access to Parks Meeting Neighborhood Needs

Pocket parks typically serve residents within a ¼-mile area, while neighborhood parks are meant to serve residents within a ¼-mile to ½-mile radius. These parks are intended to serve daily recreational needs for nearby residents and are often accessed by foot or bike. These service areas equate to approximately a 5-minute (¼-mile) to 10-minute (½-mile) walk. Pocket and neighborhood parks should be generally located away from major arterial streets and should be accessible without requiring residents to cross major roadways.

Based on the existing park types in the City (i.e., no neighborhood parks), and the potential for community parks to meet the recreational needs of nearby residents, Map 18 illustrates a walking service area (i.e., ¼-mile to ½-mile, where applicable) around all the City's close-to-home parks. Service areas are trimmed where they would require residents to cross a major roadway to access them.

When overlaid with the residential growth areas, it is noted that the north, far eastern and southwestern parts of the City lack nearby access to parks meeting neighborhood needs. Also, while some areas within the park service areas are technically close enough for a reasonable walk or bike ride, many areas lack safe sidewalks to allow residents to comfortably access the parks.

With the exception of Authors' Park, each of the other City parks currently include playgrounds and some picnicking amenities. The City should emphasize the provision of additional neighborhood park amenities in all parks of sufficient size to allow them to best meet the varied recreational needs of nearby residents.

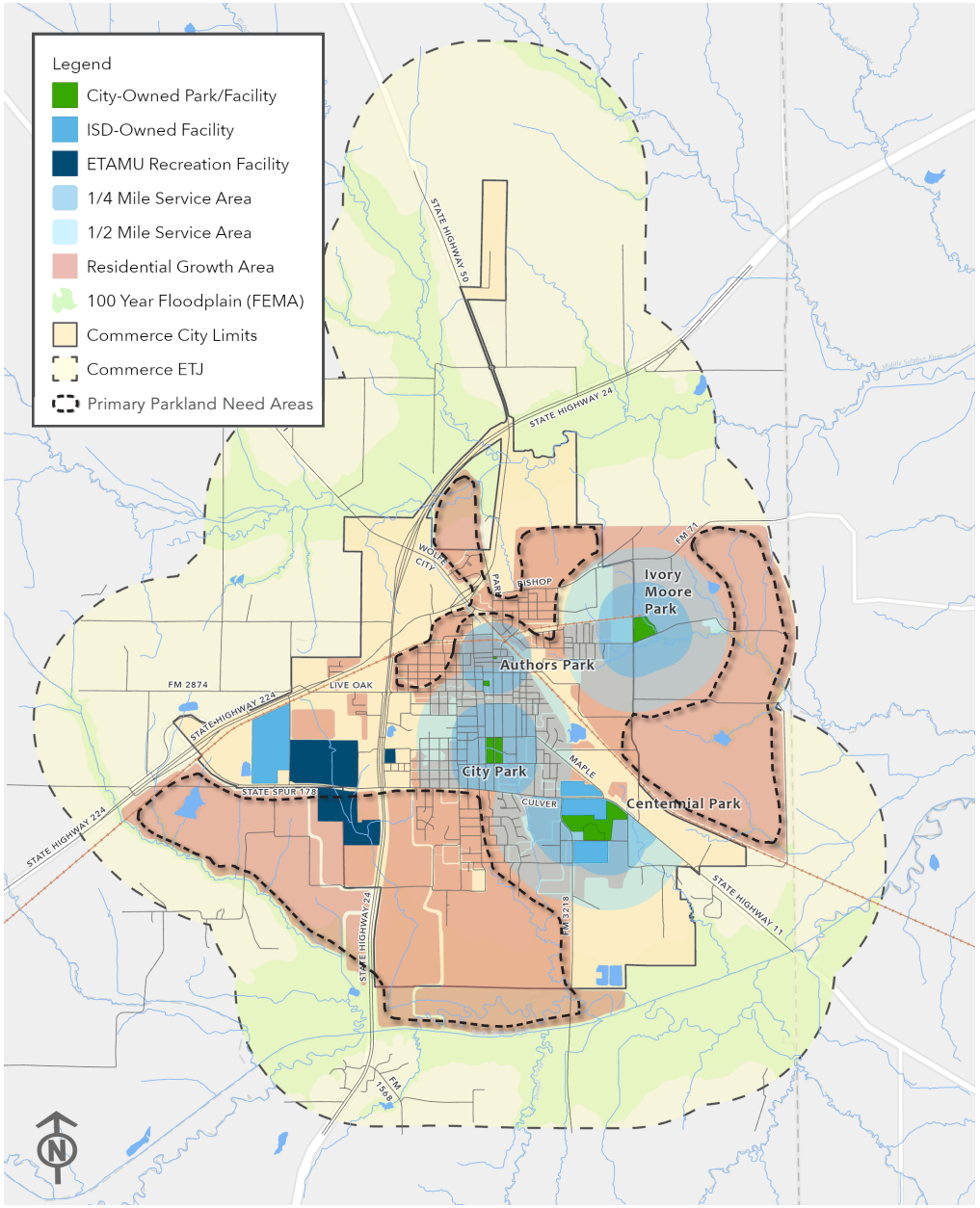
Regardless of how existing parks are further developed, based on the location of existing parks in Commerce, there are areas lacking nearby access to parkland of any kind. As the City considers locations for new close-to-home parks, priority should be given to residential areas located within the need areas illustrated on Map 18 on the next page.

As the City considers improvements to its sidewalk and trail network, priority should be given to streets within a ½-mile distance of existing parks to allow nearby residents to safely walk and bike to the parks.

Good sidewalk connectivity near City Park

Ineffective sidewalk near City Park

Map 18. Service Area of Parks Meeting Neighborhood Needs

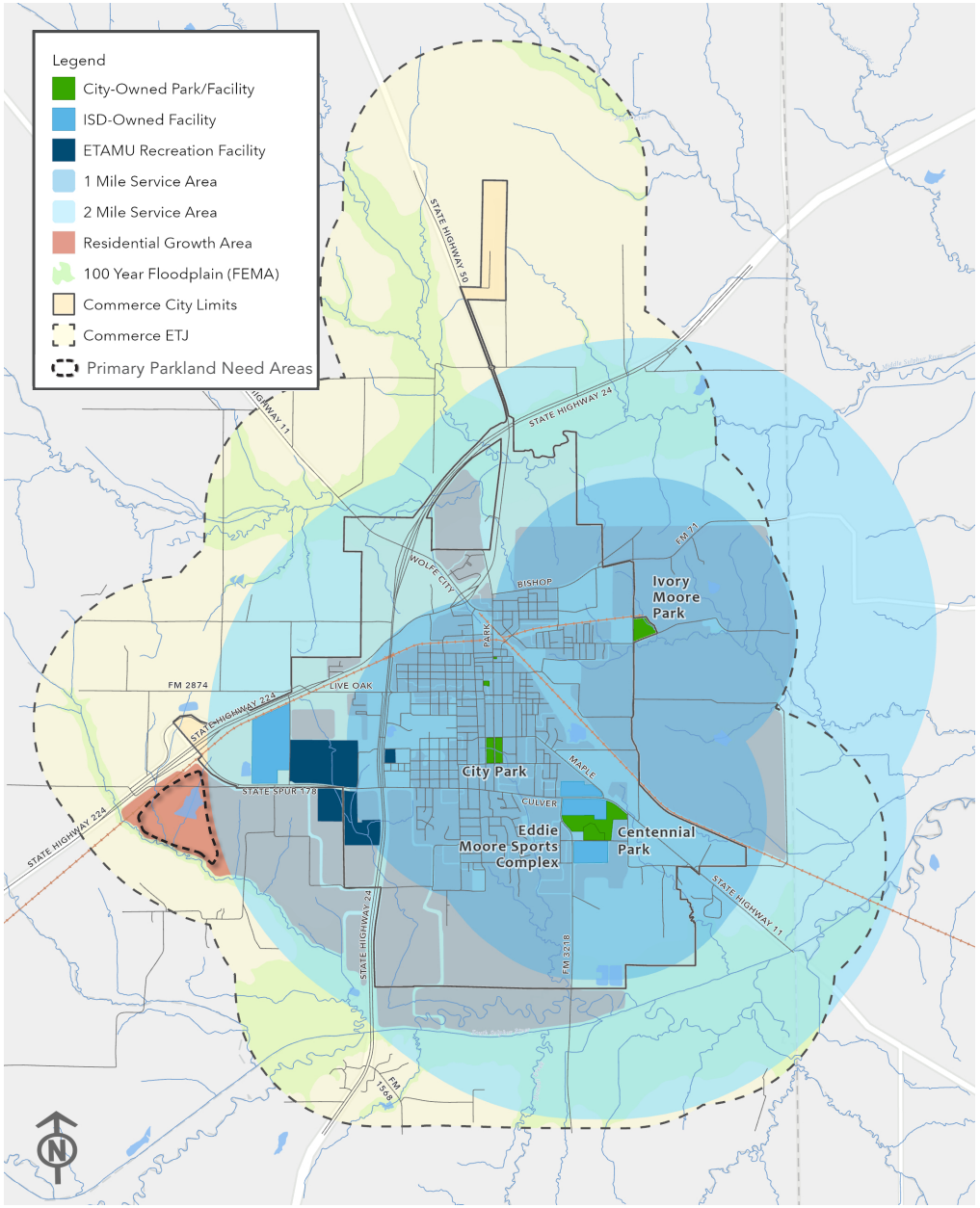


Access to Parks Meeting Community Needs

Community parks are large parks that are meant to serve multiple neighborhoods. They typically include a range of facilities such as playgrounds, picnic pavilions, athletic fields and courts, trails, swimming pools, and splash pads. Residents are often willing to drive to these parks for access to a greater diversity of options than at their neighborhood park.

A 1- to 2-mile service area is shown around the City's community parks. When the community parks' service area is overlaid with the residential growth areas, it is noted that most of the residential growth areas have adequate access to community parks, with the exception of a small area toward the western edge of the ETJ. As this area further develops, there may be an opportunity to create a community park that meets both community and neighborhood parkland needs for this part of the City.

Map 19. Service Area of Parks Meeting Community Needs



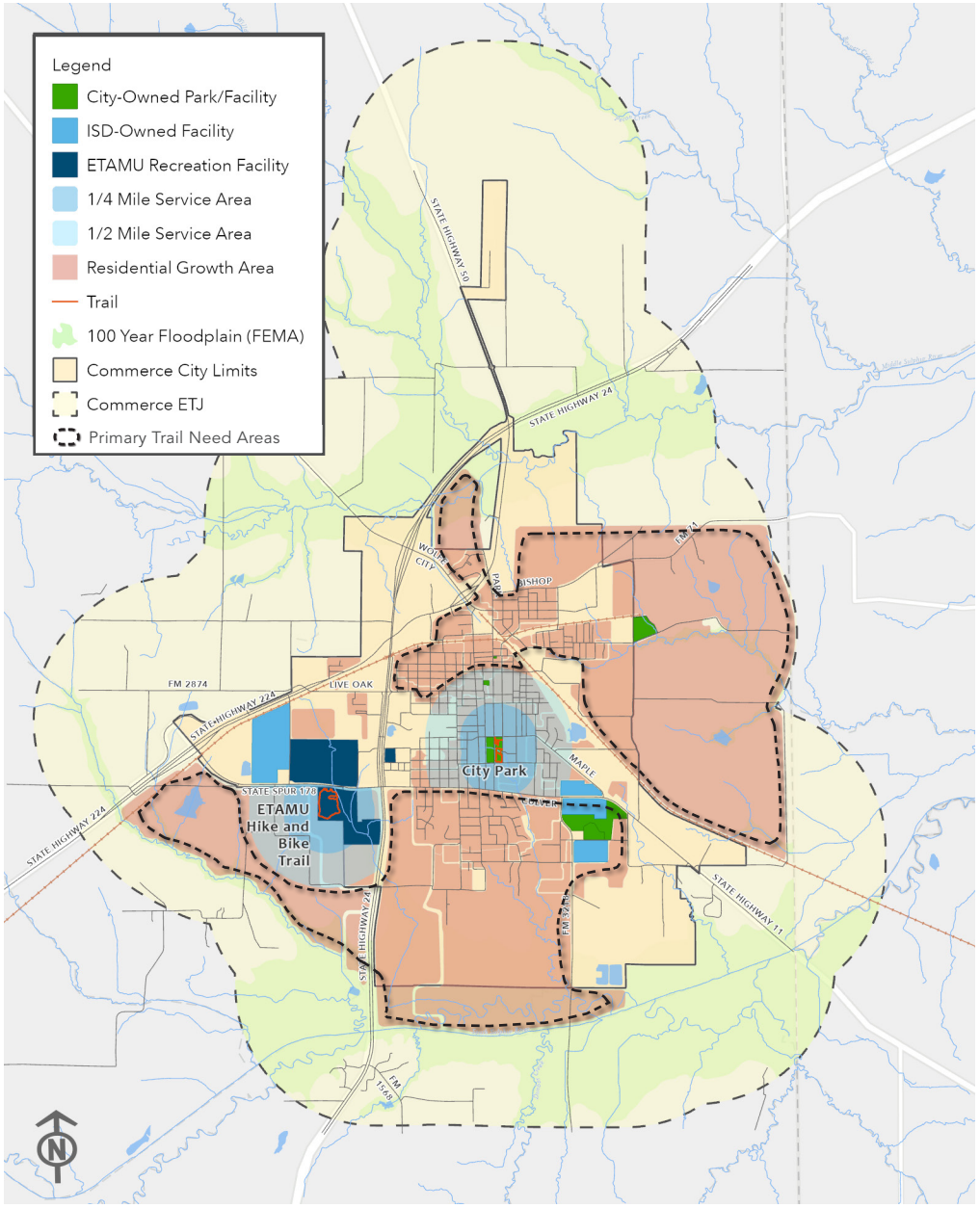
Access to Trails

Similar to pocket and neighborhood parks, trails are often accessed by foot or bike. They thus have the same service area as pocket and neighborhood parks, ¼- to ½-mile.

There are very limited existing trails in Commerce, including a small loop at City Park and ETAMU's hike and bike trail. As seen in Map 20, most of the City lacks nearby access to trails.

Local natural and man-made conditions provide potential opportunities to create trails along floodplains, creeks and decommissioned railroad tracks. Based on strong community support, further development of the City's trail network should be considered a priority for implementation.

Map 20. Service Area of Trails



Facility Level of Service

In addition to considering the different types of parkland, it is important to consider what types of facilities are available for resident use. The 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review also provides comparison data for the prevalence for outdoor park and recreation facilities per population. The facility target levels of service were determined through a baseline comparison of the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review results for communities with less than 20,000 people. Targets were then tailored to Commerce based on community input, goals, and an understanding of parkland and staffing opportunities and challenges.

The Facility Level of Service table on the next page illustrates the current level of service for each type of facility based on the estimated 2025 population. Targets are applied to the facility categories to determine current and future deficits. Level of service is based on City-owned amenities, with the exception of trails. The ETAMU hike and bike trail is open to the public and thus considered in the level of service. The trail doesn't provide connectivity to other areas in the community, but does offer scenic fitness opportunities.

The far right column in Figure 88 displays the findings from the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review for communities with less than 20,000 people, when available.

There are currently deficiencies in the following facilities:

- Outdoor basketball courts
- Pickleball courts
- Tennis courts
- Trails
- Outdoor volleyball courts
- Picnic pavilions
- Picnic facilities
- Playgrounds
- Swimming pool/aquatic center
- Recreation center

Looking toward 2035, without the addition of new facilities, there will also be deficiencies in:

- Rectangular fields (soccer/football)

Most other current deficits remain the same in 2035 or increase incrementally.

Figure 88. Facility Level of Service

	Facility	Current Available	Current LOS (1 Facility per # Residents)	Target LOS (per # Residents)	2025 Need (based on 9,184 pop.)	2025 Deficit or Surplus	2035 Need (based on 11,185 pop.)	2035 Deficit or Surplus	Cities less than 20,000**
Active	Baseball/Softball Fields	6	1,531	1 per 2,000	5	1	6	0	Diamond Fields: 1 per 1,833
	Backstop	5	1,837	1 per 6,000	2	3	2	3	
	Basketball Courts (outdoor)	2	4,592	1 per 4,000	3	-1	3	-1	1 per 4,366
	Disc Golf	1	9,184	1 per city	1	0	1	0	1 per 11,079
	Fitness Equipment Circuit	1	9,184	1 per city	1	0	1	0	1 per 8,233
	Rectangular Fields (soccer, football)	4	2,296	1 per 2,500	4	0	5	-1	1 per 2,493
	Pickleball Courts	0	0	1 per 3,500	3	-3	4	-4	1 per 3,390
	Skate Park	1	9,184	1 per city	1	0	1	0	1 per 11,284
	Tennis Courts	0	0	1 per 3,500	3	-3	4	-4	1 per 3,074
	Trails (miles)	4.3*	2,136	1 per 1,500	6.1	-1.8	7.5	-3.2	Median 4.5 total miles
	Volleyball Courts (outdoor)	0	0	1 per 10,000	1	-1	2	-2	1 per 9,250
Passive	Amphitheater/Outdoor Event Space	1	9,184	1 per city	1	0	1	0	1 per 2,769
	Dog Park	1	9,184	1 per city	1	0	1	0	1 per 10,327
	Picnic Pavilions	3	3,061	1 per 3,000	4	-1	4	-1	
	Picnic Facilities (e.g., tables)	4	2,296	In all publicly accessed parks	In all publicly accessed parks	-1	In all publicly accessed parks	-1	
	Playgrounds	4	2,296	1 per 2,000	5	-1	6	-2	1 per 1,990
Water	Fishing Piers	0	0	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	
	Swimming Pool/Aquatic Center	0	0	1 per city	1	-1	1	-1	Pool: 1 per 9,500 Center: 1 per 12,618
	Splash Pad	1	9,184	1 per 12,000	1	0	1	0	1 per 12,756
Misc.	Recreation Center	0	0	1 per 12,000	1	-1	1	-1	1 per 9,685
	Park Restrooms	3	3,061	Where feasible	Where feasible	Varies	Where feasible	Varies	

** Includes ETAMU hike and bike trail*
*** 2024 NRPA Agency Review Data*

Resource-Based Assessment

The resource-based assessment is the third analysis for the needs assessment. This exercise recognizes key physical, man-made or natural resources within the community that may provide potential recreational opportunities. These areas can either support active recreational pursuits or provide opportunities for passive enjoyment. The following areas have potential to be further leveraged for recreation or open space preservation.

Floodplains and Waterbodies

Waterbodies and floodplains are areas that are inherently unsuitable for most types of development. They are also often beautiful natural areas that wind through cities. Commerce's floodplains extend generally north to south across the southern half of the City. With strategic development of trail infrastructure, these natural areas could be used as a key element in a citywide trail network.

Rails to Trails

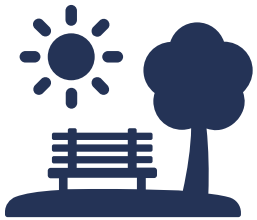
Old railroad tracks running through the City provide a potential location for a linear trail. Creating a trail along this corridor would require collaboration with local government agencies, rail companies, environmental organizations and community stakeholders. If realized, this could provide an extensive off-street trail through the northern parts of the City.

Connection to North East Texas Trail/TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Trail

If developed, a citywide trail could possibly connect to the North East Texas Trail, located approximately 13 miles north of Commerce. This area is also part of the 2018 TxDOT Bicycle Tourism Study, which proposes new trails approximately 13 miles west of Commerce going through Greenville. The City is encouraged to collaborate with TxDOT, Hunt County, municipalities involved in the TxDOT plans, and the North East Texas Trail Coalition (NETTC) to potentially develop a trail connection from Commerce to the proposed trails and/or promote Jim Chapman Lake as a potential trail destination.

Summary of Needs

Through the needs assessment and public engagement process, the need for additional distribution of parkland, increased connectivity, new and improved facilities, and expanded recreational programs were identified.



Parkland Acreage and Development

- Improvements and upgrades to existing parks
- Additional pocket and neighborhood parks in current and future residential areas

Park Facilities

- Outdoor basketball courts
- Pickleball courts
- Tennis courts
- Trails
- Outdoor volleyball courts
- Picnic pavilions
- Picnic facilities
- Playgrounds
- Swimming pool/ aquatic center
- Recreation center

Parkland Access and Connectivity

- A trail network that connects major park spaces
- Safer and more complete sidewalk network throughout the City

Recreational Programs

- Children and youth programming
- Indoor recreation
- Senior programming
- Additional family-oriented community events
- Adult athletics

Recommendations

The overall consensus of the community feedback related to parks was that residents would prefer to see a new trail system, enhancements and upgrades to existing parks, and the provision of recreational programming prioritized over the addition of new park spaces. Considering this and the City's limited staff resources, recommendations focus on making the most of the City's existing parks and recreation assets, with a few aspirational recommendations for new parks and facilities.

This Plan's recommendations were developed through consideration of:

- Community demographics and recreation needs associated with different populations.
- Existing inventory and condition of Commerce's parks and facilities.
- Community input as summarized in the demand-based assessment.
- Parkland acreage and facility deficits and surpluses based on targets defined in the standard-based assessment.
- Opportunities to leverage the natural and man-made resources described in the resource-based assessment.

Goals for the Parks & Recreation System

The following goals provide overall direction for Commerce's parks and recreation system to achieve the community's vision and aspirations. These goals should be used to help guide the City's decision-making processes and form the basis of the PMP's recommendations.

1. **Proactively obtain and preserve parkland for permanent open space.**
2. **Enhance existing parks and develop new amenities to best meet the needs and desires of the community.**
3. **Provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages, abilities, and interests.**
4. **Prioritize safety, maintenance and accessibility in Commerce parks.**
5. **Pursue partnerships and diverse funding strategies to support the expansion of parks and recreation options for the community.**

Goal 1: Proactively obtain and preserve parkland for permanent open space.

5.1.1 Evaluate opportunities for additional parkland in the identified need areas.

While some of the City is currently served with nearby access to park and recreation amenities, there is a need to proactively plan for additional parkland that addresses needs in underserved areas within the residential growth area. Five target areas for additional parkland are identified on Map 21. The City should proactively pursue acquisition in these areas through parkland dedication, purchase of parcels or partnerships. Pocket and neighborhood parks are needed throughout all the target areas and a community park is also needed in Area A.

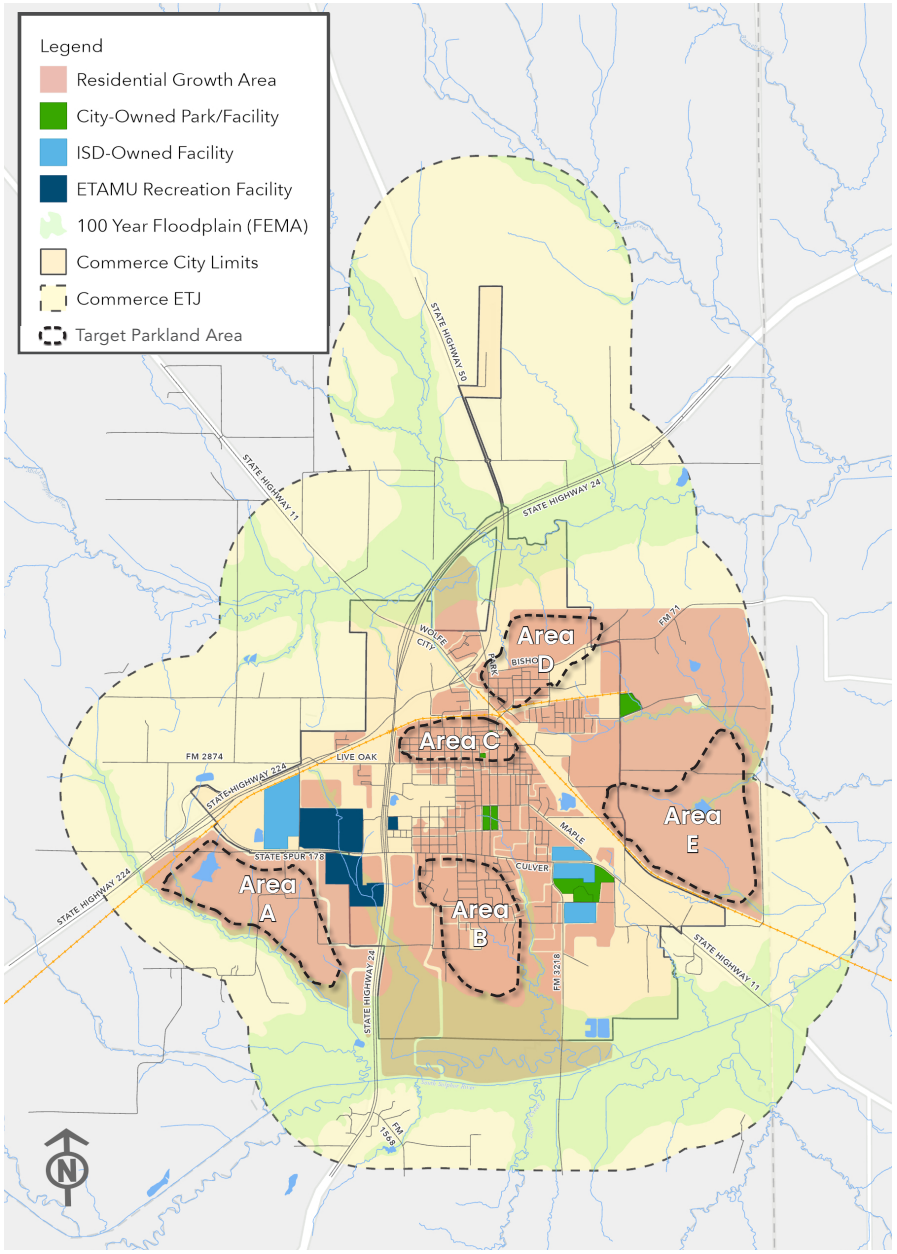
When evaluating land for recreational use, consider factors like proximity to residential areas, accessibility, topography and size. Additionally, based on the staffing and funding needs associated with additional parkland, properties that can provide the greatest diversity of benefits should be prioritized.

5.1.2 Develop a parkland dedication and development ordinance to incentivize the private development community to support park and recreation needs in Commerce.

In order to meet parkland needs as additional areas in Commerce are developed, the City should develop a parkland dedication and development ordinance. This could allow dedication of land and/or collection of funds from the private development community for acquisition, development and improvements of parks within defined park benefit zones. It is important that any accepted land truly has recreation potential (e.g., is more than just floodplain).

The City may consider privately owned parks, such as those owned and managed by an HOA, to account for some level of pocket or neighborhood parks accessible for future residents in communities that provide them with those amenities.

Map 21. Parkland Need Areas



Goal 2: Enhance existing parks and develop new amenities to best meet the needs and desires of the community.

5.2.1 Revisit the Authors' Park concept plan and revise as necessary.

In light of community input, the needs assessment and the recently adopted Downtown Master Plan, the City should revisit the conceptual plan previously developed for this property to ensure that this small property is best meeting the community's recreation needs and helping to draw the library into the greater downtown context. Elements to consider in the updated plan include:

- A context-appropriate play area.
- Interactive art and games.
- Shaded seating and outdoor classroom.
- Small event/concert space.
- Curb cuts and other accessibility modifications to ensure clear connections between the library, park and downtown.
- Connectivity to the greater citywide trail network.

5.2.2 Implement the Authors' Park Concept Plan.

The City should formally adopt this site as a park and then implement the conceptual plan recommended above.

5.2.3 Prepare a Centennial Park Master Plan.

Centennial Park is the City's largest park and has potential to better meet the needs of the community through a variety of upgrades and new amenities. Considering the variety of options, it is recommended that the City prepare a phased master plan for the property prior to making any large investments to minimize the potential of near-term improvements inhibiting the long-term vision for the park. The following elements should be considered and evaluated for feasibility as part of the master plan:

- Create a loop trail around and through the park and identify ways to connect this area to a larger citywide trail network.
- Consider potential future expansion for additional baseball fields.
- Formalize soccer fields and orient them north-south.
- Provide shade for spectators, especially in eastern soccer fields and parking lot areas.
- Consolidate and improve the disc golf course.
- Formalize the parking area near FM 3218.
- Create a park gateway entrance on the west side of the park.
- Enhance lighting throughout the park to improve safety.
- Replace park signage to match a new citywide standard design.
- Evaluate the feasibility of creating a drainage pond north of the playgrounds.
- Replace at least one playground.
- Replace both wooden bridges over drainage channel.

5.2.4 Implement the Centennial Park Master Plan.

After developing the Centennial Park Master Plan, the City should move forward with phased implementation of the improvements as funding becomes available.

5.2.5 Improve City Park.

In order to enhance the recreation potential of City Park, the following improvements are recommended:

- Provide ADA access to the full playground.
- Remodel the bathroom to better serve splash pad.
- Provide street parking.
- Add trees along the walking path through the park and along Park Street to provide traffic calming.

- Consider adding a volleyball court to the park. This could be located in the undeveloped area south of baseball field.
- Improve the dog park with additional amenities for dogs as well as shaded seating for their owners.
- Develop a streambank restoration plan to address the erosion occurring along the creek. This could include using the area as a wetland feature and outdoor education space.
- Improve park landscaping (e.g., add irrigation to the landscape areas near the pavilion, remove shrubs for visibility). If irrigation is not feasible, consider replacing planting materials with decorative hardscape and an art installation.
- Provide improved park signage.
- Install security cameras throughout the park.
- Install solar lighting in the dog park and along trail.
- Remove the horseshoe pits and the fans in the picnic pavilion.
- Identify a long-term funding mechanism for the splash pad and dog park maintenance.
- Add sidewalk and trail connections to park.

5.2.6 Prepare an Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.

Ivory Moore Park is the only park currently serving the area east of the railroad tracks. While it has had some recent improvements, there may be opportunities to do more with additional areas in the park. It is recommended that the City prepare a master plan for the park to determine the ultimate desired configuration before doing any other major changes. Elements to consider in the plan include:

- Further activation of the park to help with passive surveillance. This could be through additional events held here and adding amenities.
- Create a loop trail around the park and connect the park to a citywide trail network.
- Renovate the bathrooms.
- Install security cameras and enhanced lighting.
- Replace park signage to match a new citywide standard design.
- Level the field area near the standalone backstop. If this area is not heavily used, consider reprogramming the area to another use such as tennis or pickleball courts.

5.2.7 Implement the Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.

After developing the Ivory Moore Park Master Plan, the City should move forward with phased implementation as funding becomes available.

5.2.8 Improve the Eddie Moore Sports Complex.

In order to enhance the recreation potential of Eddie Moore Sports Complex, the following improvements are recommended:

- Replace or substantially renovate the concession stand and restroom.
- Install new, shaded spectator seating.
- Install new lighting beyond the sports fields to improve park safety.
- Install security cameras throughout the park to reduce vandalism.
- Replace park signage to match a new citywide standard design.
- Provide trail connections to other city parks.

5.2.9 Consider renovating the old Middle School Gym to provide indoor and outdoor recreation space.

The City has the opportunity to renovate the old Middle School Gym to provide public recreation options. While this may not end up being the final location for a recreation center, the City should consider the following near-term improvements:

- Program pickleball on the indoor court space.
- Convert the existing outdoor tennis courts to pickleball courts.
- Evaluate options for an additional outdoor recreation facility (e.g., basketball court) on the vacant lot west of current tennis courts.

The City should also consider if this location and facility has potential to meet the long-term indoor recreation needs of the community. If so, consider pursuing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Commerce ISD for long-term use of the facility.

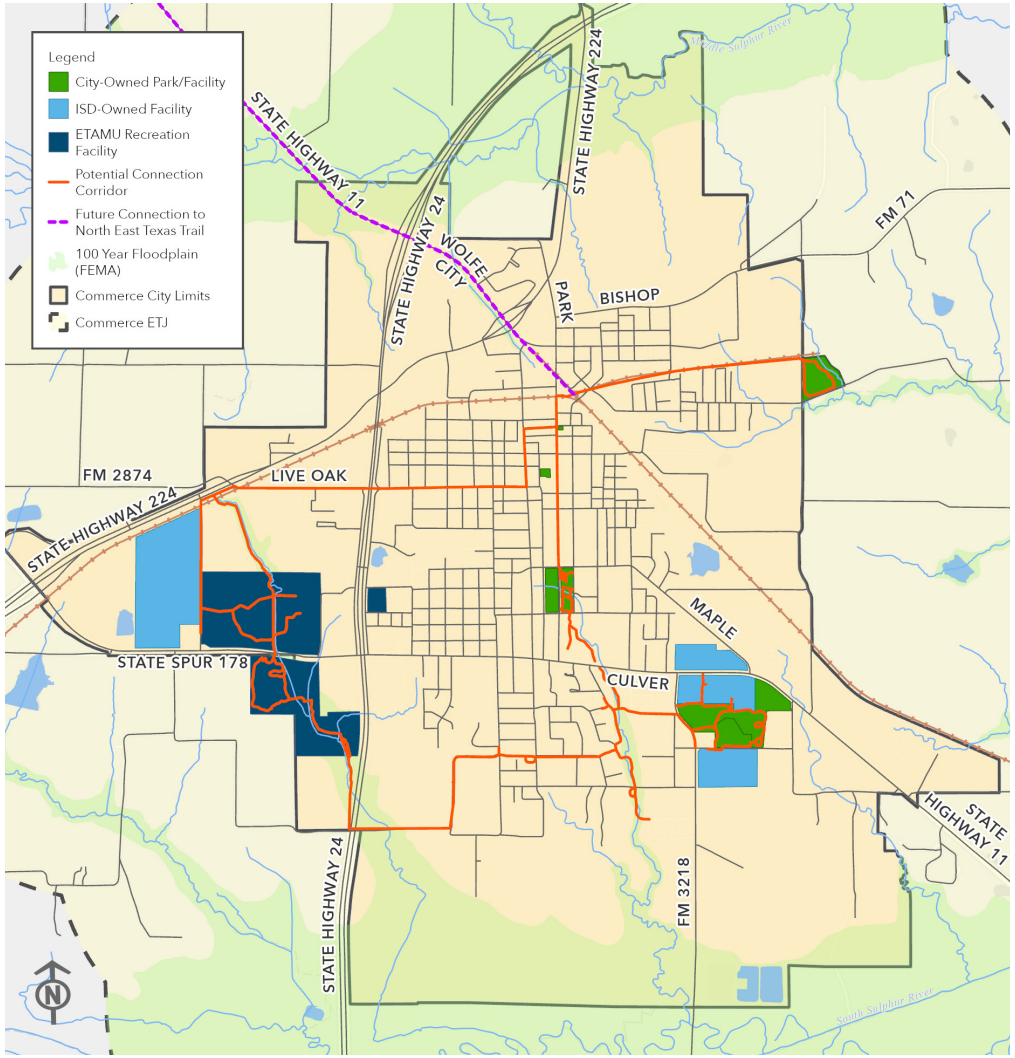
5.2.10 Develop a citywide trail/enhanced sidewalk network connecting key points of interest.

Survey respondents ranked trails as a top priority for development. It is thus recommended that the City develop a citywide trail and enhanced sidewalk network to connect residents to parks, schools. downtown and other key points of interest. Map 22 illustrates potential corridors to consider for initial connectivity. Future developments east of the railroad tracks should include connectivity to the network. Trailhead facilities (i.e., limited parking, small restroom, waste receptacles) should be included in parks and elsewhere, where feasible, to provide a good entry point for people who drive to the trail.

Note that some of the illustrated segments include existing sidewalks that can be leveraged to provide connectivity along the target corridors, while others would require coordination with and easements from private landowners, developers, rail companies and ETAMU. The segment leading to Ivory Moore Park would be a rails-to-trails project. Priority implementation throughout the system should focus on the 1/2-mile connections between neighborhoods and parks.

Through the development process, the City can require dedication of right-of-way for trail development. The City can also consider developing impact fees for trail development.

Map 22. Potential Pedestrian Connectivity Corridors



5.2.11 Prioritize development of sidewalks in residential areas within ½-mile of parks and schools.

Most of the City's parks have potential to provide neighborhood park amenities for nearby residents. As the City considers sidewalk improvements, it is recommended that sidewalks in residential areas within 1/2-mile (~10 minute walk) of parks be prioritized in order to provide safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the parks.

5.2.12 Develop an outdoor adult workout area in a new or existing park.

The City should pursue a partnership to develop an outdoor adult workout area in the City. This would support quality of life and public health improvements and should be strategically located for convenient access by higher-needs populations (e.g., near a rehabilitation center, senior housing), if feasible.

5.2.13 Develop a pool or aquatic complex feasibility study.

There is a community desire for a swimming pool or aquatic complex to provide recreational swimming. This is a very substantial investment. As a first step, the City should conduct a feasibility study to identify a potential location, general programming priorities, cost considerations and partnership opportunities.

5.2.14 Develop park design guidelines.

In addition to consistent signage (see Action 5.4.9), incorporating similar materials, furnishings and level of maintenance throughout all City parks will help to build greater continuity within the parks system and provide efficiency for design decisions. The City should consider adopting park design guidelines to steer the design and construction of new and improved parks and recreation facilities. Consideration should be given to:

- Choosing furnishings and facilities that use attractive, durable and vandal-resistant materials.
- Implementing standards for native and water-efficient landscaping.
- Minimizing maintenance requirements to the extent possible.
- Increasing security and safety through design decisions (e.g., Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).
- Designing for all ages and abilities.
- Considering adjacencies between amenities and the target audiences.
- Allowing for flexibility of use.
- Maximizing shade.
- Beautifying the parks.
- Incorporating a consistent parks brand through styles and materials used in the parks.

5.2.15. Develop trail-specific design guidelines.

Before developing the citywide trail/enhanced sidewalk network, the City should develop trail-specific design guidelines. These should consider:

- Standard widths, cross sections and materials.
- Lighting and safety standards.
- Landscape and furnishing standards.
- Signage and wayfinding.
- Public engagement and education considerations.

5.2.16 Systematically address recreational amenity deficiencies.

As the City further amenitizes existing parks or develops new parks, it should prioritize providing amenities with identified deficits as defined in the facility level of service assessment. These do not need to be the only amenities included, but should be a starting point for all discussions about adding recreation options to parks.

Goal 3: Provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages, abilities and interests.

5.3.1 Consider conducting a Recreational Programming and Event Assessment.

Community input emphasized a desire for greater recreational options for different age groups. In order to determine specific new programs and the resources required to support them, the City should consider conducting a Recreational Programming and Event Assessment. This includes collecting information about all of the public and private recreational programs, events and facilities that are currently serving the Commerce community. The data should then be analyzed to determine gaps and overlaps in order to identify opportunities for new programs. Consideration should be given to:

- The target ages of participants.
- Changes in level of participation over time.
- When and where the program/event is offered.
- Whether the program/event is free or fee-based.
- What types of programs are not currently offered elsewhere.

The programming and event list included in the Parks and Facility Inventory section can be used as a starting point for the assessment.

5.3.2 Develop a Recreation Center/ Community Center feasibility study.

Along with greater recreational programming will come a need for a Recreation Center or Community Center to accommodate indoor recreational classes, events and additional programming. It is recommended that the City develop a Recreation Center/Community Center feasibility study to determine the viability, location, programming and cost of such a facility. One of the potential locations considered should be the old Middle School Gym. The study should consider space needs for:

- Indoor recreational classes for all ages.
- Rentable spaces for meetings and events of different sizes (e.g., community events, holiday parties).
- Adequate parking to serve the desired programming.

5.3.3 Develop or support the development of a Recreation Center/Community Center in Commerce.

Based on the results of the Recreation Center/ Community Center feasibility study, the City should proceed with development or support for the development (i.e., partnership) of such a facility.

5.3.4 Develop non-intensive outdoor recreation opportunities and programs for children and adults.

In order to diversify recreation offerings and encourage greater use of parks, the City should develop non-intensive outdoor recreation opportunities focused on parks, such as walking groups, yoga/Pilates/Tai Chi, and outdoor education programs for children and adults at Author's Park, City Park, etc. These programs could be provided by the City or in partnership with other local entities.

5.3.5 Provide or partner on the provision of indoor recreational activities at various locations.

There are minimal indoor recreation opportunities provided by the City today. It is recommended that the City provide or partner with the library and local social and civic organizations to support indoor recreational programming. This could include crafting, quilting, reading, board games and other indoor recreational activities. Ideally this would include multi-generational and senior programming options. These could be hosted at the library and/or a future Recreation Center or Community Center.

5.3.6 Provide additional community events in varying locations.

In order to encourage greater use and awareness of all of the parks in Commerce, and to address the community's desire for additional special events, the City should consider diversifying locations for events. This could include hosting smaller regularly scheduled or special events in different parks. Events should be scaled based on the size and facilities at each park and could include options such as community picnics, art events, senior potlucks, and movies in the park.

5.3.7 Consider developing a community garden program.

There are ongoing conversations about community gardens in Commerce and these areas can provide a variety of health and wellness benefits for community members. The City should consider providing community garden plots in at least one community park.

Along with provision of the garden plots, there must be a program in place to ensure proper use and maintenance of plots. This can be a community or City-led program that focuses on the member and plot management as well as the communal elements of the garden, such as:

- General area upkeep and work days.
- Communal tools.
- Rules and security.
- Educational programs, either for members or external groups.
- Care trades (for when members are out of town and need extra help caring for their plot).

5.3.8 Maintain an updated parks and recreation website to include complete information about the parks system.

It is recommended that the City update the website to include additional information about all of the parks. This includes park addresses, location maps, additional photos and complete lists of amenities. The website should also be regularly updated to reflect current information about recreational programming throughout the year.

A community garden provides health and wellness benefits as well as learning and social opportunities.

Goal 4: Prioritize safety, maintenance and accessibility in Commerce parks.

5.4.1 Conduct a staffing assessment to determine the need for an expanded headcount.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently includes six full-time staff and two seasonal staff members who maintain nearly 70 acres of parkland, a variety of other City facilities and support City events and festivals. It is recommended that the City conduct a staffing assessment to determine needs for additional headcount, especially considering the ongoing renovation to Eddie Moore Sports Complex. The assessment should consider increased maintenance regularity, capacity to quickly address safety and security concerns, and temporary help for events and festivals.

5.4.2 Ensure adequate funding and staffing accompany park system expansions.

This plan includes recommendations for each park as well as potential acquisition of additional parkland in the future. As the City develops additional park facilities, it is also crucial to budget adequate funding and staffing to allow for increased park system maintenance and repairs. It is recommended that any park additions or renovations that cannot be adequately maintained be postponed until appropriate funding and staffing are available.

5.4.3 Locate or develop additional storage and workspace for the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Parks and Recreation Department needs additional storage and work space. In order to ensure that parks maintenance equipment remains protected from the elements and to maximize staff efficiency, the City should develop additional space in a central location.

5.4.4 Develop a parks system management plan.

In order to improve the appearance and maintenance of the parks system and expand existing offerings, the City should develop and adhere to a parks system management plan or proactive maintenance plan. At a minimum, this plan should include:

- An inventory of park assets.
- Proactive park maintenance plans and schedules for each park.
- Replacement plans for amenities.
- Required training necessary to develop the specialized skill sets needed to maintain the parks (e.g., irrigation system maintenance).

5.4.5 Continue to address ADA accessibility issues on a prioritized basis.

The City has a reasonably good understanding of ADA accessibility issues in the parks system. It is recommended that the City continue to address these issues on a prioritized basis. If there are any park areas that have not been assessed (i.e., trails, playgrounds, splash pad, parking areas, picnic facilities, etc.), the City should conduct an ADA assessment and incorporate the issues into its ongoing prioritized list.

5.4.6. Develop a shade/tree planting study and plan to ensure annual additions to the tree canopy.

In order to continually improve the tree canopy in parks, and the City as a whole, the City should develop a shade/tree planting study and plan to ensure annual additions to the tree canopy. There should be a special focus on park access points, gateways, parking areas, seating areas and playgrounds. This should be coordinated with City efforts to create gateways around the City. Native trees with a strong connection to the City's history and eco-region should be prioritized (e.g., pecan, cedar elm, and osage orange).

5.4.7 Increase shade within all parks.

Providing ample shade throughout the parks system is key to encouraging greater use throughout the year. It is recommended that the City provide additional shaded areas in each park. This can be through the use of shade structures, shade fabric or additional trees. These efforts should be focused in gathering areas and along walking trails.

5.4.8 Evaluate opportunities for increased security in parks.

Vandalism is a challenging issue in many of the City's parks. It is recommended that the City evaluate opportunities to increase security in all City parks. This could be through things such as enhanced lighting, security cameras, open sight lines and increased police patrols, among others.

5.4.9 Provide system-wide consistent parks signage.

Consistent parks signage, including materials and graphic content, helps residents and visitors navigate to/within parks, visually recognize City-owned parkland, and build an understanding of allowable behaviors. The City should develop a consistent parks branding strategy and update entry and wayfinding signs at all parks accordingly. Each park should have signs with the park name, rules and contact information for maintenance and other requests. Entry signs should be located in prominently visible locations and have park names at an easily legible size. Park rules signage should be provided, where needed.

5.4.10 Evaluate opportunities to increase the use of technology in all City parks.

Creating opportunities for people to interact with nature while staying connected with technology can be a great way to encourage increased park usage. It is recommended that the City seek to provide public WiFi access at all City parks. The City can also utilize QR code quick links on signs throughout the parks to allow people to report an issue, learn about a recreation opportunity, educate themselves about natural features or participate in organized activities (e.g., digital scavenger hunt).

Shade sails provide year-round shade and are helpful in areas where trees are not feasible.

Goal 5: Pursue partnerships and diverse funding strategies to support the expansion of parks and recreation options for the community.

5.5.1 Pursue grant funding from diverse sources.

In order to maximize park system development potential, the City should consistently evaluate and pursue appropriate grant funding opportunities for parks and trails. This includes Texas Parks and Wildlife grants as well as a variety of other recreational grants available to cities. The City should also think creatively and seek out both state and federal grants and those related to the unique circumstances in some parks (e.g., streambank restoration in City Park).

5.5.2 Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships.

Partnerships between cities and private-sector companies can be powerful tools to finance, build, and/or operate parks and facility projects. It is recommended that the City evaluate and pursue opportunities for public-private partnerships to best leverage its existing resources and expand offerings for the community. This could include consideration of partnerships for a Recreation Center and sponsorships from the local business community, among others.

5.5.3 Develop sponsorship/funding opportunities through outfield fences and gateway signage.

Outfield fences and park gateway signage can be good opportunities for private sponsorships or funding donations. The City should consider publishing these opportunities and using the revenue to help support the provision of City recreational programs.

5.5.4 Pursue partnership opportunities with local organizations for mentors, coaches and officials/ referees.

The City should pursue partnership opportunities with local civic organizations, non-profits and religious organizations to develop recruiting structures for mentors, coaches and officials/referees.

5.5.5 When warranted, establish joint maintenance agreements with athletic leagues.

There are currently no outside leagues that use the City's athletic facilities. However, if this starts to occur as the parks system continues to improve and grow, the City should establish joint maintenance agreements with the leagues. This can help to ensure that each party's responsibilities are clear, athletic facilities are adequately maintained, and that league fees are sufficiently offsetting the City's costs.

The outfield fences at the renovated Eddie Moore Sports Complex are a great location for sponsorship signage.

5.5.6 Coordinate and/or partner with local organizations and entities to provide additional parks and recreation opportunities for the community.

The City should continually pursue partnership opportunities to help facilitate the improvement and expansion of parks and recreation opportunities in Commerce. This could include:

- Outdoor education programs for children and adults at Author's Park, City Park and Outdoor Adventure in partnership with the library, Commerce ISD, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and/or ETAMU.
- Indoor recreation programs in partnership with the library and local social and civic organizations.

5.5.7 Establish partnerships to support the development of the citywide pedestrian connectivity corridors.

As noted earlier, some of the proposed pedestrian connectivity corridors (see Map 22 on page 159) can be developed by the City, but others will require or would benefit from partnership with other entities. Most notably, the City should pursue a partnership with ETAMU to improve their hike and bike trail for greater consistency of condition and build additional trails near Outdoor Adventure. The City should also coordinate with Commerce ISD for trails that provide connectivity to and/or adjacent to their property.

5.5.8 Consider pursuing a parks and recreation bond.

When asked about funding strategies, over 60% of respondents voiced support or strong support for a voter approved bond initiative via the public parks survey. As the City explores large-scale capital improvements, it should consider approaching the citizens with certificate of obligation bond options. This requires preparation of bond-ready projects with detailed design plans and vetting the projects with a citizen bond committee.

5.5.9 Update the Parks Master Plan.

The community's parks and recreation needs and desires will change as the population grows and demographics shift. The City should plan to update the Parks Master Plan periodically to ensure that it reflects current needs and priorities. The TPWD recommends updating the Plan every five years or before any new major developments occur that significantly change the parks and recreation needs of residents. This can also help the City during a TPWD grant funding evaluation, as TPWD places a higher point value on submittals that demonstrate that a plan has been updated within the previous five years. All Plan updates should include a public involvement process.

In the coming years, the City should review and update the Plan using the following steps:

- Annually: Staff review implementation to identify progress and provide an annual report to the City Council.
- Every five years (or sooner if needed): Conduct a full review and make needed updates to the inventory, needs assessment, recommendations, and prioritization.

Implementation

High Priority Needs

This Plan includes a variety of recommendations to improve and expand the parks, facilities, trails and recreational programming in Commerce. The Plan meets the TPWD's requirements for a parks, recreation and open space master plan, and can help increase the City's competitiveness when applying for TPWD grant funding.

Commerce's top priority parks facility needs are summarized in the table below. These are based on community input, needs assessments, consultant evaluation and staff input. Future parks and recreation efforts should work toward fulfilling these community needs.

Figure 89. Top Priority Facility Needs

New facilities needed based on community input	New facilities needed based on level of service	Upgraded facilities needed based on existing condition
1. Trails/nature trails/ sidewalks 2. Shade trees 3. Playgrounds 4. Multipurpose pavilions 5. Recreation/Community center	1. Pickleball courts 2. Trails 3. Tennis courts 4. Swimming pool/aquatic center 5. Recreation/Community center	1. Lighting and security, generally 2. Shade, generally 3. Sidewalk/trails connectivity to and within parks 4. Restroom renovations 5. Park signage

Top 10 cumulative outdoor facility needs	Top 10 cumulative indoor facility needs
1. Trails/nature trails/sidewalks 2. Additional shade in parks 3. Improved lighting and security in parks 4. Restroom renovations 5. Multipurpose pavilions 6. Improved playgrounds 7. Pickleball courts 8. Tennis courts 9. Swimming pool/aquatic complex 10. Improved dog park	1. Recreation/Community Center with programming

Prioritized Action Plan

The recommended actions of this Plan have been prioritized based on the following criteria:

- Level of need based on community input
- Level of need based on the level of service
- Existing conditions evaluations
- Less complex actions that can create early wins

Actions have been organized into near-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-7 years) and long-term (8-10+ years) time frames, with an indication of actions that will be ongoing. Some actions will be initiated and completed within their designated time frame, while others may be initiated during their designated time frame and then completed over time. Near- and mid-term actions have been ranked. Long-term actions should be further prioritized in subsequent Plan updates.

The priorities set forth in the Prioritized Action Plan on the next page are intended to guide staff and the City Council as they improve and operate the parks and recreation system for the next five to 10 years. This does not, however, preclude the City from initiating an action sooner than recommended if opportune circumstances arise.

Figure 90. Prioritized Action Plan

Rank		Action	Initiation Time Frame (years)			
			Near-term (1-3)	Mid-term (4-7)	Long-term (8-10+)	On-going
Goal 1: Proactively obtain and preserve parkland for permanent open space.						
1	5.1.2	Develop a parkland dedication and development ordinance to incentivize the private development community to support park and recreation needs in Commerce.	■			
2	5.1.1	Evaluate opportunities for additional parkland in the identified need areas.		■		
Goal 2: Enhance existing parks and develop new amenities to best meet the needs and desires of the community.						
1	5.2.16	Systematically address recreational amenity deficiencies.	■			■
2	5.2.14	Develop park design guidelines.	■			
3	5.2.12	Develop an outdoor adult workout area in a new or existing park.	■			
4	5.2.3	Prepare a Centennial Park Master Plan.	■			
5	5.2.15	Develop trail-specific design guidelines.	■			
6	5.2.10	Develop a citywide trail/enhanced sidewalk network connecting key points of interest.	■			
7	5.2.9	Consider renovating the old Middle School Gym to provide indoor and outdoor recreation space.	■			
8	5.2.4	Implement the Centennial Park Master Plan.		■		
9	5.2.1	Revisit the Authors' Park concept plan and revise as necessary.		■		
10	5.2.2	Implement the Authors' Park Concept Plan.		■		
11	5.2.11	Prioritize development of sidewalks in residential areas within ½-mile of parks and schools.		■		■
12	5.2.8	Improve the Eddie Moore Sports Complex.		■		
	5.2.13	Develop a pool or aquatic complex feasibility study.			■	
	5.2.6	Prepare an Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.			■	

Figure 84. Prioritized Action Plan (cont.)

Rank	Action		Initiation Time Frame (years)			
			Near-term (1-3)	Mid-term (4-7)	Long-term (8-10+)	On-going
	5.2.5	Improve City Park.			■	
	5.2.7	Implement the Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.			■	
Goal 3: Provide a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages, abilities and interests.						
1	5.3.8	Maintain an updated parks and recreation website to include complete information about the parks system.	■			■
2	5.3.1	Consider conducting a Recreational Programming and Event Assessment.	■			
3	5.3.4	Develop non-intensive outdoor recreation opportunities and programs for children and adults.	■			
4	5.3.6	Provide additional community events in varying locations.	■			■
5	5.3.5	Provide or partner on the provision of indoor recreational activities at various locations.	■			■
6	5.3.7	Consider developing a community garden program.		■		
7	5.3.2	Develop a Recreation Center/Community Center feasibility study.		■		
	5.3.3	Develop or support the development of a Recreation Center/Community Center in Commerce.			■	
Goal 4: Prioritize safety, maintenance and accessibility in Commerce parks.						
1	5.4.1	Conduct a staffing assessment to determine the need for an expanded headcount.	■			
2	5.4.2	Ensure adequate funding and staffing accompany park system expansions.	■			■
3	5.4.4	Develop a parks system management plan.	■			
4	5.4.5	Continue to address ADA accessibility issues on a prioritized basis.	■			■
5	5.4.9	Provide system-wide consistent parks signage.	■			
6	5.4.6	Develop a shade/tree planting study and plan to ensure annual additions to the tree canopy.		■		■

Figure 84. Prioritized Action Plan (cont.)

Rank	Action		Initiation Time Frame (years)			
			Near-term (1-3)	Mid-term (4-7)	Long-term (8-10+)	On-going
7	5.4.7	Increase shade within all parks.		■		■
8	5.4.8	Evaluate opportunities for increased security in parks.		■		■
9	5.4.3	Locate or develop additional storage and workspace for the Parks and Recreation Department.		■		
10	5.4.10	Evaluate opportunities to increase the use of technology in all City parks.		■		■
Goal 5: Pursue partnerships and diverse funding strategies to support the expansion of parks and recreation options for the community.						
1	5.5.5	When warranted, establish joint maintenance agreements with athletic leagues.	■			X
2	5.5.3	Develop sponsorship/funding opportunities through outfield fences and gateway signage.	■			
3	5.5.4	Pursue partnership opportunities with local organizations for mentors, coaches and officials/ referees.	■			
4	5.5.1	Pursue grant funding from diverse sources.	■			■
5	5.5.9	Update the Parks Master Plan.		■		
6	5.5.7	Establish partnerships to support the development of the citywide pedestrian connectivity corridors.		■		■
7	5.5.2	Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships.		■		■
	5.5.6	Coordinate and/or partner with local organizations and entities to provide additional parks and recreation opportunities for the community.			■	■
	5.5.8	Consider pursuing a parks and recreation bond.			■	

Funding Sources

General Funds

This source of funding is supported by ad valorem tax revenues and is generally the primary source of funds for maintenance and operation of the existing park system. The general fund is also the source for projects requiring smaller amounts of capital investment. It is important to include funding for ongoing maintenance and staff requirements for new trail and park improvements.

Economic Development Corporation

Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) are often utilized in communities as a means of concentrating resources toward economic development and creating new jobs. One advantage to EDCs is that they may exist as a public entity (directly associated with municipal government) or as a non-profit organization. EDCs may be created to promote and attract economic development for the City as a whole, or they may be created to specifically address issues within a particular neighborhood or area within the community. EDCs often receive funding from both public and private sources, such as funding by 4B sales tax revenues, and essentially act as an ambassador for the area that they serve. Advocacy and proactive outreach are important functions of EDCs in their attempt to reach out to potential development and provide reasons and incentives for choosing to locate within the identified area.

Bonds

Bonds are generally the most common source used by cities for the purchase of land and for providing development monies. Debt financing through the issuance of municipal bonds is one of the most common ways to fund park, recreation and open space projects. This type of funding is a strategy wherein a city issues a bond, receives an immediate cash payment to finance projects, and must repay the bond with interest over a set period of time ranging from a few years to several decades.

A general obligation bond is amortized using ad valorem taxes and is used to fund capital projects that are not supported by a revenue source. These projects include water service, sanitary sewer service, and park acquisition and development. The availability of bonding for parks is often dependent upon the overall municipal needs financed by this source. Capital items such as purchase of land and physical improvements with a usable life expectancy of 15 to 20 years can be funded with general obligation bonds.

A revenue bond finances projects which produce enough revenue to retire their debt, such as golf courses, batting cages and enterprise-oriented park projects.

Developer Requirements

This involves requiring new development to provide a dedication of land for parks (or fee-in-lieu of land), park development fees, and trail rights-of-way or easements to offset the City's costs.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Local Park Grants

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Local Park Grant Program includes five individual programs that assist local governmental entities with the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities. In general, these grants provide percentage matching grant funds to local units of government to acquire and develop parkland, renovate existing public recreation areas, or construct recreation centers, nature centers and other indoor recreation-related buildings. Current grant requirements can be found at https://tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/recreation-grants/about-local-parks-grants.

Grant Program	Eligible Population
Small Community	<20,000
Non-Urban Outdoor Recreation	<500,000
Urban Outdoor Recreation	<500,000
Non-Urban Indoor Recreation	>500,000
Urban Indoor Recreation	>500,000

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) Grants

The CO-OP grant helps to introduce underserved populations to the services, programs and sites of TPWD. This is not a land acquisition or construction grant; this is only

for programs. Grants are awarded to non-profit organizations, schools, municipalities, counties, cities and other tax-exempt groups. Funds may be used for direct program costs for outdoor recreation or environmental education and conservation programs.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Recreational Trail Grants

TPWD administers the National Recreational Trail Grants in Texas under the approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). This federally funded program receives its funding from a portion of federal gas taxes paid on fuel used in non-highway recreational vehicles.

Private Donations

This source of financial assistance would usually come from a citizen, organization or business that has an interest in assisting with the development of the park system. Land dedication is a common occurrence when property is being developed. The location of a neighborhood park within a residential development offers additional value to residential units within that neighborhood, especially if the residential development is occupied by younger families with children. Once property is acquired through this method, the City should be prepared to improve the facility for use within a reasonable length of time and to maintain the new facility.

Private donations may also be received in the form of funds, facilities, recreation equipment, art and in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued. A Parks Improvement Trust Fund may be set up to manage donations by service organizations, benevolent citizens, willed estates and other donated sources. The purpose of this trust is to establish a permanent source of principal value that will increase as donations occur. The principal cannot be decreased; however, the annual interest can be used for park development.

Public Improvement District (PID)

When authorized by City Council in compliance with state laws, new developments can establish a Public Improvement District (PID). As a taxing district, the PID provides funds specifically for the operation and maintenance of public facilities such as parks and major boulevards.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ)

A TIRZ is a tool used by local governments to finance public improvements in a defined area as approved by the City Council. When an area is designated as a TIRZ district, the tax base is frozen at the current level. As development occurs within the TIRZ, the increased value of property, or the tax increment, is captured. The tax increments are posted to a separate fund to finance public improvements within the district.

Partnership with the School District and County

The City can investigate opportunities to share park facilities and their associated cost with both the local school district and county as they have many common goals. Additionally, assets and costs can be shared between the entities to help meet each of their specific needs. For example, the City may purchase land next to a future school site and a school district may install the facilities, such as a playground, which can be enjoyed by the entire community. As a result, the entire community benefits. Even if this option is currently not available, the City should periodically review this strategy to identify any new partnership opportunities that may arise.

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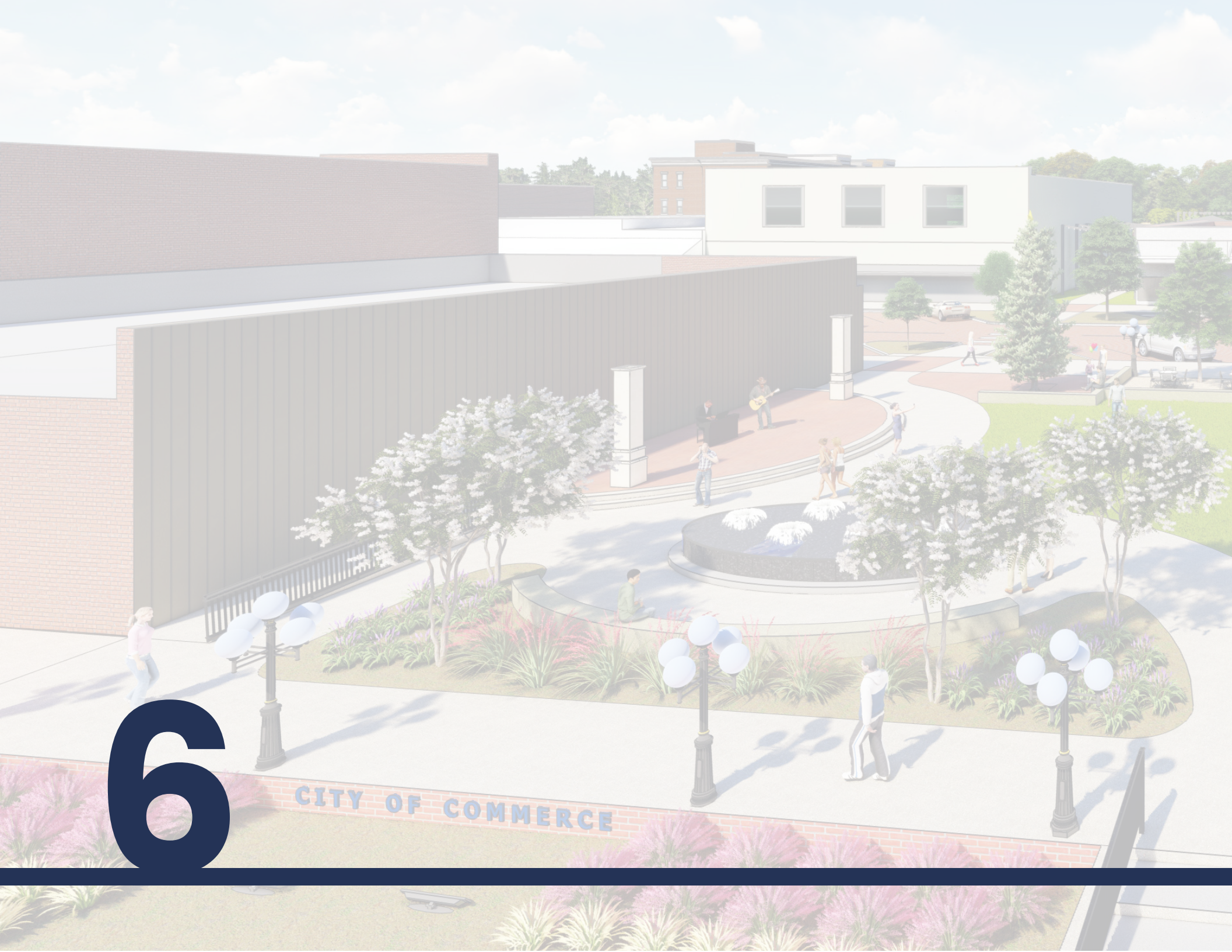


6

DOWNTOWN PLAN

Introduction

In 2022, the City of Commerce set out to revitalize its downtown through the Downtown Commerce Master Plan. This initiative was designed to strengthen the character of the downtown area by engaging a diverse range of stakeholders—from local agencies and neighborhood representatives to business owners. The public engagement process featured a Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC), stakeholder interviews, public input exercises and surveys, including three in-person DAC meetings and two community events. After a year of collaborative effort, the Downtown Plan was officially adopted on January 17, 2023.

Topics of discussion include:

- Downtown Master Plan Vision & Goals
- Land Use and Character Areas
- Improvement Areas
- Branding and Urban Design Strategies
- Additional Improvements
- Implementation Progress

Conceptual rendering of Downtown Commerce

Downtown Master Plan Vision & Goals

The Downtown Master Plan establishes a clear vision and goals that serve as a roadmap for achieving the community's direction, vision and aspirations.

Vision

Downtown Commerce is a regional destination for history, culture, and community. Locals and visitors are drawn to its unique blend of businesses, entertainment, and public spaces. Characterized by walkable streets, inviting outdoor spaces, and well-established architecture, Downtown Commerce functions as the heart of this close-knit community.

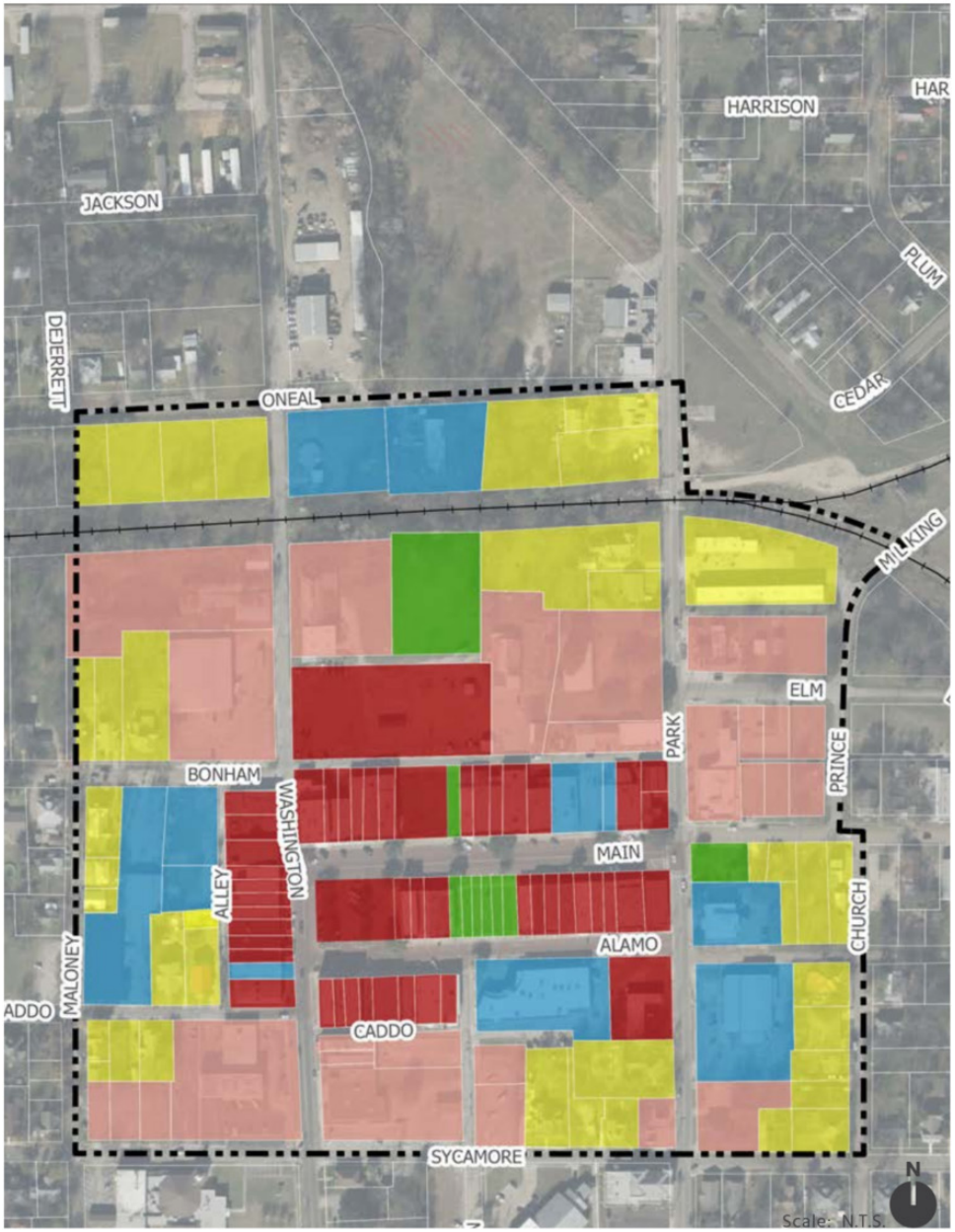
Goals

- Support existing points of interest and develop new destinations to attract people to Downtown.
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation as well as parking throughout Downtown.
- Attract and retain retail, restaurants, and entertainment businesses that appeal to Commerce residents and visitors.
- Create a year-round calendar of events for Downtown.

Land Use and Character Areas

Land use and character areas were identified in the Downtown Plan to help define the general locations that are appropriate for varying types and scales of development and redevelopment in Downtown Commerce. The map below reveals the identified land use areas that serve as a blueprint for the future of Downtown. The following page details a brief summary of the different chracteristics of each land use category.

Map 23. Land Use and Character Plan



Study Area Boundary
Civic
Parks/Public Space
Downtown Core
Core Transition
Flexible Residential Neighborhood

Downtown Core

The Downtown Core area serves as the heart of Downtown Commerce, including the blocks along Washington Street, Main Street, and Alamo Street, designed to promote a walkable and inviting atmosphere. This area supports a mix of retail, commercial, dining and entertainment uses, with multi-story buildings that may also offer upper-floor lodging or office space. The architectural landscape is defined by historic and renovated urban buildings with storefronts and mixed-use configurations.

Core Transition

The Core Transition area serves as a transition zone between the non-residential uses in the Downtown Core and residential uses concentrated in the Flexible Residential Neighborhood area. The Core Transition area features a blend of neighborhood-scale office, retail, restaurant and commercial uses. It also accommodates small-scale, medium-density residential developments and some auto-oriented commercial projects near major gateways.

Flexible Residential Neighborhood

The Flexible Residential Neighborhood encompasses existing residential neighborhoods within the study area. It supports both new and established neighborhood uses, including single-family detached homes, medium-density housing (both attached and detached) and opportunities for adaptive reuse. Suburban-style dwellings and accessory dwelling units like garage apartments further contribute to the area's flexibility.

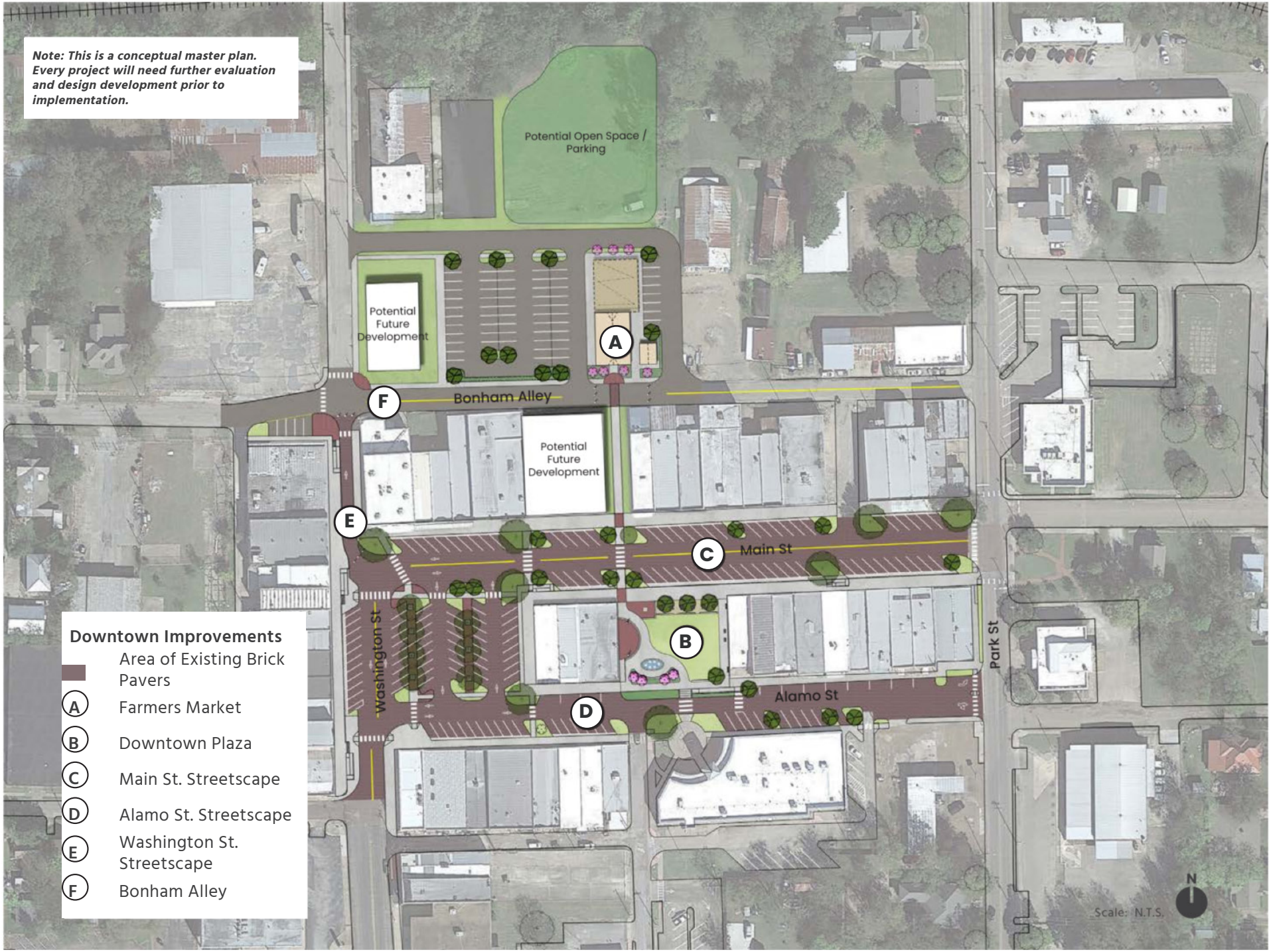
Civic

Civic uses include institutional or religious uses such as City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, public libraries, post offices and local places of worship. These uses typically attract regular activity and contribute to the vibrancy of Downtown Commerce.

Parks and Open Space

Parks and Open Space uses include existing and new public spaces in Commerce, such as the plaza across from City Hall and the park next to the public library with the Jernigin's Store historical marker. These areas provide essential gathering spaces that enhance the community's atmosphere.

Map 24. Downtown Master Plan



Improvement Areas

The Downtown Plan identifies various projects intended to attract additional regular use by residents and visitors through improved sidewalks, commercial developments, and new family-friendly parking spaces. The following items were identified as key improvement areas in the Downtown Plan. Specific locations of each area can be found on the map to the left.

Enhanced Farmers Market

The existing farmers market along Bonham Alley is targeted for improvements that will create a more pedestrian-friendly public space. Proposed enhancements include a pavilion or shade structure, restroom facilities, outdoor event and dining areas, and an entry plaza featuring special paving, lighting and site furnishings.

Downtown Plaza

Located between Main and Alamo Streets, the Downtown Plaza is envisioned as a central gathering space for Commerce. Its proximity to City Hall and restaurants makes it ideal for community events. Planned upgrades include an event lawn, performance stage, water feature, outdoor dining spaces and enhancements to the existing mural and building exterior. A pedestrian corridor is also a key suggestion to connect City Hall, the plaza, and the farmers market area to make it more accessible to visitors and residents.

Main St. Streetscape

The Main Street streetscape improvements focus on achieving better pedestrian-friendly travel routes for users. Improvement suggestions include narrowing the vehicular travel lane width while keeping the TxDOT right-of-way, re-striping the angled parking spaces to a standard length, improving pedestrian shared-use paths, improving stairway and ramp conditions, improving crosswalks, and improving lighting and other sight furnishings.

Conceptual rendering of the Downtown Plaza

Alamo St. Streetscape

Alamo Street is a one-way street that runs east to west in front of City Hall. Recommendations for Alamo Street include improving paving and pedestrian routes at the parking lot on the corner of Alamo and Washington Streets, directional and law enforcement signage, lane narrowing to expand the pedestrian path, a redesign of stairs and ramps as part of the Downtown Plaza development.

Washington St. Streetscape

Washington Street is an important north-south second arterial street that connects Downtown to the rest of the City. Suggested improvements for the area include various improvements to wayfinding signage, upgraded crosswalks and sidewalks, narrower vehicular lanes with retention of the TxDOT right-of-way, conversion of a narrow northern segment to one-way traffic for safety and an improved intersection with Bonham Alley.

Bonham Alley

Bonham Alley runs east to west and connects the core transition and Downtown core areas in Commerce. The area is slated for safety improvements at its intersection with Washington Street, the addition of sidewalks on its north side to improve access to the farmers market, enhanced roadway connections and upgrades to lighting, site furnishings and landscaping.

Branding and Urban Design Strategies

Implementing branding and urban design strategies that make the Downtown more recognizable and vibrant is key to developing a stronger and more cohesive character. These strategies specifically target physical improvements that can be implemented to make Downtown more identifiable and beautiful.

Primary Corridors

Primary corridors receive the highest levels of investment and aesthetic treatment, including expanded paving areas, enhanced intersection and crosswalk treatments and improved landscape buffers.

Secondary Corridors

Secondary corridors receive a lower level of aesthetic treatment and investment while still benefiting from consistent sidewalk connectivity, selective landscape enhancements and improved intersection treatments.

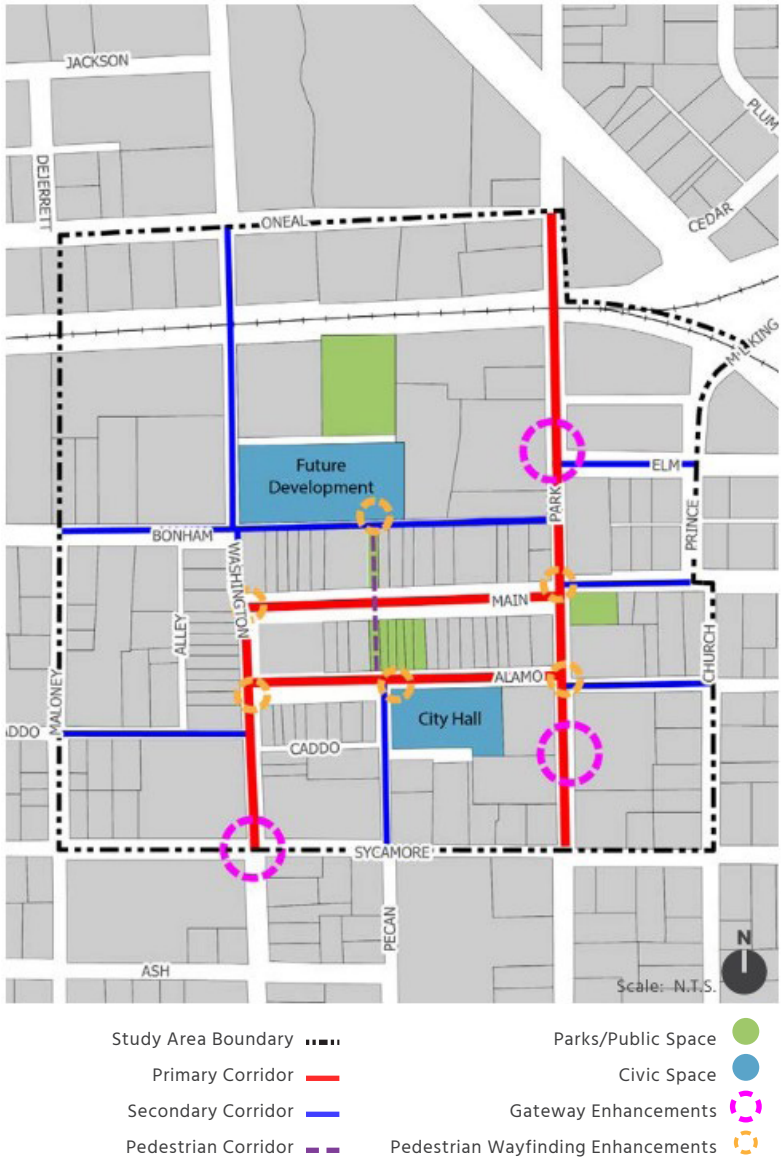
Wayfinding

A comprehensive wayfinding signage program is recommended to help visitors navigate Downtown Commerce. Key destinations—such as public parking, restrooms, City Hall, the farmers market, the library and central open spaces—will be clearly marked throughout the area.

Washington Street and Park Street Gateways

To clearly mark the entrance into Downtown, distinct gateways featuring signage, enhanced landscaping, lighting and public art are proposed at the intersections of Washington Street and Sycamore Street, as well as Park Street and Sycamore Street.

Map 25. Pedestrian Wayfinding Map



Additional Improvements

Beyond the core improvement areas, the Downtown Plan recommends several broader enhancements listed below.

Pedestrian Safety

Pedestrian safety enhances the overall sense of safety that individuals experience as they walk throughout Downtown. Upgrades include improved crosswalks at intersections and mid-block locations, a connected sidewalk network, better signage and signals for both pedestrians and motorists and enhanced street lighting.

Lighting

Lighting is an important safety element that creates ambiance and promotes visual appeal during evening activities. It can also function as an architectural element that enhances an area's character and sense of safety and contributes to the branding of Downtown.

Site Furnishings

Site furnishings are architectural elements such as benches, trash receptacles, and picnic tables that enhance an area's sense of comfort and character. They should be attractive, durable, and made of vandal-resistant materials to ensure longevity.

Greenscape

Strategic landscaping using shade trees, ornamental trees, shrub parkways, flowering plants and seasonal color are recommended to improve the microclimate, provide shelter and visually enhance pedestrian corridors, public art installations and monuments throughout Downtown.

Public Art

Public art can be used to celebrate the local history, culture, and work of artists throughout an area. Forms of public art such as sculptures and monuments are recommended to be strategically placed throughout Downtown, whether serving as permanent installations or seasonal exhibits rotated regularly.

Implementation Progress

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
	Master Plan Actions						
1	**Construct a Farmers Market** Design and construct a farmers market located on Bonham Alley, next to Huffman's Farm Supply. This could include a pavilion, outdoor seating, public restroom, and community garden. This project could be divided into phases. Parking improvements could be done within years 3, while the pavilion and public restrooms could be completed in years 6.	◆	◆				
2	**Activate Plaza Across from City Hall** Design and construct the Downtown Plaza expansion. For budgetary purposes this includes an event lawn, performance area, unique surface textures, outdoor dining area, and improved landscape areas.	◆					
3	**Construct Main Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Main Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.	◆					
4	**Construct Alamo Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Alamo Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.		◆				

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
5	**Construct Washington Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Washington Street streetscape between Bonham Alley and Caddo Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, improve on-street parking, and address significant elevation change from street level to sidewalk.		◆				
6	**Convert Part of Washington Street to One-Way** Convert Washington Street between Bonham Alley and Main Street to one-way in order to address vehicular circulation issues. Street improvements can also include temporary bollards and string lighting.			◆			
7	**Construct Bonham Alley Improvements** Design and construct Bonham Alley to address safety concerns at the intersection of Bonham Alley and Washington Street. Improve the pedestrian experience by adding sidewalks on the north side of the street and crosswalks to connect the farmers market to the rest of Downtown.			◆			
8	**Develop Washington Street Downtown Gateway Signage** Design and construct gateway signage at Washington Street and Sycamore Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from the south (one of the primary arrival paths for most local residents).			◆			
9	**Develop Park Street Downtown Gateway Signage** Design and construct gateway signage at Park Street and Alamo Street and Park Street and Main Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from either the south or north ends of Park Street.			◆			

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
10	**Develop Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage** Develop and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage, primarily at pedestrian scale, to direct pedestrians to key locations throughout Downtown. The location of signage should be strategic and considerate of walk times to key locations.		◆				
11	**Develop Vehicular Wayfinding Signage** Design and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage targeting vehicular traffic to direct drivers to key locations throughout Downtown including destinations and public parking. Consider expanding this into a City-wide wayfinding program that includes special efforts directing vehicles into Downtown from SH 24, SH 11E, Maple Street, and Culver Street. Part of this effort should include the design and installation of public parking signage for public lots.		◆				
12	**Provide Improved Street Lighting** Replace existing street lighting with architectural poles and luminaires that maintain the decorative, historic character of Downtown.	◆			◆		
	Operational & Programming Actions						
1	**Update Ordinances** Review and consider any ordinance or regulatory improvements that need to be made to achieve the Downtown Master Plan.	◆			◆		

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
2	**Enhance Storefront Appearance** Establish storefront programs to create visual interest in vacant or underutilized spaces, through the use of public art, business displays, and similar efforts. For example, a vacant storefront could have a mural on the windows, vinyls applied with unique/quirky aspects of history, or even have a display for another business in Downtown, etc. Existing businesses should develop creative displays that entice customers and change with seasons. They can highlight holidays and community events, such as homecoming (high school pride), etc.	◆					
3	**Develop a Downtown Commerce Website and Social Media Presence** Develop a standalone Downtown website independent of the City and tourism websites. This establishes an accessible source of information about Downtown-specific events, sales, and promotions. These efforts should crossover with a social media presence for both Downtown and the City. Seek social media content to promote interaction - historic photos and short videos are particularly effective.	◆			◆		
4	**Develop a Downtown Commerce Brand** Develop a unique brand for Downtown Commerce. This should include a district name, logo, and tag line that conveys activity. Consider building a product line, including items for sale (e.g., t-shirts, hats), to promote tourism, retail, and employment Downtown.	◆			◆		

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
5	**Develop a Downtown Events and Promotion Calendar** Develop a Downtown-specific events and promotions calendar featuring City-sponsored events, business events like live music, and special sales/promotions. This should be prominently featured on the Downtown website. The City should also regularly assess Downtown events, including surveys of stakeholders regarding impact, income, and staff impact; best organizations to lead each event; and purpose/intent of the events.	◆			◆		
6	**Continue Pop-Up Events for Entrepreneurs** Continue to use existing businesses and/or vacant buildings as pop-up space for entrepreneurs to "test the waters" on a new business concept at reduced risk.	◆			◆		
7	**Collaborate with Higher Education Institutions** Collaborate with local higher education facilities (e.g., business support/education, intern programs, entrepreneurship-focused degrees) to identify opportunities to support Downtown, support academic efforts, and support opportunities for students.		◆				
8	**Downtown Sponsorship Program** Develop a sponsorship program for Downtown, expanding the base of support beyond the Downtown area to include other local industries. This could include sponsorship packages for particular events or Downtown improvements, among other things. Doing so helps provide financial resources and emphasizes that a strong Downtown benefits all, even businesses outside of Downtown.	◆			◆		

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
9	**Establish/Strengthen Monthly Activation** Develop standing monthly events targeting arts and culture, with extended business hours (1st Friday, etc.). Holding monthly events shifts Downtown higher in consideration for local residents—a set monthly "date" where they know something will be happening.	◆			◆		
10	**Create Public and Mural Arts Program** Establish a mural arts program for Downtown Commerce. This could include commissioning murals as well as providing grants and/or design assistance to artists, residents, and business owners interested in placing murals on private property. San Marcos provides an excellent example of a diverse mural arts program with several years of success.	◆					
11	**Allocate Downtown Staffing Resources** As need arises, consider allocating Downtown staffing resources to effectively implement this Plan and support Downtown Commerce.			◆			
12	**Establish a Commerce Main Street Program** Establish a Main Street Program and gain access to the Main Street America network of resources and framework to implementing Downtown improvements.		◆				
13	**Explore Historic District Designation for Downtown** Explore the potential of defining a historic district to assist with regulating building materials of future developments, renovations, and facade preservation.		◆				

	Actions	Initation Time Frame (Yrs)				Action Status	Status Notes
		1-3	4-6	7-10+	On-going		
	Finance Actions						
1	**Develop a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)** Designate a Downtown TIRZ to capture incremental property tax growth. The City should lead this initiative, but request the County, school district, and potentially the university to join the TIRZ. The tax increment would be used to help fund the projects in the Downtown Master Plan over the next 20 years.	◆			◆		
2	**Pursue TxDOT Funding** TxDOT administers Transportation Alternative (TA) funds for locally sponsored bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects in communities across the state. Up to $250 million will be made available statewide for projects during FY 22-FY 25.	◆			◆		

7

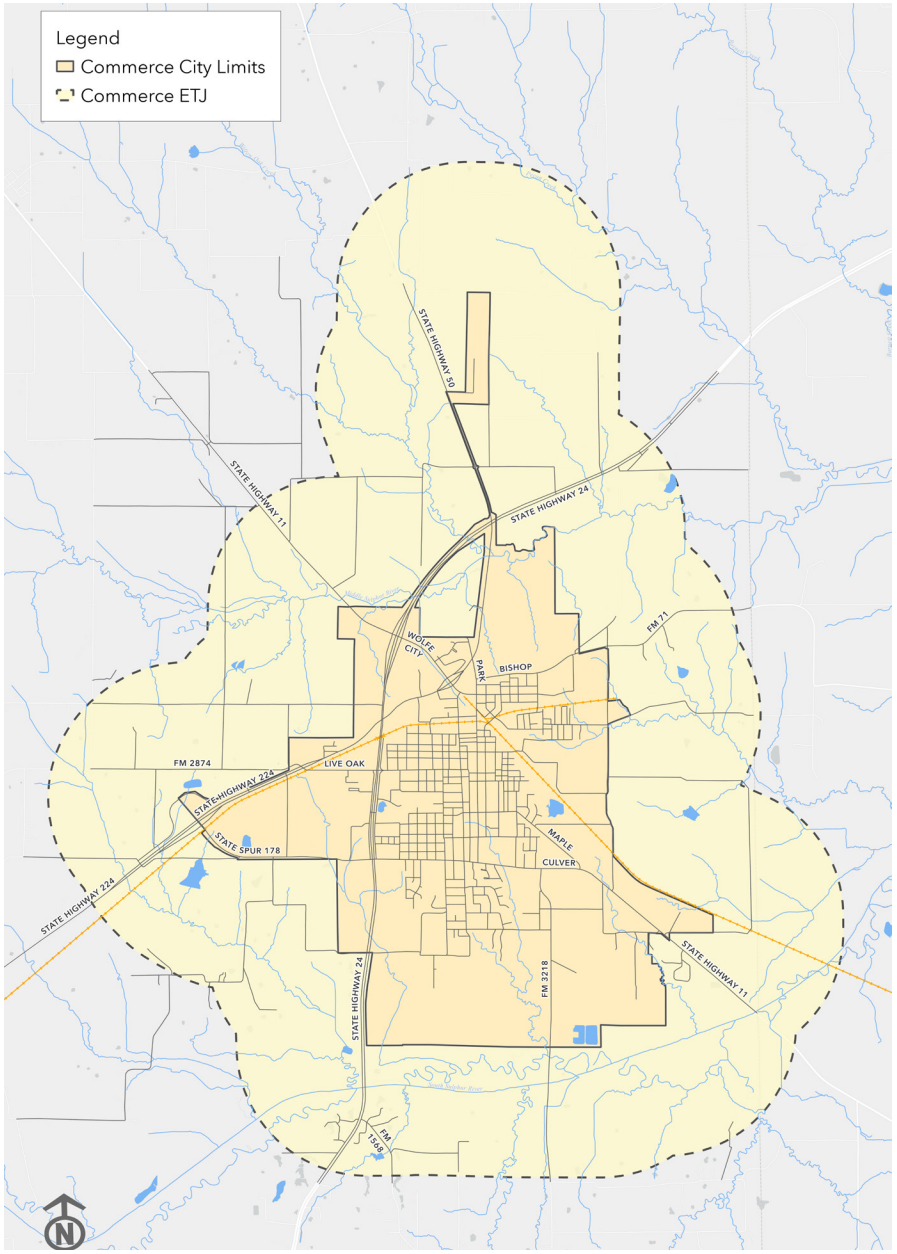
ANNEXATION & GROWTH

Introduction

Commerce's growth management priorities exist within an ever-changing environment. Past strategies for Texas cities typically revolved around assuring quality development in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and assessing areas outside of the city for annexation priority. State Law changes adopted since 2017 have either restricted or eliminated the ability of cities, including Commerce, to control development outside of their immediate borders. As a result, cities increasingly rely on land already within the City Limits for new growth or utilizing strategies such as developer agreements that provide for infrastructure in exchange for future annexation.

Far from rendering growth management strategies unimportant, this new reality has made it more important than ever for cities to grow in a careful way that does not overutilize scarce resources. These strategies break down into several categories, ranging from strategies that navigate the legal and regulatory landscape to providing resource allocation and planning for future infrastructure needs.

Map 26. City Limits & ETJ



Summary of State Law Changes for Annexation & City ETJs

In 2019, during the 86th session of the Texas legislature, House Bill 347 was adopted, which significantly changed municipal annexation in the State. This bill eliminated forced annexation by cities and required consent from all residents and property owners in a potential annexation area to approve property annexation. While this legislation eliminated the ability for cities to forcibly annex, cities are still allowed to annex land with the consent of the property owner and to impose certain regulations in their ETJs.

The statutory environment under which this plan was written not only restricts involuntary annexation, it allows any property owner to opt out of a city's ETJ. In response, Commerce, like many cities, is forced to prioritize new growth areas according to the intentions of each property owner and the City's ability to immediately serve a property with services and resources, particularly water.

There are areas within the City Limits and the ETJ that remain undeveloped due to limited access to City provided water and wastewater utilities. These areas are generally located to the north and east of State Highways 24 and 224, with the highway acting as a barrier for utility lines and limiting the development potential of the areas. Due to this lack of access to City utilities, the tools for regulating development in those areas are largely restricted to zoning control (in the City Limits), subdivision control (in the City Limits and ETJ) and economic incentives. Arrangements that provide for infrastructure extensions will typically be regulated by a development agreement, which under State Law may include certain provisions regulating the use of land and construction of buildings in exchange for annexation and City services.

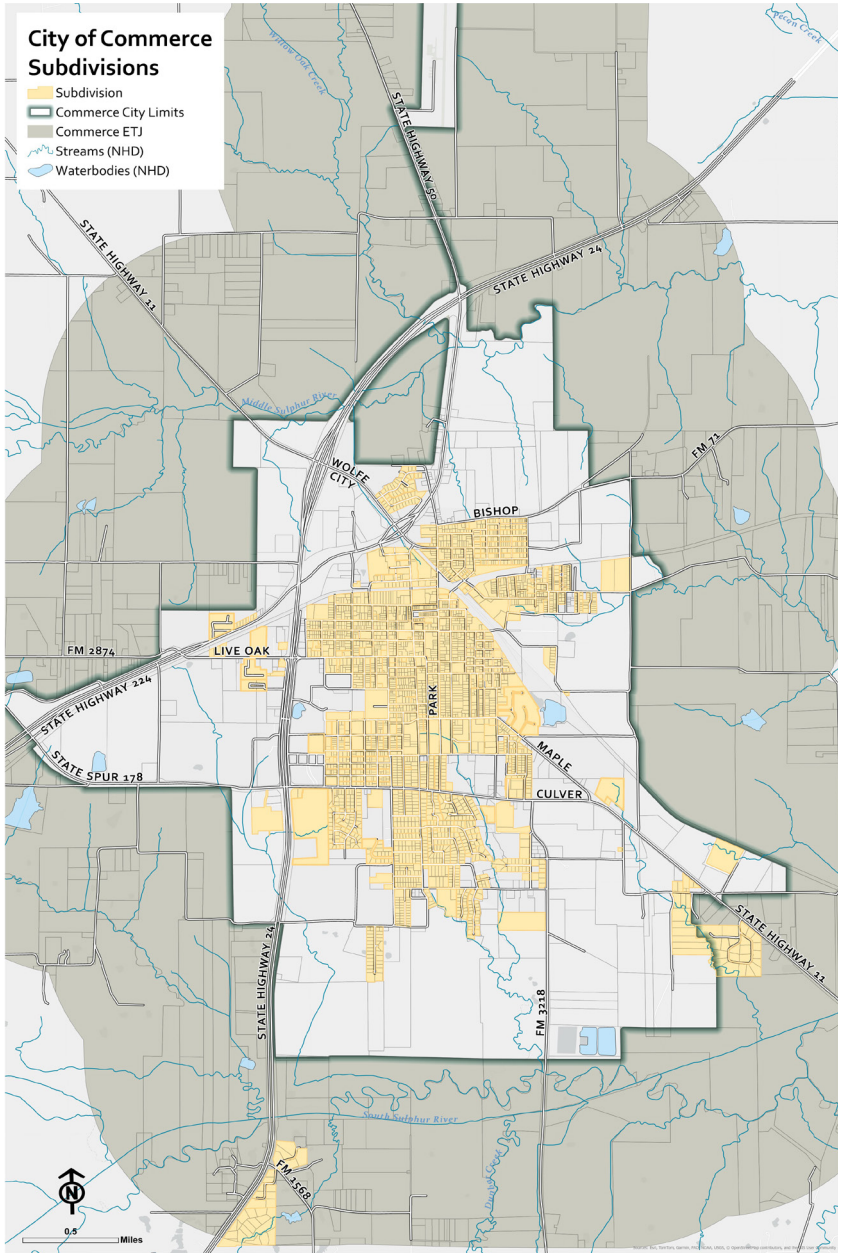
Arrangements that provide for economic incentives generally take the form of a chapter 380 agreement (so named because it is authorized in Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code) which ties infrastructure investment to jobs and business activities that benefit the community. While state law allows for these types of incentives, cities are responsible for providing a consistent source of funding in order to implement them. Because of caps on tax revenue growth also implemented in 2019, cities are limited both in the amount of new ad valorem revenue from property already within the City Limits as well as new sources of revenue that can be annexed from the ETJ. Each of these factors, which, combined with a relative lack of any new restrictions on developing land, constitute potential challenges for the ability of cities to plan for their future growth.

Development in the ETJ

The City of Commerce's ETJ is the statutory area extending one mile from the City Limits. Within this area, Commerce can maintain subdivision and platting authority, along with standards for roadway construction. However, the ability to annex areas within the ETJ depends upon the consent of private property owners, making annexation challenging in areas where subdivision has already occurred. For the purposes of annexation, the areas within Commerce's ETJ are largely unsubdivided and consist of large to medium-sized land holdings. While these parcels could be assembled, subdivided into large lots, and developed on well water and on-site sanitary sewer (OSSF) without requiring annexation into the City, denser developments will likely require utility service at a larger scale.

In addition to the City of Commerce, other nearby water service providers include the North Hunt WSC to the north, west and east, Gafford Chapel WSC to the southeast, and Campbell WSC to the south. The service areas of these WSCs generally do not overlap with the ETJ of Commerce and the nearest city water provider is the City of Greenville. Because the service boundaries of Commerce's water utility do not extend outside the City Limits, Commerce is not obligated to serve any development within the ETJ with water. The city may elect to extend water service to development in exchange for annexation into the city, provided it is cost-effective or strategic to the future growth and management of Commerce.

Map 27. Commerce Subdivisions



ETJ Development and Growth Strategy Summaries

In Texas there are various ways for development to occur in the extraterritorial jurisdiction. While cities are limited in their ability to annex, there are still tools to facilitate development in the ETJ, and in many cases eventually bring those areas into the City Limits.

Annexations

An annexation is the process of bringing in land from outside of the city limits into the City's jurisdiction. Generally, cities annex areas to provide services to developing areas and to extend the regulatory authority in order to protect the public health and safety. Additionally, annexations ensure that developments these areas share the tax burden for providing services with the rest of the residents. Since areas just outside the City Limits often utilize services such as parks and libraries, they are often consumers of free services that are otherwise paid for by City residents.

Interlocal Agreements

An interlocal agreement is a contract or agreement between two or more local government authorities to provide services to specific areas. These services can include, but are not limited to, police and fire protection, street maintenance, waste disposal, and planning and engineering services. Commerce is not currently engaged in any interlocal agreements, but provision of these services in areas outside the City Limits can constitute a valuable resource as well as a higher level of service for residents. Of note, for a City to annex an area, the level of services it provides in the newly annexed area must be equal to the level of service provided to other areas in the City Limits.

Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs)

Established by the Texas Water Code. MUDs are state-created political subdivisions that provide essential services like water, sewer, and drainage to areas outside of city limits, where services are unavailable. Funding for MUDs comes from bonds leveraged by property taxes within each district, with the revenue used to maintain the infrastructure. MUDs may become common in outlying areas with access to water and high housing demand. There are currently no MUDs in the Commerce ETJ.

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs)

Established by Texas Local Government Code Chapter 372. Similar to MUDs, PIDs are special-purpose districts created by municipalities to provide services or maintenance within the district. Unlike MUDs, PIDs are created by municipalities and counties rather than the state and are commonly utilized to provide an additional level of services beyond basic infrastructure, from construction and maintenance of trails to graffiti removal and even marketing support within the district. PIDs can take on debt, but the debt must be obligated by the district rather than by the city or county that created the PID. Although PIDs can be established to maintain existing improvements, they are often established in new areas where the additional cost of living is absorbed by the initial residents of the area, rather than being imposed on current residents. There are currently no PIDs in the Commerce ETJ.

Municipal Management Districts (MMDs)

Established by Texas Local Government Code Chapter 375. MMDs are state-created political subdivisions that provide essential services like water, sewer, and drainage to areas outside of City Limits, where services are unavailable. MMDs can also perform other types of services such as construction and maintenance of public spaces, business recruitment, and even transit services. Funding for MMDs comes from bonds leveraged by property taxes within each district, with the revenue used to maintain the infrastructure. There are currently no MMDs in the Commerce ETJ.

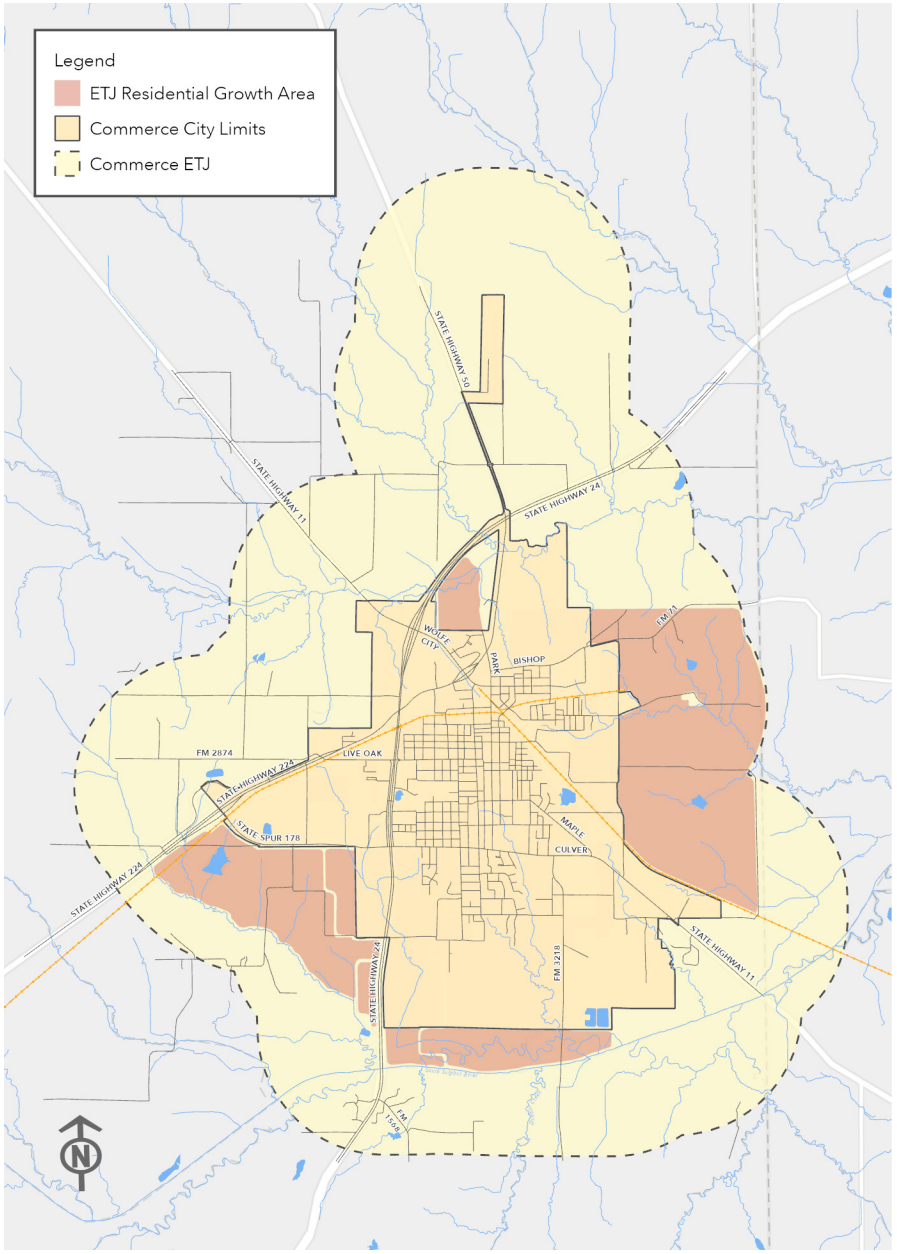
Growth Scenarios

When considering new growth within City limits or at the periphery, Commerce should use its Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to position desired areas for growth and redevelopment and to minimize barriers to the preferred vision. This strategy should emphasize efficiency to serve and address equity concerns based on local area infrastructure conditions.

Development also represents an opportunity to build key pieces of Commerce's infrastructure, including right-of-way reservations and extension and/or upsizing of arterial roadways, trunk mains, regional stormwater facilities and other vital infrastructure. To accomplish this, it's crucial for Commerce to adopt water/wastewater and stormwater master plans updated to align with growth projections, and to update development regulations, ordinances and technical manuals as needed to clearly frame expectations and responsibilities for infrastructure improvement during the development process.

Because of Commerce's irregular City limits and the difficulties anticipated with future annexation, the City's relationship with Hunt County is crucial to coordinate future capital planning for necessary roadway improvements in areas that lack adequate infrastructure. Growth in Commerce also affects the school district and its capacity to grow, particularly in the eastern portion of Commerce where a significant portion of future residents will live. Ongoing coordination between the City and CISD will allow each to identify and reserve areas for new schools and facilities and eliminate the need and expense of acquiring land in the future. Schools located near population centers will also ensure that City infrastructure is deployed efficiently to minimize future maintenance and management costs.

Map 28. Potential Growth Areas



Growth Needs

Staffing and Support Needs

While there is no set formula for determining the amount of necessary personnel the City needs, as Commerce continues to grow it will be increasingly important to increase staff to maintain the City infrastructure, public services, and safety.

With the projected residential growth to the east into the ETJ, the City's first responders will be stretched thin to maintain the current level of service and response time. While the ETJ areas to the east are largely vacant currently, similar areas within the City limits have begun to develop in recent years, as discussed in Chapter 4 Housing & Neighborhoods. It is expected that these areas will experience growth, increasing the need to expand the police and fire coverage into the area in the future. Similar consideration must be given for increases in administrative, parks and public works maintenance staff.

As the City assesses staffing levels, consultants and contractors should also be considered for City work. Cities commonly hire contractors to provide legal, engineering, and planning services and can be beneficial when a city does not have the budget or workload to bring on a full time employee.

Parks and Open Space Needs

Discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the City currently lacks adequate parks and open space to support it's population. As the City grows and adds new residential developments the City will need to add additional parkland to support these development and will need to work with residential developers to establish new parks and open spaces.

As Commerce expands its open space the City will need to hire new support staff to maintain the parks. The City can fund these positions by establishing parkland dedication fees for new residential developments in the community.

Other Growth Areas

Two future potential development areas are not listed on Map 28 as areas of general growth focus, but are still subject to particular growth pressures. The first is the area adjacent to the airport, which could support further hangar and commercial space. Additionally, as the area surrounding ETAMU gradually densifies, the adjacent areas in the ETJ along Highway 224 should maintain their existing character with traditional single-family residential development types.

Growth Funding Opportunities

Bonds

Bonds are generally the most common funding source used by cities for managing development and growth. Debt financing through the issuance of municipal bonds is a common way to fund construction and maintenance of roads, parks, and City facilities that don't generate a source of revenue. This type of funding requires a City to issue a bond for which it receives an immediate cash payment to finance projects, then must repay the bond with interest over a set period of time.

A general obligation bond is used for the for capital projects that are not supported by a revenue source. Generally these projects include park acquisition and development. Capital items with specific life expectancies may also be funded with general obligation bonds.

Revenue bonds are used for the financing of projects that produce enough revenue to eventually retire their debt. These projects include water service, sanitary sewer service, and revenue-generating parks and recreational facilities.

Grants

Federal funding for municipalities is often available in the form of grants and bonds through various federal departments including the Department of Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. These grants are either dispersed directly to municipalities or through State agencies. As Commerce continues to grow, it is recommended that the City pursue any and all federal grant funding. Some sources of grant funding are limited to cities of certain population. Chapter 4 Housing & Neighborhoods contains specific information regarding housing grants.

Exactions and Property Dedication

Texas Local Government Code allows municipalities to require the dedication of certain facilities during development. While this can be a source of capital construction for needed infrastructure projects, or land for future City projects, the amount of land dedication required must be proportionate to the level of impact caused by the development. While the City may require that a developer dedicate a portion of right of way for future road construction or dedicate park land for future parks, it cannot require the developer to fund an entire arterial roadway, or a project on the other side of the City, or to construct a regional park. The City's exaction requirements must be strong enough to require a proportionate relief of burden from acquiring new land or new facilities, but not so exacting that it exposes the City to legal challenges during development.

Donations

Another way to secure funding for development is to seek donations from private entities to support future growth. These donations can come from a variety of sources, such as individuals, institutions, corporations, and foundations. Additionally, donations are not limited to monetary contributions and can include land donations for future city facilities like parks, libraries, and fire stations.

Recommended Strategies

Strategies
1. Update the zoning code and subdivision regulations to prepare for the future growth of the City and align the regulations with state law.
2. Explore financing opportunities for future maintenance through special districts, such as PIDs.
3. Ensure that growth and annexation into the ETJ will produce revenue that balances capital expenditures and maintenance.
4. Identify service areas that are in need of staff increases as the City continues to grow.
5. Explore funding opportunities to support future growth and development.
6. Coordinate with other agencies such as TxDOT, Commerce ISD, and ETAMU to manage future growth.
7. Explore opportunities for future growth planning around the airport, including expansion of facilities, access roads, and utilities, as well as supportive land uses.

Tell Us About Housing & Neighborhoods
What housing types are lacking in Commerce?

8

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

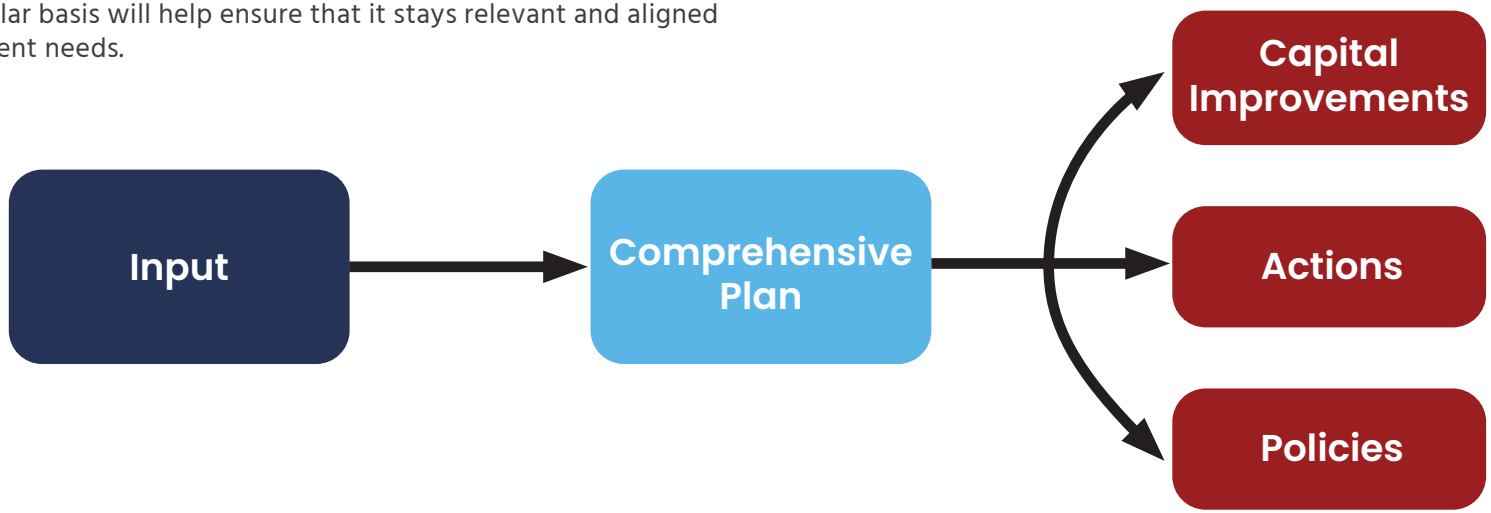
The policies and recommendations developed in this Comprehensive Plan will shape Commerce's future. These strategies will guide decisions that influence many facets of the City's physical development and social environment. Planning is a long-term, continuous process, and this Plan is designed to be a living tool that can be modified and periodically updated to keep up with changing conditions, trends, and community needs over time.

This Plan's success depends on the City's consistent and proactive implementation of its goals and strategies. This final chapter of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes the recommended actions made throughout the Plan and prioritizes the necessary measures to be taken, time frames, and responsible parties for each initiative.

As Commerce experiences shifts in its socioeconomic landscape and development patterns over time, updates to the Plan will be necessary. Remaining attentive to changes across the City and revisiting the Plan on a regular basis will help ensure that it stays relevant and aligned with current needs.

Implementation may occur through various methods, including through adopted development regulations, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances and capital improvement plans. While some recommendations can be achieved by enhancing existing regulations or processes, others may require the creation of new programs or policy tools.

To be truly effective, the Comprehensive Plan must serve as a foundation for everyday decision-making. Whether resurfacing a street, approving a residential plat, amending a zoning provision, enforcing building codes, or constructing new infrastructure, the City should consistently reference the principles and proposals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan.



Flexible and Alterable Guide

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to serve as a guiding framework for policy decisions and long-term development in Commerce. Rather than being a static document, the Plan is a flexible and living tool that should evolve alongside the community. Regular review and timely updates are essential to ensure that the City's goals and strategies remain relevant.

Following adoption, the Plan should be regularly reviewed to assess current conditions and evaluate progress toward implementation. These reviews will help identify necessary adjustments to capital improvement priorities, zoning ordinances, and other policy tools. It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission dedicate one annual meeting to evaluating the Plan's status and effectiveness, with the findings reported to the City Council for further consideration. Periodic reviews of the Plan should include consideration of the following:

- The City's progress in implementing the Plan
- Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan
- Community support for the Plan's goals and objectives
- Changes in state law

Complete Review with Public Participation

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Comprehensive Plan should undergo a complete, more thorough review and update every five or 10 years. The review and updating process should begin with the establishment of a steering committee that is appointed to assist in the preparation of this Plan. If possible, this committee or the Planning and Zoning Commission should be in charge of the periodic review of the Plan. Specific input on major changes should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders and major stakeholders, developers, business owners, and other residents and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City.

Education and Training

Effective implementation of the Comprehensive Plan requires a shared understanding of its contents and implications among those responsible for putting it into action. While City Staff and management may be familiar with the comprehensive planning process and its impact on day-to-day decisions, others involved in implementation, such as appointed officials and other community stakeholders, may benefit from additional guidance. To build capacity and alignment, the City should provide educational materials and facilitate work sessions with the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, and other key groups. The goals of such training may include:

- Establishing an understanding of the rules and responsibilities of each party related to the implementation and maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan
- A review of the Plan's content and how it relates to the decisions and actions of each involved party
- Implementation tasking and priority-setting, allowing each group to establish their own one-, two-, and five-year agendas in coordination with the strategic agenda of the City

Regulatory Mechanisms

The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan relies heavily on the City's regulatory tools and decision-making processes. Routine actions such as reviewing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision proposals offer opportunities to align development with the Plan's goals. Each land use decision should be carefully evaluated in the context of the Plan's recommendations. If a decision deviates from the Plan, accompanying amendments should be made to maintain internal consistency and fairness in future decision-making.

Two of the most proactive and effective ways to support the Plan's implementation are through updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance. These tools shape the physical development of Commerce and ensure that new growth occurs in a well-planned and coordinated manner.

Zoning Ordinance

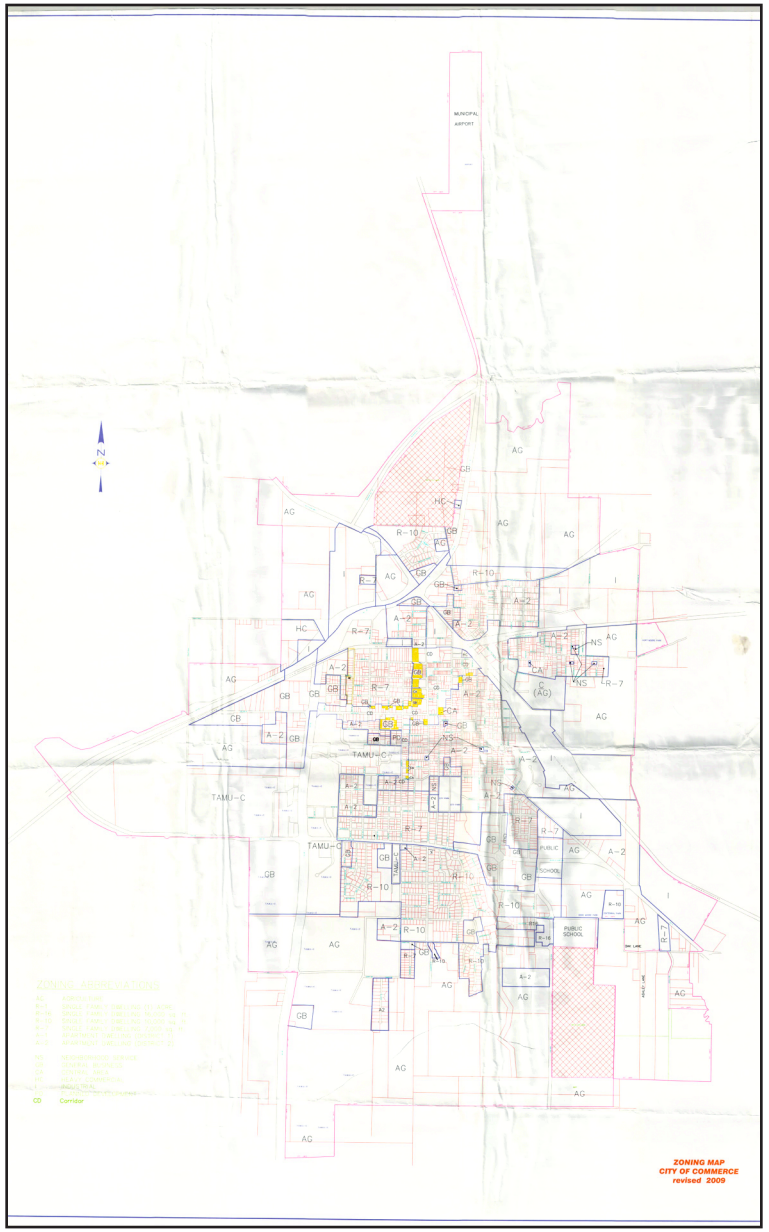
Zoning is one of the most powerful tools for shaping land use and growth patterns. The City's Zoning Ordinance should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the goals and strategies established in this Plan. Any proposed zoning and land use changes should be made within the context of existing land uses, future land uses, and planned infrastructure, including roadways, water and wastewater.

Zoning Text Amendments

In addition to zoning map changes, amendments to the zoning text may be necessary to align the City's regulations with the Plan's long-term vision. Zoning text amendments may involve revising permitted uses, development standards, or design guidelines. These changes allow the City to be responsive to evolving market trends, community needs, and emerging development types that may not be addressed under existing regulations.

Zoning Map Amendments

State law gives power to cities to regulate the use of land, but regulations should be grounded in an adopted plan. Therefore, Commerce's Zoning Map should be as consistent as possible with the Future Land Use Map. Although it is neither feasible nor advisable to undertake wholesale zoning changes immediately, the City should identify priority areas where short-term zoning adjustments are most needed. Over time, through incremental updates, the Zoning Map should evolve to reflect the land use pattern envisioned in this Plan.



Map 29. City of Commerce Zoning Map

Subdivision Ordinance

The act of subdividing land to create building sites has a major effect on the overall design and image of Commerce. Much of the basic physical form of the City is currently created by the layout of streets, easements, and lots. In the future, the basic physical form of Commerce will be further affected by such action. Requirements for adequate public facilities are essential to ensure the City's orderly and efficient growth. For Commerce, the Subdivision Ordinance plays an even more imperative role. Although the City cannot regulate land use or form within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), Texas law gives the City the authority to enforce its Subdivision Ordinance within the ETJ under the assumption that these areas may, in the future, be annexed within the adjacent municipality. Any and all ordinances related to the Subdivision Ordinance are enforceable within Commerce's ETJ.

Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a fiscal and strategic tool used to guide public investment in infrastructure and facilities. Capital improvements, such as roads, utilities, drainage systems, parks, and public buildings, are closely tied to land use policies and must support the types of development encouraged by this Plan.

For example, if the Comprehensive Plan designates a specific area for industrial growth, the CIP must prioritize projects such as water, sewer, and roadway expansions that support that land use. The Zoning Ordinance ensures compatibility, while the Subdivision Ordinance regulates the layout and infrastructure requirements. All three tools work together to bring the Plan's vision to life.

A modest amount of money expended annually on prioritized items in accordance with Plan recommendations will produce a far greater return to the City than will large expenditures at long intervals. Capital projects can budget funding through the CIP for special studies or programs to address specific issues, such as conducting a feasibility study or creating specific training programs.

Figure 91. City of Commerce Operating Budget

Implementation Strategies

The most common issue with comprehensive plans is the lack of actionable recommendations that clearly outline the initial steps that a city must take to begin implementing the Plan. The following implementation table provides individual actions that will help achieve the vision established by the community. The table is organized by each chapter and includes the related strategies for each area. For each strategy, an associated timeframe for implementation and the involved entities are identified to assist with planning and completing the action. While these recommendations are designed to be initiated within the proposed timeframes, some may take longer due to funding constraints, community feedback, or changing priorities. The implementation table serves as a roadmap that helps the City stay on course while remaining flexible and responsive to changing conditions.

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 3: Transportation & Mobility						
3.1.1	Invest in the asset management to maintain acceptable mobility levels and preventing unnecessary roadway expenditures to ensure that roadways are kept in acceptable conditions.					Public Works, Community Development (Planning) & Financing
3.1.2	Conduct alternative mobility studies including a Active Transportation / Complete Streets / Micromobility Studies and an ADA Assessment Study.					Public Works & Community Development (Planning)
3.1.3	Develop a resiliency plan to provide the City with a comprehensive plan to strengthen the resilience of the Commerce's transportation system to a range of potential hazards, including flooding.					Community Development (Planning) Emergency Management & Public Works
3.1.4	Continue fostering good relationships with TxDOT, NCTCOG, and Hunt County to assist in finding appropriate resources to fund projects in the City.					City Manager's Office, TxDOT, NCTCOG & Hunt County
3.1.5	Identify funding opportunities to fund the maintenance and continued development of City roads.					City Manager's Office, Public Works, Commerce EDC

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 4: Housing & Neighborhoods						
4.1	Prepare a dedicated housing study to identify needs and potential strategies for addressing housing challenges and opportunities.					Community Development (Planning)
4.2	Identify areas with pervasive underdeveloped or underutilized commercial or non-residential zoning and evaluate for zoning changes to allow for residential development.					Community Development (Planning)
4.3	Identify and register vacant properties and buildings.					Community Development (Building Inspections)
4.4	Work through the code enforcement process to educate homeowners and address housing that is dilapidated or neglected.					Community Development (Planning), Code Enforcement
4.5	Explore amendments to the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance and adopted ICC codes, such as the existing building code, residential code and building code, to remove barriers to constructing infill housing.					Community Development (Planning)
4.6	Communicate with ETAMU to understand future student housing needs and the potential impacts on existing neighborhoods.					Community Development (Planning) & ETAMU
4.7	Host regular forums for local builders and developers to understand barriers to infill housing and opportunities to increase supply in a way that respects existing neighborhoods.					Community Development (Planning)

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 4: Housing & Neighborhoods						
4.8	Improve housing and destination connectivity by restriping or reconfiguring roadways with high observed or expected mode share for bicycles and explore or institute "complete streets" concepts on the highest-capacity City thoroughfares or those with high trip generators such as parks and schools.			■		Community Development (Planning) & Public Works
4.9	Extend the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone to western Commerce.		■			Community Development (Planning)
4.10	Utilize state and federal funding sources to address or "buy down" the cost of housing or increase equity for individual home buyers.		■			Community Development (Planning) & Commerce EDC
4.11	Focus on life-cycle housing and aging-in place by exploring home repair programs and non-profit partnerships, and making allowance for senior-friendly housing within older neighborhoods.		■		■	Community Development (Planning)
4.12	Encourage neighborhood gatherings such as block parties and National Night Out participation and consider additional community-wide programs.	■			■	Community Development (Planning)
4.13	Engage and collaborate with institutions and community stakeholders such as ETAMU, the Northeast Texas Children's Museum, the Commerce Public Library, and the Chamber of Commerce to develop and execute community branding and beautification programs through community art projects, signage and branding.		■			Community Development (Planning), ETAMU, Northeast Texas Children's Museum & Chamber of Commerce

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 4: Housing & Neighborhoods						
4.14	Fund sidewalk improvements and construction along key mobility corridors through development fees.		■		■	Community Development (Planning), Public Works
4.15	Work with the Norris Community and key stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for housing and community elements that enhance the community identity and opportunities for engagement.	■				Community Development (Planning), Norris Community

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 5: Parks Master Plan						
Goal 1: Proactively obtain and preserve parkland for permanent open space						
5.1.1	Evaluate opportunities for additional parkland in the identified need areas		■			Parks and Recreation
5.1.2	Develop a parkland dedication and development ordinance to incentivize the private development community to support park and recreation needs in Commerce	■				Parks and Recreation, Community Development (Planning)
Goal 2: Enhance existing parks and develop new amenities to best meet the needs and desires of the community.						
5.2.1	Revisit the Authors Park concept plan and revise as necessary.		■			Parks and Recreation
5.2.2	Implement the Authors Park Concept Plan.		■			Parks and Recreation
5.2.3	Prepare a Centennial Park Master Plan.	■				Parks and Recreation
5.2.4	Implement the Centennial Park Master Plan.		■			Parks and Recreation
5.2.5	Improve City Park.			■		Parks and Recreation
5.2.6	Prepare an Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.			■		Parks and Recreation
5.2.7	Implement the Ivory Moore Park Master Plan.			■		Parks and Recreation
5.2.8	Improve the Eddie Moore Sports Complex.	■				Parks and Recreation

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 5: Parks Master Plan						
5.2.9	Consider renovating the old Middle School Gym to provide indoor and outdoor recreation space.					Commerce ISD, Parks and Recreation
5.2.10	Develop a citywide trail/enhanced sidewalk network connecting key points of interest.					Parks and Recreation
5.2.11	Prioritize development of sidewalks in residential areas within ½-mile of parks and schools.					Community Development (Planning)
5.2.12	Develop an outdoor adult workout area in a new or existing park.					Parks and Recreation
5.2.13	Develop a pool or aquatic complex feasibility study.					Parks and Recreation
5.2.14	Develop park design guidelines.					Community Development (Planning), Parks and Recreation
5.2.15	Develop trail-specific design guidelines.					Community Development (Planning), Parks and Recreation
5.2.16	Systematically address recreational amenity deficiencies.					Parks and Recreation

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 5: Parks Master Plan						
Goal 3: Provide a variety of recreations opportunities for all ages, abilities, and interests						
5.3.1	Consider conducting a Recreational Programming and Event Assessment.	■				Parks and Recreation
5.3.2	Develop a Recreation Center/Community Center feasibility study.		■			Parks and Recreation
5.3.3	Develop or support the development of a Recreation Center/Community Center in Commerce.			■		Parks and Recreation, City Council
5.3.4	Develop non-intensive outdoor recreation opportunities and programs for children and adults.	■				Parks and Recreation
5.3.5	Provide or partner on the provision of indoor recreational activities at various locations.	■			■	Parks and Recreation
5.3.6	Provide additional community events in varying locations.	■			■	Parks and Recreation
5.3.7	Consider developing a community garden program.		■			Parks and Recreation
5.3.8	Maintain an updated parks and recreation website to include complete information about the parks system.	■			■	Parks and Recreation

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 5: Parks Master Plan						
Goal 4: Prioritize safety, maintenance, and accessibility in Commerce parks						
5.4.1	Conduct a staffing assessment to determine the need for an expanded headcount.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.2	Ensure adequate funding and staffing accompany park system expansions.					Parks and Recreation & Commerce EDC
5.4.3	Locate or develop additional storage and workspace for the Parks and Recreation Department.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.4	Develop a parks system management plan.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.5	Continue to address ADA accessibility issues on a prioritized basis.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.6	Develop a shade/tree planting study and plan to ensure annual additions to the tree canopy.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.7	Increase shade within all parks.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.8	Evaluate opportunities for increased security in parks.					Parks and Recreation
5.4.9	Provide system-wide consistent parks signage.					Parks and Recreation & Public Works
5.4.10	Evaluate opportunities to increase the use of technology in all City parks.					Parks and Recreation

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 5: Parks Master Plan						
Goal 5: Pursue partnerships and diverse funding to support the expansion of parks and recreatons option for the community						
5.5.1	Pursue grant funding from diverse sources.	■			■	Parks and Recreation, Commerce EDC & Financing
5.5.2	Evaluate opportunities for public-private partnerships.		■		■	Parks and Recreation
5.5.3	Develop sponsorship/funding opportunities through outfield fences and gateway signage.	■				Parks and Recreation
5.5.4	Pursue partnership opportunities with local organizations for mentors, coaches and officials/ referees.	■				Parks and Recreation
5.5.5	When warranted, establish joint maintenance agreements with athletic leagues.	■			■	Parks and Recreation
5.5.6	Coordinate and/or partner with local organizations and entities to provide additional parks and recreation opportunities for the community.			■	■	Parks and Recreation
5.5.7	Establish partnerships to support the development of the citywide pedestrian connectivity corridors.		■		■	Parks and Recreation, Public Works
5.5.8	Consider pursuing a parks and recreation bond.			■		Parks and Recreation & City Council
5.5.9	Update the Parks Master Plan.		■			Parks and Recreation

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
Master Plan Actions						
6.1.1	**Construct a Farmers Market** Design and construct a farmers market located on Bonham Alley, next to Huffman's Farm Supply. This could include a pavilion, outdoor seating, public restroom, and community garden.					Community Development (Planning) & Parks and Recreation
6.1.2	**Activate Plaza Across from City Hall** Design and construct the Downtown Plaza expansion. For budgetary purposes this includes an event lawn, performance area, unique surface textures, outdoor dining area, and improved landscape areas.					Parks and Recreation & Public Works
6.1.3	**Construct Main Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Main Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.					Public Works & Engineering
6.1.4	**Construct Alamo Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Alamo Street streetscape between Washington Street and Park Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve on-street parking.					Public Works & Engineering

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
6.1.5	**Construct Washington Street Streetscape and Improvements** Design and construct the Washington Street streetscape between Bonham Alley and Caddo Street to address accessibility and safety issues, improve the pedestrian experience, improve on-street parking, and address significant elevation change from street level to sidewalk.					Public Works & Engineering
6.1.6	**Convert Part of Washington Street to One-Way** Convert Washington Street between Bonham Alley and Main Street to one-way in order to address vehicular circulation issues. Street improvements can also include temporary bollards and string lighting.					Public Works & Engineering
6.1.7	**Construct Bonham Alley Improvements** Design and construct Bonham Alley to address safety concerns at the intersection of Bonham Alley and washington Street. Improve the pedestrian experience by adding sidewalks on the north side of the street and crosswalks to connect the farmers market to the rest of Downtown.					Public Works & Engineering
6.1.8	**Develop Washington Street Downtown Gateway Signage** Design and construct gateway signage at washington Street and Sycamore Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from the south (one of the primary arrival paths for most local residents).					Public Works

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
6.1.9	**Develop Park Street Downtown Gateway Signage** Design and construct gateway signage at Park Street and Alamo Street and Park Street and Main Street. This feature will create a strong positive first impression for individuals accessing Downtown from either the south or north ends of Park Street.					Public Works
6.1.10	**Develop Pedestrian Wayfinding Signage** Develop and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage, primarily at pedestrian scale, to direct pedestrians to key locations throughout Downtown. The location of signage should be strategic and considerate of walk times to key locations.					Public Works
6.1.11	**Develop Vehicular Wayfinding Signage** Design and install uniquely branded wayfinding signage targeting vehicular traffic to direct drivers to key locations throughout Downtown including destinations and public parking.					Public Works
6.1.12	**Provide Improved Street Lighting** Replace existing street lighting with architectural poles and luminaires that maintain the decorative, historic character of Downtown.					Public Works
6.1.13	**Update Ordinances** Review and consider any ordinance or regulatoryimprovements that need to be made to achieve the Downtown Master Plan.					Community Development (Planning)

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
Operational & Programming Actions						
6.2.1	**Enhance Storefront Appearance** Establish storefront programs to create visual interest in vacant or underutilized spaces, through the use of public art, business displays, and similar efforts.					Community Development (Planning)
6.2.2	**Develop a Downtown Commerce Website and Social Media Presence** Develop a standalone Downtown website independent of the City and tourism websites. This establishes an accessible source of information about Downtown-specific events, sales, and promotions.					Community Development (Planning) & City Secretary
6.2.3	**Develop a Downtown Commerce Brand** Develop a unique brand for Downtown Commerce. This should include a district name, logo, and tag line that conveys activity.					Community Development (Planning)
6.2.4	**Develop a Downtown Events and Promotion Calendar** Develop a Downtown-specific events and promotions calendar featuring City-sponsored events, business events like live music, and special sales/promotions.					Community Development (Planning) & City Secretary

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
6.2.5	**Continue Pop-Up Events for Entrepreneurs** Continue to use existing businesses and/or vacant buildings as pop-up space for entrepreneurs to "test the waters" on a new business concept at reduced risk.					Community Development (Planning) & Chamber of Commerce
6.2.6	**Collaborate with Higher Education Institutions** Collaborate with local higher education facilities (e.g., business support/education, intern programs, entrepreneurship-focused degrees) to identify opportunities to support Downtown, support academic efforts, and support opportunities for students.					Community Development (Planning) & ETAMU
6.2.7	**Downtown Sponsorship Program** Develop a sponsorship program for Downtown, expanding the base of support beyond the Downtown area to include other local industries. This could include sponsorship packages for particular events or Downtown improvements, among other things.					Community Development (Planning)
6.2.8	**Establish/Strengthen Monthly Activation** Develop standing monthly events targeting arts and culture, with extended business hours (1st Friday, etc.). Holding monthly events shifts Downtown higher in consideration for local residents—a set monthly "date" where they know something will be happening.					Community Development (Planning)

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
Operational & Programming Actions						
6.3.1	**Create Public and Mural Arts Program** Establish a mural arts program for Downtown Commerce. This could include commissioning murals as well as providing grants and/or design assistance to artists, residents, and business owners interested in placing murals on private property.					Community Development (Planning)
6.3.2	**Allocate Downtown Staffing Resources** As need arises, consider allocating Downtown staffing resources to effectively implement this Plan and support Downtown Commerce.					City Manager
6.3.3	**Establish a Commerce Main Street Program** Establish a Main Street Program and gain access to the Main Street America network of resources and framework to implementing Downtown improvements.					Community Development (Planning)
6.3.4	**Explore Historic District Designation for Downtown** Explore the potential of defining a historic district to assist with regulating building materials of future developments, renovations, and facade preservation.					Community Development (Planning)

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 6: Downtown Master Plan						
Finance Actions						
6.4.1	**Develop a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)** Designate a Downtown TIRZ to capture incremental property tax growth. The City should lead this initiative, but request the County, school district, and potentially the university to join the TIRZ. The tax increment would be used to help fund the projects in the Downtown Master Plan over the next 20 years.					Community Development (Planning), Hunt County, Commerce ISD & ETAMU
6.4.2	**Pursue TxDOT Funding** TxDOT administers Transportation Alternative (TA) funds for locally sponsored bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects in communities across the state.					Community Development (Planning), TxDOT & Public Works

#	Recommendation	Initiation Time Frame				Responsible Entity
		Short (1-2 years)	Mid (3-7 years)	Long (8+ years)	On-Going	
Chapter 7: Annexation & Growth						
7.1	Update the zoning code and subdivision regulations to prepare for the future growth of the City and align the regulations with state law.					Community Development (Planning)
7.2	Explore financing opportunities for future maintenance through special districts, such as PIDs.					Community Development (Planning) & Financing
7.3	Ensure that growth and annexation into the ETJ will produce revenue that balances capital expenditures and maintenance.					Community Development (Planning) & City Manager
7.4	Identify service areas that are in need of staff increases as the City continues to grow.					Community Development (Planning)
7.5	Explore funding opportunities to support future growth and development.					Community Development (Planning) & Commerce EDC
7.6	Coordinate with other agencies such as TxDoT, Commerce ISD, and ETAMU to manage future growth.					Community Development (Planning), TxDOT, Commerce ISD & ETAMU
7.7	Explore opportunities for future growth planning around the airport, including expansion of facilities, access roads, and utilities, as well as supportive land uses.					Community Development (Planning), Utilities & Public Works

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