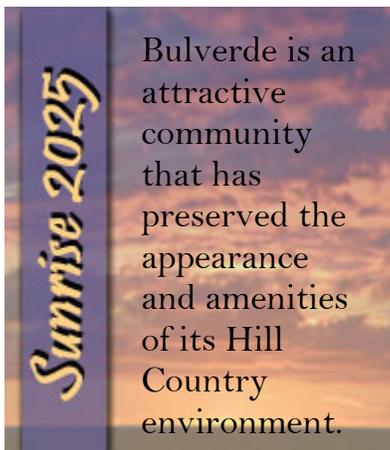


# Community Development



## 9.1 Achieving a Vision

Community development relates to how citizens perceive their city, its visual characteristics, or how it is designed, if it is designed at all. The design quality of the built environment affects a city's image and attractiveness to people searching for high quality residential and business locations. An attractive and functional community is a fundamental requirement for long term quality of life.



New developments need to be integrated physically and visually with their surroundings, thus enriching the desirable qualities of a community. They need to strike a balance between the natural and man-made environment and utilize each site's intrinsic resources such as the landform, landscape and ecology. For projects to be desirable and well cared for, they must be economically viable, well-managed and maintained. This means understanding the market considerations of developers, ensuring long-term commitment from the community and local authority, selecting and using appropriate community development tools, and seeing this as part of an overall design process. By contrast, haphazard growth can destroy the amenities and visual appeal of the City of Bulverde's Hill-Country setting.

The Comprehensive Plan Survey, conducted in the summer of 2003, indicated that the most desirable things about living in the Bulverde area are the quiet/slow-paced living, the country/rural atmosphere, the beauty and "feel" of the Hill-Country, and the small town/village charm. Two lane roads, rock walls, open space, trees, natural vegetation, wildlife and dark skies are all ingredients of this atmosphere and charm; they are all unique and critical design elements that are at the core of Bulverde's identity.

Nine out of ten survey respondents consider keeping Bulverde attractive and preserving and protecting the environment important or very important. The same percentage feel that comprehensive plan goal statements related to community appearance, retaining the small town atmosphere and managing future growth are important or very important. Current residents have a very positive image of Bulverde, and are willing to plan to maintain and enhance this image for themselves and future citizens.

But as the Steering Committee and citizens pointed out, Bulverde is facing a transition from rural to urban. Rapid population growth is having an impact on the lifestyle of area residents, who understandably want to retain the amenities that attract people to the area in the first place. Bulverde is a special place facing rapid growth, but there will be negative consequences if this growth is not managed. The citizens do not want the City of Bulverde to look like a continuation of San Antonio. Rather, they want to maintain the open, rural atmosphere and ensure that the natural beauty central to the community's identity is not lost.

Efforts at protecting and enhancing the quality and image of the City of Bulverde have already been made, but much more will need to be done. Community development is closely related to land use/development and growth management as discussed in Chapter 3, which outlined some alternative site development standards such as smart growth, rural urbanism, mixed use, 'rural by design' conservation developments, buffers and density/use gradients as growth management tools. This chapter focuses more on design elements and tools that affect all aspects of the community such as the look, feel and style of development - not just the pattern and direction of growth. This chapter will review and organize the planning tools already put forward in previous chapters in the context of community development and urban design. Other tools that can potentially be used to shape community development will be introduced and discussed, and finally specific goals to achieve the Community Development Vision on the previous page will be listed.

## *9.2 Good City Form - A Well-Designed Community*

For places to be used and well-loved, they must be safe, comfortable, and attractive. They also need to be distinctive and offer variety, choice and fun. Good design can reconcile the many interactive forces at work that shape a city's built form and open spaces, and it applies at every scale – the region, city, neighborhood and street. Urban design is the relationship between buildings, streets and open spaces – or all the features that make up the way a community looks and feels to its citizens and visitors. It is the nature and quality of all these elements, the relationship of one part of the town with other parts, the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established, and finally the complex relationships between all the elements that make up the place we call home.

According to Kevin Lynch, some dimensions of good city form include:

- *Vitality* - Does the form of the community support the daily functions of its citizens?
- *Sense* - What makes the community distinct?
- *Fit* - Does the form of the community match the pattern and quantity of actions that people customarily engage in, or want to engage
- *Access* - Are residents able to safely and conveniently reach other persons, activities, resources, services and places?
- *Control* - Do local citizens make the decisions that determine their future?

Community design elements include:

- *Scale and Dimensions* – i.e. How wide are the streets? How far back are the houses/buildings set from the street? How much space is there between houses/buildings? How well does the scale of the trees match the scale of the street?
- *Texture* – i.e. How much variation is there in the design of houses/buildings? How much variation is there in the building setbacks? Are different land uses separated or mixed within a neighborhood? What elements of a house face the street (garage or front porch)? How does landscaping contribute to the street environment?
- *Linkages* - What is the structure of the street network? Where is parking located in commercial areas? Do sidewalks or paths link residential areas to commercial areas?
- *Activity* - What kinds of activities are located in the community? What kinds of open spaces does your community have? Where do you see people gathering or interacting? How does traffic impact your community?



Commercial space designed with quality in mind

### 9.3 Quality Development

Quality creates long-term value and more than pays for itself. Projects that incorporate high-quality design features are commonly believed to hold their value better and contribute to the quality of life of both the eventual users of the development and the entire community after the developer's role has ended. Quality yields the developer increased financial return – more profits, and gives him a competitive edge and faster absorption with increased public support. Quality development establishes an image, identity and sense of community for projects, and contributes substantially to the residents' perception of security, privacy and place, and long-term value. Perhaps most importantly, quality development encourages other developers new to the area adopt higher design standards.

Quality development makes subdivisions into identifiable neighborhoods, reserves school sites within neighborhoods instead of on busy highways, and concentrates

commercial development in compact centers or districts rather than in ugly and dangerous strips along freeway access roads. Quality development contributes to a sense of community and can include diverse elements such as native landscaping, balanced mix of uses, pathway systems, community newsletters, community events, uniform signage, entry features, community associations and thematic names for streets, etc. Finally, quality is defined in the vision of the community's citizens, expressed in their Comprehensive Plan, and achieved through implementation of that plan.

## **Rural Urbanism**

At a January meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, Matt Bremer gave a presentation on development emphasizing a design approach that can be called *Rural Urbanism*, which combines the best of both urban and rural environments and brings together many of the elements that make up this Comprehensive Plan. We can develop the countryside and actually preserve it at the same time using context sensitive design. The slower "country life" is healthy. Narrow roads use less asphalt and mandate that traffic move slower. Slower roads go hand-in-hand with a country atmosphere.

Rural urbanism promotes thinking in terms of making communities with open spaces, a valuable asset to the citizens of the Bulverde area. The spatial relationships between open spaces, buildings, walls, etc. are crucial. This approach emphasizes the vernacular of building materials available in the Texas Hill Country (limestone, cedar, caliche, etc). Rather than use curbs and gutters for storm water collection, it emphasizes low impact development that focuses on slowing down drainage water so it can percolate into the soil, and eventually into the Edwards aquifer. With rural urbanism, the transportation network necessitated by inevitable growth is based on the person rather than solely on the automobile. The developer looks at the "lay of the land" and lays out the house lots to take advantage of the landscape and so few hardwood trees have to be removed. This is the kind of quality the citizens of Bulverde want.

### *9.4 Tools for Quality Community Development*

To avoid the bland sprawl of most suburban communities, the City of Bulverde has available a vast selection of tools that can include open space requirements, phasing controls, Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), conservation easements, buffering, etc. As we select and use community development tools, it is important to remember that existing rules and regulations mostly tell developers what not to do. When they say what to do, it is in the form of minimum requirements. Why should our favorite places be planned and designed using minimum standards? Is this minimal approach capable of preventing things from getting worse as the Bulverde area continues to grow? The City of Bulverde can do better.

To preserve and enhance the unique character that is Bulverde, any additional design guidelines that are adopted should encourage and incentivize the integration of

common design themes which complement local architecture and orient buildings onto the street to achieve a pedestrian-friendly and human-scale environment. There are many tools related to design and community development that the City of Bulverde can use to achieve these goals. Some have already been discussed in other chapters of this plan. Following is a review and discussion of those new tools and some new ones.

### Site Development and Architectural Standards/Design Review

Design review is simply the review and regulation of the design of buildings and their sites. Since buildings last a long time, design review can have significant long-range impacts on how a community develops. Many communities have adopted ordinances which provide for architectural design review. Like sign regulation, the standards or criteria to be applied may be included in the zoning ordinance or enacted separately. The existing zoning ordinance for the City of Bulverde addresses “Building Exteriors” in commercially zoned districts. Except for the use of glass, trim and moldings, all buildings in commercial districts “shall be composed of masonry materials, which are defined to include stone, stucco and brick.” Ordinary cinder block and corrugated type metal roofing are not allowed.



Typical big-box retail and well-designed Target Store

Typically, a board is established to review designs in accordance with enumerated criteria including compatibility with the surrounding area, effect of allowing the design on neighboring property values, and certain stylistic features. When review is conducted by a well-qualified board, it can have a positive influence on community development. When standards incorporated in an ordinance and/or used by a review board are consistent with community preferences as expressed in a comprehensive plan, the chances that they will survive judicial scrutiny and be enforceable are greatly increased.

Most design guidelines are focused on commercial development. The following guidelines are designed to answer residents’ desire for a more attractive community.

- A growing trend in communities across the country is the development of large retail, or "big-box", design standards. The cities of Fort Collins, Colorado, Tucson, Arizona, Easton, Maryland,

and Somerset County, New Jersey have already implemented design standards for large retail establishments. "Big-box" retail can be defined as large-scale

retailers, such as Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Kmart, or Home Depot, that occupy more than 50,000 square feet and derive their profits from high sales volumes. They may operate as stand-alone facilities, or more commonly they are located in a "power center." Power centers will usually have some common characteristic such as large rectangular single-story structures, a reliance on auto-borne traffic with large areas of parking and a no frills site plan with little unique community character, mixed-use and pedestrian amenities.

- Eliminate the flat facades of "big-box" stores and shopping centers through the use of architectural elements such as canopies, pediments, pilasters, recesses/projections, turrets, display windows, window bays, and planters that incorporate landscaped areas and places for sitting.
- Orient buildings and shopping centers onto or closer to the street and other public spaces to achieve a pedestrian-friendly environment. Combine architecture with sound site design and landscaping to encourage pedestrian movement throughout the center.
- Limit off-street parking between the building and street, encouraging placement at the rear or side of the site.
- Limit or prohibit the amount of parking provided that is above and beyond the city's requirement. Most large retailers design their parking lots for peak demand, which usually occurs on only a couple of days around major holidays. For most of the year, vast portions of this stark sea of asphalt go unused.
- Increase landscape standards for new development, especially changing the requirements in parking lots to provide tree islands large enough for trees to survive and provide shade. Require pervious pavement for areas around trees, any overflow parking and possibly all parking areas.
- Require that mature trees be preserved and incorporated into a site's design when possible. This is addressed in the current zoning ordinance. Adoption of a tree preservation ordinance would ensure that mature trees, such as oak and pecan trees, are not sacrificed unnecessarily.



Shopping in Southlake and attractive office building in Bulverde

**Subdivision Regulations** (*discussed in Chapter 3*) can be used to positively affect the quality of community development. Conservation design preserves the open space

so valuable to the citizens of Bulverde, and low-impact design standards manage storm water in way much less destructive of landscape amenities than traditional engineered approaches to drainage.

**Private Deed Covenants** (*discussed in Chapter 3*) are used extensively in the Bulverde area and afford the developer and residents a high degree of design control.

**Smart Growth** (*discussed in Chapters 3 and 5*) is an approach that encourages innovative site designs; protects open space that is culturally valuable; enables a variety of desirable development patterns including conservation, cluster, traditional neighborhood and infill; has architectural, landscape and signage standards that are integrated to the zoning provisions; and has a range of options above and beyond those allowed by conventional suburban codes.

**Zoning Methods** discussed in other chapters of this plan that can be applied to community design/development include:

- *Conservation or Cluster Developments (Chapter 3)* accommodates development while protecting the area's landscape qualities. By encouraging more usable open space, this kind of zoning thus protects the character of rural communities. A close relative in the zoning family to conservation/cluster zoning is density zoning. It offers flexibility to the city and developer in site design as long as overall density does not exceed the maximum allowed. It is also subject to a site-plan-review process.
- *Performance Zoning (Chapter 3)* allows for more innovation and flexibility in site and building design that may not be accommodated in more traditional zoning ordinances. Performance zoning is more effective in the preservation of natural features. The advantage of this kind of zoning is that performance standards are always measurable unlike subjective standards which only state a desired policy but cannot be enforced without making discretionary judgments.
- *Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) (Chapter 3)* gives the developer more design freedom when laying out a subdivision.
- *Transect Zoning (Chapter 3)* integrates the scales of planning, water quality and environmental issues and can facilitate development designs that are attractive, economically sustainable, environmentally sensitive, marketable and profitable.

**Zoning Methods** not yet discussed in this plan but that can be applied to community design/development include:

- *Aesthetic zoning* is designed to create, preserve and promote a particular architectural theme. Aesthetics has gained increasing acceptance in the courts as a legitimate reason to exercise police power.
- *Agricultural zoning* is primarily intended to retain productive agricultural or ranch lands, and is used as a means of preserving open space and preventing loss of aesthetic qualities, especially in rapidly urbanizing counties. Suitable large parcels

of land are identified and designated as agricultural zones. Compatible land uses may be permitted as conditional uses such as recreation or low density residential. Regulations usually provide for a minimum building site of 20 to 30 acres.

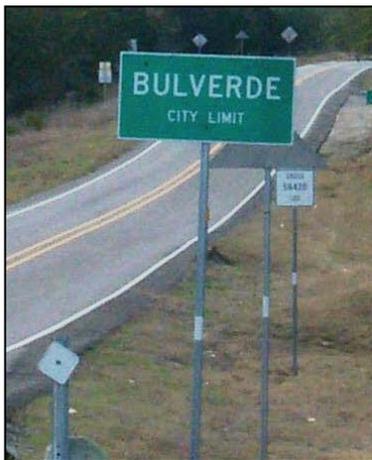
- *Buffer areas (zones)* establish parcels of land to separate incompatible adjacent land uses such as commercial and residential. The buffer may be only 10 to 20 feet wide and include walls, fences, screen plantings, or berms to insulate adjoining properties from noise, traffic, or visual intrusions. The City of Bulverde already requires commercial uses to install a buffer area wherever property lines abut a residential district. The term may also describe any zone that separates two unlike zones, such as a professional business zone between retail commercial and single family zones.
- *Flexible zoning* – under traditional zoning a city is divided into various land use districts and only conforming or homogenous uses are permitted within each district. Some communities facing increasingly complex development problems have sought to bring more flexibility to their system of land use controls without sacrificing the traditional objectives of health, safety, and welfare. Techniques include conditional zoning, bonus and incentive zoning, floating zones, overlay zones, performance standards, PUDs and others. The intent is to widen the range of options available to developers and thereby lead to more desirable and better designs. Rather than proscribing specified uses and standards for each and every parcel of land, only policies and criteria for decision-making are established. Under most flexible techniques, public officials have discretion in their decision-making process and can negotiate with developers before final approval. Development options are broad, but once granted may be quite specific and require compliance with a site plan.
  - *Floating zones* are zoning districts described in the text of the zoning ordinance but not necessarily associated with a specific location on the map. When a project of sufficient size anywhere within restricted areas can meet certain requirements, the floating zone can be anchored to a specific area on the zoning map. This is commonly used for large-scale developments such as planned unit developments. The floating zone is somewhat similar to conditional uses – it can go somewhere on the zoning map but must meet certain guidelines as to its impact on the surrounding areas.
  - *Incentive zoning* is a tool that permits greater flexibility in the zoning process. It is a negotiation process whereby a developer is awarded “bonuses” in exchange for adding amenities or following design criteria the community feels it needs. While a typical zoning ordinance is usually restrictive and based on minimums, incentive zoning permits the restrictions to be exceeded in exchange for increased open space, dedication of a school site, a hike and bike trail, etc.
  - *Mixed-use zoning* permits a combination of several uses within a single development. While traditional zoning separates land uses, mixed-use zoning enables a loosening of the narrowly defined districts to permit appropriate mixtures. This can result in more interesting, livelier and convenient neighborhoods and communities. Many PUD ordinances specify permitted combinations such as various residential types and local businesses.

- Overlay zones are standards specific to certain geographic areas in the community that are in addition to any underlying zoning district's requirements. Overlay zones can be employed to deal with special physical characteristics such as architecturally cohesive historic neighborhoods and/or environmentally sensitive areas. For example, an old-town or historic business district, to preserve its appearance and avoid vast expanses of paved parking lots, can have an overlay zone that has different parking requirements than other commercial or office districts. More on-street parking is allowed and shared parking can be encouraged. The City of Bulverde can use an overlay zone to promote historic and heritage preservation in the old-town area outlined in Chapter 7 of this plan.
- Special district zoning is similar to overlay zoning and also goes hand-in-hand with historical preservation. It can be used to preserve and enhance the appearance, design integrity and thematic architecture of an area.

**Landscaping and tree preservation**

The existing zoning ordinance addresses tree preservation in commercially zoned districts, and states that no more than twenty percent of hardwood trees with a diameter greater than six inches and outside of the building footprint can be removed unless the owner replaces them new hardwood trees totaling the diameter of the removed tree(s). Again, city fathers should be commended for inserting this into the zoning ordinance, but there are no standards for root zones, pruning, etc. As currently written, it also does not provide for site review criteria and, being a part of the zoning ordinance, does not address tree preservation in the ETJ.

*9.5 Gateways to the City*



Sign at FM1863 and 3009

Lasting images and perceptions are often established by the first impressions created by a community. Gateways (entrances) serve as focal points for creating visual first impressions and can promote the distinctiveness and attractiveness of the city. In addition, a gateway lets someone know they have arrived in a new place. Currently, the only identifying features at the city's entrances letting someone know they are entering the City of Bulverde are the green and white city limit signs.



Sample gateway sign

Welcoming signs, lighting and landscaping should denote the gateways into the city and should be

located on each of the major corridors in to the city. The signs should be located outside the current city limit boundaries (except for Farm/Market 1863) to accommodate future annexations. A common design for the gateway signs and landscaping must be followed to promote a unified appearance



Streets designed for vehicles only

### 9.6 Enhancement Corridors - *the Streetscape*

Without good planning, driving in Bulverde can potentially become an unpleasant experience, not so much from traffic problems as from unattractive thoroughfares. Not only must conscious design provide for a good first impression, but it must also address the visual aspects of transportation corridors, including

land development and other considerations which impact the image created by entering and traveling through the community. One of the goals listed at the end of this chapter calls for preserving and enhancing the visual appearance of Bulverde through the development of design standards for corridors. A Corridor Plan can help avoid unsightly streets cluttered with overhead wires and chaotic signage by promoting such features as bike lanes, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, median designs, and other aesthetic and engineering improvements.



One of the major indicators of sprawl is the unattractive commercial strip developments that consume large amounts of land. Overlay districts and design guidelines should be implemented to lessen the negative impacts of commercial development on major transportation corridors in the Bulverde area. Development adjacent to Enhancement Corridors should follow higher design guidelines to create a more pleasant driving, walking, or biking experience and avoid the loss of a sense of uniqueness and place.



Street scenes in Southlake

As discussed in Chapter 6, funds may be available for various transportation improvements such as landscaping, gate-ways, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other non-typical improvements that enhance the transportation systems. The appearance and function of these corridors can benefit from improved design standards that will foster a positive community image. The citizens of Bulverde do not want their streets to become unsafe, unsightly and unnecessarily expanded to accommodate speeding automobile traffic. Building fronts that once defined public space are now placed far away from the sidewalk and right-of-way; often behind asphalt-covered parking lots, with narrow sidewalks placed at the edge of high-speed thoroughfares without any buffer separating pedestrians from vehicles. The following are design strategies that can successfully accommodate traffic within an environment that is friendly to pedestrians and cyclists.

- Improve sidewalks and require placement away from traffic lanes.
- Provide bike lanes.
- Create medians with decorative street lighting and street trees.
- Improve the appearance of street signs
- Place utility lines underground and consolidate traffic and directional signage.
- Work with TxDOT to design aesthetically pleasing roadways and interchanges.
- As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this plan, context sensitive design considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist and should be the approach the City of Bulverde takes to streets. Residential streets should be designed for the minimum required pavement width needed to support travel lanes, on-street parking, and emergency, maintenance and service vehicle access.
- Allow an alley classification that would enable developers to place garages facing the rear of houses thus improving the street appearance of neighborhoods. Widths should still be based on traffic volume. Context Sensitive considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist.



Signage clutter

### 9.7 Signage

Signs that are meant to assist customers in locating a particular business can often be more confusing than helpful. Signs can contribute to the visual clutter of the urban environment often blocking the view of business locations and even the view of other signs. Signs say a lot about a place, yet all too often a community's image is blighted by signs that are too large, too tall, too numerous or poorly located.

The existing sign ordinance was one of the first ordinances adopted by the City of Bulverde. This is a powerful testament showing that the citizens feel very strongly about preserving the look and feel of their city. The ordinance has been amended several times and each time typically has become more restrictive, with the exception of a banner amendment. Permanent free-standing signs must be monument-style. The special needs of the higher speed corridors are taken into consideration as there are different standards for U.S. Highway 281 and State Highway 46 than the rest of the city. The existing ordinance does not differentiate the old town or village area, however. Off-premise signs are not prohibited, but are subject to the same size requirements and have a large spacing requirement (2000 feet), which effectively eliminates the possibility of large billboards. There have been some efforts at completely prohibiting off-premise signs, but as of the writing of this plan, there is no such ordinance. Adequate staff is needed to enforce the existing ordinance.



Monument style sign

Sign standards should encourage business owners to erect less obtrusive signs that reflect an area's personality, contributing to civic pride and enhancing the visual character of the community. To promote a positive city image, the sign ordinance should be enhanced to reduce the number of signs, encourage the use of a single sign structure for all tenants in a commercial development, and set design guidelines so that signs can quickly communicate their message, compliment their surroundings and enhance the visual character of the community. A combination of good site design and good sign standards that address location and scale, such as a monument signs, eliminates the visual clutter that could mar the view along our transportation corridors.

### **Overhead Utilities**

The proliferation of utility poles and lines along public rights-of-way results in cluttered and unsightly transportation corridors. The city should require that utility lines be installed underground.

### **Litter Control**

Litter is a problem that plagues many communities. Unfortunately, Bulverde is not immune to this problem. Trash and debris sometimes litter our major transportation corridors, creating an unsightly atmosphere. The improved



Utility poles and signs in Bulverde

design guidelines mentioned above will be for naught if our community does not clean up the streets, parks, and private property and work to prevent future litter. The committee has focused clean-up efforts on controlling and preventing litter on both private and public property.

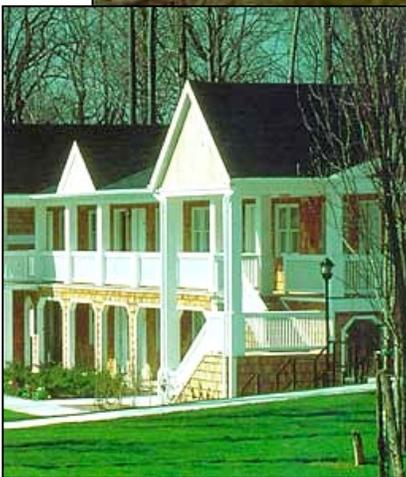


Unattractive affordable housing in Austin, Texas

### 9.8 Housing

In the Comprehensive Plan Survey, when asked to rate the importance of eight potential priorities for managing growth, “providing affordable housing” came in last, with only thirty-seven percent considering it important or very important and sixty percent considering it somewhat important or not important all. When asked to rate their support for providing eight additional city services, promoting affordable housing came in last again with fifty-four percent of survey

respondents being unsupportive or very unsupportive, and thirty-nine percent being supportive or very supportive. On the other hand, in discussions among Steering Committee members, one of Bulverde’s weaknesses was said to be that “housing is expensive” (it was also argued that this was a strength.) It should be noted that survey respondents’ images of “affordable housing” are not well-defined. In the



Well-designed affordable housing in Greenburg, N.Y.

interest of space and time, the survey did not include photographs or drawings of different kinds and values of housing.

Arguably, desirable housing for all residents is an essential component of building strong neighborhoods and good communities. Neighborhoods and communities should be safe, convenient, and attractive, and there should be some housing that is relatively affordable by an area’s standards.

Careful planning and design can bring all of these elements together. Relatively affordable housing can be in the form of well-designed town homes or condominiums that don’t have to detract from the upscale image of the area nor negatively impact the environment, prestige and heritage of the Bulverde area. Design guidelines can accomplish this.

The provision of housing in the area will be left up to the real estate market and private developers. However, the

city can help promote opportunities for housing for a range of income levels and densities while strictly adhering to the character and quality of the Bulverde area, as desired by survey respondents, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and other public input. For example, the city can consider encouraging small-scale housing for senior-citizens, and “granny flats” or accessory apartments, preferably near essential goods and services. The city’s existing zoning ordinance regulates the location and size of higher density, multi-family developments as well as non-site-built housing. City leadership can facilitate open communication and cooperation among property owners, developers, city staff and others involved in all aspects of housing in the Bulverde area.

Factors that will affect the city’s housing market in the future include the city’s population growth and existing housing supply, the characteristics of families and individuals that occupy the housing units, and the price of both new and used residences. Recall from Chapter 1 that the rate of owner-occupied residences is much higher in the City of Bulverde than in surrounding areas (ninety-five percent in 2000), and the vacancy rate is much lower (only 3.8 percent) (See Table 1.8). The median value of houses in Bulverde is over twice that for the San Antonio MSA (\$160,900 compared to \$74,100). Population growth in the City of Bulverde is projected to grow much more rapidly than in the City of New Braunfels or the rest of Comal County (See Table 1.1 in Chapter 1). According to the Texas Water Development Board, the population in 2020 is projected to be 13,649 and in 2030 to be 19,968. Using the average of 2.91 persons per housing unit, city residents will need a total of 4,690 housing units in the year 2020 and 6,682 housing units in the year 2030. According to the 2000 Census, there were 1,376 housing units in the city. Thus, it can be projected that there will be a need for 3,314 new housing units by 2020 and 5,306 new units by 2030 compared to the 2000 figure (See Table 4.6). These projections show an increase of 3,314 or 241% in total housing units from 2000 to 2020. This represents an annual increase of 166 units.

**Table 4.9. City of Bulverde Population and Housing Estimates**

Year	Population	Housing Units	Increase
2000		1,376	
2020	13,649	4,690	3,314
2030	19,968	6,682	5,306

*Source:* Texas Water Development Board and U.S. Census.

### 9.9 *A Unified Development Code?*

Some nearby communities, such as San Antonio, New Braunfels and San Marcos, have adopted or are considering adopting a Unified Development Code (UDC). A UDC, as its name implies, unites all development-related ordinances into a single document that should be more user-friendly to citizens, municipal officials, and developers alike. It is more than a compilation of the development-related codes in a city’s planning toolbox; a UDC offers a community an opportunity to have consistency in development requirements and thereby be better able to implement the goals and pursue the vision of the comprehensive plan. A UDC for the City of Bulverde may not be economically feasible at this point, but it is conceivable that

within the next twenty years the City will need to unify all of its develop-related codes. This would afford the community the opportunity to create, emphasize, enforce and incentivize desirable community design elements and thus make “quality control” more effective. In the meantime, any new ordinances adopted by the City of Bulverde should be designed so as to be consistent with other ordinances, thus making the development of a UDC more manageable and less costly.

### *9.10 Code Enforcement*

The city needs to enforce the building codes, sign regulations and other ordinances. As the areas’ population increases, this need will become more acute and require adequate staff for enforcement. These staff members will be responsible for code issues such as clean-up of weedy lots, illegal signs, abandoned vehicles and other housing-related code enforcement. A centralized code enforcement program should eventually be developed that will address all areas and aspects of the city code. To sufficiently address the volume of code violations, appropriate staffing and budget resources will need to be provided. In addition, city code and city policies should be revised to strengthen the ability to enforce ordinances with a minimum of city resources.

### *9.11 Summary*

With guidance from the citizens, the city council, planning commission, and city staff must take an active role in shaping the appearance of the community. Applying development guidelines as outlined in this chapter can create a more pleasant and attractive community that will the enable City of Bulverde an exceptional place for its citizens. The goals and objectives stated in this chapter can be achieved by choosing good design over little or no design at all. We must be proactive and diligent if we are to preserve our heritage and small town charm.

## *9.2 Goals and Objectives*

**Goal 1:** Preserve the natural/rural character of the city as much as possible.

Objective 1.1: Enforce what we already have.

Objective 1.2: Maintain the natural feel of the area.

Objective 1.3: Establish an annexation program that protects and enhances the quality of life in Bulverde.

**Goal 2:** Encourage an aesthetically pleasing appearance for the city.

Objective 2.1: Determine how best to prevent hodge-podge development.

Objective 2.2: Promote city beautification.

Objective 2.3: Provide gateway signs and landscaping to welcome residents and visitors at each of the major corridors into the city.

**Goal 3:** Encourage tasteful development of all kinds including affordable housing, roads, signs, lights, buildings, parks, and some higher density type development where appropriate.

Objective 3.1: Develop a centralized code enforcement program with adequate staffing and resources.

Objective 3.2: Strengthen city codes and ordinances to eliminate unsightly areas with a minimum use of city resources.

Objective 3.3: Promptly enforce city ordinances regarding property maintenance.

Objective 3.4: Encourage private participation in beautification.

Objective 3.5: Enhance litter control programs.

**Goal 4:** Use the relaxed atmosphere of the hill-country to Bulverde's advantage.

Objective 3.1: Develop a centralized code enforcement program with adequate staffing and resources.

**Goal 5:** Make people feel like a part of a community.

Objective 5.1: Make the city more visible.

Objective 5.2: Make Bulverde's first impression unique so people will know when they enter Bulverde.

Objective 5.3: Improve the City's public relations and communication.

**Goal 6:** Develop an "old village center" with defined edges.

Objective 6.1: Make the Village of Bulverde more identifiable.

Objective 6.2: Encourage people to visit the Village of Bulverde.

**Goal 7:** Facilitate open communication and cooperation among property owners, developers, city staff and others involved in all aspects of housing in Bulverde.

Objective 7.1: Promote a customer-friendly but strict attitude among city staff when considering housing development plans.

Objective 7.2: Facilitate the development of housing to meet the needs of the disabled, elderly and other special needs populations.

Objective 7.3: Preserve existing neighborhood integrity and create livable neighborhood environments.