

SECTION 10. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Introduction

With the completion and adoption of this Master Plan document, the City of Saint Hedwig has taken an important step in determining its future. The Plan will provide a critical tool for City officials to use in making sound planning decisions regarding the long-term growth and development of Saint Hedwig. The various elements of the Plan are based upon realistic growth objectives and goals for the City that resulted from an intense Master planning process involving the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, citizens, elected and appointed officials and major stakeholders.

The future quality of life in Saint Hedwig, as well as the environment of the City, will be substantially influenced by the manner in which Master Plan recommendations are administered and maintained.

The Master Plan should never be considered a finished product, but rather a sophisticated guide for growth and development within the City.

Changes in Saint Hedwig's socioeconomic climate and in development trends will, from time to time, occur which were not anticipated during preparation of the Plan, and therefore, subsequent adjustments will be required. Elements of the City that were treated in terms of a general relationship to the overall area may, in the future, require more specific and detailed attention. Planning for the City's future should be a continuing process, and the Master Plan is designed to be a dynamic tool that can be modified and periodically updated to keep it in touch with changing conditions and trends.

The full benefits of the Plan for the City of Saint Hedwig can only be realized by maintaining it as a vital, up-to-date document. **As changes occur and new facets of the City become apparent, the Plan should be revised rather than ignored.** By such action, the Plan will remain current and effective in meeting the City's decision-making needs regarding growth and development into the next century and beyond.

10.1 The Plan as a Guide for Daily Decision Making

The current physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each high density residential development that is platted represents an addition to Saint Hedwig's physical form. If the Master Plan is to be effective, it must guide each individual decision, whether it is that of a private homeowner or of the entire community. The City, in its daily decisions pertaining to whether to surface a street, to approve a high density residential development, to amend a zoning ordinance or to enforce building or other codes should always refer to the basic proposals outlined within the Master Plan. A developer should also recognize the concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts may coincide with the overall intent of the Master Plan. Those investments are, over the years, reinforced and enhanced by Saint Hedwig's form, development pattern and economic vitality.

10.2 Master Plan Amendments and Periodic Review

The Master Plan for the City of Saint Hedwig is intended to be a dynamic and adaptable document. Plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of amendments to the Plan. **The Saint Hedwig City Council and other Saint Hedwig officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the Plan's goals and policies, and whether it will be beneficial in the long-term for the City of Saint Hedwig.**

At approximately three to five year intervals, a periodic review of the Master Plan in regards to current conditions and trends should be conducted. Such ongoing reviews will provide a basis for adjusting capital expenditures and priorities, and will reveal changes and additions which should be made to the Plan in order to keep it current and applicable long-term. **It would be appropriate to devote one annual meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to reviewing the status and continued applicability of the Plan in light of current conditions, and to prepare a report on these findings to the Saint Hedwig City Council.** Those items that appear to need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. With these periodic reviews, the Plan will remain functional and will continue to give civic leaders effective guidance in decision-making. 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, objectives & policies
- Changes in State laws

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Master Plan should undergo a complete, more thorough review and update every five years. The review and updating process should begin with the establishment of a committee similar to the one appointed to assist in the preparation of this Plan. Specific input should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders and major stakeholders, developers, business owners, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City.

10.3 Inconsistencies: Development Proposals and the Future Land Use Plan

At times, the City may encounter development proposals which do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the Future Land Use Plan. Careful consideration should be given to any development proposal which is inconsistent with the Plan. When such a proposal is presented to the City, it should be reviewed based upon the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the proposed site and the surrounding areas?
- Is the proposed change a better use than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or, will the proposed use be compatible with, or even enhance, adjacent residential areas?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to the City in terms of public health, safety and/or welfare (i.e., would it address a physical or social need of the community or its citizens; economically benefit the community; etc.)?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan should be reviewed based on the aforementioned points. It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown on the Plan for a particular area. This may be due to changing market trends that occur at a later point after Plan adoption. Each development proposal should be reviewed on its own merit, and **it should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that the proposal would enhance the community based upon the policies in the City's Master Plan and upon community objectives and values.**

10.4 Future Land Use Plan Map Interpretation Policies

Rezoning or other development approvals for land uses not consistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or Master Plan) should not be approved until the Plan has been amended, as appropriate, to provide for such land uses.

If a rezoning proposal *is* consistent with the Plan (i.e., is the same or very similar to the uses shown on the Future Land Use Plan map), then the request should be processed generally like any other request is processed. A statement/determination should be made by both the applicant and the City stating why the proposed request is consistent with the Plan. This should not mandate approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council, but should be a prerequisite in the review process. The request should still be reviewed on its merit based upon additional criteria such as traffic impact, compatibility with surrounding uses and adjacency standards, among others.

If a rezoning proposal is *not* consistent with the Plan, then an amendment to the Plan is required prior to approving the request. It should be the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate (to include a written statement) that the proposed rezoning is more appropriate for the property and it is more consistent with land uses in the surrounding area than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan map. If this is the case, then the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council should determine that the proposed change is appropriate and in the public interest based upon testimony provided by the applicant and a plan amendment approved. In order to expedite development review, plan map amendments and rezoning changes may be processed simultaneously as long as the map amendment is approved first.

10.5 Community Involvement

The concerns and desires of the public are important considerations in Saint Hedwig's decision-making process. Citizen participation takes many forms, from educational forums to serving on City boards and commissions. A broad range of perspectives and ideas at public hearings helps city leaders and the City Council to make more informed decisions for the betterment of the City as a whole. Saint Hedwig should continue to encourage as many forms of community involvement as possible as the City implements its Master Plan.

10.6 Implementation Strategies

There are two primary methods of implementing the Master Plan: proactive and reactive. Both must be used in an effective manner in order to successfully achieve the recommendations contained within the Plan.

Incorporated proactive methods include but are not limited to:

- Establishing/enforcing Zoning Ordinances
- Establishing/enforcing Subdivision Ordinances

Incorporated reactive methods include but are not limited to:

- Rezoning because of a development proposal that would enhance the City
- Site plan review
- High Density Residential Development Review

It is recommended that a proactive approach be taken for all aspects of the Plan. Once land use categories and development standards are adopted into zoning and subdivision ordinances, such reactive procedures as site plans and high density residential development reviews will be ready to be administered.

Capital Improvements Programming Reserved

Annexation and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Annexation is the process by which communities extend municipal services, regulations, voting privileges and taxing authority to new territory with the purpose of protecting the public's health, safety and general welfare. Chapter 43 of the Texas Local Government Code prescribes the process by which communities can annex land within Texas.

Saint Hedwig has a one-half mile ETJ and is shown on Plate 4.1 *Future Land Use Plan*. **If annexation becomes necessary, it will be in the best interest of the City of Saint Hedwig to gain annexation in the ETJ (voluntarily) prior to development rather than after development has occurred.** After annexation and prior to development, the City of Saint Hedwig will be able to affect development in a more meaningful way, especially in terms of ensuring that the City's development standards are met. Annexation is important to the long-term well being of communities; therefore, such action should be carried out in accordance with established policies. For high density residential developments in its ETJ that are already developed the benefit of annexing from a development standards perspective may be minimal for the City. The City should address the concerns of those in the ETJ and encourage their voluntary annexation by informing them of improved public services (ex. improved fire/emergency protection) and zoning protection.

Administrative Processes

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and high density residential plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Master Plan. Each zoning, development and high density residential review decision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable proposals contained within the Plan. The Plan allows Saint Hedwig to review proposals and requests in light of an officially prepared document adopted through a sound, thorough planning process. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly in order to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making.

The act of subdividing land to create building sites is one of the most significant activities and therefore will likely have the greatest effect on the overall built environment of Saint Hedwig. Much of the basic physical form of the City is determined by the layout of streets, residential lots, and agricultural tracts. In the future, the basic physical form will be further affected by elements such as new development, both residential and non-residential, and the implementation of thoroughfare plan. As mentioned previously, many of the growth and development concepts contained within the City's Master Plan can be achieved through the exercise of high density residential development control and other "reactive" practices. Some elements of the Plan, such as major thoroughfare rights-of-way, drainage easements, and linear parkways, can be influenced, guided and actually achieved during the process of subdividing the land. Once the high density residential development has been filed (recorded) and development has begun, the high density residential development becomes a permanent, integral part of the City's physical landscape.

Recommendations for Implementation

An effective implementation is paramount to a valuable Master Plan. Without viable, realistic mechanisms for implementation, the recommendations contained within the Master Plan can never be realized. The following points specify ways to implement the various recommendations within the Plan:

- 1. Adopt an ordinance to adopt the Master Plan as a guide and official public policy.**
- 2. Adopt an ordinance to mandate periodic updating of the Master Plan.**
- 3. Set up a *standing* Master Plan Committee (example membership: two P&Z, two Council members) to conduct reviews, updates and monitor implementation and adherence to the Master Plan.**

- 4. Implement an immediate and sustained effort to rezone areas in conformance of the Future Land Use Plan.**
- 5. Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance text to implement the new land uses and accompanying standards and guidelines recommended within the Master Plan. Some guidelines may be mandatory or voluntary and structured in creative ways.**
- 6. Amend the Saint Hedwig Subdivision Ordinance text to implement standards and guidelines recommended within the Master Plan.**
- 7. Adopt text requiring a statement from the applicant stating why a proposal that differs from the Master Plan is still within the overall vision of the Master Plan and should be considered.**
- 8. Adopt text requiring an amendment to the Master Plan prior to any amendment of the zoning and subdivision ordinance.**
- 9. Adopt recognized review procedures for implementing policies and other guidelines that are not incorporated within current codes and ordinances.**
- 10. Prepare a report every three to five years as needed, authored by the Planning and Zoning Commission, recommending any changes or amendments to the Master Plan, and identifying items for implementation or further study.**
- 11. An official copy of the Master Plan should be kept on file at the City Hall.**