



**City of Georgetown 2030 Comprehensive Plan
Chapter 2. - 2030 Plan Framework**

2. 2030 Plan Framework

INTRODUCTION

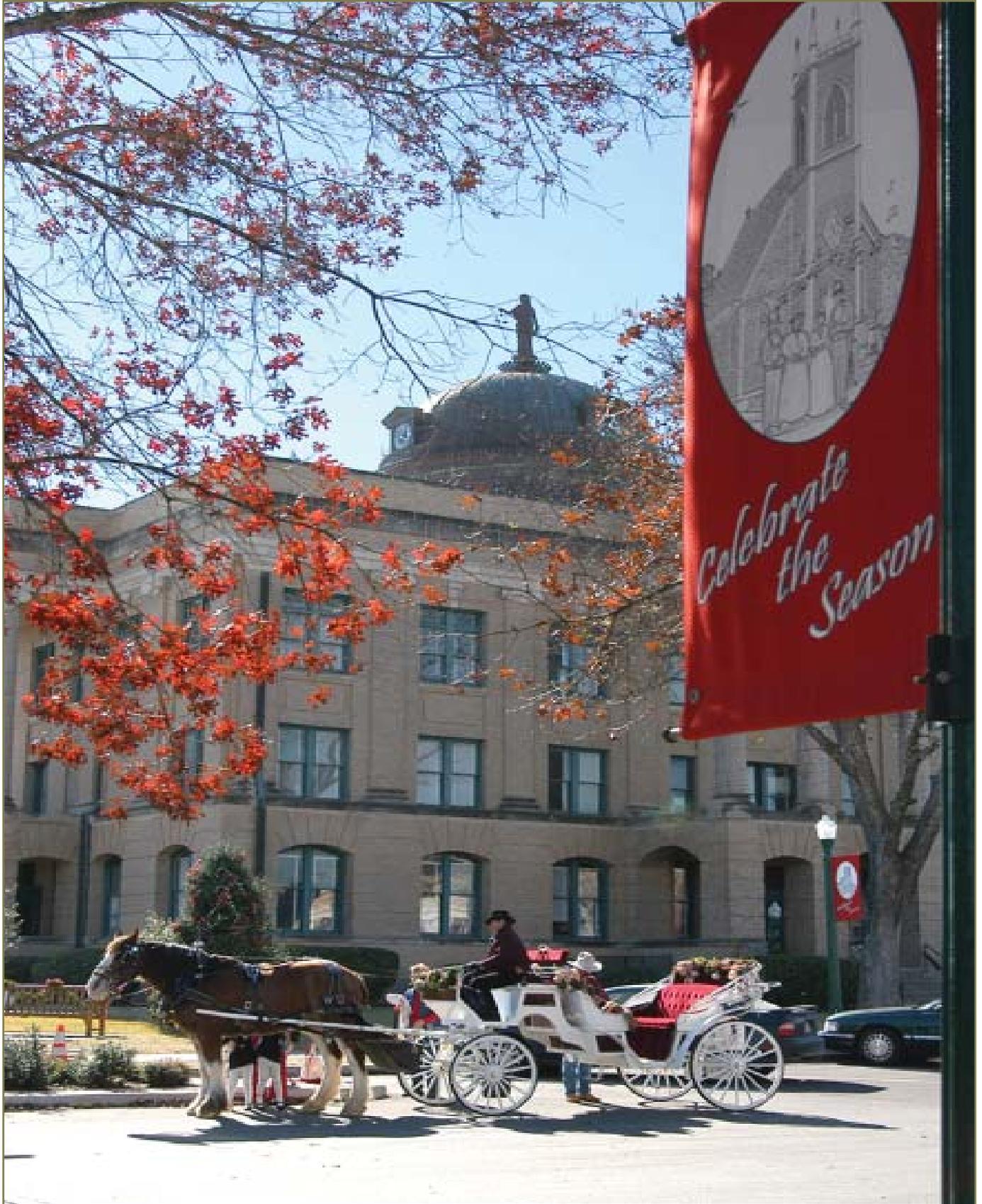
Georgetown is at a pivotal milestone in its long and rich history. On account of its strategic location, high accessibility, natural beauty, educated labor force, sense of history, and strong community identity, Georgetown finds itself facing an enviable predicament, not uncommon to many smaller, exceptional communities that are growing in the shadow of larger urban areas. Georgetown and the entire Austin region have experienced significant population growth and development over the last decade, which has led to certain “growing pains.” The dilemma is that the very factors that make this community special—the factors that are credited for the city’s appeal—are the same ones that could potentially erode with rapid growth. The city is becoming a so-called “bedroom community” for Austin due to its proximity and ease of access to the metropolis. Communities such as Georgetown—which are in the path of Austin’s northward growth surge along the I-35 corridor—must be prepared to manage this growth pressure, or run the risk of losing their unique identity and eroding their quality of life, as has been the fate of some neighboring communities. While continued pressure for growth and change is a certainty, considerable uncertainty exists about how the future may unfold for Georgetown, and what the city may be like in 10 and 20 years.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Georgetown is located in Central Texas, approximately 25 miles north of Austin along the I-35 corridor. The nearest city is Round Rock, with a U.S. Census estimated population of 82,311 in 2005, which adjoins Georgetown on the south side. Round Rock and Georgetown are part of the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), one of the fastest-growing MSA’s in the state of Texas. In fact, the Central Texas region as a whole, including the Waco and Killeen-Temple MSAs, is expected to add over one million people to its current estimated 1.6 million over the next 20 years.

Less than 44% of all local workers live and work within Georgetown. Georgetown is also influenced by growth that is occurring in its immediate vicinity, and, as the county seat, is a major center of government and commerce. According to numbers provided by the Texas State Data Center (based on the U.S. Census of Population and Housing 1980, 1990 and 2000 and U.S. Bureau of the Census Population Estimates for 2005), the population of Williamson County grew by over 82% between 1980 and 1990, and nearly 80% between 1990 and 2000. The population of the entire county increased nearly 34% and the city increased nearly 37% between 2000 and 2005.





*Georgetown citizens cherish the small town western charm, neighborliness, and natural beauty. **



Georgetown has been experiencing accelerated growth and faces the potential of erosion of its distinct identity due to Austin's northward surge of development along the I-35 corridor

The City of Georgetown is a member of Envision Central Texas (ECT), a non-profit regional visioning organization representing the five counties of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson. In 2002 ECT conducted a regional planning exercise that resulted in the creation of a regional vision and a preferred growth scenario. The vision document and growth scenario seek to guide development in the region in a way that:

- ♦ Provides for an efficient, effective, and reliable system for moving people and goods on a daily basis through a network of roads, transit, and trails;
- ♦ Conserves natural resources by minimizing the footprint of growth and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas such as streams, floodplains, and the Edwards Aquifer;
- ♦ Enhances neighborhoods by directing growth and investment to where they most improve the quality of life and economic well-being of its residents;
- ♦ Improves access to jobs for all by building on accessible employment centers and increasing the number of jobs in parts of the region where more localized options are desired.

VISION STATEMENT FRAMEWORK

In community forums held throughout Georgetown, citizens expressed concerns about the impacts of this growth on the character and quality of life of the community. Many citizens expressed a conviction that Georgetown should take a more active stance in managing growth to protect what people value in Georgetown: its small town western charm, neighborliness, natural beauty and freedom from overcrowding, pollution, crime and other urban problems.





The 2030 Plan seeks to protect the historic character of the downtown area.

Georgetown's 2030 Comprehensive Plan will be ...

A reflection of our values, aspirations and our shared vision

Just as one would not begin a trip without first identifying a destination, the planning process started by defining the community's destination: the kind of place we want Georgetown to be in 20 years. A diverse array of citizens expressed views about Georgetown; its present strengths and weaknesses, and its future opportunities and threats. In listening to what citizens are saying, areas of apparent consensus emerged concerning the kind of community we want to become, or to remain. These expressions of community values provide the basis for a shared vision of Georgetown's future. The Vision Statement articulates our expectations for the future. It frames the mandate for the comprehensive plan and it outlines the strategic framework necessary to achieve the vision.

A guide for the management of change

If our vision for Georgetown's future is to be realized, the comprehensive plan must influence the direction of growth and change and how and where public and private investments are made. To exert this influence, this comprehensive plan must be applied as a guide to the many decisions that will determine each small increment of growth and change. While Georgetown government is taking a leadership role in this effort, the comprehensive plan will call on citizens, neighborhood and civic organizations and private industry to coordinate their efforts with a shared sense of direction and a renewed spirit of partnership.

The foundation for policies, strategies and actions

Georgetown's comprehensive plan will examine policies and strategies for land use, economic development and the protection of open space and natural resources; for the management of land resources and future annexations; and for investments in roadways and other public facilities. Following comprehensive plan adoption, we can expect some adjustments to City policies, regulations and capital investment priorities.

Georgetown's 20-year "To-Do" list

The influence that the comprehensive plan will have on Georgetown's future will be a product of the vision which inspires and the actions taken to realize it. The vision will not be realized because we may agree with, or feel good about, the values it expresses. It will not be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather, it will be realized by steady progress in adhering to a well-defined "game plan" of effective short and long-term actions and a commitment to stay focused.

Over several days in November of 2006, 74 citizens, as well as Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members, participated in community forums to discuss issues facing Georgetown. From this input, the following key areas of community consensus emerged from the citizen input and served as the basis for the Vision Statement.

Key Areas of Consensus

Strengths

1. Small town/historic character, which most associate with downtown Georgetown and its square and Courthouse.
2. People of Georgetown, often described as tolerant, open, friendly, and valuing diversity, as well as educated and involved in community affairs.
3. Quality growth/preparation for growth/strong economy, with specific references to “growing room,” adequate water and infrastructure capacity with fiscal responsibility, and availability of local jobs and shopping.
4. Parks and natural areas, including rivers, lakes and trails.
5. Location/Accessibility, with specific reference to the I-35 and SH-130 links to Austin, being the County seat and a strategic location in Central Texas.

** A second tier of perceived strengths included Southwestern University, Sun City Georgetown and the community's safety level.*

Weaknesses

1. Transportation, including the lack of public transportation, pedestrian, and bicycle networks; lack of roadway connectivity that makes it difficult traversing Georgetown; traffic congestion; Williams Drive; and poor traffic signalization.
2. Misconceptions of local government, including perceived lack of attention to small/downtown businesses, zoning/enforcement inconsistencies, lack of planning for economic development/industrial recruitment, lack of spending within budget, small town politics, etc.
3. Need for more economic development, a stronger tax base, and quality local jobs

** Although not considered consensus issues many participants cited community divisiveness and a lack of choice in local-serving retail (restaurants, groceries, etc.) as community weaknesses.*



Opportunities

1. Improving/diversifying educational, civic and cultural opportunities, including raising the quality of local schools, better “town-gown” engagement with Southwestern University, lower cost higher education (community college), reserving land for future libraries, supporting local artists, and building new civic and cultural facilities.
2. Retaining/strengthening unique community character/downtown, preserve small town historic character, strengthen and diversify downtown, develop San Gabriel waterfront, protect rivers, expand trails, improve gateways, apply higher standards for quality and appearance.
3. Transportation improvements, including the development of public transportation, bike trails, and sidewalks; promotion of alternative fuel vehicles; and enhancement and development of current and future major arterials.
4. Well managed growth, by means of a clear plan for future land use, preservation of green space, creation of greenbelts, promotion of sound development at variable densities, and focused attention to high growth areas such as west Georgetown and the SH-130 and Parmer corridors.
5. Economic development/tax base growth, by attracting quality industry and well-paying local jobs, promoting heritage tourism, and providing a better variety of retail.
6. Leverage the City’s ownership of public utilities to facilitate well-managed growth.

Threats

1. Unmanaged growth: the loss of small town character, uncontrolled growth in the ETJ, wasteful low density development, loss of open space and natural beauty.
2. Failure to plan and adequately fund future infrastructure capacity.
3. Public attitudes – apathy/divisiveness; lack of contact between generations and socioeconomic groups, elitism, unwillingness to accept change.
4. Transportation problems: inadequate roads, traffic gridlock, failure to reduce dependence on the automobile.
5. Failure to adequately plan for the health and social service needs of the community.

** Although they are not recorded as consensus issues, other oft-cited issues include unbalanced growth / failure to attract industry and a failure of government to act.*



Transportation, managed growth, and preservation of Georgetown’s natural features and unique character were key issues in the discussions.

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2030 VISION STATEMENT

The following Vision Statement is written from a perspective of twenty years into the future. It expresses what we envision and desire our community to be in the year 2030 and it reflects on all that we have accomplished since we launched the revision of our comprehensive plan in 2006.

In 2030, Georgetown is a growing city, recognized throughout the region and the nation as a premier community of choice by virtue of its exceptional livability; proud historic heritage; welcoming, engaging people; safe neighborhoods; variety of well-paying jobs; excellent public schools; vibrant arts and cultural offerings; and well-planned infrastructure, transportation, and public facilities.

We have taken advantage of our strategic location by embracing sound, managed growth, and harnessing and guiding it to deliberately shape Georgetown as we choose it to be. In embracing sound growth and encouraging a variety of densities and architectural styles, we have promoted sustainable development patterns that are compatible with our natural resources and historic character. We have encouraged innovation in development practices, raised quality standards for new development, re-invested in downtown and historic neighborhoods, and revitalized areas in transition. We have achieved greater economic autonomy by attracting quality employment and an array of local retail and commercial services to grow our tax base, safeguard our fiscal health and retain our talented youth. All of our neighborhoods are safe and thriving, and offer quality, affordable housing to households of all ages, lifestyles and economic means.

We have achieved our Vision by exercising leadership and by mobilizing citizens, civic and neighborhood organizations, local businesses and institutions to work together in partnership with the City of Georgetown, its elected and appointed leaders and staff.

We have crafted our Vision to articulate community values and aspirations, structured into the following four major themes:

- ♦ Quality of Life
- ♦ Sustainable Development
- ♦ Balanced Transportation / Efficient Mobility
- ♦ Effective Governance

1.0 QUALITY OF LIFE

1.1 *Community Character*

- A. The City of Georgetown is regarded throughout Central Texas and the nation as a safe, livable and beautiful “community of choice.”
- B. We have retained our unique identity and heritage by protecting the historic character of downtown and our older neighborhoods.
- C. We have raised the bar for development quality by encouraging innovation among forms of development that maintain and enhance community character and conserve land and natural resources, consistent with market demand.
- D. We have enhanced the community’s visual character through greater attention to roadway aesthetics, conservation of our tree canopy and green spaces, standards for appropriate signage and enhanced gateway corridors.
- E. We have preserved our irreplaceable natural resources, our lakes, rivers and hill country scenery. Through a variety of means - including strategic acquisition and development of park lands, trails and greenways, successful partnerships, and effective use of incentives for voluntary preservation - our open spaces are protected for future generations.
- F. We have expanded public recreational use and enjoyment of our parks and open spaces by expanding sports facilities and by enhancing our network of greenways and trails, which link major open spaces, recreational areas and our rivers and lakes.



*In 2030, our distinct Hill Country scenery has been preserved . . .and our open spaces protected for future generations . . . **

1.2 People

- A. Georgetown residents are educated, engaged, caring, diverse and committed to the community.
- B. Georgetown residents - whether long-time residents or newcomers; young households or retirees - become deeply rooted in the community and are actively involved in community service through their faith-based involvement, civic organizations and a variety of volunteer activities.
- C. Georgetown residents are well informed and engaged with local government on key issues affecting growth and change in the community.
- D. Georgetown residents recognize and embrace their diversity and respond to opportunities to come together in common purpose, overcoming generational, cultural, geographic and socio-economic barriers.
- E. Georgetown residents are tolerant, compassionate, and reach out to those in need.
- F. Georgetown residents are receptive to positive change and nurture future leaders.
- G. Georgetown residents respond to the needs of all economic levels of residents through the provision of affordable housing and adequate and accessible health and social services.



In 2030, Georgetown residents . . . become deeply rooted in the community . . .and are well informed and engaged with local government issues.

1.3 Educational and Cultural Opportunities

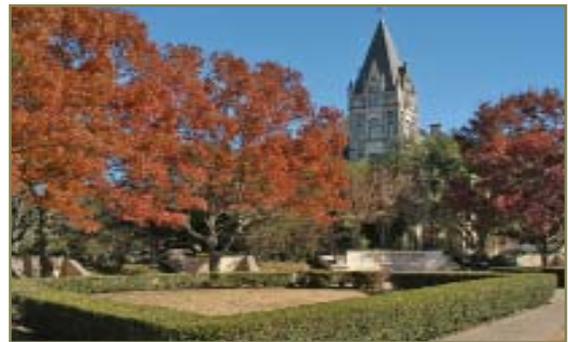
- A. Georgetown nurtures its most valuable resource—its youth—by promoting and supporting the highest level of excellence in public education and by actively engaging them in the life of the community.
- B. Southwestern University is a valued resource and a partner in community affairs. The City and University collaborate in initiatives to expand economic opportunities, to attract clean, knowledge-based employment, and to provide cultural enrichment to citizens and opportunities to engage the student body in the community.
- C. Georgetown seeks and creates partnerships to promote lifelong learning and provide affordable higher education for all, along with special venues for learning to make Georgetown an educational destination in Central Texas.
- D. Georgetown is a cultural destination in Central Texas, thanks to our vibrant community of artists and artisans, performing arts venues, and array of arts, heritage and cultural festivals and events.

1.4 Public Safety

- A. Georgetown provides honorable service and vigilant protection throughout the community so that people feel safe in their homes, businesses, and public places.
- B. Georgetown strives to provide superior, consistent, and effective public safety response capabilities through leadership, innovation and a commitment to excellence.
- C. Georgetown solidifies the relationship with the community through superior service, citizen education and collaborative partnerships in order to establish trust, empower the citizens, and meet the expectations of the community.
- D. Georgetown provides effective emergency services through comprehensive, collaborative, communicative, and efficient incident disaster management.
- E. Georgetown strives to be the standard for public safety through innovative and strategic planning, the utilization of viable emerging technologies, and the effective and efficient use of staffing, resources, and facilities.



*In 2030, Georgetown nurtures its most valuable resource - its youth . . . **



*In 2030, Southwestern University is a valued resource and a partner in community affairs . . . **

2.0 QUALITY GROWTH/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Throughout Georgetown we have...

- A. Attracted desired forms of balanced development, creating quality urban, suburban, and rural places that offer a choice of setting and lifestyle.
- B. Encouraged residential developments that are well connected to the larger community, are planned and designed to compliment the heritage and natural character of Georgetown, and offer a variety of housing types and price ranges.
- C. Encouraged sound, compact, quality growth, including pedestrian-friendly development patterns that incorporate mixed uses and densities, conserve resources, and accommodate public transportation, alternative fuel vehicles, biking, and walking as convenient substitutes for automobile use.
- D. Reserved well-planned and well-located sites for future employment centers, sufficient to meet our long range need for economic diversification and suitable to attract desired “clean” businesses.
- E. Maintained the quality and diversity of our housing stock in all of our neighborhoods, which are framed by safe, attractive streets.



*Throughout the city,...future employment centers ... suitable to attract desired “clean” businesses . . . **



Georgetown provides honorable service and vigilant protection throughout the community . . .

2.2 In downtown Georgetown and our older neighborhoods we have...

- A. Supported home-grown businesses and planned for an optimal mix of businesses, services, retail and entertainment suited to the scale and historic charm of downtown.
- B. Attracted or created an array of civic, arts and other cultural activities and events to expand the level of downtown activity.
- C. Promoted downtown and in-town housing including infill, mixed use and the creation of apartments and lofts over retail.



*In downtown Georgetown, there is a wide array of civic, arts, and cultural activities and events to expand the level of activity . . . **

2.3 Along our major highway corridors we have...

- A. Promoted development compatible with safe, efficient traffic circulation through sound standards for access management, limited installation of curb cuts and parking facility connectivity.
- B. Selectively determined appropriate locations and applied design standards for large commercial developments and other high traffic generating uses.
- C. Set high design standards for all commercial development and signage.
- D. Encouraged mixed-use, and “village center” development types as alternatives to conventional strip center and stand-alone “pad” sites.

2.4 In our suburban fringe we have...

- A. Exercised influence to prevent premature and incompatible development.
- B. Encouraged the staged, orderly expansion of contiguous development to coincide with the expansion of roads and infrastructure.
- C. Encouraged conservation development and other approaches that retain rural character and promote retention of open space.
- D. Provided for the City’s long range growth with strategically timed annexations.
- E. Consolidated development patterns within the city limits, where feasible, through judicious annexation and capital investments.

2.5 With our City services we will...

- A. Provide safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective utility services to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of the community.
- B. Provide adequate utility capacity in a manner that encourages quality, balanced growth and development through both responsive and proactive planning.
- C. Protect the environment through a commitment to conservation, sustainable fuels and materials, regulatory compliance, and the long-term viability of community resources.
- D. Encourage innovative solutions, flexibility, and a willingness to adapt to the changing needs of the community through ongoing analysis, re-evaluation, and a long-range outlook.

- E. Use as an economic tool to incentivize business and industry, expand the tax base, create jobs, and generate sales tax collections.



*Along major highway corridors, we have promoted development compatible with safe, efficient traffic circulation . . . **



*In the suburban fringe, we have encouraged conservation development to retain rural character and retain open space . . . **

3.0 BALANCED TRANSPORTATION/EFFICIENT MOBILITY

- A. Georgetown has implemented improvements to the local road and traffic control system, including new thoroughfare linkages to enhance connectivity, improved and coordinated traffic signalization, and standards for access management to enhance traffic flow and safety.
- B. Georgetown is progressing towards a functional, well-integrated, multi-modal transportation system, which provides convenient public transportation choices within Georgetown and access to the region’s major activity centers in and around Austin.
- C. Georgetown has reduced its reliance on conventional fuels and automotive traffic by promoting alternative fuel vehicles; by retrofitting bike lanes and sidewalks in underserved areas to enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility; by incorporating these facilities in new developments; and by encouraging compact mixed-use and other “walkable” development types.
- D. Georgetown has assisted in carefully locating employment and commercial centers, schools, and other high-traffic generators.
- E. Georgetown has promoted the private development of the Georgetown Municipal Airport by maintaining safe operation procedures and public facilities, strictly adhering to the maximum capacity of aircraft, and working to reduce aviation noise.

4.0 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- A. Our City government retains its reputation for providing a high level of responsiveness to citizens and in exercising visionary leadership in planning and investing for the future.
- B. We have created and enforced innovative, effective and fair regulatory codes and development standards to guide growth and improve development quality. We have streamlined the regulatory process, particularly for desired development types and locations.

- C. Georgetown has achieved a high level of service coordination, both internally and with County, State and other city service providers.
- D. Georgetown has anticipated and planned for the long-range need for public facilities including police, fire, recreation and libraries.
- E. The City has coordinated with the Georgetown Independent School District for the appropriate siting and timing of new school construction, consistent with the City's growth management strategy.
- F. Georgetown has maintained and improved its fiscal strength by:
 - ♦ Actively promoting sustainable economic development through recruitment of desired industries and employers.
 - ♦ Guiding a compact growth pattern, which reduces public facility costs.
 - ♦ Carefully prioritizing spending consistent with adopted capital improvement plans and budgets.
 - ♦ Judicious use of incentives and subsidies for desired development.
- G. Georgetown has taken a leadership role in the use of advanced technology to incorporate sustainable "green infrastructure," including initiatives to:
 - ♦ Conserve water resources through reduced consumption.
 - ♦ Effectively re-use treated wastewater for irrigation.
 - ♦ Encourage renewable sources of energy.
 - ♦ Promote maximum recycling.
 - ♦ Promote the use of alternative fuels.
 - ♦ Provide high speed internet access for all citizens.
- H. The City has followed through on its commitment to plan for the future, by adopting a comprehensive plan; by consistently applying it as a criterion in all decision-making; by implementing actions called for in the plan; and by periodic monitoring and updating of the plan.



*In 2030, Georgetown has anticipated and planned for the provision of long-range public facility needs including police, fire, recreation, and libraries . . . **