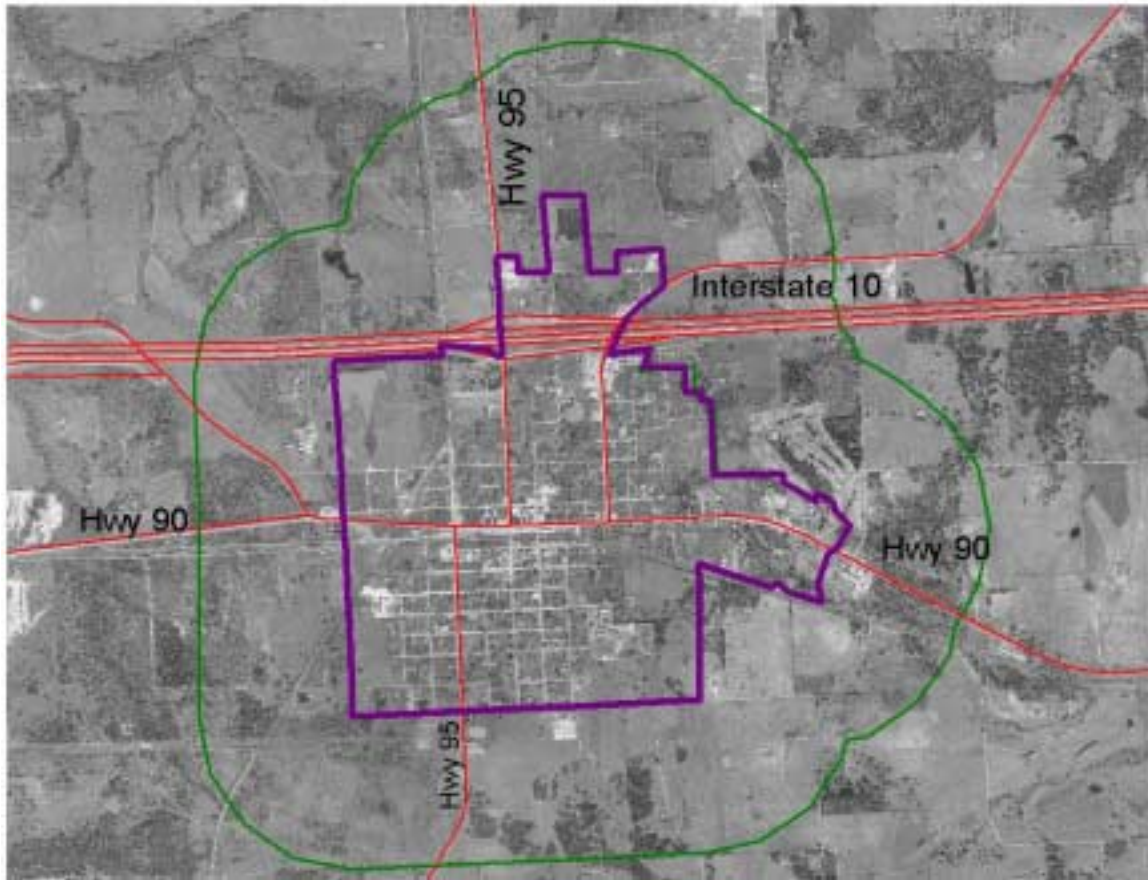


2010 Comprehensive Plan City of Flatonia, Texas



Adopted September 25, 2000

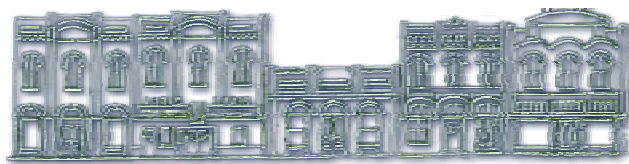


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Flatonia Comprehensive Plan 2010 is the City's 10-year master plan and is intended to serve as a policy guide for City elected officials and staff on decisions affecting the physical development of the community. It is an ambitious plan that has been put together with a significant amount of public input gathered from workshops, surveys, and Steering and Parks/Open Space Committees involvement. It provides a Vision for what the community wants to achieve in Flatonia over the next ten years and it provides a clear direction on how some of that vision can be realized.

The City embarked on this endeavor with the intention of developing tools they can use to guide the growth of their city and provide a quality of life and economic prosperity to their citizens. This is a plan and as such can be left on the shelf and never looked at again - as does often happen with such a document. Therefore, it is imperative (in order to meet the desires of the citizens of Flatonia) that the City continue the planning process by developing implementation tools such as a Capital Improvements Plan and Zoning Ordinance, including elements to address Building Design and Historic Building Preservation. A comprehensive plan remains only a policy document without these implementation tools.

The plan includes eight major elements, each addressing a particular facet of the community, which include:

- Community Vision
- Baseline Analysis
- Citizen Survey/Input
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Parks
- Housing
- Utility Infrastructure (Water, Wastewater, Electricity)

Chapter 1 identifies the **Vision** for Flatonia that was developed by Community participants at a Visioning Workshop. The primary purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to allow the community to provide the initial direction for the comprehensive plan. The Vision reads:

"In 2010, Flatonia will be a community that retains its old fashion charm through managed growth and development while providing quality education and economic opportunity".

Also in Chapter 1, the **Goals and Objectives** are presented which were developed to achieve the Vision. The primary goals for the community are:

1. Promote business opportunities and economic growth,
2. Preserve architectural integrity of the community and develop a beautification program for all of Flatonia,
3. Ensure quality infrastructure,
4. Provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of the entire community, and
5. Increase affordable housing within Flatonia's City Limits and Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

These Goals, and corresponding Objectives found also in Chapter 1, are interspersed throughout the comprehensive plan, and form the focus for other plan components (eg. Economic Development or Housing). These Goals should be reviewed by the City throughout the next ten years as a reminder of the priorities of the community. The Comprehensive Plan is built around the Goals and Objectives that were developed at the initial Visioning Workshop, and although not all Objectives have been addressed in this Comprehensive Plan, the City intends to address all issues and concerns of the citizens.

The **Baseline Analysis** in **Chapter 2** presents past, present and future data and information on demographics, economics, and land use. Flatonia has experienced a steady population growth over the past 10-20 years and the current population (1,455) is expected to increase by approximately 200 people over the next 10 years. Demographic changes expected to occur throughout Texas over the next 20 years will present challenges to city leaders as they prioritize their community and economic development initiatives.

The current land use in Flatonia is also discussed in this Chapter. Flatonia currently has approximately 1,066 acres within the City Limits and 1,338 acres within the ETJ. Approximately 72 percent of the land within the City Limits is developed. Of this developed land, 50 percent is residential, 20 percent is Agricultural. In addition, 10 percent of all land within the City Limits is vacant. There is a tremendous opportunity for the City to utilize vacant and agricultural lands to their best potential based on citizen interests. Chapter 4 discusses the Future Land Use Plan.

Chapter 3 presents the findings of the **Citizen Survey** and discusses interesting and relevant correlations. This portion of the comprehensive plan is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the plan since citizen input provides the basis for most decision-making that has been undertaken on this plan during the planning process. Of the Surveys sent to City utility customers (over 1000), 450 were returned completed. In addition, Flatonia high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors were asked to complete a survey, similar to the general citizen survey, but that was designed with the high school student perspective in mind. The most important issue raised by the survey was the perceived need for additional businesses and jobs. Protecting property values, providing affordable housing, preserving the small town character, and expanding school facilities all ranked as equally important issues facing Flatonia in the upcoming years. Respondents felt the City Council should act to encourage new businesses, develop zoning, enhance local parks, and increase the availability of new housing and affordable housing.

High School students feel that the most important challenge facing Flatonia is the need for more recreational opportunities. They chose this because they feel that kids are more likely to get into trouble without "things to do."

Chapter 4 addresses the **Future Land Use Plan**, which is one of the most important aspects of a Comprehensive Plan. The Land Use Plan is developed in relation to current and future constraints, needs and opportunities. Although a Land Use Plan does not constitute zoning, the Land Use Plan forms the basis for a future Zoning Map.

The City of Flatonia Future Land Use Plan was developed by the City Council, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the Parks Committee who gathered at a planning session and were presented information about the current land use patterns in Flatonia, the primary goals and interests of the citizens, as well as other pertinent information such as population projections, and land use constraints (e.g., floodplains). The workshop participants developed a Future Land Use Plan based on all of this information which has been reviewed by the Parks and Steering Committees as well as the City Council.

The major changes in the envisioned future land use from the current land use include: a historic district designation for historic buildings; more dedicated parks and open space; more commercial, industrial, retail and office space; less agricultural land; and higher density residential growth. However, the most salient designation was the participants need for distinct areas of use protecting, for example, areas used for residential from areas used for industrial purposes.

The **Economic Development** Plan presented in **Chapter 5** identifies business and community needs/issues as they pertain to job growth and the economy of Flatonia. This section also provides strategies that will help the City and community leaders in addressing these needs and issues while achieving the Vision for the community. Interviews were conducted with eight of the largest businesses in Flatonia and a focus group was held with twenty-five small to medium-sized business owners participating. Although the small and large business owners have different issues as they pertain to operation, they share the same concerns for improved job opportunities and quality of life for their themselves and employees. Two of the primary issues addressed by the existing businesses are 1) the need for more affordable housing and 2) that focusing on improving quality of life will result in greatest impact for economic prosperity. Based on the existing business input as well as citizen input from the Visioning Workshop and Citizen Survey, the economic development focus for the City and the Chamber of Commerce will be on:

- Helping Existing Business Expand

- Improving the Quality of Life in Flatonia
- Improving Quality and Quantity of Housing
- Marketing Flatonia as a Place to do Business and a Place to Visit
- Attracting New Businesses

Parks and Open Space needs and desires of the community are discussed in **Chapter 6**. This Parks Master Plan outlines a set of community park and recreation priorities, identifies specific park development projects, and includes a schedule for carrying out the identified park projects. The primary goal of the park plan is to greatly enhance the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of Flatonia, thereby making Flatonia a great place to live, work, and raise a family. This chapter presents an inventory of existing park, recreational and open space facilities and then presents similarly identified needs and projects of the community.

The **Housing** Plan is presented in **Chapter 7**. Residential Land Use currently comprises approximately 48 percent of current land use. Single-family housing comprises 78 percent of the Flatonia housing units. Manufactured Housing makes up 17 percent, followed by Multi-family housing at 5 percent. Approximately 77 percent of all housing types in Flatonia are considered standard while nearly 14 percent is substandard. Flatonia has a relatively high percentage of dilapidated housing units compared to other cities.

An aggressive program for improving existing housing stock as well as developing vacant properties will lead to an overall improvement in the quality of housing in the City. The maintenance and quality of housing is a good reflection of the citizen attitudes towards their community. Property owner neglect and community disinterest are two of the major factors that cause poor housing conditions. One of the most effective actions that the City can take to improve housing conditions is to improve the look and feel of the City by focusing on beautification projects and infrastructure improvements. Residents living in a city that prides itself on the condition of its own buildings, streets and community facilities often follow suit with their upkeep of their personal housing.

In addition to housing conditions, Multi-family Housing, Manufactured Housing, and Affordable Housing are the major housing issues currently affecting Flatonia. The Housing Market Study (see Appendix) suggests a need for affordable rental and owner-occupied housing, so the City will be considering their options to have developers build more housing options in the city. This would include multi-family and single family housing.

Manufactured housing is considered by some to be a good choice for affordable housing. Many other cities develop separate zoning categories for manufactured housing or for a manufactured housing park. These are issues that the City will be considering in their discussions on zoning after the completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

The **Water/Wastewater Plan** (provided by BEFCO Engineering, Inc.) and **Electric Plan** (provided by the LCRA's Customer Engineering Department) are found in the Appendix. Both of these utility infrastructure plans present specific needs for the city over the next ten years based on population projections for this time period. Information from both of these plans will be integrated into the Capital Improvements Plan.

To reiterate, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Flatonia is only as good as the implementation of the plan. A significant amount of time and energy has been contributed toward the development of this plan by City Council, City Staff, Steering and Parks Committee members, LCRA planning staff, as well as citizens who have participated in the surveys or workshops. The City of Flatonia wishes to acknowledge the following individuals involved in this important process:

City of Flatonia:

Mayor Lori Berger
Councilmember Marvin Finger
Councilmember Carlene Carlock
Councilmember Kenneth Freytag
Councilmember Steve Moeller
Councilmember Dean Stavinoha
City Manager Robert Wood
City Secretary Melissa Brunner
Public Works Director Jack Pavlas

Steering Committee Members:

Bob Bizzell
Joe Brown
Derek Hadjik
Tom Kramer
Sallie Lyons
Bitta Maeker
Nichole Scallion
Dean Stavinoha
Rosa Velasquez

Parks Committee Members:

Kristen Bargas
Marvin Finger
Gerald Freytag
George Koudelka
Tommy Schultz
Jeff Steinhauser
Judy Vire

VISION, GOALS, and OBJECTIVES

VISION

In 2010, Flatonia will be a community that retains its old fashion charm through managed growth and development while providing quality education and economic opportunity.

GOALS:

The following goals have been developed to provide guidance in achieving the Vision:

- I. Promote business opportunities and economic growth.
- II. Preserve architectural integrity of the community and develop a beautification program for all of Flatonia.
- III. Ensure quality infrastructure
- IV. Provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of the entire community
- V. Community Services
- VI. Increase affordable housing within Flatonia ETJ

I. Promote business opportunities and economic growth.

Objective I.1: Support existing businesses by establishing the city and/or chamber as a resource for information on state and federal programs and funding opportunities.

Objective I.2: Perform an economic analysis to determine where realistic opportunities for business investment or recruitment exist.

Tourism

Objective I.3: Historic Preservation

- Publicize to the community the known historic information about different buildings and locations
- Elect or hire a town historian
- Identify and attain funding for historic preservation

Objective I.4: Promote Flatonia as a tourist destination

- Look into creating a magazine advertisement
- Capitalize on area-wide resources and attractions (e.g. Muldoon)
- Create an expanded brochure (e.g. Old Spanish Trail)
- Increase involvement in the Painted Churches Tour

Objective I.5: Maximize Flatonia's cultural heritage

- Czech
- German
- English
- Mexican
- Railroad
- Ethnic Foods (promote in markets and restaurants)

Objective I.6: Improve the local Motel (possibly through improved relations between owners and the city)

Industry

Objective I.7: Develop Business Park (near the interstate?)

Objective I.8: Develop local infrastructure

- Natural Gas

- Internet

Objective I.9: Develop downtown

- Main Street redevelopment
- Create residential lofts above ground floor stores
- Relocate Government Offices to downtown buildings

Objective I.10: Consider Zoning/ Design Ordinances to enhance all of the above objectives

II. Preserve architectural integrity of the community and develop a beautification program for all of Flatonia.

Objective II.1: Develop a zoning plan to:

- Preserve the business district's architectural integrity
- Manage development and growth in the residential areas and preserve historic areas.

Objective II.2: Begin implementation to relocate city storage area away from downtown as soon as possible.

Objective II.3: Develop park and restroom facility in downtown area.

Objective II.4: Establish an architectural review committee.

Objective II.5: Establish and enforce building codes and beautification ordinance.

Objective II.6: Beautify the entryways and common (public) areas of Flatonia.

Objective II.7: Establish committee for a yard of the month and business of the month beautification awards and incentive program to encourage participation.

Objective II.8: Improve appearance of community by adding curbing and street improvements and sidewalks.

III. Ensure quality infrastructure

Objective III.1: Develop a plan for future infrastructure improvements and make available to public.

Objective III.2: Develop infrastructure incentive plan for business growth.

Objective III.3: Improve existing streets with enhanced quality construction including curbs and gutters.

Objective III.4: Through citizen input, develop standards of quality for all infrastructure improvements.

Objective III.5: Obtain adequate Internet access for the entire community.

Objective III.6: Develop plan for bringing natural gas to Flatonia.

Objective III.7: Develop plan for infrastructure improvements in ETJ.

Objective III.8: Develop feasibility plan for Industrial Park.

IV. Provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of the entire community

Objective IV.1: Meet mandated state and federal guidelines.

Objective IV.2: Provide facilities and equipment:

- PE facility
- Cafeteria/auditorium
- Classrooms

Objective IV.3: Provide adult education classes:

- Parenting
- GED
- ESOL
- Computer classes
- Job specific training (for industry to be attracted)

Objective IV.4: Expand volunteer opportunities in education.

Objective IV.5: Get students (and school in general) involved in business community.

Objective IV.6: Improve communication with rural areas and others isolated from community - from committee made up of leaders from civic organizations and leaders from rural areas to promote bond issues.

Objective IV.7: Explore alternative funding opportunities.

Objective IV.8: Improve library facilities (school, city, businesses, etc...)

Objective IV.9: Develop a mentor or job-shadowing program.

V. Community Services

Objective V.1: Continue to upgrade medical facilities:

- Build synergy between EMS and clinic resources
- Establish funding resources to maintain in situ doctor care, including a 24hr emergency care.

Objective V.2: Finalize plan and implementation of facilities for fire, police, and city maintenance.

- Establish 24-hour police capability.
- Establish full-time fire fighting personnel

Objective V.3: Pursue the development of a multilevel recreational facility

- Set up summer recreational program
- Integrate city and school resources

VI. Increase affordable housing within Flatonia ETJ

Objective VI.1: Develop zoning ordinances to uphold housing standards for traditional, manufactured and other housing building types.

Objective VI.2: Encourage the development of tenant council and homeowner councils so they have a voice (influence) in the maintenance of the property.

Objective VI.3: Develop financial programs to encourage the building or expansion of housing.

Objective VI.4: Ensure affordable access to infrastructure for all types of housing and provide housing educational programs.

Baseline Analysis

The Baseline Analysis section of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide an overview of the past and current physical and demographic environment – as well as a historical background and geographical reference. The following components will help in the development of other aspects of this plan:

- Historical Background
- Relationship to Region
- Existing Housing , Demographic and Economic Characteristics
- Physical Characteristics
- Existing Land Use

The primary objective of the Baseline Analysis is to document current conditions, and to identify opportunities and constraints that Flatonia must consider in shaping its future form and character. The secondary objective of the Baseline Analysis is to ensure that the information being used in the planning process accurately portrays the community and its needs.

Historical Background¹²

Until 1873, the site where Flatonia now stands was a rolling prairie, covered with tall grass and a few trees. Flatonia is now a rural community on Interstate Highway 10, U.S. Highway 90, U.S. Highway 95 and the Union Pacific Railroad - situated in southwestern Fayette County.

It was established on April 8, 1874, on land acquired from William Alexander Faires (on the old Faires headright, obtained from Mexico as a part of Stephen F. Austin's original Texas Colony) by a syndicate composed of F.W. Flato, John Cline, and John Lattimore. When the Southern Pacific Railroad built its tracks from Houston to San Antonio, the syndicate gave T.W. Pierce, president of the company, half of the land and named it for pioneer merchant F. W. Flato.

At that time, residents of the original Flatonia settlement, one-mile southeast, and Oso, three miles northeast, loaded their homes and businesses on wagons and moved to the new location on the tracks. Mr. Schripes, who owned one of the first houses in Flatonia, had his house moved from Old Flatonia on ox wagons by J.R. Corkett. (Mr. Corkett was one of Flatonia's earliest pioneers and ran for Governor of Texas in 1914). Mr. Schripes' structure houses the oldest business still operating within the City limits of Flatonia.

The post office that had been established at old Flatonia in 1870 was moved to the new town without changing its name. Flatonia was incorporated on November 10, 1875, and its first election was held the following December 6th. By 1878 the town had a population of 800, and the economy depended equally on cattle and cotton.

The original settlers in the area were primarily Anglo-American. Opportunities provided by the railroad and inexpensive real estate, which sold for one to fifteen dollars an acre for uncultivated land and five to thirty-five dollars per acre for cultivated, brought successive waves of German, Bohemian, Greek, Arabian, and Italian immigrants. In the 1880's

¹ Frank Lotto, Fayette County: Her History and Her People (Schulenburg, Texas: Sticker Steam Press, 1902; rpt., Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). James L. Rock and W. I. Smith, Southern and Western Texas Guide for 1878 (St. Louis: Granger, 1878).

² Bob Bizzell with the Flatonia Chamber of Commerce, 2000.

Flatonia was a big cotton and cattle center. In 1887, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway was building South from Waco and the citizens of Flatonia began an effort to get the line to come through Flatonia. In 1888, the Railroad came through the town and it became the meeting place of the two main railway lines in Texas. The Railway brought new settlements, Muldoon on the north and Moulton on the south, which caused competition for business. This new competition plus the agricultural depression of the time caused a decline in the town's economy and by 1900 occasioned a substantial loss in population.

Some of the primary businesses in the early 1900's included the Southern Pride Saloon, the Swift Meat Packing Co.(which moved in Flatonia in 1906), the Flatonia Lumber Company (organized by a group of citizens in 1907) and the First National Bank. In 1910 a Commercial Club was organized by businessmen to advertise Flatonia and develop its resources. As a result, a new electric light plant, ice plant, water works, and cold storage warehouses were gained. Later, Flatonia had the second largest creamery in Texas, and in 1910 a sauerkraut packing plant was established and was the only one of its kind in Texas.

J.D. Bunting served as Mayor from 1906 to 1912. In 1919, Flatonia converted to the Commission of Government. The first fair in Flatonia was held in the fall of 1912 at the Fair Grounds. Also that year, the official opening of the Flatonia Public School was on September 2nd, and the first high school football game was played with Yoakum. The two-story school building was completed but not at the beginning of school, as classes were held in the old building until the new structure could be completed.

In 1930 the population of Flatonia was 995. On August 9, 1932, Gov. Ross S. Sterling delivered a 30-minute speech in Flatonia. In 1935 Flatonian E. A. Arnim was appointed County Judge of Fayette County, and in 1939 Moe Klein was named the first Rotary Club head. The highway through the city became a reality as it was paved by the end of 1941. In 1948, the American Legion Hall was dedicated.

During the first half of the twentieth century the prospects of Flatonia rose and fell in response to the national economy and the markets for cotton and cattle. In 1950 the town had forty businesses, a population of 1,024, and

a wide service area of farms and ranches. Cotton ceased to be a factor in the local economy during the 1960s, and many farms were converted to cattle ranching. The population remained between 1,000 and 1,500, and the number of businesses rose to sixty-nine by 1985.

The completion of I-10 during the 1970s caused tourist-oriented businesses to move away from Highway 90 and the railroad to the new highway, a mile north. In 1971, Grumpy's Restaurant opened. In 1973, Flatonia celebrated its Centennial with a festival called Czhlispiel. The Czechoslovakian Ambassador to the U.S. visited Flatonia at that time and a historical marker was erected downtown, commemorating Flatonia's history during the Czhlispiel I I .

Czhlispiel continues today, being held on the last weekend of October each year. Czhlispiel has grown and in 1979, had the second largest chili cookoff in Texas, with 183 entries. It also boasts of the largest tented biergarden in the world.

Relationship to the Region






It is important to understand how Flatonia's geographic location effects it's quality of growth and it's growth potential. Having an understanding of where future growth may be occurring and what the factors are resulting in growth can allow the city to plan it's future annexations and zoning accordingly.

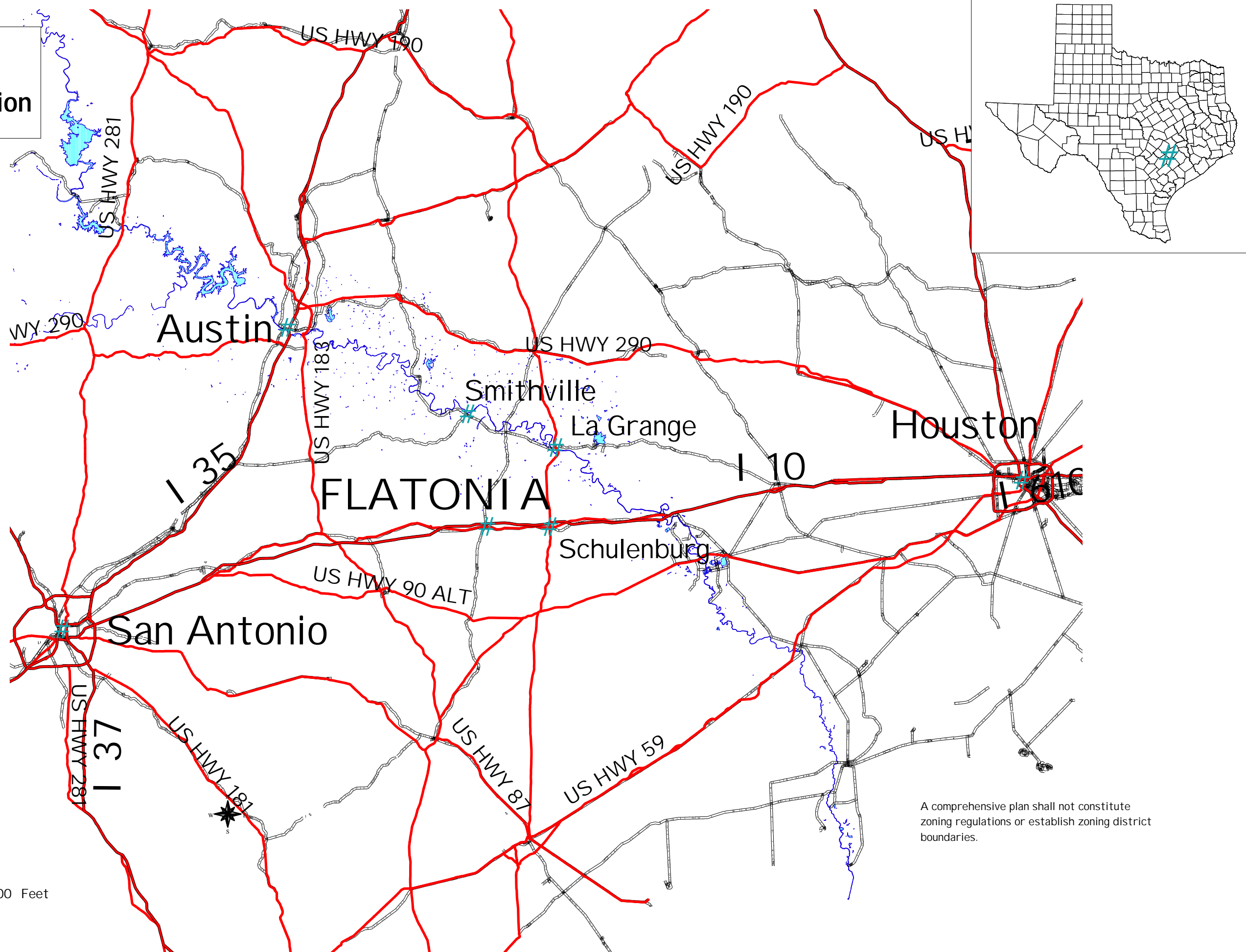
Flatonia is located (see Plate 2-1) in the Southwestern portion of Fayette County along I -10, SH-95, US-90, and the Union Pacific Railroad. It is approximately 90 miles Southwest of the City of Austin, and approximately 90 miles from San Antonio and 100 miles from Houston – along I -10. Its closest neighbors are Schulenburg, which is 12 miles away, Smithville (30 miles), La Grange (30 miles), Victoria (50 miles) and Moulton (12 miles).

Flatonia's location on an Interstate, a Railroad, and two additional major highways places Flatonia businesses an excellent location for trade. The location also provides Flatonia residents within commuting distances to three of Texas' largest cities and several small cities for employment opportunities not currently provided within Flatonia.

In addition, Flatonia's growth is not limited by other cities' jurisdictions like some Central Texas cities where the city's boundaries and ETJs abut other cities.

City of Flatonia Relationship to Region

- # City Points
-  Interstate Hwys
-  US Hwys
-  Railroads
-  Lakes
-  Colorado River



A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

80000 0 80000 160000 Feet

Existing Demographic, Housing and Economic Characteristics

Demographic Profile and Economic Base³

Just as it is important to examine Flatonia's position within Fayette County and the larger region that surrounds it, an understanding of the area's demographic, social and economic composition is a key piece in the planning for Flatonia's future. The attitudes and characteristics of the residents of the community will, to a large extent, determine the economic strength and quality of life in Flatonia. It is therefore appropriate to examine the characteristics of the population and changes that have been taking place in recent years and decades. The following is a review of the various characteristics of Flatonia's Population.

Population Characteristics

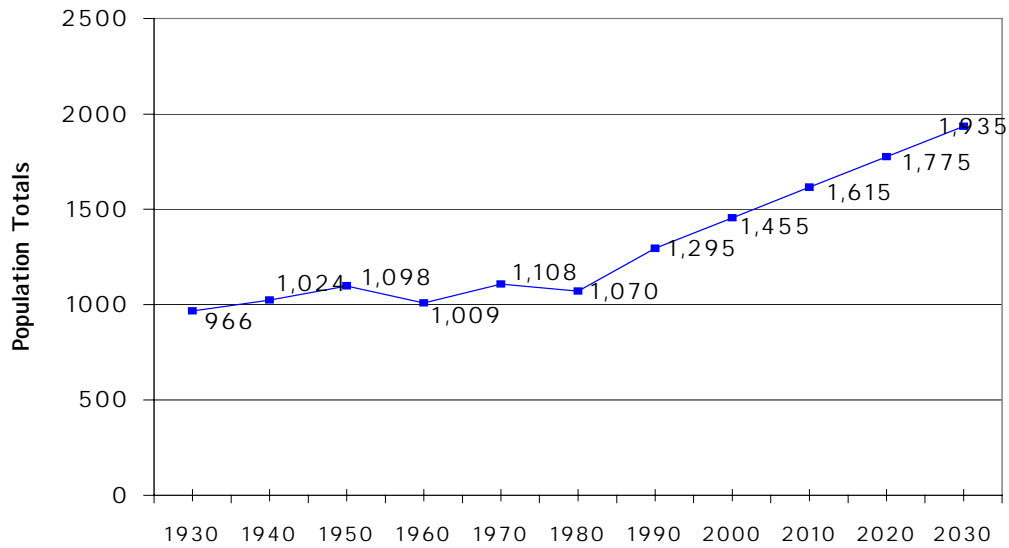
The population in Flatonia has been increasing steadily since 1980. This growth is projected to continue for the foreseeable future (Figure 2-1).

Historically, the rate of growth in Flatonia has been faster than in Fayette County but slower than the state of Texas. Overall, Flatonia's rate of growth has been variable, a trend that was also experienced by surrounding cities of similar size (Figure 2-2)⁴.

³ Despite the dated nature of the 1990 Census data, it has been used to provide a general description of the population of Flatonia. It was determined that older Flatonia data would be more illustrative than more recent county-wide information, since Flatonia is a small portion of the county (about seven percent). The City may want to examine data provided by the 2000 Census (data will begin to be available in 2001) and see how the newest information relates to historic trends mentioned herein. At that time, the comprehensive plan may need to be revised to account for the new demographics of the community.

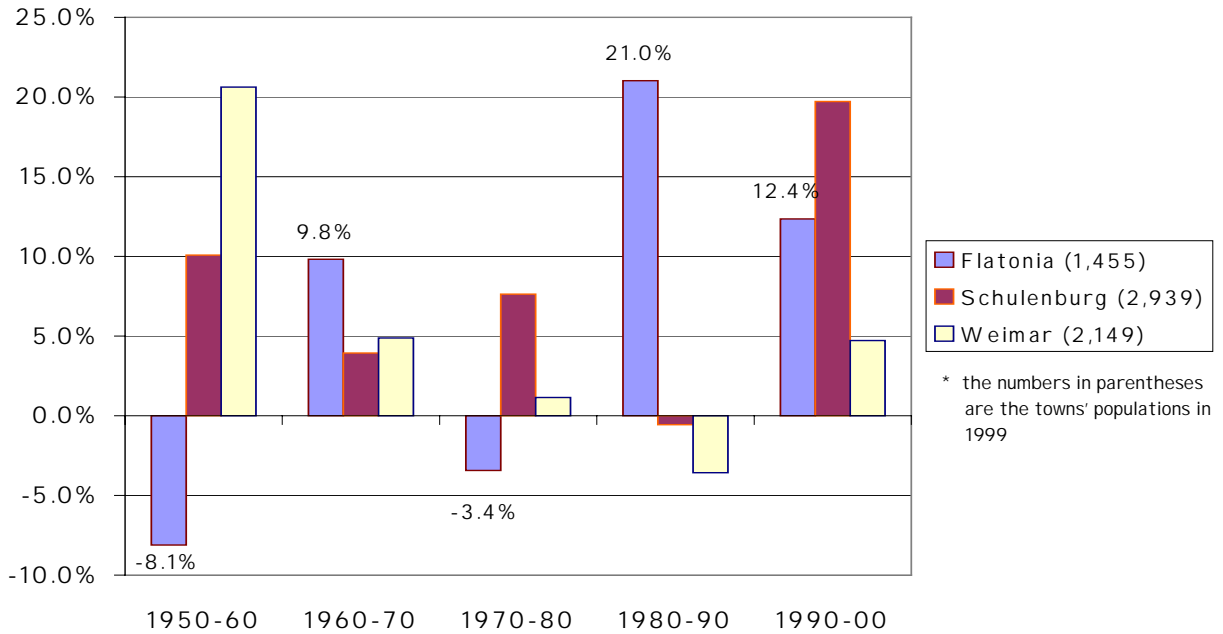
⁴ When interpreting this graph, it may be helpful to look at each community separately and then at how the communities compare to each other.

Figure 2-1
Flatonia Population Growth



Source: U.S. Census and the Texas State Data Center

Figure 2-2
City Growth Rates



Source: U.S. Census and the Texas State Data Center

Notice that in Figure 2-2 Flatonia was the only town that experienced a positive growth rate between 1980-90. The fact that Flatonia was able to

capture additional residents, while other areas were not, is significant and may indicate a strength that Flatonia could capitalize upon in the future. (To determine why Flatonia was unique in its ability to grow, identify any differences that existed between Flatonia and the other communities during the 1980s – for example, employment, schools, city government, lower property values, etc.)

Age and Race Composition

Future demands for city services and jobs can often be predicted and planned for by analyzing the age composition of a community’s population. The age distribution of Flatonia is similar to surrounding communities and the county as a whole (Table 2-1). This type of age distribution is difficult to plan for, since each of the three largest age groups demands a different type of service from City Government and the local economy.

Table 2-1
Age, 1990

	Flatonia	Schulenburg	La Grange
population	1295	2455	3951
Young (0 to 17 years)	27.3%	24.0%	24.0%
High School, College, & Young Families(18 to 24)	8.5%	7.3%	7.7%
Younger Labor Force (25 to 44)	26.4%	24.3%	25.7%
Older Labor Force (45 to 64)	16.9%	19.7%	17.9%
Elderly (65 years and over)	21.2%	24.7%	24.7%

Source: U.S. Census

A community’s racial/ ethnic character can be a source of additional economic activity if businesses are created to satisfy the tastes and preferences of the diverse population. For this reason, it is beneficial to study a population’s racial break down. In Flatonia, there is a rich heritage of ethnic and racial diversity in the local community. The original European ethnic heritage has been enriched, throughout Flatonia’s history, by additional ethnic and racial groups (Table 2-2). Today, Flatonia’s Hispanic population is much larger than those found in the surrounding towns of Schulenburg and La Grange. In contrast, Flatonia’s black population is significantly smaller than in Schulenburg and, to a lesser degree, La Grange.

Table 2-2
Race/ Ethnicity

	Flatonia	Schulenburg	La Grange
White, non-hispanic	60.5%	73.5%	76.1%
Black	8.6%	18.8%	11.2%
Hispanic	30.0%	7.6%	12.3%
Other	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%

Source: U.S. Population and Housing Census, 1990

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment of a population generally indicates the skill level and ability of community residents. These skill and ability levels must be considered when planning economic development strategies. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 49.0 percent of the persons 25 years of age and over had graduated from high school and 7.1 percent had attained a Bachelors Degree or higher. Flatonia and its surrounding region are well below statewide levels of 72.1 percent (high school graduation) and 20.3 percent (Bachelors Degree).⁵

Income and Poverty

Family income and poverty rates are relevant to planning due to their direct impacts on purchasing power for goods, homes, and services. The poverty level in Flatonia in 1990 was 34.2 percent (for comparisons with the county and state, see Table 2-3). It is likely that the poverty level has decreased slightly since 1990, shown by the fact that Flatonia's residents have seen an increase in Median Family Income of nearly 20 percent (Table 2-3). The increase in family income represents a real gain in local purchasing power.

⁵ Flatonia, Schulenburg, La Grange, and Fayette County all have similar levels of educational attainment.

Table 2-3
Poverty and Income

	Flatonia	Fayette County	Texas
Poverty Level, 1990	34.2%	18.6%	15.9%
Median Family Income, 1990*	\$27,486	\$31,909	--
Median Family Income, 1999	\$32,905	\$38,200	--

Source: US Census, 1990 and Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999

* adjusted to 1999 dollars

- U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. To view the thresholds for 1990, see <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/threshld/thresh90.html>

Economic Base

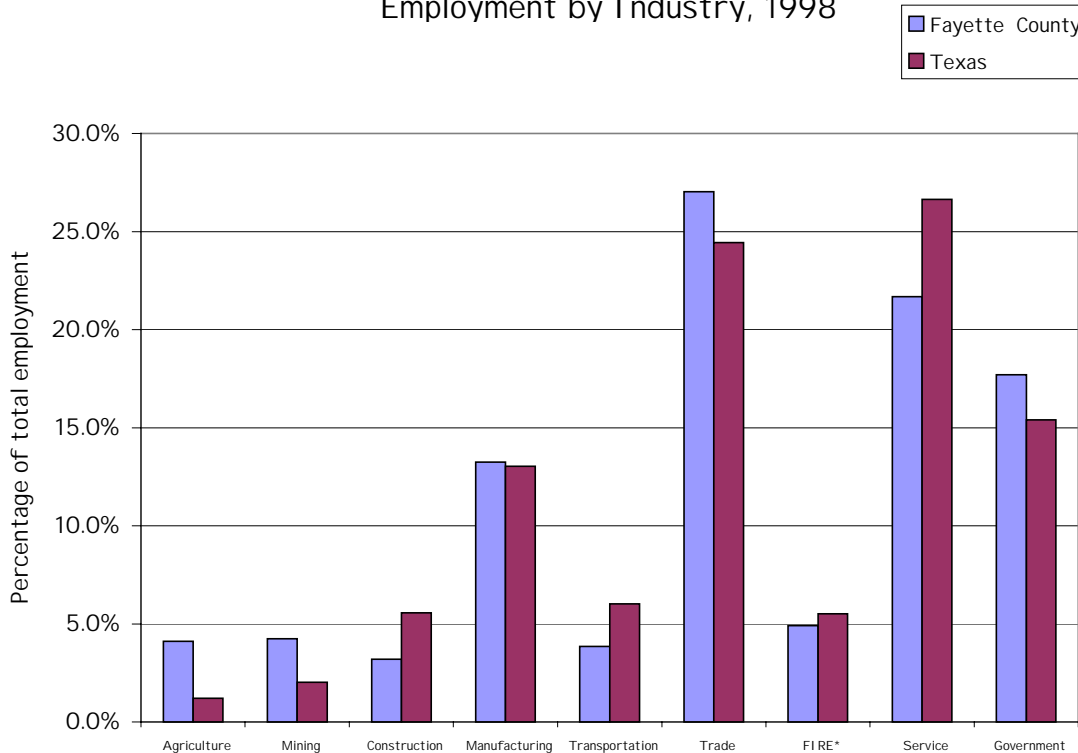
Employment

In 1990, the distribution of employment by industry in Flatonia and Fayette County were very similar. Because of this, Fayette County data is used to represent Flatonia's current industry breakdown in 1998 (Figure 2-3). The industries with highest employment are trade, services and government. For a rural community, the Flatonia workforce is fairly diversified, with a significant portion of employees working in Manufacturing and FIRE (Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate).

By occupation, over fifty percent of Flatonia residents are employed in the two categories of "technical, sales, and administrative support" and "operators, fabricators, and laborers." Table 2-4 shows how Flatonia's employment, by occupation, compares with surrounding communities.

Figure 2-3

Employment by Industry, 1998



Source: Texas Workforce Commission

Table 2-4

Employment by Occupation

Employment by Occupation, 1990	Flatonia	Schulenburg	La Grange
Employed persons 16 years and over	535	1,077	1,595
Managerial & Professional Specialty	13.1%	17.6%	15.2%
Technical, Sales, & Administrative Support	19.3%	22.7%	29.0%
Service	17.0%	15.6%	16.8%
Farming, Forestry & Fishing	8.6%	2.6%	6.0%
Precision production, Craft & Repair	9.3%	13.8%	12.7%
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	32.7%	27.7%	20.3%

Source: U.S. Population and Housing Census, 1990

Flatonia's six major employers employ over eighty percent of the town's population, making the Flatonia economy fairly vulnerable to the management decisions of individual firms (Table 2-5).

Table 2-5
Flatonia Employment

Firm Name	Number of Employees
Balcones Mineral Corporation	35
Central Texas Bank	25
Flatonia I SD	89
Flatonia Livestock Commission	40
Oak Manor Nursing Home	60
Prototype	58
Cal-Maine Foods	200
Source: City of Flatonia, 1999	

City Sales Tax Revenues

City sales tax revenue is an indicator of (1) the level of resources that will be available for City projects and investment and (2) the health of the local economy, by showing whether sales have been increasing, decreasing or stagnating. City of Flatonia sales tax revenues have fluctuated throughout the 1990's, ranging from \$106,557 in 1992 to \$98,425 in 1998⁶. While the recent annexation (1999) has increased sales tax revenues significantly (Table 2-6), historic sources of sales tax revenue have remained fairly constant, indicating little growth in the local retail or commercial sectors of the economy.⁷

⁶ All amounts are adjusted to 1999 dollars, Texas Comptroller's Office

⁷ The City of Flatonia began receiving revenues from the recent property annexation in October 1999.

Table 2-6
City Sales Tax Revenue

	1997*	1998*	1999	2000
January	\$5,683	\$6,513	\$5,265	\$9,036
February	\$9,985	\$10,421	\$14,452	\$10,972
March	\$6,831	\$8,205	\$6,245	\$12,138
April	\$6,822	\$5,649	\$7,349	\$10,523
May	\$5,780	\$7,637	\$9,698	\$12,748
June	\$8,883	\$7,789	\$7,650	
July	\$6,969	\$7,469	\$7,058	
August	\$7,764	\$9,859	\$11,401	
September	\$17,969	\$10,145	\$8,240	
October	\$7,558	\$8,456	\$9,595	
November	\$7,757	\$8,838	\$10,097	
December	\$7,117	\$7,444	\$14,853	
Total	\$99,117	\$98,425	\$111,903	\$55,417

Source: Texas Comptroller's Office

* adjusted to 1999 dollars

Housing

In April 2000, Flatonia had 585 housing units; the number was calculated during the recent land use inventory. In order to analyze ownership status of unit residents, 1990 data had to be used (Table 2-7). Compared to the County, Flatonia has a much smaller percentage of vacant units, possibly indicating that the Flatonia resident population is a more permanent population than in other areas of the county. Permanency is thought to increase citizens' desire to invest themselves in their community. If this holds true in Flatonia, the desire of citizens to take an active role in their community would be a positive characteristic that could be utilized as plan implementation is undertaken.

Table 2-7
Housing Units

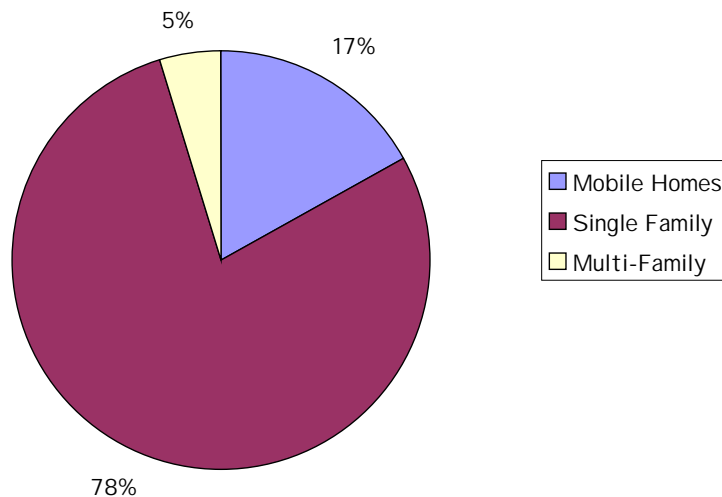
	Flatonia	Fayette County
Total Units	536	10,756
Owner Occupied	62.1%	56.6%
Renter Occupied	24.8%	18.7%
Vacant*	13.1%	24.7%

Source: U.S. Population and Housing Census, 1990

* Includes "For Sale Only", "For Rent", "Held for Occasional Use", boarded up units, and units awaiting occupancy

Flatonia housing units can be divided up into single family, multi-family, and mobile homes (Figure 2-4), with single family home as the dominant type of housing unit.

Figure 2-4
Flatonia Housing Units, by Type



The condition of the units is displayed in Table 2-8. Nearly three quarters of all units were classified as Standard. It is essential to note that over a quarter of the multi-family units were considered substandard or dilapidated. The community's perceived need for additional affordable housing and multi-family units may or may not take this level of quality into

account. If it does not, the need for additional units may be even greater than already expressed.

Table 2-8
Condition of Housing Units, 2000⁸

	Mobile Homes	Single Family	Multi-Family	Total Units
Standard	71.7%	78.4%	70.4%	76.9%
Substandard	17.2%	13.9%	14.8%	14.5%
Dilapidated	11.1%	7.6%	14.8%	8.5%

Source: City of Flatonia and LCRA, 2000

⁸ **Standard:** Sound with no defect present, or minor defect present which are capable of correction within the course of normal maintenance.

Substandard: Major defects are faults which are such a serious degree that they are not correctable by normal maintenance.

Dilapidated: Critical defects which have either failed completely or so seriously damaged that the individual components could not be fixed or replaced.

Physical Characteristics

Several factors exist that can impact the direction and type of growth for the City of Flatonia. Flatonia is fortunate to not have many environmental constraints to growth. What the city does have in the way of natural features may be thought of as assets to their community.

Natural Features:⁹

Surface Geology

The City of Flatonia lies along the Blackland Prairie Ecological Region. While called a prairie, much timber exists along streams and creeks, including oaks, pecans, elm, horseapple (bois d'arc) and mesquite. In its native state it was largely a grassy plain – the first native grassland in the west ward extension of the Southern Forest Region.

Soils















There are approximately eighteen major soil types within the ETJ and City Limits of Flatonia (see Plate 2-2). The most prevalent soils type in the area are Flatonia Loam, Arol Fine Sandy Loam, Greenvine Clay, and Singleton Fine Sandy Loam. The loams are a result of the Post Oak Woods and related loamy soils that generally accompany this type of vegetation.

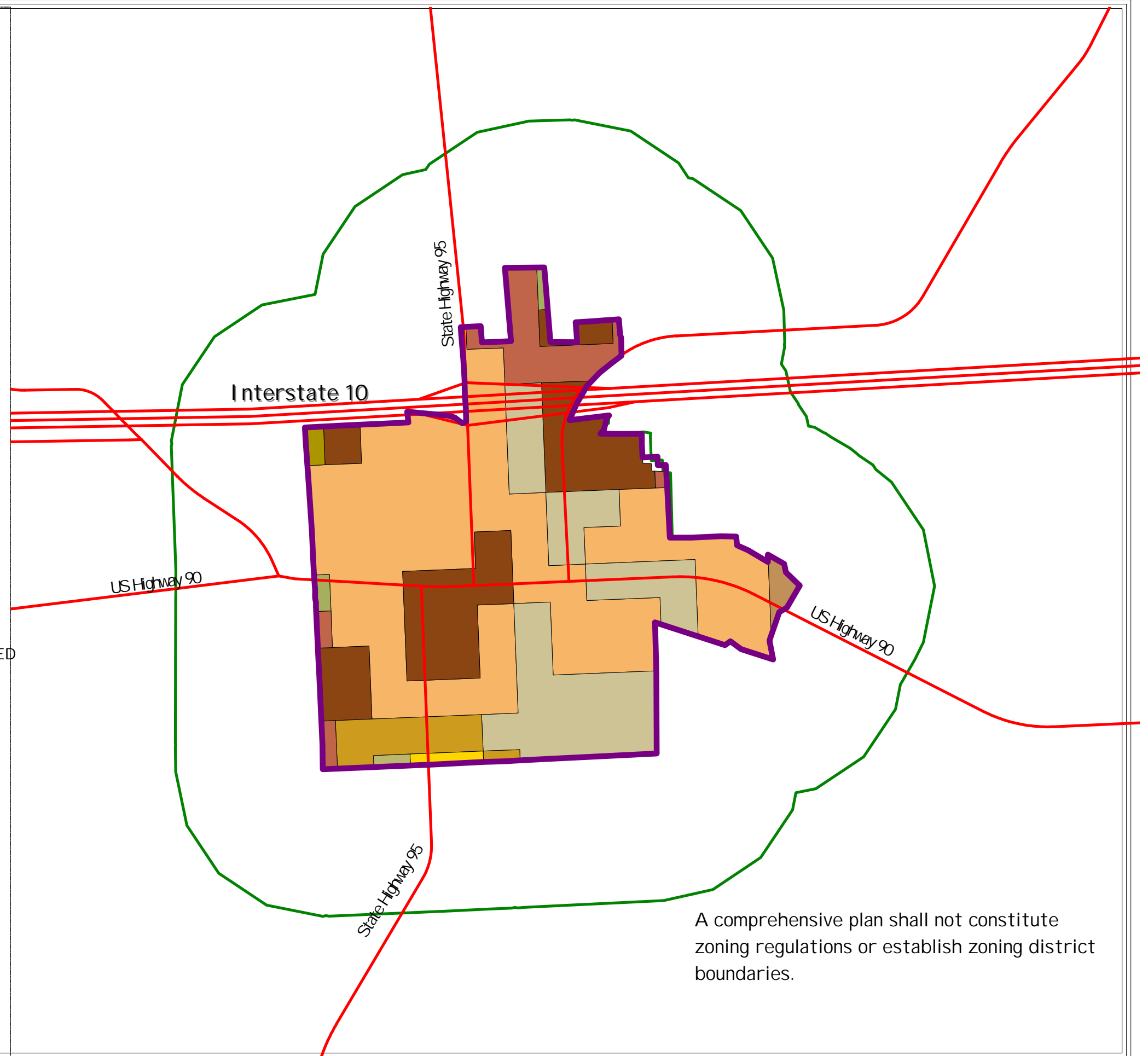
The Blackland Prairie soils are characterized by surface drainage that is moderate to rapid; bottomland and upland soils are deep, dark-gray to black alkaline clays. Soil may be neutral to slightly acidic, grayish clays and loams over mottled clay subsoils. Blackland soils are known as “cracking clays” because of the large deep cracks that form in dry weather. This high shrink-swell property can cause severe property damage to foundations, highways and other structures. Land use is divided about equally between cropland and grassland. Cotton, grain sorghums, corn, wheat, oats and hay are grown. Grassland is mostly improved pastures, with native range on the shallower and steeper soils. Water, erosion, cotton root rot, soil tilth and brush control are the major management problems with this resource area.

⁹ The information from this section was obtained from the Texas Almanac (2000-2001), the Dallas Morning News.

PLATE 2-2 Soil Survey

City of Flatonia, Texas 2010 Comprehensive Plan









-  City Limit
-  State Highways
- Soil Types
-  AROL FINE SANDY LOAM, 0 TO 2 PERCENT SLOPES
-  CARBENGLE SANDY CLAY LOAM, 3 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES
-  CARBENGLE SANDY CLAY LOAM, 5 TO 8 PERCENT SLOPES
-  FLATONIA LOAM, 1 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
-  GREENVINE CLAY, 1 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
-  GREENVINE CLAY, 3 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES
-  PURSLEY CLAY LOAM, FREQUENTLY FLOODED
-  SHALBA FINE SANDY LOAM, 2 TO 5 PERCENT SLOPES, ERODED
-  SHIRO LOAMY FINE SAND, 1 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
-  SINGLETON FINE SANDY LOAM, 1 TO 3 PERCENT SLOPES
-  WATER GREATER THAN 40 ACRES I N SI ZE
-  ETJ

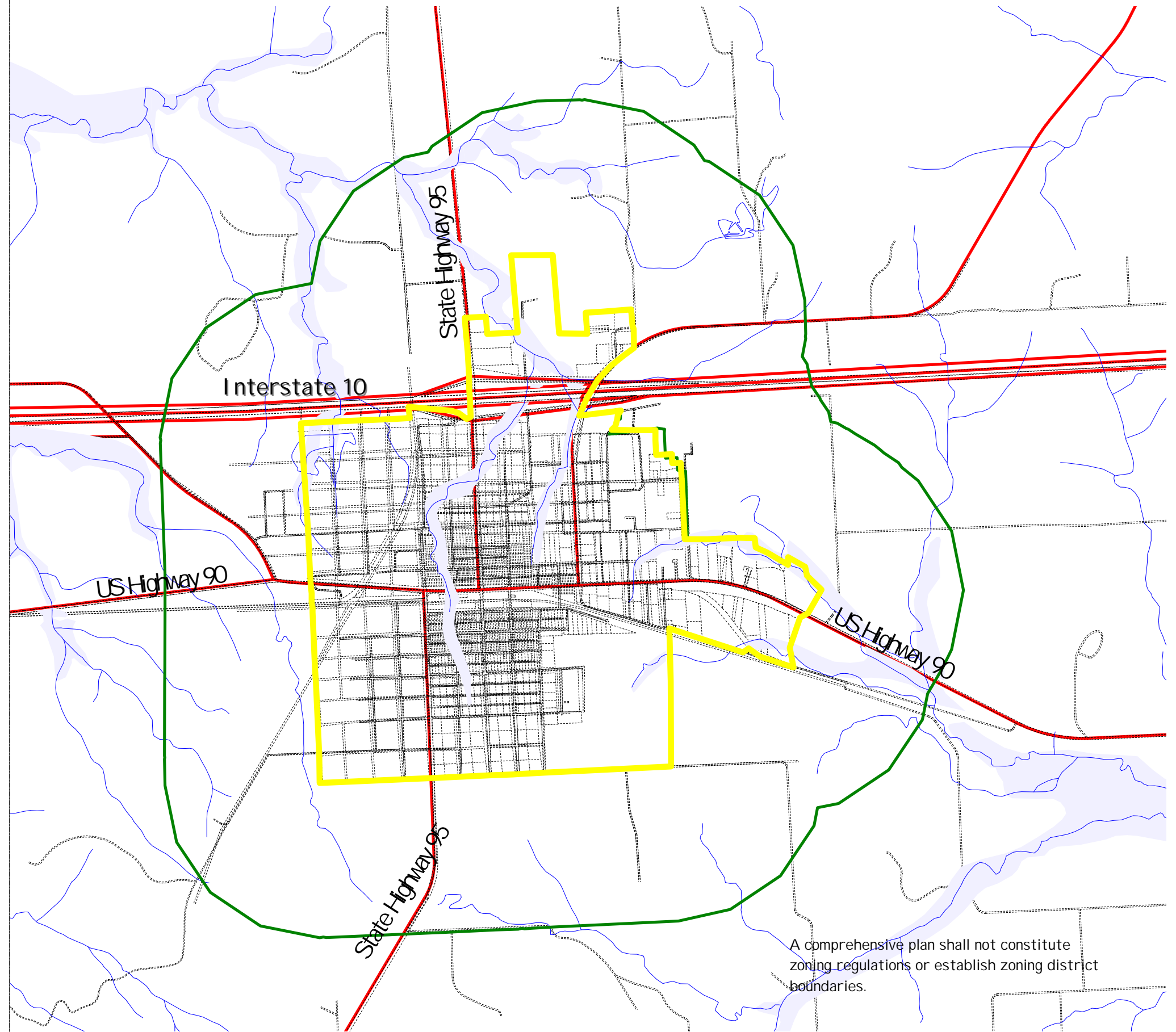
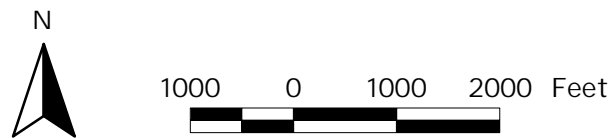


A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

PLATE 2-3 FloodPlains

City of Flatonia, Texas 2010 Comprehensive Plan

-  City Limit
-  ETJ
-  Hydrography
- FEMA Floodplains
 -  100 Year Flood Plain
 -  100 Year Flood Plain
 -  500 Year Floodplain
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  State Highways



A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

Climate

Annual Average Temperature: 69.00
Monthly Average High Temperature: 96
Monthly Average Low Temperature: 35
Annual Average Precipitation: 34.00 inches
Annual Average Snowfall: 0.06 inches
Elevation: 344 feet
Growing Season: 277 Days
Prevailing Winds: SE

Vegetation

The vegetation types present in Flatonia include the Other Native and/or Introduced Grasses and the Post Oaks Woods, Forest, and Grassland Mosaic

Significant Water Bodies

Flatonia has numerous creeks running through its jurisdiction.

Topography and Slope Analysis

Based on slope analysis, there was found to be relatively few slopes in Flatonia that are undevelopable. Therefore, it was decided to not include a map indicating slopes.

Floodplain

Plate 2-3 shows the 100-Year Floodplains that lie within Flatonia. There are no apparent 500-Year floodplains other than those 100-Year Floodplains that are shown.

Aquifers:

Carrizo-Wilcox is the only Major Aquifers that runs through Flatonia, although the Gulf Coast Aquifer runs just outside the Southwest portion of the ETJ. Sparta is the only Minor Aquifer that runs through the Northwest portion of Flatonia.

The Carrizo-Wilcox yields fresh to slightly-saline water used primarily for irrigation and for public water supply. Due to excessive pumping the water level in this aquifer has been significantly lowered.

Endangered Species/Habitat

There are no endangered species or habitat that exists within the ETJ and City Limits of Flatonia.

Man-made features

I-10

This major four-lane Interstate has had an enormous impact on Flatonia's growth through the years. Flatonia is nearly at the midpoint between Houston and San Antonio on the Interstate. In addition, Flatonia has one major exit ramp in each direction from I-10 with two access points into the city from the Interstate.

SH-90

This state road bisects the city through Main Street and carries significant truck and passenger traffic through the main part of the city.

US-95

This state road also bisects the city and to a large degree influences the types of development that occurs in portions of the city that lie along the highway (Commercial and Retail uses tend to lie along major highways within city limits). It is a major thoroughfare for travelers and commuters from SH 71 near Smithville South - through Flatonia. This state road also carries significant truck and passenger traffic through the main part of the city.

Union Pacific Railroad

Flatonia has both a North-South and an East-West railroad line running through the city. The E-W line runs directly through downtown and stops both pedestrian and vehicular traffic throughout the day.

Extra-territorial jurisdiction

Extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) can be defined as the land that an incorporated area may legally annex for the purpose of future development. The Texas State Legislature had established specific amounts of land for incorporated areas of various sizes. The vast majority of incorporated entities equal in size to the City of Flatonia have a one-half mile ETJ.

Existing Land Use

The land use has only changed slightly since the last comprehensive plan was done for the City in 1986. The patterns of land use in Flatonia have evolved to meet the needs of the community, and the City has annexed lands that have enhanced its land use composition.

In April of 2000, an inventory conducted by automobile was completed for every property in Flatonia. Each property was identified according to its general Land Use (see Land Use Districts below). Every structure on the property was also categorized based on its condition (Standard, Substandard, or Dilapidated). This information was put into a database that was used in the development of the Current Land Use Map (see Plate 2-4 and 2-5) and the Housing Inventory (above).

The purpose of identifying the Current Land Use is to map out where certain uses exist in Flatonia. This initial assessment will aid the community in identifying the general community desire for Future Land Uses, and although a Comprehensive Plan does not constitute zoning, the Future Land Use Map may eventually lead to a Zoning Map.

Where more than one residential use occupied the same property, researchers identified the property based on the predominant residential use. For example, if a mobile home and a single family home were on the same property and the single family home was the predominant use, then the property would be labeled as Rural Residential (RR), Low-Density Residential (LR), or Medium-Density Residential (MR) (depending on the size of the property) or as High Density Residential if there were more than four units on the property. Furthermore, if a property had mixed uses of retail, commercial or residential then the property would be labeled Mixed Used Use. Each property was identified and color-coded based on the following categories:

Land Use Districts:

Agricultural District

Land used for agricultural purposes (eg., ranching, orchards or farming). This use could have residence(s) but the primary use is agricultural.

Park/Open Space District

Areas designated as public (although not necessarily owned by the public) parkland and any areas intended for this purpose in the future. Areas designated as preserve land and any areas intended for this purpose in the future.

Residential District

Includes activities that occur in all types of residential uses, structures, ownership characteristics, or the character of the development.

- Rural Residential – large lot, country-style residential (average of two-acre lots per development; 1.5 acre minimum lot size) characterized by single-family detached homes.
- Low Density Residential – Large lot, low density residential (minimum one-acre lots) characterized by single-family detached homes; minimum lot widths should be approximately 140 to 150 feet, and minimum lot depths should be no more than two times the lot width to ensure maximum separation of dwelling units and preservation of country/rural atmosphere.
- Medium Density Residential – Provide for smaller residential lot sizes, possibly including dwelling units such as patio homes, town homes, or condominiums. Up to four dwelling units.
- High Density Residential – More than four dwelling units per lot.
- Manufactured Home Residential – Single Mobile Home (SMR) for Lots with only one Mobile Home, and Multiple Mobile Home (MMR) for lots with more than one mobile home.

Public Use District

Areas owned by the city, county, school district, state, or church (eg., City Hall, fire station, school buildings, library, storage sites, cemeteries). This does not include railroad right of ways.

Office District

Areas designated for Professional/ Administrative Offices – doctors, dentists, real estate, architects, accountants, secretarial service, etc.

Retail District

- Small Retail – retail activity that has fewer than 100 vehicle trips per day.
- Large Retail – retail activity that has more than 100 vehicle trips per day.
- Local Retail – retail activity, intended to serve the local citizens of Flatonia. Uses include small grocery stores, pharmacies, personal service shops (i.e., hair salons, dry cleaners, tailors, florists, etc.), day care centers, medical/dental and general offices, banks/ financial institutions, small restaurants and cafes, a few convenience stores with gasoline sales, a farmers market, a car wash, grocery stores, restaurants, large bookstores and similar establishments.
- Regional Retail – large retail establishments, including shopping malls, large single-tenant retail users, motels and hotels.
- RLL – Retail Large Local
- RLO – Retail Large Outside
- RSL – Retail Small Local
- RSO – Retail Small Outside

Mixed Use Overlay District

Parcels where more than one type of land use is present (e.g. street level retail establishment with a residential space on the second floor) and neither use is the primary use.

Commercial District

Areas allow for commercial amusements, building materials yards, automobile garages and sales lots, automobile body repair, warehouses, telecommunications/ broadcasting towers and facilities, wholesale establishments, and the sale of used merchandise and welding shops.

Industrial District

Areas might include light industry which entails unenclosed operations or storage, heavy industry with limited external effects or light industry with no outdoor storage (e.g. industrial park)

Right of Ways


Areas that include roads, highways, railroad, and utility easements.

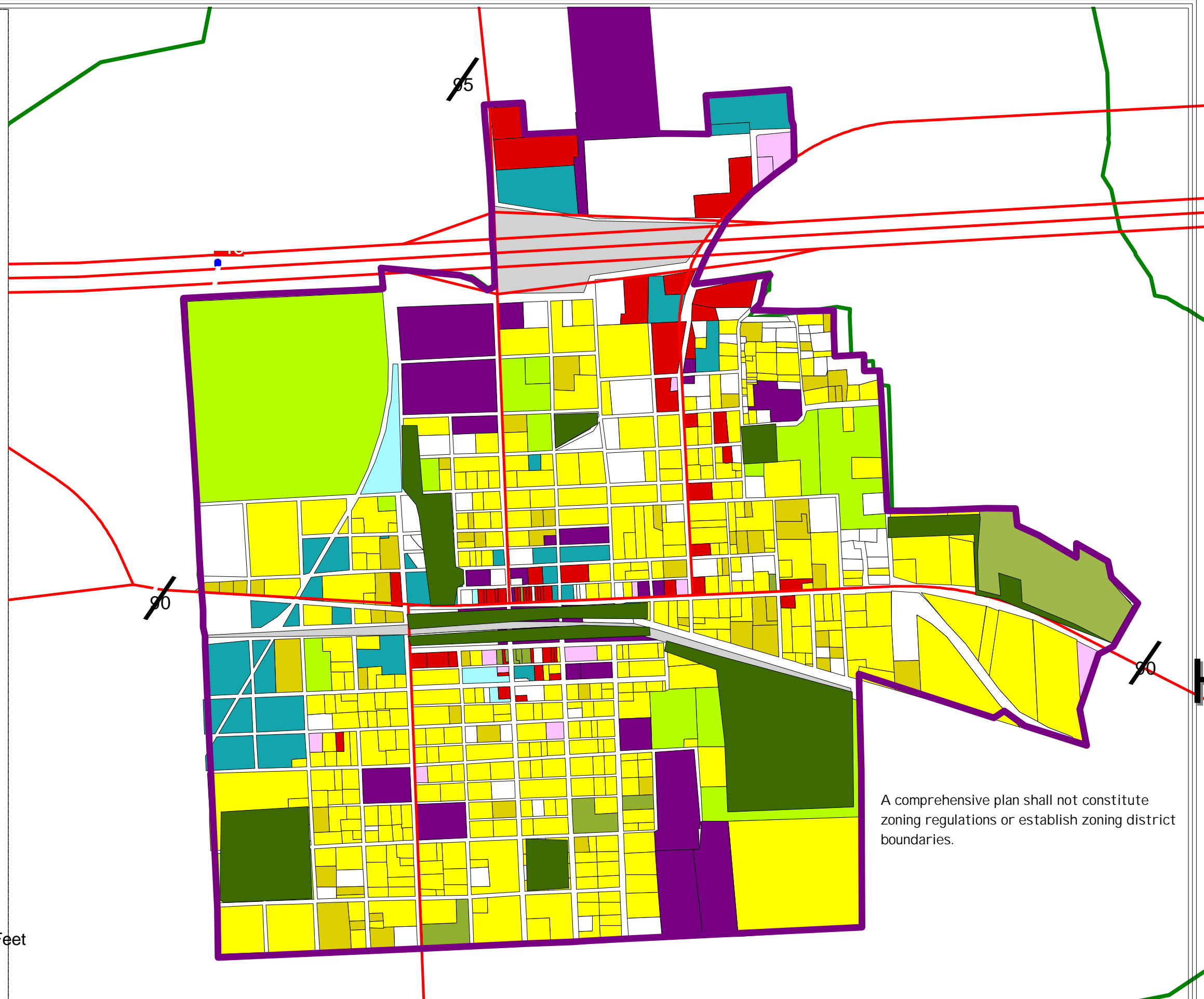
Vacant

Land that had previously been developed but currently has no structure on the lot.

PLATE 2-4
Current Land Use Plan

City of Flatonia, Texas
2010 Comprehensive Plan

-  City Limit
- Existing Parks
-  Existing Park/Open Space
- Future Parks
-  Future Park/Open Space
-  State Highways
- Existing Land Use
-  Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Mobile Home
-  Mixed Use
-  Office
-  Retail
-  Commercial
-  Light Industrial
-  Park/Open Space
-  Agriculture
- Public
- Vacant
- Right of Way
- ETJ



A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.



Land Use Analysis

Table 2-9
Existing Land Use, 2000

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Percent of Land Within City Limits	Acres/100 People (1)
Residential	389.91	50.43%	-----	26.80
<i>Single-Family</i>	<i>347.29</i>	<i>44.92%</i>	-----	<i>23.87</i>
<i>Manufactured Housing</i>	<i>42.62</i>	<i>5.51%</i>	-----	<i>2.93</i>
Agricultural	154.24	19.95%	-----	10.60
Public	98.28	12.71%	-----	6.75
Commercial	53.55	6.93%	-----	3.68
Retail	33.75	4.36%	-----	2.32
Mixed Use	9.09	1.18%	-----	0.62
Office	7.84	1.01%	-----	0.54
Industrial	5.99	0.78%	-----	0.41
Park	20.55	2.66%	-----	1.41
Total Developed	773.20		72.53%	53.14
Rights of Way	189.50		17.78%	13.02
Vacant	103.38		9.70%	7.11
Within City Limits	1066.09		100.00%	-----
Within ETJ	1338.00		-----	-----

(1) Based on an estimated population of 1455 on 1999 (State Data Center, LCRA).

As Table 2-12 illustrates, Flatonia has approximately 1,066 acres within the City Limits and 1,338 acres within the ETJ. Approximately 773 acres, or 72.5% of the total acreage within the City Limits is developed. Due to the high number of federal and state highways, and the railroad, Flatonia has a high percentage of land within the City Limits (developed and undeveloped) as Right-of-Way (17%). Flatonia also has a significant amount of Vacant land (9.7%, or 103 acres) which includes all land with the city limits that has no use on the property.

Of Flatonia's developed land, Residential has the largest share of Developed Property with 50.4% of all developed acreage used as Residential. Forty-four percent of that residential is Single-family (including multi-family) and nearly six percent is Manufactured Housing.

Agricultural (19.9%) and Public (12.7%) uses comprise the next largest shares of developed land in Flatonia. It is important to note that Agricultural uses were both working farms as well as open spaces with livestock. Some of these lands could be well-suited for future industrial or commercial uses. Combining Agricultural and Vacant lands to determine future potential for developable land, one arrives at 257 acres, or approximately 24% of all land within the current City Limits.

The Acres/100 Persons calculation is important because it provides a comparison of Flatonia to other communities of the per capita acreage devoted to each use. The most important uses to look at under this column are Commercial (3.68), Retail (2.32), Office (0.54) and Industrial (0.41) - all of which have a seemingly small share of the Acres per 100 persons. However, the amount of acreage per person for Commercial and Retail are considered relatively high. Retail demand usually ranges from 0.3 acres to 0.4 acres per person on the low end to 0.6 to 0.7 acres per 100 persons on the high end, with 0.5 being an average. A high number indicates that a city is capturing a retail market from outside the city or that local spending is high. Flatonia has a Retail ratio of 2.32, which would indicate a strong retail market that captures sales from outside the city. Although these averages are used for Retail uses, one could apply similar ratios to Commercial and arrive at the conclusion that Commercial Uses also serve a population greater than Flatonia. The newly annexed properties along I-10 and the types of Retail and Commercial developments that exist in these properties account for a large percentage of both of these uses.

Office uses comprise 0.54 acres per 100 persons in Flatonia. This is a relatively low figure and accounts for professional uses that serve the public such as doctors and lawyers. It appears that many professional services are provided for Flatonia residents outside of the City Limits (such as in La Grange or Schulenburg).

Industrial acreage per 100 persons is relatively low compared to other cities. However, one of the larger employers for Flatonia which has an industrial use is within the ETJ. Nevertheless, Flatonia may consider encouraging industrial growth.

The following summarizes features of Flatonia's existing land use:

- All uses are scattered throughout the city. There is no pattern of use except for a concentration of Residential both North and South of the Main Street, and Commercial and Retail uses concentrated located along I-10 and SH-90. Yet, Retail and Commercial exist throughout the City.
- Flatonia has 20 acres of parkland. Flatonia's acreage dedicated for Parks comprises 2.66% of total developed land. This translates into 1.41 acres per 100 persons. A commonly accepted measure of municipal park land is between 1.0-1.5 acres/100 persons.¹⁰ Therefore, Flatonia has an accepted amount of park land.
- Few Industrial uses exist. Although, large amounts of Agricultural lands exist in the Northwest section of the City which could be used for Industrial use.
- Significant amounts of land are dedicated to Public Uses which include not only city-owned lands for water/wastewater, electricity, and civic offices, but also for cemeteries and churches.
- South-central parts of the City have a large portion of Agricultural Use or are very low-density residential properties. Since these are located near the school, these may be good locations for future parks or for more residential properties.

Table 2-10
Residential Use Composition

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Residential Use
Rural	30.28	7.76%
Low Density	93.43	23.96%
Medium Density	214.63	55.05%
High Density	8.95	2.30%
Single Mobile Home	33.36	8.56%
Multiple Mobile Homes	9.26	2.38%
Residential	389.91	100.00%

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

- Few multi-family properties exist.

¹⁰ City of Arlington, Texas Park Master Plan (1998).

- Manufactured housing is scattered throughout the city.
- Lot sizes and the number of units per lot vary dramatically. Denser development not only can provide a larger tax base for a community, but also can free up properties in other parts of a city for commercial or industrial use - so as not to present health or safety hazards to residents.

COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

Introduction

Based on the survey return rate, Flatonia's recent community survey was a success. Roughly 450 of the 1100 surveys that were mailed out to City Utility customers were returned - a 41 percent response rate. Once duplicate and unquantifiable surveys were removed, the answers from the remaining 353 surveys were used to formulate the following observations.

Key Findings:

- ☞ The most important issue highlighted throughout the survey was the need for additional businesses and jobs. Although, a few respondents argued that it is not the city's responsibility to address this problem.
- ☞ Protecting property values, providing affordable housing, preserving the small town character, and expanding school facilities all ranked as equally important issues facing Flatonia in the upcoming years.
- ☞ For the City Council, respondents felt that the most important projects to focus on were encouraging new businesses, developing zoning, and enhancing local parks.
- ☞ There was general agreement that the City of Flatonia should act to increase the availability of new housing and affordable housing.
- ☞ Respondents felt that "just enough" or "not enough tax money" was being spent on all five uses given in the survey. "Attracting businesses/ industry" and "road and street maintenance" were the two areas where citizens asked that more money be spent.

Relevant Issues for the Comprehensive Planning Process:

(refer to page six for question-by-question analysis)

☛ **Economic Development**

The need for economic development is in the forefront of most Flatonia residents. This can be seen throughout the entire survey. In question 7, "what is the most important issue facing Flatonia," the two most common answers were the need for additional retail and commercial businesses and the need for more jobs. As well, in question 9, respondents most often chose "encouraging new businesses to locate in Flatonia" as the most important project for the city council to pursue.

One interesting finding that stands out is the priority that most respondents placed on bringing in outside businesses over the option of cultivating the expansion of local industry. This bias toward outside industry could be detrimental to the community if acted upon by the City or the Chamber. Since local businesses are already contributing to the local economy and community, it is important to foster a sense of cooperation and support between these employers and local government. Supporting local industry, contributing to their success, may eventually allow the city or chamber to make a stronger case for the recruitment of an outside company. If local businesses can not survive locally because of insufficient customer or employment base, it is likely that outside businesses will be unwilling to make the move into the local economy.

Some respondents expressed concern over the fact that the City might become further involved in economic development (ED). They expressed the opinion that ED should be the domain of the Chamber of Commerce. While the concern was voiced by only a few respondents, it may still be important for the city to weigh the relevance of the majority's request for city involvement with other citizen's concern over what the city's role should be, in regards to increasing economic opportunity.

☛ **Housing**

While affordable housing received only 8.1% of the total votes for the most important issue facing Flatonia, it received the third highest number of votes (tied with the need to protect property values) when all answers, ranking one through seven, were taken into consideration. This indicates that, while residents don't consider housing a top priority, they acknowledge that it is a concern and that something should be done about the shortage. In question 8, the desire for

action was clarified when nearly everyone agreed that the City of Flatonia should be involved in promoting the “construction of new housing” and “assisting in the development of more housing options,” although very few indicated that housing should be the top priority of the city council (question 9).

☛ **Land Use**

Three different issues relate to the topic of land use management: protecting property values, zoning, and preserving the small town character. Relating to the need to protect property values, only 10 percent of the respondents felt that this was the number one issue facing Flatonia, but the topic did receive a substantial number of votes (when ranking was included) for most important issue.

One of the main tools available to protect property values is zoning, which was discussed in question 8. Thirty percent of the respondents “strongly agreed” and twenty-nine percent “agreed” that the “City of Flatonia should develop zoning to manage how land is used.” While there were fifty-five individuals, or roughly fifteen percent of the respondents, who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the implementation of zoning, overall, residents seem to be in favor of the process.

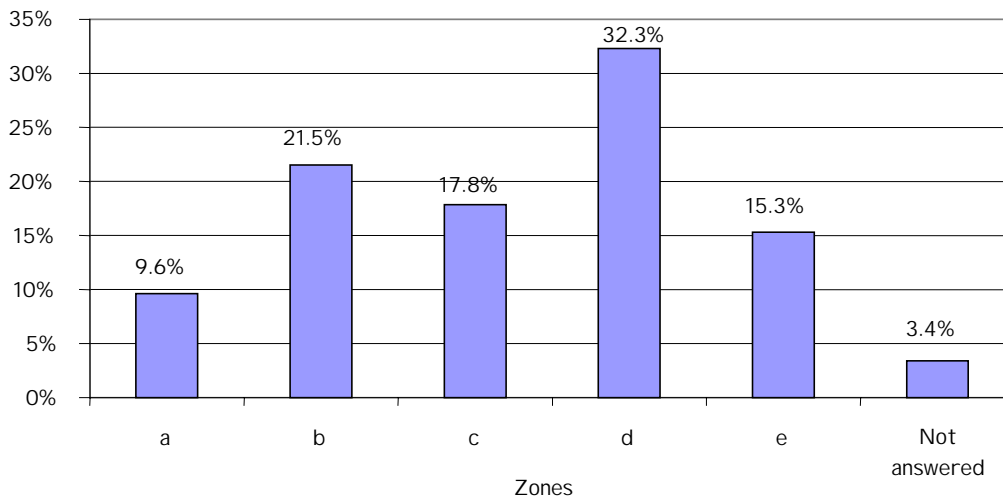
Finally, preserving the small town character of Flatonia, while not merely a land use issue, is a goal that can be furthered through future land use decisions. The importance of Flatonia’s small town feel is established by the fact that 14 percent of survey respondents listed it as the number one reason why they live in Flatonia and 16 percent of the survey respondents felt that preserving the character of Flatonia is the most important issue facing the community. With this in mind, if and when zoning and subdivision ordinances are created, they should be constructed in light of the community’s desire to preserve the character of Flatonia.

Demographics:

☛ **Location of Respondents**

The geographic location of respondents was evenly distributed throughout the four quadrants of town (a,b,c, and d) and outside the city limits (e) (see "Survey Map" at the end of report). The fact that the surveys originated from all areas of town increases the representative validity of the survey data.

Figure 3-1

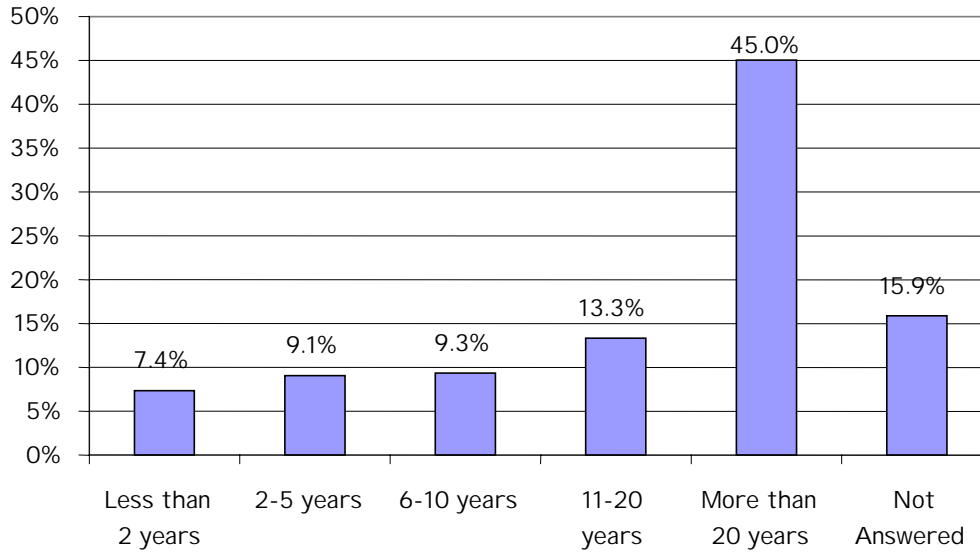


☛ **Length of Residency in Flatonia**

The following graph very clearly shows the skewed nature of the city residency characteristic. Nearly half of all survey respondents have lived in Flatonia for over twenty years. This distribution is probably the result of two causes. One, a large majority of Flatonia residents have lived within town for a significant portion of their lives, meaning that the distribution merely reflects Flatonia's overall population. But the second, and somewhat conflicting, factor is that those people who have lived in Flatonia the longest may have more of a vested interest in filling out the survey. Newer residents may not have felt the connection with city government and city life as strongly as the long-time residents, therefore not filling out the survey. Regardless of motive, it is probable that there is some segment of the Flatonia population (likely the newly acquired portion) that is under-represented.

(Length of Residency, Continued)

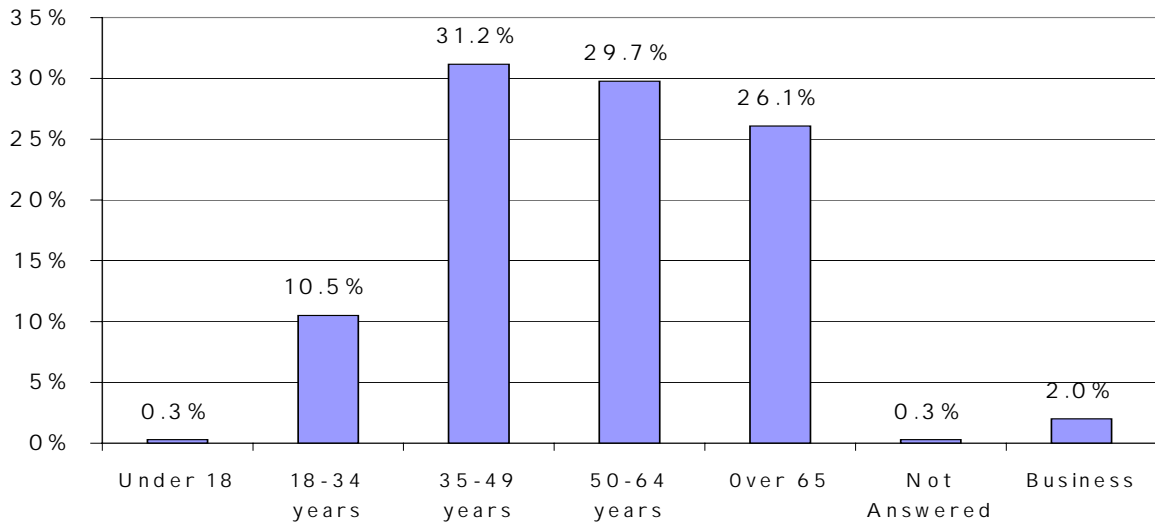
Figure 3-2



§ Age of Respondents

As one can see from the distribution, the age ranges of 35-49, 50-64, and 65+ were evenly represented. It appears that the younger individuals did not fill out the survey in as great of numbers, but this may simply be a representation of Flatonia's age distribution. Any under-representation in the 18-34 year category can perhaps be attributed to the fact that this age category tends to own less property and therefore did not receive a survey, or be more invested in work and family, or have spent less time in the Flatonia community and therefore feel less of a pull to become involved in community life.

Figure 3-3



Question by Question Analysis:

6. "Why do you live in or around Flatonia?"

Why I live in Flatonia (number one answers)	
Family	48.6%
Location	19.2%
Small Town Character	14.4%
Job Opportunities	9.0%
Schools	3.9%
Other	3.6%
Utilities	0.9%
Tax Rates	0.3%

Why I live in Flatonia (overall points)*	
Family	1657
Location	1540
Small Town Character	1462
Schools	997
Utilities	806
Tax Rates	772
Job Opportunities	666

* the higher the total, the higher the importance

By understanding why people have chosen to live in a community, a proactive stance can be taken by city government and other civil organizations to make sure that these qualities are maintained.

Looking at the reasons why individuals live in Flatonia, Family, Location, and Small Town Character lead the lists. All three of these qualities are intangible characteristics that Flatonia possesses. The inherent nature of the characteristics is a strength for the future of the town, but the town must work to preserve the quality of life that originally drew individuals to the area if it is to remain viable.

“What do you feel is the most important issue facing Flatonia during the next year?”

Most Important Issue Facing Flatonia (number one answers)		Most Important Issue Facing Flatonia (overall points)*	
Additional Retail and Commercial Businesses	36.1%	Additional Retail and Commercial Businesses	1434
Create More Jobs	17.3%	Create More Jobs	1212
Preserve Small Town Character	15.8%	Protect Property Values	951
Need to Expand/ Improve School Facilities	12.8%	Provide Affordable Housing	951
Protect Property Values	9.9%	Preserve Small Town Character	903
Provide Affordable Housing	8.1%	Need to Expand/ Improve School Facilities	895
Other	1.8%		

* the higher the total, the higher the importance

As was discussed in the economic development section, respondents indicated that the most pressing concerns for Flatonia were the need for additional businesses and jobs. While these two issues did receive fifty percent of the number one votes, the other fifty percent of the respondents felt that one of the remaining issues was the most important issue for Flatonia.

When total points were calculated, protecting property values, providing affordable housing, and preserving the small town character were given nearly equal votes by residents. Therefore, the issues that the city can exert some level of control over, protecting property values, providing affordable housing, and preserving the small town character were considered as equally critical.

The survey shows that residents feel concern on all of these issues and that some level of action is warranted.

Table 3-1

Most Important Issue facing Flatonia/ Age	Overall Breakdown	18-34 years				
		Under 18	old	35-49 years old	50-64 years old	over 65
Additional Retail and Commercial Businesses	35%	0%	46%	29%	40%	32%
Create More Jobs	17%	0%	20%	23%	15%	10%
Preserve Small Town Character	16%	100%	6%	14%	15%	23%
Need to Expand/ Improve School Facilities	13%	0%	11%	18%	11%	11%
Protect Property Values	10%	0%	3%	6%	14%	13%
Provide Affordable Housing	8%	0%	17%	7%	6%	9%
Other	2%	0%	0%	4%	1%	1%

When the “number one” responses are broke out by age, certain relationships become apparent. In the 18-34 years old category, more support was expressed

for affordable housing than in any other age category. Where as with the protection of property values, the majority of support was raised from the two oldest age groups, 50-64 and over 65. Support for the preservation of small town character apparently increases with age, going from 6 to 23 percent. Finally, the categories of additional business and jobs, received over fifty percent of the votes from those categories that included working age individuals (18-34, 35-49, and over 65).

“Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement, ‘The City of Flatonia should...’”

Table 3-2

City of Flatonia should:	Average Response	Agree Strongly (2)	Agree (1)	Neutral (0)	Disagree (-1)	Disagree Strongly (-2)
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	1.63	245	92	9	0	5
Promote the construction of new housing	1.14	139	136	59	6	6
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	1.11	135	137	48	11	9
Assist in the development of more housing options	0.98	117	129	69	14	9
Enhance local parks	0.89	101	131	86	8	12
Help to improve local cable tv services	0.80	115	93	100	16	17
Seek to make natural gas services available	0.77	103	108	104	12	18
Help to improve local internet access	0.67	87	102	116	16	17
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	0.64	102	99	84	24	31

2=Agree Strongly; 1=Agree; 0=Neutral; -1=Disagree; -2=Disagree Strongly

The average response for all actions fell between 0 and 2, which means that respondents ranged from neutral to strongly agree on all options for future City action; no overwhelming opposition existed against any of the actions.

The strongest level of support was expressed for encouraging new businesses and the least amount of support for zoning. Although, the zoning option is unique in that residents seemed to have a more varied response, as shown by the evenly distributed responses between the different categories (the larger number of disagree responses brought down the average, masking the actual level of agree responses).

“From the projects listed in question 8, which is the most important project for the Flatonia City Council to pursue?”

<u>Most important project for the City Council to Pursue</u>		
1.	Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	60%
2.	Develop zoning to manage how land is used	11%
3.	Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	8%
4.	Enhance local parks	5%
5.	Assist in the development of more housing options	5%
6.	Seek to make natural gas services available	4%
7.	Promote the construction of new housing	4%
8.	Other	2%
9.	Help to improve local cable tv services	1%
10.	Help to improve local internet access	1%

Remaining consistent, the overall consensus of survey respondents was that the priority of the city council should be encouraging new businesses in Flatonia. Since the survey did not explore what form residents would like such encouraging to take, a focus group in the future might be helpful to understand just what measures residents would support in order to further this directive. After additional businesses, zoning received the next highest number of votes.

Question 9 does not suggest that all projects other than business development are unimportant (the importance of the projects was established in question 8); what question nine illustrates is that above all, the concern highest in residents' minds is the need for additional business. In seeking to respond to this consensus, the City Council and Steering committee must consider not only how to encourage business but also how the other projects on the project list may impact the city's ability to, in fact, encourage new businesses. It may be that only through investment of time and resources in zoning, housing, or parks will Flatonia be able to encourage additional businesses.

In order to have a better understanding of who supported which type of project, the data can be broken down by length of residency in the city, location in the city, and age of respondent.

Table 3-3

Most Important Project for City Council/ City Tenure	Overall Breakdown	Less than 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	more than 20 years
Total	328	26	30	31	42	147
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	60%	52%	43%	45%	62%	69%
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	11%	8%	13%	23%	7%	2%
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	8%	24%	10%	13%	10%	6%
Promote the construction of new housing	5%	4%	3%	3%	5%	5%
Assist in the development of more housing options	5%	0%	10%	0%	7%	6%
Help to improve local internet access	4%	0%	0%	3%	0%	1%
Seek to make natural gas services available	4%	0%	3%	3%	0%	5%
Enhance local parks	2%	8%	10%	10%	5%	4%
Help to improve local cable tv services	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Other	1%	0%	3%	0%	5%	1%

A few interesting differences can be seen in the breakdown by length of residency. Those individuals that have lived in Flatonia for less than two years are more highly in favor of zoning than any other group. Residents that have lived in Flatonia for 2-10 years, but more significantly 6-10 years, see the value of assisting local business in conjunction with additional business from outside the area. Finally, those respondents who have lived in Flatonia over 20 years are strongly in agreement that the focus project of the City Council should be encouraging business. In fact, it is this group that drove up the overall overage in support of project number 1.

(See "Survey Map" at the end of report)

Most Important Project for City Council/ Location	Overall	A	B	C	D	E
	Breakdown					
Total	328	32	69	58	107	52
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	60%	69%	61%	64%	59%	47%
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	11%	6%	9%	9%	6%	7%
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	8%	3%	3%	7%	17%	13%
Promote the construction of new housing	5%	3%	5%	4%	5%	7%
Assist in the development of more housing options	5%	6%	9%	4%	3%	7%
Help to improve local internet access	4%	0%	0%	0%	1%	7%
Seek to make natural gas services available	4%	6%	3%	9%	2%	0%
Enhance local parks	2%	3%	8%	9%	5%	13%
Help to improve local cable tv services	1%	3%	2%	0%	1%	0%
Other	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%

By location, there are a few differences in the way that the different quadrants arrange the city council priorities. All sections see business as very important, while those who live outside city limits are less in support of making the quest for additional business the number one project. Minor differences are seen in the categories of local business expansion, developing more housing options (section B voicing the largest support), and providing natural gas (section D voicing the largest support). The most striking difference though is in the category that relates to zoning. Residents in section D, and to a lesser degree in the county, expressed fairly strong support for the zoning project; the support was much higher than reflected by the overall average. This difference in the level of support suggests that, if the city choose to pursue zoning ordinances, it should consider some sort of public education process to illustrate the logic and reasoning behind zoning, especially in those areas where support was lowest.

(Most Important Project, Continued)

Most Important Project for City Council/ Age	Overall Breakdown	Age Group				
		Under 18	18-34 years old	35-49 years old	50-64 years old	over 65
Total	328	1	37	102	97	81
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	60%	0%	46%	59%	66%	62%
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	11%	0%	11%	11%	3%	1%
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	8%	0%	5%	9%	18%	6%
Promote the construction of new housing	5%	0%	5%	2%	3%	9%
Assist in the development of more housing options	5%	0%	8%	6%	4%	6%
Help to improve local internet access	4%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%
Seek to make natural gas services available	4%	0%	3%	3%	3%	7%
Enhance local parks	2%	0%	19%	8%	1%	2%
Help to improve local cable tv services	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Other	1%	100%	3%	2%	0%	0%

The two important relationships that emerge when the variable of age is introduced are in the areas of parks and zoning. Respondents in the 18-34 year old category were, by far, the most heavily in support of additional effort in the area of local parks enhancement. Their support is not reflected at all in the overall average (2 percent). For zoning, the majority of support stems from the 50-64 years old age category. Again, there is a larger degree of support from one category, showing that priorities do in fact vary by age, which adds complexity to the City Council's decision making process since each group expects different results from the council and city.

“Please indicate how you feel about how the city uses your tax money.”

City's use of tax money	Average Response	# of Responses
Attracting businesses/ industry	0.83	327
Road and street maintenance	0.66	330
Parks maintenance and development	0.33	315
Revitalizing Main Street	0.26	315
Fire, Police, and Medical Services	0.21	318
1= Not enough spent; 0= Just enough spent; -1=Too much spent; 0=Neutral		

In all five categories, the average response ranged from “not enough spent” to “just enough spent”. These answers may be somewhat skewed by people’s perception that not enough is being done in the areas that concern them. Nonetheless, the information is useful, is only to compare how residents feel about these five city services, as they relate to each other. Residents would like more money spent on attracting industry, which may be somewhat surprising since often times citizens want new industry but they aren’t willing to ask for resources to be spent on it, and on road and street maintenance. The averages for the other three services, Parks, Main Street Revitalization, and Fire, Police, and Medical Services lie closer to zero which means that, on average, residents are satisfied with the current level of spending.

Answer Tables:

Community Survey -

1.

Location	
a	34
b	76
c	63
d	114
e	54
Not Answered	12

2.

City Tenure	
Less than 2 years	26
2-5 years	32
6-10 years	33
11-20 years	48
More than 20 years	158
Not Answered	56

3.

County Tenure	
Less than 2 years	21
2-5 years	26
6-10 years	32
11-20 years	45
More than 20 years	220
Not Answered	9

4.

Age	
Under 18	1
18-34 years	37
35-49 years	110
50-64 years	105
Over 65	92
Not Answered	1
Business	7

5.

Household Size	
1 person	62
2-3 persons	202
4-5 persons	68
6-7 persons	12
8 persons	3
Not Answered	6

6.

Why I live in Flatonia (number one answers)	
Family	162
Location	64
Small Town Character	48
Job Opportunities	30
Schools	13
Other	12
Utilities	3
Tax Rates	1

Why I live in Flatonia (overall points)	
Family	1657
Location	1540
Small Town Character	1462
Schools	997
Utilities	806
Tax Rates	772
Job Opportunities	666

7.

Most Important Issue Facing Flatonia (number one answers)	
Additional Retail and Commercial Businesses	121
Create More Jobs	58
Preserve Small Town Character	53
Need to Expand/ Improve School Facilities	43
Protect Property Values	33
Provide Affordable Housing	27
Other	6

Most Important Issue Facing Flatonia (overall points)	
Additional Retail and Commercial Businesses	1434
Create More Jobs	1212
Protect Property Values	951
Provide Affordable Housing	951
Preserve Small Town Character	903
Need to Expand/ Improve School Facilities	895

8.

Most important project for the City Council to Pursue	# of Votes
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	198
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	35
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	25
Enhance local parks	18
Assist in the development of more housing options	16
Seek to make natural gas services available	13
Promote the construction of new housing	12
Other	5
Help to improve local cable tv services	3
Help to improve local internet access	2

City of Flatonia Comprehensive Plan 2010

9.

City of Flatonia should:	Agree Strongly (2)	Agree (1)	Neutral (0)	Disagree (-1)	Disagree Strongly (-2)
Encourage new businesses to locate in Flatonia	245	92	9	0	5
Promote the construction of new housing	139	136	59	6	6
Assist the expansion of existing local businesses	135	137	48	11	9
Assist in the development of more housing options	117	129	69	14	9
Enhance local parks	101	131	86	8	12
Seek to make natural gas services available	103	108	104	12	18
Help to improve local cable tv services	115	93	100	16	17
Help to improve local internet access	87	102	116	16	17
Develop zoning to manage how land is used	102	99	84	24	31

2=Agree Strongly; 1=Agree; 0=Neutral; -1=Disagree; -2=Disagree Strongly

13.

City's use of tax money	Not Enough (3)	Just Enough (2)	Too Much (1)	Neutral (0)
Road and street maintenance	221	81	2	26
Attracting businesses/ industry	273	27	2	25
Parks maintenance and development	125	117	20	53
Revitalizing Main Street	102	134	19	60
Fire, Police, and Medical Services	93	148	26	51

High School Survey

1.

Place of Residence	
Flatonia	83
Surrounding Areas	67

2.

Grade	
Ninth Grade	49
Tenth Grade	42
Eleventh Grade	39
Twelfth Grade	19

Place of Residence/ Grade	Place of Residence/ Grade	
	Flatonia	Surrounding Areas
Ninth Grade	25	24
Tenth Grade	26	16
Eleventh Grade	23	16
Twelfth Grade	9	10
Total	83	67

City of Flatonia Comprehensive Plan 2010

3.

Best thing about Flatonia (number one answers)	Total	9th	10th	11th	12th
People	26%	18	12	14	4
Location	52%	22	25	16	10
Schools	10%	3	2	6	3
Other	9%	6	2	1	2
Not Answered	2%	0	1	2	0

Best thing about Flatonia (overall points)	
People	292
Location	322
Schools	205
Other	52

4.

Most Important Challenge for Flatonia (number one answers)	Total	9th	10th	11th	12th
Jobs	23%	13	13	10	7
Retail Stores (places to shop)	20%	8	9	4	6
Recreational/ entertainment opportunities	50%	22	19	24	4
Affordable Housing	4%	3	1	0	1
Other	2%	0	0	1	1
Not Answered	2%	3	0	0	0

Most Important Challenge for Flatonia (overall points)	
Jobs	396
Retail Stores (places to shop)	396
Recreational/ entertainment opportunities	464
Affordable Housing	204
Other	26

5.

Project for the City Council (number one answers)	Total	9th	10th	11th	12th
Create Jobs	39%	15	20	13	8
Help improve/ expand parks and recreational facilities	45%	23	17	24	3
Help improve Internet access	13%	8	3	2	6
Other	3%	2	1	0	1

Project for the City Council (overall points)	
Create Jobs	321
Help improve/ expand parks and recreational facilities	334
Help improve Internet access	211
Other	21

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan is one of the most important aspects of a Comprehensive Plan. Although a Land Use Plan does not constitute zoning, the Land Use Plan forms the basis for a future Zoning Map. The Land Use Plan is developed in relation to current and future constraints, needs and opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance to areas in Flatonia which are vacant or which are developed and need to be changed based on the health, safety or welfare of the community.

Flatonia has the charm and character of a small town, and based on citizen input it is a wonderful place to live and work. By assessing the entire town's existing land uses, the economic vitality and the needs and issues of the citizens and businesses, Flatonia will continue to be a great place to live and work. The Future Land Use Plan is the primary force in shaping how Flatonia grows and changes to meet these needs and issues. This portion of the Comprehensive Plan brings together the Current Land Use Map, Future Population Projections (to 2010), and citizen opinions that have been gathered from the Community Survey, Visioning Workshop, and Parks Survey. The Future Land Use Plan (Plate 4-1) is a geographic representation of all the components contained in the Comprehensive Plan, which form the framework upon which the future land use pattern of the City can develop.

In order to develop the Future Land Use Plan for Flatonia, the City Council, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the Parks Committee attended a planning session. At this session, the group was presented with information from the Vision Workshop, Community Survey, Parks Survey, and Baseline Analysis. The following are some of the basic facts that were discussed:

Community Goals Developed at the Vision Workshop

1. Promote Economic Growth
2. Preserve Architectural Integrity of Flatonia (Beautification)
3. Ensure a Quality Infrastructure
4. Provide Educational Opportunities

5. Community Services (EMS, Fire, Police)
6. Increase Affordable Housing

Salient Points from the Community Survey

1. Most Common Issue: Jobs/Businesses
 - Where will additional businesses locate?
2. Need to Preserve Small-town Character
 - How to do this through land use?
3. General Support for “Land Use Plan”
4. Family is #1 Reason Why Adults Live in Flatonia
 - How to keep it as a place for families?

Parks Issues from the Community Survey

Citizens rated the following facilities as being the most important to them:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Responses</u>
1. Indoor Recreation	173
2. Trails	153
3. Large-event Pavilion	144
4. Playground	142
5. Camping/RV Sites	140
6. Swimming Pool	118
7. Picnic Facilities	112
8. Picnic Pavilions	106
9. Historic Railroad Park	83
10. Natural Habitat Area	78

The Parks Committee discussed the top four proposed projects:

1. Neighborhood Park
 - Playground, Trail, Pavilion, Picnic Sites, Small Amphitheater
2. Historic Railroad Park
 - Walking Trail, Elevated Platform for Viewing/Picture Taking, Picnic Sites, Kiosks, RV Sites
3. Expanded Golf Course
 - Expansion of Existing Park
4. Indoor Recreation Center
 - Although this is the most desired facility in the community, the Committee felt that this project should be put off for a couple

of years due to the financing and managing aspects of such a facility.

Land Use Issues from the Baseline Analysis

1. City will add approximately 180 people by 2010 (see page 4-7)
 - Where will these people live?
2. Approximately 250 acres are currently being used as either Vacant or Agriculture.
 - What, if anything, needs to be done with this acreage.?
3. Low amount of acreage used for Industrial and Commercial purposes.
 - Where will these uses reside in Flatonia?
4. Flatonia has an above average amount of Retail per Capita, but increasing the Retail in the area will increase City revenue for improved City services.
 - Do the citizens want more Retail, and where will this reside?

Other issues that were considered during the Future Land Use Workshop included:

- The location of Flood Plain areas,
- The need for buffer zones between industrial use areas and residential areas, and
- The most appropriate location for industrial uses based upon existing transportation and utility infrastructure as well as on future residential use locations.

RECOMMENDED LAND USE DISTRICTS:

It is important to note that not all of the land uses established in the Future Land Use Plan will become zoning categories in the Zoning Ordinance, and some zoning categories that will be developed in the zoning ordinance are necessarily contained in the Land Use Plan. The zoning plan will be done at a later date and will be in accordance with the Land Use Plan. Decisions regarding a zoning map/ordinance will be made after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. Nevertheless, the overall contribution that each of these categories makes to the character of the community should be a significant factor related to how they are allowed to develop, especially in terms of their density, aesthetic appeal, compatibility with adjacent land

uses, and interaction with the environment. The Future Land Use Map, Plate 4-1, is a graphical representation of the land use categories.

The land use districts that are used as the basis for the Future Land Use Plan for Flatonia include the following:

Park/Open Space District

Areas designated as public (although not necessarily owned by the public) parkland and any areas intended for this purpose in the future. Areas designated as preserve land and any areas intended for this purpose in the future.

Residential District:

Includes activities that occur in all types of residential uses, structures, ownership characteristics, or the character of the development.

- Low Density Residential – Residential lots with less than four dwelling units per lot.
- High Density Residential – Residential lots with more than four dwelling units per lot.

Public Use District:

Areas owned by the city, county, school district, state, or church (eg., City Hall, fire station, school buildings, library, storage sites, and cemeteries). This does not include railroad right of ways.

Commercial/Office/Retail District:

Areas where one or more of the following uses occur:

- Commercial – Areas allow for commercial amusements, building materials yards, automobile garages and sales lots, automobile body repair, warehouses, telecommunications/ broadcasting towers and facilities, wholesale establishments, and the sale of used merchandise and welding shops.
- Office - Areas designated for Professional/ Administrative Offices – doctors, dentists, real estate, architects, accountants, secretarial service, etc.
- Retail – retail activity, intended to serve the local citizens of Flatonia. Uses include small grocery stores, pharmacies, personal service shops

(i.e., hair salons, dry cleaners, tailors, florists, etc.), day care centers, medical/dental and general offices, banks/ financial institutions, small restaurants and cafes, a few convenience stores with gasoline sales, a farmers market, a car wash, grocery stores, restaurants, large bookstores and similar establishments. In addition to this type of local retail, regional retail could also exist (eg., large retail establishments, including shopping malls, large single-tenant retail users, motels and hotels.)

Historical District:

This area immediately surrounds the downtown square and is meant as a district that would serve to preserve the historical buildings and nature of this particular area. Uses such as residential, commercial, retail, office, park, and public could occur in this district as long as the uses do not interfere with the purpose of the district.

Light Industrial District:











Areas might include light industry which entails unenclosed operations or storage, heavy industry with limited external effects or light industry with no outdoor storage (e.g. industrial park)

The future land uses will change over time as more people move to Flatonia and development adapts to this change in population.

FUTURE POPULATION INCREASE

Flatonia's population is expected to increase by approximately 180 people by 2010 (Table 4-1). The projected increase in population is based on historical population increases in electric hookups, school enrollment, and census data (ie., a symptomatic approach to population forecasts). As the figures below show, Flatonia could have less population in 2010 than the projected population of 1,615. However, more than likely the population increase will be more significant than projected if many of the suggestions in this Comprehensive Plan such as higher density residential development and industrial park development occur.

City of Flatonia Future Land Use Plan

-  City Limit
- Future Land Use**
-  Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Mixed Use - RE/CO/OF
-  Light Industrial
-  Park/Open Space
-  Public
-  Historic District
-  State Highways
-  ETJ



700 0 700 1400 Feet

A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.



Table 4-1
POPULATION PROJECTIONS
City of Flatonia, Texas

YEAR	POPULATION
1990	1295
2000	1455
2010	1615
2020	1775

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

LAND USE COMPOSITION

Another important aspect in planning Flatonia's future is understanding the current relationship between land use and existing population and then planning future land use based on the projected population and its corresponding land use requirements. It can be assumed that future land uses will have approximately the same intensity, or per capita, relationship as they do today for Residential uses. For example, the current residential acreage per 100 persons is 27.2 acres. If the residential density were to remain the same, one would expect that this ratio would remain the same. However, based on the citizen input and demand for more higher density housing this density ratio will change. As Table 4-2 shows, the new ratio for Future Residential Land Use is 24.7 acres per 100 persons - denoting a higher density of residential use in the future.

Although the future residential use ratio has changed slightly from the current land use ratio, all other uses have changed more dramatically in the Future Land Use Map based on the demand from citizens for more parks and more jobs. In addition, use categories have changed significantly from the Current Land Use. For example, the uses in the current use map such as Mixed Use, Retail, Commercial, and Office have all been combined in the Future Land Use Map to become Commercial, Retail, Office. In addition, a new category, "Historical" has been identified in the Future Land Use Map for areas around the downtown square. Furthermore, "Higher Density Residential" has been developed as a new land use category for areas with more than one residential unit per lot (see Land Use Descriptions below for more detail).

The following table shows the recommended composition and type of future land use for Flatonia. The acreage listed corresponds with and is graphically represented by the Future Land Use Plan, Plate 4-1. These land uses reflect a reasonable balance for meeting local needs.

**Table 4-2
LAND USE COMPOSITION
City of Flatonia, Texas**

LAND USE CATEGORY	CURRENT LAND USE			FUTURE LAND USE		
	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Acres per 100 People(1)	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Acres per 100 People(2)
Residential	395.37	50.5%	27.2	398.58	45.0%	24.7
<i>Single-Family</i>	355.42	45.4%	24.4			
<i>Manufactured Housing</i>	39.95	5.1%	2.7			
<i>Low Density Residential</i>				354.02	40.0%	21.9
<i>High Density Residential</i>				44.56	5.0%	2.8
Historical				28.4	3.2%	1.8
Agricultural	160.98	20.6%	11.1	0.00	0.0%	0.0
Public	96.82	12.4%	6.7	90.56	10.2%	5.6
Commercial/Office/Retail				141.37	16.0%	8.8
Commercial	53.17	6.8%	3.7			
Retail	34.33	4.4%	2.4			
Mixed Use	8.17	1.0%	0.6			
Office	8.13	1.0%	0.6			
Industrial	6.18	0.8%	0.4	118.85	13.4%	7.4
Park	20.68	2.6%	1.4	108.17	12.2%	6.7
Total Developed	783.83		53.87	885.93		54.9
Rights of Way	171.00		11.75	171.00		10.6
Vacant	102.11		7.02	0.00		0.0
Within City Limits	1056.94		-----	1056.93		-----
Within ETJ	1338.00			1338.00		

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

(1) 14505 persons - YR 2000, (2) 1615 persons - YR 2010

FUTURE LAND USE REQUIREMENTS

Another important aspect in planning for Flatonia is the relationship of the projected population in relation to the future land use requirements. For planning purposes, it can be assumed that, in the near term in Flatonia, future land uses could be approximately the same as or of similar intensity to those that presently exist.

Table 4-3 shows that the future land use requirements for Flatonia in relation to the population projections. The comparisons shown in Table 4-3 are intended to facilitate a better understanding of the land use relationships shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Table 4-3 also shows that based on the future land use per capita ratio the total amount of acres needed for population of 2,000 persons is 1,100 acres; the total amount of land needed for 3,000 persons is 1,650 acres; and the total amount of land for 5,000 persons is 2,750 acres. Flatonia currently has 1,056 acres within its city limits with approximately 171 acres used as rights of way (roads, streets, highways, alleys). Therefore, excluding this right of way acreage, Flatonia currently has approximately 885 acres within its city limits, which is sufficient for the projected population of 1,615 persons by 2010. However, to accommodate more growth in population, the City will need to develop an annexation plan.

Table 4-3
FUTURE LAND USE REQUIREMENTS
City of Flatonia, Texas

LAND USE CATEGORY	ACRES PER 100 PERSONS (1)	FUTURE ACRES REQUIRED (2)		
		2,000 Persons	3,000 Persons	5,000 Persons
Residential	24.7	494	741	1,235
<i>Low Density</i>	21.9	438	657	1,095
<i>High Density</i>	2.8	56	84	140
Historical	1.8	36	54	90
Public	5.6	112	168	280
Commercial/Office/Retail	8.8	176	264	440
Industrial	7.4	148	222	370
Park	6.7	134	201	335
Total Developed		1,100	1,650	2,750

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

(1) Based upon the estimated number of acres, established by the total number of acres in Flatonia and the projected population increase, and Future Land Use Plan; (2) The total developed acreage does not include Right of Way acreage.

FUTURE LAND USE POLICIES

The following section describes recommended policies that should guide Flatonia's future land use planning efforts:

- Plate 4-1 provides the general description of Future Land Use categories, and text in this chapter provides explanation of key components of the Plan. Flatonia should maintain its future land use plan (Plate 4-1) to provide areas for different types of land uses and intensities, and should plan for public services and facilities appropriate for the planned land uses. The Plan establishes the general pattern of future land use, as appropriate, to achieve the community's goals and objectives.
- Flatonia should identify appropriate locations, and develop appropriate zoning, for high-density residential development based on the safety, welfare and economic well being of those potentially affected by such development.
- Flatonia should follow the Housing Strategies outlined in the Housing Plan to ensure an appropriate mix of residential development.
- Flatonia should establish design guidelines for all types of development in all use categories.
- Flatonia should establish a design review team to review and recommend developments to City Council to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses and the community's character as a whole.
- Flatonia should adopt a Zoning Ordinance that is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. If a proposed zoning ordinance is significantly different than the Land Use Map in Plate 4-1 then the Land Use Map for the City must be modified and approved by the City Council prior to the adoption of the proposed Zoning Ordinance.
- Flatonia City Council and Staff should use the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map to establish the general pattern of development and to encourage development to occur in the appropriate locations based on the Future Land Use Map and zoning ordinance (once adopted).
- Non-residential development should be evaluated according to the types of uses proposed, their compatibility with surrounding uses, and the ability of existing or planned infrastructure to provide adequate services to these uses.

- Flatonia should continue to provide adequate notice to the public for their input on future developments.
- Flatonia should only approve amendments to the Future Land Use Plan that meet the Goals and Objectives of the community that have been described herein.

The Future Land Use Plan shown on Plate 4-1 is intended to provide an overall framework for guiding the actions of the different entities responsible for determining Flatonia's future. It will be important that the Plan be used on a daily basis in order for the City to enjoy the benefits of consistent development over a long period of time.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Economic development has been defined as “efforts resulting in job growth and expansion of the tax base.” However, it is evident in reviewing results of the citizen survey and visioning workshop, as well as from meeting individually with small and large business owners that this broad definition of economic development will not suffice for Flatonia. The consensus in Flatonia is that economic development should result in growth of existing business, new business and tourism – while preserving the quality of life in the community. Promoting economic growth while preserving quality of life is difficult and requires clear and concise strategies for implementation.

One way to achieve this balance is by focusing on the expansion of existing businesses and tourism development. Economic development planning in rural areas should emphasize existing business growth since in the United States existing business growth makes up approximately 80% of total annual job growth. In addition, tourism is a clean business and can bring needed monies into the community without disturbing the rural lifestyle. Rural communities should also assess their ability to recruit businesses and the potential impact that new businesses would have on the rural character of the community, tourism and existing business base.

The Economic Development element of the Comprehensive Plan identifies business and community needs/issues as they pertain to job growth and the economy of Flatonia. This section also provides strategies that will help the City and community leaders in addressing these needs and issues while achieving the Vision for the community.

GOAL: Promote business opportunities and economic growth.

Objective 1.1: Support existing businesses by establishing the city and/or chamber as a resource for information on state and federal programs and funding opportunities.

Objective 1.2: Perform an economic analysis to determine where realistic opportunities for business investment or recruitment exist.

Objective 1.3: Preserve Historic Buildings

Objective 1.4: Promote Flatonia as a tourist destination

Objective 1.5: Maximize Flatonia's cultural heritage

Objective 1.6: Improve the local Motel (possibly through improved relations between owners and the city)

Objective 1.7: Develop Business Park (near the interstate?)

Objective 1.8: Develop local infrastructure

Objective 1.9: Develop downtown

METHODOLOGY

The following steps were taken in developing the economic development plan for Flatonia:

1. Assessment of the business climate and specific business needs by meeting with both large and small business people in Flatonia.
2. Review of the Goals and Objectives developed as part of the Visioning Workshop
3. Review of the existing Economic Development Plan developed by a partnership team (Chamber of Commerce, City officials and staff, school officials, and business leaders).

The first step in this three-step process of analysis involved assessing the existing business climate. Interviews were conducted with eight of the largest businesses in Flatonia and a focus group was held with twenty-five small to medium-sized business owners participating. Although the small and large business owners have different issues as they pertain to operation, they share the same concerns as they relate to the major goals listed below. The issues that grew from the interviews and the focus group are summarized below under the Competitive Assessment.

Every goal developed in the existing Economic Development Plan was also addressed in the Vision Workshop Goals and Objectives. This consistency brings further credence to the goals that exist in both plans. For purposes of the Economic Development Plan contained within this Comprehensive Plan, the goals will be:

1. Support Existing Business and Encourage Expansion
2. Increase Tourism
3. Improve Local Infrastructure
4. Enhance Quality of Life
5. Attract Appropriate New Business

COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT - Issues/Needs of Existing Business

The issues and needs from both small and large business owners are categorized below. Following the issues/needs discussion is an implementation strategy that will lead the city and community leaders in improving their economy and maintaining their quality of life.

Labor and Industry:

- Labor force is tight. Labor that is in Flatonia is good, but there can be a high turnover in tight labor markets. With increased mechanization labor can be freed up for other existing or new business growth. However, if new businesses develop without mechanization then the labor market becomes even tighter.
- Some employees work more than one job and consequently get burned out quickly.
- With current labor market and good economy, some employees will leave their current job for another job in a different town that only pays \$0.50 more per hour and lose their existing benefits.
- Affordable housing would help to reduce total cost to employees (higher rents and/or commute costs)
- Examine how to help new business or existing business finance expansions or needed improvements

Infrastructure:

- Communication enhancements would enable enhanced productivity with a number of small and large businesses.
- Large businesses may need additional infrastructure such as electric enhancements. The City should check in regularly with businesses to see if there are other expansion issues.
- If there were more affordable housing in Flatonia, there would be a larger labor market from which to pull and employees may save money from their previous commuting costs.
- Housing is an obstacle for expansion.
- Update and then educate the public and employers about the utility rate structure.
- Develop a low-interest fund for business expansion.
- Improve existing signs and develop better ones on the interstate to attract tourists and potential business into Flatonia.

- City can acquire a radio station through a federal grant program that cars can tune into to get information on upcoming events in Flatonia.
- Natural gas may lower employer operation costs and would be safer than propane for both residences and commercial business.
- Develop an Industrial Park for new business development.

Quality of Life:

- Overwhelmingly, both small and large businesses do not want the quality of life to change in Flatonia, but want enhancements to parks, school, entertainment, and consumable good access.
- Businesses feel like the City can make its biggest impact in improving the economy by improving the quality of the city.
- Existing businesses do not want the frontage of I-10 changed to a neon look, and they want clean businesses (no smoke-stacks)
- Keep the feel of the small town but make it more prosperous while managing growth and developing more parks.

Business Climate:

Business owners feel like the small size of Flatonia provides for a great community in which to do business. Knowing your suppliers and some of your customers helps in customer relations and supplier issues.

- Strengths that were identified include: location, opportunities for small business, know people doing business with, charm of city (Mayberry), demographics, permitting is easy (unlike larger cities), and good place to raise kids,
- Weaknesses include: Flatonia does not have everything you need (groceries, hardware, clothing, entertainment); smell of agricultural processing facility can be awful.

Education and Training:

- New employees don't always have needed skills. This can be addressed through the ISD's Career Development Program.
- Business owners have difficulties in communicating with employees who do not speak or understand English very well

All of the issues presented above have been incorporated into the Implementation Strategy found on the next page. Prior to reviewing the Implementation Strategies, however, it is important to assess the following

two major areas (Marketing Strategy and Organizational Issues) of Economic Development Planning which will enhance current and future economic development results and the economy of Flatonia.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Flatonia must develop separate marketing strategies for tourism and new business development. The city should exploit strengths such as the quality of life, location, and transportation access for new business development. The City and Chamber of Commerce may want to enlist the expertise of a professional marketing firm to assist them in developing effective marketing plans and materials.

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

As the following Implementation Strategy shows, the City and Chamber of Commerce have begun to clearly define their appropriate roles in economic development. The two organizations should continue to meet regularly to examine their respective effectiveness in their economic development roles and be prepared to reassign roles to be the most effective.

In addition, they must also assess their ability to develop an industrial park for new business development with one of the current organizations in the City or develop a new Industrial Development Corporation. Some cities utilize their Economic Development Corporation for such an endeavour while others may do this through the City Council or a newly formed Industrial Development Corporation. The City should meet with an economic development professional to discuss best strategies for this and business development promotion.

Identifying potential funding sources for economic development is one of the highest priorities for the City and Chamber to pursue. The City has the most amount of sales tax (one-and-a-half cents) that is allowed by the state. Other cities that have adopted half-cent sales tax for economic development, but this option is not available to Flatonia since they have no remaining sales tax to adopt. In addition, the hotel/motel tax has limited uses for economic development. One option is for the City to use General

Revenue Funds for economic development efforts. This would involve having a separate line item in the City Budget for Economic Development and may also involve adopting a budget amendment for appropriate funds to be decided by the City Manager.

Another critical issue for the City and Chamber is to identify the single point of contact for business prospects and develop a team of individuals who will receive these prospects. In discussing this issue with both organizations, it appears that the Chamber Executive Director will be this point person. Both the City and Chamber need to work diligently to centralize information for all economic development or business-related issues at the Chamber of Commerce.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation plan for Economic Development does not address all the issues listed above under "COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT". Some issues will be addressed in other sections of this plan, such as the Housing Plan, Park Plan and Land Use Plan. Additionally, the Capital Improvements Plan will show the funding plan for all major projects within the city over the next ten years.

The following matrix offers guidelines for implementation and addresses the majority of the issues listed above. These goals and action steps are intended to jump-start the implementation of the Economic Development Plan and as the timeline shows, the implementation will involve both short-term and long-term actions to improve the economy of Flatonia.

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
Goal #1: Support Existing Business, Encourage Expansion, and Atract Appropriate New Business	1.01 Develop workforce skills enhancement program based on existing business needs					
				X	Nov-00	Jan-01
		Identify employer needs				
		Identify existing school programs				
		Meet with School to discuss employer needs				
		Educate employers/employees about school programs				
		Identify (through employee surveys) what training or education they would like (eg., English as second language, Financial Planning, etc..)				
		Develop funding and program for Adult Learning Program (tie into Employer Incentive Program to maintain attendance)				

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
	1.02 Increase labor pool for existing business expansion and new business needs		X		Nov-00	Jan-01
		Develop grant program to assist business with mechanization implementation which will free up labor				
		Develop housing opportunities in Flatonia (see Housing Plan)				
	1.03 Develop One-stop information "center" for existing business			X	Nov-00	Jan-01
		Develop appropriate programs for Flatonia citizens on financial planning				
		Designate point of contact for existing business questions/needs				
		Obtain appropriate information for existing business expansion/issues				
		Develop monthly/quarterly meeting seminars for existing business with information lectures/speakers and informal exchange of information				

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
	1.04 Develop loan program for local business expansion.		X		Jan-01	Feb-01
		Meet with local bank and/or regional lenders to assess financing program's effectiveness				
		I identify necessary local resources.				
		Develop program.				
		Educate businesses				
Goal #2: Increase Tourism						
	2.01 Develop Marketing Plan to promote Flatonia			X	Nov-00	Mar-01
		(Apply marketing plan from above here)				
	2.02 Improve profitability of major tourism efforts			X	Nov-00	Feb-01
		Assess profitability of major events in Flatonia				
		Make recommendations for improvements				
	2.03 Beautify City		X	X	ongoing	
		(See Quality of Life Below)				

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines							
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame		
			City	Chamber	From	To	
Goal #3: Improve Local Infrastructure	3.01 Obtain Natural Gas						
			X		Nov-00	Dec-01	
		Update existing feasibility plan					
		Determine long-term impact on Flatonia utility revenue					
		Develop financial plan for implementation					
			Obtain City Council approval (for Revenue Bonds)				
			Contract with Utility for implementation				
	3.02 Improve Telecommunication Infrastructure			X		Dec-00	Jun-01
			Assist school in obtaining TIF grant				
			I identify potential sources for improving Telecommunications				
		Develop partnership for organizations in Flatonia who will utilize telecommunications					
		I identify companies who can develop infrastructure in Flatonia					

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
		Obtain cost estimates and/or franchise fee revenue estimates from identified companies				
		Obtain Council buy-in				
		Develop RFPs for infrastructure improvements				
		Begin development and implementation				
		Obtain City Radio Station				
Goal #4: Enhance Quality of Life						
	4.01 Enhance appearance of City		X		Jan-01	Jun-01
		Develop criteria for potential beautification projects				
		I identify reasonable revenue sources for beautification projects and potential budget for such projects				
		I identify beautification projects				
		Develop cost estimates for each potential project				

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
		Develop Beautification Committee				
		Score/rank potential projects with selection committee				
	4.02 Improve existing parks and develop new parks		X		Jan-01	Mar-02
		(See Park Plan)				
		Obtain rail car for downtown park				
		Develop agreement with Bank to enhance location where existing city materials are located				
		Move Existing city facility				
		Engage community in park dedications and possibly in-kind service				
Goal 5: Attract Appropriate New Business						
	5.01 Develop an Incentive Policy		X			

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
		Review Other Incentive Programs			Aug-00	Sep-00
		Determine Available Funding, Abatements, and Fee Waivers that could be made available and under what circumstances			Aug-00	Sep-00
		Develop Draft Incentive Plan			Sep-00	Oct-00
		Present information to Council			Oct-00	Oct-00
		Develop an Incentive Policy and obtain Council approval			Oct-00	Nov-00
	5.02 Develop an Industrial or Business Park		X			
		Designate organization/coalition to be both funding and administrative agent for potential industrial park.				
		Develop site criteria (acreage, topography, costs, etc...)			Sep-00	Oct-00
		I identify qualifying sites within city or ETJ			Sep-00	Oct-00
		Develop financing mechanism (s) with City, Chamber, Bank, Private Companies, other			Sep-00	Dec-00

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan

Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
		Negotiate terms for land with owners			1-Jan	Mar-01
		Close on land			May-01	
		Arrange for architectural plans for prospective buildings (virtual building sites)			May-01	Jul-01
		Develop infrastructure			Sep-01	Aug-02
		Market site (in conjunction with Marketing Plan below)			Aug-02	??
	5.03 Market Flatonia for new business			X	Nov-00	Mar-01
		Identify available city/chamber funding for marketing				
		Identify complete marketing strategy (brochures, web page, potential markets, outsource, etc...)				
		Enlist marketing/design firm or organization for "professional" materials				
		Review other city marketing materials for new business development				
		Develop draft marketing materials				

Table 5-1 Flatonia Economic Development Plan
Implementation Guidelines

Table 5-1: Implementation Guidelines						
Goal	Objective	Action Step	Responsible		Time Frame	
			City	Chamber	From	To
		Perform a Target Industry Analysis for Direct Marketing				
		Begin Marketing campaign				
	5.04 Develop Readiness for New Business			X		
		Develop database of available properties and update regularly			Dec-00	Jan-01
		Establish primary point of contact for business prospects			Dec-00	Jan-01
		Develop a Business Recruitment Ready Team			Jan-01	Mar-01

PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Introduction

The Flatonia City Council recognizes that parks and open spaces are an integral component of what makes a community a great place to live. Therefore, the City is proactively addressing the current and future recreational and open space needs of its residents by directing the Flatonia Parks Committee ("Parks Committee") to develop this Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan and to actively pursue its implementation.

This Master Plan outlines a set of community park and recreation priorities, identifies specific park development projects, and includes a schedule for carrying out the identified park projects. The primary goal of this plan is to greatly enhance the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of Flatonia, thereby making Flatonia a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Flatonia Population- Estimates, Trends, and Forecasts for Growth

The population in Flatonia has been increasing steadily since 1980. This growth is projected to continue for the foreseeable future (see Table 6-1). Historically, the rate of growth in Flatonia has been faster than in Fayette County but slower than the state of Texas. Overall, Flatonia's rate of growth has been variable, a trend

GOAL: Increase the number of recreation facilities for Flatonia's citizens, especially for the area's youth.

GOAL: Acquire land, when and where appropriate, for the development of new parks.

Objective: Identify and rank the recreation needs of Flatonia's citizens.

Objective: Inventory existing park land and recreation facilities and determine their suitability for meeting the City's needs.

Objective: Identify land that the City could purchase or have donated to it to provide additional parks and open space.

Objective: Distribute needed recreation facilities throughout the City.

Objective: Solicit public ideas and comments about the City's park system.

Objective: Identify appropriate sites and develop a schedule for constructing the most-needed recreation facilities.

Objective: Identify sources of parkland acquisition and development funds.

City of Flatonia Comprehensive Plan 2010

**Table 6-1
Population, Ethnicity, and Income**

Demographic Factor		1990	2000	2010	Percent Change from 2000
Population		1,295	1,455	1,615	11%
	0 to 17	350	393	437	
	18 to 24	110	124	137	
	25 to 44	342	384	426	
	45 to 64	218	245	272	
	65 and Older	275	309	343	
Race and Ethnicity	Non-Hispanic Whites	783	880	976	
	Non-Hispanic Blacks	111	125	139	
	Hispanics	389	436	485	
	Other	12	14	15	
Median Household Income (adjusted to 1999 dollars)		\$27,486	\$32,905		
Percent below poverty level		34.2%			

*U.S. Census Data

**Texas State Population Data Center

that was also experienced by surrounding cities of similar size. However, projections indicate steady growth for the area.

For a more detailed discussion of Flatonia's population, ethnicity, and income levels, please see Chapter 1 of this Plan.

Parks Committee and Master Plan Background

In 1999, the Flatonia City Council determined that a master plan was necessary to help ensure that the parks, recreation, and open space needs of the community would be met well into the future. In order to accomplish this task, as well as to assist in the implementation of the plan, the City Council established a Parks Committee with members representing a broad range of community organizations and interests. A copy of the City's resolution creating the Parks Committee is contained in the Appendix of this plan.

As one of its first actions, the Parks Committee began to develop a strategic plan for improving existing parks and providing additional public recreation facilities. The Committee's goal was to inventory available park resources, identify recreation priorities as established by the citizens, and develop a schedule for satisfying those demands.

Most of the Parks Committee's continuing work will be to decide the best ways to fund needed park improvements and to provide guidance on specific park master plans. The Parks Committee will also update this plan at least every five years to ensure that changing citizen needs are identified and met.

Inventory of Park and Recreation Facilities

The Parks Committee inventoried all of the recreation facilities available to Flatonia citizens. The following table is a complete listing of facilities available to the public.

**Table 6-2
Recreation Facility Inventory**

Site	Property Owner	Facility	Number	Condition
G.F. and Audrey McWhirter City Park	City of Flatonia	Baseball Field	1	Good
		Picnic Sites	4	Good
		Pavilion	1	Good
		Restroom	1	Good
		Softball Field	1	Good
		Swimming Pool	1	Good
		Basketball Court	1	Good
		Hike and Bike Trail	.5 mile	Good
Garbade Park	City of Flatonia	Playground	1	Poor
		Baseball Field	1	Good
		Picnic Sites	4	Good
Golf Association	Flatonia Golf Association (non-profit)	Golf Course	9 holes	Good
Flatonia ISD	FISD	Football Field	1	Good
		Track	1	Good
		Sand Volleyball Courts	1	Good
		Playground	1	Good
		Tennis Courts	2	Good

Open Space and Park Land Needs Identification and Assessment

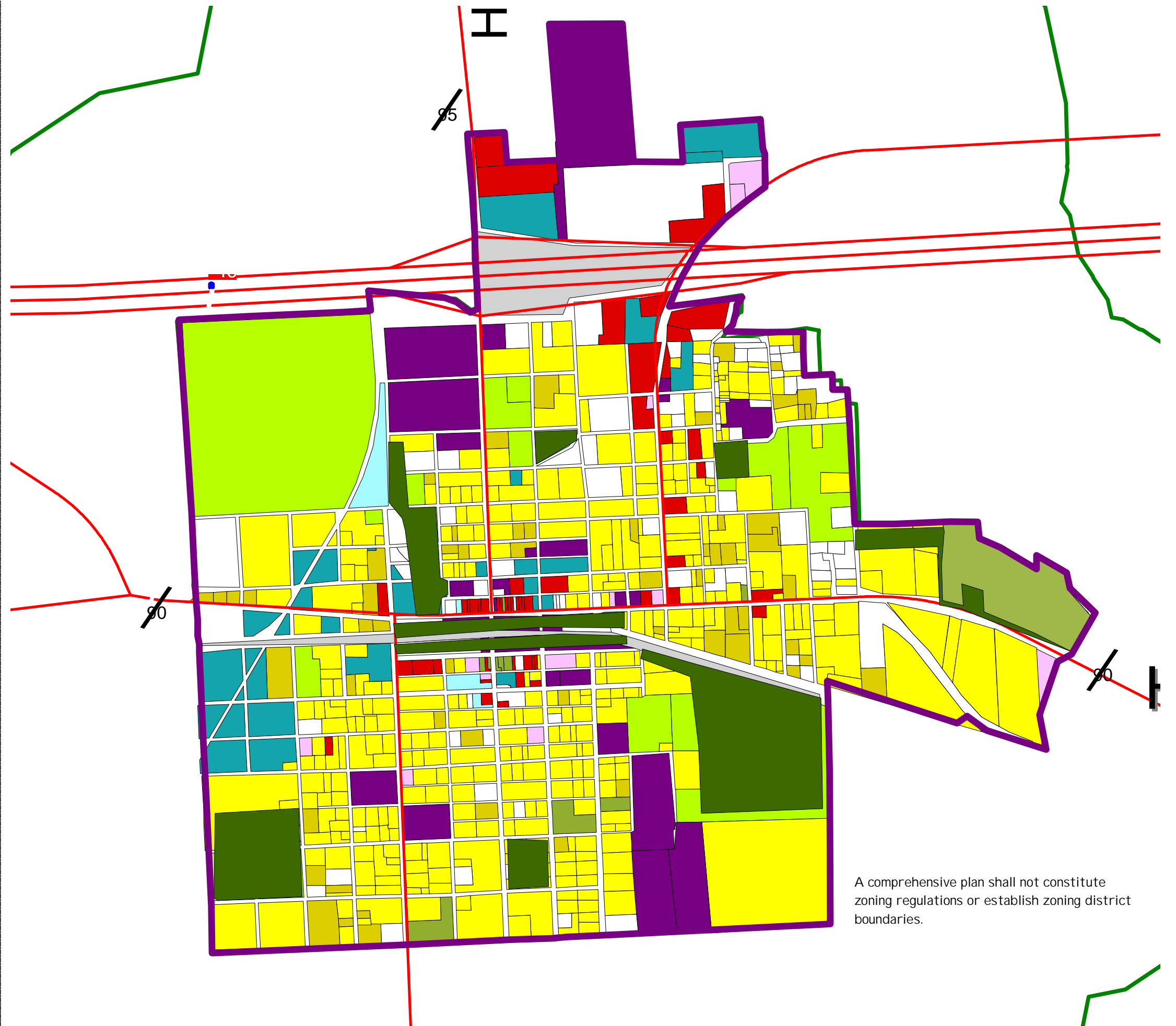
Flatonia recognizes the need to plan for future park developments and the strategic location of those parks as the City grows. While Flatonia enjoys a comfortable 1.4 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, only a small percent of residents live within walking distance of a park. High priorities include neighborhood parks (generally between 2 and 10 acres in size, within walking distance of a residential area, and with basic recreational amenities), park land near the school for joint-use facilities between the City and the school district, and linear park development along creeks and natural drainage areas. [Map 6-1](#) on the following page shows current park land and preferred future park and open space locations.

Flatonia also recognizes the need to preserve open space for today and for future generations. Currently, the City does not own any dedicated open space (the term

PLATE 6-1 Parks and Open Space Plan

City of Flatonia, Texas 2010 Comprehensive Plan

-  City Limit
- Existing Parks
-  Existing Park/Open Space
- Future Parks
-  Future Park/Open Space
-  State Highways
- Existing Land Use
-  Residential
-  High Density Residential
-  Mobile Home
-  Mixed Use
-  Office
-  Retail
-  Commercial
-  Light Industrial
-  Park/Open Space
-  Agriculture
-  Public
-  Vacant
-  Right of Way
-  ETJ



A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

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“open space” is used to identify publicly owned land of one acre or more with a minimal amount of development). These lands are typically used for passive recreation purposes such as walking and picnicking and for the preservation of unique, rare, or easily damaged natural resources such as wetlands, riparian woodlands, steep slopes, and natural drainageways.

Park And Recreation Needs Identification And Assessment

Citizen Survey of Park and Recreation Needs

The Parks Committee distributed copies of the survey to residents by mailing them with every electric bill (1,100 in all). More than 450 of the 1100 surveys that were mailed out to City Utility customers were returned - a 41 percent response rate.

In the survey, citizens were given a list of recreation facilities and asked to place a checkmark next to the five most desired facilities from each list. Based upon the total point scores, the top 10 facilities were called “most requested park and recreation needs” and were used as the starting point for determining the City's priority needs. If a respondent checked “Indoor Recreation Facility” as one of their top five facilities, then they were also asked which indoor facilities were most desired. The survey results are listed below in order of most requested to least requested:

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Points</u>
Indoor Recreation Facility	173
Trails	153
Large Event Pavilion	144
Playground	142
Camping/RV Sites	140
Swimming Pool	118
Picnic Facilities	112
Picnic Pavilions	106
Historic Railroad Park	83
Natural Habitat Areas	78
Golf Course	54
Baseball Fields	49
Amphitheatre	45
	6-6

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Skateboard/rollerblade	36
Softball Fields	32

<u>Indoor Recreation Facilities</u>	<u>Points</u>
Aerobic/Dance Area	97
Movies	94
Game Area	80
Craft/Meeting Room	69
Weight Lifting Room	62
Basketball	49
Volleyball	44
Raquetball	25

Community Park and Recreation Workshop

On September 16, 2000, the Parks Committee held a community workshop to discuss the results of the citizen survey and to elicit public review and comment on the Parks Committee's prioritized list and conceptual park development projects. Many citizens attending the workshop voiced support for the prioritized list and the conceptual projects.

Overall City Park and Recreation Needs

In order to develop the final needs list the Parks Committee reviewed the results of the citizen survey and the citizen workshop. The committee then assessed the available resources of the city to build and maintain these facilities, as well as previous (pre-survey) facility requests, available land for park development, and park grant opportunities. The final prioritized list of Flatonina's park and recreation needs is shown in the following table.

**Table 6-3
Master Plan Priority Needs List**

Priority	Facility Type
1	Park land acquisition
2	Trails for walking, jogging, and biking
3	Picnic pavilions
4	Playground
5	Picnic tables and grills
6	Natural habitat area
7	Skateboard/Rollerblade area
8	Historic railroad interpretive facilities
9	Camping/RV sites
10	Indoor Recreation Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aerobic/Dance area - Movies/Games area - Craft/Meeting area - Weight-lifting area - Basketball court - Volleyball court

Park and Recreation Facility Deficit / Surplus

The Parks Committee adopted park and recreation facility standards similar to those recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in its *Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. The Parks Committee used the NRPA standards as the starting point and adjusted them to reflect local needs. The City's park and recreation facility standards can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

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After determining the City's park and recreation facility standards, the Parks Committee reviewed the needed facilities list and used the standards to determine the number of each kind of facility the City should have to meet those needs. Some existing recreational facilities were not fully counted in the current number calculations due to their limited availability or poor conditions:

- Recreation facilities on school property are generally available during the school year only after 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, and all weekend. They are also available for approximately three months during the summer. At the suggestion of Texas Parks and Wildlife's staff, the Parks Committee used a multiplier of 0.5 in current number calculations to account for the limited public availability of these school facilities.
- Public recreation facilities in poor condition are not included in the current number calculations. At the suggestion of Texas Parks and Wildlife's staff, the Parks Committee declared that these facilities are worn out and of no benefit to the community.

The result of applying the Parks Committee's facility standards is a current deficit for all 10 priority recreation facilities as shown in the table 6-4 below.

**Table 6-4
Deficit / Surplus Facility Calculations**

Priority	Facility Type	Current Number	Condition	Facility Standard	Current Facility Deficit / Surplus
1	Park land acquisition	22 acres	NA	45	-23 acres
2	Trails for walking, jogging, and biking	.5 miles	Good	2.5 miles	-2 miles
3	Picnic pavilions	1	Good	2	-1
4	Playground	.5	Good/Poor	2	-1.5
5	Picnic tables and grills	8	Good	23	-15
6	Natural habitat area	0 acres	NA	1.5 acres	-1.5 acres
7	Skateboard/Rollerblade area	0	NA	1	-1
8	Historic railroad interpretive facilities	0	NA	1	-1
9	Camping/RV sites	0	NA	10	-10
10	Indoor Recreation Center	0	NA	1	-1

Note: The Facility Standard and Current Facility Deficit / Surplus numbers are rounded to the nearest whole unit of measure.

Master Plan Implementation

The final step in the master planning process was to develop a five-year implementation plan which outlines specific projects and timelines for project development.

After analyzing existing City-owned land and possible land acquisitions throughout the City, as well as considering facility development and maintenance costs, the Parks Committee selected the following three projects: "Central Park," "Historic Railway Crossing" Linear Park, and an Indoor Recreation Center. The development

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timing, the number and type of facilities to be constructed, and the current and remaining facility deficit / surplus are shown in the following table.

**Table 6-5
Master Plan Implementation Schedule**

Priority	Facility Type	Current Facility Deficit / Surplus	Project 1: Neighborhood Park (2000 - 2002)	Project 2: Historic Railway Crossing Linear Park (2002 - 2003)	Project 3: Indoor Recreation Center (2003 - 2005)	Remaining Facility Deficit / Surplus
1	Park land acquisition	-23 acres	6 acres (approximately)	12 acres (approximately)	5 acres (approximately)	0
2	Trails for walking, jogging, and biking	-2 miles	.5 miles	1.5 miles	0	0
3	Picnic pavilions	-1	1	0	0	0
4	Playground	-1	1	0	0	0
5	Picnic tables and grills	-11	8	0	0	3
6	Natural habitat area	-1.5 acres	.5	1	0	0
7	Skateboard/Rollerblade area	-1	1	0	0	-5
8	Historic railroad interpretive facilities	-1	0	1	0	0
9	Camping/RV sites	-10	0	10	0	0
10	Indoor Recreation Center	-1	0	0	1	0

Resources and Fundraising Opportunities for Plan Implementation

Flatonia and the Flatonia Parks Committee will work together to identify funding sources as well as available resources to assist in the development of new recreational facilities and the acquisition/donation of park land. To date, three grant programs have been identified to assist the City:

1. The Lower Colorado River Authority's *Partnerships in Parks* grant program (up to \$200,000);
2. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Grants-in-Aid grant program (up to \$500,000);
3. The TEA-21 grant program administered through the Texas Department of Transportation.

The following funding and available resources have also been identified as potential sources of assistance:

1. City funds;
2. City labor and equipment;
3. Lower Colorado River Authority's *Partnerships in Parks* technical assistance program;
4. Flatonia Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, and local business funds and labor.

Ongoing Park and Recreation Priorities

After establishing a priority park and recreation development list, the Parks Committee then identified park and recreation opportunities that should be addressed both now and in future plans.

- The Parks Committee, as part of its ongoing efforts, will work with interested local citizens to develop a City Trails Master Plan. Any future trails Master Plan would be incorporated into the overall Flatonia Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.
- The Parks Committee should work closely with the Flatonia I SD to identify appropriate tracts of land adjacent or near school buildings as potential sites

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for the proposed Indoor Recreation Center and a future Flatonia Athletic Field Complex. These facilities could be shared with the school system and, in return, some or all maintenance costs could be covered by Flatonia I SD.

HOUSING

Introduction

The condition and availability of housing are important factors in a community. Flatonia has an appropriate mix of housing types (single-family, multi-family and manufactured housing), but the overall condition of housing and the lack of affordable housing to address the market demand (see Housing Study in Appendix) are areas of concern for citizens and City government.

GOAL: Increase affordable housing within Flatonia ETJ

Objective VI.1: Develop zoning ordinances to uphold housing standards for traditional, manufactured and other housing building types.

Objective VI.2: Encourage the development of tenant council and homeowner councils so they have a voice (influence) in the maintenance of the property.

Objective VI.3: Develop financial programs to encourage the building or expansion of housing.

Objective VI.4: Ensure affordable access to infrastructure for all types of housing and provide housing educational programs.

The maintenance and quality of housing is a good reflection of the citizen attitudes towards their community. Property owner neglect and community disinterest are two of the major factors that cause poor housing conditions. One of the most effective actions that the City can take to improve housing conditions is to improve the look and feel of the City by focusing on beautification projects and infrastructure improvements. Residents living in a city that prides itself on the condition of its own buildings, streets and community facilities often follow suit with their own housing upkeep.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the existing housing conditions, future demands for housing stock and suggestions for improvements of housing in Flatonia.

Residential Land Use

Residential Land Use comprises approximately 48 percent of current land use. Future land use composition, discussed in the Future Land Use Plan and is based on the community's desire for more affordable housing through multi-family housing development. This will have fewer acreage devoted to single family housing and more devoted to multi-family housing. This change in residential types from single family to multi-family (characterized by

more persons per acre due to the higher number of residential units per acre) will result in a higher overall residential density. As Table 7-1 points out, the majority of land currently being used for residential purposes are considered Medium Density (55 percent) followed by residential land considered low density (24 percent).

**Table 7-1
Current Residential Land Use Composition¹, 2000**

Land Use Category	Acres	Percent of Total Residential Use
Rural	30.28	7.76%
Low Density	93.43	23.96%
Medium Density	214.63	55.05%
High Density	8.95	2.30%
Single Mobile Home	33.36	8.56%
Multiple Mobile Homes	9.26	2.38%
Residential	389.91	100.00%

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

Based on the Future Land Use Plan, this residential use composition will change with more land being devoted to high density residential (i.e., multifamily) and less land devoted for low and medium density residential.

Housing Types

An exterior survey of all residential buildings in Flatonia revealed the housing types shown in Table 7-2. Single-family housing comprises 78 percent of the Flatonia housing units. Manufactured Housing makes up 17 percent, followed by Multi-family housing at 5 percent.

¹ Rural Residential - large lot (single owner parcel), country-style residential (average of two-acre lots per development; 1.5 acre minimum lot size) characterized by single-family detached homes.
Low Density Residential - Large lot, low density residential (minimum one-acre lots) characterized by single-family detached homes; minimum lot widths should be approximately 140 to 150 feet, and minimum lot depths should be no more than two times the lot width to ensure maximum separation of dwelling units and preservation of country/rural atmosphere.
Medium Density Residential - Provide for smaller residential lot sizes, possibly including dwelling units such as patio homes, town homes, or condominiums. Up to four dwelling units/acre.
High Density Residential - More than four dwelling units per lot.
Manufactured Home Residential - Single Mobile Home (SMR) for Lots with only one Mobile Home, and Multiple Mobile Home (MMR) for lots with more than one mobile home.

**Table 7-2
2000 Housing Types**

Type of Housing	Structures	Percent
Single Family	459	78%
Multiple Family	27	5%
Manufactured Housing	99	17%
TOTAL:	585	100%

Source: City of Flatonia and Plan Consultants

This residential mix has changed significantly over the years based on market needs, construction costs, new housing types, and other similar factors. According to a market study done for Flatonia in late-1999 by I pser & Associates (see Appendix), "over the 10 years between 1980 and 1990, Flatonia experienced a loss of 28 single family homes, a loss of 12 multi-family units, offset by a gain of 84 mobile home units, resulting in a net gain of 44 housing units." The study further points out that with the increase in the number of mobile homes, owner occupied units had a net increase of 18 in Flatonia from 1980 to 1990, or from 315 to 333. Based on demographic trends and market demands, the study estimates that Flatonia will need approximately 16 housing units (11 owner and 5 renter over the next two years).

Housing Conditions

While assessing the housing types in Flatonia, a classification of housing condition was also undertaken (See table 7-3 below). The following definitions were used in this analysis:

Standard - Sound with no defect present or minor defect present which are capable of correction within the course of normal maintenance.

Substandard - Major defects or faults that are of such a serious degree that they cannot be corrected by normal maintenance.

Dilapidated - Critical defects that have either failed completely or are so seriously damaged that the individual components could not be fixed or replaced.

Approximately 77 percent of all housing types in Flatonia are considered standard while nearly 14 percent is substandard. Flatonia has a relatively high percentage of dilapidated housing units compared to other cities. For example, a nearby city had approximately 91 percent of all housing standard, 8 percent substandard and only 0.5 percent dilapidated. One major difference, however, between the two cities' housing conditions is that nearly 67 percent of their manufactured housing was considered substandard compared to only 17 percent of substandard manufactured housing in Flatonia.

**Table 7-3
Housing Conditions - 2000²**

Type of Housing	Standard		Substandard		Dilapidated		TOTAL
	Structures	Percent	Structures	Percent	Structures	Percent	
Single Family	360	78.4%	64	13.9%	35	7.6%	459
Multiple Family	19	70.4%	4	14.8%	4	14.8%	27
Manufactured Housing	71	71.7%	17	17.2%	11	11.1%	99
TOTAL:	450	76.9%	85	14.5%	50	8.5%	585

Source: Lower Colorado River Authority

As mentioned briefly above, the Housing condition is often a factor of neighborhood and city condition. The degree to which the neighborhood and city is kept clean and in good condition often determines the attitude of homeowners as to how they maintain their houses. The City's role in effecting this includes providing adequate infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, parks and trails, streetlights, drainage, water, and wastewater. Public services such as garbage collection, recycling, police and fire protection are also important, as are programs for youth and seniors. Additionally, the City can work to improve their own buildings to establish a model for homeowners.

An aggressive program for improving existing housing stock as well as developing vacant properties will lead to an overall quality of housing. Flatonia has a building inspector and a policy for demolition of dilapidated housing which will continue to enhance the housing conditions. The degree to which the city enforces, and remains consistent with, their current rules for

demolition of dilapidated housing will largely impact future housing conditions in Flatonia. In addition, financing options exist to assist homeowners in improving their housing condition. The City should develop an aggressive program of educating residential owners regarding programs that can be utilized to improve their housing.

Affordable Housing

According to the Housing Market Study (see Appendix) commissioned by the City of Flatonia in late-1999, the primary demand for future housing is for 16 single-family units in the next year (11 owner occupied and 5 renter units). These figures are based on household growth and conservative replacement estimates. This study estimates that the demand will primarily come from individuals with a median family income above the limit of what is considered affordable housing. In addition, the Housing Market Study states that “a rental demand figure of up to 35 multi-family units is appropriate for the Flatonia market.” These latter figures are based on projected growth, turnover in existing households, and focuses on the targeted income limits.³

However, the City feels that this income estimate is somewhat conservative and wants to pursue the development of multi-family residential development to serve what they see as an affordable housing need in Flatonia from existing Flatonia employees who are either living in a nearby city and commuting or living in a substandard or dilapidated housing structure. The city has met with affordable housing developers and finance specialists to discuss options for the development of affordable housing.

A developer can benefit from building affordable housing through 1) low-income housing tax credits, or 2) private market housing rates (i.e. payback over the life of the housing). Tax credits are primarily given to developers through a state-managed program and are given based on the percentage of people living in the affordable housing units that are below 80 percent (or sometimes lower depending upon the program) of median family income for a specific geographic area. The housing market study points out that the income levels of the future market demands will primarily be above the 80

³ Information provided in the Housing Market Study prepared for Flatonia by Ipser and Associates, Inc (December 1999). See Appendix for full text of study.

percent median family income. Therefore, a multi-family developer will probably not be able to benefit from low-income housing tax credits in Flatonia. Compounding this problem is the fact that the current and projected rental rates in Flatonia and the surrounding area are fairly low, so the payback through rents to the developer for the construction of a housing development will be fairly low. Therefore, the City will need to provide other incentives to a developer in order to make the multi-family development less costly up front and somewhat profitable over the long-term.

Manufactured Housing⁴

Manufactured housing, as mentioned above, has been the predominant new housing type over the past ten years in Flatonia. The manufactured home industry has exploded during this time, as there is a tremendous market for this housing due to the low cost of the housing and the ease of placement. Manufactured housing has become a more popular housing type for affordable housing. However, other less positive issues also exist regarding manufactured housing, such as: not a good investment (deteriorate rapidly and do not appreciate in value); pose a safety concern when not tied to a permanent foundation; and opposition from neighbors on the effect of manufactured housing on the property value of single family housing.

The challenge to Flatonia however is to decide what mix of housing is appropriate. Manufactured housing is a good alternative for affordable housing, however without permanent foundations, attractive skirts and proper upkeep, manufactured homes can become unsightly in a community.

Another issue that the City will need to address is the dispersment of manufactured housing throughout the City. Currently, manufactured housing is located throughout the city. Some cities have decided to treat manufactured housing similar to single family and multi-family and have a designated area for manufactured housing. Other cities have opted to only allow manufactured homes in a manufactured home park. These are issues

⁴ Manufactured Housing in this text refers to both those mobile homes built prior to 1976 and those built and often referred to as HUD-based manufactured homes.

that the City Council and Steering Committee will need to address in the Zoning discussion and ordinance.

Housing Strategies

Following are recommended strategies for the City of Flatonia:

- Develop a City-owned building beautification program and educate the public about what the City is doing and why.
- Work with civic organizations to improve the condition of some of the substandard housing through volunteer painting, yard maintenance and other similar improvements.
- Enforce, and remain consistent with, the City's code enforcement program - especially as it pertains to demolishing dilapidated housing and approving manufactured housing requests.
- Look into the current staffing of building code enforcement and examine if it is sufficient to meet the needs of the position. In addition, develop a much clearer system for both building inspection and demolishing dilapidated housing.
- Develop a Zoning Ordinance (including building design) for all building types including residential.
- Review the Housing Infill Analysis provided by the Capital Area Housing Financing Corporation and Capital Area Planning Council. This analysis shows the most appropriate properties within Flatonia for the City to assist in the development of housing based on back taxes due, depreciated housing stock, and other similar factors.
- Decide where all residential types are most appropriate based on the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and develop zoning categories and a zoning map that is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.
- Develop a City policy for facilitating affordable housing such as what types of incentives to give developers or what role should the City have in the development process.
- City will take lead on developing an education program for Flatonia citizens on the following programs which will help individuals to improve their existing housing, alternatives to manufactured housing, or finance new housing:

- The HOME Program – This program is administered by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of the Federal Government and allocated to state and local governments. The purpose of this program is to increase the supply of affordable and low-income housing units. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of housing.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program – The City of Flatonia already participates in the CDBG program both through its own allocation from TDHCA and from the Capital Area Planning Council. However, Flatonia is not presently participating in the CDBG housing program. The use of funds for housing is limited to rehabilitation. New construction is prohibited. Cities may use grants to provide funds to non-profit groups such as a non-profit developer or to a housing authority.
- Habitat for Humanity – This non-profit organization provides volunteers and materials to assist low to moderate-income residents in building housing. The organization usually demands a certain degree of “sweat equity” on the part of the homeowner, but this is a good program to get a community involved in volunteering to develop or rehabilitate housing. The organization relies on the donation of existing homes and vacant lots purchased by the local government to provide stock from which to build.
- Down-Payment Assistance (DPA) Programs – The Capital Area Housing Finance Corporation has a DPA for the ten counties that it serves (Fayette County being one of these counties). The program provides direct grants (forgivable after a certain number of years) towards the down payment of a new or existing home. The program primarily targets households with incomes less than 80 percent of median family income for the given county.
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) – LIHTCs are a significant incentive for developers to build low to moderate-income housing. The amount of Tax Credits given from the State to the developer depends upon the amount of residents in the new residential development who are below the median family income level for a specific geographic area and also the extent (or percent) that the residents fall below that level. The City of Flatonia needs to continue to meet with developers to determine what is an appropriate mix of affordable housing for the City and how the City can facilitate the development.