

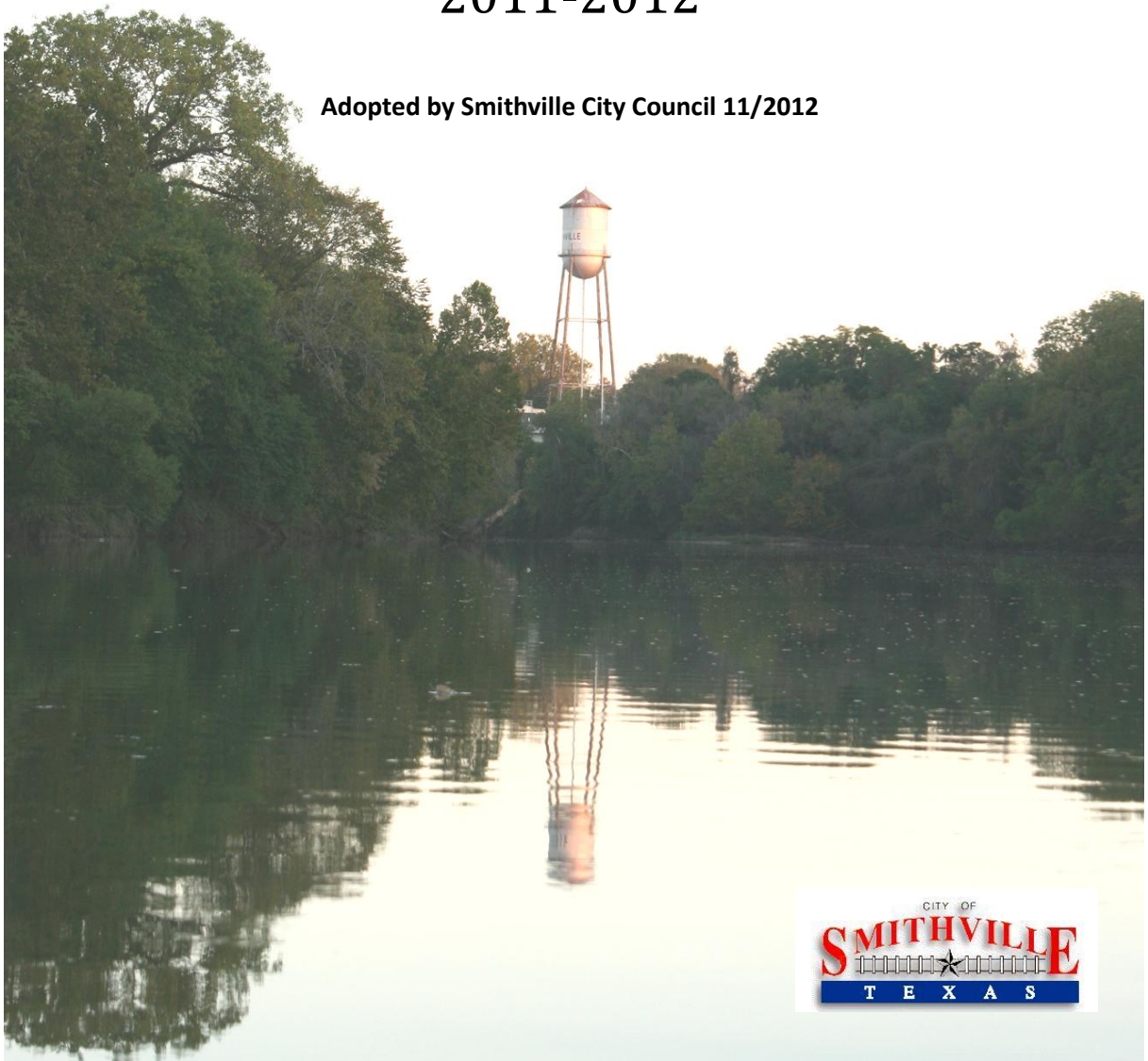
COMPILED BY THE LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY

# City of Smithville Comprehensive Plan

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## 2011-2012

Adopted by Smithville City Council 11/2012



The **City of Smithville 2011-2012 Comprehensive Plan** is the product of many public meetings and discussions with community leaders and members. The City of Smithville is pleased to present this blueprint of ideas and projects. Many thanks to all the people who participated in its development.

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## **The City of Smithville**



### **Vision and Values Statement**

*Adopted by Smithville City Council on 9/4/2002*

#### **Vision**

Our vision is to maintain a small-town sense of community while encouraging positive growth and continually improved standards of living for the citizens of Smithville, Texas.

#### **Values**

- Respect, appreciation, and regard for citizens and the environment
- Open, honest communication
- Teamwork within City government and support of all community-based organizations
- Innovation and improvement

#### **Leadership philosophy**

- Focus on the customer
- Invest in our workforce
- Meet targeted financial and administrative goals

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# Demographic Analysis

## Introduction

The City of Smithville is located in a still-rural section of eastern Bastrop County. The rural character and small town quality of life are key aspects of Smithville's character that residents value greatly. However, while the County population has grown rapidly in the last decade, this growth has bypassed Smithville. This plan update is an effort to balance the need for quality development while simultaneously protecting community values.

The LCRA assisted Smithville with the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, but since the early 1980s Smithville has had a good track record of creating plans and implementing projects. After the 2007 Plan was initially adopted, the projects it recommends have been realized on an ongoing basis and the community has been engaged in regular reviews and updates.

Several projects that were not specifically identified in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan or in the 2009 Update have very positively impacted the community. The Smithville Texas Veterans Memorial Park is a good example of how this community comes together to rally around a good project and follows through to its completion. Between 2006 and 2010 when the project was first conceived, Bastrop County and the Smithville area had lost five military service personnel in active duty. In a town of about 4,000 where everyone knows their neighbors and all the kids go to the same school together, these

losses have been devastating. Since that time, two more with ties in Bastrop County have made the ultimate sacrifice in the conflict in Afghanistan.



*Smithville TX: Veterans Memorial Park, walls for name plaques of veterans from 1835 to present from Bastrop County and elsewhere*

Mayor Mark Bunte spoke with those families in 2010 to find out how they wanted to pay tribute to their loved ones. The families requested a memorial park unlike any other—one that would bring youthful energy and joy while simultaneously paying respect and honoring this country's veteran heroes. They simply requested a splash pad for community children for this purpose. The Veterans Memorial Park has grown in scope since those first meetings. As visitors enter the park, they will pass a 15'-tall sculpture of an angel created by internationally-known and local resident Bill McGlaun that represents the sacrifice of our military families. Visitors will walk through walls representing service, with over 5,000 names of veterans primarily from Bastrop County who have served this nation since the Texas Revolution in 1836. They will then arrive at the splash pad, which is dedicated to the

reasons why our veterans make those great sacrifices—so that we and our children can live free.

As of November 2012, only about \$50,000 remained to complete a park that is valued at \$720,000 and was built without using tax dollars. A terrific accomplishment for any town, this is an example of how “everything is possible in Smithville.”

Work for Independence Park was also initiated in 2012, and on August 13, 2012 Smithville commemorated town founder Dr. Thomas Gazley’s birthday by raising the flags over the new park. Plans call to eventually include an amphitheater built into the hill and to develop a hike/bike trail along Gazley Creek, which may become part of a larger network designed to connect Riverbend Park to town, a major part of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. This effort brings the love and reverence for the past together with a vision of the future, showing how city leaders strive to improve the quality of life for all residents.

Additionally, programs like the Smithville Community Gardens, which provides free, nutritious, organic produce for all residents to harvest, was established by community volunteers with assistance from the City in 2009. In 2010, the City was awarded funds for the Smithville Safe Routes to School programming, supporting school and library programming that encourage youth to walk and bike, and funds for three segments of pedestrian paths (ground to be broken by June, 2013). These and other programs and projects tap into the substantial number and talents of the volunteer base in town, which enhances the quality of life in Smithville without demanding additional taxes to do so.

By the time the grants administrator was hired in 2009 (a major component of the 2007 Plan), over 33% of the projects in the 2007 Plan were put into action. By the time the first public meeting was held to update this 2011-12 Plan, over two-thirds of the recommendations in the 2007 Plan had been initiated or completed. This consistent work has paid off in significant community projects, including community gardens, park improvements, road improvements, and more. The citizens of Smithville have been well served by their City leaders and their own volunteer commitment to ensuring the City’s plans do not gather dust, but instead drive positive enhancements to the community.

### Current and Projected Population

As table 1 indicates, the population within the city limits declined according to the 2010 Census, despite rapid growth in the County overall. Although the City believes some growth occurred that was not captured by Census, due to the high cost involved, the City will not formally dispute them.

**Table 1: Population Estimates and Projections**

	2000	2010	2011 (Est.)	% Change 2000- 2011	2016 (Proj.)
<b>City of Smithville</b>	3,901	3,817	3,883	-0.02%	4,155
<b>Bastrop County</b>	57,733	74,171	75,465	30.7%	80,694
<b>State of Texas</b>	20,851,820	25,145,561	25,525,763	22.4%	27,505,386

Source: 2010 US Census



**Table 2: Race and Ethnicity 2010**

	#	%
<b>White Alone</b>	2,527	66.2%
<b>Black Alone</b>	463	12.1%
<b>American Indian</b>	19	0.5%
<b>Asian</b>	17	0.4%
<b>Pacific Islander</b>	6	0.2%
<b>Other</b>	3	0.1%
<b>Two or More</b>	55	1.4%
<b>Hispanic</b>	727	19.0%

Source: 2010 US Census

**Table 3: 2010 Population by Age**

	#	%
<b>0 – 4</b>	252	6.6%
<b>5 – 9</b>	269	7.0%
<b>10 – 14</b>	263	6.9%
<b>15 – 19</b>	300	7.9%
<b>20 – 24</b>	197	5.2%
<b>25 – 29</b>	186	4.9%
<b>30 – 34</b>	161	4.2%
<b>35 – 39</b>	222	5.8%
<b>40 – 44</b>	249	6.5%
<b>45 – 49</b>	271	7.1%
<b>50 – 54</b>	241	6.3%
<b>55 – 59</b>	230	6.0%
<b>60 – 64</b>	253	6.6%
<b>65 – 69</b>	190	5.0%
<b>70 - 74</b>	135	3.5%
<b>75 - 79</b>	145	3.8%
<b>80 - 84</b>	123	3.2%
<b>85+</b>	130	3.4%
<b>Median Age</b>	41.2	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Bastrop County growth has been driven largely by new subdivision developments on the western side, where it is convenient for many residents to leave the County for work in the Austin area. The City of Bastrop has seen significant retail growth and some growth in primary employment. With the recent economic downturn, it will likely be several years before Smithville will see significant growth without very targeted economic development programs.

Growth in Smithville is likely to be relatively slow for the next several years. Smithville is fortunate to have a hospital, and the proximity to retail services in Bastrop will likely make it an attractive destination for retirees. Smithville will have to focus on economic development to create jobs and training opportunities to attract young people and working families to the community.

### Population Characteristics

Table 2 shows the racial and ethnic makeup of Smithville. Compared to 2010 Census figures for the State of Texas and Bastrop County, the Hispanic population is much smaller (19% compared to 37% and 32% respectively). As a result, the “white alone” category is much higher in Smithville (66.2% compared to 57.2% in Bastrop and 45.3% in the state). Smithville’s African American population is slightly higher than the state (12.1% compared to 11.5%), and much higher than the county (7.5%). Bastrop County and the City of Smithville have a much lower Asian population compared to the state as a whole (0.6% and 0.4% compared to 3.8%).

Table 3 shows that nearly 30% of Smithville’s population is 19 or below. This is significant in that it drives demand on the school district as well as for recreation and entertainment amenities. An important factor driving economic development, young people are hard pressed to find quality employment directly upon graduating from high school or after they return from efforts to gain higher education.

According to 2010 Census figures, the percentage of youth 19 and under is on par with the state of Texas (30.4%) and Bastrop County (28.9%), but the population aged 65 and over is much greater. Approximately 20% of the Smithville population is over 65, compared to 10.3% at the state level and 11.5% in the county. The population in this demographic generally expects and requires higher public services. Smithville is fortunate to have a hospital and related medical services, which is key for the older demographic. It also can serve as a nucleus for job growth.

**Table 4: Median Household Income 2010**

	# 2010	% 2010
<\$15,000	352	20.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	179	10.5%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	134	7.9%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	279	16.4%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	449	16.4%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	120	7.1%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	146	8.6%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	23	1.4%
\$200,000+	17	1.0%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$46,522</b>	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

As a corollary to this demographic reality, it is important to note that the predominately working-age population (16-64) is smaller due to the higher numbers of people of retirement age.

### Income and Employment

The median income in Smithville is lower than the State of Texas, or Bastrop County, as table 4 indicates. This is likely due to the lack of primary employment in the City. Over 20% of households earn less than \$15,000 in Smithville, compared to 9.2% in the state and 6.2% in the county according

to 2010 Census data. This indicates a significant lack of economic opportunity, and puts a drain on public services. According to May, 2012 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, Smithville's unemployment rate (7.1%) is comparable to the State and County rates. Retail recruitment will be a challenge for Smithville because of its low income numbers and proximity to significant retail in Bastrop; however, Smithville has a great opportunity for targeted recruitment, including businesses catering to the older demographic and tourists visiting the community.

The ESRI Business Analyst data shows that Smithville's median income in 2000, adjusted for inflation, was \$45,104 (in 2000 dollars, this equals \$35,619). Earnings have not changed much in 10 years, as the 2010 median income only rose by about \$1,500. At the state level, Census figures show that median

household income was higher for both years, however, in 2000 median income adjusted for inflation was \$50,329 in 2000 (equal to \$39,745 in 2000 dollars), and dropped to \$49,646 in 2010.

**Table 5: Housing Occupancy 2000 - 2010 (City Limits)**

	# 2000	% 2000	# 2010	% 2010
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	1,672	100%	1,708	100%
<b>Occupied</b>	1,491	89.2%	1,481	86.7%
<b>Owner</b>	987	59.0%	985	57.7%
<b>Renter</b>	504	30.0%	496	29.0%
<b>Vacant</b>	181	10.8%	227	13.3%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**Table 6: Vacant Housing 2010**

	# 2000	% 2000	# 2010	% 2010
<b>Total Vacancy</b>	181	100%	227	100%
<b>For Rent</b>	47	26.0%	52	22.9%
<b>For Sale</b>	12	6.6%	36	15.9%
<b>Sold, Not Occupied</b>	39	21.5%	12	5.2%
<b>Seasonal Use</b>	30	16.6%	46	20.3%
<b>Other</b>	53	29.3%	81	35.7%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

\* "Rented, not occupied" was not a category in 2000, but were listed with "sold, not occupied." Three homes were listed as such in 2010, and are included in the 2010 "Sold, not occupied" category for comparison purposes.

### Housing

The stagnant population has led to an increase in the number of vacant homes the community. Over 13% of homes are now vacant (tables 5 and 6). The City should be vigilant in monitoring the condition of vacant homes to ensure they do not deteriorate and become a blight on the community. Consistent code enforcement will be critical to maintain neighborhood integrity.

**Table 7: Housing Type (City Limits) 2010**

	% of Units
Single Family Detached	74.4%
Single Family Attached	5.4%
Duplex	6.6%
Multi-Family (3 or more units)	2.1%
Mobile Home	8.7%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

**Table 8: Home Values 2010**

	% 2010
< \$10,000	0.5%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	0.2%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	0.1%
\$20,000 - \$24,999	4.3%
\$25,000 - \$29,999	4.6%
\$30,000 - \$34,999	2.1%
\$35,000 - \$39,999	2.5%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	3.8%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	6.7%
\$60,000 - \$69,999	6.7%
\$70,000 - \$79,999	5.4%
\$80,000 - \$89,999	4.1%
\$90,000 - \$99,999	2.5%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	14.2%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	18.8%
\$150,000 - \$174,999	6.9%
\$175,000 - \$199,999	4.4%
\$200,000 - \$249,999	8.3%
\$250,000 - \$299,999	1.0%
\$300,000 - \$399,999	2.4%
\$400,000 - \$499,999	0.6%
> \$500,000	0.0%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

One of the issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan public meetings was the lack of multi-family housing (table 7). Smithville has a number of duplexes and townhomes but very few apartment buildings. This may present a challenge for lower-income residents and those wanting a low-maintenance rental option. Home values run the gamut (table 8) with a range of pricing, which could attract potential residents seeking a single-family home.

Table 9 shows the growth between 2000 and 2010 in the median price of homes in Smithville compared to the state of Texas. Despite the burst housing bubble of the middle of the decade, home values have increased by about 9% in Smithville and about 11% for the State of Texas using figures adjusted for inflation.

Standard banking practices hold that no more than 30% of income should be spent on housing. Based on the median family income of \$46,522 and median home value of \$111,624, a family making the median income can easily afford a home in Smithville. Monthly, 30% of the median income (which calculates to \$3,877 each month) is \$1,163. An estimate based on the median income and local tax rates is a mortgage payment of \$710 per month, well below the 30% threshold for the median income. The question is whether an appropriate home is available.

### Education

Educational attainment is a key indicator of the health of a community. A higher educational level generally correlates with higher income, and individuals with

greater income are more likely to be able to choose the community in which they live—people who have a choice will live in an area with a better reputation for providing a higher quality of life as well as a community in which wages are relatively higher. Additionally, a more highly educated workforce will make a community more attractive to potential employers that seek skilled labor.

Table 10 shows that nearly 60% of Smithville's residents have no more than a high school education, which will likely present a challenge to city officials and community organizations working to recruit new businesses. However, the partnership already established and growing with the school district is ripe to develop innovative programs that will provide high school juniors and seniors with mentorship and

**Table 9: Median Home Price 2010**

	Median Value 2000	Adjusted 2000 Value*	Median Value 2010
<b>Smithville</b>	\$80,324	\$101,714	\$111,624
<b>Texas</b>	\$77,846	\$98,576	\$110,323

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

\* Figures were adjusted for inflation using the BLS Inflation calculator at [http://bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

**Table 10: Educational Attainment 25 and over**

	%
<b>&lt; 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	8.5%
<b>Some High School</b>	12.1%
<b>HS Grad (incl. GED)</b>	37.4%
<b>Some College</b>	18.8%
<b>Associates Degree</b>	6.0%
<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	11.4%
<b>Graduate or Professional Degree</b>	5.7%

Source: 2010 ACS Survey US Census

internship opportunities that will teach skills that new industries need (see Smithville's SECO Training Plan for more details). In addition, Austin Community College (ACC) and other institutions of higher education can be approached to offer adult education and workforce training in tandem with Smithville Independent School District (SISD) programming. These partnerships and the opportunities to develop formal training and educational programming are moving towards preparing residents for new job opportunities that may arise as business development programming becomes successful.

Smithville ISD was a TEA Recognized School District and all four of its campuses

received a Recognized rating in 2010. This is the second highest, just below Exemplary, and all Smithville residents can be proud of their district. Despite falling in ratings for the 2011 school year, a problem that 30 other school districts shared due to changes in the standard testing rating system, SISD is on track with the new standard tests (STAAR) to be ranked well above average.

Smithville ISD includes a strong focus on preparing students to attend post-secondary schools. Eligible students at both the Junior High and High School campuses are provided exposure to college entrance exams, beginning with 7th grade via Duke University's Talent Identification Program, through 10th grade, where all students take the PSAT and Plan Test.

In addition, through a partnership with Austin Community College (ACC), 99% of SISD students in their junior year qualify for post-secondary educational acceptance. ACC conducts on-campus workshops and other assistance for juniors to ensure that their entrance exams and other materials score as high as possible, which can be used at any institution of higher learning. The workshops lead to dual-enrollment courses whereby all credits transfer directly into their chosen community college or four-year university.

Smithville is much better about keeping students in school: the SISD dropout rate is only 5.3% compared to the State dropout rate of 9.4%. The senior dropout rate is low (1.2% in SISD compared to 2.4% for the state and 2.2% for the region), and most students graduate on time. The on-time graduation rate is 94.3% and completion rate (students who received a GED or returned for a fifth year) is 95.7%. Performance at the high school level in 2010 has met the state standards at 100%, an unusual success rate, which can be attributed to classroom instruction, intervention plans, and attention and commitment to individual students.



*City Worker*  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)

Of 2009 tracked graduates, 29 students (22%) enrolled in two-year colleges and 33 (24%) enrolled in four-year institutions. In addition, three students pursued a military career following school-supported coursework. Students within the school district also have an opportunity to follow five different career pathways including human services; agriculture, food and natural resources; arts, AV technology and communications; business management and administration; information technology; and marketing, sales and services.

### **Conclusion**

This update reflects the City's on-going effort to address key issues facing Smithville. A series of focus groups and workshops were held throughout 2011 and 2012 to discuss challenges and opportunities. These meetings identified new projects for the community to undertake and new strategies to consider. The following sections discuss those community-lead ideas and recommendations.

While Bastrop County overall has grown quickly, Smithville has not. This is because the County growth is based in its ability to provide a bedroom community to Austin where many Bastrop residents find employment. Smithville is too far from Austin to become a similar bedroom community. However, as the City of Bastrop continues to grow and add employment, it is likely that Smithville will begin to see more growth. Bastrop is rapidly losing its small town character, while Smithville retains it. People can more readily (at this point) find employment in Bastrop, but maintain a quiet, rural lifestyle in Smithville.

However, the City should not wait for growth to happen somewhere else. The City should focus its attention on economic development and increasing opportunities to attract and retain new businesses and residents. The recommendations in this Plan reflect the first steps in addressing the challenges of the community and creating an environment for growth that also protects community values and continually improves the quality of life for all residents.

A note about the format of this Comprehensive Plan: the ideas presented in each section came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people as well as by City Council and other officials. Appendix A provides a spreadsheet that includes goals and projects from 2007 and 2009 as well a summary of the short- and long-term recommendations in this plan. Updates to line items are also provided here where possible.

Comprehensive Plans normally provide a blueprint for city leaders and community members to work on projects and concepts for the following five, ten, or 25 years. The next formal comprehensive planning process will likely occur in 2021-2022 in Smithville to take advantage of the Census cycle and learn from our demographic changes. In the meantime, updates to this plan and public meetings to discuss the logistics of implementing the ideas in this plan as well as potential new projects will occur before the next formal comprehensive planning phase begins again. This is a living document—a guide to help Smithville build the kind of future it hopes to create for itself, and a measure by which we can look back and determine if we were able to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.

The City of Smithville appreciates the thoughts, time, and effort that our community has provided in creating this document and in making these ideas come to fruition. Thanks to YOU for making Smithville a wonderful place and for helping to improve the quality of life for everyone here.



# Business Development

## Introduction

Smithville has been largely unaffected by the tremendous growth of the region. Most residents leave the community to work and shop. The biggest challenge for the City is how to increase economic opportunity, both by supporting existing businesses and by attracting new ones. Much of the discussion of this focus group was on what businesses are appropriate for Smithville, and what policy the City should have to attract them. It is a long-term, on-going effort to increase economic opportunity, especially considering the larger economic challenges the country faces at present. However, if Smithville is to retain and attract residents, it must have suitable local employment.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. In the past, Smithville Plans have not gathered dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

Short-term recommendations are those that can be undertaken relatively quickly, and with a reasonable financial investment. They are intended to provide a 'jump start' to making a difference, while also laying a foundation of success for when larger, more intensive projects are undertaken. The short-term goals in business development largely focus on improving tourism, and include the following:

- Purchase blue highway information and way finding signs
- Add the ARTS to the billboard and other marketing campaigns to draw in more people
- Continue to develop the relationship with the Hyatt to bring more tours to Smithville
- Further develop Heritage Tourism Program
- Apply for a Cultural District Designation through the Texas Commission on the Arts and investigate the potential to participate in the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Main Street Program

Tourism is a key industry for Smithville, and one that is sometimes overlooked. It can provide quick benefits by bringing more visitors in to the community, raising sales tax revenues, and generating attention. Getting the word out about the city can have a big impact when business owners are looking to relocate an established business or wish to find a good community in which to start. A good experience visiting Smithville could influence the decision when the time comes to move or to open the doors for the first time. A recent Tourism Assessment provided by LCRA includes a great deal of information in generating more tourism in Smithville and should serve as the basis for addressing tourism issues more specifically. Other short-term recommendations from the Comprehensive Planning process include the following.

Purchase blue highway information and way finding signs

Unlike many cities, Smithville has not experienced an explosion of retail development along the highway, away from the historic downtown area. Despite a few gas stations, hotels, and a strip mall that have located along Hwy 71, most businesses are still located in or near the core of the city. Although the historic quality of the downtown area is very charming for many visitors, these businesses are not visible to vehicles driving on Hwy 71; people passing by Smithville between Houston and Austin do not know to drive in to town for a meal or to shop.

The blue highway signs and the way finding program can address this issue by providing the names of restaurants and potentially other businesses and the distance from the exits so passersby can know what is available. The State will install the signs but charges for businesses to advertise on them. The Chamber of Commerce, the City Council, or another entity may choose to subsidize this cost in order to increase the number of potential visitors to the community. This concept should be discussed and pursued as it can be a very cost effective opportunity for businesses to get advertising on the highway, without the expense or visual blight of a billboard.

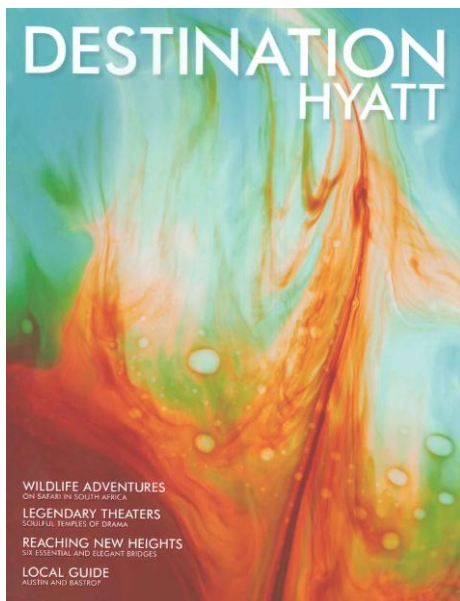
Add the ARTS to the billboard and other marketing campaigns to draw in more people

Smithville has a thriving arts community, which has been an underutilized resource. Many potential visitors do not know that enough artisans and galleries are located in Smithville to justify stopping to see them. The Arts can be added to local marketing efforts, with further details available on-line and in printed materials. This is a new source of potential visitors, usually with money to spend, that Smithville should actively pursue. Smithville should also look at examples of best practices of other small communities around the country that have used the Arts for economic development, like Saugatuck, MI; Asheville, NC; Santa Fe, NM; Key West, FL; and Texas towns like Marfa, Denison, and Kerrville.

Continue to develop the relationship with the Hyatt to bring more tours to Smithville

The Hyatt Lost Pines offers benefits through tourism that have immensely affected in Bastrop County. Smithville is aggressively courting this asset to bring visitors out the extra miles to experience its charm and friendly nature. The Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce is in regular contact with Hyatt staff,

informing them of local attractions and events, and creating multiple reasons to visit and improve the health of the local economy. Local tours have been developed around the film industry, so Hyatt visitors can spend a day visiting famous movie sites in Smithville. Tour pamphlets and information are available to the Hyatt and the staff is educated about Smithville attractions. This same approach is being used for historic



2012 Edition of "Destination Hyatt" with full page Smithville Ad available in every room



buildings and sites, as well as for the arts community. Tourism can be a key economic driver and can be accessed quickly and with relatively little expense.

Further develop Heritage Tourism Program

Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. Smithville has a unique heritage and many historic buildings and sites. This is the foundation for the historic tourism program focusing on these assets. This effort can include utilizing digital media (including QR codes) to create 'guided' tours of the community where visitors can have access to recorded histories, videos, etc. via smart phones. It can also include ghost tours and movie tours. The Chamber of Commerce and the Smithville Heritage Society (SHS) are taking the lead in developing this effort. SHS has created walking tour brochures, and are currently working to revamp them. Additionally, ghost tours during the weeks around Halloween have had good turnouts for the past two years for the businesses that run it on Main Street. In the future, recordings and documentation including oral histories about famous Smithvillians and historic sites, ghost stories and other interesting facts can be made available to visitors via a dedicated heritage tourism website or app. This is relatively low-cost opportunity to expand the reach of tourism in Smithville.



*Airing of the Quilts in Downtown Smithville*  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)

Apply for a Cultural District Designation through the Texas Commission on the Arts and investigate the potential to participate in the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Main Street Program

Texas towns that are designated participants of the Texas Commission of the Arts and the Texas Historical Commission are eligible for various types of funding that is not offered to others. For example, certain funds are available through these programs for façade improvement, marketing, signage, and other important elements to improving the downtown area and the cultural features of the town.

Smithville may also want to investigate the benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government through the Texas Historical Commission for similar reasons, and should be on the lookout for similar programs that offer special rewards for membership.

Although the 2012 Application to the Texas Commission on the Arts was not accepted, it would be advantageous to act as if it had been. The Steering Committee can convene and work on some of the projects described in the application; the partners can move forward with planning the programs; and the city can work with other entities to create an incentives package with a “menu” of components, some of which could be enacted regardless of outside funding. Smithville can make itself ready for action in preparation of becoming designated. Likewise, the Steering Committee can investigate alternative sources of funding for the kinds of activities advanced by the Main Street program without having to participate in that program and conform to their requirements.

### **Longer-Term Recommendations**

Smithville recognizes that growing its economy is an on-going, ceaseless effort. These long-term recommendations from community members reflect their understanding of the need for greater investment and commitment from the community to be successful. These are projects that will require considerable teamwork and coordination from the City, Chamber of Commerce, School District, and other entities to bring real change to the community. They include the following:

- Consider purchasing a trolley / working with CARTS to transport visitors between Riverbend Park and Downtown during events or for use on other occasions
- Encourage the development of small industrial parks where zoning and neighbors allow
- Establish a virtual office / park and work in the downtown area
- Develop a business incubator
- Establish an alternative movie venue
- Review and update incentive policy to meet changing expectations
- Consider hosting a ‘Taste of Smithville’ and encourage other partners to develop new events

While some of these ideas are related to tourism, others address the need to diversify the Smithville economy by working to attract new businesses and fostering programs that encourage local citizens to grow their own businesses.

#### **Consider purchasing a trolley/working with CARTS to transport visitors between Riverbend Park and Downtown**

Riverbend Park is an excellent facility for hosting major events, and Smithville has several major annual activities at the site. However, access to Riverbend Park is only available from an unmarked ramp off a major highway away from the downtown area, which makes it more difficult to establish a link between the Park and the downtown shops. Shuttling people between the two locations with a Smithville/CARTS bus or trolley may encourage more interaction between the sites during events. Downtown businesses could plan for the event and offer sales or other benefits to visitors who come from the park to help to entice them to come downtown and a shuttle might make the trip more accessible. However, its many logistical challenges put this item in the long-term recommendation category. Additional research must ferret out the details of any potential action.

If the community wishes to purchase a vehicle, determining the responsibility of the on-going expense of maintenance and insurance and establishing contracts and memoranda of understanding between the controlling entity and any potential partners must be addressed. Partners, including the nonprofit organizations that utilize Riverbend Park and Smithville businesses, should learn from previous attempts

at providing shuttles for events before taking any measures. The Smithville Chamber of Commerce has run shuttles in the past between the airport for the Fly-In and from Riverbend Park with limited success. Jamboree's shuttles have had more success, which may in part be attributed to the presence of alcohol during the event.

The Director of the Capital Area Regional Transportation System (CARTS) asserts that it may be more cost effective and logistically reasonable to work directly with CARTS rather than deal with some of the problems associated with owning a trolley (such as liability, driver assignment, and maintenance). CARTS may create a more stable round-trip service that could go into effect for Riverbend events.

Organizations that have events in Riverbend would need to work with the City to discuss the interest and feasibility of this possibility; a group of organizations willing to pay for the "fixed route" service and coordinate all eligible dates would need to go before the CARTS Board for approval in their Fiscal Year service plan well before their fiscal year begins in September.

Bringing the community together for this task, researching its potential for use, and finding the funding for running the route and marketing the service would need to take place regardless of which method might be employed.

Encourage the development of small industrial parks where zoning and neighbors allow

The possibility of bringing in light industrial or clean-energy manufacturers helps to further diversify Smithville's business plan. A small pot of economic development funds were used in 2010 to support the Omega Foundry at the old Coca-Cola site at Eagleston and SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, illustrating one successful example of how a small investment on the part of the City can support new business and grow jobs in the area. A larger project would include bringing water/sewer and supporting roads to a proposed industrial park on the other side of the Colorado River. This would be a much more expensive proposition, and may require an outside source of funding, but has the potential to be a tremendous source of additional revenue, and would encourage the development of other properties in that area, as well as opens up that area to the possibility of annexation.

Where it is feasible and wise to encourage light manufacturing, including for green industries as proposed in other sections of this Plan, the City should consider using light industry to grow its economic and employment base. However, it is always important to ensure compatible zoning uses near any industrial development and the City of Smithville needs to carefully consider possible negative impacts on the quality of life related to any potential industrial use.

Establish a virtual office / park and work in the Downtown area

Those seeking a lower cost of living while still working in the Austin area have primarily driven the growth in Bastrop County. At about an hour away from Austin, the commute from Smithville is unreasonable for many people, and therefore Smithville has not seen the benefits of this growth. Developing a virtual office presents an opportunity to attract new residents and provide relief to current residents who have the option to telecommute, but want the amenities of an office (such as secretarial and phone services, copy machines, conference rooms, and so on).

This space could serve a dual function as a working space for people and as the incubator discussed below to help reduce costs of having two spaces and also to create the opportunity for synergy. Potential entrepreneurs would be in proximity to established business owners and could learn from them and help generate new ideas.

The City and Chamber should spend some time researching existing models to see what works in other communities before moving forward. They should also reach out to residents to determine what the market is for any such facility. The City needs to seek a balance between serving an existing market and

creating a market that does not currently exist. The City and Chamber will need to determine this balance to determine the cost effectiveness of this effort.

#### Establish a business incubator

Many communities talk about establishing an incubator, but not many have been successful in implementing one. Successful incubators need to target a specific segment of the economy. The City of Bastrop has a retail business incubator supporting local entrepreneurs trying to establish retail businesses. Food-related incubators have also been successful where caterers and other related enterprises have access to a commercial kitchen and facilities. Austin has several technology incubators; however, these require a large enough population to make viable.

The greatest benefits of developing a business incubator are derived when it offers more than just a space for entrepreneurs. It should incorporate planning assistance, marketing assistance, and other training to help turn good ideas into viable businesses. Tying the incubator to the virtual office would allow entrepreneurs to mingle with established business people and help establish that synergy. Before jumping into this endeavor, Smithville should spend time researching other communities to determine what does and does not work with incubators. They can be a resource or just another boondoggle if not managed properly.

#### Establish an alternative movie venue

The original intent framed by participants in the Comprehensive Plan Public Meetings was to recruit a movie theater to Smithville. However, movie theaters have a very high investment cost and struggle in small towns. The theater in Bastrop (a larger community with much larger service area) shut down for nearly a year before opening under new management, indicating just what a struggle it is. It may be more effective for the community to start with a 'Movies on Main Street' or 'Movies in the Park' concept to establish interest before moving forward with recruiting a theater.

Another option may be to focus on a theater that also serves food and drinks, using the Alamo Drafthouse as a model. The food and drink subsidize the theater, and the business does not rely solely on movies. An example of community-owned movie theaters includes Sweetwater, Texas, which has a non-profit committee that manages a theater showing first-run movies; the community that operates it simply breaks even.



A committee should be established to explore all possible options for recruiting a theater to Smithville or to determine if an alternative way to bring movies to Smithville would be of greater benefit at less cost. Currently, the Recreation Department hosts G-rated movies available by DVD at Riverbend Park during summer months, and Playhouse Smithville is examining an option of bringing movies to town. In addition, several people are interested in the possibility of restoring the old Texas Theater (the Milton's / Rabb McCollum building) on Main and Loop 230, which could be a long-term, very expensive goal.

#### Review and update the incentive policy to meet changing expectations

City-provided incentives designed to attract prospective business are controversial, but the economics of growing a city generally require them. Smithville can be creative in the types of incentives it offers.



Rather than focusing on the traditional tax abatements and infrastructure assistance, City policy can focus on other opportunities.

The City should spend time researching best practices from other communities to determine what is effective and what meets its needs. The policy should target those businesses that the community most strongly desires to encourage business development that meets community goals; a 'worst' practice is to provide incentives to just any business that wants to locate in the area, regardless of what it might do to the character of the town. City leaders should review the incentive policy and ensure that it meets current best practices targeting those businesses that are most appropriate for Smithville.

The City also needs to remember its current businesses as it develops incentive plans. Many communities have a two-tiered incentive structure: one to attract new businesses, and one to reward existing businesses for expanding. These may include offering free high speed internet (wifi) throughout the downtown area, incentives for building renovation and improvements, and marketing assistance (such as the blue highway sign program).

#### Consider hosting a 'Taste of Smithville' event and encourage other partners to develop new events

Smithville is fortunate to have a wide variety of local food enterprises. A 'Taste of' event is a great opportunity to highlight those businesses and attract visitors to the community. Once those visitors know what is available they will be more likely to return and tell others. The Chamber of Commerce should take the lead in this effort. The first step is to contact local food vendors to gauge their interest. If they are supportive then it is time to start planning.

The event could also expand to include local agricultural producers to highlight their produce and meats. Local farmers and ranchers could partner with restaurants and caterers to provide some of the tasted products, which would additionally help establish relationships to develop the local market for their products. Local artisans could be brought in as well to showcase their work during the festival. This

event could be an opportunity to showcase what Smithville has to offer and to promote the community to an entirely new audience.

Similarly, other kinds of events that bring people to town could also be explored. Innovative individuals in the business community have developed several of these new events (for example, the Airing of the Quilts, the Witches Ball, and a number of others); interested organizational partners and volunteers should be encouraged to continue this trend.

#### **Conclusion**

Business development is a key challenge for Smithville. It is critical to foster economic growth to make Smithville an attractive destination for new residents. The recommendations provide an outline for supporting the existing businesses in town as well as attracting new ones. The City and Chamber of Commerce need to take ownership of them and invest the resources necessary to position Smithville for smart economic growth and new opportunities.



*Smithville is well known for wonderful downtown festivals like the December Festival of Lights  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

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# Historic Preservation

## Introduction

One of Smithville's greatest assets is its historic homes and buildings. The character of these buildings has made Smithville a hot spot for movie production, which has generated additional positive economic benefits and great interest for many visitors. Protecting and enhancing these assets should be a very high priority for the entire community because of the many benefits it will provide. The recommendations in this section will ensure that historic buildings remain an asset to the community and an attraction to potential visitors.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

The short-term ideas focus on protecting historic assets and ensuring they remain a benefit to the community. Historic preservation is truly a local initiative—all regulations and preservation standards are set at the local level, not by State or Federal government agencies, as many believe. Some people resist historic preservation efforts because they think that it will only hinder their ability to use their property with few or no benefits to them. It is important to educate the public on what preservation really is and the many benefits it can provide the community. To do this, Smithville should:

- Establish "Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee"
- Review and update codes and ordinances related to historic preservation
- Create a "Smithville Historic Landmark Designation"

### Establish "Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee"

As something that was identified very early on in the Comprehensive Plan process, the City Council has already acted to establish this Committee. The Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee has been tasked with reviewing relevant codes and ordinances, developing design standards and examples of preferred designs builders of new structures and property owners wishing to renovate historic buildings should consider, and advising the Planning and Zoning Board, City Council, and property owners on questions and proposals related to the historic district, new development, and design standards. It is subservient to the Planning and Zoning Board (P&Z), therefore is a further step removed from City Council. It will reflect community values and it will serve in an advisory capacity only; it will in no way serve to restrict property owners in ways they do not voluntarily accept or might otherwise be restricted through existing codes or ordinances.

The City Council is responsible for identifying and appointing Committee members. These members should be knowledgeable about the community and its history, as well as offer some knowledge about construction and understand what it takes to maintain historic buildings. This Committee is an important asset in historic preservation for the community and must reflect community values.

The Committee will advise P&Z when property owners are required to come before the Board to help all parties understand what designs would or would not preserve the heritage and character of Smithville.

Affected property owners will have ample opportunity to challenge Committee recommendations as they go through P&Z procedures.

Review and update codes and ordinances related to historic preservation and design standards

The first task of the Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee should be to review existing city ordinances related to historic preservation and architectural design to ensure they are appropriate. This task should include studying best practices from other historic communities. Some areas have very strict standards that severely limit what property owners can do, so the Committee should ensure that any standards adopted for the City are reasonable, fair and supported by residents and property owners. The goal of setting design standards should be to protect historic properties and the character of the town while also allowing owners the flexibility and freedom to utilize and improve their properties. If standards are too strict, property owners will rebel and the result will be a loss of trust and support for protecting historic structures. This advisory committee needs to create a system that balances preservation values with property owner needs through a system that avoids as much conflict as possible.



*Historical Home in Smithville*

*(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

Create a “City of Smithville Historic Landmark Designation”

A local historic designation is a way to recognize historic properties without having to go through the process of State or Federal recognition. It can be a way to highlight properties that are unique and significant to Smithville that may not otherwise qualify for other designations. Recognition could also extend beyond buildings to natural features and specific sites that are historic and significant.

The Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee should be tasked with developing criteria and standards, as well as for reviewing applications and determining status. An application fee should be instituted that is low enough to not deter applicants, but high enough to cover costs (such as



standardized markers). Once accepted, sites and buildings would have a locally-designed plaque installed recognizing them. A walking tour could be developed around this concept, possibly utilizing digital media to educate visitors on the history of the sites. This program would capitalize on one of the fastest growing segments of the industry: historic tourism.

### **Longer-Term Recommendations**

#### Develop financial incentives for appropriate rehabilitation work

As historic preservation becomes more valued by residents, it may become feasible to offer incentives to property owners who wish to improve their properties or make renovations to restore the historic character. One option is to offer a property tax freeze on historic properties undergoing renovation. The City of Austin currently freezes property taxes on historic properties to help property owners manage the greater cost of maintenance and making improvements, ensuring property owners are not penalized for improvements through increased property taxes.

A second option is through offering façade grants, whereby property owners can apply for matching funds for improvements primarily to the part of the building that the public sees. This is a common tool used in historic downtowns to help building owners renovate. Because matching funds are used, the Historic Preservation and Design Standards Advisory Committee can implement standards and work cooperatively with property owners to inform them of the historic look of the building to ensure renovations are appropriate.

A third option is to work with local banks to establish a low-interest loan pool that property owners can access for improvements. Although it may be a challenge because current interest rates are at historic lows, this option is worth considering. The goal is to provide assistance to property owners so they can renovate and improve their properties while protecting the historic character.

### **Conclusion**

Community members and local public officials have identified historic preservation as an important priority for Smithville. Smithville's historic character and assets are important in themselves, but also because they offer a terrific destination for a wide variety of visitors including its burgeoning identification as a film destination, historic tourism, and the "charm" factor that is attractive to many potential new residents. Visitors want to have the unique experience that historic architecture and towns steeped in history can offer.

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# Sustainability and Environmental Issues

## Introduction

One area that was not addressed in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan was the issue of environmental sustainability. This issue has become a growing priority for the community, and this update reflects that increased interest and attention. The current focus of attention is on solid waste management; however, the concern for environmental sustainability also extends to water and energy issues. The City should continue its focus on sustainability and continue to build public awareness and support for the challenge. The 2011 Summit Smithville Green Expo was a tremendous opportunity to spread the word about sustainability and should be continued on an annual basis. The key is to find needed funding and volunteer support to ensure it remains a meaningful event, not just a space filler on the calendar.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

The City can undertake several activities at minimal cost to raise awareness of different efforts and methods residents can use to reduce the waste that ends up in a landfill. This effort will provide a long-term benefit in reducing the City's cost of landfill operations, increasing the City's revenue from recycling, and reducing the environmental impact of household hazardous waste that is improperly disposed. Public outreach and informational campaigns should be a priority moving forward, including:

- Create 'How to' Guides for recycling and alternative energy solutions for residents and businesses
- Sign the Zero Waste Resolution and Interlocal Agreement with the Zero Waste Alliance

### Create 'How to' Guides for recycling and alternative energy solutions for residents and businesses

Citizens can be empowered to regulate and change their individual behavior, and creating a guide to help them do so should be the first step. If residents have the information to make smart choices, they usually will. The City should partner with other area communities and organizations like Keep Bastrop County Beautiful to develop brochures that can educate residents on the benefits of recycling, the resources available to do so, and why it is important. The same type of brochure can be developed for renewable energy. Many municipal and cooperative electric providers have significant rebate opportunities for energy improvements. There are also potential Federal tax savings. Many residents may not be aware of these programs and the cost savings they will see. The City should take a leadership role in educating residents on the importance of environmental sustainability and the steps they can take to move Smithville forward.

### Sign the Zero Waste Resolution and Interlocal Agreement with the Zero Waste Alliance

Zero waste signifies that essentially all municipal solid waste is diverted from landfills through aggressive recycling and composting efforts. It takes a significant investment from the City and, critically, from residents to be successful. The City should carefully weigh the costs and benefits of signing on to a Zero Waste commitment because of the potential investment required.

The first step would be to gauge community interest. While the attendees of Summit Smithville identified this as a priority, it may be that the rest of the community is not interested. A targeted outreach effort should be conducted to ensure this agreement will be supported because it requires a great commitment from many citizens to be successful. If community support is strong, the City can move forward with implementing the project. An outreach campaign could include a survey disseminated through utility bills, and to families in the school system through SISD, as well as news stories through the Smithville Times, the City website and other associated internet sites.



*Summit Smithville Green Expo, November 2011*

*(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

### **Longer-Term Recommendations**

The State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) grant funds that paid for the solar panels on City Hall's rooftop also required four reports and staff time devoted to other issues that ensure that sustainability remains a priority for the City. The four reports include a "Sustainability Plan," a "Training Plan," a "Feasibility Study," and a "Case Study" (these are included in Appendix B and will be adopted by the City Council for use as a blueprint in tandem with this Comprehensive Plan). A summary of the main long-term goals and recommendations from these documents is provided below:

- Seek grant funding for projects identified in the SECO Feasibility Study, including solar lights on Main Street; a scrap-tire recycling facility; weatherization of public buildings; a composting compound; and a solution to household hazardous waste through working with Bastrop County.
- Continue to develop relationships with educational institutions and work on the elements of the training program outlined in the SECO Training Plan.
- Work with City Council and other partners to identify and prioritize opportunities to help Smithville become increasingly self-sufficient into the future, and promote the cost savings and other benefits to sustainability programming.

### **Conclusion**

Environmental sustainability, by definition, is an on-going, long-term effort. The City should lay a foundation for success through a broad public outreach and informational campaign. Residents will be more supportive if they understand how it will benefit them directly. It can be difficult to generate much enthusiasm from the general public on vague 'environmental benefits,' but if they see a financial savings in their utility bills, or savings in their taxes, they will be much more supportive.

# Volunteer Development

## Introduction

The volunteer base is one of Smithville's greatest assets; a large number of citizens are actively engaged in the community and willing to volunteer for different projects and activities. For example, a committed group of volunteers initiated and maintain the Smithville Community Gardens program. Their vision was to provide healthy, organic vegetables at no cost to community members, many of whom are too poor to be able to afford fresh produce. Working with the City, other nonprofit organizations, and property owners of vacant land, they made their vision a reality. In the past two years, at least five nonprofit organizations have achieved 501(c)3 status. It is critical to support and enhance this sense of volunteerism because of the tremendous benefit volunteers can play in moving Smithville forward.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

People are much more likely to volunteer if they are personally asked to help and given a specific task. Sending blanket requests for volunteers is much less effective than identifying and targeting individuals for a job. The various organizations in Smithville should coordinate an on-going outreach and informational effort to ensure residents know about volunteer opportunities and remain engaged and active in the community. In addition, the community can:

- Conduct regular volunteer workshops and upload workshop notes for public use
- Upload the Cities of Service 'Volunteer Smithville' report to the web to showcase volunteerism
- Utilize the Volunteer Manual created by Volontology



*Regular volunteers on both sides of the table, Smithville works because they and many others volunteer their time.*

*(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

### Conduct regular volunteer workshops and upload workshop notes for public use

As mentioned, people are more likely to volunteer when given specific tasks and asked individually. Volunteer workshops are a great opportunity for people to get engaged, get an overview of what opportunities are available, and plug in to the process. In addition, they are an opportunity to develop the volunteer skills database. Volunteer workshops can also be an opportunity for any required training to be provided to potential volunteers, like Youth Protection training for those working with young people, for example. It is also an opportunity to establish codes of conduct and expectations across the board. Workshops should be conducted on at least an annual basis to ensure a regular supply of volunteers and regular identification of needed and available skills.

In 2010, a national organization that supports volunteerism, "Cities of Service," provided a consultant at no charge to the City who, among other tasks, developed a Volunteer Workshop program that was

conducted in the summer of 2011. This workshop was designed to be conducted by a volunteer leader and materials were provided that can be posted to the website. The website needs to be modified in such a way that these materials are easy to find for any interested citizen, the materials need to be uploaded to that location, and a volunteer facilitator needs to be identified so that the next series of workshops can be scheduled.

Upload Cities of Service 'Volunteer Smithville' to the web to showcase volunteerism

Smithville has been recognized for its spirit of volunteerism and engaged citizens. This should be celebrated. When people visit the City website, this award should be highlighted. Volunteer successes should also be recognized in the newspaper and other media.

In addition to uploading this report, there should be a way to track the metrics outlined in it. It is critical, both to celebrate the success, and for maintaining that status, to track volunteer hours and accomplishments. It may be appropriate to coordinate this with the 'Skills' database discussed below.

Utilize the Volunteer Manual created by Voluntology

In 2011, Cities of Service provided Smithville with a consultant organization, Voluntology, which developed a manual that provided job descriptions, evaluation forms, and other needed administrative tools to best utilize volunteers to move forward with the volunteer development program. This manual needs to be the centerpiece of all volunteer programming.

**Longer-Term Recommendations**

Several efforts in volunteer development require more coordination and testing:

- Establish an annual Volunteer Appreciation Event
- Establish a 'Skills' database of volunteers

Establish an annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

Several Smithville organizations are currently working to develop an event that will recognize the volunteers from all local community organizations. A Volunteer Recognition event would go a long way to support these important citizens and help them know how much they are appreciated for their selfless service to the community. It would also serve to promote new opportunities and to generate more enthusiasm for volunteerism, seeking to recruit new volunteers.

Establish a 'Skills' database of volunteers

The Smithville Public Library is in the process of creating a "match.com" model that would bring community organizations that need volunteers together with the volunteers they need. Community organizations can search for individual skills and experience people can provide, and potential volunteers can research the nonprofit organizations in town to find the right fit. This database will likely require several beta versions before it works as well as possible for its intended purposes and for evaluation or other data that some grants may require.

**Conclusion**

Smithville is blessed with citizens that are engaged in their community. This situation should not be taken for granted as it can quickly change. Smithville must continue to reach out to current, past, and potential volunteers to recognize their service, inform them of ongoing needs, and sustain its great tradition and spirit of volunteerism.



# Parks and Recreation

## Introduction

Parks are amenities that attract residents, tourists, and businesses, and should be carefully considered as the City moves into the future. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan addressed the issue of developing the Colorado River as a resource and expanding Hike and Bike opportunities, many of which have not yet been implemented due to cost and coordination issues. It is recommended that the Committee dedicated to the long range planning component revisit the 2007 Comprehensive Plan for information and hold additional public meetings, identify willing private partners, and work with interested volunteers to ensure the best amenities for all. Any future hike and bike trail must work for willing property owners, and should not be considered where property owners do not support its development. Additional recommendations for Parks and Recreation based on conversations with the community in 2011 are included in this section.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. We know that Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

Smithville is fortunate to have several community parks that provide different opportunities for residents to get outside and be active. Although improvements for each of these parks are generally longer-term efforts, one short-term goal has been identified:

- Add a pavilion and restore the concession stand at MLK Park
- Install an irrigation system and improve lighting at ball fields and other park locations
- Install a playscape and restore the concession stand and bathrooms at Keilburg Park

### Add a pavilion and restore the concession stand at MLK Park

MLK Park is an important neighborhood park that neighborhood children use daily and many families use for small gatherings and events. It offers a playscape, a basketball court, picnic tables and barbecue grills, and is adjacent to baseball fields in which county little league games are played. Adding a pavilion to the park would encourage more small events and activities to be held there, as well as provide an opportunity for concerts and other larger events. Volunteers from local nonprofits could staff the concession stand to serve as a source of funds through the concessions they would sell. It would be a tremendous opportunity to revitalize a key community asset at a minimal cost to the City.



*Gazebo Park  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

The community should explore grant opportunities (such as LCRA's CDDP program) and sponsorships to help fund the improvements. Local volunteers could be utilized for some labor savings as well. Given the importance of this park to the community, this should be a priority for action in the next year.

Install an irrigation system and improve lighting at ball fields and other park locations

Infrastructure improvements are important to Smithville's parks. Maintaining ball fields is a challenge, especially in the recent extended drought in Texas. A properly installed and maintained sprinkler system can significantly save water over time. It will reduce over watering, and reduce the time required to water the fields. In addition, lighting at most parks is inadequate for current uses, especially Little League evening games, and needs to be improved to meet public demands. Lighting at MLK Park needs to be the highest priority, followed by Keilburg Park, due to their heavy use by Little League, PARD, and the Smithville Youth Football Association.

Because it will be rather expensive to install these systems, the City should partner with local Little Leagues and other clubs to share the costs. Following the ball fields, it may be appropriate to add sprinkler systems to other City parks as funding becomes available. Any systems will have to be carefully monitored to ensure they are operating well and not leaking water or wasting electricity, which can quickly create expensive problems.

Install a playscape and restore the concession stand and bathrooms at Keilburg Park

The community "Up on the Hill" has the fewest park amenities of any neighborhood in Smithville, with a soccer field, a baseball field, and a concessions stand/bathroom facility in great need of repair. This neighborhood includes many children and would benefit from an age-appropriate playscape. This community should not be neglected as we move forward with parks planning.

**Longer-Term Recommendations**

The park system needs to evolve to meet community expectations as well as changing safety and accessibility standards. These issues drive improvements to area parks, but the need to maintain existing facilities to meet current demand are equally important. Preparing now for long-term improvements will ensure the City is ready to act when opportunity arises, such as when a grant or other funding becomes available for a specific project.

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan identified a number of hike and bike trails that may still be pursued if funding can be identified, private owners are willing to discuss the possibility of hike and bike trails on or near their property, and city-owned land can be used and maintained properly. This Plan outlines a number of new issues that the public has identified through the 2011 Comprehensive Plan process.

Long-term improvements to the parks system include:

- Seek funding for hike/bike path along Gazley Creek at Independence Park
- Change landing zone surfaces and bathrooms to meet ADA requirements
- Install playground equipment for 8- to 12-year-olds at MLK Park
- Connect Riverbend Park to town with willing private partners
- Continue to work with Texas Parks and Wildlife on the paddling trail
- Develop a Long-Range Improvement Plan for park facilities

Seek funding for hike/bike path along Gazley Creek at Independence Park

Several citizens reinforced the community's continued desire to provide an extensive hike and bike facility throughout Smithville. The 2007 Plan called to increase river accessibility, utilize Gazley Creek for



access to the river, establish stronger relationships with river outfitters, and identify potential locations for trail development and funding sources for trail and pedestrian improvements. At the time of this writing, the most likely first trail to be developed may be along Gazley Creek with an entrance at Independence Park, which is currently under construction at the far west end of Loop 230, near the site of the original storefront that Dr. Thomas A. Gazley built in early Smithville history. The possibility of finding funding for trail development is less difficult given the status of the current project, which is on the trajectory to open to the public by spring 2013. The trail can be considered “Phase II” of this project; the planned amphitheater can be part of Phase II or Phase III as funding sources may require. After this trail has been completed, other trails can be considered. The long-range improvement plan (below) can be used to establish priorities for trail development and other projects.

#### Change landing zone surfaces and bathrooms to meet ADA requirements

Safety is the preeminent concern for any public recreation facility. New standards have been developed to increase the safety around playground equipment. The City should prioritize upgrades to park surfaces based on the usage of the park. Facilities that younger children predominantly use should be improved first and other parks can be upgraded as funding becomes available. These improvements should be scheduled for low-use times if feasible to minimize loss of access for the public.

All public facilities must be ADA accessible, so improvements will need to be made to address this issue. Again, prioritization is the key. Begin with the areas where improvements will have the most impact. The City should make every effort to be welcoming and accessible to all residents.



Colorado River Paddling Trail  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)

#### Install playground equipment for 8- to 12-year-olds at MLK Park

Children of different ages have different play needs and interests. Facilities appropriate for young children will not interest older ones. This can create dangerous situations as older children misuse the equipment, or play around smaller children and increase the risk of accidents. MLK Park should be a target for a playscape appropriate for older children. Funding could come from sponsorships or grants. An internet search provides many examples of community-built playgrounds that are very popular and provide a way to engage the citizens and kids who would be using the park, creating a facility that meets their needs and saving taxpayer money.

#### Connect Riverbend Park to town with willing private partners

Many residents would like to have access to Riverbend Park without having to get on the highway to get there. The 2007 plan for a hike and bike trail crossed several private properties, which is no longer a point of discussion. Instead, the City may investigate the possibility of developing the park at the end of Main Street and linking it across the Colorado River, potentially by using a swinging

bridge or a ferry system (harkening back to an earlier time when vehicles crossed the river there by ferry). Solutions will depend upon community input and financial and engineering feasibility.

Continue to work with Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) on the paddling trail on the Colorado

A paddling trail between Bastrop and Smithville would help develop river access for fishing, paddling, and wildlife viewing, as well as for river study and conservation efforts. Working with the TPWD on collaboration between local community organizations and willing private landowners will help promote efforts in tourism and recreation.

Develop a Long-Range Improvement Plan for park facilities

Finally, the City should consider developing a long-range park facilities plan to identify desired projects and establish preliminary specifications. The City would then be able to respond quickly to new sources of funding designed to pay for park facilities. By having projects 'shovel ready,' the City can quickly determine eligibility and apply to newly available funding sources for new and upgraded facilities.

**Conclusion**

Smithville has excellent park facilities that serve residents of all ages. The recommendations in this update are intended to address specific shortfalls and prepare the community for long-term needs. Parks should be considered an investment in the community, not just a cost. Park amenities increase quality of life, improve property values, and make Smithville a desirable community for potential residents. Maintaining and improving that investment will pay dividends to the City over time.

# Education

## Introduction

Few issues are more important than education. Potential residents will often locate in a community simply because it has an excellent school system. Business owners will look for workforce training opportunities and a skilled potential workforce when they decide where to locate their businesses. It is critical that education be a priority for Smithville to position itself for future growth and success. The City should maintain and improve its strong relationship with the Smithville Independent School District (SISD) to continue to move forward and ensure coordination of efforts and cooperation on projects that can benefit both entities.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. We know that Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

The City and SISD have a strong cooperative relationship, from which both entities greatly benefit. These recommendations are provided as an effort to strengthen that relationship and ensure both organizations continue to benefit from new opportunities. City and SISD leaders should hold regular workshops to identify opportunities to work together. Programmatic partnerships will save taxpayer dollars by reducing duplication of efforts. Successful cooperative efforts should be celebrated and publicized so citizens know their leaders are working to save taxpayer money. As leaders see the benefits of cooperation and are rewarded by citizens through greater support, the relationship will continue to grow, allowing for closer coordination and greater success for both organizations.

## Longer-Term Recommendations

The projects identified here will foster economic opportunities for Smithville, as well as generate reasons for young people to stay in the community by expanding opportunities for job training and higher education. Successful efforts in education and training will provide the access young people need to education and high paying jobs that will keep them in Smithville. These recommendations include:

- Provide incentives for local business to offer internship opportunities
- Expand vocational training opportunities
- Promote opportunities for higher education
- Promote community and parental engagement in education

### Provide incentives for local business to offer internship opportunities

Local businesses can benefit tremendously from offering internships to students. They receive very inexpensive labor and the opportunity to train potential future employees. Students clearly benefit from exposure to the workplace and real-world, on-the-job training not available in school. Ideally, it may also provide them with direction on what to do after they graduate from high school, either through higher education, technical training, or a foot in the door at a job straight out of school.

The City and School District should establish a task force that includes business owners to identify and address challenges to creating an internship program. Some level of incentives may need to be offered to jump start the program. This may be as minimal as offering advertising at school sporting events (such as banners in the ball fields), the Yearbook, playbills, and other areas. The benefits to all participants are tremendous and every effort should be made to foster a successful program.

#### Expand vocational training opportunities

Like the internship program, vocational training can benefit the businesses as well as the students. Having a trained, available workforce will also make Smithville much more attractive to prospective businesses as it will reduce their costs. The same task force established to foster the internship program should also be tasked with identifying vocational training needs for local businesses. SISD can then begin to identify what they require to offer that training. Businesses may be willing to purchase equipment, or help fund a position if they will benefit from training offered in the school.

The task force should study successful programs in the State and elsewhere to determine what really works. There may also be an opportunity to partner with ACC or other Community or Technical College to offer training. SISD may be able to make facilities available for higher education to offer technical training for students and potentially adults.

Ideas in the SECO Training Plan, which is designed to specifically address partnerships and training focused on alternative energy, can also be utilized in this area.



*Smithville's Marching Tiger Band  
(Photo by Denis McGinness)*

#### Promote opportunities for higher education

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan discusses expanding higher education opportunities in Smithville. Elgin will soon have an Austin Community College campus, making physical access to classes easier. SISD already has a strong partnership with ACC and other institutions of higher education, but should continue to explore every opportunity to expand access to college level classes and advanced training to

their students. It should also promote the opportunities it has already created so that more people are aware of the work it is currently doing.

#### Promote community and parental engagement in education

Having committed and engaged parents is one of the key factors in successful educational outcomes, but it is also one of the biggest challenges facing school districts. Families are pressed for time and resources: both parents are often working in two-parent households; single-parent households struggle to make ends meet and still help children function in school; and all families face a broad spectrum of other important and sometimes debilitating issues. For reasons as diverse as all the families in a community, some parents and other caregivers have a hard time actively engaging in their child's education. Many ISDs have undertaken creative ways to address this concern. For example, some offer parenting classes, have extended hours for tutoring and counseling, offer adult education, open computer labs to students and their families in the evenings, and more. SISD leaders should explore every opportunity to engage parents. The community as a whole, especially city leadership, should support this effort and work together to ensure every child has the opportunity to get the most possible out of the educational system offered in Smithville.

#### **Conclusion**

Education is the most fundamental component to prepare Smithville for the future. Providing a high-quality education that meets the needs of students and the community as a whole will ensure Smithville remains a successful community. Smithville will become a very desirable destination for residents and prospective businesses by offering quality education and a well-prepared workforce. The ideas outlined in this section will lead to the continued success and enhancement of the community's reputation.

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# Housing

## Introduction

Housing is one of the more challenging issues facing cities of all sizes across the globe. It is difficult to build support for public investment in housing; the market tends to drive what is built, although market pressures may not meet the needs of all people, in particular leaving substantial gaps especially for low-income households. Voters often resist new ideas about housing, such as dense single-family homes (as Smithville discovered in 2011 when a proposed small-lot subdivision was rejected). Addressing housing will take a concerted effort from the community and an informational effort will be critical to success.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. We know that Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

The first challenge is to identify the housing needs of the community. This includes identifying the gaps in the types of available housing and where potential demand is not currently being met in order to form the basis for action to be undertaken. The demand for new housing is likely relatively small since the population is not growing rapidly, which makes the challenge in addressing the issue more difficult as market pressures are not clearly being pushed into reality. To identify housing needs, the City should:

- Survey residents and employees of local businesses
- Investigate and address infrastructure needs in residential areas
- Review the 2007 Comprehensive Plan for additional recommendations

### Survey residents and employees of local businesses

A housing survey will help the City identify gaps in the current inventory. It can also be used to build support for new types of housing that current residents may initially resist. For example, the survey may reveal that older residents would appreciate smaller homes with little or no yard to maintain. Whatever survey results show, City leaders may be able to work with developers to bring the type of housing that the people of Smithville really want. The survey should be available to City residents as well as those who work within city limits but do not live in Smithville as many employees may be forced to live elsewhere due to a lack of appropriate housing in the City. This information can also be utilized to market Smithville to developers.

In addition to city-lead survey work, the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) can provide a supply/demand housing analysis, which Smithville should request before moving forward with plans for infrastructure development and marketing.

### Investigate and address infrastructure needs in residential areas

Members of the community have expressed their concern for two issues in particular during this round in the Comprehensive Plan process: drainage and lighting. Many drains to the city sewer system in residential areas have a tendency to fill with debris during heavy storms and flood easily. Given the additional health threat of West Nile Virus this past year, the drainage issue is a great concern to all. During the summer of 2012, a curb and gutter program was developed to help alleviate some of this

problem—through this program, the Smithville Public Works prepared the area for the curb and gutter, and the homeowner contacted a contractor to do the cement work at their cost. The city's in-kind subsidy of the program has given a number of neighbors the break they need to be able to afford an improvement they would not be able to make on their own while enabling the city to take care of a problem that it would not otherwise be able to put into the budget.

In addition to drainage, lighting is of great concern for several citizens who live on dark streets. The city should investigate lighting needs throughout town to discover where additional street lights could be beneficial. A survey of residents might be useful to establish priorities and uncover other infrastructure needs and wants across town, which can help city leaders prioritize and seek funding for improvements.

Review the 2007 Comprehensive Plan for additional recommendations

The chapter on housing in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan provides good direction on addressing the challenges of housing and opportunities to move forward, which should be the basis for additional work in the area of housing.

## Conclusion

Housing is a challenge for all communities all over the world. In a community with a declining or stagnant population it can be even more of a challenge because of the difficulty in generating interest in development. The City should work to ensure adequate and appropriate housing for all residents.





# Transportation

## Introduction

Transportation is an important aspect of infrastructure for any community. Accessibility and mobility are issues that every individual must reconcile as we interact with the world. Even a small community like Smithville must make transportation plans if it is to continue to improve the quality of life for its residents, as transportation investments are always cheaper and easier in the past than in the future. Providing a good transportation system and continuing to improve it will become a terrific asset to a community that wishes to grow, even at a moderate pace, so that people don't complain about the traffic as much as they do about the weather.

The ideas presented in this Plan came directly from the people who live in Smithville and participated in the public meetings. The LCRA has grouped them into short-term and long-term categories and provided commentary about each of them for consideration by the people and by City Council and other officials. Smithville Plans do not gather dust, but it will be up to the leaders in the city to take charge of any given recommendation.

## Short-Term Recommendations

The short-term recommendations focus on projects that will have an immediate benefit to the community and address immediate concerns for safety and quality of life. Compared to projects in the long-term category, the following projects are less onerous, but all will require considerable time due to the coordination across various transportation entities and jurisdictions required as most are targeted at state-level roads and/or do not affect City-controlled roads. The Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), Union Pacific (UP), and others will be important partners in these efforts.

- Create a 'Quiet Zone' through Smithville to mitigate train whistles
- Install warning light on SH 95 by High School
- Address the Walk light at Main and Loop 230
- Resurface Loop 230

### Create a Quiet Zone' through Smithville to mitigate train whistles

Quiet zones are becoming more common in cities with frequent train traffic. These are beneficial for communities because the horn is extremely loud. The City can start this process by passing a resolution calling for a 'Quiet Zone'; however, it will take finding the money to pay for the safety improvements and on-going work with the railroad to make it reality. Building a quiet zone is a significant undertaking because it requires the installation of serious safety enhancements at all grade crossings, including gates that prevent vehicles from driving around them. This cost must be borne by the local entity, as the railroad typically will not pay for those improvements. In other words, while passing the ordinance can be considered a short-term goal, the rest of the work will require long-term actions.

### Install warning lights on SH 95 at High School

Traffic on SH 95 enters Smithville at fairly high speeds from the south, creating a safety hazard at the High School. The City and School District has partnered in an effort to bring this issue to the attention of the local TxDOT office; in February, 2012, TXDOT committed to installing a flashing

warning light and establishing a School Zone in that area so that lower speeds can be enforced. TXDOT expects to establish the School Zone by spring, 2013.



*International Walk to School Day, October 2010  
(Photo by Rebecca Byrne)*

#### Address the Walk light at Main and Loop 230

Two issues have surfaced with regard to the Walk light at Main and Loop 230 making it inconvenient to cross the intersection. First, the button to request the walk light across Main Street should be fixed (the 'walk' signal never changes from 'don't walk' regardless of how many times the button is pushed). Second, when the walk lights were installed, only three of the four crossings were wired to allow safe passage. The crossing on the east side of Loop 230 was never wired with a walk signal. These will require coordination with the TXDoT, but should be relatively easy to fix.

#### Resurface Loop 230

Residents use Loop 230 heavily and this road serves as the main entry into Smithville off the highway. Because it is such an important thoroughway, it should be a priority for maintenance. The City is working with TXDoT to ensure it is a high priority for attention and proper maintenance. In September 2012 TXDoT began work to resurface the Loop; work should be completed by early 2013.

#### **Long-Term Recommendations**

Transportation projects in general tend to be long-term efforts because of their complexity and high costs. The projects identified in this section build on work from the 2007 Plan, and incorporate newly identified challenges.

- Develop a Corridor Study for improvements to SH 95
- Complete Safe Routes to School projects and implement pedestrian improvements identified in 2007 Comprehensive Plan
- Improve safety and signage at Riverbend Park access on SH 71
- Make improvements to railroad crossings

Develop a Corridor Study for improvements to SH 95

Improvements to SH 95 will require the support and funding of TXDoT because it is a State road. The City can implement the process more quickly by taking on some of the costs associated with the project, including funding the corridor study to identify needed improvements and associated costs. This study will be the basis for detailed planning of the necessary improvements. Once complete, the City and TXDoT can determine if it is possible to move forward with a 'pass through' funding agreement (a tool that allows the local government to pay for needed improvements upfront and be reimbursed by TXDoT as funding becomes available from federal sources). The City would be responsible for interest costs on the money borrowed to pay for the improvements; however, the project can be done much more quickly than waiting for TXDoT funds, and can take advantage of being "shovel ready" should appropriate funds become available.

Complete Safe Routes to School projects and implement pedestrian improvements identified in 2007 Comprehensive Plan

Smithville was fortunate to receive a Safe Routes to School grant in 2010 that funded major pedestrian improvements in town and supports programming that encourages walking and biking. These projects can be the backbone of a connected network of sidewalks and trails connecting major destinations throughout the community. The City should utilize the 2007 Plan and begin creating a detailed hike/bike trail plan, with prioritized projects to enhance the pedestrian network and reach amenities like Buescher State Park. This would include connecting the 'Hill' neighborhood with downtown. These projects will improve the quality of life in a community with such a high percentage of both young people and seniors, who are those most in need of alternatives to driving and would be best served by safe and accessible pedestrian routes.

Survey work on three priority segments occurred in September/October 2012 to be able to construct pedestrian paths along Loop 230 from Bluebonnet Circle to McSweeney, from Eagleston to Mary A. Brown Primary along South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and from the Smithville Elementary School/Junior High complex to Main Street along North 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The Volunteer Crossing Guard program has been in effect for about five weeks during each semester since fall 2010, and is working to expand its reach as the number of volunteers grows. Other SRTS programming, from the Library's Feet First and Reading to Ride programs to Bicycle Rodeos and Maintenance Workshops, and so on, have been in place and are going strong. The Smithville Safe Routes to School Plan has some elements that can still be explored, but this program has accomplished many goals since its inception.

This program should also be used to investigate where stop and yield signs may be placed to address road safety issues. SRTS programming includes a driver awareness component that needs to fold into the volunteer program to become more successful. The SISD's work to educate students on bike, pedestrian, and bus safety are important in working to ensure that students take safety seriously, but the city can help by targeting drivers for informational campaigns and by identifying intersections in need of proper signage.

Improve safety and signage at Riverbend Park access on SH 71

Riverbend Park is a key community asset hosting large events, such as Thunder on the Colorado, Jamboree, various fundraisers for nonprofits, and family reunions, as well as providing river access and recreation for residents. Access to this site can be somewhat hazardous because through traffic on SH 71 travels at very high speeds. The City should partner with TXDoT to identify safety enhancements that can be made to this area. These may include turning lanes and / or acceleration lanes to allow for safer merging. Signage is also an important issue as currently no exit signs are provided at the off-ramps. Again, due to limited TXDoT funds, any projects would likely require local

funding. The City should review its budget and determine how, and when, these projects could be funded once they are identified.

#### Make improvements to railroad crossings

Smithville is dissected by the railroad, which creates accessibility issues from the neighborhood south of the tracks as they travel to the major shopping, banking, and city services areas downtown. It is especially challenging for mobility-impaired residents to access local businesses, such as Dollar General and Brookshire Brothers. Access across the tracks is currently available at SH 95, Taylor, and Marburger/Miller, but these crossings are in need of much improvement, which should be addressed when feasible. Additionally, the historic pedestrian crossing at Main Street (which has been fenced off for many years) should be put on the table for discussion with Union Pacific and LCRA because the community at large has generally requested it. The City should develop a detailed plan for needed improvements and begin work with TXDoT and the railroad to implement. If the City moves forward with the 'Quiet Zone' project, these improvements will need to incorporate the standards necessary to qualify for that as well.



*Lawn Mower Crossing Taylor at Railroad Tracks*

#### **Conclusion**

Safe and adequate transportation infrastructure is critical to foster economic vitality and improve quality of life. Smithville faces two important issues in this respect: major thoroughfares are State-controlled roads, and an active rail line bisects the town. These create unique challenges that the City must address and require strong partnerships to make needed improvements. The City does have control over the majority of its pedestrian facilities, however, and residents have supported improvements as a priority for community action. The recommendations in this section build on those identified in 2007 and represent an opportunity for Smithville to create a strong transportation network that will serve both pedestrian and vehicles allowing needed access to all parts of the City for all residents, regardless of mobility issues.

# Appendix A

## Summary of Comprehensive Plan Goals and Updates since 2007

*The Comprehensive Planning Process provides City leaders with the information they need to establish priorities and develop programs and projects that community members are interested in pursuing. The Comprehensive Plan is necessarily a “living document” that requires periodic revision. The last round of comprehensive planning resulted in the 2007 Smithville Comprehensive Plan. In 2009, a group of community members reconvened to work with the newly-hired Grants Administrator to help guide her efforts.*

*By 2010, more than half of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan items had been initiated or accomplished, and with the newly-accessible Census data, it seemed to be a good time to update the plan again.*

*Between March 2011 and September 2012, a series of public meetings were held and information solicited from the people of Smithville to find out what kinds of programs and projects they thought would be important for our future. The Smithville 2011-2012 Comprehensive Plan is the result of those interactions. It is a living document that provides a blueprint for Smithville’s future and helps city leaders set priorities.*

*While updates to the Plan and public meetings to help coordinate details of any given item in it will continue, it is likely that the next full Comprehensive Planning process will coincide with the next Census to take advantage of the new demographic data.*

*The pages that follow provide a line-item summary of the plan components with an update regarding their implementation.*



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# Appendix B

## State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) Reports

1. Sustainability Plan
2. Feasibility Study
3. Training Plan
4. Case Study

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