



2017 Comprehensive Master Plan City of Bertram, Texas



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1.1 Introduction

The City of Bertram is a community on the cusp of change, and this plan is an opportunity to prepare for the change to ensure development reflects community priorities and values. Located in Burnet County, northwest of the rapidly growing Austin metropolitan region, Bertram is in the path of growth. As nearby communities, including Leander, Cedar Park, Liberty Hill, and Burnet continue to grow and add employment opportunities, Bertram can expect to be affected. Growth is already happening, with several developments already approved or proposed that will add significant residents in the next 5 years.

The biggest challenge facing Bertram at this time is securing adequate water and ensuring adequate infrastructure to supply water to current and future residents. This includes finding new water sources (a process well underway) along with replacing and expanding water lines throughout the city. Wastewater is another issue, with improvements needed to ensure reliable and efficient service. Because of the significant costs associated with this vital work, the rest of the plan is fairly limited in scope. Goals focus on small steps that will help foster quality of life and economic growth that will benefit new and future residents.

Because of the issues related to water and wastewater and the need to prioritize investment in that direction, the decision was made to leverage city leadership and a steering committee rather than an extensive public engagement process. Despite this limitation, the plan will provide a framework for decision making that will guide investment of limited resources into projects that can prepare Bertram for expected growth and ensure priority issues are addressed in a meaningful way.

Plan Process

The process began with a kick off meeting to lay out the planning process, as well as to identify what city leadership expected from that process. Following this meeting, a thorough review of the subdivision and zoning ordinances was conducted. This was an important step to ensure these ordinances were suitable for Bertram to promote quality development while not being onerous for developers. In addition, a Demographic and Market Analysis was developed. This report provides an overview of the current population of Bertram and its characteristics, along

with expected changes. In addition, it provides an overview of the economic characteristics of Bertram including retail gaps, spending, and other data that can be used to market Bertram to prospective employers and retailers. This analysis is an important tool that informs the entire planning process.

A workshop was conducted to develop a vision for future development in and around Bertram. The Future Land Use plan serves as a blueprint for how Bertram should develop over time. It identifies areas suitable for growth, along with defining where that growth can be accommodated in an efficient manner based on existing and proposed infrastructure and the characteristics of the property itself. While not regulatory, this plan should inform decision making and be used to encourage development that meets community goals.

On-going discussions were held to identify goals and projects that would serve Bertram residents. As mentioned, water and wastewater infrastructure represents a significant challenge for the City and should be the focus of investment over the immediate future. Beyond infrastructure, a series of goals were identified that can foster quality of life and economic growth.

The goals identified for Bertram are listed below. The rest of the plan provides the Demographic Analysis, the Future Land Use plan, along with a discussion of plan goals. Finally, the Implementation Guide provides detailed direction for accomplishing plan goals that can be utilized by City leadership and others to ensure the plan vision becomes reality. Writing a plan is just the beginning, the work really begins once the plan is adopted. If a plan sits on a shelf, it serves no good and the time and work invested in developing the plan is wasted.



1.2 Plan Goals

Land Use Goals

- Revise Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances
 - Ensure ordinances promote quality development and support community values

Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Goals

- Secure an adequate, long term water supply
- Develop a prioritized water / wastewater infrastructure improvement plan
- Review and revise fee structure and utility rates to provide needed funding for improvements

Other Infrastructure

- Develop a prioritized street improvement plan, coordinated with water / wastewater improvements

Community Goals

- Contract with grant writer to research and pursue grants to help fund city projects (many grant writers work on contingency basis and are paid through administrative fees associated with grants they obtain for the city rather than requiring city funding)
- Explore options to develop / recruit a grocery store and pharmacy to Bertram
 - Cooperative store
 - Lowes or similar small grocery
- Make improvements to park facilities as funding allows
 - Bathrooms at pool
 - Parking at sports fields
 - Park expansion around ball fields
 - Sidewalk and trail connections where suitable
 - Consider / pursue acquisition of rodeo arena

Chapter 1 Introduction

- Develop events / activities in the downtown
 - Food Trucks (full time or as an event)
 - Artisan Market
- Work with downtown building / property owners to encourage them to lease / sell properties
- Explore potential for community center / meeting space
- Ensure adequate staffing to support city services as Bertram grows
- Work with library to expand hours and provide on-going support for services

The identified goals represent an opportunity to provide service to Bertram residents that support quality of life and will make Bertram an attractive destination for new residents and businesses. As the region continues to grow, Bertram can be positioned to benefit from this growth while supporting community values and protecting small town character and heritage.



2.1 Demographic Analysis

2.1.1 Population Estimates and Projections

Bertram is located just north of the rapidly expanding Austin metropolitan area. Its proximity to Austin and growing commercial development in northern Williamson County will likely drive future growth in the area. Bertram will likely begin to see increased interest from residential developers looking for relatively low cost land with good access to employment and business centers developing in Leander and Cedar Park.

Bertram is located in Burnet County, which is also expected to see significant growth. Most of this growth is happening in proximity to the Highland Lakes and the communities of Burnet and Marble Falls; however, it can also be expected to affect Bertram. Bertram experienced steady growth between 2010 and 2016, gaining approximately 200 residents and this pattern is expected to continue. However, with the rapid growth of the region, city leaders should be prepared to address more rapid growth than currently expected. The current planning effort and ordinance revision is a good start to prepare Bertram for this potential growth and ensure it happens in a way that protects existing quality of life and the unique identity of the community.

Table 1 – Population Estimate and Projection

	2010 (Census)	2016 (est.)	2021 (ESRI)	2020 (TWDB)	2030 (TWDB)
Bertram	1,353	1,546	1,723	1,681	2,034
Burnet County	42,750	47,418	51,074	53,114	64,268

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Texas Water Development Board

As Bertram grows, the demands for city services and strain on infrastructure will also increase. City leaders are being proactive in developing strategies to manage this increased demand and ensuring future growth does not lead to strain on the utility and transportation systems.

2.1.2 Population Characteristics

Bertram has a younger population than Burnet County overall, but it is still significantly higher than the State of Texas, which is 33.6 years. Nearly 25% of Bertram residents are under the age of 19, which creates a challenge to ensure adequate services such as parks and recreation for these young people. Bertram has an elementary school, but middle and high schoolers are bussed to Burnet for schooling.

Table 2 – Age 2016

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
0-4	6.7%	103	5.4%	2,584
5-9	6.4%	99	5.7%	2,719
10-14	6.7%	104	6.2%	2,951
15-19	5.1%	78	5.8%	2,739
20-24	5.4%	84	5.6%	2,632
25-34	10.6%	164	11.15	5,276
35-44	11.6%	179	10.9%	5,163
45-54	14.1%	218	13.0%	6,171
55-64	15.2%	234	15.4%	7,95
65-74	10.8%	167	12.2%	5,784
75-84	4.9%	76	6.3%	2,985
85+	2.3%	36	2.4%	1,119
Median Age	42.8		44.3	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The City has a much smaller minority population than the State of Texas. Approximately 86% of City residents identify as White alone, and approximately 24% identify as Hispanic. Hispanic is considered an ethnicity by the Census, not a race, so respondents can identify as Hispanic and any race of their choosing. This means the numbers in Table 3 will not add up to 100% because Hispanic is counted separately. Bertram has similar characteristics to Burnet County.

Table 3 – Race and Ethnicity

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
White	87.5%	1,354	86.1%	40,817
Black	0.6%	9	2.6%	1,250
American Indian	1.0%	15	0.9%	415
Asian	0.1%	2	0.6%	302
Pacific Islander	0.1%	2	0.0%	20
Some Other Race	8.5%	131	7.6%	3,595
Two or More Races	2.2%	34	2.1%	1,019
Hispanic (Any Race)	23.6%	365	22.9%	10,839

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The adult residents of Bertram have relatively low educational attainment. Over 45 percent have only a high school diploma or less education. While the educational attainment is low, Bertram residents have an income that is in line with the State and slightly higher than Burnet County. While it will be important to address this challenge to help diversify and grow Bertram’s economy in the long term, for now, Bertram residents are doing fairly well to overcome this issue.

Table 4 – Educational Attainment Age 25+

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
< 9th Grade	5.6%	60	6.7%	2,264
9th – 12th no diploma	7.9%	85	7.8%	2,636
HS Grad / GED	33.3%	358	31.9%	10,780
Some College	27.1%	291	23.3%	7,874
Associates Degree	4.6%	49	5.9%	1,994
Bachelors Degree	16.1%	173	16.4%	5,542
Graduate Degree	5.5%	59	8.0%	2,703

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

2.1.3 Income and Employment

The median income of Bertram is not far off the state median of \$55,653 and slightly higher than Burnet County. As mentioned above, this is an indication that Bertram residents are not being held back by their relatively low educational attainment. This strong income is likely due to the fairly high percentage of residents employed in construction and manufacturing. These jobs often do not require high levels of education but can pay good wages. It is important to note that approximately 25% of Bertram residents are making below \$35,000. This is a population that could benefit from increased access to education and workforce training to help them prepare for better jobs in the future.

Table 5 – Household Income

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
<\$15,000	8.2%	44	10.1%	1,820
\$15,000-\$24,999	12.6%	68	12.4%	2,225
\$25,000-\$34,999	12.8%	69	9.9%	1,777
\$35,000-\$49,999	12.3%	66	15.0%	2,688
\$50,000-\$74,999	26.8%	144	19.8%	3,551
\$75,000-\$99,999	7.6%	41	12.2%	2,197
\$100,000-\$149,999	13.4%	72	12.0%	2,147
\$150,000-\$199,999	2.0%	11	4.5%	815
\$200,000+	4.3%	23	4.0%	720
Median Household	\$49,079		\$42,750	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst and US Census American Community Survey

Table 6 – Employment by Industry Age 16+

Occupation	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
Ag / Mining	2.7%	15	3.0%	590
Construction	16.5%	90	12.0%	2,360
Manufacturing	7.9%	43	8.8%	1,731
Wholesale Trade	1.8%	10	1.9%	374
Retail Trade	13.2%	72	12.3%	2,419
Transportation / Utilities	7.0%	38	4.6%	905
Information	0.2%	1	2.5%	492
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	4.6%	25	3.8%	747
Services	40.1%	219	46.2%	9,087
Public Administration	6.0%	33	4.9%	964

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

2.1.4 Housing

The median home value in Bertram is \$142,890, which means a family making the median income can afford to purchase a home in the community. This may not mean that an appropriate home is available, just that home prices tend to be in line with incomes in town. This is a significant benefit for Bertram as many communities in Central Texas are struggling with housing affordability and diversity. If the wave of growth coming north out of Austin gets to Bertram, affordability may become more of a challenge as land prices increase and builders focus more on higher end homes rather than homes at the current market levels. As the city revises its development ordinances, it should ensure city policies do not unnecessarily increase housing costs through excessive regulations.

Table 7 – Owner Occupied Housing Values

Value	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
<\$50,000	9.4%	38	7.1%	928
\$50,000-\$99,999	17.5%	71	14.6%	1,908
\$100,000-\$149,999	26.9%	109	16.7%	2,179
\$150,000-\$199,999	16.5%	67	17.6%	2,291
\$200,000-\$249,999	5.7%	23	11.55	1,495
\$250,000-\$299,999	4.2%	17	7.4%	963
\$300,000-\$399,999	6.2%	25	10.3%	1,344
\$400,000-\$499,999	9.6%	39	5.8%	757
\$500,000-\$749,999	1.2%	5	4.3%	564
\$750,000-\$999,999	1.7%	7	2.8%	366
\$1,000,000+	1.0%	4	1.8%	232
Median Value		\$142,890		\$182,704

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Table 8 – Housing by Occupancy

Status	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
Occupied	88.6%	536	79.1%	17,940
Owner	66.8%	404	57.5%	13,027
Renter	21.8%	132	21.7%	4,913
Vacant	11.4%	69	20.9%	4,733

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Detailed vacancy status is only available for 2010, but it is not likely to have changed significantly. One issue this data indicates is a very high number of 'Other' vacant homes. These homes may be held in estate or abandoned and may create a challenge of neighborhood blight and decay if they are not maintained. There should be consistent and fair code enforcement to ensure these vacant homes do not become a public safety issue and contribute to declining home values in neighboring properties.

Table 9 – Vacancy Status Count (2010)

Status	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
For Rent	28.8%	19	10.1%	440
Rented Not Occupied	3.0%	2	0.6%	26
For Sale	19.7%	13	10.3%	449
Sold Not Occupied	1.5%	1	1.1%	50
Seasonal	10.6%	7	60.9%	2,655
Migrant Workers	0.0%	0	0.1%	5
Other	36.4%	24	16.8%	734

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

2.2 Market Analysis

Bertram currently has limited retail and service options. Residents have to drive to Burnet or Leander for a full-service grocery store and other shopping needs. This is an inconvenience for residents and makes Bertram potentially less attractive for new residents and businesses. It also limits the opportunity for programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program that provides workforce housing in communities. As the data indicates, there is significant demand for grocery and pharmacy that is currently unmet in Bertram. There are no grocery stores or pharmacies within a 10 minute drive of Bertram. The nearest stores are in Burnet, and the grocery store there is relatively small and access can sometimes be difficult, especially during the busy summer season. Bertram is an attractive destination for a grocery and pharmacy because of significant unmet demand and accessibility to residents from the east side of Burnet who do not want to deal with crowds at the grocery store there. Liberty Hill residents may also appreciate the ease of access to a store in Burnet rather than dealing with traffic going to the stores in Leander. The EDC can leverage this information in its efforts to recruit these businesses to the area.



Table 10 - Market Gap Analysis

Industry Group	Total Retail Demand	Supply	Retail Gap
Total Retail Trade (City Limits)	\$21,378,873	\$9,741,590	\$11,637,283
10 Minute Drive	\$104,042,191	\$24,630,070	\$79,412,121
15 Minute Drive	\$306,392,256	\$224,668,348	\$81,723,908
Total Food and Drink	\$1,930,709	\$569,355	\$1,361,354
10 Minute Drive	\$10,204,693	\$1,520,125	\$8,684,568
15 Minute Drive	\$27,855,473	\$17,932,614	\$9,922,859
Grocery Stores	\$3,318,608	\$0	\$3,318,608
10 Minute Drive	\$17,659,512	\$0	\$17,659,512
15 Minute Drive	\$447,169,814	\$83,872,775	-\$36,702,960
Restaurants	\$1,849,500	\$457,638	\$1,391,862
10 Minute Drive	\$9,765,104	\$1,342,970	\$8,422,134
15 Minute Drive	\$26,611,442	\$17,749,329	48,862,113
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$1,094,439	\$0	\$1,094,439
10 Minute Drive	\$5,851,713	\$0	\$5,851,713
15 Minute Drive	\$15,465,767	\$16,526,762	-\$1,060,995
General Merchandise Stores	\$3,465,931	\$847,973	\$2,617,958
10 Minute Drive	\$18,412,614	\$2,090,575	\$16,322,039
15 Minute Drive	\$49,752,729	\$10,553,881	\$39,198,848

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Chapter 2 Demographic Analysis

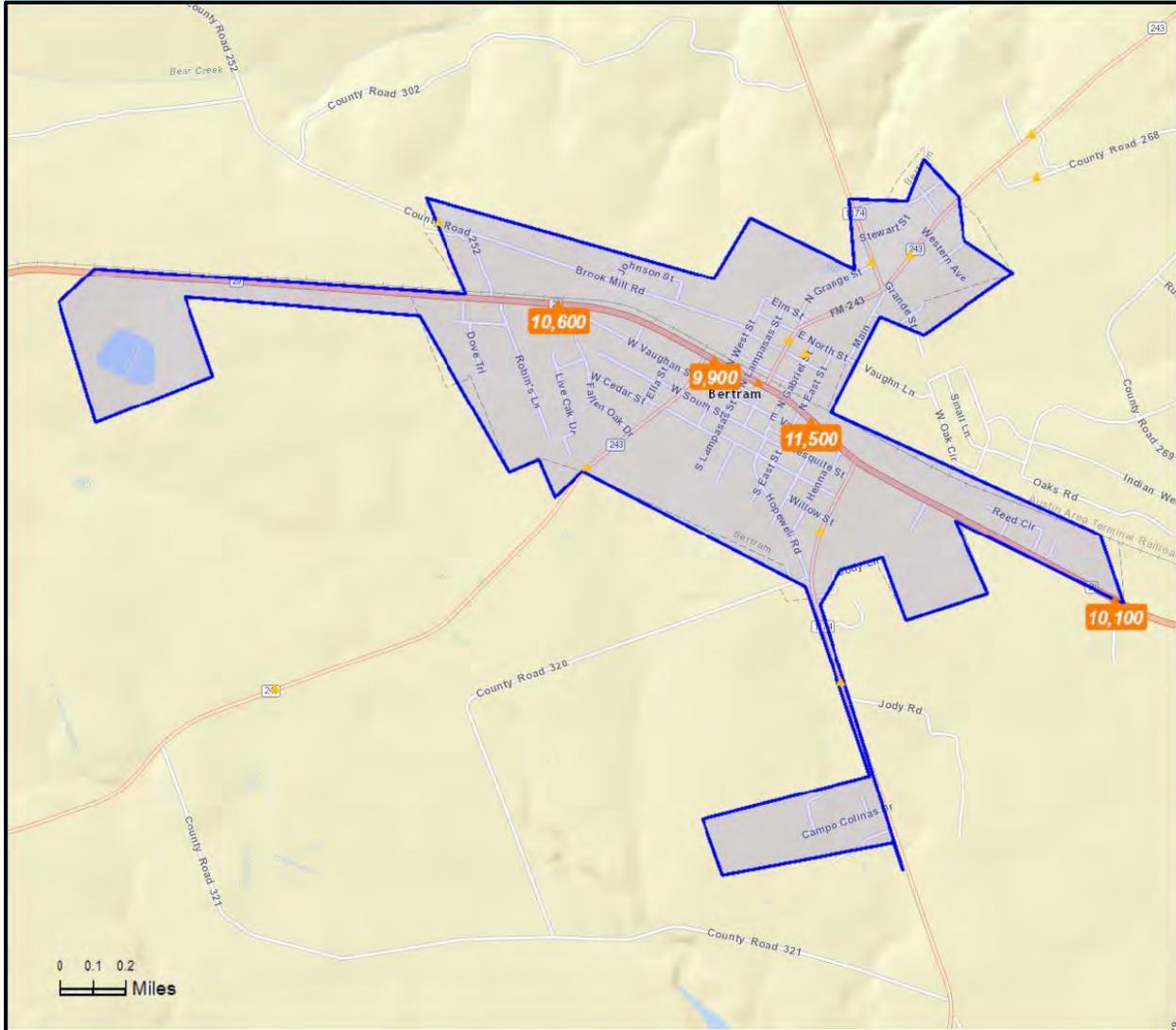
Bertram also has a significant traffic count, with over 10,000 cars passing through daily. This is reflected in the large 'surplus' of gasoline stations (a nearly \$4,000,000 surplus in supply vs. demand). This high traffic count makes Bertram an attractive location for a variety of potential businesses that cater to high visibility and traffic. This is another opportunity to recruit businesses to the area that will benefit from the growing local population and through traffic.



Traffic Count Map

Bertram City, TX
 Bertram City, TX (4807864)
 Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri



- Average Daily Traffic Volume**
- ▲ Up to 6,000 vehicles per day
 - ▲ 6,001 - 15,000
 - ▲ 15,001 - 30,000
 - ▲ 30,001 - 50,000
 - ▲ 50,001 - 100,000
 - ▲ More than 100,000 per day



Source: ©2016 Kalibrate Technologies

March 23, 2017

2.3 Conclusion

Bertram is a community on the cusp of change. While current projections show steady growth over the next 10 to 15 years, this can change fairly quickly as the Austin region continues to expand. Bertram provides easy access to northern Williamson County and the on-going commercial and business development in Leander and Cedar Park. Growth in Burnet County is another potential pressure point as Burnet and Marble Falls continue their expansion. It will be important for Bertram leaders to track these regional changes and ensure they are prepared to respond if growth accelerates. Bertram is fortunate to remain an affordable community, with lower cost housing than many neighboring communities. However, there are some challenges ahead. An aging population will foster demand for new housing options and increase the need for transportation alternatives. There is also the need to diversify and grow the local economy so Bertram can be more than a bedroom community. This will require investment in economic development and workforce training to be successful. Overall, Bertram is at the point where it can begin to define its future and develop strategies to achieve a community vision.



3.1 Future Land Use

Growth is coming to Bertram, and the city needs to be prepared to accommodate this growth and ensure it happens in a way that benefits the community. The Future Land Use plan, along with recommended infrastructure improvements, provides direction for addressing this challenge. The tools to ensure quality development are the Subdivision and Zoning ordinances. Bertram's ordinances are in need of review and revision to ensure they promote quality growth while not creating undue burdens on developers. The current ordinances do not achieve this, and a list of recommended changes are included as Appendix A. These changes are the primary goal for the Future Land Use plan and represent an opportunity for Bertram to have ordinances that are appropriate for the community and can be fairly and consistently applied to new development.

Bertram is fortunate to have some land available within the existing city limits as well as adjacent that is available and suitable for development. The existing pattern of development is typical for rural communities, with commercial and retail businesses centered on Hwy 29, the primary thoroughfare and residential uses off the major roads. There is limited multi family development in Bertram, which again, is typical for small towns.

The railroad that parallels Hwy 29 to the north does constrain commercial development on that side of Bertram. Prospective businesses may hesitate to locate there because of limited lot sizes fronting on Hwy 29 and the impact of train traffic on access. This likely means most commercial and retail growth will occur on the south side of the highway, which represents an opportunity for the revitalization of Bertram's historic downtown. This is a key issue discussed later in this plan.

Figure 1 is the Future Land Use Map, identifying areas for new development in and around Bertram. It incorporates existing development and ensures new subdivisions and activities have minimal impact on existing residents. New residential growth is primarily focused on the south side of town, where new subdivisions are already being developed. New retail and mixed use developments are also proposed in this area. This will provide access to retail and restaurants without having to get onto Hwy 29, which will help mitigate traffic congestion on the major

thoroughfare. Mixed use can include mixed retail, residential, and office uses in the same development. Sometimes, this can include first floor retail with multi-family on upper floors, or incorporating different uses in their own buildings within the same property. There is growing demand for mixed use developments, many people are looking to be able to live, work, and play in the same place without having to drive.

North of Hwy 29 there is an opportunity to develop additional commercial properties that may benefit from access to the rail line, or at least not be negatively affected by it. These can provide local employment options and grow the tax base for Bertram. Another opportunity is a proposed manufactured home development and potential multi-family in proximity to Bertram Elementary and the large city park. This proximity will benefit residents by providing access to school and recreation without having to drive. It will also help mitigate traffic as residents do not have to drive their children to and from school. There is also an opportunity to expand the city park to provide additional recreation facilities to Bertram residents.

It is important to note that the Future Land Use map and plan are not regulatory. The vision provided by the map does not constitute zoning and does not restrict development. Instead, it provides a guide for potential developers and city leadership to encourage new development happens in an efficient manner that benefits Bertram. It helps direct infrastructure spending to support desired development patterns and gives developers confidence in their decision making that proposed projects will be supported if they reflect the plan.

3.1.1 Future Land Use Goals

In order to achieve the desired vision for future development in Bertram, it is important to revise the regulations that control development in the City and its Extra-territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). These are the Zoning and Subdivision ordinances and the City's existing ordinances have some challenges that should be addressed.

- Revise Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances
 - Ensure ordinances promote quality development and support community values

Chapter 3 Future Land Use

Subdivision ordinances and identified opportunities to make these rules more effective and efficient. The purpose was to ensure rules that protected community interests and supported quality development, while also not being onerous or overly burdensome on developers. The recommendations for changes are included in Appendix A. Revising the ordinances should be a separate process involving city staff, the city attorney, and Bertram residents to ensure any changes have community support. The revised ordinances will benefit city staff by simplifying the development process, reducing the number of variances currently requested, and providing clear direction. For developers, it will make the timeline simpler and more straightforward and provide clarity on expectations.

Bertram can expect to see steady, and potentially rapid, growth over the next 5 – 10 years as the Austin region continues to expand to the north. Bertram has the opportunity to become a desirable place to live for residents working in Leander, Cedar Park, Burnet, and Marble Falls. There is also an opportunity to grow local employment opportunities providing new options for existing residents and a reason for prospective residents to choose Bertram. It will be important to provide the foundation for this growth through the provision of adequate infrastructure, particularly water, and a vision for development that protects existing quality of life and the heritage of Bertram.



4.1 Water Resources

The City of Bertram currently obtains water from a long-term lease with the Felps family. At this location, there are two wells producing 450-500 gallons per minute (gpm). The production of these wells is limited by the mechanical infrastructure (well column and pump) and the water rights permit that is granted through the grandfathering rule with the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District (CTGCD). The City is currently in negotiation with the CTGCD to increase the water rights allotment at this location based on historic use, pumping levels and scientific data collected over the past 30 years of production at this location. The City believes that additional rights will be granted at this location to secure additional water rights for current and future needs of the system. Attachment A in this report summarizes the historic water usage for the system.

One of the wells at this location has registered contamination and the source is currently under investigation. The Main Street Ground Water Plume Superfund Site is located between County Road 340 and County Road 340 A in Burnet County, Texas, approximately one mile south of the city limits of Burnet. The site consists of a tetrachloroethylene (PCE)-contaminated ground water plume originating from an unknown source that released into the Ellenburger-San Saba Aquifer. Site contamination was identified through monitoring of the Bertram Public Water Supply in 2010 by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). (US-EPA) Since the contaminant registered on water quality samples in 2010, the Water Department has noticed that contaminant levels increase after substantial rain events. During and after significant rainfall, the Water Department has been able to depend on Well 10 to supply the City with safe, potable water and not use Well 9. This is a solution for the short term, however as the City grows and water demand increases, the City will need additional sources of water to meet demand.

There are treatment options for the removal of the contaminant. Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) could be used to lower the contaminant concentrations to acceptable levels. Water quality samples, bench scale testing and investigation of the water supply will be required to confidently estimate the cost and scope of this project at some point in the future.

One potential challenge facing the City is redundancy and reliability. The City's production wells are over 11.4 miles from the City. If the wells or the transmission main fail, the City has a very limited amount of time to repair the infrastructure to keep the City's system up and running. There are several ways to increase reliability in the system that we will discuss later in this section.

4.2 Additional Water Sources

The City has identified additional sources of water that could be viable projects to secure future water. Those sources are:

A - Local groundwater – Drill wells and secure water rights closer to the City of Bertram

Challenges –

1. Local groundwater production has been spotty and does not produce large quantities of water. We would anticipate any wells in the local area to be less than 80-100 gpm.
2. Requires land area to secure water rights from CTGCD
3. Multiple small wells increase operation and maintenance costs (water production costs increase)

Benefit –

1. Local groundwater production could use existing infrastructure (tanks, pump stations, pipelines) to reduce capital costs and diversify the City's supply.
2. Increases reliability and redundancy in the system (i.e. local production wouldn't depend on the Burnet – Bertram transmission main.)

B - Additional Groundwater near Burnet – Drill wells and secure additional water rights near the Felps wells

Challenges –

1. Potentially would tap into the same contaminated stream of water
2. Requires land area to secure water rights from CTGCD
3. Does not increase reliability or redundancy regarding the transmission main from Burnet to Bertram

Benefit –

1. Increases water supply to meet demand
2. Proven water supply with historical data
3. All infrastructure and treatment plant (if needed) would be located in one location, which saves on O&M, electrical, etc.

C – Surface Water from Felps property – Develop surface water supply from 25-acre spring fed pond on the Felps property

Challenges –

1. Requires a Surface Water Treatment Plant – Cost/Benefit Analysis and Water Supply Study required to quantify cost and production capabilities
2. No historical data on production capability or water quality of supply
3. Unknown cost of rights at this point in time
4. TCEQ Permitting takes time, need to start well in advance of when you need the supply
5. Requires source water protection, supply could become contaminated due to relatively small size
6. Supply would utilize the same Burnet – Bertram Transmission Main. This line has limited capacity and is aging infrastructure.

Benefit –

1. Could blend supplies at this location to provide a consistent water supply to the rate payers
2. Increase water supply – Felps indicated potentially up to 800 gpm supply
3. May utilize some existing infrastructure at the well sites, which reduces costs.

4.3 Current Distribution System

The current water distribution system consists of 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 12-inch waterlines, valves, hydrants, flushing valves, tanks and associated appurtenances. Many of these lines are aging infrastructure and reaching the end of their useful life. Typically, water distribution mains are 40-50-year assets. For critical infrastructure, such as the transmission main from Burnet to Bertram, we would consider 30-35 years as the plan horizon to begin planning and financing a replacement or redundant line. The Burnet to Bertram transmission main plans were completed in August of 1987, making this waterline 30 years old this year. This watermain is critical to supply the City rate payers with adequate service. Even with currently adequate water storage in the system, if the Burnet to Bertram waterline fails, the system will only last an estimated 6-8 hours of storage. This estimation assumes that all tanks are full when the failure occurs, which may not always be the case.

The City’s distribution system consists of the following pipe sizes in linear feet:

2-inch	3-inch	4-inch	6-inch	8-inch	12-inch
36,466	17,271	13,978	14,876	81,805	615



This equates to 31.25 miles of pipe in the system. 11.36 miles of this watermain is the transmission main from Burnet to Bertram. If you exclude the transmission main, 12.82 miles of the remaining 19.89 miles of waterline is less than 4-inches in diameter. We recommend that

the City establish a policy that no waterline less than 6-inch will be installed in the City. This will increase capacity in the system and increase the reliability of fireflow in the event of a fire.

The existing distribution system also has several dead-end mains that effect water quality and reliability. Dead-end mains require flushing on a regular basis and can cause issues when leaks occur, causing more residents to be effected by an outage. The existing distribution system map can be found in Attachment B – Water Distribution System Map and Attachment C illustrates the current Water Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for the City through the Public Utility Commission of Texas. Attachment D provides a fire protection radius map for review. This map illustrates the coverage of the existing fire hydrants by line length only, not by the capacity of the fireflow present.

4.4 Water System Repair and Replacement Projects

We have identified several projects that would be considered repair and replacement type projects. A portion of these projects could be considered Capital Improvement Projects when we are providing additional capacity for future developments. Detailed cost estimates can be found in Attachment E – Water Repair and Replacement Projects. The projects are not ranked in any particular order of priority.

Project A – 8-inch Waterline on West Street to Elm Street.

Description: Replaces a 2-inch waterline along West St. and Elm St. from W. South St. to Elm St. and North Grange St. This waterline would connect waterlines on W. Vaughan, W. Moeller, North and Grange St. to provide additional capacities, increase fireflow and reliability. This line also replaces one of the waterlines crossing SH 29 and the Railroad and will increase capacities for future developments in the FM 243/FM 1174 area of the City. This project will also have a Capital Improvement (CIP) Component that qualifies for Impact Fee designation under Local Government Code 395.

Project Cost: \$315,864.83

Project CIP Component = 60% = \$189,518.90 = \$504.04 per new connection

New Capacity Supplied = 376 connections

This cost does not include financing costs, interest, financial advisor, bond counsel or any other issuance cost.

Project B – 8-inch Waterline on E. & W. Cedar Street from Lampasas St. to FM 243

Description: Replaces a 2-inch waterline along E. & W. Cedar St. The distribution map shows several locations of dead-end mains in this area that will be corrected by this project, which will help with flushing and water quality. This project also increases reliability for this area, providing an additional way to transport water through the system. A small portion of this project will create additional capacity in the system and qualify for Impact Fees and inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Project Cost: \$222,660.13

Project CIP Component = 15% = \$33,399.02 = \$355.31 per new connection

New Capacity Supplied = 94 connections

This cost does not include financing costs, interest, financial advisor, bond counsel or any other issuance cost.

Project C – 8-inch Waterline on North Grange, FM 1174 and FM 243 near the Fairgrounds

Description: Replaces 2-inch waterline along North Grange, FM 1174 and FM 243, connecting existing 6-inch waterlines and creating additional looping in the system. This project increases flows to the FM 243/1174 area of the City where development is beginning to take place. This project will also have a Capital Improvement Component that qualifies for Impact Fee designation under Local Government Code 395.

Project Cost: \$440,800.58

Project CIP Component = 60% = \$264,480.35 = \$703.41 per new connection

New Capacity Supplied = 376

This cost does not include financing costs, interest, financial advisor, bond counsel or any other issuance cost.

Project D – 6-inch Waterline on Robins Lane

Description: Replaces 2-inch waterline on Robins Lane. This waterline is stressed due to exceeding the number of connections available on a 2-inch waterline. Low pressure is experienced during peak use periods.

Project Cost: \$156,829.40

Project CIP Component = 0%

This cost does not include financing costs, interest, financial advisor, bond counsel or any other issuance cost.

Project E – 12-inch Waterline from Felps Wells to Bertram

Description: The existing 8-inch transmission main has limited capacity and is 30-years old this year. We propose installing a 12-inch watermain within the existing easement and utilizing both mains until the 8-inch presents increased maintenance issues or failure. The project will be eligible for the CIP plan and Impact Fee designation for increased capacities.

Project Cost: \$4,704,967.46

Project CIP Component = 35% = \$1,646,738.61 = \$2,084.48

New Capacity Supplied = 790 connections

4.5 Water System Repair and Replacement Project Summary

Project Description	Total Cost	CIP Eligible Cost (per new Connection)
Project A	\$315,864.83	\$504.04
Project B	\$222,660.13	\$355.31
Project C	\$440,800.58	\$703.41
Project D	\$156,829.40	\$0
Project E	\$4,704,967.46	\$2,084.48
Total	\$5,841,122.40	\$3,647.24

4.6 Maintenance and Operation Projects

We have identified several projects that will reduce maintenance and operational costs over time and increase reliability of the system.

Project A – SCADA Upgrades

Over time SCADA system has been repaired and upgraded, however there are different types of equipment in the system that require multiple manufacturers as suppliers. There hasn't been a selected supplier of SCADA equipment on past projects, therefore there is no continuity in equipment out in the field. Recently Council approved a contract for SCADA support with a new vendor. The new vendors first task is to catalog what issues exist out in the field and provide costs for replacement of this equipment over time. Their Engineering Report should be made a supplement to this Comprehensive Master Plan.

Project B – Elevated Storage Tank on North side of the City.

The City’s water storage and distribution system is dependent upon the standpipe on CR 330



and the elevated storage tank on Vaughan Street. The existing elevated tank will continue to be a maintenance issue due to age and the size of the tank. As the system grows, more demand is put on aging infrastructure. Also, TCEQ enforces storage requirement for water systems, which we will discuss in the next section of this plan. We propose constructing a 300,000-gallon spheriod elevated storage tank on the north side of town. The exact site is unknown at this time. Once a location is chosen for the tank we can evaluate the cost and any additional infrastructure needs, such as waterlines, pump station and ground storage.

4.7 Regulatory Compliance

The City’s water distribution system is regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). TCEQ sets minimum standards for Public Water Systems, which regulate flowrates, storage capacities, pump capacities, water quality and source water protection.

The water system needs to be planned to meet anticipated demand as well as the TCEQ minimum requirements detailed in TCEQ Chapter 290 – Public Drinking Water Subchapter D: Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems. As of 2017, the City of Bertram had 846 existing connections and would exceed the 250 connection minimum for the following requirements:

- (i) two or more wells having a total capacity of 0.6 gpm per connection. Where an interconnection is provided with another acceptable water system capable of supplying at least 0.35 gpm for each connection in the combined system under emergency conditions, an additional well will not be required as long as the 0.6 gpm per connection requirement is met for each system on an individual basis.

(ii) a total storage capacity of 200 gallons per connection;

(iii) two or more pumps that have a total capacity of 2.0 gpm per connection or that have a total capacity of at least 1,000 gpm and the ability to meet peak hourly demands with the largest pump out of service, whichever is less, at each pump station or pressure plane. For systems which provide an elevated storage capacity of 200 gallons per connection, two service pumps with a minimum combined capacity of 0.6 gpm per connection are required at each pump station or pressure plane.

(iv) an elevated storage capacity of 100 gallons per connection or a pressure tank capacity of 20 gallons per connection. If pressure tanks are used, a maximum capacity of 30,000 gallons is sufficient for up to 2,500 connections. An elevated storage capacity of 100 gallons per connection is required for systems with more than 2,500 connections.

(v) emergency power for systems which serve more than 250 connections and do not meet the elevated storage requirement. Sufficient emergency power must be provided to deliver a minimum of 0.35 gpm per connection to the distribution system in the event of the loss of normal power supply. Alternately, an emergency interconnection can be provided with another public water system that has emergency power and is able to supply at least 0.35 gpm for each connection in the combined system.

Projections for the proposed projects are based upon a comparison of historical growth, demand and TCEQ minimums. The historical annual demands were gathered and an average daily demand of 380 gpd and a peak and typical demand per connection of 0.79 gpm and 0.26 gpm respectively. The average day flow per connection is below the TCEQ minimums of 0.6 gpm per connection, however we are required to meet the minimum standards.

Current Ground Storage Tank Capacity

- 200,000 gallons at Felps Well
- 200,000 gallons at WWTP
- 200,000 gallons at Roach Well
- 124,000 gallons at Public Works Building
- 140,000 gallons Lower 2/3 of Standpipe



Totals 864,000 gallons or 1021 gallons per connection

TCEQ Minimum 200 gallons per connection total storage

Conclusion: The City has adequate ground storage in the system

Current Elevated Storage Tank Capacity

- 50,000 gallons at Public Works Building
- 67,000 gallons at CR 330 Standpipe

Totals 107,000 gallons of Elevated Storage or 126 gallons per connection

TCEQ Minimum is 100 gallons per connection elevated storage

Conclusion: The City currently has adequate elevated storage capacity and can add 224 water service connections prior to needing additional capacity to meet minimums.

Recommendation – Locate property to plan, finance and construct a 300,000-gallon spheriod elevated storage tank. This project once designed will require 12 months to construct. Therefore, if we start planning and financing now, the project will not come online for 18-22 month at the earliest. At that point, the City could experience growth of 50-100 connections based on current plats that are under consideration. Time is of the essence on this project, because we need to analyze how to fill the tank using existing infrastructure.

Pump Capacity



The City currently has adequate pumping capacity within the system. When the elevated tank mentioned in the previous section of this report is designed and constructed we anticipate a new ground tank and pump station which will increase pumping capacity in the City.

Water Supply – Wells

The System is required to provide 0.6 gpm per connection. Currently the City has 846 connections in the system, requiring 507.6 gpm of capacity with the largest pump out of service. The City currently meets this requirement but is on the cusp of needing additional pump capacity, water rights and well availability. This is especially true with Well 9 being out of commission due to contamination and the superfund site.

4.8 Rate Comparison

One consideration that the City should evaluate is their reserve funds. This reserve fund will fund emergency repairs and/or operational issues that might arise. Most utilities establish policies that create a reserve fund of 6-9 months of operating reserves. Attachment F summarizes and compares the City of Bertram Water rates to those of local communities.

Wastewater Utility

4.9 Wastewater Collection System

The City's Wastewater Collection system consists of gravity collection mains, manholes, 4 lift stations and forcemains. The system consists of four sewersheds which collect and transport all of the raw sewage in the City. The following table summarizes the infrastructure in the system:

Infrastructure	Sewershed A	Sewershed B	Sewershed C	Sewershed D	Total
Gravity Mains	17541	9333	22101	8810	57785
Forcemain	7641	2532	3521	3676	17370
Manholes	34	17	21	24	96
Living Unit Equivalents	245	114	124	268	751
Acres in Sewershed	257	95	121	218	691

The collection system has been designed and constructed where Lift Station D pumps directly to the Lift Station A Collection System and Lift Station C pumps to Lift Station B, which ultimately pumps to Lift Station A. This means that all 751 LUE's of service is the City's collection system is routed through Lift Station A. A map of the collection system can be found in Attachment G – Wastewater Collection System. The Wastewater Certificate of Convenience and Necessity Map can be found in Attachment H of this report.

With all sewage being routed through Lift Station A, you can see that this is a critical piece of infrastructure. If Lift Station A or the forcemain to the WWTP were to fail, an overflow of raw sewage could and would likely occur. With additional services being added to the system in the next several years the lift stations will continue to be stressed. The following is a summary calculation of Lift Station A:

751 LUE's of Service at 245 gallons per day = 183,995 gallons per day (Exceeds WWTP Permitted Capacity)

183,995 gpd converted to gpm is 127.77 gpm.

This lift station currently has a 450 gpm pump installed, this equates to a peaking factor of safety of 3.52. This peaking factor is adequate for today's operation; however, we know that platting of residential lots has increase and additional services are imminent. For competent design, we consider a peaking factor of 3.0 to be the minimum, this equates to an additional 129 LUE's of service being available in the lift station without improvements. This will likely take multiple years to add 129 additional services, however planning should commence fairly soon based on platting of new lots. This summary calculation does not include infiltration, this is a peak dry weather flow.

One issue that has been identified in the collection system, especially at the lift station is the increased inflow and infiltration during rain events. Lift Station C was added to the CDBG Grant application in 2016, however funding has not been granted on that project.

4.10 Wastewater Treatment Plant & Permit

The City currently holds a Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP) through TCEQ. The permit includes water quality standards that must be met prior to irrigating the effluent for agricultural use. The permit flowrate equates to 0.144 million gallons per day. This permit expires in December 1, 2022, and the preparation of the application should be budgeted the prior year to ensure that the permit does not lap during the renewal process. We will discuss historic usage at the plant in a future section, this permit will need to be amended prior to expiration.

4.11 Wastewater Repair and Replacement Projects

The wastewater collection system has been relatively maintenance free and operating well for many years. We can expect some maintenance issues in the future due to aging infrastructure and increasing demands. The following projects have been identified that will need to be addressed over the coming years:

Project A – Lift Station C sealing – this lift station has increased inflow and infiltration that is observed during rain events. The lift station needs to be sealed to prevent infiltration. This project is included in the CDBG Grant that is currently under review.

Project Cost = \$28,000



Project B – WWTP Permit Renewal – The permit will expire in December 2022. The application process should begin 12 months prior to the expiration. The permit will need to be amended to increase capacities at the plant and remain in compliance with TCEQ regulations.

Project Cost = \$23,500

Project C – WWTP Upgrades – In the short term the City should consider installing a floating aerator at the WWTP. This will assist the processing of sewage and keep the plant within permit limits.

Project Cost = \$145,000

Project D – WWTP Replacement – As the City grows the WWTP will need to be replaced and expanded with a new plant that can provide more reliable treatment for irrigation. The current ponds would be utilized for the finished irrigation water prior to release.

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Project Cost = \$3,500,000

Project CIP Component = 35% = \$1,225,000 = \$2001.63 per new connection

New Capacity Supplied = 612

Project E – Lift Station A Upgrade – Replace pumps and upgrade controls.

Project Cost = \$78,000

Project CIP Component = 40% = \$31,200 = \$156 per new connection

New Capacity Supplied = 200 LUE's

Project F – Lift Station D Rehabilitation – North Side of Railroad Tracts with Forcemain out to WWTP. This project would divide the collection system in two segments and create redundancy in the system. We would need to upgrade Lift Station D and construct a forcemain to collect lift station D and all of the sewage from the north side of town and deliver it to the WWTP, bypassing and relieving the strain on Lift Station A. This project location is shown in Attachment I.

Project Cost = \$840,608.80

Project CIP Component = 40% =
\$336,243.52 = \$1,120.81 per new
connection

New Capacity Supplied = 300 LUE's of
service



4.12 Regulatory Compliance

The City's Wastewater Collection and Treatment facilities are regulated through TCEQ under Chapter 217 of the Texas Administrative Code. The discharge parameters are set for the City under the current permit WQ0011669001 and expires on December 1, 2022.

The City will need to budget to renew the WWTP permit in the 2021 budget cycle since the permit generally takes 11-16 months to renew.

Chapter 217 dictates that the City should enter into design and planning for expansion once the plant capacity reaches 75% of the permitted capacity and the City must be in construction once capacity reaches 90% capacity. This will need to be monitored by the City closely as new developments and additional connections are made.

Currently the City is experiencing flows at 70,000-80,000 (49-56%) gallons per day on average with a peak loading of 113,000-190,000 (78-132%) gallons per day over the past several years. The rules state that if the system exceeds 75% of the permit capacity for a three-month period, the utility must enter planning for expansion. We recommend that design and planning should commence as soon as possible to meet the current 75%/90% rules previously discussed. This includes amending the permit to increase discharge



capacity. Attachment J summarizes the historic flows for the WWTP.

A detailed rate study and master plan should be completed for the wastewater system to pay for the needed upgrades and planning for future growth.

4.13 Rate Comparison

We have prepared a summary of current wastewater rates and adjacent community sewer service rates for review. This can be found in Attachment K of this report.

5.1 Streets

The City owns and maintains approximately 10.6 miles of streets within the City Limits. The majority of the streets are not curbed and range from compacted base and chip seal to compacted base and hot-mix asphalt. In the construction of any street or roadway the basic components of the street sections are sub-grade, sub-base, base, and wearing surface. Each of these components performs an important function in determining the durability and length of life for the street section. The number, type and weight of the vehicles utilizing the roadway determine the type and thickness of the sub-base, base, and wearing surface when designing a street with a desired life span. The sub-grade is in-place material and although the load carrying characteristics of the in-place material can be altered somewhat the components which lie above the sub-grade are the primary variables which determine strength and design life of the section.

In the design life of a street section, certain maintenance functions must be performed throughout the life of the roadway to insure the section will fulfill the economic life expectancy of the street section utilized in the design. The primary purpose of the maintenance program is to protect the street base from being subjected to water, which will cause the base to deteriorate. Secondary benefits received from asphaltic hot mix concrete (HMAC) overlay and seal coats are increased skid resistance and improved riding surface.

The street inventory for Bertram has been developed to evaluate the condition of the street sections and to recommend a maintenance program, which must be applied, to the street surface to extend the life of the all-weather street surface. As a rule, a seal coat program, when applied to an all-weather roadway surface (with a good base), will extend and protect the life of the street section for 5 to 7 years. Most street sections are designed for a life of 20 years, depending on the variables outlined above. The residential streets in Bertram, for the most part, have served their design life and now the objective is to maintain the streets in a condition so that there will be an all-weather surface where a desirable smooth street

surface existed at one time. The Street inventory and major thoroughfare map can be found in Attachment L of this report.

The inventory of the conditions of City streets is a very helpful tool in providing the City staff and City Council with information to be used in the process of allocating annual funds in the attempt to protect the City's investment in this asset. The City must know which of the many streets within the network should be included in annual maintenance program and the cost of this program.

The inventory over a period of time will provide information as to the long-term condition of the system and whether or not the funds being allocated are protecting the City's investment. The inventory will also provide information as to the adequacy of the street section being built in new subdivisions. The maintenance required on the streets (throughout the life of the street) will reveal the cost of maintaining the type of section being built. The City can then determine if the maintenance cost of the section is within the funding capabilities of the city. The time, which passes between the initial construction of the street and its first required maintenance program should be between 5 to 7 years if the street section is to have a useful life of 20 years. If the street begins to show wear and requires maintenance within 2 to 5 years after construction the useful life, will most likely, be less than the expected 20 years.

5.2 Targeted Maintenance

The streets should be chip sealed or overlaid every 15 years. For budgeting purposes, the City should consider a maintenance line item to begin this targeted maintenance program. With 10.6 miles of roadway, the City would need to chip seal or overlay approximately 0.7 miles of roadway annually to stay on a 15-year maintenance cycle. Obviously, this program will take time to implement and the early years will likely need to maintain additional roadway footage to stay on track. In other words, the existing streets cannot last the 15 years that it would take to address all street repairs in the City. If the work is performed by the City the current cost for chip seal is approximately \$6 per square yard and overlay is \$12 per square yard. This equates to a budget line item of \$22,394 annually for chip seal or

\$44,784 for overlay. A detailed street analysis and ranking of streets has not been completed at this time.

5.3 Coordination of Street Repairs with Utility Projects

As the City completes utility upgrades and service crossings the streets in that particular area should be upgraded simultaneously. This approach will complete the utility upgrades, roadway and driveways for that particular street, providing a complete and attractive end result.

5.4 Complete Reconstruction

We know that several streets and isolated areas of many of the City Streets will require full reconstruction. These projects are more costly and will require full engineering design. However, completing these projects will reduce the annual maintenance budget and workload for the Public Works Department by replacing problematic streets that require pothole repairs regularly.

5.5 Drainage Discussion

The City of Bertram infrastructure generally consists of open bar ditch sections, culverts and swales. The residents maintain the majority of the drainage system which fronts their properties by mowing, trimming and controlling erosion.

As the City grows and more properties develop, the impervious cover (streets, roofs, parking lots, and driveways) will increase. This increase in impervious cover will increase the surface runoff during storm events. It is imperative that new development control their stormwater runoff to minimize or eliminate the effects of increased runoff on downstream properties. The City may consider including a downstream analysis of the system.

In Attachment M, we have provided a drainage area map. As you can see, the City is located on a ridge line that flows to the San Gabriel River Basin, a major tributary to the Brazos River. Bear Creek is located north of the City and flows from west to east. South of the City, runoff follows unnamed tributaries and ultimately the South Fork of the San Gabriel River.

No major drainage courses run through the City due to the location of the ridge line between Bear Creek and the San Gabriel River watershed.

No major flooding deficiencies have been identified. The majority of the work that needs to be completed has to do with culvert age, material type or size. The City should strive to maintain the drainage system; however, the complexity and cost of these improvements are not as large as the Utility System needs for the City. The City should keep in mind, as new annexations are requested by property owners that a drainage review should be completed. The City shouldn't assume any liabilities for known drainage deficiencies (i.e. don't accept county or private roads that have known drainage issues).

Creek erosion and water quality are also a concern for the Cities waterways and area creeks and rivers. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has a permitting program that should be followed and enforced by the City. This program provides guidelines for new development to reduce erosion, sedimentation and flooding. This should be a priority for the City and the downstream property owners as well.

At this time, we have not identified any capital projects for the drainage system of the City. We recommend evaluating drainage in specific areas as utilities and roadways are upgraded and replaced. Drainage infrastructure in these areas will be a relatively small cost increase to the overall project and can be completed in one contractor mobilization.

We do recommend strengthening the City's development ordinance for new subdivisions and redevelopments to make sure that drainage is adequately addressed. We have made recommendations of revisions to the Development ordinances to address these issues. We also recommend adopting the City of Marble Falls Drainage Criteria Manual with a few updates that we will present to Planning and Zoning and City Council for consideration.

6.1 Community Goals

As discussed, the significant challenge for Bertram at this time is making needed improvements to its water and wastewater infrastructure. The investment required to address existing limitations in these systems will leave limited funds available for other projects. However, there is still a need for the city to promote quality of life and opportunities for current and potential residents. The projects identified in this section are not solely limited to city government activities. The Economic Development Corporation has a role, the Chamber of Commerce can engage, and other community groups and individuals can participate. The identified goals in this section should be considered medium to long term, as the focus in the short term will be on infrastructure. However, having them identified and laid out means when funding becomes available, either through local actions, grants, or other source, action can be taken quickly to accomplish things.

- Explore options to develop / recruit a grocery store and pharmacy to Bertram
- Contract with grant writer to research and pursue grants to help fund city projects
- Make improvements to park facilities as funding allows
 - Bathrooms at pool
 - Parking at sports fields
 - Park expansion around ball fields
 - Sidewalk and trail connections where suitable
 - Consider / pursue acquisition of rodeo arena
- Develop events / activities in the downtown
 - Food Trucks (full time or as an event)
 - Artisan Market
- Work with downtown building / property owners to encourage them to lease / sell properties
- Explore potential for community center / meeting space
- Ensure adequate staffing to support city services as Bertram grows
- Work with library to expand hours and provide on-going support for services

6.2 Goal Discussion

Explore options to develop / recruit a grocery store and pharmacy to Bertram

Bertram currently has limited retail options, and no full-service grocery store or pharmacy. This is a significant inconvenience for residents and limits the opportunity to receive grant funding and other resources to assist with the provision of workforce housing and other community needs. With expected growth in Bertram, there will likely be more interest from retailers in the community; however, the city should not wait. Instead, there should be a concerted effort to recruit a grocery and pharmacy, or potentially to explore creating a locally owned cooperative model store.

As indicated by the Demographic and Market Analysis, Bertram currently has a \$3.3 million gap in grocery spending alone, and that is just the city population, not including the surrounding area. Within a 15-minute drive of Bertram there is a \$3.3 Million gap. The closest full-service grocery is in Burnet and is a fairly small HEB. This gap is an opportunity for the EDC to market Bertram to grocery retailers as an attractive destination. Bertram's central location and ease of access would likely bring in customers from Liberty Hill and the east side of Burnet as well as from north and south of the city. Lowe's is a Texas based grocery chain that targets smaller towns for its stores. While information on what their location requirements are is not available on their website, this would be the first target for recruiting using the Market Analysis. Since they have experience in rural Texas communities, they understand the local market and would likely be able to provide feedback to the EDC about the potential for a store in Bertram fairly quickly. Brookshire Brother is another Texas based chain operating in rural communities. They also have some stores with pharmacies that would be another asset for Bertram. It is recommended that the EDC contact these two companies and open discussions with them as to the potential for Bertram to attract them.

As part of this process, it may be beneficial to consider what, if any, assistance might be provided to recruit a grocery. Options include fee waivers (or having the EDC offset the costs from their funding), provision of land, and / or funding necessary infrastructure improvements. While incentives can be controversial, the benefit to Bertram of having a grocery and pharmacy

would outweigh the costs both in increased tax revenue, local employment opportunities, additional retail associated with a grocery store, and improved quality of life for residents. A discussion should be had and preliminary decisions made as to what the community is willing to do as part of its recruitment efforts.

If recruiting a grocery and pharmacy is unsuccessful, Bertram may need to look into alternative options, including the development of a community owned grocery and pharmacy. There are several models of how this might work. The first is money is raised locally through the sale of stock in the prospective business, or through membership fees. A corporation is created with a local board of directors and the locally raised funding is used to start the business. The EDC may serve as a partner in this effort. Community owned stores are not cooperatives, they are open to the public, but may provide benefits to local investors such as the ability to charge goods to be paid monthly, and / or the payment of dividends when the store becomes profitable. Jubilee Market in Waco is an example of a community owned grocery. In this instance, a non-profit was involved to help overcome a food desert in an underprivileged area of Waco. The organization sold shares in the company, leveraged volunteers and donations, and opened a grocery store to serve local needs.

The benefit to this approach is that the store can focus on the needs of Bertram residents rather than having a corporate model. It also provides an opportunity to build community engagement and pride as residents come together to build their store. Challenges include providing adequate staffing and experienced management to operate the store. Most community owned stores hire professionals for this aspect, even while using volunteers and community members for some tasks. This would be especially challenging for trying to open a pharmacy to ensure regulatory hurdles are addressed. However, these are not insurmountable and if recruitment is unsuccessful, it may be necessary for this approach to be undertaken.

Contract with grant writer to research and pursue grants to help fund city projects

As discussed, the priority for Bertram is infrastructure, which will require significant financial investment over the next several years. To address that challenge, and to help leverage additional funding for other community projects, the city should consider contracting with a

grant writer to search and apply for appropriate grants. Many grant writers are paid out of the administrative fee awarded with grants they obtain, so there is minimal up front cost to the city. This would be beneficial because it would free up staff time currently devoted to researching and writing grants. In addition, because these grant writers are experienced and know the process, they may be more successful in developing grant proposals that will be funded.

The city should reach out to other communities that may have pursued this option for feedback on the pros and cons of this approach. Pedernales Electric Cooperative staff may also be a resource in this effort. Another starting point is the Grant Professionals Association (<http://www.gpaaustin.org/main.htm>), which has an Austin / Central Texas chapter. This organization is the professional network for grant writers and may be a resource in finding an experienced contact to help the city. If the city moves in this direction, there will be a need for staff to coordinate with the grant writer to provide oversight and direction to determine priority funding needs and to manage any acquired funding. While there may be increased administrative work, the benefits to having someone focused on finding additional funding for community projects is worth that added work.

Make improvements to park facilities as funding allows

Bertram is fortunate to have a number of parks across the community offering a diversity of amenities and facilities for residents. These include multiple sports fields, a swimming pool, picnic facilities, pavilion, playscapes, and a pocket park in downtown. This park system supports local recreation and family activities and contributes to the quality of life for Bertram residents. The city leverages a parkland dedication clause in the subdivision ordinance to acquire new land for parks or additional funding through a fee in lieu of dedicating land. Because of the existing amount of parkland and the need for more funding rather than more park space, the city should revise this clause to focus on funding rather than more property. Having more funding would be much more beneficial because the city lacks the resources to develop and maintain more parks. Instead, funding could be focused on improving existing facilities and making targeted investments for new facilities in the existing park footprints.

Some needed improvements include bathrooms at the park where the pool is located. While there are facilities serving pool patrons, there are not public restrooms available to the rest of the park. Parking at the ball fields is another needed project. Current parking is inadequate to serve growing demand and there is a need to expand and improve the parking in this area. This connects to an opportunity to expand this park. The city owns property adjacent to the park and there is additional undeveloped land surrounding it. There may be an opportunity (with appropriate funding) to acquire this additional land, along with the deteriorating rodeo arena, and create a regional park that would serve Bertram residents and the surrounding community. This could become a regional attraction and tourism magnet as there is growing demand for facilities to accommodate sports tournaments, rodeos, horse events, and similar activities. The rodeo arena is currently owned by a non-profit that has resisted discussions about selling the property, so this should be considered a long-term goal, with on-going discussions continuing.

Finally, the city should explore opportunities to connect destinations throughout Bertram through sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, and trails. Again, this is a long-term strategy, but should be considered to promote opportunity for residents to access places without having to drive. An example would be to add on-street bike / pedestrian lanes when streets are repaved or reconstructed. Most city streets have adequate ROW and pavement width to accommodate this, and the only cost would be paint. If done when streets are being repaved, the cost would be minimal. An added benefit is that additional striping and paint can serve to slow traffic on these residential streets without the expense of speed bumps and other traffic calming features. The city should also work with developers to encourage installation of sidewalks where it makes sense as new development occurs. Rather than a blanket requirement to install sidewalks, it makes sense to focus on areas where destinations can be connected through new infrastructure rather than simply having sidewalks to nowhere. There are grants that focus on pedestrian facilities, notably the Safe Routes to School program, and these should be a target to offset costs for new facilities that will serve Bertram residents.

Develop events / activities in the downtown

Bertram's downtown has the potential to become a unique destination that can serve residents and attract visitors to the community. It is currently underutilized, with many vacant buildings and lots. The vacant space can be activated through 'pop-up' activities like artisan shows, food trucks, concerts, and dances. This is not necessarily a task for city government, instead the Chamber of Commerce or other organization should take leadership on developing regular activities in the downtown.

The success of the current Farmers Market shows the potential for downtown activities, and can serve as a model for creating new events. Local bands, including from Burnet ISD schools, are always looking for opportunities to perform, so monthly concerts could be fairly easy to organize and conduct on vacant space in downtown or nearby. The Chamber should contact other communities who have successful events to learn from them what works and what challenges exist and begin to develop programs that are appropriate for Bertram that will begin to activate the downtown.

The purpose of these events is to give reason for people to come to downtown Bertram, which will encourage new businesses to open in the vacant buildings. In addition, having food trucks and other mobile vendors in the area may encourage them to open brick and mortar locations in Bertram as they come to know the community and build a customer base. This connects to the next goal, which is to work with property and building owners to encourage them to make space available at a reasonable cost.

Work with downtown building / property owners to encourage them to lease / sell properties

Bertram will grow in the future, but this growth is currently hindered by a lack of retail, dining, and employment opportunities. One barrier to the growth in this sector is that many buildings and properties are not available for new businesses. This may be due in part to owners unwilling to sell, but there is also an issue of prices being too high for new businesses. The risks of any new business, particularly a restaurant or retailer, are enormous, and the barrier of excessive rents is a particular hurdle. This is an opportunity for the EDC to reach out to property owners, particularly in the downtown, and work with them to encourage their cooperation in

making space available. There is limited options to require this, but given the status of EDC board members and their relationships, they may be powerful influencers that can begin to open doors. This should be another focus of the EDC, in addition to recruiting a grocery and pharmacy, to help diversify employment, retail, and restaurant options in Bertram and to enliven the downtown. Vacant properties are not just unattractive, they cost the city money by requiring services without contributing to the tax base in a meaningful way. It is important to fill these spaces with successful businesses that will strengthen tax revenues and benefit Bertram residents.

Explore potential for community center and meeting space

Despite the variety of amenities in Bertram, the city is lacking a public meeting space and community center. There is limited space available at the library and city hall for small meetings, but not space suitable for receptions and larger activities. This type of facility should be on the city's long-term list of projects to pursue as it would be a significant benefit to residents. This type of space could serve residents for occasional activities like receptions and reunions, but also provide meeting space for regular events like senior activities, civic organizations, and others. There may be an opportunity to acquire and repurpose an existing downtown building that would help spur activity and interest in downtown, or possibly as part of the park expansion discussed above.

This type of project provides an opportunity to bring the community together through fundraising and other efforts to garner buy-in and support for the project. This type of facility could be funded through private fundraising and sponsorships, then operated by the city once it is built, with on-going support from the community. Burnet followed this model with the development of the community recreation center, it was built through fundraising and sponsorships, with a non-profit that continued to help fund operations. The city operated it to simplify staffing and insurance issues with support from the non-profit. This center is now operated by the YMCA, but the original model provides a model for how Bertram could develop a community center.

Ensure adequate staffing to support city service as Bertram grows

Bertram city government is a lean organization, with a small staff working hard to serve the community. There is significant reliance on leadership and work from the Mayor and City Council to help provide day to day management and oversight. As Bertram grows, it will be vital to ensure staff grows appropriately to serve growing demand for services. This is especially true for public safety and the police department. Costs associated with expanding the police force are not just labor costs, the required equipment, vehicle, and on-going training are a significant expense that needs to be accommodated.

While there is usually support for public safety staffing increases, administrative staff tends to not grow, or have the support to hire needed people to manage growing demands. It will be important for staff to communicate with City Council to identify needs and ensure appropriate budgeting as needed for expanded staffing. This is not to suggest a hiring frenzy, instead, it is intended to encourage long-term thinking about what the needs of Bertram are and bring on employees with the right experience and training to do the necessary work. This will be an on-going goal, not one that can be checked off and completed, instead it should become part of the annual budget process to review current staffing and determine what, if any, new staff is needed to provide continued quality service to Bertram residents.

Work with library to expand hours and provide on-going support for services

Bertram is fortunate to have a fairly new and high-quality community library in the heart of downtown. This facility is an attraction to the downtown and provides an important service to Bertram. Continued support for the library should be a priority for the community. This is another goal that is more for the entire community and less for city government. There may be an opportunity for a local organization to coordinate with the library to provide assistance in expanding available hours and services provided. This may include developing a volunteer base that can help with staffing and other projects at the library, or potentially through fundraising to offset costs of expanded hours and services.

This type of project requires a local champion, a person or organization that will step up and take ownership of achieving this goal. It may be that city staff can help to identify that person,

or it may be library staff that can do that. However, if it is accomplished, the library is a valuable asset that should be supported by the entire community to make it even more accessible to residents.

6.3 Conclusion

Bertram is laying the foundation for a bright future. The goals identified in this plan provide direction for city leadership and the entire community to work together to address existing challenges while building a stronger community. Infrastructure improvements will allow for new development and better service for current residents. New and improved park facilities will improve quality of life and encourage Bertram residents to be more active and engaged in their community. Expanded events and activities will help encourage investment in the downtown, creating a destination for residents and visitors. Attracting a grocery store and pharmacy will add convenience for residents, expand tax revenue, and open the door to other benefits for Bertram.

It is important to recognize that this plan is just the starting point. The real work begins once the plan is adopted. The plan itself will not do the necessary work, that will require leadership from city staff and elected officials, engagement from the EDC, Chamber, and other organizations, and participation from the entire community. The plan provides direction, but it is up to the community to provide the work. Working together towards common goals will ensure Bertram continues to be a community that provides high quality of life and opportunity for current and future residents.

Goal: Revise Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Review zoning and subdivision recommendations included in Comp Plan Update	January 2018	Planning and Zoning Commission
Work with City Attorney to make specific revisions to existing ordinances based on recommendations	January – March 2018	Planning and Zoning Commission; City Attorney
Conduct public engagement process to introduce revised ordinances and get feedback	March – May 2018	City Staff
Finalize changes to Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance	May – June 2018	Planning and Zoning Commission, City Staff, City Council, City Attorney
Conduct Public Hearings and adopt revised ordinances	June – August 2018	Planning and Zoning Commission; City Council

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Cost of additional City Attorney time to make revisions; Resistance from developers and residents

Stakeholders and Partners: Developers, residents

Measures of Success: Recommended revisions in place by March 2018; Revised ordinances by August 2018

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Staff Time and City Attorney fees; Dependent on cost for City Attorney

Goal: Contract with Grant Writer

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Contact other communities who have done this to learn best practices	January 2018	City Staff
Develop expectations based on best practices	February – April 2018	City Staff; City Council
Send out Request for Proposals for grant services	May – June 2018	City Staff
Evaluate responses and make determination about selected grant consultant	June – July 2018	City Staff; City Council
Work with grant consultant	On-going	City Staff; City Council

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Finding grant consultants that meet city needs

Stakeholders and Partners: Economic Development Consultant

Measures of Success: Grant RFP sent out June 2018; Grant writer contracted by July 2018

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Minimal costs up front; grant writers typically are paid through administrative fees on grants awarded

Goal: Explore Options to Develop / Recruit a Grocery Store

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Contact regional grocers like Lowes, Aldi, and others to determine their market expectations	January – March 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Utilize Demographic and Market Analysis to promote Bertram to these grocers	January – March 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Consider what, if any, incentives City may be willing to offer for grocery store (fee waivers, sales and property tax abatements, etc.)	January – March 2018	Economic Development Corporation; City Council
Research alternative options, such as a cooperative grocery and pharmacy	April – June 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Develop plan to create a cooperative grocery	June – December 2018	Economic Development Corporation;
Create non-profit or other organization to manage the store, depending on model selected	January – June 2019	Economic Development Corporation; new non-profit
Develop funding program to build and operate the store using the plan	June – December 2019	Non-profit
Build the Store	January – June 2020	Non-profit

Community Goals

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Lack of interest from grocery and pharmacy stores; Lack of capacity to create a locally owned and operated option

Stakeholders and Partners: Developers; regional grocers; residents; local business owners

Measures of Success: Grocery store committed to locate in Bertram by June 2018; Locally developed option in place by June 2020

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Minimal for recruitment activities; Locally developed option dependent on size and facilities; funding from local fundraising / membership, city assistance for development, grants

Goal: Make Improvements to Park Facilities as Funding Allows

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Adopt Parks Plan (included with this Comp Plan Update)	January 2018	City Council
Consider developing a non-profit / local fundraising to support park projects	January – June 2018	Economic Development Corporation; local residents and business owners
Pursue grant funding for identified projects	On-going	City Staff; City Council; Grant Writer
Develop park improvements as funding allows, starting with bathrooms and parking projects at existing parks	On-going	City Staff

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Limited funding for improvements

Stakeholders and Partners: Developers, residents, local businesses

Measures of Success: Additional funding secured for park improvements through grants and local fundraising / sponsorships

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Dependent on selected improvements; private and public grants, local fundraising / sponsorships

Goal: Develop Events and Activities in Downtown

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Continue support for on-going activities like Farmers Market and Oatmeal Festival	On-going	Economic Development Corporation; Chamber of Commerce; Farmers Market
Add new, informal events to downtown like street concerts and dances using local acts	On-going	Chamber of Commerce
Develop regular events like an Artisans Market that can be held monthly or quarterly	On-going	Chamber of Commerce
Consider seasonal events that may also be used to activate vacant buildings like Christmas Market, Halloween Haunted House, etc.	On-going	Chamber of Commerce

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Lack of interest / support from Chamber of Commerce; lack of engagement with residents and visitors to support events

Stakeholders and Partners: Downtown property and business owners, Economic Development Corporation; residents

Measures of Success: More events taking place in downtown, increased traffic to the area, growth in businesses

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Dependent on selected events; local fundraising and sponsorships

Goal: Encourage Building Owners to Lease / Sell Properties

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Develop comprehensive list of downtown property owners	January – March 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Contact property owners to ask their intentions for their buildings	March – April 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Develop an inventory of available properties with rents, etc. to use to market buildings to prospective businesses	April – June 2018	Economic Development Corporation
Work with building owners to encourage them to moderate rents to support prospective businesses	On-going	Economic Development Corporation

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Lack of interest and support from property owners; lack of prospective businesses

Stakeholders and Partners: Developers, local business owners, local property owners

Measures of Success: More buildings filled with businesses in downtown

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Minimal cost for recruitment and engagement

Goal: Explore Potential for Community Center and Meeting Space

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Identify potential locations / properties for center	January – June 2020	City Staff
Develop potential budget based on location and construction / improvement needs and on-going costs	June – December 2020	City Staff; City Council
Establish fundraising / grant writing campaign	January – June 2021	City Staff; Chamber of Commerce
Develop facility when funding is secured and on-going funding established	On-going	City Staff; City Council

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Cost of facility construction and on-going costs

Stakeholders and Partners: Residents; Chamber of Commerce

Measures of Success: Plan in place by December 2020; Facility built when funding allows

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: \$250,000 - \$500,000 depending on location, amenities, size, etc.; local fundraising, sponsorships, public and private grants

Goal: Ensure Adequate Staffing to Support City Services as Bertram Grows

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Review similar sized cities to compare staffing, facilities, and needs	On-going	City Staff; City Council
Plan for needed staffing increases as soon as possible to incorporate into budgeting	On-going	City Staff; City Council
Ensure adequate funding in budget for necessary staff pay and benefits as needed	On-going	City Council
Monitor facility size and organization to ensure adequate facilities as staff grows	On-going	City Staff
Update / Remodel / Expand City Hall when necessary	On-going	City Staff; City Council

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Cost of new staff; limited budget

Stakeholders and Partners: Residents to support needed increases

Measures of Success: Service to residents remains high and efficient

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Dependent on staffing needs and growth; general fund (property and sales taxes)

Goal: Work with Library to Expand Hours and Support Services

Action	Timeline	Responsible Party
Meet with Library staff to develop understanding of their needs and how assistance can be provided	January 2018	City Staff
Provide assistance in finding volunteers / developing organization to support library	January – March 2018	City Staff; City Council; Chamber of Commerce
Help with fundraising if needed to support library	On-going	City Council; Economic Development Corporation; Chamber of Commerce

Potential Barriers to Implementation: Library may not have needs that City can partner to address; lack of volunteers and funding

Stakeholders and Partners: Residents, County, local businesses, Chamber of Commerce

Measures of Success: Library hours expanded, more services offered

Potential Funding Needs and Sources: Dependent on identified projects; existing library funding, grants, local fundraising

City of Bertram



Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

2017

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Introduction

Bertram community leaders recognize the value of a high quality park system providing a variety of amenities and facilities to serve local residents. The city has invested in park facilities including a community pool, ball fields, and pocket parks. These facilities are located across town, serving the current population. In addition, the city has a parkland dedication requirement in its subdivision ordinance, mandating new development provide land for new parks, or funding through a fee in lieu option. This has been used to expand the park system and provide funding for needed improvements at existing parks. As Bertram grows, the need to expand the park system will also grow. This plan provides direction to achieve community goals for a quality park system, within the constraints of a small town with significant infrastructure challenges that are taking priority for limited resources in the near term.

Plan Process

This parks plan came out of the comprehensive plan update effort recently undertaken. Over the last several months, community leaders and residents have held a series of meetings to identify challenges and opportunities facing Bertram. From those meetings, a series of goals and objectives were identified to provide direction and a framework for decision making by the City Council and others. Parks and recreation was a significant issue in that planning effort. This plan is an attempt to provide additional insight into parks and recreation needs in Bertram and a strategy to implement those goals. It is also a tool to leverage additional resources from Texas Parks and Wildlife and other funding organizations that can help provide needed resources. The goals in this plan reflect the concerns and priorities of Bertram residents.



Demographic Analysis

Population Estimates and Projections

Bertram is located just north of the rapidly expanding Austin metropolitan area. Its proximity to Austin and growing commercial development in northern Williamson County will likely drive future growth in the area. Bertram can expect to see increased interest from residential developers looking for relatively low-cost land with good access to employment and business centers developing in Leander and Cedar Park.

Bertram is located in Burnet County, which is also expected to see significant growth. Most of this growth is happening in proximity to the Highland Lakes and the communities of Burnet and Marble Falls; however, it can also be expected to affect Bertram. Bertram experienced steady growth between 2010 and 2016, gaining approximately 200 residents and this pattern is expected to continue. However, with the rapid growth of the region, city leaders should be prepared to address more rapid growth than currently expected. The city is in the process of adopting a comprehensive plan update that identifies challenges and opportunities facing Bertram and provides direction to address them.

Table 1 – Population Estimate and Projection

	2010 (Census)	2016 (est.)	2021 (ESRI)	2020 (TWDB)	2030 (TWDB)
Bertram	1,353	1,546	1,723	1,681	2,034
Burnet County	42,750	47,418	51,074	53,114	64,268

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Texas Water Development Board

As Bertram grows, the demands for city services, particularly parks and recreation facilities will continue to increase. Given the limited resources available, and the significant infrastructure issues facing Bertram, expanding parks and recreation services will be a challenge. This park plan can provide direction on priorities and be an asset in securing grant funding to help provide needed improvements to the Bertram park system.

Population Characteristics

Bertram has a younger population than Burnet County overall (42.8 vs. 44.3), but it is still significantly higher than the State of Texas, which is 33.6 years. Nearly 25% of Bertram residents are under the age of 19, which creates a challenge to ensure adequate services such as parks and recreation for these young people. Nearly 20% of the population is over 65, another age group that tends to desire more recreation services and programming. Providing appropriate facilities and services to the diversity of Bertram residents can be a challenge.

Table 2 – Age 2016

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
0-4	6.7%	103	5.4%	2,584
5-9	6.4%	99	5.7%	2,719
10-14	6.7%	104	6.2%	2,951
15-19	5.1%	78	5.8%	2,739
20-24	5.4%	84	5.6%	2,632
25-34	10.6%	164	11.15	5,276
35-44	11.6%	179	10.9%	5,163
45-54	14.1%	218	13.0%	6,171
55-64	15.2%	234	15.4%	7,95
65-74	10.8%	167	12.2%	5,784
75-84	4.9%	76	6.3%	2,985
85+	2.3%	36	2.4%	1,119
Median Age	42.8		44.3	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The City has a much smaller minority population than the State of Texas. Approximately 86% of City residents identify as White alone, and approximately 24% identify as Hispanic. Hispanic is considered an ethnicity by the Census, not a race, so respondents can identify as Hispanic and

any race of their choosing. This means the numbers in Table 3 will not add up to 100% because Hispanic is counted separately. Bertram has similar characteristics to Burnet County.

Table 3 – Race and Ethnicity

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
White	87.5%	1,354	86.1%	40,817
Black	0.6%	9	2.6%	1,250
American Indian	1.0%	15	0.9%	415
Asian	0.1%	2	0.6%	302
Pacific Islander	0.1%	2	0.0%	20
Some Other Race	8.5%	131	7.6%	3,595
Two or More Races	2.2%	34	2.1%	1,019
Hispanic (Any Race)	23.6%	365	22.9%	10,839

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The adult residents of Bertram have relatively low educational attainment. Over 45 percent have only a high school diploma or less education. While the educational attainment is low, Bertram residents have an income that is in line with the State and slightly higher than Burnet County. While it will be important to address this challenge to help diversify and grow Bertram’s economy in the long term, for now, Bertram residents are doing fairly well to overcome this issue.

Table 4 – Educational Attainment Age 25+

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
< 9th Grade	5.6%	60	6.7%	2,264
9th – 12th no diploma	7.9%	85	7.8%	2,636
HS Grad / GED	33.3%	358	31.9%	10,780
Some College	27.1%	291	23.3%	7,874
Associates Degree	4.6%	49	5.9%	1,994
Bachelors Degree	16.1%	173	16.4%	5,542
Graduate Degree	5.5%	59	8.0%	2,703

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Income

The median income of Bertram is not far off the state median of \$55,653 and slightly higher than Burnet County. As mentioned above, this is an indication that Bertram residents are not being held back by their relatively low educational attainment. This strong income is likely due to the fairly high percentage of residents employed in construction and manufacturing. These jobs often do not require high levels of education but can pay good wages. It is important to note that approximately 25% of Bertram residents are making below \$35,000. This is a population that could benefit from increased access to education and workforce training to help them prepare for better jobs in the future.

Table 5 – Household Income

	Bertram %	Bertram #	Burnet County %	Burnet County #
<\$15,000	8.2%	44	10.1%	1,820
\$15,000-\$24,999	12.6%	68	12.4%	2,225
\$25,000-\$34,999	12.8%	69	9.9%	1,777
\$35,000-\$49,999	12.3%	66	15.0%	2,688
\$50,000-\$74,999	26.8%	144	19.8%	3,551
\$75,000-\$99,999	7.6%	41	12.2%	2,197
\$100,000-\$149,999	13.4%	72	12.0%	2,147
\$150,000-\$199,999	2.0%	11	4.5%	815
\$200,000+	4.3%	23	4.0%	720
Median Household	\$49,079		\$42,750	

Source: ESRI Business Analyst and US Census American Community Survey

Conclusion

Bertram is a small town offering rural character and proximity to employment opportunities in the northern part of the rapidly growing Austin region. The city is fortunate to have several community parks with a variety of amenities; however, there are needs in the existing parks and future growth can be expected to increase demand on existing facilities and increase desire for recreation programming and additional amenities. The demographic characteristics show youth and senior activities should be the priority for park system improvements.

Plan Goals

Based on the conversations with residents and community leaders, the following goals have been identified. Given the limited resources and infrastructure challenges facing Bertram, park expansion and improvements are more dependent on the availability of alternative funding sources. This is why hiring a grant writer, revising the parkland dedication, and potentially developing a Friends of the Park organization are high priority projects at this time. These efforts can lead to the city acquiring additional funding for desired park improvements sooner than would happen if city resources were the only available.



Revise Subdivision Ordinance to Allow City to Decide on Land Dedication or Fee in lieu

The city currently requires a parkland dedication with new development. The current standard is 8% of overall property being developed to be set aside as a park, or a fee of \$250 per home. Given the amount of parkland the city already owns, there is a greater need for funding over additional parkland. The city does not have the resources to build amenities for new parks, nor to maintain dedicated land that is not developed. Given these constraints, it is in the city's interest to have the flexibility to require funding instead of land to be dedicated.

The city should also consider the amount of funding required per home. City leaders recognize that increasing the costs for developers results in higher priced homes; however, the benefits of a well-funded park system offset the slightly increased costs in a home. The city should consider increasing the fee in lieu amount to provide a more robust funding stream to pay for needed park improvements and ensure a quality park system for new and existing residents.

Hire a Grant Writer to Pursue Additional Funding

One of the goals identified in the comprehensive plan is to hire a grant writer. Grant writers often work for the administrative fee that accompanies grants when they are awarded. This provides a low-cost option for the city because they do not need to pay for staff people to chase grants and do not have to cover costs for the grant writer. Because these consultants have experience and skill in preparing grant applications, they may be more likely to succeed in finding money that the city would not have on its own. This option should be seriously considered to provide additional resources to address challenges in Bertram. The grant writer could pursue grants for parks and recreation as well as other city needs, like additional library funding to expand hours, infrastructure issues, and events in the community. These would all benefit Bertram and tie into goals from the comprehensive plan.

Consider Developing a Friends of the Parks Organization

Many communities have local non-profits that take ownership for fundraising, volunteering, and other services to support the local park system. Although Bertram is a small town, there are people who may be willing to be part of this effort. The city should partner with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation to lay the foundation for the creation of this type of organization.

A Friends organization could take ownership of developing local fundraising efforts and finding sponsorships for needed park improvements. They could also help develop additional events and activities at Bertram parks and in the downtown. These could be things like street dances, concerts, etc. that would bring people to the community and serve as fundraising opportunities. Volunteers could also be utilized for on-going work in the parks like maintenance and clean ups. Given the limited resources available to the city, having an organization tasked with supporting the park system would be enormously beneficial. Given the value of parks to local residents, they should be willing to step up and be part of the effort to provide quality parks and recreation.

Install Bathrooms at Park Outside of Swimming Pool

Bertram is fortunate to have a swimming pool available for all residents and a surrounding park offering additional amenities. However, there are not restrooms available for park users except for those inside the pool facility. This is an issue that park users have brought to



the city's attention and is one that is a high priority when funding becomes available. Clean, well-maintained restrooms are a key amenity for park users.

The city recognizes this issue and is working to secure funding for restroom facilities at the park. If the city hires a grant writer, this should be a high priority for them to pursue funding for restrooms. It can also be part of any local funding efforts. Although there may not be a line of sponsors to put their name on a restroom facility, it is still vital infrastructure that would make the park more welcoming for visitors.

Expand Parking at Sports Complex

As Bertram grows and participation in recreation expands, there is a need for additional parking and improvements to existing parking at the sports complex. This facility is in proximity to the elementary school and has limited parking. This creates a safety issue as people are parking and having to cross the street to get to the park. It also impacts adjacent neighborhoods as overflow parking happens in these areas. Like restrooms, this is not a project that provides new recreation opportunities; however, it is necessary for the full use and enjoyment of existing facilities. This project should be pursued as funding becomes available because it will make the sports complex more accessible for residents and allow more users to enjoy the facilities and amenities at the park.



Park Expansion around Sports Complex

Although providing new parks is not a huge priority given the amenities and facilities already available, the city owns approximately 10 acres adjacent to the sports complex that can become a new community park in the future. This project should be considered long-term as there are

more pressing issues facing Bertram; however, as resources grow and fundraising is successful, this is an important and meaningful goal to pursue.

Expanding the park would provide additional amenities that may include additional sports fields, especially soccer as it is growing in popularity. There may also be opportunities for additional picnic and meeting space to complement the existing E.B. Goodwin Pavilion. In 3-5 years, the city may consider developing a concept plan for the park expansion that can be used as part of a fundraising effort to develop the park. Having a vision and images will be much more powerful in pursuing grants and sponsorship when the time is appropriate to pursue this effort.

Add Sidewalk and Trail Connections where Appropriate

As Bertram grows, traffic issues will also increase. Having a network of trails and sidewalks connecting community destinations will benefit new and existing residents. The current subdivision ordinance requires sidewalks on both sides of the street with new development; however, this is not really appropriate for Bertram at this time. Given the overall lack of sidewalks and connections, this can result in sidewalks to nowhere that drive up development costs without creating real connectivity or improving safety.

A better approach would be to develop a vision for connectivity that identifies key community destinations and then lays out a strategy to improve connections to those destinations. Grants like Safe Routes to School and other sources can provide funding for needed improvements. In addition, as the city repaves and rebuilds roads, bike lanes could be painted. This is a low cost opportunity that helps raise awareness and safety for cyclists, provides an option for pedestrians,

and will slow traffic on wider roads. This should be considered with any roadwork done by the city.

Improving pedestrian connectivity will benefit Bertram by reducing traffic and ensuring access to those without a license. With the large population of young and older residents, this is an opportunity for Bertram to ensure quality of life for all residents.

Consider Acquisition of the Fairgrounds

The fairgrounds are currently owned by a non-profit that has allowed the property to deteriorate and is not holding regular events. There is growing interest in rodeos and other activities at fairgrounds in many small communities, and this facility can be a tremendous asset in attracting residents to Bertram. However, there is limited interest from the current owners in selling, so this should be considered a long-term goal. The city (or Friends of the Park organization if formed) should establish and maintain a relationship with the owners to ensure that they are aware of the public interest in acquiring the facility and improving it.

Table 6 - Estimate of Park Land per 1,000 population

Existing Acreage	Existing for 2016 est. of 1,546
All Parks ~ 13 acres	~8.4 acres per 1,000

Table 7: Facility Standards per NRPA

Units	Standard	Existing	Required for 1,546	By Location	Units Needed
Fields					
Baseball	1 per 7,000	3	1	< ½ Mile	0
Softball	1 per 5,000	3	1	< ½ Miles	0
Football	1 per 20,000	0	0	15 -30 Minute Drive	0
Soccer / Multi Use	1 per 5,000	0	0	1 – 2 Miles	0
Courts					
Basketball	1 per 5,000	2	1	< ½ Mile	0
Tennis	1 per 4,000	1	0	< ½ Mile	0
Volleyball	1 per 5,000	0	0		
Outdoor Areas					
¼ Mile Track	N/A	2	1	15 – 30 Minute Drive	1
Trails					
Walking / Biking	N/A	0			
Specialized					
Aquatic Center	1 per 20,000	0	0		0
Meeting Center	1 per 20,000	0	0		
Skate Park	N/A		N/A		
Golf	1 per 25,000	0	0		0
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	1		15 – 30 Minute Drive	0
Rodeo Arena	N/A	1 (privately owned)		15 – 30 Minute Drive	0

Does Not Include School Facilities

Conclusion

Bertram is fortunate to have a variety of amenities and facilities to serve residents. Ball fields, playgrounds, swimming pool, and a pavilion ensure residents can spend time with family and recreate in quality facilities. Bertram is beginning to grow and has an opportunity to create a park system that will benefit existing and current residents for years to come. Given the limited resources and other pressing priorities, it is understood that park expansion and improvements may be somewhat on the backburner. However, there are opportunities to build capacity to pursue parks projects through the hiring of a grant writer, the establishment of a Friends of the Parks organization, and revisions to the park dedication ordinance. These options can help secure funding resources to improve the already strong park system in Bertram.



August 22, 2017

Ms. Georgina Hernandez, City Secretary
City of Bertram
PO Box 1604
Bertram, Texas 78605

RE: Development Ordinance Comments

Dear Ms. Hernandez:

Utility Engineering Group has reviewed the current development ordinance and offer the following comments:

Development Ordinance 20.99

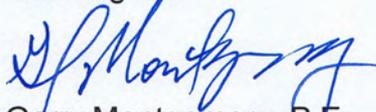
1. Page 3 - Definitions - References City Standard Details and Specifications
 - a. These details and specifications need .to. be updated or adopt details and specification from a neighboring utility such as City of Burnet or Marble Falls
2. Page 10 - Definitions - Significant tree list Does the City have a list Can the City adopt a TPWD or other agency list for consistency? ·
3. Page 22 - (f) Approval Item 8 - references mylar copy - update to Paper copy(les) and pdf copy
4. Page 22 - (i) Revisions - references mylar copy - update to paper copy(ies) and pdf copy
5. Page 23 - (l) (vi) Certification and Signature Blocks - Recommend writing updated signature blocks so that all plats, replats and short form plats are consistent
6. Page 24 - (2) Existing Conditions (v) references City's Drainage Master Plan. Does the City have a detailed drainage master plan? If so does it provide easement requirements, pond locations? Any deficiencies? I recommend creating/updating the Drainage Master Plan and requiring downstream calculation requirements for new development.
- (4) Supporting Documents - Downstream drainage requirements. Some City's require a letter from a Licensed Professional Engineer certifying that no adverse effects will be observed downstream of the new development.
7. Page 26 - (6) reference mylar copies - recommend revising to require a paper copy and pdf copy
8. Page 29 - Erosion and Sedimentation Controls - Should reference TCEQ Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans and include requirements
9. Page 30 - (5) Water Distribution System references City Standard Details and Specifications - these should be updated to include general notes and details for valves, hydrants, appurtenances, pipe types, approved manufacturers, as-built drawing criteria, and TCEQ criteria etc.
10. Page 30 - (6) Wastewater Collection Systems – Need to include TCEQ requirements and generator requirements. City should prepare general notes and standard details for lift stations, manholes and collection systems - Also should include low pressure sewer requirements in the event that developments. want to install low pressure sewer – we have discussed this option with developers recently
11. Page 31 - (7) Street Lighting - Need to detail these requirements - we receive comments on this section from developers.

12. Page 31 - (9) Sidewalks - City should consider allowing the home builder to install this sidewalk at the time of home construction versus the developer. If the developer installs the sidewalk, some of the sidewalk will need to be removed for driveways, etc. Matching grades and driveways will be easier and, look better at the time to home construction. Sidewalks may be broken during construction of homes if installed by the developer. Need to Include sidewalk details in City Standards
13. City should consider including a section in the ordinance regarding Developer Agreements so the all variances can be considered at once and not individually as variances.
14. Page 38 - Recordation - City should, consider not filing the plat until all construction is complete - If the City records the plat upon construction plan approval, the developer can sell lots without any of the Infrastructure in place – (4) References mylar Copies - Change to paper and pdf copy (6) reference plat to be picked up at Engineers Office. - May want to change to City Hall. (7) Change to paper and pdf copy
15. Page 44 ... Section 28 - General Policy- (1) I recommend not recording the plat until all construction is complete.
16. Page 45 -- Completion of Improvements – States that prior to signing all construction must be complete - this conflicts with the previous section and the discussion on surety. This section also eludes to the fact that the. Home builder will install sidewalks, not the developer. Need to clarify
17. Page 47 (g) Inspection and Acceptance of improvements – Utility Superintendent or City Engineer can inspect water/wastewater infrastructure - This. section speaks to one inspection for all improvements -City should clarify how many inspections they want done on the construction i.e. road. subgrade, base, paving, waterlines, wastewater collection. Who pays for the inspections? Could there be a percentage of construction cost to the developer to cover inspections? Also, the City currently does not require copies of bacteriological sampling results, pressure tests on water lines and density testing on paving, base, backfill. City should set a requirement and maintain copies for each development.
18. Page 48 - (iv) requests a diskette - We should require a cad file as-built plan with coordinates of all valves, hydrants and appurtenances in addition to a signed copy from the engineer of record. Pdf and paper copies
19. Page 53 - Design Standards - All references to City of Austin should be removed and replaced with a more reasonable design guide. I recommend either City of Burnet or Marble Falls for drainage or creating your own.
20. The city may want to consider adding a downstream drainage study requirement for developments over a certain acreage or density to identify any downstream affects. I also recommend adding a requirement of a letter signed by a licensed Professional Engineer that states there is no adverse effect downstream of the proposed development. We should not allow any development that increases flow at the discharge point of the property
21. Transportation section referenced City of Austin Transportation Plan - Need a more reasonable plan
22. Page 59 - Curbs - Ribbon curbs, standup curbs? What is acceptable to the City? If you require standup curbs, you will require subsurface drainage in most cases.
23. Page 60 - Construction Standards - Require a geotechnical report for design based on the type of street and proposed traffic.
24. Page 60 - Street Lighting - Requirement? On PEC poles? Spacing? Developers ask for variances on this often.
25. Page 60 - (e) Sidewalks - At time of home construction or development? Is this

- required on existing city streets if someone pulls a building permit?
26. Page 61- (l) references TNRCC. Update to TCEQ
 27. The city should consider creating a water model for the City Water Distribution System - This will remove a lot of unknowns in the system and ensure that all regulations are being met
 28. Page 61(ix) City Standard Details and Specifications need to be created/updated
 29. Page 62 Section 44 - Wastewater Utility Improvements- References TNRCC; update to TCEQ - need to identify capacity deficiencies within the System
 30. 30 Page 63 - Blocks and Lots - (b)(l) 12,000 sf conflicts with Zoning Ordinance
 31. Impervious cover limits? Effects drainage calculations.
 32. Page 68 - Landscaping -Want to include Xeriscaping requirements?
 33. Confirm right-of-way widths and pavement widths for each cross-section
 34. Consider providing standard cross-section details that show where utilities should be located during design/platting.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will supplement this letter with any additional thoughts after the meeting Wednesday, August 23, 2017.

Best Regards



Garry Montgomery, P.E.
Utility Engineering Group, PLLC

March 7, 2017
Ms. Georgina Hernandez, City Secretary
City of Bertram
PO Box 1604
Bertram, TX 78605

RE: Development Ordinance Comments

Below are my comments related to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances

Zoning Ordinance

- 1) Zoning Map does not reflect Zoning Categories defined in the ordinance – does this mean there are not designated districts for these defined zones? If this is the case, update ordinance to reflect existing zones per the map
- 2) Page 31 – height requirements of 60 feet for public and semi-public buildings and 75 feet for churches, does the fire department have a ladder truck if something this tall is built?
- 3) Page 34 – a Floor Area Ratio of 1.8 in the CBD may be too low to allow for density that reflects historic development patterns and contributes to a more attractive and economically viable area
- 4) Page 37 – parking requirements for Personal Care Facilities seem high, basically a parking space for each resident
- 5) Page 33 and Page 40 – Chart 1 (page 33) states minimum lot size for R-1-2 is 7500 sq ft, while Purpose and Permitted Uses (page 40) says 7300 sq ft
- 6) Could R-1-1 and R-1-2 be combined into one district? The primary difference is a slight increase in lot size (7200 to 7500 sq ft) and an increase in minimum home size (1000 to 1300 sq ft). Seems like a small enough distinction to do away with R-1-2 and just leave R-1 as the standard single family zone
- 7) Page 40 – suggest reducing minimum lot sizes for R-1-A to 2500 sq ft, possibly with a requirement of 3000 sq ft for ‘end units’ to make these a more feasible option
- 8) Page 42 – consider combining into one category rather than having 3 multi family categories regulating the allowed number of stories
- 9) Page 44 – my reading of the M-1 zoning is that it is intended to allow mobile homes to remain where they already exist? Is this still necessary?



- 10) Page 44 and 45 – consider reducing the minimum lot sizes for M-2 and M-3 (especially M-3). Manufactured homes can serve as an affordable option for people and can provide a very high quality living environment. However, the land costs for 7200 sq ft lots may put even this option out of reach for many people
- 11) Page 49 – 51 – is there a significant difference between C-1 and C-1-Restricted outside of operating hours? Is there really a need for this distinction?
- 12) Page 51 – consider allowing multi family in the CBD. Would potentially provide for uses in second stories of buildings as well as small multi family projects that would complement the area and bring in more people to attract new business.
- 13) Page 71 and 75 – should there be a requirement for digital submission of Construction Plans in addition to drawings?
- 14) Page 84 – alignment of text in the Permit Fees chart
- 15) Page 87 – digital submission of sign plans?
- 16) Page 93 – consider including an amortization policy for non-conforming uses to bring them into conformance over a period of time

Subdivision Ordinance

- 1) Consider the development of Low Impact Development Standards as part of the drainage requirements – LID is a method for managing stormwater on site through features like rain gardens, swales, etc. rather than focusing on engineered solutions
- 2) ROW widths of 60 feet for minor streets (eg residential marginal access streets) is excessive. While pavement width requirements are only 31 feet, wide ROW will result in houses set well back from the pavement and potentially wider streets which contributes to higher speeds for vehicles. This detracts from pedestrian environment and decreases safety
- 3) No mention of connectivity between subdivisions – there is a statement that minor streets should be designed to discourage through traffic, but not providing for connection between subdivision results in all traffic being forced onto arterials and connectors and increases congestion
- 4) Revise parkland dedication to allow City to decide on land dedication or fee-in-lieu



Chris Holtkamp, AICP
Holtkamp Planning

