

# Comprehensive Plan 2008

*Little Elm, Texas*



## Chapter 4: Future Land Use Plan



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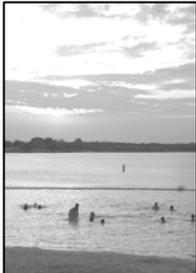
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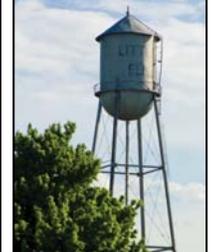
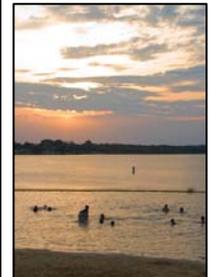
# INTRODUCTION

The right of a municipality to coordinate growth is rooted in its need to protect the health, safety, and welfare of local citizens. An important part of establishing the guidelines for such responsibility is the *Future Land Use Plan*, which establishes an overall framework for the preferred pattern of development within Little Elm. Specifically, the *Future Land Use Plan* designates various areas within the Town for particular land uses, based principally on the specific land use policies outlined herein. The *Future Land Use Plan* is graphically depicted for use during the development plan review process with the *Future Land Use Plan Map (Plate 4-1)*, and the *Future Land Use Plan* should ultimately be reflected through the Town's policy and development decisions. The *Future Land Use Plan Map* is not a zoning map, which deals with specific development requirements on individual parcels. The zoning map and changes in zoning should, however, be based on the *Future Land Use Plan* and related *Future Land Use Plan Map*. In general, the *Future Land Use Plan* is intended to be a comprehensive blueprint of Little Elm's vision for its future land use pattern.

Little Elm's land use pattern has evolved over the last 30 years to become what it is today. The challenge now is to maintain the great areas within and history of the Town while paving the way for new, quality, sustainable development that will contribute to the Town in the years to come. This *Future Land Use Plan* has been written to achieve the following:

- Address the needs of the Town as a whole;
- Address the concerns and issues raised throughout this planning process;
- Provide policy guidance in keeping with the Town's established vision statement, goals, and objectives (Chapter 2); and
- Ensure that Little Elm is a unique and sustainable community.

This *Future Land Use Plan* is divided into two sections. First is a discussion of the recommended future pattern of land use, with an explanation of land use categories and a graphic depiction through the *Future Land Use Plan Map*; this map, **Plate 4-1**, will help guide land use decisions within the Town. Second is a discussion outlining the land use policies, which should be used in conjunction with the *Future Land Use Plan Map* to guide land use decisions as the growth, development, and perhaps redevelopment, occurs.



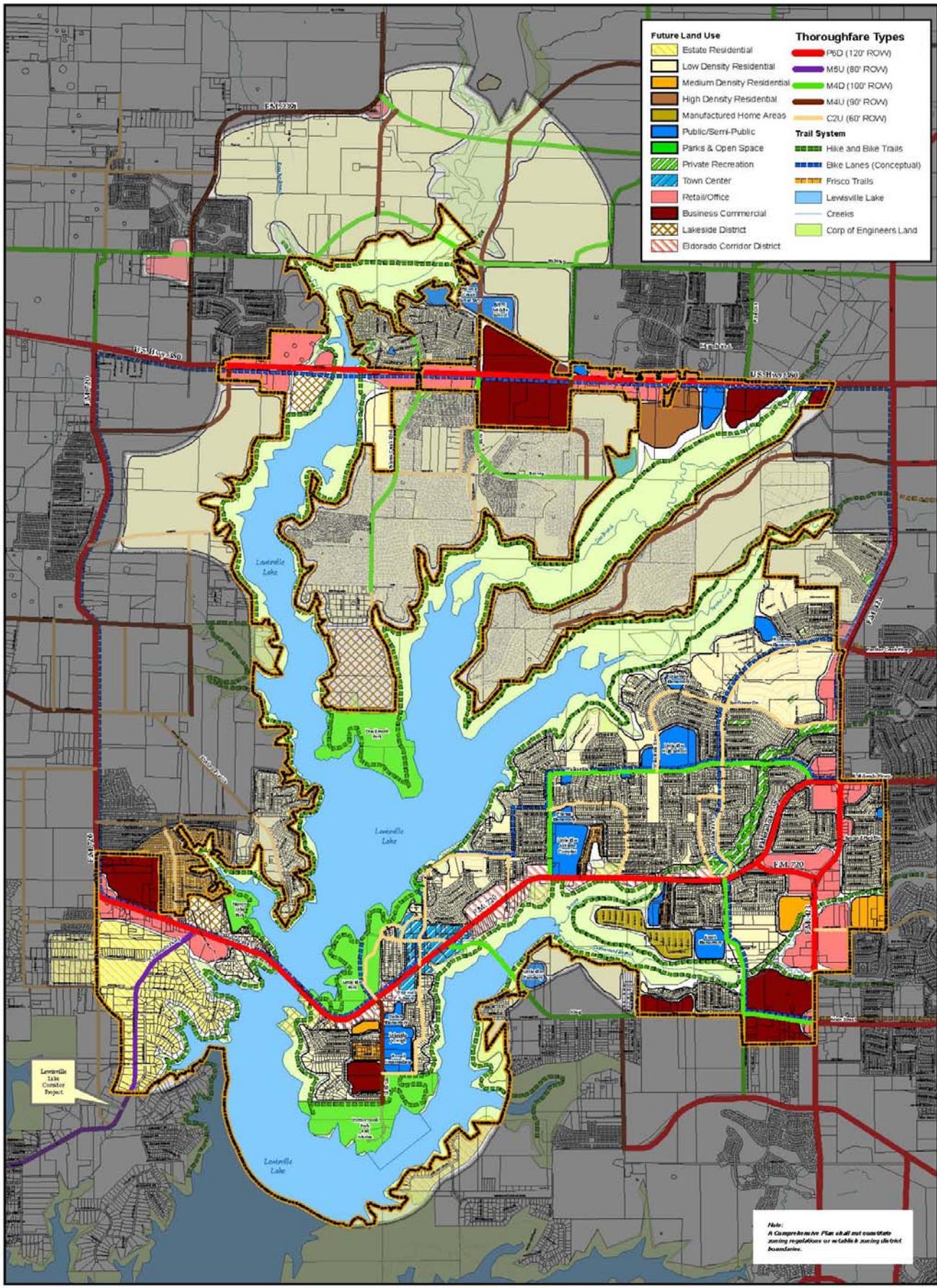


Plate 4-1



# Future Land Use Plan



Adopted: September 16, 2008

# RECOMMENDED PATTERN OF LAND USE

The *Future Land Use Plan Map*, **Plate 4-1**, has been created as the result of numerous public meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Town Staff. It is important to note that the *Future Land Use Plan Map* does not directly affect the regulation of land within Little Elm or the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) because it is not a zoning map. The *Future Land Use Plan Map* is intended to provide a graphic depiction of Little Elm's ideal land use pattern. It should be used by the Town to guide decisions on proposed zoning/development and development standards in the future. It should be noted that while the *Future Land Use Plan Map* itself is an integral part of this *Future Land Use Plan* chapter, the land use policies that support the map and that relate to how land use development should occur are also important. These policies are contained in the last section of this *Future Land Use Plan*. The subsequent paragraphs, related map colors, and pictures are provided to clarify the various land use types shown on the *Future Land Use Plan Map*.

## *Land Use Categories*

**Table 4-1** below outlines descriptions of the various land use types on the *Land Use Plan Map*. Also shown are related map colors and example images.

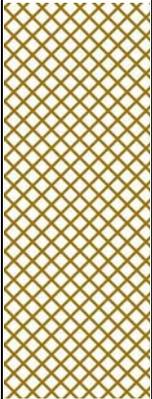
Table 4-1  
 Land Use Types & Descriptions  
 Town of Little Elm, Texas

| <i>Land Use Category</i>   | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>                                      |
|--|---|---|
| Estate Residential   |  | Single-family homes with lot sizes one acre or greater. |
|  |   |   |

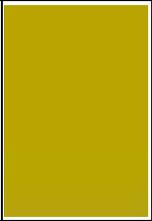




| <i>Land Use Category</i>   | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|--|---|--|
| Low Density Residential  |    | Single-family homes of varying lot sizes that are smaller than one acre. |
|    |   |  |
| Medium Density Residential   |   | Townhomes, two-family homes (duplexes), three-plex, and four-plex homes. |
|  |   |  |
| High Density Residential   |  | Apartments and condominiums.   |
|  |   |  |

| <i>Land Use Category</i> | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Lakeside District        |  | A mixture of residential and non-residential uses oriented to the Lake with Lake tourism and recreation. The residential component will comprise a greater percentage of the development than the non-residential component. Non-residential uses should be limited to office, retail, and public uses such as docks, marinas, beaches, and other Lake tourist activities. |



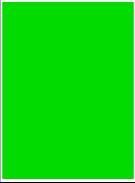
|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Manufactured Home |  | Manufactured homes (generally only recommended where these areas currently exist). |
|-------------------|---|--|





| <i>Land Use Category</i> | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Public / Semi-Public     |  | Educational, governmental, or institutional uses. These uses are generally permitted within any area. The uses shown represent only those that are currently in existence, although others are anticipated with future population. |

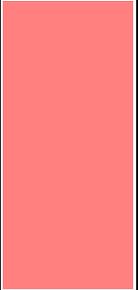


|                    |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Parks & Open Space |  | Parks and open spaces that are currently in existence. These uses are generally permitted within any area. |
|--------------------|--|--|

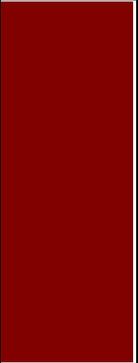


|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Private Recreation |  | Private parks and recreation areas that are currently in existence. |
|--------------------|---|---|



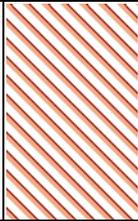
| <i>Land Use Category</i> | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Retail / Office          |  | Establishments providing merchandise for retail sale, including a mall, daycare, shopping center, restaurant or bars, grocery store, souvenir shops, etc. Also, professional or corporate office, medical or doctor's office, administrative office such as real estate, insurance, or bank. |



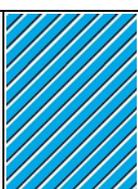
|                     |  |   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Business Commercial |  | Combination of light industrial and light commercial uses. Businesses engaged in warehousing, distribution, manufacturing are envisioned. Also, includes business establishments that primarily provide a service such as automobile service stations, self-storage businesses, and repair shops. Such businesses/uses may have outside storage. An example of a suitable uses would be a business technology park. |
|---------------------|--|---|





| <i>Land Use Category</i>   | <i>Color</i>  | <i>Description</i>   |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Eldorado Corridor District |  | Retail and office uses, as well as the Town Hall. Businesses located within the corridor should have structures of a higher caliber with quality design standards. A unique and unified appearance should be encouraged. |



|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| Town Center |  | Mixed-use area with civic, park, cultural, retail, and residential uses, which is design to be a focal point of the community. |
|-------------|--|--|



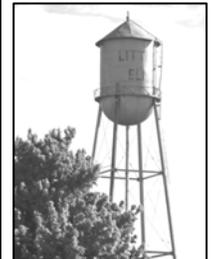
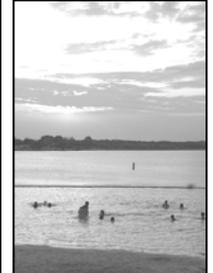
## Land Use Categories & Related Calculations

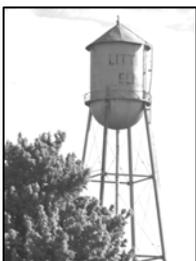
Table 4-2 lists the categories of land use by acreage for the Town limits of Little Elm and its ETJ. This information represents the calculations from the recommended, graphic pattern of land use shown on the *Land Use Plan Map (Plate 4-1)*. Although municipalities in Texas do not have much land use control in the ETJ, land uses have been recommended within the ETJ for primary purposes. One, if the Town annexes an area, the recommended use of the land is known and it can be zoned or planned for accordingly. Second, it is important to know the intended land use when various types of studies are conducted by the Town or other public entities; examples include population projections, engineering studies, site location studies (i.e., for retail or traffic), and school enrollment projections.

Table 4-2:  
 Land Use Types & Calculation  
 Town of Little Elm, Texas

| Land Use Category          | Town Limits     |                | ETJ            |                | Total<br>(Town Limits + ETJ) |                |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                            | Acres           | Percent        | Acres          | Percent        | Acres                        | Percent        |
| Estate Residential         | 455.8           | 3.82%          | 77.0           | 1.21%          | 532.8                        | 2.92%          |
| Low Density Residential    | 2,521.3         | 21.14%         | 4,000.0        | 63.10%         | 6,521.3                      | 35.70%         |
| Medium Density Residential | 110.1           | 0.92%          | 110.0          | 1.74%          | 220.1                        | 1.20%          |
| High Density Residential   | 90.6            | 0.76%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 90.6                         | 0.50%          |
| Manufactured Home          | 67.1            | 0.56%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 67.1                         | 0.37%          |
| Lakeside District          | 98.5            | 0.83%          | 172.0          | 2.71%          | 270.5                        | 1.48%          |
| Public\Semi-Public         | 308.3           | 2.58%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 308.3                        | 1.69%          |
| Parks & Open Space         | 725.9           | 6.09%          | 89.0           | 1.40%          | 814.9                        | 4.46%          |
| Private Recreation         | 8.6             | 0.07%          | 18.0           | 0.28%          | 26.6                         | 0.15%          |
| Retail\Office              | 565.0           | 4.74%          | 55.0           | 0.87%          | 620.0                        | 3.39%          |
| Eldorado Corridor District | 149.0           | 1.25%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 149.0                        | 0.82%          |
| Business Commercial        | 530.9           | 4.45%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 530.9                        | 2.91%          |
| Town Center                | 70.0            | 0.59%          | 0.0            | 0.00%          | 70.0                         | 0.38%          |
| Lake and Floodplain        | 6,225.9         | 52.20%         | 1,818.0        | 28.68%         | 8,043.9                      | 44.04%         |
| <b>Total Acreage</b>       | <b>11,927.0</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>6,339.0</b> | <b>100.00%</b> | <b>18,266.0</b>              | <b>100.00%</b> |

Method for calculating the future land use acres: five percent was added to the actual calculated value of each land use category to account for the abstract shape of each "land use bubble." Rights-of-way are incorporated into each land use and are not shown as a separate category.





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# LAND USE POLICIES

## Balanced Land Use

The various types of land use have different needs in terms of location. For example, residential areas should be designed to have minimal impact from major roadways, thereby preserving the integrity of local neighborhoods and ensuring the safety of local residents. In contrast, non-residential uses should generally be located at major intersections in order to allow them the highest visibility possible. The exception to this may be heavy commercial and industrial uses, which often have open storage areas and large warehouses that do not require visibility from major roadways.

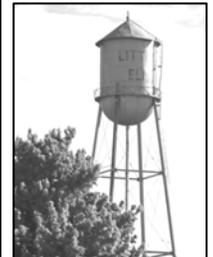
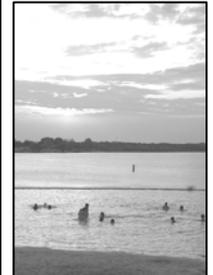
Retail and some commercial land uses require locations that provide visibility, because these types of land uses often depend on “walk-in business” for success. Consequently, land along several of Little Elm’s major thoroughfares has been primarily designated for and should generally be preserved for retail and commercial land uses. The market, in conjunction with Town policy, has dictated the existing land use pattern in Little Elm over the years. The *Future Land Use Plan*, graphically shown on **Plate 4-1**, further reinforces these concepts.

It should be noted that non-residential development is extremely important to the economic support of the Town; this importance will only increase with the increased needs of additional population. It has been shown that non-residential uses are less intensive users of public services than residential uses. Therefore, non-residential uses have the benefit of subsidizing the residential uses through their taxes. Also, it should be recognized that developing all major roadway frontages with non-residential uses is not feasible, as there will be no market for such large amounts of these types of land uses.

***Policy FP.1: Maintain a Future Land Use Plan and Map that balances residential and non-residential land uses. (Reference: Goals F.8 & F.12)***

**Sub-Policy FP.1.1:** Designate the majority of the vacant land along Highway 380 as non-residential and promote business campuses, office developments, and/or retail establishments.

**Sub-Policy FP.1.2:** Encourage unique retail development incorporating livability characteristics, such as, but not limited to:





- Pedestrian and roadway connections to adjacent neighborhood areas;
- Less visible parking – this could be achieved by internalizing parking with buildings out front (as opposed to large parking lots located adjacent to the street), or with wide setbacks;
- Separation of parking areas to minimize wide expanses of concrete;
- Minimized spacing between buildings to encourage walking instead of driving; and
- Adjacent accessible land uses, such as residential and/or office, that provide a built-in market.

**Retail Design Layout – Comparison of Typical & Unique**

*Typical Retail Site Layout*

Layout of retail site places parking next to roadways, with buildings being secondary. Shared parking opportunities are reduced due to placement. Residential areas are separated with screening wall, not integrated with the retail development. Access from residential area is difficult and uninviting because of a lack of pedestrian orientation.

*Unique Retail Site Layout*

Layout of retail site places buildings next to roadways, with parking internalized. Shared parking opportunities are increased due to placement. Residential areas are connected, not separated from the retail development. Central open space serves as a focal point and makes access from residential area more inviting than simply providing sidewalks and provides pedestrian interest.

Source: Hall, Kenneth B. and Gerald A. Porterfield. *Community by Design: New Urbanism for Suburbs and Small Cities*, page 190.

Sub-Policy FP.1.3: Provide guidance on the location of future office, retail, commercial, and industrial uses.

Sub-Policy FP.1.4: Promote a diversified local economy by encouraging a variety of non-residential land uses.

Sub-Policy FP.1.5: Working collaboratively with local and state economic development groups, support the development of quality non-residential development.

Sub-Policy FP.1.6: Provide for limited, traditional multiple-family development and/or two-family (duplex) development.

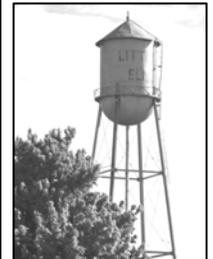
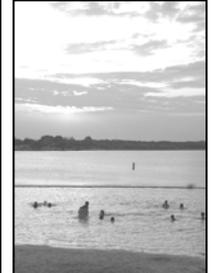
## Quality Design

The level of the design can improve or takeaway from the quality of life, or “livability,” of Little Elm. Important design elements that can be enhanced through planning include building materials, site design, landscaping, and similar elements. Such elements are often difficult to quantify because their aesthetic quality is inherently subjective.

Quality design contributes to the longevity of non-residential areas and neighborhoods. For example, the impact building materials have on the appearance of a community is substantial. When a neighborhood ages, the wear and tear on the materials becomes more and more noticeable. Since most homes in a neighborhood are built at the same time, they typically have maintenance issues within a similar span. If poor materials are used in construction and all the homes age at the same pace, then a blighted neighborhood could result.



Entryway Feature





A subdivision that is designed in a cookie-cutter format (where homes are virtually identical) lacks diversity and visual interest. Uniqueness of a neighborhood is developed by all the homes not being the same, in regards to building materials, size, floor plans, front facades, etc. In an effort to help create ownership, neighborhood pride, and encourage long-term commitment, homes should be individual, definable and not just replicas of the adjacent homes.

*Policy FP.2: Ensure quality design of residential and non-residential developments. (Reference: Goals F.8 & F.9)*

Sub-Policy FP.2.1: Promote standards that produce quality signs and provide a common sign theme along roadways.

Sub-Policy FP.2.2: Promote the use of common design elements for the construction of non-residential buildings and streetscapes, such as street or parking lot lighting.

Sub-Policy FP.2.3: Develop and implement anti-monotony standards for residential developments.

Sub-Policy FP.2.4: Encourage all developments to utilize energy and water conservation techniques.

## *Livability Concepts in Land Use Decisions*

The way in which land is developed within a community has a direct and lasting impact on quality of life. In the future as development continues, opportunities will exist for Little Elm to incorporate livability concepts within its land use decisions to improve the overall quality of life. Ideally, the result of a community's land use pattern is that citizens' housing and services needs are met while providing a desirable environment to live, work, and shop.

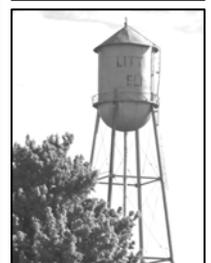
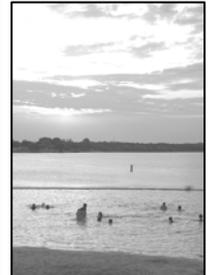
*Policy FP.3: Integrate livability concepts into land use decisions, such as rezoning cases. (Reference: Goal F.8)*

Sub-Policy FP.3.1: The following are example questions to consider during a rezoning request:

- Does the development provide something unique for Little Elm – a diversity of housing types, lot sizes, land uses, amenities, etc.?
- Is the development within walking distance to retail areas, public uses, parks and open space, etc.?
- Does the development provide off-street pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and future development?
- How does the development proposal impact the Town fiscally – tax revenue, employment, public considerations (such as parks, schools, etc.)?
- How does the development proposal impact the school district in terms of school planning and school attendance zoning?
- Does the development allow for the future integration of transit, when applicable?
- How does the development respect environmentally significant areas like floodplains – are these areas used as an amenity?

## *Develop Recreational Connections*

Pedestrian access between parks, public spaces, and neighborhoods can enhance citizens' sense of community. This type of access can also provide a means for residents





to move through the community and meet their neighbors and can provide a safe way to increase children's mobility. A functional network of trails and connections will help Little Elm maintain a unique, community atmosphere as the Town's population grows.

Participation in the trail system in developed areas will most likely be the responsibility of the Town of Little Elm, but developer participation can be solicited in areas that are currently vacant as they develop. In the case of creating a trail system in newer or developing areas, some communities have adopted policies that new subdivisions provide points of access to a designated trail segment. These access points are generally located such that they provide connections with trails on adjacent properties.

*Policy FP.4: Promote the development and implementation of pedestrian connections, hike and bike trails, bike lanes, parks, and open spaces. (Reference: Goal F.8.D)*

Sub-Policy FP.4.1: Apply specific standards and/or methods to integrate hike and bike trails, bike lanes, parks, and open spaces into existing and future developments.

Sub-Policy FP.4.2: Ensure non-residential development is complementary to the surrounding residential development by requiring at least one (1) connection between the two developments.

### *Capitalize on the Lake*

One of the major issues raised during the visioning process for this Comprehensive Plan was the desire, of both community leaders and citizens, to capitalize on the Town's relationship with Lewisville Lake. The Lake is one of the major attributes that Little Elm has, and it is underutilized. However, development along many parts of the Lake is established, and in many cases has been established for years. Now, the challenge for the Town is to better incorporate the lake into the community and utilize this immense natural features for the betterment of the community.

*Policy FP.5: Encourage development that capitalizes on the features of Lewisville Lake. (Reference: Goal F.9)*

Sub-Policy FP.5.1: Preserve and promote public access to the lake by acquiring easements for hike and bike trails.

Sub-Policy FP.5.2: Encourage and promote the establishment of new public parks adjacent to the lake.

Sub-Policy FP.5.3: Promote the preservation of lake views from parks and rights-of-way (e.g., roadways).



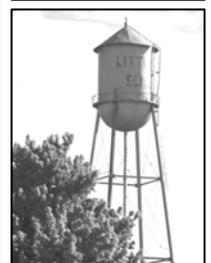
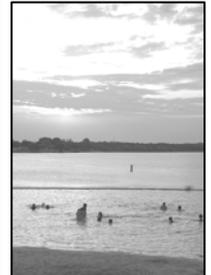
Lewisville Lake

## *Town Center*

Through much public involvement, the Town has developed a Town Center concept. This Town Center is envisioned to be a focal point of the community and to help future define the overall image of the Town of Little Elm. The conclusion of the Town Center planning effort is documented within the Town Center report. The *Future Land Use Plan* and *Future Land Use Plan Map* need to accommodate and promote the concept of a Little Elm Town Center.

*Policy FP.6: Support the development of a Town Center to serve as the focal point of the community. (Reference: Goal F.10)*

Sub-Policy FP.6.1: Promote a Town Center that is a mixed-use development with pedestrian amenities and lake/waterfront characteristics.





Sub-Policy FP.6.2: Promote a mixture of residential opportunities, such as apartments, condominiums, lofts, town homes, and patio homes.

Sub-Policy FP.6.3: Ensure the Town Center has formal public open spaces to serve community events.



Town Center Concepts

Sub-Policy FP.6.4: Utilize different communication methods (e.g., the Town's Communication Strategy, as discussed in the Growth Strategy) to inform people of Town Center events.

### *Consistency between the Plan & Zoning*

At times, the Town will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the *Future Land Use Plan* (Plate 4-1). Review of such development proposals should include the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the site and the surrounding area?
- Is the proposed change a better use than that recommended by the *Future Land Use Plan*?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or will the proposed use be compatible with, and/or enhance, adjacent residential areas?

- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare of the community? Would it contribute to the Town's long-term economic well-being?

It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown on the Plan for a particular area. This may be due to changing markets, the quality of proposed developments and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future after the Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to Little Elm, then these proposals should be approved, and the *Future Land Use Plan* should be amended accordingly.

***Policy FP.7: Ensure zoning districts are in agreement with the Future Land Use Plan. (Reference: Goal F.11)***

***Sub-Policy FP.7.1:*** Amend the Future Land Use Plan prior to rezoning land that would otherwise result in an inconsistency between the *Future Land Use Plan* and the Zoning Map.

***Sub-Policy FP.7.2:*** Work collaboratively with landowners to rezone properties to conform to the *Future Land Use Plan*.

