

INTRODUCTION



2040 Comprehensive Plan
Your Plan for Your Hometown

Adopted March 27, 2023

The Katy Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide future development, redevelopment and community enhancement efforts over the next 10-20 years. It serves as a framework for thoughtful community discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing Katy and the opportunities that will shape its future. Through long-range planning efforts, the community can accommodate its projected growth and revitalization needs in a manner that preserves its history, culture and overall quality of life for current and future residents.

Process

The new Comprehensive Plan resulted from a 17-month planning and community engagement process. The plan’s findings and action recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of Katy’s projected growth and development in the coming years. It provides guiding principles, goals and action priorities that will help City officials, board/commission appointees and staff in determining the location, financing and sequencing of public improvements; administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The plan also provides a basis for coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of municipal government.



Plan Purpose

A comprehensive plan is usually the most important policy document a municipal government prepares and maintains. This is because the plan:

- Lays out a long-range vision regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community.
- Considers at once the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur, along with its regional context.
- Assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key “building blocks” of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, redevelopment, housing, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, etc.).



- Serves as a guideline for measuring success and is amended from time to time to remain a “living document” that is able to address changing circumstances.

Through a comprehensive plan, a community determines how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth and to revitalize older neighborhoods and non-residential areas. The Katy Comprehensive Plan aims to ensure that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace and so that residents’ quality of life will be enhanced.

The plan also clarifies and states the City’s intentions regarding the area’s physical development and associated infrastructure investment. This information creates a greater level of predictability for residents, land owners, developers, potential investors, and partner agencies and organizations.

PLAN FOCUS AREAS

Focus areas within the Comprehensive Plan provide direction when setting program and funding priorities to enhance the quality of life in Katy. The **five focus areas** of this plan are highlighted below. These focus areas were considered in developing the Existing City Report and helped orient this Future City portion of the plan.

Growth Capacity



Land Use and Development



PLAN FOCUS AREAS

Transportation



Economic Development



Recreation and Amenities





Why Plan?

Local planning allows Katy to better control its future rather than simply dealing with change as it happens. Planning enables the City to manage future growth and development actively as opposed to reacting to development and redevelopment on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues. The process for developing the Comprehensive Plan involved major community discussions about Katy's priorities and its capability to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support these priorities. Such considerations led to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to quality of life will be affected.

Long-range comprehensive planning provides an opportunity for the City's elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create and maintain. Through the plan development process, Katy's leaders could look broadly at programs for growth management, economic development, parks and recreation, and provision of public infrastructure and facilities and how these efforts may relate to one another. The plan ultimately represents a "big picture" of the community and its near-term and longer-range future. In sum, essential reasons for long-range planning are to:

- Provide a balance of land uses and services throughout the community to meet the needs and desires of the population.
- Ensure adequate public facilities to meet the demands of future development and redevelopment.
- Achieve and maintain a development pattern that reflects the values of the community and ensures a balanced tax base between residential and non-residential development.
- Ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of the perception and image of the community.
- Involve local citizens in the decision-making process, provide a transparent planning process and reach consensus on the future vision for Katy.

Planning is the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.





Use of This Plan

A comprehensive plan, when embraced by leadership and residents, has the potential to boost a community's livability and its opportunities for tangible accomplishments. This plan is ultimately a guidance document for City officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health and "look and feel" of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine but essential functions such as code compliance.
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City's budgeting efforts.
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to Comprehensive Plan objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of subdivision and land development activities).
- Departmental work plans and resources in key areas.
- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits and strategies.
- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects.
- Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Despite these many avenues for action, the Comprehensive Plan should not be considered a "cure all" for every tough problem the community faces. This plan focuses primarily on the responsibilities of City government in the physical planning arena, where municipalities normally have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value such as education and social services. Long-range plans, as vision and policy documents, also must remain relatively general.

The resulting plan may not address every challenge before the city, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.

Planning Authority and Requirements

Unlike in some other states, municipalities in Texas are not mandated by state government to prepare and maintain local comprehensive plans. Section 213 of the Texas Local Government Code provides that, “The governing body of a municipality may adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the municipality.” The Code also cites the basic reasons for long-range, comprehensive community planning such as, “The powers granted under this chapter are for the purposes of promoting sound development of municipalities and promoting public health, safety and welfare.” The Code also gives Texas municipalities the freedom to “define the content and design” of their plans, although Section 213 suggests that a comprehensive plan may:

- Include but is not limited to provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- Consist of a single plan or a coordinated set of plans organized by subject and geographic area; and,
- Be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

Regarding the final point above, in granting zoning authority to municipalities through Local Government Code Chapter 211, the State of Texas stipulated in Section 211.004 that "Zoning regulations must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan and must be designed to:

1. lessen congestion in the streets;
2. secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
3. promote health and the general welfare;
4. provide adequate light and air;
5. prevent the overcrowding of land;
6. avoid undue concentration of population; or
7. facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewers, schools, parks, and other public requirements."

Therefore, as a Texas municipality that has adopted and administers zoning regulations, it is prudent for the City of Katy to have an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan to guide its land use policies and zoning strategy.



IMAGE SOURCE:
Texas Department
of Transportation

Katy City Charter and Code of Ordinances

Katy is a Home Rule City as established by the City's Home Rule Charter, which was originally adopted through an election held on January 17, 1981, and amended most recently on May 1, 2021. The City established a City Planning and Zoning Commission (CPZ) through Section 23 of its adopted Zoning Ordinance (found in Exhibit 14A within the City Code of Ordinances at <https://ecode360.com/38884693>). The CPZ's powers and duties are enumerated in Section 23.3, including:

23.3-1: To make studies and project plans for improvement of the city, with a view toward its future development and extension, and to recommend to the city council all matters for the development and advancement of the city's facilities, layout and appearance, and to perform all duties imposed upon the "CPZ Commission" by the statutes of the state.

23.3-2: To make plans and maps of the whole or any portion of the city and of land outside the city located within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of Katy, which, in the opinion of the "CPZ Commission," bears a relation to the planning of the city, and to make changes in, additions to, and extensions of such plans or maps when it deems same advisable.

23.3-3: To confer with and advise property owners pertaining to location and erection of structures in order to promote conformity to the overall city plan.

23.3-5: To assist all other municipal and governmental agencies, and especially the city council, in formulating and executing proper plans of municipal development.

23.3-6: To plan and recommend the location, plan, and extent of city alleyways, viaducts, bridges, subways, parkways, parks, playgrounds, airports, automobile parking places and other public properties, and of public utilities, including bus terminals, railroads, railroad depots, and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, lights, sanitation, sewage, sewage disposal, drainage, flood control, transportation, communication, marketing, and shipping facilities, power and other purposes and for the removal, relocation, widening, extension, narrowing, vacation, abandonment or change of use of any of the foregoing public places, works, buildings, facilities, or utilities.

23.3-7: To select and recommend to the city council routes of streets, avenues and boulevards, and particularly to investigate and recommend the opening, widening, or abandonment of streets, avenues, boulevards, and alleys or the changing thereof to conform with the city's system, present and future, of boulevards, streets, avenues, alleyways, parks and parkways.

Section 23 also specifies the CPZ's role in zoning and subdivision regulation as an advisory body to the City Council.



Adoption of the City of Katy's previous Comprehensive Plan, in 2001, is codified in Chapter 14, Zoning, of the City Code of Ordinances. In addition to restating the state-specified purposes of local planning and zoning, Section 14.01.001(a) also intends for the Comprehensive Plan to provide guidance to:

- "... prevent the flooding of land by stormwater and to generally preserve the historic hometown heritage of the city."
- "... serve as a basis for future development and growth in the city."
- "... be a basis for all future city plans, policies, and strategies and used to coordinate and guide Katy development strategies ..." [and require their compliance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan].

Adoption of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan is also called out in Chapter 10, Subdivision Regulation, of the City Code of Ordinances. Section 10.10.001(a) then specifies that development designs and the design, public dedication and construction of associated streets, infrastructure and easements shall be "in accordance with the goals and guidelines set down in" the Comprehensive Plan.

What Katy Residents Had to Say

Community and leadership engagement activities during the comprehensive planning process included:

- **Listening sessions** with a group of former Katy Mayors, entities focused on Katy-area education and economic development, and members of the City's Downtown Advisory Committee (along with other informal listening sessions held for the City's concurrent Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan process, including groups of long-time and newer residents and homeowner association representatives; City board/commission members; representatives of local partner organizations and public agencies such as Katy Heritage Society, Keep Katy Beautiful, Katy/Coastal Prairie Conservancy, Katy ISD, Brookshire-Katy Drainage District and Harris County Precinct 4 Parks; business and Katy Area Chamber representatives; and City officials and staff). [April 2022]
- A **Town Hall Meeting on Katy's Future** open to anyone who wanted to attend. [April 2022]
- Two meetings with the **City Planning and Zoning Commission (CPZ)**, one each during the Existing City and Future City phases of the process. [April and August 2022]
- Three meetings with a **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee**, convened to serve as a "sounding board" as the Future City portion of the plan was drafted and refined. [September and December 2022, January 2023]

- Three **joint workshops** at key process milestone points with the City Council and CPZ, joined by the CPAC for the third and final workshop. [February and May 2022, and January 2023]
- An informal **public open house** on the overall draft plan. [February 2023]
- Two **public hearings** on the final proposed Comprehensive Plan – one held by the CPZ prior to its recommendation of plan adoption to City Council, and one held by the Council prior to its consideration of plan adoption. [February and March 2023]

In addition, an **online community survey** to gather broad input to the Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan was available the entire month of March 2022 and disseminated and promoted in various ways by City officials and staff. The survey received more than 1,200 responses and, while focused primarily on parks and recreation considerations, also drew comments and insights pertinent to a range of community planning issues and Katy's overall livability. A summary of the survey results is included in the nearly 40-page Public Involvement Summary Appendix to the Master Plan, along with all the other input obtained for that plan, available at <https://online.encodeplus.com/regs/katy-tx/doc-viewer.aspx#secid-39>.



Members of City Planning & Zoning Commission

QUOTABLE

A sampling of comments from Katy residents, as input to this plan:

"We need to honor the history and traditions of the community."

"We need to stay ahead of growth, to keep our services at a high level."

"We need more trees, and incentives to protect trees."

"Don't forget the old section of Katy. We need to maintain and repair the infrastructure we already have."

"Visitors need the impression of a clean street, facades and other visual clues about pride and safety."

"We need connected parks via walking trails."

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<p>"This plan needs to be a living document. We can't just do it and then stop, need to keep going. Need that road map."</p>		<p>"The busines district is a very special place, the heartbeat of Katy. Needs a balance of preservation and a gathering place."</p>
<p>"We need another detention pond north of town. The railroad track blocks the drainage."</p>	<p>"Mobility and infastructure need to be priorities."</p>	<p>"We need to keep a balance of residential and commercial."</p>
<p>"More people are working from home. If that trend continues, more people will want to use public resources and utilities."</p>	<p>"The Old Katy District should be more lively and energetic. It is such a cute area with so much potential."</p>	<p>"We need to make the best use of the space we have left, and our funding."</p>
<p>"Katy should be more pedestrian and bike friendly. Need to fix the gaps."</p>	<p>"The industrial area is an economic driver, bringing people in."</p>	<p>"People don't know where Katy stops and starts. Need that identity and placemaking."</p>

Future City

While the Katy Existing City Report provides background and insights about Katy as it is today (available at [doc-viewer.aspx#secid-6](#)), this Future City portion of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on Katy as it intends to be in the years ahead. These aspirations are presented in topic areas that are central to Katy’s physical growth and development as listed earlier in this Introduction. Each topical section highlights key issues and considerations followed by a Framework for Action portion. A final section on plan implementation considerations, priorities and procedures rounds out the Future City portion of the plan.

Vision and Guiding Principles

A **vision** is a broad statement of what a community hopes and intends to be in the future. It offers a picture of that future to provide inspiration, motivation and a framework for more detailed planning and decision-making. The Vision Statement formulated with the Katy City Council and CPZ is in the box to the right.

A **guiding principle** expresses a basic value or operating policy that will apply regardless of the course of action ultimately chosen. In essence, guiding principles frame how an organization goes about pursuing its mission. These principles should be consulted when making crucial decisions and when evaluating the results of previous decisions and actions.

Guiding Principle 1

Katy will continue to be **PRO-ACTIVE** in providing a high quality of life for all residents, listening and responding to residents’ concerns and aspirations, and seeking to involve more residents, businesses and other partners in making Katy a strong community.

Guiding Principle 2

Katy will be **ENGAGED** as it seeks to build and maintain partnerships in all arenas, including transportation, infrastructure, economic development, emergency response, and parks and recreation.


Guiding Principle 3

Katy will be **AUTHENTIC** as it seeks to preserve its small-town feel and unique identity, through continuing improvements to public areas and facilities, historic preservation efforts, and ongoing and new community events that bring people together.

Our Vision for Katy

Katy will be a premier family-oriented community, providing a safe, connected and resilient place to live, work, invest, learn and worship.

Katy will also maintain its small-town feel and preserve its identity and heritage, offering residents and visitors an amenity-filled, welcoming community.






Guiding Principle 4

Katy will be **FOCUSED** on maintaining the core elements that are valued by residents, including public safety and infrastructure to meet today’s needs and beyond.

Guiding Principle 5

Katy will be **CONNECTED** both as neighbors and residents, and in working to achieve a citywide pathways network that better links areas of the city.

Pathways to Action

The **Framework for Action** in each plan section provides goals and identifies strategic action priorities:

- A **Goal** is a statement of a desired outcome (“end”) toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps (“means”).
- A strategic **Action Priority** is aimed at seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources – financial and otherwise – and recognizing that a broader agenda of new or ongoing activities will also be pursued in the meantime.

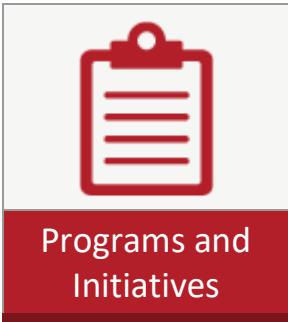
The action priorities in this Comprehensive Plan are presented in five categories that represent the major ways that plan goals and initiatives are typically advanced and accomplished:

Like many local governments, Katy uses a multi-year capital improvements planning process to identify and budget for “big ticket” projects, especially those that must be phased and/or coordinated with other initiatives. This may include street infrastructure; water, sanitary sewer and drainage improvements; parks, trails and recreation facility construction and upgrades; construction of public buildings; and purchases of land, vehicles or major equipment. With a typical five-year outlook, a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) provides predictability regarding a jurisdiction’s capital investment plans and priorities for the benefit and awareness of citizens and private interests. Anticipating and adequately budgeting for major capital projects will be essential to implementing this Comprehensive Plan. Likewise, decisions regarding the prioritization of proposed capital improvements should reflect the direction and priorities of this plan.

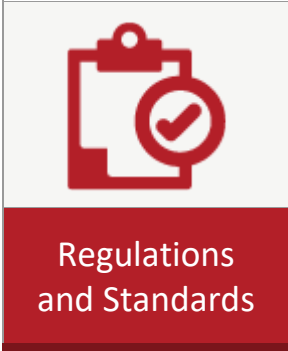


Capital
Investments

Programs involve the routine activities of City departments and staff, as well as special projects and initiatives they may also undertake. As part of Comprehensive Plan implementation, this method may include initiating new or adjusting existing City programs and activities; expanding community outreach efforts; or providing specialized training to accomplish a priority objective more promptly and/or effectively. Other City partners – public, private and/or non-profit – may also have ongoing programs or choose to pursue new initiatives that lead to desired outcomes expressed in the Comprehensive Plan goals or in more its specific action steps.



Given that private investment decisions account for a vast majority of a city’s physical form, land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamental for plan implementation. Consequently, zoning and subdivision regulations and associated development criteria and technical engineering standards are the basic keys to ensuring that the form, character and quality of development reflect the City’s planning objectives. These codes should advance the community’s desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic factors. They should not delay or interfere unnecessarily with appropriate new development or redevelopment that is consistent with plan principles and directives.



Some community initiatives identified in this plan cannot be accomplished by City government on its own. They may require direct coordination, intergovernmental agreements or funding support from other public entities or levels of government. Additionally, the unique role of potential private and non-profit partners to advance the community’s action agenda should not be underestimated. This may occur through cooperative efforts, volunteer activities and in-kind services (which can count toward the local match requirements for various grant opportunities), and from public/private financing of community improvements.



Various areas of City governance require more detailed study and planning, especially as required to qualify for external funding opportunities. These studies involve targeted planning work at a finer-grain level of detail than is appropriate for comprehensive planning purposes (e.g., utility master plans, roadway alignment studies, etc.). As such, some parts of this plan will be implemented only after some additional planning or special study to clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations, including clarification of roles and potential cost-sharing when partnering is involved.

