

INTRODUCTION



The South Knoll Area Neighborhood Plan is the sixth plan in an on-going series of neighborhood, district, and corridor plans that assist in implementing the goals and strategies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The neighborhood planning process offers the opportunity to develop an in-depth knowledge of an area and develop area-specific approaches to implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

The planning area includes the South Knoll Area neighborhoods, comprised of several residential subdivisions in the northern portion of the City. Arising issues as a result of increased residential densities as homes are converted to investment properties are becoming prevalent. This planning process was initiated to better understand the issues in the area and to help guide its future.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The intent of the Neighborhood, District, and Corridor Planning process is to strengthen existing neighborhoods and places; to help stabilize neighborhoods that are in transition; and enhance the quality of life for residents. The process furthers College Station’s goals of “ensuring safe, tranquil, clean, and healthy neighborhoods with enduring character” and “valuing and protecting our cultural and historic community resources.”

Neighborhood Plans have a planning horizon of five to seven years, although changes with longer-term implications are considered during the process. The City’s various Master Plans, including the Water/Wastewater Master Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan, and others, will be amended and implemented as approved – though specific details, such as exact location and design, may be further defined through the planning process.

ABOUT THE SOUTH KNOLL AREA NEIGHBORHOOD

The South Knoll Area is made up of just over five and a half square miles and is bounded by Wellborn Road, Harvey Mitchell Parkway, Texas Avenue, Holleman Drive, Welsh Avenue, and Southwest Parkway. This area includes 14 subdivisions, and is home to approximately 10,067 residents (US Census 2010).

Housing and Business

The majority of the South Knoll Area developed between the 1940’s and 1980’s, but continuous development of additional neighborhoods within has occurred since that time. The earliest development took place in 1947 with the creation of the The Knoll subdivision. The oldest portion of the South Knoll area was annexed into College Station in 1953, while the majority of the area was incorporated into the City limits between 1967 and 1969.

The area includes more than 270 acres of commercial property, 1,012 single-family homes, 143 duplexes, and 226 multi-family units. The planning area is primarily residential, with commercial uses along its major corridors (Texas Avenue, Holleman Drive, Wellborn Road, and Harvey Mitchell Parkway).

Schools and Institutions

Located within the South Knoll Area are South Knoll Elementary School and A&M Consolidated High School. Students in the planning area are zoned to attend South Knoll Elementary, Oakwood

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Intermediate School, A&M Consolidated Middle School, and A&M Consolidated High School. In the western portion of the planning area, children living in the multi-family developments along Wellborn Road attend Rock Prairie Elementary. These students are zoned to attend Cypress Grove Intermediate School, College Station Middle School, and College Station High School.

Emergency Services come from outside of the planning area boundaries. Fire and ambulance services are generally provided from Fire Station #1 on Holleman Drive East and fire service alone by Fire Station #2 at Rio Grande.

The neighborhood is within Police Sector B and C and is divided into two community policing beats – Beats 40 and 50. The area is also served by the Code Enforcement division which monitors violations such as overgrown grass, litter, and property maintenance.

This area is home to two churches:

- Parkway Baptist Church on Southwest Parkway
- Grace Bible Church on Harvey Mitchell Parkway

Texas A&M University's growing enrollment, the limited amount of on-campus housing, and South Knoll's proximity to campus makes the area attractive for student living. As the Texas A&M student population increases, College Station, including the South Knoll Area, will continue to accommodate an increasing number of off-campus Aggies. The South Knoll Area Neighborhood Plan focuses heavily on how to retain the strength and vitality of our neighborhoods while adjusting to and accommodating a transient student population.

Parks and Natural Features

Approximately 267 acres of the planning area are identified on the City's Comprehensive Plan as both Natural Areas Protected and Reserved. These areas generally include the floodplain for Bee Creek and related tributaries that traverse the planning area.

The planning area is part of Neighborhood Park Zone 6 and Community Park Zone B, within which the City maintains over 75 acres of park space, including the College Station Cemetery, Bee Creek Park (which includes the D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum), Gabbard Park, Lemon Tree Park, and Southwest Park. Overall, there is an average of one acre of park for every 135 residents in the South Knoll Area, similar to the City's average of about one acre for every 130 residents.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Neighborhood Plan was developed over the course of a year, beginning in fall 2012. The process was broken into four phases, each with a specific function.

Phase 1, Pre-Planning (September – October 2012): The pre-planning phase was the first step in neighborhood planning. This phase focused on the mechanics of getting a plan started and moving it forward. During this stage of the Plan, the draft boundaries were identified, a timeline established, resource teams were established, and public outreach efforts were identified.

Phase 2, Existing Conditions and Planning Vision (September 2012 – February 2013): This phase focused on data collection, public outreach, and determining the goals for the Plan. Five public meetings and four Neighborhood Resource Team meetings were held during this time to develop the planning goals. Additionally, the existing conditions analysis was conducted to establish some of the baseline data for tracking plan implementation.

Phase 3, Plan Development (March – July 2013): This plan development phase focused on the development of the Plan chapters, utilizing the goals and existing conditions that were developed during the previous phase. Draft strategies and actions were developed to achieve the stated goals and were presented at three Neighborhood Resource Team meetings. At the end of the process, an Open House meeting was held in July to present the draft Plan at a neighborhood-wide meeting and gauge acceptance of the proposed strategies.

Phase 4, Adoption and Implementation (August 2013 and ongoing): The Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Advisory Board provided a recommendation. A public hearing was held and recommendation provided at the Planning and Zoning Commission and after a public hearing the City Council adopted the Plan in August. After adoption, implementation will be on-going for the duration of the time period of the Plan (five to seven years) and may be tracked on the Plan's website at: <http://www.cstx.gov/ndcplanning>.

Area History

The earliest subdivisions in the South Knoll Area include The Knoll (1947) and South Knoll (1954). Areas of South Knoll were annexed into the City of College Station between 1953 and 1969. There are two homes in the South Knoll Area that were once located on the Texas A&M campus: 1712 Glade Street and 1700 Laura Lane. These "campus homes" were sold and moved south in 1965.

The City of College Station collaborated with Quimby McCoy Preservation Architecture, LLC in 2007 to conduct a Historic Resource Survey of the City to document and determine sites of historical significance in the area. This survey included a windshield survey which resulted in an inventory of housing stock within the area and recommendations for future historic districts and landmarks in the City, including the South Knoll Area. Further information about historic resources in the South Knoll Area is provided as an appendix to the

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Plan (**Appendix C, Historic Resources**).

SOUTH KNOLL AREA NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public input is critical in the planning process. Receiving information and feedback from the community enhances the process by allowing those who know the area best – the residents, property owners, and business owners- to identify issues facing their community and possible solutions. Opportunities were provided for members of the neighborhood to voice their opinions on the direction of their neighborhood and discuss ways in which to change or maintain that direction and character of the neighborhood.

Feedback received during the planning process is provided as an appendix to the Plan (**Appendix B, Public Input Summary**).

Neighborhood Plan Kick-off Meeting

A Neighborhood Plan Kick-Off Meeting was held to introduce the planning process and provide information about City services. The meeting was publicized to the community through postcards, door hangers, neighborhood signs, the City's website, and information distributed to neighborhood organizations.

The Kick-Off Meeting was held on October 24, 2012 at South Knoll Elementary School and was attended by approximately 150 residents and property owners from the area. Maps of existing neighborhood conditions were displayed, including information such as registered rental properties, existing sidewalks, code enforcement cases, and the locations of floodplain. Those interested in becoming more involved in the planning process were encouraged to volunteer for the Neighborhood Resource Team.

A written questionnaire was distributed during the Kick-Off Meeting. Those in attendance were asked to complete the questionnaire to identify the most important issues facing their neighborhood. This information was used to determine discussion topics at future meetings.

Issues and Opportunities Meeting

A second neighborhood-wide meeting was held to collect more in-depth information about several issues identified through a questionnaire distributed during the Kick-Off Meeting, including Code Enforcement and Character; Infrastructure; Public Safety; and Bicycling and Walking. Attendees listened to a short presentation on each of the topics and participated in small group discussion workshops.

The Issues and Opportunities Meeting was held on November 26, 2012 at the College Station Conference Center and was attended by over 65 residents and property owners. The meeting was publicized to the community through an email to Kick-Off Meeting attendees, neighborhood signs, information on the City's website, and information distributed to neighborhood organizations.

Public Meeting Series

As information was gathered through the planning process, it became clear that there were several neighborhood issues that warranted further public input and discussion. A series of three meetings were held to discuss Bicycling and Walking Facilities; On-Street Parking; and HOAs and Neighborhood Associations. New feedback was received during this series of meetings that had direct impact on the outcome of the Plan.

The Public Meeting Series was held on three consecutive Tuesday evenings, February 12, February 19, and February 26, 2013 at South Knoll Elementary School. Approximately 60 residents and property owners attended the Public Meeting Series. The meetings were publicized to the community through a direct mail out to all property owners and residents in the area, flyers at community centers, information on the City's website, and information distributed to neighborhood organizations.

Open House

A final neighborhood-wide Open House Meeting was held to present the draft Plan and receive feedback. Participants discussed recommended actions with City staff and Neighborhood Resource Team members. A written survey was distributed to attendees to evaluate the planning process and opportunities for public participation.

The final Open House meeting was held on July 9, 2013 at College Station City Hall and more than 65 residents and property owners were in attendance. The meeting was publicized to the community through a direct mail out to all property owners and residents in the area, neighborhood signs, information on the City's website, and information distributed to neighborhood organizations.

RESOURCE TEAMS

The advice and expertise of two advisory teams were used throughout the planning process - the Planning Resource Team and the Neighborhood Resource Team. These teams met to offer input and

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advice, and assist with the planning process, including public outreach.

Planning Resource Team

The purpose of the Planning Resource Team is to provide technical assistance in planning and related fields, as well as oversight and guidance throughout the planning process. This team assisted in the development of the citizen engagement plan, plan timeline, neighborhood outreach, facilitation of public meetings, and development of the Plan document. This team is made up of City employees within the Planning and Development Services Department. In addition, there were several other members of City staff that contributed or assisted in the development of the Plan.

Plan Manager – Jennifer Prochazka, AICP, Principal Planner

Bob Cowell, AICP, CNU-A, Executive Director

Debbie Eller, Community Development Manager

Morgan Hester, Staff Planner

Molly Hitchcock, AICP, Assistant Director

Venessa Garza, AICP, Greenways Program Manager

Alan Gibbs, P.E., City Engineer

Joe Guerra, AICP, PTP, Transportation Planning Coordinator

Barbara Moore, Neighborhood Services Coordinator

Michael Trevino, GIS Technician

Additional Planning & Development Services staff and staff from various other departments also participated in the planning process, including the following:

Teresa Rogers, Staff Planner

Jason Schubert, AICP, Principal Planner

Jenifer Paz, Staff Planner

Matt Robinson, AICP, Senior Planner

Ed McDonald, CIP Graduate Engineer

Donald Harmon, P.E., Asst. Director Capital Projects

Troy Rother, P.E., Traffic Engineer

Eric Hurt, Interim Fire Chief

Neighborhood Resource Team

The Neighborhood Resource Team consisted of 46 people that included representatives from all geographic areas of the neighborhood and

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included both residents and property owners. The team of volunteers met over a period of eight months and served as an advisory board for the Plan Manager during the planning process. Members provided feedback on the direction of the Plan and served as community champions for the Plan by encouraging their neighbors to become active and involved in the planning process.

Jennifer Armstrong	Chris Mathewson
Charles Barr	Monica Mercer
Rodney Boehm	Barbara McCannon
Pamela Brummett	Robert McGeachin
Mary Lind Bryan	Sherron McKenzie
Amy Caldwell	Nathan Mikeska
Wendy Castro	William Moore
Helen Cluck	Curtis Morgan
J. Roland Cole	Michael Painter
Justine Ealy	Clayton Powell
Gordon Evans	Rene Ramirez
Sandra Fincher	Jared Scoggins
Jerry Fox	Jane Sielken
Cale Gardenhire	Laurie Smith
Bridgette George	Bonnie Stolt
Jean Gould	Retha Todd
Lisa Halperin	Penny Woodcock
Gary Hart	Shanna Yates
Joe Hartfiel	Elizabeth Yancey
Gene Hawkins	Karen Yancey
Carol Hipchen	James Yelich
Kathleen Kenefick	Jodi Warner,
Russell Kohel	P&Z representative
Mort Kothmann	

PLAN CONTENTS

The South Knoll Area Neighborhood Plan includes five chapters. Within the chapters, information related to citizen discussions that formed the Plan recommendations is included. Each chapter has a goal that is supported by a series of strategies and action items that reflect the work of the Neighborhood Resource Team.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter describes the South Knoll Area and outlines the

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neighborhood planning process.

Chapter 2: Neighborhood Integrity and Community Character

Neighborhood integrity can be described as a measure of the quality of life in a neighborhood. It includes resident involvement, preservation of neighborhood resources, neighborhood identity and investment, property maintenance, and adherence to adopted codes. Neighborhood integrity builds relationships among various groups so that proactive and positive interaction can occur. The objective is to address issues and work toward common goals of retaining the strength and vitality of the neighborhood.

Community character relates to the stability, sustainability, and vitality of an area through the appropriate placement and interaction of land uses. The Community Character section of this chapter identifies the location of future land uses in order to create, protect, and enhance places of distinction throughout the community.

This chapter focuses on land use, character preservation, and neighborhood organizations, with an established **Neighborhood Integrity & Community Character** Goal for the South Knoll Area **to be a neighborhood that is desired and valued for its single-family-friendly character with:**

- **Reduced character impact of high-density housing in the neighborhood;**
- **Continued investment in and maintenance of area schools, parks, and trails;**
- **Preservation of the existing larger-lot development pattern and eclectic architecture; and**
- **Effective neighborhood organizations.**

The strategies in this chapter focus on increased code compliance and property maintenance standards, additional parking standards, and the preservation of historic resources.

Chapter 3: Mobility

Mobility addresses vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian movements within and through an area. Whether for transportation or recreation, good connectivity improves the quality of life for neighborhood residents. The purpose of mobility in neighborhood planning is to ensure that all modes and routes of transportation are safe and reliable, and minimize congestion on the road system including an adequate and efficient street network, designated bike routes, a sufficient sidewalk network, and local transit services.

This chapter focuses on pedestrian and bicycle safety, accessibility, and the function of streets, with an established **Mobility Goal** for the South

Knoll Area **to maintain a safe and efficient transportation network and improve multi-modal transportation options by increasing the continuity of bicycle and pedestrian routes to key destinations, while protecting the single-family character and integrity of the neighborhood.**

The strategies in this chapter focus on additional parking restrictions to increase safety, additional sidewalks and intersection improvements, and an amendment to the Bicycle Master Plan.

Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Services

Neighborhood identity is made up of a variety of elements including public and private landscaping, community gathering places, park development and maintenance, fencing, drainage, sidewalk and public facility maintenance, and signage that serves to enhance an area's aesthetic quality. Together these elements can provide a distinct image for an area. Maintaining or improving that identity is important to promoting the long-term viability and attractiveness of a neighborhood. Public investments such as utility and street rehabilitation, drainage improvements, and streetlight programs can support neighborhood investment. Building on these elements throughout the neighborhood can strengthen its overall image and identity.

This chapter focuses on strategies relating to community services, infrastructure, capital investments, and public safety with an established **Public Facilities and Services** Goal for the South Knoll Area is **to provide and maintain public facilities and services that meet the needs of the residents and positively contribute to the integrity of the neighborhood and an enhanced single-family friendly character.**

The strategies in this chapter focus on increased code compliance and property maintenance, increased public safety, and park improvements.

Chapter 5: Implementation

The final chapter includes all of the strategies and actions that are proposed in the Plan. The plan implementation period is five to seven years. Specifically, this chapter assigns the estimated cost of implementing a particular strategy, a timeframe for when the strategy will be implemented, and the entity that is responsible for implementing the strategy.