

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES ELEMENT



Neighborhood identity is made up of a variety of elements including public and private landscaping, community gathering places, park facilities and maintenance, fencing, drainage, sidewalks, 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, and possibly improving, this identity is important to promoting the long-term viability and attractiveness of a neighborhood. Overall, these elements should work together - providing a safe, cohesive and inviting public realm.

Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a set of strategies regarding Public Facilities and Services within and serving the South Knoll Area.

Goal

Based on the public input that was received during the planning process and Staff research regarding existing conditions of the area, the **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.**

Strategy and action recommendations have been developed to progress toward this goal and are included at the end of this chapter.

Summary of Chapter Recommendations

- Increased code compliance and property maintenance
- Increased awareness of Adopt-A-Greenway
- Increased public safety
- Park improvements
- Neighborhood improvement projects

Elements of Chapter

This chapter is organized into six broad categories:

- Neighborhood Services
- Neighborhood Parks
- Floodplain & Greenways
- Infrastructure & Capital Investments
- Code Enforcement
- Public Safety

The following pages describe these components and their relationship to the South Knoll Area. This information is supported by **Appendix A, Existing Conditions** which provides supplementary quantitative data about the Area. This chapter describes some of the key issues facing the South Knoll Area and provides information and opinions garnered through the public engagement process. At the end of the chapter, strategies are identified to assist the neighborhood in moving toward the chapter goal. The broad strategies are accompanied by recommended action statements that support changes to the Comprehensive Plan and considerations for future development in the Area. Specific information about timelines, responsible parties, and estimated costs are reflected in **Chapter 5, Implementation**.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Neighborhood Services

The City's Neighborhood Services division maintains collaborative partnerships between neighborhoods, community organizations and the City of College Station. By registering a neighborhood or homeowner association with the Neighborhood Services division and becoming an active member in the Neighborhood Partnership Program, the association is eligible for resources and assistance from the City. Associations have regular communication with City staff regarding area development and City services.

Home Owners Association (HOA) Education

Workshops and seminars provide association leaders with important information such as State HOA laws, insurance requirements, financial record keeping and practices, how to conduct meetings, liability and much more. Since HOAs are legal entities, it is very important that HOA leaders understand laws related to their operations and ensure that their associations remain in good standing. These workshops are held periodically in conjunction with Community Association Institute (CAI) and offer HOA leaders certificates and education credits for workshop completion.

Through discussions with the NRT, members suggested Neighborhood Associations, HOAs, and block captains distribute new resident information through a number of resources. As described in Action PF&S1.2, packets will be distributed providing information including common Code violations, the locations of public facilities, and emergency contacts. This information has been suggested to be provided not only through the neighborhood, but online, print media including The Eagle and The Battalion, as well as on the City's website.

Seminar Suppers

Seminar Suppers are educational and networking forums designed for elected and prospective neighborhood and homeowner association representatives. These seminars are hosted throughout the year by City Neighborhood Services staff. They feature speakers from various City departments and the local community providing association leaders with information on programs and services. The goals of the seminars are to keep neighborhood leaders informed and aware of issues going on in the City and to support them in building strong, solid associations.

Mosquito Abatement

The Mosquito Abatement Grant Program allows associations to annually receive up to \$200.00 worth of mosquito abatement products to assist in the prevention of mosquito breeding. All active neighborhood partners may apply for a Mosquito Abatement Program grant, regardless of their length of time in the program. Program applications are typically accepted beginning in April of each year, and are accepted throughout the mosquito breeding season, usually ending around October.

Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grants

One of the benefits of the Neighborhood Partnership Program is being eligible for grant programs offered through Neighborhood Services. To be eligible to receive Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grant funds, associations must have been active members of the Neighborhood Partnership Program for at least one year prior to applying for funds. The Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grant may be awarded for several purposes—neighborhood identification, neighborhood-building activities, and the implementation of City Council adopted neighborhood plans. Gateway Grants are one type of grant in the program and are matching grants for homeowner associations to construct signs identifying their neighborhoods at or near their entrances. Other Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grants are for activities that strengthen associations and improve neighborhoods, and they may or may not be matching grants, depending upon the project being funded. Homeowners associations and neighborhood associations will need to provide a match for non-physical projects and community building projects. They may provide a match for a physical project that helps to implement their City Council adopted neighborhood plan.

Neighborhood Clean Up Program

Neighborhood Services has partnered with the City of College Station Sanitation Department to offer the Neighborhood Clean-Up Program. Two or three neighborhoods may be chosen annually after they submit brief applications about the purposes and goals of their clean-ups. Once selected, neighborhoods will schedule a day for the clean-up. Sanitation crews will deliver one or two large containers to the neighborhood the day before the clean-up and pick them up the end of the day after the clean-up, at no cost to the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

The South Knoll Area is home to the City's cemetery as well as five parks – D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum, Bee Creek Park, Gabbard Park, Lemontree Park, and Southwest Park. Each of these parks contributes to the character of the area and provides areas for neighbors to gather and interact. The residents of this area take great pride in their parks and several park maintenance items and improvement needs were identified during the planning process. The response to these items can be found at the end of this chapter in the **GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS FOR THE SOUTH KNOLL AREA** section.

Existing Facilities

City of College Station Cemetery

In 1948, a Methodist Church deeded 31 acres of land to the City of College Station for the City's cemetery. The land was decreased in size in 1973 due to sectioning off 18 acres for Bee Creek Park. The City of College Station Parks and Recreation Department is currently in charge of operation and maintenance of the cemetery.

D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum

Located at 1900 Anderson, off of Southwest Parkway, this 17-acre park was founded in 1976 as part of the USA Bicentennial celebration. Originally called the Brazos County Arboretum, the College Station City Council designated this area to be utilized as an area where native Texas plants could be cultivated for educational purposes. The arboretum contains a shelter and an interpretive natural walking/biking trail system highlighting the natural landscape, also connecting to Bee Creek Park. In 1986, the park was renamed to honor D.A. Anderson, former mayor of College Station. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provided partial funding for this park.

Bee Creek Park

Located at 1900 Anderson, this park was established in 1973 after College Station designated 18 acres of the City cemetery for the city's first park that also included the City's first swimming pool, Adamson Lagoon, named for Texas A&M's former swimming coach, Art Adamson. Facilities provided within the park include tennis courts, softball fields, a pavilion, sand volleyball court, a pond, playgrounds, and parking to accommodate 237 cars. Paved and natural trails connect the park to surrounding residential neighborhoods as well as the D.A. "Andy" Anderson Arboretum.

Gabbard Park

Located at 1201 Dexter Drive South, the 10.67-acre Gabbard Park was purchased in 1978 by surrounding residents to serve as a neighborhood park. Named for Letcher P. Gabbard, the former head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University and funded through a 1981 bond issue, substantial public input went into the planning of the park to ultimately provide a 1/3 mile jogging trail, fishing pier, ponds, playgrounds, and a softball practice field.

Lemontree Park

Located at 1300 Lemontree, this 15.4-acre park was established in 1976 with recreational features including a half-basketball court, ¾ mile concrete jogging trail, softball fields, a playground, picnic areas, and a 30-car parking lot. A nature trail is also located here, stretching from Southwest Parkway, through the park, to the corner of Holik and Anderson Street.

Southwest Park

Located at 300 Southwest Parkway between Wellborn Road and Welsh Avenue, this 4.78-acre park was acquired in 1982.

The planning process has provided multiple action items for the parks located within the South Knoll Area. In order to provide facilities for the growing bicycle community, the installation/quantity upgrade of bike racks at the area parks has been requested. Clean-up and installation of additional trash receptacles has been identified as a need for all area parks, as well. Due to age, updating playground facilities at Gabbard Park was included as an action item in Strategy PS&F4 which can be referred to at the end of this chapter for specific details about all of the area’s parks.

Programmed Improvements

Below are park improvement projects that have been identified through the City’s Capital Improvements Programming process.

D.A. “Andy” Anderson Arboretum

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Pavilion	\$12,000				
Trash receptacles	\$600 x 2				

A pedestrian bridge has been funded and will begin construction in Summer 2013.

Bee Creek Park

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Tennis Courts (resurface)	\$5,000				
Volleyball Courts (resurface)	\$5,000				

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Swing sets (gravel)	\$4,500 sw/\$12,000 surface				
Swing sets	\$4,500				
Drinking fountains (2)			\$3,300 x 2		
Pavilion			\$12,000		
Trails			\$6,600 (\$5/lf)		
Picnic Units			\$1,300 x 3		

A future plan for new concessions and restrooms is planned, but is currently unfunded.

Gabbard Park

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Baseball backstop			\$6,000		
Playgrounds				\$40,000	
Playground surfacing (gravel)				\$18,000	
Swing sets (gravel)		\$12,000		\$4,500	
Pavilion	\$12,000				
Trails			\$2,903 (\$5/lf)		\$2,903 (\$5/lf)
Picnic units	\$1,500 x 3				
Pond aerator	\$1,800				

Lemontree Park

	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018

Basketball court (resurface)	\$5,000				
Playgrounds				\$35,000	
Playground surfacing (gravel)				\$18,000	

Southwest Park

Through the City's Community Development Block Grants awarded by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development in 2011 and 2012, over \$84,000 has been made available for improvements to Southwest Park. Phase I of developing this park includes a 10' hike/bike trail through the park to connect to the multi-use path on Harvey Mitchell Parkway (FM2818), a pedestrian bridge, and sidewalks along Southwest Parkway. The project is scheduled to begin summer 2013. Phase II of the project includes the development of a picnic plaza, installation of site furniture and exercise equipment, lighting along the hike/bike trail, and signage. Projected completion is the end of FY 2013.

FLOODPLAIN & GREENWAYS

Floodplain

The South Knoll Area neighborhood is impacted by Bee Creek, as well as its associated tributaries. Using recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) data, areas have been identified that are designated floodplain or should be reserved for environmental or recreational purposes. **Map 4.1, Floodplain and Open Space** highlights the properties in the area that are identified as Natural Areas-Reserved or Natural Areas- Protected.

Greenway Programs

The Greenways Program seeks to preserve a network of natural corridors along rivers, streams, utility corridors, and rights-of-way. Greenways are a resource that serve a variety of functions including floodplain management, protection of open space, wildlife and plant habitat. Development has encroached into the floodplain throughout the South Knoll Area, starting with some of the earliest development being centered around the floodplain as an amenity. The Greenways Program is intended to pursue the conservation and acquisition of sensitive areas, such as these, to both protect them and, when appropriate, make them available for public use.

The creeks traversing the South Knoll Area provide a natural drainage system that keeps drainage in the built environment functioning

properly. When the natural system is disrupted by silt or pollution, the function is decreased. Blocked culverts and overgrown creek beds are challenging to monitor; the City relies on residents to report the issues for maintenance or repair.

College Station started the Adopt-A-Greenway Program in 2012 as a hands-on initiative for City Staff and residents to work together to handle conditions such as these. Additional program awareness is needed to get more people involved to ensure a better future of the creek conditions.

INFRASTRUCTURE & CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

The City of College Station is responsible for maintaining public infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, water lines, wastewater lines, fire hydrants, electrical lines, street lights, and traffic lights. Most infrastructure is on a maintenance schedule, meaning it will be repaired or replaced before it fails. Emergency repairs or replacement are generally initiated by a citizen phone call. In the South Knoll Area, the City currently maintains 23.1 miles of streets, 13.4 miles of sidewalks, 29.9 miles of water lines, 24.2 miles of waste water lines, 213 fire hydrants, 534 streetlights, and 19 traffic lights.

Maintenance and Future Improvements

Street Maintenance

An asphalt street generally has a life of 20 to 25 years. That period of time can be extended with preventive maintenance such as crack sealing, micro-surfacing, mill and overlays, and pothole repair. The City conducts an annual evaluation of streets and rates each street on a variety of criteria such as cracking, potholes, and other issues that require maintenance. The ratings are programmed into a 5 year street maintenance plan that contains strategies ranging from crack sealing up to a full overlay, and the street is programmed for maintenance. The majority of the maintenance consists of repairing potholes and crack sealing. Prioritization is based on the evaluation and on the amount of traffic that utilizes the street. A arterial or collector like Southwest Parkway or Longmire will receive a higher prioritization compared to a short residential street like a cul-de-sac that experiences much less traffic and subsequent wear.

Utility Maintenance

While it is estimated that new utility lines have a 50-75 year life span, utility lines in older parts of the City were often made of clay, which has a shorter life span and can be problematic with College Station's shifting soil. Many patches and spot repairs have been done on lines in the area to extend the life of the older utilities. Utilities in portions of the South Knoll Area are currently being replaced with new lines. The City

periodically tests its utility lines to ensure that they are working properly. Fire hydrants are inspected and flow tested each year. Maintenance and painting are scheduled as needed, based on the inspections.

Streetlight Maintenance

The City uses an automated system with a sensor on each street light that reports whether the light is in working or non-working order. The Public Utilities Department also relies on information from citizens about lights that are not working properly. Street light repair is a high priority and repairs generally occur within 36 hours.

Capital Improvements in the South Knoll Area

Recent completed projects in the area include:

- Southwood 5-7 Rehab in 2012 – rehabilitation of water and wastewater lines in the vicinity of Southwest Parkway, FM2818, Glade Street, Welsh Avenue, and Shadowood Drive.
- New traffic light at Texas Avenue and Krenek Tap at the edge of the planning area.
- Bike loop and Bee Creek Bridge – Bee Creek Park
- Hike and Bike Trail (Multi-Use Path) along Harvey Mitchell Parkway
- Hike and Bike Trail (Multi-Use Path) to Southwest Park
- Adamson Lagoon Bathhouse
- Bee Creek Drainage Improvements

Projects Underway:

- A utility rehab is currently underway for South Knoll / The Glade. This project includes the rehabilitation of water and wastewater lines in the Southwood area, in the vicinity of Haines Street, Southwest Parkway, Glade Street, and Langford Street. Substantial completion is anticipated for October 2013.
- Bee Creek Parallel Trunk Line – This project will install a gravity sewer line to increase the system capacity of the Bee Creek Trunkline Sub-basin. Phase I begins this year and spans from the Carter Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant to Welsh Avenue. Phase II is anticipated to start construction next year and will span from Welsh Avenue to areas north of Wellborn Road.

Electric

Streetlight Maintenance

Existing street lights are illustrated on **Map 4.2 Street Lights by Wattage**. Streetlighting has been requested through the planning process for increased safety. Streets that have been discussed and have either

requested lighting or additional lighting to what currently exists include:

- Southwood Drive
- Rayburn Court
- Angelina Court and Circle
- Laura Lane (additional)

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Code Enforcement Trends

The City has established a minimum level of property maintenance to ensure basic health, safety, and welfare of its residents. Code violations and a lack of property maintenance can detract from neighborhood integrity, and over the long-term, can change the character of an area. Lawn maintenance, trash, open storage, and dilapidated homes play a role in how surrounding property owners make decisions about future investments in the maintenance and improvement of their own home.

Code Enforcement was a particular concern expressed throughout the South Knoll Area planning process due to the high number of renter-occupied units. Strategy PF&S1 suggests restoring the single-family character through increased code compliance. Due to the high density of rental properties the area, property maintenance is a major focus of this Strategy and accompanying Action items to restore the single-family character and integrity of the South Knoll Area Neighborhood. In order to address the common problems, it has been suggested that the City work with not only code violators but rental property owners. Rather than reactively responding to code issues, a more proactive response has been identified as a solution to reduce the number of violations.

SeeClickFix

In 2011, the City began using SeeClickFix, a web-based application that allows citizens to report non-emergency issues. The City uses this application to get feedback from citizens regarding some of our top Code Enforcement violations. **Map 4.2, See-Click-Fix** highlights the reports in the South Knoll Area from March 2011 to December 2012. Examples include overgrown weeds and grass, accumulation of trash, junk vehicles, and overflowing trash containers. SeeClickFix is now available for iPhone, BlackBerry, and Android phones.

Noise Violations and Enforcement



Figure 4.1 – Guadalupe Drive



Figure 4.2 – Langford Street No Parking



Figure 4.3 – Glade Street No Parking

Noise complaints are an issue throughout College Station. The City prohibits loud noises when heard outside the structure in which they occur, or beyond the property where the noise takes place higher than 65 decibels from 7 am to 10 pm and 55 decibels from 10 pm to 7 am. Code Enforcement cases in the South Knoll Area from 2011 to 2012 have been included in **Map 4.3, Code Enforcement Cases**. All areas of South Knoll have a fair number of issues with loud parties with 88 complaints reported in the area during 2011. This number was only 4% of the total number of noise complaints in the City as a whole during that year, showing that the noise condition in South Knoll is not unlike the rest of College Station.

Parking Restrictions and Enforcement

Parking complaints are common throughout South Knoll Area, commonly associated with the Texas A&M football season, high number of rental properties, and areas surrounding South Knoll Elementary. Parking enforcement is conducted by the Police Department and is primarily complaint-based due to limited resources. Because of continued complaints in some areas of South Knoll Area during this planning process, the College Station Police and Fire Departments have assessed parking to address areas of high complaint. Parking may be removed by City ordinance if a safety evaluation concludes that emergency services cannot be adequately provided. For additional information, please refer to **Chapter 3 Mobility** and **Appendix E Parking & Traffic Ordinance Restrictions**. To report parking violations, residents may call the Police non-emergency line if immediate attention is necessary, or for on-going parking violations, may submit the complaint on See-Click-Fix to request that the City inspect that area during a specific time of day when violations are prevalent.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Speeding

A safe and efficient street network contributes to quality of life for neighborhood residents. South Knoll Area residents cited speeding within the neighborhood as a primary safety concern, particularly on Glade Street and Welsh Avenue. Traffic calming measures can sometimes be used to deter speeding. An on-going task of local law enforcement officers is speed limit enforcement in neighborhoods and throughout the City. A way to help encourage compliance with the speed limit is to increase the awareness of the posted speed limit. One opportunity to increase awareness includes the temporary placement of radar speed limit signs in targeted areas that display the speed of passing vehicles on the typical speed limit sign.

In addition to increasing speed awareness, this tool can be used to assess whether vehicles are speeding and to collect data for traffic count and pattern analysis.

Property Security

Property security is a concern in many college communities because of the seasonal effects of school breaks that leave a large number of homes empty, creating easy targets for break-ins and burglary. Burglaries of a vehicle or habitation are a consistent issue throughout the community. The planning process has identified the need to organize Neighborhood Watch programs through the City's Neighborhood Services Division as well as the Police Department. In the South Knoll Area, 444 reports of theft or burglary and 342 reports of criminal mischief or trespassing were reported in 2011. **Map 4.X, Burglary and Theft**, illustrates the overall reported burglary and theft activity in the area.

GOAL, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS FOR THE SOUTH KNOLL AREA

The **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.**

Strategies have been developed to progress toward this goal. Each strategy has a series of action recommendations designed to implement the strategy.

Strategy PF&S1- Restore and maintain a single-family character through increased code compliance and property maintenance to lessen the impact of higher density housing on the single-family character and integrity South Knoll Area Neighborhood. *(Cross-referenced with Neighborhood Integrity & Community Character Strategy NICC 1)*

- Action PF&S1.1 Properties not meeting existing City codes and ordinances should be identified. The City should work with the owners of these properties to move toward compliance. *(cross-reference Action NI&CC 1.1)*
- Action PF&S1.2 HOA and new resident digital information packet, on-line, emailed to rental registration contacts annually, and otherwise advertised City-wide. *(cross-referenced Action NI&CC 1.2)*
- Action PF&S1.3 Increase the awareness and accessibility of SeeClickFix through Neighborhood Services and the Police Department.



Figure 4.4 – Valley View No Parking

Action PF&S1.4 Re-instate proactive Code Enforcement to re-establish and maintain the single-family character. Strict Code Enforcement should be observed in the South Knoll Area.

Strategy PF&S2 – Promote the protection and maintenance of floodplain and stormwater facilities for function, conservation, and recreation.

Action PF&S 2.1 Increase awareness of the Adopt-A-Greenway Program to create better creek environments, aesthetics, and function.

Strategy PF&S3- Promote public safety within the South Knoll Area so that the neighborhood will remain a desirable place to live.

Action PF&S3.1 Evaluate where additional street lights may be needed and installed.

Action PF&S 3.2 Assist in the organization of Neighborhood Watch programs through the City’s Neighborhood Services and Police Department.

Strategy PF&S4- Continue to invest in and enhance existing park and trail facilities.

Action PF&S4.1 Install bicycle racks at all parks.

Action PF&S4.2 Bee Creek Park: install new bicycle racks at Adamson Lagoon, more picnic tables in the park, and benches along the trail.

Action PF&S4.3 The D.A. “Andy” Anderson Arboretum: clean up and maintain the arboretum area.

Action PF&S4.4 Lemon Tree Park: install benches along the trail.

Action PF&S4.5 Gabbard Park: install more benches, add rubber (instead of gravel) under playground equipment, add a shade structure over the playground equipment, and maintain the pond aerator.

Action PF&S4.6 Install landscaping along the Harvey Mitchell Parkway Trail.

Strategy PF&S5- Assist South Knoll Area neighborhoods in identifying and completing Neighborhood enhancement projects.

Action PF&S5.1 Provide technical assistance to neighborhood organizations applying for neighborhood grants. Incorporate training for

organizations on developing projects that would be available for funding.