

City Council Initiates Strategic Planning for Balanced Growth Through the City's Comprehensive Plan 2040

Lakeside community seeks to preserve small-town character while managing development pressures

By Jeff Koska, City Manager

The Horseshoe Bay City Council embarked on an ambitious strategic initiative to balance growth with community preservation through 2040, launching discussions on August 15. The initiative comes as our picturesque lakeside community experiences increasing development pressure while working to maintain the qualities that make it an attractive Hill Country destination.

Vision Under Review

Central to the planning process is an examination of the city's current vision statement, which emphasizes delivering excellent service and maintaining Horseshoe Bay as "a world-class destination to visit, play, work, retire, and stay." Council members are questioning whether this vision adequately addresses the critical balance between accommodating growth and preserving the community's distinctive character and Hill Country heritage.

The planning process will provide multiple opportunities for resident engagement, beginning with a community-wide Town Hall meeting scheduled for September 25, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at Quail Point Lodge. For more information, visit www.horseshoe-bay-tx.gov/townhall.

Eleven Strategic Initiatives

The City Manager has presented eleven key initiatives that will guide decision-making and organizational priorities:

Community Character and Environmental Protection The cornerstone initiative focuses on preserving Horseshoe Bay's small-town leisure lifestyle while protecting natural resources. This includes establishing measures to track balanced growth alongside environmental conservation.

Neighborhood Safety and Attractiveness Public safety is a priority. Goals include achieving emergency response times of six minutes or less citywide, installing dark sky-compliant lighting at key intersections, and collaborating with the Resort and POAs on neighborhood connectivity.

Strategic Commercial Development The city aims to promote retail and dining establishments that serve community needs while maintaining high aesthetic standards. Emphasis will be placed on supporting local business ownership over large corporate chains, with commercial development designed to offset property taxes through sales tax revenue generation.

Parks and Recreation Connectivity Plans include completing a connected trail system within the ten-year planning horizon, establishing community pocket parks, and potentially acquiring additional parkland acreage through open space requirements for new developments.

Walkable City Center The city envisions mixed-use developments with public gathering spaces, exercise areas, and venues for community events such as farmers markets, all connected through sidewalks and trails.

Transportation Network Enhancement Development of an efficient, multi-modal transportation system will accommodate vehicles, golf carts, bicycles, and pedestrians while improving regional connections to neighboring communities and essential services.

Intelligent Growth Management Infrastructure capacity planning will address water, wastewater, and utility needs while considering lot densities, greenspace preservation, long-term maintenance costs, and appropriate impact fees for new developments.

Diverse Housing Options Recognizing the community's aging population, the city plans to support lifecycle housing choices that enable aging in place while diversifying residential options to meet evolving community needs.

Sustainable Development Standards Environmental and economic sustainability will guide development decisions, with considerations for improved efficiency standards, lifecycle cost analysis, and alternative energy and water sources.

Revenue Diversification The city seeks to balance revenue sources between sales taxes, property taxes, and user fees while maintaining tax rates below regional averages. Economic development incentives may be considered to attract appropriate businesses.

Property Value Preservation Coordinating with POA Architectural Control Committees will ensure building standards and aesthetics that maintain the city's prominent market position.

Community Input Opportunities

Beyond the September Town Hall meeting, residents will have additional opportunities to contribute to the planning process through special meetings and the Spring Citizens Academy Graduation in May 2026. Monthly Council meetings are also regular forums for community input.

The comprehensive planning process reflects Horseshoe Bay's proactive approach to managing growth pressures while preserving the community attributes that residents and visitors value. As development continues throughout the region, the strategic planning initiative allows the city to make informed decisions about future character and infrastructure needs.