



City of Highland Haven
510 Highland Drive, Suite A
Highland Haven TX 78654-8269
Phone: 830-265-4366 Fax: 512-366-9721

AGENDA – PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

DATE: February 12, 2026

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Highland Haven Community Center, Highland Haven, TX 78654

1. Open meeting and Roll Call to Establish Quorum

Jackie Garrow	Chair	☐ Present	☐ Absent
Lorinda Peters	Vice Chair	☐ Present	☐ Absent
Linda Ray	Secretary	☐ Present	☐ Absent
Connie Smith	Member	☐ Present	☐ Absent
John Novak	Member	☐ Present	☐ Absent

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Recognize Visitors.

4. Presentations/Proclamations

5. Public Comment

(At this time, any person with business before the P&Z Commission not scheduled on the agenda may speak to the Commission. No formal action can be taken on these items at this meeting. No discussion or deliberation can occur. Comments regarding specific agenda items should occur when the item is called.)

ACTION ITEMS

6. **Consider Consent items:**

The items listed are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Planning & Zoning Commission and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to a motion and vote. The item will be considered in its normal sequence on the regular agenda.

- a. Meeting Minutes for Regular P&Z – January 8, 2025

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Discussion – Voluntary Annexation of Lots 176 & 177 into the City of Highland Haven

8. Discussion – Comprehensive Plan 2026

- a. Review Draft of Outline and Sections Submitted
- b. Review Alternate Draft of Introduction and Table of Contents – Lorinda Peters
- c. Review Structure and Style (Voice) of Document – Andy Adams

9. Discussion - Clarification of Ordinance Language for 25' Setback and Shoreline

10. Discussion – Other Items for Ordinance Review

- a. Signs (John Novak) – Status Report
- b. Water Wells (Lorinda Peters) – Status Report
- c. Storage Tanks (Linda Ray) – Status Report

Note: Click on highlighted text to go to HH P&Z webpage, then click to expand "Items for Planning & Zoning Meetings," then click on each document to view.

11. Mayor's Report

- a. TML Resources for Elected Officials: <https://www.tml.org/215/Essential-Reading>
 - i. [A Guide to Becoming a City Official](#)
 - ii. [Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers](#)
 - iii. [Understanding Your Personal Liability as a City Official: A Primer](#)
 - iv. [Thirty Tips for Newly Elected Mayors and Councilmembers](#)

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 12. P&Z Commission Member Comments.
- 13. Next Regular Meeting: March 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM (Community Center)
- 14. Items to be considered for the next agenda must be received by the Chair on or before January 30, 2026.
- 15. Adjournment.

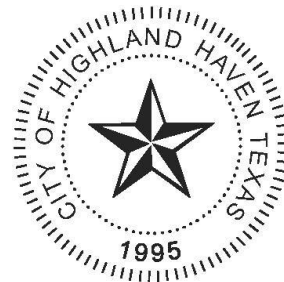
Agenda posted on February 5, 2025

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING

I, SARAH COLLARD, CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING AGENDA HAS BEEN POSTED AT HIGHLAND HAVEN CITY HALL, 510 HIGHLAND DRIVE, SUITE A; HIGHLAND HAVEN, TX, ON THE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR NOTICE BOARDS OF CITY HALL, WHICH ARE CONVENIENTLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC AT ALL TIMES, AND THE CITY WEBSITE AT WWW.HIGHLANDHAVENTX.COM ON THE 5TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025, AND REMAINED SO POSTED FOR AT LEAST THREE BUSINESS DAYS PRECEDING THE SCHEDULED DATE OF SAID MEETING PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551.

Sarah Collard

Sarah Collard, City Secretary





City of Highland Haven
510 Highland Drive, Suite A
Highland Haven TX 78654-8269
Phone: 830-265-4366 Fax: 512-366-9721

MINUTES – PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

DATE: January 8, 2026

TIME: 6:00 PM

PLACE: Highland Haven Community Center, Highland Haven, TX 78654

1. Open meeting and Roll Call to Establish Quorum – **Meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Lorinda Peters at 6:01 PM.**

Jackie Garrow	Chair	☐ Present	☒ Absent
Lorinda Peters	Vice Chair	☒ Present	☐ Absent
Linda Ray	Secretary	☐ Present	☒ Absent
Connie Smith	Member	☒ Present	☐ Absent
John Novak	Member	☒ Present	☐ Absent

2. Pledge of Allegiance – **Led by Lorinda Peters.**
3. Recognize Visitors – **Judy Kelley**
4. Presentations/Proclamations – Public Comment

(At this time, any person with business before the P&Z Commission not scheduled on the agenda may speak to the Commission. No formal action can be taken on these items at this meeting. No discussion or deliberation can occur. Comments regarding specific agenda items should occur when the item is called.)

There were no Public Comments.

ACTION ITEMS

5. **Consider Consent items:**

The items listed are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the Planning & Zoning Commission and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Commission member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda prior to a motion and vote. The item will be considered in its normal sequence on the regular agenda.

- a. Meeting Minutes for Regular P&Z – December 11, 2025

Motion to accept consent items made by Connie Smith, seconded by John Novak.

Vote: 3-0

6. **Consider/Possible Action:** Finalize Comprehensive Plan Town Hall #4 (January 22, 2026)
 - a. Mini-Survey Results
 - b. Outline of Discussion/Agenda/Handout

No action taken; discussion only.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7. Discussion – Comprehensive Plan 2026
 - a. Review Draft of Outline and Sections Submitted

8. Discussion – Other Items for Ordinance Review
 - a. Signs (John Novak) – Status Report
 - b. Water Wells (Lorinda Peters) – Status Report
 - c. Storage Tanks (Linda Ray) – Status Report

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. P&Z Commission Member Comments.
10. Comprehensive Town Hall Meeting #4: Thursday, January 22, 2026 Time 6:00-7:30 PM
(Community Center)
11. Next Regular Meeting: February 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM (Community Center)
12. Items to be considered for the next agenda must be received by the Chair on or before January 29, 2026.

Motion to adjourn made by Connie Smith, seconded by John Novak.

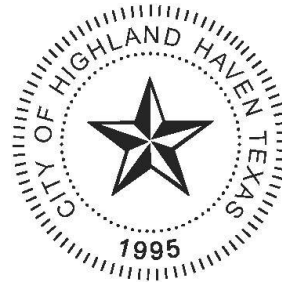
Vote: 3-0

13. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Lorinda Peters, Vice Chair

Sarah Collard, City Secretary





DEER RUN

LOT 178
FREDI F. FRANKL
201204554
O.P.R.B.C.T.
LOT 177
 $N77^{\circ}31'E \ 154.13'$
 $N75^{\circ}50'02"E \ 154.13'$
1/2" REBAR FOUND MONU. OF DIGNITY
2.60'
1/2" REBAR SET CAP "WILLIS"
 $S14^{\circ}09'58"E \ 160.50'$
 $(S12^{\circ}29'E \ 160.50')$
80.50'
80.50'

LOT 176
FREDI F. FRANKL
201204554
O.P.R.B.C.T.
LOT 176
 $N75^{\circ}50'02"E \ 153.71'$
1/2" REBAR FOUND MONU. OF DIGNITY
80.00'
1/2" REBAR SET CAP "WILLIS"
 $S14^{\circ}28'00"W \ 160.50'$
 $(N12^{\circ}47'W)$
80.50'
46.98'
1/2" REBAR FOUND MONU. OF DIGNITY
 $N14^{\circ}28'00"W \ 160.50'$
 $(N13^{\circ}20'S1"W \ 160.50')$
1/2" REBAR SET CAP "WILLIS"

CITY OF HIGHLAND HAVEN
E.T.J. OF THE CITY OF GRANITE SHOALS
 $N36^{\circ}41'51"E \ 197.85'$
 $(N33^{\circ}49'00"E)$
 $(N12^{\circ}47'W)$
 $(N13^{\circ}20'S1"W \ 160.50')$
 $S14^{\circ}28'00"E \ 143.55'$
 $(S13^{\circ}20'S1"E \ 143.55')$
1164.10'
1/2" REBAR FOUND IN CONCRETE

161 SHADY ACRES SECTION 2 VOL. I, PG. 56 P.R.B.C.T.

446 HIGHLAND HAVEN SECTION 6 VOL. 2, PG. 72 P.R.B.C.T.

RECORD POINT AT S.E. CORNER OF LOT 446
1.27'

1/2" REBAR FOUND ON EAST LINE OF LOT 446

EON THE ECTION ERS

FIT OF

1/3/18

SSIONAL

STATE OF TEXAS
REGISTERED
DONALD SHERMAN
1877
PROFESSIONAL
LAND SURVEYOR

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February 6, 2026

Subject: Discussion on Comprehensive Plan 2026

To the City of Highland Haven Planning and Zoning Commission,

PURPOSE

I appreciate your feedback and edits received so far and have noted ideas about making the plan easier to read and shortening language where appropriate. I've been working on that and have rewritten the introduction to change the tone as well as shorten the overall length by about 40%. I do want to make sure that we are all on the same page on the structure of the document, and the purpose of each section. This memo explains how the plan is structured so we don't accidentally cut important information from the wrong sections.

THE PLAN HAS FOUR PARTS—EACH SERVES A DIFFERENT PURPOSE

1. Executive Summary (3-4 pages)

- The "quick version" anyone can read in 10 minutes or less
- Summarizes the entire plan
- **We write this LAST** after everything else is done, but is the first thing people will read in this document

2. Introduction & Community Profile

- Explains what the plan is and why we're doing it
- Provides background on Highland Haven
- This comes **after** the Executive Summary and kicks off the detailed portion of the document
- **This is NOT a summary**—it's the foundation that sets up everything else

3. Topic Sections (Land Use, Water, Transportation, etc.)

- The detailed guidance on each issue
- **This is where decisions get made**—needs enough detail to be useful
- The working part of the plan

4. Implementation & Appendices

- How to use the plan and who does what
- Supporting data, maps, and reports

ADDRESSING YOUR CONCERNS

What I'm doing:

- Simplifying language throughout
- Removing repetitive content where needed
- Tightening the Introduction to be more concise
- Taking feedback about tone and length to apply to the rest of the document

What we shouldn't do:

- Remove detail from Topic Sections—they need substance to guide real decisions
- Cut the Introduction too much—people need context to understand the plan
- Write the Executive Summary now—we can't summarize what doesn't exist yet
 - I will write this section last, and we will work together to make sure it is concise, easy to read and understand, and points to where more details can be found later in the document



WHY THIS STRUCTURE MATTERS

Different people need different things:

- Residents → Read the Executive Summary (quick overview)
- Developers/Outside Entities → Read Executive Summary + relevant Topic Sections (community expectations)
- Board/P&Z making decisions → Read specific Topic Sections (detailed guidance)
- Staff applying for grants → Read Topic Sections + Appendices (documentation)

If everything is too brief, we can't make good decisions. If everything is too detailed, people won't read it. The goal of this structure is to provide both.

ITEMS TO CONSIDER TONIGHT

We now have 3 different versions of the introduction that we can work with to figure out the best way to move forward. This is actually a great development, and one of the reasons I've held off writing more sections for the plan. Once we have developed the voice, structure, and style for this section, it will be easier to create the rest of the document moving forward. Below is a list of the 3 versions of the introduction which can be discussed so we can move forward:

1. Original Version (Andy)
2. Summarized Version (Lorinda)
3. Edited Version (Andy)

NEXT STEPS

1. Define the style, structure and voice needed based on the three versions of the introduction we have
2. Once agreed upon, the Introduction will be written to match the decision of the P&Z and presented at the March meeting in order to approve it's completion
3. The Community Profile (next section after Introduction) and a couple of Topic sections will be sent in draft form to review for the March meeting as well where we can discuss necessary changes to be approved at the April meeting

Thank you all again for your hard work and feedback on this. I'm excited about where we are headed with getting this completed. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,
Andy Adams
Highland Haven
City Administrator
(830) 265-4366
cityadministrator@highlandhaventx.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range policy document that establishes a community's vision for its future and provides guidance for decision-making over the next 10 to 20 years. It is not a zoning ordinance, a building code, or a regulation—rather, it is a guide that helps city leaders, staff, and residents make informed decisions about land use, infrastructure, public services, and community character.

Think of the comprehensive plan as Highland Haven's roadmap. It tells us where we are today, where we want to go, and how we plan to get there. It reflects the collective values and priorities of our community, gathered through surveys, town hall meetings, and extensive public input.

What a Comprehensive Plan Is and Isn't

A Comprehensive Plan IS:

- A vision for Highland Haven's future based on community input
- A guide for making decisions about development, infrastructure, and city services
- A tool for coordinating public investments and capital improvements
- A foundation for zoning decisions and development regulations
- A resource for grant applications and funding opportunities
- A statement of community values and priorities

A Comprehensive Plan IS NOT:

- A zoning ordinance or regulation (those are separate documents that should be consistent with the plan)
- A guarantee that everything in the plan will happen exactly as written
- A rigid rule that cannot be changed or amended
- A detailed engineering or technical document
- A budget or commitment of specific funding

The comprehensive plan provides guidance and direction, but it allows flexibility to respond to changing conditions, new opportunities, and unforeseen circumstances. It should inform decisions, not dictate them.

Why Does Highland Haven Need a Comprehensive Plan?

Highland Haven, despite being a small community of approximately 400 full-time residents and 330-340 homes, faces many of the same planning challenges as larger cities—maintaining infrastructure, managing development, protecting water resources, preserving community character, and planning for the future. A comprehensive plan helps our small city government make better decisions with limited resources and is required by state law.

Specific Benefits for Highland Haven:

1. Protects Community Character

Highland Haven's identity as a quiet, lakeside residential community is our most valuable asset. The comprehensive plan establishes clear policies to preserve single-family residential character, manage development appropriately, and protect the natural beauty that attracted residents here in the first place. With 98% of survey respondents opposing multi-family development and short-term rentals, the plan ensures future decisions align with community values.

2. Guides Infrastructure Investment

With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of the lowest property tax rates in Texas, Highland Haven must be strategic about how we invest in roads, water systems, drainage, and other infrastructure. The comprehensive plan helps prioritize projects using our limited funding sources - based on community needs and available funds - while coordinating improvements efficiently. Survey respondents made clear that road maintenance and water system improvements are top priorities—this plan helps us address those needs systematically.

3. Supports Strategic Funding Opportunities

While grant funding can be a valuable tool, Highland Haven faces unique challenges in accessing these resources. Our higher median income disqualifies us from many low-to-moderate income (LMI) focused grants, and most grants require significant local matching funds (often 10-30% of project costs) that must be available before applying. An adopted comprehensive plan helps the city identify which funding opportunities genuinely align with our needs and capabilities, demonstrate community support for priority projects, and make competitive applications when appropriate opportunities arise. The plan ensures we pursue funding strategically rather than opportunistically.

4. Provides Consistency and Transparency

City leadership changes over time—mayors, aldermen, and staff come and go. A comprehensive plan provides continuity and consistency in decision-making across administrations. It also makes city policies transparent to residents, developers, and other stakeholders, reducing confusion and building trust.

5. Coordinates with Other Entities

Highland Haven doesn't operate in isolation. We work with the Shady Acres POA, Nobles Subdivision, Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, the Central Texas Groundwater District, Pedernales Electric Cooperative, Texas Department of Emergency Management, FEMA and other agencies. The comprehensive plan helps coordinate our efforts with these partners and ensures everyone understands Highland Haven's priorities and policies.

6. Empowers Informed Decision-Making

When the Board of Aldermen considers a zoning change, variance request, or major capital project, the comprehensive plan provides a framework for evaluating whether the proposal aligns with community values and long-term goals. It moves decisions from subjective preferences (personal opinions) to objective policy consistency (impartial facts and standards).

7. Engages the Community

The planning process itself—surveys, town halls, public meetings—strengthens community engagement and gives residents a voice in shaping Highland Haven's future. The 30% survey response rate (105 responses from 353 households) demonstrates strong community interest in having input on city direction. According to The National Citizen Survey (NCS)—a gold standard for municipal citizen surveys—our comprehensive plan survey's 30% response rate (105 out of 353 recipients) hits the high end of the typical 20–30% benchmark, delivering reliable, representative insights for community priorities and planning decisions.

Who Should Use This Plan?

Board of Aldermen: Use the plan to guide policy decisions, evaluate zoning requests, prioritize capital improvements, and set annual budgets consistent with long-term community goals.

Planning & Zoning Commission: Use the plan as the foundation for zoning recommendations, site plan reviews, variance evaluations, and subdivision considerations. The plan should inform every P&Z decision.

City Administrator and Staff: Use the plan for day-to-day decisions, project planning, grant applications, development review, and coordination with other agencies. The plan helps staff provide consistent guidance to residents and developers.

Property Owners and Developers: Use the plan to understand community expectations, development policies, and design standards before proposing projects. The plan helps avoid surprises and align proposals with community values.

Residents: Use the plan to understand city policies, infrastructure priorities, and the decision-making framework for Highland Haven's future. The plan makes city government more transparent and accessible.

Partner Agencies: Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other agencies can use the plan to understand Highland Haven's priorities and coordinate their efforts with our community's needs.

A Living Document

This comprehensive plan is designed to be a living document—one that evolves as Highland Haven evolves. While it provides long-term vision and stability, it also includes mechanisms for amendments and regular updates to ensure it remains relevant and useful. The plan may be reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Commission at the Direction of the Board of Aldermen and comprehensively updated every five to ten years to reflect changing conditions, new opportunities, and lessons learned from implementation.

The 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan represents Highland Haven's commitment to thoughtful, community-driven planning that preserves what we love about our community while preparing for the future. It is not the end of a planning process—it is the beginning of ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and action to make our shared vision a reality.

Why Now

Why Update Now?

Highland Haven's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004 and revised in 2014—over a decade ago. While many of the fundamental values and priorities from that plan remain relevant today, our community has evolved significantly, and state laws have changed to impose new requirements and restrictions that did not apply previously. The time has come for a comprehensive update that reflects these current conditions, emerging challenges, and the input of today's residents.

Best Practices Recommend Regular Updates

Planning professionals and state guidance recommend that cities review and update their comprehensive plans every 5 to 10 years. This ensures that plans remain relevant to current conditions, reflect the community's evolving needs and priorities, and provide useful guidance for decision-making. At over 10 years since the last revision, Highland Haven's plan update is overdue and brings us back in alignment with best practices.

Significant Changes Since 2014

Highland Haven has experienced notable changes since the 2014 plan revision that warrant a fresh look at our community's direction:

Infrastructure Planning Imperative

As Highland Haven's infrastructure continues to age—including our water system, roads, drainage infrastructure, and public buildings—proactive planning becomes increasingly critical. With limited staff (3.5 people) and one of the lowest tax rates in Texas, we must operate lean and efficiently. A comprehensive plan with a well-developed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) allows us to prioritize infrastructure investments strategically, plan for maintenance and replacement cycles, and avoid costly emergency repairs. Without systematic planning for aging infrastructure, we risk reactive decision-making that is both more expensive and more disruptive to the community. It is also important to note that existing plans for future infrastructure improvements is vital and necessary for apply for grant funding.

Water Resource Challenges

Long-term water supply planning has become more urgent since 2014. It is imperative that the city work with the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District to ensure our groundwater permit meets the minimum needs of our community. Highland Haven has existed longer than the Groundwater District itself, and our Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) has remained unchanged since its inception, yet regulatory requirements continue to evolve. Currently, our groundwater permit does not align with the actual size and number of platted lots within our CCN service area, creating a critical mismatch between our regulatory capacity and industry standards for residential homes. Strategic planning for water resources—including conservation, infrastructure improvements, and permit management—is essential to ensuring Highland Haven can continue to serve its residents reliably.

Community Demographics Shifting

While Highland Haven remains predominantly a retirement and vacation home community, we are seeing gradual demographic changes. More families with children are moving in, drawn by the safe environment and proximity to employment centers in Marble Falls and surrounding areas. Weekend and part-time residents remain a significant portion of our property owners (approximately 30% based on survey data), creating unique planning considerations for infrastructure capacity, communication, and community engagement.

Build-Out Status

Highland Haven is almost entirely built out, fundamentally changing the nature of planning for our community. With 375 platted lots and approximately 330-335 existing homes, only minimal vacant lots remain available for future residential development. Some vacant lots cannot be developed due to existing septic fields or other constraints. This near-complete build-out shifts our planning focus from managing new growth to managing redevelopment, property reinvestment/replacement, and long-term maintenance of existing infrastructure. The comprehensive plan must address the realities of a mature, established community rather than one anticipating significant expansion, and also take into account any future development in Shady Acres, the Nobles Subdivision and Camp Champion.

New City Administration

Highland Haven created the City Administrator position in 2024 to professionalize city operations and provide continuity as volunteer leadership transitions. This represents a significant change in city governance structure since the 2014 plan and provides capacity to implement more sophisticated planning and management practices, including a licensed code enforcement official, now required by state law.

Evolving Regional Context

The Highland Lakes region, including Marble Falls, Granite Shoals, Kingsland, and Horseshoe Bay, has experienced substantial growth and development since 2014. FM 1431 has become busier and commercial development has expanded in neighboring communities. With Lake Travis and Buchanan Lake being flood reservoirs, their water levels very significantly causing an increase in usage of Lake LBJ due to its consistent water levels. These regional changes impact Highland Haven even though we remain a small, residential community. Traffic, commercial pressure, and lake congestion are concerns that weren't as prominent in 2014.

Emerging Issues

Residents have raised questions and concerns about several topics that will require the city to continue monitoring and providing information on the following items:

- Short-term rental pressure (VRBO/Airbnb) that didn't exist at the same scale in 2014
- Invasive aquatic vegetation and zebra mussels have become a growing concern for residents
- Questions about centralized sewer system feasibility
- Increased construction activity and contractor traffic
- Balance between property tax relief and infrastructure maintenance needs
- Emergency preparedness and communication systems

Strong Community Engagement

The timing is right because the community is engaged and ready to participate in planning. The

2025 community survey received 105 responses from 353 households—an impressive 30% response rate that demonstrates residents care about Highland Haven's future and want to have input on city direction. Town hall meetings have been well-attended, and residents have expressed clear values and priorities that provide a strong foundation for this plan.

When community engagement is high, it's the ideal time to capture that input and translate it into policy guidance that will serve Highland Haven for the next decade.

Alignment with City Leadership Transition

With new city administration in place and a Planning & Zoning Commission committed to thoughtful community planning, this is an opportune moment to establish a clear, community-supported roadmap for the future. The comprehensive plan provides a foundation for consistent decision-making across future changes in elected leadership and ensures continuity of community values and priorities.

The Cost of Inaction

Failing to update the comprehensive plan carries real risks for Highland Haven:

Policy Drift: Without an updated plan reflecting current conditions and community values, decisions may become inconsistent or reactive rather than strategic. The 2014 plan doesn't address issues like short-term rentals, current water challenges, potential commercial development on F.M. 1431, or the build-out reality we now face.

Missed Opportunities: An outdated plan may cause us to miss strategic funding opportunities, partnership possibilities, or development proposals that could benefit the community because we lack clear policy guidance on how to evaluate them.

Weakened Decision-Making: When difficult decisions arise—zoning changes, variances, major capital expenditures—an outdated plan provides little useful guidance, making those decisions harder and more contentious.

Community Disconnect: If city policies don't reflect what residents told us in the 2025 survey, trust and engagement will erode. The plan update demonstrates that city leadership listens and responds to community input.

Moving Forward Together

This comprehensive plan update represents Highland Haven's commitment to proactive, thoughtful planning based on community input and current conditions. Rather than waiting for problems to force reactive decisions, we are taking this opportunity to chart a clear course for the next decade—one that preserves what makes Highland Haven special while addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities ahead.

The time is now because our community is ready, engaged, and clear about what matters most. This plan will ensure that clarity translates into action and results that benefit all Highland Haven community for years to come.

Legal Basis

Authority to Plan

The City of Highland Haven's authority to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan is established under Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code, which authorizes municipalities to adopt, prepare, and enforce comprehensive plans for the long-range development of the municipality. While Texas law does not mandate that cities adopt comprehensive plans, it provides the legal framework for cities to engage in strategic, long-range planning that guides growth, development, and the provision of critical public services.

Relationship to Zoning and Regulations

The comprehensive plan is a policy document that guides decision-making, but it is not a regulation with the force of law like zoning ordinances or building codes. However, Texas law states that zoning decisions should be made "in accordance with a comprehensive

plan" (Texas Local Government Code §211.004). This means that when the City makes zoning decisions, considers variances, or evaluates development proposals, those decisions should align with the goals and policies established in this comprehensive plan.

Other city ordinances—including building codes, subdivision regulations, and development standards—should similarly reflect and support the policies in the comprehensive plan.

Adoption and Amendment

This comprehensive plan will be adopted by resolution of the Board of Aldermen following review by the Planning & Zoning Commission and a public hearing. Once adopted, it becomes official city policy.

The plan may be amended as conditions change. Amendments require Planning & Zoning Commission review and recommendation, public notice and hearing, and Board of Aldermen approval by resolution. The Planning & Zoning Commission may review the plan annually at the direction of the Board of Aldermen, with comprehensive updates recommended every five to ten years.

What the Plan Does and Doesn't Do

The Plan:

- Establishes official city policy on land use, development, and public services
- Provides the framework for evaluating zoning decisions and development proposals
- Guides capital improvement planning and infrastructure investments
- Supports grant applications and intergovernmental coordination

The Plan Does Not:

- Create enforceable rights or obligations for individual property owners
- Guarantee that any specific project will be funded or completed
- Prevent the city from making decisions that deviate from the plan when appropriate
- Override existing property rights or vested development rights

Good Governance

Texas law does not mandate that cities adopt comprehensive plans, but it does require that zoning regulations be adopted "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Since Highland Haven has zoning ordinances in place, maintaining an up-to-date comprehensive plan is

effectively a practical necessity. While state law does not specify how often plans should be updated, best practices recommend regular reviews and comprehensive updates every five to ten years to ensure the plan remains relevant and useful for guiding community decisions.

Planning Process

A Community-Driven Approach

The development of Highland Haven's 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan was driven by community input and guided by a commitment to transparency and inclusive engagement. From the outset, the goal was to create a plan that reflects the authentic voice of Highland Haven residents—both full-time and part-time—and establishes policies grounded in community values and priorities.

Timeline and Key Milestones

Fall 2024 - Planning Initiated The Board of Aldermen directed city staff to begin the comprehensive plan update process, recognizing that the 2014 plan needed revision to reflect current conditions and community needs. The Planning & Zoning Commission was tasked with providing oversight and guidance throughout the development process.

January 2025 - Community Survey Launched A comprehensive community survey was developed and distributed to all Highland Haven property owners to gather input on key topics including community character, development preferences, infrastructure priorities, water resources, parks and recreation, public safety, and communication. The survey was emailed to 339 households and mailed to 14 households without email addresses on file, reaching a total of 353 households.

January - February 2025 - Survey Response Period The survey remained open for several weeks, allowing residents ample time to provide thoughtful responses. A total of 105 responses were received—a 30% response rate that demonstrates strong community engagement. Of these responses, 96 were submitted online and 9 were written responses. The survey included 269 individual comments, providing rich qualitative feedback beyond the structured questions.

Timeline and Key Milestones (Cont.)

March - August 2025 - Survey Analysis City staff analyzed survey results and compiled findings into a comprehensive report documenting community priorities, concerns, and

suggestions. This thorough analysis ensured that community input would be accurately reflected in the plan development process.

September 2025 - January 2026 - Town Hall Meetings Based on survey feedback, the city hosted focused town hall meetings to dive deeper into specific topics and allow for more detailed discussion. These meetings provided opportunities for residents to ask questions, clarify concerns, and engage directly with city leadership on key issues.

November 2025 - March 2026 - Plan Development Using community input as the foundation, city staff drafted comprehensive plan sections, organized around the key topic areas identified through the survey and town hall discussions. Each section was developed to include community input, establish clear priorities, and provide actionable guidance for the next 10 years.

January - May 2026 - Review and Refinement Draft plan sections were presented to the Planning & Zoning Commission for review, feedback, and refinement. The commission reviewed sections individually and as a complete document, ensuring consistency, clarity, and alignment with community input.

June - September 2026 - Public Review and Adoption The draft comprehensive plan was made available for public review, and a public hearing was held to receive final community input. Following the public hearing and any final revisions, the Board of Aldermen adopted the plan by resolution, making it official city policy.

The goal is to adopt this Comprehensive Plan by September 30, 2026 in order to align with our fiscal year end.

Community Engagement Methods

Community Survey: The survey served as the primary tool for gathering broad community input. It included both structured questions (with rating scales and multiple-choice options) and open-ended comment opportunities that allowed residents to express concerns and suggestions in their own words. The survey covered:

- Community safety and character
- Development preferences and land use
- Infrastructure conditions and priorities
- Water resources and conservation
- Communication preferences
- Demographic information

Town Hall Meetings: Town halls provided opportunities for face-to-face dialogue on specific topics such as community vision and values, infrastructure, and development policies. These meetings allowed for more nuanced discussion, clarification of misconceptions, and real-time feedback. They also helped city leadership understand the reasoning behind community preferences and concerns.

Planning & Zoning Commission Involvement: The P&Z Commission was actively involved throughout the process, providing guidance on plan organization, reviewing draft sections, and ensuring the plan would serve as a practical tool for future decision-making. Commission members brought diverse perspectives and helped ensure the plan addressed real-world planning challenges facing Highland Haven.

Transparency and Communication: Throughout the planning process, the city kept residents informed through regular email updates, website postings, and announcements at Board of Aldermen meetings. Draft materials were made available for review, and residents were encouraged to provide ongoing feedback.

Key Themes from Community Input

Several clear themes emerged from the community engagement process that shaped the comprehensive plan:

Preserve Residential Character: Overwhelming opposition to multi-family development, short-term rentals, and high-density housing. Strong support for maintaining Highland Haven as a single-family residential community.

Protect Water Resources: Deep concern about water supply, conservation during drought, and lake water quality. Water issues were consistently cited as top priorities.

Maintain Infrastructure: Recognition that roads, water systems, and drainage facilities need ongoing maintenance and strategic investment. Residents understand that infrastructure maintenance costs money but want efficient use of tax dollars.

Value Natural Beauty: Appreciation for Highland Haven's natural setting, tree canopy, lake access, and low-density character. Desire to preserve open space and avoid over-development.

Support Transparency: Strong preference for email communication, website updates, and clear explanations of city decisions and spending. Residents want to stay informed and involved.

Balance Fiscal Responsibility: While residents appreciate Highland Haven's low tax rate, there's recognition that some level of taxation is necessary to maintain quality services and infrastructure. The challenge is finding the right balance.

Using Community Input

Every section of this comprehensive plan is grounded in community input. Survey data, town hall feedback, and written comments informed the priorities, policies, and action items throughout the document. Where community opinion was clear and strong (such as opposition to short-term rentals), the plan reflects that consensus. Where opinions were more divided (such as commercial development at the FM 1431 entrance), the plan acknowledges the range of perspectives and establishes a framework for further community discussion.

This plan represents the collective voice of Highland Haven residents translated into policy guidance for the next decade.

How to Use This Plan

A Practical Guide for Decision-Making

The Highland Haven Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a practical, user-friendly tool that guides city decision-making over the next 10 years. Unlike highly technical planning documents, this plan is written in plain language and organized around specific topic areas that matter to Highland Haven residents. Whether you're a city official, Planning & Zoning Commissioner, property owner, or resident, this plan provides clear guidance on community priorities and policies.

For the Board of Aldermen

Policy Decisions: Use the plan as the foundation for establishing new policies or updating existing ordinances. When considering changes to zoning, development standards, or other regulations, refer to the relevant plan section to ensure consistency with community values and priorities.

Budget and Capital Planning: The plan's priority action items and Capital Improvement Program provide a roadmap for annual budget decisions. Use these priorities to allocate funding, justify capital expenditures, and communicate with residents about how tax dollars are being invested.

Zoning and Development Decisions: When evaluating zoning change requests, variances, or development proposals, ask: "Is this consistent with what the comprehensive plan says about this topic?" While the plan allows flexibility for special circumstances, decisions should generally align with adopted policies.

Grant Applications: Reference the comprehensive plan when applying for state or federal funding. Grant agencies look for evidence of community planning and prioritization, and an adopted plan strengthens applications by demonstrating strategic thinking and community support.

Intergovernmental Coordination: Share the plan with Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other partner agencies to help them understand Highland Haven's priorities and ensure their planning efforts complement ours.

For the Planning & Zoning Commission

Development Review: Every zoning recommendation, site plan review, and variance consideration should be evaluated against the comprehensive plan. Ask: "Does this proposal advance or undermine the community's vision and goals?"

Plan Amendments: When property owners or developers request plan amendments, carefully evaluate whether the proposed change would serve the long-term interests of Highland Haven or simply accommodate a single project. Not every inconsistency requires a plan amendment—some should result in the proposal being denied or modified.

Annual Plan Review: Dedicate at least one P&Z meeting each year to reviewing plan implementation progress. Which priorities have been accomplished? Which need more attention? Are plan policies still relevant, or do conditions warrant updates?

Consistency Checks: As the city develops new ordinances or updates existing regulations, ensure they align with comprehensive plan policies. Flag any inconsistencies for the Board of Aldermen to address.

For City Staff

Day-to-Day Guidance: Use the plan to provide consistent guidance to property owners, developers, and residents who have questions about city policies, development requirements, or future plans. The comprehensive plan makes your guidance more authoritative and less subject to interpretation.

Project Planning: When planning capital projects, infrastructure improvements, or new programs, reference the comprehensive plan to ensure projects align with community priorities and established policies.

Development Review: During pre-application meetings or development consultations, share relevant plan sections with applicants so they understand community expectations before submitting formal proposals.

Communication: Reference the plan when communicating with residents about city decisions, explaining how policies are grounded in community input and adopted guidance.

Grant Writing: Include plan excerpts, priorities, and supporting data in grant applications to demonstrate planning, community support, and strategic alignment with funding priorities.

For Property Owners, Developers, and Residents

Understanding Expectations and Decisions: Before purchasing property, proposing development, or planning renovations, review the comprehensive plan to understand community expectations and development policies. When the city makes a decision you don't understand or agree with, consult the plan—it provides context for why decisions were made and how they relate to community priorities.

Pre-Application Planning: When planning a project, consult the relevant plan sections early in the design process. If your proposal conflicts with plan policies, you'll either need to modify it or be prepared to make a compelling case for why an exception or amendment is warranted. This can save time, money, and frustration by ensuring proposals align with city direction.

Participating in Decisions: When the city holds public hearings on zoning changes, variances, or major projects, reference the comprehensive plan in your comments. Point out whether proposals align with or conflict with adopted policies—this makes your input more effective and builds credibility with city officials.

Requesting Plan Amendments: If you believe the plan should be updated to address new conditions or changing community needs, you can request an amendment through the Planning & Zoning Commission. Be prepared to demonstrate how the amendment would benefit the community and be justified by changing conditions or community needs, not simply by a desire for a specific project.

Staying Informed and Holding Leaders Accountable: The plan provides a clear picture of Highland Haven's priorities for the next decade. Read the sections that interest you to understand what the city plans to accomplish. Use the plan to hold elected officials and

city staff accountable for following through on priorities and maintaining consistency with community values established through your input.

For Partner Agencies

Coordination: Burnet County, LCRA, Central Texas Groundwater District, and other agencies should review relevant sections of Highland Haven's comprehensive plan to understand our priorities and coordinate your activities with our goals. For example, Burnet County road maintenance should align with our transportation priorities, and LCRA lake management should consider our water quality concerns.

Joint Planning: When regional issues affect multiple jurisdictions—such as water supply, transportation corridors, or emergency services—use comprehensive plans as a starting point for coordination and collaboration.

Technical Assistance: Agencies with planning expertise can provide valuable technical assistance during plan implementation, helping Highland Haven accomplish priorities more efficiently and effectively.

Finding What You Need

The comprehensive plan is organized into logical sections covering major topic areas. Each section follows a consistent format:

- Definition & Overview: What is this topic and why does it matter?
- Importance to Highland Haven: Why is this specifically relevant to our community?
- Community Input: What did residents tell us through surveys and town halls?
- Responsible Entities: Who manages or controls this area?
- Priorities & Action Plan: What will we do over the next 5-10 years?

To find information quickly:

- Check the Table of Contents for the section you need
- Review the Executive Summary for a high-level overview
- Read the Community Vision & Values section to understand foundational principles
- Consult the Implementation Framework for the master list of priorities and timelines
- Use the Index (if provided) to find specific topics

Flexibility and Common Sense

While the comprehensive plan should guide decisions, it's not meant to be rigid or inflexible. Circumstances change, opportunities arise, and good ideas emerge that weren't anticipated during the planning process. The plan allows for:

Reasonable Deviations: Minor deviations from the plan may be appropriate when they don't undermine overall goals and respond to unique circumstances.

Plan Amendments: When conditions change significantly or new opportunities arise, the plan can and should be amended through the proper process involving P&Z review, public input, and Board approval.

Professional Judgment: City officials, staff, and P&Z commissioners should use professional judgment in applying plan policies to specific situations. The plan provides guidance, not rigid rules.

Evolution Over Time: The plan will be reviewed annually and updated comprehensively every five years to ensure it remains relevant and useful as Highland Haven evolves.

The comprehensive plan is a living document meant to serve Highland Haven's long-term interests while allowing flexibility to respond to changing conditions and emerging opportunities.

Plan Organization

Document Structure

The Highland Haven Comprehensive Plan is organized into three main parts that work together to provide a complete picture of our community's vision, priorities, and implementation strategies.

Part 1: Foundation

This section establishes the groundwork for the comprehensive plan by defining who we are as a community and how this plan was developed.

Introduction

Explains the purpose of the comprehensive plan, why Highland Haven is updating it now, the legal basis for planning, the community-driven planning process used to develop this plan, how different audiences should use the plan, and how the document is organized.

Community Profile

Provides key information about Highland Haven's location, history, demographics, physical characteristics, and current conditions. This data-driven section establishes the baseline from which the plan's goals and priorities were developed.

Part 2: Topic Sections

The heart of the comprehensive plan consists of detailed sections addressing specific policy areas. Each section follows a consistent format for easy navigation:

- **Definition & Overview:** What this topic means and why it matters
- **Importance to Highland Haven:** Why this is specifically relevant to our community
- **Community Input:** What residents told us through surveys and town halls
- **Responsible Entities:** Who manages or controls this area (City, County, HHPOA, other agencies)
- **Priorities & Action Plan:** Specific goals and actions for the next 5-10 years with timelines and success metrics

Community Vision & Values

This foundational topic section captures Highland Haven's identity, core values, and vision for the future based on extensive community input. It establishes the guiding principles that inform all other sections of the plan. Understanding this section is essential to understanding why Highland Haven has adopted the policies and priorities outlined throughout the plan.

Land Use & Development

Addresses zoning, residential character preservation, development standards, and management of remaining developable land. This section establishes Highland Haven's commitment to maintaining single-family residential character and managing the limited development capacity that remains.

Transportation & Mobility

Covers road maintenance and improvement priorities, traffic management, intersection safety, and coordination with Burnet County on shared roadways. Roads are consistently identified as a top infrastructure concern by residents.

Water Resources & Infrastructure

Addresses both the city's drinking water system and Lake LBJ water quality concerns. This section covers water conservation, infrastructure improvements, groundwater management, aquatic vegetation, and stormwater management. Water resources are fundamental to Highland Haven's future.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

While parks are owned and managed by the Highland Haven Property Owners Association (HHPOA), this section acknowledges the important role parks play in community quality of life and establishes how the city will coordinate with HHPOA on resident concerns and priorities.

Community Character & Design

Establishes policies for preserving Highland Haven's unique character through building design standards, landscaping requirements, property maintenance, and consideration of dark sky principles. This section ensures new development and redevelopment enhance rather than detract from community character.

Public Safety & Emergency Services

Addresses law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, emergency preparedness, and traffic enforcement. Highland Haven residents value the safe environment we've established, and this section ensures we maintain and enhance public safety.

Infrastructure & Utilities

Covers drainage systems, wastewater management (individual septic systems), utility coordination, and long-term infrastructure planning. This section addresses the reality of maintaining aging infrastructure with limited resources.

Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability

Establishes policies for maintaining fiscal health, developing long-term revenue strategies, pursuing appropriate grant funding, and evaluating potential commercial development

opportunities. This section balances Highland Haven's preference for low taxes with the need to maintain quality services and infrastructure.

Community Engagement & Communication

Addresses how the city communicates with residents, maintains transparency, and creates opportunities for community involvement in decision-making. Strong communication was consistently identified as important to residents.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Establishes policies for working effectively with Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, the Central Texas Groundwater District, and other partner agencies. Highland Haven doesn't operate in isolation, and coordination with other entities is essential to achieving our goals.

Part 3: Implementation

This section translates the plan's vision and priorities into action.

Implementation Framework

Provides the roadmap for putting the comprehensive plan into action, including roles and responsibilities, plan amendment procedures, annual review processes, and monitoring strategies. This section ensures the plan remains a living, useful document rather than sitting on a shelf.

Priority Action Matrix

A comprehensive table organizing all priorities from all topic sections by timeframe (immediate, short-term, long-term, ongoing). This matrix includes responsible parties, estimated costs, funding sources, and success metrics for each priority action.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

A detailed 5-year plan for major infrastructure investments and capital projects, including costs, funding strategies, and coordination with the annual budget process.

Funding Strategies

Addresses current revenue sources, grant opportunities, potential revenue enhancements, and creative financing approaches that align with Highland Haven's fiscal constraints and community values.

Appendices

Supporting materials that provide additional detail and documentation:

- **Appendix A:** Community Survey Results (full survey document and analysis)
- **Appendix B:** Town Hall Meeting Summaries
- **Appendix C:** Maps (city limits, ETJ, land use, zoning, infrastructure, flood zones, etc.)
- **Appendix D:** Demographic & Statistical Data
- **Appendix E:** Technical Studies & Reports
- **Appendix F:** Public Participation Documentation
- **Appendix G:** Ordinances & Resolutions (including plan adoption resolution)
- **Appendix H:** Glossary of Terms
- **Appendix I:** Resources & Contacts

How Sections Work Together

The comprehensive plan is designed so that each section stands on its own while also connecting to other sections. For example:

- **Community Vision & Values** establishes the foundation that all other sections must support
- **Water Resources** connects to Land Use (development capacity), Infrastructure (water system maintenance), and Fiscal Sustainability (water fund revenue)
- **Transportation** connects to Public Safety (traffic enforcement) and Infrastructure (drainage along roads)
- **Community Character** connects to Land Use (design standards) and Parks (preserving natural beauty)

When making decisions or reviewing proposals, consider how multiple plan sections may apply and ensure consistency across all relevant policies.

Reading the Plan

For a Quick Overview: Read the Executive Summary and Community Vision & Values section to understand Highland Haven's priorities and direction.

For Specific Topics: Jump directly to the topic section you need. Each section is written to be self-contained and understandable without reading the entire plan.

For Decision-Making: Review the relevant topic section(s), then consult the Implementation Framework to understand timelines, responsibilities, and how the priority fits into the overall action plan.

For Comprehensive Understanding: Read the plan from beginning to end to fully understand how Highland Haven's vision, values, and priorities interconnect and support each other.

The comprehensive plan is a tool designed to serve Highland Haven for the next decade. Its organization reflects the way decisions are actually made—by topic area—while maintaining a coherent overall vision grounded in community values.

Table of Contents

Introduction

- What is a Comprehensive Plan
- Planning Area
- Past Planning
- Plan Timeframe

Baseline Analysis/Trend Report

- Community Trends
- Forecasted Growth
- Infrastructure

Vision & Community Direction

- Public Engagement Summary
- Guiding Principles for Decision Making
- Goals and Focus Areas
- List the major topics we addressed individually

Recommendations

- xxx
- Xxx
- xxx

Plan Implementation

- Introduction (roles, responsibilities, benchmarks - BOA, P&Z, City Staff)
- Implementation Table

Introduction

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range policy document establishing a community's vision and guiding decisions about land use, infrastructure, public services, and community character over the next 10 to 20 years. Think of it as Highland Haven's roadmap—where we are today, where we want to go, and how we plan to get there.

The plan guides decision-making but allows flexibility for changing conditions and new opportunities. It is not a zoning ordinance, regulation, or budget commitment. Rather, it establishes official city policy that informs decisions without dictating them.

Why Does Highland Haven Need This Plan?

Despite being a small community of approximately 400 full-time residents and 330-340 homes, Highland Haven faces the same planning challenges as larger cities. With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of the lowest property tax rates in Texas, we must make strategic decisions with limited resources. A comprehensive plan helps us:

Protect community character as a quiet, lakeside residential community. Guide infrastructure investment strategically—roads, water systems, drainage. Support strategic grant funding opportunities while acknowledging our constraints (higher median income limits LMI grants; most grants require 10-30% matching funds). Provide consistency across changing administrations. Coordinate with partner agencies (Burnet County, LCRA, Central Texas Groundwater District, HHPOA, etc.). Empower objective, policy-based decision-making. Engage the community in shaping Highland Haven's future.

The 2025 community survey received 105 responses from 353 households—a 30% response rate demonstrating strong community engagement and providing reliable, representative insights according to The National Citizen Survey (NCS) standards. With 98% of respondents opposing multi-family development and short-term rentals, community priorities are clear.

Why Update Now?

Highland Haven's last plan was adopted in 2004 and revised in 2014—over a decade ago. Best practices recommend updates every 5-10 years. Significant changes since 2014 warrant this comprehensive update:

Aging infrastructure requires proactive planning and a Capital Improvement Program to avoid costly emergency repairs and support grant applications. Water resource challenges have intensified—our groundwater permit doesn't align with the actual size and number of platted lots within our CCN service area, creating a critical mismatch. Community demographics are shifting with more families moving in. Highland Haven is nearly built out (375 platted lots, 330-335 existing homes), shifting focus from managing growth to managing redevelopment and maintenance. The City Administrator position

was created in 2024, professionalizing operations and enabling more sophisticated planning. Regional growth has increased traffic on FM 1431 and commercial pressure. Emerging issues include short-term rentals, invasive aquatic vegetation, zebra mussels, sewer system questions, and balancing tax relief with infrastructure needs.

Strong community engagement, new city administration, and clear resident priorities make this the optimal time to establish a roadmap for the next decade. Without updating the plan, we risk policy drift, missed opportunities, weakened decision-making, and community disconnect.

Legal Basis

Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes municipalities to adopt comprehensive plans. While Texas doesn't mandate comprehensive plans, it requires that zoning decisions be made "in accordance with a comprehensive plan" (Texas Local Government Code §211.004). Since Highland Haven has zoning ordinances, maintaining an up-to-date comprehensive plan is a practical necessity.

The plan will be adopted by Board of Aldermen resolution following Planning & Zoning Commission review and a public hearing. Amendments require P&Z review and recommendation, public notice and hearing, and Board approval. The P&Z may review the plan annually at the Board's direction, with comprehensive updates recommended every 5-10 years. The goal is adoption by September 30, 2026 to align with the fiscal year end.

The plan establishes official policy, provides the framework for zoning and development decisions, guides capital improvements, and supports grant applications. However, it does not create enforceable rights for property owners, guarantee project funding, prevent reasonable deviations, or override existing property rights.

Planning Process

This plan was developed through a community-driven process committed to transparency and inclusive engagement:

Fall 2024: Board of Aldermen initiated the update process. January 2025: Comprehensive survey distributed to 353 households (339 email, 14 mail). January-February 2025: Survey open; 105 responses received (96 online, 9 written) with 269 individual comments. March-August 2025: Survey analysis and findings compiled. September 2025-January 2026: Town hall meetings on specific topics. November 2025-March 2026: Plan development based on community input. January-May 2026: P&Z review and refinement. June-September 2026: Public review, hearing, and adoption.

Key Themes from Community Input

Preserve residential character — opposition to multi-family, short-term rentals, high-density housing. Protect water resources — supply, conservation, lake quality. Maintain infrastructure — roads, water systems, drainage with efficient use of tax dollars. Value natural beauty — tree canopy, lake access, low density. Support transparency — email

communication, website updates, clear explanations. Balance fiscal responsibility—low taxes with necessary infrastructure maintenance.

Plan Organization

The plan is organized into three parts:

Part 1: Foundation—Introduction (this section) and Community Profile (demographics, history, physical characteristics, current conditions).

Part 2: Topic Sections—Community Vision & Values; Land Use & Development; Transportation & Mobility; Water Resources & Infrastructure; Parks, Recreation & Open Space; Community Character & Design; Public Safety & Emergency Services; Infrastructure & Utilities; Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability; Community Engagement & Communication; and Intergovernmental Coordination. Each follows a consistent format: Definition & Overview, Importance to Highland Haven, Community Input, Responsible Entities, and Priorities & Action Plan.

Part 3: Implementation—Implementation Framework, Priority Action Matrix (organizing all priorities by timeframe with responsible parties, costs, funding sources, and metrics), Capital Improvement Program (5-year plan for major infrastructure), and Funding Strategies. Appendices include survey results, maps, demographic data, technical reports, and supporting documentation.

To find information quickly: check the Table of Contents; review the Executive Summary; read Community Vision & Values for foundational principles; consult the Implementation Framework for priorities and timelines; or use the Index.

How to Use This Plan

This plan is a practical, user-friendly tool written in plain language for all audiences:

Board of Aldermen: Use for policy decisions, budget and capital planning, zoning and development decisions, grant applications, and intergovernmental coordination.

Planning & Zoning Commission: Evaluate every development review, plan amendment, and variance against the plan. Conduct annual plan reviews. Ensure new ordinances align with plan policies.

City Staff: Provide consistent day-to-day guidance, plan projects aligned with priorities, share plan sections during development consultations, reference in communications and grant applications.

Property Owners, Developers, and Residents: Review before purchasing or developing property. Consult during pre-application planning. Reference the plan when participating in public hearings. Request amendments through P&Z when conditions warrant. Use to hold leaders accountable.

Partner Agencies: Review to understand Highland Haven's priorities and coordinate activities. Use for joint planning on regional issues. Provide technical assistance during implementation.

Flexibility and Common Sense

The plan guides decisions but is not rigid. It allows for reasonable deviations when appropriate, plan amendments through proper process (P&Z review, public input, Board approval), professional judgment in applying policies, and evolution over time through annual reviews and comprehensive updates every five years.

The 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan represents Highland Haven's commitment to thoughtful, community-driven planning that preserves what we love about our community while preparing for the future. It is a living document and the beginning of ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and action to make our shared vision a reality.

Introduction

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a long-range guide that sets out a community's vision for the next 10 to 20 years. It's not a law or regulation—it's a roadmap that helps city leaders and residents make smart decisions about growth, infrastructure, and services.

This plan shows where Highland Haven is today, where we want to be, and how to get there. It reflects what matters most to our community, based on input from surveys, town halls, and public meetings.

What a Comprehensive Plan Is and Isn't

A Comprehensive Plan IS:

- A vision for Highland Haven's future based on what residents told us
- A guide for decisions about development, infrastructure, and city services
- A tool for planning public projects and investments
- A foundation for zoning and development rules
- Support for grant applications and funding requests

A Comprehensive Plan IS NOT:

- A zoning law (those are separate documents that follow this plan's direction)
- A guarantee everything will happen exactly as written
- A rigid set of rules that can't be adjusted
- A technical engineering manual or a city budget

The plan provides direction while allowing flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and new opportunities.

Why Does Highland Haven Need This Plan?

Even as a small community of 400 residents and 340 homes, Highland Haven faces real planning challenges: maintaining roads and infrastructure, managing development, protecting water resources, and preserving what makes our community special. This plan helps us make better decisions with limited resources—and it's required by state law.

Key Benefits:

1. Protects Our Community Character

Highland Haven's quiet, lakeside residential feel is what residents value most. With 98% of survey respondents opposing multi-family development and short-term rentals, this plan ensures future decisions honor those values.

2. Guides Infrastructure Investment

With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of Texas's lowest property tax rates, we must be strategic. This plan helps prioritize road repairs, water system improvements, and other projects that residents identified as most important.

3. Supports Strategic Funding

Our community's median income disqualifies us from many grants, and most require matching funds we must have ready. This plan helps identify realistic funding opportunities and strengthens applications when the right fit comes along.

4. Provides Consistency

City leaders and staff change over time. This plan ensures continuity in decision-making and makes policies clear to everyone—residents, developers, and partners.

5. Coordinates with Partners

Highland Haven works with Shady Acres POA, Nobles Subdivision, Burnet County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other agencies. This plan helps coordinate efforts and communicate our priorities.

6. Supports Better Decisions

When considering zoning changes or major projects, this plan gives the Board of Aldermen a clear framework based on community values—not just personal opinions.

7. Engages Residents

The planning process itself strengthens community involvement. Our 30% survey response rate (105 of 353 households) shows strong interest in shaping Highland Haven's future—well above typical municipal survey benchmarks.

Who Should Use This Plan?

****Board of Aldermen:**** Guide policy decisions, zoning requests, and budgets aligned with long-term goals.

****Planning & Zoning Commission:**** Foundation for zoning recommendations, site plan reviews, and variance decisions.

****City Administrator and Staff:**** Day-to-day decisions, project planning, grant applications, and coordination with agencies.

****Property Owners and Developers:**** Understand community expectations and development policies before proposing projects.

****Residents:**** Learn about city policies, priorities, and how decisions are made.

****Partner Agencies:**** Understand Highland Haven's priorities to coordinate regional efforts.

A Living Document

This plan is designed to evolve with Highland Haven. While it provides long-term vision, it includes ways to make amendments and updates every five to ten years to stay relevant.

The 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan represents our commitment to thoughtful, community-driven planning that preserves what we love while preparing for the future. It's not the end of planning—it's the start of ongoing action to make our shared vision real.

Why Now?

Highland Haven's last comprehensive plan was adopted in 2004 and revised in 2014—over a decade ago. While many core values remain the same, our community has changed, state laws have evolved, and it's time for an update that reflects today's reality and what residents told us matters most.

Best Practices Recommend Regular Updates

Planning experts and state guidance recommend cities update their comprehensive plans every 5 to 10 years to stay relevant and useful. At over 10 years since our last revision, we're overdue and ready to get back on track.

What's Changed Since 2014?

Aging Infrastructure Needs Planning

Our water system, roads, drainage, and public buildings are aging. With a small staff (3.5 people) and one of Texas's lowest tax rates, we must plan strategically to avoid costly emergency repairs. A clear Capital Improvement Program helps us prioritize projects and is required for most grant applications.

Water Resource Challenges

Water supply planning is more urgent than ever. We need to work with the Central Texas Groundwater Conservation District to ensure our groundwater permit meets community needs. Currently, our permit doesn't match the actual number of platted lots in our service area—a critical gap we must address.

Changing Demographics

While Highland Haven remains primarily a retirement and vacation home community, more families with children are moving in. About 30% of property owners are weekend or part-time residents, which affects how we plan infrastructure capacity and community communication.

Nearly Built Out

With 375 platted lots and approximately 330-335 existing homes, Highland Haven has minimal vacant lots left. This shifts our planning from managing growth to managing redevelopment, property reinvestment, and infrastructure maintenance in a mature community.

New City Administration

Highland Haven created the City Administrator position in 2024 to professionalize operations and provide continuity. This improves our capacity to implement better planning and management practices, including state-required code enforcement.

Regional Growth

The Highland Lakes region has grown significantly since 2014. FM 1431 is busier, neighboring communities have expanded, and Lake LBJ sees increased use due to water level fluctuations at Lakes Travis and Buchanan. These changes affect Highland Haven even as we remain small and residential.

Emerging Issues

Residents have raised concerns about topics that weren't as prominent in 2014:

- Short-term rental pressure (VRBO/Airbnb)
- Invasive aquatic vegetation and zebra mussels
- Feasibility of a centralized sewer system
- Construction activity and contractor traffic
- Balancing property tax relief with infrastructure needs
- Emergency preparedness and communication

Strong Community Engagement

The 2025 community survey received 105 responses from 353 households—a 30% response rate showing residents care deeply about Highland Haven's future. When community engagement is this strong, it's the ideal time to capture input and turn it into action.

The Right Moment

With new city administration, an engaged Planning & Zoning Commission, and clear community priorities, now is the perfect time to establish a roadmap for the next decade that ensures continuity across future leadership changes.

The Cost of Waiting

Without an updated plan, we risk:

- ****Inconsistent decisions**** based on personal preference rather than community values
- ****Missed opportunities**** for funding or partnerships because we lack clear policy guidance
- ****Difficult decisions becoming more contentious**** without a framework to evaluate them
- ****Eroding trust**** if city policies don't reflect what residents told us matters

Moving Forward Together

This plan represents our commitment to proactive, community-driven planning. Rather than waiting for problems to force our hand, we're charting a clear course that preserves what makes Highland Haven special while addressing new challenges and opportunities.

The time is now because our community is ready, engaged, and clear about what matters most.

Legal Basis

Authority to Plan

The City of Highland Haven has the legal authority to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan under Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code. While Texas doesn't require cities to have comprehensive plans, state law does require that zoning regulations be made "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Since Highland Haven has zoning ordinances, maintaining an up-to-date comprehensive plan is a practical necessity.

Relationship to Zoning and Regulations

The comprehensive plan is a policy guide, not a regulation like zoning ordinances or building codes. However, when the City makes zoning decisions, considers variances, or evaluates development proposals, those decisions should align with this plan's goals and policies. Other city ordinances—including building codes and development standards—should similarly reflect and support the comprehensive plan.

Adoption and Amendment

This plan will be adopted by resolution of the Board of Aldermen following Planning & Zoning Commission review and a public hearing. Once adopted, it becomes official city policy.

The plan can be amended as conditions change. Amendments require P&Z review and recommendation, public notice and hearing, and Board approval by resolution. The P&Z may review the plan annually at the Board's direction, with comprehensive updates recommended every five to ten years.

What the Plan Does and Doesn't Do

The Plan:

- Establishes official city policy on land use, development, and public services
- Provides a framework for evaluating zoning decisions and development proposals
- Guides capital improvement planning and infrastructure investments
- Supports grant applications and intergovernmental coordination

The Plan Does Not:

- Create enforceable rights or obligations for individual property owners
- Guarantee that any specific project will be funded or completed

- Prevent the city from making appropriate deviations when circumstances warrant
- Override existing property rights or vested development rights

Planning Process

A Community-Driven Approach

Highland Haven's 2025-2035 Comprehensive Plan was built on community input through surveys, town halls, and public meetings. The goal was to create a plan that reflects what residents—both full-time and part-time—told us matters most.

Timeline

****Fall 2024**** - Board of Aldermen directed the comprehensive plan update process

****January 2025**** - Community survey distributed to all 353 Highland Haven households

****January-February 2025**** - Survey open for response; 105 responses received (30% response rate) with 269 individual comments

****March-August 2025**** - City staff analyzed survey results and compiled findings

****September 2025-January 2026**** - Town hall meetings held on specific topics for deeper discussion

****November 2025-March 2026**** - Plan sections drafted based on community input

****January-May 2026**** - Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed and refined draft sections

****June-September 2026**** - Public review period and adoption by Board of Aldermen

Goal: Adopt the plan by September 30, 2026

How We Gathered Input

****Community Survey:**** Covered community safety and character, development preferences, infrastructure priorities, water resources, communication preferences, and demographics. Included both structured questions and open-ended comments.

****Town Hall Meetings:**** Provided face-to-face dialogue on specific topics, allowing for clarification and real-time feedback.

****Planning & Zoning Commission:**** Actively involved throughout, reviewing draft sections and ensuring the plan addresses real-world challenges.

****Ongoing Communication:**** Regular updates via email, website, and Board meetings kept residents informed throughout the process.

Key Themes from Community Input

- ****Preserve residential character:**** Strong opposition to multi-family development and short-term rentals; support for single-family community
- ****Protect water resources:**** Deep concern about water supply, conservation, and lake quality
- ****Maintain infrastructure:**** Recognition that roads, water systems, and drainage need ongoing investment
- ****Value natural beauty:**** Appreciation for tree canopy, lake access, and low-density character
- ****Support transparency:**** Preference for clear communication about city decisions and spending
- ****Balance fiscal responsibility:**** Understanding that some taxation is necessary while valuing efficiency

Every section of this plan is grounded in what residents told us through surveys, town halls, and written comments.

How to Use This Plan

A Practical Tool for Decision-Making

This plan is written in plain language and organized around specific topics that matter to Highland Haven. Whether you're a city official, P&Z member, property owner, or resident, this plan provides clear guidance on community priorities.

For the Board of Aldermen

- ****Policy Decisions:**** Use the plan when establishing new policies or updating ordinances
- ****Budget & Capital Planning:**** Use priority action items to guide annual budget decisions and justify capital expenditures
- ****Zoning Decisions:**** Ask, "Is this consistent with what the comprehensive plan says?" when evaluating zoning changes or development proposals
- ****Grant Applications:**** Reference the plan to strengthen funding applications
- ****Intergovernmental Coordination:**** Share the plan with partner agencies to communicate Highland Haven's priorities

For the Planning & Zoning Commission

- ****Development Review:**** Evaluate every zoning recommendation, site plan, and variance against the plan
- ****Plan Amendments:**** Carefully consider whether proposed changes serve Highland Haven's long-term interests
- ****Annual Review:**** Dedicate at least one meeting per year to reviewing implementation progress
- ****Consistency Checks:**** Ensure new ordinances align with plan policies

For City Staff

- ****Day-to-Day Guidance:**** Use the plan to provide consistent guidance to property owners and developers
- ****Project Planning:**** Reference the plan when planning capital projects or infrastructure improvements
- ****Development Review:**** Share relevant sections with applicants during pre-application meetings
- ****Grant Writing:**** Include plan excerpts in grant applications to demonstrate planning and community support

For Property Owners, Developers, and Residents

- ****Understanding Expectations:**** Review the plan before proposing development or planning renovations
- ****Pre-Application Planning:**** Consult relevant sections early in design to avoid conflicts
- ****Participating in Decisions:**** Reference the plan in public hearing comments to make input more effective
- ****Requesting Amendments:**** Submit amendment requests through P&Z if conditions or needs change
- ****Holding Leaders Accountable:**** Use the plan to track whether city officials follow through on priorities

For Partner Agencies

- ****Coordination:**** Review relevant sections to understand Highland Haven's priorities
- ****Joint Planning:**** Use comprehensive plans as starting points for regional collaboration
- ****Technical Assistance:**** Provide expertise to help Highland Haven accomplish priorities efficiently

Finding What You Need

Each topic section follows a consistent format:

1. Definition & Overview
2. Importance to Highland Haven
3. Community Input
4. Responsible Entities
5. Priorities & Action Plan

To find information quickly:

- Check the Table of Contents
- Review the Executive Summary for high-level overview
- Read Community Vision & Values for foundational principles
- Consult the Implementation Framework for priorities and timelines

Flexibility and Common Sense

The plan provides guidance, not rigid rules. It allows for:

- **Reasonable Deviations** when circumstances warrant
- **Plan Amendments** through proper P&Z and Board process
- **Professional Judgment** in applying policies to specific situations
- **Evolution Over Time** through annual reviews and comprehensive updates every five years

The plan is a living document meant to serve Highland Haven's long-term interests while remaining flexible.

Plan Organization

Document Structure

The comprehensive plan has three main parts that work together to provide a complete picture of Highland Haven's vision, priorities, and implementation strategies.

Part 1: Foundation

Introduction

Explains the plan's purpose, why we're updating it, legal basis, planning process, how to use the plan, and how it's organized.

Community Profile

Provides information about Highland Haven's location, history, demographics, physical characteristics, and current conditions.

Part 2: Topic Sections

The heart of the plan. Each section follows the same format:

- Definition & Overview
- Importance to Highland Haven
- Community Input
- Responsible Entities
- Priorities & Action Plan

The Topic Sections:

1. **Community Vision & Values** - Highland Haven's identity, core values, and guiding principles
2. **Land Use & Development** - Zoning, residential character, development standards
3. **Transportation & Mobility** - Road maintenance, traffic management, intersection safety
4. **Water Resources & Infrastructure** - Drinking water system, lake quality, conservation

5. ****Parks, Recreation & Open Space**** - Coordination with HHPOA on parks and resident concerns
6. ****Community Character & Design**** - Building standards, landscaping, property maintenance
7. ****Public Safety & Emergency Services**** - Law enforcement, fire protection, EMS, emergency preparedness
8. ****Infrastructure & Utilities**** - Drainage, septic systems, utility coordination
9. ****Economic Development & Fiscal Sustainability**** - Fiscal health, revenue strategies, grant funding
10. ****Community Engagement & Communication**** - Transparency, resident involvement
11. ****Intergovernmental Coordination**** - Working with County, LCRA, neighboring cities, and other agencies

Part 3: Implementation

Implementation Framework

Roles and responsibilities, amendment procedures, annual review process, and monitoring strategies.

Priority Action Matrix

All priorities organized by timeframe with responsible parties, costs, funding sources, and success metrics.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

5-year plan for major infrastructure investments and projects.

Funding Strategies

Current revenue sources, grant opportunities, and creative financing approaches.

Appendices

Supporting materials including:

- Survey results and town hall summaries
- Maps and demographic data
- Technical studies and reports
- Public participation documentation
- Ordinances, resolutions, and plan adoption documents
- Glossary of terms
- Resources and contacts

How Sections Work Together

The plan is designed so each section stands alone while connecting to others. For example:

- **Community Vision & Values** establishes the foundation for all other sections
- **Water Resources** connects to Land Use, Infrastructure, and Fiscal Sustainability
- **Transportation** connects to Public Safety and Infrastructure
- **Community Character** connects to Land Use and Parks

When making decisions, consider how multiple sections may apply.

Reading the Plan

For a Quick Overview: Read the Executive Summary and Community Vision & Values

For Specific Topics: Jump directly to the topic section you need

For Decision-Making: Review relevant topic sections, then consult Implementation Framework for timelines and responsibilities

For Comprehensive Understanding: Read the plan from beginning to end to see how everything connects