

Chapter 2:

Community Visioning

Daniel H. Burnham, famous architect and planner who helped rebuild Chicago after the 1871 fire, once said, “Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans. Aim high in hope and work. Remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die...” It is with this spirit in mind that Granite Shoals began the process of creating its vision for the future. This chapter provides that foundational element for this Plan as well as the building blocks, in the form of goals and objectives, for its achievement.

Vision Statement

Granite Shoals is dedicated to a vision of an attractive central Highland Lakes lakeside community with a Hill Country accent where preservation of parks and responsible development for growth are reflective of a respect for the diversity of its citizens and visitors while environmentally friendly to flora and fauna, with commitment to an open and fiscally responsible government encouraging civic involvement to be an informed citizenry for our wellbeing plus future generations.

SWOT Analysis/Issue Identification

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis is a technique used to identify issues within a City. Strengths and weaknesses identify a variety of aspects that currently impact the community both positively and negatively. Opportunities and weaknesses refer to the future of the community. It is important to note that some characteristics, such as growth for example, could easily fall into more than one category. In fact, depending on the point of view, growth could be considered a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat, all for the same community.

Identified Issues

Below are the issues that were identified at the onset of the planning process. These issues have been incorporated throughout the Plan and were the building blocks for the goals and objectives listed later in this chapter.

Land Use Issues

- Need more retail
- Waterfront taxation
- Medical facilities
- Retail / "Granite Gateway"
- Develop a concept of the image of Granite Shoals
- Airport expansion
- Our own Post Office and Zip Code
- Town Center
- Highway retail along R.R. 1431
- Entrance to city
- Hardware Store
- Industrial Uses
- Commercial Aesthetics
- School Growth
- Senior Housing - Assisted Living
- Growth Management - Keep Small Town feel
- Unique Restaurants

Transportation Issues

- Regional Road system / Bridge across river
 - Entrance to City
 - Lighting on Highways
 - Street Improvements
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Park and Open Space Issues

- Trails system / pavilion
 - Site Plan – sports facilities
 - Library
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Infrastructure Issues

- Sewer Costs
 - Sewer
 - Develop sewer to get retail
 - Storm Drainage
 - Street Lighting
 - Sewer Plant
 - Water Distribution
 - Infrastructure:
 - Sewer
 - Roads
 - Water
 - Drainage
 - Water Plant
 - Distribution Systems
-

Housing Issues

- Create attractive well maintained neighborhoods
 - Code Enforcement
 - Clear definition of vacant property maintenance
 - Affordable housing
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Implementation Issues

- Keeping a positive process

Visual Character Survey

The Visual Character Survey (VCS) is a tool used to help determine citizens' aesthetic preferences for their community as it continues to develop. The results help fashion policies that encourage a positive image of the built environment. The VCS also helps the community develop a common visual lexicon for communicating their vision with each other and its visitors.

VCS Results

Participants were asked to rate each image based on its appropriateness for Granite Shoals on a scale of -5 (very undesirable) to 5 (very desirable). The results of the VCS exercise were compiled using a standard set of descriptive statistics, namely, the mean, median, mode and standard deviation:

- Mean: Average of all scores
- Median: Middle number when all scores are arranged in ascending order
- Mode: Most commonly occurring score
- Standard deviation: Measure of how widely individual scores varied from the mean score

These were used to rank the images overall and by category. The following tables show the two highest and the two lowest scoring images in the overall survey and within each category.

Overall Results

Image #	#107	#144	#131	#102
Mean	4.3	3.8	(2.7)	(2.8)
Median	4.0	4.0	(3.0)	(3.0)
Mode	4.0	4.0	(5.0)	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	0.7	1.2	2.4	2.2

Image #107, Public Space, was well-liked overall. The inclusion of stone in the image seems important to the self-image of the community. The quarry lake on the 131 acre Town Center site could look comparable to this image. Image #144, Open Space, is typically the highest scoring image in most communities, and shows well here in Granite Shoals.

Image #131, Pedestrian Amenities, and Image #102, Signage, were disliked universally with no score higher than 1. These images show wide pedestrian unfriendly roads with closed vertical edges that are uninviting.

Overall, the group liked images that incorporated natural areas and materials, and images that had a small City scale and feel such as buildings that were three stories or less.

Street Design Results

				
Image #	#3	#19	#20	#7
Mean	3.7	3.4	(1.5)	(1.7)
Median	4.0	3.5	(1.5)	(2.0)
Mode	5.0	3.0	(5.0)	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.8	1.3	2.6	3.2

Similar to the overall results, the images that incorporated natural areas were favored and wide, heavily trafficked areas were considered unfavorable.

Image #3 provides a median that has substantial trees and a meandering feel that creates softer feel to this corridor. Image #19 is a pedestrian way that is located along a road (seen to the far right), but that is buffered by distance and landscaping.

In Images #20 and #7 there are no medians, little landscaping and signage plays a prominent role in the landscape.

Building Materials Results



Image #	#40	#33	#23	#27
Mean	3.3	3.3	0.4	(1.9)
Median	4.0	3.0	1.0	(1.5)
Mode	4.0	3.0	2.0	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.7	1.1	2.6	2.4

Again, natural materials played a strong role in the preferences for building materials. The two most favored images provide complete treatment of natural materials on visible facades and provide a nice level of articulation to the building and use.

The two remaining images appear to use metal siding and have simplistic roof lines. Image #27 received a -5 score most often in this category.

Building Design Results

				
Image #	#50	#46	#57	#58
Mean	2.9	2.7	(1.6)	(2.1)
Median	3.0	3.0	(1.5)	(2.0)
Mode	3.0	2.0	(1.0)	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.1	2.0	2.4	2.3

Similar to Building Materials, natural style materials with building articulation scored higher.

Simple rectangular buildings that utilize little or no natural materials have consistently scored low and been perceived as unfavorable.

Town Center/Mixed Use Results





				
Image #	#82	#84	#67	#80
Mean	3.7	3.4	(0.2)	(1.3)
Median	4.0	4.0	0.5	(2.0)
Mode	4.0	5.0	1.0	(4.0)
Std. Dev.	1.3	1.6	1.9	2.5

These visual preferences for the Town Center coincided well with the design alternatives that the Steering Committee and citizens developed.

There was a strong sense that the Town Center should be an active recreational area. More urban styles of development were considered acceptable if they stayed below four stories in height and had natural or human-scaled elements.

The two least favored images are four stories tall with a distinctly urban feel.

Signage Results

				
Image #	#95	#91	#90	#102
Mean	3.4	2.8	(1.8)	(2.8)
Median	4.0	3.0	(2.0)	(3.0)
Mode	5.0	3.0	(5.0)	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.9	2.0	2.8	2.2

Consistent with previous results, natural materials, landscaping and features that have a human scale were favored in the signage category.

Visually congested signage was not favored. Consistency in signage application would be considered an improvement to these areas.





Public Space Results

				
Image #	#107	#114	#123	#125
Mean	4.3	3.3	1.0	(0.7)
Median	4.0	3.5	1.0	(1.0)
Mode	4.0	4.0	3.0	(1.0)
Std. Dev.	0.7	1.2	2.0	2.5

The category contained the number one favored image, #107. This image is suggestive of the quarry lake that is located on the Town Center site if it were developed.

Images #123 and #125 lacked a human feel and were sparsely landscaped. Overall, they had a colder feel than the favored images.

Pedestrian Amenities Results

				
Image #	#129	#128	#138	#131
Mean	2.8	2.7	(0.7)	(2.7)
Median	3.0	3.0	(0.5)	(3.0)
Mode	4.0	3.0	1.0	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.2	1.3	2.3	2.4

Overall, this series of images promoted open and inviting pedestrian paths as opposed to “walled off” unlandscaped paths.

Images #138 and #131 are paths that may be considered too close to major thoroughfares and lacking pedestrian amenities.

Open Space Results

				
Image #	#144	#160	#146	#162
Mean	3.8	3.0	0.5	(0.5)
Median	4.0	4.0	1.5	1.0
Mode	4.0	4.0	2.0	(3.0)
Std. Dev.	1.2	1.8	2.7	2.6

Favored images, again, are suggestive of the quarry site with its stone work and Lake LBJ.

Images #146 and #162 lacked a natural feel and were sparsely landscaped. Overall, they had a more developed feel than the favored images.

Housing Mix Results

Image #				
	#181	#173	#177	#167
Mean	2.9	2.7	0.9	(0.1)
Median	3.0	3.0	1.0	1.0
Mode	3.0	3.0	(1.0)	1.0
Std. Dev.	0.9	2.0	2.1	2.3

As expected the preference was for lower and medium density homes as shown in images #181 and #173.

Images #177 and #167 show more urban, higher density developments and were not as well received. The higher density developments that were two to three stories scored fairly well overall if they appropriately integrated into their surroundings.

Non-Residential Development Results

Image #				
	#202	#197	#195	#192
Mean	3.2	2.9	(1.0)	(2.6)
Median	4.0	3.0	(1.0)	(3.0)
Mode	4.0	3.0	(1.0)	(5.0)
Std. Dev.	1.9	1.0	2.4	2.1

Human-scale retail and commercial structures that utilized natural materials appropriate for the Hill Country were well liked overall.

Low, sprawling buildings with little building articulation and metal siding scored very low.

Vision Statement

A vision communicates the reason for existence, the purpose behind planning, and the overall goals and objectives of a City from long-range planning and development perspective. The primary benefit of visioning is that it clarifies how a community will approach its critical planning, development, and growth issues. With the clarified approach that visioning provides, the resulting Comprehensive Plan will address the future of the City in a manner that is reflective of the community's interests.

The vision statement for a community should succinctly and vividly describe the community as it will ideally exist in the future. A vision statement spells out the City's goals or values, and promotes what the City should become in the future. Also, it communicates the overall purpose of the community and what the community values.

Vision Statement

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Goals and Objectives

Granite Shoals has taken an important step in guiding its future with the decision to initiate this comprehensive planning process. One of the main purposes of this chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is to state clear goals for the City and to identify specific directions that should be taken to achieve such goals. It is the goals and objectives established herein that determine the focus of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan recommendations contained within subsequent chapters. It should also be noted that many of the goals and objectives represent items that are not only intended to be addressed by the comprehensive plan, but also by the City on a long-term and on-going basis.

Goals and objectives are created to define what the City wants to accomplish. Goals are broad ideas, and objectives are more specific or tangible steps to achieve the goals. For example, a housing goal could be to provide a diverse range of housing choices. A corresponding objective of this goal could be to encourage housing types suitable for senior citizens.

The goals and objectives are identified within this chapter, but relate to the five recommendation chapters: Transportation, Future Land Use, Infrastructure, Housing Strategies, and Parks & Open Space Plans.

Goal 1: Grow in a balanced and efficient manner

- Objective 1.1 Establish land use policies that support appropriate enhancement of the Phillips Ranch Road and quality development of the R.R. 1431 area, and promote the unique character of each.
- Objective 1.2 Encourage “smart growth” principles to help ensure the City’s future sustainability.
- Objective 1.3 Prioritize potential growth areas within the City.
- Objective 1.4 Encourage infill development to take advantage of existing infrastructure and promote effective utilization and upgrading of existing structures, especially in the R.R. 1431 area.
- Objective 1.5 Create a zoning district along Phillips Ranch Road which encourages the appropriate mix and types of uses.
- Objective 1.6 Continue efforts to instill a stronger sense of civic pride by encouraging involvement in public decision-making and soliciting regular citizen input.

- Objective 1.7 Coordinate the Thoroughfare Plan with regional plans to ensure efficient and desirable connections between major arterials and other thoroughfares.
- Objective 1.8 Continue coordination with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Burnet County on key regional roadway projects impacting Granite Shoals and its ETJ.
- Objective 1.9 Promote a mix of uses, including light industrial and retail, that will provide a viable economic base for the future.

Goal 2: Develop a variety of housing choices

- Objective 2.1 Ensure that the variety of housing units is compatible and complementary to surrounding land uses.
- Objective 2.2 Ensure a diversity of housing needs by encouraging a variety of lot and housing sizes and designs, and develop incentives for residential development.
- Objective 2.3 Develop incentives for combining smaller lots for infill residential development.
- Objective 2.4 Promote home ownership and long-term residency.
- Objective 2.5 Wherever possible, retrofit neighborhoods with pedestrian connections and access to open space.
- Objective 2.6 Develop housing for a “full-life cycle” community.

Goal 3: Enhance quality of life and maintain “small town charm”

- Objective 3.1 Continue to proactively address property maintenance issues (e.g., litter, yards, structures, neighborhoods).
- Objective 3.2 Promote the image of Granite Shoals as a “full-life cycle” community by encouraging appropriate development, such as safe, walkable neighborhoods and staged medical care.
- Objective 3.3 Encourage the development of recreational opportunities throughout the community, particularly focusing on youth-oriented activities.
- Objective 3.4 Encourage unique retail development that is pedestrian-oriented and connects to adjacent neighborhoods.

Goal 4: Promote tourism industry

- Objective 4.1 Develop a comprehensive tourism marketing plan that includes off-season opportunities.
- Objective 4.2 Consider a high-quality RV park near R.R. 1431 or another appropriate area.
- Objective 4.3 Advertise and promote cultural and natural amenities, as well as vacation rentals and bed & breakfasts.
- Objective 4.4 Create gateways at principal entry points into the City, and develop a design theme that is used throughout the community to create a sense of unity, identity, and cohesion for both residents and visitors.
- Objective 4.5 Establish ways in which the City can honor its history and use it to bolster civic pride.
- Objective 4.6 Become a destination City with unique points of interest to offer visitors – recreational and cultural opportunities.
- Objective 4.7 Evaluate feasibility of a town center concept.

Goal 5: Plan for expansion and renovation of existing infrastructure

- Objective 5.1 Examine funding opportunities and implementation strategies to provide City-wide water services.
- Objective 5.2 Examine funding opportunities and implementation strategies to provide City-wide wastewater treatment services.
- Objective 5.3 Examine current street and drainage capabilities and address any deficiencies through capital improvement funding.
- Objective 5.4 Plan for infrastructure along R.R. 1431 for expanded retail and commercial use.
- Objective 5.5 Investigate feasibility of and begin planning for a wastewater plant.

Goal 6: Promote economic development and job creation/attraction

- Objective 6.1 Ensure Granite Shoals has a diversified tax base through a balance of residential and non-residential land uses.

- Objective 6.2 Continue to pursue and encourage the establishment of new businesses in Granite Shoals, thereby creating increased and diversified employment opportunities.
- Objective 6.3 Investigate the possibility of commuter rail expansion and attraction of new businesses which may utilize a commuter rail connection.
- Objective 6.4 Study the future feasibility of the airport in its current location.
- Objective 6.5 Promote existing and new restaurants and retail stores that provide a unique image for Granite Shoals.

Goal 7: Establish design standards

- Objective 7.1 Develop high quality building and development standards for the R.R. 1431 corridor.
- Objective 7.2 Promote high quality development along the northern portion of Phillips Ranch Road.
- Objective 7.3 Improve appearances of storefronts along the R.R. 1431 corridor.
- Objective 7.4 Identify roadway design standards in conformance with a functional street system classification.

Goal 8: Ensure the provision of a balanced park and open space system for the enjoyment of Granite Shoals residents

- Objective 8.1 Provide new and different recreational opportunities for all age groups.
- Objective 8.2 Promote and enhance recreational opportunities at the Town Center property for city and county residents as well as visitors from outside Burnet County.
- Objective 8.3 Actively promote tourism based recreational opportunities throughout Burnet County and to plan park and open space developments in a manner that provides economic benefits to the community.
- Objective 8.4 Develop a maintenance program which will address maintenance schedules, park equipment replacement funds, and maintenance for additional parks as they come online.

- Objective 8.5 Forge partnerships with public and private organizations for the development, operation and maintenance of future recreational facilities.
- Objective 8.6 Encourage the school district to continue its practice of allowing public use of its outdoor recreation facilities during non-school hours.
- Objective 8.7 Connect existing parks with surrounding neighborhoods through a network of trails.
- Objective 8.8 Consider opportunities for a multi-use facility that could house a community center and library.
- Objective 8.9 Ensure that all park facilities meet the most current safety guidelines and accessibility standards.

Goal 9: Identify, protect and preserve quality natural open spaces for unstructured recreational activities, inherent aesthetic value and protection of valuable ecosystems

- Objective 9.1 Continually research the viability of developing trail systems along creeks, flood ways, rights-of-way, and utility easements that will link public and private recreational facilities, neighborhoods, and school campuses.
- Objective 9.2 Be proactive in the acquisition and protection of unique natural open spaces throughout the City of Granite Shoals.
- Objective 9.3 Limit development in natural open spaces in order to minimize adverse effects on valuable ecosystems.
- Objective 9.4 Address natural open space needs when developing active recreational facilities to provide citizens with well balanced recreational experiences that include both active and passive opportunities.
- Objective 9.5 Maintain adequate public access to the lake and associated viewsheds.