

## **Section 7: Nonresidential Development**

### **7.0 NONRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **7.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

GOAL 7: Support the diversification of the local economic base by encouraging nonresidential development in the appropriate areas of the City and providing the necessary zoning controls to ensure that nonresidential areas work in concert with residential neighborhoods.

Objective 7.1: Maintain a sufficient amount of nonresidential land to meet the future requirements for new businesses and that encourages local employment and increasing Rockdale property values.

Objective 7.2: Provide the necessary studies and review processes to ensure that nonresidential areas work in concert with existing and future residential neighborhoods using best known zoning and other management methods.

Objective 7.3: Review and update the existing nonresidential building and zoning codes as necessary in support of future commercial development requirements.

Objective 7.4: Develop zoning codes that include businesses consistent with the economic development plan.

Objective 7.5: Utilize physical buffers, such as permanent open space, landscaping, fencing or walls, (as appropriate) between residential areas and nonresidential areas and/or differing residential densities where appropriate.

Objective 7.6: Ensure that new development and the related development review processes achieve, maintain, and improve the quality of life; and develop and enforce effective external construction standards to alleviate the impact of growth (e.g., dimensional, landscaping, lighting and signage).

Objective 7.7: Alleviate the occurrence of substandard and/or deteriorated development within the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction through the use of regular, consistent development review and code enforcement practices.

Objective 7.8: Manage development in the floodplain and in areas that the City determines are subject to flooding, with the exception of development

that can utilize the floodplains and not substantially alter it (e.g., park and recreation uses).

## **7.2 OVERVIEW**

Retail, services, light industrial, commercial, public use, parks and open spaces are all examples of areas that would be considered as nonresidential development. Nonresidential development is necessary for healthy growth and the continued improvement of quality of life within our City. As the residential growth occurs, more retail and service businesses will be required to provide the needed goods and services the public expects and requires. With growth, parks and open spaces will need to be added in proportion to the increasing population. Residential growth also will stimulate demand for more City services, necessitating new funding that might be raised through nonresidential taxes. Accordingly making adequate land available for future nonresidential development will become a greater priority for the City. Planning for managed growth in nonresidential development will ensure that needed businesses, public services, parks and open spaces are consistent with goals of the community.

## **7.3 EXISTING CONDITION**

With so little property currently zoned for nonresidential usage, it is critical that additional land be preserved for nonresidential development. As the City grows, it is conceivable some residential lots may need to be rezoned for nonresidential usages to satisfy the demand for new retail and commercial business, public use facilities, parks, and open spaces.

Most new businesses will most likely continue to locate in areas already zoned for nonresidential use along Highway 79, where the majority of developed commercial land is located.

As for public use facilities, the City owns and operates City Hall, city parks, the sports facilities, an airport and the library. There is a one golf course that is privately owned and operated located outside the city limits. The city owns undeveloped land designate for an industrial park located outside the city limits. There are numerous other school, recreation and utility properties around the City, but very little reserved open space. If new parks, open space or public use areas are to be developed, the City would need to acquire and probably rezone the land for such projects.

## **7.4 PLANNING AND ZONING**

The City has obligations to its citizens to ensure the proper balance between quality of life, residential growth, tax rates and economic competitiveness. It is critical that Rockdale through its Planning and Zoning and Economic Development processes decide what growth is desired and take the necessary steps to move Rockdale into the future while preserving its quality of life.

## **7.5 DEVELOPMENT**

Rockdale is fortunate to have an existing airport, available land and an existing workforce. The City should leverage these attributes and take advantage of the economic benefits, enhancements to the community and quality of life these assets bring to the community. Nonresidential development which is compatible to and associated with these amenities could be extremely favorable economically to the City provided it is accomplished in consonance with the City plan.

The H. H. Coffield Regional Airport can potentially support some additional commercial and light industrial businesses. Some land around the airport could be annexed and rezoned in preparation for the potential addition of new businesses which could take advantage of locations in close proximity to the airport. Some utility upgrades and road improvements may be necessary to support any major new development.

The City needs to consider ways to enhance its ability to accommodate architecturally compatible lodging, condominiums, town homes and other accommodations in support of the development of business and employment opportunities. Developing and having both temporary and permanent housing in support of these businesses will help in their ability to maintain more stable and successful operations. To accomplish this, some land currently zoned as single family residential might need to be rezoned in order to provide the appropriate development stimulus.

Rockdale generally lacks sufficient facilities to attract overnight visitors. The City needs to develop attractions that make Rockdale a destination point for tourists and travelers.

## **7.6 ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE**

This plan reflects the desire of many citizens in the community to protect the beauty of the area and maintain property values within the City. Therefore building codes and zoning ordinances should be strictly enforced to prevent the occurrence of substandard development and/or deteriorating properties. Current regulations need to be reviewed and updated periodically to allow for

easier enforcement and compliance. Commercial property owners with deteriorating structures or poor land use habits should be encouraged to bring their property up to a minimum standard. The City must promote high standards of appearance for all buildings, and should review, update and enforce construction standards, sign and on-site storage ordinances in order to ensure these standards are adhered to. The retail businesses located on Highway 79 are the gateways to our community, it is essential that these properties are representative of Rockdale's values.

## **7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Acquire additional land and preserve for nonresidential land use.
2. A review and update, as needed, the existing building codes and zoning ordinance in support of future commercial and industrial development.
3. Utilize physical buffers, such as permanent open space, landscaping, fencing or walls, (as feasible and appropriate) between residential areas and nonresidential areas and/or differing residential densities.
4. Underdeveloped land with potential use as architecturally compatible lodging, condominiums, town homes and other such accommodations should be identified and considered for rezoning to enhance nonresidential development to stimulate potential business and employment.
5. Undeveloped land adjacent to the airport should be evaluated to determine potentially needed zoning changes to support additional nonresidential development.