



A Premier Outdoor Lifestyle Community

CITY OF HEATH

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Acknowledgments

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1 | Executive Summary

This 2025 Heath Comprehensive Plan is an update to the City’s 2018 Plan. The adoption of this 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update on June 10, 2025, marks the end of a process guided by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Because an existing Plan framework was already in place, the planning process for Heath’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan focuses on updating the content while maintaining the structure of the 2018 Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee first reviewed and revised the Plan’s goals and objectives to reflect changes in Heath since the previous planning process. The Committee then focused on the land use and livability strategies focusing heavily on maintaining Heath’s rural character and high quality of life for current and future residents.

This Plan provides instruction on implementing the objectives and actions outlined in the document and, when used in conjunction with other documents such as the Heath Thoroughfare Plan, the Water System Study and CIP Plan, Heath Parks, Recreation, and Trails Plan, Subdivision Regulations, and Zoning Ordinance, will be a useful tool in growing Heath in accordance with the wishes of residents.



Photo courtesy of Bayley/Brooke Creative Communication

2 | Introduction

A city’s comprehensive plan can be defined as a long-range planning tool that is intended to be used by City staff, decision-makers, and citizens to guide the growth and physical development of a community for 10 years, 20 years, or an even longer period of time. The State of Texas has established laws about the way incorporated communities can ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens. State law gives communities the power to regulate the use of land, but only if such regulations are based on a plan. Specifically, the law states:

The governing body of a municipality may adopt a comprehensive plan for the long-range development of the municipality...A municipality may define the relationship between a comprehensive plan and development regulations and may provide standards for determining the consistency required between a plan and development regulations.

Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code

In basic terms, the primary objectives of a comprehensive plan are to accomplish the following:

- Efficient delivery of public services,
- Coordination of public and private investment,
- Minimization of potential conflicts between land uses,
- Management of growth in an orderly manner, and in accordance with citizens' preferences
- Cost-effective public investments, and
- A rational and reasonable basis for making decisions about the community.

A comprehensive plan has two interrelated purposes: one, it allows the citizens of a community to create a shared vision of what they want the community to become, and two, it establishes ways in which a community can effectively realize this vision. This 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update is, therefore, a vision of what Heath can become and a long-range statement of the City's public policy.

Heath has a tradition of planning; the City's previous plan was completed in 2018, and City leaders and staff have effectively followed many of the guidelines and recommendations in the years since its adoption. By continuing this planning tradition with this latest version of the comprehensive plan, the City can continue to pattern its growth in a positive manner – through traditional planning elements, as well as through new and innovative planning-related policies. The product of this latest planning effort will be a plan document that the City can use in the years to come.

This 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update, once adopted, becomes the official planning document of the City. However, this document does not represent the end of the process – planning is not a single event, it is continuous. The 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to be a dynamic, adaptable guide to help citizens and officials shape Heath's future on a continual, proactive basis. The City has recognized this in the past, and it is anticipated that planning in Heath will continue long after this 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update is adopted.

3 | Visioning

What does the future hold for Heath? What should the City be like in 2035. The purpose of this section is to answer these questions and identify the community’s shared vision for Heath’s future. This vision will define how Heath should grow, look, and function as it becomes an increasingly mature and livable City.

Numerous meetings and exercises were held with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and City officials to establish this vision, which can be reviewed in greater detail in Section 7 | **Appendix**.

This chapter creates a vision for this comprehensive planning effort, as well as for the City of Heath in general. This is also the chapter upon which many of the recommended actions and implementation efforts of Heath’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update will be based. To create this shared vision, numerous meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) were held. City leaders and the public were also asked to provide input at public hearings at City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings and through an online survey. This chapter includes the Plan’s vision statement and goals and objectives, which provide a basis for the comprehensive planning process.

Vision Statement

The vision statement should succinctly and vividly describe the community as it ideally will exist in the future. This statement is intended to guide both the comprehensive planning process and the City’s future.

The CPSC provides the following vision statement:

A premiere outdoor lifestyle community of spacious, upscale neighborhoods, open spaces, parks and trails, cultural amenities, an exemplary educational system, and distinctive economic development to provide the highest level of public services and safety – a place to call home for a lifetime.

Upon review for this 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update the CPSC agreed to keep Heath’s Vision Statement largely intact with only slight modification. As implementation of this plan occurs, the City of Heath will strive to become the place described by this vision statement.

Goals and Objectives

This portion of this chapter is a set of goals and objectives. **Goals** are general statements of guidance concerning an aspect of Heath's desired ultimate physical, social, and/or economic environment. These are statements that outline how various issues should be addressed in a broad sense. **Objectives** express specific statements of intent that will ultimately lead the City to achieve what is envisioned within the goal statements. Many of the goals and objectives represent items that are intended to be addressed by the Comprehensive Plan and the City on a long-term, ongoing basis.

Neighborhood Livability Strategy

Goal 1. Unique Development

Encourage long-term stability and reinvestment by ensuring that new development is unique.

- Objective 1.1. Maintain a residential density of no more than one dwelling unit per a minimum of one acre of developable land, as defined herein.
- Objective 1.2. Encourage large tracts of undeveloped land to develop according to the SFE 3.0 Residential Estate District regulations, especially along the main corridors into and out of Heath.
- Objective 1.3. Encourage a diversity of residential properties in terms of size, type, views, and orientation of lots to amenities.
- Objective 1.4. Require non-residential development to be distinctive, quaint, pedestrian-oriented and have trail connections to adjacent properties.
- Objective 1.5. Establish a strategy that minimizes the local impact of non-residential uses while maximizing the economic benefit of such uses.
- Objective 1.6. Promote appropriate building height, mass, impact (lights, traffic, safety, security) and scale with respect to non-residential development and the surrounding properties.
- Objective 1.7. Require sidewalks and trails to connect to other existing trails. Ensure the trail plan and ordinances are aligned with this objective.

Goal 2. Community Image

Continue to enhance Heath's image as a community of excellence.

- Objective 2.1. Distinguish Heath as a City of unique attributes, including low-density residential and commercial development, Lake Ray Hubbard, cultural amenities, an abundance of parks, open space, pedestrian orientation, small-scale retailing, quality housing, and educational opportunities.
- Objective 2.2. Explore options for land conservation efforts through City initiatives and incentives for the development community.
- Objective 2.3. Create attractive public open spaces to serve as focal points and gathering areas inviting to both citizens and visitors.
- Objective 2.4. Continue to foster a positive relationship with the Rockwall Independent School District (RISD) by encouraging the development community to work with the RISD regarding school locations, transportation, and other related challenges and partnership opportunities.

Goal 3. Livable Community

Review local development standards to ensure that livability and sustainability concepts are required.

- Objective 3.1. Develop standards for transitional elements to ensure positive relationships between residential and non-residential development.
- Objective 3.2. Review zoning and subdivision ordinances, as well as engineering standards, to ensure that the recommendations of this Plan are incorporated.
- Objective 3.3. Ensure that all neighborhoods have convenient access to parks, open space, and trails, which will maintain property values and attract reinvestment.
- Objective 3.4. Ensure that non-residential development has characteristics that enhance and contribute to the livability of Heath.
- Objective 3.5. Identify how park and open space areas can be integrated with existing and future development.
- Objective 3.6. Require pedestrian access throughout newly developed and redeveloped areas.
- Objective 3.7. Require the dedication of parkland, trails, and open space for new residential development proportionate to the parkland, trails, and open space available to existing residents.

Goal 4. Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity

Ensure that the community’s recreational system meets the current and projected population’s needs, reflects Heath’s quality and unique character, and allows for bike and pedestrian transportation.

- Objective 4.1. Create strategies to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access as an alternative form of transportation in Heath.
- Objective 4.2. Provide convenient, shaded, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle mobility throughout the City.
- Objective 4.3. Pursue funding for retroactive and proactive integration of pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Objective 4.4. Build upon the connectivity concepts in the City’s adopted Master Parks Plan and concentrate on connecting existing trail segments and providing connections from neighborhoods to schools, retail, civic buildings, and recreation facilities.
- Objective 4.5. Ensure that Heath’s park and trail network is coordinated with the current Rockwall County Open Space Master Plan, the plans of surrounding cities, Kaufman County, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).

Land Use Strategy

Goal 5. Identity

Maintain the City’s development quality, low residential density, low commercial intensity, openness, and hometown atmosphere.

- Objective 5.1. Create distinctive neighborhood areas that will contribute to the City’s established reputation for quality development.
- Objective 5.2. Maintain the City’s value and quality in the future by ensuring that existing neighborhoods are well-maintained and enhanced as needed.
- Objective 5.3. Require residential developments to preserve open space and reinforce the feeling of openness while maintaining a density of no more than one dwelling unit per acre of developable land, as set out in Objective 1.1. with a preference to develop large tracts of land in accordance with the SFE 3.0 zoning district as set out in Objective 1.2.
- Objective 5.4. Require residential and non-residential development to maintain open view corridors, open perimeter features, trail connectivity, trees, and entryways.

Goal 6. Rural By Design

Maintain the City’s Rural by Design character. Rural by Design is defined as infilling existing neighborhoods, strengthening the Towne Center, pursuing Heath’s vision statement (see Page 3), and only allowing development that maintains open spaces, low residential density, low commercial intensity, and low impact on infrastructure.

- Objective 6.1. Implement Rural by Design concepts when amending ordinances and creating or amending plans
- Objective 6.2. Non-residential development should be small in scale and minimize infrastructure impact, guided by the Towne Center Overlay District Design Manual throughout the entire City.
- Objective 6.3. New public plans, non-residential developments, and residential developments should include open spaces such as outdoor rooms with shade and seating and lawns for public gatherings that encourage lingering and camaraderie and cultivate a sense of community.

Goal 7. Land Use Mix

Encourage a balance of land use to serve citizens’ needs, minimize infrastructure impact, and provide a more diversified local economic base.

- Objective 7.1. Identify specific land uses needed to serve the community; establish ways the City can proactively provide and attract these needs.
- Objective 7.2. Allow local non-residential uses so that residents can meet more of their service needs within Heath.
- Objective 7.3. Ensure that Heath’s land use policies adequately allow for uses that will support the sales tax and property tax bases to support existing and future residents.

- Objective 7.4. Establish ways to transition between residential and non-residential development as development occurs. For example, but not limited to: buffer zones, landscaping berms, and soft-scaping elements.
- Objective 7.5. Ensure that development standards for non-residential uses are the highest possible so that a positive visual perception of Heath continues to be projected to citizens and visitors while minimizing infrastructure impact.

Goal 8. Resource Protection

Require future development to respect and preserve the environment.

- Objective 8.1. Require development proposals to consider local environmental factors, such as tree retention, topography, drainage, creek protection, floodplain areas, and open space conservation.
- Objective 8.2. Require development to utilize sustainable design concepts to preserve natural resources.
- Objective 8.3. Preserve pathways and natural areas for public use whenever possible.
- Objective 8.4. Follow a year-round water conservation schedule that allows homeowners to irrigate their landscapes.
- Objective 8.5. Require self-sustaining amenities, including, but not limited to: irrigation, greywater systems, and other infrastructure.

Goal 9. Lakefront

Facilitate the use of areas along Lake Ray Hubbard by both community and private interests.

- Objective 9.1. Maintain the recreational use of Lake Ray Hubbard at Terry Park by the citizens of Heath.
- Objective 9.2. Identify areas along the Lake that should be focused on ensuring community access, preserving views of the Lake, and maximizing long-term value for properties in the area.
- Objective 9.3. Identify areas that may be available for future community access and use.
- Objective 9.4. Ensure that new development and redevelopment along the Lake is of the highest quality.

Transportation Strategy

The Transportation goals and objectives should be co-referenced with the Thoroughfare Plan and Park Master Plan. These are standalone but concurrent long-range planning documents. (A complete description of the Park Master Plan can be found on Page 30.)

Goal 10. Maintenance

Ensure that the community's roadway and trail systems are safe, well-maintained, adequate to meet the needs of the current and projected population, and reflective of Heath's quality and unique character.

- Objective 10.1. Identify and implement strategies that balance convenient and efficient auto access with safe, well-designed pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

- Objective 10.2. Identify roadway and street deficiencies and address those deficiencies in a prioritized systematic preventative maintenance program designed to extend the service life of existing roadways and streets. Roadways and streets should be graded and rated according to their condition. A funding plan should be enacted as an execution strategy for required maintenance and improvements.
- Objective 10.3. Investigate and offer ways in which public and private funding can be directed toward roadway and trail system improvements.
- Objective 10.4. Enhance current and newly constructed roadways with light fixtures, landscaping, medians, signage, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities to make the City's roads visually unique and help residents and visitors recognize that they are in Heath.

Goal 11. Planning

Address roadway and trail system needs according to the type of development or redevelopment that is anticipated to occur in the future. These objectives should be pursued in conjunction with the Thoroughfare Plan and Park Master Plan.

- Objective 11.1. Correlate the Transportation Strategy with the Land Use Strategy, specifically to ensure that the transportation system accommodates the various land uses.
- Objective 11.2. Review standards for roadway design based on anticipated function, traffic volume, and adjacent land use.
- Objective 11.3. Incorporate updated standards for roadways into the City's regulations.
- Objective 11.4. Plan for an interconnected and diverse street pattern to ease congestion, more evenly distribute traffic, and offer flexibility of routes.
- Objective 11.5. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to reflect the Comprehensive Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Parks, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.
- Objective 11.6. Determine strategies to limit cut-through traffic from surrounding cities.

Goal 12. Coordination

Work with adjacent cities, county, and state governmental entities on efforts to maintain and/or expand the roadway and trail systems.

- Objective 12.1. Ensure that Heath's Transportation Strategy is coordinated with the plans of surrounding cities, Rockwall County, Kaufman County, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).
- Objective 12.2. Investigate how local, county, state, and federal funds could be combined to affect local and regional transportation needs positively.
- Objective 12.3. Work with Rockwall County and Kaufman County on floodplain preservation efforts so that such areas can be used to create pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the region.
- Objective 12.4. Collaborate with surrounding cities as appropriate.
- Objective 12.5. Coordinate and seek alignment of state elected officials regarding legislation impacting the city.

Towne Center Strategy

Goal 13. Towne Center

Encourage the development of the Towne Center Overlay District as a special and unique area in the heart of Heath, consistent with the Towne Center Overlay District Design Manual.

- Objective 13.1. Ensure that public amenities are a major focus of the Towne Center, including pedestrian access from the local trail system and adjacent development and Towne Center Park.
- Objective 13.2. Encourage distinctive and quaint businesses that generate sales tax and improve the quality of life for Heath citizens.

4 | Land Use Strategy

The right of a municipality to coordinate growth is rooted in its need to protect the health, safety, and welfare of local citizens. An essential part of establishing the guidelines for such responsibility is the Land Use Strategy, which establishes an overall framework for the preferred pattern of development within Heath. Specifically, the Land Use Strategy designates various areas within the City for particular land uses, based principally on current land uses and the community's vision for its future.

This Land Use Strategy is graphically depicted for use during the development plan review process with the Future Land Use Map (**Figure 1** on page 16), and the Land Use Strategy should ultimately be reflected through the City's policies and land development decisions. It is important to note that the Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map, which deals with specific development requirements on individual parcels. The zoning map and changes in zoning should, however, be based on the Future Land Use Map and the related policies within this Land Use Strategy. In general, this Land Use Strategy is intended to be a comprehensive blueprint of Heath's future land use pattern vision.

Heath has become known as one of the premier cities in the Metroplex in which to live. The City has experienced significant residential development in the last two decades. However, a balance of land uses is needed, as are policies to ensure Heath remains a highly livable and sought-after community with the ability to handle the infrastructure impacts of growth. The opportunity to make Heath a unique and sustainable community is now. At the same time, a significant amount of land remains undeveloped and can be developed more uniquely and innovatively than land previously developed. This Land Use Strategy has been written to achieve the following:

- Address the needs of the City as a whole,
- Address the concerns and issues raised by the Review Committee and the general public throughout this planning process, but particularly during the visioning process,
- Not burden existing citizens with the impacts of future growth,
- Provide policy guidance in keeping with established goals and objectives (within **3 | Visioning**), and
- Ensure that Heath is a unique and sustainable community that ages well and gracefully.

Summary of Existing Land Uses and Local Development Patterns

An analysis of present land use patterns within Heath is presented in **7 | Appendix**. Land uses were documented through aerial imagery during which each parcel of land in the City and ETJ was coded as a certain land use type, such as Residential (i.e. Rural Estates, Medium Density Residential, High Residential), Public/Semi-Public, and Non-Residential (i.e. Office, Retail, Commercial).

Approximately 67 percent of the developed land within the City is consumed by residential land uses, primarily single-family residential. Rights-of-Way and Public/Semi-Public land uses also account for a large amount of the developed land, and together these three use categories account for approximately 98 percent of the City’s developed acreage.

Table 1. 2025 Land Uses within the City Limits

Land Use Category	2025 Existing Land Use		
	Acres	Percent of Developed	Percent of Total
Rural Estate	1,595.6	28.8%	19.3%
Medium Density Residential	1,460.0	26.4%	17.7%
High Density Residential	626.8	90.8%	24.9%
Residential - Townhome	43.5	0.8%	0.5%
Residential	3,725.9	67.3%	45.1%
Parks and Open Space	165.0	3.0%	2.0%
Private Recreation	588.2	10.6%	7.1%
Public/Semi-Public	268.4	4.8%	3.2%
Public/Semi-Public	1,021.6	18.4%	12.4%
Office	14.9	0.3%	0.2%
Retail	61.0	1.1%	0.7%
Commercial	23.7	0.4%	0.3%
Non-Residential	99.6	1.8%	1.2%
Right-of-Way	690.6	12.5%	8.4%
Total Developed Land	5,537.7	100.0%	67.0%
Vacant	2,521.7	N/A	30.5%
Total	8,267.7	N/A	100.0%

*Total Developed Land includes all residential, public/semi-public, non-residential, and right-of-way that is not considered vacant land. Vacant is land that typically has no buildings, structures or improvements.

Approximately 30.5 percent of the total acreage within Heath is Vacant (or undeveloped) land. This percentage amounts to over 2,521 acres that have the potential to be developed in the future. The importance of the calculation of undeveloped land lies in the fact that it is this land, along with annexed areas, that will allow the City to grow in population with infrastructure capacity in the coming years. It is also significant because, at almost 31 percent of the City, if it is developed in keeping with the policies outlined within this Comprehensive Plan – with increased connectivity, open space, use diversity, etc. – Heath will be a highly sustainable and livable community.

Another method of analyzing land use is by examining current land use densities – that is, establishing how much land is being consumed for each type of land use by the current population. The density of single-family residential land use is 37.3 acres per 100 persons, which indicates a low-density residential development pattern.

Heath maintains a Rural by Design community with a high ratio of open space and an intentionally low ratio of retail land use to total land area and total population. An average ratio is 0.5 retail acres per 100 persons; less than 0.4 generally indicates that citizens are going elsewhere for goods and services, and greater than 0.6 usually indicates that citizens from elsewhere are coming into the community to buy goods and services. Heath's ratio is 0.09 acres per 100 persons, which is intentionally low, and means people who live in the City are going to other areas, such as Rockwall or Dallas, to meet their retail needs. This ratio of retail land use reflects Heath's identity as a Rural By Design community. The balance of residential and non-residential uses is discussed further in later sections of this chapter.

In summary, important facts about Heath's existing land uses include the following:

- Approximately 98 percent of the developed land within the City is consumed by Single-Family land uses, Rights-of-Way, or Public/Semi-Public land uses.
- The percentage of developed land uses in Heath has declined since 2008 because the City annexed undeveloped land faster than it was developed.
- The percentages of non-residential land uses—retail, commercial, and office—have remained extremely low, especially compared to residential development and the number of people living in Heath.
- The acreage of Parks and Open Space land use has also increased over the years, a significant quality of life feature that is very positive for Heath.
- Heath's ratio of retail acres to population is 0.09 acres per 100 persons. This is an intentionally low ratio and indicates that citizens are traveling outside of the City for goods and services, a convenience available to Heath's citizens due to its close proximity to larger cities.

Future Land Use and Population Growth

Future Land Use Types and Map

The **Future Land Use Map, Figure 1** (page 16), has been drafted as the result of numerous meetings with the CPSC. The Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map, and it does not directly affect the regulation of land within Heath or the ETJ. The Future Land Use Map provides a graphic depiction of Heath’s ideal land use pattern. It should be used by the City to guide decisions on proposed zoning and development standards in the future. It should be noted that while the Future Land Use Map itself is an integral part of the **Land Use Strategy**; the land use policies that support the Future Land Use Map are also important. These policies begin on page 18 of this chapter.

Future Land Use Types

The table below outlines descriptions of the various land use types on the Future Land Use Map. Also shown are related map colors and example images.

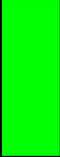
Table 2. Future Land Use Acreages

Future Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Rural Estate	2230.1	22.5%
Medium Density Residential	1542.5	15.6%
High Density Residential	626.8	6.3%
Townhome	43.5	0.4%
Office	14.9	0.2%
Retail	61	0.6%
Mixed Use	41.33	0.4%
Parks and Open Space	165	1.7%
Private Recreation	615.5	6.2%
Public/Semi-Public	277.1	2.8%
Lake Edge	208.26	2.1%
Right-of-Way	756.7	7.6%
Vacant	3326.6	33.6%
Total	9909.29	100.0%

Table 3. Residential Land Uses

Land Use Type & Map Color	Description	Density	Corresponding Zoning District(s)	Example Image
Rural Estate	Estate lot, single-family residential, large estate development	Minimum 3-acre lots	Agriculture, SFE-3.0	
Medium Density Residential	Medium-sized lot, single-family residential development	Minimum 1-acre lots	SF-43	
High Density Residential	Small lot, single-family residential development	Minimum 1/3 acre lots	SF-15, SF-22	
Townhomes	Multi-family residential development	Maximum of 8 units per acre	Townhouse (TH), Duplex (D), Multi-Family (MF-8)	

Table 4. Non-Residential Land Uses

Land Use Type & Map Color		Description	Corresponding Zoning District(s)	Example Image
Office		Small-scale offices (one- or two-story) such as doctors', lawyers', and realtors' offices	Local Retail	
Retail		Small shops, shopping centers, restaurants, cafes	Local Retail	
Mixed Use		See description on following page		
Parks and Open Space		Existing park and open space areas	Any zoning district allows this use	
Private Recreation		Local golf courses (e.g., Buffalo Creek as shown in image to the right)	Any zoning district allows this use; usually occurs through Planned Development (PD) zoning	
Public/Semi-Public		Civic uses, schools, churches, cemeteries	Any zoning district allows this use	
Lake Edge		Lake management area, generally owned by the City of Dallas and leased to the City of Heath and available for sublease by adjoining property owners	No zoning	

Mixed Use

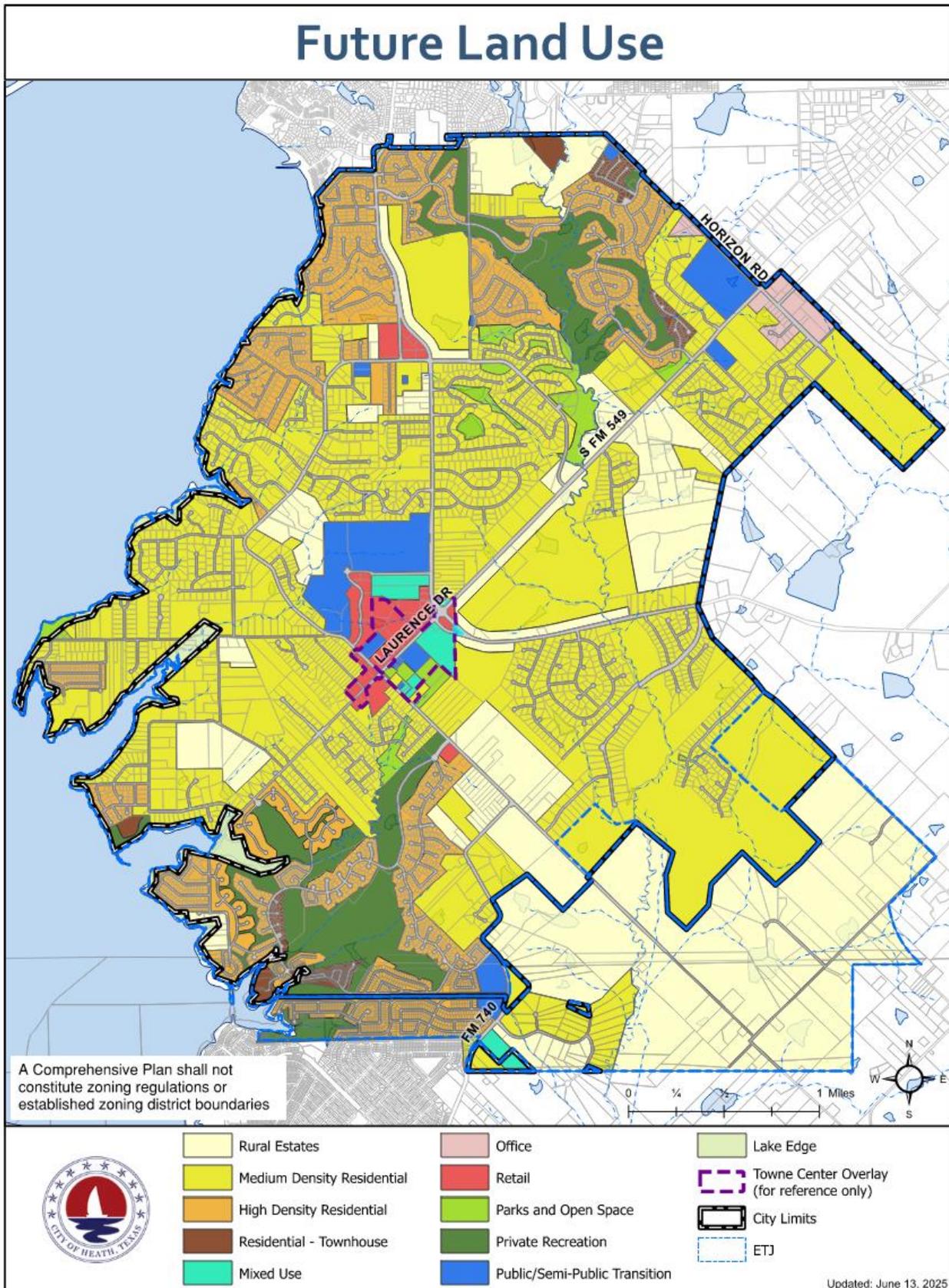
Mixed-use is a general term used to describe areas where a mix of two or more land uses is appropriate; it does not necessarily equate to increased density or residential land uses. Heath's vision for the composition and location of mixed uses has not changed over the past decade, with the continued preference for non-residential development that is small-scale, pedestrian-oriented commercial, office, and retail uses around the Towne Center. Any inclusion of housing is limited to the existing single-family homes.

Towne Center Overlay District

Overlay districts are a layer of zoning regulations that incorporate the underlying zoning of an area while adding additional regulations specifically for that area. The purpose of this technique is to promote or preserve a desired theme for the area. The Towne Center Overlay District was established in 2003 in the area surrounding City Hall. At the time, the area was almost entirely vacant, and the goal of the overlay was to facilitate the land uses and public realm necessary to create an identifiable Town Center as determined by the preferences of residents at the time. Following the adoption of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the Towne Center Overlay District was amended to accomplish the goals, objectives, and recommendation of that Plan.

The Future Land Use Map identifies the land use for this overlay as mixed use with the exception of existing parks and public uses, as well as a parcel of retail to the east of Buffalo Way Road (FM 549). Only development that meets the permitted uses as outlined in the Towne Center Overlay District are allowed to develop in this area.

Figure 1. Future Land Use Map



Population Growth and Capacity

Heath’s population growth is documented in detail in the Appendix. It is important to consider this growth in the context of planning for future land uses for several reasons. The principal reason is that the Land Use Strategy provides a recommended land-use pattern that inherently affects where population growth is likely to occur. Also, service provision and roadway infrastructure must be considered in conjunction with where population increases are anticipated to occur. Another reason is that the City will, at some point, reach its ultimate capacity for population growth given the fact that only minimal geographic expansion is possible – the City is surrounded by Lake Ray Hubbard, Rockwall, McLendon Chisholm, and other developed areas. For these reasons, this section of the Land Use Strategy is provided to outline the City’s anticipated population growth in the next 20 years, as well as its ultimate population capacity and when that capacity might be reached.

Projections

The 2020 population of 9,769 is based on NCTCOG population data and the U.S. Census. **Table 5** shows population projections through 2050. **Table 8** on page 53 identifies the compound annual growth rates (CAGR) of Heath’s population since 1970. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) between 2000 and 2010 was 5.3%. Additionally, the CAGR between 2010 and 2020 was 3.5%, while the projected rate between 2010 and 2015 slowed to only 1.4%. This information indicates that Scenario A, 3.0%, may be the most reliable growth rate for planning purposes.

The 3.0% CAGR projects population growth to approximately 11,326 in 2025, and a build-out of the current City limits of 16,640 by 2038. Typically, a relatively rapid growth scenario utilizes a higher population growth rate when planning for adequate infrastructure and roadway capacity. Planning for a moderate growth rate will enable Heath to be well-prepared if the population projection of Scenario A becomes reality, which is better than planning for a higher rate of growth scenario when future development proposals are submitted for less density based on larger lot subdivisions. Heath’s population capacity, discussed in the following section, is projected to occur in various years depending on the rate of growth, as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Population Growth Scenarios

Year	Scenario A 3.0%	Scenario B 4.5%	Scenario C 7.0%
2020	9,769	9,769	9,769
2025	11,326	12,174	13,701
2030	13,130	15,171	19,216
2035	15,221	18,906	26,951
2040	17,645	23,560	53,016
2045	20,455	29,360	74,357
2050	23,713	36,588	104,290
Projected Year to Reach Population Capacity			
	2038	2032	2028

Capacity

Heath has a vacant land area of approximately 30.5% percent, much of which is designated on the Future Land Use Map (**Figure 1**, page 16) for residential land use. The City also has some ETJ area within which the City can grow geographically. Both the vacant area within the City limits and the ETJ provide developable land for population growth. An assessment of Heath’s ultimate population is provided to guide the City in planning how many people will ultimately have to be supported.

Several assumptions are considered in the calculation of ultimate population capacity, including the application of various densities, occupancy rates, amount of land used for right-of-way, and average household size. In addition to these assumptions, there are known factors that also impact ultimate population, specifically the number of existing dwelling units and platted lots. Given these factors and assumptions, it can be concluded that Heath’s ultimate population capacity within the existing City limits and ETJ is approximately 18,750 people. This is the number of people the City should plan on needing to serve with water, wastewater, roadway facilities, and quality-of-life services.

Land Use Strategy | Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

- Non-Residential Land Uses
- Residential Uses
- Lakefront Access/Redevelopment
- Procedural Land Use Policies
- Parks/Trails

Non-Residential Land Uses

Retail

Economic sustainability is key to discussing retail land uses. Heath desires limited retail development. Heath is afforded this luxury of specificity for small-scale boutique retail uses due to its proximity to larger Cities and their numerous goods and services.

To ensure sustainability over time, any retail development in Heath must be well designed and of very high quality. Retail development must also be pedestrian-friendly. Heath's vision for local retail development is defined in the Heath Towne Center Design Book and further described in the following Towne Center section. While the design book was created to guide development in the Towne Center Overlay District, its guidelines should be implemented in all retail development in the city.

Recommendation 1. Develop retail sites with high-end character, lasting value, and sustainability.

- Use the Heath Towne Center Design Book as a guideline for all retail development in Heath.
- Create civic focal elements such as public gathering areas for any new retail development.
- Utilize the Architectural Review Board to review proposed plans and provide architectural design recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.
- Require all retail developments to be in Planned Development districts with features that include, but are not limited to, a combination of the following:
 - Towne Center design guidelines
 - Ample open space
 - Modest signage
 - Dark Sky compliant lighting
 - Noise buffering
 - Non-disturbance/Preservation zones to protect forested areas and natural landscape screening
 - Amenitized common areas and outdoor gathering areas

- Trails that serve the neighborhood and connect to adjacent trails
- Greywater/irrigation well
- Drought-tolerant landscaping of lots
- Uniform wrought iron fencing
- Curvilinear streets to prevent a grid like, monotonous layout of development
- Cul-de-sacs
- Variety of building designs to reduce monotony
- Ponds, water features, floodplain preservation, etc.

Towne Center

After the City Council adopted the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, the Heath Economic Development Corporation / Heath Municipal Benefits Corporation funded the creation of the Heath Towne Center Overlay District Design Book. The Towne Center Overlay Project included a series of public engagement methods to understand the area's local character and desired improvements. The project website hosted several digital engagements, including an architectural style preference survey. Additional outreach methods included a series of stakeholder interviews with local property and business owners within the Towne Center Overlay District boundary.

A Steering Committee was formed as well to provide direction to the project team at three key points in the project. The project team also held two Design Focus Group Workshops. Through the outreach methods, the project team was able to review and synthesize the feedback received and created a unified vision for the Heath Towne Center. The Design Book presents the details of this vision and is incorporated into the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update by reference. Following the adoption of the Heath Towne Center Design Book, the Towne Center Overlay District zoning regulations were amended to implement the design concepts.

Recommendation 2. Implement the Heath Towne Center Design Manual in the Towne Center Overlay District and in the Local Retail District.

- Update the Heath Towne Center Design Book as needed to reflect the community's vision and preferences for development in the Towne Center Overlay District.
- Update the Towne Center Overlay District zoning regulations and the Local Retail District regulations to implement the guidelines in the Design Book
- Update the Towne Center Overlay District zoning regulations to address trails, open spaces, and connectivity.

Residential Uses

Residential Diversity and Uniqueness

Quality housing is not a challenge in Heath as in many cities – most local homes are highly valued and well-designed. Residential development primarily consists of fully custom, single-family homes on large- or medium-sized lots.

One of the primary reasons people stay within a community is that they consider their property and neighborhood unique.

Recommendation 3. Require residential subdivisions and individual residential properties to provide unique amenities.

- Establish a listing of acceptable and required amenities, such as views of the lake, proximity/access to parks, proximity/access to trails, proximity and access to schools, and establish criteria for each.
- Require each individual property to have at least three amenities. This will create neighborhoods that attract reinvestment because of each property's uniqueness, which is not the case in large homogenous subdivisions.
- Enforce the City's established residential Appearance Code / Anti-Monotony Standards.
- Require trails and trail connectivity.

Recommendation 4. Require uniqueness in the layout of each development.

- Identify and preserve existing neighborhood landmarks, such as distinctive buildings and prominent natural features, to foster neighborhood pride and a sense of ownership.
- Preserve open space and make it an integral part of the neighborhood, such as common areas or greenbelts throughout the neighborhood.
- Update the Open Space Standards in the Subdivision Regulations as needed to continually implement the community's priority to retain open space.
- Require open space within neighborhoods to be amenitized with benches, shade, recreation equipment, trails, fishing docks, and/or other amenities that enhance the use and enjoyment of the open space.
- Discourage straight and grid-like road layouts within a development.

Residential Density

As the City continues to grow, there will be a concern that the environment of Heath will suffer as development proceeds and more open land area is lost. In response to these concerns, the City should encourage neighborhoods to be spacious with large lots and generous setbacks to provide the feeling of openness while also incorporating the preservation of open space, particularly for environmentally significant areas, such as floodplains, slopes, and sensitive habitat.

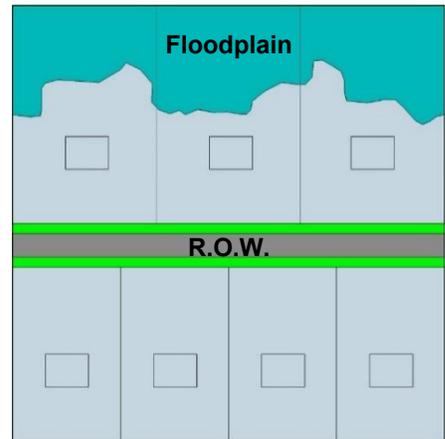
Heath is known for its large-lot development, and City leaders, the community, and landowners would like this to be maintained. The following recommended policy supports the continuation of a low-density development pattern. This policy states that residential development must be done on lots containing at least one acre of developable area. Developable areas exclude land in the regulatory floodplain; rivers, lakes, and streams; and rights-of-way (ROW). This policy serves vital interests: maintaining the health and safety of its residents, promoting the orderly growth and development of the City, and preserving Heath’s unique rural community character. “The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive. The values it represents are spiritual, physical, aesthetic, and monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled.” *Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas*, 416 U.S. 1, 6 (1974), quoting *Berman v. Parker*, 348 U.S. 26 (1954).

Excluding floodplain and water bodies from developable residential area protects life, health, and property of City residents; minimizes costs for flood control projects; reduces tax dollars spent on relief and repair for flood damage; prevents and controls water pollution and protects wildlife habitat; prevents increased flood levels caused by floodplain developments; and maintains both the scenic natural beauty and the economic value of Heath’s water resources.

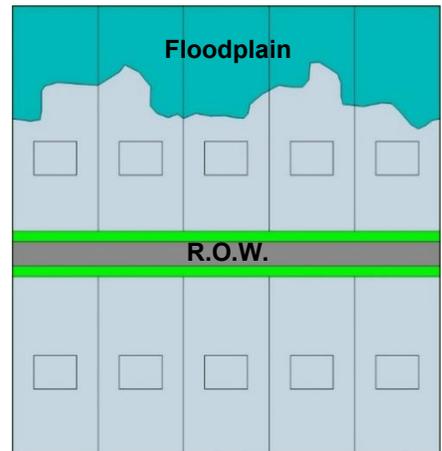
Excluding right-of-way from developable residential area promotes orderly growth, development, and subdivision of land in the City by providing for the coordination of streets, highways, and water assets with existing or planned streets and highways and with other public facilities; by dedicating or reserving rights-of-way or easements for streets and utility purposes; and by distributing traffic in a manner that avoids congestion and overcrowding and promotes the public health, safety, and welfare.

Both exclusions also preserve Heath’s unique rural community character by ensuring minimum one-acre lot residential zoning requirements are not diluted or diminished by residential construction on one-acre lots that contain undevelopable acreage and result in dense development uncharacteristic of Heath’s established community character. Heath, its City leaders, stakeholders, and citizens have repeatedly voiced their preference for not only maintaining but further enhancing Heath’s low-density, unique, rural residential character. This policy responds to that preference and serves the governmental interest of maintaining community character, conserving the value of improvements and property in the City, and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the community in accordance with the citizens’ preference.

Correct Method of Calculating Developable Acreage; One Acre does not include Floodplain



Incorrect Method of Calculating Developable Acreage; One Acre includes the Floodplain



Recommendation 5. Require a residential density of no more than one dwelling unit per a minimum of one acre of developable land, and encourage a residential density of no more than one dwelling unit per three acres of developable land as the preferred residential density

Recommendation 6. Encourage all future residential zoning changes to be Planned Developments that facilitate Heath’s vision of premier neighborhoods.

- Require Homeowner Associations (HOAs) to maintain common areas and neighborhood amenities. Identify factors such as the placement of open space toward the front of developments and the maximization of usable open space.
- Review the Planned Development District zoning ordinance with respect to density calculations to ensure that objectives are met, specifically Objective 1.1.
- Amend the Planned Development District regulations to require residential Planned Developments to provide unique features that enhance the neighborhood and the city. Features should include, but not be limited to, a combination of the following:
 - Ample open space
 - Landscaped entry features
 - Landscaped buffers along exterior roads,
 - Non-disturbance/Preservation zones to protect forested areas and natural landscape screening
 - Amenitized common areas such as pocket parks and outdoor gathering areas
 - Trails that serve the neighborhood and connect to adjacent trails
 - Outdoor warning siren
 - Potable water well
 - Greywater/irrigation well
 - Drought tolerant landscaping
 - Uniform wrought iron fencing
 - Curvilinear streets to prevent grid like, monotonous layout of development
 - Cul-de-sacs
 - Variety of lot sizes to reduce monotony
 - Ponds, water features, floodplains, etc.

Recommendation 7. Review and update as needed SF-43, SF-E3.0 to ensure they reflect recommendations 3, 4, and 5.

Existing Neighborhoods

Oftentimes, planning documents such as this Comprehensive Plan tend to focus on new development, and policies addressing existing developed areas are not considered to be important. However, citizens and stakeholders in this comprehensive planning process have stated that it is important for the existing neighborhoods in Heath to remain attractive, viable places in which people will continue to want to live. The sustainability of previously developed neighborhoods is as important to the future of the City as the need to design new sustainable neighborhoods.

Recommendation 8. Ensure the sustainability of existing neighborhoods.

- Use the Capital Improvement Program to prioritize and allocate funds for maintaining and improving existing parks and infrastructure.
- Encourage HOAs and property owners to plant drought-tolerant landscaping conforming to the city’s landscape ordinance.
- Encourage HOAs to beautify entryways, medians, and common areas
- Encourage all HOAs to adopt restrictions prohibiting more than one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) per lot, require all accessory dwelling units to conform to the city’s Zoning Ordinance, and prohibit rental, lease, or sale of the ADU.
- Encourage all HOAs to prohibit short-term rentals, Airbnb, VRBO, and similar.

Lakefront Access/Redevelopment

As the western boundary of the City of Heath, Lake Ray Hubbard plays an integral part in the City’s identity and planning process. The Lake currently provides recreational and scenic amenities that enhance Heath’s desirability as a premier place to live. An issue identified during the visioning process for this Comprehensive Plan was the desire, of both community leaders and citizens, to have access to Lake Ray Hubbard.

The City of Dallas, which owns the Lake and shoreline, and the City of Heath are parties to an Interlocal Lease and Agreement providing for use of the take area, leased to Heath and potentially available for sublease to adjacent property owners. The City of Heath has adopted Zoning Guides for development within the leased areas. Residential development along the shoreline of the Lake provides certain limitations to access points for public use.

Recommendation 9. Proactively pursue opportunities along the shoreline of Lake Ray Hubbard to create, improve, and protect access to the Lake for the citizens of Heath.

Note: This policy does not include the use of eminent domain for this purpose.

- Evaluate the Lake Edge Zoning District and Take Area Zoning Guide periodically for possible improvements to regulations or processes.
- Enhance Terry Park or any other public lake access to maximize the use of Lake Ray Hubbard for the recreation and enjoyment of Heath residents.

Procedural Land Use Policies

The Future Land Use Map is one of the most significant pieces of this Comprehensive Plan document. Effective use of the Map will result in Heath attaining its desired land use pattern. The following discussions address the most valuable ways in which the Map can be used to make positive decisions in keeping with this Plan.

Rezoning Decisions

When a development proposal is submitted, and the tract of land is already zoned for a type of land use that is consistent with the proposed development, the City only has the ability to ensure that the development is consistent with its subdivision standards. The development must make provisions for water and wastewater supply and provide sufficient irrigation to serve the development, for adequate rights-of-way, for proper ingress and egress, etc. However, when a development proposal is submitted and involves a rezoning, Heath has more discretion in whether to approve the rezoning. Therefore, the City has more of an ability to apply Land Use Strategy concepts to the development proposal before approving the proposal.

Zoning decisions are one of the most important tools the City has to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens and ensure the City's development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. The City should engage in the state legislative process to gain visibility and influence any proposed state legislation that adversely impacts Heath's ability to retain local zoning control.

Recommendation 10. Use the Land Use Strategy text and map as a guide to determine whether the requested rezoning is appropriate and consistent with the City's commitment of quality and sustainability.

- Consider the following questions related to concepts within this Comprehensive Plan before approving rezoning requests.
 - Does the development provide something unique for Heath?
 - Is the development within walking distance of public uses, parks, and open spaces?
 - Does the development provide off-street pedestrian, bicycle, and/or equestrian connections to existing and future development?
 - How does the development proposal impact the City fiscally and functionally– tax revenue, infrastructure, public services, and other public considerations (such as parks, schools, etc.)?
 - How does the development proposal impact the City's traffic and public safety?
 - How does the development respect environmentally significant areas like floodplains and wooded areas – are these areas preserved and used as an amenity?
 - Is the proposed development of a type and quality that will be acceptable and maintain its value and condition for the long-term, especially if immediate development of the property is not intended to occur upon the granting of the proposed rezoning?
 - Does the proposal establish sufficient irrigation to provide for the needs of the development?
 - Is the development in line with and does it further enhance Heath's low-density, distinctive, and rural character?

Effective Use of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map is an important visualization of the citizens' input for future land development and should be rigorously preserved and conformed with.

It is important to recognize that development proposals contrary to land uses recommended on the Future Land Use Map could improve the uses shown within a particular area; however, they should be highly scrutinized. This may be due to changing market conditions, development patterns, and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future after the Comprehensive Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City, then these proposals should be considered, and the Future Land Use Map should be amended accordingly. However, State law specifies that zoning must be based on a plan, and the courts have ruled likewise. Therefore, the following policy is recommended.

Recommendation 11. Amend the Future Land Use Map, if necessary, before rezoning land, to eliminate any inconsistency between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map.

- Require zoning changes to conform to the Future Land Use Map or amend the Future Land Use Map to match zoning changes.
- Consider the amendment to the Future Land Use Map on the City Council agenda before the agenda item to consider the related rezoning.
- Regularly review the Future Land Use Map to ensure the City's zoning regulations are as consistent as possible. The Map should reflect all zoning amendments made after its initial adoption.

Ultimate Population Capacity

Previously, this chapter calculated the ultimate capacity of the City and ETJ. This calculation is not likely to be the exact amount of the population when and if Heath builds out because it is based on 1) current City limit and ETJ lines that will probably be altered in the future, and 2) current assumptions about residential density that may or may not occur. However, this calculation is the most accurate that can be established for the City because it is based on a planning process that has determined what the City's ideal land use pattern and related densities should be, resulting in the Future Land Use Map. Given this discussion, the following policy is recommended.

Recommendation 12. Utilize the ultimate population capacity calculation as a tool for planning public services to provide for the population that is anticipated to be served in the future.

- Proactively monitor the capacity of the water and wastewater systems and increase service availability for developable areas. Water is an increasingly scarce resource, and cities with capacity in the future will be better positioned to accommodate growth and quality development.
- Proactively seek partnership opportunities with current and alternative water suppliers.
- Increase public awareness of water supply limitations and the need for water conservation, especially during high-usage summer months.
- Require new development to conform to the City's landscape ordinance.
- Consider how to incentivize existing properties to retroactively conform to the Landscape Ordinance.
- Utilize the Land Use Plan to calculate projected roadway traffic counts based on recommended land uses. This will allow the City to design roadways for their ultimate capacity and not overbuild them.
- Maintain and expand police and fire services to meet the needs of Heath's future population and improve upon such services as funding allows.
- Review the Thoroughfare Plan every three years to meet the needs of the citizens of Heath and collaborate with neighboring cities, counties and states.

5 | Livability Strategy

Livable Communities

What does the term “livability” mean in Heath? It means a sense of peace and tranquility, a respite from the commotion of typical urban and suburban development. Many intangibles make a city livable, such as a sense of community, a strong sense of place in particular areas, city pride, and the friendliness of neighbors. Heath is a premier outdoor lifestyle community.

There are also tangible aspects that can nurture livability. Therefore, the aspects of livability that this chapter will concentrate on involve:

- Creation of walkable, bikeable, and equestrian-friendly spaces;
- Creation of neighborhood and city identity, and areas with a strong “sense of place”;
- Concentration on the design of the pedestrian realm;
- Aesthetic quality of the neighborhoods and community;
- Proximity to open space and recreational opportunities;
- Proximity and availability of other community services such as high quality schools;
- Ease of access to and quality of retail and restaurants;
- Traffic flow and availability of alternative means of travel;
- Availability of the desired type and style of housing;
- Proximity to employment opportunities;
- Sustainability in buildings and development patterns; and
- Accessibility to natural areas.

An important aspect of livability is the concept of sustainability, which involves creating an environment that people and businesses want to both invest and re-invest in. It includes such things as the:

- Achievement of a high level of livability, as outlined above;
- Ability to adapt to inevitable changes in population characteristics and economic condition, such as employment opportunities, as the community continues to mature and to age gracefully;
- Creation of a building, cultural, and open space infrastructure that contributes to the desirability of a community over time, and that improves with age. Examples include parks and open space, cultural facilities, and non-residential buildings that do not have to be torn down and rebuilt when tenants move to another location; or which “wear out” in 20 years or become vacant due to overbuilding the commercial real estate footprint.
- Provision for trail connections.
- Design of environmentally sensitive infrastructure that minimizes long-term maintenance costs.

Livability Strategy | Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

- Parks and Open Space,
- Trails and Sidewalks,
- Pedestrian-Friendly Design, and
- Environmental Sensitivity.

Parks and Open Space

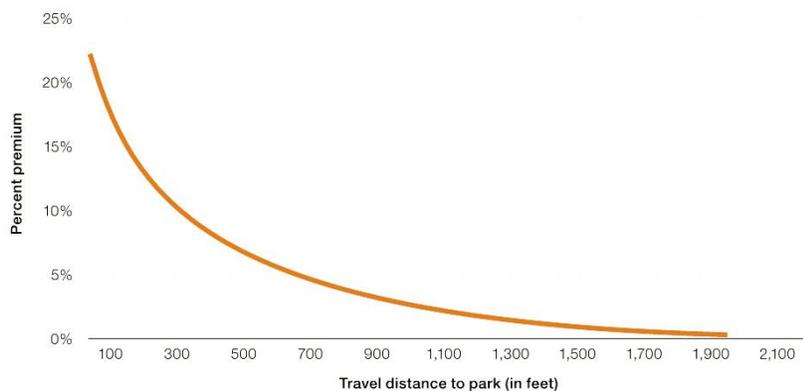
The amount and quality of parks and open space within a community are often cited as essential elements of local quality of life. Heath has recognized this fact through an adopted Park Plan and a park dedication ordinance. Therefore, this portion of the Livability Strategy focuses on fine-tuning how parks and open spaces are designed and integrated with development throughout the City to enhance Heath’s livability further.

Value Considerations

Research and proven methods exist to add value to sites and homes adjacent to parks and open spaces. These methods generally relate to visibility and accessibility to such areas. As shown in **Figure 2**, properties near open space generally have a premium property value. There is a measurable value added to properties for up to a quarter-mile.

The way a neighborhood is laid out can significantly affect property values. The following actions are recommended to add value, greater livability, and greater sustainability to local home sites.

Figure 2. Impact of Neighborhood Parks on Adjacent Neighborhoods in DFW



Source: Active Living Research,

Recommendation 1. Ensure that the subdivision and development process includes consideration of the way in which residential lots relate to parks and open space, trail connectivity, adjacency and accessibility to parks and open space should be optimized.

- Implement the Open Space Standards in the Subdivision Regulations

Natural Drainage Courses

In every community, some areas are unable to be developed because of environmental constraints. A common example is a floodplain area. The fact that areas are not developable may be viewed as negative to a developer, but the preservation of these areas for community enjoyment and use as parks, open spaces, and trails will greatly enhance the livability of the entire city and support strong property values over the long term.

Recommendation 2. Ensure floodplains are preserved and contribute to the community's public open space and trail system.

- When feasible, connect floodplain areas via trails to open space or park areas within adjacent developments. This will ensure that floodplain areas, as they are connected to other floodplain areas or local parks, become areas that significantly contribute to the open space of the City.
- Ensure that the City's Subdivision Regulations include provisions for floodplains and related open space that support plans for a county-wide system. A regional system of open space that utilizes floodplain areas and trails would provide great benefit for Heath and all other cities involved.
- Ensure that the City's Subdivision Regulations include provisions to ensure a minimum of 20 percent of the gross land is designated as open space, of which a minimum of 50 percent of the open space is not in a flood plain.
- Increase the allocated funds to improve drainage issues relating to floodplain areas within developments.



Recommendation 3. Recommend buildings and structures to be set back at least 30 feet from the 100-year flood plain.

- Establish a reasonable distance from creek edges to platted lots.

Trails and Sidewalks

Trails Planning

Land development is largely centered around the automobile. This is because the primary mode of transportation is the automobile, and development is designed to accommodate automobiles, often to the exclusion of any other travel mode. However, alternative forms of transportation are becoming increasingly important, with society becoming more aware of healthy lifestyles that involve walking, running, and biking, and the environmental impact of using fossil fuels is also influencing this trend.

Trails could provide access to a form of transportation that could benefit a portion of the population. In Heath, trails offer the most viable alternative transportation mode. The City has a master park plan that will, among other actions, outline ways to establish trails throughout the community based on various factors. Upon completion of the Comprehensive Plan, it is recommended that City staff perform an assessment to ensure that both documents are appropriately referenced and linked. The Park Master Plan is considered an extension of this Comprehensive Plan update and shall be referred to accordingly when making land use, development, planning, and funding decisions.

Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Equestrian Integration

One way to reduce the dependence on the automobile is to provide a viable and realistic transportation alternative, specifically through pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian connections. Integration of these three concepts within the city is essential now, when the city has much room for population growth and land development, which will make Heath a more sustainable and livable community in the long term. Integration of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access should be pursued in accordance with the following recommendations and required for new neighborhoods.

Welcoming and Safe Streets

The City of Heath Thoroughfare Plan is a standalone document that, among other factors, considers the recommended goals and land use planning information contained in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The Thoroughfare Plan is updated periodically to verify its consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and development trends that have occurred since the last update.

A welcoming street means a street that is designed to project the image of a quality community. Streets are one of a city's greatest assets for establishing character and maintaining and/or increasing property values. A welcoming street also means a safe street. Ex-urban areas have proven less safe to travel in than dense urban areas. This is likely due to the more open feeling experienced by drivers when they travel long, straight roads with wide lanes that lack "friction" created by trees and parked cars, which results in a higher incidence of fatalities.

Recommendation 4. Consider how Heath's image and adjacent property values will be affected as streets are newly constructed, maintained, or widened.

- Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require new subdivisions to comply with all requirements of the revised Comprehensive Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Park Master Plan.
- New subdivisions shall require driveway access to an adjacent local street for each new lot. Shared residential driveways with cross-access easements are not prohibited, but should only be permitted to limit the number of driveway openings onto roadways with high traffic volume.

- Design gently curved roadways to create views for people traveling along them. This will provide indirect views of various attributes of Heath, such as local homes, open spaces, creeks, trails, ponds, and the lake. Update the Engineering Standards of Design to require curvilinear streets.
- Homes should face or side onto streets.
- Design new neighborhoods to minimize or eliminate the need for retaining walls along streets.
- Require the establishment of certain streetscape elements along all new streets. Such elements should include trees, lighting, and medians.
- Develop a streetscape plans for existing roadways in Heath. Such plans should prioritize roadways and consider how trees, pedestrian amenities, lighting, etc. can be integrated retroactively accounting for utility locations and easements.
- Work with the Texas Department of Transportation, our county commissioners, and county judge to implement these recommended actions regarding streets that are not under the city's direct management or control.
- Prioritize sidewalk and trail “connectors” to make a network of paths, sidewalks, trails for non-auto travel throughout the city. This must include paths and connectors through commercial projects with appropriate sidewalks and trails.
- Require trail and sidewalk connectivity to existing trails and sidewalks for any new development.
- Separate the sidewalks and trails from the back of curbs by a distance that increases with the speed and capacity of the street to ensure pedestrian safety.
- Revise and revisit the [throughfare plan](#) to account for an increase in traffic along our state, city and county roads.

Recommendation 5. Design developments to increase pedestrian and bicycle usage.

- Encourage interconnectedness of trails between neighborhoods, parks, retail, recreation, and other types of development to minimize automobile trip length and congestion.
- Update the Trail Master Plan with a focus on trail connectivity across the City and require interconnected trails between and through developments, providing an alternative pedestrian and bicycle circulation system and increasing pedestrian safety
- Require developments to be designed with continuous sidewalks or trails throughout the neighborhood and connected to adjacent developments, short blocks, and a safe pedestrian/bicycle environment with clearly identified crosswalks.
- Require all retail developments near trail routes to provide bike racks.
- Eliminate the use of screening walls as buffers between developments. Instead, use other buffering techniques, such as landscaping and/or berms that do not create obstacles to walking or biking between developments.
- Ensure trails and sidewalks are set back from busy streets for pedestrian safety.

Recommendation 6. Partner with Rockwall County to further the county-wide trail systems. Partner with neighboring cities of McClendon-Chisholm and Rockwall to connect city-wide trail systems.

- Appoint a contact person to represent Heath in the decision-making process as the counties and cities work on their respective plans.
- Investigate mutually beneficial funding opportunities for local trails, especially off-street trails and/or trails to be retrofitted into existing developed areas.

Pedestrian-Friendly Design

The forefathers of this country understood the importance of civic design, and the impact that good design could have on the way in which a city is viewed in terms of identity, quality and livability. The importance of pedestrian realm design has not lessened, and the fact remains that Heath has the ability to affect its perception through the design of the public domain – specifically public buildings, streets, and public spaces.

Landmarks and Prominent Public Buildings

In the past, designing public buildings so that they projected a positive image of the locality was done as a matter of practice. A good example is the old, ornate county courthouses in Texas that once embodied county government. Although these old courthouses that still stand are now celebrated historic landmarks, in more recent times, public buildings have become increasingly utilitarian. This Livability Strategy recommends a return to utilizing civic buildings as a key component in creating a community “identity” and “sense of place”.

Recommendation 7. Ensure that new public buildings are designed to project a positive image of Heath.

- Ensure that new and improved public buildings will be architecturally distinctive and in accordance with the Texas historic style depicted in the Towne Center overlay district design manual.

Recommendation 8. Ensure that new public buildings are located prominently and strategically to project a positive image of Heath.

- When considering locations for a future City Hall, focus on opportunities close to the existing City Hall and Towne Center Overlay and Towne Center Park.

Gathering Places

The most livable towns and cities generally have at least one location that citizens can identify as a gathering place. Another type of gathering space is a “third place.” These are places that are not the “home” or the “office” but a place where people gather and serve as social meeting places for neighborhoods and communities. Examples include coffee shops, bookstores, cafes, and restaurants.

Recommendation 9. Encourage “third places” to occur as new development takes place.

- Ensure that new commercial developments create a lasting infrastructure of buildings laid out in pedestrian-oriented development patterns, and include broad landscaped sidewalks, plazas, or parks.
- Encourage inclusion and identification of gathering places in new commercial development.

Environmental Sensitivity

In recent decades, awareness of the importance of preserving the environment has grown. The impact of development on the environment can be positive or negative – development can enhance environmental features for the better, or it can essentially “pave over paradise.” The goal is to ensure that development is sensitive to environmental issues and takes advantage of its amenities.

Design with Nature

The Design with Nature concept considers all aspects of the environment in designing the human habitat. The following actions describe how this can effectively be achieved in Heath.

Recommendation 10. Minimize negative impact on water quality and water use from new development.

- Preserve open space and drainageways throughout developments to encourage ground absorption of water and the natural filtering and cleaning effect of soil and plant material to improve ground and stream water quality.
- Utilize native and/or drought-tolerant species with organic mulch for landscaping to minimize fertilizers and excessive water use.
- Encourage the use of non-potable water for irrigation.

Recommendation 11. Proactively reduce the “heat island effect.”

- Amend regulations and standards to require parking lots to have trees that shade paved areas
- Establish a parking lot landscaping ordinance.
- Integrate street trees along new roads and along existing roads as they are improved.
- Preserve open space through the maintenance of natural floodplains, creation of parks, and conservation of wooded and other environmentally sensitive areas. These types of areas and development patterns will greatly reduce the ambient temperature in the City and further reduce road maintenance and energy costs.

Recommendation 12. Proactively address air, light, and noise pollution.

- Encourage interconnectedness of streets and trails between neighborhoods, parks, retail, recreation, and other types of development to minimize automobile trip length and congestion.
- Require interconnected trails through and between developments to provide an alternative pedestrian and bicycle circulation system.

Energy Efficient Building Designs

The term “energy efficient building design” describes a way buildings and sites can be constructed and utilized to be more environmentally friendly, including energy conservation, water usage, and building materials. A variety of energy-efficient building and infrastructure programs are in existence today. Energy-efficient building standards have been adopted by many municipalities, school districts, and commercial developers to enhance the sustainability of their buildings. Many of these programs address such issues as:

- Promoting healthy and active communities;
- Using less land to create more benefits;
- Protecting and improving water quality; and
- Conserving energy, water, and other natural resources.

Since Heath has 12.1 percent of its land to develop, much could be built to be more sustainable.

Recommendation 13. Be more environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

- Promote standards for efficient building designs, alternative energy, and water conservation techniques.
- Preserve tree and natural landscaping elements in property development.
- Require energy efficient design and LEED certification for commercial properties.

6 | Implementation Strategy

Introduction

Planning is essential to set the stage for quality growth and development in any community. Implementation is essential to carry out the vision for planning. The techniques for implementation outlined within this Implementation Strategy prescribe actions that should be taken by the City of Heath to achieve the goals, objectives, and policies recommended within this 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

It is important that implementation measures are outlined so that they can begin immediately after this Plan is approved by the Heath City Council. This chapter completes Heath's 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update by providing implementation actions that cohesively address the goals, objectives, and policies recommended herein and that are designed for immediate action.



This chapter is written so that general implementation measures are discussed first, with more specificity provided as the chapter progresses. It is also written so that City staff, leaders, and citizens can easily ascertain what it is that the City has to do to achieve the vision for Heath (refer to **3 | Visioning**) created as the foundation of this Plan. This Implementation Strategy should be used as a checklist of actions for the City to undertake in the immediate, as well as long-term, future to take the ideal of what Heath can be from vision to reality.

General Use of the Comprehensive Plan

There are certain ways in which Heath's Comprehensive Plan can be used to most effectively impact the future development of the City. Using the Plan on a daily basis and keeping it up-to-date are two of the most important. The following sections discuss the need to use the Plan and to ensure its continued validity.

A Guide for Daily Decision-Making

The physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each new development that takes place — whether it is a subdivision that is platted, a home that is built, or a new school, church or shopping center that is constructed — represents an addition to Heath's physical form. The integration of all such efforts and the resulting built environment creates the City as it is seen and experienced by its citizens and visitors. **For planning to be effective, it must guide each and every individual development decision. The City should consider the Comprehensive Plan in its decision-making processes, such as decisions regarding infrastructure improvements, zoning ordinance amendments, and projects and programs to implement.** Also, the development community should incorporate the broad concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts become part of a meaningful whole in planning the City.

A Flexible Guide

Plan Amendments

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a dynamic planning document for Heath — one that responds to changing needs and conditions. The full benefits of the Plan for the City can only be realized by maintaining it as a vital, up-to-date document. As changes occur and new issues within the City become apparent, the Plan should be revised. By such action, the Plan will remain current and effective in helping to guide City decisions.

Plan amendments, such as but not limited to water, transportation, infrastructure, land use, residential requirements, and commercial requirements, may be made after a thorough analysis of immediate needs and consideration for the long-term effects of proposed amendments. The City Council and other City officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the Plan's goals, objectives, policies, recommendations, citizens' desires, and whether it will be beneficial for the long-term health and vitality of the City.

Annual Status Report and Suggested Amendments

Each year, City staff should request an item on the Planning and Zoning Commission's agenda to review the Comprehensive Plan and associated plans (e.g., Park Master Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Capital Improvement Plan) to evaluate priorities, identify completed actions, and target upcoming efforts. A status report on the findings of the Planning and Zoning Commission should then be prepared by City staff and presented to the City Council before June 1 of each year to allow sufficient time for review before preparing the City's annual budget. Those items that need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. Through such periodic, consistent reevaluations, the plan will remain functional and continue to give civic leaders effective guidance in decision-making. Periodic status report reviews of the Plan should include consideration of the following:

- The City's progress in implementing the Plan;
- Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan;
- Adjustments needed related to capital expenditures;
- Changes to the City's regulations or programs;
- Adjustments of Comprehensive Plan priorities; and
- Changes in State laws.

Five-Year Review & Update

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Comprehensive Plan should undergo a thorough review and update every five years. The review and updating process should begin with the establishment of a citizen committee similar to the Review Committee (RC) that was appointed to assist in the preparation of this Plan. It would also be beneficial to have several RC members serve on such a citizen committee; this would provide a cohesive link between this Comprehensive Plan and these five-year updates. Specific input on major changes should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders, developers, business owners, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City.

Public Education and Public Involvement

Updating a comprehensive plan is a crucial step in shaping our community's future. To ensure this process is effective and inclusive, we encourage all residents to participate actively. Comprehensive Plan creation and updates should

include a combination of elected, appointed, and at-large citizen participation. Further citizen participation should be actively solicited during the update and review process.

Best practices for updates include thorough community engagement and awareness, providing an opportunity for citizen input. This feedback is essential in identifying community needs and priorities. Clear and timely citizen notifications are vital. Utilizing channels like local media, social media, and direct mail (or inclusion and reference in city newsletters) ensures that everyone is informed about upcoming meetings, proposed changes, and opportunities to provide input. The following actions maximize citizen engagement and plan effectiveness:

1. Provide plan access on the City Website: This centralized hub should house all plan documents, meeting schedules, survey links, and contact information, ensuring easy access for residents.
2. Utilize multiple communication channels: Don't rely on just one method. Combine traditional methods like those mentioned in our community newsletter with digital strategies like social media posts, email newsletters, and local government website updates to reach a broader audience.
3. Offer diverse engagement opportunities: Cater to different preferences and schedules by offering a mix of in-person public forums, virtual meetings, online surveys, and interactive feedback tools.
4. Provide clear and concise information: Avoid jargon and technical language. Present plan information in a user-friendly format, using visuals, summaries, and translations where necessary.
5. Actively solicit and incorporate feedback: Demonstrate that public input is valued by clearly explaining how community feedback is being used to shape the final plan. Provide summaries of public comments and how they influence decision-making.

By working together and using input and education tools, we can create a comprehensive plan that reflects the collective vision for our city's growth and development and ensure it appropriately reflects the needs and interests of our citizens. Furthermore, making the plan available to everyone easily keeps the plan active as the guiding direction for our city.

Implementation Mechanisms

All policy recommendations made in the previous chapters of this Comprehensive Plan have been outlined in tables in the following section (Implementation Priorities). One of the columns within these tables is labeled Mechanism, which is intended to show the primary way(s) in which the Plan recommendation can be most effectively and expeditiously achieved. This section describes these various mechanisms, which fall into the three basic categories of Regulatory Ordinances, Financing Methods, and City Procedures.

Regulatory Ordinances

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning is perhaps the single most effective tool that Heath can use to implement this Comprehensive Plan. Zoning regulations are applicable within the City limits and can affect land use integration (mixes of uses and lot sizes), non-residential building design, and required amenities for various types of development. In addition, the right type and number of zoning districts can provide a straightforward menu of choices for the development community to use within Heath.

Heath's current Zoning Ordinance must be reviewed by staff to ensure that policy recommendations are integrated to the fullest extent possible. Making these changes will also make the development community aware of the City's expectations for quality development as they create and process their development proposals. Specific changes that need to be addressed are noted in **Table 6** and **Table 7** and include the following immediate priorities for amendments should be:

1. Reviewing retail design standards to align with the Towne Center design manual.
2. Requiring amenities for residential lots.
3. Requiring adequate water infrastructure for domestic and irrigation uses.
4. Requiring adequate sanitary sewer infrastructure.
5. Requiring adequate transportation infrastructure.

Subdivision Ordinance

Subdivision regulations direct land division into individual lots or parcels prior to development. Such regulations are applicable not only within the city limits but also within the ETJ. The primary topics within this Comprehensive Plan that can be addressed within the Subdivision Regulations include pedestrian and trail integration, roadway provisions, and development regulations relating to the environment. Specific changes that need to be addressed are noted in **Table 6** and **Table 7**; an immediate priority for amendment should be integrating park and open space concepts related to residential lots (and property values).

Other Ordinances to Revise or Create

Consider ordinance amendments to address:

- Parking Lot Design (shade, space dimensions, cart corrals, curbside pickup, etc.)
- Food Trucks
- Car Washes (Require Conditional Use Permit) and other High Water Land Uses

- Short Term Rentals
- Outdoor Storage
- Sign consistency within commercial developments
- The Reserve Overlay District
- Rural street standards
- Collection and donation bins
- Trail connector plan and program
- Sidewalk replacement program
- Water for new neighborhoods
- Codifying residential development amenities in planned developments and straight zoning districts.
- Codify design standards for concrete and natural trails.

Financing Mechanisms

Capital Improvements

It is in the City’s long-term financial interest to invest in physical elements that will help enhance Heath’s livability and increase its sustainability over time. Many recommendations within this Comprehensive Plan will require the City to make such investments. The capital improvement mechanism, when listed in **Table 6** and **Table 7**, relates to recommendations that will generally require a one-time or initial investment to be achieved.

Annual Budget

Allocating monies each year toward the creation and maintenance of various elements of the City, from roadway and utility infrastructure to quality-of-life enhancements such as trails and streetscaping, is one of the most effective ways to impact the sustainability of Heath over time positively. The annual budget mechanism, when listed in **Table 6** and **Table 7**, relates to recommendations generally requiring the City to commit to annual investment to achieve. One of the goals of this Comprehensive Plan has been to make recommendations that will help Heath have a more balanced budget in terms of land use (residential and non-residential). This will allow the City to allocate funds annually toward Comprehensive Plan priorities.

City Procedures

City Leadership and Staff Actions

The leadership of Heath is the key to taking this Comprehensive Plan and related policy recommendations from paper to reality. The City’s leadership must discuss with citizens what the Comprehensive Plan recommends and why. If this occurs, citizens will be more likely to favor changes made as a result of the Comprehensive Plan. Also, it is imperative that City leaders, such as the Park Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, and other boards and commissions, support and vote for measures to implement Plan recommendations.

City staff is also very critical to the process of implementing Plan recommendations. Staff is often the first point of contact for citizens; this is an opportunity for staff to explain to the public what the Comprehensive Plan contains. Also, staff can

be proactive in putting forward (before the proper boards and commissions) recommended zoning and subdivision text changes, as well as other Comprehensive Plan policy-related recommendations that may be implemented through resolution or ordinance.

However, the recommendations in **Table 6** and **Table 7** that are listed with City Leadership & Staff Actions as the mechanism for implementation are those that generally cannot be implemented through a vote, ordinance, or resolution. These recommendations are those that will require City leaders and staff to work with and inform citizens and stakeholders proactively. Others are outlined in the tables.

Development Review

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plats provide significant opportunities for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. In contrast with many of the aforementioned ways to achieve Plan recommendations, development review is a reactive way to implement the Plan effectively. Each decision on zoning, development, and subdivision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable recommendations contained within the Plan. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making. Recommendations in **Table 6** and **Table 7** that are listed with Development Review as the mechanism for implementation are those that City staff and leaders will have to apply to new developments on an on-going basis.

Engineering Studies

Some recommended policies have been made that will, in the short- or long-term, require more in-depth analysis. These are shown with the implementation mechanism Engineering Studies within **Table 6** and **Table 7**. Generally, these recommended policies involve environmental studies or an analysis of public services (water, wastewater, drainage) that may be needed as Heath continues to develop and grow in population.

Implementation Priorities

Implementation is one of the most important, yet most difficult, aspects of the comprehensive planning process. Without viable, realistic mechanisms for implementation, the policy recommendations contained within this Comprehensive Plan will be difficult to realize. The City should work toward policy implementation on an incremental, annual basis. Each of the policies listed in each table is correlated to the Comprehensive Plan chapter, goal, and objectives (**3 | Visioning**), and mechanism (discussed in previous sections of this Chapter).

Recommendations Matrix

Table 6. Land Use Recommendations

Recommendation (page)	Mechanism
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 1: Develop retail sites with high-end character, lasting value, and sustainability. (18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Heath Towne Center Design Book as a guideline for all retail development in Heath. • Create civic focal elements such as public gathering areas for any new retail development. • Utilize the Architectural Review Board to review proposed plans and provide architectural design recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. • Require all retail developments to be in Planned Development districts with features that include, but are not limited to a combination of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Towne Center design guidelines ○ Ample open space ○ Modest signage ○ Dark Sky compliant lighting ○ Noise buffering ○ Non-disturbance/Preservation zones to protect forested areas and natural landscape screening ○ Amenitized common areas and outdoor gathering areas ○ Trails that serve the neighborhood and connect to adjacent trails ○ Greywater/irrigation well ○ Drought-tolerant landscaping of lots ○ Uniform wrought iron fencing ○ Curvilinear streets to prevent a grid-like, monotonous layout of development ○ Cul-de-sacs ○ Variety of building designs to reduce monotony ○ Ponds, water features, floodplain preservation, etc. 	<p>Zoning Ordinance; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>

<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 2: Implement the Heath Towne Center Design Manual in the Towne Center Overlay District and in the Local Retail District. (19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Heath Towne Center Design Book as needed to reflect the community’s vision and preferences for development in the Towne Center Overlay District. • Update the Towne Center Overlay District zoning regulations and the Local Retail District regulations to implement the guidelines in the Design Book • Update the Towne Center Overlay District zoning regulations to address trails, open spaces, and connectivity. 	<p>Development Review; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 3: Require residential subdivisions and individual residential properties to provide unique amenities. (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a listing of acceptable and required amenities, such as views of the lake, proximity/access to parks, proximity/access to trails, proximity and access to schools, and establish criteria for each. • Require each individual property to have at least three amenities. This will create neighborhoods that attract reinvestment because of each property’s uniqueness, which is not the case in large homogenous subdivisions. • Enforce the City’s established residential Appearance Code / Anti-Monotony Standards. • Require trails and trail connectivity. 	<p>Development Review; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 4: Require uniqueness in the layout of each development. (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and preserve existing neighborhood landmarks, such as distinctive buildings and prominent natural features, to foster neighborhood pride and a sense of ownership. • Preserve open space and make it an integral part of the neighborhood, such as common areas or greenbelts throughout the neighborhood. • Update the Open Space Standards in the Subdivision Regulations as needed to implement the community’s priority to retain open space continually. • Require open space within neighborhoods to be amenitized with benches, shade, recreation equipment, trails, fishing docks, and/or other amenities that enhance the use and enjoyment of the open space. • Discourage straight and grid-like road layouts within a development. 	<p>Subdivision Regulations</p>

<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 5: Require a residential density of no more than one dwelling unit per a minimum of one acre of developable land, and encourage a residential density of no more than one dwelling unit per three acres of developable land as the preferred residential density (22)</p>	<p>Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 6: Encourage all future residential zoning changes to be Planned Developments that facilitate Heath’s vision of premier neighborhoods. (22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require Homeowner Associations (HOAs) to maintain common areas and neighborhood amenities. Identify factors such as the placement of open space toward the front of developments and the maximization of usable open space. • Review the Planned Development District zoning ordinance with respect to density calculations to ensure that objectives are met, specifically Objective 1.1. • Amend the Planned Development District regulations to require residential Planned Developments to provide unique features that enhance the neighborhood and the city. Features should include, but not be limited to, a combination of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ample open space ○ Landscaped entry features ○ Landscaped buffers along exterior roads, ○ Non-disturbance/Preservation zones to protect forested areas and natural landscape screening ○ Amenitized common areas such as pocket parks and outdoor gathering areas ○ Trails that serve the neighborhood and connect to adjacent trails ○ Outdoor warning siren ○ Potable water well ○ Greywater/irrigation well ○ Drought tolerant landscaping ○ Uniform wrought iron fencing ○ Curvilinear streets to prevent grid like, monotonous layout of development ○ Cul-de-sacs ○ Variety of lot sizes to reduce monotony ○ Ponds, water features, floodplains, etc. 	<p>Zoning Ordinance</p>

<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 5: Review and update as needed SF-43, SF-E3.0 to ensure they reflect Recommendations 3, 4, and 5.</p>	<p>Zoning Ordinance</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 8: Ensure the sustainability of existing neighborhoods. (23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Capital Improvement Program to prioritize and allocate funds for maintaining and improving existing parks and infrastructure. • Encourage HOAs and property owners to plant drought-tolerant landscaping conforming to the city’s landscape ordinance. • Encourage HOAs to beautify entryways, medians, and common areas • Encourage all HOAs to adopt restrictions prohibiting more than one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) per lot, require all accessory dwelling units to conform to the city’s Zoning Ordinance, and prohibit rental, lease, or sale of the ADU. • Encourage all HOAs to prohibit short-term rentals, Airbnb, VRBO, and similar. 	<p>Capital Improvement Program; Staff Actions; HOA Coordination</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 9: Proactively pursue opportunities along the shoreline of Lake Ray Hubbard to create, improve, and protect access to the Lake for the citizens of Heath. (23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the Lake Edge Zoning District and Take Area Zoning Guide periodically for possible improvements to regulations or processes. • Enhance Terry Park or any other public lake access to maximize the use of Lake Ray Hubbard for the recreation and enjoyment of Heath residents. 	<p>Zoning Ordinance; Capital Improvements</p>

<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 10: Use the Land Use Strategy text and map as a guide to determine whether the requested rezoning is appropriate and consistent with the City’s commitment of quality and sustainability. (24)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the following questions related to concepts within this Comprehensive Plan before approving rezoning requests. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does the development provide something unique for Heath? ○ Is the development within walking distance of public uses, parks, and open spaces? ○ Does the development provide off-street pedestrian, bicycle, and/or equestrian connections to existing and future development? ○ How does the development proposal impact the City fiscally and functionally– tax revenue, infrastructure, public services, and other public considerations (such as parks, schools, etc.)? ○ How does the development proposal impact the City’s traffic and public safety? ○ How does the development respect environmentally significant areas like floodplains and wooded areas – are these areas preserved and used as an amenity? Is the proposed development of a type and quality that will be acceptable and maintain its value and condition for the long-term, especially if immediate development of the property is not intended to occur upon the granting of the proposed rezoning? ○ Does the proposal establish sufficient irrigation to provide for the needs of the development? ○ Is the development in line with and does it further enhance Heath’s low-density, distinctive, and rural character? 	<p>Zoning Ordinance; City Leadership</p>
<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 11: Amend the Future Land Use Map, if necessary, before rezoning land, to eliminate any inconsistency between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map. (25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require zoning changes to conform to the Future Land Use Map or amend the Future Land Use Map to match zoning changes. • Consider the amendment to the Future Land Use Map on the City Council agenda before the agenda item to consider the related rezoning. • Regularly review the Future Land Use Map to ensure the City’s zoning regulations are as consistent as possible. The Map should reflect all zoning amendments made after its initial adoption. 	<p>City Leadership; Staff Actions</p>

<p>Chapter 4 Recommendation 12: Utilize the ultimate population capacity calculation as a tool for planning public services to provide for the population that is anticipated to be served in the future. (26)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively monitor the capacity of the water and wastewater systems and increase service availability for developable areas. Water is an increasingly scarce resource, and cities with capacity in the future will be better positioned to accommodate growth and quality development. • Proactively seek partnership opportunities with current and alternative water suppliers. • Increase public awareness of water supply limitations and the need for water conservation, especially during high-usage summer months. • Require new development to conform to the City’s landscape ordinance. • Consider how to incentivize existing properties to retroactively conform to the Landscape Ordinance. • Utilize the Land Use Plan to calculate projected roadway traffic counts based on recommended land uses. This will allow the City to design roadways for their ultimate capacity and not overbuild them. • Maintain and expand police and fire services to meet the needs of Heath’s future population and improve upon such services as funding allows. • Review the Thoroughfare Plan every three years to meet the needs of the citizens of Heath and collaborate with neighboring cities, counties and states. 	<p>Development Review; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
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Table 7. Livability Recommendations

Recommendation (page)	Mechanism
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 1: Ensure that the subdivision and development process includes consideration of the way in which residential lots relate to parks and open space, trail connectivity, adjacency and accessibility to parks and open space should be optimized. (29)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Open Space Standards in the Subdivision Regulations 	<p>Subdivision Ordinance</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 2: Ensure floodplains are preserved and contribute to the community’s public open space and trail system. (29)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When feasible, connect floodplain areas via trails to open space or park areas within adjacent developments. This will ensure that floodplain areas, as they are connected to other floodplain areas or local parks, become areas that significantly contribute to the open space of the City. • Ensure that the City’s Subdivision Regulations include provisions for floodplains and related open space that support plans for a county-wide system. A regional system of open space that utilizes floodplain areas and trails would provide great benefit for Heath and all other cities involved. • Ensure that the City’s Subdivision Regulations include provisions to ensure a minimum of 20 percent of the gross land is designated as open space, of which a minimum of 50 percent of the open space is not in a flood plain. • Increase the allocated funds to improve drainage issues relating to floodplain areas within developments. 	<p>Development Review; Subdivision Ordinance; Budget</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 3: Recommend buildings and structures to be set back at least 30 feet from the 100-year flood plain. (29)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a reasonable distance from creek edges to platted lots. 	<p>Subdivision Ordinance</p>

<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 4: Consider how Heath’s image and adjacent property values will be affected as streets are newly constructed, maintained, or widened. (31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to require new subdivisions to comply with all requirements of the revised Comprehensive Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, and Park Master Plan. • New subdivisions shall require driveway access to an adjacent local street for each new lot. Shared residential driveways with cross-access easements are not prohibited, but should only be permitted to limit the number of driveway openings onto roadways with high traffic volume. • Design gently curved roadways to create views for people traveling along them. This will provide indirect views of various attributes of Heath, such as local homes, open spaces, creeks, trails, ponds, and the lake. Update the Engineering Standards of Design to require curvilinear streets. • Homes should face or side onto streets. • Design new neighborhoods to minimize or eliminate the need for retaining walls along streets. • Require the establishment of certain streetscape elements along all new streets. Such elements should include trees, lighting, and medians. • Develop a streetscape plans for existing roadways in Heath. Such plans should prioritize roadways and consider how trees, pedestrian amenities, lighting, etc. can be integrated retroactively accounting for utility locations and easements. • Work with the Texas Department of Transportation, our county commissioners, and county judge to implement these recommended actions regarding streets that are not under the city's direct management or control. • Prioritize sidewalk and trail “connectors” to make a network of paths, sidewalks, trails for non-auto travel throughout the city. This must include paths and connectors through commercial projects with appropriate sidewalks and trails. • Require trail and sidewalk connectivity to existing trails and sidewalks for any new development. • Separate the sidewalks and trails from the back of curbs by a distance that increases with the speed and capacity of the street to ensure pedestrian safety. • Revise and revisit the thoroughfare plan to account for an increase in traffic along our state, city and county roads. 	<p>Development Review; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
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<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 5: Design developments to increase pedestrian and bicycle usage. (31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage interconnectedness of trails between neighborhoods, parks, retail, recreation, and other types of development to minimize automobile trip length and congestion. • Update the Trail Master Plan with a focus on trail connectivity across the City and require interconnected trails between and through developments, providing an alternative pedestrian and bicycle circulation system and increasing pedestrian safety • Require developments to be designed with continuous sidewalks or trails throughout the neighborhood and connected to adjacent developments, short blocks, and a safe pedestrian/bicycle environment with clearly identified crosswalks. • Require all retail developments near trail routes to provide bike racks. • Eliminate the use of screening walls as buffers between developments. Instead, use other buffering techniques, such as landscaping and/or berms that do not create obstacles to walking or biking between developments. • Ensure trails and sidewalks are set back from busy streets for pedestrian safety. 	<p>Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances; Staff Actions; City Leadership</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 6: Partner with Rockwall County to further the county-wide trail systems. Partner with neighboring cities of McClendon-Chisholm and Rockwall to connect city-wide trail systems. (32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a contact person to represent Heath in the decision-making process as the counties and cities work on their respective plans. • Investigate mutually beneficial funding opportunities for local trails, especially off-street trails and/or trails to be retrofitted into existing developed areas. 	<p>City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 7: Ensure that new public buildings are designed to project a positive image of Heath. (32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new and improved public buildings will be architecturally distinctive and in accordance with the Texas historic style depicted in the Towne Center overlay district design manual. 	<p>City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>

<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 8: Ensure that new public buildings are located prominently and strategically to project a positive image of Heath. (32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When considering locations for a future City Hall, focus on opportunities close to the existing City Hall, Towne Center Overlay, and Towne Center Park. 	<p>City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 9: Encourage “third places” to occur as new development takes place. (33)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that new commercial developments create a lasting infrastructure of buildings laid out in pedestrian-oriented development patterns, and include broad landscaped sidewalks, plazas, or parks. Encourage inclusion and identification of gathering places in new commercial development. 	<p>Development Review; City Leadership & Staff Actions</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 10: Minimize negative impact on water quality and water use from new development. (33)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve open space and drainageways throughout developments to encourage ground absorption of water and the natural filtering and cleaning effect of soil and plant material to improve ground and stream water quality. Utilize native and/or drought-tolerant species with organic mulch for landscaping to minimize fertilizers and excessive water use. Encourage the use of non-potable water for irrigation. 	<p>Engineering Studies; Subdivision Ordinances</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 11: Proactively reduce the “heat island effect.” (33)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend regulations and standards to require parking lots to have trees that shade paved areas Establish a parking lot landscaping ordinance. Integrate street trees along new roads and along existing roads as they are improved. Preserve open space through the maintenance of natural floodplains, creation of parks, and conservation of wooded and other environmentally sensitive areas. These types of areas and development patterns will greatly reduce the ambient temperature in the City and further reduce road maintenance and energy costs. 	<p>Engineering Studies; Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances</p>

<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 12: Proactively address air, light, and noise pollution. (34)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage interconnectedness of streets and trails between neighborhoods, parks, retail, recreation, and other types of development to minimize automobile trip length and congestion. • Require interconnected trails through and between developments to provide an alternative pedestrian and bicycle circulation system. 	<p>Engineering Studies; Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances</p>
<p>Chapter 5 Recommendation 13: Be more environmentally sensitive and sustainable. (34)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote standards for efficient building designs, alternative energy, and water conservation techniques. • Preserve tree and natural landscaping elements in property development. • Require energy-efficient design and LEED certification for commercial properties. 	<p>Engineering Studies; Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances</p>

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7 | Appendix

Demographic Snapshot

There are many elements within a city that are important – a government body, roadways, parks, and neighborhoods are a few such elements. However, the most important aspect of a city is its citizenry. The people who live in Heath, how they live, and where they make a living are the key factors in what kind of city it is today, and what kind of city it will be in the future. This section provides an overview of various characteristics of the people who call Heath home.

City, County, and Regional Population Growth

City Population Growth

Heath has experienced marked population growth since 1990, as **Table 8** shows. Between 1970 and 1980, Heath experienced the greatest percentage change in population. However, the greatest numerical increase occurred between the years 2000 and 2010, where the population grew by 2,772 people.

Between the years 2010 to 2015, the City of Heath experienced its slowest growth, increasing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of only 1.4%. It should be noted that the 2015 population of 7,430 is an estimate generated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The 2020 population of 9,769 is generated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and is based on the 2020 U.S. Census as found in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Population History

Year	Population	# Change	CAGR
1970	520	-	-
1980	1,459	939	10.9%
1990	2,108	649	3.8%
2000	4,149	2,041	7.0%
2010	6,921	2,772	5.3%
2015*	7,430	509	1.4%
2020	9,769	2,339	3.5%

Source: U.S. Census; *NCTCOG estimate

County Population Growth

In past years, Rockwall County has been one of the fastest growing counties in Texas, as well as the nation. **Table 9** shows the population change within the County since 1970. The largest percentage increase occurred between the years 1970 and 1980, where the County grew by 106.2 percentage points. But the largest numerical growth occurred between 2000 and 2010. As of the NCTCOG 2020 U.S. Census and population estimates, Rockwall County continues to grow and is estimated to currently be home to 107,819 people.

Table 9. Rockwall County Population Growth

Year	Population	# Change	% Change
1970	7,046	-	-
1980	14,528	7,482	106.2%
1990	25,604	11,076	76.2%
2000	43,080	17,476	68.3%
2010	78,337	35,257	81.8%
2015*	87,290	8,953	11.4%
2020	107,819	20,529	23.5%

Source: U.S. Census; *NCTCOG estimate

Population Growth in Surrounding Cities

The cities that surround Heath have also experienced high growth rates, as shown in **Table 10**. Forney and Rowlett were the two cities that experienced the highest percentage growth, respectively, in the area. Between the years 1980 and 2020, Heath has experienced a 569.6% growth rate, which ranks it fourth among its surrounding cities in terms of growth. On the lower end of the growth spectrum are Sunnyvale and McLendon-Chisholm at approximately 456% on average.

Table 10. Heath and Surrounding Cities Population Growth

Year	Heath	Forney	McLendon-Chisholm	Rockwall	Rowlett	Sunnyvale
1980	1,459	2,483	-	5,939	7,522	1,404
1990	2,108	4,070	646	10,486	23,260	2,228
2000	4,149	5,588	914	17,976	44,503	2,693
2010	6,921	14,661	1,373	37,490	56,199	5,130
2015*	7,430	17,480	2,050	40,620	56,910	5,420
2020	9,769	23,488	3,562	47,251	62,535	7,893
Percent Growth	569.6%	845.9%	451.4%	695.6%	731.4%	462.2%
Average Annual Compounded Growth	4.87%	5.78%	5.86%	5.32%	5.44%	4.41%

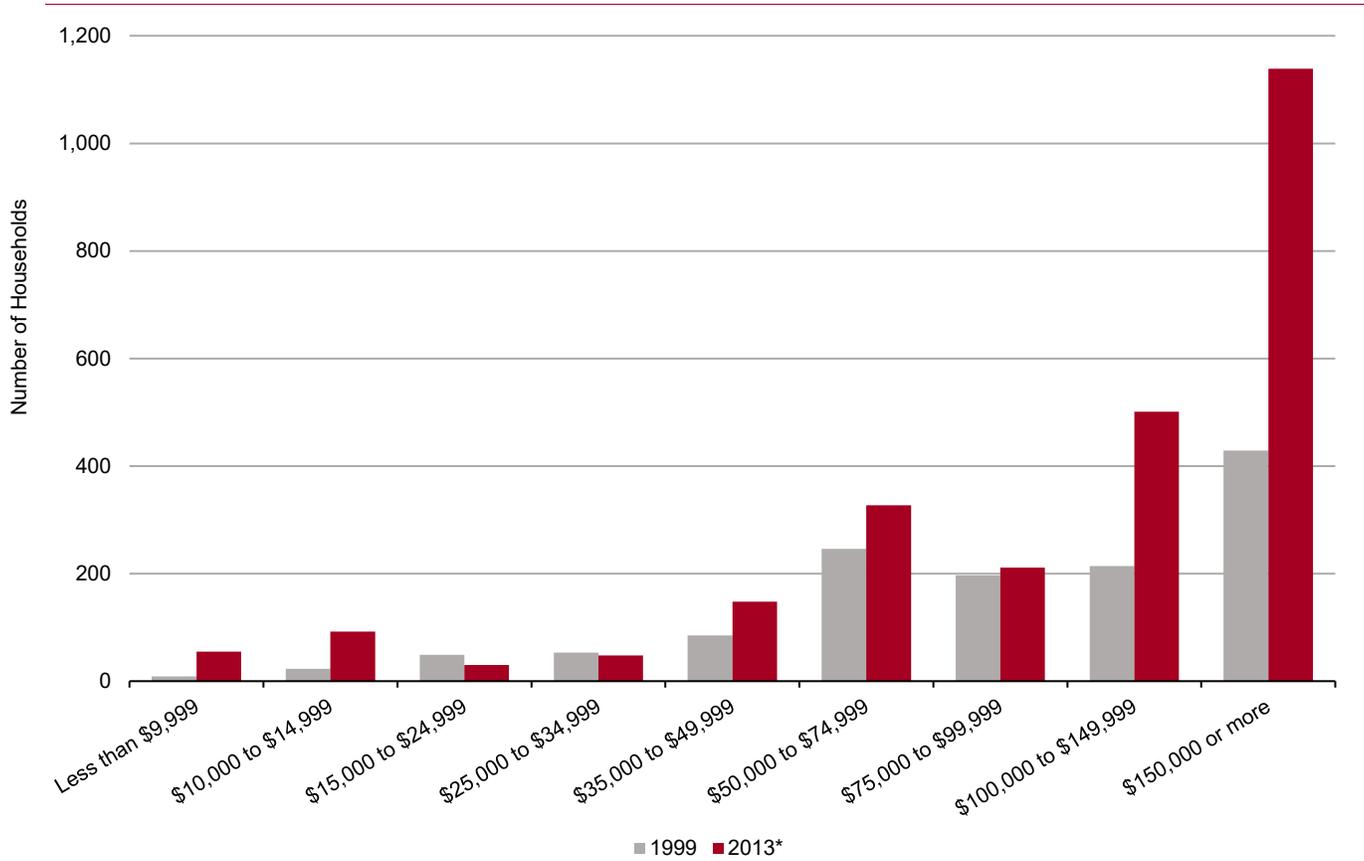
Source: U.S. Census; *NCTCOG estimate

It is interesting to note that since 1980, Heath and Sunnyvale have experienced similar patterns of growth, with Heath having a slightly larger population every year. McLendon-Chisholm has shown the slowest rate of growth in comparison to all the cities surrounding Heath, but has increased its average annual compounded growth rate since 2015.

Local Income Levels

Income levels are interesting to note for two primary reasons. First, if there is significant fluctuation in household income levels from one Census year to another, it may indicate that employment opportunities (regionally or locally) are increasing or decreasing. Second, income is an indicator for the retail market – higher income levels generally mean more disposable income and more retail possibilities, which in turn mean a higher tax base for a community. **Figure 4** contains household income information for Heath for the years 1999 and 2013.

Figure 4. Median Household Income



Source: U.S. Census; *2009-2013 ACS estimate

Summary of Findings

This concludes the discussion of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Heath's population and related aspects of the surrounding area. Key findings include:

- Heath has experienced a relatively high rate of population growth since 1990, with slower, steady growth before 1990. This is consistent with the population growth of Rockwall County. Heath's population growth has slowed slightly since 2008, though it continues to increase.
- Population growth in some surrounding cities has been faster, such as in Rowlett and Forney, while growth has been slower in others, such as in Sunnyvale and McLendon-Chisholm.
- The racial and ethnic composition in Heath has remained relatively stable since 2000. Caucasians continued to make up the majority, and in 2013 were 98.5 percent of the population.
- The greatest difference in age distribution occurred within the Older Labor Force segment, which increased by 9.5 percent. An increase in this category suggests a skilled labor force, since the people have been in the work force for quite some time. The Prime Labor Force, people 20 to 44 years of age, experienced the largest decrease between 2000 and 2013. The Young age group also experienced a decline, while the High School population remained stable.
- The local population is becoming increasingly educated, with over half of the population over 25 years of age having a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Heath has a significantly higher median income level than the cities in the area. McLendon-Chisholm's median income level was the closest but was more than \$20,000 below Heath's.
- Family Households represented, by far, the largest percentage of households in Heath in 2000 and 2013 at 88 and 90.4 percent, respectively. The number of households with an individual over 65 years of age continues to grow.
- People are willing to commute relatively far distances to work in order to live in Heath. Over a third commuted at least 30 minutes, and almost 15 percent commuted 45 minutes to an hour to work in 2013. There is approximately 40 percent of the workforce that commutes less than 25 minutes, suggesting that there are employment opportunities available at a close proximity to the City. Commute times may, therefore, be decreasing as the area around Heath becomes more balanced with both residential and non-residential uses. Telecommuting opportunities may also be helping to reduce commute times.
- The vast majority of the housing units in Heath, 98.5 percent, are single-family.
- Housing values in Heath are high, with the majority being priced at \$300,000 or more in 2013. Values increased between the 2000 Census and 2013 ACS estimate and were higher in 2013 than in any of the surrounding cities.

Existing Land Use Characteristics

Land Use Types

The discussion within this section provides documentation of the way in which all parcels of land are currently used in Heath. This will allow for later land use recommendations to be tailored to the needs of Heath’s citizens – their needs for single-family homes, other housing types, retailing, public services, etc. The City’s strong history of planning is also helpful to this discussion, because land usage was documented as part of those efforts. This allows for comparative analysis of how land was used in the past, in addition to analysis of how it is being used today.

In order to analyze the land use trends within Heath, a parcel-by-parcel land use survey was conducted during the preparation of this Plan.

Table 11. Residential Land Uses

Land Use Type & Map Color		Description	Example Image
Single-Family		Any single dwelling unit that is detached from other dwelling units, is built on-site, and is designed to be occupied by only one family. Single-family homes are the most prevalent housing type and land use type in Heath.	
Two-Family (Duplex)		Any structure with two attached dwelling units that is designed to be occupied by two families (one in each unit). Duplex units are also commonly referred to as two-family units. This type of land use is very minimal in the City.	
Multi-Family		Any structure with numerous attached dwelling units that is designed to be occupied by several families (one in each unit). This term can be used to describe a single structure or series of structures in a complex. Multi-family homes are also commonly referred to as apartments. Like duplexes, this type of land use is also very minimal in the City.	

Table 12. Non-Residential Land Uses

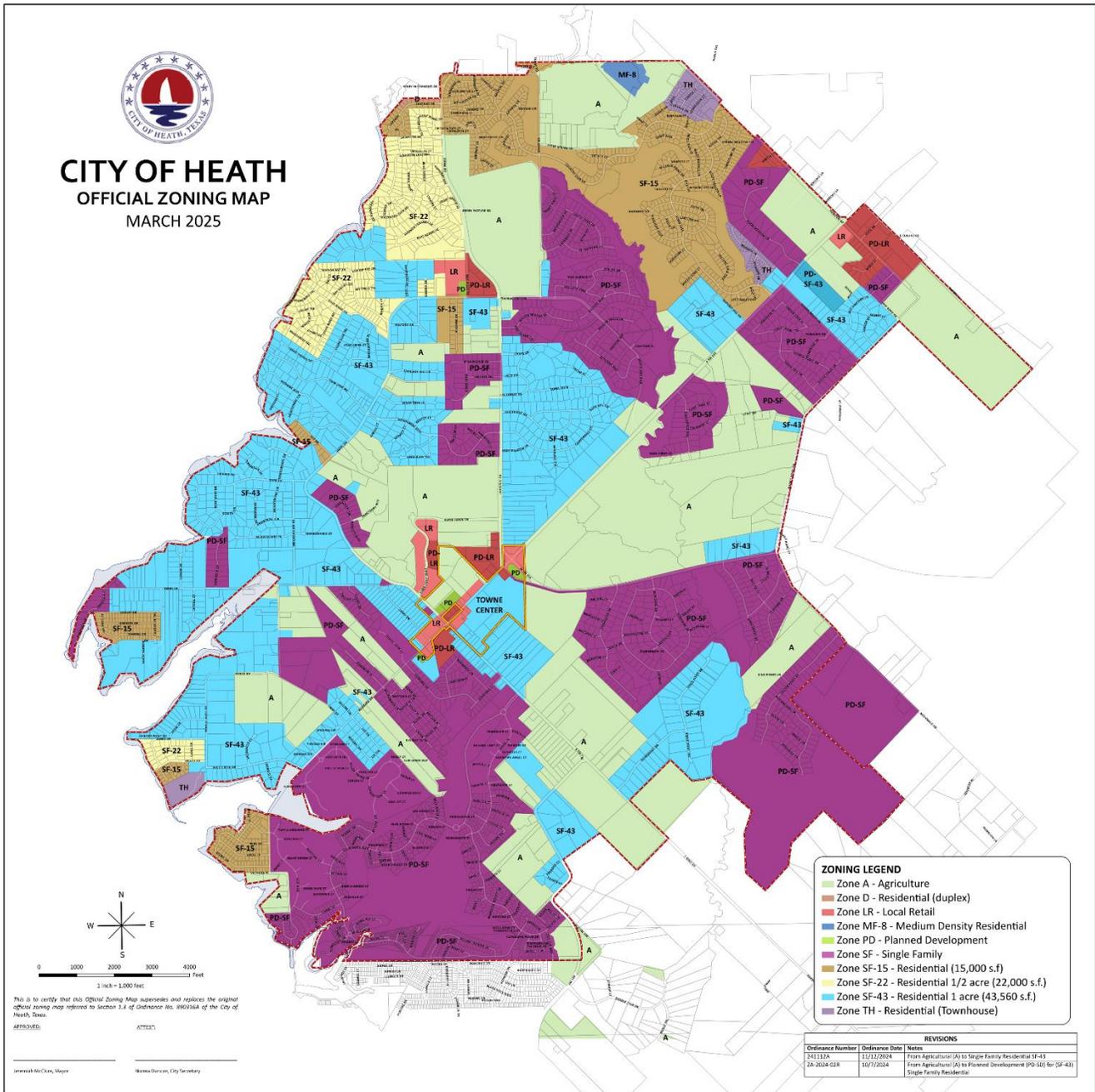
Land Use Type & Map Color	Description	Example Image
Office	Any and all types of professional and administration offices, examples of which include doctors, lawyers, dentists, real estate, architects, accountants, and secretarial services.	
Retail	Business establishments that primarily sell commodities or goods to consumers. Examples of such establishments include restaurants, grocery stores, beauty salons, and shopping centers.	
Commercial	Business establishments that primarily provide a service to consumers.	
Parks and Open Space	Public or HOA-owned local parks, open space, and/or recreation areas (such as trails).	
Private Recreation	Private golf courses, private marinas, and similar private uses.	
Public/Semi-Public	Buildings and their related sites that the general public has access to, such as schools, churches, and public buildings.	
Utility	Land that is dedicated to use for electric stations, water towers, and other public utility facilities.	
Vacant	Land that either has no readily visible or apparent use, or land that is used for growing crops or grazing of animals.	

Land Use Composition

Table 13. Existing Land Use Comparison within the City Limits and ETJ

City Limits with ETJ			City Limits Only		
Future Land Use Type	Acres	Percent	Future Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Rural Estate	2230.1	22.5%	Rural Estate	1595.6	19.3%
Medium Density Residential	1542.5	15.6%	Medium Density Residential	1460	17.7%
High Density Residential	626.8	6.3%	High Density Residential	626.8	7.6%
Townhome	43.5	0.4%	Townhome	43.5	0.5%
Office	14.9	0.2%	Office	14.9	0.2%
Retail	61	0.6%	Retail	61	0.7%
Mixed Use	41.33	0.4%	Mixed Use	23.7	0.3%
Parks and Open Space	165	1.7%	Parks and Open Space	165	2.0%
Private Recreation	615.5	6.2%	Private Recreation	588.2	7.1%
Public/Semi-Public	277.1	2.8%	Public/Semi-Public	268.4	3.2%
Lake Edge	208.26	2.1%	Lake Edge	208.26	2.5%
Right-of-Way	756.7	7.6%	Right-of-Way	690.6	8.4%
Vacant	3326.6	33.6%	Vacant	2521.7	30.5%
Total	9909.29	100.0%	Total	8267.66	100.0%

Figure 5. Current Zoning



Local Development Patterns

In order to understand how Heath is growing and changing, the project team compared existing land uses in 2008 and 2018. Overall, Heath has grown in size and population. While some areas of the City have become more dense, this has been offset by annexing vacant or underdeveloped areas of the ETJ.

Development Over Time

Since 2008 the City has grown, annexing eastern areas of the ETJ between Rabbit Ridge Road and FM 550, southern areas of the ETJ along FM 740, and the northern portion along Hanby Road. Heath’s only remaining ETJ is to the south and southeast. This development pattern is not surprising given the large portion of the City that borders Lake Ray Hubbard to the west; there is also less vacant land in the western portion of the City. Despite substantial annexation since 2008, much of south and east Heath remains vacant, comprising a significant portion of the 30.5% percent of undeveloped land in the City.

Recent Development

Residential development increased between 2018 and 2025. Almost all of this growth was comprised of single-family residential, both through annexation of existing development and construction of new neighborhoods. Fluctuations of duplex, townhomes, and single-family development from 2018 to 2025 are the result of recalculating existing developments.

Public/semi-public land uses grew overall by over 581 total acres. Much of the percentage change in distribution of these uses is a result of calculating private recreation, parks and recreational amenities in previously unincorporated areas of the City. Overall, these land uses increased by about 75 percent.

Non-residential development remains low and has increased in area due to more accurate mapping tools and the reclassification of existing land uses. For example, in 2008 there were categories for office, commercial, and retail/commercial. In the 2018 Plan and the 2025 Plan, these uses are more clearly differentiated, resulting in fluctuations of calculated acreage. As of 2018, office use has not changed; however, retail and commercial/mixed use have an increase that will result in more of these types of uses.

Residential	2018 Acres	2025 Acres	Percent Change
Rural Estate	-	1595.6	-%
Medium Density Residential	-	1460.0	-%
High Density Residential	-	626.8	-%
Townhome	-	43.5	-%
Total	2,942.0	3,725.9	26.6%

Public/Semi-Public	2018 Acres	2025 Acres	Percent Change
Parks & Open Space	771	165.0	114.0%
Private Recreation	285.3	588.2	106.2%
Public/Semi-Public	218.8	268.4	22.7%
Total	581.2	1,021.6	75.8%

Non-Residential	2018 Acres	2025 Acres	Percent Change
Office	14.9	14.9	0%
Retail	6.7	61.0	810.4%
Commercial/Mixed Use	11.1	23.7	113.5%
Total	32.7	99.6	204.6%