

*Chapter 5:
The Neighborhood & Business Enhancement Plan*

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022



Introduction

The City of Live Oak, as the “*Gateway to San Antonio*,” has a unique opportunity to make a substantial regional impression. Because of its proximity to Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604, it is seen by millions of visitors to the San Antonio area each year. Live Oak has the ability to greatly impact the way the region is seen by these visitors and the way it is perceived by its residents. The City, therefore, must balance its local and regional roles, serving both those who visit Live Oak and those who reside here.

One important element within Live Oak locally is the quality of its residential neighborhoods. Neighborhoods that provide safe and attractive living environments with convenient access to recreation, shopping, and work prove to be sustainable areas that contribute positively to the overall community for many years to come. An important regional element is the way in which Live Oak is viewed from major roadways, especially Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604. This view from the road, formed mainly by the businesses that exist along them, is extremely important in that it often provides people with their first impression of Live Oak. This influences their basic perceptions of the City before they fully experience it. The *Neighborhood & Business Enhancement Plan* of the Comprehensive Plan provides an analysis of these two important elements of Live Oak.

Neighborhood Enhancement

While it is difficult to define, a *neighborhood* can be described as a residential area in the community with boundaries demarcated by thoroughfares, collector streets, or other man-made or natural features. The neighborhood may vary in size from several blocks to hundreds of acres. However, a neighborhood cannot adequately be described solely by its physical structures. The definition of a *neighborhood* is affected by an almost indefinable sense of community and quality of life enjoyed by its residents. Each neighborhood is unique, and it is that uniqueness which makes neighborhoods difficult to define with any degree of precision. However, for residential development and planning purposes, the following factors should be considered:

- ◆ Physical condition of housing units (this is described by housing type within the *Baseline Analysis* and later within this Chapter);
- ◆ Opportunities for social interaction (e.g., centralized gathering areas, parks);
- ◆ Careful placement of public and retail land uses (i.e., on the edges of the neighborhood);
- ◆ Proximity to schools, churches, and recreational facilities;
- ◆ Accessibility by emergency services;
- ◆ Adequate lighting and other features which foster the feeling of safety (along streets and within park areas);
- ◆ Continued investment in public and private property to stabilize property values (i.e., consistent code enforcement);
- ◆ Acceptable level of owner-occupied dwelling units; and,
- ◆ Condition of public facilities and infrastructure serving the area (i.e., street maintenance and adequate drainage facilities).

A successful neighborhood is the creation of a sustainable environment where ongoing investment in property is supported by public investment in schools, parks and open spaces, and infrastructure, where there are opportunities for social interaction, where there is accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles, and where distinctive characteristics are apparent, which give an area a unique identity. The quality and livability of Live Oak's neighborhoods are integral to the community's overall character and quality. Upkeep and maintenance of both private and public property are critical to neighborhood viability and sustainability. Maintenance of neighborhoods and facilities also affects the larger community. If left unabated, blighted areas create a 'ripple effect,' which impedes other civic objectives, including such actions as economic development and private investment. Thus, it is in the public interest to maintain the highest possible housing quality and environmental character within each neighborhood area. Generally, cooperative action by property owners, tenants, the municipality and volunteers are required to maintain and upgrade the quality of housing.

At the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, an assessment of the City's housing stock was conducted in conjunction with the existing land use survey. Within this assessment, each of the single-family and two-family housing units in Live Oak was categorized as Type 1, Type 2, or Type 3.

- ◆ Units categorized as "Type 1" were observed as being maintained in good physical condition, with no visible exterior problems.
- ◆ Units categorized as "Type 2" were observed as being in need of minor repair, which includes repair that could generally be performed by the property owner; examples include painting of trim and exterior wood surfaces, replacement of small trim areas, and cleaning/replacement of gutters.
- ◆ Units categorized as "Type 3" were observed as being in need of major repair, which includes repair that could generally not be undertaken by the property owner; examples include sagging of the roof, cracked brick, rotted wood, missing brick or siding, and missing shingles.

<i>Table 5-1 HOUSING CONDITION – 2002 City of Live Oak, Texas</i>		
Housing Condition	Number	Percentage
Type 1	2,503	77.30%
Type 2	722	22.30%
Type 3	13	0.40%
Total	3,238	100.00%
<small>Note: Margin of error of ±3%</small>		
<small>Note: Reflects single- and two-family units only.</small>		
<small>Source: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc.</small>		

*Figure 5-1
HOUSING TYPE
City of Live Oak, Texas*

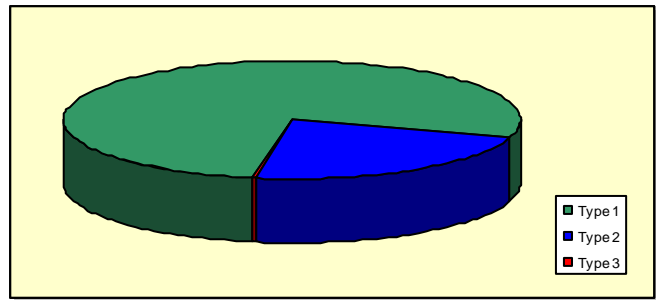


Table 5-1 shows the information on housing type.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIES

Based in part on the assessment described above, three neighborhood enhancement strategies have been devised for Live Oak and are presented herein. First, the Neighborhood Preservation Strategy is intended to encourage continued preservation of well-kept neighborhoods. Second, the Maintenance & Rehabilitation Strategy is intended to promote increased maintenance where aging housing is in need of minor rehabilitation. And finally, the Development Guidance Strategy is intended to identify ways in which new neighborhoods can incorporate elements that will ensure their sustained quality over time.

Neighborhood Preservation Strategy

In areas where sound, quality housing exists, a preservation strategy is appropriate. Over 77 percent of the housing units in Live Oak have been identified as “Type 1”, which describes units that are maintained in good physical condition, with no visible exterior problems. The purpose of the Neighborhood Preservation Strategy is to recognize areas in which the City should sustain and protect existing desirable conditions. This can most successfully be achieved by proactive code enforcement in and around these areas, and by ensuring complementary relationships with adjacent land uses. It will be important for the City to carefully review any development proposals that are in proximity to these areas to ensure that they will not be adversely affected by approval of such proposals. In addition, an effective Neighborhood Preservation Strategy includes the continued provision and maintenance of adequate utilities and community facilities, such as parks, schools and streets. Preservation efforts by Live Oak within these areas should minimize the need for rehabilitation programs in the future. As part of the activity of normal planning, community development, and code enforcement practices, the Neighborhood Preservation Strategy can be implemented by appropriate City departments on an on-going basis.

Also, there are identifiable elements, such as street trees, sidewalks, and well-maintained streets, that have been proven over time to contribute to the sustained quality of neighborhoods. With new neighborhoods, incorporating such elements is relatively simple by requiring them through City regulation. Providing them in older neighborhoods is no less important to the quality of life, but is more of a challenge because it must be done retroactively. As part of the Neighborhood Preservation Strategy, a gradual and sustained program of incorporating the following improvements wherever possible where they are lacking is recommended:

- ◆ Provide pedestrian and bicycle routes (refer to the *Thoroughfare Plan* Chapter and to Live Oak’s *Park, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan*);
- ◆ Provide recreation spaces within neighborhoods;
- ◆ Encourage the formation of neighborhood associations;
- ◆ Continue proactive code-enforcement efforts, and be proactive in protecting the appearance of residential areas;
- ◆ These existing structures will contribute to Live Oak’s future stock of affordable housing. New housing of equal size and quality could not be constructed and sold at the same prices of these units.

While some of these suggestions require capital reinvestment, others do not and may be easily achieved with limited capital outlay. It is recommended that the City allocate capital and maintenance funds to an established reinvestment program for the long-term preservation of existing, older neighborhoods.

Maintenance & Rehabilitation Strategy

The Maintenance & Rehabilitation Strategy is appropriate where the housing units are substantially sound, but are in need of some type of repair. Houses that were categorized as Type 2 or Type 3 are appropriate for this housing strategy.

The main purpose of this strategy is to reduce the incidence of further deterioration of these housing units. If minor repairs are not accomplished on Type 2 units, such units may fall into the Type 3 category, making rehabilitation an increasing challenge. Currently, approximately 22 percent of the City's housing stock falls into the Type 2 category, while just 0.4 percent fall into the Type 3 category. It is recommended that the Type 2 and Type 3 units that have been identified be immediately addressed for several reasons:

- ◆ Over a period of time, if neglected, these areas can further deteriorate;
- ◆ If the deterioration of housing/neighborhoods is not addressed, further decline may negatively impact surrounding areas;
- ◆ The overall image or "quality of life" of the community can be enhanced by improving these housing units.

There are numerous state and federal housing rehabilitation programs that the City can initiate to begin to improve housing in these areas. Examples of these programs, as well as some related non-profit agencies include:

- ◆ The Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) – Federal; administered by the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Office; allocates funds on a competitive/discretionary basis; no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver
- ◆ The Healthy Homes Initiative Program (HHI) – Federal; administered by the Lead Hazard Control Office and builds upon the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department's existing housing-related health and safety issues; no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver
- ◆ Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) – Federal, State, and County; administered by the Community Planning and Development Office; allocates funds on a formula/entitlement basis; funding for activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development and the provision of improved community facilities and services; participation can be through funds allocated by the State or County; no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver
- ◆ The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) – Federal, State, County, and Local; administered by the Community Planning and Development Office and allocates funds on a formula/entitlement basis; funding may be used for a variety of activities, including housing rehabilitation, tenant-based rental assistance, assistance to homebuyers, acquisition of housing, new construction of housing, site acquisition, site improvements, demolition, and relocation; requirement for matching funds on the

- part of the receiver equal to 25 percent of the grant amount
- ◆ Neighborhood Initiatives Grants - Federal, State, County, and Local; administered by the Community Planning and Development Office; allocates funds on a competitive/discretionary basis; no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver
 - ◆ Habitat for Humanity - A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that builds and rehabilitates homes in partnership with low-income people. Houses, sold at no profit to pre-qualified, low-income families, are financed through no-interest mortgages. Mortgage payments are returned to a revolving fund, which is used to finance more construction. Pre-qualified homeowners are required to invest hours directly working on the Habitat project. The organization utilizes volunteer labor, monetary, and in-kind donations to build houses
 - ◆ Christmas in April Program – A non-profit, “grassroots” effort; discussed below
 - ◆ Community Development Corporation (CDC) - A 501(c)(3) private, nonprofit corporation formed to address special needs of a community, such as the revitalization of lower- and moderate-income neighborhoods; generally rely upon fundraising efforts for capital, funding may also include CDBG or HOME funds from the local government or state grants; typically undertake smaller projects that are less profitable to a bank lender by lending money directly or utilizing funds as a guarantee for conventional bank loans; usually comprised of a group of active community volunteers, managed by financial administrators

The City should solicit input on what the specific needs are of the individuals who own and/or live in the units identified as Type 2 or Type 3. For example, some of these individuals may be elderly and may not be physically able to undertake the minor repairs needed to improve their homes. In other cases, lack of funds may keep individuals or families from making necessary improvements. Knowledge of factors that may be keeping individuals from undertaking proper maintenance will help the City to determine the best steps to take.

A majority of the Type 3 housing units that were identified can be addressed by the City taking simple steps to help the property owners. Many cities help to coordinate volunteer efforts by identifying properties and by putting willing volunteers together with donated supplies. This may include prioritizing properties in need of improvement, obtaining donations from local businesses, signing up interested Live Oak staff and citizens, and donating basic items. This type of effort (often referred to as “Christmas in April”) could help to improve numerous homes on an annual basis. In addition, if major repairs are needed and funding is an issue, the City could simply provide information, such as information on grants and on low-interest bank loans, to citizens. A system for feedback and continued contact with property owners could also be established.

Development Guidance Strategy

The standards for new residential development should be such that maintenance and preservation strategies become less necessary over time. Applying the Development Guidance Strategy, either during the stages of zoning change or subdivision approval, provides City staff with an opportunity to ensure that Live Oak’s commitment to quality will be reflected in a

residential development of lasting value and stability. It is recommended that the City develop a range of lot and dwelling sizes to continue the goal of a balanced housing mix (also see the *Housing Density* discussion that follows). In addition, the City should continue to enforce the Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Ordinance, building codes and minimum housing standards in areas that are undeveloped. Proactive enforcement of City policies and regulations prior to development is critical to the maintenance of the local housing stock and to the high standards of community development to which Live Oak is committed. The following is a list of standards recommended for new residential development that should be included within the City's Zoning or Subdivision Ordinance, as applicable:

- ◆ Single-family (low density) development:
 - All new residential lots should be a minimum of 6,500 square feet
 - All units should have a two-car garage
 - Driveways should be constructed on concrete or brick pavers
 - Some units should have "J" drives
 - All homes should be connected to a permanent, reinforced concrete foundation
 - All units should have a 6-to-12 roof pitch
 - A certain amount of landscaping (e.g., street trees) should be required
- ◆ Multiple-family (high density) development (refer to the *Future Land Use Plan*):
 - The development should be adjacent to a major collector or arterial roadway (i.e., not directly adjacent to local residential streets)
 - All structures should be 80 percent masonry
 - The development should not be less than approximately five acres in size
 - Transition areas (greenspace, buffer areas, etc.) should be incorporated into the development if it is adjacent to an existing or planned single-family development
 - Usable open space should be incorporated
 - At least fifty percent of the units should have one garage space; covered parking should be provided for all other units
 - Apartment complexes should be gated and should have limited access entry

Increasing Code Enforcement Efforts

Many cities have codes and ordinances in effect that are not generally enforced unless a citizen voices concern. Often, the result of this is that municipalities are consistently in the position of being reactive instead of proactive. One of the issues that Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members discussed at length was the need for more proactive enforcement of Live Oak's regulations. The views expressed were that the desired result of this would be more visually pleasing neighborhood areas without much cost to the City. Some of the items that are often considered as cities engage in proactive code enforcement measures include broken down vehicles, damaged fences, recreation vehicles parked for extended periods of time, excessive trash in front yards, and dilapidated accessory structures. Many cities have adopted property and housing code ordinances that include regulation of these elements. The City of Live Oak should consider adopting such an ordinance, and should practice proactive code enforcement throughout the City on a consistent basis.

Business Enhancement

Several major aspects of the City's physical urban design can enhance local land uses, especially in terms of nonresidential development and the related image that the public forms of Live Oak. As discussed within the *Future Land Use Plan* (Chapter 3), the land that is designated for nonresidential use is of prime importance to the City due to the fact that, in general, the land is located along the City's major thoroughfares, Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road, making the nonresidential uses very visible. These areas also represent Live Oak's major tax-generating opportunities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAJOR ROADWAYS

The fact that the City of Live Oak has recognized the importance of protecting its image along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 is apparent through the high-quality development the City strived for resulting in "The Forum". The following discussion focuses on regulations that could be applied to the City's major roadways, including Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road, specifically within the areas identified on **Plate 5-1**. These regulations will help Live Oak achieve its goal of enhancing its image within these important corridors. The following will specifically be addressed:

- Parking areas,
- Shared driveways,
- Lighting,
- Setbacks,
- Screening,
- Exterior construction,
- Loading docks,
- Landscaping, and
- Signage.

Parking Areas

Large expanses of pavement for parking do not generally contribute to a positive visual image. Therefore, the City should consider either providing incentives for or requiring parking areas to be placed to the side or the rear of the primary on-site structure (to the back of the lot) and out of the view of people traveling along Interstate Highway 35 Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road. An example of an incentive would be to require the construction of a slightly reduced number of parking spaces when parking areas are located to the rear. Landscaping and screening, which are discussed later within this Chapter, should also be incorporated into parking areas. The



*Illustration 5-1
NONRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WITH PARKING AREAS
ORIENTED TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SITE
(City of Southlake Town Center)*

following is an example of the language that could be incorporated into the Live Oak's Zoning Ordinance to regulate parking area location:

The required parking area within any new development shall be not be visible from Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road; the required parking area shall be oriented such that it is located to the interior of the site, with the on-site structures surrounding it to the furthest extent possible.

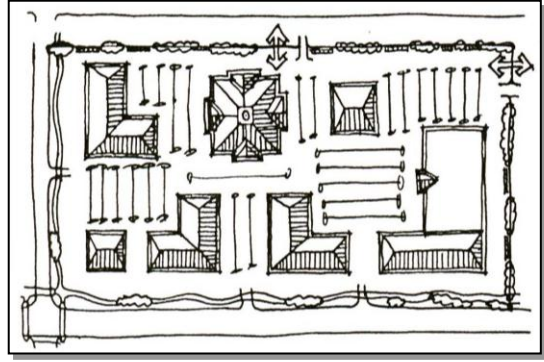


Illustration 5-2

NONRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT WITH PARKING AREAS ORIENTED TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SITE

Shared Driveways

The concept of requiring shared driveways is not related directly to aesthetics, but to safety. Although there is not direct ingress or egress access from Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604, the integrity of the related service roads is important. The need for shared driveways and limiting curb cuts that would serve to help protect the integrity of roadways in Live Oak is also discussed within the *Thoroughfare Plan*, Chapter 4. The following is an example of the language that could be used to require shared driveways:

The minimum distance between any two (2) driveway entrances, whether on the same or different lots, shall be thirty-five (35) feet, measured along the curb line. Mutual access agreements for parking lots, driveways and adjoining properties shall be required. A professional traffic engineer, subject to City Council approval, shall establish the specific number, width and location of ingress and egress points.



Illustration 5-3

A MAJOR ROADWAY WITH NO SHARED DRIVEWAY REQUIREMENT

Lighting

Lighting for businesses along Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road is needed to provide visibility for the businesses and safety for those who patronize them. To avoid any adverse impacts on residential areas, lighting facilities to be reflected away from adjacent residential areas. However, aesthetics are also extremely important. In order to address impacts on adjacent residential areas as well as aesthetics, the following language is

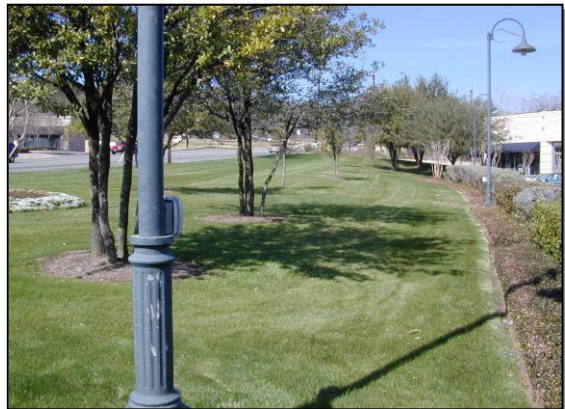


Illustration 5-4

EXAMPLES OF AESTHETICALLY PLEASING LIGHT FIXTURES

recommended for inclusion into the City's Zoning Ordinance:

Lighting facilities shall not produce unwanted light onto adjacent residential property as measured from the property line. If, after all corrective action has been taken, there is illumination crossing the property boundary, under no circumstance shall the illumination be greater than 0.05 footcandles, as measured at five (5) feet inside the adjacent residential property.

Light poles and fixtures shall be of a single color that is compatible with and complementary to the architecture of the building and the entire overall development.

Setbacks

Minimum setbacks along the service roads of Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 should be a minimum of 35 feet from the right-of-way, and side street setbacks should be 20 feet from the right-of-way. Minimum side and front street setbacks along Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road should be 20 feet from the right-of-way. This recommendation should not only apply to building setbacks, but also parking areas and accessory elements. Requiring these elements to be set back from the right-of-way as well not only contributes to better aesthetics, but also is safer because it creates less visual confusion for drivers on the rights-of-way. The revised regulation could read:

The minimum front setback distance for buildings, parking areas, loading areas, and accessory elements from the rights-of-way of Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 and related service road rights-of-way shall be thirty (30) feet. The minimum side street setback distance for buildings, parking areas, loading areas, and accessory elements from the rights-of-way of Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 and related service road rights-of-way shall be twenty (20) feet. The minimum side and front street setback distance for buildings, parking areas, loading areas, and accessory elements from the rights-of-way of Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road shall be twenty (20) feet.

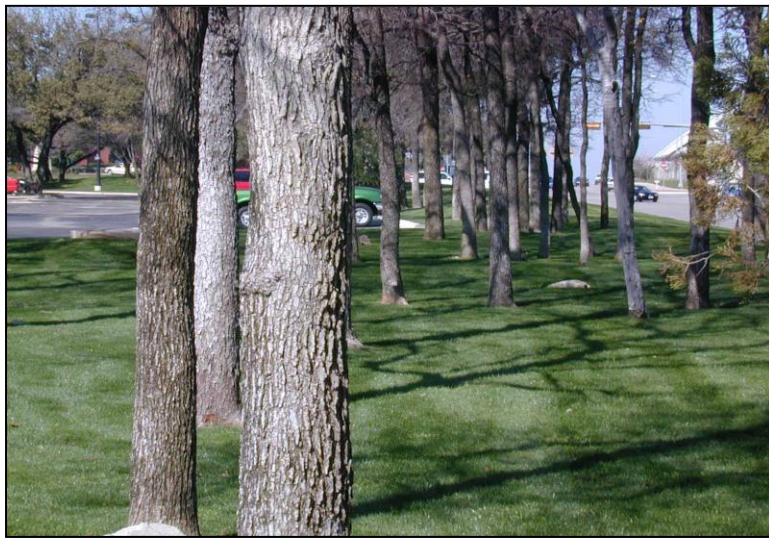


Illustration 5-5

EXAMPLE OF A WIDE SETBACK BETWEEN THE SERVICE ROAD AND A RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Screening

There are many elements that are needed for business to operate that are not generally considered to be visually attractive. These various elements include trash receptacles (and related areas), open storage (and related areas), expansive parking lots, service areas, ground-mounted equipment, and roof-mounted equipment. Acceptable means by which to provide screening generally should include landscaping, earth berms in conjunction with landscaping (mainly for parking areas), masonry walls in conjunction with landscaping, parapet walls (mainly for roof-mounted equipment), and use of other materials that are compatible with the structure(s). Screening mechanisms should be constructed at a height that is appropriate to the element being screened, which is generally between three and eight feet. Other issues include maintenance and visual appeal. Following is a discussion of the various elements that should be considered in the context of requiring screening.

ELEMENTS TO BE SCREENED

The following language should be incorporated into the Zoning Ordinance to screen these specific elements:

Trash receptacles (and related areas) that are not within a screened service area and that would otherwise be visible from a public right-of-way shall be screened from public view and from adjacent property by a minimum six-foot (6') screening wall on three (3) sides. The fourth side, which is to be used for garbage pickup service, may provide an optional gate to secure the trash receptacle (and related area).

Open storage of materials, commodities or equipment (and related areas) shall be screened from public view and from adjacent property with a minimum six-foot (6') screening wall. No open storage may exceed the height of the screening wall.

All parking areas that are located adjacent to a public right(s)-of-way shall be screened from the general view of the right(s)-of-way by a three-foot (3') berm.



Illustration 5-6

MASONRY SCREENING WALL & LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS
SCREEN A LARGE TRASH RECEPTACLE AREA & LOADING AREA
(Wal-Mart in Plano, Texas)



Illustration 5-7

MASONRY SCREENING WALL & LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS
SCREEN A LARGE TRASH RECEPTACLE AREA & LOADING AREA
(Wal-Mart in Plano, Texas)



Illustration 5-8

EXAMPLE OF A SCREENING WALL THAT PROTECTS A REFUSE
CONTAINER FROM PUBLIC VIEW

Service areas, such as loading docks and delivery entrances, shall be screened from public view and from adjacent property with a minimum six-foot (6') screening wall.

Ground-mounted mechanical equipment, including utility structures, transformers and natural gas regulating stations, shall be screened from public view and from adjacent property with a screening wall that is equal to or greater in height than the structure(s) to be screened.



Illustration 5-9
SCREENED OPEN STORAGE AREA

Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view and from adjacent property with a parapet wall, mansard-style roof or other architectural extension equal in height to the unit(s), except when the unit height exceeds five (5) feet. When the height does exceed five (5) feet, an additional roof setback shall be required at a ratio of two (2) horizontal feet for each additional foot of vertical height above five (5) feet.

LANDSCAPING

The City should allow landscaping elements to be used as a screening wall, but only after approval by City staff. Also, language should be included within the Zoning Ordinance that ensures landscaping elements will provide adequate screening. For example:

Landscaping elements are permitted to be used to meet screening requirements upon approval by the City Manager or his/her designee. Landscaping elements shall provide a solid, opaque screen within two (2) years of the initial planting, and such elements shall be maintained so that a solid, opaque screen is provided on a consistent basis.



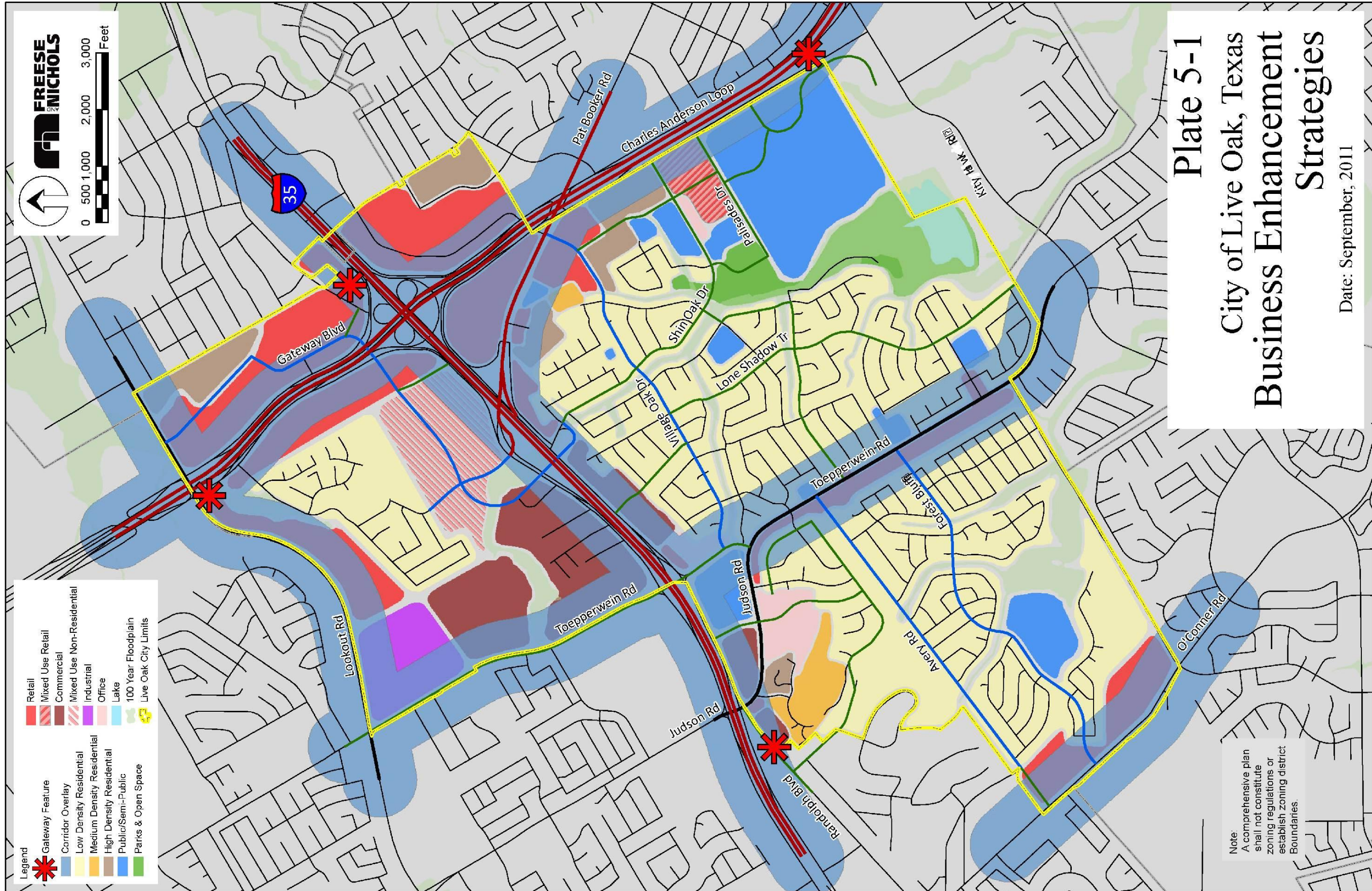
Illustration 5-10
LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS DO NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE SCREENING IN THIS EXAMPLE

HEIGHT SPECIFICATIONS

Height guidelines should define the allowable minimum and maximum screening height; height requirements vary depending on the element to be screened, but generally, masonry or wrought iron screening walls should be a minimum of six (6) feet.



Illustration 5-11
SCREENING WALL WITH COMPATIBLE MATERIALS & VARIATION



MATERIALS SPECIFICATIONS

The City should specifically prohibit the use of chain link, solid wood, barbed wire, fiberglass panels, and corrugated steel to be used to meet screening requirements. In addition, screening walls should be complementary to the design of the business (or business development); the following language should be included to ensure this in the future:

Masonry screening walls shall be constructed with brick or wrought iron and shall be designed in a manner that is consistent with the exterior finish of the main building(s) in material and color. Screening walls shall generally be extensions of the business's or development's architectural design. The only exception to this shall be a landscape screen, approved by the City Manager or his/her designee.

REQUIRING VARIATION

In addition to the screening wall itself, the City should consider requiring variation of the screening wall where masonry elements are used; this is especially important for screening walls that need to be extremely long to provide adequate screening. This regulation should read:

All masonry screening walls that are 20 feet in length or longer shall provide some horizontal variation in the wall that is equal to at least 3 feet in depth for every 20 feet in length.

CONSISTENT IDENTITY

Although it is important to create a visually interesting community, it is also important to establish an identity for Live Oak. The City is bisected by Interstate 35 and Loop 1604, resulting in a fragmented community image. This can affect both residential and nonresidential areas, however the results are more apparent in the nonresidential development along the corridors. Consistent requirements for signage and building materials can play a major role in promoting a consistent image along a corridor. The City should ensure that design standards are applied evenly across corridors, and develop a template design to be used for directional and locational signage throughout the City.

Exterior Construction

The way in which the exterior of a structure looks along Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road has a major effect on the visual image of Live Oak that is projected. The following is a discussion of recommendations specifically related to the design of buildings within these important corridors within Live Oak.

EXTERIOR CONSTRUCTION

Materials used for the exterior facades of buildings within these areas of the City should generally be limited to brick, stone, rock, or some variation thereof. These materials should comprise at least 80 percent of the walls that face or can be seen from Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road. Either a City official or City Council should be able to approve alternate materials such as concrete, concrete block, or stucco. It is also recommended that reflective and/or mirrored glass not be permitted to comprise more than fifty percent of the façade(s) facing Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road. Metal buildings should likewise not be permitted, unless the façade(s) facing either of these highways is covered with brick, stone or rock, thereby shielding the metal façade from being visible.

FAÇADE ARTICULATION FOR LARGE BUILDINGS

The facades of large nonresidential structures can be large and visually unappealing; this is sometimes referred to as “massing”. Massing concerns have generally arisen in response to large retailers (often referred to as “big box” retailers). A building that is 100,000 square feet in size can have a façade that is more than 300 feet in length, and often with large retailers, this façade is a flat expanse of wall with little to no variation or decoration. While large retailers are a real asset to Live Oak, large, flat walls do not provide the visual appeal for which the City is striving. Therefore, similar to the recommendation made for requiring variation of masonry screening walls, the City should consider requiring “façade offsets” to address this before it becomes an issue. An



Illustration 5-12
THE “VIEW FROM THE ROAD” OF A METAL BUILDING



Illustration 5-13
RETAIL USE WITH FAÇADE OFFSETS



Illustration 5-14
RETAIL USE WITH FAÇADE OFFSETS

example of the language that should be used to incorporate such a requirement within the Zoning Ordinance is:

For all nonresidential structures 50,000 square feet in size or greater, architectural variation of the exterior walls of the structure that are visible from Interstate Highway 35 or Loop 1604 shall be provided. The architectural variation shall be equal to at least 5 feet in depth for every 25 feet in vertical or horizontal length.



Illustration 5-17
EXAMPLE OF LANDSCAPING BETWEEN A NONRESIDENTIAL USE AND A MAJOR ROADWAY

Landscaping

Landscaping is generally accepted as adding value to property and is an aesthetically pleasing element to incorporate along Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road. Landscaped areas also increase the amount of land that is devoted to pervious surface area, allowing more water to permeate into the soil and helping to recharge the aquifer. Xeriscape landscaping, which requires a lesser amount of water than other types of landscaping, should be encouraged within Live Oak. The following are landscaping requirements that should be considered for inclusion within the Zoning Ordinance:



Illustration 5-15
LANDSCAPING BETWEEN A NONRESIDENTIAL USE & A MAJOR ROADWAY

A landscaped edge shall be incorporated adjacent to the rights-of-way of Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 and related service road rights-of-way and to the rights-of-way of Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road.

A minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the front yard shall be landscaped area.

Landscaped areas within parking lots shall be equal in size to at least one (1) parking space, with no landscaped area less than fifty (50) square feet in size. The total landscaped area within a parking lot shall be equal to at least sixteen (16) square feet per parking space.

One shade tree shall be provided for every twelve (12) parking spaces within parking lots that contain twenty (20) or more parking spaces. Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the required trees shall be permitted to be planted within the landscaped edge.

Plants used shall be drought-resistant, and xeriscape techniques shall be used to the furthest extent possible.

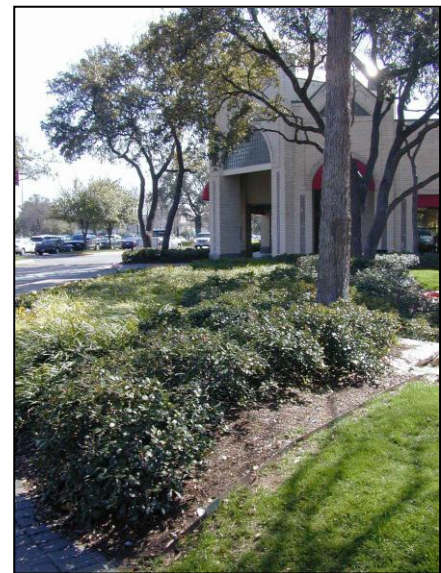


Illustration 5-16
LANDSCAPING BETWEEN A RETAIL USE & THE REQUIRED PARKING AREA

In addition to the previous recommendations, a credit to put toward the overall required landscaped areas should be provided for the protection and preservation of existing trees. Also, in order to provide guidance to the development community to help these requirements to be met, the City should provide a listing of appropriate plant materials, particularly xeriscape materials. Use of plants not specified should be subject to approval by the City.

Signage

Signs perform many functions and come in many different forms – directional, locational, and informational (i.e., announcing special events), to name a few. The City can use all types of signs in a cohesive manner to help give Live Oak a special identity that would be recognizable, particularly along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604.

CITY-ESTABLISHED GATEWAY SIGNS

Well-designed, visible gateway treatments placed at the strategic locations identified on **Plate 5-1** would provide citizens of and visitors to Live Oak with a visual image of the geographic location of the City, thereby effectively and clearly defining Live Oak’s identity. Establishing gateways would help people to differentiate Live Oak from the City of San Antonio, which is especially difficult for those traveling along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604. These gateway treatments, although they will likely be established at different times, should have a consistent design so that a particular image becomes associated with the City.



Illustration 5-18
AN EFFECTIVE GATEWAY TREATMENT
ESTABLISHED BY THE CITY OF ENNIS, TEXAS

GENERAL SIGNAGE FOR NONRESIDENTIAL LAND USES

As was discussed within the *Future Land Use Plan* (Chapter 3), nonresidential uses generally seek to locate along major thoroughfares due to the visibility. For the same reason, nonresidential uses generally desire the largest, brightest, highest sign to further increase their visibility. In order to prevent the proliferation of signs within along Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O’Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road, the City should consider certain requirements for new nonresidential development, such as:

The maximum allowable height, including the base, of any sign shall be fifty feet (50’).

Note: There could be special provisions for new nonresidential uses locating in proximity to an existing nonresidential use with a higher sign in order to ensure fair market opportunity.



Illustration 5-19
EXAMPLE OF WELL-DESIGNED SIGNS

Colors used for any sign shall be consistent with the overall design of the primary building.

The use of fluorescent colors shall not be permitted.

Flashing signs, specifically signs with moving letters, words, or pictures, shall not be permitted.

The use of temporary signs (i.e., signs that advertise special sales, etc.) shall be limited to a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, unless otherwise permitted by the City Building Official.

BILLBOARD SIGNS

In addition, billboards should be prohibited within the Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 corridors. Regardless of the fact that, in general, the development community will want to locate billboards along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604, such signs are inconsistent with the community image Live Oak wants to project within this high-traffic corridor. Many cities across the state of Texas have recognized that the proliferation of billboard signs is not a positive thing for the image they want to put forth along their major roadways. Live Oak can eliminate the potential future problem of visual clutter that can be caused by billboards by prohibiting them before they become a concern for the City.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

In examining economic development programs and their impact within a community, it is wise to acknowledge all of the elements that fall within the term “economic development”. One is the creation of new business activity within a community, as measured by increases in employment and expansion/growth of the tax base. Retention and increased viability of existing businesses is another element. The attraction of outside investment into a community, such as a concentration on tourism, is yet another. The quality of local housing stock, addressed previously within this chapter, is also an important element related to economic development. Recommendations herein pertaining to Live Oak’s economic development strategies are designed to guide City leaders in crafting programs and services that respond to the needs of existing businesses and the need for new businesses. These recommendations are presented as actions the City of Live Oak should take, or should take in partnership with its economic development partner, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Where applicable, a recommendation as to the appropriate entity that should be responsible in taking the action has been identified. Additionally, the recommended strategies have been divided into categories to aid in determining importance and assigning priorities. It should be noted that the EDC’s Economic Development Business Plan (dated January 15th, 1998) has been reviewed in relation to these recommendations.

New Business Development

Local Need: Business development that will enhance the City’s economy and quality of life.

Related Recommendations: Develop a listing of targeted businesses for the various areas of Live Oak related to location. Targeted businesses along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 should be of a retail nature; this would differ from targeted businesses along Topperwein, which should generally be light industrial uses. Target businesses that would be appropriate to locate within the designated Technology Park area would also vary. The *Future Land Use Plan* should be used as a guide to establishing these target businesses. Recommended target businesses are outlined in **Table 5-1**.

Participatory Entity: EDC

Business Need: Land that is allocated for the applicable nonresidential land use, located properly, and priced competitively.

Related Recommendations: Maintain a listing of vacant land that is planned for and available for targeted non-residential uses, especially large tracts.

Ensure that there is an adequate amount of non-residential land to allow for market choice.

Ensure that water and wastewater services are available for the prime nonresidential sites.

Create a highway-oriented zoning district for Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 that is correlated to target businesses.

Participatory Entity: City

<p><i>Table 5-2</i> RECOMMENDED TARGET INDUSTRIES <i>City of Live Oak, Texas</i></p> <p>General Office Uses</p> <p>Bank Medical facilities, offices, & services Professional offices (e.g., attorneys, insurance agency, etc.)</p> <p>General Retail Uses</p> <p>Outlet Mall Restaurants (limit the number of drive-thru restaurants) Recreation & Entertainment Uses (e.g., movie theaters, gyms) Hardware Stores Grocery/Food Stores Clothing Stores Shoe Stores Pet Stores Coffee Shops Sporting Goods Superstores</p> <p>Limited Commercial Uses</p> <p>Hotels Motels New Car Sales Home Improvement Stores Auto Rental</p> <p><small>*Target industry recommendations are predicated on the assumption that the previously discussed nonresidential aesthetic guidelines are adopted and enforced by adopted regulations.</small></p>
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Business Need: Economic programs that provide assistance to small, emerging businesses.

Related Recommendations: Establish a *Small Business Development* service that would focus on aiding and assisting businesses and on providing information, such as business plans, marketing, legal, administrative, personnel, and financial/accounting matters.

Consider the establishment of a small business incubator. The Texas Department of Commerce's Texas Capital Fund Small Business Incubator Program provides grants to establish new small business incubators. A feasibility study is required prior to applying, however, which would require some funding on the part of the City and/or the EDC.

Participatory Entities: City & EDC

Business Need: A community that is open and receptive to new business.

Related Recommendations: Formalize the City's positive attitude that encourages and attracts more business development and expansion.

Re-evaluate the City's ED incentive policy in regard to new business development to determine Live Oak's competitiveness with neighboring and/or nearby cities.

Market and advertise the City as business-friendly.

Participatory Entities: City & EDC

Business Need: Land that has access to major thoroughfares.

Related Recommendations: Utilize the City's location at the intersection of Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 as a marketing tool.

Participatory Entities: City & EDC

Business Need: Access to information on the demographics and economics of the community as well as the region.

Related Recommendations: Provide up-to-date research and data information on Live Oak, surrounding communities, and San Antonio, as applicable, to inquiring businesses.

Participatory Entities: City & EDC

Business Retention & Expansion

Business Need: Economic assistance programs aimed specifically at helping existing Live Oak businesses to prosper.

Related Recommendations: Establish and cultivate a *Business Retention and Support Program* focused specifically on aiding targeted existing Live Oak businesses that want to compete effectively and progress economically. Help these firms identify and service new market opportunities.

Encourage local business to diversify, modify, and/or expand their products.

Participatory Entity: EDC

Business Need: Economic assistance programs that provide information to existing Live Oak businesses on growing/expanding their business.

Related Recommendations: Encourage local businesses to utilize the Texas Department of Commerce's (TDOC) Texas Marketplace – an electronic bulletin board system with access to numerous business-related databases and directories

Participatory Entity: EDC

Business Need: Proactive programs that provide opportunities for the City to monitor the success local businesses.

Related Recommendations: Develop a *Business Development Program* that would be designed to encourage direct and regular contact with existing businesses to identify the needs of local businesses and the challenges facing them. Volunteers could be enlisted to contact businesses to survey their success. Businesses in need of assistance could be identified and the City and/or the EDC could act accordingly.

Participatory Entity: City & EDC

Business Need: An attractive appearance that would appeal to people traveling on Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604.

Related Recommendations: Develop a matching grant program to help existing businesses improve their appearance along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604. Improvements could include landscaping and upgrading the façade of buildings.

Participatory Entity: EDC

Business Recruitment

Local Need: An expanded tax base of industrial and commercial, retail and office firms.

Related Recommendations: Efforts should be made to recruit businesses from a target business list.

Survey residents to determine needed goods and services and then develop a recruitment program to attract those types of businesses to fill the gaps and to fill vacant buildings. The EDC should address these needs in its long-range plan in the form of a formalized “target industry” recruitment program.

Participatory Entity: EDC

Local Need: A reputation as a progressive community.

Related Recommendations: Create and launch a marketing theme that presents Live Oak as a business-friendly community. Emphasize the City’s quality of life, quality neighborhoods, quality labor force, regional position, and supportive local government.

Participatory Entities: EDC

Tourism Opportunities

Local Need: Additional income and tax base from imported dollars.

Related Recommendations: Take advantage of the City’s location along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604 and adjacent to San Antonio to promote Live Oak.

Participatory Entities: City & EDC

Local Need: Higher visibility of Live Oak as a tourism destination in the San Antonio area.

Related Recommendations: Research publications that would help promote local and regional events, and would provide information on places in Live Oak to stay, shop, and eat in relation to those events.

Participatory Entity: Hotel Motel Tax

General Recommendations

It is not uncommon for economic development strategies or programs to stretch over five years or more in their execution. City staff, Economic Development Corporation (EDC) members, and local elected officials need to be keenly aware of this, and need to be patient with the maturation and evolution of seed programs. The above-referenced strategies are intended to help the City and the EDC over the short-term. A more detailed master plan for economic development will likely be warranted in the future, which would provide greater detail and direction.

In Conclusion

As mentioned previously, quantifying the elements that contribute to a community’s quality of life is a challenging task, primarily because the defining of those elements is subjective. This chapter has provided discussion of numerous enhancement strategies related to neighborhoods within Live Oak and to businesses along Interstate Highway 35 and Loop 1604, as well as economic development recommendations for the City. These strategies and recommendations should be considered cohesive – it will take daily implementation over a period of time for these elements to make a real, lasting contribution to Live Oak’s community image and economic future. **Table 5-3** (continued onto the following page) summarizes the recommendations made within this chapter.

<p><i>Table 5-3</i> NEIGHBORHOOD & BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS <i>City of Live Oak, Texas</i></p>
<p>Neighborhood Enhancement Strategies</p>
<p>Incorporate a gradual and sustained program of improvements (refer to the listing recommended herein) into existing neighborhoods as part of the proposed Neighborhood Preservation Strategy.</p>
<p>Solicit input on what the specific needs are of the individuals who own and/or live in the units identified as Type 2 or Type 3.</p>
<p>Use the funding aid provided by state and federal housing rehabilitation programs to begin initiating the improvement of identified Type 2 and Type 3 housing.</p>
<p><i>Note: Not in any order of priority.</i></p> <p><i>Source: City of Live Oak’s Neighborhood & Business Enhancement Plan.</i></p>

<p><i>Table 5-3 (Continued)</i> NEIGHBORHOOD & BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS <i>City of Live Oak, Texas</i></p>
<p>Neighborhood Enhancement Strategies</p>
<p>Coordinate volunteer efforts by identifying properties that need improvement and by putting willing volunteers together with donated supplies. Coordination may include prioritizing properties in need of improvement, obtaining donations from local businesses, signing up interested Live Oak staff and citizens, and donating basic items.</p>
<p>Provide information, such as information on grants and on low-interest bank loans, to citizens, especially if major repairs are needed and funding is an issue. Also, establish a system for feedback and continued contact with property owners.</p>
<p>Incorporate the list of standards recommended for new residential development, specifically for single-family and multiple-family development, into the City's Zoning or Subdivision Ordinance, as applicable.</p>
<p>Consider adopting such a property maintenance ordinances that would allow the City to regulate the maintenance of broken down vehicles, damaged fences, recreation vehicles parked for extended periods of time, excessive trash in front yards, and dilapidated accessory structures.</p>
<p>Practice proactive code enforcement throughout the City on a consistent basis</p>
<p>Business Enhancement Strategies</p>
<p>Increase development standards along the City's major thoroughfares, including Interstate Highway, Loop 1604, Topperwein Road, O'Conner Road, Lookout Road, and Pat Booker Road. Such standards should specifically address parking, shared driveways, lighting, setbacks, screening, exterior construction, loading docks, landscaping, and signage.</p>
<p>Adopt these standards either through a zoning district or through an overlay district.</p>
<p>Utilize the recommendations herein to further Live Oak's economic development efforts; these recommendations are designed to guide City leaders in crafting programs and services that respond to the needs of existing businesses, as well as the needs of new businesses.</p>
<p>Utilize the recommended target industry list (Table 5-2) to market Live Oak to these specified industries.</p>
<p><i>Note: Not in any order of priority.</i></p> <p><i>Source: City of Live Oak's Neighborhood & Business Enhancement Plan.</i></p>