

Star-Telegram

Westlake adopts Comprehensive Plan

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03/10/2015 1:50 PM | Updated: 03/10/2015 1:50 PM



With Fidelity Investments over the horizon, Longhorns graze in the afternoon sun in Westlake BOB BOOTH / SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

The town of Westlake has a new “blueprint” for the town’s future.

Westlake Town Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan on March 2, updating the way the small, rural town in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex will prepare for population growth.

The last Comprehensive Plan was adopted 23 years ago, and while it’s been “modified a little here and there,” said Town Manager Tom Brymer, “a lot has changed since 1992.”

A unique part of the Metroplex, Westlake has an estimated population of roughly 1,000 with high-end housing, but most of its land is undeveloped.

“Most of the cities around here are mostly built out, but Westlake isn’t,” said Eddie Edwards, the town’s planning and development director. “There’s an awful lot of raw ranchland yet to be developed.”

Byrmer said the town’s population – which grew from about 200 to more than 700 from 2000-2010 – is expected to reach 7,000 in 30 years. A busy, sometimes gridlocked Texas 114 corridor essentially makes much of the north border of town. Westlake’s work population is estimated between 10-12,000 people because of the presence of Fidelity Investments and the Deloitte University campus.

“One of the planning challenges we had is not only dealing with the growth of Westlake, and the traffic and other things that brings, but also the growth in the area, with people passing through here,” Brymer said. “Westlake is and will be a significant commercial center.”

The new Comprehensive Plan focuses on land use, thoroughfares, open space/parks/trails, town design, emergency facilities/Town Hall, water conservation, housing and economic development.

Resident input was important to the town. Preserving rural landscape and tranquility, promoting education and conservationism, offering distinctive recreation opportunities, preventing traffic congestion, and providing sufficient emergency services and infrastructure to serve future growth are number one priorities for Westlake residents, according to a town news release.

Many residents attended the Town Council meeting on March 2, most of whom spoke in favor of the plan, which had been amended in response to concerns of the thoroughfare element, according to the town.

The amendments included deleting the connection of east Dove Road to Solana Boulevard, and reflecting east Dove Road as a "roadway of special consideration," meaning it has the potential to be perceived as having an adverse effect on adjacent properties.

Therefore, serious consideration regarding design, along with public hearings, should be held prior to final approval, according to a town news release.

Mayor Laura Wheat said that although Westlake faces similar problems to other suburbs, the town is different.

“Westlake does not want to be anyone’s suburb. The word alone makes me cringe, and I am betting that the same is true for each of you. Simply put, we do not want to suburbanize our town,” she said. “And, the Comprehensive Plan is being designed to help us avoid that fate. It is being designed so that Westlake is Westlake, with its own unique sense of place – a true oasis in an ever-expanding urban landscape.”

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