SECTION 4. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The existing land uses and development of Levelland can be described as predominantly single-family residential, most of which has been developed on a grid street pattern. At the core of the City are the Central Business District and its role as the social, political and cultural focal point of the community. Along the major corridor of College Avenue, becoming U.S. Hwy 385, uses are predominantly commercial and retail in nature. Retail and commercial use may also be found along the U.S. Hwy 114 corridor but its predominant use is industrial.

Defining the types of land uses and their appropriate locations is a major element in setting the stage for the community's ultimate vision at build-out.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to provide a framework from which the City's vision may be realized. It is not a zoning ordinance and does not contain any provisions that otherwise govern the use of land. It is a guide that will provide the primary basis for consideration of development proposals and land use decisions. Land use proposals that do not substantially conform to the Plan may be contrary to the vision of the community as stated herein. However, the Plan is intended to be flexible and should be revised periodically as the community evolves.

The Future Land Use Plan describes the planning process used by all entities in relating development decisions to the community's ultimate vision. A series of policies defines how these decisions should be made.

4.1 Land Uses

The *Future Land Use Plan* considers development within the corporate limits as well as the existing ETJ. It proposes a pattern of development determined by land use types that are in turn recommended as land use *districts* in the City's zoning ordinance:

Residential

- Residential Estate (single-family, minimum one acre lots)
- Low Density Residential (single-family, minimum 7,500 s.f. lots)
- Medium Density Residential (single-family, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)
- Manufactured Home (manufactured home, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)
- Medium Density Residential/Manufactured Home (single-family and manufactured home, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)

- Mixed Use Residential (manufactured home, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots and allowing commercial uses)
- High Density Residential (multi-family and single-family; minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)

Non-Residential

- Office/Retail/Light Commercial
- Commercial/Retail
- Industrial
- Central Business
- Public Facilities
- Parks and Open Space

The Future Land Use Plan proposes a broad diversity and mixture of land uses throughout the planning area to address community visioning and the existing built environment.

Other

- Future Development
- Floodplain

Table 4.1 below shows the distribution of future land uses throughout the planning area, defined as the city limits and the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Table 4.1 Future Land Use Distribution, Levelland

Residential		
Residential Estate	2,724	13.9%
Low Density Residential	8,683	44.2%
Medium Density Residential	1,256	6.4%
Manufactured Home	57	0.3%
Medium Density Residential/ Manufactured Home	229	1.2%
Mixed Use Residential	39	0.2%
High Density Residential	158	0.8%
Non-Residential		
Office/Retail/Light Commercial	389	2.0%
Commercial/Retail	1,586	8.1%
Industrial	1,054	5.4%
Central Business	90	0.5%
Public Facilities	1,453	7.4%
Parks and Open Space	157	0.8%
Other		
Future Development	1,780	9.1%
Floodplain*	------	-------
TOTAL	**19,655**	**100.0%**

*Floodplain overlaps and is accounted for in various other land uses

Source: Dunkin, Sefko & Associates, Inc. April 2003.

Plate 4.1 *Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan* graphically depicts the land use categories described above.

The ultimate holding capacity has been calculated for the proposed future land use pattern shown in Table 4.2. The ultimate holding capacity represents the total estimated housing and population counts that could be accommodated at build-out throughout the planning area. Housing units are assumed to average 3 persons/household with the exception of the "High Density Residential" land use which assumes a 2 persons/household average. Table 4.2 following shows the ultimate residential holding capacity estimates. The holding capacity does not account for future right-of-way for major roadways that will reduce the buildable areas for these land use categories and their corresponding population levels.

Table 4.2 Ultimate Holding Capacity, Levelland

Future Residential Land Use	Housing Units	Population
Residential Estate	2,160	6,049
Low Density Residential	32,995	92,387
Medium Density Residential	5,966	16,705
Medium Density Residential/Manufactured Home	1,088	3,046
Manufactured Home	285	798
Mixed Use Residential*	93	259
High Density Residential	2,101	3,783
Future Development (Residential)**	6764	18,939
Total	51,452	141,966

*Assumes a 50/50 residential/commercial build-out of the land use

**Assumes a Low Density build-out as an average density for projection purposes

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4.2 Land Use Categories

Note: For land use categories proposing a mix of uses, refer to the graphic and textual descriptions of single land use categories.

Residential Uses

These land uses are defined on the basis of residential type, density and minimum lot sizes.

Residential Estate (single-family, minimum one acre lots)

Example of Residential Estate

Maximum Density: 0.8 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size: 1 Acre

Residential Estate uses are located in the outer planning areas, specifically to the west and northwest. Development within these areas may be typically characterized as rural in setting, with many lots exceeding the minimum one acre size. *Residential Estate* uses should have close access to collector streets. This land use will not require wastewater utility services and will instead rely on septic tank systems.

This land use is the least intense use specified by the *Future Land Use Plan* and should be located in the outlying areas of the City.

Low Density Residential (single-family, minimum 7,500 s.f. lots)

Example of Low Density Residential

Density: 3.0-3.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size: 7,500 square feet

Low Density Residential uses have been assigned to areas surrounding the original grid street pattern layout of the City. This land use should have close access to major thoroughfares and direct access to major collectors. This residential use will be served with full utility services, including water and wastewater services. This land use type will in some instances be in close proximity to commercial and retail uses. The *Low Density Residential* land use will also serve as a transition to the *Residential Estate* land use.

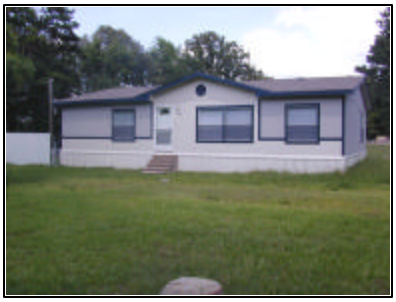
Medium Density Residential (single-family, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)

Example of Medium Density Residential

Density: 4.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size: 6,000 Square Feet

Medium Density Residential uses will be primarily applied to the central planning area and will serve as a transition Between the *Central Business* land use and less intense residential uses. The density and numbers of persons living in this land use will allow for the support of retail and other commercial development while maintaining the single-family character of the community. This land use should have close access to major thoroughfares and direct access to major collectors. This residential use will be served with full utility services, including water and wastewater services.

Manufactured Home



Example of Manufactured Home

Density: 4.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size: 6,000 Square Feet

Manufactured Home uses will be located where existing uses are primarily manufactured home in nature. This land use will be exclusively for HUD code* manufactured housing development.

Medium Density Residential/Manufactured Home (single-family and manufactured home, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)

Density: 4.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size: 6,000 Square Feet

Medium Density Residential/Manufactured Home land uses combine the characteristics of the Medium Density Land use previously described with added flexibility through the allowance of manufactured homes. This land use will be located generally to the west of the *Central Business* land use planning area. Lot sizes for manufactured home uses will remain the same as the standard single-family residential development lot sizes described for this land use to maintain the desired level of density.

* HUD code refers to building standards established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mixed Use Residential (manufactured home, minimum 6,000 s.f. lots and allowing commercial uses)

Density: 4.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Residential Lot Size: 6,000 Square Feet

Mixed Use Residential uses are intended for those areas that have experienced significant development and contain both commercial and manufactured home uses. Refer to the *Manufactured Home* and *Commercial* land use uses for a description of these uses. Each use will be subject to its own standards and restrictions.

High Density Residential (multi-family and single-family; minimum 6,000 s.f. lots)

Density: Single Family – 4.5 Dwelling Units per Acre
Multi-Family – 20 Dwelling Units per Acre
Minimum Lot Size:
Single-Family – 6,000 Square Feet
Multi-Family – 6,000 Square Feet

Example of Multi-Family Development

High Density Residential uses are intended for multi-family use and development while allowing for single-family use. These intensified uses may include attached single-family developments such as town homes and condos, multi-family developments such as duplexes, fourplexes and developments of increased apartment units. This land use will occupy the planning area around the South Plains College complex and may abut any other land use type except the *Residential Estate* land use.

Multi-family development is appropriate within this area pursuant to the following policies and guidelines:

- *Maximum Density:* A maximum density of twenty (20.0) dwelling units per acre is recommended.
- *Share of Housing Stock:* Multi-family units may comprise 100 percent of the total housing stock within the high density residential areas.
- *Location:* Multi-family developments are appropriately located adjacent to major thoroughfares, major collectors and/or college facilities.

- *Design:* Where multi-family projects abut single-family residential uses, appropriate architectural and buffering elements should be incorporated to ensure that they are integrated with the neighborhoods they abut.

Non-Residential Uses

Office/Retail/Light Commercial

Example of Retail Development

Example of Light Commercial

Example of Office Development

Office/Retail/Light Commercial uses will be located throughout the planning area but will be primarily applied to the major corridor areas of College Avenue and U.S. Hwy 114.

Major retail and office developments are important to economic growth but also generate additional noise, traffic and pollution. Accordingly, these uses should be located primarily along highly visible travel corridors. Existing and/or planned single-family residential developments should be buffered from major retail and office uses by either transitional land uses, like multi-family development, or major physical features like screening walls and/or landscaping. Also included in this land use will be light commercial uses. *Light Commercial* uses are those with impacts and concerns similar to office and retail. *Light Commercial* uses include hotels, motels, new car dealerships and the like. Buffering does not necessarily apply to retail and office uses in the *Central Business* land use where development is subject to such restrictions as height and footprint size, thereby minimizing and negative associations with differing land use types.

Retail uses may include grocery stores, restaurants, general retail, theaters and the like. Office uses may include numerous uses from small dental or law offices to major office developments.

Commercial/Retail

Example of Commercial Use

Commercial/Retail land uses are intended for service and commercial related establishments, such as wholesale products, major automotive repair and other heavy commercial uses. Open storage areas are allowed but new uses should locate open storage areas to the rear of the building and out of public view. Convenient access to thoroughfares and collector streets is also a primary consideration. Commercial uses for Levelland are intended primarily for the U.S. Hwy 114 corridor. This land use, though primarily intended for commercial uses, will allow retail businesses to be established in the Retail/Commercial Land use.

Commercial uses often generate more noise, odor, dust and pollution that make them generally less incompatible with residential and other non-residential uses. Because of this, the control mechanisms previously mentioned will be prescribed in a specific way to avoid a negative impact on neighboring land uses. For Levelland, commercial uses may include the following:

- Automotive repair
- Pipe yards
- Open storage
- Welding shops
- Incidental or accessory retail uses
- Mini-warehouses
- Car washes
- Heavy machinery sales
- Parking lot, trucks and trailers
- Feed and grain store

Specific controls for commercial uses may include:

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area
- Signage and parking area design guidelines
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards
- Minimum exterior building façade standards

These guidelines will help create development corridors that enhance the view from the road. They will also help ensure that open storage, site design and building types for commercial uses will blend with the future vision for the City's major entryways and for the community as a whole. If this strategy is followed, the City of Levelland should realize higher visual quality and higher property values along the U.S. Hwy 114 corridor.

Industrial

Industrial land uses may produce certain amounts of smoke, odor, noise and vibrations normally associated with industrial uses. The planning area intended for this use will be primarily at the western and eastern portions of the U.S. Hwy 114 corridor as well as along U.S. Hwy 385 near to the Levelland Municipal Airport to allow for maximum access to air and highway transportation. To ensure the negative effects of this use are kept to a minimum, guidelines are also applied and will include:

Example of Industrial Use

- Additional setbacks along major thoroughfares and collectors
- Additional landscaping and screening along major thoroughfares and collectors
- Minimum access requirements to major thoroughfares and major collectors
- Minimum standards for the generation of noise
- Prohibited open storage within the front yard area
- Buffering and screening where adjacent to residential uses
- Minimum storm water management and run-off standards

Application of these guidelines will help to ensure development of an industrial area that is both compatible with the community's vision and future land use pattern. They will also help to mitigate any negative environmental impacts and assure sustained property values within the node as well as for any adjacent properties.

Central Business

Building Footprint: 5,000 Square Feet maximum
(A firewall in a continuous building is considered a border of that footprint measurement)

Example of Central Business Use

Central Business land uses are intended to enhance the City of Levelland's existing city center as a concentrated, mixed-use

focal point and center of business/government. Development within this land use category will champion the pedestrian, not the auto, and will appropriately discourage typical suburban-type development. A mixture of land uses is appropriate as it is intended to remain a place for local residents to shop, conduct personal and government-related business, reside at the same location as their business (i.e. loft apartments above retail shops), meet neighbors, eat at a local café, enjoy arts/cultural facilities (such as a local museum), gather for community events and live in an area conducive to social interaction. Light manufacturing and similar business activity will be appropriate in this land use provided the impact in terms of noise, pollution, vibration, traffic, etc. is no more than general office activity. Such uses will not allow off-street parking or loading and will not be appropriate on the ground floor of buildings immediately surrounding the courthouse. Design guidelines are recommended to create an aesthetically pleasing environment and one that enhances the pedestrian experience.

Public Facilities

Public Facilities land uses are appropriate throughout the planning area and include a variety of uses like churches, civic centers, schools, public utility areas (such as wastewater treatment plants) and government buildings. Establishing some uses like a park or school within residential neighborhoods may provide a community focal point for the local neighborhood.

Example of Public Facility Use

Parks and Open Space

Parks and Open Space land uses will be intended for use throughout the planning area to ensure reasonable proximity to all residents of the community. In general, park usage refers to active uses and may include playgrounds, recreational fields and the like. Open space refers to the preservation of open areas and does not feature any facilities that would encourage active uses. Floodplain uses may also act as *Parks and Open Space* uses where appropriate.

Example of Park Use

Other Uses

Future Development

The *Future Development* land use is designated in areas where it may be premature to designate land uses in part because market forces can not be predicted at this time and a number of uses may still meet the overall vision of the community.

Floodplain

Floodplain land uses are entirely made up of the playa lake system and the surrounding low lying areas of those lakes. Development within the floodplain should be restricted and serve as passive and recreational areas within the Parks and Open Space uses where beneficial.

Example of Floodplain Use

4.3 Population Projections

Population projections are significant to the process of assessing the quantity of land that should be allocated to each land use and how intensely land should be used in order to support desired population numbers. As discussed in the *Baseline Analysis*, the U.S. Census reported the 2000 population to be approximately 12,866 persons. Using this population estimate as a base year population, a series of projections were made for planning purposes. Table 4.3 compares three growth scenarios. The growth rates are compounded annually over the 10 and 20 year projections. The assumptions of these scenarios immediately follow.

Table 4.3 Projected Population Growth, Levelland

Year	Low (1.0%)		Medium (Recommended) (2.0%)		High (3.0%)	
	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate	Population	Growth Rate
1970*	11,445	---	11,445	---	11,445	---
1980*	13,809	17.10%	13,809	17.10%	13,809	17.10%
1990*	13,986	1.3	13,986	1.3	13,986	1.3
2000*	12,866	-8.7	12,866	-8.7	12,866	-8.7
2010	14,212	9.5	15,684	18	17,291	25.6
2020	15,715	9.5	19,118	18	23,237	25.6

* U.S. Census Estimate.

Scenario A (Low)

Though population levels have decreased between the U.S. Census counts of 1990 and 2000, this rate assumes the economy has stabilized and is in fact growing at a very moderate rate.

A 2% annual population growth rate is recommended to ensure infrastructure and public services are able to adequately meet future demand.

Scenario B (Medium)

The recommended rate is primarily tied to such infrastructure planning as the Capital Improvements Program. In simplistic terms, it would not be recommended to produce a growth rate greater than the City's capacity to provide water/wastewater and emergency services to. As described in the CIP, the level and quality of water available to the City should increase. Such issues as storage capacity existing for peak water demand and the level of water that can be received from the CRMWA will impact the recommended rate. The current wastewater treatment plant may be approaching its maximum age of usefulness of roughly twenty years. The recommended rate will be impacted by the City's ability to replace or upgrade this plant.

Scenario C (High)

This scenario assumes a growth rate of 3% over the twenty year period and one that has not occurred since the 1970's. This scenario provides a snapshot of what population levels may look like given unforeseen population growth. Given the population projections described above, it may be helpful to review how current land uses should increase to correspond with an increased population level. Table 4.4 describes future land use requirements should this ratio be desired and maintained at its current level based on the recommended growth rate.

Table 4.4 Projected Future Land Use Requirements
Levelland

Land Use Category	Acres/100 Persons	Acres Per 20,000 Persons
Single-Family	7.2	1440
Duplex	.02	4
Multi-Family	0.3	60
Manufactured Homes	0.6	120
Public and Semi-Public	3.8	760
Parks and Open Space	1.1	220
Office	0.3	60
Retail	0.5	100
Commercial	2.9	580
Industrial	.05	10
Rights-of-Way	7.4	1480

4.4 Future Land Use Policies

The following statements describe recommended policies that should guide Levelland's future land use planning efforts:

1. Levelland should use the *Future Land Use Plan* and the associated policies in this report to establish the general pattern of development within the community. This pattern of development should be implemented through the City's development regulations.

2. The *Future Land Use Plan* map provides the general locations of land use categories and the text in this section provides an explanation of these land uses. Levelland should maintain the *Future Land Use Plan* to provide areas for different types of land uses and intensities, and should plan for public services and facilities appropriate for the planned land uses. The Plan establishes the general pattern of future land use, as appropriate, to achieve the City's goals and objectives.

3. Levelland should identify sufficient locations for residential and non-residential development (especially in the ETJ) to accommodate projected growth with provision of additional land use capacity for market choice and flexibility (i.e., *Future Development* Land use).

4. Levelland should plan areas for a variety of residential housing types and densities.

The Future Land Use Plan should be implemented through the City's development regulations and referenced in all matters relating to the physical development of the community.

5. Levelland should implement improvements to its thoroughfare system to support the land use pattern specified in the *Future Land Use Plan*. Specifically, the City should continue its capital improvements program for the orderly and consistent improvement of the system to meet growing demand.

6. Industrial areas should be of sufficient size and should be appropriately located to support the community's economic development goals and strategies.

7. Levelland should use its planning and development regulations to protect residential neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible land uses that may have a negative impact upon a residential living environment.

8. Residential developments adjacent to park or to public open spaces should be designed to facilitate public access to and use of a future park/trail system, while minimizing potential traffic conflicts between park users and residents of the neighborhood.

9. In reviewing development proposals, the City should consider issues of community character, compatibility of land use, residents' security and safety, and efficient service provision.

10. Levelland should encourage future patterns of development and land use that would reduce infrastructure construction costs and make efficient use of existing and planned public facilities.

11. The official copy of the *Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan* map should be on file at the Levelland City Hall. The boundaries of the land use categories as depicted on the official map should be used to determine the appropriate land use category for areas that are not clearly delineated on the smaller scale *Future Land Use Plan* contained in the Comprehensive Plan document.

12. A rezoning proposal's density should be consistent with the *Future Land Use Plan*. The actual density approved should take into consideration the parcel zoning, adjacent land

uses, the nature of the proposed development, and other relevant policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

13. Non-residential development proposals should be evaluated according to the types of uses and the ability of existing or planned infrastructure to provide adequate services to these uses.

14. Design guidelines should be established for all land use types to ensure development of high quality and compatible design. Standards and guidelines should address elements including, but not limited to, minimum lot size, building scale, building setbacks, lighting, landscaping, screening and fencing, signage and building materials.

Levelland should periodically evaluate its development review and approval process, and should revise its process as needed to ensure the following: (1) that adequate opportunity is provided for public input in appropriate development projects; (2) that consistency and predictability are maximized for all parties involved in the process; and (3) that the process helps to achieve the vision established by the Comprehensive Plan.

4.5 Future Land Use Plan Interpretation Policies

Rezoning or other development approvals for land uses not consistent with the *Future Land Use Plan* (or Comprehensive Plan) should not be approved until the Plan has been amended, as appropriate, to provide for such land uses.

If a rezoning proposal is consistent with the Plan (i.e., is the same or very similar), then the request should be processed as any other request is processed. A statement/determination should be made in a municipal staff report that the proposed request is consistent with the Plan. This should not mandate approval by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission and/or the City Council, but should be the first prerequisite in the review process. The request should still be reviewed on its own merit based upon additional criteria such as traffic impact and compatibility with surrounding uses, among others.

Development proposals appropriate to Levelland but inconsistent with the Plan should first be amended into the Plan and then rezoned.

If a rezoning proposal is not consistent with the Plan, then an amendment to the Plan should occur prior to approving the request. It should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence proving that the proposed rezoning is better or more consistent with land uses in the surrounding area than what is shown on the Future Land Use Plan map. If this is the case, then Levelland could initiate a Plan amendment process. To expedite the process, Plan amendments

may be processed simultaneously or automatically with rezoning requests. The Plan map should be updated at least once or twice annually to ensure that it reflects any *Future Land Use Plan* amendments.

4.6 Inconsistencies Between Development Proposals and the Future Land Use Plan

At times, the City will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the *Future Land Use Plan*. Careful consideration should be given to any development proposal that is inconsistent with the Plan. When such a proposal is presented to the City of Levelland, it should be reviewed based upon the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the proposed site and the surrounding area?
- Is the proposed change a better use than what is shown on the *Future Land Use Plan*?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or, will the proposed use be compatible with, or even enhance, adjacent residential properties?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to either the City or the community as a whole in terms of public health, safety and/or welfare (i.e., would it address a physical or social need of the community or its citizens; would it be to the City's economic advantage; would it add needed jobs in a particular employment sector, etc.)?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the *Future Land Use Plan* (or which do not meet its general intent) should be reviewed based on the above questions. It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown on the Plan for a particular area. This may be due to changing market, development and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future after the Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City, then these proposals should most likely be approved unless they would have a negative impact upon the surrounding area and/or the City in general. Each development proposal should be reviewed on its own merit. It should be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that a proposal would enhance the community based upon the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and upon community objectives and values.

Future development proposals not consistent with the land use plan should be judged on their appropriateness to the overall vision and potential benefit of the City.