



11. Public Facilities and Services

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES :: Chapter 11

GOALS	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS
Continue improvements and expansion of public safety facilities and services to keep pace with growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide police and fire substations to serve new growth. • Attract diverse and competent officers with competitive employment conditions.
Become the regional water provider for Smith County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire smaller water utilities and develop supplier relationships with other Smith County municipalities. • Plan to extend water infrastructure into the ETJ.
Protect the quality and quantity of Tyler’s drinking water supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize further development impacts on Lakes Tyler and Tyler East by implementing Tyler 21 recommendations for the Lakes. • Protect wellhead lands and Lake Palestine water supplies.
Become the regional sewer/wastewater treatment utility for Smith County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire investor-owned sewer utilities. • Plan to extend sewer infrastructure into growth areas.
Maintain the City’s role as the regional landfill provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue phased landfill expansion. • Explore the potential for energy production from waste. • Regularly evaluate the potential for cost-effective full curbside recycling service.
Minimize flooding, erosion and water quality degradation through improvements to existing infrastructure and implementation of best practices in growth areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of natural drainage systems to provide amenities and minimize capital and maintenance costs. • Address drainage first with policies to manage development; second with natural or bioengineering solutions; and last, hard structured solutions. • Continue drainage improvements in older parts of the city.
Keep existing streets and public places well-maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify street improvement criteria and priorities for existing streets for greater public understanding.
Enhance code enforcement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support additional staff and innovative partnerships to improve code enforcement efforts.
Continue and enhance efforts to assure compliance with accessibility standards in both public and private facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make all city facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Texas Accessibility Standards.
Develop Tyler’s library system and resources as an innovative source of information services and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep library services relevant to changing community information needs.
Strengthen the tourism value of the Rose Garden Center, Harvey Convention Center and East Texas State Fairgrounds site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and evaluate the effectiveness of these facilities in meeting City goals.
Continue partnerships with nonprofits in social services, arts and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on seed funding for pilot activities and on key activities that lack sufficient private funding.
Provide services and opportunities for senior citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include explicit review of any special senior citizen/retiree needs in City services and facilities.
Provide regional broadband Internet access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider development of a citywide Wi-Fi system.
Make City facilities and operations a model of resource efficiency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support municipal energy, water, and other resource conservation.
Meet city government space needs by enhancing current facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate the interior of City Hall.
Establish a consolidated multi-year Capital Improvement Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to five-year priorities, develop a preliminary priority ranking for years 6-10 in the future.

FINDINGS

- Tyler residents generally are pleased with municipal services.
- The water/sewer utility and the solid waste department operate as enterprise funds.
- A stormwater utility has been initiated with plans to comply with implementation of EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations.
- The City has planned ahead to assure its drinking water supply for many decades to come.
- The City has planned ahead to assure landfill space for over 100 years at current rates of usage.
- The City is working to address code enforcement concerns with additional resources.
- The Tyler Public Library meets only basic standards as a traditional library and is not yet fully positioned for new ways to serve residents with information and culture.
- City Hall is long overdue for renovation and restoration to meet even current office and public meeting space needs.

KEY CHALLENGES

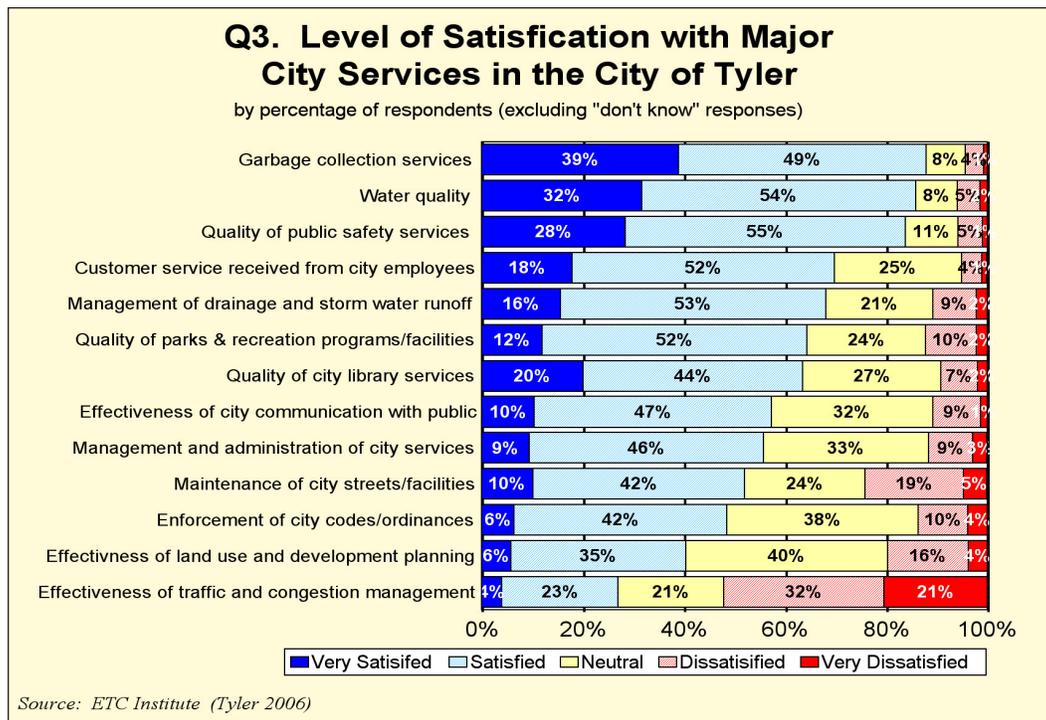
- Funding improvements to small water and sewer systems when purchased
- Providing facilities (including streets, utilities and buildings) to serve existing growth areas while also using facility planning to shape and direct growth
- Assuring public understanding of priority criteria for street and other public projects
- Using site planning and other non-structural means to preserve natural drainage rather than using hard structures
- Meeting challenges to provide sustainable drainage infrastructure
- Keeping pace with maintaining an aging street infrastructure
- Providing sufficient space for City staff and for public meeting space
- Creating a library system for the 21st century
- Increasing facilities to be competitive as a tourist destination.

A. Current Conditions

COMMUNITY ISSUES

The Tyler 21 public opinion survey found that Tyler residents are generally satisfied with City services.

In public meetings and working group discussions, additional facilities and services issues emerged as matters of concern, particularly code enforcement and priority-setting processes. Until recently, the City had only one code enforcement officer, which clearly was insufficient for a city of Tyler's size and complexity, and residents would like more aggressive enforcement against code violations. Particularly in the case of street improvement projects and similar activities, residents desire a better understanding of how the City sets priorities and ranks projects for implementation.



CITY MANAGEMENT AND THE TYLER BLUEPRINT

In 1997, the City of Tyler adopted the “Blueprint,” a plan for city government that emphasizes responsiveness, accountability, and efficiency. The City has continued to build on the first Blueprint to improve the delivery, quality and cost-effectiveness of services, with a particular emphasis on adopting new technologies. In 2005 it issued a Business Plan based on five organizational goals for City staff identified by the acronym SERVE: Streamline, Empower, Respond, Venture and Evaluate. The City uses competitive processes to identify the best service delivery options, whether by contract or by government. The City’s success in streamlining and cost-cutting is credited with making it possible to cut the property tax rate by more than half over the last ten years.

PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

Tyler’s public safety departments meet and exceed national standards. They plan ahead five to six years in advance to keep up with growth and use advanced technology.

Tyler Police Department

The Tyler Police Department has 239 employees, approximately 1.8 officers per 1,000 residents, more than other East Texas cities but about average nationally. Police units include a bicycle unit, canine unit, and community policing. In 2006 there were 63,855 calls to the department, 3,290 major crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, etc.), and 5,858 minor crimes.

Three police stations serve the city. The main station at 711 West Ferguson Street was fully renovated in 2003 and expanded by 16,000 square feet to make a total of 37,000 square feet. The north substation at 411 West Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard has its own dedicated staff. The main police station and the North Tyler substation allow good response times to calls in North, West, and East Tyler. In the south, the department previously used a station inside the Broadway Square Mall but lost that lease. The police now have a very small space inside the Target store on South Broadway Avenue.

Growth and traffic congestion south of Loop 323 have created the need for new substations. The Police Department is beginning a five-year plan to build a new substation in South Tyler, probably in the Faulkner Park area. A decision has not yet been made on whether this station will have a dedicated staff like the North Tyler substation or satellite staff based at the main police station.



Main police station



North Tyler police substation

The department's community policing program, the Community Response Team, has six beats throughout the city. Activities include meetings with a neighborhood network team (neighborhood leaders, ministers, etc.) at least once a month, Neighborhood Watch programs, crime prevention programs in schools, and work with the community on nuisance abatement projects.

Since the late 1990s, police training and Smith County law enforcement training takes place at the Tyler Junior College Law Enforcement Academy on the TJC West Campus.

Tyler has invested in new police technology. All police vehicles are equipped with laptops. Tyler was one of the first departments in the country to have a digital video system in cars with wireless capability to transmit video images at a cost of \$504,999 for 60 vehicles. The Tyler Police Department is also among the first to be accredited nationwide, meeting rigorous performance standards that represent industry best practices.

Tyler Fire Department

The Tyler Fire Department currently has nine fire stations and an administrative center. A tenth station is under construction in FY 2007. This new station will require twelve more employees to join the current staff of 136. Fire station coverage currently is good, with the exception of the Old Jacksonville Highway corridor in the southwest. A new, eleventh station is proposed for that area. The department provides training for new firefighters through the East Texas Fire Academy in Kilgore.

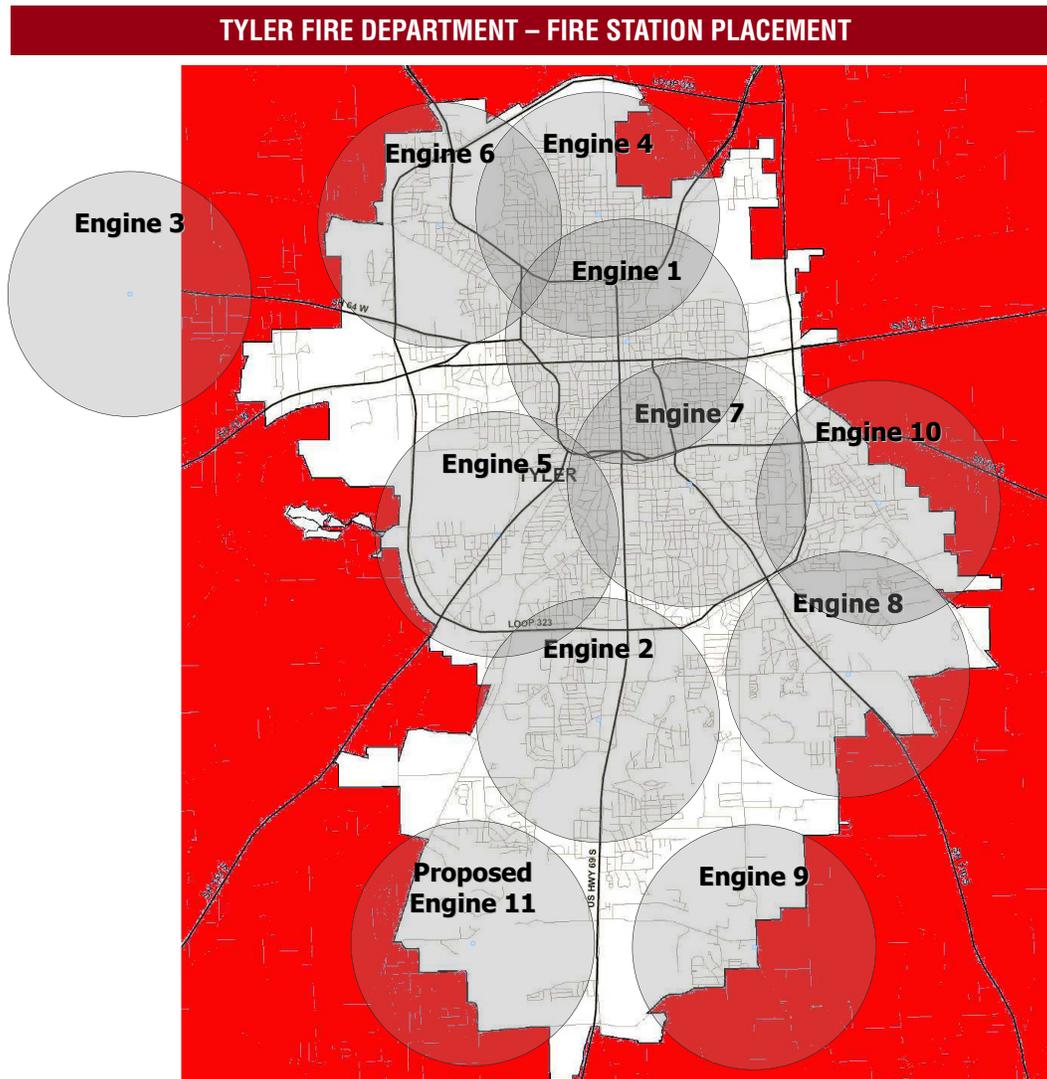


Fire Station No.1 in downtown Tyler

In a five-year period, 2002-2006, the Fire Department responded to between 3,007 and 3,385 fire calls and between 4,513 and 5,042 emergency medical services calls. In addition to responding to calls and investigating fires, the Fire Department also enforces the Fire Code and reviews building plans for fire safety, inspects buildings, issues permits, and provides programs for citizens and youth. The Fire Department provides special operations teams consisting of Hazardous Materials, Airport Rescue Firefighting and Technical Rescue.

The department is currently in the third year of a six-year service plan. In addition to the eleventh fire station proposed for South Tyler, the Fire Department is also seeking to relocate and improve its training field with private funding. The current facilities include a training tower, a classroom, a small hay barn, equipment storage, and a balance high beam. The facilities are located at Fair Park, between the baseball field and the Rose Stadium. In addition to a larger classroom, a new training facility could offer training in structure collapse-trench rescue; swift water rescue; and the latest technology providing safety controls exceeding the current fire training facility. The Police Department uses the current facility and is also looking for enhanced training facilities. A new joint training field would benefit them both.

All Fire Department vehicles are also equipped with mobile computers. The City of Tyler has continually invested in Fire Department technology.



Source: City of Tyler Fire Department

WATER AND SEWER FACILITIES AND SERVICE

The City of Tyler owns the Tyler Water Utility, which supplies water and sewer services to most of the area within the current city limits. The service areas that can be supplied only by the Tyler Water Utility are set by state agencies. The water service area is limited to the 1978 ETJ and the sewer service area is limited to the 1978 city limits. This does not mean that Tyler cannot service other areas, but that other companies can provide service outside of Tyler’s state-defined area. The Tyler utility is an enterprise fund that pays for opera-

tions, maintenance, and approximately \$4 to \$6 million in annual capital improvements from fees and service payments. Major system investments are underwritten by bonds secured with system revenues.

Smith County is unusual for the number of water and sewer utilities that serve the county, some with overlapping jurisdictions. Tyler water service offers advantages that other suppliers generally do not: Tyler water is typically less expensive and the rural water utilities do not offer fire protection. The Tyler Water Utility has an interest in purchasing these utilities, particularly when areas are annexed, but cannot force a sale. The Algonquin Water Services Company serves part of the city's southwestern area. Investor-owned, it has not been interested, thus far, in selling to Tyler. In contrast, Southern Utilities provides water to a large rural and semi-rural area and sells its systems to Tyler at annexation. Tyler might also be interested in purchasing investor-owned suppliers, but purchases may require significant new investments to be brought up to standard. There are also numerous small sewer systems in the county. Because they were typically built to serve a specific area, without expansion capacity, they are also often below the city standard. Acquisition of utility companies – and their paying customers – south of the city, where most growth has been occurring, is attractive to utility managers as a way to fund potential infrastructure extensions in other directions.

Drinking Water Supply

East Texas is fortunate to have much greater natural water resources than most of the rest of Texas, but recent experience has shown that it remains subject to drought, sometimes severe. However, the region's relatively abundant water resources are under consideration to serve the long-term needs of the high water consumption communities of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. In the State of Texas Water Plan (2010-2060), which is made up of a series of regional water plans, the Dallas region identified an area for a new reservoir (Lake Fastrill) to fulfill its needs, while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified the same area to be the North Neches National Wildlife Refuge. Although this conflict does not directly affect Tyler or Smith County, it is indicative of the long-term potential pressures to transfer “surplus” drinking water supplies out of East Texas to other parts of the state.

The City of Tyler has been forward-looking in securing substantial supplies of drinking water and implementing conservation measures. Tyler depends on surface water reservoirs and deep water wells for its drinking water supply. Bellwood Lake, created by a dam in 1894,¹ was the city's drinking water source until 1950 and now supplies raw water to two golf courses and the Goodyear plant. Today, the primary source of water for Tyler is Lake Tyler, placed in service in 1950, Lake Tyler East, added in 1967, and Lake Palestine. Lake Tyler covers 2,400 surface acres with a storage capacity of 14 billion gallons of water. Lake Tyler East is similar but with a slightly larger size and storage capacity. Tyler has access to surface water in Lake Palestine through a 1965 contract and this lake currently supplies 55% of Tyler's water. Lake Palestine will be an increasingly important source of drinking water as Tyler grows, with the Lake Palestine Water Treatment Plant having the potential to expand to twice the capacity of the Golden Road Water Treatment Plant. Tyler

¹ The dam is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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also owns twelve wells that draw on the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer. The water treatment plants and capacity of the system is as follows:

- Golden Road – capacity of 34 mgd (million gallons per day)
- Lake Palestine – capacity of 30 mgd with future potential expansion to an additional 30 mgd
- 12 wells – capacity of 8 mgd



Tyler Water Utilities well on Robertson Road

There are 582 miles of pipe, elevated storage for 5.5 million gallons of water, and 10.25 million gallons of ground storage (at water treatment sites and water well sites).

The water utility currently serves 30,460 customers inside the city and 197 customers outside the city limits. It also supplies water on a wholesale basis to the City of Whitehouse, with some 2,500 households, and to the Walnut Grove water company, which serves about 2,100 households. Customers outside the city are charged 150% of the rate within the city. Average daily water consumption in 2006 was 25.4 mgd. This is approximately 250 daily gallons per capita. Among the largest water customers are the Delek Refinery, Caldwell Zoo, Briarwood Golf Club (untreated water from Bellwood Lake), East Texas Medical Center Hospital, Trane Corporation, Trinity Mother Frances Hospital, and Southwest Dairy.

Tyler Water has followed industry standards in implementing new technologies to limit stormwater infiltration of the sewer system and radio transmission water meters.

There are two wastewater treatment plants:

- Southside plant with a capacity of 5 mgd
- Westside plant with a capacity of 13 mgd

Each plant serves about half of the city, with the Westside plant treating most of the industrial waste. Additional capacity needed for the southern part of the city as it grows can be created either through expansion of the existing Southside plant or by building a new plant farther to the south that would serve a regional system. There are 29,424 sewer customers inside the city limits and 177 outside.

Both the water and sewer systems are in generally good condition within Loop 323. In Smith County, rural sewer systems are often problematic because they are typically built to accommodate a defined number of customers, without any capacity for expansion. Developers in the county with access to a sewer system typically build more houses on smaller lots. Without sewer service there is an incentive to build large-lot subdivisions. These infrastructure realities account for some of the fragmented and discontinuous development patterns evident in the city.

A water and sewer master plan currently is nearing completion. This master plan, along with the Tyler 21 land use plan, will guide future investments in water and sewer infra-

structure. Extension of water infrastructure north and west of the city is less expensive than to the south because south of the city's treatment plant, all water must be pumped. Continued acquisition of other water suppliers to the south will provide the Tyler utility with customers and cash flow to make improvements and to expand in other directions from the city. New sewer infrastructure will be costly because pumping will be required. For example, one or two pump stations would be required to extend sewer service to I-20.

SOLID WASTE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Within the city, Tyler's Solid Waste Department provides residential and commercial garbage pickup service, voluntary curbside recycling service, a drop-off recycling center, hazardous waste disposal days, and opportunities for volunteer city beautification activities. The City owns the land for a landfill in Smith County which is operated by a contractor and serves the entire county.

In addition, the department staffs the Keep Tyler Beautiful program, oversees the city's GIS system, and has recently acquired responsibility for code enforcement.

The department's 18 trucks operating on 36 routes serve approximately 27,000 households. By 2008 all residential routes will be automated with an additional eight trucks. Trash and garbage pickup services received the highest ratings in the Tyler 21 public opinion survey. The department is very responsive to its customers, making special pick-up trips if residents call to say they will be late in putting out their trash. Residents pay fees for pickup and for trash containers. The department offers regular opportunities for pickup of bulky items and will rent dumpsters for household projects. Commercial service also is available from the department.

Approximately 730 households participate in the curbside recycling program. Currently, East Texas has a limited market for recyclables and most of the recyclables are sent to Arlington. In addition to curbside recycling for a fee, residents can bring items to the Recycling Collection Center, which is open on Saturday mornings and three weekdays.

A household hazardous waste collection event is held annually and attracts many people. With grant funds, the department was able to open the event in 2006 to residents of the county as well as the city, but future participation by county residents will depend on the



Tyler residents value the City's customer-friendly garbage pickup services.



Tyler Recycling Collection Center on North Bois d'Arc Avenue

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availability of funding. Although residents can dispose of hazardous waste with household garbage, the event has been popular and serves to raise awareness about disposal of paints, oils and other hazardous wastes.

Greenwood Farms Landfill is located on FM 2767, approximately five miles east of Loop 323. The City owns the land, Greenwood Farms holds the landfill permit, and Allied Waste Systems operates the landfill. The City receives 10% of the gate fees. The landfill operation began in 1988 with 124 acres and is now expanding to 292 acres. Between 1992 and 2005 the City spent over \$2.25 million to acquire land for expansion, which resulted in re-permitting of the landfill in 2006. The landfill now has 136 years of capacity, based on the current growth rate in waste activity.

The “Keep Tyler Beautiful” program is staffed by the Solid Waste Department. The program supports volunteer groups that focus on particular adopted areas, for litter removal and beautification. Most recently, this program has assumed advisory authority for LeGrand Gardens and is developing a plan to fund new master plan improvements.



Keep Tyler Beautiful also sponsors Tyler participation in events such as the “Texas Trash-Off” in the spring, which in 2007 involves clean up of downtown, lakes and rivers. The group also sponsors an annual daffodil planting and distribution project, including the bulk discounted sale of bulbs to residents and the planting of daffodils on public properties. Keep Tyler Beautiful does not have its own budget but requests funding for projects from the Solid Waste Department budget (all requests have been funded so far). The group and the Solid Waste Department plan to expand its public education activities and events.



Windsor Grove Nature Park before (top) and after (right) Keep Tyler Beautiful's park cleanup in 2006.

The city's Geographic Information Systems program originated in the Solid Waste Department, which continues to oversee GIS work that includes digitizing plats, aerial photography, geographic analysis, and map production. The GIS department includes five employees from four departments, Solid Waste, Water, Planning and Zoning, and Technology, and when digitizing work is brought in-house instead of being contracted out, a small number of additional employees will be needed. A new set of aerial photographs will be available in August 2007.

Like the water and sewer utility, the Solid Waste Department is an enterprise fund that relies on fees and other fund-raising to support its activities and programs.

DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

The natural landscape of the Tyler region is threaded with numerous creeks and streams. In the older parts of the city, waterways were buried or sometimes channelized with attractive stonework. Still within Loop 323, there are a number of neighborhoods in which drainage channels, though paved with concrete, are located in planted medians, providing a neighborhood amenity. In newer parts of the city, approaches to drainage can range from grass swales to heavily-armored concrete.

Development disrupts natural water systems through clearing of vegetation, grading, soil compaction and addition of impervious surfaces in the form of buildings, roads, parking lots and use of drainage infrastructure such as gutters, storm sewers and hard-lined water channels. These changes to the land increase the volume and speed of stormwater runoff and increase erosion, flooding and pollution in the downstream water bodies that receive the stormwater runoff.

Over time, as Tyler grew from the downtown core, development was allowed to occupy floodplains with the following consequences:

- Reduced capacity of the stream to convey stormwater runoff
- Increased stormwater flow velocities within the main channel and increased erosion potential
- Loss of water quality benefits provided by natural buffers between developed areas and the stream
- Loss of recreational opportunities within the floodplain
- Loss of aesthetic quality and potential property value within the corridor.

Communities are increasingly implementing “best management practices” for stormwater management that encourage preservation of natural drainage systems and, where preservation is not feasible, encourage use of natural channel design practices to the degree possible, thus minimizing the need to line channels with concrete.

Tyler has prepared for implementation of the EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations and is waiting for the state general permit to be issued. These regulations require municipalities in urbanized areas to implement programs to reduce pollution that is carried by stormwater (“non-point source pollution” which contrasts with pollution that comes from a “point” like a factory discharge). The programs include public awareness and public participation campaigns, detection and elimination of illicit discharges, control of runoff from construction sites of one acre or more, management of post-construction stormwater runoff, and pollution prevention in municipal operations. Tyler’s plan includes creation of a fee-based service to fund the Phase II activities.

In Tyler, current regulatory requirements for drainage infrastructure vary according to the size of the watershed:

- Drainage areas less than one-half square mile: pipe culverts, underground box culverts or concrete-lined open channels are required.
- Drainage areas between one-half square mile and one square mile: if the develop-

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ment's site plan or the City's comprehensive plan provides for it, the City's Development Services engineer may allow the floodplain to remain in its natural state, with dedication of the floodplain plus 100 feet on each side to the City.

- Drainage areas over one square mile: the floodplain may be left in a natural state as above; the floodplain fringe may be developed as long as the floodplain itself is protected and the 100-year flood elevation is raised no more than one foot; the stream may be relocated or reconstructed to accommodate development; lakes or detention ponds may be constructed.
- The regulations also provide for "innovative" drainage concepts if approved by the Development Services engineer.

Although preservation of natural drainage is permitted in some cases in the City's regulatory scheme, the regulations do not actively encourage the use of natural channel design. In addition, the subdivision regulations do not allow for innovative, low-impact development that minimizes impervious surfaces and stormwater impacts.



Drainage infrastructure takes many forms in Tyler.



STREET MAINTENANCE

The Tyler Street Department, with 48 employees, is responsible for street maintenance on approximately 447 miles of roadway within the city limits. The City does no regular maintenance on sidewalks because they are legally the sole responsibility of the abutting property owners, although limited sidewalk replacement is performed annually by the City with property-owner consent.

The department maintains an ongoing program to rate street conditions and a maintenance plan is created according to the street ratings. In addition, the department also performs the following services:

- Utility repair
- Valley gutter replacement
- Inlet box reconstruction
- Tree trimming
- Street cleaning with four street sweepers each day and completion of 13 cycles in a fiscal year
- Right-of-way clearing and mowing
- Creek maintenance



Tyler street sweeper

The department also tows abandoned vehicles on streets and assists Code Enforcement in moving them off lots. In 2006, over 100 abandoned cars were towed and in the City's NEW Program that targets specific neighborhoods for clean up, 130 cars were ticketed. The department clears debris and mows abandoned lots, placing a lien on the property to pay for the service.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Solid Waste Department has been given oversight of the Environmental Services/ Code Enforcement Department. Until recently Tyler had only one code enforcement officer and now has only two, which is still too few for a city of Tyler's size and extent. The

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City currently is developing a plan to provide more proactive code enforcement using new resources.

Because code enforcement activities have been very limited, the Solid Waste Department is looking at a number of ways to improve the effectiveness of code enforcement, for example:

- Code enforcement training for City employees from different departments who would receive certification and assist Code Enforcement on a part-time basis
- Use of the Internet for publicity, education, and potentially, an interactive code enforcement workshop similar to one implemented by the city of North Richland Hills near Dallas
- A volunteer group similar to Keep Tyler Beautiful but focused on code enforcement like the Arlington (TX) Code Ranger program.

TYLER PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Tyler Public Library has one 50,000 square foot building, constructed in the early 1980s, at 201 South College Avenue in downtown Tyler. There are no branch libraries, but a bookmobile spends mornings at Faulkner Park in far South Tyler and afternoons at the Glass Recreation Center in far North Tyler. Twenty-one full-time and 19 part-time employees staff the library. The total number of borrowers in 2006 was 21,767 (less than one per Tyler household) with circulation of



Tyler Public Library

over 222,000 items. A recent League of Women Voters study found that the Tyler Library is below both state and national average standards in a number of categories, including library visits per capita, per capita spending, per capita circulation, and staffing.

The Library's collection includes books, videos/DVDs, books on tape, magazines, newspapers, music, filmstrips, and artwork, as well as special collections on genealogy and local and regional history.² Sixty computers offer access to office software, with 17 also connected to the Internet. The library building includes a small auditorium for library and community events.

All Tyler residents and property owners may obtain a free library card and non-residents may check out items by purchasing a punch card (\$2-\$10) and paying \$0.50 per item. A books by mail service is available only to homebound borrowers, currently only 24 active patrons. Library services online include access to the catalog, book renewal, account management, and access to the state library catalog.

² 2007 holdings: 216,699 volumes (Books – 182,088; Periodicals – 453; AV – 11,482; Databases – 1; Electronic books – 22,675).

The Library sponsors a variety of events, including reading clubs/book discussions for all age groups; story groups for children; writers' workshops; author talks and book signings; book sales; the Printed Page Players, a group that reads plays aloud; tax assistance; and lecture programs on a wide range of topics, including African-American history, global warming, foreign policy, and genealogy. A Friends of the Library group raises money through dues, operation of library copy machines and other activities. It assists the Library with promotional items, speaker fees, and similar "off budget" costs.

The Library increasingly faces space constraints: there is no longer enough room for the local history collection or the children's collection; the fiction stacks are now out of space; and there is no room to expand computers or other technology stations. The building has insufficient meeting and study space and the auditorium lacks up-to-date presentation equipment and good acoustics. New library technologies, such as RFID tags and "self-check" kiosks for circulation, are also needed.

Creation of branch libraries has been a repeated subject of discussion over the years, as well as the idea of a county or multi-county system. Concern about the cost of replicating collections, funding buildings and staff, and more recently, technological changes in the way people seek information, has resulted in a decision not to expand the system.

The Library director and Board has proposed hiring a consultant to assist the City in developing a new and effective library system that meets community needs for information and culture within the context of a changing information economy.

MUNICIPAL ROSE GARDEN, ROSE CENTER AND HARVEY CONVENTION CENTER COMPLEX

Tyler's Municipal Rose Garden was opened in 1952 and contains 38,000 roses representing more than 500 species. The 14-acre garden includes a variety of specialty gardens in addition to the rose gardens, including a demonstration garden sponsored by the Smith County Master Gardeners. Adjacent to the garden is the Rose Center, which includes a museum, shop and meeting rooms. The Harvey Convention Center, also owned by the City, is a facility of approximately 30,000 square feet with meeting rooms.

Several other community facilities are at the same location and served by the same large parking



Tyler Municipal Rose Garden



Harvey Convention Center

lot. The Trinity Mother Frances Rose Stadium is owned by the school district. The East Texas State Fairgrounds facility will eventually be vacated because the Fair has acquired a large parcel just west of the city.

The Rose Center is an important tourist attraction for the city. Although the Harvey Convention Center is small and needs upgrading, it continues to attract meetings and small conventions or exhibitions because of the lack of other meeting space in Tyler.

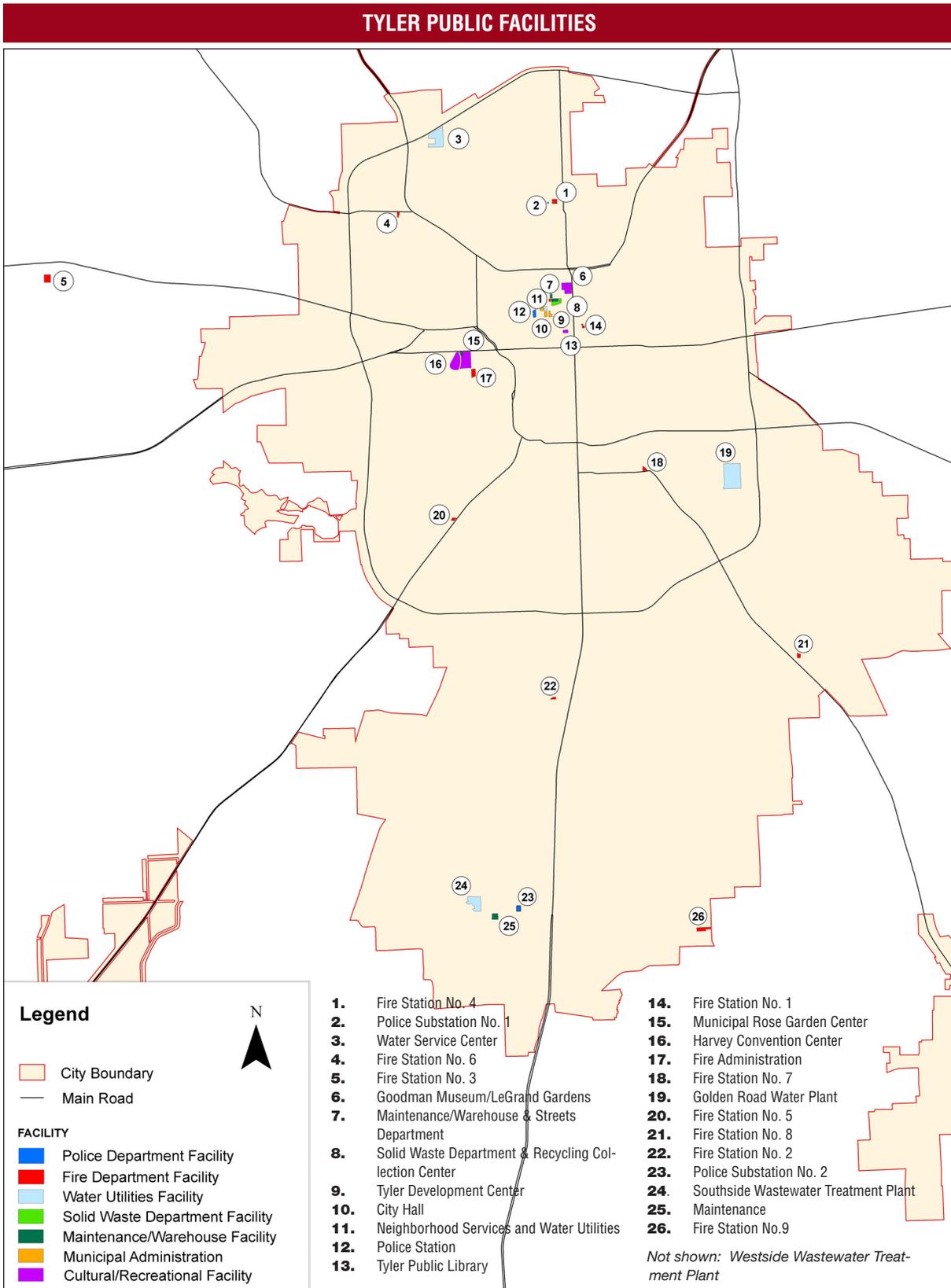
PARTNERSHIPS WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The City has contributed to several Smith County agencies (public health, juvenile attention, human society, child welfare), as well as small amounts to community groups and cultural organizations including Heart of Tyler, Truancy Abatement, Tyler Civic Theatre, Tyler Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce, Tyler Teen Court, Discovery Science Place, the Hispanic Alliance, People Attempting to Help (PATH), St. Paul Children's Foundation, the Bright and Fair Home, the Smith County Historical Society, the Tyler Economic Development Council, and the Tyler Area Convention and Visitors' Bureau. These funds are either pass-through funds from the federal Community Development Block Grant funding received by the City, or contributions from City general or hotel occupancy tax funding.

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Asset management involves taking care of the physical systems and structures owned by the City and its agencies. In order to make the most cost-effective decisions while maximizing service, managers need to know how much annual maintenance is needed, the service life of the asset, and how it can be calculated. Answers to these questions can drive decisions on whether and when to maintain, repair or replace assets. A number of software systems are available that are designed to keep track of the condition of assets and support decision making about maintenance and replacement. In Tyler, the systems to manage the city's physical assets reside in the departments with responsibility for particular assets and are not always connected to the City's GIS system. However, the City is now using barcode technology to keep track of many items used in city government.

Similarly, Tyler's capital improvements programming system is somewhat fragmented. Enterprise funds plan and fund their improvements separately from the rest of city government. Project lists are prepared for the Half Cent Sales Tax Board, which creates an annual work program. The Capital Improvements Department assigns projects on a five-year program, but the priority-setting criteria are not always clear to Tyler residents.



Source: City of Tyler GIS data

B. Recommendations

GOAL:

- 1. Continue improvements and extension of public safety facilities and services to keep pace with growth.**

ACTIONS:

- 1a. Continue five-year plan cycles for facilities and services planning in coordination with the Capital Improvement Program.**
- 1b. Recruit a diverse workforce that reflects Tyler's citizenry to the police force and fire departments.**
- 1c. Build the proposed eleventh fire station and a third police substation in South Tyler.**
- 1d. Identify a location and funding for a new fire and police training field.**
- 1e. Create wireless hotspots in downtown and along major corridors to permit police officers to transmit information and data efficiently.**
- 1f. Coordinate proposed new station locations with recommended Planning Department district plans for growth areas.**
- 1g. Where practical, locate stations at recommended "village commercial" centers in growth areas in order to use public facilities to promote clustered growth.**

As Tyler continues to grow, the police and fire departments will need to expand their facilities and staffs. Continuing growth towards the south is expected to require police substations in the Old Jacksonville Highway area and the Shiloh Road area. Additional residents in downtown and the North End planning area (including West Tyler) arriving as these areas are revitalized may also need new police and fire facilities over the next ten to twenty years.

New police and fire stations should be located in ways that enhance the creation of neighborhood centers. These public buildings can become anchors that attract neighborhood-serving businesses and clusters of development.

GOAL:

- 2. Become the regional water provider for Smith County.**

ACTIONS:

- 2a. Actively examine acquisition of investor-owned water utilities.**

Acquisition of investor-owned water utilities in the ETJ will rationalize and improve service for residents and provide the city's utility with funds for extending infrastructure elsewhere.

2b. Expand infrastructure as an incentive for compact growth.

Tyler has few tools it can use to shape and influence the direction of growth in the ETJ. Extension of infrastructure is one of those tools. Water mains and sanitary sewers have already been extended west to the airport. City interest in extending its jurisdiction towards I-20 and promoting growth in that direction argues for extension of water supply infrastructure.

GOAL:

3. Protect the quality and quantity of Tyler's drinking water supply.

ACTIONS:

3a. Minimize impervious surfaces and preserve public land for nature-based recreation at Lake Tyler.

3b. Ensure monitoring of septic systems near lakes to avoid failure and excess nutrients in the lakes.

Lakes Tyler and Tyler East are the city's primary drinking water supply sources. Because the City owns the land around Lake Tyler, it has the capacity to control activities that could potentially pollute the water. In the lakes section of the Parks and Recreation Chapter, this plan recommends that the remaining public land that has not been leased at the Lakes should be retained for nature-based recreation for the public, avoiding excessive impervious surfaces and activities that could result in pollution. Similarly, septic systems in use near the lakes should be monitored regularly. Excess nutrients can seep into the lakes from failing septic systems, promoting growth of unwanted plants and other organisms.



Tyler's drinking water sources should be protected from pollution.

3c. Continue to implement water conservation by raising public awareness.

3d. Implement water conservation measures in all public facilities.

3e. Seek local or regional nonprofit partners for raising public awareness about long-term watershed planning.

Although the city water utility benefits from selling water, it is also important to be a good steward of the resource. Tyler and East Texas are fortunate to have substantial water supplies, but as recent experience has shown, the area is not immune to significant droughts. Tyler consumes much more water per capita than communities that have learned to conserve water through necessity. The City should encourage water conservation to become second nature for all residents and businesses. Groups like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can become allies in promoting water conservation and public understanding of watershed planning.

GOAL:

4. Become the regional sewer/wastewater treatment utility for Smith County.

ACTIONS:

4a. Acquire a location in the southern part of the county for a new wastewater treatment plant, and land for additional plants as needed.

4b. Extend or improve infrastructure only within the city limits (existing or through future annexation) and acquire investor-owned utilities.

4c. Expand infrastructure in areas proposed for compact growth.

Smith County has a higher proportion of its population living in non-urbanized areas than any other Texas County, and the availability of sewer shapes the character of growth in the county. Houses built with private septic systems are required to have a minimum half-acre lot size. Smaller independent sewer systems have been built to serve specific subdivisions, lack expansion capacity, and do not tie together. Sewer lines are not laid under the street but in the right-of-way, necessitating an excessively wide ROW. Expansion of the Tyler sewer utility will allow for more orderly growth.

GOAL:

5. Maintain the City's role as the regional landfill provider.

ACTIONS:

5a. Continue phased landfill expansion.

5b. Continue reasonable pricing to discourage dumping.

Tyler already provides the regional landfill and is in the process of expanding the landfill. In order to encourage use of the landfill and discourage dumping – whether inside the city or in rural areas – the City should continue reasonable tipping fees at the landfill.

5c. Continue customized service.

5d. Continue annual household hazardous waste events.

5e. Work towards programs for community mulch and curbside recycling.

The Solid Waste Department's customized service is very popular with Tylerites. The new household hazardous waste annual event begun in 2006 proved to be very effective, and should be continued. In order to enhance solid waste services and take reusable and recyclable materials out of the waste stream, programs for collecting yard waste to be made into a community mulch opportunity and establishment of citywide curbside recycling should be evaluated within the next five to six years. City government already recycles paper and other waste produced in its offices.



The City should consider instituting a curbside recycling program that provides recycling bins and pickup service to all city residents.

GOAL:

6. Minimize flooding, erosion and water quality degradation through improvements to existing infrastructure and implementation of best management practices in growth areas.

ACTIONS:

6a. Establish a priority ranking system to resolve existing drainage problems.

6b. Review drainage plans and regulations and make changes as needed to promote preservation of natural drainage and use of natural channel design rather than hard-armored channels when possible.

6c. Encourage protection and integration of natural drainage features into the community through park systems and planned land use.

6d. Allow strategies that encourage infiltration of stormwater, such as pervious surfaces and directing rooftop runoff, where feasible.

6e. Seek local or regional nonprofit partners for raising public awareness about watershed planning.

Cities across the nation have been searching for alternatives to traditional hardscape solutions in solving their storm drainage problems. Common approaches include vegetated swales and protection and enhancement of riparian buffers and floodplains. These approaches are even more effective when implemented along with strategies that keep stormwater runoff out of the storm sewer system altogether, such as pervious pavement and directing rooftop runoff to vegetated areas. These approaches reduce the amount of stormwater runoff, recharge the groundwater and base flow for streams, reduce urban temperatures, improve urban aesthetics and community livability and save capital costs.

Where upstream development practices continue to increase stormwater runoff volumes, the result is greater stormwater runoff flow rates and velocities that lead to increased erosion of stream banks, finally producing more frequent flooding. The conventional solution to this problem is to add hard structural measures to increase the drainage capacity within the stream channel. These measures include, but are not limited to, the addition of concrete pilot channels, completely lining the channel banks and bottom with concrete. While these structures may reduce flooding frequency and erosion in the immediate area they also exacerbate flooding and erosion downstream – displacing the problem somewhere else. As Tyler plans for new growth and development, particularly in the ETJ, it has the opportunity to improve stormwater management and enhance overall quality of life through establishment of best management practices for new development. The “downstream” areas may eventually become part of the ETJ or the city itself.

Current best practices emphasize the many benefits of preserving natural drainage:

- Floodplains store water during big storms, reducing the velocity of the water and reducing downstream flooding.
- The natural floodplain buffer between developed areas and the stream mitigates non-point source pollution from the developed areas.

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- Tree conservation, parks, greenways and recreational areas in the floodplain enhance the community.

If preservation of natural drainage is not possible, bioengineered solutions for natural channel design are preferable. Bioengineering solutions use soil engineering and plantings to increase drainage capacity, reduce stormwater velocity and reduce erosion. Under the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will generally not allow concrete lining of natural channel areas unless it can be demonstrated that there is absolutely no other option and the permitting process for concrete lining can be time consuming. Concrete lining is considered the most disruptive option available. Although initial construction costs for a concrete-lined channel may be less than that of a bioengineered approach, the costs associated with the mitigation requirements for a concrete-lined channel greatly exceed options that allow for some self-mitigation within the channel based on the use of appropriately bioengineered solutions. Preserving the natural drainage corridor in order to provide stream buffers as well as erosion hazard setback zones in areas of future development is a prudent step towards meeting the water quality goals dictated by EPA Phase II stormwater regulations.

Other findings and recommendations include:

- Consider adding erosion hazard setback requirements or stream buffer requirements, as appropriate to the size of the drainage area.
- Consider incorporating the “10 percent rule” to identify potential downstream impacts. This rule requires that calculations of peak flows, velocities and hydraulic effects should proceed downstream to the point where the site drainage area represents 10 percent of the total drainage area. This will allow the City to identify potential impacts from the development and identify existing deficiencies early in the development process.
- Consider encouraging natural channel design in all drainage areas.
- Consider revising the regulations so that the default language reflects a preference for natural drainage and natural channel design, with criteria and requirements for review and approvals when natural drainage or natural channel design is not used.



Bioengineering: mechanically-stabilized earth and plantings.

GOAL:

7. Keep existing streets and public places well maintained.

ACTIONS:

7a. *Develop a pavement management program connected to GIS with criteria for priority ranking and clarity of criteria and priorities for greater public understanding.*

One type of infrastructure that everyone in Tyler encounters every day is the street system. Street maintenance and improvement programs are of great interest to residents, but how street projects are ranked and prioritized for maintenance and improvements is not clear to them. A pavement management program connected to the City's GIS, plus greater clarity about the decision making system, can enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the City's street maintenance programs.

7b. *Continue to maintain brick streets.*

As noted in earlier chapters, Tyler's brick streets are an integral element of its identity. Although the source of the original bricks is no longer operating, the City should consider creating a stockpile of bricks from streets where a small portion of the street still has bricks (while offering high-quality paving in return for taking out the bricks). Colored concrete pavers have not proved to be the best solution. The City recently found a source of bricks which is expected to prove more suitable for maintaining the brick streets.

7c. *Create a Sidewalk Plan.*

According to Tyler ordinances, maintaining safe sidewalks is the sole responsibility of the abutting property owner, though the City may intervene to make sidewalk improvements on its own initiative or in response to a citizen petition. Because the creation of an attractive, connected, walkable city is a central goal of this comprehensive plan, more attention to sidewalks as a critical element of the city's public realm is essential. A Sidewalk Plan should be undertaken after or in conjunction with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan recommended in the Transportation Chapter. This plan should identify priority locations for sidewalk improvements, including sidewalk widening; sidewalk repairs; new sidewalks where they are discontinuous; and new sidewalks in neighborhoods where they do not yet exist.

GOAL:

8. *Enhance code enforcement.*

ACTIONS:

8a. *Increase the amount of resources dedicated to a more proactive code enforcement effort.*

The City recently has taken steps to enhance its code enforcement efforts and these should continue with the hiring of additional officers and training of other appropriate City staff to act as code enforcement officers.

8b. *Provide a simple way for citizens and City employees to report code infractions, including an opportunity to get a response on what actions the City has taken, and publicize it widely.*

Although citizens can report code infractions now, a highly publicized specific program, with reports through the Web and through a telephone hotline (and including Spanish-language options), can be more effective. Today, the City's website explains code infractions and provides a phone number. If residents leave their names and contact informa-

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tion, they should receive a statement on how the City followed up on their reports. This can be a powerful way to demonstrate responsiveness and get even more collaboration from residents.

GOAL:

9. Continue and enhance efforts to assure compliance with accessibility standards in both public and private facilities.

ACTIONS:

9a. Provide guidance to the private sector for ADA/TX Accessibility Standards compliance.

More guidance for the private sector is necessary. The Development Services Department gives some guidance in sidewalk and driveway details, but a brochure that explains accessibility requirements and where information can be found would be beneficial. Although projects costing less than \$50,000 do not require an accessibility permit, they are still required to conform to the standards.



Public information materials can help private developers understand and apply accessibility standards.

GOAL:

10. Develop Tyler's library system and resources as an innovative source of information services and culture.

ACTIONS:

10a. Develop a Master Plan for library services and the library buildings.

The Tyler Public Library is at critical juncture. To be effective as a traditional library, it needs more facilities and programs. In order to become an innovative library that can serve the community in a variety of ways, it needs a thorough study to understand the market, likely future changes, the options available, and their potential costs.

10b. Make the library a key asset in the downtown Arts, Culture and Business Innovation District.

The downtown library can be a key asset in the renaissance of downtown and should be included in downtown planning.



The Tyler Public Library is a cultural asset that can play a role in downtown's renaissance.

GOAL:

11. Strengthen the tourism value of the Rose Center, Harvey Convention Center and East Texas State Fairgrounds site.

ACTIONS:

11a. Consider expansion of the Rose Center into a regional botanical garden and model gardens center.

11b. Develop a site master plan for the Rose Garden Center, Harvey Hall and current East Texas State Fairgrounds site.

11c. Make short to medium-term interior improvements to Harvey Center while other options are under review.



The soon-to-be vacant East Texas State Fairgrounds site offers the opportunity to expand the Rose Garden Center into a regional botanical garden.

With the East Texas State Fairgrounds site soon to be vacated, the entire complex of buildings at the Rose Center site should be reevaluated for the buildings' effectiveness as tourist attractions and meeting space and their contribution to the city's quality of life. As noted in earlier chapters, although the Rose Garden is very attractive, the buildings and large asphalt parking lot could be better. With the Fairgrounds site soon to be available, there is tremendous potential to develop the Rose Center into a much bigger attraction, for example, a regional botanical garden and model garden center. A site

master plan, feasibility, and market study would provide options while still accommodating other uses, such as the stadium. Because of the great need for meeting space in Tyler, interior improvements to the Harvey Center in the short and medium term will upgrade that space.

GOAL:

12. Continue partnerships with nonprofit organizations in social services, arts and culture.

ACTIONS:

12a. Continue CDBG (federal) pass-through funding to the degree possible.

12b. Consider implementation of a competitive process for a portion of available funding to promote innovation.

12c. Facilitate accountability and avoid duplication of services.

12d. Coordinate funding to support key City objectives, such as revitalization of downtown.

The City does not provide large amounts of funding to nonprofit organizations. However, it can use its funding potential to encourage nonprofits to try innovative projects to achieve their goals and to encourage efficient provision of services. Where city action is important to provide incentives or "prime the pump" for revitalization, such as downtown, City contributions to organizations such as Heart of Tyler are to be encouraged.

GOAL:

13. Provide services and opportunities for senior citizens.

ACTIONS:

- 13a. Survey retirees and senior citizens about needs.**
- 13b. Work with educational and medical institutions and the Senior Resource Committee of the Chamber of Commerce to promote Tyler as a retirement destination.**
- 13c. Develop a comprehensive plan with nonprofit partners for senior services.**

Although the Tyler Area Chamber does focus efforts on enhancing services to seniors, Tyler does not have a Council on Aging or other specific municipal agency that is focused on elder services. However, the city has promoted itself as a retirement destination and the needs of retirees and senior citizens should be taken into account in the development and delivery of city services. A survey of seniors about their needs or creation of an advisory group would help identify the most important areas for City action. For example, in many communities, transportation to shopping and medical appointments is an essential service for seniors who no longer can or wish to drive.

GOAL:

14. Provide regional broadband Internet access.

ACTIONS:

- 14a. Develop Wi-Fi service in downtown and the medical district as Phase One of a citywide Wi-Fi system.**
- 14b. Build on Wi-Fi currently available in the medical district area and planned public safety Wi-Fi system.**
- 14c. Consider a long-term plan to extend service throughout the region.**

Community-wide Wi-Fi internet service is fast becoming a new utility. As part of Tyler's downtown revitalization program, provision of Wi-Fi in the downtown and the medical district can be the first phase in a citywide program.



Wi-Fi hotspots in downtown and the medical district could be the first elements of a citywide Wi-Fi system.

GOAL:

15. Make City facilities and operations a model of resource efficiency.

ACTIONS:

- 15a. Evaluate costs of energy efficient systems and materials on the basis of facility life-cycles versus initial cost outlay.**

- 15b. Use recycled and locally-sourced content in municipal construction, where practical.**
- 15c. Design municipal buildings to maximize energy efficiency by attention to ventilation, windows, site orientation, tree planting to the south and west, green roofs and similar strategies.**
- 15d. Study the implementation of water conservation measures for all public facilities and services, including reuse.**
- 15e. Consider the use of permeable surfaces when repaving municipal parking areas.**
- 15f. Develop a procurement policy that minimizes use of toxic materials.**

Municipalities are increasingly emerging as leaders in establishing resource-efficient and sustainable operations, management and capital improvements. Because municipalities own and operate their own buildings and other physical assets, it makes sense to look at the full life-cycle of these assets in the planning and design phases.

Many municipalities in Texas have implemented sustainable or green building programs for their public facilities. Some of the more active cities include Austin, Dallas, Houston and Frisco. Recently implemented projects include features such as solar thermal water heating systems, permeable paving in parking lots, orientation of the building to minimize energy consumption for heating and cooling, and recapture of stormwater runoff for use as irrigation.

GOAL:

- 16. Meet city government space needs by enhancing current facilities.**

ACTIONS:

- 16a. Renovate the interior of City Hall and review space needs for city government.**

City Hall is a very attractive historic building, but the present configuration of space no longer works well. The City Council meeting space is insufficient for public meetings. City Hall space needs to be reprogrammed and certain systems need to be upgraded: HVAC, mechanical, elevator and audio/video. In addition, it is important that the historic character of the building be preserved through restoration of finishes and similar improvements. An overall review of city government space needs and locations would be valuable in the context of downtown revitalization.



City Hall needs many interior upgrades, but renovations should preserve the building's historic character.

GOAL:

17. Establish a consolidated multi-year Capital Improvement Program.

ACTIONS:

17a. Implement an integrated CIP process.

17b. Establish criteria for project ranking based on the Tyler 21 plan, best practices, resource efficiency, and community need.

An integrated CIP process that includes the capital improvement programs of the enterprise funds can provide a more holistic picture of where and how the City is making investments. The purpose of the Tyler 21 Comprehensive Plan is to provide a set of principles and decision making tools to guide the City in moving towards a consensus-based vision. A consolidated Capital Improvement Program will provide decision makers with a clearer understanding of how all of the proposed City investments can contribute to achieving the vision.