



1

INTRODUCTION	13
WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?	14
CITY PLANNING AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY IN TEXAS	
PLANNING PROCESS	17
HOW TO USE THE PLAN	18



**RENEW
TEXARKANA**
comprehensive plan for tomorrow

Arts and Historic District
Main Street Texarkana



INTRODUCTION



Texarkana, TX is a community situated on the Texas/Arkansas border in northeast Texas. The city serves as a commercial hub for freight and has a rich history as a community that spans two states. Texarkana was established as a railroad and industrial center and has grown into a regional agriculture, retail, and wholesale service center. Texarkana, TX is separated from the Arkansas community by the historic State Line Avenue but the two cities are intrinsically linked and together are called 'Texarkana, USA.' The Texarkana Metropolitan area was first defined in 1960 and has expanded since. As of 2015, the population of Texarkana, TX is 37,280 and the greater Texarkana Metropolitan Area is 149,527.

In 2015, city leaders initiated the process to update the comprehensive plan for the city that will create a cohesive vision to guide future growth in a sustainable manner. This plan, called Renew Texarkana, assesses the existing conditions, analyzes constraints and opportunities, and develops a 'road map' to guide future growth for Texarkana, Texas. Throughout the process, input from the city and citizens were taken to direct the future development of Texarkana. This process included monthly stakeholder meetings, three primary public meetings, and on-line communication through social media and the Comprehensive Plan website. The Texarkana Comprehensive plan also follows closely the Comprehensive Plan Standards for Sustaining Places put forth by the American Planning Association. Creating a lasting resilient city is a primary goal for the city of Texarkana and is described further in this document.



¹ U.S. Census. 2011-2015 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?



As communities grow, mature, and redevelop it is important for residents and leaders to consider what the future holds for their community. Questions such as ‘what do we want the future to look like’ and ‘how do we get there’ can be answered through a community comprehensive plan process.

Communities participate in comprehensive planning to prepare a ‘blueprint’ for the growth of a municipality. Comprehensive plans typically include a future land use plan that serves as a road map for future regulatory decisions and policies that help the municipality implement the vision. What makes a plan comprehensive is that it considers all components of a city and how they work together to create a quality community. Renew Texarkana includes a review of and recommendations for the following community elements: **Land Use, Transportation, Parks and Trails, Urban Design, and Downtown.**

It is also important to articulate what a comprehensive plan is not. A comprehensive plan should serve as the basis for the preparation of regulatory documents such as a zoning map, subdivision regulation, budget, or capital improvement plan and does NOT serve as a regulatory document itself.

CITY PLANNING AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY IN TEXAS

Unlike other states, comprehensive plans are not required in Texas. However, the [Texas Local Government Code](#) (LGC) permits municipalities to develop them for the “purpose of promoting sound development.”² Most Texas communities develop comprehensive plans to use as a foundation for land use regulations, such as a zoning ordinance or subdivision regulations. If a community chooses to develop a comprehensive plan, the LGC allows municipalities to define the content and design of the plan and requires review by the planning and zoning commission and a public hearing.

Another critical aspect of regulatory authority is Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), which allows local governments to exercise authority outside the designated city limits. Based on the current population, Texarkana has a two mile ETJ beyond the city limits where the city can impose limited regulations. Renew Texarkana will make recommendations for the current city limits and the ETJ area (assuming that the ETJ land would be incorporated during the lifetime of the plan).



Figure 1.1 | Texarkana Comprehensive Plan Components

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT MUNICIPAL REGULATORY AUTHORITY IN TEXAS

Zoning: regulates height, size, lot coverage, lot size, density, and location of structures (Chapter 211)

Subdivision: how a property is subdivided and used (Chapter 212)

Structures: how structures relate to the building code and establishing building lines (Chapter 214)

Certain Business Operations: (Chapter 215)

Signs: authorizes municipalities to establish sign regulations (Chapter 216)

² State of Texas. Texas Local Government Code: Title 7: Regulation of Land Use, Structures, Businesses, and Related Activities. <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/?link=L.G.>



PLANNING PROCESS



The new comprehensive plan for Texarkana is the result of an in-depth process that assessed existing conditions, engaged the public, and developed recommendations. A Steering Committee composed of community leaders was created to help guide the planning process. The analysis and recommendations were extensively analyzed through the committee to formulate the Comprehensive Plan. A website was also developed to disseminate information, inform the public of outreach opportunities, and solicit feedback. Figure 1.2 depicts the planning process.

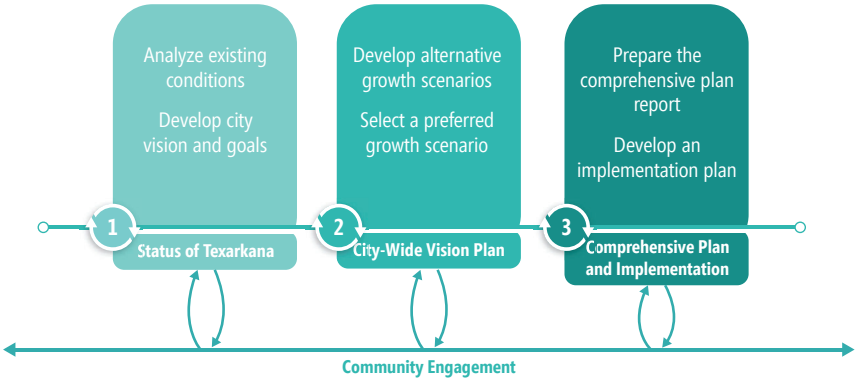


Figure 1.2 | Planning Process Diagram

1 PHASE 1: STATUS OF TEXARKANA

In the initial phase, the role of a comprehensive plan was communicated to the community and leadership of Texarkana. This phase established the basis on which the rest of the plan was developed. During this phase the Steering Committee, website, and project goals were developed and the existing conditions of the community were documented.

2 PHASE 2: CITY-WIDE VISION PLAN

During the second phase, community needs were identified through technical, physical analysis and stakeholder engagement. Goals and objectives were refined and a preferred city-wide scenario was selected. The preferred scenario then guided the development of the comprehensive plan document.

3 PHASE 3: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & IMPLEMENTATION

In this final phase, plan elements, policies, and programs were developed to address critical issues and achieve the established community goals and objectives. An implementation plan was also provided to direct guidance on how the plan can be realized in future years.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN



Renew Texarkana is meant to provide guidance on how future growth should occur to elected officials, city staff, property owners, developers, and residents for the next 10-20 years. To facilitate use of the plan, frequently used terms are defined as follows:



the overarching statement that represents collective thoughts and ideas that residents and leaders have about the future of Texarkana.



a desired result of the planning process. The Renew Texarkana plan has several goals that fit within nine themes defined by the community and stakeholders.



specific and achievable steps that meet the goals of the plan.





THIS PLAN IS ORGANIZED INTO SIX CHAPTERS THAT DESCRIBE MAJOR PLAN COMPONENTS:

- 1** **CHAPTER 1 - Introduction**
Describes the purpose and framework of the plan
- 2** **CHAPTER 2 - Community Profile**
Reviews existing plans and studies and also describes the existing conditions of the city and larger region, such as demographics and natural resources.
- 3** **CHAPTER 3 - Vision & Goals**
Describes the plan for public engagement and defines the vision and goals for the community.
- 4** **CHAPTER 4 - A Comprehensive City**
Makes recommendations for how Texarkana can be more sustainable through land use decisions, transportation investments, parks and trail amenities, and urban design.
- 5** **CHAPTER 5 - Resilient Neighborhoods**
Presents scenarios for the redevelopment of downtown and gives strategies to revitalize three historic neighborhoods.
- 6** **CHAPTER 6 - Implementation Strategy**
Presents a prioritized implementation strategy to realize the plan recommendations.