CITY OF CASTLE HILLS

# CREATE CASTLE HILLS

## *DETERMINING OUR FUTURE EXCELLENCE*

A Comprehensive Plan for the City of Castle Hills

*Draft, December 2022*




WWW.CITYOFCASTLEHILLS.COM

209 Lemonwood Drive
Castle Hills, TX 78213

# Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

## Amy McLin, Chair

*2017-2019 Served as Alderman, Place 3*
*Attorney & Volunteer*
*Resident of Castle Hills since 2009*

## Maretta Scott, Vice-Chair

*2017-2019 Served as Alderman, Place 2*
*Educator & M.S. in Environmental Design*
*Resident of Castle Hills since ___*

## Jack Joyce

*Alderman, Place 4*
*Architect, Planner*
*Resident of Castle Hills since 2003*
*Liaison to City Council*

## Clyde "Skip" McCormick

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*Attorney*
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## Barry Middleman

*AIA Emeritus Architect*
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## Bruce Smiley-Kaliff

*2008-2011 Served as Alderman Place _*
*2011-2014 Served as Mayor*
*Commercial Development/Insurance Agent*
*Resident of Castle Hills since ___*

# Letter from Mayor Trevino

Dear Castle Hills Residents, Businesses and Visitors:

Our beloved City has seen many changes since its incorporation in 1951. What remains the same is our commitment to provide *world class service* through our City Administration, Fire, Police, and Public Works Offices. What you are about to read is our Comprehensive Plan which has been a labor of love for all involved.

Cities of all sizes have Comprehensive Plans so that they may better guide the forward movement of their communities over the next 10, 20, or 30 years with an organized strategic plan. Castle Hills is no different, our 2.5 square mile City with a population of 4,000 residents is landlocked but our growth is directly correlated to that of our State. In 2036, Texas will celebrate its Bicentennial, at which time it is projected that there will be an *additional 10 million Texans*.

In 2051, Castle Hills will celebrate its Centennial. This Comprehensive Plan will give us 29 years to guide us as we build the City that you deserve through continued investment in infrastructure, quality of life offerings, and continually improving City services. In recent years, *the City has taken a supercharged approach to ensure that you can appreciate the future Castle Hills today!*

The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that will serve as the *framework for policy, development, and service decision making* for the future of Castle Hills. This plan creation was managed by professionals, but the content was distilled from those that live, work, and play in Castle Hills. The Committee went through extraordinary efforts to solicit input via numerous surveys, questionnaires, and Town Halls. This plan was crafted with the underlying principle that we want to *protect the character of our City and encourage responsible growth*.

I want to personally thank the Castle Hills Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee for their work in helping shape the future of our City and *Determining our Future Excellence*.

# Acknowledgements


## Mayor and Council

The Committee is most grateful to Mayor Trevino and all City Council members who have served during the duration of this planning process for their unwavering encouragement and support:

JR Trevino, *Mayor*
Joe Izbrand, *Alderman Place 1, Mayor Pro Tem*
Frank Paul, *Alderman Place 2*
Kurt May, *Alderman Place 3*
Jack Joyce, *Alderman Place 4*
Beth Daines, *Alderman Place 5*
Doughlas Gregory, *former Alderman Place 5*

## Parks & Projects Commission

The Committee wishes to thank the Parks & Projects Commission for recognizing the value of planning for the future of our city and for their support of this massive planning project by creating and appointing citizens to the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Bernard Juettemeyer, *Chair*
Madison Dillon, *Commissioner*
L. Matthew Dotin, *Commissioner*
Cindi Martinez, *Commissioner*
Clyde "Skip" McCormick, *Commissioner*
Ray Schultz, *Commissioner*
John Squire, *Commissioner*
Jack Joyce, *Council Liaison*
Rick Lopez, *former Alternate*
Bonnie Hopke, *former Commissioner*

## Survey Respondents

The Committee decided early on that the plan needed to be driven by citizen input. The first step to gather citizen input was a written survey. Approximately 240 survey responses were received from Castle Hills citizens. This information allowed the Committee to tailor the next phase of planning to focus on issues identified by citizens. Thank you, citizens, for the honest and thoughtful responses!

## LPA Architects

The Committee received funding from the City of Castle Hills to hire a professional to assist with the comprehensive planning process. LPA provided professional guidance to the Committee and led the effort

to identify citizen priorities from all the input received and present that information in the form of graphics and pictures from which the community could see examples of how their input could impact the City's future development. Thank you, *Federico Cavazos* and *Leo Hernandez*!

## Speakers Forum Participants

For the second phase of community involvement, the Committee planned a series of speaker forum presentations on various issues that could be attended via ZOOM or in person. An aggregate of approximately 200 citizens participated in twelve different presentations to learn about topics and ask questions. This phase was critical to our comprehensive planning. The Committee appreciates their interest in learning and participation in the process.

## Speakers Forum Presenters

Twenty speakers participated in the Forum presentations that were held in August 2021. We are forever indebted to them for the time they spent sharing their knowledge and industry expertise with our community in order to help shape the second phase of the planning process:

Bill Barker, *Planner, FAICP, FITE*
David Bemporad, *Trails & Transportation Planner*
Ernest Brown, *CCIM*
Stephen Burch, *RID, GSC Architects*
Federico Cavazos, *LPA Architects*
Sarah Davis, *SALSA (Successfully Aging & Living in San Antonio)*
Wendell Davis, *AICP*
Joe Izbrand, *Alderman & Mayor Pro Tem*
Jimsi Kuborn, *former City of Converse Economic Development Director*
Omar Leos, *former NEISD Board of Trustees, District 3*
Mark Luft, *former Economic Development Director, Cities of Cibolo and Converse*
Norma McLelland, *REALTOR, Phyllis Browning*
Amy McLin, *Chair, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee*
Joey Pawlik, *Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization*
Agdel Rivera, *Architect, City of San Antonio Parks & Recreation*

Vonna Smith, *Jewish Family Services*
Juan Solis, *Chair, Castle Hills Zoning Commission*
Alex Turner, *Detective Castle Hills Police Department*
Wayne Waggoner, *Castle Hills Police Captain*
Charlie Weil, *Transwestern Real Estate Service*

## Community Workshop Participants

The last phase of gathering input from the community was to hold community engagement workshops. The Committee is thankful that approximately 40 residents took the time to identify and rank priorities during the community workshops which were held in October 2021. Attendees were able to provide direct and specific ideas regarding subjects that the Committee had identified as important to the community based on prior input from surveys and forums.

From the input provided during the community engagement workshops, LPA created images that were presented to the citizens in December 2021. These images provided the first visual representations of how we could utilize the citizen input received and turn them into real world projects for Castle Hills.

## City Staff

City staff participated fully in the process, filling out space questionnaires, helping with the workshops, and assembling the final document. We are grateful for their input and efforts given to this project.

Finally, the Committee thanks Scott Figueroa, the City's Intern, for seeing the drafting of this plan through from the beginning to the version presented to Council for approval. Without his tireless efforts these words might still be in the minds of the Committee and not a reality on paper.

# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a long-range plan intended to direct the growth and physical development of a community over a multi-decade period of time. Its major components include an analysis of land use, infrastructure, transportation, parks and green spaces and community facilities. Other analyses can include economic policies, public safety and services, design guidelines and conservation and sustainability.




*West Ave and NW Military Hwy*

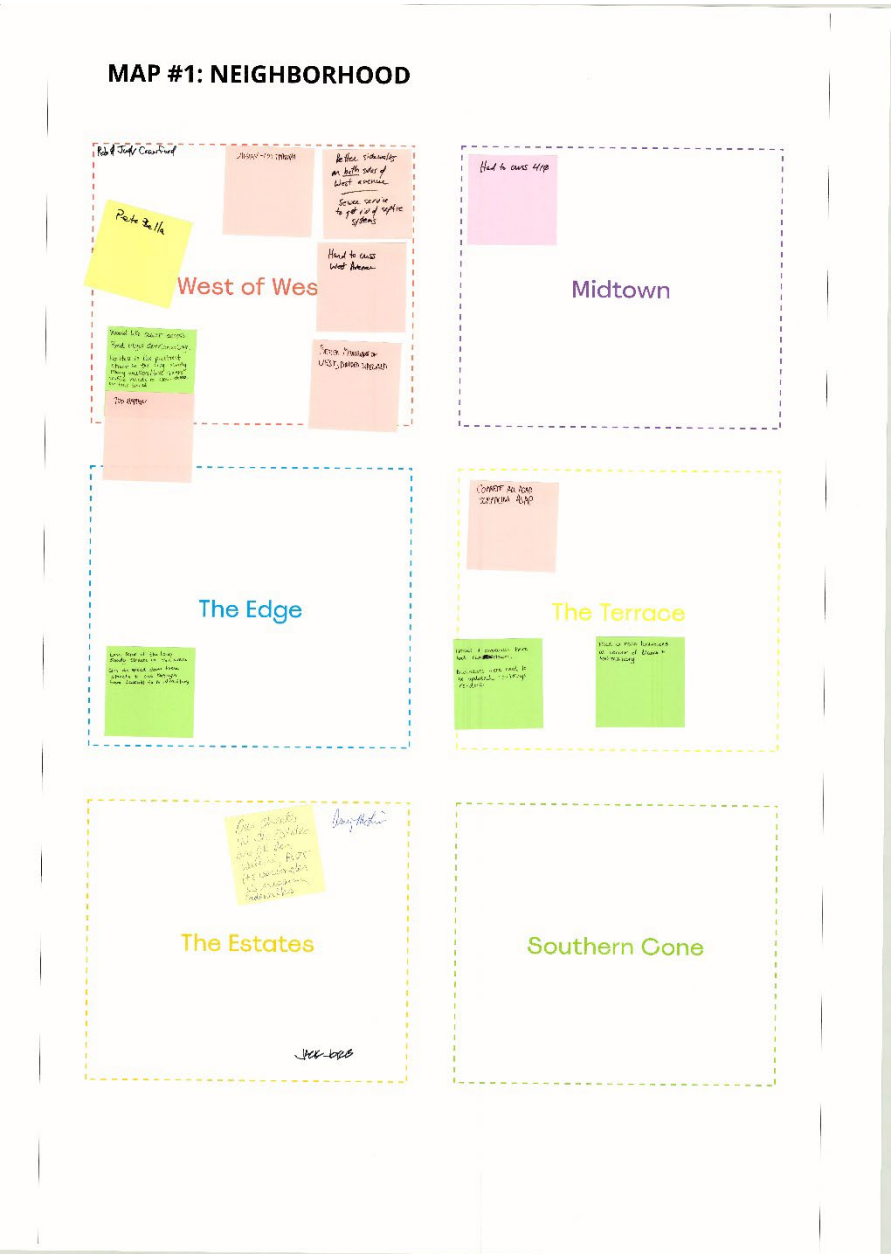
Comprehensive plans are addressed in Chapter 213 of the local government code. Potential areas of study are suggested, perhaps the most important of which is to, "...be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations." Any land use or zoning changes recommended by the plan cannot be implemented until a public hearing is held to describe the plan to the public, with the zoning commission subsequently voting on the recommendations.



*Aerial Image of Castle Hills*

## Origins of this Plan

In the Fall of 2020, a few members of the Parks and Projects Commission (PPC) decided it was necessary to update the Comprehensive Plan, which was nearly 25 years old, having been completed and approved in 1997. The PPC approved the establishment of a committee for that purpose, and after recruiting some dedicated citizens, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was formed. CPAC met biweekly via Zoom to address transmission concerns of the pandemic at the time. Early tasks included development of a mission statement and development of the goals and objectives of the plan.



# Introduction

## Mission Statement

CPAC determined that their mission would be: ***"The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee is to, with input from Castle Hills citizens, businesses, city staff and Council, produce a roadmap for economic development and the care, maintenance, and growth of our city's infrastructure, facilities, green spaces and services for the future."***

In keeping with ambitious scope of the Plan, CPAC named the Comprehensive Plan effort *"Create Castle Hills – Determining Our Future Excellence."* This phrase suggests a new beginning (Create), a fresh start that will be ours to decide (Determining), and we will strive to make our City the absolute best it can be (Future Excellence), in keeping with the Mission and overarching goals of the Plan.



*Prinz Drive*




*Carolwood Drive*

## Goals, Objectives, and the Process

The overarching goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to create a more livable, walkable, healthy, vital, and prosperous City for all stakeholders, including citizens, staff, and visitors. CPAC wanted to be sure that the effort:

- Was citizen-focused
- Created a roadmap for implementation of recommendations, including incorporation into the City' s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)
- Incorporated elements from previous planning efforts
- Improved community health and safety
- Incorporated a unifying vision for the City; but preserve the uniqueness of each of the six neighborhoods
- Be mostly an in-house effort
- Produce an attractive, easily readable and accessible document
- Provided for the future amending of the Plan
- Included assessment and implementation mechanisms to create accountability

In order to best achieve these goals and acquire maximum input, CPAC developed the following process for the Comprehensive Plan effort:

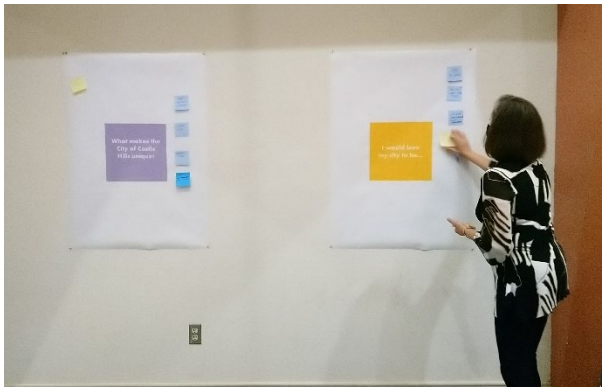
- In the winter of 2021 a survey was distributed to Castle Hills stakeholders. Approximately 240 responses were received. Please see a summary of results in Chapter II.
- In the summer of 2021 CPAC hosted (via Zoom) a series of speakers who were experts on topics important to the successful completion of the Comprehensive Plan. Topics included zoning, residential real estate, commercial real estate, green infrastructure, crime prevention and economic development. Approximately 220 citizens attended the 13 sessions.
- With an allocation of approximately $55,000 by City Council, LPA Architects was engaged to help identify priorities and prepare a presentation to

the community of these priorities. Three community workshops were held in the fall of 2021 in Council Chambers, with approximately 30 citizens attending. LPA led the group, including a few citizens on Zoom, through a number of exercises designed to draw out citizens' priorities for the future of our City. The priorities presentation was made to the community and City Council in December of 2021 and was well received.

*Community Workshop Activities*



- The final step in the process is the writing and assembly of the Comprehensive Plan document. CPAC will prepare a presentation for the community as well as for City Council, with the goal of achieving this in December of 2022.





## Priorities of the Comprehensive Plan

The priorities expressed in the workshops are noted below. See subsequent chapters for further discussion of these ideas.




*Image Courtesy of LPA*




*Image Courtesy of Agdel Rivera*

### 1) IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN MOBILITY

There are very few sidewalks in Castle Hills and many of these, because of their location immediately adjacent to the street, are deemed unsafe. Citizens would like to see safe walkable infrastructure however it can be created. Sidewalks, when separated from the street by a strip of landscape, are desired. Where sidewalks are not practical or desirable, the streets could have a walking path delineated by paint striping to assure the safety of pedestrians. Additional street lighting should be part of pedestrian mobility improvements.

### 2) IMPROVE BIKEWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

There are currently no bike lanes in Castle Hills. Citizens would like to see safe bike lanes on the major streets such as NW Military, Jackson-Keller, West Avenue and Lockhill-Selma, in addition to the City Center. A great opportunity would be to take a bike lane all the way to Hardberger Park, where access to San Antonio's extensive city-wide trail system can be had. These bike trails should be safe and tree-lined where possible, with plenty of lighting for evening riding.

### 3) IMPROVE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green spaces are severely lacking in Castle Hills, with the Commons as the only real green space in the City. Participants in all phases of the Plan, especially those with small children, have advocated for more parks and green spaces. There are opportunities for additional green space, such as small, open areas in the City; potential linear parks; and outside City Hall and across Lemonwood at Castle Hills Elementary.

### 4) IMPROVE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION

Loop 410 is a great barrier between the northern and southern neighborhoods of our City. There are three streets that connect across Loop 410 – West Avenue, Honeysuckle and Blanco. Of the three, citizens believe that Honeysuckle provides the best opportunity to connect north and south because of moderate traffic, its central location and its ability to connect to the northern and southern extremes of the City. Suggestions include pedestrian and bike paths which can connect to major corridors and public transportation and community nodes. The connector should include plenty of streetlights and traffic safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists. Consider the painting of the overpass a special color and special lighting, such as what might be considered public art.

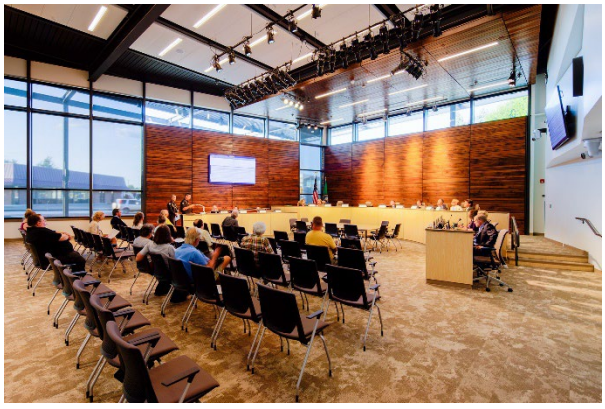



*Image Courtesy of LPA*

## 5) CREATE A CITY CENTER

A City Center should be established where the Commons and City facilities are currently located. The City Center would have the following characteristics:

- It would offer all services from one central area, with the goal of improving services to citizens and bringing more transparency of government.
- It would offer openness, flexibility and would be community focused. This suggests a renovation or replacement of the existing City Hall building, which would include additional community facilities such as flexible gathering spaces, inviting spaces, and a connection to the outdoors.
- The Commons would be renovated to promote greater wellness and physical activity for residents, young and old alike. Similarly, the land north of the Public Works building could be used for physical activity such as a sports court, all with the aim of bringing the community together.
- A City Center that serves as a node for multimodal transportation.



*Images Courtesy of LPA*



# Introduction

## 6) ESTABLISH NW MILITARY HIGHWAY AS CASTLE HILLS' MAIN STREET

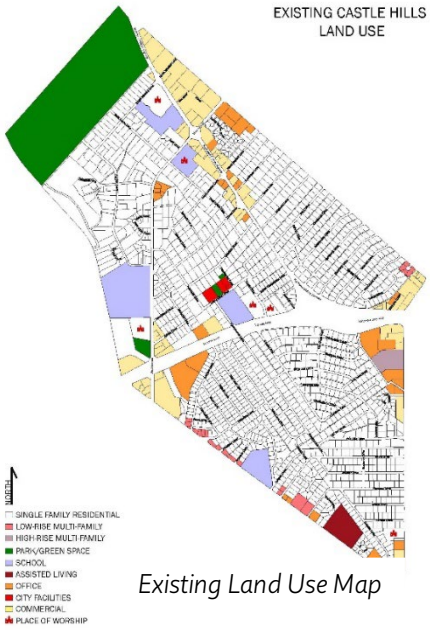
Consider transforming NW Military into Castle Hills' Main Street. This Main Street could extend from about Carolwood on the south to Lockhill-Selma on the north, where there is already considerable commercial activity. This approach would encourage increased pedestrian activity through the development of multi-use, office, live/work, or retail/restaurant uses in underutilized or residential properties. Safe pedestrian and bike paths could be established, making it easier to traverse the distances between the various establishments. The idea is to help with the goal of creating a more livable, walkable, healthy, vital and prosperous City for all stakeholders.




*Image Courtesy of LPA*

## 7) CONSIDER LAND USE AND ZONING CHANGES AT MAJOR HIGHWAY AND MAJOR STREET EDGES

Land use and/or zoning changes are proposed to be considered on highway and street edges where existing structures are underutilized; where the current use is not the best use of property for the area; where there is opportunity for a bit more density, especially for residential; where new building types can enhance the vitality of an area; or where a more substantial structure can help block highway noise. These proposals are considered to be surgical in the sense that they will never be intended to transform Castle Hills away from its status as a mostly single-family housing city. Like the priorities above, they are intended to help achieve the goal of creating a more livable, walkable, healthy, vital and prosperous City for all stakeholders.



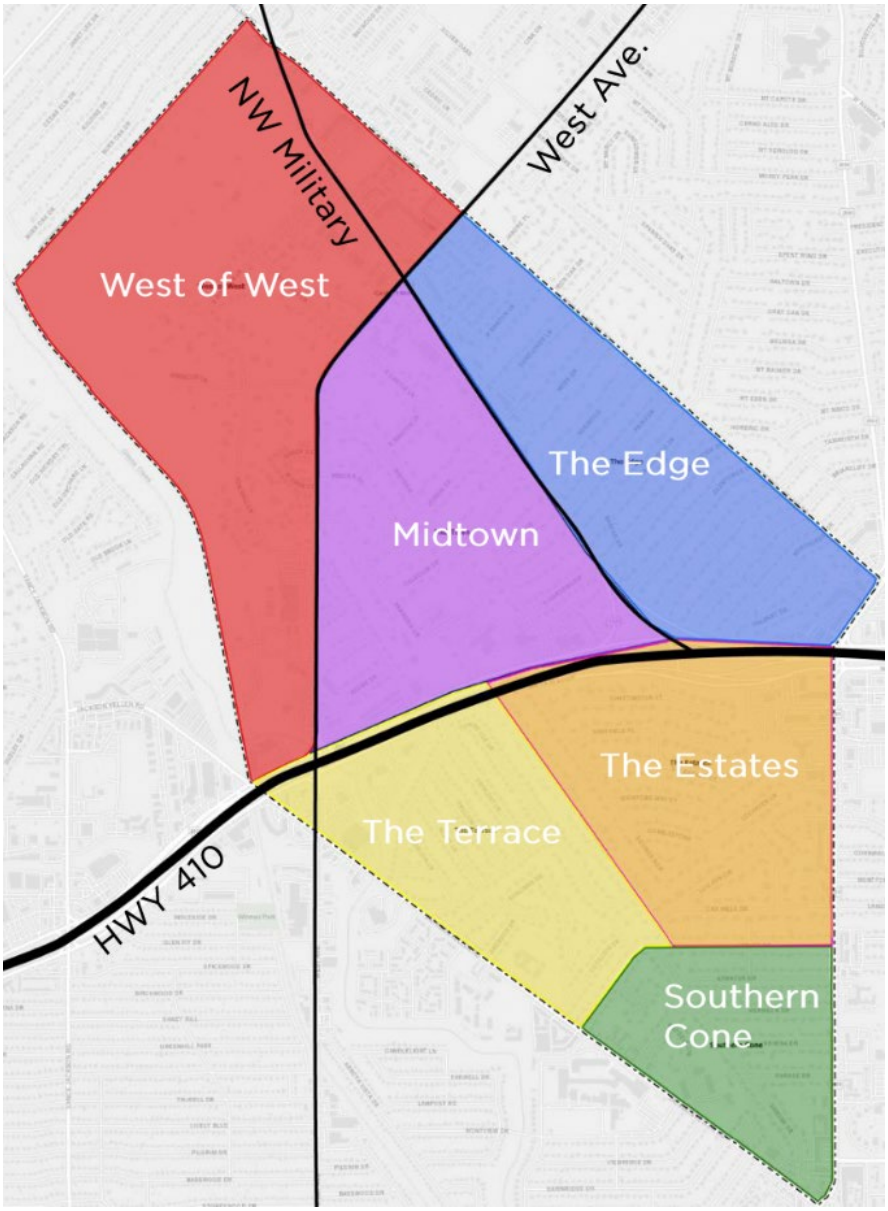

*Existing Land Use Map*

## 8) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is a priority since it has as its overarching goal the improvement of quality of life for a municipality's citizens. The normal endgame of this is, through the variety of strategies, to increase ad valorem and sales taxes. In recent years, a few large tracts of commercial land have been developed in Castle Hills, resulting in small increases in these taxes, but there ae only two commercial tracts of notable size remaining in the City. At the same time, City budgets leave no room for amenities such as green spaces, community facilities or an improved City Hall, which citizens have deemed important as indicated through the comprehensive plan process. These are the kinds of improvements that can help improve the quality of life in Castle Hills.

## Two Areas

The City of Castle Hills is divided in two parts by Loop 410, which is now a 10-lane highway with a total of 5 lanes for the East and West-bound access roads. The area north of Loop 410 is known as "NoLo," with the area south of the highway known as "SoLo." Each of these areas is subdivided into 3 neighborhoods, as shown in on the map below. The neighborhoods are described on the next page.




*The Six Neighborhoods*

# Introduction

## The Six Neighborhoods

**The three neighborhoods north of Loop 410 are known as West of West (WoW), Mid-Town, and The Edge:**

- **"West of West,"** or ***"WoW,"*** is all the land West of West Avenue, bounded by Loop 410 on the south, the railroad tracks and Wedgewood Drive on the west, NW Military on the north, and West Avenue on the east.

- ***"Mid-Town"*** is a triangular area bounded by Loop 410 on the south, West Avenue on the north and west, and NW Military on the east.

- ***"The Edge"*** is bounded by Blanco Rd. and Loop 410 on the south, NW Military on the west, West Ave. on the north, and Lockhill-Selma on the east.




**The three neighborhoods south of Loop 410 are known as The Estates, The Terrace, and the Southern Cone or (SoCo):**

- ***"The Estates"*** is bounded by Loop 410 on the north, Blanco Road on the east, Cas-Hills Drive on the south, and Honeysuckle Lane on the west.

- ***"The Terrace"*** is bounded by Loop 410 on the north, Honeysuckle Lane on the east, Antler Drive on the south, and Jackson-Keller on the west.

- ***"The Southern Cone",*** or ***"SoCo,"*** is a triangular area bounded by Antler Drive and Cas-Hills Drive on the north, Blanco Road on the east, and Jackson-Keller on the west.

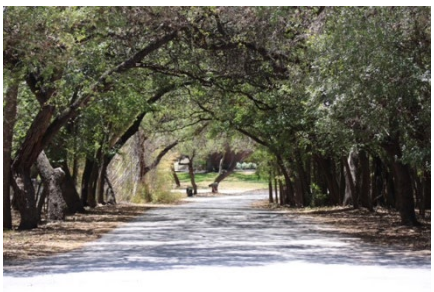




*Prinz Drive*



*Fox Hall Lane*



*Hibiscus Lane*



*Dogwood Lane*

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Beautiful canopies of trees arch over streets with attractive homes set back on either side. There is great access to highways. Many of the neighborhoods have unofficial walking routes that are travelled daily by numerous residents. Although each neighborhood has its own distinctive features, they all have these characteristics in common. And, these features are beloved by citizens! They serve to make Castle Hills a desirable neighborhood for people in all stages of life.

# Introduction

## DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

### *West of West (WoW)*

The WoW neighborhood is distinctive in its country feel, attributed to its large lots, a wonderful tree canopy, and narrow streets without curbs, gutters, or sidewalks. Many of the lots are larger than an acre, which is not the case in the other neighborhoods. WoW features the 140-acre McGimsey Boy Scout Camp, which is operated by the Boy Scouts of America. Also located here are a number of religious organizations including Mission City Church, the Christian School of Castle Hills, Antonian Preparatory School, and Castle Hills Christian Church.

The topography slopes to the west, with a large flood plain along the western border. WoW is home to one of the few PUDS (Planned Unit Development) in Castle Hills, with beautiful homes on smaller lots. Much of this neighborhood has been designated a Rural Residential District (RRD). The major feature of this district is that it forbids any subdivision of a lot less than three quarters of an acre. This will be a great help in preserving the country feel of WoW.

### *Mid-Town*

Mid-Town is the home of many beautiful residences, with much of the area having a similar country feel to WoW. This means many large lots, beautiful tree canopy, and many streets without curbs, gutters, or sidewalks. There is a fair amount of commercial activity in Mid-Town, on the west side of NW Military, east side of West Avenue, and on the north side of Loop 410. There is a 3.1 acre vacant lot on Loop 410, which seems prime for commercial development.

The Castle Hills city facilities are located in Mid-Town, with City Hall, the Fire Department building, Public Works building, the Commons and a vacant lot north of Public Works. These are located on Lemonwood and Persimmon, immediately adjacent to Honeysuckle, which provides convenient access to the south side of Castle Hills. Mid-Town is home to Castle Hills Elementary School and a number of religious organizations, including St. George's Episcopal School, Wayside Chapel, and Covenant Presbyterian Church.

"A special thing about my home is that we have an English telephone booth built into our living room."

– **Allison Juettemeyer, resident since 2012**

"The first thing the workers built on our property was the bar-b-que pit (that still stands today). The workers lived on our property while building our home."

–Tim Howell, resident since 1975







### *The Edge*

The Edge also features numerous lovely homes, a terrific tree canopy, and many streets with curbs and very few sidewalks. Lot sizes vary. The Castle Hills Gardens PUD is located in The Edge. There are a number of commercial centers here, one at the corner of Lockhill-Selma and West Avenue, a variety of retail and office businesses wrapping the corner of Lockhill-Selma, Blanco, and Loop 410, as well as the office and retail properties on the east side of NW Military from about Moss Drive and north to West Avenue.

### *The Estates*

The Estates features a wonderful tree canopy with beautiful homes on wide streets with curb and gutter but no sidewalks. There is a large commercial area which extends from Loop 410 at the One Castle Hills Building, wrapping the corner at Blanco, and extending down Blanco to about Cas Hills Drive. There are a variety of office and retail businesses here, as well as the Lundblade PUD. Castle Hills' largest residential property, the Ensemble, a senior residence facility, is located on Blanco Road at the edge of the Estates.

### *The Terrace*

The Terrace has beautiful homes with a very nice tree canopy, and streets with curb and gutter, but no sidewalks. It features mostly single-family homes, but has a number of duplex properties, mostly on Jackson Keller Road. There are three large commercial areas in the Terrace. One is located off Loop 410 near Gladiola and is home to two beautiful new buildings. A large drainage ditch runs behind the property and connects to the large concrete drainage channel coming from the north and eventually passing under Jackson Keller and connecting to Olmos Creek. A retail center containing an HEB and other retail stores is located on the west side of this channel and is immediately adjacent to the Dutch Brothers Coffee shop at the corner of West Avenue and Loop 410. The third area at Loop 410 and Jackson-Keller Elementary is located in the Terrace at Jackson-Keller and Cotillion.

# Introduction

### *The Southern Cone*

The Southern Cone is known for its variety of building types, with single family residential being the predominant type. Along Jackson-Keller, there are duplex facilities, apartment buildings, a senior living campus, a PUD, and a number of retail and restaurant businesses on the corner of Jackson-Keller and Blanco. The presence of Lee High School across Jackson-Keller introduces considerable traffic through the neighborhood, and streets such as Cotillion and Herweck do not allow parking throughout the day to prevent large numbers of students from taking up all the street parking spaces. Lee facilities have recently been expanded to include a parking facility, so hopefully the City can pull back on the parking restrictions.

## NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

### *West of West (WoW)*

The emphasis for this neighborhood is on preservation. Preservation of the beautiful tree canopy, of the large lots, and of minimal traffic on the streets is of great importance to these neighbors. They want the streets in good condition (Fox Hall Lane had just been repaved as of this writing), have little interest in curbs as these would reduce the country feel of the area. There is little opportunity for development with the designation of Rural Residential District, and that's just the way these neighbors like it.

### *Mid-Town*

With two major streets forming the eastern and western borders of this neighborhood, there is some development opportunity. Keeping in mind the overarching goals of making Castle Hills a more walkable, healthy, vibrant and prosperous community, the lots fronting the west side of NW Military south of Caladium down to about Ivywood Circle could be re-zoned to permit multi-use or higher density residential projects such as townhomes or condominiums or live/work facilities. Similarly, on the east side of West Avenue from about Wisteria Drive south to Ranchland Drive, additional retail or office zoning on those lots fronting on West Avenue is proposed. In both cases, adequate buffers to the single-family lots abutting would be required.

### *The Edge*

There is a major opportunity for development on the east side of NW Military. As proposed above in Mid-Town, keeping in mind the overarching goals of making Castle Hills a more walkable, healthy, vibrant and prosperous community, and keeping in mind the desire to make NW Military Castle Hills' Main Street, the lots fronting the east side of NW Military south of Moss Drive down to about Halbert Drive could have their land use studied for possible multi-use or higher density residential projects such as townhomes or condominiums or live/work facilities.

### *The Estates*

With its wide streets and limited traffic, the Estates is a popular area for walking and biking. There is a terrific opportunity to connect popular Estates walking paths, such as Oak Royal and Squires Row to Honeysuckle, which is seen as an important pedestrian connector to the north and south neighborhoods of the City. Enhanced street lighting would also be of great benefit to Castle Hills walkers. Sidewalks should be considered for safety's sake.

With so much frontage from noisy Loop 410 and with the traffic count to continue to rise as San Antonio grows, some Estates residents have wondered if there is some way, such as a barrier wall, to reduce the noise into the neighborhood. TxDOT does not agree that a noise barrier is warranted, so the City must consider that independently. One option is to consider rezoning the properties to multi-family, higher residential structures, which could block some of the noise and have the added benefits of saving the expense of the wall, increasing property values and thus revenue. Assuming a row-house arrangement of new townhomes, this presents the opportunity to offer smaller, more affordable housing options to older and younger residents.

### *The Terrace*

Given the frontage on busy Jackson-Keller and to the office buildings at Loop 410, the Terrace presents opportunities for higher, more dense residential properties. In addition to the more affordable housing and increased revenue opportunities these conditions allow, this approach would also improve the aesthetics of Jackson-Keller, which looks a bit run down now. There is also an opportunity to provide a linear park in the right-of-way of a portion of Jackson-Keller along a stretch that is currently an unsightly drainage ditch. Please see Chapter V for a more in-depth discussion of these opportunities.

### *The Southern Cone*

The Southern Cone presents potential opportunities for more dense development and for beautification efforts on the Jackson-Keller and Blanco frontages. The Linear park mentioned above could be a great benefit to parents and school kids making their way to Jackson-Keller Elementary or Lee High School.

# Introduction

## Amending the Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is seen by the Committee as a living document that is intended to evolve and be reviewed and revised as technology, trends, and community priorities develop and change over the next 20 to 30 years.

Yearly review should be done by the City Manager, Council, or someone else appointed for the task in order to evaluate progress that is being made towards accomplishing the priorities of the City. It is recommended that the Plan be thoroughly reviewed by CPAC or its successor committee every three to five years.

Amendments to the Plan are anticipated and may be required as the needs of the Castle Hills community change and progress is made on executing the Plan recommendations. Amendments should also be considered when necessary to simplify or modernize the Plan. If the city is continually evaluating the Plan and the needs and wants of our community on a regular basis, completely starting from scratch should never be necessary.

When the Plan is updated, those appointed to make recommendations to Council should be sure to verify that within the Plan there is internal consistency and that development regulations are taken into account.

This Plan is a guiding document, not a regulatory document, therefore, City Council should seek guidance from the City Attorney regarding whether an ordinance will need to be adopted to formalize the amendment process. If it is the City Attorney's recommendation that an ordinance be adopted to facilitate the Plan's amendment, it is the recommendation of CPAC that Council take appropriate action in order to facilitate future changes to the Plan.

# 2 Executive Summary

SUMMARY OF SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHICS

LIVE

GROW

PLAY

# Executive Summary

## Live, Grow, Play

The overarching goal of this Comprehensive Plan, referred to as *Create Castle Hills – Determining our Future Excellence*, is to create a more livable, walkable, healthy, vital, and prosperous City for all stakeholders, including citizens, staff, visitors, and businesses. All the analysis and recommendations in this report strive to point our City towards these general goals.

The analysis and recommendations are broken down into three main headings: Live, Grow, and Play. CPAC thought these headings appropriate since they represent the major categories of human activities that take place in our City each day. Although there is some overlap, the Committee tried to include topics with the most compatible heading.

### SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY

A survey of residents was taken in February of 2021 to ascertain their thoughts on critical questions related to their likes, concerns and preferences for Castle Hills as we look to the future.

The Overarching Themes are:

- City demographics have changed since 1997 Comprehensive Plan.
- Citizens value trees, rural appearance; public services; large lots; central location; quiet neighborhoods.
- Citizens worry about street maintenance, crime, traffic issues, poorly maintained yards and homes.
- Each of the six neighborhoods have different and unique needs,
- Citizens would like to see responsible development, whether commercial or residential

These themes will be carried through the appropriate chapters of the Comprehensive Plan.

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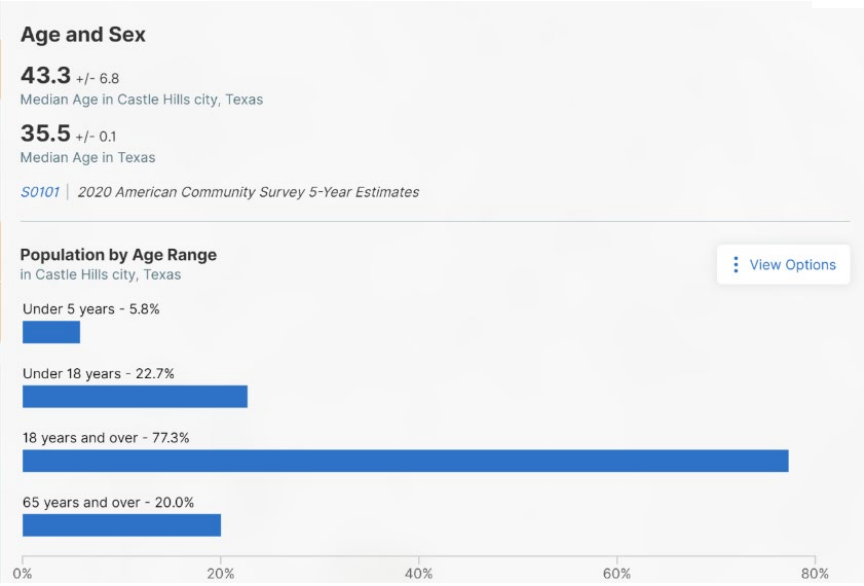
## DEMOGRAPHICS

We were fortunate that our planning for the Comprehensive Plan started as the 2020 census date was being collected. This helped provide CPAC with up-to-date information regarding our city demographics.

2020 census data shows Castle Hills is a diverse, educated, and comparatively affluent community.

Although the population has dropped to just below 4,000, it is notable that nearly one half of households are of Hispanic descent with a substantial population of residents of European ancestry, indicating a very diverse population.

At the same time, the median age has dropped to 43.3 years old, which is still high when compared to the population of Texas which has a median age of 35.5. Knowing that the population is getting younger is helpful as we plan for the future.



# Executive Summary

## Live

### INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term recommendations for infrastructure include protecting historical structures, studying the feasibility of renovating vs. replacing City Hall, and studying street light levels on a new plan for walk and bicycle lanes throughout the City.

Long term recommendations include continuing support for the repair of City streets and addressing drainage issues, performing a study of the condition of the City's alleys, and continuing to monitor for cybersecurity threats.

### TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Transportation recommendations focus heavily on walk and bicycle paths. In the short term, walk and bike paths should be studied to assure that these can be developed in all six neighborhoods to connect to City Hall, schools, and major business and shopping areas. In addition, they should be designed to connect our City to Hardberger Park and other locations where we can connect to the extensive San Antonio Trail System.

The longer-term recommendation is to study the development of bike and walking lanes on NW Military Highway. TxDOT has expressed interest in slimming the lanes to create a bike lane, but no traffic lanes can be lost. In addition, a shaded pedestrian path traversing the east side of the Highway should be studied as a way to connect citizens with businesses. If city paths connect to San Antonio and beyond to Hardberger Park, we could attract San Antonians wishing to shop or dine in Castle Hills.




*Image Courtesy of LPA*

### NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term recommendations include the study of the intersection of Loop 410 and Honeysuckle to provide better lighting, new landscape, public art, and walk and bike lanes.

In the Long term, CPAC recommendation the study of the busy intersections of West Avenue and Blanco Road at Loop 410 intersections to include the possibility of a pedestrian bridge at Blanco or special features that identify the city limit of our City.

# Grow

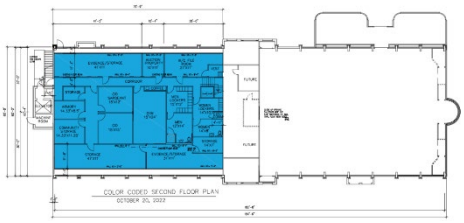
## LAND USE CHANGES AT HIGHWAY & STREET EDGES

CPAC recommends that the City undertake studies of land use bordering on the major streets and highways, including Loop 410, NW Military, West Avenue, Blanco Road and Jackson-Keller. The purpose is to explore the creation of a better buffer to protect the single-family residences from the sight and noise pollution of the busy thoroughfares. If border structures provided more density and height on the highway this could help deflect some of the highway noise in lieu of noise barriers on Loop 410 which TxDOT has declined to install. There is the potential to increase the value of the property and thus revenue to the City.

## NW MILITARY AS CASTLE HILLS' MAIN STREET

In the short term, CPAC encourages the creation of walking paths and bike lanes to encourage fitness and increase safety. Connecting the walk/bike paths to San Antonio and continuing on to Hardberger Park would encourage San Antonians to visit Castle Hills retail shops and restaurants. Also, the Committee encourages zoning changes to allow multi-use or small multi-family projects along NW Military.




## CITY FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

Castle Hills City Hall was converted from a church in the 1990s. It functions poorly, is unattractive, and features finishes that are tired and worn. Two of the architect members of CPAC conducted a study of the building and have proposed an alternative floor plan for consideration. It is not perfect but improves some of the functionality of the facility. The cost-benefit of remodel versus new construction should be considered as part of this process.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic development recommendations are intended for the short term and have actually been acted upon by City Council. In September and October of this year, Council established an Economic Development Committee and adopted a charter which essentially gives the Committee their marching orders. At this time, criteria are being developed for the selection of Committee members prior to soliciting statements of interest from potential candidates. Among the important tasks expected of the Committee are developing a marketing plan, keeping in close touch with Castle Hills businesses, especially with the Castle Hills Business Association, and identifying potential sources of funding for a variety of projects for the City.

# Executive Summary

## Play

### GREEN SPACES RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation in the short term is to develop green spaces which are currently open land owned by the city and which could be developed into an attractive resting place, dog park, or community garden. In addition, developing linear parks should be studied, as these have been used very successfully in San Antonio. The ultimate goal is to have a unique green space in each of the six neighborhoods which would eventually be connected with walking/biking routes. Also in the short term, in coordination with the Parks and Projects Commission efforts, the Commons should be developed as Castle Hills' premier space for gathering, play, and events. In the long term, Committee recommendations include finding more diverse and accessible community spaces and installing restrooms which are easily accessible by people utilizing the Commons. The Architectural Review Commission is currently engaged in a rewrite of the City's Tree Ordinance. The purpose of the rewrite is to provide more definitive guidelines on when a tree can be removed, define requirements for replacement or mitigation, and to establish a tree fund to help with new tree planting or oak wilt treatment and prevention. It is recommended that these efforts be supported by our community

### SUSTAINABILITY

There are a wide variety of recommendations with respect to sustainability for both the long and short term. In the short term, it is recommended that the City give attention to energy conservation by having CPS conduct a free energy audit of City facilities and study the feasibility of installing solar panels on the Fire Station or other city facilities. Water conservation should also be encouraged with the replacement of turf and non-native plants with native plants and wildflowers. Water collection could be used to irrigate landscaping. Citizens and businesses should be encouraged to do the same with their properties, but the City should be an example for all to model.

### OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

An important short-term recommendation is the creation of a city beautification program that would encourage homeowners and businesses to keep their properties in good condition and updated as needed. Similarly, parking lots and old signs in the commercial areas could use some refreshing. The City should consider adopting incentives or

programs to encourage these kinds of beautification efforts. For the longer term, the City or the new Economic Development Committee should develop policies or incentives to attract high end or destination retailers and restaurants to Castle Hills.




*Public Art by Bill FitzGibbons*

### PUBLIC ART RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Public Art include consideration of the Commons as a "Sculpture Park" with an annual rotation of sculpture exhibits, establishment of a public art program to increase citizen pride and a renewed sense of belonging to the community, and consideration of local businesses or schools as public art sites.

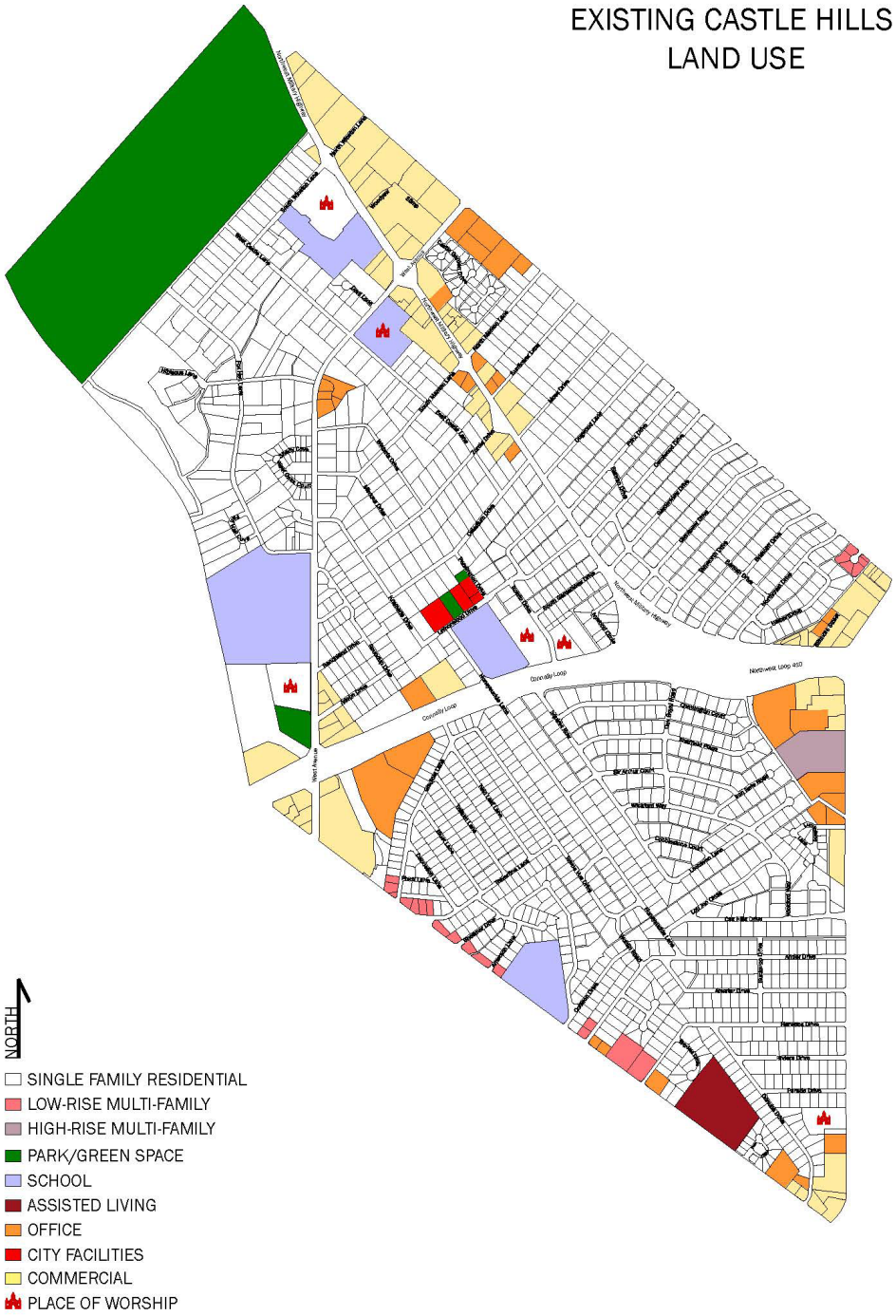
### IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS & PRIORITIES

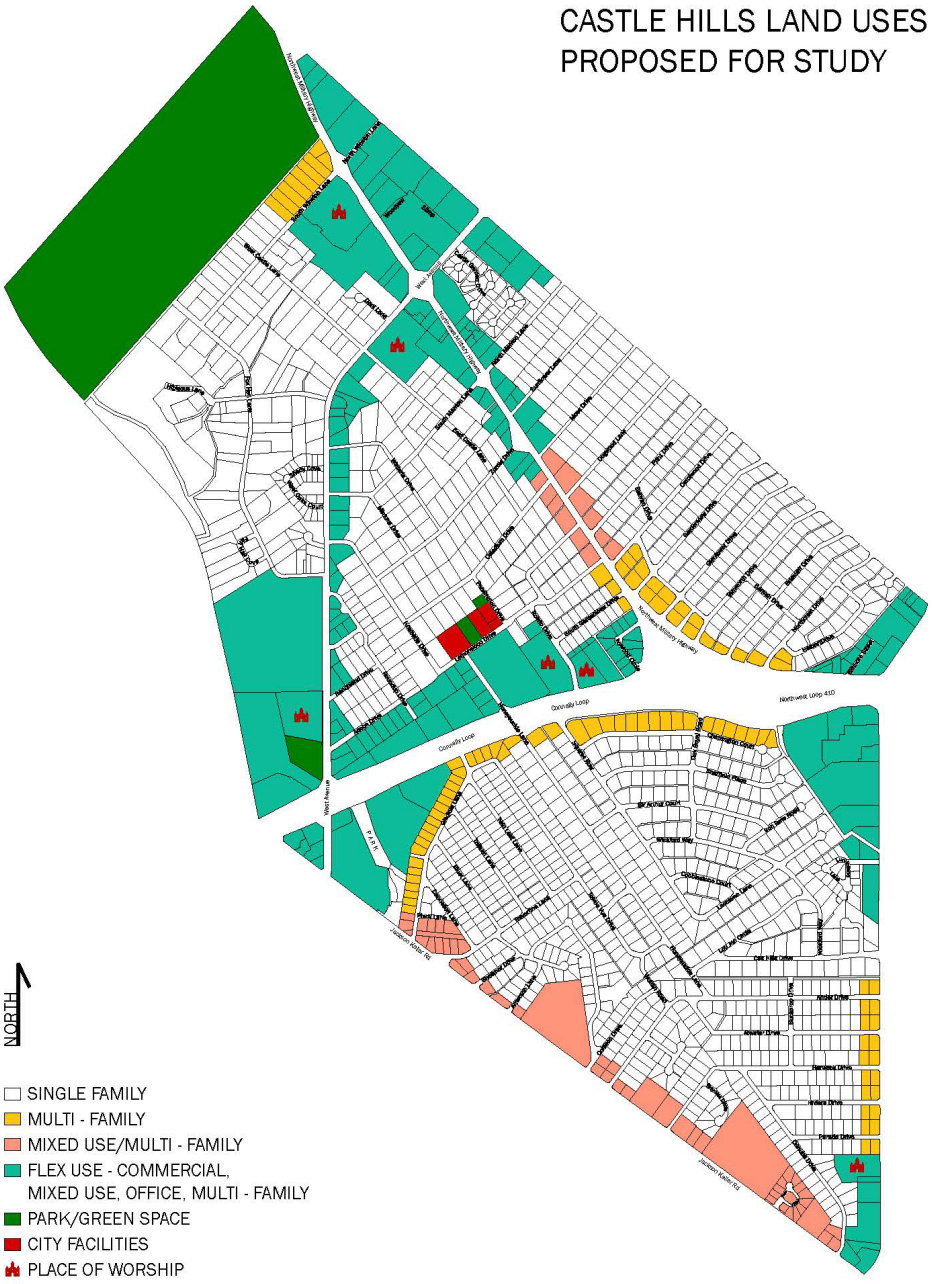
The recommendations in this report have been taken as far as possible by the citizen volunteer group on the Committee. CPAC suggests that further studies be conducted by professionals, such as engineers, architects, landscape architects, designers, and artists as appropriate for the various priorities.

Beginning with the short-term priorities, the Committee recommends starting with the intersection of Loop 410 and Honeysuckle as a way to provide a project with maximum impact to the entire city. Once the first project is started, a study of the bike and walking paths in the City could commence, in order to determine a scope and probable project cost. At that point, Council should consider adding one or both projects to the Capital Improvement Plan.

The Committee recognizes that funding is a concern. However, there are many sources of funding for projects such as grants, CIED funds, ARPA funds, or through certificates of obligation. Specifically, CPAC recommends having a paid grant writer explore grant funding opportunities such as Texas Parks & Wildlife, AARP, Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, and other grant sources. The grant writer could be paid out of funds won for city projects, thereby creating an incentive towards successful grant applications. Coordination with the Economic Development Committee is suggested since one of their charges is fund-raising.

# Executive Summary




CASTLE HILLS LAND USES
PROPOSED FOR STUDY
NORTH
SINGLE FAMILY
MULTI - FAMILY
MIXED USE/MULTI - FAMILY
FLEX USE - COMMERCIAL,
MIXED USE, OFFICE, MULTI - FAMILY
PARK/GREEN SPACE
CITY FACILITIES
PLACE OF WORSHIP

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# 3 Live

HISTORY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

INFRASTRUCTURE

PUBLIC SAFETY

CITY SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION

EDUCATION

HOUSING – EXISTING AND OPPORTUNITIES

BEAUTIFICATION & PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

# Live

## History and Historic Preservation

*Note: The following information was provided by the Castle Hills Historical Society. Contributions were made by Place 3 Councilman Kurt May, Judy Crawford, Margaret Sylvia, Wayne Carter, Kristin Bengoechea, Jennifer Walters, Jason Smith, Sherrill Yeckel, and Maddie Dillon.*

### *The Castle Hills Historical Society*

he Castle Hills Historical Society was founded in 2020 in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiated by Alderman Kurt May, it soon attracted many members. The mission of the organization is to record, research, celebrate, and share the history of Castle Hills. They meet regularly and were recognized by Resolution of the City Council. Over the course of the next year, the Society organized a 70th anniversary celebration for Castle Hills. The celebration was held in Council Chambers in September of 2021. It featured numerous exhibits of the founding and early days of Castle Hills and a dinner later that evening at the Veranda, which was the original home of the Slimp family, who were prominent in the early history of the area.



My family purchase land here in 1949. We moved here in 1950. My dad built the house himself. The cost of the home and land were $12,500.00."
**–Sherry Yeckel, resident since 1950**

Long term projects that the Historical Society intends to pursue include seeking status as a 501(c)(3), tax exempt entity; writing and publishing an official History of Castle Hills in celebration of the City's 75th Anniversary in 2026; and collecting oral history stories from the city's citizens. It is the organization's purpose to preserve as much of the verbal history, written history, and published history of Castle Hills as possible. In time, the Society would like to integrate the collected information and oral histories into a complete and reliable narrative.

### *The Founding of Castle Hills*

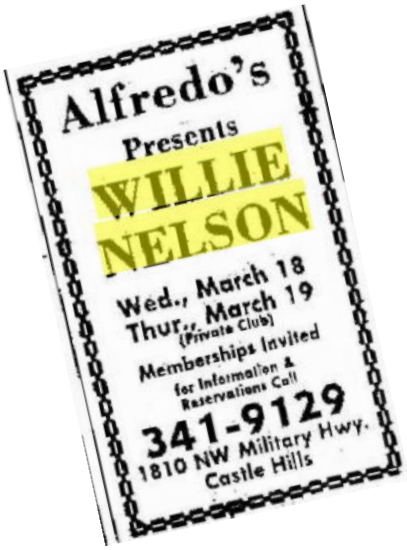
A few consistent patterns were noted regarding our history while research was being gathered. Castle Hills was founded to avoid annexation by the City of San Antonio. Numerous annexations by the City of San Antonio occurred after major increases in population in Bexar County post-World War II. Other municipalities were successful in avoiding annexation, but Castle Hill's avoidance of annexation was accomplished by litigation after filing for incorporation with the State of Texas. The motivations for the founding members of the City revolved around the desire to provide for better police and fire protection for the citizens of Castle Hills. In addition, the prevailing belief of the founding leaders was that other city services could be better delivered by a municipal government comprised of those living in the current boundaries of Castle Hills. After the incorporation of Castle Hills, the City of San Antonio moved quickly to annex all the territory surrounding the current boundaries of Castle Hills.




"Our home was built in 1959. It was pink brick on all sides. The home had 3 bedrooms and 2 baths. The counter tops in the kitchen were "aqua" as was the refrigerator. My grandfather used to come visit and count the oak trees in the yard each time. At that time there were over 100." **– Judy Crawford, resident since 1962**



"The first thing the workers built on our property was the bar-b-que pit (that still stands today). The workers lived on our property while building our home." – **Tim Howell, resident since 1975**




*Early Years*

Artists, ranchers, oil men, mid-level managers, business owners, veterans and even gamblers all found their way to the tree and brush covered land we now know as Castle Hills. All of these people wanted out of the "big city" where land was cheap and flooding was at a minimum.

These people became neighbors, helping each other put up fences, planting gardens and founding a city while at the same time being fiercely independent. This independence is still visible today – just look around and you'll see no two homes are the same!

This land was inhabited long before the idea of Castle Hills became a reality. People who resided here before our city was founded were Native Americans, Mexican farmers, German dairy men and heroes of Texas Independence. This bluebonnet-covered land was home to many notable citizens throughout the years – Mr. B.B. McGimsey Plant Manager and face of Pearl Brewery, Mrs. Helen Slimp, noted artist, friend of Marion Koogler McNay, Tom Moore, notorious gambler and founder of the WWS of poker, Mark White, former mayor of Houston, and many more. As notable as these people are, it is through interviews with founding members of the city and their families that the Historical Society learned about the really important names that made this place our home.

The Yeckel, Horton, Dolch, Saunders, Green, Carter, Bland, Lewis, Howell, Palmer, and Anderlitch families are just a few of the families that came together to form the town of Castle Hills. These families were here to see Loop 13 turn into Loop 410. They saw Moeglin Road change from two miles south of the Loop to West Avenue and then extend all the way to Lockhill-Selma. They saw the convoys for military troops, horses and tanks roll down NW Military towards to Camp Bullis, troops stopping to rest and reshoe horses in the area of NW Military and West Ave. They were here to see the beautiful Castle Hills Elementary school being built and then filled to the brim with new students. They were here to hunt deer, dove, and turkey in the area. Families would camp and fish at a small pond near Jackson-Keller and West Avenue. They shopped down San Pedro Avenue and were thrilled when North Star Mall was opened.

Along with families, businesses came and went. We had Prinz's Store at the corner of Blanco Rd. and Loop 410. They sold everything and you could hitch the horse that brought you to the store right up front! The city had nightlife – Rex's club was popular, the casino on West Ave. held big poker games.

# Live

Families got together for game nights (mainly bridge). Modern conveniences came when Piggly Wiggly, Royal Pharmacy and Winn's 5 & Dime arrived. As the city developed, and San Antonio moved closer, many people clamored to have a Castle Hills address.



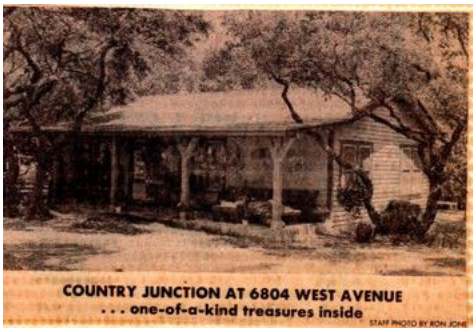
The city became a Mid Century Modern destination. Residents appreciated the country feel, friendly people and closeness to the city. These characteristics are why many early residents, and their family members are still here today. It is not uncommon to find children and grandchildren of longtime residents purchasing homes and moving into Castle Hills. While the early residents moved here for "cheap land" and to escape flooding, they found an oasis near a big city. It is important to remember as the city is surrounded by San Antonio that we continue to be independent and an oasis for all who are lucky enough to live here.

### *Some Notorious History of Castle Hills*

Tom Moore's home at 6701 West Avenue was for many years, beginning in the sixties, an illegal gambling casino that was ignored by law enforcement, allegedly because the upper ranks and other important local officials were invited to play and never lost money. Eventually, however, the games were raided and Mr. Moore bought a casino in Reno. He invited the best Texas poker players, who had previously played in his home casino in Castle Hills, to a tournament that became the World Series of Poker.

"I remember people had heated bread drawers, built-in grills, spacious kitchens built for large families, cocktail bars." – Steve Voltz, resident since 1963

One notable raid by the Texas Rangers on the Castle Hills "casino" occurred while it continued to operate under the aegis of "Slim" Lambert after Mr. Moore had moved to his newly purchased casino in Nevada. During this raid, a Texas state senator, Virgil "Red" Berry, was arrested, along with Mr. Lambert and $42,900 was seized. There was an accusation that the senator owned a "piece of the Castle Hills action."

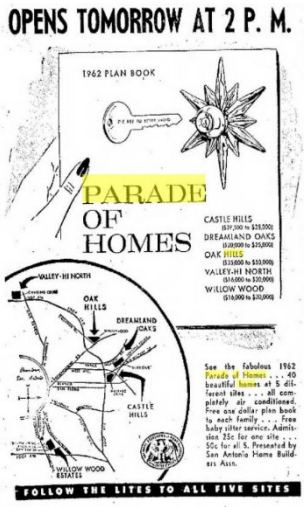



Tom Moore's home on West Avenue was not the only locus of gambling in Castle Hills. Jack Hanratty's residence at 102 Prinz was raided by the FBI in 1977 on suspicion that he was involved in directing a large bookmaking operation, allegedly taking bets of up to $100,000 in a single day. (Today's equivalent is nearly a half million dollars). This was not the first raid alleging that a gambling operation was based in the Prinz Drive home. At least one previous raid by the Texas Rangers had taken place, but the search warrant was eventually declared "fatally defective," and the case was thrown out.


San Antonio Express SAN ANTONIO NEWS
Real Estate, Building Pages
9G
SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 1956

"ATOMIC OVEN" RIDES AGAIN—Free repeat showing will be held Sunday to display this brick Colonial by Homecraft Builders at 103 Herwack, Castle Hills Park Estates. Special feature is the first electronic oven to be demonstrated to the public in a San Antonio home. Host will be Weslie Cosper, Homecraft sales director.


Castle Hills
OPEN 2 TO 6
105 W. Castle Lane
One large bedroom, living room, large kitchen, separate wash room, 1-car garage, lot size 120x210—Covered with oak trees—looks like a park—Nice place for older couple to retire on
L. E. Felton
DI 2-5711, Niles DI 2-7797


OPENS TOMORROW AT 2 P. M.
1962 PLAN BOOK
PARADE OF HOMES
CASTLE HILLS
DREAMLAND OAKS
OAK HILLS
VALLEY-HI NORTH
WILLOW WOOD
See the fabulous 1962 Parade of Homes . . . 40 beautiful homes at 5 different sites . . . all completely air conditioned. Free one dollar plan book to each family . . . free baby sitter service. Admission 25c for one site . . . 50c for all 5. Presented by San Antonio Home Builders Assn.
FOLLOW THE LITES TO ALL FIVE SITES


FINE HOME SHOWN AGAIN—This is the "Model Home" by Builder R. L. Lindsey, open again Sunday at 106 Adobe in Ranchland Acres—just east off West ave. in Castle Hills. It is a Cliff May-designed $21,000 carpeted "glamor" home—1 of 3 shown last weekend. Publicity and advertising featured exclusively in this section of last Sunday's Light sold the other 2 homes adjoining for $21,500 and $19,900.

Mr. Hanratty and two associates pleaded guilty to the charges issued in 1977. His sentencing was delayed indefinitely because he because he was undergoing surgery to remove a large brain tumor. He died a few months later in October 1977.

The Abdo family of Castle Hills was linked to Lambert's gambling during the investigations of bookmaking on Prinz Drive and was plagued by other misfortunes. Solomon Abdo, Sr., who lived on Caladium Drive was stabbed to death at his grocery store on Zarzamora in a robbery/murder where $2 was taken from the store. His son's house (Solomon, Jr.) on Briarcliff caught on fire the next day. The younger Solomon later became a real estate tycoon and continued living in Castle Hills. His home was the target of a home invasion and burglary in 1977 that left him severely injured. The burglars fled with cash and jewelry from his safe, along with his 1976 Cadillac.

### *Homes of Castle Hills*

Many of the homes in Castle Hills were custom built in the 1950s and 1960s with distinctive mid-century modern features in their architecture. Ranch-style homes were common and attempted to engage the surrounding landscape. The Castle Hills development was advertised as a community of distinctive, individual homes offering the ultimate in modern living. In various San Antonio Express ads from 1954, Castle Hills was touted as the "Dream City of the Future" featuring air-conditioned homes. "Fashionable addresses, modern schools, Texas size lots, low city taxes and distinguished homes in an intelligently planned community" were also selling points in a 1955 San Antonio Light ad.

A crowd of 8,000 visitors attended the "Panorama of Modern Living" open house tour. The homes were developed by Sterling Browning Jr and priced between $25-$35k. Spanish contemporary, French provincial, and "modern oriental classic" homes were highlighted in Express News ads from 1960. The Better Homes and Gardens "Idea Home of 1955" was featured at 200 Glentower, built by Modern Builders. The home had post and beam construction, a sheltered patio, and a "kitchen of tomorrow...today". The home was furnished and decorated by Karotkins.

# Live

The Wedgewood apartment complex on Blanco (now Ensemble Senior Apartments) was advertised as "luxury living" and offered room service, a restaurant, grocery store, and library.

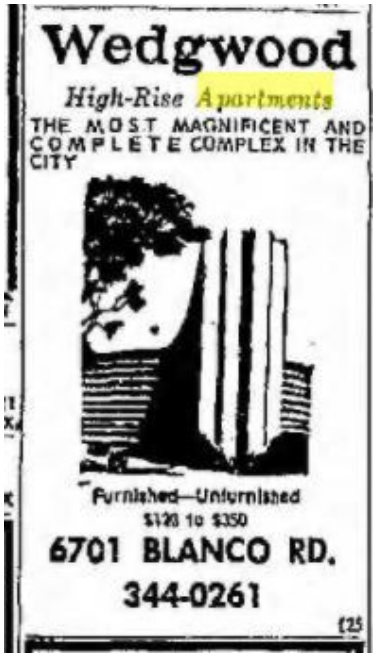
*Some of the notable builders/architects/developers of the time were:*

- Wallace Thomas
- Guy Aldridge
- Phil Lloyd Shoop
- B.L. Craighead
- William Swinney
- Weslie Cooper and Associates (Sales)
- Homecraft Builders
- Modern Builders
- Cibolo Constructions Company
- Mayer and Jones
- Richard O. Jenkins
- Louis P. Lubbering
- Ted C. Pruske
- CW Brecka
- Castle Hills Development Company
- Sterling Browning (Parade of Homes Co-Chairman)



"I built 301 Lochaven Lane in 1963, paid $7500 for the lot in 1960. I built a 3700 square foot house for less than $50k. Well Don Rayburn built it, because I bought a lot two doors down and backed him to build a spec house. He built mine essentially at cost to him." – Dr. Phil Voltz, resident since 1963



### Quotes from Interviews from Residents

"Our home came with all the modern amenities including central heat and air. It has lovely touches throughout including lighting sconces in the hallway, wood carvings." – **Anna Armstrong, resident since 1976**

"The house had a flat roof, one bedroom, dining room, kitchen and back bedroom that was used as an exercise room. I turned the one car garage into a family room." – **Richard Green, resident since 1961**

"My dad paid $600.00 for the lot. The street was called Senesia. It was changed to Caladium a few years later." – **Greg Smith, resident since 1952**

"Our house was 109-foot long ranch style home that faced NW Military and West Ave. We had a driveway that ended at that intersection. In 1967, the city asked us to move the driveway entrance when Military Highway traffic increased." **– Bryant Slimp, resident from 1959 - 1966**

"Almost every house in Castle Hills has this white terrazzo tile, it came from Mexico and in the 60s when I built it [301 Lochaven], it was a dollar a square." **– Dr. Phil Voltz, resident since 1963**

# Live

## Infrastructure

### ELECTRICAL POWER

*Reliability – ERCOT (Electric Reliability Council of Texas)*




*ERCOT Reliability*

Like most communities in Texas in February 2021, Castle Hills experienced drastic and prolonged power outages during and after the "snowmageddon" weather event of February 2021. Soon thereafter, Governor Abbott demanded that ERCOT improve electric grid reliability across the state so that such power loss would never happen again. ERCOT responded in July of 2021, delivering a "roadmap to improving grid reliability" to Governor Abbott, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) and the Texas Legislature. This roadmap identified 60 items that should be implemented immediately. Among them are:

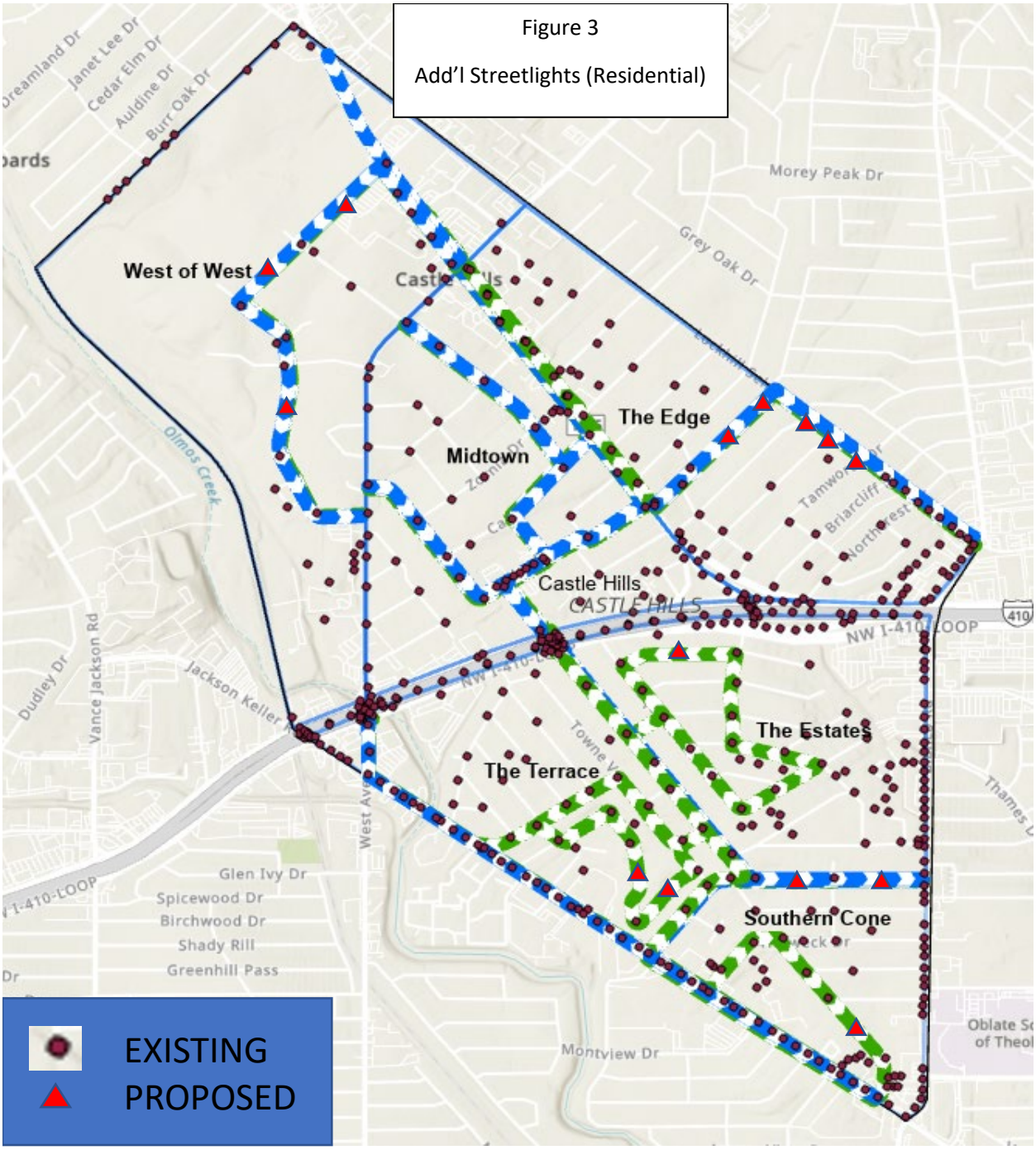
- Taking a more aggressive approach by bringing more generation online sooner if needed to balance supply and demand.
- Purchase more reserve power, especially on days when the weather forecast is uncertain.
- Require CEO certifications. After a rule change, all market participants who own or operate generation resources and/or transmission/distribution power lines will be required to submit a letter signed by their CEO twice a year certifying companies have completed their weatherization preparations to protect the electric grid for the summer and winter seasons.
- Adding new requirements for generation owners. ERCOT is proposing a new market rule that requires generators to provide operational updates more frequently.
- Assessing on-site fuel supplies. ERCOT is reviewing the need for on-site fuel supplies for some generators.

We in Castle Hills seem to have survived the summer of 2022, one of the hottest summers on record, without major electrical outage. There were some CPS electrical issues, such as downed power lines and power outages for maintenance needs, but nothing on the scale of February of 2021. It would appear that the new roadmap is helping. Hopefully that will prove to be the case over the long term.

### *Streetlights*

Castle Hills' streetlights are owned and maintained by CPS Energy. They generally perform well, although there are many residents who would like to have more light, especially on popular walking and cycling routes. It is not known if the lamps in the streetlights are the most efficient or provide the most light.

Below is a sketch composed by CPAC that overlays proposed walking and cycling routes on the streetlight grid, with suggestions for additional lamp posts or brighter bulbs shown. CPS has agreed to do a photometric study of lighting needs on the major streets such as NW Military and West Avenue, but not on the inner streets. The City will have to provide confirmation of the lighting suggestion for inner streets as shown below.




*Proposed Preliminary Streetlight Plan (CPAC)*

## INTERNET & PHONE

Castle Hills residents and businesses have many choices when it comes to internet and cellular service. Internet providers have featured high-speed internet (5G) for some time now, with speeds of 300 Mbps or higher readily available at affordable prices. Cellular phone service is also readily available, as cell phones at this point are ubiquitous.

However, in Castle Hills, where the average age is about 44 years old, a full ten years higher than the state average, not everyone is online or on cell phones. Approximately 20% of our population is 65 years or older, with some portion of this group without internet or cell phones. Interestingly, the Speakers Forum presenters who discussed Aging in Place recommended that older adults be taught the use of internet and cell phones even if they are reticent to do so. Once learned, these tools can be a great help in emergency situations as well as enabling family members to keep in closer touch. But for now, those who wish to communicate with all Castle Hills citizens still rely on the USPS.

## NATURAL GAS

Most homes in Castle Hills have natural gas, which is a very efficient and more environmentally friendly energy source of energy. Natural gas provides approximately 45% of CPS' electrical generating capacity. It is also a very reliable source, with the possible exception of rare 'snowmageddon' events.

## WATER

Castle Hills water service is provided by San Antonio Water System (SAWS). SAWS took over the water and sewer infrastructure from Bexar Metropolitan Water District in early 2012, as management issues led ultimately to a customer vote for the transition to SAWS.

The water infrastructure has had a difficult time in this most recent drought, with numerous water main breaks in Castle Hills as well as throughout the Bexar County area. As soils have dried out and moved, aging pipes have been unable to withstand the movement, causing line breaks.

## SEWER

Castle Hills sewer service is also provided by SAWS; although there are numerous homes which are still on septic systems. These are mostly in the midtown, the Edge, and West of West neighborhoods. Most of these residents seem content with septic, although they need to service the tanks every four years or so.

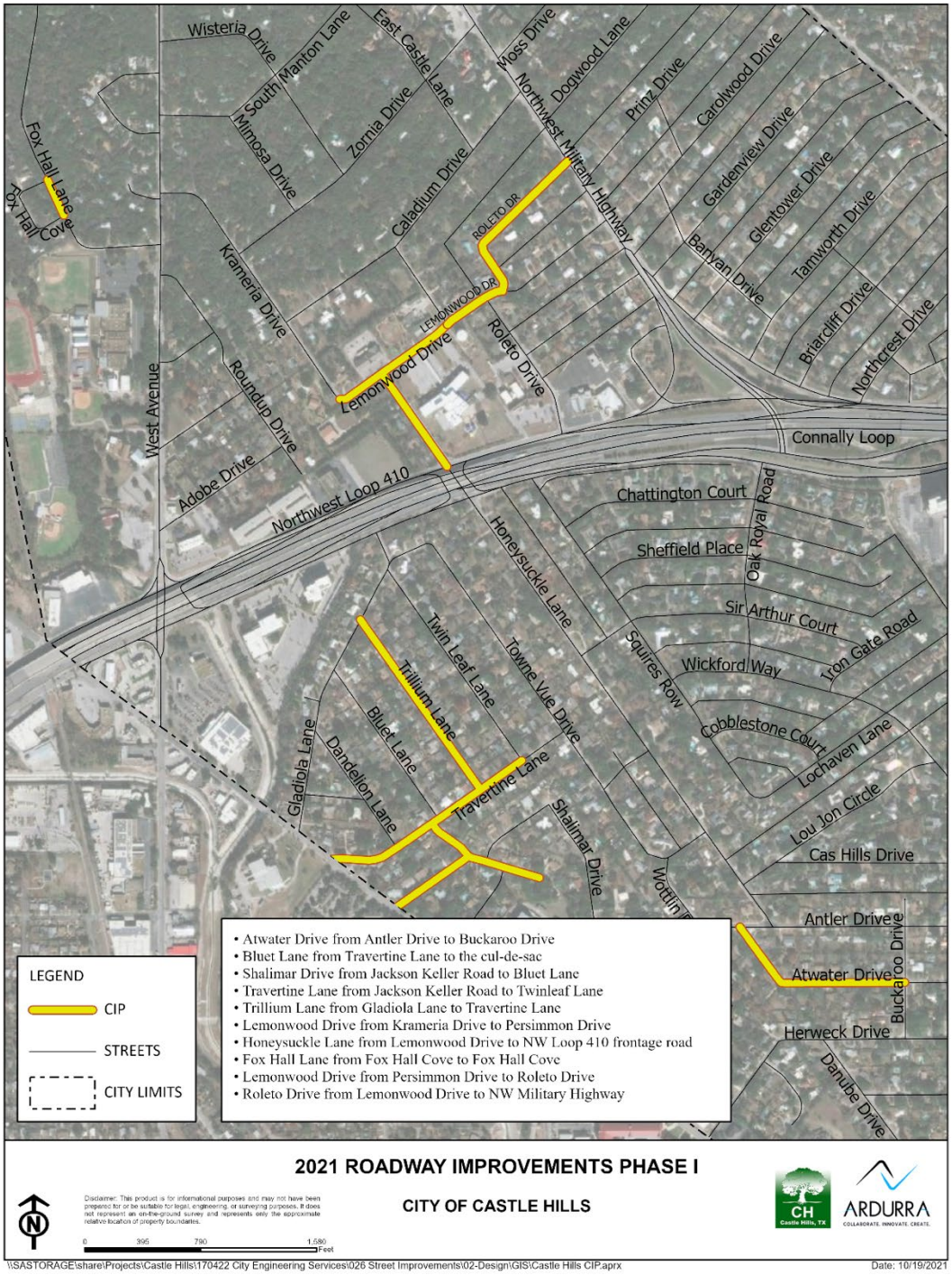
## ROADS, DRAINAGE, SIDEWALKS, BIKE LANES, ALLEYS

### *Roads & Drainage*

After decades of neglect (see 1997 Comprehensive Plan), the City of Castle Hills is aggressively addressing street and drainage deficiencies. City Council approved a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) in 2018 which had been put together by City staff. The CIP addressed the much needed and wanted repair of streets and drainage issues. Engineers at the time estimated the total cost to be in excess of $40 million. Funds for light duty street repairs such as seal coat or mill and overlay were made through the use of a street and maintenance tax and funds from the electronic signs; but the major repairs such as reconstruction could only be accomplished with borrowed funds, so Council in 2020 approved $8.7 million of certificates of obligation (COs). These were obtained at the very low interest rate of 1.49%, helping to keep the cost to taxpayers more reasonable. Numerous streets were reconstructed. Please see the diagrams nearby to see streets reconstructed with this funding.

Drainage improvements were also made with the CO money and with the electronic sign revenue, 80% of which is allocated to drainage projects, the balance to street projects.

Perhaps the most significant projects completed were two of three phases of improvements to Banyan and Carolwood, which have had severe flooding, including flooded homes, for many years. The project placed large concrete culverts under the street with inlets along the way, to carry the water away without impacting residents. The third and final phase, part of a future CO, will bring the underground culverts all the way to Lockhill-Selma, where the flood waters originate.




*Phase One Street Reconstruction – 2020 Certificates of Obligation*

# Live

A second round of certificates of obligation was approved by voters in the November 2022 election. These projects total $6 million and are roughly evenly divided between street repair and drainage projects. They include 12 street projects and four drainage projects. These COs will complete all of the street reconstruction projects. Roughly $6 million in drainage projects will still remain. See city's website for detailed information on the engineering studies and CIP.



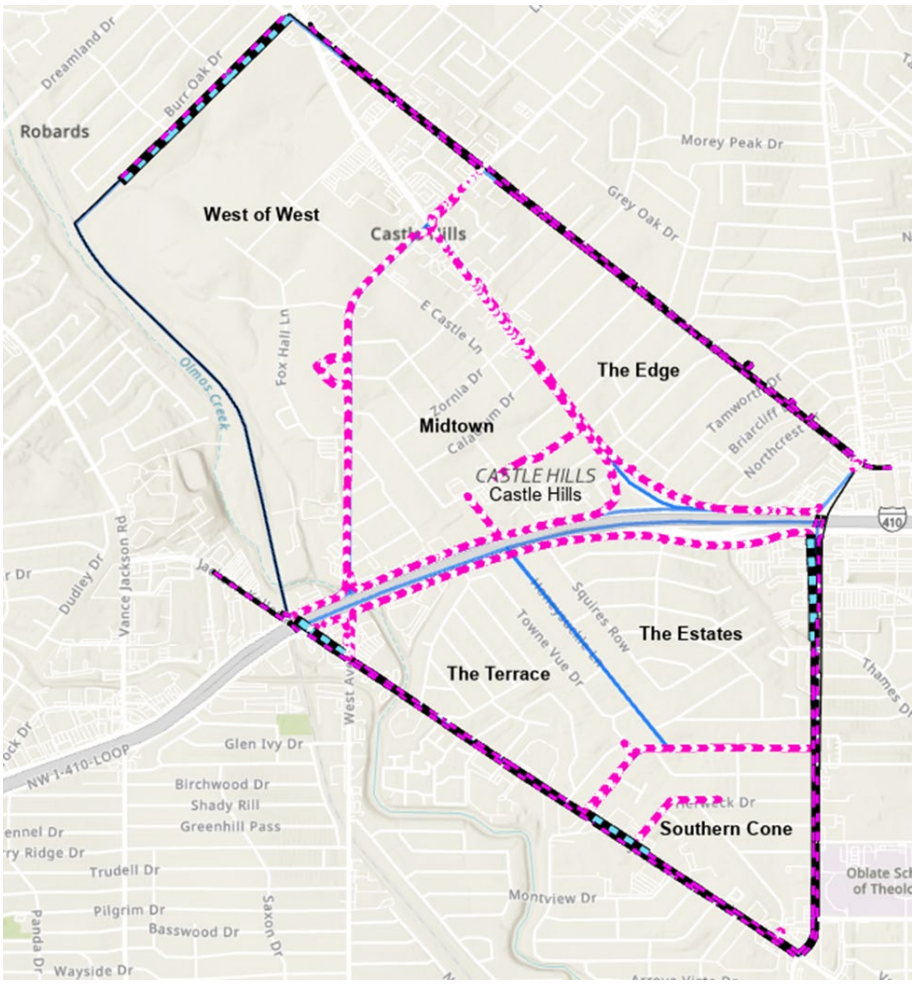

*Phase Two Street Reconstruction – 2020 Certificates of Obligation*



*Image Courtesy of LPA*

### *Sidewalks & Walking*

Much space in this report has been dedicated to walking and sidewalks (please see Transportation Section of Chapter III); but it is worth emphasizing the need for safety in the city's walking paths. The sidewalks that do exist are for the most part immediately adjacent to the streets and do not feel safe. Traffic on NW Military, for example, despite the 35 MPH speed limit, often travels at 40 – 45 MPH. Future sidewalks should have a separation between driving and walking paths, ideally a landscaped area at least five feet wide. See example nearby and map of existing sidewalks.

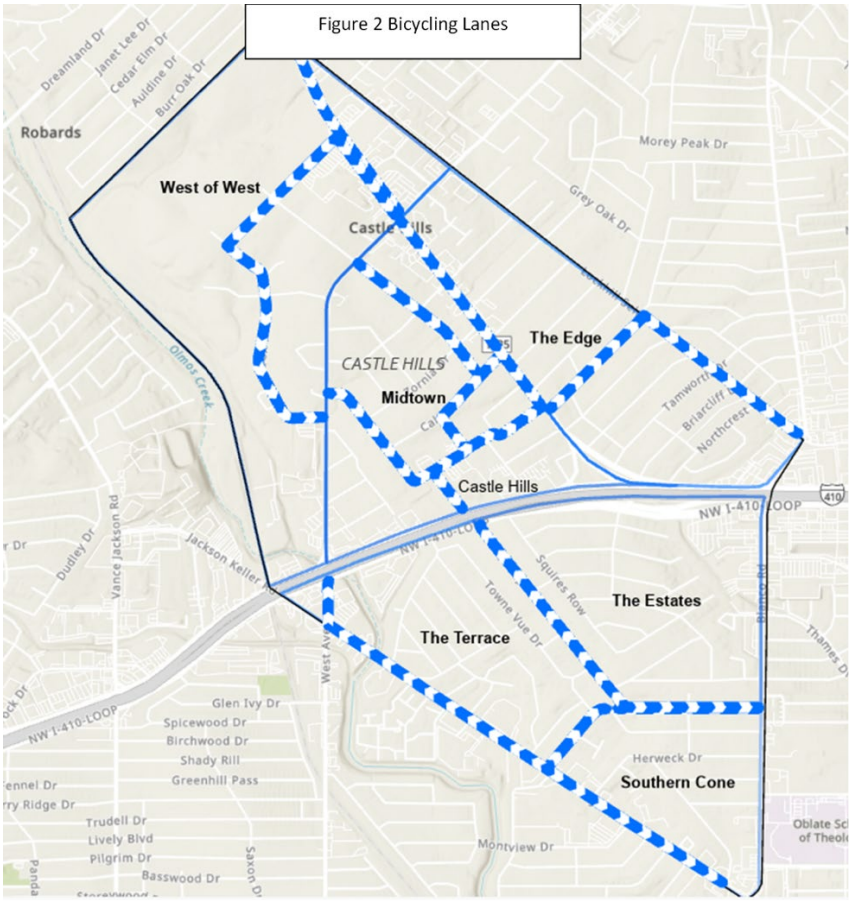



*Existing Sidewalks in Castle Hills (CPAC)*

# Live

## *Bike Paths*

Like sidewalks, this topic was discussed at length in the Transportation section of Chapter III. It is worth reiterating the need for safety of these paths, especially when located on the major streets. A diagram of proposed bike paths is shown below.




*Proposed Bike Paths in Castle Hills (CPAC)*






*Safe Bike Lane Opportunities – Images Courtesy of LPA*

## CITY FACILITIES

### *City Hall, Fire Station, & Public Works Buildings*



*Castle Hills City Hall Rear View*

The Castle Hills City Hall building houses the Police Department, Council Chambers, and Administrative offices. Conceptual floor plans and exterior sketches are presented in the City Facilities Section of Chapter 4, with the intent to overcome the lack of functionality and 'churchy' image of the facility. Please refer to that chapter for details on the concept.

### *Fire Station*



*Castle Hills Fire Station*

The Fire Station recently received $34,000 in funding to complete phase III of their building updating. This allows for painting and installation of flooring in the public area, offices and classroom, as well as painting and replacement of tile and countertops in two public restrooms.

### *Public Works Building*

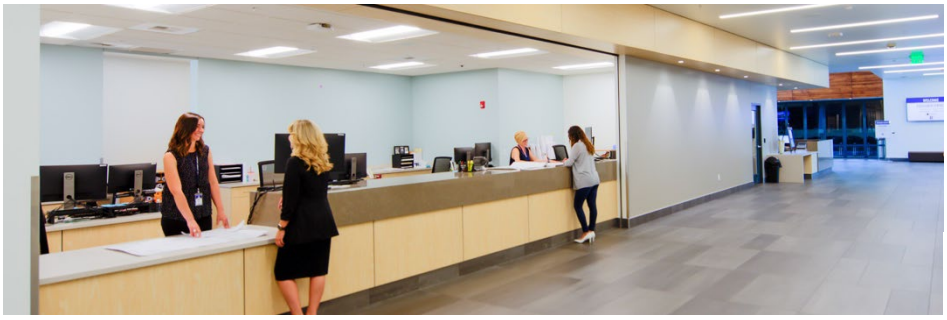



*Castle Hills Public Works*

Public Works has requested a replacement storage shed, since the existing shed is in poor condition. They have also requested a shed for storage of city hall and Police Department materials.

### *Municipal Court*

Municipal Court has long desired to be more accessible to the public, and to have sufficient space for their staff members. Funding has been preciously set aside for this purpose, but never used. One idea to consider is that of an open counter in the building lobby, from which residents and visitors could have access to court staff as well as permit staff, to provide more accessible and faster service.



*Richland, Washington City Hall Interior – Image Courtesy of LPA*

# Live

## CYBERSECURITY

In December of 2021, City Council received a briefing from the City's IT consultant on the state of their IT infrastructure, to include cybersecurity issues. A number of recommendations were made, and later this year Council approved approximately $70,000 for improvements to this infrastructure. These improvements are underway at this time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Short Term*

1) Continue to maintain City Hall as a warm space and cold space when utilities such as electrical power or water supply fail.

2) Review the Emergency Preparedness Plan periodically and make recommendations when needed.

3) Resist approval of multi-story cellular towers, except on Loop 410, as they are an eyesore to the City's beautiful neighborhoods.

4) See bike path and walking path proposals in Chapter III.

5) Hire consultants to conduct a study of the feasibility of a redesign of the City Hall building versus constructing a new building. Keep in mind the request for additional space for community activities such as learning, display of art, working with crafts, etc. and of the inaccessibility of the Community Room during voting periods. Also be mindful of the need for more accessibility for visitors to municipal court and to the permit office.




Image Courtesy of LPA

*Long Term*

1) Continue to support the repair of City streets and drainage issues which cause local flooding. Coordinate with the City of San Antonio to help them understand the impact of development to Castle Hills streets and flooding, and work toward solutions which share financial responsibility.

2) Do an analysis of the condition of all of the City's alleys and develop a program to keep them in good condition. Where repair needs are significant, add the projects to the Capital Improvement Plan. Consider developing some alleys into pleasant walking or biking paths.

3) Consider improving Public Works' storage facility.

4) Continue to monitor cybersecurity threats to City infrastructure as well as citizens homes and businesses, making recommendations as needed.

# Live

## Public Safety and City Services

Since the inception of Castle Hills, we have taken great pride in public safety and the level of service provided our city departments.

The City of Castle Hills has independent Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments.



# Transportation

## EXISITNG CONDITIONS

### *Pedestrians*







*Pedestrians in Walkable Cities*

Castle Hills was built up mostly in the 1950s and 1960s in the heyday of suburban growth. An important key to the suburbs was the mobility the vehicle provided, offering convenient and reliable transportation to downtown or other areas in and around San Antonio where most of the jobs were. So walking was an after-thought to neighborhood development, and sidewalks were omitted from most streets.

But we live in a different world now, and the health benefits of walking and biking are widely acknowledged. In all of Castle hills neighborhoods, walkers, joggers and cyclists are seen in the early morning and late evening hours. They use the streets since there is no alternative. Some informal walking routes have been established in some neighborhoods. There was considerable agreement in the community meetings that sidewalks, or at least a safer alternative to walking in the street, be provided. Many expressed concern about their children's' safety, even on sidewalks that are immediately adjacent to the street. A walking path with some separation from traffic was preferred.

### *Bicycles*





*Images of Cyclists in San Antonio*

Although not quite as popular as walking, many residents ride their bikes within the neighborhoods, occasionally riding up NW Military to Hardberger Park. But there are no dedicated bike paths in the city, so safety is a critical concern. Bike paths were requested in the surveys as well as the community meetings. A safe connection to the San Antonio trail system, perhaps via Hardberger Park, was requested.

### *Vehicles*

Vehicles are the single most utilized mode of transportation in Castle Hills. Major arteries Loop 410,

which carries nearly 300,000 vehicles daily, and NW Military Highway which carries 30,000 vehicles daily, contain the vast majority of traffic through our city. West Avenue and, Jackson Keller and Lockhill-Selma are also busy, carrying thousands of daily. The many collector streets which provide access to Castle Hills homes carry generally light traffic, although there are cut-thru issues in some neighborhoods, especially the Edge and the Terrace.



*San Antonio Street Traffic*

After decades of neglect, these streets are being improved thanks to a new maintenance program and a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) approved by City Council in 2018. Street maintenance addresses those streets which need minor repair such as seal coating or mill and overlay, and is funded through the general budget and 20% of the revenue from the electronic signs. The major repair where streets have to be rebuilt from the base on up, is funded with borrowed money. The first round, recently completed, was funded with certificates of obligation with a 20-year payback. These efforts resulted in the percentage of streets in good condition progressing from about one quarter of streets to about two-thirds of streets. A second round is to be voted on in the November election. If passed, all the major street repairs will be completed.




### *TxDOT Plan for Loop 410*

TxDOT is planning a major improvement to Loop 410 from McCullough to West Avenue. The goal is to reduce accidents resulting in fatalities. There will be impact to Castle Hills, with changes to entry and exit ramps into our City. A number of citizens, the Mayor and City Council have all voiced objections to some of the elements of the plan. Of concern were the increased use of access roads for traffic, additional noise from increased traffic on the main highway and the access roads, and the proximity of the newly placed West Avenue exit to Gladiola, among other items. Please see the appendix for more information on this plan. A graphic describing a portion of the plan is nearby.

Texas Department of Transportation

*Public Transportation*

VIA Metropolitan Transit provides the region's public transportation, offering bus service to 14 member cities through 96 routes serviced by 7 transit centers. There are five bus routes that pass through Castle Hills, including bus numbers 2, 97, 534, 552 and 651, giving residents and workers access to the vast majority of the San Antonio area.




- The number 2 bus runs from the San Antonio Convention Center, along the full length of Blanco in Castle Hills, terminating at Wurzbach Parkway.
- The number 97 bus runs from downtown, through West Ave. and Lockhill-Selma as it passes through Castle Hills, going as far north as the Rim and University Heights.
- Number 534 originates at North Star Transit Center, runs the full length of NW Military Highway in Castle Hills, continues through the Medical Center, terminating at Ingram Park Mall.




- The number 552 originates at WW White Road and E. Southcross, travels on Hwy. 90 and IH 410 South, moving across IH 410 Eastbound through Castle Hills, terminating at the Kel-Lac Transit Center.
- The 651 bus originates at Fredericksburg Road and Mary Louise St., travels north on various roads, winding up on Jackson-Keller as it passes through Castle Hills, terminating just west of Castle Hills.

VIA offers other services including VIA Trans, a special bus service designed for elderly and physically and mentally challenged individuals. They also offer express service, rides to parks and the airport, and Park and Ride service. Castle Hills pays for the VIA Trans service, an idea that became controversial a few years back. Participants in the Comprehensive Planning process were overwhelming in favor of keeping VIA.

# Live

## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

### *Improved Walkability*

One of the questions posed by the survey taken in February 2020 was 'What do you want to preserve and/or improve within your neighborhood?'

- One of the highly rated responses was to improve walkability through the use of sidewalks, crossings, and bike trails. Safety should be kept upmost in the minds of planners. Sidewalks which directly abut major streets or highways are not considered safe. Sidewalks should be set back from these roadways with a barrier, even as simple as a grass plot, in order to enhance the safety of pedestrians.




- Create linear parks from drainage ditches and channels. A linear park, otherwise known as stream restoration, is an example of low-impact development which seeks to remove the eyesore of unfinished or concrete drainage channels and, using appropriate soil base, trees, shrubs and grasses, creates a more beautiful walkway for people. In areas where there is enough width, benches could be located to provide a resting place for walkers. San Antonio has constructed many of these in recent years, notably the San Pedro Creek restoration. This would also be a great boon to the green space in Castle Hills.

*Create Bike Trails in Castle Hills*

There are many bike enthusiasts in Castle Hills and they advocated for safe bike trails on our major streets as well as the neighborhood streets. They would like to connect to the San Antonio trail system as much as possible.



### *Vehicular Control*

Residents expressed the desire to reduce cut-through vehicles, which are a particular problem in the Edge as well as the Terrace. This suggests an examination of speed limits in Castle Hills. They also would like to re-examine the no-parking zones nearby Lee High School, which may no longer be necessary as the school built lots of parking on campus.

### *Better Connection: North and South and to Green Spaces*

One of the chief goals is to better connect the north and south neighborhoods. Loop 410, like any highway, is a large barrier to the connecting of Castle Hills neighborhoods. The Honeysuckle intersection, with its quieter traffic, seems a safer place to begin this effort. The intersections at Blanco and West Avenue are very busy, suggesting greater investment to keep pedestrian (and bikers) safe.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Improve Walkability*

Create safe walking paths throughout the City, including major streets so that each neighborhood will have the opportunity for safe walking. Walk paths should connect to all schools, major businesses such as HEB, and shopping areas. Each neighborhood should have it's own internal path wherever possible. Some of these paths have been in use for some time.

A few areas have sidewalks already, but it is recommended that existing sidewalks be studied for safety. If a path directly abuts a major street, citizens do not feel safe and will not use it. Sidewalks should be somewhat removed from traffic by a buffer, ideally landscape, wherever possible. If there are areas where a sidewalk cannot be installed, it is recommended that the street be striped in an appropriate, safe manner for this purpose.

NW Military Highway is envisioned as Castle Hills' Main Street, and so the walking path should be studied to travel through the right-of-way, ideally on the east side of the highway where there is shade. This path should be shaded by trees wherever possible, recognizing that it may be some years before shade is substantial. This shaded path could exist from the most northern part of NW Military, south to about Carolwood, even further south if feasible.

*Images Courtesy of LPA*





There should also be new striped crosswalks at NW Military to facilitate access to walking paths and commercial facilities on the west side of the highway. These could be used by school children headed to Castle Hills Elementary, Castle Hills Christian School or St. George's; residents walking to City Hall; or shoppers going to the businesses and restaurants on the west side of the highway.

Connection to San Antonio Trails. Create a walking path to reach Hardberger Park, where the City could connect to the extensive San Antonio trail system. Keep abreast of San Antonio trail plans, as Blanco Road is seen as a future part of the trail system, and potentially a point of connection for Castle Hills walkways.

*Linear Park (Stream Restoration) Opportunities:*

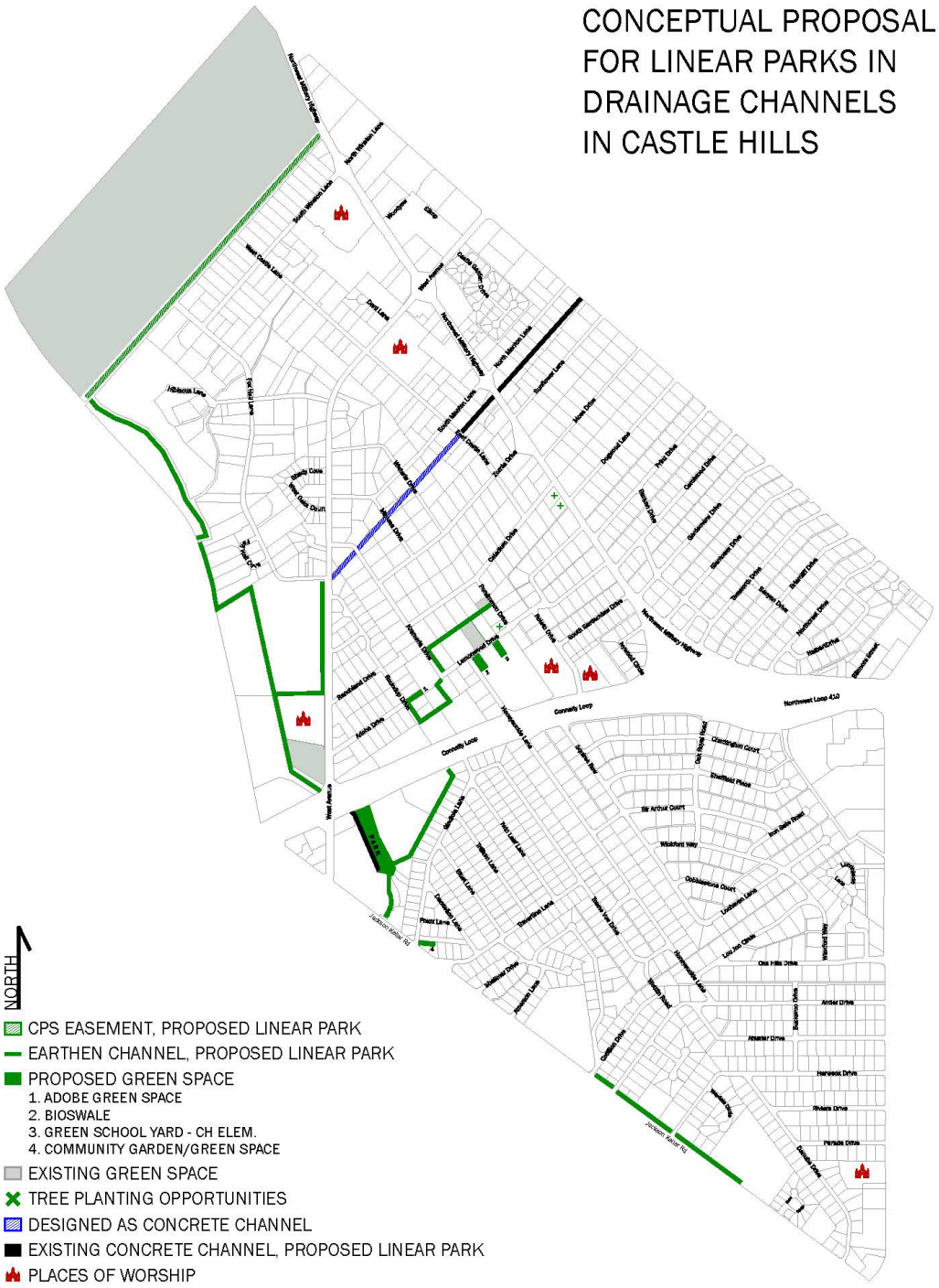
Transforming the unsightly drainage ditch along Jackson-Keller into a linear park that could provide a safe walking path for the students at Jackson-Keller Elementary and Lee High School. It could run from about Travertine on the north (ideally from the channel behind HEB) south to Blanco. Some areas may have enough width for a sidewalk only. Improved crosswalks at Jackson-Keller would be required.

Beginning at the south end of Roundup, turning east through the channel behind the SAMM building, turning north before Honeysuckle, crossing under Lemonwood and continuing in the channel that runs to the west and north of City Hall, connecting to the open land to the north of the Public Works building.

# Live

Another opportunity that could benefit the West of West neighborhood is at the CPS easement that runs at the southern end of the Boy Scout camp. This is a relatively straight, flat stretch of land with power poles at regular intervals. It runs to the flood plain at the railroad tracks which form the western border of Castle Hills. The linear park could continue south where it eventually goes under Loop 410 into the large concrete culvert behind HEB. This area itself could be a large park if the hydraulics can be engineered satisfactorily.

Rework existing concrete channel into a linear park starting at Lockhill-Selma between Manton and Sunflower, continuing through mid-town across E. Castle, Wisteria, Mimosa, and Krameria, crossing under West Ave. and connecting to the channel in front of Antonian, turning west to the channel that runs along the railroad, and runs under Loop 410 to connect to the large concrete channel behind HEB. This impacts four of the six neighborhoods. It is complicated by the recent completion of design for a portion of the channel as a concrete channel.


CONCEPTUAL PROPOSAL
FOR LINEAR PARKS IN
DRAINAGE CHANNELS
IN CASTLE HILLS
NORTH
CPS EASEMENT, PROPOSED LINEAR PARK
EARTHEN CHANNEL, PROPOSED LINEAR PARK
PROPOSED GREEN SPACE
1. ADOBE GREEN SPACE
2. BIOSWALE
3. GREEN SCHOOL YARD - CH ELEM.
4. COMMUNITY GARDEN/GREEN SPACE
EXISTING GREEN SPACE
TREE PLANTING OPPORTUNITIES
DESIGNED AS CONCRETE CHANNEL
EXISTING CONCRETE CHANNEL, PROPOSED LINEAR PARK
PLACES OF WORSHIP

# Live

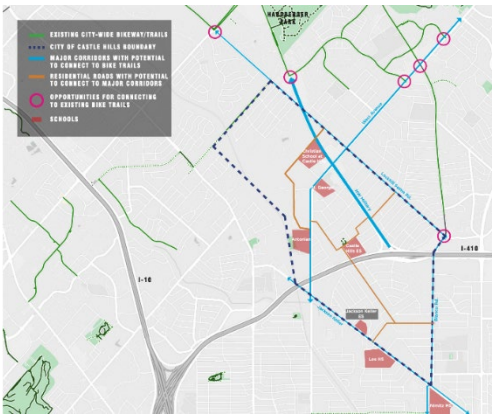
### *Create Bike Lanes*

Currently there are no bike paths in Castle Hills. Bike paths are recommended to connect to the San Antonio trail system, as well as provide safe bike lanes to residents in each of the neighborhoods:

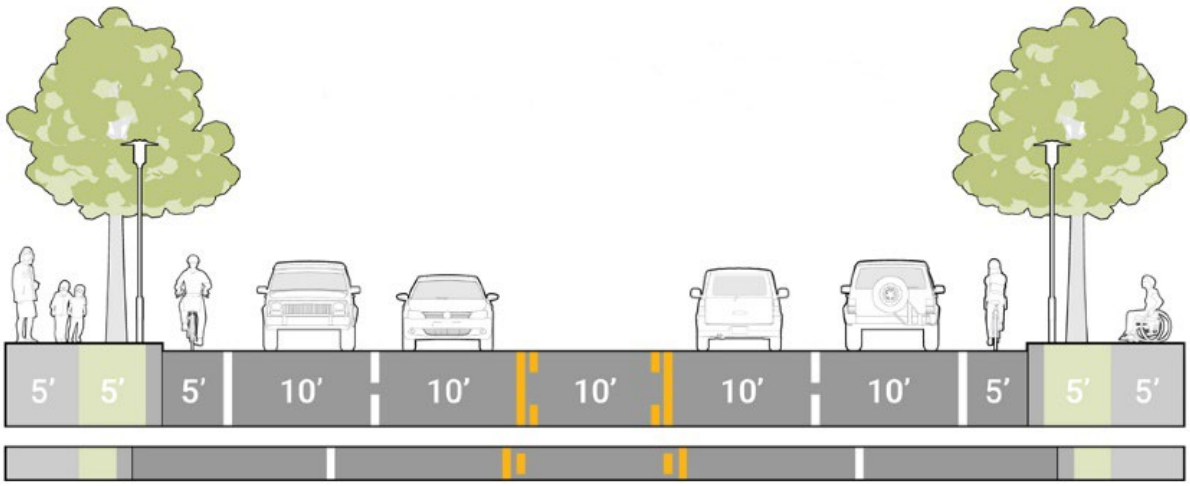
- Provide bike lanes to connect to major destinations in Castle Hills such as schools, HEB, and major shopping areas. Assure each neighborhood has a bike path and can connect to the San Antonio trail system.

- Working in cooperation with the City of San Antonio and TxDOT, connect to Hardberger Park from NW Military Highway. Although a bike lane and sidewalk exist from approximately Braesview to the Park, these do not feel safe with NW Military traffic buzzing by at 40-45 MPH. Perhaps a safer route could be devised/designed.

- In a visit with TxDOT last year, committee members discussed the idea of using NW Military for a bike lane by squeezing down the width of existing lanes. TxDOT planners were open to this idea, as long as no lanes were removed. They noted that they have no future plan for the right-of-way, so using it for a walk/bike path is feasible. This concept should be explored and implemented if feasible and affordable.




*Images courtesy of LPA*



### *Vehicular Control*



*Images courtesy of LPA*

- Discuss and implement strategies for reducing cut-through driving with CHPD and traffic control officer.
- Re-evaluate daytime no-parking zones, particularly near Lee High School.
- Re-evaluate city-wide speed limit of 30 MPH, as well as speed limits on major roads, NW Military (TxDOT), Lockhill-Selma (San Antonio), West Avenue and Jackson-Keller (San Antonio).

### *Better Connection: North and South and to Green Spaces*






*Could a bridge like this in Ireland span Loop 410 at Blanco?*

- Study Loop 410 intersection at Honeysuckle to provide better lighting at the underpass, bike and walking paths, addition of some landscaping, and dressing up of overpass, with branding for Castle Hills. It should be an attractive place where residents would like to take a walk or bike, thus encouraging the connection of the neighborhoods.
- A lesser priority is to study the Loop 410 intersections at west Avenue and Blanco Road to achieve the same purpose. Nearby is an example of a pedestrian bridge in Ireland that could serve as inspiration for a solution.
- Another priority is to connect the walk and bike paths to any new green spaces created in Castle Hills. See Chapter Five for a discussion of possible new green spaces.

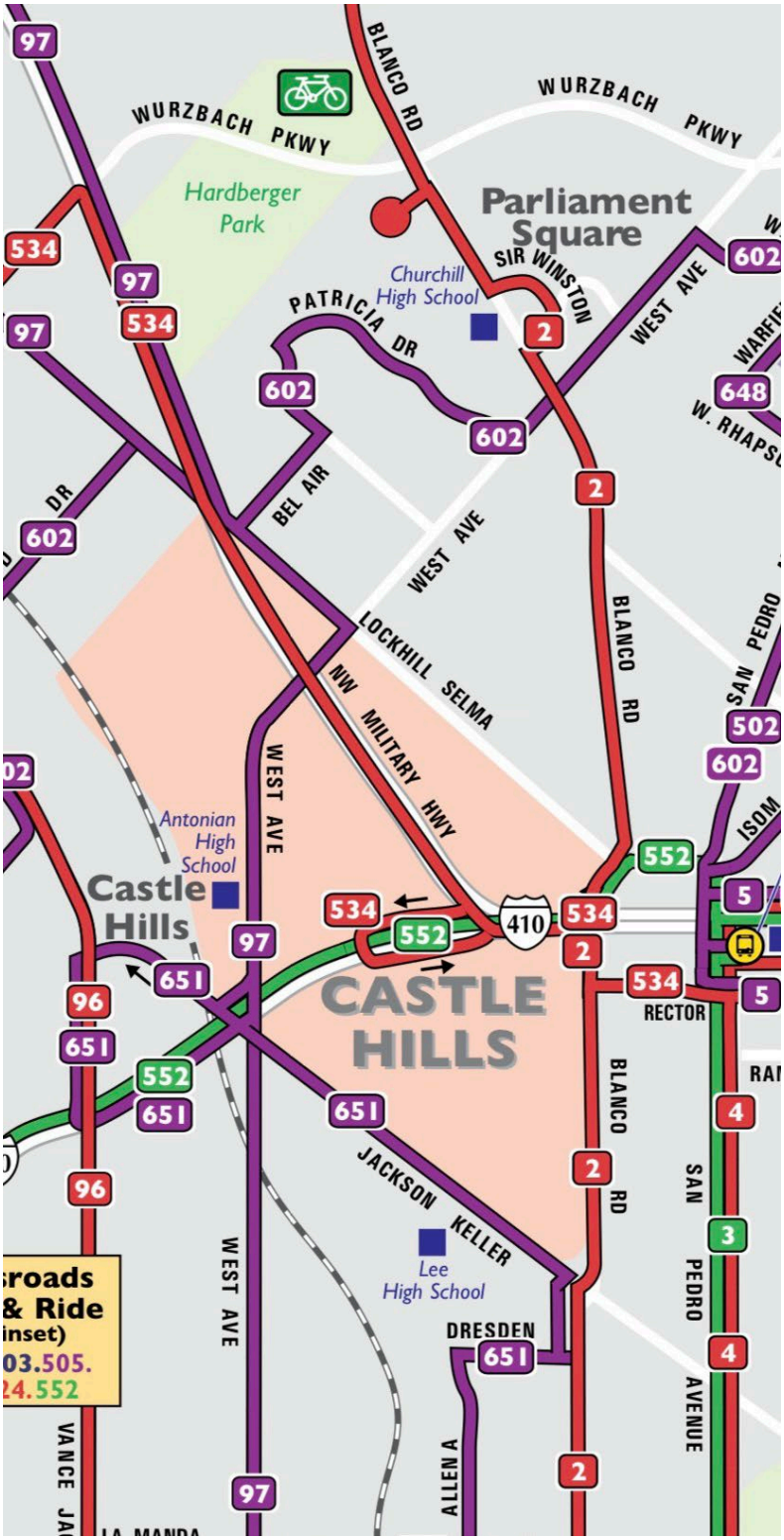
# Live

*Public Transportation*

- Conduct a survey from time to time to gauge the usefulness of VIA routes to residents, visitors, and workers in Castle Hills. When appropriate, advocate for bus service that better serves Castle Hills stakeholders.

- Continue to support and advocate for VIA and VIA Trans, which serves the more vulnerable members of our community.

- Work with TxDOT to develop the plan for NW Military as Castle Hills' Main Street, incorporating bike lanes, walking paths and bus stops which best serve Castle Hills stakeholders.





*Castle Hills Elementary Classroom*
*Circa 1959*



*Castle Hills Elementary (Modern)*




*Jackson-Keller Elementary*

## Education

The majority of people move to Castle Hills in spite of not because of public educational opportunities for their children. This statement was shared throughout the city survey and in one-on-one discussion with citizens. Education was not in the pro list but in the con list when choosing a home in the city.

The City of Castle Hills belongs to the Northeast Independent School District (NEISD) for public school attendance. The city is clearly divided by the district into students north and south of Loop 410.

Students who live north of the Loop attend Castle Hills Elementary, Jackson Middle School, and Legacy of Educational Excellence (LEE) High School. Students south of the Loop attend Jackson-Keller Elementary School, Nimitz Middle School, and Legacy of Educational Excellence (LEE) High School.

Most people are shocked to find out that not all homes are zoned for the same schools. Part of the typical small-town experience that would encourage families with young children to choose Castle Hills would be to develop friends from kindergarten through graduating high school is not available in our city.

Then it gets even more complicated as NEISD offers 12 magnet programs for elementary, middle school and high schools that divide the public-school populations even further. Castle Hills Elementary is a year-round magnet program offering a different schedule than all other elementary schools in NEISD. Nimitz Middle School offers a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) magnet for 6th through 8th grade that continues through 12th grade at LEE High School. LEE High School also offers Northeast School for the Arts magnet program, and a separate school the International School of Americas.



*Legacy of Educational Excellence HS*
*(Formerly known as Robert E. Lee HS)*

# Live

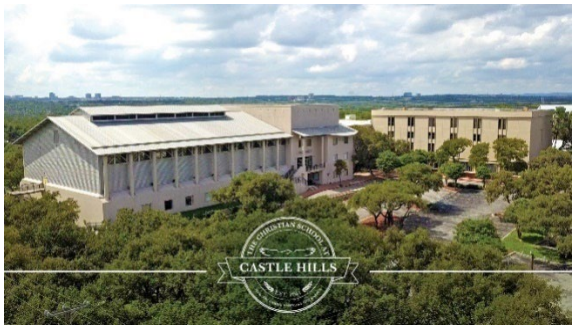
The magnet programs are on two different ways to gain entry. One is a lottery system that selects students in a draw of all applicants the other is an audition process to select students' for their programs. This divides the public-school students even more as the lottery student's grade point averages (GPAs) are calculated differently than students who have to audition for a magnet program. Those that audition for seats are given a weighted average to any class only offered by the program allowing them to outperform students in another program on the same campus.

Living in Castle Hills, magnet programs offer a buffer between a public school that you might not feel comfortable having a child attend; however, if they do not receive a seat in one of them your only other choice is private school.

There are several private schools located within the boundaries of the city. Antonian College Preparatory School High School is a Catholic school that offers ninth through twelfth grade. St. George Episcopal offers pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Castle Hills Christian School offers pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation of CPAC that the city develop an ongoing relationship with NEISD and the local private schools in order to build partnerships. Building relationships and cooperation between the City and the educational institutions will help create connections within the community and preserve the or improve the educational opportunities available to our citizens locally.




*Castle Hills Christian School*



*St. George Episcopal*



*Antonian College Preparatory HS*

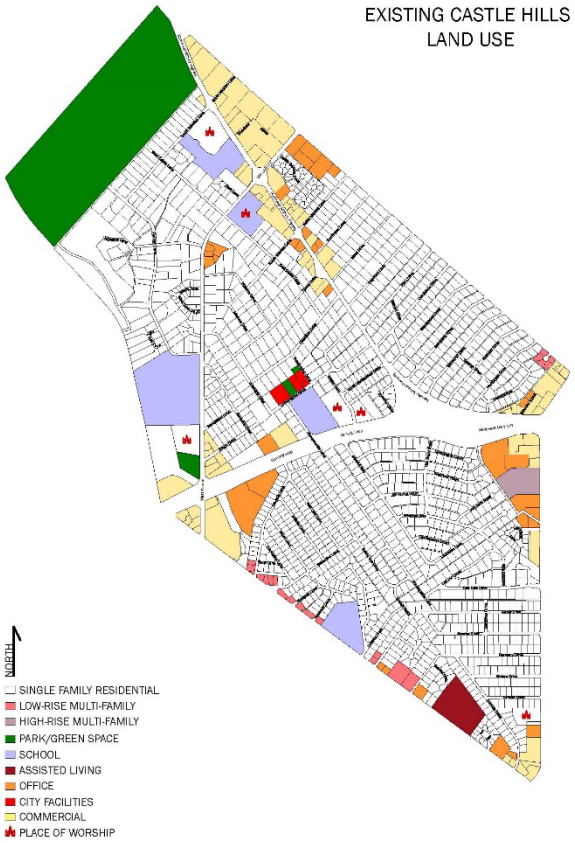
## Housing – Existing and Opportunities

Housing in Castle Hills is predominately single-family homes many of which are situated on large lots. For our city a "large lot" is one that is over three-quarters of an acre. There are areas of town where duplexes or garden homes have been built. We have little in the way of apartment or multi-family housing.

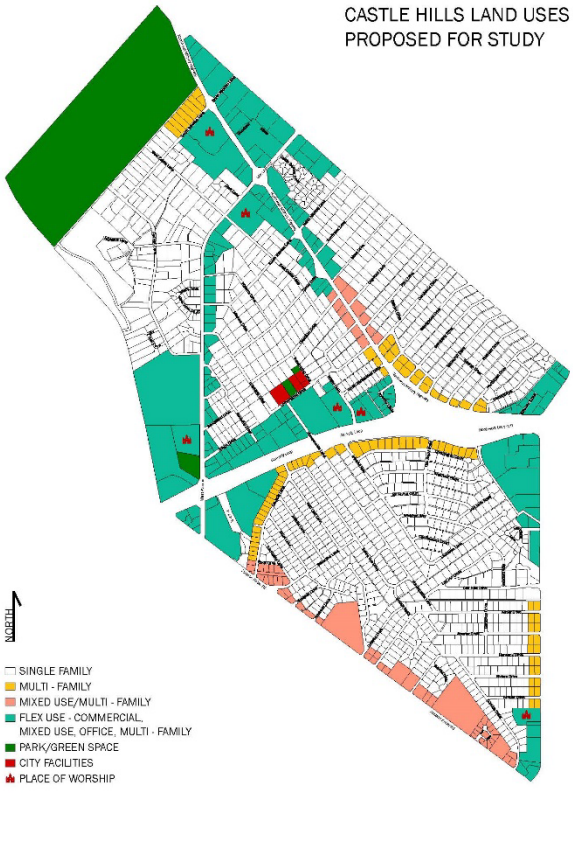
The Committee has spent hours looking at the current zoning map of the city looking for opportunities to address citizen concerns about noise and public safety. One solution to some of the concerns is considering the rezoning of some areas of the city in order to provide better buffers from noise and safety issues.

The first map is the current land use map. The second is a proposal that identifies areas were flexible land use opportunities exist. These areas would provide a sort of "wall around the Castle." This flexible would give owners selling a larger market for their property as well. See Chapter IV for further land use discussion on this topic.

EXISTING CASTLE HILLS
LAND USE




CASTLE HILLS LAND USES
PROPOSED FOR STUDY



# Live

## Beautification and Property Maintenance

The survey brought to light that some residents are frustrated by the lack of property maintenance in parts of the city. Many reasons are to blame, but the committee has looked at this issue extensively.

It is recommended that the City undertake a Beautification program to encourage residents and businesses to keep their property looking trim and sharp at all times.

# 4 Grow

LAND USE AND ZONING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CITY FACILITIES

PUBLIC ART

# Grow

## Land Use and Zoning

### CURRENT LAND USE

#### *Residential Property*

The vast majority, or approximately 92% of Castle Hills' land, is residential in use.

Most of these properties are single family homes, with just a few areas with duplex homes, and only two multi-family rental properties on Jackson-Keller. The multi-family properties are largely in The Edge, Terrace, and Southern Cone neighborhoods.

There are four PUDs in Castle Hills, typically with smaller lots and homes. Castle Hills Gardens is the exception, with larger homes on the small lots. The PUDs are spread throughout the city, with one each on the Edge, West of West, Estates, and Southern Cone neighborhoods.

Most of the West of West neighborhood was recently designated as a rural residential area, meaning that no lot can be less than three quarters of an acre in size. This is expected to prevent the carving up of large lots into smaller ones, helping to preserve the country feel of the neighborhood.

#### *Commercial Property*

Commercial properties, which make up about 8% of Castle Hills' land, are spread throughout the city, mostly on the highways and major streets. There is a combination of retail, restaurant, office and some multi-use properties in the city.

Of the approximately 350 businesses in Castle Hills, there are about 10 office properties, 30 restaurants, just a couple multi-use (retail/office) properties and numerous retail businesses.

Some of these office and retail properties are a bit tired and are candidates for redevelopment.




*Dutch Brothers Coffee*




*Golden Chick*



*The Bank of San Antonio*



*Pape-Dawson Engineers, Inc.*

New development has given some of Castle Hills' commercial real estate a refreshing new look. The latest of these are:

- Dutch Brothers Coffee at the southeast corner of Loop 410 and West Ave.
- The new retail center at the northeast corner of Loop 410 and West Ave.
- Mosaic Oaks, a two-building office complex at 6810 West Ave.
- The Pape-Dawson building at Loop 410, just east of Dutch Brothers.
- The Bank of San Antonio building, on Loop 410 just east of Pape-Dawson.
- Golden Chick near the intersection of NW Military and Lockhill-Selma.

There are just two large commercial parcels of vacant land remaining in the city. One is a 4.7-acre tract located at the southeast corner of NW Military and N. Winston. This is zoned 'G' General Business and is suitable for a commercial use such as retail, office or restaurant. It would also make a good site for a multi-use or multi-family residential project.

The other vacant site is a 3.1-acre tract located just west of the northwest corner of Honeysuckle and Loop 410. It is also zoned 'G' General Business and is suitable for an office, hotel, retail or multi-use project.

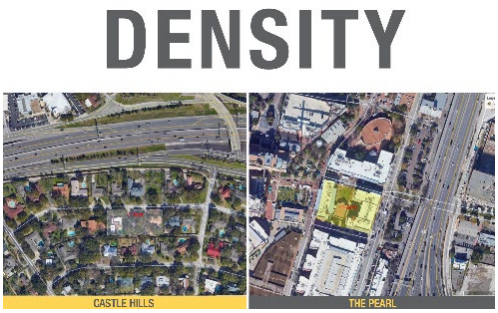
### *Tax Exempt Property*

Approximately 25% of Castle Hills property is tax-exempt, which means the City provides all services to these areas without any tax collected. To address this, a moratorium on designation of any new tax-exempt property is proposed. Additionally, it would make sense to develop a relationship with the tax-exempt entities to come up with a program where they might help the City, perhaps in the form of community service projects or some method to assist elderly or challenged citizens with basic chores such as yard maintenance or grocery shopping.

## BACKGROUND – WHY CONSIDER LAND USE CHANGE?

### *Overall Goals of Comprehensive Plan*

The overarching goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to create a more livable, walkable, healthy, vital and prosperous City for all stakeholders, including citizens, staff, and visitors. The Plan does not intend to change the essence of Castle Hills, with its lovely single-family homes on large lots and beautiful tree canopy. Rather, it proposes to enhance the City's desirability with proposed walkable paths, bike paths and other amenities as described elsewhere in this report. It also proposes that we study changes in land use along the highway and major street edges only. These edges, with their busy, noisy traffic, especially at rush hours, are less than ideal for single family homes. The Plan proposes an alternative, taking a long-term view, with changes beginning in the next few years and lasting for a period of perhaps 20 – 25 years. One potential goal is to implement land use changes in time for the City's 100th anniversary in 2051.




*Images Courtesy of GSC Architects*



PEDESTRIAN AS PRIORITY

### *Locations, Impact of Land Use Changes*

The study of Land Use changes is proposed in five highway/major street areas of the City:

1) Lots fronting the east and west sides of NW Military south of Moss Drive down to about Halbert Drive could allow mixed-use or higher density residential projects such as townhomes or condominiums. These would be no higher than three-four stories in height, with adequate buffers to the single-family lots required.

2) On the east side of West Avenue from about Wisteria Drive south to Ranchland Drive, additional retail or office zoning on those lots fronting on West Avenue is proposed. These would be two-three stories high, with adequate buffers to the single-family homes required.

3) On Jackson-Keller from about Cotillion Drive continuing southeast to Blanco and turning north up Blanco to the Korean United Methodist Church, mixed-use or higher density residential projects such as townhomes or condominiums would be permitted on

those lots which front onto the road. Like the other areas, these would be no higher than three-four stories in height, with adequate buffers to the single-family lots abutting required.

4) On Jackson-Keller from Jackson-Keller Elementary on the south to Gladiola Lane on the north, turning north on Gladiola to the south end to the Loop 410 on the north, townhomes and condominiums would be permitted. Similarly, on south Loop 410 from Gladiola to the drainage structure on Chattington Court, townhomes and condominiums would also be permitted. All of these would be no higher than three-four stories in height, with adequate buffers to the single-family lots required.

5) The vacant lot at the corner of NW Military and North Winston Lane, currently zoned 'G' General Business, would allow a higher-density residential use such as townhomes, condominiums or apartments. Similarly, the lots across NW Military would be zoned for higher density residential.

These changes would have a significant impact on Castle Hills. For example, the mixed-use or townhome projects could add more residents and shoppers, thus increasing the overall vitality of the area. Both older and younger residents would have a smaller housing option with little maintenance to worry about. This would also provide more and different shopping experiences, making Castle Hills more of a destination for shoppers and residents alike. The bike lane envisioned (see Section IV) could connect from Jackson-Keller on the south, proceed up Honeysuckle and making its way to NW Military and connect to Hardberger Park. This would have the advantage of drawing San Antonians into Castle Hills to dine or shop. All of this would contribute to the prosperity of the City and bring additional sales tax and ad valorem tax into City coffers. This result dovetails nicely with the goals set out for economic development.

# Grow

### *Inclusion of Mixed-Use Properties*

The introduction of additional mixed-use properties could offer many advantages to the city:

- Provide additional retail (lower level) and residential or office space (upper levels).
- Where residential facilities are provided, even a modest increase in city population would provide additional incentive to businesses to locate in the city.
- In addition, the residences could be smaller and offer a less costly, more maintenance free option to Castle Hills citizens, old and young.

*The images below were provided courtesy of LPA*



*Design of walkway*

### *NW Military as Castle Hills' Main Street*

The Comprehensive Plan envisions NW Military Highway as Castle Hills' Main Street. This suggests the inclusion of walk and bike lanes on both sides of the highway, crosswalks to facilitate pedestrian movement across the highway, and the change in land use from single-family to mixed-use or denser residential. This would provide more pedestrian life on NW Military, enhancing community activity and retail activity.

In a preliminary meeting, TxDOT planners supported this idea as long as no traffic lanes are removed. The lanes could be reduced in width to accommodate the bike lane, and the right-of-way could be used for pedestrian pathways.



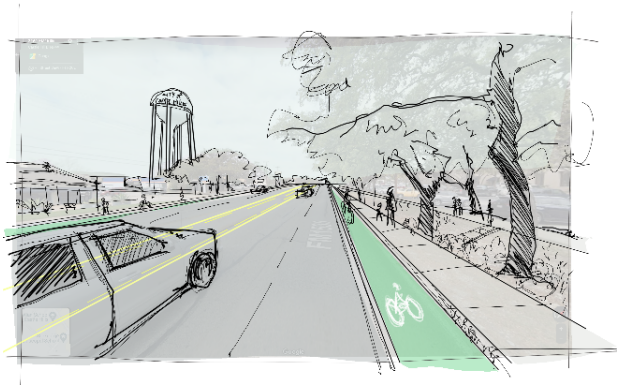
*Aerial image of NW Military Hwy*



*Image of Mixed-Use Development*



*Current view of NW Military Hwy*



*Street sketch with bike lane on NW Military Hwy*

## RECOMMENDATIONS – SHORT TERM (0 – 5 YEARS)

### *Vacant Land*

Study modification of land use and appropriate zoning to allow for, in addition to the General Business zoning, multi-family projects such as townhomes, condominiums or apartments.

### *Commercial Property Opportunities*

It is recommended that the following strategies for redevelopment and beautification be undertaken:

Beautification could include refacing existing buildings, parking lot refreshment or reconstruction, and the addition of landscape and lighting.

This Plan envisions coordination with the Economic Development Committee, who would be responsible for coming up with funding for incentives to support these efforts, or possibly assisting in the funding of smaller projects such as landscaping. The city should thoughtfully consider incentives for redevelopment and beautification of properties.

The plan recommends that a top priority would be properties on Jackson-Keller Road and the lower portion of Blanco where it intersects Jackson-Keller, mostly in the Southern Cone. The unsightly drainage ditch that runs along the Castle Hills side of Jackson-Keller is recommended to be transformed into a linear park, with beautiful trees and shrubs, benches, public art and a walking path. Properties should be redeveloped, or at least beautified with new facades and landscaping. It should look like it belongs in Castle Hills.

Attracting high end retailers is another recommendation advocated by the Plan. Castle Hills is already a destination for fine dining and there is no reason the same could not be true for retail – as it was in its early days. A strategy should be developed for marketing Castle Hills, with one goal to bring in high end businesses who could benefit from the central location, access to highways, and more affluent population.

Similarly, additional fine restaurants should be sought to provide even more critical mass for these establishments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS – LONG TERM (5+ YEARS)

### *Lots on Highways and Major Streets*

Modify Land Use and Zoning as proposed in Section II.b above.

### *Commercial Property Opportunities*

It is recommended that the following strategies for redevelopment and beautification be undertaken:

Redevelopment could include complete reconstruction of buildings or renovation, both exterior and interior. This report suggests that the city partner with landowners and developers to help make those decisions, which will greatly depend on financial performance. Incentives should be considered in furtherance of these recommendations, in coordination with the Economic Development Committee.

Parking requirements should be studied with an eye toward new approaches which suggest sharing parking facilities, with perhaps lesser parking for commercial uses. Similarly, residential parking ratios should be studied to provide no more than what is needed, and with the assurance that the ban on overnight street parking would not be jeopardized.

A parking facility might be considered on or adjacent to NW Military to relieve the retail facilities of the full parking need. This could also encourage those from outside Castle Hills to shop and dine here.

Lastly, develop NW Military Highway as Castle Hills' Main Street.

## ZONING DISTRICTS RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of the ideas above is to offer more land use options at the edges of Castle Hills' highways and major streets, without jeopardizing the single-family nature of the City.

## SHORT TERM

Once the study of land use changes is completed, this Plan recommends a study by planning professionals of zoning district changes suggested by the new land uses. The study should include analysis with respect to uses allowed, setbacks, parking, height requirements, land coverage, noise requirements and other criteria as may

be recommended by the Zoning Commission. It is further recommended that these studies be coordinated with the Zoning Commission and Economic Development Committee.

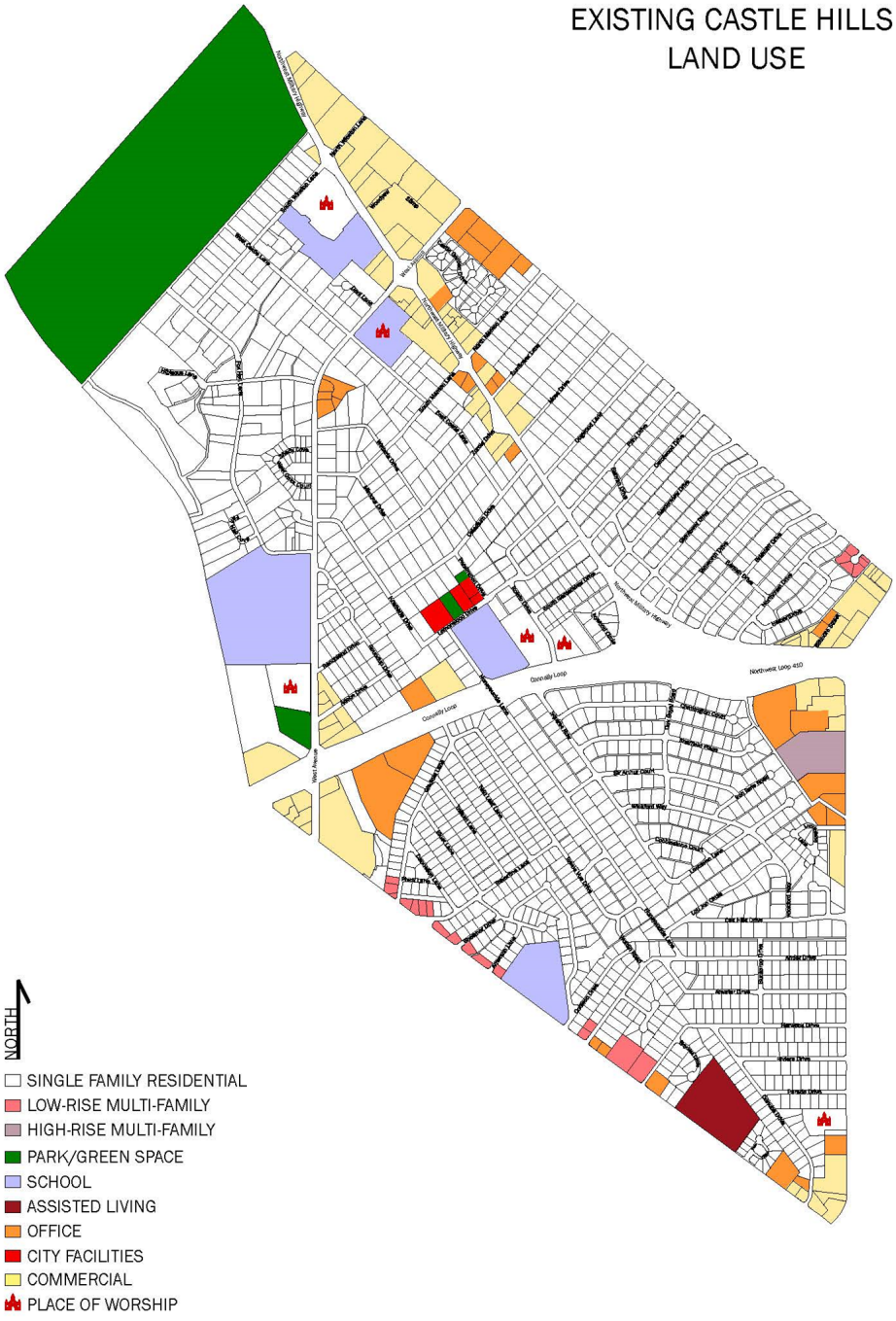
Landscape buffers are recommended where commercial property, to include residential units with four or more units, abuts to residential districts A or AA.

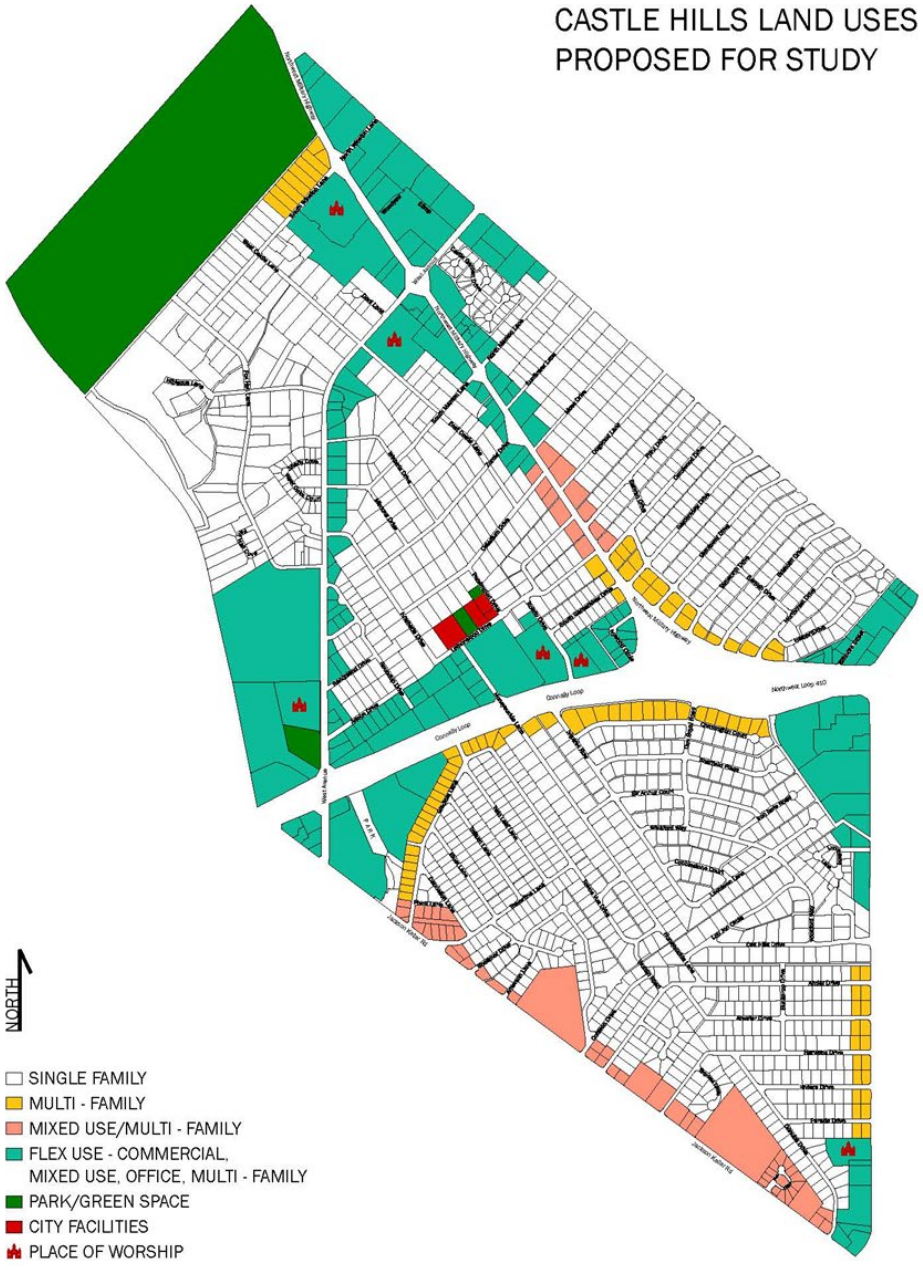
The Local Government Code requires that the Zoning Commission hold public hearings on any proposed changes before making a recommendation to City Council.

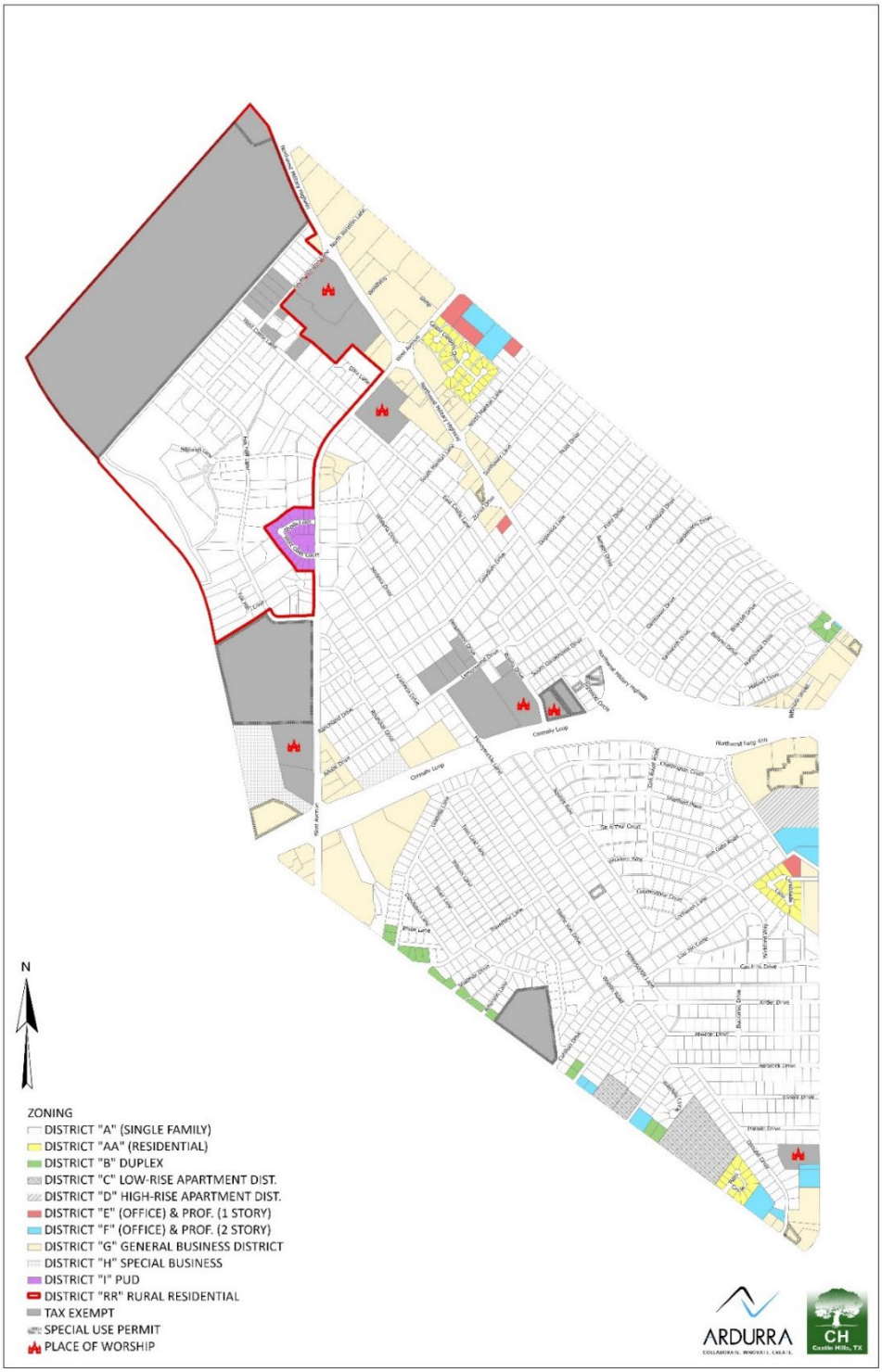
Other recommendations are:

### *Special Use Permits*

These allow special use of property not otherwise permitted under the zoning rules and may be granted by the zoning commission after a public hearing in accordance with the Castle Hills Zoning Ordinance or denied in accordance with section 50-500. Although a helpful tool that provides flexibility in the application of zoning regulations, Special Use Permits effectively dilute land use limitations and requirements imposed by the zoning code. A study of Special Use Permits is recommended to be incorporated into the main zoning study. Do they serve their purpose? Do they undermine the intent of the code? Is there an easier way to accomplish the same goals? Etc.


EXISTING CASTLE HILLS
LAND USE
NORTH
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
LOW-RISE MULTI-FAMILY
HIGH-RISE MULTI-FAMILY
PARK/GREEN SPACE
SCHOOL
ASSISTED LIVING
OFFICE
CITY FACILITIES
COMMERCIAL
PLACE OF WORSHIP


CASTLE HILLS LAND USES
PROPOSED FOR STUDY
NORTH
SINGLE FAMILY
MULTI - FAMILY
MIXED USE/MULTI - FAMILY
FLEX USE - COMMERCIAL,
MIXED USE, OFFICE, MULTI - FAMILY
PARK/GREEN SPACE
CITY FACILITIES
PLACE OF WORSHIP




*City of Castle Hills Zoning Map*

### *Tax Exempt Properties*

The city of Castle Hills occupies just 2.49 mi.² of land area. Approximately 25% of this area is dedicated to nonprofit use, with the largest tract being the 138-acre McGimsey Scout Camp at NW Military near South Winston Lane. Property taxes provide about $3.8 million of our approximately $7 million annual budget.

Castle Hills is made a richer, more diverse and giving community with the inclusion of the various churches and schools that occupy the tax-exempt properties. However it must be recognized that there is a cost to this, in the maintenance of streets and provision of police and fire services.

It is recommended that the City work closely with the leadership of these institutions, for the purpose of joining together in activities that could improve or help beautify our City. Property clean- up crews, perhaps made up of children and teachers from these schools, or displays of children's artwork in City facilities, would provide a great benefit to the community and possibly allow the children to accrue service hours as well. Another thought is to invite the clergy members to offer the invocation at all City Council meetings.

Any future conversion of property to tax-exempt use should be considered very carefully, keeping the impact to Castle Hills services and street maintenance in mind.

# Grow

## Economic Development

### GOAL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The overarching goal of economic development is the improvement of the quality of life for a municipality's citizens. The normal path toward this is, through a variety of strategies, to increase ad valorem and sales taxes. In recent years, a few large tracts of commercial land have been developed in Castle Hills, resulting in small increases in these taxes, but there are only two commercial tracts of notable size remaining in the City. At the same time, City budgets leave no room for amenities such as green spaces, community facilities or an improved City Hall, which citizens have deemed important as indicated through the comprehensive plan process. These are the kinds of improvements that can help improve the quality of life in Castle Hills.

### THE NEED FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CASTLE HILLS

The need for economic development is driven by many factors, including:

- Constant upward pressure on City budget
- Uncertainty of future revenue stream
- Avoid past failure to invest in infrastructure and facilities
- Potential to fund community amenities
- Provide the opportunity to be pro-active rather than reactive when financial stressors appear

### ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Research suggests that one of the critical factors in successful economic development efforts is the establishment of a leadership team. Charge the team with developing and implementing an economic development plan, with specific targets such as:

- To develop and update annually an economic development plan for Castle Hills, consistent with the City's Vision and Comprehensive Plan. As part of this plan, identify types of businesses that are

likely to align with workforce/residential trends and composition of Castle Hills and evaluate toward a business recruitment strategy.

- In coordination with City Council and the City Manager, identify resources and funding opportunities that support economic development initiatives such as creating an economic development staff position, establishing a process for applying for various grants, initiating engagement with regional business accelerators, etc.
- To develop and maintain an ongoing marketing campaign to promote Castle Hills as a great destination for both businesses and consumers of those products/services. Customize seasonal promotional strategies e.g. "shop at the mall, dine in Castle Hills" during peak holiday periods

### To develop a relationship with Castle Hills businesses in order to:

- Learn from their experiences about the perceived opportunities/challenges of creating a business in Castle Hills
- Identify issues of companies in maintaining and growing their businesses.
- Create a Castle Hills business ambassador program.
- Consult and coordinate with the Castle Hills Business Association on these and other issues as appropriate.
- To help provide a better-educated workforce and attract new residents and businesses, develop relationships with local colleges, universities and workforce organizations to create satellite community educational and economic development training tools in and for Castle Hills. In addition, monitor local schools' academic success as it relates to property values.
- To monitor and work with City staff to assure that zoning ordinances are up to date, the permitting and plan review process is easy, and city staff is trained to deliver excellent 'customer service.'
- Track progress in reports provided at least annually to City Council

# Grow

CPAC is pleased to note that City Council has recently established an Economic Development Committee (EDC), with a charter that reads very much like the notes above. We look forward to the speedy selection of EDC members and their getting to work!

# City Facilities and Services

## Proposed Architectural Modifications to City Hall

### THE ISSUES

The floor plan for the existing City Hall building is outdated and not functional for a number of reasons:




*City Hall Front View*



*City Hall Rear View*

- If a visitor arrives at the front door, there is no access to City administration, including permits, court, or the City Manager.
- Most staff spaces are cramped, with multiple people in spaces designed for one person.
- The Council Chambers is significantly oversized and underutilized.
- The community space is inaccessible from the inside and disconnected from the Commons.
- The police department lacks a well-sized and equipped training space.
- Public restrooms are in Police Department space.
- Lack of natural light in many areas.
- Finishes are tired and worn.

Both the floor plan and exterior building elevations of City Hall are outdated and sorely need a functional plan that meets today's demands.

### PROPOSED CONCEPT

Upon considerable study of the existing facilities, an Architect, a City Councilman who also is an Architect, with assistance from the Police Chief and City Manager have devised a proposed floor plan. This floor plan should provide significant improvement to the flaws found in the current floor plan. Proposed floor plans and elevations are shown nearby.

The plan "flips" the Community Room from the west end of the building to the east end (adjacent to the Commons) thus relinquishing the existing community room area for Police Department use. The Police Department, save for the holding cells and dispatcher's office, have been totally modified to better serve the demand for more space and functionality. With the new design, they will have new modernized exclusive bathrooms.

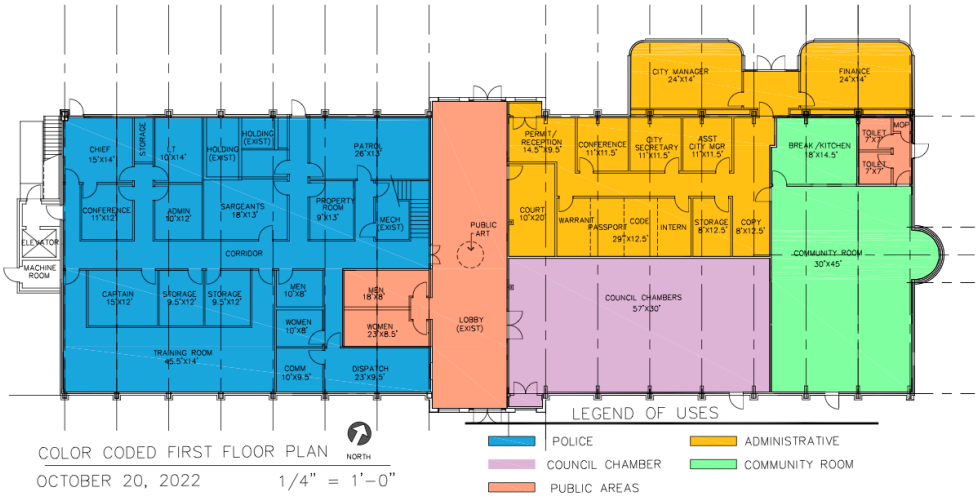
In addition, the plan proposes public restrooms directly off of the main lobby for easier access and an identifiable location without affecting the Police Department space, which is now a problem.

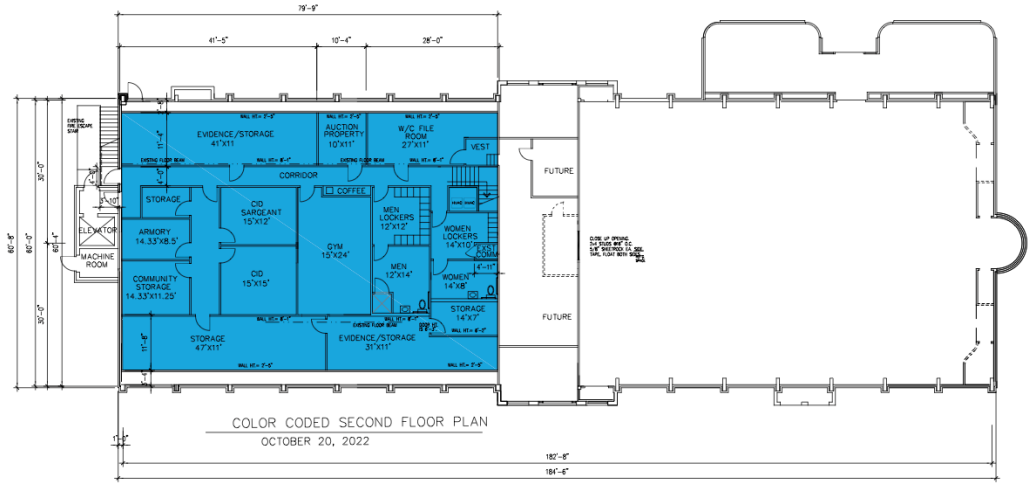
It is a collective opinion among those who have developed the plan that the current City Hall Council Chambers are easily twice as large as needed. By reducing its size the new plan opens up a solution for larger and more functional city administration offices. The plan would offer a reception area directly off of the main building's lobby for a direct and obvious access to the city offices. From an energy standpoint, dropped ceilings in both the Council Chambers and administrative offices will help reduce the volume to be cooled, resulting in energy savings.

*(Larger diagrams are included in the appendix.)*



*Possible Redesign of City Hall – Exterior View*



The reduction of the Council Chambers will also allow for the new community room. As a function of this new proposed floor plan, we will be providing dual use of new public rest rooms for use of the community room as well as the Commons. There can be availability of these restrooms at any and all events as well as during the day by locking the access to the community room as necessary.

With respect to the exterior of the building, the plan proposes to modernize the exterior to better camouflage the perception of a church. In addition, it utilizes the existing structure, thus creating more of a commercial, administrative City Hall appearance. It would create an effective sign band which would accommodate the signage of Castle Hills City Hall.

The plan also proposes to add dormers to the existing roof, not only for aesthetic purposes, but to allow for additional height due for second floor spaces, making them more functional and overcoming the limitations of the current severe roof pitch. The dormer windows will also provide natural light for the second floor Police offices as well as the Council Chambers. Thus the work spaces would better promote staff and visitor health in the building.

To summarize, all of these plan and exterior modifications are designed to create a much-needed functional working environment, and hopefully a design at reasonable building costs.

### CONCEPTUAL COST, RENOVATE VS. NEW BUILDING

Given the volatile construction cost environment and continued supply chain interruptions, the cost ideas in this narrative should be thought of as conceptual at best, with more reliable cost information to come as the plan is developed, should that be the community's desire. As of spring 2022 the conceptual cost range of the plan and exterior changes envisioned by the nearby drawings appears to be in the $3 million to $4 million range. More reliable estimates can be developed with more detailed documents.

# Grow

The idea of a new building to replace the existing was not examined in this study, as the costs would be significantly higher than the conceptual costs of renovation presented here. However, a study of the feasibility of a new building is recommended.

# Public Art

## ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC ART



*Jesus Moroles*



*Michelle O'Michael*

Public Art can offer many benefits for Castle Hills! Public pride would be an important aspect of the contribution public art would make for a community such as ours. Places with strong public art expressions break the trend of blandness and sameness, and gives neighborhoods a strong sense of place and identity. Public art is uniquely accessible enabling people to experience art in the course of daily life, outside of museums or other cultural institutions. If we had an active public art program we would have a town identified as an arts and culture destination adding to growth in citizen pride and a renewed sense of place!



*Dewane Hughes*



*Susan Budge*

Public art also has economic benefits for a community. Public art programs usually boost local economies. Businesses supply materials and labor, restaurants and local shops benefit from a site that attracts visitors. Public art also enlivens places where people work, which can improve employee morale, productivity and respect.

Finally a robust public art program can support various schools in our community. Artists involved in a public art program often give presentations and/or workshops to local schools- both elementary as well as high schools. Artists can present students the importance of creativity as well as "thinking outside the box."

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ART IN CASTLE HILLS



*Danville Chadburn*



*Brian Wedgworth*

There are several opportunities for public art in Castle Hills. The commons next our City Hall would make for an outstanding sculpture park. Temporary artworks placed here would be an excellent compliment for our annual Easter egg hunt for neighborhood kids, Trunk or Treat, Christmas lights, Fiesta, etc. Also public art along our main business area of Northwest Military offers numerous retail businesses and Castle Hills owned properties for public art sites. Another opportunity would be schools located within the Castle Hills boundaries.

## INCORPORATING PUBLIC ART IN CASTLE HILLS

Here are several suggestions for incorporating public art in Castle Hills. First suggestion is to collaborate with a state wide sculpture non-profit such as the Texas Sculpture Group. A curated selection of six to eights artists to install an outdoor sculpture exhibition for the Commons for a one year loan. This could become an annual event that would get regional and city-wide attention. Assuming that this temporary exhibition receives a favorable public response the city should establish a Public Art Masterplan. Finally, the city of Castle Hills could meet with local schools and establish an artist-in-schools program




*Bill Fitz Gibbons*

# 5 Play

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

CERTIFICATIONS AND BEAUTIFICATION

# Play

## Parks and Green Spaces

### BACKGROUND

Castle Hills has only one large park space in the Commons. There are a few small spaces that, with some investment, might become attractive, comfortable green spaces; but for now, the Commons is what the City has. Back in 2019, with the initiative of the Parks and Projects Commission, the City reached an agreement with NEISD to share Castle Hills Elementary playgrounds with Castle Hills residents. However, the more recent active shooter threat has caused a need for greatly enhanced security, unfortunately removing this opportunity. This chapter will present some suggestions for creating additional green spaces in Castle Hills.

#### *Existing Inventory*

*The Commons* is a park-like space nestled on Lemonwood Drive between City Hall and the Fire Department. It is nearly 2 acres in size and features a large open space, a walking/jogging path around the area, a few shade trees, and the Castle Hills clock. It serves as Castle Hills' most popular community space, hosting events of all kinds, including Fiesta, Christmas tree lighting, Easter egg hunt and many others.





*The Commons of Castle Hills*

### NEED FOR PARKS & GREEN SPACES

#### *Survey Results*

One of the questions posed by the survey taken in February 2020 was 'What do you want to preserve and/or improve within your neighborhood?' Behind the desire to improve streets and preserve trees, the most popular response was to improve community space, i.e., playgrounds, pools, and parks. Another highly rated response was to improve walkability through the use of sidewalks, crossings, and bike trails.



*Bioswale External Opportunity*



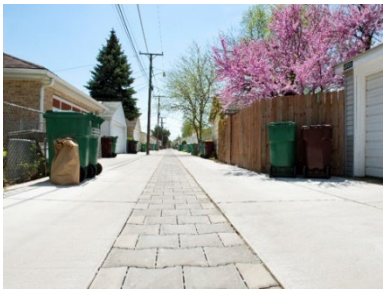
*Opportunity: Castle Hills Elementary*

## *Speaker Forum Ideas*

Agdel Rivera, long-time City of San Antonio and San Antonio River Authority project manager for the restoration of urban creeks and streams and CPAC member, presented ideas on the potential enhancement of green infrastructure in Castle Hills. He addressed such issues as urban tree canopy, urban creek and stream preservation, bioswales, green streets and alleys, among other items. He stressed the many benefits of green spaces which allow for a more active populace and made suggestions for the enhancement of our green infrastructure by means of green school yards, bioswales, tree planting on city property as well as Castle Hills Elementary school property and restoration of streams such as the channel behind the West Avenue HEB or the channel that runs from Lockhill-Selma Road to Loop 410, and the implementation of green streets and alleys.



*Urban Tree Canopy Opportunity*



*Green Street Alley Opportunity*



*Typical Castle Hills Alley*




*A = Tree Planting*

*B = Green School Yard*

*C = Bioswale*

# Play

## PRIORITIES FOR GREEN SPACES

- Improve Walkability. Provide more complete and safe walking paths throughout the City.
- Connect to San Antonio Trails for walking and biking.
- Explore Linear Park (Stream Restoration) Opportunities
- Provide better connection among our neighborhoods by creating at least one green space for each and connecting them all together.
- Support the improvement of the Commons recommended by the Parks and Projects Commission.
- Explore Shared Opportunities, such as with Castle Hills Christian Church on West Avenue or the with the City of San Antonio concerning the former detention pond at Lockhill-Selma and Carolwood and possibly the extension of the Olmos Creek.
- Monitor, preserve, and enhance the city's tree canopy.



*Green Street Opportunities: NW Military*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve walkability in Castle Hills, and connect to San Antonio Trails:
- Add bike lanes and walking paths on at least one side of NW Military, to be designated Castle Hills' Main Street, from about Carolwood on the south to the intersection with Lockhill-Selma on the north.
- Add bike lanes and walking paths to those streets that can connect to San Antonio trails, such as NW Military Drive to Hardberger Park.
- Add bike lanes and walking paths to those streets seen as connectors, such as Honeysuckle, Antler, Caladium, or Moss Drives; to those streets that can provide a path for school kids, such as Jackson-Keller and Lemonwood.
- Add walking paths to those routes commonly used by Castle Hills residents.
- Institute a program where the city's tree canopy is regularly evaluated by a certified arborist. Analysis should include tree health, canopy expansion or contraction, with recommendations for improved health and volume of trees in Castle Hills.



*Images Courtesy of LPA*

## EXPLORE LINEAR PARK (STREAM RESTORATION) OPPORTUNITIES



*Urban Creek Stream Restoration Opportunity*



*Drainage channel between Lockhill-Selma and 410 access road*



*Urban Creek Stream Restoration Example - Could the drainage channel behind HEB look like this?*



*Drainage channel behind HEB at Jackson-Keller Rd*

Rework existing concrete channel into a linear park starting at Lockhill-Selma between Manton and Sunflower, continuing through mid-town across E. Castle, Wisteria, Mimosa, and Krameria, crossing under West Ave. and connecting to the channel in front of Antonian, turning west to the channel that runs along the railroad, and runs under Loop 410 to connect to the large concrete channel behind HEB. This impacts four of the six neighborhoods. This idea is complicated by the recent completion of design for a portion of the channel as a concrete channel….and it's part of the CO in the Nov. 8 election.

Beginning at the south end of Roundup, turning east through the channel behind the SAMM building, turning north before Honeysuckle, crossing under Lemonwood and continuing in the channel that runs to the west and north of City Hall, connecting to the open land to the north of the Public Works building.

Transforming the unsightly drainage ditch along Jackson-Keller into a linear park that could provide a safe walking path for the students at Jackson-Keller Elementary and Lee High School. It could run from about Cotillion on the north south to the entry drive to the Gardens of Castle Hills, or even to Blanco if there is sufficient width. Some areas may have enough width for a sidewalk only. Improved crosswalks at Jackson-Keller would be required.

Another opportunity that could benefit the West of West neighborhood is at the CPS easement that runs at the southern end of the Boy Scout camp. This is a relatively straight, flat stretch of land with power poles at regular intervals. It runs to the flood plain at the railroad tracks which form the eastern border of San Antonio. From here it could run southeast along the channel, into the Antonian property where it would intersect with the channel coming from West Avenue.

# Play

## PROVIDE BETTER CONNECTION AMONG OUR NEIGHBORHOODS BY CREATING AT LEAST ONE GREEN SPACE FOR EACH AND CONNECTING THEM ALL TOGETHER.

Explore transformation of open spaces into parks at Roundup where Adobe once went thru to Krameria and is now open space; two large grassy areas in front of Castle Hills Elementary in front of City Hall (coordinate with NEISD); the shallow channel on Jackson-Keller between about Cotillion and the drive into the Gardens of Castle Hills; a slim open space off Gladiola near Jackson-Keller. These spaces could be transformed into small parks with rich landscape and benches. Perhaps one could be a doggy park or even a community garden.



*Images Courtesy of LPA*

If the linear parks and new green spaces were all constructed, all neighborhoods in Castle Hills would have a green space.



Connecting the green spaces is a bigger challenge, as there are great distances between the areas. The linear parks would seem to have the greatest chance for connecting neighborhoods; but connecting them all is likely a challenge for the future.

Support the improvement of the commons recommended by the parks and projects commission. At this point that includes playground equipment and shade structures.



*Shade Structure Opportunities*

Explore Shared Opportunities, such as with Castle Hills Christian Church on West Avenue or the with the City of San Antonio concerning the former detention pond at Lockhill-Selma and Carolwood and possibly the extension of the Olmos Creek channel past Jackson Keller into San Antonio.

Castle Hills Christian Church has approached the City (Councilwoman Daines) with the idea of potentially sharing a large area behind the church which is open and could make a nice park, with play structures for kids and shaded areas for adults, as well as other amenities. This opportunity should be explored, keeping in mind connections to other neighborhoods with bike and walking trails. The open space on the eastside of Lockhill-Selma at Carolwood could provide a nice opportunity for a richly landscaped green space. Coordination with the City of San Antonio is suggested for the development of this idea.



*Playground Opportunity*

# Conservation and Sustainability

*Note: This section on Sustainability was provided by Alan Montemayor, a resident of Castle Hills.*

## INTRODUCTION



*Sustainable Development*

At the request of CPAC, I have assembled this preliminary Sustainability Plan for City of Castle Hills (COCH). This was undertaken as a volunteer effort, so the information contained herein is necessarily preliminary in nature. Recommendations are based on rising water and energy costs, climate change and a cursory survey of the COCH properties.

Challenges to the sustainability of COCH include, but are not limited to climate change, the rising cost of water, electricity and natural gas, traffic, solid waste, air quality, and light pollution. Of these challenges, climate change is perhaps the 500-pound gorilla in the mix.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

As a result of anthropogenically caused climate change, COCH can expect more summer days with peak temperatures over 100°F, more summer nights with low temperatures greater than 80°F, increased periods of severe drought, more intense rainstorms dropping large amounts of rainfall, potential for high winds and hail associated with rainstorms, potential for more and longer freezing events, and an increase in the urban heat island effect.

## TEMPERATURE EXTREMES

Associated with increased temperature extremes are the potential for power outages due to increased electrical load on CPS generating capacity. This has the potential to curtail water delivery similar to what happened during winter storm Uri in February 2021. COCH should initiate or continue a dialog with CPS Energy and San Antonio Water System (SAWS) concerning critical circuits to keep energized and pressurized during electrical outages.

Increased temperatures during the summer pose a health risk for our citizens and COCH personnel. Senior citizens, infants and young children have reduced capacity for tolerating high temperatures. We can expect a rise in heat

related emergency calls during the coming summers. This is due not only to the peak daytime temperatures but also to heat stress due to hot summer nights making sleeping more difficult for citizens eschewing air conditioning.

COCH personnel working outside will face difficult and potentially hazardous working conditions during peak temperature events. Some of this is unavoidable, but can be mitigated with schedule adjustment and attention to hydration for all personnel. Reusable water bottles and access to water refilling stations should be provided to all employees. COCH should install bottle filling stations at all water fountains and encourage staff to use re-usable containers. Rehydration salts should be made available to all staff.

Extreme and extended low temperature events also pose a challenge to citizens and employees. This is of concern, particularly if the weather event causes electrical outages. COCH should plan for weather emergencies where extreme heat, cold, rain or wind may adversely affect citizens. This can take many forms and we may already have such a plan in place. Some cities have designated cooling/heating areas where citizens can shelter until extreme conditions ameliorate. Emergency supplies such as canned water and rehydration salts should be considered for emergencies.

## DROUGHT

Associated with climate change is the specter of extreme drought. 2022 is shaping up to be an example of this drought, with annual rainfall significantly behind expected totals. This is exacerbated by the increased cost of water from SAWS (approximately a 50% rise in residential costs from 2017 to 2021) and graduated costs for large volume users. The number of front lawns In CH that are brown attest to this trend. SAWS has numerous programs that can ameliorate these effects and reduce the cost of water to users. In cooperation with the SAWS, COCH should undertake a survey of irrigation systems owned by COCH and eliminate irrigation sectors where applicable. SAWS has commercial rebates available for capping un-needed systems. COCH should consider replacing turf and plants that require watering. Native and xeriscape plants will require much less water and maintenance as well as

providing food for native insects and animals at the base of the food chain.



*Xeriscape Landscape Designs*



City codes currently dis-allow native/wildflower landscapes where they appear unkempt. Some citizens have been warned or cited for their native/wildflower landscapes. This has resulted in court cases in some extreme instances. Native plants conserve water, reduce chemical pollution, reduce stormwater run-off, increase biodiversity and provide food for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. Native plants more easily survive our extreme weather conditions and are most cost-effective and sustainable long--term. COCH should examine city ordinances to encourage the use of native plants, wildflowers and the creation of wildlife habitat and recommend any changes in the ordinances that may be in conflict with these recommendations. Examples might include high mowing (8 to 12 inches) of wildflower meadows and scheduling mowing after wildflowers have set seed. COCH should encourage residents to take advantage of water conservation rebates offered by SAWS to replace turfgrass and irrigation systems with water-saving native plants.

Rainwater harvesting provides a free source of non-chlorinated water that is excellent for growing plants. In addition to the water, rainwater harvesting systems impound water that would otherwise become runoff, thereby ameliorating downstream flooding. Rainwater storage systems provide an excellent source of emergency water that is under the direct control of the owning entity. The COCH fire station has an excellent roof for rainwater harvesting. Stored rainwater could be a fire department-controlled source of emergency water for firefighting when there is a widespread power failure. During times when it is desirable to utilize the water, it could be used to water plants in the commons area. COCH should consider a large rainwater harvesting system for the fire station. This could provide an emergency source of water for firefighting as well as a source of non-SAWS water for irrigating plants in the commons. Other fire departments have similar systems.

# Play

## FLOODING

Even though drought is predicted for the coming years, climate change predicts additional and more severe rain events associated with higher air temperatures. Houston has been named America's Rainfall Flooding Capital because of rain events such as September 2020 (Tropical Storm Beta), September 2019 (Tropical Storm Imelda – 30 inches), August 2017 (Hurricane Harvey – 60.58 inches) and April 2016 (17 inches). San Antonio's location, away from the Gulf Coast, will ameliorate the rainfall we can expect in relation to Houston, however, we can still expect more intense rainfall events and concomitant flooding.

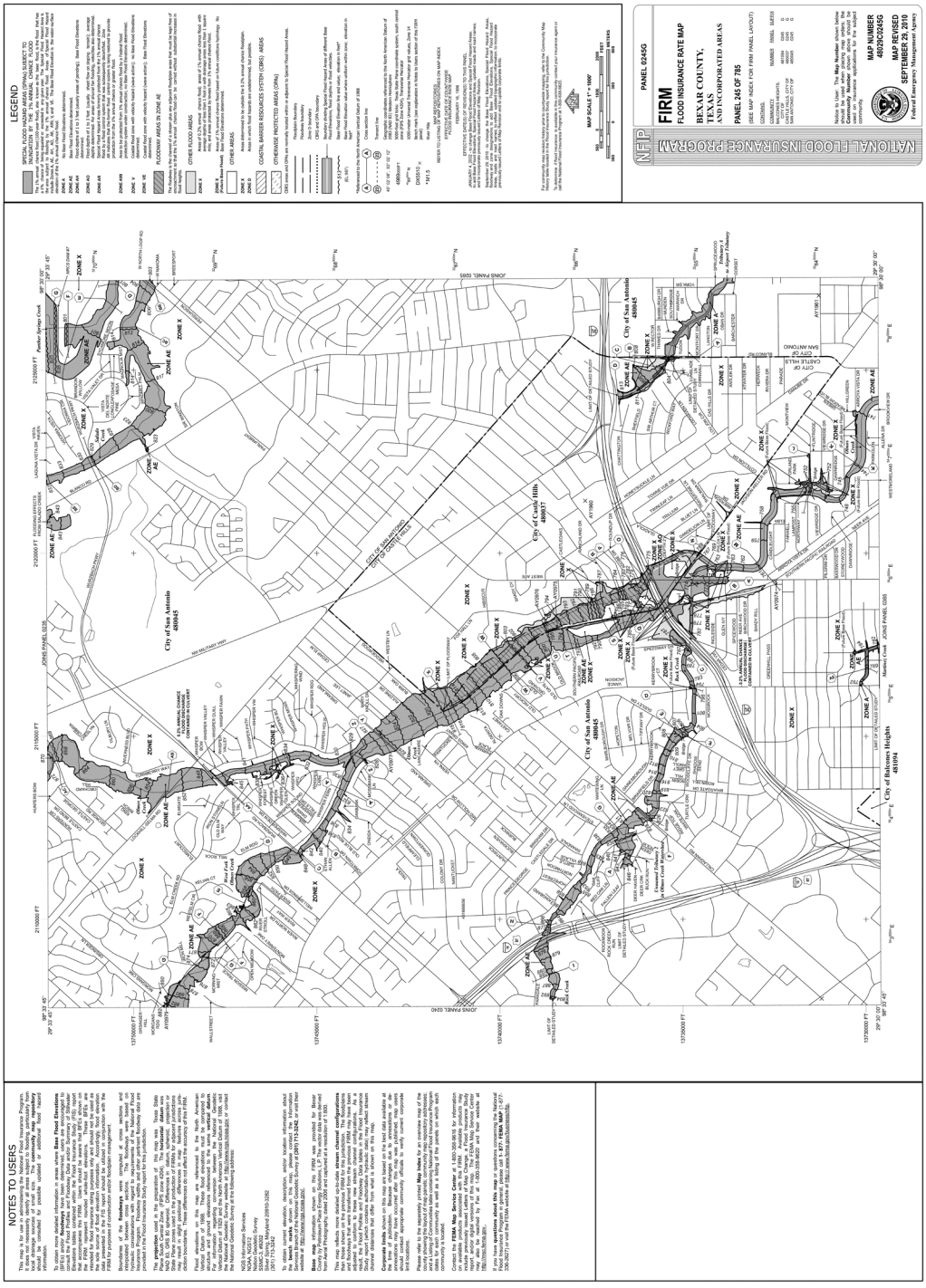
The FEMA Castle Hills Flood Plain Map, shown below, indicates two main areas of concern for flooding. The first is the long area along the western border of CH that parallels the Martin Marietta – Beckman Quarry rail spur. This drainage is referred to as Olmos Creek. The second area of concern is labeled Tributary A in the diagram and primarily incorporates the area near and north of the Ensemble Senior Apartments.

Much of the Olmos Creek area that will flood is undeveloped land or channelized flood area. Because of the severity of expected rainfall, we can expect property damage along the periphery of this floodway, particularly the HEB at the intersection of West Avenue and Jackson Keller Road, the lower portions of the Antonian property, lower dwellings along Foxhall lane and Aggie Park.

The drainage between North Manton Lane and Sunflower Lane will likely see flooding as well and the flooding will likely extend across N.W. Military Hwy. between South Manton and Zornia Drive all the way to the Antonian property. COCH should assure the drainage from North Manton and Lockhill-Selma to Antonian is kept clear of obstructions and consider improvements in the form of a greenway trail along this corridor.

The area north of Highway 410 that is the extension of Tributary A will likely see flooding as well, however, this area is not mapped in detail on the FEMA map.

The drainage that passes along the North side of Castle Hills City Hall is of some concern as well, since it feeds into the Olmos Creek flood area. COCH should periodically inspect and maintain the drainage channel from City Hall to Olmos Creek and assure there are no significant impediments to drainage.


NOTES TO USERS
LEGEND
NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM
FIRM
FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP
BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS
AND INCORPORATED AREAS
PANEL 245 OF 785
PANEL 0245G
MAP NUMBER
48029C0245G
MAP REVISED
SEPTEMBER 29, 2010
City of San Antonio 480045
City of Castle Hills 480037
City of Balcones Heights 481094

# Play

## ENERGY

The cost of all kinds of energy, including electrical, natural gas, propane, gasoline and diesel fuel will likely continue to escalate as a result of global politics and climate change. COCH can expect their energy bill to escalate in the coming years. There are several ways of mitigating this.

A cursory inspection of city buildings including City Hall, Solid Waste and Fire Station indicate that there have already been programs implemented to minimize energy usage. This is evidenced by the LED bulbs throughout the buildings, insulation in City Hall, rebuilding of the south entry foyer, and addition of mini-split heat pumps to augment cooling in several areas. COCH should undertake a free energy audit from CPS Energy. This may have been done in the past, however, there are new technologies and potentially new rebates available. This should yield one or more cost-effective efficiency upgrades. At a minimum, it will yield additional information on what areas need to be addressed.

Solar panels can offset much of the electrical power used by COCH buildings. Solar arrays are becoming more cost effective and the return-on-investment period has been shrinking for these systems. In addition to the direct energy provided by these systems, they provide a layer of shade to hot roofs in the summertime, thereby lowering the heat load within the building. COCH should consider solar panels for the fire station. The roof of the fire station is ideally suited for solar panels in terms of orientation and obstruction-free expanse. Since it is a raised-seam roof, a clamp-on system could be used for solar panel installation. This mounting system has no roof penetrations. There may be funds available through city, state or federal programs to help fund this.

The roof of City Hall appears to be ideally suited for solar panel installation in terms of orientation and freedom from obstructions. After installation of a new roof on City Hall, COCH should consider installation of a solar array, similar to what is proposed for the fire station.

A cursory survey of COCH vehicle fleet revealed that there are light duty vehicles employed by police, fire and



*Council Chamber in Richland, Washington*




*Balcones Heights City Hall*



*Olmos Park City Hall*



*Alamo Heights City Hall*

other city personnel. These include SUV, pickup and other administrative vehicles. The cost to operate these vehicles will continue to rise due to fuel and maintenance costs. Additionally, the air emissions of these vehicles are deleterious to the citizens of CH. The carbon dioxide from these vehicles contributes to global warming. On an attrition basis, COCH should consider electric vehicles (EVs) to replace light-duty vehicles in the city fleet. EVs seem ideal for police, fire, solid-waste and city vehicles which are domiciled at the city offices. Level 2 chargers should be placed at the parking areas of these vehicles, or parking areas changed to be closer to existing utility hookups.

## TRANSPORTATION




*Image Courtesy of LPA*

The walkable and bicycle friendly terrain of Castle Hills is broken up by highway 410 running roughly east to west and Military Drive running roughly north to south. These roads are significant impediments to walking and bicycling citizens. Indeed, the overpass structure of highway 410 provides safe passage at only Blanco, Honeysuckle, and West Avenue. There are no significant bicycle lanes in Castle Hills. These impediments make it more difficult for citizens to enjoy the outdoors, get exercise and establish a sense of neighborhood in the city. COCH should consider changes to the roadway systems to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. This can take the form of bicycle lanes, bicycle racks, greenways and changes in the city website that encourage walking and bicycling. Efforts should be undertaken with TXDOT to ameliorate the significant pedestrian and bicycle barriers imposed by highway 410 and Military Highway.

## SOLID WASTE



*Solid Waste Management Landfill*

It will become more expensive to dispose of municipal solid waste as landfills reach capacity. COCH should make efforts to study the nature of our municipal solid waste and undertake ways of minimizing the amount of waste generated by the City and our citizens. COCH should encourage citizens to compost and look at creative ways to utilize green waste. Plastic is a particular problem in our solid waste stream, as it does not biodegrade for centuries. Additionally, a significant percentage of the single use plastics and packaging escapes from

containment and is fouling our waterways and air. Ultimately, this plastic reaches our oceans and is destroying the ocean environment on which we depend. COCH should aggressively eliminate plastic single-use items from city purchases. There are many alternatives, such as canned water rather than plastic water bottles. COCH should study ways to incentivize citizens to use less plastic.

## LIGHT POLLUTION

Citizens of Castle Hills are inundated by the glow of city lights at night. This not only deprives citizens of a view of the stars and planets, but degrades the quality of sleep available without blackout blinds. Additionally, it degrades the quality of night training operations at Camp Bullis. The high ambient light at night environment is confusing and deleterious to animals that migrate or are nocturnal. COCH should consider dark sky initiatives that benefit military, wildlife and citizens.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Consider a free energy audit from CPS Energy.** This may have been done in the past, however, there are new technologies and potentially new rebates available. This should yield one or more cost-effective efficiency upgrades. At a minimum, it will yield additional information on what areas need to be addressed.

**Consider an irrigation assessment from SAWS** with the goal of reducing water consumption and eliminating irrigation sectors where applicable. SAWS has commercial rebates available for capping un-needed systems.

**Consider solar panels for the fire station.** The roof of the fire station is ideally suited for solar panels in terms of orientation and obstruction-free expanse. Since it is a raised-seam roof, a clamp-on system could be used for solar panel installation. This mounting system has no roof penetrations. There may be funds available through city, state or federal programs to help fund this.



*Athens-Clarke County Fire Station*

**Consider a new roof for the main city office building**. The new roof materials should incorporate a layer of insulation and be reflective or light-colored to reflect more of the sun's rays. Ideally, the material should be a



*Solar Panels Roof Example*



*Native Plant & Xeriscape Design*




*NYPD expected to go fully EV in 2024*



*Native Plant & Xeriscape Design*

standing seam roof that would facilitate installation of solar panels.

**Consider installation of a solar array for City Hall,** similar to what is proposed for the fire station after the new roof is installed.

**Consider a large rainwater harvesting system for the fire station.** This could provide an emergency source of water for firefighting as well as a source of non-SAWS water for irrigating plants in the commons. Other fire departments have similar systems.

**Consider replacing turf and plants that require watering.** Native and xeriscape plants will require much less water and maintenance as well as providing food for native insects and animals at the base of the food chain.

**Plan for weather emergencies where extreme heat, cold, rain or wind may adversely affect citizens.** This can take many forms and we may already have such a plan in place. Some cities have designated cooling/heating areas where citizens can shelter until extreme conditions ameliorate. Emergency supplies such as canned water and rehydration salts should be considered for emergencies.

**Consider, on an attrition basis, electric vehicles (EVs) to replace light-duty vehicles in the city fleet.** EVs seem ideal for police, fire, solid-waste and city vehicles which are domiciled at the city offices. Level 2 chargers should be placed at the parking areas of these vehicles, or parking areas changed to be closer to existing utility hookups.

**Consider changes to the roadway systems to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.** This can take the form of bicycle lanes, bicycle racks, greenways and changes in the city website that encourage walking and bicycling. Efforts should be undertaken with TXDOT to ameliorate the significant pedestrian and bicycle barriers imposed by highway 410 and Military Highway.

**Examine city ordinances to encourage the use of native plants, wildflowers and the creation of wildlife habitat** and recommend any changes in the ordinances that may be in conflict with these recommendations. Examples might include high mowing (8 to 12 inches) of wildflower meadows and scheduling mowing after wildflowers have set seed. COCH should encourage residents to take

advantage of water conservation rebates offered by SAWS to replace turfgrass and irrigation systems with water-saving native plants.

**Eliminate single-use plastic items from city purchases**. There are many alternatives, such as canned water rather than plastic water bottles. COCH should study ways to incentivize citizens to use less plastic.

**Reduce solid waste by residents and city personnel**, which could include encouraging citizens to compost and look at creative ways to utilize green waste.

**Install bottle filling stations at all water fountains** and encourage staff to use re-usable containers. Rehydration salts should be made available to all staff.

**Consider dark sky initiatives that benefit military, wildlife and citizens.**

**Initiate agreements with CPS Energy and SAWS concerning critical circuits** to keep energized and pressurized during potential electrical outages.

**Inspect and maintain the drainage channel from City Hall to Olmos Creek** and assure there are no significant impediments to drainage.

**Inspect and maintain the drainage from North Manton and Lockhill-Selma to Antonian** and is kept clear of obstructions and consider improvements in the form of a greenway trail along this corridor.

## BEAUTIFICATION - TREES

One thing the Committee thought, but which was confirmed through the information gathering of planning is that trees are important to our citizens. Preservation of tree canopies and tree health are two components that came up over and over. The Committee recommends that the City consider having its own "Arbor Day" or other celebration. Furthermore, ordinances or city programs should be considered as appropriate regarding mitigation plans for tree removal, assistance with treating oak wilt or other tree diseases, encouraging the planting of disease resistant trees, and maintaining canopy heights that will allow city vehicles such as fire and sanitation trucks to pass without damage.

## CITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Many certifications exist for Cities. The Committee recommends that the City chose at least one certification to pursue. For example, we could seek certification as:

- "Texas Scenic City" – through Texas Municipal League
- "Tree City" – through Arbor Day Foundation
- "Bee City" – through Xerces Society
- "Green City" – through The Green City

Each designation has a set of requirements for certification. The cost for applying varies. The Parks and Projects Committee or the Economic Development Committee could be responsible for choosing and applying for certification. Attaining one or more of these designations will help provide identity and pride for City.

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# 6 Conclusion

PRIORITIES

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

ENSURING THE FUTURE OF CASTLE HILLS

# Conclusion

## Implementation Strategy

It is the intent of this Comprehensive Plan that the recommendations approved/adopted by City Council herein become one of the Master Planning Documents for the City of Castle Hills. Further, it is critical that these ideas not sit on a shelf and be forgotten. The Committee strategically and intentionally engaged citizens in this process in order to determine the priorities of our citizens. As a result, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance for Council, Boards, and Commissions when making decisions and planning for expenditures regarding what a broader group of citizens want for the future of Castle Hills.

Having reached the limits of the skills of the committee of citizen volunteers who served on the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee, the recommendations propose the hiring of various professionals to help plan and determine the scope and probable costs of several short-term priorities that were identified during our planning process. Once the scope and costs of these projects are estimated, CPAC requests that City Council authorize the projects to be added to the Capital Improvement Plan and constructed within a five-year time period. The exception to this time period might be Priority Six related to the City Hall building which also contains the Police Department and Court facilities which might take a five-to-seven-year period to plan, finance, and construct relevant improvements.

As discussed elsewhere in this plan, our city is land locked and our sources of income from property tax and sales tax are somewhat limited. Therefore, the Committee highly encourages the city to seek funding through individual donors, grants (e.g., Texas Parks & Wildlife, Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, AARP, etc.), certificates of obligation, and/or a bond election as might be appropriate for different projects. Additionally, volunteer services from non-profit schools and churches located in Castle Hills could be used to achieve some of the goals and priorities discussed in this plan.

CPAC sees grants as being a vital source of income and matching funds for city projects and further recommends that a grant writer be hired as a consultant and paid from the proceeds of the grants they win for the city. Many times, the cost of the grant writer can be included in the money requested for the grant as part of the

administrative expense. In many cases grants can help the money we have go farther especially if grants are sought for projects from the very beginning in order to conserve cash savings.

Implementation priorities for major short-term projects are suggested as shown below. Less complicated priorities such as a beautification program or sustainability recommendations can begin at any time potentially using volunteer time, talents, and resources as a way to build stronger connections between different segments of the city.

Long-term priorities might overlap with short-term priorities. As short-term projects are completed, new priorities and/or projects should be developed. The process will not end. There is always an improvement or change that needs to or can be made.

## Priorities

These priorities or projects were chosen by the Committee based on themes that developed as the surveys and other citizen input was analyzed. They should be re-evaluated of a regular basis.

### PRIORITY ONE – SHORT-TERM - CONNECTIVITY

It was clear from the engagement workshops that our citizens want connectivity within the city. The natural starting place is intentionally connecting the Southern Loop to the Northern Loop at the intersection of Loop 410 and Honeysuckle. This project will help connect the Southern Loop to the City Center – City Hall, The Commons, the Fire Station, and Public Works.

CPAC requests that City Council authorize the City Manager to hire LPA Architects to come up with a design for the intersection of Loop 410 and Honeysuckle. Suggested consultants that should be involved in this project include a public artist to help design a concept for highlighting the intersection, a landscape architect to propose attractive native plantings, and a civil engineer to assure traffic lane adjustments comply with TxDOT standards and support multi-modal transportation (e.g., vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian). The City Manager can advise Council when competitive bids are needed.

# Conclusion

### PRIORITY TWO – SHORT-TERM – GREENSPACE

Concurrently or soon after the above authorization, CPAC requests that City Council authorize the City Manager to solicit bids for the creation of additional green spaces identified in the Plan. This would include an engineering study which would analyze the feasibility of converting some or all of the various CPS easements and drainage channels into linear parks. These linear parks would feature attractive native trees and landscaping plants, benches or other accessories, and possibly public art that would not impact the ability of the streams to carry storm water and would provide destination locations throughout the city for all citizens that would be within walking distance of their homes or businesses.

### PRIORITY THREE – SHORT-TERM – CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

After adopting the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Castle Hills, the Committee recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager to solicit bids for engineering studies which would analyze preferred walking/biking routes, best safety practices, probable costs, and a proposed implementation plan for the walking routes and bicycle routes advocated in this Plan. The Committee appreciates that additional study of preferred routes is necessary as the routes in this Plan are general suggestions and are not based on specific and targeted input from citizens.

This priority action should include the conversion of a portion of the east right-of-way of NW Military Highway to a shaded pedestrian path. The study should take into consideration any impact to the city for maintenance of these paths.

### PRIORITY FOUR – SHORT TERM - BEAUTIFICATION

CPAC supports the Parks and Projects Commission efforts to improve The Commons and recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to collaborate with a state-wide sculpture non-profit such as the Texas Sculpture Group to plan a curated selection of six-eight artists for a sculpture garden within The Commons or at locations identified throughout the city, and to contract any engineering that might be needed to determine scope and probable costs.

### PRIORITY FIVE – SHORT TERM – CONNECTIVITY and GREENSPACES

This priority combines the requests from citizens for more connectivity and beautification. The fifth item on the priority list is a recommendation that City Council authorize the City Manager to re-examine the proposed concrete drainage channel between approximately E. Castle Lane and West Avenue, in order to determine the feasibility of converting the channel to a linear park.

With additional investment, this would offer the opportunity to have a linear park that stretches from Lockhill-Selma all the way past West Avenue and could eventually connect to a large potential linear park in the large drainage channel behind HEB.

### PRIORITY SIX – SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM – CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The largest of all the priorities in scope and cost is a recommendation that City Council authorize the City Manager to solicit bids from architectural/engineering firms to study the feasibility of (1) renovating the existing City Hall/Police Department/Court versus (2) constructing a new building to house all of the departments that currently use our City Hall building. If efficiencies can be created between City Departments by relocating or reorganizing services, the cost benefit should be included within the scope of this priority.

It is recommended that native landscaping, public art, and other amenities be incorporated into the final design solution especially since The Commons is located in the area between City Hall and the Fire and Sanitation Departments.

## Ensuring the Future of Castle Hills

The future either happens to us or because of us. Planning is the key to changing the narrative. Innovation and thinking outside the box are key to keeping our city services at the level expected by our citizens.

As the population grows Castle Hills needs to have the tools in place to be proactive to development and not reactive like it has been in the past. We need to continue to engage citizens to identify priorities and weaknesses in order to continually adapt this plan so that it remains relevant as a tool to provide guidance for Council and other city commissions to look to when a decision needs to be made.

Looking towards the City's Centennial in 2051, the future looks bright if we can thoughtfully remember the past, and not fear making the changes necessary for the city to survive as an independent city that provides incredible services to its citizens right in the heart of the seventh largest city in the United States.

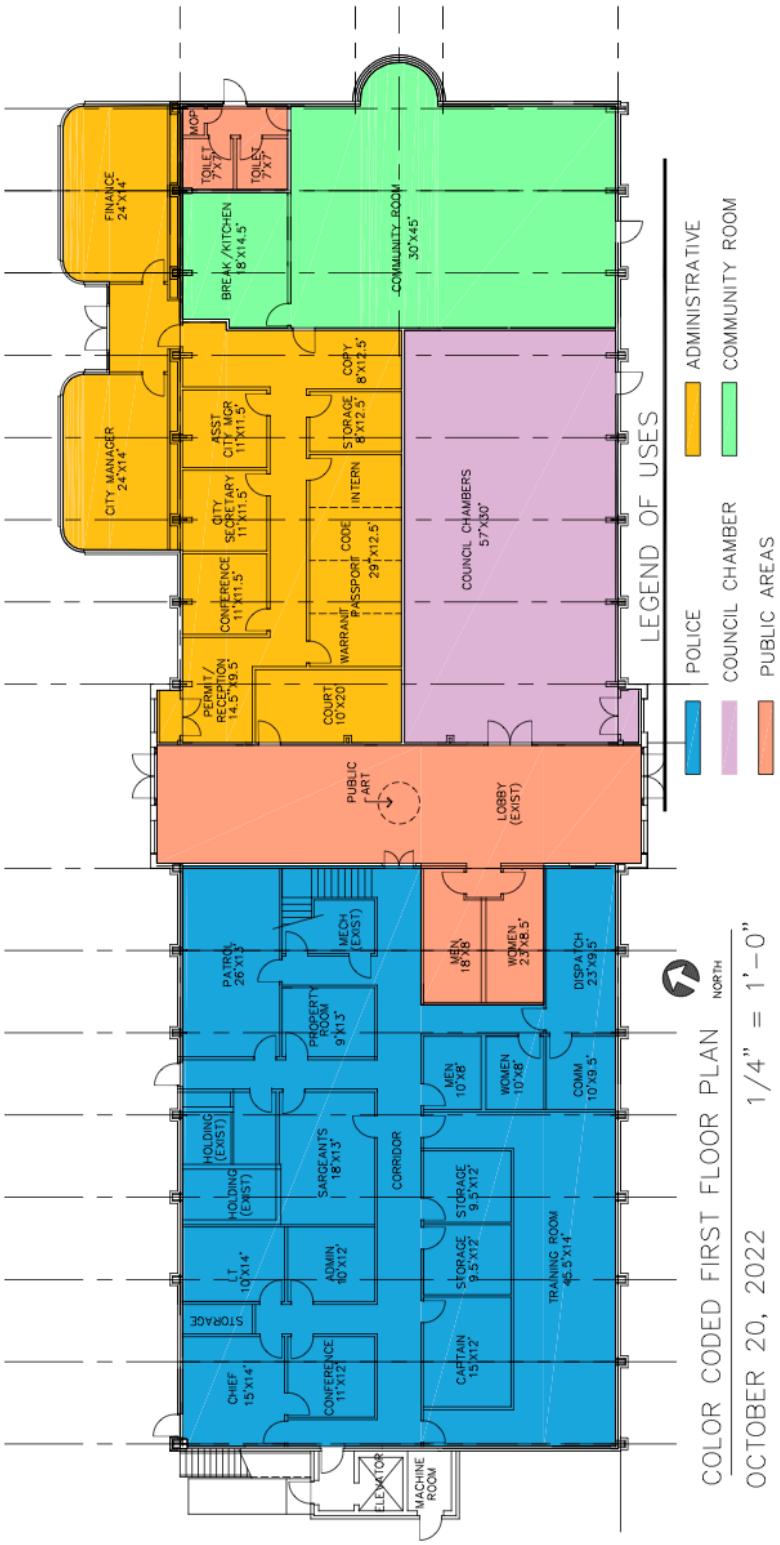
# Conclusion

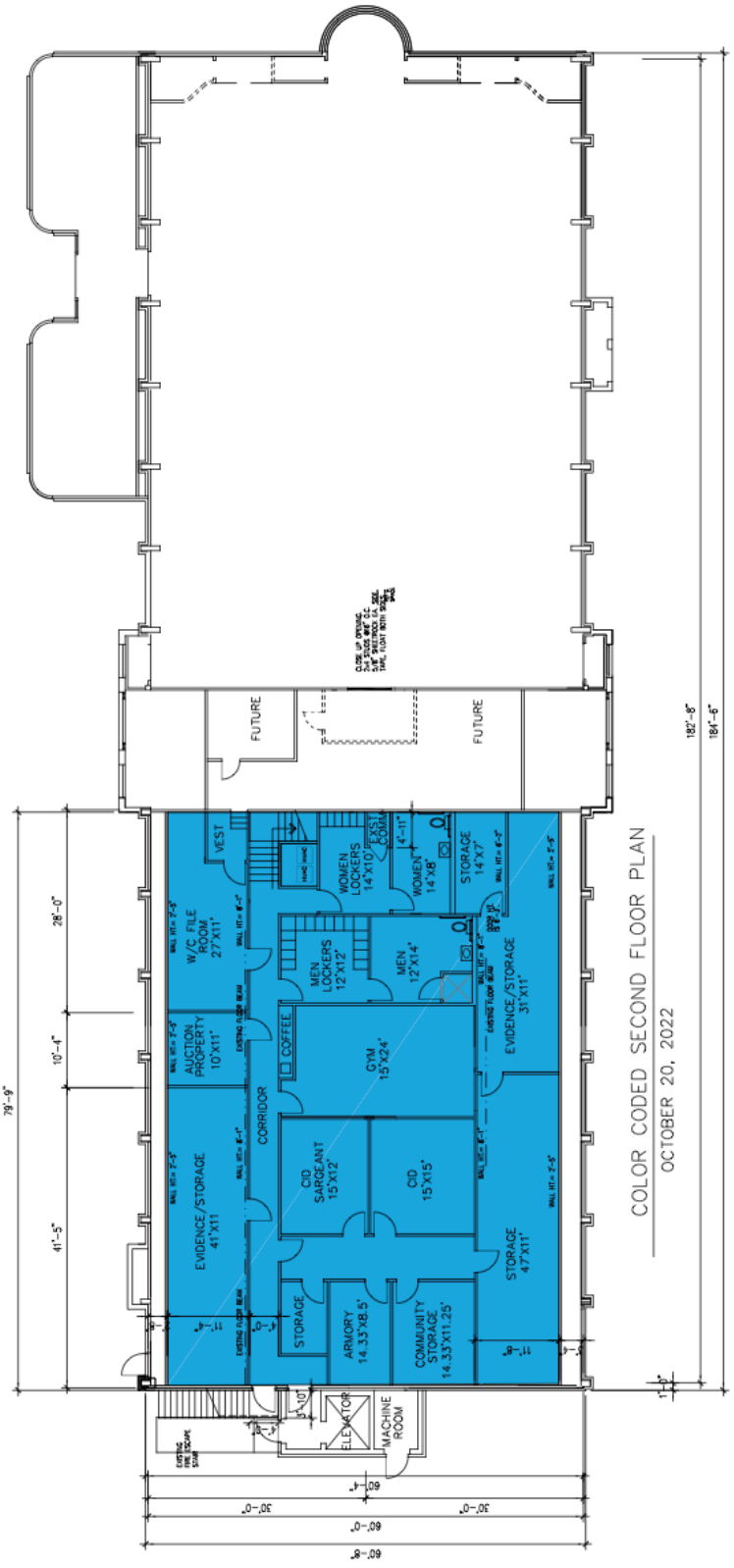
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# 7 Appendix

- City of Castle Hills
- City of Castle Hills Comprehensive Plan 1997
- MPO Walkability Study
- CPS Energy
- San Antonio Water System (SAWS)
- TxDOT Loop 410/Hwy 281 Presentation
- VIA Metropolitan Transit
- North East Independent School District (NEISD) – San Antonio, TX

# Appendix


FINANCE 24'X14'
MOP
TOILET 7'X7'
TOILET 7'X7'
BREAK /KITCHEN 18'X14.5'
COMMUNITY ROOM 30'X45'
CITY MANAGER 24'X14'
ASST CITY MGR 11'X11.5'
CITY SECRETARY 11'X11.5'
CONFERENCE 11'X11.5'
PERMIT / RECEPTION 14.5'X19.5'
COPY 8'X12.5'
STORAGE 8'X12.5'
INTERN
CODE
PASSPORT 29'X12.5'
WARRANT
COURT 10'X20
COUNCIL CHAMBERS 57'X30'
PUBLIC ART
LOBBY (EXIST)
PATROL 26'X13'
MECH (EXIST)
PROPERTY ROOM 9'X13'
MEN 18'X8'
WOMEN 23'X8.5'
DISPATCH 23'X9.5'
MEN 10'X8'
WOMEN 10'X8'
COMM 10'X9.5'
HOLDING (EXIST)
HOLDING (EXIST)
SARGEANTS 18'X13'
CORRIDOR
STORAGE 9.5'X12'
STORAGE 9.5'X12'
TRAINING ROOM 45.5'X14'
LT 10'X14'
ADMIN 10'X12'
STORAGE
CHIEF 15'X14'
CONFERENCE 11'X12'
CAPTAIN 15'X12'
ELEVATOR
MACHINE ROOM
LEGEND OF USES
ADMINISTRATIVE
COMMUNITY ROOM
POLICE
COUNCIL CHAMBER
PUBLIC AREAS
NORTH
COLOR CODED FIRST FLOOR PLAN
OCTOBER 20, 2022
1/4" = 1'-0"


FUTURE
FUTURE
VEST
WOMEN LOCKERS 14'X10'
EXST CORR
WOMEN 14'X8'
STORAGE 14'X7'
W/C FILE ROOM 27'X11'
MEN LOCKERS 12'X12'
MEN 12'X14'
AUCTION PROPERTY 10'X11'
COFFEE
GYM 15'X24'
EVIDENCE/STORAGE 31'X11'
CORRIDOR
EVIDENCE/STORAGE 41'X11'
CID SARGEANT 15'X12'
CID 15'X15'
STORAGE 47'X11'
STORAGE
ARMORY 14.33'X8.5'
COMMUNITY STORAGE 14.33'X11.25'
ELEVATOR
MACHINE ROOM
COLOR CODED SECOND FLOOR PLAN
OCTOBER 20, 2022
182'-8"
184'-6"
79'-9"
28'-0"
10'-4"
41'-5"
30'-0"
30'-0"
60'-0"
60'-8"