

## SECTION 6. PUBLIC FACILITIES PLAN

### Introduction

The Public Facilities Plan addresses concerns related to the ability of present and future public facilities to satisfactorily serve the needs of the public over the next 10 to 20 years and beyond. It is important to define what public facilities are and are not in the context of this section. For example, issues related to utilities infrastructure like water/wastewater treatment plants, sewer extension lines and the like are addressed in Section 7. *Infrastructure*. However, a structure that housed employees servicing public utility infrastructure would be addressed here.

Generally, the Public Facilities Plan addresses such structures as the city hall, schools, fire and police stations/substations and the like.

*To ensure the effectiveness of public services in the future, adequate physical sites and structures should be planned for to house additional employees and equipment.*

There are three principal areas that should be addressed when planning to ensure appropriate service levels are available to the public. To begin, this includes the number of employees required as it relates to appropriate employee: population ratios (as the population changes). As the number of employees required increases, the required physical space to house employees and new associated equipment (ex. additional fire apparatus) also increases. To plan for this, it is important to anticipate what future growth may approximate over the next 20 years and longer and take into account what the ultimate holding capacity of the City is based on the *Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plan* map and its associated zoning districts. For Levelland, it is not anticipated that ultimate holding capacity (refer to Table 4.2. Ultimate Holding Capacity) will be reached over this approximate 20 year projection and should therefore not be the dominant consideration for facilities planning. For planning purposes, this section assumes a 2% compounded growth rate (medium/recommended rate) based on assumptions described in the *Future Land Use Plan* and Table 4.3. Projected Population Growth. Using this growth rate, a population of about 19,118 could be anticipated by the year 2020.

Using this population projection, the facility itself must be assessed in terms of its ability to house the appropriate number and amount of employees and equipment. Should the facility be deemed capable of servicing population growth for the coming 20 year period and beyond, no action is necessary. If additional square footage is required, a decision should be made to either expand that existing facility or create additional facilities at other sites.

This plan seeks to address land use planning issues and will recommend existing sites to be expanded (acquiring additional lands) and additional sites (existing improved or raw land) to be acquired. Making these recommendations allows the City to act accordingly and ensure sites are

acquired for future growth and not lost to unassociated uses (i.e. commercial, residential development).

## 6.2 Public Facilities, Analysis

This section provides an analysis of all existing facilities and services and makes recommendations accordingly. Refer to Plate 6.1 *Public Facilities Plan* for a graphic depiction of proposed new sites. New sites area based on areas of growth within the City, needed service areas, recommendations from city officials and the City of Levelland Capital Improvements Program. For public facilities requiring new and/or additional sites over the next twenty years, it is not absolutely critical to first identify suitable sites and then acquire based on the sheer volume of adequate sites located throughout the City for various uses. This statement is less true for facilities requiring locations in areas where growth (and associated lot consumption) exceeds average to low growth areas.

In the Section 2. *Baseline Analysis*, the existing public facilities are described according to the structure type, square footage, services and departments housed in that structure and the corresponding number of employees within that service/department. The Baseline Section should be referred to prior to reviewing individual public facility assessments in the text to follow.

*Generally, ample physical sites exist for future facilities and are not necessary to acquire in the immediate future.*

*Additionally, many existing facilities are able to expand at their existing sites.*

Because some public facilities greatly affect city residents but are owned and operated at the county level, it is recommended that the City communicate with county officials to learn of planned expansions, improvements, etc. and to examine the possibility of joint partnerships with the county where concerns exist that services will not adequately address the level of service needed by Levelland residents.

### *City Hall*

The present city hall structure has been in use roughly 6 years after relocating from a downtown location less than half the square footage of the present structure. As a result of this significant increase in space, no foreseeable additional space should be anticipated over the next twenty years. Current space used in a storage capacity could be easily converted to office



City Hall

**The current city hall is more than double the square footage at its previous location and is expected to be sufficient for the future.**

space for additional personnel should the demand come to exist. The structure is in sound condition.<sup>1</sup>

### *Civic Center*

Support for a new civic center that is more accessible and versatile has been expressed from within the community. Funding is the major issue representing serious challenges to the community. A county/city venture would be the ideal partnership for creating the civic center should both parties be able to make a meaningful contribution to the project. All alternatives to a solely city-based venture should be examined. A basic market research study should be conducted to determine potential paying users, existing competition from facilities outside the community, average revenue on a square footage basis that may be anticipated. Conducting such a study would uncover demand for such a facility and its ability to generate revenue to address financial issues like operating costs. It should be noted that a proposed civic center will not be a revenue generator for the City but will, in fact, have a cost of operation similar to any park or recreational facility. The civic center must be viewed simply as a service and resource provided to the citizens.



**Civic Center**

**A county/city venture to replace the existing civic center facility is the most advantageous approach to this project.**

The current civic center, provided a facility is constructed or rehabilitated to serve as the new civic center, should be examined to determine its most ideal use based on the physical features of the structure and the facility needs of the City. Possible reuses of this structure may include a maintenance facility.

### *Fire Station*

A service area extending 1.5 miles in all directions is the generally agreed upon service area capable by a fire (sub) station. Ideally, all buildings within a community should fall within the service area of a fire substation. This is not the case in Levelland, particularly given its lower density style of development that makes such a service area difficult to accomplish. Since this 1.5 mile service area is one of the criteria used by the ISO (Insurance Service Office) in setting fire insurance rates, the City, through its Capital Improvements Program, has performed a cost-benefit analysis

***A new fire station is one of the major public facilities to be considered by the City. The facility would require a full city block and should be located in accordance with the Insurance Service Office.***

<sup>1</sup> Telephone Interview. Rick Osburn, Assistant City Manager, City of Levelland. October 15, 2003.

of adding an additional fire substation. The potential locations shown on Plate 6.1 *Public Facilities Plan* show that no single new substation will provide the 1.5 mile coverage for the entire city. In addition, the ISO considers Highway 114 and the railroad tracks as a special barrier requiring special attention. The cost-benefit analysis also revealed that, although the construction of a fire substation is a significant expense, the greatest expense is the ongoing annual cost of providing the required additional equipment and staffing. Given the cost of adding a fire substation, the City could also examine the benefits of replacing the existing fire station, especially given its current condition.

Currently, the facility is inadequate in terms of office space, lack of a true training facility and a generally outdated condition. The current six bays have garage doors that are too small to allow easy access by larger, more modern fire apparatus. A general trend has occurred within the U.S. toward EMS services/vehicles being housed within the fire department. A new location/facility should be designed or chosen based on its ability to house EMS services. Additionally, such a facility should be designed for full drive-thru and should allow adequate space/facilities for living quarters, office space, training facility, bays and room for future growth. Such a facility would most likely require a full city block.<sup>2</sup>



**Fire Station**

**The existing fire station is at capacity and outdated. A new main fire station is recommended.**

### ***Police Station***

For purposes related to land use planning, a ratio of 1.5 officers per 1,000 residents is often recommended. Levelland's ratio may be appropriately slightly lower (15 full-time officers) given a generally lower crime rate versus the U.S. as a whole. Using this measure, the City should plan to add nine officers by the year 2020 under current population projections. The current police headquarters, owned by the County and attached to the County jail, is in sound condition and would satisfactorily house any additional officers or administrative support that would be needed based on population projections. In the event that a larger facility was actually needed, additional lands may be available at the current site for building expansion.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Telephone Interview. Marvin Brewer, Fire Chief, City of Levelland. October 15, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Telephone Interview. Tony Cowan, Police Chief, City of Levelland. October 15, 2003.

## *Schools*

School building and property expansions, acquisitions and site analysis are conducted by the Levelland Independent School District (LISD). However, it is important for general coordination with the district and land use planning purposes to also describe future expansions and additional sites in the Comprehensive Plan.

According to the LISD Long Range Facility Plan Update, a new junior high school is proposed for construction at some point within the 2003-2008 period. Though current funding for this project is currently unavailable, the project remains a priority with the school district.



**Junior High School**

**A new junior high school is proposed to replace the above pictured school.**

## *Healthcare*

Levelland is served by a full acute care center and operated under the umbrella of the Covenant Healthcare System of Lubbock. Located at 1900 South College Avenue, the structure was built in the early 1970's and is in sound condition. It contains 48 beds, an emergency room and facilities for such services as baby labor and delivery, physical therapy, basic surgeries and x-rays. Several clinics exist within the complex and available on-site land exists should the facility ever require further expansion. Ultimately, it is hoped that the entire hospital can be remodeled, the nearest related project may be the remodeling of hospital rooms. It is possible that the hospital may add internal medicine services and some nursing care in the future. The hospital currently employs 13 full-time doctors, all of which are required to reside in Levelland, and some part-time doctors are employed for day clinic service. The hospital is not fully relied upon for Hockley County residents outside of the City, as services are often sought at healthcare facilities in Lubbock. In general, the hospital has proven capable of



**Covenant Hospital**

**Covenant Hospital of Levelland is the major provider of medical services for the community.**

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providing quality care to citizens and would be prepared for increasing the amount of service required should population levels increase.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Solid Waste Disposal***

The City of Levelland operated a landfill for several decades but closed it in 1994. This closure came at a time when the landfill was nearing its capacity and a new landfill would be required very soon. At that same time new federal regulations on landfills were put in place that would have significantly increased the cost of permitting and operating a landfill. The City studied the alternatives available ranging from obtaining property and permitting a new City landfill, to joining in a regional landfill with other cities, to complete privatization. The most cost effective choice was to contract with a private provider to provide solid waste collection services and haul the solid waste to an existing landfill.

Since 1994, the regulations have been modified and loosened so that a small landfill that could handle a portion of the solid waste generated in Levelland could be feasible. The 2001 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) addressed this and recommended the City pursue establishing a landfill under the “arid exempt” provisions of the regulations governing landfills. Under these provisions the City could likely create and operate a landfill capable of handling about half of the solid waste generated in the City in a cost effective manner. Based upon the recommend in the CIP the City is in the process of searching for a suitable site on which to construct such a landfill.

### ***Other Facilities***

Refer to Section 7. *Infrastructure* for discussions on improvements related to water and wastewater, drainage and streets.

### **Activities Building, 1800 Lee Street**

- Because of serious concerns related to substantial damage to the Activities Building, this structure is currently under consideration as a candidate for demolition and replacement. A new facility would conceivably function as the new Activities Building and would be designed in a fashion that it may be expanded to become the official city civic center. When this replacement occurs, the location of the facility will be examined to determine if there may be a more appropriate location for it. Any such relocation considerations must include the fact that the current location is in an area of town with a high concentration of minorities and also provides a focal point and draw to City Park.

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<sup>4</sup> Personal Interview. Jerry Osburn, Hospital Administrator. Covenant Hospital of Levelland. November 6, 2003.

**Park Maintenance Building, 1820 Houston Street**

- Current structure and available space is sufficient at this time and should not be considered a priority for improvement.

**Pool and Bathhouse, 1820 Wilson Street, 14 part-time employees**

- Current structure and available space is sufficient at this time and should not be considered a priority for improvement.

**Wastewater Lab, 2000 Alamo Road**

- Current structure and available space is sufficient at this time and should not be considered a priority for improvement.



Figure 6.6 Airport

**Airport Terminal, 4/10 mile South Highway 385**

- Significant improvement of the airport is required along with some additional space needed for office and a possible new classroom for flight instruction. Currently, opportunities with TXDOT are being explored for funding assistance. Improvements related to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance should be addressed with all applicable physical improvements (ex. New bathroom facilities).

**The Levelland Municipal Airport is in need of serious physical improvement with some additional space needed.**

**Cemetery Office/ Maintenance Shop, 1400 15<sup>th</sup> Street; 3.5 full time/1.5 part time employees**

- A possible building expansion of the existing office may be needed in the future.

**Water/Wastewater Office and Maintenance, 215 Hickory Street; 10 full time employees (7 Water, 3 Wastewater)**

- This office is currently under renovation to transform the original structure from a warehouse to an office building. Under the current renovation, the building will be at capacity and any additional personnel would require an expansion of the building. If an expansion becomes necessary, available land at the site does exist to the north of the structure.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Telephone Interview. Pat Riley, Manager of Water/Wastewater services, City of Levelland. October 16, 2003.

**Street & Sanitation Offices/Vehicle Maintenance Shop/Service Center, 302 Avenue G; 9 full time employees (7 Street, 1 Service Center, 1 Sanitation)**

- Some renovation may be required. Physical size is adequate.
  
- Senior Center, owned and operated at the county level
  
- Library, owned and operated at the county level

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