

Grassland Village Special Area Plan

*Public Open House and Information Session
December 10, 2012*



Welcome

The Williamson County Planning Department, along with the Grassland Village Citizens Advisory Committee, welcome you to tonight's Public Open House for the Grassland Village Special Area Plan.

This open house is the first in a series of public meetings, and is intended to be a starting point for the public's involvement with the Plan. We



hope the information shared tonight will give you a better understanding of what to expect over the coming months, as we work with the Grassland community to develop a Plan for the future of the Village. Your participation and continued involvement will be a key component in the development of the Plan.

We have set up various "stations" around the room, and each of these stations provides specific information regarding a particular aspect of the Special Area Plan.

Please take some time to visit each station. Staff members will be on hand to provide additional information and to answer any questions that you may have.

The stations represented in tonight's Open House are listed below:

- **Welcome**
- **What is a Special Area Plan?**

- **Process & Timeline**
- **Current Zoning, Uses and Conditions**
- **PowerPoint presentation**

Should you wish to be added to the contact list for future meetings, please make sure you sign-in at the welcome station. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you in the coming months as we help to develop the Grassland Village Special Area Plan!

Why is Public Involvement Important?

Public Involvement is crucial to the success of a Special Area Plan for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, public involvement enables collaboration between Planning Staff and citizens. This collaboration is invaluable to the planning process because it allows the public to directly shape the vision, goals, and objectives of the Plan. This will be the community's Plan. As such, it should reflect the values of the community as expressed during public involvement meetings.

Using the knowledge and experience of both Staff and citizens of the community, a high quality, consensus-based Plan can be developed.

The relationship that is developed between staff and the community during a Special Area Plan process often lasts well into the future, as the recommendations of the Plan are implemented over time and as new issues facing the community arise.

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What is a Special Area Plan?

A Special Area Plan is a policy document that articulates a shared vision for the future growth and/or preservation of a community. In addition, these plans include specific goals and objectives that are designed to help achieve the community's vision. Because Special Area Plans are intended to reflect the values of the community for which they are prepared, public participation during the planning process is vitally important.

Issues that may be addressed in Special Area Plans include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Appropriate land uses;**
- **Design and character;**
- **Historic Preservation; and**
- **Transportation and Infrastructure needs**

Upon completion, Special Area Plans are adopted by the County and become part of the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Special Area Plans are designed to establish a vision that is community-driven, so that future land use decisions will meet the community's preferences.

Relation to County Comprehensive Plan

In 2007, an update to the Williamson County *Comprehensive Land Use Plan* was adopted. The

Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for future land use and development decisions for the entire unincorporated County.

Because the Comprehensive Plan covers such a large geographic area, its recommendations are relatively broad in nature. Therefore, in order to address land use and preservation issues in greater detail, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that Special Area Plans be developed for the County's four villages, including Grassland.

Special Area Plans and Development Regulations

It is important to understand the distinction between Special Area Plans and development regulations. Special Area Plans are policy documents that articulate a vision for how a community can and should evolve over time. Special Area Plans should be used as a guide for making decisions regarding development, future land uses, and other improvements in the Village. However, they do not, in and of themselves, impose regulations or requirements.

Once the Special Area Plan is completed, it will serve as the basis for the creation of new zoning regulations that are specifically tailored to address the unique needs of the Grassland Village, and that are geared toward implementing the community's vision, as set forth in the Special Area Plan.

Like the Special Area Plan itself, the creation of these zoning regulations will also include opportunities for public input.

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Process and Timeline

The process for the Grassland Village Special Area Plan involves four main (4) phases:

- **Phase 1: Research, Inventory, and Assessment**
- **Phase 2: Establishing Vision, Goals & Objectives**
- **Phase 3: Creation and Presentation of Draft Plan**
- **Phase 4: Adoption/Endorsement**

Phase 1: Research, Inventory, and Assessment

The first phase in the Special Area Plan process is spent conducting research that will help us better understand the Grassland Village.

The information collected includes historical and background references about the area. Because the Village has served as a center for residential, institutional, and commercial uses, it is important to know why this occurred at this particular location, rather than in others. It also provides us with an understanding of events: natural or manmade, that may have had an influence on how the Village was shaped.

The next step involves a land use inventory, which provides information about how the various parcels within the Village are currently being utilized.

Additionally, this phase involves an assessment of existing natural resources, including streams and creeks, topography, woodlands, and floodplain. This assessment will help in understanding how these natural resources may influence future growth and preservation.

Lastly, an inventory and assessment of the current infrastructure in the Village is studied. Infrastructure plays an essential role in determining both the growth and preservation patterns for Grassland.

Phase 2: Public Involvement – Establishing Goals and Objectives

Phase 2 of the Special Area Plan process is the most essential for the Plan's development. That is because it revolves around public participation and input.

In order for a Special Area Plan to be successful, it needs input from citizens. Because these plans are community-driven, it is important to know how the citizens feel the Village should grow and evolve over the next twenty (20) years.

Through several Public Involvement meetings, Staff will work with the community to better understand the concerns and the issues facing the Village. Staff will then work with the community to establish a shared vision, followed by detailed goals and objectives on how to achieve the vision.

Without participation from its citizens, the Plan cannot achieve its maximum potential. It is Staff's role to help the community outline what the future of Grassland Village should be.



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Phase 3: Creation and Presentation of a Draft Plan

Once the information collected in the Public Involvement meetings is compiled, Staff will work with the Citizens Advisory Committee to develop a draft version of the Grassland Village Special Area Plan.

The Plan will reflect the vision, goals and objectives expressed by the community, as well as illustrate a timeline for achieving the vision. Upon completion of the draft Plan, Staff will present it to the community to ensure that the Plan accurately reflects the community's values.

Phase 4: Adoption and Endorsement

The last phase of the Special Area Plan is the presentation of the Plan to both the Williamson County Regional Planning Commission and Williamson County Board of Commissioners for their adoption and endorsement respectively. The adoption/endorsement process will provide even further opportunities for public input.

By Phase 4, there will have been multiple community meetings that have helped shape the Plan. With a unified voice, it is Staff's goal that the Plan will represent what the citizens of Grassland wish for the future of the Village.

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Current Zoning, Uses, and Conditions of the Village

2013 Williamson County Zoning Ordinance

In January of 2013, an update to the Williamson County *Zoning Ordinance* will go into effect. The Ordinance serves as the regulating document for development within the entire unincorporated County.

In keeping with the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, the 2013 Ordinance establishes the zoning of the Grassland Area from Suburban (S), to Village (V). While this change will not go into effect until January 1, 2013, it does identify the areas that will be zoned as the Grassland Village.

Current Zoning

On January 1, 2013, the Grassland Village will transfer to a Village (V) zoning district. The Village zoning district represents the areas within the County that have traditionally acted as commercial centers surrounded by areas characterized by a mix of residential uses, historical and natural resources and greater traffic flow.

This zoning district encourages new commercial development and redevelopment, so these areas can continue to serve the needs of the residents. This zoning district also encourages that design and layout of new development must blend with the unique scale and character that is currently established.

These areas are afforded with a unique opportunity to allow a number of use types to co-exist.

Current Land Uses

The Grassland Village has long-served as a focal point for commercial, social, and institutional uses surrounded by a strong residential community, and this pattern remains true today. By serving the more residential areas around the Village, Grassland still offers a wide mix of uses, and as is typical to a village, these different uses can exist alongside one another.

The most common use in the Grassland Village is commercial. The Village has a long-established commercial area, and the businesses exist both in a compact, mixed-use development, as seen in the Grassland Shopping Center, and on individual parcels that have been subdivided from larger tracts of land, such as the commercial businesses along Battlewood Street. Commercial uses in Grassland also attract many travelers who visit the Village, whether it is their ultimate destination or whether they are simply passing through.

Institutional uses are the second most-frequent use in the Village. The institutional uses exist primarily along the Bethlehem Loop corridor, and have long-served the needs of both the Grassland residents and those in the surrounding areas.

Residential uses, although not as common in the Grassland Village, typically exist between the two commercial nodes. In addition, the Grassland Study Area is encompassed by



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residential neighborhoods outside of the Study Area, providing a strong and unique sense of community for the Grassland Village and its surrounding area.

Natural Resources

Abundant natural resources exist in and around the Grassland Village, and these resources contribute greatly to the attractiveness of the Grassland Village to both visitors and residents. Natural resources also play an important role in determining, and in some cases limiting, the future growth potential of the Village.

Grassland is flanked on nearly all sides by rolling, wooded hills. The topography of the Grassland Village varies, with slopes anywhere from 0% to over 35%. The areas that contain steep slopes tend to occur on the western border of the Village. Both the eastern and southern portions of the Village are close in proximity to the growth boundaries for Franklin and Brentwood, creating a border to development outside of the Village boundaries.

How to Stay Connected

Follow the community conversation for the Special Area Plan by “Liking” the Grassland Village Special Area Plan page on Facebook.

<http://www.facebook.com/grasslandplan>

Stay in contact with Williamson County Planning Staff on the County’s website for calendar updates and the latest happenings for the Special Area Plan.

<http://williamsoncounty-tn.org/planning>

Contact Williamson County Planning offices by phone, email, or mail.

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We look forward to hearing from you!