



2. OVERALL POLICY DIRECTION

CHAPTER 2: OVERALL POLICY DIRECTION CURRENT JANUARY 2018

ROLE OF OVERALL POLICY DIRECTION

POLICY COMPONENTS

A General Plan's Overall Policy Direction should include three important components:

- A Vision Statement
- A set of Guiding Principles
- A Preferred Scenario

The Vision Statement describes the future that is desired by the Weatherford community, in terms of its physical, social and economic conditions. It is an aspirational statement. It is not intended to describe the current situation; instead, it is designed to create an inspiring image of the future that participants seek to achieve. A Vision Statement should:

- Describe where the community wants to go (i.e., the result, not the process to get there)
- Be succinct and memorable
- Not contain a laundry list of ideas about individual topics

Guiding Principles provide overall guidance across plan components. They explain the most important general principles that should be followed to achieve the Vision. These Guiding Principles apply at both the citywide and the Planning Area level, and they shape the more detailed principles that apply to each topical area, such as mobility or infrastructure.

The Preferred Scenario is the graphic depiction of the future Weatherford community as it would exist if these Guiding Principles are followed and this Vision is realized. As with the Guiding Principles, the Preferred Scenario provides overall guidance for investors and decision-makers. By illustrating the general geographic development pattern the Weatherford community hopes to achieve, the Preferred Scenario establishes the basic framework for the strategies for individual Planning Areas.

The Preferred Scenario describes the development that achieves this Vision. It is generalized, however, and in much of the Study Area it reflects the broad pattern at the scale of a 5-acre grid. In the Land Use and Development Element, a more detailed Place Type Diagram depicts a more precise version of this desired development pattern. The most

detailed depiction is found in the Strategies for each of the seven Planning Areas.

A set of Place Types is used to describe the desired character of specific places within the community. Instead of simply indicating a single land use (such as single family residential use at two units per acre), the Place Type describes the character of the development pattern that could be attracted to various parts of Weatherford. The Land Use and Development Element includes the definitions of each Place Type, supporting images that depict the places represented by each Place Type and criteria for applying these Place Types to decisions about individual development or infrastructure projects.

IMPORTANCE OF OVERALL DIRECTION

This level of Overall Policy Direction is the foundation upon which topical and geographic policies and recommendations are based. It sets the overall framework for the plan's more specific policy direction and informs stakeholders of what the plan seeks to achieve. The principles and policies found in each of the Plan's strategy sections should help the City achieve this Vision and should be consistent with these Guiding Principles. The Overall Policy Direction should be the basis for recommendations by the City staff and action by appointed and elected decision-makers, including the City Council, on decisions and investments by the City of

Weatherford that affect the future form and character of the Weatherford community

VISION STATEMENT

This Vision Statement describes the Weatherford community of the future desired by the community's leaders and stakeholders:

We in Weatherford envision a dynamic future that continues and expands our historic role – as a destination and a center of government, education, commerce and entertainment — for our community's adults and children, our rural neighbors, and the visitors who enjoy our distinctive character and events.

We succeed and thrive through 2050 by retaining our western heritage and natural assets, remaining a safe and desirable community, attracting diverse people and businesses, supporting and making economically sustainable investment, and building connections from our historic Downtown to Weatherford neighborhoods and the surrounding North Texas Region.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As noted above, the General Plan’s Guiding Principles provide overall policy direction that applies to many or all of the Plan’s individual topical areas. They establish a basis for major decisions shaping the Weatherford community that will exist in 2050. Their broad statements of principle and direction are then applied and detailed in each of the topical Elements, so they can be put into practice as the City considers individual decisions on development, capital investments, public programs and other issues. The twelve General Plan Guiding Principles presented below

- ✓ Address the top priority issues (shown in Exhibit 2.1) that were ‘very important’ for 75% or more of the participants in the General Plan’s initial public input process;
- ✓ Help achieve the Vision described above; and
- ✓ Relate to multiple Plan Elements.

Top Priority Issues

- Maintaining City infrastructure (streets, parks, buildings, etc.) over time
- Helping small businesses to stay here as they grow
- Being economically sustainable (desirable or resilient) over the long term
- Using energy, water & other resources efficiently
- Having quality schools (Kindergarten to College)

Exhibit 2.1: Top Priority

CHARACTER OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Private and public investments in the historic Downtown and surrounding historic neighborhoods retain their character and enhance Downtown’s role as the vibrant center of Weatherford’s shopping, dining, living, entertainment and professional opportunities.



WESTERN HERITAGE

Weatherford's Western heritage is celebrated in community design and continued through economic and tourism efforts that support ranching, equestrian and related Western activities.



MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Today's neighborhoods remain vital and desirable places that meet the needs of existing residents and appeal to future residents.

DIVERSE HOUSING CHOICES

Weatherford offers diverse housing and neighborhood choices that are accessible, affordable (or attainable) and appealing to people at all stages of their lives.



QUALITY LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

Weatherford's educational institutions partner with the City to locate facilities and offer programs that give residents the skills they need for success at all stages of their lives.

ROBUST, SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

A diverse mix of businesses and employment enables Weatherford's economy to adapt to change and remain successful over time.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Businesses that start in Weatherford receive support so they choose to remain here as they grow.

EVENT AND TOURISM ATTRACTION

Events, destinations and experiences in Weatherford attract people from the region and beyond because they are rooted in the community's heritage, based on its unique current character and enhanced to appeal to visitors' changing interests over time.

LONG TERM MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The Weatherford community uses its water, energy and other natural assets to enhance residents' quality of life and manages these assets for enjoyment by future generations



MOBILITY OPTIONS AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Weatherford's mobility network – its highways, streets, trails and transportation options – meets the needs of residents and businesses without substantially reducing quality of life or community character.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

City leaders and decision-makers invest in public facilities, services and infrastructure that are located, timed and sized to meet the expected needs of current and future residents and businesses, and that have life-cycle benefits that outweigh their life-cycle costs.

SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Weatherford's public services enhance public safety, its programs and activities encourage healthy living, and its residents look out for their neighbors.



PREFERRED SCENARIO

The Preferred Scenario depicts the geographic pattern of the future Weatherford community if these Guiding Principles are followed and this Vision is achieved. This scenario results

from an evaluation of several alternative futures for Weatherford. These alternatives all continued to support the vitality of existing Weatherford neighborhoods. They considered options for the character and type of development near Downtown, along the future Ric Williamson Memorial Highway (the Loop) and for areas that are currently in ranching or agricultural use or are currently outside the City's service area. The General Plan Advisory Committee examined the implications of these alternatives and recommended a Preferred Scenario that reflects the best possible future for Weatherford. The City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission considered the Advisory Committee's recommendations and finalized the Preferred Scenario described below and illustrated in Exhibits 2 and 3.

The Preferred Scenario includes the entire Study Area – Weatherford's current incorporated area and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Exhibit 2 shows the Preferred Scenario for the Study Area, while Exhibit 3 focuses on the current incorporated area.

The Preferred Scenario is intentionally presented as a generalized diagram of future development. Its purpose is to communicate the overall pattern and major objectives of this General Plan. The detailed information on the location and character of future development is found in the Land Use and Development Element of the General Plan (Chapter 4).

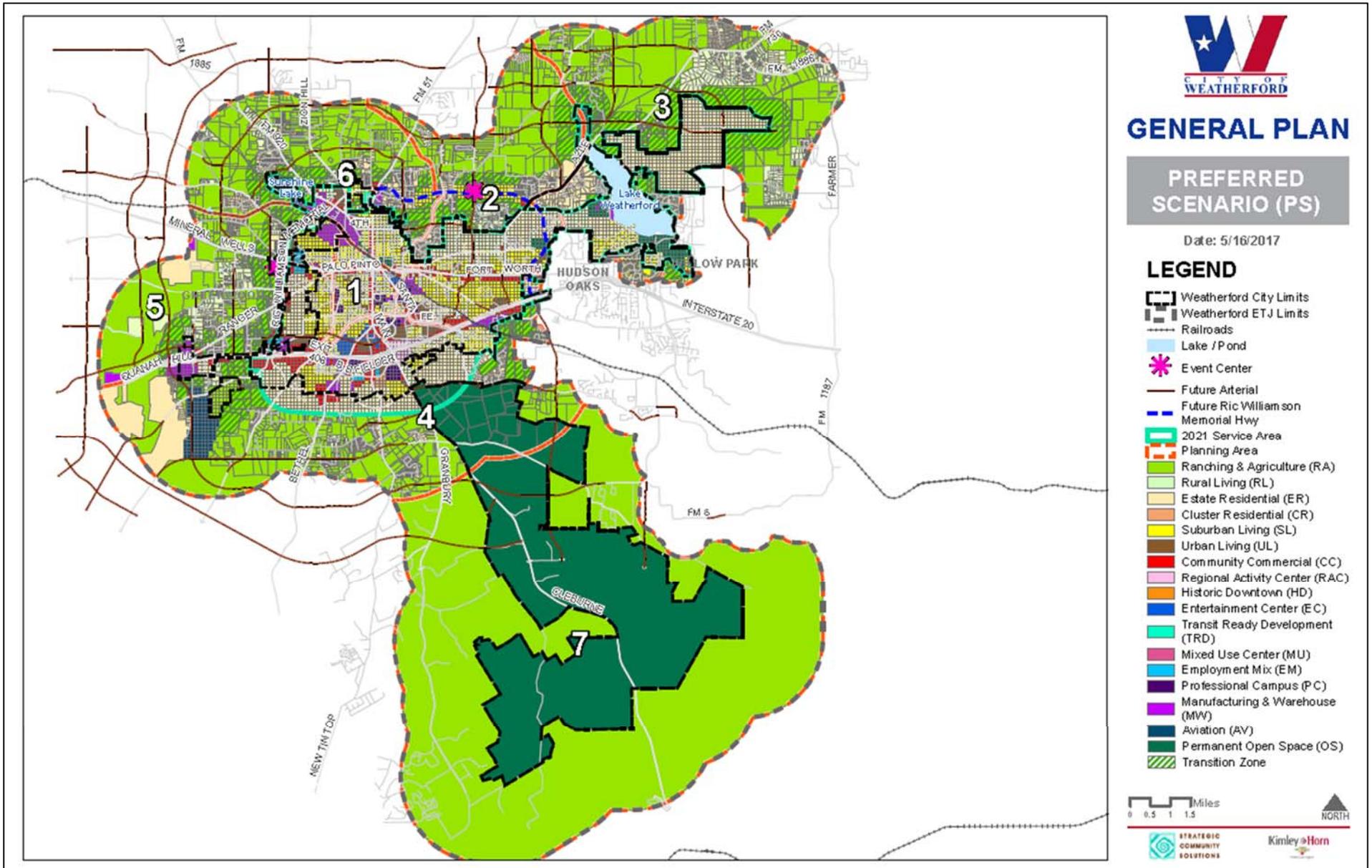


EXHIBIT 2.2: PREFERRED SCENARIO, STUDY AREA

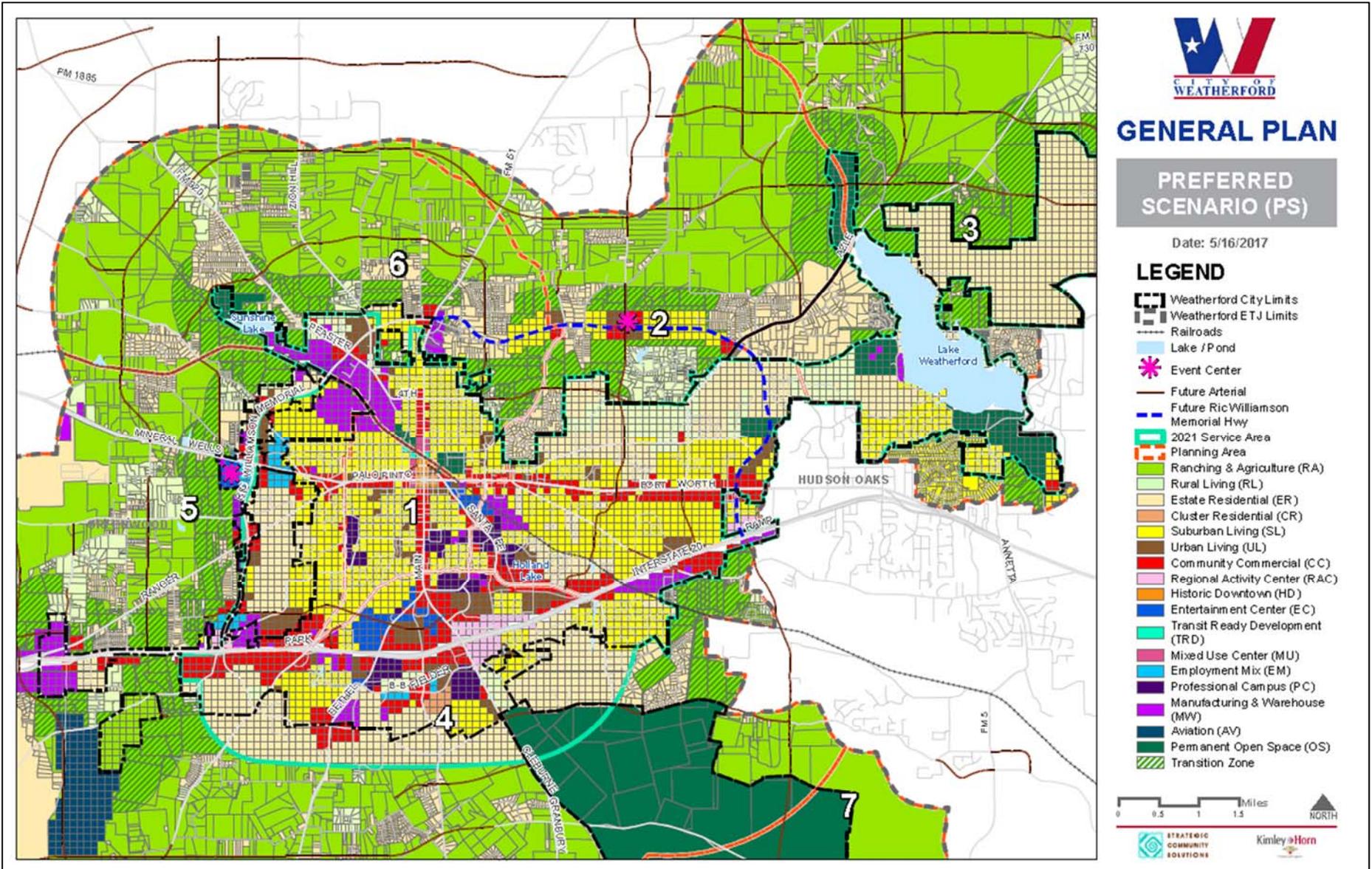


EXHIBIT 2.3: PREFERRED SCENARIO, CITY

CURRENT TRENDS AND POLICIES

The Preferred Scenario assumes that many current trends and policies continue:

- Existing development in most parts of the city will not change. The General Plan supports efforts to retain the vitality and desirability of existing Weatherford neighborhoods and business areas.
- Infill of vacant properties within the developed city will occur with uses similar those that exist today in the area surrounding the infill property.
- Industrial expansion will continue in the western and northwestern parts of the city.
- Development along I-20 will be consistent with the City's adopted Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) plans.
- An airport will be built in the southwestern part of the Study Area. Uses that support aviation and those that benefit from proximity to an airport will occur in the area around the future airport.

This Preferred Scenario also reflects the desired direction for three critical parts of the Weatherford community described below.

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown is the keystone of Weatherford's future – the place that is most memorable and distinctive, and the place that supports the appeal and vitality of the entire community. Weatherford envisions its future Downtown as an enhanced and even more lively expansion of the Downtown that residents value today. As a result, it is a key component of Weatherford's appeal to new residents and businesses. Two alternative development patterns were considered for the vacant and underutilized areas near Downtown. The first alternative, 'Business as Usual', continued a pattern of lower density development dominated by single family detached



homes. The second alternative, 'Downtown Focus', created a more compact, walkable area with a mix of uses.

Weatherford's leadership concluded that the character of the second alternative was more desirable than the first, determining that it would be more likely to achieve the community's objectives. The mix of uses and the higher density residential both create more customers for the shops and restaurants in Downtown, helping it to succeed. The General Plan's preferred scenario reflects the second option for Downtown.

Downtown continues to retain its historic character and structures, since these are the assets that give Weatherford's Downtown its authenticity. The General Plan supports action to retain this history and to provide incentives to business and property owners in these buildings. Historic neighborhoods around the Square are similarly protected and supported. Properties near the Historic Downtown that are vacant or underutilized can be developed with a wider mix of uses and more intense development than exists today.

This desired development pattern means that the future Downtown should be even more walkable and inviting to people on foot than Downtown is now. Heavy vehicular traffic, including large trucks and commute hour congestion, should be redirected to routes outside the square to improve safety and reduce noise impacts. All streets should be

designed to be sensitive to their context – the uses and activities occurring on the properties along the streets. Biking and walking are enjoyable, safe and desirable options for people who want to enjoy Downtown. In the northeastern part of the Downtown, the T&P Depot is identified as a potential future transit stop for a rail line that could connect Weatherford with Fort Worth and the rest of the North Texas region. To support this future mobility choice, the areas around the Depot are developed with a compact mix of uses that make the area 'transit-ready'.

RIC WILLIAMSON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY (THE LOOP)

The Preferred Scenario includes the future route for this loop highway around the existing Weatherford community. It anticipates a development pattern along the Loop that should maximize the highway's mobility benefits as well as providing locations for a mix of future development that can respond to changing market conditions over time.



As part of the planning process, two alternative development patterns were considered for the properties along the Loop. The first, 'Business as Usual', (See Exhibit 2.4) assumed that the properties along the entire Loop would be developed with highway-oriented retail (shown in red above) – a pattern that occurs in many Texas communities when new highways are built.

The second alternative, 'Concentrated Retail', examined a development pattern that concentrates retail at major

**EXHIBIT 2.4:
BUSINESS AS USUAL SCENARIO**

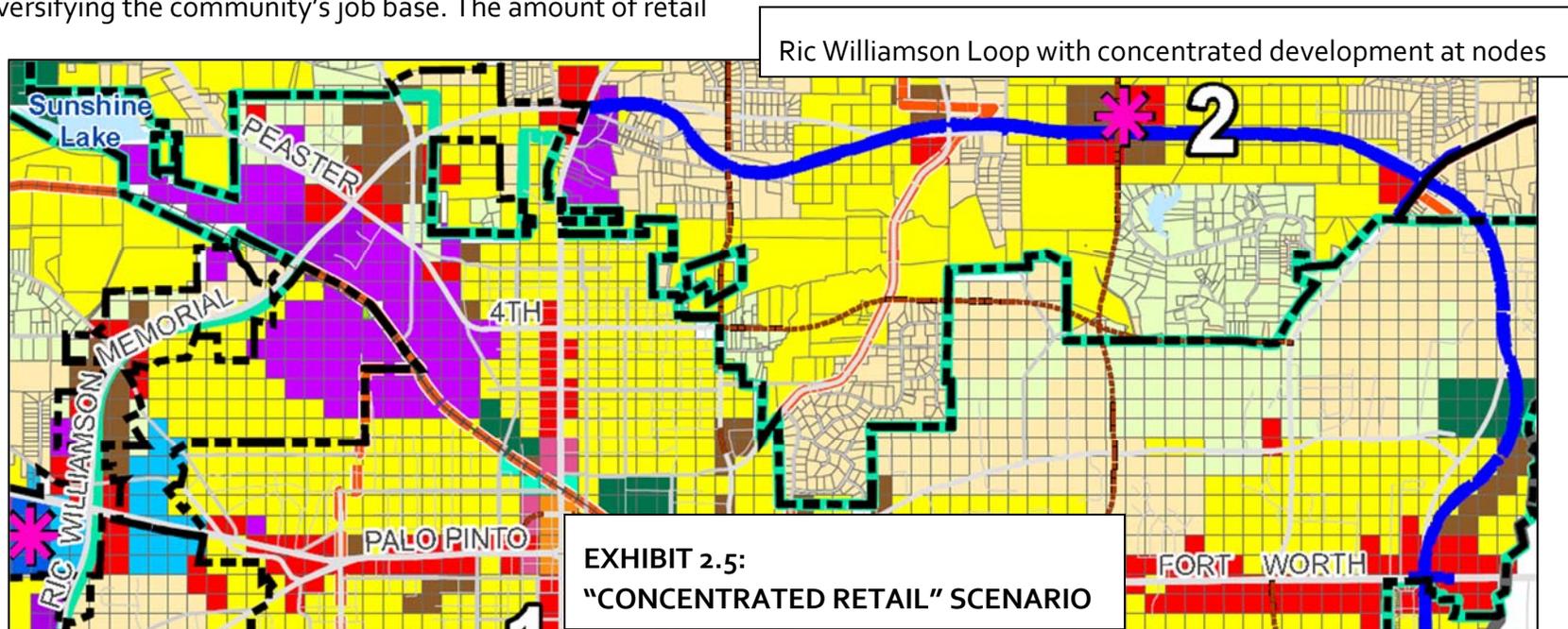
LEGEND

- Weatherford City Limits
- Weatherford ETJ Limits
- Railroads
- Lake / Pond
- Event Center
- Future Arterial
- Future Ric Williamson Memorial Hwy
- 2021 Service Area
- Planning Area
- Agricultural (A)
- Rural Living (RL)
- Estate Residential (ER)
- Cluster Residential (CR)
- Suburban Living (SL)
- Urban Living (UL)
- Community Commercial (CC)

intersections of the Loop and arterial streets (Shown in Red in Exhibit 2.5). In between these intersections, the development pattern included Place Types focused on major employers and on business activities such as manufacturing, office and distribution. Some Urban Living (Shown in Brown) areas were identified as well. The analysis showed that this second alternative was more successful. With the first option, the amount of retail that could be developed was far beyond the amount the market is likely to support. The result of this pattern is over-building of retail, leading to higher vacancy rates and less business viability. In contrast, the second option balances retail growth with other employment sectors diversifying the community's job base. The amount of retail

appears more realistic based on market demands as well. The General Plan's preferred scenario includes this second alternative development pattern for the area along the Loop. The development pattern along the future Loop should concentrate retail centers at the Loop's intersections with primary arterials.

At these major intersections, centers can be developed that each have a unique identity or brand. They will provide important shopping destinations for Weatherford residents and for people throughout Parker County. These centers may



include other uses as well, such as restaurants, services, entertainment, event centers and hotels.

Since the retail concentrations at the Loop's major intersections will readily accommodate the future retail market, the Preferred Scenario envisions the areas between these intersections as prime locations for major employers and other economically important uses. Along the western portion of the Loop, areas between the intersections could develop with office, manufacturing, distribution or a combination

of these uses. The emphasis is on attracting companies that provide career opportunities and good-paying jobs for future Weatherford residents. Some urban residential uses may be included as well, so Weatherford can attract the companies whose young, knowledge-based employees want to live close to their jobs. Suburban Living is appropriate between intersections along the eastern part of the Loop.

RANCHING AND AGRICULTURE

More than half (61%) of the land in this General Plan Study Area is currently in ranching or agricultural use. As Weatherford grows, some of this land will be developed for residential or non-residential use. But much of it is likely to remain in ranching. Retaining this surrounding ranchland is important to the character Weatherford residents value, since

it helps retain the Western heritage that distinguishes Weatherford from other communities near Fort Worth. The transitional area between Weatherford's suburban expansion and its ranchland must be managed to support community objectives, respect property owner interests and remain fiscally responsible as City facilities and services are extended.

Three alternatives were considered for current agricultural areas near the incorporated City. 'Business as Usual' assumed that it would develop over time with a mix of Estate Residential and Rural Living uses. The second alternative, 'Suburban Expansion', assumed that typical suburban neighborhoods would be developed here, along with the shopping centers, city streets, infrastructure and public services found in Weatherford neighborhoods today. The third alternative, 'Agriculture with Clusters', allowed urban or suburban development in compact clusters, while the surrounding area continued in agricultural use or was retained as open space. Weatherford's leadership evaluated these options and concluded that both the 'Suburban Expansion' and the 'Agriculture with Clusters' had advantages for the community. The direction reflected in this preferred scenario is a combination of these two, applied according to the existing conditions in each area. This tailored approach depicts the desired future for these parts of the Study Area. Closest to the current incorporated City, a phased extension of facilities should enable areas to develop in a suburban



pattern as the market demands. In areas of active ranching and agriculture, the Preferred Scenario supports the continuing economic vitality of these uses. Between these two areas, the scenario envisions a careful assessment of natural conditions, costs to provide service, ownership and lot size patterns and other factors. A future development pattern that is economically and fiscally sound results from this assessment.

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Preferred Scenario envisions the pattern of uses and activities when all land within the Study Area is developed. If the entire Study Area were developed based on this general pattern, it could accommodate almost 127,000 residents and slightly more than 90,000 jobs. This is, of course, a very significant increase from the 44,000 residents and 28,000 jobs in the Study Area today. There is not a target year for this build-out. Based on current population projections, however, these population levels would not be reached until sometime after 2060. Only 30% of this development potential is needed to accommodate growth expected by 2030. By 2050, about 40 to 60% of this potential would be needed to accommodate expected growth.



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