

Redevelopment Update Approved

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TEMPLE TERRACE - Several years ago, the Temple Terrace City Council kicked off its downtown redevelopment efforts with a plan, one city officials say was a valuable tool to help jump-start its endeavor to improve the city's blighted business district.

The 2001 Temple Terrace Downtown Community Area Redevelopment Plan contained design concepts, including streetscape, landscape, signage and architectural principles the city deemed necessary to successfully refurbish 225.31 acres at the southwest corner of the city limits surrounding the intersection of North 56th Street and East Busch Boulevard.

The initial plan spearheaded the establishment of the Community Redevelopment Agency, composed of council members responsible for administering policies related to the redevelopment area.

It also set in motion the creation of the Temple Terrace Redevelopment Agency, which allows tax increment financing usage for strategic investments to enhance the city's primary urban center.

However, in the years since the plan was adopted, much has transpired in the city's attempt to create a 'sense of place' with a mixed-use, high-density development.

Steps documenting the city's progress along the way and its strategy to move forward are included in the new 2007 Temple Terrace Downtown Community Redevelopment Area Update, approved by the council Tuesday night.

Included in the 38-page manuscript is the city's May 2005 Comprehensive Plan amendment to create a new land use category of 'downtown mixed use 25' that allows for an average of 25 dwelling units per acre and a limit of 3,500 dwelling units within the redevelopment area. It outlines a range of land uses such as multifamily residential, general commercial, office, parks, recreation/entertainment venues and institutional services.

The update also details the function of the Overlay Zoning District, adopted in May 2006 to set standards for building colors, heights and architectural designs, as well as requirements for streetscaping, signage, lighting and accessory structures.

In addition, the update describes the goals of the Downtown Temple Terrace Revitalization Master Plan, completed in 2005 following public input from a series of workshops. They are to create a sense of place, a pedestrian-friendly environment, public squares and parks, a central open space, gateways, a riverfront park and a main street as part of a new street grid.

'Some parts of the plan have become very generalized in order to allow flexibility in the downtown redevelopment strategy,' said Ralph Bosek, community services director. 'Specific improvements and construction costs have changed and will continue to change through the 30-year life of the plan and the Tax Increment Finance Trust Fund, which ends in 2033.'

Councilwoman Alison Fernandez said the updated plan is an excellent tool to use as Temple Terrace's redevelopment efforts continue to unfold.

'The update makes us review our goals for the area and makes sure our plan is in line with our overall goals and hopefully with our citizens' goals,' she said.

Councilman Ken Halloway called it 'an excellent document.'

'I'm happy with it; it does express the desires of our citizens,' he said. 'It's also a good step forward in our redevelopment process.'