

GOAL 2.1:

Protection of the residential atmosphere and desirability of Bellaire’s neighborhoods.

Guiding Principles

- A. *Maintain and enhance residential property values.*
- B. *Focus on the safety of residential streets.*
- C. *Maximize compatibility between older and newer (redeveloped) single-family detached homes, and with any nearby development of attached or higher-density housing types.*
- D. *Maintain the privacy of homes and rear yards.*
- E. *Ensure neighborhood security and crime prevention.*

Consideration 1: Non-Residential Compatibility and Screening/Buffering

Policy	n/a
Regulation	✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Incorporate character-based zoning and development standards for non-residential and higher-density housing developments as this approach directly targets building and site design factors that determine compatibility (versus a primary focus on regulation of uses).
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use City street and drainage improvements as an opportunity to install landscaping and screening that can address nearby compatibility concerns. Such projects are also a chance to clarify the extent of existing rights-of-way (where this is an issue) and the potential availability of some right-of-way area for these types of enhancements. ▶ Recognize screening and buffering between differing land use types/intensities as a key contribution and design consideration for pocket and linear parks.
Program/ Initiative	▶ Use individual residential redevelopment projects near non-residential uses as an opportunity to encourage supplemental tree planting, landscaping, taller fences (up to 8 feet as permitted in City Code Section 24-512, Fence Regulations), and other buffering/screening measures near established non-residential uses.
Partnerships/ Coordination	▶ Pursue retroactive screening/buffering improvements in conjunction with private property owners in sensitive locations with long-standing compatibility issues.
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consider a flexible bufferyards approach for screening/buffering versus the current approach in City Code Section 24-513 of mandating installation of a wall or fence (this should apply between residential uses of differing intensities as well). In exploring this potential strategy, also recognize the land cost factor in Bellaire. ▶ Consider requiring screening/buffering between non-residential and residential properties in all cases versus the current waiver in City Code Section 24-513.D if the non-residential structure is more than 50 feet away.

Consideration 2: Compatibility at City Limits

Policy	▶ Check the existing and potential land use on abutting properties just outside the City limits in Houston when evaluating zone change requests on fringe properties within Bellaire.
Regulation	n/a
Capital Improvement	▶ Monitor opportunities to include screening/buffering elements in capital improvement projects completed along the City limits.
Program/ Initiative	n/a

Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coordinate, as appropriate, with the City of Houston District “C” Council Member regarding land use compatibility issues near the Bellaire City limits. ▶ Communicate, as appropriate, with the City of Houston Planning Commission, and Planning & Development Department staff, regarding development applications of concern along the City limits.
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consider supplemental screening requirements for residential properties along the City limits that develop or redevelop at a time when they abut non-residential uses on properties in Houston.
Consideration 3: Loss of Tree Canopy with Redevelopment	
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commit the City to plant equivalent size trees in close proximity to the location of public improvement projects where tree removal cannot be practically avoided.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue careful enforcement of City Code Chapter 9, Article XI, Trees, particularly before and during residential redevelopment projects. Also focus on outreach and better awareness of the City’s requirements and standards.
Capital Improvement	n/a
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintain a City staff position with appropriate certifications to oversee tree ordinance administration and assist homeowners and builders with compliance and tree planting and care. Also consider assigning this individual, or a contract Urban Forester, to conduct monitoring of mature trees along neighborhood streets and to provide information and recommendations to home owners regarding treatment of diseased trees and removal/replacement of dead trees. ▶ Highlight unique and innovative design practices used to preserve mature trees on development sites.
Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Partner with Trees for Bellaire and other civic improvement groups to plant trees in appropriate locations within neighborhood street rights-of-way community-wide, especially where mature trees have been lost to age, disease, or unavoidable construction impacts.
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore potential enhancements to City Code Chapter 9, Article XI, Trees, based on model code provisions in similar communities. ▶ Consider extending the Street Trees provisions in the existing code to residential as well as commercial properties—or at least to corner residential lots.
Consideration 4: Institutional Impacts	
Policy	n/a
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Require greater setback of parking areas from residential property lines than the current two feet in City Code Section 24-154.C.3. Buffering/screening provisions should also apply where parking is situated near a property line with no other intervening site improvements or screening. ▶ Use maximum lot coverage standards to limit the extent of parking areas on non-residential sites within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
Capital Improvement	n/a
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue strict enforcement of parking regulations around Bellaire High School, in conjunction with HISD police, as well as crime prevention and incident response in the high school vicinity. ▶ Take advantage of major construction and building expansion projects (e.g., school campus redevelopment) to explore potential relocation or reconfiguration of parking arrangements, as well as improved screening and buffering, to improve compatibility with nearby residences. ▶ Develop a plan for managing or regulating the routine or frequent use of neighborhood streets for overflow parking from nearby non-residential uses.

Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Coordinate with HISD and private schools, including early involvement in design considerations and plans for new or renovated buildings, play areas and athletic fields, parking and traffic circulation, and any other improvements that could have implications for nearby residential areas. ▶ Maintain similar coordination with local churches, working to address any community concerns within the limitations of the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA).
Further Study/ Planning	n/a
Consideration 5: Neighborhood Traffic	
Policy	n/a
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintain tree preservation and landscaping requirements, which help to slow traffic through the visual/psychological effect of street enclosure. ▶ Encourage use of on-street parking in appropriate areas as parked cars also help to slow traffic.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Install street design elements intended to slow traffic—other than speed humps (e.g., varied curb lines and chicane features, on-street parking bays, brick paver sections or other surface treatments, etc.). ▶ Install traffic diverter improvements in additional locations to eliminate through traffic and particular turning movements at the end of targeted streets.
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue routine police presence and traffic law enforcement on neighborhood streets. ▶ Continue to place driver awareness signs at key locations.
Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue coordination with HISD and its police department to maintain and closely enforce school zone restrictions.
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As part of City-wide trail and sidewalk planning, identify key intersections and mid-block locations for installation of high-profile crosswalks and other bike/pedestrian safety amenities.
Consideration 6: Neighborhood Security	
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue strong budget support for a well-staffed and responsive Police Department.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the City’s development regulations.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Incorporate CPTED principles into capital project design and other public improvements.
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue Neighborhood Watch efforts City-wide. ▶ Monitor the latest technology applications for enhancing crime prevention and response capabilities. ▶ Continue routine reporting of crime incidents and statistics to City Council and residents.
Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue strong partnerships with police departments in Houston, West University Place, Southside Place, Harris County, and other area law enforcement agencies. ▶ Continue to pursue grant funding opportunities that support enhanced staffing and facility/ equipment/technology upgrades.
Further Study/ Planning	n/a

GOAL 2.2:

Greater housing choice in Bellaire to increase overall supply and accommodate “life cycle” needs for a more age-diverse community.

Guiding Principles

- A. Respond to the need for smaller dwelling sizes and more affordable options for current and potential Bellaire residents at various “life cycle” stages (e.g., young adults who grew up in Bellaire, young professionals and families, empty nesters, seniors, etc.).
- B. Emphasize diversified home ownership opportunities in Bellaire.
- C. Ensure compatibility of smaller-lot homes or attached dwelling types with the predominant single-family detached housing form in Bellaire.
- D. Promote mixed-use development as one avenue to achieving life-cycle housing objectives in Bellaire.
- E. Focus on quality design and sustainability in any future apartment construction or redevelopment.
- F. Spur redevelopment in under-utilized areas of the community through promotion of alternative housing types.

Consideration 1: Active Promotion

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Avoid re-zoning or non-residential use of properties currently zoned for residential use, especially where conducive for medium- and higher-density residential types. ▶ Emphasize clarity versus vagueness in the City’s development regulations and standards to ensure that community expectations for the quality and compatibility of alternative housing forms are clearly communicated and spelled out.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To protect the integrity of single-family detached neighborhoods, ensure adequate standards for building setbacks and placement, height limits (and step-back requirements for upper stories, where necessary), parking area placement and screening, landscaping, general screening/buffering, and architectural design where alternative housing forms may locate near existing single-family detached homes.
Capital Improvement	n/a
Program/ Initiative	n/a
Partnerships/ Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify and recruit development companies with a track record of building quality housing in small-lot, attached, and higher-density forms, as well as in mixed-use, downtown, and transit-oriented development settings.
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consider financial, regulatory, and other types of incentives (e.g., land assembly/clearance) the City might employ to encourage life-cycle housing development and redevelopment.

Consideration 2: Mixed Use

Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Recognizing the scarcity and rising value of land in Bellaire, provide zoning to encourage mixed-use development that offers higher-density housing options, more efficient land use, and preservation of open space on sites. ▶ In areas zoned for mixed use, encourage applicants not proposing a residential component to consider the viability and market appeal of a mixed residential-commercial product.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Rather than a change in zoning strategy in the RM-2 or RM-2-O zoning districts (since they are largely built out), encourage incorporation of remaining residual tracts into residential developments in adjacent districts, or explore opportunities to use such tracts for buffering purposes between different land use types or intensities.
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Provide more flexibility for Planned Developments within the R-M1 and R-M3 zoning districts by focusing on general criteria for such projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allow private streets and drives (built to City standards); - permit lots to take access from private streets/drives; - reduce minimum size required for PD projects; - allow reduced lot sizes where appropriate; - allow flexibility with setbacks as appropriate; - step-back approach for increasing building height; - more flexible approach to accommodating parking; - raise site coverage limit, plus on-site detention; - open space tied to lot size; - sidewalk standards tied to project size/design.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Design street rehabilitation, sidewalk/crosswalk installation, park/plaza, and streetscape projects to complement a more urban, mixed-use, and walkable environment in locations planned and zoned for this development character. ▶ Establish appropriate standards for private streets, if these are to be authorized, so they will meet City design criteria for public streets and be maintained appropriately over time.
Program/ Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a density bonus to development and redevelopment projects that propose to include more than one housing type from a “housing palette” included in the City’s zoning regulations.
Partnerships/ Coordination	n/a
Further Study/ Planning	n/a
Consideration 3: Key Redevelopment Areas (City Center and UV-T Area)	
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new UV-D zoning district] Enable a wide variety of housing options in the City Center area as part of the overall revitalization strategy for this area. ▶ Reserve the frontage along major streets in the City Center area (e.g., Bellaire, Bissonnet, South Rice) for permitted commercial and retail uses, including mixed retail and office potential (but not residential uses). ▶ Contingent on improved east-west vehicular circulation through the area and anticipated construction of a METRO transit center along Westpark just outside of Bellaire, plan for the potential emergence of a transit-oriented development—or “TOD”—scenario in the UV-T zoning district (TOD areas often attract a mix of retail, office, civic, and medium- to high-density residential uses).
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new UV-D zoning district] Amend the zoning regulations for the CCD-1 district to permit by right medium-density residential development (e.g., small-lot and attached forms such as townhouses) away from major streets and subject to appropriate design and development standards to ensure quality and compatibility. ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new CMU and UV-D zoning districts] Encourage more mixed-use Planned Developments (medium- or high-density residential combined with retail and/or office uses) within the CCD-2 district by reducing the minimum site area requirement, subject to appropriate design and development standards to ensure quality and compatibility (including the current six-story height limit).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED, in large part, through standards for the new UV-T zoning district] Amend the zoning regulations for the RDD district to encourage a more urban and mixed-use development form, to permit by right a variety of alternative housing styles, and to restrict primarily auto-oriented uses. ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Amend the zoning regulations to encourage and address more directly vertical mixed-use (residential use on upper floors above ground-level retail, office, or services) in both the CCD and RDD districts.
Capital Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Design street rehabilitation, sidewalk/crosswalk installation, park/plaza, and streetscape projects to complement the desired development character for the City Center (small downtown) and UV-T areas, respectively.
Program/ Initiative	n/a
Partnerships/ Coordination	n/a
Further Study/ Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore whether Linden and Spruce are good candidate locations within the City Center area for potential encouragement of medium-density residential development. (With regard to Linden, this includes just one block between S. 5th Street and S. Rice Avenue.) ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU and UV-D zoning districts] Explore ways to simplify and provide greater flexibility in the Planned Development process within the CCD districts, particularly regarding mixed-use projects with a residential component, including the minimum site area, maximum building height, and maximum floor-area ratio (FAR) standards for such projects.
Consideration 4: Quality and Sustainability of any Future Apartment Development or Redevelopment	
Policy	n/a
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ [ACCOMPLISHED through standards for the new CMU, UV-D and UV-T zoning districts] Adopt design standards for high-density residential development, which may include provisions for building form and scale, articulated building walls, building orientation, architectural detailing, roof types and materials, façade enhancements, and acceptable building materials. ▶ Ensure that traffic impact analyses and parking studies are required and effectively utilized when assessing the compatibility of proposed new or redeveloping apartment projects.
Capital Improvement	n/a
Program/ Initiative	n/a
Partnerships/ Coordination	n/a
Further Study/ Planning	n/a
Consideration 5: Residential Redevelopment	
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use zoning to encourage higher-density housing near major roadways, and as a buffer to single-family detached housing areas, while not adding to zoning complexity. This can be done within appropriate residential zoning districts by providing an incentive for increased housing density in transition areas near arterial streets. This allowance can be spelled out within the provisions of a particular district rather than needing to create new zoning districts or overlay districts in such areas to allow for the density variation.

Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Adjust the zoning strategy for the Larch Lane (LLDD) district to encourage its revitalization for alternative housing uses (e.g., smaller minimum lot size for slight density increase, flexibility in parking standards, reduced setbacks where appropriate, height step-back approach to allow greater height where appropriate but maintain compatibility near adjacent single-family detached homes). ▶ Establish an average, rather than minimum, lot size whereby lot sizes are allowed to vary in width and/or depth while maintaining the same overall development density. This approach can encourage a mix of housing styles within a single development.
Capital Improvement	▶ Determine the appropriateness of alleys in the Larch Lane (LLDD) district, and whether the City should construct these to spur residential redevelopment activity.
Program/ Initiative	n/a
Partnerships/ Coordination	n/a
Further Study/ Planning	▶ Explore a potential expansion of the Larch Lane (LLDD) zoning district to make this area more viable for alternative housing forms.