

Keeping Up with Kerrville

News and Views from the City of Kerrville

By Mark McDaniel

YOUR VOICE. YOUR CITY.

The passage this week by City Council of the Kerrville 2050 Comprehensive Plan brings to a conclusion 10 months of intense planning by more than 500 Kerrville-area citizens from all social, economic, religious and political backgrounds. These individuals have provided our great city with an inclusive and visionary road map for the next 30 years that will ensure Kerrville retains its natural beauty, small-town charm and sense of place despite growth and change that is inevitably coming our way.

From the start, development of the Kerrville 2050 Comprehensive Plan was an incredibly transparent and inclusive endeavor, the likes of which few communities of any size have ever experienced. The Plan received input from a number of sources, most notably the 42-member Advisory or Steering Committee, which provided feedback from community citizens in nine meetings, all of which were heavily publicized and open to the public. The 42 Steering Committee members were appointed in equal proportions by the mayor and city council members at the beginning of the planning process in 2017.

The Plan also relied heavily on community feedback through seven Comprehensive Plan subcommittees, which consisted of approximately 77 individuals who met in three rounds of meetings. Again, subcommittee members were appointed in equal proportions by the prior city council at the beginning of the planning process, ensuring that, like the Steering Committee, community representation would be evenly distributed throughout Kerrville.

The Comprehensive Plan received additional input from a number of other sources. Following the initial Plan kickoff meeting last November at our “State of the City” address at the Inn of the Hills, stakeholder interviews were conducted with more than 40 individual and small group sessions at City Hall. These meetings included more than 100 people.

KERRVILLE 2050 VISION STATEMENT:

Kerrville will be a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive community that:

- *Respects and protects the natural environment that surrounds it;*
 - *Seeks to attract economic growth and development;*
 - *Provides opportunities for prosperity, personal enrichment and intellectual growth for people of all ages; and*
 - *Does so while preserving the small town charm, heritage, arts and culture of the community.*
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The Comprehensive Plan featured six Community Events where the public was asked to review and comment on the city's issues and needs, including:

- The "State of the City" kickoff last November, where approximately 240 attendees were asked to fill out an initial questionnaire;
- A Community Retreat Nov. 18 at St. Peter's Tucker Hall which drew approximately 140 people;
- Two Open Houses Feb. 5-6 at the Dietert Center that had approximately 250 people attend over two nights;
- And two more Open Houses April 19-20 at City Hall that included approximately 125 attendees.

All of these events were open to the public and well publicized, not only on the City of Kerrville's website, Facebook and Twitter pages, but also by front page reporting in the *Kerrville Daily Times* and the *Hill Country Community Journal*. Both papers did an outstanding job of covering the planning process and notifying citizens of upcoming meetings.

The city further bolstered the planning process by hosting two online surveys and distributing thousands of newsletters on three separate occasions that detailed the progress of the plan and the dates of all future meetings. These newsletters were included in the *Times*, *Journal*, and the *West Kerr Current*.

The city's efforts to keep the Kerrville 2050 Comprehensive Plan process inclusive and open to all didn't go without notice. Kimley-Horn, the consulting firm helping facilitate this plan – a firm that has a long history of putting together Comprehensive Plans – said that the Kerrville community's involvement with the Comprehensive Plan was unprecedented and overwhelmingly encouraging.

So where do we go from here? While the planning process is complete, the hard work needed to achieve the many ambitious guiding principles in the plan is just beginning. The city will continue to hold open meetings as we pursue the aspirations our citizens have set out for Kerrville, and we will also continue to count on active involvement from citizens as we move forward to implement the plan.

Finally, a big "Thank You" to all who assisted in the creation of the Kerrville 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Your time, effort and input into this process have greatly exceeded my expectations and experiences over the last 32 years I have been blessed to serve in city management. Kerrville 2050 is indeed distinctly reflective of "Your Voice. Your City."