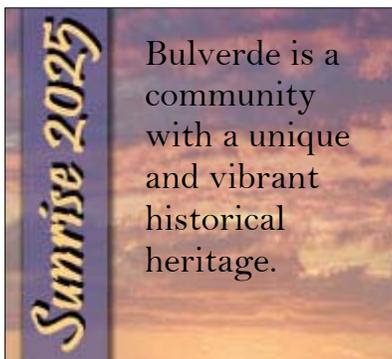


Historical/Heritage Preservation

7.1 Preserving Bulverde's Heritage

The Bulverde area's historical heritage includes buildings, rock walls, windmills, and the beautiful landscape of creek-beds, hills and valleys, wildflowers, and live oak and other types of native trees. As mentioned in the first chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, the history of our community and the region is both unique and significant. This history should be seen as an important resource both for establishing an identity for the City of Bulverde and developing it as an attractive community that stands out from other suburban towns.



Bulverde is a community with a unique and vibrant historical heritage.

When asked about their vision for what Bulverde should be, seventy-one percent of Comprehensive Plan survey respondents believe Bulverde should be “a unique village type community with an identifiable center(s).” Bulverde's strengths mentioned in the open-ended section of the survey include the beauty and feel of the Hill Country and the small town/village charm. When asked about goal statements for the Comprehensive Plan, ninety-one percent chose “protect and enhance the natural environment,” and eighty-seven percent chose “protect and enhance the appearance of the community.” Both of

these goal statements go hand-in-hand with the goal “protect and enhance historic sites” which was chosen by three out of four survey respondents. When asked to rate the quality of city services, only twenty-three percent of those surveyed thought the city was doing a good job of historic preservation.

There are many benefits to historical or heritage preservation. One is the town's appearance - would you prefer a flat-faced modern office building or retail strip center, or an authentically restored or designed edifice; a strip mall fronted by a parking lot or a pedestrian-friendly retail district; a locally relevant restaurant or a generic fast-food building; a “McMansion” with a huge garage fronting the street or an



Spring-time in the Texas Hill-Country

early Texas-style house built with native materials such as stone, cedar, and metal roofing material?

Historical and heritage awareness creates more attractive places to live and work. The style and variety of historic places and landscapes make communities much better to look at and live in. Historic places tell a community where it came from - what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be. Historic landscapes are daily reminders of why we have come to love the place we call home. The beauty of the Hill Country is a treasure that only we can preserve with proactive planning. By protecting these reminders of the past, preservation also builds the present and the future, since it saves valuable resources and recalls a community's goals and dreams.



Restaurant in Fredericksburg

The historical significance of our community, region and landscape, and the potential of the old-town area are assets for fulfilling the vision of Bulverde as an attractive, well preserved, historic, and culturally unique community. What have been the efforts at heritage preservation, and are there any programs available for use by our community? Just what are the Bulverde area's historical assets? What can be done to take advantage of these programs and resources? What can be done to enhance the old-town area and strengthen the mix of uses, utilizing its full potential? This Comprehensive Plan chapter attempts to address these questions and offers goals for achieving the answers.



Restaurant in Anywhere, USA

7.2 *Ongoing Efforts and Programs*

Historic resources available in the Bulverde area and Comal County include historically significant buildings, sites, artifacts and landscapes as well as individuals and organizations with an active interest in preserving and enhancing the historic value of the community and region. These resources and the history that they represent play a significant role in strengthening the identity of the Bulverde area and Comal County as a region steeped in Texas history. According to the Texas Historical Atlas, resources located within Comal County include 11 National Register listed sites, seventy-four historical markers, five museums and one courthouse.

Bulverde and the Texas Heritage Travel Program

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) has a regional program, the Texas Heritage Travel Program, designed to magnify the state's heritage. On January 8, 2004 an organizational meeting was held at the River Crossing Golf Club. This meeting, hosted by the City of Bulverde, marked the beginning of an effort to bring Hill Country counties together. The owners of the club donated the use of their facilities, and the Guadalupe Valley Telephone Cooperative bought lunches for some 170 participants who came from seventeen of the nineteen counties in the region. On this very successful day, the City of Bulverde made its debut into the state's historical community.



Scenes from the January 8th Texas Heritage Trails meeting hosted by the City of Bulverde

The Heritage initiative is directed towards experiencing an area's unique heritage and culture through heritage tourism and appreciation. It does not exploit and change an area's attractions but rather highlights them for everyone's appreciation and thus helps document what makes a place special. It preserves and protects resources, develops partnerships for sustainability, and focuses on authenticity and quality, all things deemed very important in the Comprehensive Plan survey and by the Steering Committee's Historical/Heritage subcommittee.

Heritage Travel is designed to be a tool for quality economic development. As such, heritage awareness and preservation can help increase retail sales, property values and tax revenues as well as preserve the past. The Heritage initiative helps educate both residents and visitors about the area's history and traditions, and its planning protects landscapes as well as buildings - all historic, cultural and natural resources. It helps bring people together as was evidenced by so many people attending the January organizational meeting at the River Crossing Club. At their January 27th

meeting, the Bulverde City Council passed a resolution supporting the Texas Historical Commission's Heritage Travel program.

Currently the THC has six active trail programs: Brazos, Forest, Fort, Independence, Lakes and Plains Trails. As of the writing of this plan, efforts to organize the Hill Country Region have met with great participation from the region. The THC is currently accepting applications for four Trail Regions that include the Mountain, Pecos, Tropical and Hill Country regions. Efforts are currently underway to establish a Heritage Trails Regional Board for the Hill Country, appoint a Regional Coordinator, and conduct a historical resources inventory. The City of Bulverde is at the forefront of this effort.

Comal County Historical Commission

The Comal County Commissioners Court has established the Comal County Historical Commission. It is fully sanctioned by the State of Texas and the eight member board has responsibility for all historic sites in Comal County. The City of Bulverde should consider working closely with this group to take advantage of much work already done and avoid duplicating preservation efforts.

Comal County Genealogy Society

The purpose of the Comal County Genealogy Society is to create, foster and maintain interest among the citizens of Comal County in the genealogy and local history of the county and such genealogy as may be of interest to its members. The Society also seeks to preserve church, cemetery and land records, testamentary documents, diaries, manuscripts and other source materials, and to promote the exchange of ideas and collaborate in devising efficient methods of genealogical and historical research.

Certified Local Government Program

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is a partnership with local governments, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) at the state level, and the National Parks Service (NPS) at the federal level, designed to assist communities preserve their heritage. Through the CLG Program, local governments may receive grant assistance, technical assistance and guidance in local preservation, as well as professional recognition and access to a nation-wide preservation information network. Currently Texas has forty cities and counties in the CLG program. These include Abilene, Arlington, Beaumont, Grapevine, Kingsville, Palestine, Plano, Tyler and Hays County.

In order to qualify for CLG status, a municipal government must adopt and enforce a preservation ordinance, establish a qualified review commission, maintain a system for surveying and inventorying historic properties, and provide for public participation in the historic preservation process. As evidence of the City of Bulverde's interest in historic/heritage preservation and appreciation, efforts have already been undertaken during this comprehensive planning process to develop and adopt an acceptable historic preservation ordinance.

7.3 Resources

One of the first steps in historical/heritage preservation efforts is to conduct a community resources inventory. An example of priority ratings of such a survey is shown in Table 7.1. These ratings are essential for characterizing an area's sites and activities. The inventory should incorporate geographic locations of



Stone and cypress barn in the area

historic structures, archeological sites, activities, historic districts, types of resources and attractions, condition of the facilities and needs to be addressed. The inventory can also include museums, memorials/monuments, parks and recreation sites, scenic drives, and natural attractions.

Local resources are as diverse as the bowling club, the Festival at the Community Center, and “lost” communities in the Bulverde area. For example, Mustang Hill was a Comal County community near present-day Bulverde settled in the 1880s when well-drilling machinery made possible water wells for farm and ranch homes. Herrera was a school community located on the Guadalupe Herrera survey near Cibolo Creek in western Comal County. In 1945 it was consolidated with the Bulverde school district, and today no community center remains. Honey Creek was named for the large numbers of honeybees near the creek and an abundance of an unusual limestone rock formation locally known as “honeycomb rock.” In 1883

Table 7.1. Priority Rating of Historic Resources Survey

PRIORITY: Criteria	Number of Features
Low: typical example of a common local building form, architectural style or type, with no identified historical associations; moderate to severely altered resource with reversible modifications that exemplifies a distinctive early building type or architectural style, or that has minor historical significance.	
Medium: contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns, but alterations have diminished the resource's integrity; significant example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; outstanding example of a common local building form, architectural style or type; modern or recent landmark not old enough to be judged in a historical context.	
High: contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns; is an outstanding or unique example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; retains a significant portion of its original character and contextual integrity; in some cases meets criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and/or is eligible for a Texas Historical Marker.	
Total	

Source: Texas Historical Commission.



The Hitzfelder House on FM1863 at Beck Road

Honey Creek School was built and served the community until it was consolidated with the Bulverde school district in 1945. Ufnau was a farming and stock-raising community settled as early as 1858 and located near present-day Bulverde.

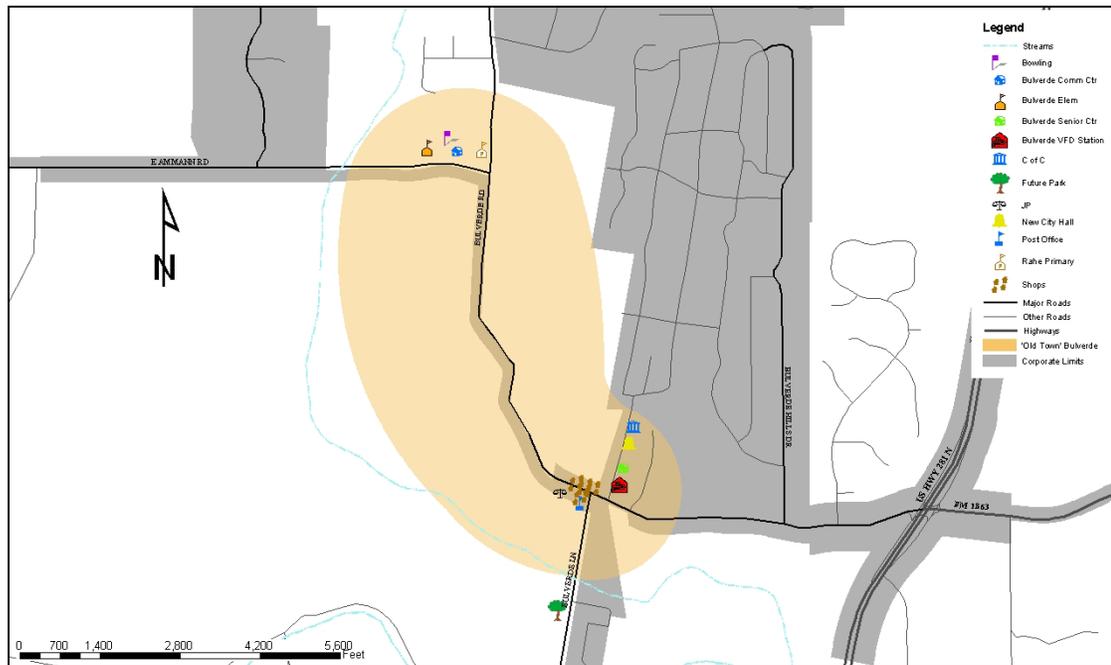
Cibolo Creek has a storied history that needs to be told. The Coahuiltecan Indians identified it as *Xoloton* and those of the Tonkawan linguistic family identified it as *Bata Coniquyoqui*.

In the late 1600's and early 1700's Father Damian Massanet called the stream *Santa Crecencia*, while other explorers called it *San Ygnacio de Loyola* and *San Xavier*. The stream was also called *Arroyo del Cibolo* and *Río Cibolo*, and over time the term *Cibolo* gradually came to be applied to the entire area.

The “Old-Town” Area

Another important resource that can serve to enhance Bulverde's identity and reinforce its potential is the city's “old-town” area in the vicinity of Bulverde Road and Cougar Bend (See Figure 7.1). Old-town Bulverde has potential as a historically significant town-site that can be a place for citizens to gather and enjoy themselves as well as shop and dine. Community leaders and volunteers have an opportunity to help establish an area that will serve as a more relaxed and pedestrian-friendly center of activity in our city by encouraging multiple uses such as retail, entertainment and dining, government services, office space and housing, a true mixed use neighborhood. Making downtown more attractive and pedestrian-friendly will help cause people to stay and walk around, thus making it a more vibrant place. In turn this activity will be appealing to retail establishments that may consider locating in old-town Bulverde. The City should investigate the utility of establishing an historic overlay zone to facilitate this goal. Historic zoning establishes special districts and works as an overlay zone. This means that the zoning does not affect the land use restrictions set by a broader comprehensive land use plan, but instead, the historic significance overlays or is in addition to the existing use district. For example, sign standards could be different in an historical overlay zone than from the rest of the community.

Figure 7.1. The City of Bulverde’s Potential “Old-Town” Overlay Zone



Source: City of Bulverde.

7.4 Historic Preservation Plan

Once historic sites are identified, they can be preserved and enhanced. At the very least they should be kept from falling into disrepair. A key tool to identify and help restore these sites is a historic preservation plan. Such a plan should be developed in order to identify strategies to preserve the Bulverde area’s unique historic resources. Implementation of the historic preservation plan could include designating historic districts, establishing a historic preservation review board, consistent design standards for historic areas or districts, and designing flexible regulations and incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties. The plan should also include recommendations for capitalizing on these historic resources as symbols of our heritage.

A historic ordinance should address critical issues that affect historic resources. These can include traffic/automobile dominance, design guidelines, surface parking lots, signage, and street amenities. Related ordinances that can promote historic preservation include tax incentives, a tree and shrub ordinance, and sign and design ordinance.

Many Texas communities use historic preservation plans to address the neglect and alteration of historic areas, buildings and the destruction of heritage landscapes with sprawling subdivisions and strip commercial development. A variety of activities can be included in the plan and used to increase public awareness of the value of a community’s historical resources and encourage and assist with preservation efforts. These activities can include developing self-guided tours of historic structures/sites,

area ranches and country lanes with rural landscapes, publishing brochures on the history of the community and region, offering advice and incentive programs to those who are restoring historic properties or building structures using the historical vernacular, and spearheading restoration projects.

The preservation plan could include strategies needed to establish the old-town area as an attractive place for both locals and visitors. These strategies could begin with identifying the stakeholders in the old-town area's revitalization, including merchants, property owners, residents, customers, and government representatives, and bringing them together so that they can express their concerns and discuss them with others. An organization can then be created, either formally or informally, to oversee the continuing development of an implementation plan, and to represent the stakeholders on old-town development issues. The planning process would include conceptualizing the overall design and physical improvements for downtown, conducting a market analysis to be used as a tool in recruiting retail businesses, initiating design guidelines, and generating ideas for special events and promotions. Such a plan should also encourage a mix and variety of land uses as well as a strategy for dealing with parking issues.

7.5 Summary

The preservation of our community's heritage can enrich the lives of residents, neighborhoods, and the City of Bulverde as a whole. The historic resources in the Bulverde area and Comal/Kendall counties rival any other areas in Texas. Our historic fabric must be protected and preserved to ensure that it is available for future generations. These resources can also have aesthetic and economic benefits for the City of Bulverde.

7.6 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Preserve and enhance Bulverde's heritage.

Objective 1.1: Prepare a historic preservation plan.

Objective 1.2: Prepare a historic preservation ordinance.

Objective 1.3: Establish a Historic Overlay Zone with design guidelines to coordinate commercial signage.

Objective 1.4: Establish a Historical Society.

Objective 1.5: Investigate the possibility of pursuing the Texas Historical Commission's Certified Local Government designation.

Objective 1.6: Work closely with the Comal County Historical Commission and other established groups that work to preserve the history and heritage of the area.

Goal 2: Preserve and enhance historic and archeological sites and other unique aspects of the community.

Objective 2.1: Identify, preserve, procure and promote historical structures, documents, artifacts, traditions, photographs and memorabilia that demonstrate the historical heritage of Bulverde.

Objective 2.2: Preserve old rock fences, windmills, etc. and encourage new building of old style rock fences, windmills, etc.

Goal 3: Improve communication and interaction in Bulverde.

Objective 3.1: Install directional signs to “old town”, Spechts, Anhalt, etc.

Objective 3.2: Install a community sign to tell about upcoming events.

Objective 3.3: Begin a column in the newspaper that would be an old-fashioned “gossip” column.

Objective 3.4: Set up a notice tree for schools, town activities, City Council, churches and social activities.

Objective 3.5: Investigate the possibility of establishing a Bulverde radio station.

Objective 3.6: Establish story-telling programs to tell the history of Bulverde (oral history).

Objective 3.7: Establish some form of town crier, maybe www.towncrier.com.

Goal 4: Develop Bulverde’s historical and natural assets for the citizens’ enjoyment and for potential nature/heritage tourism.

Objective 4.1: Establish the City of Bulverde as an integral part of the Texas Heritage Trails program.

Objective 4.2: Identify old established ranches and establish a “Ranch trail.”

Objective 4.3: Set up a committee to explore ideas of how to use Cibolo Creek, currently an untapped resource. Activities such as day camps, and arrowhead searches can point out the creek played a huge part in the settlement of this area.

Objective 4.4: Prepare an old-town revitalization/enhancement plan and incorporate it into the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) process.

Objective 4.5: Establish a museum, even if in small or temporary quarters. This would encourage donations of documents, photos and/or antiquities.

Objective 4.6: Promote participation in local events such as “Jubilee”, reenactments, period dress, old settler “wagoneers”, hunters’ “black powder contests”, farmer’s markets, etc.

Objective 4.7: Study the success of other suburban towns to get ideas on how to help us “stand out from the crowd” and not become just ‘that town’ north of San Antonio.

Objective 4.8: Promote and preserve locally owned small businesses that serve the needs of the city.

Objective 4.9: Involve schools in historical projects to create interest and a bond with the area’s youth.

Goal 5: Manage the future growth of Bulverde to preserve the heritage and character of the community.

Objective 5.1: All future development should acknowledge the scale and character of Bulverde.

Objective 5.2: Encourage architecture consistent with the “old hill country” style, especially in those areas that are designated historic.

Objective 5.3: Encourage walkways and bicycle paths for easy access.

Objective 5.4: Ensure that future roads and road improvements take into consideration the rural and village ambiences of Bulverde and not just the rapid movement of vehicles.