



Project Overview

The City of Tomball, once a quiet, rural community, has become home to families and metropolitan commuters. The Houston Metropolitan Area's growth pressures are beginning to influence Tomball. The City of Tomball has grown over 50% since 1990 and over 350% since 1970. The completion of the Comprehensive Plan ushered in an important milestone for community planning in Tomball.

The Tomball Downtown Specific Plan translates long-range planning into regulatory policy necessary for effective implementation. This is a critical step to ensure the implementation of Tomball's 2010 Strategic Plan, Comprehensive Plan and Livable Centers Downtown Plan. The City Council has identified the downtown as a priority focus area for the next five years and identified the Specific Plan as an important project to complete. "Specific Plan" is a misnomer when in fact it is a regulatory document with the authority of zoning to address the unique development constraints of Downtown Tomball. The Comprehensive Plan provides the broad vision for the community and identifies the importance of positioning downtown Tomball as an economic hub and community destination while preserving its historic character and neighborhoods. The specific plan process will further define this vision by creating an effective tool and regulatory document that will be used to determine appropriate development and redevelopment within downtown area.

Public Involvement Objective

The Public Involvement and Communication Plan (PICP) includes strategies for involving stakeholders and community members in the development of the Tomball Downtown Specific Plan. The PICP establishes strategies that address project needs and presents a high-quality program that will identify, educate, inform, and engage the residents and stakeholders throughout the process.

Ensuring that a wide range of public and stakeholder involvement opportunities exist on all community planning projects is essential to the City of Tomball. Tomball is dedicated to taking a proactive approach in soliciting citizen and stakeholder comments early and often to ensure that the final product is reflective of the community's values, goals, and objectives. The PICP explains the measures the City of Tomball will take to ensure citizen and stakeholder involvement throughout the process. The fundamental

principle that provides the underlying foundation for the PICP is to ensure a “we’re all in this together” atmosphere that will promote understanding and useful input. All those interested in Downtown Tomball or that live, work, play, or have a stake in Tomball or its ETJ must sense that their involvement is genuinely desired and that the time they spend on the project is worthwhile. This is particularly important for drawing in very diverse groups and those that may be skeptical or timid about participating. The PICP will guide the outreach process to meet the objectives.

At the completion of the Plan, the Project Management Team (PMT) will prepare a PICP Summary Report that compiles all input received throughout the planning process.

City of Tomball Project Manager

The City of Tomball Project Manager will serve as the key contact person for the Tomball Downtown Specific Plan process. The Project Manager will be responsible for coordinating all activities and ensuring that the project remains on schedule.

Consulting Team

The consulting team led by PSA, Inc. is responsible for completing the scope of work and maintaining the schedule for the Plan’s completion. In relation to the public and stakeholder involvement process, the consultant team will work with the Tomball Project Manager to identify key stakeholders and implement the PICP.

The consulting team will be responsible for maintaining a project database; organizing, conducting and documenting the involvement process; preparing for and implementing public events; and working with the Downtown Tomball Advisory Committee (DTAC), Planning & Zoning Commission, City Council and general public. The Team, with the Tomball Project Manager may be asked to make presentations on the project. Presentations will use appropriate audio-visual techniques such as PowerPoint. The goal of the PICP and of the Plan is to reach consensus on a regulatory document to guide land use and development in Downtown Tomball that will be approved by City Council.

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT) is comprised of key city staff members and the consulting team. The PMT is responsible for overseeing the planning process and working closely with the consulting team and Project Manager. The PMT will provide:

- Appropriate background information and project data;
- Identify potential stakeholders and their perspectives;

- Review and comment on interim documents; and
- Provide continuous feedback on the project approach, process, and products.

Meetings of the PMT will be held every time the PSA Team visits the City of Tomball, or more frequently via teleconferencing as needed.

The PMT will consist of:

- City Manager
- Assistant City Manager
- City Planner
- Assistant City Planner
- Assistant City Engineer
- Fire Marshal
- Building Official
- Public Works Director
- Finance Director
- TEDC Executive Director

Downtown Tomball Advisory Committee

The Downtown Tomball Advisory Committee (DTAC) was appointed by the City Council on February 21, 2011. Residents and interested stakeholders compose the DTAC and will assist in the development of the Downtown Specific Plan. The DTAC will meet with the consulting team and staff throughout the process to provide feedback and direction. Meetings will be posted in accordance with state law.

Involvement Opportunities

This section of the PICP presents the outreach techniques that will be used during the Downtown Tomball Specific Plan.

Group Presentations

Presentations to local groups to explain the Downtown Tomball Specific Plan will be given at various stages in the process by staff and/or the consulting team. These presentations will be used to educate and get residents excited about the Downtown Tomball Specific Plan.

Walk Tomball

To kick off the project, the community will be invited to participate in a special Walk Tomball event focused on seeing Downtown Tomball with a fresh perspective. Participants will be directed to take photos and observe characteristics of Downtown Tomball in a “scavenger hunt” format. The City of Tomball will host breakfast following the walk where the downtown characteristics will be discussed.

Eyes on Downtown Charrette

The following are activities that will be conducted during four-days of activities focused on Downtown Tomball called Eyes on Downtown Tomball.

Public Workshop

The Public Workshop will kick off the “Eyes on Downtown Charrette” and discuss the project, downtown design features, land uses, and potential opportunities.

Second Saturday at the Depot

The Downtown Tomball Specific Plan project will be featured at the Second Saturday at the Depot event. An interactive display and information will be provided about the project and participants’ input will be solicited.

Downtown Design Studio

The planning team will set up a Downtown Design Studio at the Community Center where citizens can stop by and provide input into the planning process. During the Downtown Design Studio, planners and urban designers from the Team will work with City staff, community members, and the public to discuss downtown design concepts and create a downtown design framework for the project area. The purpose is to compile and focus common themes/divergent viewpoints from the planning exercise.

Focus Group

A focus group will be conducted to understand issues and opportunities facing Downtown Tomball during the charrette event.

Elected and Appointed Officials/Advisory Committee Workshops

At key points in the process, workshops will be conducted with elected and appointed officials. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for these officials to review and provide input into the process.

Public Workshops

Public Workshops will be conducted to present and receive feedback on the key features that will be included in the Downtown Tomball Specific Plan. Comments received will be compiled and common themes and divergent viewpoints will be identified.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council prior to the Downtown Tomball Specific Plan's adoption.

Communication Techniques

Stakeholder/Community Database

During the project initiation phase, all project stakeholders and interested individuals or agencies will be identified. The City has assumed that everyone interested in Downtown Tomball will want to be involved; therefore, it is the goal of the PICP to be inclusive rather than exclusive.

Residents and key agencies as well as general stakeholders will be invited to participate in the process. As other concerned public agencies and stakeholders are identified during the planning process, they will be added to the database and contacted. The consultant team will be responsible for maintaining the stakeholder/community electronic database.

Downtown Specific Plan Webpage

The Team will work with Tomball staff to communicate information about the Specific Plan process and interim products through a dedicated project page on the City of Tomball website. The project page will allow anyone to gather information about the process, issues and results.

e-Newsletters

The Team will create and distribute a project e-newsletter periodically throughout the Downtown Specific Plan process. The purpose of the e-newsletters is to educate interested individuals and organizations about the plan, present downtown concepts and features under consideration, and promote upcoming public events. The Team will be responsible for creating the e-newsletter and distributing it to those listed in the study database.

Tomball Quarterly Newsletters

The Team will write articles for inclusion in the quarterly City of Tomball newsletters. These articles will provide an update on the process and Downtown Specific Plan progress. The articles will also encourage residents' involvement and will direct people to the project website. The Team will also look for other newsletter opportunities to include information about the project.

Media Releases

The Team will write and distribute media releases periodically about the Downtown Specific Plan process. The media releases will focus on upcoming activities/events as well as announcing interim products for review. The media releases will also encourage residents' involvement and will direct people to the project webpage.