



From roadways to parkways, needed changes take vision and goals

## Hobbs' master plan well under way

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NEWS-SUN

Hobbs is growing, and nowhere does that reflect more than in the city's master plan.

The Comprehensive Community Development Plan was adopted in June 2004 and is meant to serve as a blueprint for future development in Hobbs. It was put together with input from the Hobbs City Commission and Planning Board, as well as an advisory board that included nearly 60 people from throughout the community.

"They came up with a vision for 20 years from now and decided these are what the goals ... would be," said Hobbs city planner Joe Dearing.

The plan is broken down into five major subsections — growth capacity, transportation development, economic development, urban development and parks and recreation.

Less than a year into the plan's implementation, a good deal of progress has already been made.

A constant concern of south side residents, the Hobbs Wastewater Treatment Plant is a major part of the growth capacity plan. A complete overhaul of the plant is scheduled to

- ✓ GROWTH CAPACITY
- ✓ TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- ✓ PARKS AND RECREATION



be completed in March 2008. While there is still a lot of work to be done, Dearing is pleased at how much has been completed already.

"As of December we have 15 percent of that plan finished," he said.

Progress has also been made in the

area of transportation. The signal at Grimes and Joe Harvey has been upgraded to include traffic-control cameras, and the City Commission recently authorized construction of downtown street improvements.

The Planning Board is currently

working on aspects of the Hobbs thoroughfare system, which is a big part of the transportation plan. The thoroughfare plan is a wide-ranging blueprint for upgrading the road system in Hobbs.

Many of the proposed improvements are to take place on the north side of Hobbs, since that is where the majority of the growth in town is taking place. Many roads that run through the north side are slated to become major streets. The City Commission recently gave the final authorization to a plan to widen Grimes Street from Bender to Joe Harvey, for example.

Work has already begun on some of the urban development plans as well. Wilbur Smith Associates, a consultant firm hired by the city, has started conducting research on how to encourage housing development and the city is studying ways to decrease construction and development costs.

Urban development has gotten a boost from the large number of new homes that are being built in Hobbs, according to Dearing.

"The last four quarters we've really had a lot more activity than before

because people are finally developing and ... trying to build some residential community expansion," he said.

Of course, some aspects of the master plan have not been started. The Plan Implementation Task Force recently listed several items from the urban development chapter that it wanted a higher priority placed on, focusing on issues like land annexation, community cleanup and research on uses of gross receipts tax revenue.

"It's kind of hard to focus on all these things at one time and sometimes you need a reminder," Dearing said.

The master plan has a three-year timetable for implementation, but Dearing emphasized that the full plan will likely take far longer to finish. It's recommended to review the plan every five years, Dearing said, and nothing is written in stone.

"You need to revise it. You need to study it every few years and say, 'Well, we've done this. What else do we need?' or 'This didn't work. Let's change this strategy,'" Dearing said. "It should be amended as the community needs change."

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