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This is a preliminary document that has not been considered or approved by the City Council. It is intended for public review and discussion purposes only.

Village of The Hills Comprehensive Plan

**Approved by Ordinance No. _____
(February ____, 2025)**

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This document constitutes the comprehensive plan (the “Plan”) of The Village of the Hills, Texas (the “City”). This Plan is adopted by the City as a policy declaration and not as a zoning regulation, and is adopted for the purposes identified in state law under the Texas Local Government Code.

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1. Regulatory Framework for Comprehensive Planning

Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code (“LGC”) authorizes and encourages cities to adopt comprehensive plans for the purpose of “promoting sound development of municipalities and promoting public health, safety, and welfare.” LGC Sec. 213.001. Under Chapter 213, a comprehensive plan may:

- include (but is not limited to) provisions on land use, transportation, and public facilities;
- consist of a single plan or a coordinated set of plans organized by subject and geographic area; and
- be used to coordinate and guide the establishment of development regulations.

The Village of The Hills, Texas (the “City”) is a type B general law municipality established under Chapter 2, Subchapter 7 of the LGC and, as such, is authorized to adopt a comprehensive plan.

This comprehensive plan (the “Plan”) is adopted under Chapter 213. The Plan is a policy document and not a zoning regulation. However, as a comprehensive plan this Plan does provide guidance and direction for any future zoning regulation by the City. LGC Chapter 211.004(a) provides that any zoning regulations adopted by a city “must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan and must be designed to:

- (1) lessen congestion in the streets;
- (2) secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers;
- (3) promote health and the general welfare;
- (4) provide adequate light and air;
- (5) prevent the overcrowding of land;
- (6) avoid undue concentration of population; or

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- (7) facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewers, schools, parks, and other public requirements.”

2. History and Background of The Village of The Hills

The land area comprising the City encompasses approximately 687 acres in western Travis County, Texas and is almost entirely coextensive with the boundaries of the Hills of Lakeway subdivision (the “Hills Subdivision”).¹ The City’s boundaries are also included within the Lake Travis School District and the service area of the Hurst Creek Municipal Utility District. The 2020 United States census reported approximately 2,600 residents living in the City.

Prior to 1997 the land area comprising the City was part of the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of Austin and was not part of any incorporated municipality. Early in that year the Hills Subdivision residents petitioned the Travis County Commissioners Court to hold an election to determine if the land area within the Hills Subdivision should be incorporated as a municipality following the procedures outlined in the Texas Local Government Code. On May 3, 1997, the residents voted in favor of incorporation. Based on that vote, the Commissioners Court approved an order on May 13, 1997, authorizing creation of The Village of The Hills as a Class B general law municipality. Following the Commissioners Court order, the original plat defining the City’s boundaries was filed with the Travis County Clerk and became effective June 9, 1997.

The City is and always has been a residential community designed and laid out in and around a private golf course and country club facility. The overall design concept and ambiance of the City emphasizes a high quality of life for City residents, including: well-maintained homes; open green spaces and vistas; underground utility lines; reduced nighttime lighting to amplify dark sky; lush and well-groomed vegetation; and low-speed, low-volume street traffic. Within the City’s boundaries there are just over 1,100 residences; the beautiful Hills of Lakeway Country Club (including the clubhouse property, the Hills Signature Golf Course, and associated golf training and ancillary use facilities); a newly renovated municipal park; several greenbelts and common areas; and a system of well-maintained streets, sidewalks, and walking paths. Other than the Hills of

¹ The only part of the City that is not included within the boundaries of the Hills of Lakeway subdivision is the section of road outside the Club Estates Pkwy. gatehouse running from the Serene Hills Dr. entrance gate to Lakeway Blvd.

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Lakeway Country Club, there have never been any commercial businesses within the City.

The Hills of Lakeway subdivision predates the 1997 formation of the City. The subdivision was originally created by The Lakeway Company in July 1980 through the filing of a master subdivision declaration and plat with the Travis County Clerk. Because the subdivision was located in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Austin at that time, the master declaration and plat were also filed with that city as a planned unit development project and approved by Austin in Case No. 814-80-002. While the Hills Subdivision master declaration materials have been amended numerous times over the years by both the original developer and later by the subdivision's Property Owners Association ("POA"), the overall boundaries of the subdivision have stayed essentially the same.

Because of their coextensive boundaries and their separate purposes, the City and the Hills Subdivision share responsibility for maintenance and regulation of the public infrastructure and public improvements within the City. Under the master declaration for the Hills Subdivision, the POA is the owner of the streets in the City and thus responsible for their maintenance and upkeep. The POA also owns and manages the gatehouses at Lohman's Crossing and Club Estates Drive as well as the other 3 vehicle entrance gates to the City. In addition, the POA has independent authority under its governing documents to establish architectural standards for residential property within the City and to enforce the deed restrictions and other encumbrances in the master declaration and associated plats.

In contrast to the POA, the City is a municipal government whose authority and responsibilities are established by state law and its own ordinances. The City is a Class B general-law municipality as provided under LGC Chapters 7 and 23, which is governed by a Mayor and 5-member City Council (together, the "Council"). The Council approves all ordinances, establishes an annual budget for operations and capital improvements, sets a sales tax rate for applicable transactions within the City, and sets a property tax rate annually for all real property within the City. State law also gives the Council authority to enact ordinances that apply within the City to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of persons within its boundaries; to protect and preserve places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural significance; and to regulate land usage within its boundaries through zoning and other processes. In exercising these responsibilities, the City:

- Establishes speed limits and other traffic safety controls on streets located within the City, including posting of traffic control signage;

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- Provides law enforcement services (currently through a contract with Travis County) to enforce its traffic control and other regulations;
- Adopts and enforces ordinances to protect and enhance the safety, health, and general welfare of its residents and visitors, such as the City's noise ordinance, fireworks ordinance, short-term rental ordinance, and others;
- Provides trash and recycling pickup services to all properties within the City; and
- Owns the pedestrian gates, the paved walkways, the City park located on The Hills Drive, the greenbelts located throughout the community (including the median area along Club Estates Parkway between the Hills Clubhouse and the gatehouse on Club Estates Dr.), and most of the perimeter wall system that surrounds the City.

The City is entirely surrounded by the City of Lakeway, making it unlikely that the City will grow in land area in the future. In addition, almost all the lots designated as residential on the recorded Hills Subdivisions plats have been developed at this point, so it is unlikely that the City's population will increase significantly in the future. The boundaries of the City are entirely enclosed and all vehicle access points are gated and regulated through the POA.

3. The City's Existing Land Use Regulations

The City's current land use planning and regulation regime is based on the existing subdivision ordinance (the "Subdivision Ordinance"), which was adopted by the Council in March 1999 and is codified as Article 9.02 in the City's Code of Ordinances. The Subdivision Ordinance defines a general land use plan for the City based on the original Master Concept Plan created by The Lakeway Company, requires pre-approval by the Council of any subdivision of a lot within the City, establishes procedures for requesting Council approval of any subdivision of an existing lot, sets standards for the Council's evaluation of a lot subdivision request, and prohibits any construction on a subdivided without Council's prior approval.

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4. The City's Future Land Use Objectives

Based on public input and the deliberations of the Council, the City collectively envisions its overall future land use regulation to include adopting and enforcing ordinances and other land use controls as needed to achieve the following objectives:

- Maintain the current residential character and overall ambience of the City with its mix of primarily single-family homes, limited condominium regimes and multi-family residential units, parks and walkways, significant areas of open space, and no commercial development beyond the Hills Country Club.
- Confirm all current land uses within the City as permitted uses so that no owner would be required to change or modify the current use of their property.
- Provide streets, recreational facilities, trails, open spaces, parks, and other public facilities as appropriate and financially viable for a city of the size and population of the City.
- Manage any future development within the City's boundaries consistent with maintaining the residential character of the City to the extent permitted by law.
- Preserve open spaces and view corridors within the City to the extent feasible.
- Adopt land use controls as needed to mitigate adverse impacts from future development on both the property values of existing improved properties and the quiet enjoyment by property owners of their residences.
- Coordinate any future City land use controls with the encumbrances and restrictions in the Hills Subdivision governing documents and preserve the authority of the POA to manage and enforce those encumbrances and restrictions.

5. Zoning and Future Land Use Regulation

LGC section 211.003 allows the City to regulate through zoning the use of land for business, industrial, residential, or other purposes, and to regulate the location and design of streets, buildings, and other structures. In consideration of the future land use objectives identified above, and in light of (a) historical and current uses of land within the City, (b)

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comments and ideas received from residents, and (3) the careful consideration and deliberations of the Council, the City has determined that future land uses within the City should be limited to the extent permitted by law to the following categories (all of which are identified on the Future Land Use Map in Section 7 of this Plan):

1. Single family residential
2. Residential condominium
3. Commercial
4. Open Space
5. Recreational

In addition, in order to maintain desired flexibility in land planning and design, the City has also determined that each of these categories of land usage should include and specify:

- The permitted land uses within that category that can be implemented by owners without specific Council authorization;
- The conditional uses within that category that can be implemented upon specific authorization and a finding by the Council that the proposed use at that site is not inconsistent with the City's future land use objectives; and
- The categories of land usage within that category which are prohibited because they are inconsistent with the City's future land use objectives.

6. Public Review and Approval of The Comprehensive Plan

Meaningful review and informed commentary from City residents as well as careful deliberations by the Council concerning the initial design of this Plan are critical to its alignment with the values of the City and the wishes of residents. In addition, periodic re-evaluation of this Plan by elected officials and City residents is likewise critical to ensure that this Plan represents the current values and aspirations of the City as these may change over time. In light of these principles, this Plan includes the following actions by the City as part of its initial adoption and periodic reconsideration of this Plan:

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- A. Prior to initial adoption of this Plan, the Council posted the draft of this Plan on its public website for a period of at least 21 days and invited residents to provide written comments on the Plan to the Council or verbal comments to individual Council members. The City sent an email notification to residents about the posting of the draft Plan to ensure that residents were informed about it.
- B. Prior to adoption of this Plan, the City conducted a public informational session about the Plan attended by the Mayor and Council Members on January 29, 2025. Residents were invited to attend that meeting, view the draft Plan, ask questions about it, and provide comments to the Council.
- C. Prior to initial adoption of this Plan, the City solicited and received input from the POA about this Plan to ensure that the Plan is not inconsistent with the existing land use authority of the POA under the Hills Subdivision master declaration and plats, and to give the POA the opportunity to offer comments and questions about the content of the Plan.
- D. At its February 2025 regular meeting, the Council conducted an additional public hearing on this Plan, at which residents and the general public were invited to provide comments and ask questions about the Plan.
- E. Following these opportunities for public input on the initial Plan, the Council deliberated on the Plan at its regular public meeting on February 11, 2025, before taking a vote on its adoption.
- F. As a matter of City policy, the Council believes this Plan should be reviewed and updated as appropriate no less often than once every five years. Future land use ordinances should provide for draft ordinances prior to adoption and the drafts should be posted on the City's website. Residents of the City will be encouraged to review and comment.
- G. Final drafts of any future land use ordinances or changes to this Plan should incorporate community comments before being presented to the Council for approval.

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- H. As part of each future re-evaluations of this Plan, the Council should consider and design an implementation process that includes ample opportunities for public input and evaluation, professional advice and recommendations as Council determines to be appropriate, and careful public deliberations by the Council prior to adoption of any amendments to the Plan.

7. Map of Future Land Uses

The map of future land uses appears on the following page.

Village of The Hills

Future Land Use Map (2025)

Note: a comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.



Legend

- Village of the Hills Boundary
- Single Family Residential
- Residential Condominium
- Commercial
- Park & Greenbelt
- Recreational
- State & Local Government

