

## City of McKinney - Sustainability Vision Session Notes

### GROWTH, LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

The purpose of this group was to discuss how McKinney can grow better in a more sustainable fashion. What are the factors that need to be considered? Should McKinney look at other cities in the region at how they have handled their growth? How does transportation/mass transit play into the picture? What should be considered in a transportation plan? How does McKinney utilize their land in a fashion that facilitates growth, but still keep the culture and mindset of McKinney itself? And finally, how do you measure the success in these areas?

#### Growth

- Changing demographics (diverse population mix)
- Not a place for JOBS- need to improve jobs / housing balance
  - Live/work balance
- Top end (Elderly/seniors) and 20's – not the “place” to age in place
- Amenities and entertainment are needed to attract people
- 4 city regional cooperative planning (McKinney, Frisco, Allen, Plano)
- Proactive change needed
  - More urban design needed to be a city
  - Never expected a high growth curve
  - Greater emphasis on planning
  - Infrastructure planning and improvements
  - Go from a “Bedroom Community to a real “CITY”
  - Quality development
- Reactive to growth from unexpected places
  - Dallas out-migration
  - California out-migration
  - Growth pressure affects city identity
- When growth “stops” – Then what is left?
  - McKinney live by itself
  - High value residential

#### Transportation / Mobility

- E/W “ Transit” needed to connect to potential DART stations (north/south)
  - Regional N/S – supports McKinney as a bedroom community
- Growth followed the Outer Loop – better strategy is to locate preferred land use and then develop transportation
- Bike/ pedestrian connectivity
  - Lack of bike trails / sidewalks
  - “Free” bike program
- Consider new technologies
- Balanced transportation mode mix
- Do advance mass transit(LRT) planning in corridors (TOD)
- Airport expansion
  - Parallel runways
  - Plan for infrastructure and support development
- “Complete” streets
- Revised thorough fare plan (multi-modal)
  - Auto – transit- pedestrian – bike

## Land Use

- Lack of corporate business park (hurts McKinney's competitive position)
- Office/business development not diversified
- Need sustainable "districts" (communities)
- "Just" land Use (not a true comprehensive plan)
- No constraints (geology)
- Start fresh with a comprehensive plan
  - Natural resources
  - Transportation
  - Land Use
  - Creative
  - Mixed use?
- Craig Ranch – model?
- Acquisition of O.S.
- New Urban patterns
  - Density
  - Green space
- Clusters of development do not give coherence
- High value jobs need quality education
  - Add a higher education institution (4 year)

## General

- Long-term, enforceable plan
- Economically independent sustainable city
- Open to new ideas
- There is a City Hall / Business "Split"
  - Permitting
  - City Council micro-managing
  - Means to implement new ideas

## Codes/ Ordinances

- Form-based codes
- Alternate approval process
- Alternative standards
- Inter-department coordination
- Internal agreement between all codes
- Complete street ordinances
- Consistency between land use and zoning

## Performance Indicators

- Track "built" elements against plan
- Population mix
- Changes in employment
- New modes

## **WATER QUALITY & SUPPLY, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT/REGULATION**

Water is becoming (or has become) a scarce resource. The use and availability of water shapes how communities grow and attract businesses and residents. The growth in the North Texas region and the droughts we have recently experienced make this a critical component for the future. How does McKinney manage water, a regional resource, for their community? How can McKinney use water more efficiently, or reuse it? How can McKinney harvest the water it receives via rain? How do we deal with our natural resources? How does energy affect our city?

### **Water Supply**

- Do we have enough water to sustain growth? Most don't know, but we believe we will have a problem in the future.
  - McKinney residents and business use a lot of water – General consensus was that the City uses excessive amounts of water.
  - Water consumption is embedded in our culture
  - Growth can't happen without water reliability
  - Water Control is an issue – Local vs. Regional Control
  - Key concerns – Availability, Reliability, Drought Exposure, Economics
  - Reduction in usage is key
  - Residents (Gardeners) can reuse rainwater - there are many uses for rainwater
- The economics of water need to be clarified for residents to save water
  - Cost of sustainable strategy will be paid for by citizens regardless of method (e.g. taxes, cost of housing, etc)
  - Economic growth – everything stops without water
- New Local Water Supplies
  - Go for groundwater
  - Consider stormwater percolation/recharge/augmentation
  - Align sustainable policies with common sense
  - We need some amount of local control plus conservation
  - Consider a rebate program plus mandatory conversion to ET controllers
  - Water conservation is an essential strategy
  - McKinney can't retain Quality of Life without water
  - McKinney will assure Quality of Life by securing adequate water for tomorrow – today

### **Wastewater**

- Is water useless after it goes down the drain – most people have flush and forget concept
  - Uses for greywater – landscaping, currently okay for commercial but not residential
  - There is an ROI that can come with greywater infrastructure
  - Water & Energy savings are integrally related
  - Maximize water reuse production at regional WWTP
  - Consider water reuse distribution systems – dual piping systems for new construction

### **Stormwater**

- The City should consider implementing combined sewer systems to maximize flow to WWTP for recycled water production.
- Divert stormwater for Reuse
- Inject stormwater in to wells
- Retrofit existing water system for stormwater diversion and reuse
- Use stormwater to create drought reserve (don't sit back and do nothing)
  - Have option to use added capacity
  - Handle locally
  - Must address water rights

## **Natural Resources**

- Vegetation, Wildlife, Soil
- Requires serious City commitment – too new or different
- Need to maintain green & open spaces
- Integrate nature in planning community and addressing water related issues
- Use native vegetation – reduces water use
- Stop using fertilizers – use natural products
- Understand soil conditions
- Require additional trees, but the right trees that require less water
- Need to change City ordinance to control what is planted to support reducing water usage
- Change “Approved” plant list
- Creek set-backs for different type of soil conditions
- Erosion Control Plans
- Rethink the variance Requirement for native plants

## **Energy**

- Energy Conservation is second key issue to water
- Alternative energy opportunities should be evaluated
  - Wind
  - Solar
  - Geothermal

## **Principles**

- Proper stewardship and leadership within the region
- Conservative Conservation
- Water is finite and comes at a cost

## **Goals**

- Regional leader in water per capita usage
- Achieve Assured water supply for year 2030

## **Plan**

- Establish Water Supply Oversight Committee
  - Promote Conservation Best Practices
  - Educational Program – start at preschool level & up
  - Performance Metrics
  - Substantial Tiered Rate Structure
  - Clarified Codes/ Rules & Enforcement

## **RECYCLING & SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Land is a valuable resource for our community. Our world’s natural resources are being depleted at a rate that is fast and not sustainable in the long term. How do we handle these issues? Do we want to build new landfills and waste our precious land for the sake of a mound of trash? Or do we want to recycle and find alternate means to handle our waste? Resolving some of these issues at a city level will reduce our costs, save our natural resources, and make our city more desirable for businesses and residents.

## **Landfill**

- McKinney Landfill end use:
  - Land to be used as a park development project?
  - Methane recovery for energy?

### **Education / Communication**

- What can be recycled and composting
- School district involvement to educate students
- Commercial vs. residential
- 85-90% residents have recycle containers
- 9% of Commercial industry recycles
- Commercial - need measurement tool
- Multi-media Education
- Public service announcements in movie theaters
- Fliers in utility bills

### **Recycling**

- Plastic bags (polystyrene #6)
  - Wal-Mart accepts
  - Litter problem
- Trees/Brush = compost
- Contamination/ security
- Bulky items (encouragement)
- Mandate (possible or not) and enforcement
- Items to recycle
  - Motor oil / paint
  - U-waste
  - E-waste
  - Appliances
  - Fuel / GHG
- Home composting
- Ease of recycling
- Codes / space needed for storage
  - City planning
- Concrete / asphalt
- C&D recycling
- Regionalism
- Designated EPA Green City

### **Vision and Mission**

- Double residential recycling by 15% to 30% by 2015; then 50% by 2020 (note: currently 10k ton/month in waste and 1.5k ton/month recycling)
- Increase Recycling for Commercial – 9% to 60% by 2015
- Green team at every school & the Green team with best idea wins an award
- Sustainability has to be a class @ Leadership McKinney

### **Regional or Municipal Programs**

- Programs – every commercial customer gets a cart for recycling
- Distribute containers for recycling to multi-family buildings
- Cash for Trash (positive way first)

### **Performance Indicators**

- Quantify recycling rates
- Carrots instead of tricks

## **BUILDINGS & ENERGY**

The Buildings/ Energy group was very well attended, with very good participation from everyone. The people involved have current and relevant experience in many areas including engineering, architecture, building management, project management, subcontracting, and building ownership.

The session broke out the discussion into Residential and Commercial, as well as suggestions/ideas for city code changes. This document will highlight the areas of discussion in those areas, as well as some takeaways or “low hanging fruit” that may be worthwhile to proceed forward on in this area.

### **Residential**

Green or sustainable actions will be effective and successful in the McKinney residential market if the following items are addressed.

- Cost effective measures that add value to the project
- Any changes need to apply to everyone to create a level playing field
- City incentives to implement measures
  - reduction in city building fees for green projects
  - expedited permitting process
- HOA’s need to allow/approve green building methods (e.g. solar panels, xeriscaping, energy efficient roofing, etc.)
- Understand differences in verbiage and educate the building profession on those differences (e.g. storm-water detention vs. rainwater retention)
- Put building guidelines in place to save energy and water
- Put performance targets in place and allow people to be creative in solutions to achieve targets (i.e. don’t specify how to achieve it)
- Start green items at development stage of project

### **Commercial**

The following comments were made specifically to the commercial building sector to achieve success in green building.

- Educate public on green building and value it brings to the community (helps generate business and interest)
- Green building can help save labor costs from an operations and maintenance standpoint (e.g. light bulb replacement)
- Designers don’t want to do something new (liability issues)
- Are city projects (e.g. roads/bridges) built sustainable today?
- Condensate collected from HVAC systems doesn’t need to go to sewer system
- What is the return of investment (ROI) of sustainable projects and items? The financials drive what is done from a private sector standpoint.
- Do not focus just on new buildings- look at existing buildings for changes in building codes/ energy requirements.
- Sustainable actions for existing buildings
  - Water efficient plumbing fixtures
  - Xeriscape landscaping
  - Lighting retrofits
  - Building management systems
  - Green cleaning

### **General**

The following are general comments that were made that can apply to all areas of the building/ energy area.

- Should McKinney have local building criteria (e.g. Austin, TX) in lieu of LEED?

- Do not want mandate of buildings to be LEED certified
- LEED competition
  - Green Globes
  - Municipal green building standards
- While Austin has taken the lead in this area, we don't want McKinney to be just like Austin
- City of Dallas has "green" codes- what can McKinney learn from them?
- Want results without stifling development
- Positive impacts in Frisco on the use of Energy Star requirements
- Subcontractors are reluctant to spend extra dollars unless they can recoup costs immediately (i.e. subcontractors don't want to pay for green items on their own)
- City needs to make sustainable changes a priority now.
- Not able to safely dispose fluorescent lighting in McKinney (non-convenient)
- Chamber of Commerce needs a permanent group to focus on sustainability
- The city needs to take the lead and have municipal projects be green, otherwise, why should commercial/residential projects do it
- McKinney needs to communicate / celebrate their city green projects
- Need to have infrastructure and resources within city government to handle work to assist building industry in green building process
- How can sustainable building lower taxes (i.e. property, building, sales)?
- Private sector is leading the city in green building- the city needs to catch up and lead or be in line with the private sector.

### **Policy and Code**

The following items were discussed from a policy/ code/ ordinance standpoint for McKinney to investigate to implement or research further and determine best course of action to stimulate green building within the city.

- Metrics for new school buildings to build green (performance criteria)
- Concerned that if it costs more for the city to be green (i.e. if taxes need to be raised to pay for additional costs), the City Council may be reluctant to proceed forward.
- City Council has seemed favorable to green initiatives
- What is the most effective way to measure sustainable actions? (e.g. LEED, Energy Star, Energy Efficiency)
- There needs to be a method to efficiently request / approve changes to building practices/ codes/ ordinances for green building practices
- How are conflicts between city building code and sustainable building practices resolved in a timely, cost-effective manner?
- City employees need to understand and be educated on green building standards and approve new methods at lower/ operational level
- Local building codes are not up to speed to green building standards. In some cases, they conflict and the non-green standards are required.
- Costs extra to get city approvals for new methods (i.e. time spent to meet and educate city employees on green building methods).

### **Recurrent Themes**

The following items were repeated, or crossed multiple areas, and should be noted as such. These items were the major issues that need to be addressed from the participant viewpoint.

- Any actions need to be cost effective and add value to the project, and not stifle development
- Performance targets should be used to reduce energy and water usage, and allow for people to be creative in how to achieve them
- Educate the city on green building and the value it achieves
- The city needs to make sustainability a priority now.

- The city needs to take the lead on sustainability and have municipal projects be green to set the example
- The city needs to communicate/ celebrate their green building initiatives
- The infrastructure and resources need to be in place within the city government to assist the building industry for their green building projects
- City building codes/ ordinances need to be changed or flexible to change for green building methodologies, and be efficient in such changes.

### **Low Hanging Fruit**

The following items are some suggestions that could be enacted in the short term and allow the city to achieve some wins and start this process from a building standpoint.

1. Initiate a communication plan/ campaign to educate the community on what it means to be green, what the city is doing, and what the city has done.
2. Make funds available to educate city employees on green methodologies and hire/contract additional people and infrastructure to begin work in this area.
3. Initiate performance targets for energy and water use reduction for commercial and residential projects.
4. Work with the private sector and create a small team of city employees and industry professionals to open lines of communication and seek feedback/input on operational changes from a sustainable standpoint.

### **QUALITY OF LIFE/COMMUNITY BRAND & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

People come to McKinney because they like the quality of life of the city. They like the atmosphere, what it stands for, the good schools, and the services that are available. It is important for McKinney to continually improve this image, and change with the times. Change not for the sake of change, but to keep up with the needs of the community, and to be a destination of choice into the future.

### **Community Image**

- What is the postcard image of McKinney?
  - Downtown & the Courthouse
  - Hills & trees
- Quality of Life
  - May be different for residents versus the business community
  - Attracts qualified employees; these attract businesses
- We need a coherent, cohesive message
- Quality of life includes excellent educational opportunities
  - Public schools
  - Private schools
  - Ultimately, four-year education
    - This will attract employers & keep young people here
- Enhance McKinney as a destination
  - Ball fields
  - Tourism
- There's a lot of diversity in McKinney
  - Adriatica
  - Craig Ranch
  - Downtown
- Architectural beauty + natural beauty
- A diverse population adds to the overall quality of life
- A diversity of skill sets - not just professionals
- McKinney is a safe place – police & fire adequacy
  - Safety
  - Wellness
  - Health

- We want options + convenience
  - We want more variety in greater proximity
  - Some items are very hard to find in McKinney
  - Live, work, and play in McKinney
- Nurture & enhance the community spirit
  - Civic engagement – enhance this
  - Celebrate the spirit of McKinney
- The community brand
  - Heritage
  - “Unique by Nature”
  - It’s just a cool place
- McKinney is a very surprising community
  - It’s very easy to assimilate
  - It’s welcoming
  - It’s easy to become involved
  - People go out of their way to make you feel that you belong
- Preserve history of community
- Upgrade & restore the existing parts of the community

**Business / Community Services**

- Diversity of business-friendly facilities & services
- There are 13 independent restaurants downtown
- There’s a farmer’s market downtown
- Hotels are sorely lacking
  - Old and like truck stops
  - Need different types and styles
- Restaurant choices
  - Lots of fast food
  - Need different and better options
- The daytime population = the nighttime population
  - The jobs out: executives & senior management
  - The jobs in: service industry
- Nightlife
  - Downtown McKinney
  - McKinney has the second largest historic district in the state of Texas
- We lack venues for events
  - No stadiums or places for concerts or different activities
  - We can’t continue to go elsewhere to do things
  - Options within McKinney
    - Arts
    - Recreation
    - Sports
  - Meyers Park is an option
    - Out in the “country”
- Preserve/enhance/promote downtown
  - Lifestyle
  - Activities
  - Entertainment
  - How do you integrate it since it’s on the east side, and most people live on the west side?
- We need festivals and celebrations for ourselves
  - “Small town” feeling events
  - Not tourist events

- Not simply about money
- Protect existing open space and preserve land for future use

### **Housing / Neighborhoods**

- Neighborhoods are self-supporting but we don't have the amenities that people expect
  - Pools
  - Tennis Courts
  - Libraries
  - Community Centers
  - Cultural Arts
  - Shopping
  - Indoor & Outdoor Opportunities
- Affordable housing
- Kid-friendly neighborhoods
  - Safe
  - Walkable
  - "Eyes on the Street"
  - Longevity
- HOAs control a lot of life, today
  - This is a long-term negative in terms of quality of life
  - The city mandates them – it's a form of double taxation
  - We end up with less facilities for the community as a whole
- Streets – mobility
  - We are not very walkable

### **Takeaways**

- Maintain small town identity and culture amidst rapid managed growth
- Change the culture of driving (everywhere)
- Aging in place
- Enhance residents understanding of their own city
- Informed citizens are engaged citizens
- Breakdown the highway 75 barrier (between east and west sides of town)

### **RECURRENT THEMES**

The following items were seen among all the sessions and should be viewed as major items that should be addressed by the city.

- McKinney is a place to live, but not a place to work
- City Hall involvement needs to bring codes/ ordinances in line with what needs to be accomplished
- Any actions need to be cost effective and add value, and not stifle development
- City needs to communicate more frequently and efficiently
- Four-year education opportunities are needed to attract people and jobs
- Diversity
  - Diverse population adds to quality of life
  - Diverse skill sets for jobs
  - Diverse business services and facilities
- Homeowners Associations (HOAs)
  - Mandated by city, but do not perceive to add value
  - Stifle growth
  - Not open to new ideas or new ways of doing things