

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE TOWN CENTER STUDY INITIATIVE?

The Town Center Study is an extension of the City of McKinney's 2004 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan was developed from community input and the leadership of McKinney to guide decision making for the City's future growth and development. Because it considered approximately 114 square miles of McKinney's city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), the Comprehensive Plan required a generalized approach. To more adequately address the specific needs of the Town Center area, the Town Center Study builds upon the work of the Comprehensive Plan by focusing on the single sector of town – the Town Center.

As an extension of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan, the Town Center Study is a work plan initiated by the City. A work plan serves as a means by which potential polices and ordinances can be evaluated, recommended, and implemented in order to realize the goals and objectives expressed in the Comprehensive Plan and as outlined in the Town Center Study Initiative. A number of different work plans are listed in Section 12 of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically including the following items:

Prioritize 3 items in the Urban Design section, including:

- S.H. 5 Corridor Plan
- U.S. Highway 380 Corridor Plan
- Town Center Module Plan

Initiate Sector Plans

The Town Center Study is a sector planning effort that addresses all of the items above.

The Town Center Study presents many opportunities for place making and place saving. At this conceptual planning stage of Phase 1, the process is not focused on the details. Instead, the focus is on exploring how basic urban design principles can be used to foster the eventual

development of new places and spaces as well as the redevelopment of existing places and spaces. This process has thus set the context and policies for people to live in, work in, and enjoy the unique character of the McKinney Town Center for many generations to come.



THE TOWN CENTER STUDY PROCESS

Phase 1 of the study established a starting point for development of an overall revitalization plan for the Town Center. Phase 1 involved the following major elements:

- Observing and documenting existing conditions
- Engaging stakeholders
- Creating a shared illustrative vision of preferred concepts and ideas
- Identifying and clarifying the significant current obstacles to realizing the vision
- Establishing a general framework for moving forward to further explore obstacles and opportunities

Looking ahead, the primary goals of Phase 2 of the study will likely involve:

- Taking a more detailed look at obstacles and opportunities
- Developing specific strategies for overcoming obstacles and taking advantage of opportunities
- Determining the appropriate actions for implementing critical components of the vision

Phase 3 and beyond:

- Initiating a combination of specific implementation tools and strategies (fiscal, regulatory, administrative, marketing, management, partnerships, etc.).

The illustrative nature of the shared vision creates the need for choices to be made for implementation. In order for the vision to become a reality, future phases of the Study will be utilized to evaluate, craft, select, relate, and phase the appropriate implementation components into a comprehensive implementation program. The long-term success of the Town Center Study will depend on the degree to which each element of the vision is implemented. Market acceptance and stakeholder ownership will be critical in that regard. Accordingly, existing implementation tools will be reviewed and potentially refined, and new tools and strategies may be developed so that the City's future choices are consistent with the shared vision.

PURPOSE OF THE PHASE 1 REPORT

Phase 1 of the Town Center Study consisted of a series of public urban design workshops. Each workshop focused on a topic of concern and opportunity within the study area such as compatibility of land uses, enhancement of the downtown area, revitalization of the State Highway 5 (McDonald Street) corridor, the potential for transit-oriented development just east of SH 5, and the enhancement of the Kentucky/Tennessee Street corridor and the U.S. Highway 380 corridor.

The Phase 1 Report serves as the conclusion to the Phase 1 process. This report summarizes the series of urban design workshops that were held over the past year. More importantly, however, it outlines the preferred concepts and ideas that resulted from each of the public design workshops. It also explores general recommendations and strategies for moving forward with the next phase of the Town Center Study.

THE STUDY AREA

The study area, generally bounded by U.S. Highway 75, U.S. Highway 380, Eldorado Parkway and Airport Drive, contains neighborhoods and commercial districts that are well established, stable, eclectic and historic. These places collectively form the core of the City. This area includes the oldest developments in McKinney and is characterized by development patterns that occurred over the first 150 years of the community. Many of the issues now facing this area are those associated with redevelopment.

MAP OF STUDY AREA



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

McKinney has been blessed with a rich and wonderful past. This past provides the symbols for a community that is much more than a suburb of Dallas. Today, McKinney is a city centered about a historic town square with all key roads leading to the square.

Agricultural Roots

McKinney serves as the county seat of Collin County. Collin County was established in 1846 and McKinney in 1848. Both City and County were named for Mr. Collin McKinney, a patriot, land surveyor, legislator, and one of the 56 signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The cultivation and processing of locally grown crops fueled much of McKinney's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century growth and prosperity. During this period, Collin County emerged as one of the leading agricultural centers in Texas. Cotton prevailed as the county's



largest and most significant farm product; however, corn, wheat, and oats were also grown in large quantities. Although crop production in the McKinney area continues today, its role in the local economy diminished after World War II. McKinney's cotton-processing structures played a significant role in the town center's history and development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the area's vast agricultural potential was realized through the construction and operation of these facilities. Their establishment aided the town center's commercial development because area farmers came to McKinney to sell their crops and then purchased goods at downtown stores. These property types also laid the foundation for the town center's industrial development and supported the establishment of a textile mill.

Town Square

The town square is one of the symbols that people throughout North Texas recognize as being McKinney. The original town site presented a cardinal-point grid plan with a courthouse square near the city's center, a popular town plan throughout Texas. The majority of the state's county seats, especially those of the same vintage as McKinney, are arranged similarly. The square was the sole public space set aside in the original town plan. Anticipating that property near the town's center would be in great demand for business purposes, the city's surveyors made lots facing onto the courthouse square long and narrow, measuring 25 by 100 feet. Such a layout enabled merchants to erect buildings with storefronts for displaying merchandise. George White and Ethelred Whitley, who surveyed the new town site, divided the remainder of the City's blocks into equally sized lots that were reserved for residential use.

Arrival of the Railroad

The arrival of the railroad in 1872 greatly stimulated economic growth and brought new wealth to McKinney. The railroad enticed several industrial enterprises, such as a textile mill, grain elevators and a flour mill, to locate in the community. It also influenced much of the town center's physical growth and settlement patterns. In addition, the railroad linked the once

physically and socially isolated community with the rest of the nation, thus allowing new ideas, people, and goods to arrive in McKinney.

Post World War II

The McKinney Comprehensive Plan of 1964 was the first to propose the loop road around downtown (US 75). This event, along with post WW II population growth and a desire for a decentralized growth pattern away from urban centers, changed the image of McKinney. Prior to US 75, commercial growth was focused in downtown and along SH 5 and Highway 24 (current US 380). With the arrival of US 75, growth began to shift west and away from the town center.

