



# Facilities & Public Safety

*Facilities and public safety systems that support and serve the desired community identity*

## **GOAL:**

Build, secure and maintain efficient public facilities and vehicles, and establish protective measures that reduce danger, risk or injury to people and property in a manner that best benefits and enhances the character and priorities of the City and its neighborhoods.

## **Policy Statements:**

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- 1 Efficient Facility Use, Planning and Design:** *Royse City will make efficient use of existing facilities and strategically plan and implement expansions to ensure the necessary needs and services are provided to residents and businesses in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.*
  - 2 Community Health and Safety:** *Royse City will protect and provide for the safety of residents and visitors, lower crime rates and sustain fire protection through a combination of up-to-date facilities and fleet vehicles, technology, outreach and community engagement initiatives.*
  - 3 Emergencies and Natural Disasters:** *Royse City will evaluate and improve its emergency management initiatives, education and partnerships to better prepare the public and city staff for emergencies and natural disasters.*
  - 4 Extending Education Opportunities to Everyone:** *Royse City will collaborate with the school district, local churches, businesses, and other partners to enhance and expand high quality educational facilities and opportunities to accommodate and serve the needs of an increasingly diverse mix of residents.*
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## Introduction

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Today, our community is home to around 11,000 people. In the next thirty years, we will grow to be anywhere from 40,000 to as many as 100,000! This growth will require additional facilities for education, public safety, and city administration. Public facilities can be categorized into two types:

- 1.) those requiring a single, central location that serves the entire community (such as City Hall); and
- 2.) facilities assigned to a specified “service area” (such as a fire station).

This section of the plan addresses the city’s facility needs and lays out strategies that will ensure we have sufficient space, personnel and resources to provide the best service possible to residents and businesses in Royse City for years to come.

## What We’ve Heard from Residents

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“We need a paid fire department. Currently we have a volunteer department. With our population now over 10,000 we need to get bond money going to hire a couple of firemen. Also we need to hire more police officers as our town grows. More commercial business will require more patrols and help. Put a bond up to increase first responders budgets.”

“Propose a bond to pay for Emergency Responders such as City paid fire dept. personnel and add more police officers to support all new businesses and new residences.”

“Police and Fire. Both are understaffed. The FD’s equipment needs to be updated ASAP. As behind as they are on equipment and as fast as the city is growing, it will snowball out of control and it will be hard for them to catch up.”

“All emergency response staff needs to be adequately staffed, equipped, and paid to handle emergencies in a timely manner. This could easily be a matter of life or death.”

“Are there any plans to incorporate a full time fire station and EMS? Not just volunteer?”

## Administration

In 2016, the city had 61 full-time employees. A common benchmark for staffing in north Texas cities is between 7-8 employees for every 1,000 residents. Some cities have much higher than this (where their budgets allow), and some smaller communities have less. We are currently around 6. Using the planning population target of 80,000 in 2050 and a goal of 8 personnel for every 1,000 people, Royse City would need around 640 employees. Using national averages for police (2.2 officers/1K pop) and fire (2.7 full-time firefighters/1K pop) personnel, this would break down into around 390 public safety (police and fire) personnel and 250 employees to fill roles in administration, finance, planning and development, engineering, parks, public works, building inspection, code enforcement and other areas. The table below shows how staffing can be expected to grow if the city grows along the planned trajectory of 6% per year through 2050.

		2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050
<b>Population (80K in 2050)</b>		10220	20000	30000	40000	50000	60000	70000	80000
<b>All Employees</b>	<b>Staff per 1,000 pop.</b>	6.0	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.5	7.5	8.0
	<b>Total</b>	61	130	210	280	350	450	525	640
<b>Fire</b> <i>Nat'l Std: 2.77/1K pop.</i>	<b>Staff per 1,000 pop.</b>	0.2	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.25	2.5	2.7
	<b>Total</b>	2	10	30	60	100	135	175	216
<b>Police</b> <i>Nat'l Std: 2.2/1K pop.</i>	<b>Staff per 1,000 pop</b>	1.5	1.75	2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
	<b>Total</b>	15	35	60	88	110	132	154	176
<b>All Other Staff</b>	<b>Total less Fire+Police</b>	44	85	120	132	140	183	196	248
		72%	65%	57%	47%	40%	41%	37%	39%

### CITY HALL

Our existing city hall building is approximately 21,000 square feet. Between City Hall, the police station and the fire station, we have enough space to accommodate our personnel today and in the near future, but as we continue to grow, we will eventually need to either expand City Hall or construct a new, larger facility. Conversations with staff and surveys with residents indicated a strong preference to maximize capacity of existing facilities first, and then when expansion is needed, to keep City Hall in the Town Center area. Design of future city facilities should place a high priority on the image the City wants to portray to existing and potential residents, businesses and developers looking to live and work in the community. The community's brand and image can be conveyed in the buildings' architectural features, commitment (or not) to sustainability, and location. Because the location and layout of City Hall is so important, the city should be looking at property adjacent to the existing City Hall and other locations in the Town Center now, and begin making plans to acquire the land. Early planning and land acquisition will also be beneficial as development of the Town Center area evolves and fills in between Main and Church Streets.

### LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

We currently have a small library adjacent to City Hall, with additional resources available at local schools and the much larger Rockwall County Library in Rockwall. Our library hosts a variety of events for children and adults throughout the year. Royse City does not currently have a community center. Space in the library and City Hall is typically used for community activities. Royse City has some very active and well-attended outdoor community event programming through its Parks Department, along with activities and events sponsored by local churches. If the city does grow to be 30,000 or more, it will likely need to construct some dedicated "community center" space either as a standalone facility or as part of a new City Hall complex.

## Public Safety

Now, more than ever before, protecting the health and safety of residents is of utmost importance. Royse City recently ranked as one of the safest cities in Texas thanks to the diligent work of our Police Chief, Fire Chief and their respective teams, but it will be a challenge to maintain this level of service as more people and businesses move here and financial resources continue to be limited. To maximize effectiveness while limiting financial demands, growing cities like ours are looking to innovative public safety approaches that integrate building, street and neighborhood design with fleet and vehicle makeup and facility location to create a “sweet spot” of self-policing neighborhoods, safer streets, and superior service and response times when incidents do occur. We want to do the same.

### FIRE

In 2013, the National Fire Protection Association reported that of the total 31.9 million calls routed to U.S. fire departments, only 1.2 million (or about 4 percent) were fire-related. The remainder of calls were for medical emergencies, vehicle incidents and other situations that do not require a full-size fire truck. Urban planners and progressive engineers have proven that widening streets to accommodate the larger trucks is increasing vehicular accidents and pedestrian fatalities, expensive, and damaging to the character and identity of communities. They suggest that we can reduce the volume and severity of incidents and cut costs by narrowing our streets and replacing some Type I trucks with smaller “rapid response vehicles” (RRVs). Beaufort, South Carolina was one of the first communities in the U.S. to do this in 2010, when they decided to replace three full-size fire trucks with one new fire truck and two all-purpose cars the size of a pickup truck. This approach reduced the cost from \$1.4 million it would have cost for three new full-size trucks to \$675,000, cutting the cost in half.

In Royse City, our fire district crosses three counties and covers 46 square miles. We currently have two full-time employees, with additional support coming from volunteers and mutual aid agreements with surrounding cities. While the dependence on volunteer support can leave the city short-staffed sometimes during weekdays, our automatic and mutual aid agreements provide for a more efficient emergency response force. Our fleet consists of two small trucks (RRVs), two large trucks and one tanker. Our sole fire station is located on Main Street in downtown. The city’s ISO rating was recently bumped to a 3, which translates into greater safety and lowers fire insurance premiums. However, in order to maintain or improve this rating further, our most recent audit report recommends that we add a second fire station on the south side of IH-30. As we continue to add homes, businesses and population (day-time and full-time), it will be necessary to add additional fire stations to maintain target service levels of 1.5 mile radius for engine companies and 2.5 mile radius for ladder companies. The Facilities Map at the end of this chapter shows the approximate locations where future fire stations should be located in order to maximize coverage and minimize response times. Revisions to the development process and ordinances should be considered for adoption that would require developers to donate land for future fire stations in these areas.

### POLICE

We love, respect and appreciate the work that our police officers do every day to protect our community. Like the fire department, we will need to add officers, vehicles and equipment to keep up with our growth, but we can also explore and implement approaches that minimize the number of officers required and keep our officers as safe as possible. We can design our neighborhoods so that the streets force cars to drive slower, thereby reducing the need to monitor neighborhoods for speeding infractions and other common traffic stops that are becoming increasingly tense and violent. We can also design and program

### SAVING LIVES AND MONEY



*Royse City’s Fire Department can save money—and allow for more flexibility in road design—by using smaller rapid response vehicles instead of large trucks to respond to non-fire-related calls. The city of Beaufort, South Carolina cut their vehicle costs in half by replacing two of its three large trucks (such as the kind Royse City uses; top image) with the smaller vehicles (bottom).*

our neighborhoods to encourage more pedestrian activity in the street, so that neighbors can get to know and trust each other to look after each other and their children. Finally, we can improve lighting and wayfinding in public places so that when people are in public places, they can get where they're looking to go safely and comfortably.

None of these will replace the need for a well-staffed, trained, and equipped police and fire department, but they can help relieve some of the pressure and costs on the departments while also accomplishing other broader goals for our community. We should review these case studies and our situation more and determine an appropriate strategy forward for Royse City.

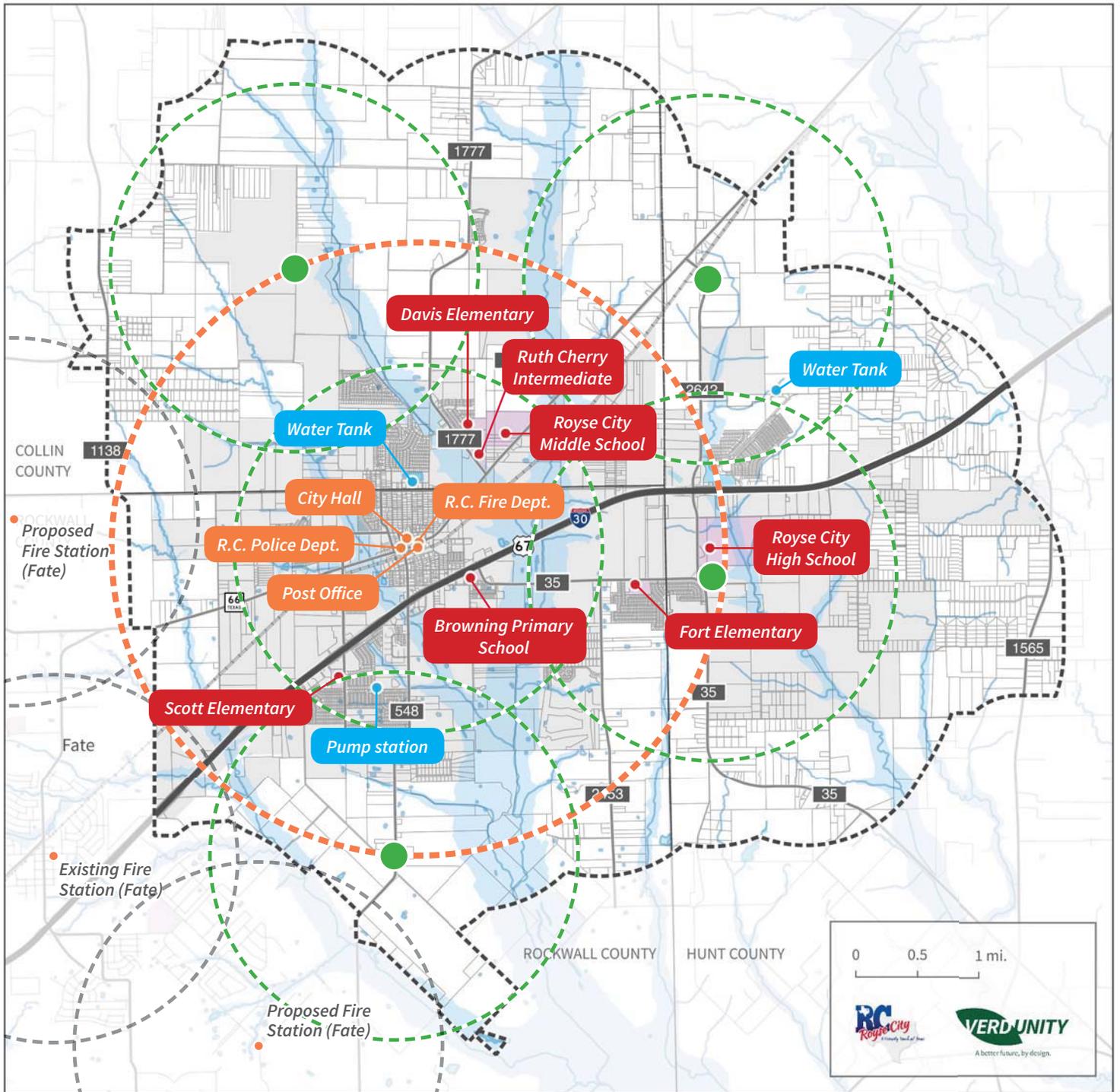
## **Education**

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Education is another area that is important to the quality of life and long-term resiliency of a community. The growth of the Royse City Independent School District is mirroring that of the community. A Templeton Demographics report presented to the school board in August 2016 suggested enrollment could increase by 1000 students over the next five years, reaching 6219 students during the 2020-21 school year. Growth is projected to reach 7,377 students for the 2025-26 school year. According to Superintendent Kevin Worthy, the major challenge for the 2020-21 school year is that the ISD's debt payment increases from \$8 million to approximately \$11 million. Continued growth in property values for existing homes and addition of new housing at higher values will be critical in order to pay off the district's existing debt and create capacity to help maintain and expand facilities.

RCISD currently has four elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one middle school and one high school. In the near term, additional students will be accommodated by adjusting attendance zones for existing schools, but additional elementary schools will be needed in the future. A second high school could also be required as the city approaches buildout.

We must continue to partner with the Royse City ISD, home school groups, local businesses, churches and other community groups to provide quality education facilities and programs for people of all ages, education levels and income levels.



Sources: NCTCOG & Royse City

## Facilities Map

- Services
- Water Utilities
- Schools
- Public Use
- Floodplain
- City Limits
- ETJ Boundary
- Potential Fire Station Sites
- 1.5-mile service radius (proposed fire stations)
- 2.5-mile service radius (existing fire station)

## Policies and Priority Action Items

The following policy statements will be used to guide decisions related to city facilities and public safety. The priority action items are what the city should focus on in the next few years in order to get the big things right.

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### Efficient Facility Use, Planning and Design

*Royse City will make efficient use of existing facilities and strategically plan and implement expansions to ensure the necessary needs and services are provided to residents and businesses in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.*

#### Priority Action Items

- 1 Conduct an internal workshop with police and fire chiefs, planning department, and emergency services partners to review and discuss the pros and cons of various approaches and commit to a strategy forward that can be integrated into updated ordinances and design standards.
- 2 Identify a site for a future fire station on the south side of I-30 and secure the land.
- 3 Implement the regional vehicle idling policies local government vehicle fleets established by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG).
- 4 Design and construct new fire station on the south side of I-30
- 5 Identify sites for future fire stations in each Development Zone and secure the land.
- 6 Prepare a plan for expansion of City Hall and associated municipal services (public works, police, animal services) and purchase additional land in Town Center for facilities and parking.
- 7 Enable city vehicles to use alternative fuel technology

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### Community Health and Safety

*Royse City will protect and provide for the safety of residents and visitors, lower crime rates and sustain fire protection through a combination of up-to-date facilities and fleet vehicles, technology, outreach and community engagement initiatives.*

#### Priority Action Items

- 1 Conduct citizen outreach events periodically throughout the year to establish relationships between residents and public safety personnel, educate residents on public safety issues, and encourage them to be proactive regarding personal property and share responsibility for community safety.
- 2 Promote and assist with formation of neighborhood watch programs in all neighborhoods.
- 3 Evaluate the option of having a paid fire department (every 2 years)

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### **Emergencies and Natural Disasters**

*Royse City will evaluate and improve its emergency management initiatives, education and partnerships to better prepare the public and city staff for emergencies and natural disasters.*

#### **Priority Action Items**

- 1 Review and update the city's Emergency Management Plan at least once every five years.
- 2 Expand emergency management initiatives and education to prepare better the public and city staff during emergencies.

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### **Extending Education Opportunities to Everyone**

*Royse City will collaborate with the school district, local churches, businesses, and other partners to enhance and expand high quality educational facilities and opportunities to accommodate and serve the needs of an increasingly diverse mix of residents.*

#### **Priority Action Items**

- 1 Partner with Royse City ISD to confirm needs and locations for future elementary, middle and high school facilities and coordinate with property owners and developers to secure land for these facilities.
- 2 Partner with Royse City ISD, home school groups, local businesses, churches and other community groups to provide quality education facilities and programs for people of all ages, education levels and income levels.
- 3 Enhance and expand the existing library services to accommodate additional community needs



