

# ROYSE CITY



**A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY**

ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL – APRIL 11, 2017



**To:** *The residents, businesses owners,  
and employees of Royse City*

**From:** *The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee*



Royse City is growing: new restaurants, new stores, and lots of people moving in. But Royse City is also staying the same: Main Street activities, a thriving school district, and a real sense of community. The challenge in making this comprehensive plan was this: how do we maintain the “small town” feel with the imminent growth coming to Royse City?

Through the tireless efforts of all involved, including community member surveys, volunteers, city workers and others, this CPAC document addresses nine key areas Royse City needs to focus on over the next five, ten, and fifteen years. However, through our many discussions, three over-arching goals were at the forefront to ensure our town can thrive now and into the future.

These goals are as follows:

- 1. Shared Vision of Growth:** The two largest entities in Royse City, the town itself and the school district, are both implementing strategic plans to ensure proactive decision-making. Anticipating and understanding upcoming challenges and developing a plan to guide decisions are important steps to “growing smart.”
- 2. Get the Big Things Right:** Royse City wants to maintain a historical perspective and tight-knit community, while also embracing economic development and growth. To secure this future in a manner that’s sustainable today and in the future, we must make wise use of our available land and financial resources today. This document includes plans and prioritized action items for future parks, trails, transportation routes, and types of developments for specific land areas that work together to build the community we hope to become.
- 3. Communication, Engagement, Transparency:** Strong towns have citizens and business leaders that make time to understand, engage and invest their time, talents and treasure into making their neighborhoods and community better—incrementally, over time. This level of engagement and support begins with clear communication about where the city is headed and how we plan to get there. We want this plan to be a reflection of our town’s unique character and values, as well as a source for ongoing discussion about how we collectively can make our community and neighborhoods better.

While this document is extensive and, at times, overwhelming, it is more than just pictures and words on paper. Our comprehensive plan is unique to what Royse City is now and will become. This is a very exciting, yet scary time for our town. Being proactive now will ensure easier decisions down the road.

Residents and business owners of Royse City have the opportunity to see, first-hand, what plans are being discussed. Ask questions, educate yourself, get involved and become an engaged citizen of Royse City, whether through this plan or in your neighborhood. Talk to CPAC members, City Council members, ask questions, volunteer for Main Street activities, join your school’s PTA, attend an All Pro Dads breakfast, serve on an HOA board, join the Chamber or even run for an elected position in our community. This community is great and will become even greater because of YOU, the citizens and business owners of Royse City.

### **The Comprehensive Plan Action Committee:**

Brian Zator, *CPAC Chair, Royse City ISD*

Tom Crowley, *Council member, CPAC Liaison*

Julia Bryant, *Chamber Director*

Mellody Crawford, *Resident*

Scott Gebo, *Resident*

Richard Grist, *Former P&Z member*

Kari Hollifield, *Real Estate Agent, former Main Street Manager, Chamber Board of Directors*

Jim Mellody, *Chamber Board of Directors, former Mayor*

John Sallee, *Resident*

Russell Summers, *Resident*





“As a city, we juggle two different things: a Main Street, hometown feel and our I-30 corridor. I’m very passionate about our downtown and want to preserve and improve it. We’ve got to have a plan to manage the growth we’re experiencing. I’ve learned so much during this process about our opportunities. Having a plan is exciting because it will make it so much easier for our staff and Council. What I want to see come out of this effort is for us to follow it and follow through.”

**Janet Nichol**, Mayor of Roysse City

“The relationship between the City and the School District is very important to our community and to our kids. I’m excited about the plans our community is putting in place to help us manage our growth in a smart way. It’s encouraging to know more about making smarter decisions. It’s great to hear our city is being proactive and getting input from stakeholders on the future!”

**Kevin Worthy**, Roysse City ISD Superintendent

“There are lots of opportunities with the growth that’s coming. This plan will help us manage the growth and make sure it’s the kind of growth that we want. It’s been very rewarding to see the input from the community and the caring and conviction from citizens to do the best thing. We hope to follow the plan and be successful.”

**Carl Alsbrook**, City Manager

“Roysse City was and still is chosen as the destination for many families due to its rural location and Southern charm. As we continue to expand, smart growth strategies can help this community achieve our goals for growth and development while maintaining our distinctive rural character. The Roysse City Chamber of Commerce supports and encourages the opportunity to have a well thought out plan that provides informed strategies to help us move forward in the right direction.”

**Julia Bryant**, Chamber Director

“Roysse City is a great town with activities for people of all ages and stages of life. As a member of CPAC, I was skeptical at first because I didn’t think this would be something that could be put into action, but as I talked with people, I felt like this plan puts the city on track to grow smartly. This Plan allows us to look to the future to know what we can be, and also to reflect back on what makes Roysse City great. With this plan, we’ll be able to maintain that small town feel while offering more opportunities for the people coming here.”

**Brian Zator**, CPAC Chair



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Numerous individuals including City of Royle City elected and appointed officials, City Staff, members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC), key stakeholders and citizens provided knowledge, assistance and insight throughout the process of developing the vision and strategy for the Royle City Comprehensive Update. Specific contributions of the following are greatly appreciated:

## **CITY STAFF**

Carl Alsabrook, *City Manager*

Larry Lott, *CDC Director*

Janet McPherson, *Director, Development Services*

Shannon Raymond, *Director, Finance*

Dario Lopez, *Director, Public Works*

Tauna Ratliff, *Director, HR*

Jeff Stapleton, *Police Chief*

Richard Bell, *Fire Chief*

Brent Stowers, *Parks & Recreation Superintendent*

Paula Morris, *Main Street Manager*

Deborah Sorenson, *City Secretary*

## **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

Jeff Hays, *Chairperson*

Dave Shivers, *Vice-Chair*

Xavier Cortez

Wendy Johnson

Phil Haggard

Spencer Pattison

Russell Flanigan

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC)**

Brian Zator, *CPAC Chair, Royle City ISD Board Member*

Julia Bryant, *Chamber Director*

Jim Mellody, *Chamber Board of Directors, former Mayor*

Russell Summers, *Former Council Member*

Kari Hollifield, *Real Estate Agent, former Main Street Manager, Chamber Board of Directors*

Scott Gebo, *Resident*

John Sallee, *Resident*

Mellody Crawford, *Resident*

Richard Grist, *Former P&Z Member*

Tom Crowley, *Council member, CPAC Liaison*

## **CONSULTANT TEAM:**

### **VERDUNITY**

Kevin Shepherd, *Project Director*

Kristin Green

Mikel Wilkins

Jordan Clark

Mili Tagle

### **Government Resource Associates**

Becky Brooks



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## WHAT IS THE ROYSE CITY 2030 PLAN ABOUT?

The Royse City 2030 Plan is intended to provide background information, analysis and recommendations focused around four main objectives:

- 1 Understanding current needs & anticipating future needs** so that we can leverage growth to build a stronger version of the community we want to be and avoid turning into Anywhere, USA.
- 2 Getting the big stuff right.** Organizing and prioritizing land, infrastructure and economic development decisions that maximize return on investment and quality of life today and for years to come.
- 3 Enabling clear expectations and consistent, predictable decisions** so elected officials, staff, and other partners will be unified, efficient and proactive.
- 4 Creating an educated and engaged citizenry** that enthusiastically supports city leadership, respects decisions, and contributes to making positive change in their local neighborhoods and the community.

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY STATEMENT

“Royse City is a **neighborhood-centric** town combining **vintage charm** with **contemporary vision** and building on a foundation of **genuine relationships, community, and integrity.**”



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### ENGAGED COMMUNITY

*Cultivate a supportive environment that promotes active engagement of residents, local businesses and the schools in community affairs that improves the quality of life in neighborhoods and the entire town.*

### RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

*Preserve and leverage natural, cultural, historical and renewable resources to enhance community identity and support the needs of current and future generations.*

### FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Do and understand the math. Be obsessive about accounting for revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities so we remain fiscally solvent and strengthen our long-term position in the region.*

### LIVABLE DESIGN

*Implement development standards and procedures that improve public health and safety, enhance beauty and appeal of the public realm, foster prosperity and improve quality of life for residents and visitors.*



PLAN PILLARS, GOALS, POLICIES, ACTION ITEMS

## Growth Management

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

**Area:** 30 square miles

**Population:** 80,000 by 2050

**Density:** 4.2 residents per acre

**Service Costs:** \$6,000 per acre

**Average Home Value:** \$330,000

The recommended approach is for the City to manage population and annexation for a target city limit area of 30 mi<sup>2</sup> and a 2050 population of 80,000, which would result in an average density of 4.2/acre. The ‘Place Type’ approach to the future land use plan provides the city with plenty of flexibility to accommodate a wide population range while still protecting the different types of neighborhoods that residents want today and in the future. If fewer people move to the community, then the density will be below the maximum and there will likely be more rural neighborhoods and less of the more compact urban housing. Should the high growth scenario play out and more people need to be accommodated, then the Urban Village, Town Center and traditional neighborhood areas provide neighborhoods that can handle (and would benefit) from the higher densities while still allowing the lower density neighborhoods to remain that way.

We want to grow in a manner that:

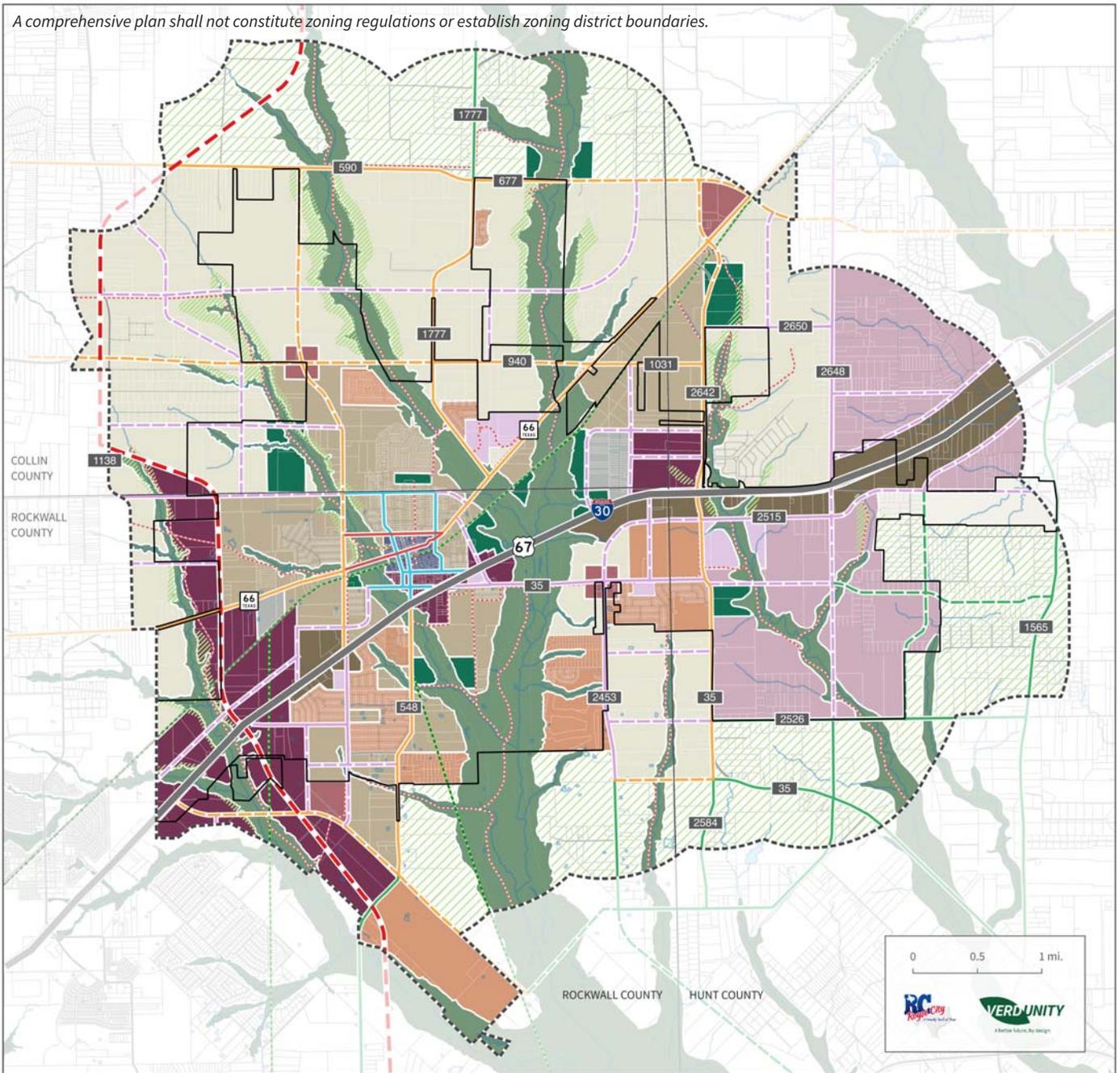
1. maximizes financial productivity of development (revenue/acre);
2. allows efficient cost of service and infrastructure;
3. minimizes debt (especially for maintenance); and
4. balances tax base between residential and commercial to keep property tax rate down.

The most efficient manner for a city to grow is to prioritize infill and vertical expansion where there is already existing development and infrastructure so that revenue can be maximized with current service costs. Given our current position of a fairly large service area, low density, and minimal revenue base, our priority in the near-term must be to increase tax base from land within our current city limits and served by existing infrastructure. This can be done through small projects in existing neighborhoods (such as painting crosswalks, adding benches or planting trees) that improve quality of life and thereby increase property values, or through infill projects where new buildings are constructed on sites already served by infrastructure. When new development is desired, it should be added incrementally in areas immediately adjacent to current development and infrastructure, and in a pattern that aligns with recommendations in this plan.

### SUMMARY OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 1 Implement **small, tactical projects** to prove quality of life and property values in existing neighborhoods.
- 2 Prioritize **infill** in areas where there is existing infrastructure capacity.
- 3 Align **service levels** (infrastructure, parks, public safety, etc.) with **neighborhood type** and residents’ willingness and ability to pay for the services.
- 4 Manage **annexation** so that the shape of the city can have as much contiguous growth as possible, minimizing “fingers” and out-parcels.

A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.



## Future Land Use Plan

### Place Types

- |                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Town Center           | Highway R/O/C                   |
| Urban Village         | Industrial                      |
| Traditional Mixed Use | Civic                           |
| Suburban Mixed Use    | Park/Open Space                 |
| Suburban Residential  | Conservation                    |
| Rural Estates         | Floodplain                      |
| Commercial Node       | Regional Stormwater Mgmt. Areas |
|                       | City Limits                     |
|                       | ETJ Boundary                    |

### Planned Corridor Type

- |                     |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Avenue              | Multi-use Trail |
| Parkway             | Veloweb Trail   |
| Rural Road          |                 |
| Street              |                 |
| Outer Loop (Future) |                 |



## 1. COMMUNITY DESIGN

A welcoming community with a small town environment and unique identity

### GOAL:

Emphasize community branding and activities that protect, celebrate and promote local culture, history, businesses, residents, and schools.



## 2. LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Balanced growth and development

### GOAL:

Implement a flexible and incremental approach to growth and development in order to preserve and enhance the City’s assets, infrastructure, social character, fiscal health and environmental resilience.

## Policy Statements:

- 1 **Intentional Community Design:** *Royse City will promote and incorporate unique, functional community design components within new developments, public spaces, and streetscapes to enrich areas throughout the city, create distinctive character, and ensure a citywide pedestrian-friendly environment.*
- 2 **“All-In” on Downtown/Main Street:** *Royse City’s highest priority will be to make Main Street and the surrounding area a vibrant town center that is the core of the economic and social life of our community, a center of civic, entertainment, and cultural activities, and the focus of our community’s identity and branding efforts.*
- 3 **A Unique and Special Brand:** *Royse City will collaborate with the Community Development Corporation (CDC), Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Program and other partners develop a cohesive, unique branding message and materials that aggressively promotes the town’s commitment to small town character, complete neighborhoods, people-oriented design, cultivation of entrepreneurs and local business, and family-friendly activities.*
- 4 **Activities and Events:** *Royse City will organize and implement a robust program of events and activities that promotes, celebrates, and protects the town’s local character, history, businesses, residents, schools, and neighborhoods to enhance quality of life and enrich community culture.*

## Policy Statements:

- 1 **Neighborhood-Centric Development Model:** *Royse City will organize land use, housing and transportation infrastructure around the concept of “complete” neighborhoods, where schools, parks, and daily necessities are in near proximity and easily accessible for people of all ages and conditions.*
- 2 **Diverse, Flexible and Context-Sensitive Land Use:** *Royse City will establish a mix of “place types,” where the associated development pattern and infrastructure support a specific context and character, but provide flexibility for individual properties to evolve and adapt over time.*
- 3 **The Transect and Adjacent Development:** *Royse City will ensure that all development is scaled and designed appropriately given its place in the rural-to-urban transect by creating smooth transitions between conflicting uses and development types.*
- 4 **Productive Use of Developed Land:** *Royse City will encourage development that increases the per acre revenue yield (property & sales tax revenue) and reduces costs of service throughout the city.*
- 5 **Protection of Natural Areas:** *Royse City will keep the ecological functions of natural areas intact by preserving floodplain and other key habitat locations as unaltered as possible and limiting the type of development in the areas adjacent to them.*
- 6 **Growth Management:** *Royse City will implement an antifragile approach to growth by managing the rate, pattern and location of growth in a manner that makes infrastructure and service delivery as economical as possible and does not overextend the city financially in the short or long-term.*



### 3. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

A broad spectrum of neighborhood and housing types that can flex to meet changing demands over time

#### GOAL:

Provide and maintain a range of neighborhood development styles and housing types at various price points that emphasize quality architecture, desirable and well-maintained public spaces, and pedestrian safety.



### 4. MOBILITY

An efficient, affordable, and sustainable transportation system

#### GOAL:

Build and maintain a balanced and sustainable transportation system that provides for the safe, convenient and efficient movement of people and goods, reduces traffic congestion, encourages energy and transportation efficiency, and expands opportunities for citizens to meet some of their routine needs by walking or cycling.

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Diverse Housing and Neighborhood Mix:** *Royse City will offer a mix of housing and neighborhood types at a variety of price points that meets the needs of all people planning to stay in or move to Royse City today and in the future, enabling three or more generations of a family to all live comfortably in Royse City.*
- 2 **Unique, Complete, and Walkable Neighborhoods:** *Royse City will enhance existing neighborhoods and construct new neighborhoods to encourage interaction amongst residents, prioritize pedestrians and walkability, and utilize architecture, nature and the public realm to create unique environments.*
- 3 **Maintenance:** *Royse City will educate the community on the importance of property maintenance, provide proactive inspections, and utilize incentive programs to improve the quality of life, enhance the city’s appearance, and protect the health and safety of the community.*

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Multimodal Mobility:** *Royse City will minimize traffic and the demand for travel lanes by creating a viable, functional multimodal transportation network that is attractive and effective, and takes into consideration public transit, bikes and pedestrians.*
- 2 **Safe and Connected Pedestrian/Bicyclist Network:** *Royse City will build and maintain a mobility network for pedestrians and bicyclists that is safe, functional, comfortable, and well connected.*
- 3 **Accessible Transportation for Everyone:** *Royse City will provide access to public transit, walking and biking trails for people of all ages and physical abilities within and close to neighborhoods, shopping and employment centers.*
- 4 **Traffic Congestion and Transportation Demand:** *Royse City will utilize technology, innovative concepts and transportation demand management strategies to reduce traffic demand and congestion, reduce journey to work trips, and improve the safety and efficiency of roadways and intersections throughout the community.*
- 5 **Flexible Roadways and Corridors:** *Royse City will design and utilize roadway corridors and public rights-of-way in a manner that can be adapted with minimal investment to accommodate mobility needs and adjacent land uses as they evolve over time.*
- 6 **Improved Regional Connectivity:** *Royse City will collaborate with neighboring cities and other agency partners to improve the mobility network in the region.*



## 5. PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

A functional, desirable, and accessible system of parks, open space, and recreational facilities

### GOAL:

Develop and maintain an extensive system of interconnected parks and public spaces, preserved natural areas, and recreational facilities and programs that creates value, enhances quality of life and community health, and reduces impacts on the environment.



## 6. INFRASTRUCTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Balanced and functional built and natural systems

### GOAL:

Preserve, enhance and integrate natural systems and the built environment to reflect the desired community identity and sustain current and future generations.

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Park Accessibility and Functionality:** *Royse City will build a quality, efficient parks system by adding green space and public plazas in a manner that makes them conveniently accessible to all residents and prioritizes function and aesthetics over size.*
- 2 **Open Space and Nature Connections:** *Royse City will preserve and restore floodplains, wetlands, stream and river corridors, tree canopy, critical habitat sites and other environmentally sensitive areas in order to maintain wildlife habitat and biodiversity, improve water quality, reduce erosion and flooding risk, and enhance the natural landscape throughout the community.*
- 3 **Connecting People to Places:** *Royse City will collaborate with land owners, developers and other partners to link parks, neighborhoods, and public spaces with a network of greenways and multi-use trails.*
- 4 **Community Partnerships and Recreational Facilities/Programming:** *Royse City will partner with the school district, medical providers, local churches and other organizations to encourage active living and expand its sports facilities, recreation activities, health and wellness initiatives, and event programming for families and residents of all ages.*

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Sustainable Site and Building Design:** *Royse City will implement development standards that encourage sustainable site development and building design that reduce energy consumption, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.*
- 2 **Functional and Efficient Infrastructure:** *Royse City will plan, design and maintain infrastructure for transportation, water, and wastewater to maximize capacity of existing systems, supports new development in accordance with the city's Future Land Use and Growth Management Plans, and is financially and environmentally sustainable.*
- 3 **Water Resource Conservation:** *Royse City will conserve water resources by expanding education and incentive programs to ensure the city has adequate water supply to meet the long-term needs of the community.*
- 4 **Integrated Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure:** *Royse City will improve soil and water quality, mitigate flooding and erosion issues, and enhance and protect ecosystems by requiring design and use of watershed-scale stormwater management strategies, erosion control plans, and stormwater pollution prevention plans that comply with federal, state, and local regulations.*
- 5 **Ecosystem and Habitat Preservation:** *Royse City will conserve, preserve and restore prime farmland, tree canopy and natural habitats with rare vegetation and wildlife, high quality soils, scenic views and unique topography to increase resilience, adaptability, and biological integrity and maintain the community's access to clean air and water, local food, and natural areas.*

- 
- 6 Renewable Energy Supply:** *Royse City will diversify its energy supply, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the usage of solar power and other renewable sources for city infrastructure, facilities and operations, and encouraging residents and businesses to make renewable energy improvements to their homes, buildings and operations.*
- 
- 7 Recycling and Waste Management:** *Royse City will promote a comprehensive and cost-effective solid waste management program that protects public health and the environment, promotes recycling, reduces the amount of solid waste, and successfully manages and reclaims landfill sites.*
- 



## 7. 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:

- 
- 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.*
-



## 8. ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

A vibrant, diverse, & relevant economy

### GOAL:

Cultivate and maintain a local economic model and composition that provides a wide range of employment opportunities, encourages financially sound business creation and expansion, and allows for creative reutilization of existing buildings and spaces.



## 9. COMMUNICATION, PARTNERSHIPS, & VOLUNTEERISM

Mutually beneficial partnerships and volunteerism efforts, and effective communication to promote and improve them

### GOAL:

Fully utilize and coordinate with the City’s many partners to address issues facing the community and region, provide services and facilities, encourage volunteerism, support and promote events and programs, and foster economic and educational growth.

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Entrepreneurship and Local Businesses:** *Royse City will grow jobs and small businesses locally by identifying, connecting, developing and supporting local entrepreneurs.*
- 2 **Attractive and Unique I-30 Corridor:** *Royse City will create a visually appealing and Royse City-branded I-30 corridor with a combination of regional retail, office, commercial and residential in a flexible, mixed-use development framework.*
- 3 **Attracting Business and Talent through Placemaking:** *Royse City will invest strategically in quality placemaking efforts to meet the growing demand for more “live-work-play” environments where companies want to locate, people want to do business and the workforce wants to live.*
- 4 **Competitive Workforce:** *Royse City will encourage partnerships between the City, school district and local businesses to provide job skills demanded by the regional market place and create employment opportunities.*

### Policy Statements:

- 1 **Engaged and Empowered Citizens:** *Royse City will create and grow a culture of “strong citizens” who are informed, care deeply about the present and future of their community, and have a clear understanding of how to make positive contributions in their neighborhoods, throughout the community, and on city boards and commissions.*
- 2 **Collaboration with Community Organizations:** *Royse City will organize and implement processes to collaborate with local community organizations and philanthropic groups and maximize shared resources to improve the local economy, culture and quality of life.*
- 3 **Regionalism:** *Royse City will partner with other communities, counties and regional agencies to address population growth, regional transportation, air quality, water conservation, consistency with neighboring cities, emergency responsiveness, and educational opportunities.*
- 4 **Transparency and Communication:** *Royse City will improve transparency and communication with citizens, land owners and local businesses by providing regular updates and important information regarding policies, programs and decision-making using mail, meetings, websites, and social media.*

# Implementation Program

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## TOP 5 PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

- 1** Form Neighborhood Improvement Committees (NIC) for each neighborhood in the city and recruit residents that are interested in contributing to make their neighborhoods better. Form a Neighborhood Advisor Council made up of a member from each neighborhood. Hold quarterly meetings with NAC to collect feedback from residents and distribute information. Initial tasks for each NIC should be to complete walking audit of neighborhood to identify small things that could be done in near term and critical, bigger projects that need to get on city's radar.

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  - 2** Update the city's zoning ordinance and development standards to align with Comp Plan recommendations.

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  - 3** Talk with TxDOT and determine a plan for routing SH66 around downtown, or if that's not possible, a slow speed, urban design for couplet on Main and Church Streets.

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  - 4** Develop pop-up programming to utilize the pocket park space downtown to promote local businesses and provide opportunities for aspiring artists and entrepreneurs to test out ideas.

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  - 5** Partner with land owners and developers in Town Center and Urban Village Place Type areas to create Planned Development (PD) special districts and associated design guidelines to identify desired and allowable uses, establish infrastructure and building framework, and set criteria for key aesthetic items such as architecture, streetscape and signage.
-



# I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## Why Do We Need a Plan?

Royse City is at a critical point in its evolution as a city. When we did our last Comprehensive Plan in 2001, just under 3,000 people lived in our town and business activities were limited mostly to Main Street. Today, in 2016, the population has grown to over 11,000 and the much anticipated economic activity along the I-30 corridor has begun. In Mayor Nichol's words, "Now is our time to shine."

This growth puts pressure on our lean staff to keep up with residential and commercial site plan approvals, building permits, construction inspections and infrastructure maintenance. Our elected officials are being challenged to provide infrastructure and amenities commensurate with other communities in the area while working with a much smaller budget. Our old plans are outdated and no longer relevant or useful, but the development decisions we make in the coming months and years will have repercussions far into the future for our children and future generations. It is time for a new Plan that provides context and guidance for the decisions ahead.

### **MAKING GROWTH WORK FOR US, NOT AGAINST US**

Growth does not equal or create prosperity. In fact, certain types of growth can actually lead to the opposite. As a community in the early stages of growth and a large amount of undeveloped land, we have options in front of us. We are still a young city with room to grow in ways that reflect our character and values. We are also in position to learn from what other, more mature communities have done and use that knowledge to make smarter decisions about our own approach to growth and development. This process is about deciding what we want our community to look and feel like, laying out a framework to manage growth in a manner that moves us intentionally toward this vision, and, most importantly, understanding and getting comfortable with the compromises and difficult decisions that will be required along the journey.

### **GETTING MORE BANG FOR OUR (LIMITED) BUCK**

Infrastructure and development decisions today have financial consequences in the future. The City is already financially stressed from past decisions. We have to be especially careful about how we invest our limited funds. We need a plan for maximizing the return on investment of our city's resources in a way that increases property values, improves quality of life, and reduces long-term infrastructure liabilities. Otherwise, we'll soon be faced with deteriorating neighborhoods and service liabilities that far exceed our capacity to pay for them.

### **BECOMING MORE PROACTIVE, LESS REACTIVE**

Increasing demands on staff and the absence of current, coordinated plans has resulted in many of our decisions and day-to-day activities being reactive. This limits staff efficiency and our ability to maximize return on investments, and makes it difficult to manage and communicate expectations. Updating our plan puts us in a position to eliminate duplicative efforts and be proactive decision-makers across all aspects of the city's development and operations.

### **CONSISTENCY, COMMUNICATION, ACCOUNTABILITY**

Managing expectations of citizens during growth can be extremely challenging, time consuming and frustrating. Establishing a cohesive vision, core values, planning principles, policies and prioritized implementation actions will clarify roles and expectations for City Council, staff, local businesses, and citizens and empower everyone in the community to contribute. Progress on action items and decisions will be measured and tied back to this Plan, providing transparency and accountability.

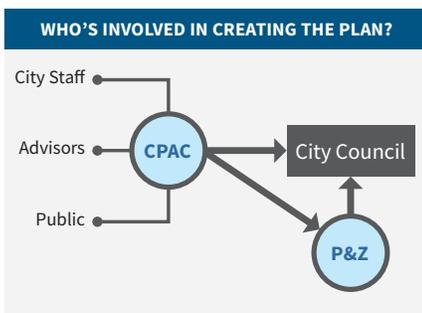
*This process is about deciding what we want our community to look and feel like, laying out a framework to manage growth in a manner that moves us intentionally toward this vision, and, most importantly, understanding and getting comfortable with the compromises and difficult decisions that will be required along the journey.*

## What is the Royse City 2030 Plan About?

The Royse City 2030 Plan is intended to provide background information, analysis and recommendations focused around four main objectives:

- 1 Understanding current needs and anticipating future needs** so that we can leverage growth to build a stronger version of the community we want to be and avoid turning into Anywhere, USA.
- 2 Getting the big stuff right.** Organizing and prioritizing land, infrastructure and economic development decisions that maximize return on investment and quality of life today and for years to come.
- 3 Enabling clear expectations and consistent, predictable decisions** so elected officials, staff, and other partners will be unified, efficient and proactive.
- 4 Creating an educated and engaged citizenry** that enthusiastically supports city leadership, respects decisions, and contributes to making positive change in their local neighborhoods and the community.

## Who all is involved?



**CPAC:** Representative group of citizens & city leaders meeting regularly to guide the plan update; establish community vision, core values, and plan goals; review various drafts of the plan; give presentations to Council and P&Z; encourage community input and engagement during and after the planning process.

**City Staff:** Provide ongoing input on and review of planning process (vision & principles, plan drafts, etc.) to ensure plan is accurate and actionable.

**Advisors (VERDUNITY):** Analysis of current conditions; collect/interpret public input; coordinate with and educate Council, Staff, and CPAC on planning process, best practices; facilitate public meetings and focus area charrettes; complete plan document; ensure plan is written to be useful in daily decision-making.

**Public:** Provide input on community strengths, areas for improvement and desired future; give ongoing feedback of draft versions of the plan; support and engage in implementation activities.

**Planning & Zoning Commission:** Provide input and interim reviews at key milestones during the planning process. Recommend final plan to City Council for adoption.

**City Council:** Final authority to approve or reject the plan update for adoption.

## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

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A comprehensive plan is a roadmap for building the city's future. Communities that have grown successfully, such as Frisco, have called their Comprehensive Plan the most important document for managing growth, and they treat it as such. It represents the shared vision of the community and is its official statement on policy regarding its desirable future. The document provides the blueprint to guide policy development, master planning, operations decisions and capital investments, and considers elements such as land use, mobility, housing and neighborhoods, natural resources, economic development, and quality of life.

Successful plans balance visioning and big ideas with careful consideration of fiscal, environmental/natural and technical resource constraints and incorporate honest discussions about what citizens are willing and able to pay for.

The responsibility for implementing the Comprehensive Plan involves city leadership and every department, but support and participation from citizens and local businesses is just as important. Often, policies and recommended actions cross organizational boundaries and require compromise between departments and other community agencies. It is critically important to involve representatives from all of these groups in the development and prioritization of goals and implementations strategies.

The Comprehensive Plan must be a dynamic, adaptable resource—especially for a rapidly growing community like Royse City. While the Plan provides the framework to guide the city's growth and big decisions, it is also important to maintain flexibility to accommodate requests that may not fit exactly within the Plan, or that fit the Plan but conflict with current ordinances or development standards. When special projects or unique development opportunities present themselves, the staff, Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council should reference the Comprehensive Plan as they consider the impacts of these proposals based on the approved Future Land Use Plan and vision for surrounding properties. In the absence of clear direction, the vision, core values, and guiding principles outlined in the document should always be referenced.

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*Successful plans balance visioning and big ideas with careful consideration of fiscal, environmental/natural and technical resource constraints and incorporate honest discussions about what citizens are willing and able to pay for.*

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## KEY QUESTIONS WE'RE ASKING THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS...

# 1

### 1. What defines Royse City today and in the future?

What makes Royse City unique? What do we want to be known for?

What are the things about our community that we want to keep, and what do we want to let go of or change?

Who lives and works in our community, and how do we recruit/retain more of them?

What is our current trajectory?

If we keep doing what we're doing, will we get better or worse?

### 2. How do we want to grow?

What types of residential neighborhoods do we want?

What type of businesses and entertainment do we want?

Where do we want new development to be located?

How fast do we want to add businesses and residents (and the additional services and infrastructure they require)?

What is our current approach to annexation, and what should it be going forward?

Where should we focus infrastructure investments?

How should we organize and invest our economic development resources?

# 2

# 3

### 3. What does implementation look like?

What can realistically be done in the next year with available resources?

What are the catalyst sites, projects, and programs that can initiate and build momentum in the next 1–3 years?

What are the current processes and who are the people responsible for making decisions related to land use, zoning, economic development programs and infrastructure? Is there duplication and/or inefficiency that can be eliminated?

What organizational structure is best suited toward implementation of the desired policies and actions?

If we keep doing what we're doing, will we get better or worse?

### 4. What can be done to educate and empower citizens to engage and contribute to helping Royse City achieve our vision?

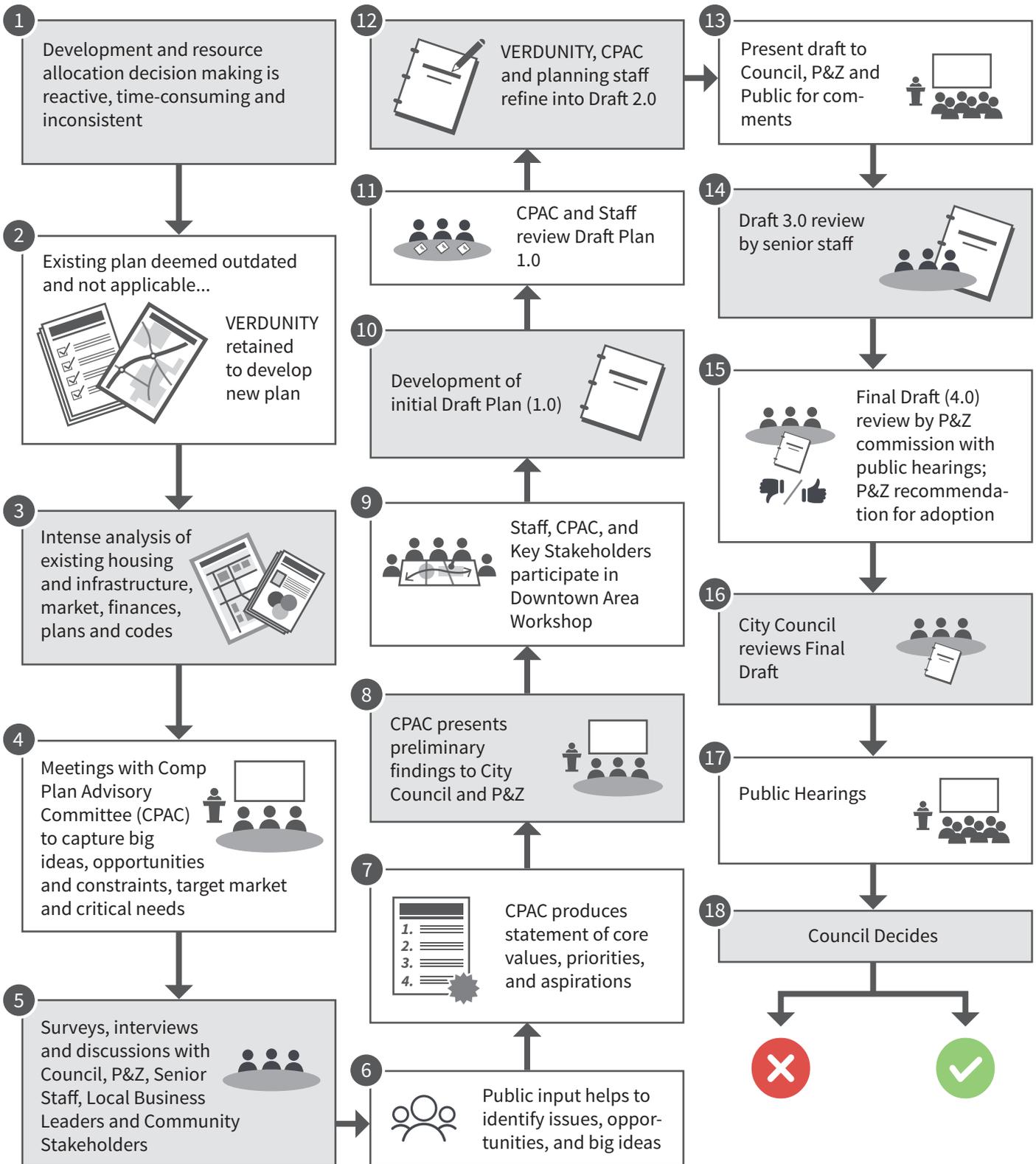
What small projects can be done by residents right now that will improve quality of life and community identity in existing neighborhoods and downtown?

How, when and where should city leaders communicate with residents and businesses?

How do we encourage participation in city boards and committees?

# 4

# THE PLANNING PROCESS





## II. PLANNING CONTEXT

The next twenty years are going to be very different than the last twenty years. Real change is already upon us. Rather than planning to continue business as usual, we need to analyze the changes that are underway and establish a plan framework that can accommodate today's needs while being much more flexible for the years ahead. Some of the global, regional and local factors impacting the future of Roysse City are summarized below.

### RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

Sustained prosperity in any community is dependent on the availability of financial, energy and natural resources. We need to be prepared for the day when we reach the limits of how far we can go in each of these directions. This plan emphasizes using our city's finite resources responsibly, so that we can be nimble in the face of big, systemic shifts.

#### A Fragile Economy

Much has been made of the country's national debt situation, but what often goes unmentioned is how tenuous many of our state and local governments' fiscal situations have become. Demands to provide funds for pension payments, infrastructure, education and healthcare continue to escalate at an increasing pace each year, while available revenues are flat or declining. The impacts of these trends can be seen in the routine budget shortfalls with multiple state transportation departments and municipal bankruptcies in cities such as San Bernardino, CA, and Detroit. And at the local consumer level, it's having an impact on the spending, housing, and mobility choices of seniors who have seen retirement savings shrink, as well as on young professionals entering a tough job market with record levels of student debt.

#### Overconsumption of Natural Resources

Globally, consumption of natural resources such as water, minerals, fuels, and forestland is skyrocketing, and as our regional population grows, that trend is mirrored in North Texas. We cannot count on an endless supply of the earth's resources; our consumption habits will need to change sooner rather than later.

#### Peak Cheap Oil and the Emergence of Renewable Energy

Oil has been and continues to be the primary energy source in this country and globally. It is, however, becoming much more expensive to locate and refine, and our supply with at some point be depleted. Continued reliance on an increasingly expensive and diminishing fuel supply will significantly raise the costs of the costs of development, construction, and maintaining our transportation system.

Renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar, however, are in infinite supply and have a very efficient ratio of cost to produce versus surplus for society's consumption. These energy sources will continue to be researched and developed, and should be expected to replace oil over time.

### FINANCIAL IMPACTS OF THE POST-WWII DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

One of the underlying reasons behind the economic issues in the country is the way many communities have developed in the post-World War II automobile era. For a city to remain fiscally solvent and prosperous over time, it must grow and develop in a manner that consistently produces enough wealth and revenue to pay for the maintenance of infrastructure (streets and utilities) and provision of services to its residents and businesses.

The pattern of development that many communities built post-WWII have followed is simply not financially sustainable over the long term. If we want our

**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
*is an important value of Roysse City residents. Citizens expect their tax dollars to be used responsibly, while also expecting a high quality of life. The majority of the goals, policies, and implementation recommendations outlined in this Plan were developed with the principle of long-term fiscal solvency in mind.*



*Municipal bankruptcies continue to expand, with 12 municipalities having declared bankruptcy just since 2008. (Image: governing.com)*

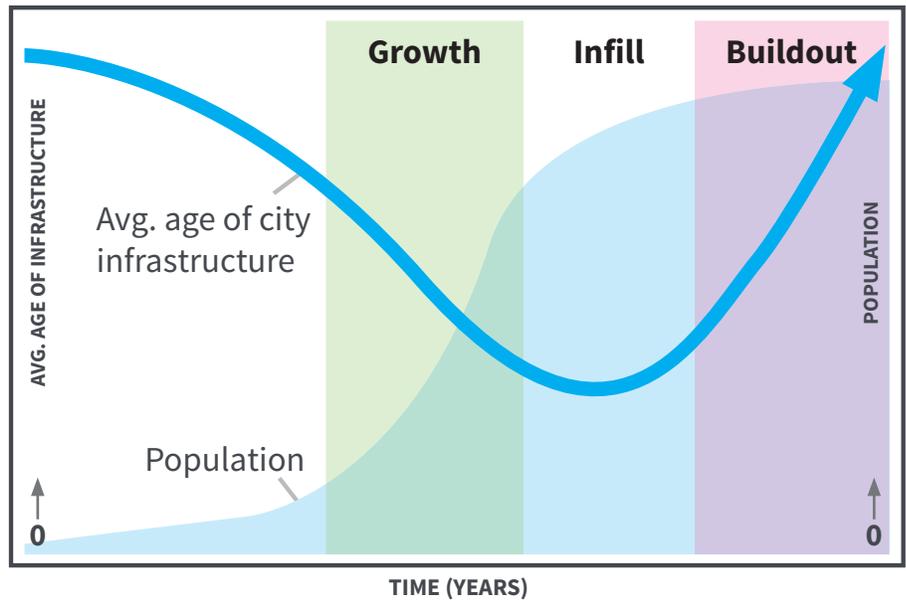
*“Cities routinely trade near-term cash advantages associated with new growth for long-term financial obligations associated with maintenance of infrastructure.”*

**Charles Marohn**  
Strong Towns

## THE AGING OF A CITY

In the growth phase, developers pay to build homes, buildings, and infrastructure at minimal cost to the city.

As a city starts to grow, the average age of its infrastructure begins to drop, and its population rises. The growth in households and new businesses generates new revenues for a period, but when that growth tails off, the city is left with an aging—and much more expanded—infrastructure, whose maintenance can no longer be financed by new growth.



country and communities to continue to prosper, we must think differently about how we approach growth and development. The following concepts are critical to building a financially strong and resilient city.

## DEVELOPMENT PATTERN VALUES



### PROPERTY TAX REVENUE PER ACRE IN ROYSE CITY:

#### A. New Development

Denny's: \$22,474/acre

Jack in the Box: \$23,895/acre

#### B. Historic Downtown Businesses

Well Coffee Lounge: \$69,709/acre

2-Story Drug Store: \$82,536/acre

### Pace of Development

For thousands of years, cities all over the world were built and grew incrementally out (horizontally), up (vertically) and more intense (higher density) as resources allowed. The traditional pattern of development was characterized by a compact grid, narrower streets, and diverse building types (whose uses were flexible), and built in increments when the demand and money were available. New structures or streets were built adjacent to existing buildings or infrastructure, because this was the most cost-effective way of growing.

When the automobile became widespread, it led to what engineer and Strong Towns founder Charles Marohn has coined the “suburban experiment.” Widespread automobile use, the creation of the highway system, and housing programs rolled out after the war combined to create a new environment where developers were able to purchase and develop land out on the edge for fairly low costs, and the suburbs were born. Streets and buildings became more spread out than ever before, and residential, commercial, and other uses were separated. Fewer buildings were designed with unique character and built to last, and more were instead designed to be cost-effective and mass-produced. Massive amounts of housing, streets, and infrastructure were built in a short amount of time, without ever being tested over time to see if the model was sustainable. Today, many years later, the phases and costs of this approach are revealing themselves. Without the new growth, these same cities are now struggling to find money to maintain large amounts of infrastructure all deteriorating at the same time.

Here in North Texas, Dallas, Mesquite, and other first-ring suburbs are examples of communities who are in the mature phases of this process. Many of the area's outer-tier cities are examples of communities that are still in the growth phase.

### Development Patterns and Tax Revenue Productivity

Not all kinds of development yield the same returns on investment. Our most financially productive places, in terms of the tax revenues they bring in per acre, tend to be clustered around our older downtown developments and walkable neighborhoods. Repeated studies across the country show that street-fronting businesses on small lots in compact, walkable areas—such as those along Main Street—tend to be vastly more productive per acre than the more suburbanized

# COMPARING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS:

## Tax revenue and infrastructure costs

### TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Traditional** development has more, smaller lots with narrower streets and setbacks—so infrastructure costs are spread across more users.



**Number of lots:** 30  
**Total acres:** 5.19  
**Block length:** 800 ft.  
**Street section:**  
 24 ft., curb & gutter, with sidewalk  
**Cost to rebuild street:** \$2.8 million\*  
 • per household/lot: \$95,000  
 • per acre: \$547,000  
**Annual property tax revenue (total):**  
 \$44,800  
 • per household/lot: \$1,490  
 • per acre: \$8,630  
**Time to pay off:** 63 years

### SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

**Suburban** neighborhoods feature larger lots and wider streets with underground drainage and full water and wastewater service, resulting in a higher infrastructure cost, spread out over fewer users.



**Number of lots:** 17  
**Total acres:** 5.03  
**Block length:** 800 ft.  
**Street section:**  
 31 ft., curb & gutter, with sidewalk  
**Cost to rebuild street:** \$3.2 million\*  
 • per household/lot: \$188,000  
 • per acre: \$637,000  
**Annual property tax revenue (total):**  
 \$30,200  
 • per household/lot: \$1,010  
 • per acre: \$6,000  
**Time to pay off:** 106 years

### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Rural** residential can vary widely from small lot mobile homes to large estate lots or farmsteads. Infrastructure typically includes gravel or asphalt roads with surface (bar ditch) drainage and septic systems.

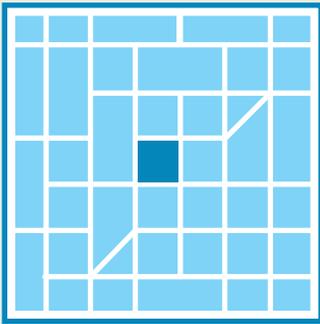


**Number of lots:** 8  
**Total acres:** 16.03  
**Block length:** 800 ft.  
**Street section:**  
 26 ft., bar ditch, no sidewalk  
**Cost to rebuild street:** \$1.8 million\*  
 • per household/lot: \$222,000  
 • per acre: \$111,000  
**Annual property tax revenue (total):**  
 \$44,800  
 • per household/lot: \$520  
 • per acre: \$970  
**Time to pay off:** 114 years

\*Cost to rebuild street includes water and sewer utilities

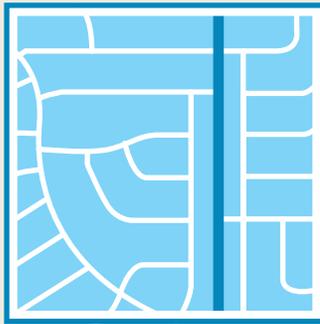
# WHY STREET PATTERNS MATTER

Pre-1900



Traditional grid design

Approx. 1930–1950



Curvilinear loop design & beginning of cul-de-sacs  
(Figures adapted from Norman Garrick)

Since 1950



Conventional cul-de-sac design

Changes to street patterns in the last hundred years have had serious implications for how we interact with our communities. The older parts of most of our American cities were laid out in compact, interconnected grids, which allowed us to get around easily before the automobile era. This grid design was a particularly efficient way of making jobs, shopping, and so on close to home and conveniently accessible.

Looking at today's patterns, the differences are stark. We gave up connectivity and convenience for the feeling of separation from the bustle of the traditional neighborhood. The old grid pattern was designed specifically to be in scale with the human body, and to be easily navigated on foot. We've mostly replaced human-scale communities with those designed around the car.

Researchers studying these patterns find that this way of designing communities:

- **makes us drive more:** People who live in sparse, tree-like communities drive about 18 percent more than those living in traditional grids.
- **makes us less safe:** those areas designed in traditional grids have much lower traffic fatality rates than those newer communities that are more spread-out and tree-like.
- **may be making us less healthy:** street networks that encourage more driving and decrease people's ability to walk or bike are also linked to obesity and other health problems like diabetes. Traditional grid communities, on the other hand, see much higher rates of people commuting by bike.
- **may be keeping us disconnected from one another:** the more spread-out we become, the less efficient we are in getting from one place to another, leaving us less free time, and often isolating us from each other. There's even evidence that foreclosures tend to be concentrated in spread-out subdivisions that require driving many miles to perform any daily function.

*“A lot of people feel that they want to live in a cul-de-sac, they feel like it’s a safer place to be. The reality is yes, you’re safer – if you never leave your cul-de-sac. But if you actually move around town like a normal person, your town as a whole is much more dangerous.”*

**Wesley Marshall**

Associate Professor of Civil Engineering  
University of Colorado

auto-oriented sites with larger lots and dedicated parking areas. Very little infrastructure cost is associated with this Main Street-style development, and units can easily adapt to different uses. Contrast this with the big-box-and-strip-mall approach, which eats up valuable land for diminishing returns, requires significantly more infrastructure, and is particularly inflexible to reuse.

**NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIETAL SHIFTS**

Traditionally, the demographic breakdown of the country has followed a pyramid shaped histogram where each generation was larger than its predecessor. Over the past 50 years, however, these patterns have shifted.

The Baby Boomer generation bulged and there’s a reduction in the following generation. This means there are fewer people to support retirement programs for those in the boomer generation. Additionally, many more seniors are now moving in with their children, either in their homes or where it’s allowed, in an accessory dwelling unit. This is driving an increase in demand for these types of accommodations.

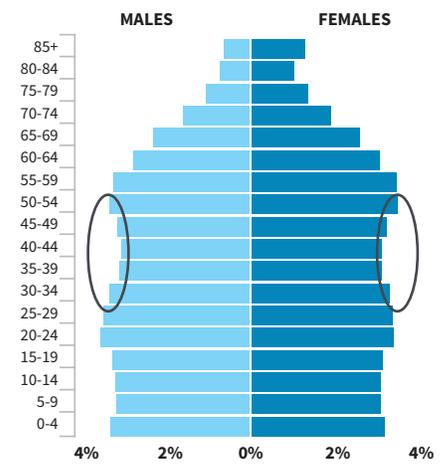
Studies repeatedly show that the two largest groups of the population, Baby Boomers and Millennials, increasingly prefer the convenience and practicality of living in walkable environments, where less driving is required. Many seniors are downsizing from their suburban homes into smaller homes or rental units in walkable neighborhoods where they have less home maintenance costs and easier access to daily needs. Young professionals are also looking for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods where they can live, work, play, and build personal wealth without depending on a car or owning a home.

**Housing Choice: Missing Middle Housing**

“Missing middle housing” comprises the range of housing styles that fall between the extremes of the detached single-family home and the midrise apartment complex. These housing styles (illustrated below), which include townhouses, duplexes, courtyard apartments, and live/work developments, were an essential building block of any pre-1940s neighborhood, and their appeal is being rediscovered today in towns across the country. It is important that these housing types be included in any new Royse City neighborhoods.

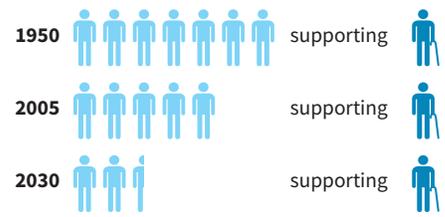


**2015 U.S. POPULATION**



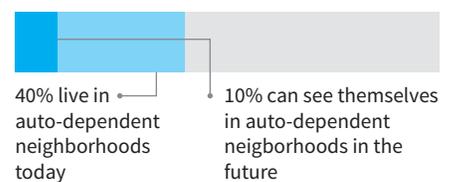
The age makeup of the U.S. population is shifting, and is no longer youth-heavy. Historically, this figure has taken a pyramid shape, but is becoming flatter as Americans have fewer children.

**RETIREMENT PROGRAMS**

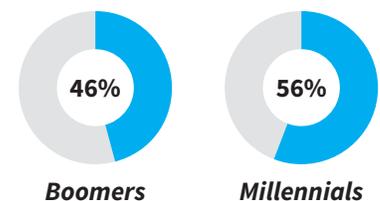


Payment into retirement programs is dwindling in comparison to the boom in the senior population, due to the gap in generation size noted above.

**AUTO-DEPENDENT VS. WALKABLE**



Preference for walkable, mixed use neighborhoods:



A growing number of Americans prefer to live in more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods—in particular, Millennials (56%) and Baby Boomers (46%), the two most populous generations. (RPA, “The Unintended Consequences of Housing Finance”)

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## Vision North Texas 2050

**1. DEVELOPMENT DIVERSITY:** Meet the needs of changing markets by providing a mix of development options and land use types in communities throughout the region.

**2. EFFICIENT GROWTH:** Promote reinvestment and redevelopment in areas with existing infrastructure, ensure that new infrastructure supports orderly and sustainable growth, and provide coordinated regional systems of natural and built infrastructure.

**3. PEDESTRIAN DESIGN:** Create and connect pedestrian-(and bicyclist) oriented neighborhoods, centers and places throughout the region.

**4. HOUSING CHOICE:** Sustain and facilitate a range of housing opportunities and choices that meet the needs of residents of all economic levels and at all stages of life.

**5. ACTIVITY CENTERS:** Create mixed use developments that are centers of neighborhoods and community activities and serve as hubs of non-automobile transportation systems.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:** Protect, retain or enhance the region's important natural assets (including its air, water, land and forests) and integrate these natural features and systems into the character of the region's communities and the experiences of its residents.

**7. QUALITY PLACES:** Strengthen the identities of the region's diverse communities through preservation of significant historic structures and natural assets, creation of new landmarks and gathering spaces, use of compatible



architectural and landscape design, and support for the activities and institutions that make each community unique.

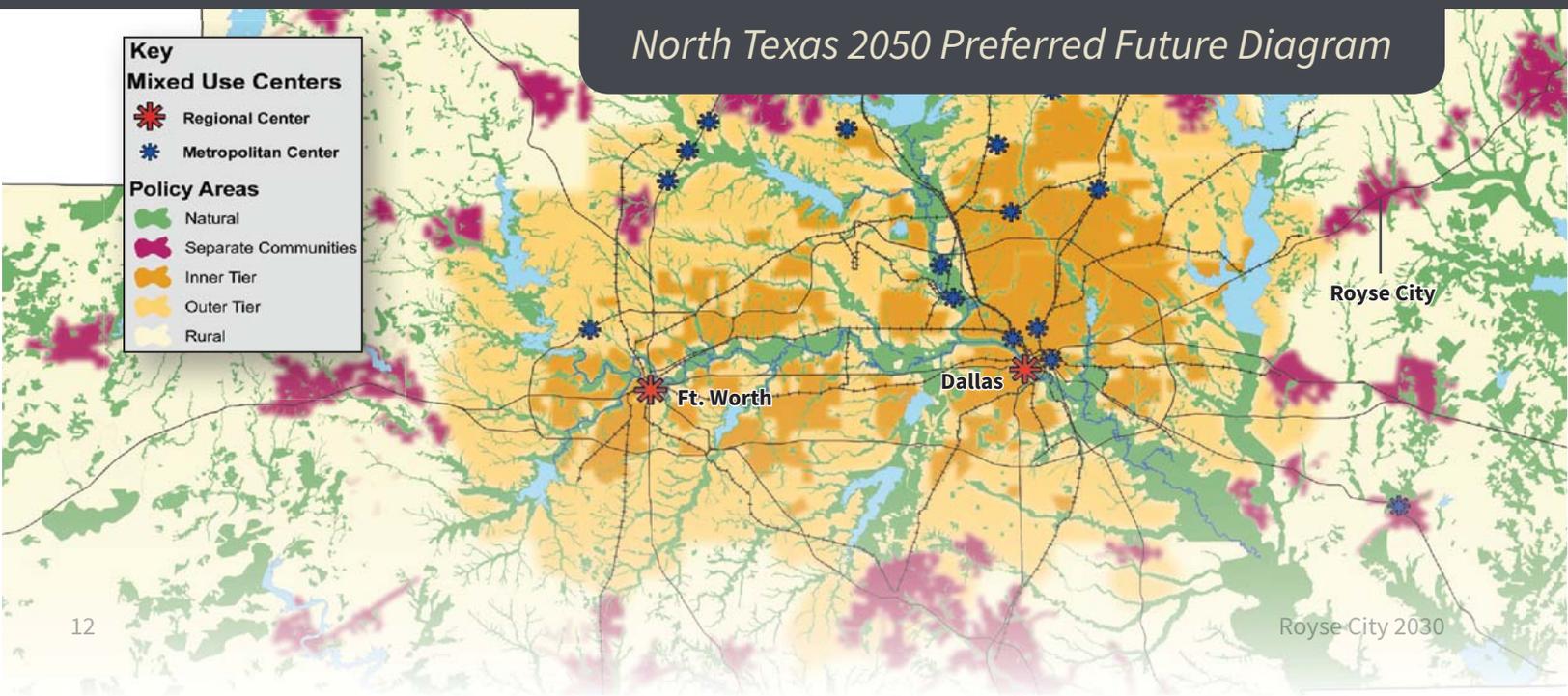
**8. EFFICIENT MOBILITY OPTIONS:** Invest in transportation systems, facilities and operations that provide multi-modal choices for the efficient and sustainable movement of people, goods, and services.

**9. RESOURCE EFFICIENCY:** Design buildings, sites, communities and regional systems to use water, energy, and renewable resources responsibly, effectively and efficiently, and to retain non-renewable resources for the use of future generations.

**10. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY:** Provide opportunities for all North Texans to have access to the schools, people and technology they need for success in learning throughout their lives.

**11. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES:** Identify and support functional, sustainable infrastructure and institutions that offer North Texans access to affordable, nutritious foods, opportunities for physical activity, and access to wellness and primary care services.

**12. IMPLEMENTATION:** Achieve the region's vision by adoption of compatible comprehensive plans and ordinances for cities and consistent investment plans for regional systems; involve citizens and stakeholders in all aspects of these planning processes.



North Texas 2050 Preferred Future Diagram

## THE SCENE IN NORTH TEXAS

Right now, North Texas is the fastest-growing region in the country. Almost two million people have moved here just since the turn of the century, and there's no sign of that trend slowing. This growth is putting pressure on the region's natural resources (water in particular) and infrastructure (transportation in particular). Additionally, changing demographics in the region are driving increased demand for different types of housing and neighborhoods.

### Vision North Texas 2050

Vision North Texas 2050 was a collaborative planning effort conducted in the late 2000s to educate elected officials and regional leaders about these trends and develop a cohesive plan for how the region can accommodate the influx of so many people. Different scenarios were developed, compared, and eventually combined into a "preferred development" scenario that would best accommodate the region's population growth and demographic shifts while also working with available water, food and other natural resources. The VNT 2050 Plan includes twelve guiding principles (opposite page) for North Texas communities to follow in local planning efforts to make a sustainable future for the region achievable.

### Mobility 2040

The Mobility 2040 Plan from NCTCOG emphasizes that, given the large number of people moving here, we simply won't all be able to get around exclusively on roads and highways. Instead, the plan stresses the increasingly pressing need for more transit, bike trails, and walkable development. Moreover, our transportation needs are far more expensive than our ability to pay for them. Much of the regional transportation funding that is available is being moved toward public transportation and maintenance of what already exists, meaning much less will be available to fund construction of new roads in the future.

### Water Quality, Supply and Stormwater Management

Here in Texas, we've seen that water consumption versus availability is a major and growing concern. Many more people are moving here every year, putting higher demand on limited water supply. On top of that, over-development of our land is deteriorating the water quality in our streams and rivers and causing worse flooding when storms come. Continuing in this way becomes expensive—both in monetary and quality-of-life terms.

	2000	2015	2030	2050
Population*	5.31	7.1	9.49	11.66
Employment*	3.22	-	5.58	7.17
Households*	1.94	-	3.48	4.38

\*millions

*The North Texas population has ballooned in the past 15 years, and it shows no signs of slowing down. A significant portion of that population growth will continue to extend eastward from Dallas along the I-30 corridor.*

## NORTH TEXAS MOBILITY FUNDING GAP

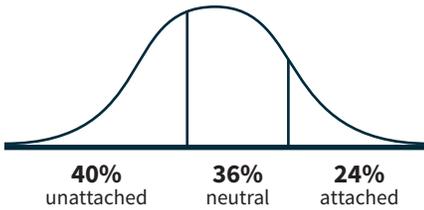
Projected regional transportation needs: **\$431.5 billion**



*The approved funding for the most recent North Texas Mobility Plan falls over \$300 billion short of the region's actual transportation needs.*

## CONCLUSIONS FROM VISION NORTH TEXAS 2050

- The North Texas region will face a **significant amount of growth** in the next several decades.
- **Current infrastructure is not adequate** to meet the needs of this growth.
- A **continuation of the development patterns** of the past leads to **serious impacts** on the region's air, water, land and natural resources.
- The market of the future is more likely to want a **different type of community** – one that is more compact, walkable and with natural assets and urban amenities nearby.
- The past patterns cannot be changed by the actions of one or a few decision-makers. **Choices made by many stakeholders** will affect the result.
- A **shared vision** and more complete information for these stakeholders offers the region a better chance to achieve a desirable future.
- North Texans want a **future that is better than the one forecast** by a continuation of 'business as usual' trends.



The “Soul of the Community” survey, conducted by The Knight Foundation and Gallup, finds that only about a quarter of Americans are emotionally attached and engaged in their community.

## STRONG TOWNS

The non-profit group Strong Towns has focused its entire organization around the goal of identifying and empowering a million people who care about their neighborhoods—people they are branding #strongcitizens. Strong Towns has a number of online resources for citizens and leaders who want to find ways of making their communities better.

“The mission of Strong Towns is to support a model of development that allows America’s cities, towns and neighborhoods to become financially strong and resilient.”

[StrongTowns.org](http://StrongTowns.org)



Revitalizing and constructing small-scale mixed use buildings like this one (with commercial space at ground level and residential space above) can have a significant economic impact in older neighborhoods. (Image: Small Developer/Builder Facebook page)

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVISM

Most people live in their communities, and use the services they provide, but tend not to have or make the time to get involved in shaping what their community looks like. Although there are exceptions, citizen involvement has not been the norm, and it will not become the norm unless community leadership actively makes it so. We have a tremendous opportunity—and a real responsibility—to be the kind of place that empowers our residents to take ownership, get involved, and make their community reflect their hopes and ideas. For a resident, it can be intimidating to step out (seemingly) on one’s own. But it is possible to foster an environment in Roys City that creates opportunities for engagement and activism, and that make it easy for people to express themselves.

There are three tools in particular that are especially relevant to Roys City and that can and should be an integral part of implementation:

### Tactical Urbanism

Tactical urbanism is a term used to describe a collection of low-cost, temporary improvements that test out different design concepts to improve a street or public space before significant public investment is made for permanent construction. This approach has been used by cities and neighborhood organizations across the world to transform public spaces. It is especially useful in scenarios where funds are limited and/or where there is some skepticism about proposed concepts.



Street right-of-way can often be converted into useful public space, such as parklets in parking spaces. Bike lanes can also be created quickly and at minimal expense.

### Small-Scale/Incremental Development

Most businesses and developers have traditionally been large groups that do best when developing big sites and multiple properties in a template format. They tend not to be interested in developing and repurposing individual sites and buildings, though it is a growing area of need for many communities. A group of “small developers” is emerging to fill this void, focusing on constructing two-story mixed-use buildings, fourplexes, and other types of unique, context-sensitive development on small lots that can activate and revitalize downtowns and aging neighborhoods. Organizations such as the Incremental Development Alliance and Small Developers Group on Facebook have been formed to connect and share resources with this rapidly growing group.

### Neighborhood Improvement Programs

Neighborhood improvement programs are emerging to engage residents and help fund improvements to older neighborhoods, historic downtowns and aging homes and buildings. Examples include the Oswego Renaissance Association’s healthy neighborhood program in Oswego, New York ([www.oswegonyonline.com](http://www.oswegonyonline.com)), Austin’s Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP) and the Northeast Investment Cooperative (NEIC) in Minnesota. These programs provide another source of funding, but more importantly, they provide an avenue for residents to make positive, productive contributions to their neighborhoods that ultimately help cultivate community pride and identity.

# III. ROYSE CITY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



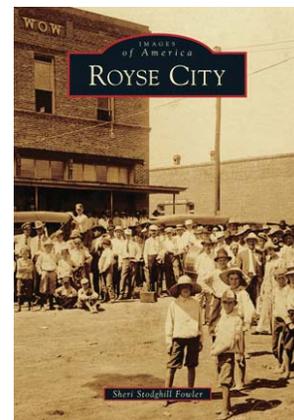
The MKT Railroad was constructed through Royse City in 1886, allowing people, crops, and merchandise to come and go with greater ease. The railroad's arrival sparked a boom in the business district, and population grew quickly.



The historic Bankhead Highway (also known as Highway 67) later became Royse City's most important connection to the rest of the region and nation. It became Main Street as it passed through Royse City.

## Royse City's Proud History

In 1886, Confederate veteran Burgess Griffin Royse platted his namesake town-site on the blackland prairie of North Texas. A savvy businessman, Royse knew that the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad line between Dallas and Greenville was being planned, and he was instrumental in making sure its route passed through the newly platted city. Train service was a major economic boom to the area, and the small community grew quickly. By 1890, Royse City had a population of 1,000 and boasted two cotton gins, a gristmill, and 20 businesses. Through the mid-1900s, Royse City thrived on farming, with cotton growing, cotton ginning, and cottonseed oil manufacturing serving as the major industries. Although most Royse City citizens now commute to jobs throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, this small bedroom community celebrates and preserves its history through the Texas Main Street program, a thriving city-owned historical museum, and many festivals and celebrations that highlight its rich heritage.



The 2012 book *Images of America: Royse City*, written by the late longtime resident Sheri Stodghill Fowler, tells the story of Royse City through an extensive collection of historical photographs.

## Royse City Today: A Snapshot

Our recent history is a story of rapid expansion, in terms of both population and development. The trend of growth outward from Dallas along Interstate 30 is transforming Royse City from a small rural town into a larger, more urbanized community. That brings with it a host of new opportunities as well as new challenges and responsibilities.

### DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

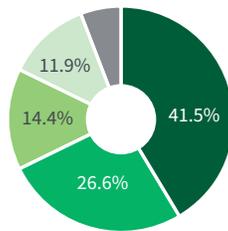
Royse City is in the early stages of growth. Between 2000-2010, Royse City's population grew from just under 3,000 residents to almost 10,000, an annual rate of 9.8%. Projections vary, but it is a safe assumption that Royse City's population will continue to increase at a steady pace over the next two to three decades. Royse City's population has gotten progressively younger since the population boom began, driven in large part by the construction of mostly tier-one single-family homes, which tend to draw young families. Overall, Royse City households earn 27 percent more than the state median, but less than some surrounding communities. For the most part, though, they don't do that earning within Royse City. Right now, the reality is most people who live here work outside the city, and most people who work here also come from elsewhere.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Royse City's average resident in the future will be younger, better educated, and more diverse than in the past. Providing quality schools, a variety of youth/family activities and more local employment opportunities will enable the city to adequately serve residents' needs.*

*A combination of stagnant wages, rising cost of living expenses and increased debt is impacting citizens' willingness and ability to pay for public services.*

### WHAT DO ROYSE CITY RESIDENTS DO?



- Management, business, science, & arts occupations (**41.5%**)
- Sales & office occupations (**26.6%**)
- Natural resources, construction, & maintenance occupations (**14.4%**)
- Sales & office occupations (**11.9%**)
- Production, transportation, & material moving occupations (**5.7%**)

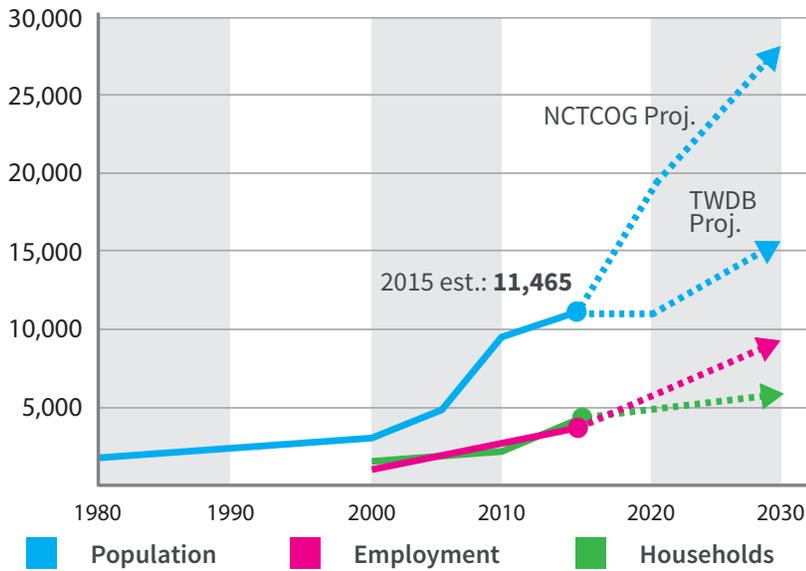
### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



*(Data source for all graphics: U.S. Census Bureau estimates: V2015)*

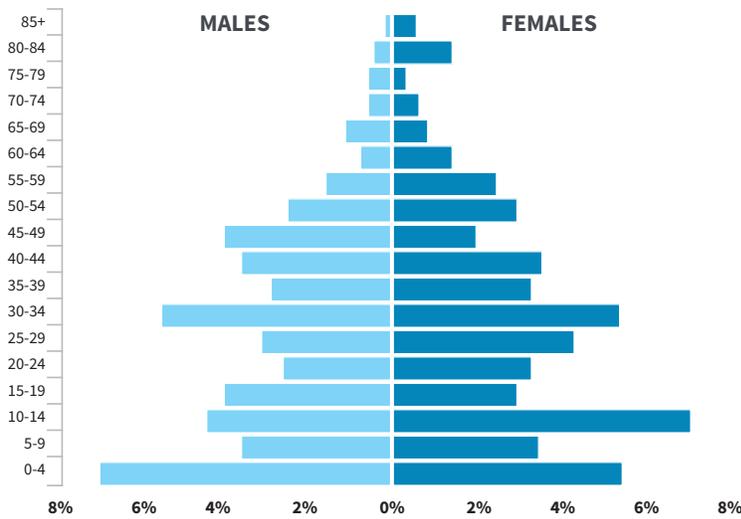
**POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD, & EMPLOYMENT TRENDS\***

(Data source for all graphics: U.S. Census Bureau estimates: V2015)

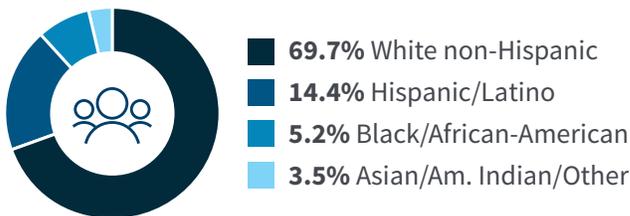


\*Projections are from NCTCOG 2030 Demographic Forecast

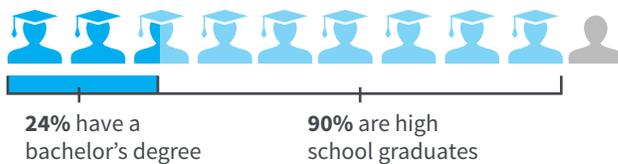
**AGE DISTRIBUTION**



**POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY**



**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: RESIDENTS 25 & OLDER**



## LAND USE (WITHIN CITY LIMITS)



## DENSITY COMPARISONS

Royse City is currently on the lower end of population density in the North Texas region, but the population per square mile will grow as the I-30 corridor continues to attract more residents.

## GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

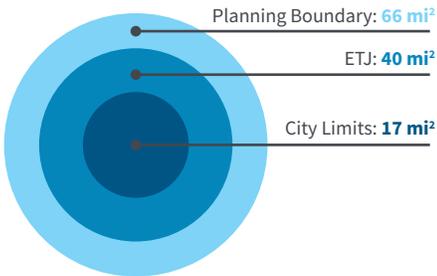
### Area and Population Density

The area within the city limits is approaching 17 square miles (10,880 acres). When the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) is added, the total area of the city expands to over 40 mi<sup>2</sup>. The City's ultimate planning boundary is 65.9 mi<sup>2</sup>. In terms of population density, Royse City is still a rural community with a low density of 1.14 people per acre. This number will increase as the city continues to grow and develop, but there are still many options available to the community to control how big the city gets in terms of size (acreage) and people (density).

City	Land Area, City Limits	Total Population	Population per mi. <sup>2</sup>
Plano	71.58	274,960	6.00
Southlake	22.43	28,868	2.01
Rowlett	19.96	58,073	4.55
Little Elm	18.65	34,598	2.90
Lewisville	42.47	101,074	3.72
<b>Royse City</b>	<b>17.08 mi.<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>11,054</b>	<b>1.14</b>

(Statistics from 2015-16 budget documents)

## ROYSE CITY: TOTAL AREA

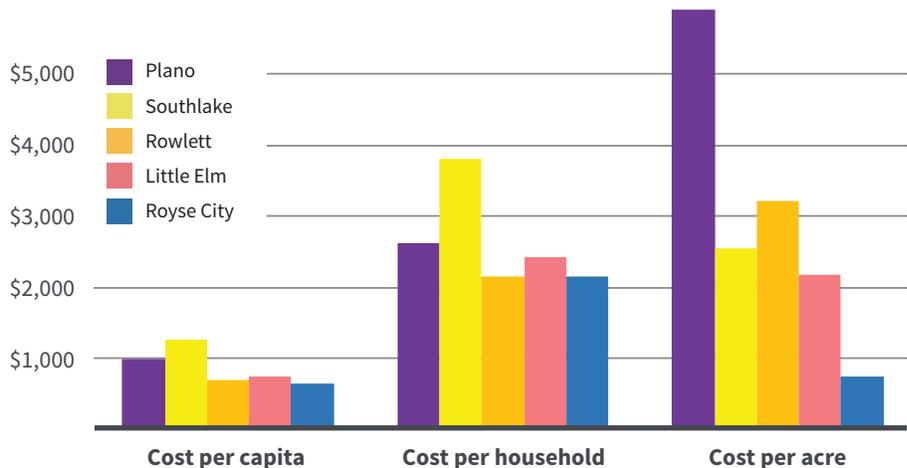


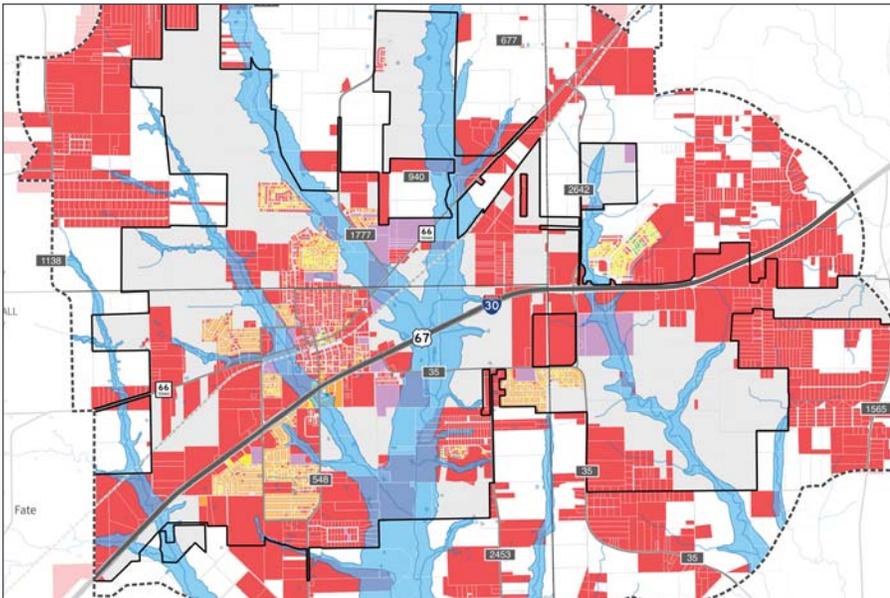
## Development Pattern and Cost of Service

Early (pre-1950) residential development was concentrated in a compact, traditional grid pattern around downtown and Main Street, where the first businesses were established. Suburban style residential developments built since 1970 have been scattered around the city, with a pronounced increase since 2000, while commercial activity along Interstate 30 is just beginning to kick in. Because the development is so spread out, the cost to serve these multiple neighborhoods is significantly higher than if the same number of houses were grouped into one or two locations. The City and school district have been challenged with providing high-quality, competitive education, public safety, and infrastructure services to a large area without the benefit of the revenue that will result when the full area develops. To further illustrate this, Royse City's service costs per household are on par with some other cities (Royse City: \$2,154, Rowlett: \$2,163, Plano: \$2,621), but when we calculate the service costs per acre, Royse City's costs are well below those of other cities who are more built out and dealing with higher infrastructure maintenance costs (Royse City: \$746, Rowlett: \$2,550, Plano: \$5,914). The city must infill the areas around existing roads and utilities soon to grow property tax revenue so there will be funds available to repair infrastructure and continue providing quality public services to residents in the future.

## SERVICE COSTS VARY BY CITY

As a city gets older and closer to buildout, service costs can be expected to increase significantly due primarily to infrastructure maintenance.

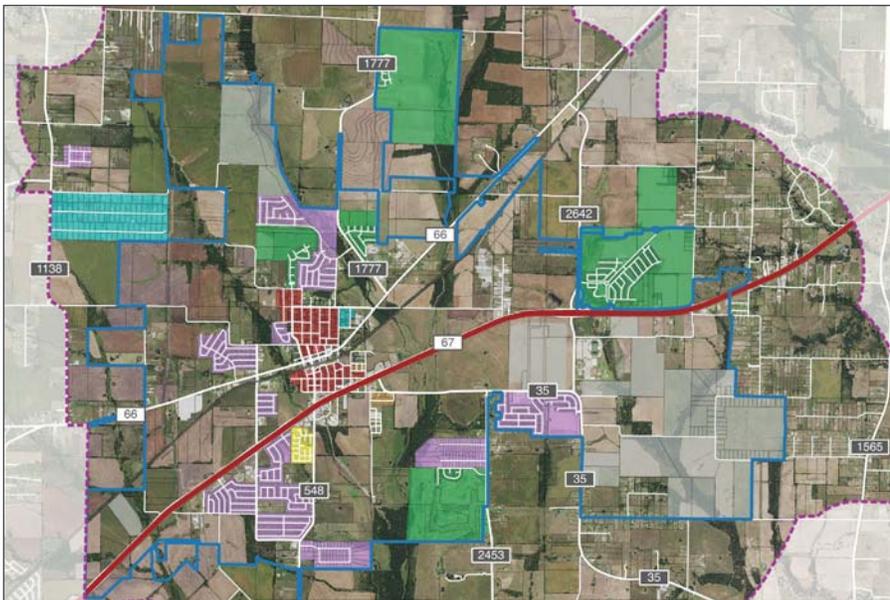




## UNDERPERFORMING DEVELOPMENT

On a per-acre basis, most of the developed properties in Royse City do not generate enough revenue to enable the City to provide quality services, amenities, and infrastructure upgrades in any sustained fashion.

### Tax Value per Acre



## SCATTERED RESIDENTIAL

Newer developments have been scattered around the city as Royse City enlarged its territory, whereas earlier development was concentrated in the compact area around downtown. The result is a tremendous growth in the amount of infrastructure that the city must continually maintain.

### Neighborhoods by Decade



### Property Tax Value per Acre

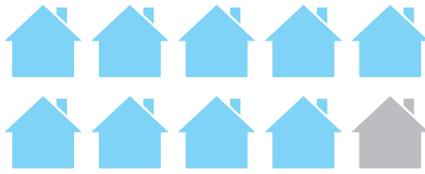
In addition to building in a spread-out pattern, most of existing homes and businesses are not generating enough property revenue to cover the costs needed to provide quality infrastructure and services that citizens desire. In a high-growth community like Royse City, service costs are typically between \$600 to \$2,200 per acre. But as a community matures, these costs can be expected to rise to \$6,000 per acre or higher. The majority of properties in the city currently generate less than \$3,000/acre in property tax revenues. In order for the city to provide high-quality service in the future, new development in the city must be done in manner that increases property revenue per acre to around \$5,000 or \$6,000.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

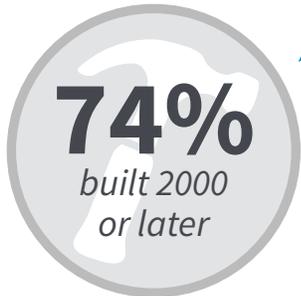
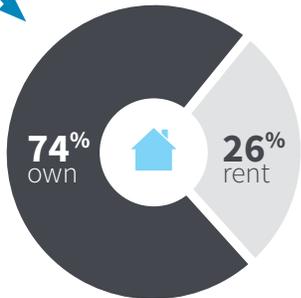
*The combination of a spread-out development pattern and lower-value lots (per acre) has created a revenue gap that the city will need to close before the streets and utilities serving these neighborhoods need to be maintained or replaced. Service levels (and costs) should also be adjusted to better align with what the residents in a neighborhood are willing and able to pay.*

## HOUSING

**3,562** total housing units



9 in 10 are detached single-family homes



## HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

### Housing

Royse City has an abundance of newly-built, detached single-family housing, the majority of which is in one price range. Many other housing types are missing. There are few places for young teachers in the Royse City school system to live, for example. To be more accommodating of a broader population, Royse City needs to diversify the housing stock, including quality smaller-scale options and higher-priced tiers of single-family detached and rural estate properties.

In addition to diversifying the types of housing available, Royse City also needs to generate enough property tax revenue to provide an adequate level of service to all residents. The average home value has been steadily increasing in recent years, but needs to continue to do so in order to maintain quality schools, infrastructure and amenities in the community.

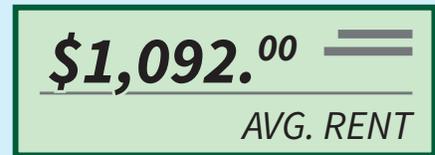
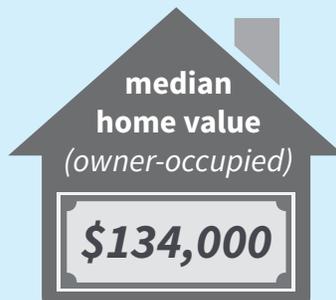
### Neighborhoods

Royse City has a cluster of housing—near downtown—built in a more traditional grid and within reasonable walking distance to amenities. Newer homes are mostly part of single-use residential subdivisions that require driving to get to most daily needs and amenities.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Royse City must diversify the types and price points of housing and neighborhoods to meet the needs of its diversifying population, and to ensure that the average value per acre can be increased to cover the costs of service.*

### WHAT DOES IT COST TO LIVE IN ROYSE CITY?



**781** renter-occupied units

(Data source for all graphics: U.S. Census Bureau estimates: V2015)

## MOBILITY

### Getting Around: Car is King

Because of the spread-out development pattern and the absence of local jobs, Roysse City residents are forced to rely almost entirely on driving to get around. Demographic shifts and local surveys indicate that if more jobs were available locally, and if neighborhoods were designed to be comfortably walkable, more residents would choose to drive less than they do now.

### Roadways

Traffic congestion in Roysse City is relatively minimal today, with the exception of some rush hour delays on State Highway 66 through downtown and the occasional backup on I-30 when an accident occurs. Recently completed projects and planned improvements from TxDOT include I-30 frontage roads, intersections and underpasses at Erby Campbell and FM 2642, and the addition of another lane in each direction toward I-30. Additionally, more major roadway projects are planned as a part of the Rockwall, Collin, and Hunt Counties' respective thoroughfare plans, but securing funding for these projects is expected become increasingly difficult. Even with these improvements, traffic congestion will increase as the communities along the I-30 corridor between Rockwall and Greenville continue to grow. We can learn a lot from looking at the current traffic and commute time issues Collin County communities are dealing with on 75 and the Dallas North Tollway. The most strategic way to prevent traffic congestion from being a problem in the future is to plan and design buildout of our community in a manner that will enable and encourage the majority of residents to live and work in Roysse City and make at least some portion of their trips by biking, walking or public transportation.

### Public Transportation

Public transportation is lacking. DART service does not yet extend out to Roysse City and access to taxis and ride-sharing services like Uber or Lyft is limited. There is a bus service—STAR Transit—that serves cities in Rockwall County, but using it requires scheduling a ride at least one day in advance. It is not a reliable option for people with changing daily transportation needs. While there is a rail line that runs through the heart of the city, it currently provides no passenger service, and sees minimal use otherwise. This underused asset could potentially be converted into a commuter rail corridor connecting the Rowlett DART station to Greenville and further east. In order to mitigate future traffic congestion problems and serve the needs of residents who do not want or are not able to drive, Roysse City should explore ways to make neighborhoods and development more walkable and accessible via some level of public transportation.

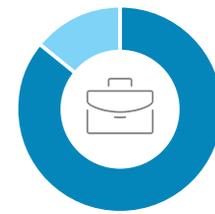
### Pedestrian and Bike Facilities

Bicycle facilities, such as bike lanes or the more comfortable shared-use paths, are not provided in Roysse City. Many people mentioned in the citizen survey that getting around town by bike or on foot can be difficult, uncomfortable, and often dangerous. Additionally, sidewalks are inconsistent overall; some neighborhoods have internal sidewalks, but there is minimal connectivity between neighborhoods and other activity nodes.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*If Roysse City wants to avoid the traffic and deteriorating roadways found in most communities, it must change its approach to development to make neighborhoods more walkable and self-contained, and provide a variety of safe, convenient mobility options.*

## PLACE OF WORK



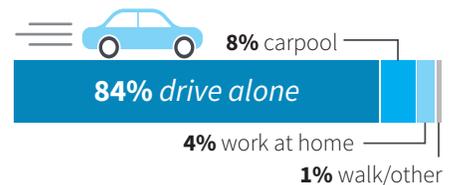
88% work outside Roysse City

## AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME (MIN.)



1/3 of Roysse City residents have a commute time of 45 minutes or more.

## GETTING TO WORK



(Data source for all graphics: U.S. Census Bureau estimates: V2015)

*The best way to prevent traffic congestion in the future is to build out Roysse City in a way that enables the majority of residents to live and work in town and to make most of their daily trips by walking, biking, or public transit.*

## OVERALL PARK LAND



**National Recreation and Park Assoc.  
suggested minimum:**

10 acres/1,000 residents



**Royle City (2015):**

4.4 acres/1,000 residents



*City Lake Park is a draw for many Royle City residents—particularly those who live near enough to walk to it. At the citywide scale, however, Royle City's parks system is not nearly sufficient for its current or projected future population.*



Walker Hawk Sports Complex



Splash Park



Becknell Park

## PARKS AND AMENITIES

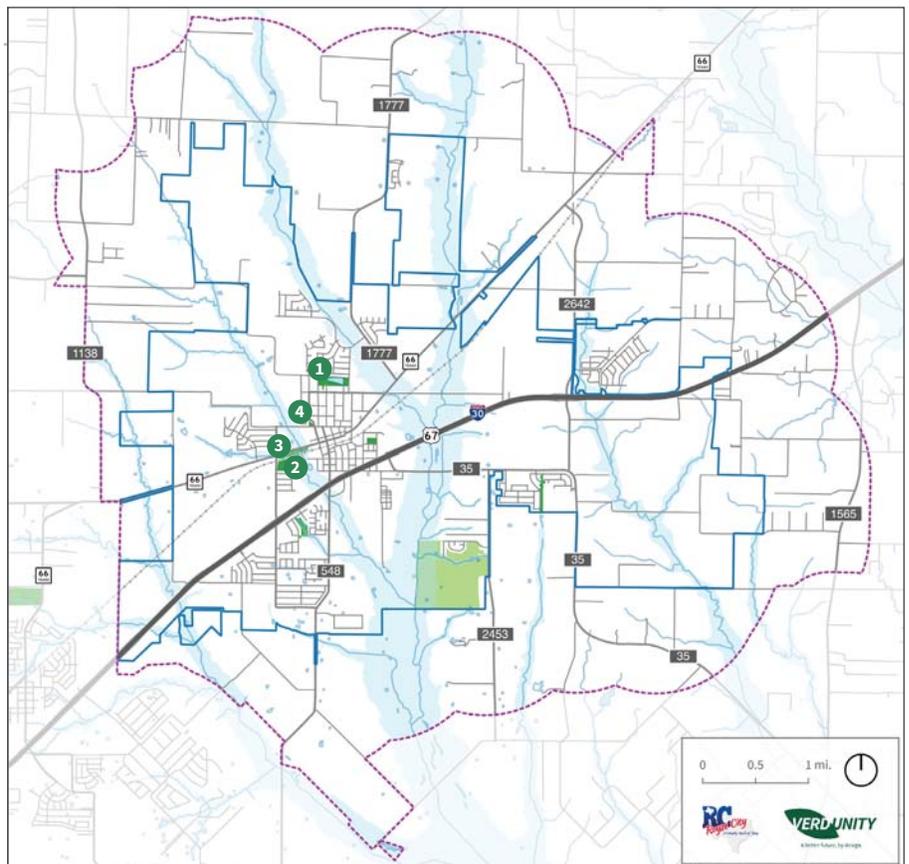
Currently, Royle City's park system is below industry benchmarks and other cities for parks and other quality-of-life amenities. At the same time, the residents and businesses that we're trying to attract and/or retain expect these kinds of quality places nearby.

We do not have a large regional nature preserve, recreation center, or community parks and facilities to address passive and active needs like youth sports, recreation, senior activities, etc. Walker Hawk Sports Complex has a few baseball fields, but the community needs more, higher quality fields for the youth to play on safely. Our neighborhoods and community could also benefit from a network of sidewalks, bike lanes and off-street trails.

The city has some great open space and recreation assets to build on though. First and foremost, there is a large amount of floodplain within the city that could be leveraged to provide nature preservation areas, linear parks, and trail corridors. The largest park in the city, City Lake Park, is where the city holds many of its community events like Movies in the Park, Easter Egg hunts, and others. Located just north of downtown, City Lake has the potential to be an attractive neighborhood park for employees working downtown and those living in nearby neighborhoods. In addition to events held at City Lake Park, the City also holds a number of events in its historic Main Street area, many of which draw crowds from surrounding communities. Finally, the recent announcement of a minor league baseball anchored development will provide entertainment opportunities and facilities for high school. Additional value could be captured from this development by incorporating additional fields that could help address community-wide needs for youth fields.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

*Access to a variety of quality parks, recreation programs and facilities is critical to retaining and recruiting families and businesses. If Royle City was to continue to grow and compete in the region, we must find ways to expand the parks system.*



## FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

At the moment, the city’s current facilities are adequate to serve the current population, but additional facilities and personnel will be required in the future to maintain service levels.

### City Hall

City Hall is well-located in the town center, and with approximately 21,000 square feet of space, it provides enough space for the City’s near-term growth. Additional space and/or facilities will be required to serve the anticipated population in the future. Citizen surveys and staff interviews have indicated a strong preference to keep City Hall in downtown. With increases in population, though, more space will be needed.

### Library

The city currently has a small library facility adjacent to City Hall, with additional resources available at the Rockwall County library in Rockwall. The library hosts a variety of events for children and adults throughout the year.

### Police

Royse City has been ranked highly in “Safest Places to Live” rankings. In 2016, the city had 15 police personnel, which equates to 1.5 per 1000 population. The national standard is closer to 2.2 officers per 1000 people, so the City will need to add officers and vehicles as we grow. At the same time, we can control resource needs and costs by designing places that are “self policing”—with good lighting, more compact development that puts “eyes on the street,” and right-sized streets that make speeding uncomfortable.

### Fire

The City currently has one fire station, which is located in downtown, north of the Interstate. The fleet includes two large trucks, two small trucks (rapid response vehicles) and one tanker. The City employs two full-time employees, with the remainder being volunteers, and has auto and mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities. The City’s ISO rating improved in 2013 from a 5 to a 3, but additional facilities and personnel will be needed to maintain or improve this rating as the community grows. The most notable needs are a second fire station on the south side of Interstate 30, equipment upgrades, and some additional paid personnel to help with daytime calls when volunteers are not as available. As with the police department, costs of vehicles and personnel can be reduced (to an extent) by designing neighborhoods, buildings and streets in a manner that prevents or limits the magnitude of incidents. Additionally, the vast majority of calls that the fire department makes are not fire-related; rather, they are emergency-related calls that do not necessitate the use of full-size fire engines. Some U.S. cities have begun shifting to a fleet of smaller trucks that afford more flexibility than the large trucks—which, incidentally, require us to build our streets wider than otherwise necessary.

### Schools

Royse City ISD currently services more than 5000 students, but enrollment is expected to increase by another 1000 students by the 2020/2021 school year. Because of the spread out growth pattern, the school district issued a large amount of bonds (debt) to build schools scattered across the city. The 20/21 school year is also when the District’s payment on this debt is set to increase from \$8 million to almost \$11 million, so the ability to issue additional debt capacity in the near-term is minimal. A key goal of the District is to get as much capacity out of the current facilities as possible in order to limit the need for additional debt. The District recently adopted a new Facility Master Plan, in which it lays out its strategy to meet the future education needs of the community with available resources. There are currently 4 elementary schools (K-4th), 2 inter-



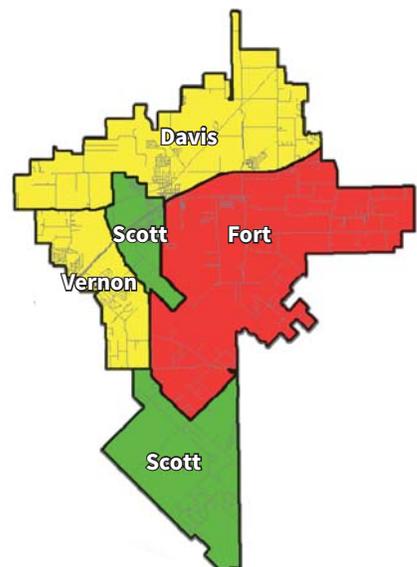
City Hall, Arch St. (Photo: Jack Palmer)



Police Station, Main St.



Fire Station, Main St.



Royse City ISD School attendance zones

mediate (5th-6th), 1 middle (7th-8th) and 1 high school (9th-12th). The District's short-term plans include converting the intermediate schools to elementaries, adding a middle school in Fate, and making improvements to the high schools to accommodate higher enrollment. Long-term recommendations (10+ years) include building a second high school in Fate/western portion of the District area and modifying the current middle school to accommodate more students. The District has a site secured for the future middle school and is negotiating with land owners/developers for future elementary sites in Verandah, The Meadows and Bearpen developments.

#### **KEY TAKEAWAY**

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*We will need more and bigger facilities to accommodate the continued growth, and we should be looking at options to acquire the land necessary for these facilities.*

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Two things that are critically important for a city to provide are quality, efficient infrastructure systems and access to a sufficient supply of clean air and water. Mobility systems – primarily roadways – are maintained by a combination of Royse City, three counties (Rockwall, Hunt and Collin), and TxDOT. Water and sewer services are provided by North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) and in a few cases, Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs).

### Street and Utility Infrastructure

The term “infrastructure” generally includes roads, sidewalks, drainage facilities and utility (water and sewer) facilities. Royse City’s infrastructure systems have been constructed in three stages:

**1950s and earlier:** The original streets and utilities in the downtown area that the city was initially built on. This infrastructure was built before the suburban development concept and more stringent standards and building codes commonly used today were put in place. Much, if not all of this infrastructure has already passed its life expectancy and is in need of replacement. The streets and utilities north of downtown are in this category. It is all located in a compact area and lots are smaller, so improving infrastructure in this area will have a positive impact on property values and quality of life for a large number of residents and businesses.

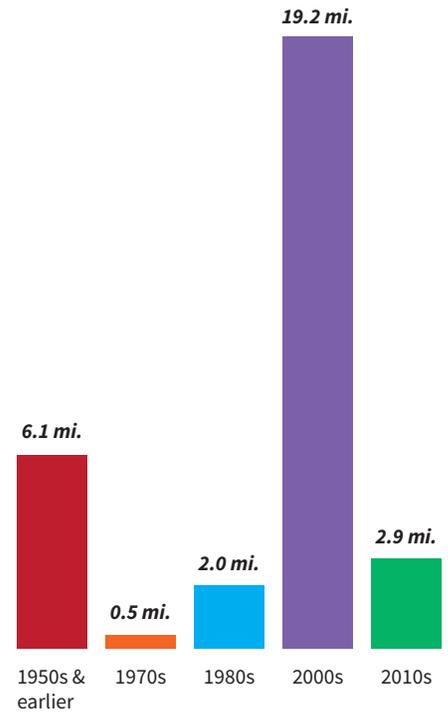
**1960s-90s:** The city’s first “suburban” housing came in during this time. Geographically, these neighborhoods were spread out in the western part of the city, some north of I-30 and some south of the interstate. The lots in these subdivisions are larger than the traditional lots built in the downtown area, so infrastructure costs are higher per property. The infrastructure serving these neighborhoods is approaching the end of its initial life expectancy and will require maintenance or replacement in the near future. These neighborhoods need to be explored to identify ways that quality of life can be maintained/improved so that property values can be increased to pay for a higher percentage of the infrastructure serving these areas.

**2000s-present:** The newer subdivisions have been almost exclusively single family suburban homes, and are spread out across the city. This pattern required extension of road and utility networks to multiple parts of the city and also increased the area requiring city services (police, fire, waste management, etc). Additionally, the lots in these developments tend to be the largest, so the cost per property owner is the highest. This infrastructure will not require maintenance in the near-term, but when it does come due for replacement, the costs will be significantly higher due to the much larger quantities of pavement and pipes. Any new development the city approves going forward should ideally be designed to be more fiscally productive and have higher infrastructure efficiency so they do not make the funding gap larger.

### Water Resource Management

**Water Supply:** As referenced earlier, we are currently consuming water and other natural resources at an unsustainable rate. The increasing frequency and severity of droughts and extreme weather events is also impacting the region’s supply. Additional capacity is being planned for by NTMWD and state water agencies, but our community will still need to reduce water consumption through improved conservation efforts.

**Water Quality:** The tremendous development growth in the region and associated construction of paved areas is having a negative effect on the quality of water in creeks and streams. Pollutants from vehicles, garbage and animals are slowly deteriorating the water quality, which is not only making these areas less suitable for public interaction, but also adding to treatment and mitigation costs that will be required at some point in the future.

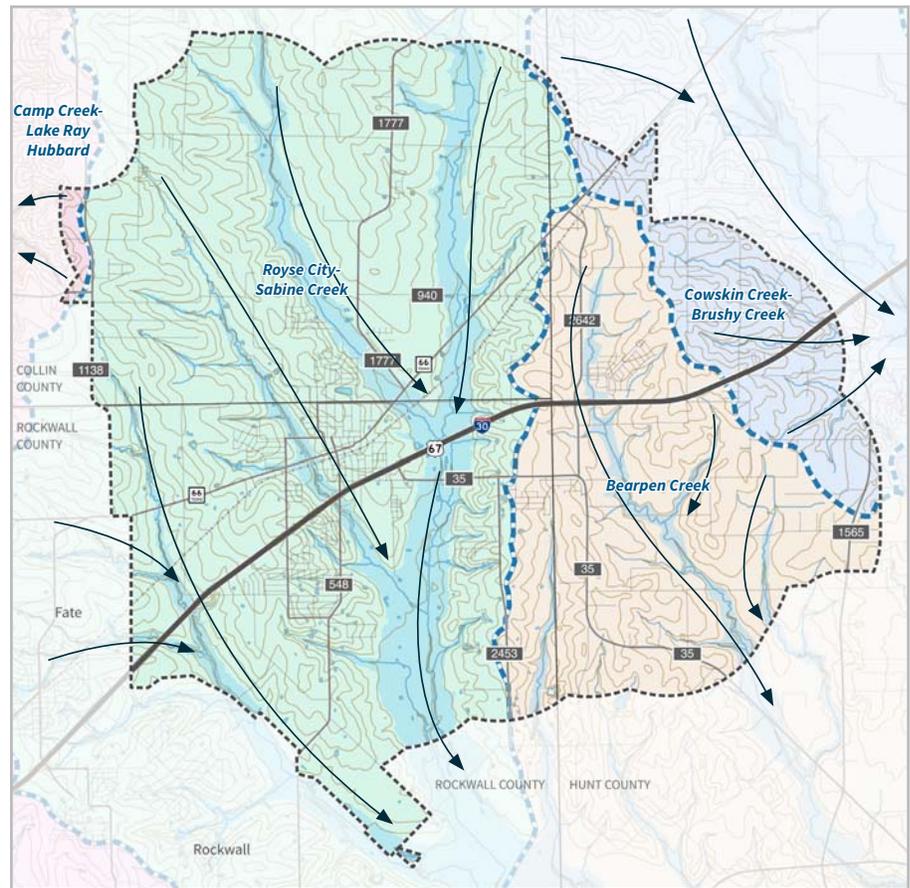


### MILES OF RESIDENTIAL STREETS, BY DECADE

*Most of Royse City’s residential streets have been built since the population boom began at the turn of the 21st century.*

## WATERSHEDS IN ROYSE CITY

Ninety percent of the land within Royse City's ETJ drains into one of two watersheds. Creating detention site for stormwater and enforcing buffer zones around streams and floodplains can help minimize flood risks and also keep our waterways cleaner and healthier.



**Stormwater Management:** We are also experiencing an increasing number of high risk rainfall events across the region. These more intense rain events combined with the additional development and paving are leading to an increase in the number and significance of flooding and erosion related damages. Drainage in older areas around downtown is an issue that will require attention before significant private investment and growth can be expected in the Town Center. The city currently does not have a Stormwater Master Plan.

All three of these issues as well as the demand for more open space amenities can be addressed with strategic planning and implementation of open space and green infrastructure to address stormwater, water quality, and amenity needs as the city grows. Rockwall County initiated this effort with the countywide Open Space Master Plan that was completed in 2015. Many of the recommendations from the Rockwall County document have been incorporated into this plan. Royse City will need to build on this by completing a drainage master plan and updating water and wastewater master plans that prioritize development around existing infrastructure and make sure any new infrastructure is sized to support the pattern and type of development laid out in the Future Land Use Plan.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*We already have more infrastructure to maintain than our city's revenues can support with current levels of revenue. It's also more than we can take care of without requiring new development to be more financially self-supporting, in terms of paying for infrastructure and services. As an initial step, we need to prioritize development around the infrastructure we've already put in the ground, in order to maximize return on those investments. Secondly, we need to incorporate water conservation, green infrastructure, and other sustainable design practices so that, as we continue to develop, we're able to reduce our impact on our valuable natural systems.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

One of the ways we can keep property tax rates low is to increase our sales tax revenue in the community. In our FY17 budget, sales tax revenue is projected to make up 24% of the city's total revenue. The higher this ratio is, the easier it is for the City to maintain or enhance service levels at a competitive property tax rate. Today, Royse City is competing against other cities with much larger population bases, more robust infrastructure systems, and larger budgets. Many franchises and name brands won't come to Royse City yet because these metrics don't meet their requirements for population or traffic volumes. This is starting to shift, however, with the opening of Walmart and future Buc-ees serving as anchors for two of our key highway intersections. At the same time, the local businesses on Main Street strengthen the small town identity of the community, and contribute more to the city tax base on a dollar-per-acre basis than most of the larger businesses.

Royse City offers a range of location options for entrepreneurs and organizations looking to open in our area:

**Main Street/Old Town:** The existing buildings and businesses on Main Street are the core of our small town character. This area is ideal for entrepreneurs and local small business owners who would benefit from being located in a walkable town center environment and want their business to play a key role in Royse City's identity. Small developers looking to revitalize existing buildings or build new infill mixed-use buildings would also fit nicely into this area.

**I-30 Corridor:** Properties along the interstate are available for regional employers and retail businesses who depend on high traffic volumes and regional customers or employees. It will be important for us to offer a variety of different development types within the I-30 corridor to maximize our ability to recruit these businesses.

**SH 66 and local arterial corridors and intersections:** Royse City's rapidly growing population and housing base means that neighborhood R/O/C (retail, office, and commercial) businesses will be in demand. SH 66, Erby Campbell and FM 2642 are all opportunities these businesses may be interested in.

The City does not currently have a business incubator or shared workspace facility. Many other north Texas suburbs have opened these or are looking to as a part of their economic development and retention programs.

Royse City should consider prioritizing its economic development budget toward infrastructure and building improvements and local business support programs that will benefit the community long-term, and avoid giving monetary incentives or rebates to individual companies.

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Big-box retailers that have recently arrived in Royse City are filling a certain need for citizens, and will also provide a boost to the sales tax base. In addition, we have a strong core of local businesses around Main Street that we can build upon. From here on, our efforts should be geared towards growing jobs and businesses locally, as well as creating pedestrian-oriented, place-based development.*



*Royse City has a strong core of locally-owned businesses in the Town Center, while large national chains now predominate along the interstate. This property is some of the most valuable in Royse City; we need to make sure that any future development is of high quality and capable of generating revenue and value for decades to come.*

*Big-box retailers often provide a spike in tax dollars in the short term, but their value diminishes significantly over the medium and long term.*

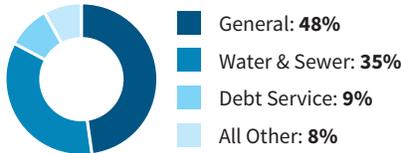
*Smaller, more pedestrian-friendly sites like those along Main Street are more flexible over time, able to adapt as the economy changes.*

## BUDGET AND FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### 1. General Fund Revenues and Expenditures

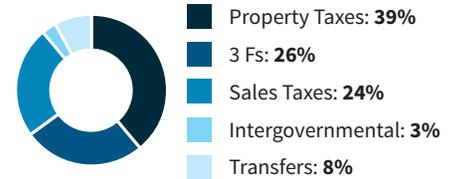
In the City's FY17 budget, general fund expenditures are budgeted to total \$7,304,100, which is up from FY16 projected expenditures of \$6,807,050. Property taxes are the largest source of revenue for the City (39%). The FY17 budget includes a 14% increase in property tax revenue, which is primarily due to new construction and increased value. Sales tax revenue is projected to increase \$83,000 (5%) over FY16 revenue, primarily due to a full year of collections from retail that opened in FY16 and conservative estimates for new retail opening in the next year.

**FY17 TOTAL EXPENDITURES BY FUND**



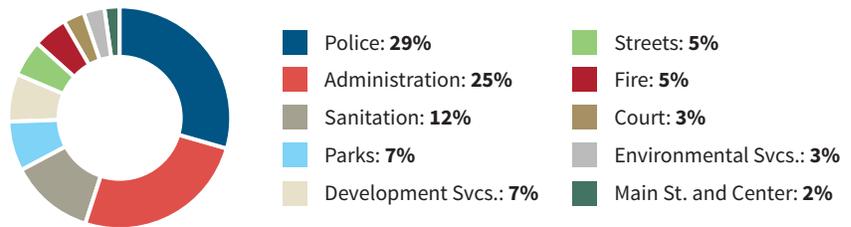
**Total Budget:** \$15,310,550

**FY 17 GENERAL FUND REVENUE SOURCES**



**Total General Fund:** \$7,310,900

**FY17 TOTAL EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT**



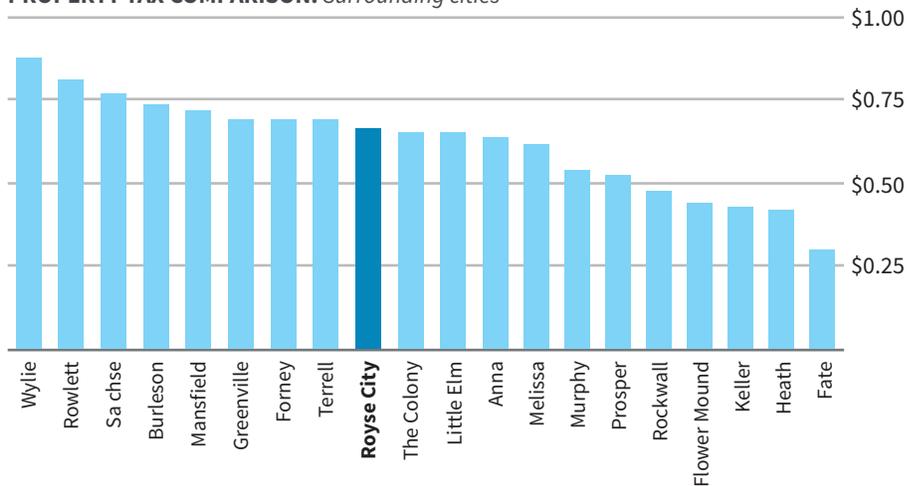
### 2. Property Tax

Royse City's tax rate of \$0.6771 per \$100 assessed value is typical of a community in early stages of growth that does not have an established retail base yet. Ad valorem (AV) revenues are split with approximately 77% coming from residential properties and 23% commercial.

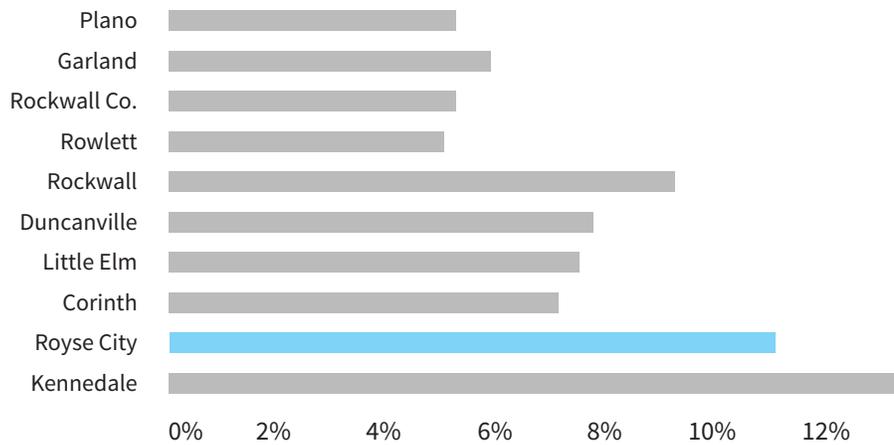
**Average home value:** \$152,975

**Estimated property tax for city services, before exemptions:** \$1,036

**PROPERTY TAX COMPARISON: Surrounding cities**



**PERCENT OF PROPERTY VALUES IN TOP TEN TAXPAYERS**



**PROPERTY TAX CONTRIBUTION TO COST (FY17)**

Service/Department	Total Property Tax Contribution	Average Home Contribution
Debt Service	\$1,360,400	332.11
Police	\$2,081,850	225.94
Administration	\$1,884,150	205.17
Parks	\$527,950	58.31
Development Services	\$536,300	52.95
Fire	\$385,300	41.96
<b>Streets</b>	<b>\$355,300</b>	<b>38.69</b>
Court	\$213,000	23.19
Environmental Services	\$199,950	21.77
Library	\$112,650	12.27
Main Street	\$109,750	11.95
Senior Center	\$94,400	10.28
Museum	\$11,100	1.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,872,100</b>	<b>\$1,036</b>

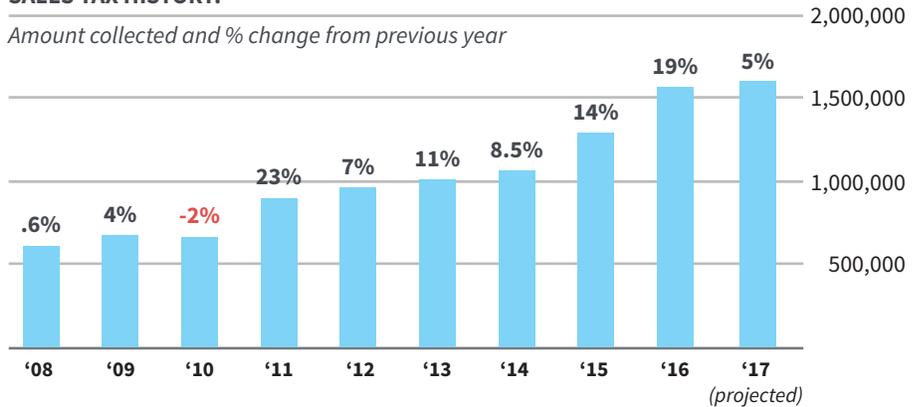
*Streets are a major concern for citizens, yet only 4 percent of a homeowner's taxes goes toward street maintenance.*

### 3. Sales Tax

Sales tax revenue has been steadily growing since 2011, and currently accounts for 24% of the City’s total revenue. This percentage should continue to grow as more retail and commercial businesses open in the City.

#### SALES TAX HISTORY:

Amount collected and % change from previous year



### 4. Service Costs

Royse City’s service costs compare well with other cities in terms of cost per household and capita, but are well below benchmarks on a per acre basis to the city’s low development density and large size. Administration and public safety (police and fire) make up the majority of the City’s service costs today (46%).

#### SERVICE COST BREAKDOWNS: per capita, per household, per acre



#### BREAKDOWN OF SERVICE COSTS (FY17)

Service/Department	Service Cost	Percent of Total Expenditures
Administration	\$2,725,550	37%
Police	\$2,074,850	28%
Parks	\$535,450	7%
Development Services	\$486,300	7%
Fire	\$385,300	5%
Streets	\$355,800	5%
Court	\$213,000	3%
Environmental Services	\$199,950	3%
Library	\$112,650	2%
Main Street	\$109,750	2%
Senior Center	\$94,400	1%
Museum	\$11,100	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,304,100</b>	<b>100%</b>

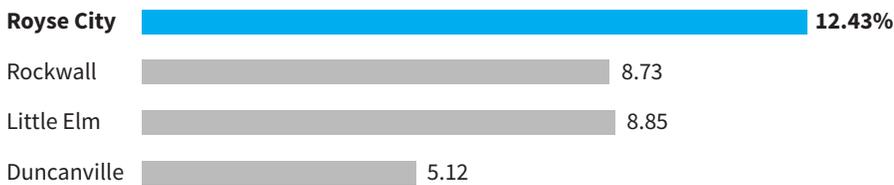
### 5. Debt per Capita

Right now, Royse City's level of debt per capita is still at a very reasonable rate.

City	Net Debt per Capita	Overlapping Debt per Capita
<b>Royse City</b>	<b>\$851</b>	<b>\$5,846</b>
Rockwall	\$2,385	\$8,929
Little Elm	\$1,110	\$5,534
Duncanville	\$93	\$2,115

### 6. Debt as a Percentage of Property Value

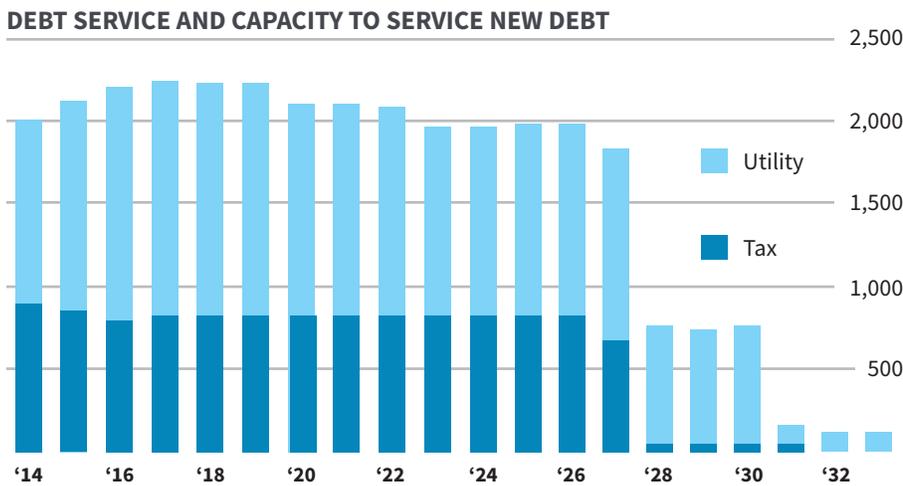
Royse City's debt as percentage of property values is one of the highest in the Metroplex. This is an indicator that average property values need to be increased.



*A large percentage of property tax revenues currently goes toward debt payments. Home values must be increased to provide more revenue for streets and other quality-of-life amenities.*

### 7. Debt Service and Capacity to Issue New Debt

Our current debt reaches out to 2033, with outstanding debt totaling more than \$20 million. Level debt service for the next several years means there is minimal capacity built into the payment schedule until 2027-28.



## Royse City’s Primary Near-term Challenge

### ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS AND QUALITY-OF-LIFE DESIRES WITH LIMITED FINANCIAL AND STAFF RESOURCES

Royse City already has a substantial amount of infrastructure liabilities—without even adding a single new road—that will need to be addressed over the coming decades. The total cost of the street and utility infrastructure already in the is upwards of \$550 million (in today’s dollars). Some of our roads and pipes—those built before the 1970s—have already hit their life expectancy. The newer infrastructure will require maintenance as early as 2030 and likely need to be replaced by 2060. If we spread the total \$550 million over the next 35 years, that would be \$15.7 million per year. And that’s assuming we don’t add a single new street or subdivision and costs don’t go up.

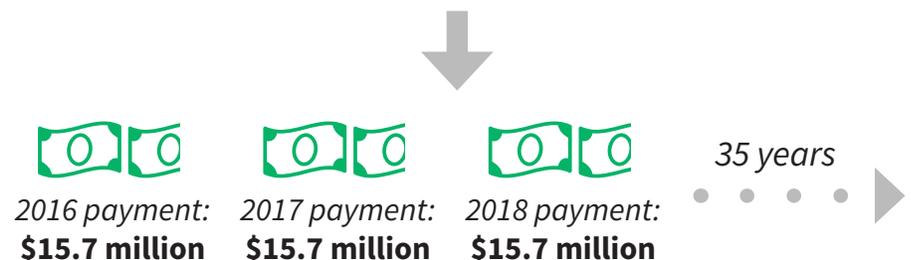
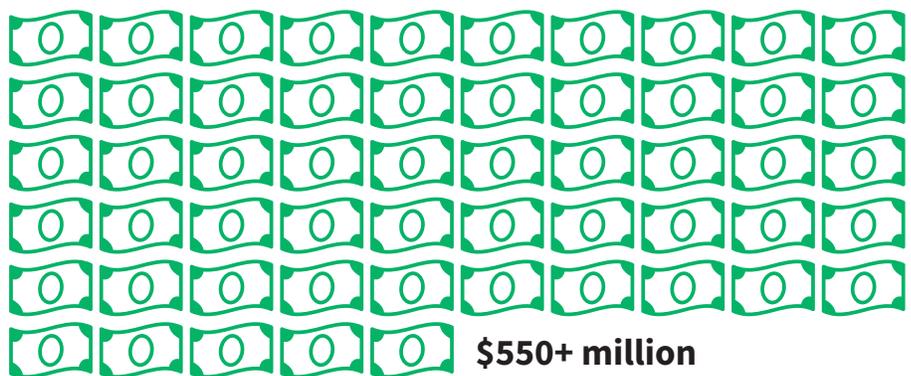
Today, we have limited funds available for the maintenance of streets, drainage, water and wastewater infrastructure. Without some well-planned growth and increased tax revenue, infrastructure liabilities will continue to limit our ability to provide the types of above-and-beyond amenities and services—like quality parks, trails, public gathering spaces, and community events.

In addition to growing our sales tax base, growth in property values of existing homes and for new development will be important to closing the infrastructure funding gap we have today. Quality of life amenities such as parks, trails and recreational facilities are one of the key drivers of property values and economic growth in a community. The city’s current park budget and staff resources are limited, but as new development comes on line, more neighborhood parks will be added and a park dedication fee could help raise funds to support additional maintenance and program staff.

#### KEY TAKEAWAY

*In order to achieve our goal of being financially and environmentally resilient well into the future, we need to carefully balance infrastructure investments and new growth to steadily close the service cost gap over time.*

### THE COST OF TODAY’S INFRASTRUCTURE



# SO, WHAT COULD BE DONE?

*In many ways, the city's finances are similar to your personal finances.*



## PERSONAL

Imagine you bought some nice things, but now you've got some debt that you can't afford. How would you handle it?

Go to Vegas and bet big. Or maybe buy a bunch of lotto tickets. You might get lucky.

Take on a second job. It'll be a big sacrifice, but you can keep living this lifestyle.

Instead of buying new, fix up what you already own. Save money and live within your means.

Worry about it later. These things have a way of working themselves out.

## VS.



## CITY

The city's finances aren't much different. The city's liability costs are rising faster than its revenue and it has more infrastructure than it can sustain. How should the city handle it?

Build new roads and infrastructure in the hopes that it will bring more retail and sales tax revenue.

Raise taxes. It's a huge sacrifice, but it guarantees more revenue to meet the growth rate.

Stop adding infrastructure in new areas. Instead, develop and redevelop where infrastructure already exists. Grow internally instead of externally.

Let the future residents of Royse City worry about that. Surely they'll figure something out by then.



## GAMBLE



## REVENUE



## CONSERVE



## NOTHING

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Royse City is a relatively young city and there are numerous options for growth. If we want to be a prosperous, healthy community with a high quality of life and low taxes now **and** in the future, we must embrace these concepts and integrate them into our growth and development decisions. Creating a Plan with these concepts in mind is the beginning. Then we must be disciplined in the implementation of the Plan's recommendations, measure our progress, continue to watch and learn from other places that are ahead of us in the growth cycle, and routinely refine our plans and processes accordingly.



Main Street



CPAC planning meeting



Wood Street walking tour



The CPAC learning journey in 2015 made stops in Plano, Allen, Dallas' Bishop Arts District, and McKinney.



Residents discuss planning maps at the public meeting in October, 2016.

## Bridging the Gap: Where Does Royse City Want to Be in The Future?

Through the citywide survey and discussions with local stakeholders, residents, city leaders, and staff, we learned that the following things are important to our community as we continue to grow.

### EMBRACE AND ENHANCE OUR LOCAL IDENTITY

Preserving the small town character and history of the town and establishing a unique identity is extremely important. As part of this, the community would like to see the Main Street/Town Center area grow into a destination similar to Grapevine's Main Street or downtown McKinney. Integration of natural environments and art is also something we feel can help differentiate Royse City from other communities.

### BALANCED GROWTH & THE INFRASTRUCTURE GAP

To catch up with the cost of the infrastructure we've already put in the ground, we have to be strategic about how we continue to grow. We simply cannot keep spreading our development out across the city in the way we (and most other cities) have. Instead, we need to close the gap by steadily increasing residential property values and productivity of commercial sites while minimizing city investment in new infrastructure in the near-term. New development must be done in a style that is more self-supporting in terms of generating sufficient revenue to cover infrastructure and service costs. It sounds simple, but it is going to require saying no to developers and projects that don't align with this strategy.

### HOUSING DIVERSITY

We want to be an inclusive community where people from different backgrounds and all stages of life can live comfortably and interact regularly with their neighbors. To accommodate a broader range of residents, we need to create a more diverse housing supply. That means building quality, attainable housing options—such as townhouses, fourplexes, or “live-work-play” apartments—situated in a more walkable setting. Housing diversity can be created in a way that fits in with the local character and encourages neighborly interaction.

### MOBILITY OPTIONS

The Royse City of tomorrow should be a community that is connected by more than just the automobile. That means building in a more compact manner, so that people are closer to the places they want to go. It also requires investing in trails and walkways that connect parks, neighborhoods, and gathering places, so that walking or biking is a viable and comfortable option. Expanding public transit options both locally and regionally is also essential if we truly want to be a diverse, resilient community.

### EXPANDED PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Royse City is already underserved by our parks system (and has no trail network), and that will only become more pronounced as population grows. We must get out ahead of the projected growth and set aside land for both parks and environmental preservation. A quality park system starts with having neighborhood parks within walking distance. Having a diversity of park types is key to supporting the residents' various recreational needs—as is a trail system that links them together.

### POLICE & FIRE

Royse City must continue to be a safe place. Residents desire a balance between expanding emergency services personnel and resources, but also doing things through design that allow them to build trusting relationships with neighbors.

## **LOCALLY-GROWN WORKFORCE & BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

Most of our workforce commutes, but almost everyone says they would prefer not to. Tomorrow's community should be one in which a person can work, live, and play without leaving town. That is going to require us to work on growing companies and jobs locally. This "economic gardening" supports and empowers people already in the community to become successful cornerstones of the economy—rather than merely competing with the next town for outside companies. Luckily, we have two key assets in the Main Street district and the Interstate 30 corridor, which can serve as the backbone of our economic development efforts. Additionally, everything we do to make Royse City a more livable, healthy, and lovable town will also make us a more economically viable place—one where businesses and people want to come and stay.

## **BUILD ON PARTNERSHIPS; IMPROVE COMMUNICATION**

Leveraging partnerships and resources (especially funding) from other groups will be critical to our ability to continue growing while also addressing our infrastructure issues. We must prioritize key needs and then aggressively pursue partnerships to address them in a fiscally responsible manner.

There is room to improve the communication at all levels between elected officials, city leadership, staff, citizens, businesses and other local organizations. This is typical of small communities on the verge of growth. We must use this planning process and the final Plan to define our community's vision, challenges and opportunities, unify these groups, clearly define roles, responsibilities and channels of communication, and then execute and hold each other accountable.



# IV. COMMUNITY VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES & PLAN PILLARS

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY STATEMENT

“Royse City is a **neighborhood-centric** town combining **vintage charm** with **contemporary vision** and building on a foundation of **genuine relationships, community, and integrity.**”



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### ENGAGED COMMUNITY

*Cultivate a supportive environment that promotes active engagement of residents, local businesses and the schools in community affairs that improves the quality of life in neighborhoods and the entire town.*

### RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

*Preserve and leverage natural, cultural, historical and renewable resources to enhance community identity and support the needs of current and future generations.*

### FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Do and understand the math. Be obsessive about accounting for revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities so we remain fiscally solvent and strengthen our long-term position in the region.*

### LIVABLE DESIGN

*Implement development standards and procedures that improve public health and safety, enhance beauty and appeal of the public realm, foster prosperity and improve quality of life for residents and visitors.*



PLAN PILLARS, GOALS, POLICIES, ACTION ITEMS



**Old Jail Park**

*Image: Nicholas Henderson (Flickr)*

# 9 PLANNING PILLARS



## 1. COMMUNITY DESIGN

A welcoming community with a small town environment and unique identity



## 2. LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Balanced growth and development



## 3. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

A broad spectrum of neighborhood and housing types that can flex to meet changing demands over time



## 4. MOBILITY

An efficient, affordable, and sustainable transportation system



## 5. PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE

A functional, desirable, and accessible system of parks, open space, and recreational facilities



## 6. INFRASTRUCTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Balanced and functional built and natural systems



## 7. FACILITIES & PUBLIC SAFETY

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



## 8. ECONOMY & WORKFORCE

A vibrant, diverse, & relevant economy



## 9. COMMUNICATION, PARTNERSHIPS, & VOLUNTEERISM

Mutually beneficial partnerships and volunteerism efforts, and effective communication to promote and improve them

