

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEW MILLENNIUM IN CARROLLTON

Much has changed in Carrollton since the last *Comprehensive Plan* was completed in 1991. Then, The Plan focused on the development of open land for suburban style development. At that time, the City formed the northern edge of development around Dallas and much of its land was open for development with a disproportionately large part of it zoned for garden apartments. Today, suburban growth is focused northward toward Denton, Frisco, and McKinney, and very little land is available for development within Carrollton. In addition, the City is facing issues such as aging development and infrastructure, and how best to use its resources to renew and refresh itself.

Today, the City is completely hemmed in by other municipalities with no opportunities for any significant expansion; but it is part of a larger contiguous metropolitan area. It is not self-sufficient in terms of the amount of retail it supports or availability of jobs for its residents; nor should it be entirely self-sufficient. The City will be served best by building on its particular location and transportation advantages to define its future, and to define its relationship to other communities in the region.

The City is in a similar situation as many of the region's other suburban communities that are largely built-out and where, over time, property values will tend to decline and the cost of services will tend to increase. The goal of this Plan is to set out a roadmap to long-term health and vitality for Carrollton so that it will not succumb to the ills of an aging suburb.

Good plans shape good decisions. That's why good planning helps to make elusive dreams come true.

Lester R. Bittel, The Nine Master Keys of Management

"EXPANDING CITY" TO "REVITALIZING CITY"

Carrollton is extremely fortunate to be located in the path of dynamic growth within the Metroplex. It is also well-connected to the region with excellent access to major roadways, and it will soon be tied to Dallas, the Medical Center, and other important destinations with a DART Light-Rail line and three transit stations.

Regional highways, combined with an expanding transit system, create an engine that can drive new development and revitalization of older areas.

Experience in other successful cities indicates some key attributes of a successful "revitalizing city:"

- Taking advantage of physical attributes;
- Creating an environment to attract investment; and
- Paying attention to existing neighborhoods and businesses.



Taking Advantage of Physical Attributes

Carrollton’s position in the Metroplex is being strengthened and enhanced by the transportation improvements being made.

Interstate Highway 35E runs through the City, and the Dallas North Tollway is located on the eastern edge of the City. These corridors connect Dallas and the fast growing northern communities in Denton and Collin Counties.

The President George Bush Turnpike (PGBT) is being extended to other communities in the Dallas Region, providing a major east-west connection, with direct access to DFW Airport.

DART is building a light rail system from the Dallas Central Business District (CBD) and Love Field to Carrollton, including three stations within the City.

Denton County is planning a transportation system to tie into DART in Carrollton, thus placing the City at a major regional hub of transportation.

In addition, two and possibly three transit lines will interconnect in downtown Carrollton: the Union Pacific, the Cotton Belt, and - in the long term - the Burlington Northern Railroads. Along with a commuter rail connection from Denton County, downtown

Carrollton will become one of four major centers in the region, along with downtown Dallas, downtown Fort Worth and DFW Airport.

Carrollton is in a central location in the Metroplex where it can attract a range of quality housing types, including single-family subdivisions and more unique, higher density, transit-oriented residential. Such locations prove very attractive to buyers because of the easy access to the professional job markets in the Richardson Telecom Corridor, downtown Dallas, Las Colinas, and DFW Airport areas.

The City is at a very important point in time where it is close to running out of developable land, and new development is already focusing beyond its northern borders. Before the City acquires a reputation of "last year's hot spot," it has the opportunity to become the "new hot spot." The construction of the PGBT and the DART LRT provide the City with a new level of regional accessibility that it has never had before and can become the basis for its attractiveness for major new investment. The three stations in Carrollton (Downtown Carrollton Station, Trinity Mills Station and North Carrollton Station) are uniquely different in terms of the types of development that might be attracted to them. The Downtown Carrollton Station will be the only location where two or more transit lines will cross in the entire DART system within the foreseeable future, outside of downtown Dallas. This station in particular can attract a new style of pedestrian-oriented development, which is especially attractive to young professional and older empty-nester households. The construction of PGBT opens up land west of IH-35E for commercial development. This land will also have easy access to the Trinity Mills Station. This new energy in the City can also contribute to increased investment into previously developed areas.

Creating an Environment to Attract Investment

New investment and re-investment is not automatic over time. It takes an aggressive stance on behalf of the City to reinvent, improve, and promote itself. Richardson, Plano, Addison, and Farmers Branch are all very active in making sure that they will continue to be cities where people will want to live, shop, recreate, and locate their businesses. They take great care in creating and maintaining their "public face" such as roadways, streetscapes, parks, trail systems and public facilities. Richardson's Parks Department, for example, views all streetscape and parks as the City's "front yard" and therefore designs, builds and maintains them as well as any homeowner would hope to. In addition, these cities are also creating new mixed-use pedestrian-oriented development opportunities—Addison Circle, downtown Plano, Galatyn Park, and the Farmers Branch station area.

Facilitating an environment conducive to new investment involves creating innovative entrepreneurial, administrative, and funding strategies. All the cities mentioned above were directly involved in creating the landmark developments listed. Their involvement in all cases resulted in a high quality landmark development that would not have happened otherwise. Though this involvement required special approvals and large amounts of

public funding, the net result is a continuing increase in property and sales taxes and the attraction of additional spin-off development and re-investment.

New forms of development require special approvals and a bureaucratic system that facilitates quick decisions. In the developer's world, time is money. They tend to avoid building innovative projects when all the rules, regulations, and funding sources are geared to standard suburban-style development. And, they tend to avoid redeveloping properties when there are large parcels of farmland available north of the City that will not require complex acquisition, demolition and reconstruction of services just to get to the point of having a developable parcel. Very little will happen in Carrollton over the coming years if it does not work with developers and property owners to overcome these issues.

EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESSES

It is just "good business" to support existing neighborhoods and businesses through maintaining the City's infrastructure of streets, drainage, streetscape, parks, and open space. Reinvestment by homeowners and businesses is at the very core of maintaining a healthy tax base. The City appreciates this concern and is developing programs directed toward these objectives.

The City's Neighborhood Partnership is a major step in the direction of helping to strengthen neighborhoods. It was established to foster and encourage partnerships between citizens, religious institutions, schools, businesses, community organizations, and the City to assist in reinvestment in Carrollton's many neighborhoods.

