



City of Denton

City Hall
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Denton, Texas
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AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Department of Development Services

CM/ DCM/ ACM: Christine Taylor, Assistant City Manager

DATE: June 13, 2025

SUBJECT

Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding implementation of the Southeast Denton Area Plan.

DISCUSSION

On July 23, 2024, City Council adopted an ordinance approving the Southeast Denton Area Plan (SEDAP). The plan's core area includes 600 acres generally bounded by McKinney Street to the north, Bell Avenue and Dallas Drive to the west, Teasley Lane and Shady Oaks Drive to the south, and Woodrow Lane to the east. The purpose of this discussion is to provide background information regarding the preparation and implementation of SEDAP with a particular focus on the topics most relevant to the Community Services Advisory Committee.

What is an Area Plan?

Generally, area plans provide an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to create a shared vision, influence city land use and development decisions, prioritize capital investments, and establish programs which benefit the community. These types of plans provide the ability to address specific planning challenges and enhance potential opportunities at a neighborhood or community scale. They are also intended to be functional documents which provide both community goals and detailed implementation actions.

Southeast Denton was identified as a priority area by City Council to create an area plan and implementation steps to accomplish the following:

- Acknowledge generational trauma that resulted from the forced displacement of Quakertown residents by the City and subsequent City actions
- Address residents' concerns about future displacement due to new developments in the area
- Identify those areas that are important to the residents and stakeholders for preserving the cultural character of the Southeast Denton neighborhoods
- Identify areas where change can occur for the advancement of the neighborhood and overall community
- Suggest ideas for future improvements – transportation, housing, connectivity, parks and open space, and overall quality of life in the community
- Make recommendations for capital improvement projects and policy changes for future improvements

The Southeast Denton Area Plan project kicked off in March 2023 and included a study of the existing conditions as well as over 40 public engagement opportunities, including Steering Committee meetings, listening sessions, community visioning, intercept surveys, pop-ups at area events, and attendance at neighborhood meetings.

The results of the existing conditions study included the following population and housing characteristics:

Population Characteristics

Southeast Denton is a young, diverse community. According to 2021 ACS data, Southeast Denton is fairly evenly split between Hispanic (28%), Black (30%), and White (36%), and 64% of the population is under 40 years of age, with 36% under 25. The distribution of the different race and ethnic groups is somewhat uniform, with no one area dominated by a single group.

Median household income is slightly lower than the City as a whole, with Southeast Denton households earning \$59,328 per year as compared to City of Denton household earnings of \$65,168 per year. Finally, while the population of the City and County have grown over the last 11 years (City of Denton: up 23%, Denton County: up 293%), the population of Southeast Denton has decreased 4% within that same period of time.

Housing Characteristics

Housing in Southeast Denton is largely dominated by single-family residential dwellings on individually platted lots (79% of the residential properties). The average value of Southeast Denton homes, according to the American Community Survey, is \$207,600. The community includes many historic structures and architectural styles that vary from home to home and street to street reflecting design trends of various decades. The area was developed over many decades with construction on individual lots (as opposed to volume-builder neighborhoods often seen today).

The results and themes from the community engagement efforts, combined with the existing conditions analysis, created a foundation for the Southeast Denton Area Plan. Ultimately, the plan includes the following elements:

Vision Statement:

The Vision Statement expresses the community's collective values and a description of what the community wants to become in the future. It reflects the community's beliefs and culture with a positive, forward-looking, and aspirational message for the future generation.

“Our vision for Southeast Denton is a harmonious future that ensures a diverse, resilient and inclusive community for generations to come. We will be a vibrant community that the City cultivates trust with, cherishes and preserves our rich Black history and culture, discourages gentrification, ensures shared prosperity, and elevates the overall quality of life through strategic investments.”

Community Goals

The six overarching goals in the plan were developed by listening to the Southeast Denton community and incorporating their solutions, aspirations, and ideas. The plan seeks to strengthen the Southeast Denton area for existing and future residents as well as other community stakeholders who are interested in joining this cohesive, connected community.

1. Building Trust within the community & with the City as a whole
2. Honoring the Culture & Heritage of Southeast Denton
3. Investing in Economic Prosperity
4. Strengthening Neighborhoods & Housing Affordability
5. Elevating the quality of public infrastructure
6. Creating a safe and connected, multimodal travel system

Strategies

The plan includes twenty strategies which will help the City and community achieve the goals and vision for Southeast Denton. The following explains the strategies most relevant to Community Services and the Community Services Advisory Committee. For a full listing of all the SEDAP strategies, refer to Exhibit 3.

- **Strategy 1.1: Develop and Implement an Anti-displacement Action Plan Specific to Southeast Denton Study Area.** Anti-displacement plans are used in neighborhoods experiencing rising rents and home prices. The purpose of this plan is to protect existing residents and give them more time and ability to choose whether they want to move and under what circumstances. When residents prefer to stay in their existing homes, these policies can offer financial and technical assistance to allow them to stay and benefit from improved access to high-quality amenities and infrastructure. In the instances where residents decide to move, policies can support their transition into new homes – either in the existing neighborhood or in a neighborhood of their choice. (For example, The University of Texas at Austin has developed an anti-displacement toolkit named the Uprooted Project.)
- **Strategy 1.2: Create and Implement a City Communication Strategy Specific to Southeast Denton Study Area.** A communication strategy is a plan that outlines how the City will communicate with Southeast Denton residents. It includes a set of goals and objectives, key messages, communication channels, tactics, and metrics to measure the success of the communication efforts. Good communication is vital for building trust, encouraging citizen compliance, and creating a sense of community in everyday interactions. Effective communication can help city staff and officials bridge the gap between the City Hall and the Southeast Denton residents to build understanding and support that will ultimately improve the lives of residents.
- **Strategy 3.1: Develop and Implement People Based Economic Development Specific to Southeast Denton Study Area.** People-based economic development strategies focus on supporting the people in a community so that they can thrive. They strengthen small businesses, provide needed social services, and concentrate on building capacity. These strategies acknowledge the realities of community members' lives, including a need for flexible daycare opportunities, workforce education, mentoring opportunities, support for young people, and crime reduction and safety.
- **Strategy 3.2: Develop and Implement Place-Based Economic Development Specific to Southeast Denton Study Area.** Place-based economic development strategies focus on supporting the built environment of an area by enhancing buildings, infrastructure, and other physical improvements. These strategies provide suitable spaces for small businesses to incubate, offer gathering spaces for people to exchange ideas, and activate new clusters of economic activity. They acknowledge the realities of community members' lives, including a need for revitalized buildings, improved aesthetics, and mixed uses where people can work, live, play, and share ideas. This strategy can also kickstart and advance larger investments or broader organizational/community goals.
- **Strategy 3.3: Establish a Neighborhood Empowerment Zone to spur community investment, reduce taxes for homeowners, and increase affordable housing opportunities.** Texas law allows cities to create Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZ) to incentivize the creation or renovation of housing affordable to households in the zone and to improve the quality of life for residents in the zone. An NEZ can spur community investment, reduce taxes for homeowners and commercial property owners, and increase affordable housing opportunities. Within an NEZ, the City can encourage actions such as renovation and new construction of affordable housing, investing in a new business, or improving commercial space in exchange for development fee reimbursements, property tax abatements, and sales tax refunds. The City can add additional requirements to the program, such as requiring that new construction happen only on vacant land, requiring a minimum amount of private investment, or requiring that a business have a minimum number of new employees from the neighborhood.
- **Strategy 4.1: Establish overlay districts to protect existing neighborhood character.** Creating overlay districts can help long-term residents strengthen their neighborhoods, stabilize property values, and build safe communities for their families by allowing missing middle housing, but maintaining existing architectural detailing, landscaping, height, and setback requirements. Residents have conveyed that they welcome new development in Southeast Denton if it respects the scale and feel of the existing neighborhood. Developments such as appropriately-sized duplexes, triplexes, small apartment buildings, and pocket neighborhoods clustered around a central courtyard

or greenspace and walkable-scale retail, restaurants, and small businesses that could nestle gently into the existing neighborhood fabric. This strategy could protect established neighborhoods while allowing for investment and redevelopment. Additionally, maintaining the existing small-scale zoning may slow the rate of land value growth within the established neighborhoods, which would help existing homeowners stay in their homes.

- **Strategy 4.3: Establish Southeast Denton as a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area.** The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows cities to designate Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSAs) through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. NRSAs have two key benefits:
 - They are designed to support cities and non-profit organizations in their efforts to collaborate closely with designated communities to create transformative revitalization, and
 - They offer significant additional flexibility in federal funding rules.

This additional HUD funding can benefit Southeast Denton in neighborhood initiatives and activities such as residential tree planting programs, do it yourself (DIY) home repair classes, volunteer-run home improvement and maintenance programs, home improvement mentoring programs, and women-centric home repair classes that provide a comfortable space for women to teach each other handy skills.

- **Strategy 4.4: Increase Access to Capital in Southeast Denton Study Area by Creating a Consortium of Banks for Mortgage Lending.** Creating a group of banks, lending professionals, and community members can facilitate more open communication, foster collaboration, and discover new opportunities for community members and Denton’s financial institutions.

Implementation

To assist with plan implementation, the Southeast Denton Area Plan breaks the strategies down into 53 actions to be accomplished over the next 10 to 20 years. These actions have been organized into a matrix which allows City staff, partner agencies, and the community to prioritize and monitor the activities which must be accomplished to achieve the goals of the plan. The matrix includes a time frame for each step to establish structure for the action priorities:

- Short-term actions are high-priority quick-wins intended to be accomplished in the next one to two years.
- Mid-term actions will take longer to accomplish and should be completed in three to five years.
- Long-term actions are intended to be completed in six to ten years.

Since adoption of the plan, staff has started work on the following actions related to housing, economic prosperity, and land use:

Action 3.1.2	Provide financial assistance to reduce membership costs for Stoke or similar coworking space that provides amenities and a supportive, resourceful community for startups, entrepreneurs, remote workers, freelancers, small businesses, and tech enabled companies and provides programming and events to foster growth and collaboration and market this and other opportunities such as maker spaces, pop-up markets, and events available to entrepreneurs and small businesses to Southeast Denton residents.
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Action 3.3.1	Create a NEZ program statement, including the purpose of the program, the benefits of the zone, participation requirements, and compliance criteria.
Action 4.1.1	Create a residential overlay district and height limitation overlay district as shown in Figure 32 to maintain the scale and character of the neighborhoods while fostering community investment to create livable and inclusive neighborhoods for all who want to call Southeast Denton home. Overlay standards may include, but are not limited to, limiting height to two stories, allowing infill on small lots, requiring enhanced front elevations such as larger windows and covered porches.
Action 4.1.3	Create a live-work overlay district as shown in Figure 32 that focuses on allowing small mom and pop retail such as bookstore, toy shop, coffee shop, music store, barber shop, hair salon/spa, small incubator space, resale clothing etc. in a portion of a single family home with a portion being used as a residence simultaneously. Require design standards from the residential overlay in Action 4.1.1 to be applied in this live-work overlay also.
Action 5.3.3	Offer small community grants to community leaders and organizers to host block parties and markets within the Southeast Denton community. These events could be around a season (i.e. Spring Fest or Fall Carnival) or they can be held around specific holidays and celebrations (i.e. MLK Day Festival, Cinco de Mayo, Hispanic Heritage Month, Earth Day Festival, Black History Month Kick Off, etc.)

To enhance accountability and transparency in public service, staff is finalizing a SEDAP dashboard using Envisio, the city's performance management software. This dashboard will track the plan's progress and allow for robust reporting. Envisio's features enable the city to create powerful analytical tools that link SEDAP actions to other Council priorities, city strategic plan initiatives, and related efforts. The public can view the dashboard here: [Strategic Plan Dashboard](#).

EXHIBITS

1. Agenda Information Sheet
2. Presentation
3. Southeast Denton Area Plan

Respectfully submitted:
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