



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Department of Development Services

ACM: Cassey Ogden

DATE: March 19, 2024

SUBJECT

Receive a report and hold a discussion of the Southeast Denton Area Plan progress and receive direction and concurrence related to the proposed strategies as recommended by the project team and Steering Committee.

MEETING OBJECTIVE

The objective of the meeting is to inform the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council of the Southeast Denton Area Plan progress and to receive direction and concurrence related to the proposed strategies as recommended by the project team and Steering Committee. The strategies provide the foundation for developing subsequent implementation action steps (or action items). The purpose of this report and joint meeting is to present the recommended strategies as a “check-in” on the planning process before the implementation action steps are devised.

The Steering Committee has reviewed the recommended strategies and supports the strategies as being presented.

BACKGROUND

On March 22, 2022, City Council adopted an ordinance that approved an update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan (Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan). Throughout the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council work session presentations related to the update, Area Plans were discussed as a solution to address local challenges and were identified as one of the Commission’s and Council’s implementation priorities. Elected and appointed leaders, as well as staff, agreed that further in-depth analysis was needed to better refine the vision for the area and plan for future infrastructure needs. Area Plans allow for a more detailed analysis of a given area within the framework of the Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan. These types of Plans provide the ability to address more refined and specific planning and development challenges, as well as enhance potential opportunities, at a scale more specific to a given area.

Per City Council’s direction, staff initiated the Southeast Denton Area Plan (SEDAP) study which kicked off in March 2023. Establishing the SEDAP study area boundary was a key component of the plan which required considerable public outreach and consensus-building. Ultimately, a core area that includes 600 acres was selected, 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. And since proximate developments and neighborhoods often influence each other, planning for this area also includes the parcels north of McKinney Street, east of Woodrow Lane, and south of Shady Oaks Drive/Teasley Lane to provide guidance for transition areas between the core project area and these adjoining neighborhoods.

The SEDAP project team is also coordinating with the Design Downtown Denton team to ensure Bell Avenue (the seam between Southeast Denton and Downtown) is planned comprehensively to support and connect both areas.

History

A discussion of the future of Southeast Denton cannot begin without first acknowledging the past. In the 1920s, Black families in Denton were forced to move from Quakertown, a prosperous middle-class Black community located northeast of the Downtown Square, to the southeastern part of the city. Quakertown's proximity to the nearby College of Industrial Arts (now known as Texas Woman's University) in the first decades of the twentieth century was unacceptable for Denton's residents and the College leaders, due to white students living near the prominent black community. Under the pretense that the town desperately needed a civic center park and the misconception that a thriving Black community constituted "blight," the City used federal funds to force the community's displacement. By 1923, nearly seventy homes, dozens of businesses, and a community center had either been torn down or physically relocated to the south and east side of Denton.

Although it has been almost a century, the trauma of the forced relocation has remained. Many of the long-time residents and their families have not forgotten what happened, and the destruction of their homes and property caused huge financial setbacks.

Forty years after Quakertown, Denton's Black families faced displacement threats once again. The City proposed an urban renewal bond in the 1960's that, if approved, would have demolished 185 acres of homes—clearing the way to sell the property to a private developer. The bond was defeated by community members who organized opposition, but the long-term impacts of the City's repeated actions formed a multi-generational distrust of local government that continues today.

Southeast Denton Today

Today, Southeast Denton is home to a diverse community whose residents expressed a desire to protect the historic and cultural character of their neighborhoods. According to 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) data, Southeast Denton is fairly evenly split between Hispanic (28%), Black (30%), and White (36%) residents. Residents primarily reside in single-family homes in distinct neighborhoods which were built throughout the 20th Century and reflect a variety of architectural styles. Land uses include residential (183 acres), commercial, government, and industrial (283 acres), and open space (222 acres). Refer to the attached presentation (Exhibit 2) for additional details regarding demographics and land uses.

GOALS OF THE SOUTHEAST DENTON AREA PLAN

While the City has made efforts to lessen the government distrust by investing in area park and street improvements, a concerted and cohesive acknowledgement of the harm caused by the forced relocation of Quakertown families is long overdue. Furthermore, recent development proposals adjacent to and within Southeast Denton have raised concerns from the community about the past repeating itself. The Southeast Denton Area Plan is the first step in the effort to heal from the damages of the past and begin anew to build upon the community's vitality and resilience to ensure a bright future based on the community's desires.

By listening to the Southeast Denton community and incorporating their solutions, aspirations, and ideas, this plan attempts to strengthen the Southeast Denton area for existing and future residents and stakeholders as well as those interested in joining this cohesive, connected community.

Through the planning process, this plan will:

- Identify those areas that are important to the residents and stakeholders for preserving the cultural character of the Southeast Denton neighborhoods;
- Address the impacts of potential development within and adjacent to the study area;
- Identify areas where change can occur for the advancement of the neighborhood and overall community;

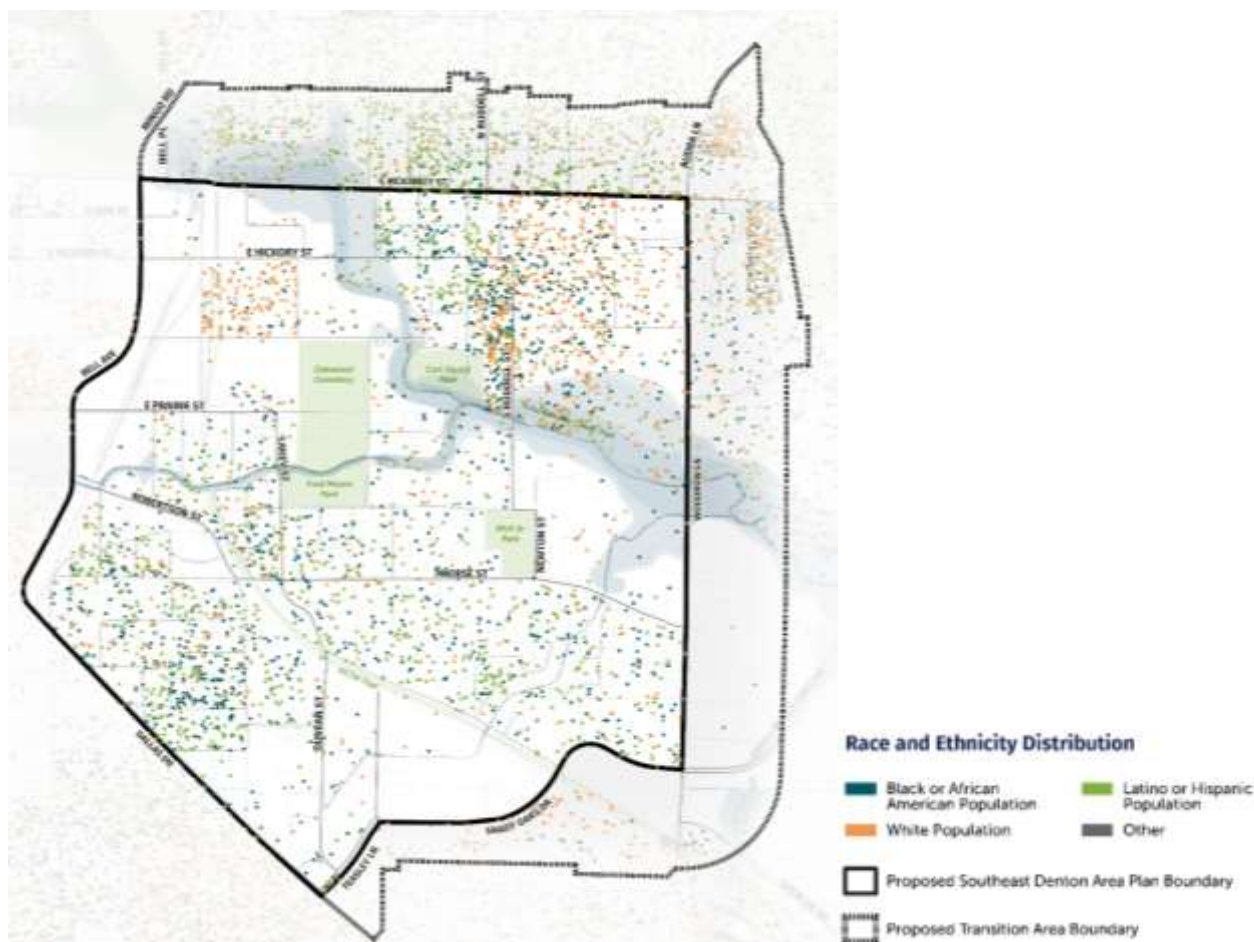
- Suggest ideas for future improvements – transportation, housing, connectivity, parks and open space, and overall quality of life in the community; and
- Make recommendations for capital improvement projects and policy changes for future improvements.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following is a summary of the existing conditions for population, housing, land use, and streets. For a full presentation of the existing conditions analysis, refer to the February 21, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting, which can be found here: <https://dentontx.new.swagit.com/videos/298025>.

Population

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 60% 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 as shown on the map below:



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

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. Because Southeast Denton developed over many decades with construction on individual lots (as opposed to volume-builder neighborhoods often seen today), the community includes many historic structures and architectural styles which vary from home to home and street to street, reflecting the design trends in a given decade.

Land Use

The land use analysis accounted for residential, non-residential, and open space uses. Residential housing makes up 183 acres within the study area. Non-residential uses include industrial, commercial, religious, and institutional/government categories and makes up 283 acres. Open space includes rights-of-way, vacant land, and park properties and makes up 222 acres. It is important to note that the vacant land provides both opportunity and threat to the community, depending on how it is used or developed in the future.

Streets

Although many streets within the Southeast Denton area have recently been reconstructed as part of the 2019 Bond Program, further improvements have been identified as part of this analysis. Many sidewalks are missing or in disrepair. Additional bike lanes and connections are needed. Crash data indicates some intersections require design interventions to increase safety. Furthermore, the existing railroad tracks and floodplain have created barriers to a well-connected street network. All of these conditions make maneuvering within, into, and out of Southeast Denton challenging for all modes of transportation, as well as contribute to many of the complaints received on area roadways such as Morse Street, Lakey Street, Duncan Street and Kerley Street.

During the aforementioned February 21, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, the Commission asked several clarifying questions related to the project team's analysis of the existing conditions. The following is a summary of those questions and answers:

1. Is the population data indicative of gentrification occurring within the area?
 - a. While there has been an overall 4% population decline within the area from 2010 to 2021, there is no data to suggest that gentrification is occurring within the area. There are several possible variables associated with the changes. The area's slight increase in median household income is comparable to the trend seen across the City of Denton. The recent decline in the project area's population is in contrast to the growth of the region. Given both the number of older homes and the developable parcels in the area, development interest is expected to persist, and Southeast Denton's population is expected to grow in the near future. Notwithstanding the natural increase in property values and the City's limited influence on the free real estate market, a goal of this Area Plan includes the implementation of strategies that preserve the historic character of the area's built environment as well as provide programmatic assistance to the area's residents to offset potentially negative impacts of growth in the area.
2. Is the age bracket breakdown of Southeast Denton comparable to the age breakdown of the City of Denton?
 - a. As discussed above, approximately 60% of Southeast Denton's population is under the age of 40. Similarly, this age cohort holds an approximate 64% share of the population across the City of Denton.
3. What is the age breakdown of racial and ethnic groups?
 - a. The project team used Census block and block group data to determine the age and racial/ethnic makeup of Southeast Denton. Unfortunately, the Census does not break down the age cohorts of the racial and ethnic groups at the block or block group level, so this information is unavailable for Southeast Denton.
4. Which variables are used to come up with the population segments?
 - a. As part of the analysis, the project team used the ESRI Tapestry Segmentation system to better understand Southeast Denton and its residents by using socioeconomic and demographic variables to create a composite resident and consumer based on standard

geographic areas. Selection of the variables used to identify consumer markets begins with data that includes household characteristics such as a single person or family, income, relationships (married or multigenerational), and tenure; personal traits such as age, gender, education, employment, and marital status; and housing characteristics such as home value or rent, type of housing, seasonal status, and owner costs relative to income. ESRI has verified the efficacy of its Tapestry Segmentation markets against consumer insight surveys that include thousands of product and service brands in more than 500 market categories. A full discussion of the population segments was held at the February 21, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting (see the link above).

5. What percentage of the project area's population resides within each segment?
 - a. The composite residents and consumers discussed above were grouped into three general areas:
 - i. Segment 1 includes neighborhoods north of Robertson Street/Morse Street and east of the railroad adjacent to downtown. Approximately 2,041 (63%) Southeast Denton residents live in this area. This population is racially diverse, would rather rent rather than buy a house, tend to work administrative and service-sector jobs, and spend their money carefully - necessities like baby and children's products and on transit options
 - ii. Segment 2 includes neighborhoods south of Robertson Street/Morse Street. Approximately 1,204 (37%) residents live in this area. This is an older suburban population, predominantly homeowners, who tend to live in older homes, use traditional means of shopping and listening to music, and spend money on home improvement tasks, gardening, and non-profit organizations.
 - iii. Segment 3 is the smallest by land area and population and includes the area between the railroad adjacent to downtown. Currently 6 (0%) residents reside here. This is a younger generation, working on a college degree, living in a rented apartment, environmentally concerned, comfortable using the latest technology, and starting to learn about finances.
6. How does the share of vacant parcels and residential uses in Southeast Denton compare to vacant parcels and residential uses across the City of Denton?
 - a. The comparison of residential and vacant parcels between Southeast Denton and Denton are as follows:
 - i. Southeast Denton residential land: 33%; City of Denton residential land: 45%
 - ii. Southeast Denton vacant land: 25%; City of Denton vacant land: 27%
7. Given the significant amount of vacant parcels existing within the area that the residents have identified as "areas of stability," is this indicative of a community's desire to keep those parcels vacant?
 - a. When surveying the residents to identify areas of change and areas of stability, the project team focused the question on the existing land uses, architectural style, and neighborhood character. The areas identified as "areas of stability" closely align with residential zoning and existing residential neighborhoods while the areas identified as "areas of change" most closely align with those commercial and industrial land uses that do not complement the quality of life for those residents. The community has expressed both an understanding of the potential negative impacts of change and an acceptance of the potential benefits. The consensus reflects that a gradual change in both land use and density adjacent to their established residential neighborhoods would improve the overall quality of life.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The planning process started with *listening* to the community and acknowledging past harm – the forced removal in the 1920s, a proposed Urban Renewal demolition plan in the 1960s, and current concerns with development activities of today. Early in the project, the project team recognized that the best way to reach the community was to be *in the community* as much as possible, reaching out in a variety of ways:

- **Listening Sessions:** The team held multiple meetings with residents and stakeholders to listen deeply to their stories, their dreams, and their desires for their neighborhood, as well as their fears and their anger about the past. Participants identified several key concerns, some of which have already been addressed by the City as quick wins.
- **Stakeholder meetings:** The team met with several community stakeholders to better understand the history of the area and the issues important to residents now.
- **Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee, appointed by City Council, has met periodically to provide feedback on the information gathered and analysis completed.
- **Intercept Surveys and Pop-Up Events:** To reach a more representative sample of stakeholders, the team fanned out within the community at various locations and times to connect with community members; some locations/events included the MLK Jr. Recreation Center, Veronica's Café, and Juneteenth parade.
- **Visioning Workshop:** One meeting was held to share preliminary concepts with the public and to collect feedback. The project team also asked community members to draw their ideal SEDAP boundary. This allowed participants to give their individualized interpretation of Southeast Denton without predetermined options.
- **Visual Preference Surveys and Establishing the Boundary:** Using the information gathered at the Visioning Workshop, the team once again went out into the community, specifically to determine the preferred housing and commercial building styles and finalize the study area boundary. The data previously collected was aggregated into three possible boundary maps, and participants were asked to vote on the map which best represented their idea of Southeast Denton.
- **Implementation Workshop:** The team met with staff from various agencies and entities in Denton County, such as the appraisal district, the county, and the housing authority, as well as various City of Denton departments, to understand solutions and limitations in addressing various community concerns and desires.

The findings from the above engagement efforts were presented to the Steering Committee for feedback and validation at their June 23, 2023, August 25, 2023, and February 15, 2024 meetings and have been coalesced into the following overarching themes:

- Improve communication between the City and the neighborhood
- Create standards for housing, ensure long-term affordability, and address concerns about displacement
- Maintain cherished community assets
- Improve infrastructure
- Preserve Denton's history and remember the lessons of Quakertown
- End the pattern of neglect and begin to heal the area

The results and themes from these community engagement efforts, combined with the existing conditions analysis, create a foundation for the plan elements which are discussed in the paragraphs below: vision statement, desired outcomes, goals, and strategies.

VISION STATEMENT

A Vision Statement is an expression of the community's collective values and a description of what the community wants to become in the future. It should reflect the community's beliefs and culture with a positive, forward-looking, and aspirational message for the future generation.

On February 15, 2024 the Southeast Denton Area Plan Steering Committee recommended the following draft vision statement, which is based on input received from the public engagement events.

“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.”

RECOMMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK AND DRAFT STRATEGIES

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. They are intended to be functional documents which provide both community goals and detailed implementation actions.

To be useful, the Southeast Denton Area Plan follows a framework which builds upon information gathered from the public engagement and the existing conditions to determine the community’s desired outcomes and goals. From there, strategies to achieve the goals were formulated. Finally, implementation action steps (or action items) will further break down the strategies into achievable, measurable steps. It is important to note that each strategy should relate to a goal and help to accomplish one or more of the desired outcomes. The purpose of this report and joint Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council meeting is to present the recommended strategies as a “check-in” on the planning process before the implementation action steps are devised.



On February 15, 2024, the project team presented the vision statement, outcomes, and strategies to the Steering Committee for feedback, validation, and adjustments. The Steering Committee discussed each recommendation individually and at length and endorsed the 19 strategies outlined below, providing modifications where needed. Furthermore, the project team has engaged with the community using intercept surveys to garner feedback on the draft strategies. The majority of community members who have reviewed the strategies are in support.

- **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 1.3: Develop a program to recruit more Denton 360 participants from Southeast Denton.** Denton 360, a City-sponsored program, is an educational program which takes Denton residents and business owners behind the scenes for a city government learning experience. Alumni often become informal ambassadors for the local government, share information with their neighborhoods, and serve on advisory boards. Some participants chose to run for elected office.
- **Strategy 2.1: Use Historic Preservation tools and incentives to recognize the built environment and the families who created it.** Southeast Denton is home to the descendants of families who settled here after being removed from their homes in nearby Quakertown. Because of this painful history and the decades of injustices that followed, community members planted deep roots in Southeast Denton that are still alive today. The fear of gentrification is not just about the fear of being forced out of one's home or neighborhood. It is also the fear of no longer recognizing the place and people that were once called home. Protecting the essential character of Southeast Denton's buildings will make this community stronger.
- **Strategy 2.2: Develop and implement a Southeast Denton History and Cultural Roots Preservation Program.** An Arts and Cultural Roots Preservation Program ensures that the historic integrity of a site/area is not lost. Preserving the art and cultural roots of Southeast Denton's Black history acknowledges the past harm and signals to the community a determination to do better. Maintaining a connection to the past also provides a sense of unique identity, inclusion, and belonging to the entire community. This program aims at communicating Southeast Denton's history and culture in public spaces to ensure that whatever demographic changes occur in the future, the physical environment would preserve and maintain remembrance of the area's culture roots. Harlem in New York is a good example of maintaining the Black roots/history of an area.
- **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 a minimum amount of private investment or 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 could be clustered around a central courtyard or greenspace. Walkable-scale retail, restaurants, and small businesses 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 4.2: Rezone industrial areas through City-initiated action to ensure all permitted uses and design standards are consistent with the desired outcomes of the Southeast Denton Area Plan.** Incompatible or nonconforming industrial and heavy commercial land uses should be relocated out of Southeast Denton to make way for development which is compatible with the existing neighborhood character and consistent with the community's vision. It should be noted that no City-initiated rezoning should go forward without extensive public outreach for both the neighborhood and industrial property owners to ensure all who are impacted fully understand the costs/benefits of such an action and any potential uses that could develop. Should these uses continue to remain, the City must work with the property owners and businesses to reduce the visual and operational impacts for the nearby residential neighborhoods.
- **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 Adopting a Locally Responsible Banking Ordinance.** Encourage banks to lend equitably especially in Southeast Denton and allow fair investment and equal opportunity for its residents.
- **Strategy 5.1: Upgrade the Existing Parks in Southeast Denton to Higher-Quality Parks.** Southeast Denton has two parks, two recreation/community centers, publicly-owned open space, and creeks running through the neighborhood. The MLK, Jr. Center and the American Legion Hall Senior Center are well-used, local hubs of programming and activity. Additional investment in Southeast Denton's park facilities will strengthen their ties to the community and contribute to neighborhood pride. In addition to the existing parks and facilities, the creek and adjacent publicly

owned property offer opportunities for beautifying Southeast Denton and adding to the green space in the area.

- **Strategy 5.2: Enhance the Physical Quality of Public Infrastructure through Stormwater Management Systems in Southeast Denton.** Develop a stormwater management infrastructure in the area that integrates principles of artful rainwater design (ARD), blue green infrastructure (BGI), and low impact development (LID). Some examples of the design elements that serve as both utility and amenity are rain gardens, bio swales, culvert removal, reintroduction of native vegetation and animals and nature reconnection and restoration. Southeast Denton's abundant green space, trees, and creeks provide an opportunity for the city to improve stormwater management and add to the City's park space at the same time. Prioritizing shared-use and multi-benefit nature-based infrastructure including best management practices (BMP) to reduce flooding and improve stormwater retention in Southeast Denton will also result in expanded open space and beautification of the area.
- **Strategy 5.3: Enhance the programming and city sponsored events in existing parks and recreation centers in Southeast Denton Study Area.** Park programming is a way to increase the functionality of a park by making the space more effective and increasing usage by providing memorable experiences for everyone. Community events bring a community together for holidays or regional celebrations and create an avenue for a collaborative and inclusive interaction among the diverse populations and cultures in Southeast Denton. The main benefit of hosting events and festivals in Southeast Denton would be access to entertainment for the residents. Other benefits for the community would be capture of temporary jobs, increase in sales tax receipts, improvement in quality of life, and an increase in tourism/business awareness in Southeast Denton and the region. This can help repair the perceptions in and around the study area
- **Strategy 6.1: Develop Street Cross Sections that Improve Safety for all People Regardless of the Mode of Transportation.** Developing new street cross sections involves reconfiguration of existing roads to include on-street improvements such as traffic safety measures and pedestrian and bicycle facilities to enhance connectivity and safety on the roadways. Currently, most of Southeast Denton's main roads have sufficient right-of-way to re-purpose them in a number of different configurations that could include either on or off-street separated bicycle paths, wider sidewalks, street plantings, and adequate travel lanes. Both interim (immediate and low-cost solution) and permanent solutions to achieve this strategy are recommended in this plan. The proposed street cross sections would allow residents to choose from various modes of transportation, make navigation across Southeast Denton safer for people, especially children and people with disabilities, reduce carbon emissions by encouraging alternative modes of transportation (walking, biking, public transit), beautify the community, and help to spark economic growth by giving context to commercial developments next to the repurposed roadways.
- **Strategy 6.2: Prioritize Improved Pedestrian and Bike Connection and Safety.** Buffered wide sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and good intersection designs are not only important for safety but can tap civic and economic potential, infusing overbuilt or underutilized spaces with street life. Together these roadway elements, when designed correctly are responsible for not only improving and connecting routes and destinations in communities but also for enhancing safety and the public realm. Studies show more people bike and walk in communities where improvements such as safer sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and protected bike lanes have been made. Making walking and biking easier can help Southeast Denton by improving mobility safety, increasing interaction between residents, improving the local economy, and reducing air pollution.
- **Strategy 6.3: Develop a Network of Trails Through the Existing Open Spaces and Drainage Easements to Connect Residential, Commercial, and Public Places (Parks, Schools etc.) to Form an Active Transportation Network Both Within and Outside Southeast Denton Study Area.** Southeast Denton study area is mostly built out, but there are publicly owned lands around drainage areas and creeks as well as existing parks and wide rights-of-way. Together, these provide an opportunity to develop off-street trails and linear parks while creating a safer system for walking

and biking in Southeast Denton. These trails would connect people and places in the community, provide a social infrastructure to maintain the strong neighborhood bonds, encourage a healthy lifestyle with easy access to active recreation and travel, protect the environment, increase the value of nearby properties, and increase social equity by providing an affordable mobility option.

- **Strategy 6.4: Strengthen the connections to downtown and surrounding neighborhoods for all modes of transportation.** The proposed Mobility Plan together with Strategy 6.3 will establish improved connections to downtown, thereby providing residents of Southeast Denton easier and safer access to downtown.

NEXT STEPS

Following the discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council, the project team will make any needed adjustments to the recommended strategies and create action steps to implement the strategies. These implementation action steps will then be validated with the Steering Committee, before the final plan is presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council for adoption.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 - Agenda Information Sheet

Exhibit 2 - Presentation

Respectfully submitted:
Tina Firgens, AICP
Deputy Director of Development Services/
Planning Director

Prepared by:
Julie Wyatt, AICP
Principal Planner

Mia Hines, AICP
Senior Planner