



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: July 23, 2024

SUBJECT

Hold a public hearing and consider adoption of an ordinance of the City of Denton, Texas, adopting the Southeast Denton Area Plan and amending the Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Southeast Denton Area Plan has an approximate boundary line of 800 feet north of East McKinney Street, 900 feet east of South Woodrow Lane, 700 feet south of Shady Oaks Drive, Dallas Drive to the south, and South Bell Avenue to the west, encompassing approximately 975 acres in the City of Denton, Denton County, Texas; and providing an effective date. The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the proposal (5-0). The motion was made by Commissioner Villareal and seconded by Commissioner Cole. (CA24-0002b, Southeast Denton Area Plan, Julie Wyatt and Mia Hines) <https://dentontx.new.swagit.com/videos/310499?ts=2048>

PROPOSED PLAN ADOPTION

The purpose of the July 23, 2024 public hearing is to present the Southeast Denton Area Plan for approval. Developing the Southeast Denton Area Plan has been a year-long project with active public engagement to identify the community's vision, goals, strategies, and actions for implementing the next 10 to 20 years. Since the Joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission meeting held on March 19, 2024, the project team has developed the plan's implementation elements which include 53 action steps, an updated Future Land Use Map, a Future Overlay Districts Map, and conceptual street cross-sections. The Steering Committee has evaluated these implementation elements, as well as provided input related to other area plan components (i.e. existing conditions, community engagement, vision statement, goals and strategies), and is supportive of the draft plan as proposed.

This proposed plan will supersede the Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan goals and recommendations (including land uses) for the Southeast Denton community. **Furthermore, the proposed plan is reflective of the community's desires and past Steering Committee, City Council, and Planning and Zoning Commission input. Below is a summary of the steps taken to formulate the plan throughout the duration of this project.**

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 specific areas and to plan for future infrastructure needs. These types of plans provide the ability to address more refined and specific planning 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. Understanding 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 SEDAP and adjoining neighborhoods. The SEDAP project team is also continuing to coordinate 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 portion 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 seen as 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 was either 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 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.

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 to build upon the community’s vitality and resilience to ensure a bright future based on the community’s desires.

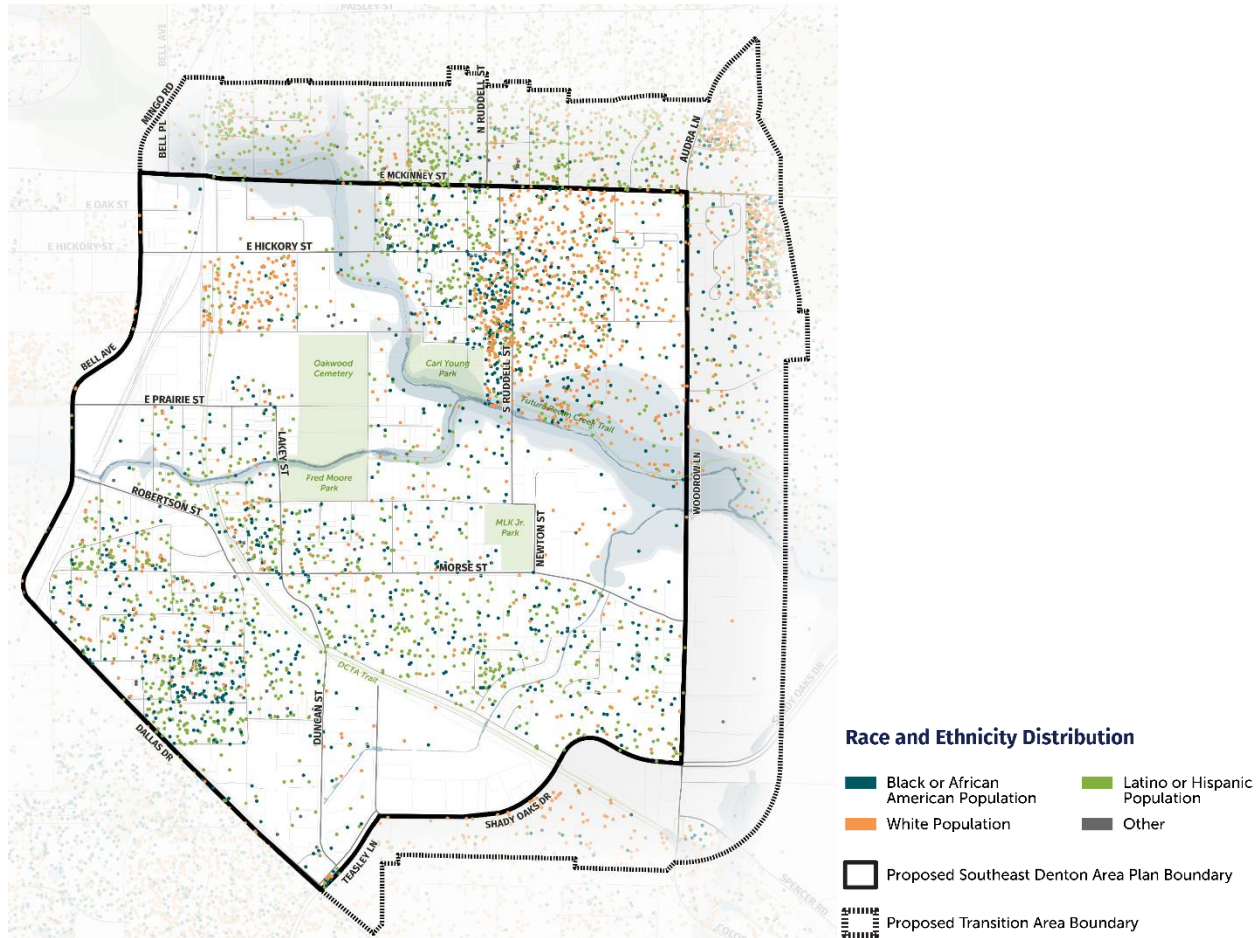
By listening to the Southeast Denton community and incorporating their solutions, aspirations, and ideas, this plan attempts to strengthen the Southeast Denton area for existing and future residents and stakeholders as well as those interested in joining this cohesive, connected community.

Through the planning process, this plan has considered the following:

- The areas that are important to the residents and stakeholders for preserving the cultural character of the Southeast Denton neighborhoods;
- The impacts of potential development within and adjacent to the study area;
- Areas where change can occur for the advancement of the neighborhood and overall community;
- Ideas for future improvements – transportation, housing, connectivity, parks and open space, and overall quality of life in the community; and
- Recommendations for capital improvement projects and policy changes for future improvements.

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 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 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. 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, because Southeast Denton developed over many decades with construction on individual lots (as opposed to volume-builder neighborhoods often seen today).

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 an 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.

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 during the public engagement phase 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 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.

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, connecting 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 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 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 coalesced into the following overarching themes:

- Improve communication between the City and the neighborhood
- Create standards for housing, ensure long-term affordability, and address displacement concerns
- 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, strategies, and implementation.

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.

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

DRAFT STRATEGIES

The project team engaged with the community using intercept surveys to garner feedback on the draft strategies. The majority of community members who reviewed the strategies were in support. 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 at length and endorsed the 19 strategies outlined below:

- **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 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 even 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 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 4.2: 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 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.
- **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 to capture temporary jobs, increase in sales tax receipts, improvement in quality of life, increase in tourism/business awareness of 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 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 solutions) and permanent solutions are recommended to achieve this strategy. 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 improve safety, increase interaction between residents, improve local economy, and reduce 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 work to improve the connections to downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS

On June 20, 2024, the project team presented the Implementation chapter of the plan to the Steering Committee for feedback and validation. The Steering Committee reviewed the material in detail and provided comments during a 3.5-hour meeting. Their comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the final draft of the plan. Ultimately, the Steering Committee endorsed all of the implementation elements summarized below:

- **Action Plan Matrix** – This document breaks down the strategies outlined above into a variety of steps. It is a roadmap of the actions, agencies, and funding needed to make the goals and strategies in the plan a reality. Additionally, each step has been assigned a time frame: short-term, mid-term, and long-term to organize and prioritize the steps:
 - 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.
- **Land Use Map** – The Land Use Map is an important part of both Comprehensive Plans and Area Plans, as it communicates a community’s vision for the desired uses of a given area and how those uses coordinate and complement each other to meet the needs of current and future residents. The various colors correspond to different land use designations that provide policy direction for residents, property owners, staff, and decision-makers regarding zoning decisions.
 - The draft Land Use Map reflects the community’s direction to preserve the existing single-family neighborhoods while allowing the heavy commercial and industrial uses along Shady Oaks Drive to redevelop with moderate-density housing and community-serving retail and service uses. It modifies the existing Future Land Use Map in the Denton 2040 Comprehensive plan by reducing the area that may be influenced by Downtown and providing a smoother transition to the single-family neighborhoods.
- **Future Overlay Districts Map** – The Future Overlay Districts Map provides further guidance for zoning actions by reaffirming the community’s desire to protect the established neighborhoods with four proposed overlay areas:
 - A Height Overlay to ensure that any new construction is compatible in scale to the residential areas.
 - A Residential Overlay 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.
 - A Commercial Overlay that focuses on walkable neighborhood design and uses, including, but not limited to, limiting building height, removing barriers to redevelop smaller infill lots, reducing parking and requiring it to be located behind buildings, requiring enhanced front elevations such as larger windows and pedestrian-scaled entrances, and ensuring larger tracts include a well-defined, walkable transportation network.
 - A Live/Work Overlay that focuses on allowing entrepreneurial spaces, including small retail uses such as a 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.
- **Conceptual Street Sections** – Over the last year, the public engagement has revealed that the community desires streets that are well-designed to accommodate all ages and a variety of transportation modes. Safety (particularly at intersections) and connectivity were a top priority for

many residents and stakeholders; therefore, the plan has reimagined several streets in Southeast Denton with those priorities in mind. The street concepts repurpose existing street rights-of-way where possible, while achieving the vehicular travel lanes, on-street parking, and multimodal elements desired by the community. The concepts also depict the overall goal for the street design for a majority of the street length recognizing there may be some engineering design concessions having to be made due to existing constraints within the existing built environment. Historic areas of any community often present challenges for mobility planning—existing right-of-way widths can be narrow and the community’s travel patterns are well established. Therefore, it is critical that before street design begins, the City work with residents to ensure that the final design meets the needs of those who are most affected. Lastly, the street designs proposed are generally consistent with the 2022 Mobility Plan direction to provide complete streets, thereby taking into account the various transportation modes desired by the community.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

A public hearing was held at the July 17, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The project team presented a summary of the Southeast Denton Area Plan background and public engagement and highlighted significant action steps in the plan. Approximately 20 members of the public attended the meeting and seven provided comments to the Commission (on the speaker’s cards, two indicated support for the plan, five did not indicate support or opposition). The concerns/comments included the following:

- **The recent increase in appraisal values, impacting affordability.**
 - This concern was shared by the community during the Listening Sessions held in April and June of 2023; therefore, it was a priority for the project team to address this issue within the plan. The Southeast Denton Area Plan includes a goal to *strengthen neighborhoods and housing affordability* and a variety of action steps to assist current and future residents. These include pre-approved accessory dwelling unit designs, home repair grants, establishing a Neighborhood Empowerment Zone, and coordination with Denton Central Appraisal District to ensure equitable appraisals.
- **Fears of future displacement of residents.**
 - This concern was also communicated by the residents over the last year. As explained in the bullet point above, several Southeast Denton Area Plan strategies focus on protecting the existing neighborhoods and improving affordability in order to minimize any potential displacement of residents. Additional strategies include creating overlay districts to ensure any new development is compatible with the current development scale and use and an adjustment to the Future Land Use Map to minimize the potential impacts of future development surrounding the DCTA train station. Economic strategies are also included in the plan to encourage community-serving businesses and support entrepreneurship and small businesses.
- **Although efforts to reach the community were robust, some residents and property owners stated they were not aware of the Southeast Denton Area Plan.**
 - As a community-focused plan, the project’s extensive public engagement was adapted throughout the duration of the project to reach as many residents, business owners, and other stakeholders as possible, including:
 - Mailed postcards to residents and property owners at the onset of the plan,
 - Distributed of flyers explaining the project and upcoming meetings at various locations, including area restaurants, community centers, a day care center, an area church, and salons
 - Provided monthly project updates during SEDNA meetings
 - Held community meetings within the study area (both Listening Sessions and Visioning Workshop)
 - Conducted intercept surveys at strategic locations within the project area such as La Sabrocita, MLK Jr. Recreation Center, and Veronica’s Cafe

- Published online surveys
 - Maintained a project website on Discuss Denton for the duration of the project
 - Participated in community events (pop-up tables with activities) such as Juneteenth, National Night Out, Black History Month, Back to School at MLK, Jr Recreation Center, and Hispanic Heritage Month
 - Provided regular project updates with the Planning and Zoning Commission and Steering Committee
 - Submitted press releases to Denton Record Chronicle
 - Used social media to advertise community meetings, including Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, and NextDoor
 - Posted signs for Visioning Workshop and public hearing
 - Reached out to area churches
 - Asked Steering Committee and community leaders to spread the word about the project
- Even with the engagement efforts over the last year, reevaluation and improvement is always needed to ensure effective communication. Therefore, the Southeast Denton Area Plan includes *Strategy 1.2: Create and Implement a City Communication Strategy Specific to Southeast Denton Study Area* to tailor the messages and media for residents and property owners.

At the close of the public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commissioners expressed support for the plan and encouraged staff to move quickly on accomplishing the short-term action items.

OPTIONS

1. Approve
2. Approve with conditions
3. Deny
4. Postpone Item

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended **approval** of the proposal (5-0) with an additional page depicting the preferred images from the Visual Preference Survey.

Staff recommended **approval** of the Southeast Denton Area Plan, an amendment to the Denton 2040 Comprehensive Plan, as presented.

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1 - Agenda Information Sheet
- Exhibit 2 - Draft Southeast Denton Area Plan
- Exhibit 3 - Presentation
- Exhibit 4 - Draft Ordinance

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

Prepared by:
 Julie Wyatt, AICP
 Principal Planner

Mia Hines, AICP
 Senior Planner