

SECTOR 1 SOUTH NEIGHBORHOODS SMALL AREA PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

I. Purpose

The City of Denton invites qualified consultants to submit their qualifications to develop a small area plan, which will include a comprehensive land use plan and implementation strategies, for an area within the city boundaries that is referred to “Sector 1 South Neighborhoods.” The project will be managed by the City’s Development Services Department - Long Range Planning Division.

Background

The Denton Plan 2030, the City’s comprehensive plan, recommends the creation of a small area plan to guide the physical development of the neighborhoods surrounding the University of North Texas (UNT) campus. The Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan will build on the broad goals and policies in the Denton Plan 2030 to address site-specific planning issues of the study area, and provide policy guidance for future development and investment decisions.

The Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan study area is approximately 1200 acres, and bounded on the north by Panhandle Street, on the east by Fort Worth/Carroll, and on the west and south by Bonnie Brae Street and IH-35E. A map is provided in Section VII of this document.

The flagship campus of UNT, one of the largest universities in Texas and one of the most important public research institutions in the nation, is located in the study area. Current enrollment at the UNT campus in Denton is over 36,000 students, and is projected to increase to 45,000 by 2020. For the purposes of the Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan, the study area does not include the land area or facilities that are within the UNT campus boundaries.

The Sector 1 South neighborhoods are comprised primarily of multi-family and single-family residential uses, with retail and commercial development along major roadways. The Oak Hickory and West Oak Historic Districts, the city’s most historically significant residential areas are contained in the study area. As a consequence of their proximity to the UNT campus, the single-family residential areas have been heavily impacted by traffic, parking overspills, the expansion of rental housing for students, and the university’s property acquisition for campus expansion.

The goal of the planning process is the development of a comprehensive small area plan and a clear implementation action plan that is prioritized and sequenced for the greatest effectiveness. The objectives of the planning process include:

- To establish development standards that will provide appropriate transitions in scale, use, character and intensity between the established neighborhoods and the UNT campus
- To develop design standards for the street network that will enhance the public realm and pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular circulation and connectivity
- To develop an urban design strategy to enhance the visual and physical connections between the established neighborhoods and the UNT campus
- To establish development standards and strategies to buffer and enhance the Oak Hickory and West Oak Historic Districts

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- To develop design standards for parking structures and lots, and make recommendations for a parking solution that meets demand while maintaining the property values and character of the established neighborhoods that surround the UNT campus

II. Scope of Services

The Scope of Services summarizes the services and deliverables required to complete the project. Consultants should use the information in this section as the basis for preparing their approach to the work in Section III.A.5. The scope of the project involves four phases of work as follows:

Phase 1: Inventory and Database Development

Phase 2: Community Assessment/Analyses

Phase 3: Development and Evaluation of Alternative Land Use Plans

Phase 4: Development of Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan and Implementation Strategy

Phase 1 Inventory and Database Development

A. Database Development

1. Review existing plans, including Denton Plan 2030, Planning Town-Gown Relations: An Ethnographic Study of Denton University Neighborhood District; City of Denton 2015 Mobility Plan, Update to Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkage Component of Denton Mobility Plan, UNT 2013 Campus Master Plan Update, UNT Transportation Plan, and Environmental Assessment of IH-35E.
2. Assemble existing GIS data from the City in order to update/create the following data layers: land use, street network, street conditions, street widths, traffic counts, sidewalk network, sidewalk conditions, bicycle facilities, transit lines, transit amenities, zoning, housing conditions, real estate market trends, existing and planned private and public construction projects, and environmental analyses.
3. Review data, identify gaps and areas that need updating, and focus data collection on those areas.
4. Prepare demographic and economic profiles, including population projections and trends of socio-economic variables.
5. Survey existing and planned public facilities and services to determine whether capacity problems exist and expansion is needed to accommodate growth. The following public facilities, utilities and services should be inventoried: transportation facilities, water service, sanitary sewers, storm drainage, parks and recreational facilities, police service, and fire protection. Identify opportunities for improvement or expansion for which the development potential would be constrained by public facilities and services at currently planned levels.

B. Study Input

1. Meet with Technical Advisory Committee, comprised of staff from various departments, and obtain input regarding the policy context of the project.

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2. Develop a summary report, including the delineation of key issues and land use objectives that are derived from review of past plans and meetings with City staff.
3. Prepare and execute a community outreach plan for key stakeholder members. A series of public meetings shall be held to engage the community in the planning process. The plan should include community-wide workshops and on-line engagement tools.

Phase 2 Community Assessment/Analyses

Complete a comprehensive of key issues associated with land use, transportation, urban design, parking facilities, housing, policies and regulations, and financial resources. Record collected geographic data within a geodatabase containing GIS feature classes.

A. Land Use

1. Complete assessment and parcel-by-parcel inventory of properties. Evaluate the following data categories: existing land use; ownership; parcel size; vacant land; building and property condition; adjacent use impacts; recent development trends; building height; building area; and residential density.

B. Transportation (General)

1. Evaluate street conditions throughout the study area.
2. Evaluate the functional classification of streets and street design standards in the City of Denton Mobility Plan. Determine the ability of street design standards to incorporate context sensitive solutions that enhance the public realm and improve mobility of all users.
3. Assess sidewalk conditions throughout study area.
4. Evaluate transit routes, including frequency of service, and transit amenities.
5. Evaluate bike routes and pedestrian connections throughout study area.
6. Evaluate transportation services as they relate to access for area residents, commuters, employers and customers. Analysis should include automobile, transit and non-motorized transportation options, as well as opportunities to use TSM/TDM and land use planning techniques to reduce trip generation.

C. Public Realm (IH-35E, Arterial and Collector Streets)

1. Conduct analysis of intersection treatments, pedestrian facilities, parking facilities, signage, street lights, traffic and building signage, and landscape condition.
2. Evaluate condition of utilities to determine whether capacity problems exist and improvements are needed.
3. Determine location of potential gateways for key intersections along corridors to enhance appearance and create community identity.
4. Provide recommendations for roadway design and streetscape enhancements, including pedestrian circulation system improvements; parking improvements; landscape planting; public open space; transit; bicycle amenities; street furniture; traffic and informational signage; and street and pedestrian lighting.

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D. Urban Design

1. Determine the conditions that contribute to or detract from the appearance and environmental quality of the study area, and determine means by which adverse visual conditions can be eliminated or reduced. Develop guidelines for urban design regarding: mitigation of adverse impacts of potential development on surrounding historic and traditional single-family neighborhoods; opportunities for public or private investments to improve the urban design of existing neighborhoods; public art; etc.
2. Propose an urban design strategy suited to long-term development, including recommendations for streetscape, neighborhood preservation, open space, infrastructure standards and commercial facilities.

E. Parking Facilities

1. Assess parking conditions in areas outside the boundaries of the UNT campus. Assessment will include public parking lots, private parking lots, and private and public on-street parking.
2. Evaluate design standards for parking structures and lots, and determine their ability to mitigate negative visual impacts to residential properties and streetscapes.
3. Conduct a neighborhood parking demand analysis.
4. Evaluate the feasibility of a residential parking program to help increase on-street parking for neighborhood residents.

F. Housing

1. Determine the type of housing (e.g., new housing, affordable housing, student housing, etc.) that can and should be promoted. Identify existing housing stock (including housing in historic districts and established neighborhoods) that should be protected, and indicate appropriate locations for new housing.
2. Conduct an analysis of the City of Denton Development Code, and other city regulations to monitor the conversion of single family dwellings to rental properties. Evaluate design standards pertinent to the conversion of single family dwellings to rental properties. Evaluate effectiveness of regulations pertaining to the maintenance of converted rental properties.

G. Policies and Regulations

1. Determine zoning code changes to promote mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development. Identify design standards that address the following: vehicular and pedestrian circulation; building and site signage; landscaping; parking; lighting; public open spaces; building envelopes for development parcels including height, bulk, massing, setbacks and architectural character.
2. Assess current regulations, including the City of Denton Development Code, to determine its effectiveness to guide development in a manner beneficial to the study area. Determine what changes should be considered in regulatory provisions and procedures.

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3. Review the City's past use of existing tools for economic revitalization and propose new tools or new uses of old tools to accomplish the necessary upgrades in the community.

H. Financial Resources

1. Survey existing and potential resources and/or techniques for financing capital improvements to provide a basis for assessing the financial feasibility and fiscal implications of development alternatives in the Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan.
2. List the advantages and disadvantages of various financial resources for financing public improvements. Identify the most appropriate use for each resource or technique.

I. Community Assessment/Analyses Report

1. Develop a report that summarizes the findings and analyses in Phase 2, including an evaluation of existing conditions, trends, and projections of future conditions. Identify major issues associated with land use and transportation that need to be addressed through the planning process. Define goals, objectives and policy guidelines for land use that will be used for the evaluation of the land use alternatives.
2. Make preliminary recommendations on roadway design, streetscape enhancements and zoning for major roadways in study area.
3. Prepare a draft zoning overlay district ordinance for major roadways in study area.

Phase 3 Development of Alternative Land Use Plans

A. Alternative Land Use Plans

1. Prepare development concepts, plans and maps illustrating three (3) alternative land use proposals for the planning study area. The alternatives should address: varying land use mixes and intensities, alternative local circulation, public realm improvements, urban design choices and implementation prospects. The evaluation of land use plan alternatives should consider the following: impacts on established neighborhoods, economic and market feasibility, sustainability, community character, fiscal consequences, impacts on public services and facilities, and implementation feasibility. The impacts and issues associated with each land use alternative proposal should be prioritized for the purpose of determining a preferred plan.

B. Alternative Analyses Report

1. Develop Alternative Analyses Report that describes the alternative plans, including maps, graphics, and GIS data of a minimum of three alternative future land use scenarios developed and analyzed in Phase 3. Each alternative plan will include an analysis of desirable and feasible patterns of land use.

Phase 4 Comprehensive Small Area Plan and Implementation Strategy

A. Land Use Plan

Synthesize the results of the analyses to prepare the Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan. The small area plan will include the description of the recommended land use alternative and an action plan for its implementation. The land use plan will include sections on the following: a) statement of goals and objectives; b) existing conditions; c) description and summary of

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analyses; d) analysis of alternative land use proposals; e) recommended land use alternative; f) detailed implementation strategies; and g) description of public participation and feedback involved in the planning process.

B. Implementation Strategy

Develop the implementation strategy to carry out the land use and development recommendations for the preferred land use alternative. The implementation strategies will include the following:

1. Prepare a cost breakdown of proposed improvements and an overall improvement plan identifying needed capital improvements and assigning them priority.
2. Determine the budget strategies necessary to initiate the plan.
3. Develop a financing program establishing procedures for funding public sector improvements and attracting and assisting private projects when necessary.
4. Identify federal and state funding sources that can be used to implement the recommended improvements.
5. Recommend ordinances, policies and design standards that will assist the implementation of the Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan.
6. Recommend incentives, regulations and use of zoning, subdivision, site planning or other tools to implement the urban design strategy.
7. Recommend regulatory procedures and provisions necessary to secure compliance with plan objectives and program specifications.
8. Recommend alternate approaches for encouraging quality design and layout of neighborhoods and commercial development.
9. Develop strategies for use of public improvements and private property guidelines to create a visual identity for special project sites.
10. Identify short-term projects that are capable of having early positive impact on study area.
11. Recommend a development phasing plan.

C. Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan and Implementation Strategy

1. Develop draft Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan. Provide digital files of the entire document, including graphics, and two hardcopies of the entire document, including graphics to the City of Denton.
2. Within one week of City Council approval, complete final Sector 1 South Neighborhoods Small Area Plan. Provide digital files of the entire document, including graphics, and two hardcopies of the entire document, including graphics to the City of Denton.

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3. Develop summary version of the report, with program highlights and key recommendations, for general community distribution. Provide digital files of the entire document, including graphics, and two hardcopies of the entire document, including graphics to the City of Denton.
4. Submit all GIS files illustrating the final plan as geodatabases to the City of Denton.

III. Previous Studies and Documents

The City of Denton and other organizations have completed various studies about the study area. These documents will provide a basis for the preparation of the Small Area Plan.

A partial list of documents follows:

- Denton Plan 2030, City of Denton, 2015
- Planning Town-Gown Relations: An Ethnographic Study of Denton University Neighborhood District, UNT, 2017
- 2015 Mobility Plan, City of Denton, 2016
- Update to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkage Component of the Denton Mobility Plan, City of Denton, 2012
- Oak-Hickory Historic District Ordinance and Map
- West Oak Hickory Historic District Ordinance and Map
- UNT Campus Master Plan, UNT, 2013
- UNT Transportation Plan
- Bonnie Brae Corridor Widening Project, City of Denton
- Environmental Assessment for IH-35E North Section from FM 2181 to US 380 – Denton County, Texas, TXDOT, 2011
- Fry Street Small Area Plan, City of Denton

