

Accomplishments in 2008

Overview

The past six months have been busy ones for Vision North Texas! The VNT partnership is moving ahead with steps to create **North Texas 2050**, an innovative plan that will contain both a shared vision of the region's desired future and a package of tools needed to achieve that vision. This newsletter shares some of the most notable highlights, and looks ahead to activities planned for 2008 and 2009.

Advisors

Vision North Texas now has over 70 advisors, each of whom is a leader in a public, private, academic or non-profit organization in North Texas. These leaders assist Vision North Texas by providing advice, assistance and resources; they also serve on the VNT Advisory Committee. In January, the Committee met at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, where they learned about the role this research institution plays in economic development and community revitalization. Discussions focused on VNT work underway on greenprinting and subregional workshops. In April, the Advisory Committee met at the University of Texas at Arlington's Fort Worth Higher Education Center. This session included presentations and discussion of green building and green infrastructure initiatives.

Workshops

VNT has now completed the set of four subregional workshops begun with the Southeastern and Southwestern Subregional Workshops last year. A Northeastern Subregional Workshop was held at Justin Wakeland High School in Frisco on April 19th. This workshop addressed parts of Dallas and Denton counties, and all of Rockwall, Hunt and Collin counties. Participants created scenarios that accommodated growth in patterns reflecting such themes as "Efficient Growth through a Holistic Approach" and "On the Right Track". In addition, they recommended actions to collect, analyze and share regional examples of sustainable development and green building.

A Northwestern Subregional Workshop was held at Northwest ISD High School in Justin on May 31st. This workshop covered parts of Tarrant, Denton and Parker counties, and all of Wise County. The themes for these scenarios included "Live Life Linked" and "Where the West Goes Green". Sustainable economic development was a special focus for this discussion.

The results of these sessions are now being studied and compared to the scenarios created for the central 10 counties of the region during the very first Vision North Texas workshop in 2005. The combination of ideas from all subregional workshops will update the results of the 2005 regional workshop. Impacts of these development scenarios on issues such as vehicle travel, water and energy demand, walkability and development intensity within the region will be evaluated this summer.

Vision North Texas is a private-public partnership designed to increase awareness about the growth expected in North Texas and to involve people and organizations in initiatives that accommodate this growth successfully.



Northeastern Subregional Workshop



Northwestern Subregional Workshop



Greenprinting

Greenprinting combines detailed data with stakeholder input to create a set of priorities for regional land conservation. An extensive set of data sources has been identified and much of this data has been secured. Also, stakeholders have reached agreement on a preliminary list of eight greenprint goals for North Texas. A *2007 Greenprint Results Report* is available.

Research

The research to support *North Texas 2050* began this spring and is continuing through the summer. It assesses the implications of key issues for the region's vitality and sustainability. Among the findings are:

- National research shows that sprawling development patterns contribute to obesity. Dallas County residents are 3% less likely to be obese than the national average, while Parker County residents are 4% more likely to be obese.
- North Texas could meet all of its electricity demands for the next 15 years through energy efficiency, onsite renewable energy and expanded demand response initiatives.
- North Texas is more affordable than the nation's larger regions – New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. But the average salary for a North Texas police officer in 2007 was about 80% of the salary needed to afford the region's median-priced home.

Preliminary Greenprinting Goals

- Goal A: Provide trail connections that people can use for recreation and travel between desired destinations.
- Goal B: Foster new opportunities for recreation, access and parks.
- Goal C: Protect and enhance existing ecosystems.
- Goal D: Restore vital ecosystems.
- Goal E: Preserve the assets that define "character of place" for the region and its communities.
- Goal F: Protect water quality and promote natural storm water management.
- Goal G: Sustain the region's watersheds, waterways and water resources.
- Goal H: Use natural and land assets to improve public health.

Looking Ahead – 2008 and 2009

The rest of 2008 will focus on research and stakeholder dialogue on key issues for *North Texas 2050*. Vision North Texas expects to complete a draft of *North Texas 2050* in June 2009. Debate, refinement and action on this proposal will continue through the end of 2009.

Regional Summit

The next major stakeholder event for Vision North Texas will be a Regional Summit. This one-day summit meeting will be held in Arlington on Thursday, December 9, 2008. The summit will include presentations from national leaders and release of new research on North Texas. Participants will agree on the general direction for policies in *North Texas 2050* and on the top priorities for action tools.

Vision Statement

The vision statements and preferred growth scenarios that stakeholders created at the VNT workshops are the basis for concepts illustrating the most desirable North Texas region in 2050. These concepts will be examined along with the existing plans of cities, counties and service providers. The result will be proposals for a regional vision, one or more scenarios showing the preferred patterns for future growth, and an integrated regional infrastructure framework.

Action Package

Practical tools and techniques are essential if decision-makers and investors are to make choices that lead to the region's preferred future. "Best practices" for stormwater management and energy conservation in buildings are being investigated now. Action tools will be proposed at the Regional Summit so they can be developed in conjunction with the Vision Statement.

To Stay Involved

The Vision North Texas website contains more information on the accomplishments described in this brief newsletter. You can use the website to sign up for our email list if you wish to receive periodic electronic updates as the project moves forward. In addition, the website offers easy ways for you to register as a volunteer or to become a sponsor of Vision North Texas. Go to www.visionnorthtexas.org to help create the best possible future for North Texas.