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.
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.
Background
When Vision North Texas began in 2004, it had a single focus: hold a one-day regional visioning workshop with diverse stakeholders from the 10 central counties in the North Texas region. The three Charter Sponsors – the Urban Land Institute’s North Texas District Council, the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the University of Texas at Arlington – and the Planning Committee recruited additional sponsors, secured resources and volunteers and designed a session that was held on April 25, 2005 at the UTA University Center.

The results of this workshop were very positive. Workshop groups described alternative scenarios that accommodated the regional growth projected by 2030. When these options were evaluated, they showed notable advantages over the pattern of development currently forecast for the region. In addition, workshop participants were enthusiastic about continuing the dialogue begun at the workshop. As a result, the Charter Sponsors chose to create a Phase 2 for Vision North Texas (VNT).

Phase 2 Initiatives
The second phase of Vision North Texas began in October 2005 and will wrap up at the end of September 2007. It has been directed by a 12-member Management Committee representing the private, public and academic sectors that continue to partner for Vision North Texas. The work plan focuses on four initiatives:

1. **Education & Outreach.** Educate regional residents, business leaders, elected & appointed officials to raise awareness about the growth anticipated in the region and the choices for accommodating it in a way that is successful and sustainable.

2. **Involvement.** Involve more people in this discussion of the choices available to our region and the application of the Ten Principles of Development Excellence.

3. **Research into Development Excellence Best Practices.** Research the implications of these choices and the tools we can use to achieve a desired choice; make available and celebrate the best practices for development excellence in the region.

4. **Policy Decision.** Decide whether to create a preferred regional scenario and, if so, what level of detail it should have and what role it should play.

This report highlights the results of efforts by the many people and organizations that have contributed to the successes and accomplishments of Vision North Texas during the past two years.
Leadership
Vision North Texas benefits from the involvement of advisors from all sectors and all parts of the region. These advisors help VNT by providing expert advice and sharing VNT with particular groups and areas of the region. As of September 10, 2007, these Advisors are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terri Adkisson</td>
<td>Adkisson Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Allen</td>
<td>ULI North Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Bancroft</td>
<td>Conbrio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy B. Bell</td>
<td>City of Crandall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian J. L. Berry</td>
<td>UT Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Bowman</td>
<td>League of Women Voters, Arlington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Strain Burk</td>
<td>City of Lancaster</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Campbell</td>
<td>City of Denton</td>
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<td>Rene Castilla</td>
<td>DCCCD</td>
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<td>Mayor Robert Cluck</td>
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<td>Fernando Costa</td>
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<td>Peter Coughlin</td>
<td>Southside at Lamar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Dailey</td>
<td>Downtown Fort Worth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Davis</td>
<td>Fort Worth National Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Day</td>
<td>Broadway Eye Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jyl De Haven</td>
<td>Arbiter Group</td>
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<td>Betsy del Monte</td>
<td>AIA Dallas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Eastland</td>
<td>NCTCOG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Councilmember Sal Espino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruben E. Esquivel</td>
<td>UT Southwestern Medical Center</td>
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<td>Robert Folzenlogen</td>
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<td>Judge Jim Foster</td>
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<td>Darrell Frederick</td>
<td>Verizon Communications</td>
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<td>Robert Galecke</td>
<td>University of Dallas</td>
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<td>Ed Garza</td>
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<td>Donald Gatzke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vergel Gay</td>
<td>University of North Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annette Griffin</td>
<td>Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Guyton</td>
<td>Oncor Electric Delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glen Hahn</td>
<td>Greater F. W. Real Estate Council</td>
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<td>Nancy Hardie</td>
<td>City of Farmers Branch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Herzog</td>
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<td>Steve Houser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyssa Jenkens</td>
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<td>Jill Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Kawecki</td>
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Advisors (continued)

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<tr>
<td>Paris Rutherford</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Sharp</td>
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<td>Mayor Mike Simpson</td>
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<td>Michael Sorrell</td>
<td>Paul Quinn College</td>
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<td>Nathaniel Tate</td>
<td>Nathan Lawrence Group</td>
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<td>Bob Terrell</td>
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<td>John Terrell</td>
<td>DFW International Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison J.H. Thompson</td>
<td>City of Cedar Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Turner</td>
<td>Greater Dallas Planning Council &amp; City of Plano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Vargas</td>
<td>City of Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Walsh</td>
<td>ULI North Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Walz</td>
<td>Vision North Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Wells</td>
<td>Dallas County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commissioner Cynthia White</td>
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<td>Ron Whitehead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Libby Willis</td>
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<td>Commissioner Jerry Wimpee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Young</td>
<td>ULI Young Leaders</td>
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Public Partners

These are the cities and counties that have been partners and participants in Vision North Texas Phase 2.

- Dallas County
- Ellis County
- Rockwall County
- Tarrant County
- Town of Addison
- City of Allen
- City of Arlington
- City of Azle
- City of Benbrook
- City of Burleson
- City of Carrollton
- City of Cedar Hill
- City of Cleburne
- City of Dallas
- City of Denton
- City of DeSoto
- City of Farmers Branch
- City of Forest Hill
- City of Fort Worth
- City of Frisco
- City of Garland
- City of Grand Prairie
- City of Greenville
- City of Hurst
- City of Irving
- City of Lancaster
- City of Lewisville
- City of Little Elm
- City of McKinney
- City of Mesquite
- City of Plano
- City of Red Oak
- City of Richardson
- City of Rowlett
- City of Royse City
- City of Southlake
- City of The Colony
- City of Waxahachie
- City of Weatherford

Private and Non-Profit Sponsors

These are the private companies and non-profit organizations that have been sponsors of Vision North Texas Phase 2.

Charter Sponsors

- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- University of Texas at Arlington
- Urban Land Institute, North Texas District Council

Titanium Sponsors

- Urban Land Institute
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Platinum Sponsors
✓ Harold Simmons Foundation
✓ Hillwood Development Corporation

Gold Sponsors
✓ AIA Fort Worth
✓ Dean International, Inc.
✓ Reprographics Fort Worth, Inc.
✓ TIG Real Estate Services, Inc.
✓ Tarrant Regional Water District

Silver Sponsors
✓ AIA Dallas
✓ DART
✓ Greater Fort Worth Real Estate Council
✓ Walsh Ranch

Bronze Sponsors
✓ Connemara Conservancy
✓ Dunaway Associates
✓ EDAW
✓ Greater Dallas Planning Council

Bronze Sponsors (continued)
✓ Greater Fort Worth Builders Association
✓ Greater Fort Worth Commercial Real Estate Women
✓ Inclusive Communities Project
✓ Komatsu Architecture
✓ North Texas Commission, North Texas Future Fund
✓ Turner, Collie & Braden

Workshop Sponsors
✓ Dunkin, Sefko and Associates
✓ Gallagher
✓ Halff Associates
✓ Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
✓ Tamer Partners Corporation

Activity Sponsors
✓ Lancaster Chamber of Commerce
✓ Lancaster Economic Development Corporation

Initiative 1: Education & Outreach
The issues addressed by Vision North Texas have been shared with numerous organizations and individuals in the North Texas region since the initial workshop was held in April 2005. Groups that have received presentations are listed below and on the following pages.

<table>
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<td>09/16/05</td>
<td>Texas Municipal League Region VII Leadership</td>
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<td>Leadership Fort Worth</td>
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<table>
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<td>APA, Annual Conference, Regionalism Presentation</td>
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<td>Women’s Transportation Seminar (WTS) National Conference</td>
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<td>City Council, City of Euless</td>
<td>07/11/06</td>
<td>City of Frisco Planning &amp; Zoning Commission</td>
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<td>07/13/06</td>
<td>ULI National</td>
<td>07/14/06</td>
<td>Apartment Association of Greater Fort Worth</td>
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<td>10/19/06</td>
<td>Texas APA</td>
<td>12/12/06</td>
<td>Texas Association of Community Development Corporations</td>
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<td>City of Dallas Urban Forestry Committee</td>
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<td>01/18/07</td>
<td>UTA School of Urban &amp; Regional Affairs</td>
<td>01/24/07</td>
<td>ULI North Texas District Council</td>
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### Initiative 2: Involvement

Major activities to involve additional stakeholders in the Vision North Texas process have included a Leadership Summit for top elected and appointed public officials, two Subregional Workshops, special ‘mini-workshops’ with non-profit partner organizations and initiation of the City Futures Forum. Key aspects of these activities are described below.

#### Leadership Summit

The Vision North Texas Leadership Summit was held on September 25, 2006 at the Arlington Convention Center. It was designed to bring together public sector leaders from the North Texas region who face common challenges and opportunities because of their communities’ character and location within the region.
Approximately 100 elected and appointed officials participated in the event, which was co-chaired by then-Dallas County Judge Margaret Keliher and Arlington Mayor Robert Cluck. William H. Hudnut III, Senior Research Fellow at Urban Land Institute, provided the keynote presentation. He urged participants to maintain the vitality of the region’s core and inner tier communities while creating diverse neighborhoods in the region’s growing outer communities. Judge Keliher and Mayor Cluck were joined by Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief and Cedar Hill Mayor Rob Franke in giving a North Texas response to the issues raised by Mayor Hudnut.

Eight workshop groups allowed participants to meet with representatives from other similar communities. Four groups focused on the Core and Inner Tier Communities, two groups addressed Outer Tier Communities and two groups considered Separate Communities. Each group discussed regional issues and the specific concerns of their communities. They supported the use of the Principles of Development Excellence to guide growth. The workshop groups recommended priorities and action steps for their communities and the region. Some highlights of these recommendations are:

- **Core/Inner Tier Communities** contain both stable, established neighborhoods and recently-redeveloped mixed use areas. Participants noted that “the development/redevelopment process never ends. We are in a process of continuous reinvention.” Top issues include: managing these changing development patterns; maintaining community character while responding to the demands of increasingly diverse residents; and addressing health, education, public safety and culture in order to provide a high quality of life. Among the contributions these communities can make to the region is “they can use their experiences to articulate strategies for quality growth – both their success stories and the ‘things we’d do differently’”.

- **Outer Tier Communities** are challenged to balance action to serve new urban development with efforts to maintain their traditional “small town” character. Their top issues include: planning and serving new urban and suburban areas; making their new development sustainable; and using their leadership skills and “strong problem-solving attitudes” to address regional issues and be stewards of resources. These communities can assist the region by providing leadership for cooperative regional visioning.
communications and consensus-building.

- **Separate Communities** include cities and small towns that are still geographically distinct from the region’s central urban area. Top issues include: paying for growth and infrastructure; creating a “regional mindset” to overcome unhealthy competition among the region’s cities; and retaining their communities’ individual personalities. If they retain these personalities, they will assist the region by adding to the diversity of community choice available to future residents.

Following reports from each workshop group, the Summit participants used keypads to respond individually to a series of questions about priority issues and action after the Summit. Water issues ranked highest for the region, followed by transportation, education, air quality and economic competitiveness. Participants voiced a high level of commitment to continuing work with Vision North Texas and to involving more regional leaders in this partnership.

**Southeastern Subregional Workshop**

Vision North Texas held its first subregional workshop on January 27, 2007 at Lancaster High School. Participants represented diverse stakeholder interests from all parts of this subregion. They worked in 10 small groups to identify goals for the region, discuss specific objectives for this subregional area and map out preferred development patterns. This workshop also included initial discussion of the goals that will shape the Greenprint Model for North Texas.

The area of focus for this workshop is shown on the next page. It included southern Dallas County, most of Ellis County and all of Kaufman County. The study area covers approximately 1,900 square miles of territory. In 1960, this Southeastern Subregional area had approximately 550,000 residents. By 2005, its population had grown to 1.3 million and jobs located in this area totaled 505,000. The NCTCOG 2030 Forecast projects that this subregional area will have 2 million residents by 2030. In addition, 950,000 jobs are expected to be located here in 2030. The location of growth according to this Forecast is depicted in the Lego® display on the following page.
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Four alternative levels of household and employment growth were used by the ten workshop groups. These alternatives were based on the set of regional alternatives developed at the initial Vision North Texas workshop and by work of the NCTCOG staff. The Southeastern Subregion’s growth was evaluated for each of these nineteen alternatives, and the highest and lowest levels among the alternatives were determined. The workshop groups were assigned levels of household and employment growth as shown in the chart on the right. Each group was asked to develop a ‘headline’ summarizing their alternative, to establish overall goals or principles for the subregion and then to locate growth according to those principles. The ten group headlines and key concepts are summarized on the following pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Groups 1, 5, 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Groups 2, 6</td>
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</table>

Scenes from the Workshop

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.
Group 1

The group’s headline is: “Nodes and Corridors: In order to preserve environmental assets, the southeast region will develop by creating growth opportunities in nodes and corridors fed by public transportation and by encouraging high density in mixed use settings.” The top issues this group identified for the subregion are:

- Accommodate diversity in economic development
- Protect environmental quality

Among the concepts guiding the group’s development scenario is an emphasis on the value of Cedar Valley Community College and the University of North Texas to the area’s economic growth and community appeal.
Group 2

The group’s headline is: “Development Nodes and Preservation Corridors”. The group’s development scenario is guided by four key design concepts:

- High intensity – in mixed use development, providing housing for people of varied incomes, and enabling the preservation of natural and historic assets
- Compatible growth guidelines – allowing communities to be proactive in building infrastructure
- Future transportation system characteristics – that integrate rail systems with development and provide for ‘quiet zones’
- Attracting new business and residents – by an enhanced sense of community and access to open space, transportation, jobs and services.
Group 3

The group’s headline is: “Sustainable economic development and redevelopment to retain quality of life and livability of our communities”. The top issues this group addressed in its vision are:

- Green areas and hike & bike trails
- The existing and planned DART rail system
- Prison areas
- The role of a cargo airport
- An extension of the DART line along Lancaster Road to the BNSF Railroad

Among the concepts guiding the group’s development scenario is the idea of “low-density sustainability”, with conservation of open space, preservation of floodplain and urban forest and regulation of unincorporated areas.
Group 4

The group’s headline is: “More intense makes sense!” The top issues this group identified for the subregion are economic development and quality of life. The group concluded that the area’s unique niches related to its educational facilities and the manufacturing/logistics centers here. Natural resources noted as part of this group’s development scenario include:

- The Great Trinity Forest
- Prairie Land
- The Escarpment
- The overall Trinity River Corridor
- Cedar Hill State Park.
Group 5

The group’s headline is: “Healthy and safe rail-oriented growth”. The top issues this group identified for the subregion are water, transportation and air quality. The group defined an urban form that focuses on:

- Street design
- Pedestrian scale
- Parks
- Safe areas
- Community responsibility.

The group found that this development scenario was beneficial because: it allows the area to sustain growth; the natural areas will improve livability; and the increased rail system will help improve air quality.
Group 6

The group’s headline is: “Path to sustainability”. One of the top issues this group identified for the subregion is the need for visionary planning. The group defined this subregion’s competencies and unique niches as:

- Life style centers
- Open space
- Natural resources
- Undeveloped land
- A proactive mentality
- Models to plan for growth.

The group developed recommendations for protection of heritage and habitat, for development in areas of high and low intensity, for transportation facilities and for steps to attract new businesses and jobs.
Group 7

The group’s headline is: “Growth and transportation while conserving our natural resources and open spaces”. The group described its subregional form as:

- Promoting walkability
- Encouraging the use of bikes
- Maintaining and respecting the area’s land and character
- Offering mixed income housing
- Having sensitivity to school growth
- Providing for health care facilities
- Locating high impact industry away from residential, water sources and natural areas
- Anticipating infrastructure needs
- Locating campus-style development further from the urban cores
- Resulting in a cluster of interdependent businesses
- Offering employment diversity.
Group 8

The group’s headline is: “Conserve our natural resources and enhance our quality of life by integrating live/work/play/educate”. Among the concepts guiding the group’s development scenario are:

- The use of single-loaded roads along open spaces
- Consolidated open space
- Saving resources to save and improve the area’s quality of life
- Advocate and educate residents about the benefits of consolidating “live” and “work”.

They discussed the challenges facing the subregion, including the need for more educational facilities and the transition of small towns into larger suburban cities.
Group 9

The group’s headline is: “Mejor Tierra – A Better Earth”. The top issues this group identified for the subregion (and the region as a whole) are zoning and land use practices and utility infrastructure. The group recommended:

- Education to change traditional methods of planning and decision-making
- The use of working urban farms to preserve open green space
- Building transportation networks for modes other than cars
- Connecting existing development and future growth nodes to the natural environment.
Group 10

The group’s headline is: “Self-supporting, sustainable exurban nodal development linked by commuter rail”. The group believed this development should be 50% in Dallas and 50% in exurban areas. Top issues identified by this group are:

- Housing supply, mix and affordability
- Air quality
- Community character
- Cultural assets
- Economic competition

Among the group’s recommendations are that expansion/growth should be accompanied by a reduction or mitigation of air pollution. They noted the importance of maintaining community character or ‘flavor’ as decided by residents.
Southwestern Subregional Workshop

A second subregional was held on Saturday, June 30, 2007, at Aledo High School. This subregional workshop was done in collaboration with AIA Fort Worth as part of this AIA Chapter’s project to celebrate the 150th anniversary of AIA. This AIA 150 project – “Strategies for Growth: Empowering Outlying Communities” – focuses on assistance to communities in the outlying part of the region that are just now beginning to experience urban/suburban growth pressures.

The area of focus for this workshop is shown on the map below. It included all of Hood and Johnson counties, southern Parker County, a portion of Palo Pinto County (City of Mineral Wells), and southwestern Tarrant County. The study area covers approximately 2,086 square miles of territory.

The NCTCOG 2030 Forecast’s allocation of households and employment is shown on the following page.
NCTCOG 2030 Forecast for the Southwestern Subregion

Participants in this workshop divided into eight study groups and followed a process similar to the one used at the Southeastern Subregional Workshop. Each group was asked to develop a ‘headline’ summarizing their alternative, to establish overall goals or principles for the subregion and then to locate growth according to those principles. The eight group headlines and key concepts are summarized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Groups 1 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Groups 2 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups 3 &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups 4 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group 1

The group’s headline is: “Urban nodes win the day”. The group’s emphasis is described by three principles of development:

- Work, shop and live opportunities
- Living choices
- Utilize existing infrastructures

Among the concepts guiding the group’s development scenario is an emphasis on expansion of the existing transportation infrastructures, by utilizing current rail, plus new corridors and existing roadways, in order to expand public transportation. The group incorporated AIA’s *Principles of Livable Communities* in their development scenario.
Group 2

The group’s headline is: “Wide open spaces: economic development opportunity and quality of life”. The top issues this group identified for the subregion are water supply and transportation. The group’s growth principles for this subregion address:

- Quality of life
- Preservation of natural areas
- Master planning
- Environmentally conscious development
- Concentrating growth in existing transportation corridors to preserve open space.

The group recommended strategies to successfully add intensity to existing development, provide for new low intensity development and attract new businesses.
Group 3

The group’s headline is: “Smart growth along transit corridors through preservation/conservation of natural/cultural resources”. The group defined this set of growth principles for the southwest region:

- Cluster housing
- High proportion of protected green space
- Planned Development – incentives for developers to move away from simple zoned subdivisions
- Mixed use development
- Minimize impervious area
- Preserve undeveloped land surrounding water bodies
- Development regulations – ordinances that lead to ‘optimum’ development (best practices’
- New commuter rail corridors
- Infill development
- High density retirement communities.
Group 4

The group’s headline is: “Growth in green: path to the future”. Among the top issues this group identified for the subregion are:

- Attracting a knowledge base to the area
- Keeping access to the open land and gorgeous countryside
- Persuading folks to support environmental issues

The group noted the Barnett Shale and the area’s diverse topography as the best natural features and recommended that the area develop in a way that respects natural features.
Group 5

The group’s headline is: “Preserving the best of the West through transportation-focused development”. The group felt that this subregion’s most important contribution to the region comes from the large quantity of natural undeveloped open space, the amount of land available for recreation and the area’s western cultural resources. The concepts guiding the group’s development scenario are:

- The need to address threats to open space and western cultural resources
- Provide for movement of people, goods and services
- Water and air [quality] management.
Group 6

The group’s headline is: “Transit-linked employment anchors”. The group proposed that the areas with dense existing development should be made more attractive as a way to keep people from moving out to develop vacant land, thus losing the area’s original attractiveness.

Recommendations to achieve the headline include:
- Transit-oriented employment centers or anchors
- Use of existing freight rail lines for transit
- Concentrate employment intensity inside a future loop road (which locates most of this growth in Tarrant County)
- Provide commuter rail service to Benbrook and outlying areas
- Increase bus services in concert with rail expansion.
Group 7

The group’s headline is: “Preserving rural character with nodal development”. The top issues this group identified for the subregion are:

- Quality holistic infrastructure that balances natural and man-made contributions
- Human health and quality of life

Among the concepts guiding the group’s development scenario are the recognition of the importance of the Barnett Shale to the region’s future development patterns and the need for water, roads and other infrastructure. The group recommended that growth should be concentrated along existing corridors and that the area should be a worldwide example and a leader in planning for growth. A number of specific community design strategies were proposed, such as the use of green roofs on big box stores and action to inspire quality development.
Group 8

The group’s headline is: “Rural character, city living: development, transportation, open space”. The group noted that this subregion offers inexpensive, uncongested land and the potential for development along transportation corridors. Its attractions include the small town culture, the school systems and the easy commute into Fort Worth. Challenges include urban sprawl, keeping open space and providing infrastructure for water and sewer.

Recommendations to achieve the group’s vision are:

- Preserve creek and river corridors as open space
- Preserve and enrich the area’s existing character
- Support more compact development, so there is less focus on long distance travel to meet daily needs
- Seek transportation support in the Legislature
- Adhere to development excellence and AIA livability principles.
Special Sessions

A simplified template of the regional visioning workshop was developed for use with individual stakeholder organizations. These ‘mini-workshops’ were designed to allow the VNT presentation and interactive exercise to be used as part of an organization’s own meeting or at a special meeting. Design of these workshops was supported by a Community Action Grant received from the Urban Land Institute. They were conducted in partnership with organizations that requested this collaboration with Vision North Texas.

Greater Fort Worth Real Estate Council

The Greater Fort Worth Real Estate Council conducted a Vision North Texas ‘mini-workshop’ at their meeting held on February 27, 2006 at the Fort Worth Club. Vision North Texas leaders presented the overall challenges facing the region and managed the workshop process; volunteers served as group facilitators and recorders. Attendees divided into four groups to discuss principles for future regional growth and to use a simplified version of the VNT Lego© exercise to depict preferred growth patterns.

The first group’s presentation highlighted a “$10 per gallon gas model”:
- Putting employment and housing together to avoid congestion
- Proposing a 30-day moratorium on vehicle travel in the region
- Focusing on centers with infrastructure and transit

The second group’s presentation highlighted “a non-concentrated approach”:
- Follow transit corridors and emphasize rail
- Downtowns will be employment centers
- But people want to live away from the CBD’s
- Change focus to get off the bus and onto the rail

The third group’s presentation highlighted “transportation out west”:
- The key thing is transportation, particularly light rail
- We envision growth along I-35
- Change public policy north of Fort Worth to allow increased density
- Key to all development is infrastructure and transportation

The fourth group’s presentation highlighted “following the path of least resistance”:
- Employment will follow existing transportation corridors
We allow housing to grow and follow employment
We envision new light rail going west toward Weatherford – or maybe from Weatherford back to the east!
‘Seed’ the rural/suburban areas to allow growth
Build on existing smaller communities

This mini-workshop highlighted these ideas:
- The “Ten Principles of Development Excellence” were generally accepted.
- The pattern of growth and infrastructure to the west of Fort Worth will be important to the region’s future. This area is a good candidate for planning according to these principles.
- There is support for more intensive development in downtown Fort Worth and at transit-oriented locations.
- Most groups agreed with the concept of locating jobs and housing close together as a way to reduce traffic congestion.
- Several groups were interested in supporting the existing smaller communities, and seeing growth that preserved their character.
- Three issues were emphasized that will affect our region’s future urban form but that are bigger than the region. These should be considered in the Vision North Texas process.
  - The price of gasoline
  - The location of the Barnett Shale
  - The potential Trans-Texas Corridor

Apartment Association of Tarrant County

The Apartment Association of Tarrant County conducted a Vision North Texas (VNT) exercise as part of their meeting held on July 14, 2006. Attendees grouped together to discuss principles for future regional growth and to use a simplified version of the VNT Lego© exercise to depict preferred growth patterns.

The group defined three guiding issues that shaped their allocation of population and
employment:
- Transportation, to include: DFW Airport, State Highways 121 and 360 as well as extended rail service to the City of Weatherford.
- Major Landmarks and Attractions, to include: Trinity River, Dallas Cowboys Stadium (new), Downtowns and the concept of mixed-use town squares.
- Major Institutions, to include: Universities and Hospitals
- The group also considered undeveloped land, land for corporations, diverse demographics, availability of water, and more growth to the southern part of the region. The group suggested that the location of companies such as Wal-Mart and Sonic in addition to roads and schools are influential in guiding development.

The Headline “All Aboard”, developed by the group reflects the primary intent of their scenario.
Transportation (highways & transit) will be a large driving force in future growth patterns. In addition, the group recognized that rail service is key to development and should be expanded to the western and southern portions of the region. Group members supported more intensive development at transit-oriented locations. Also, they agreed with the concept of locating jobs and housing close together as a way to reduce traffic congestion.

Leadership Fort Worth
A mini-workshop was also held with Leadership Fort Worth in November 2005. Detailed results of this session are not available.

City Futures Forum
The City Futures Forum includes senior professional staff from those cities and counties that are partners in Vision North Texas. These include city managers, assistant city managers, planning directors and economic development directors. The first forum session was held on Thursday, April 26, 2007 at NCTCOG. The session:
- Updated these professionals on recent Vision North Texas progress, including the Southeastern Subregional Workshop and the Greenprinting Initiative;
- Discussed the current ‘working definitions’ of regional community form types and their application to particular communities;
- Reviewed the Leadership Summit’s recommendations;
- Sought advice on priorities among the Leadership Summit recommendations and action steps to carry out these priorities;
- Sought feedback and advice on future Community Type Discussions; and
- Invited their recommendations and involvement in future Vision North Texas activities.

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This discussion informed the current community type definitions and application that are described in greater detail as part of the Vision North Texas research initiatives.

**Initiative 3: Research into Development Excellence Best Practices**

The research agenda for Vision North Texas began with a lengthy list of possible research projects. The VNT Advisory and Management Committees recognized that the actual research accomplished would depend on the level of available resources. The research projects with progress are summarized below.

**Project 1: Community Form Types**

Vision North Texas recognizes that communities in similar circumstances and facing similar issues may benefit from dialogue, sharing of resources and collaborative action. To begin these discussions, a set of ‘community form types’ have been defined and the cities within the region have been evaluated to determine which form type best describes their current character. These form types were used in the 2006 Leadership Summit and were reviewed again with city staff in the 2007 City Futures Forum. Leaders agreed that such community type dialogues would be valuable to the region.

The current description of community types, discussed below, was applied to individual cities within the region based on research and advice from community representatives related to:

- The community’s extent of urbanization
- The time period when most of the community’s development occurred, as reflected by the age of its housing stock and other factors
- Whether the community is land-locked or can grow through annexation
- Its proximity to the central cities of Dallas and Fort Worth
- The community’s relative focus on expansion and ‘greenfield’ development; or on redevelopment and reuse of previously-developed areas
- The community’s concern about retention of a distinctive or historic character, or its attention to creating an identity for itself.

The map on the following page shows the current application of these community types to the North Texas region. These groupings will be used for future Vision North Texas research and to structure future leadership sessions within the region. These sessions may result in agreement about a collaborative research or action agenda for the communities of a particular type.

**Core Areas**

These are the oldest parts of the urban area and were largely developed before World War II. They are recognized by their historic character and are the location of many of the region’s major cultural, educational and civic institutions. They include the central parts of the region’s
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two major cities, Dallas and Fort Worth, as well as some smaller communities that are completely surrounded by these two cities.

**Inner Tier Communities**

These communities include most of the areas where development occurred between the end of World War II and the early 1990’s. They are largely suburban cities that grew very rapidly; for this reason, many of their neighborhoods and shopping areas are similar and there are fewer distinctive community assets than in communities that grew over a longer period of time. Most of them are surrounded by other cities and can no longer grow through annexation. The outer parts of Fort Worth and Dallas fit in this community type, as do many of the region’s other large cities such as Garland, Arlington, Plano and Hurst.

**Outer Tier Communities**

The outer tier communities are the latest communities to experience extensive suburban growth. Located further from the historic cores of the region, these communities typically have a significant amount of developable land remaining in their jurisdiction; they are generally still able to grow through annexation. Much of their development has occurred in the past two decades. Frisco, Cedar Hill, Southlake and Benbrook are examples of these communities.

**Separate Communities**

The communities in this group are still largely separated from the region’s central urban fabric by agricultural or rural lands or open spaces. Some of them, such as Greenville and Mineral Wells, have historic cores because they have long served as the center for local agriculture or industry. These communities are facing challenges related to new suburban growth and increasing connection to the central part of the region, as well as concerns about retaining the vitality and character of their older developed areas.

**Rural / Unincorporated Areas**

These areas are outside the region’s incorporated cities and towns. They may support agricultural activities or may be experiencing suburban growth in special districts. Since they are not incorporated, they have fewer tools available to support quality growth and provide infrastructure and public services over the long term.

**Project 2: VNT Research Collaborative**

The University of Texas at Arlington has convened a research collaborative to support Vision North Texas. Other academic partners include the Texas A&M Dallas Center and the Texas Water Resources Institute.

The collaborative has submitted several research proposals for state and federal funding, which are still under review. They include Trinity River Corridor project inventories (Office of the...
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In addition, the collaborative has drafted a “Resource Management Master Planning” preamble aimed at local jurisdictions in which reservoir and other water impoundments are being proposed. This is expected to be a new strategy aimed at aiding jurisdictions impacted by new impoundments. The collaborative sees this as increasingly significant as the water issue expands in North Texas, and the rest of the state, and it is an ideal fit for the research interests and talents of the research collaborative.

The VNT research collaborative, through the Texas A&M-Dallas Center is conducting research on water quality and water demand in McKinney as the city expands to its build-out population. The research will investigate the connections between growth strategies and water use. Other North Texas communities may become involved in similar efforts.

Lastly, graduate research assistants in landscape architecture at UT Arlington are creating a “hot link” list of environmental organizations for inclusion on the VNT web page.

**Project 3: Greenprinting**

Greenprinting is a tool developed by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) that can help communities make informed decisions about land conservation priorities. Most communities have limited resources, so determining the highest priority lands to protect is important. Based on Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling, Greenprinting provides a systematic approach for identifying currently unprotected areas that offer the highest conservation benefits based on locally identified priorities. Using Greenprinting, communities can protect their most cherished landscapes — the drinking water supply, wilderness habitat, productive farmland, or the best opportunity for new parks.

Through the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Vision North Texas has entered into a contract with TPL to provide greenprinting as part of VNT. This initiative will produce two key products:

- A “Greenprint Model Framework” that is a computer-based tool for analyzing land conservation, park and open space issues for all 16 counties of the North Texas region; and
- A “SE Subregional Greenprint” that assembles and evaluates the data for the southeastern part of the region (all or parts of Dallas, Ellis and Kaufman counties).

After this work is complete, the framework and greenprint will be transferred from TPL to the North Central Texas Council of Governments so they can be used in a wide range of regional and local planning and development processes.

The VNT Greenprint project began with stakeholder discussions at the Southeastern Subregional Workshop in January 2007. All ten discussion groups defined priorities for land conservation in the subregion and the entire North Texas area. The set of top goals developed through this workshop are:
• Provide connectivity through trails
• Create new opportunities for recreation access and parks
• Protect habitat
• Preserve sense of place and cultural assets
• Minimize flooding impacts
• Protect water quality and water supply
• Improve air quality

For each of these broad goals, more specific implementation techniques were suggested by the stakeholders. Each discussion group also identified priority land conservation areas on its subregional map and considered them as they placed the Lego®s representing anticipated growth.

Technical work is underway now to assemble computerized data that will be used to map the areas and features related to each of these goals.

**Input & Involvement**

This VNT greenprinting process includes three levels of input and involvement that build on the goals identified in the January workshop.

**Vision North Texas Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee receives reports and presentations on the greenprinting initiative at its regular quarterly meetings. During the Greenprinting process, individual advisors also serve on the two groups described below.

**Regional Ecosystem Task Force**

The North Texas Regional Ecosystem Task Force (RETF) represents the diverse range of stakeholders who live and work in North Central Texas. The group ensures that conservation goals and objectives reflecting the entire North Central Texas region are appropriately represented in the computerized Greenprint model. In addition to its work on the VNT greenprinting initiative, this task force will serve as the forum for discussion of additional natural resource issues as part of the overall Vision North Texas project and other Center of Development Excellence initiatives such as the creation of a regional ecological framework.

The RETF guides and advises the Greenprint process. It is responsible for analyzing the results of the public workshop and creating a set of goals and criteria for the Greenprint model that accurately reflect the interests of communities and stakeholders throughout the North Central
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**Greenprinting Technical Advisory Team (TAT)**

This group works very closely with NCTCOG and TPL staff on the details of data source identification, model design and analysis. Its members provide expert review and advice regarding model design, rationale, content, and outcomes. Tasks include:

- Verify the completeness and appropriateness of the model criteria defined for each goal;
- Recommend best available data sources;
- Help ensure that defensible science is used for all models and advise on modeling assumptions; and
- Review input data and model results for accuracy and currency.

**Other Research Projects**

The *Vision North Texas Phase 1 Report* contains the detailed analysis of alternatives proposed at the initial regional workshop in April 2005. This research, completed in June 2005, continues to form the basis for presentations about the implications of anticipated regional growth, analysis of each subregion and further research on regional form.

Other research accomplishments for Vision North Texas during this two-year period include:
- Coordination with NCTCOG to carry out a tour of CLIDE award-winning projects in May 2006.
- A Regional Form Policy Study is being conducted by NCTCOG staff. This project includes a review of cities’ comprehensive plans and other development policies to determine how these plans use the Principles of Development Excellence and how they relate to the alternative development patterns created by participants in Vision North Texas workshops. It is still underway.

**Initiative 4: Policy Direction**

The final initiative in the Vision North Texas Phase 2 Work Plan is described as follows:

**Initiative 4: Policy Direction**

*Description:* Decide whether to create a preferred regional scenario and, if so, what level of detail it should have and what role it should play.

*Objectives:* Agree on a policy recommendation adopted by resolutions of the ULI North Texas District Council’s Executive Board and the Development Excellence Steering Committee and present this recommendation to the Regional Transportation Council and/or NCTCOG’s Executive Board.

The Vision North Texas Advisory Committee has replaced the Development Excellence Steering Committee and plays its role in this effort. As suggested in the work plan, the committee was to
consider what a preferred scenario for regional development would include, the level of detail it would reflect and the role it would play; alternatively, decide on another way to create and/or present an overall regional vision. Fort Worth Mayor Mike Moncrief suggested a variation on this idea at the Leadership Summit, when he proposed that “the time has come to work together on regional land use issues. We need a ‘regional gamebook’ to grow successfully”.

Stakeholder Input

Participants at Vision North Texas workshops have shown strong interest and support for the creation of a preferred vision of the region’s future. Highlights of keypad polling results from three sessions indicate this support.

- At the regional visioning workshop in April 2005, participants were asked whether North Texas should “set regional investment priorities based on a preferred growth scenario”. 83% of the participants in the keypad polling indicated that this activity was either “essential for the region to undertake during the next year” or “important for the region to undertake as resources become available”.
- Participants in the September 2006 Leadership Summit were asked “how important is action on the regional urban form (or development pattern) to the future of the North Texas region? 94% of the keypad polling participants indicated that it was either “essential to take action in the next year” or “important to take action as resources become available”.
- At the Southeastern Subregional Workshop in January 2007, participants were asked “should we set regional investment priorities based on a preferred growth scenario?” 96% of the participants in the keypad polling indicated “yes, this is essential” or that it is “desirable if we have enough resources”.
- Participants at the June 2007 Southwestern Subregional Workshop were asked the same question. Again, 96% of participants indicated this was essential or desirable.

Advisory Committee Direction

The Advisory Committee discussed this policy direction at its meetings in April and June of 2007. At both meetings, VNT’s consultant presented information on similar projects in other metropolitan regions and described possible options for future VNT focus. In June, the Advisory Committee agreed that Vision North Texas should continue and should “be bold” in its agenda for accomplishment. The Committee agreed to pursue a “policy document” with two major components:

1. A Regional Vision Statement. In this role, the policy document would describe the region of the future that current residents and leaders would like to achieve.
2. An Action Package. In this role, the policy document would detail the tools and techniques that could be used by many different decision-makers (public and private) to help achieve the regional vision.

During the summer of 2007, the VNT Management Committee, consultant and staff refined the details of this proposal for future action. The Management Committee’s proposal was
discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting in September 2007. The Advisory Committee voted its support for this work plan at that meeting. The Vision North Texas Work Plan for 2007 – 2009 provides a detailed description of the next phase for this initiative.

**Awards and Recognition**

Vision North Texas has received recognition as an innovative and noteworthy project from the following organizations and award programs.

♦ The Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized VNT with a Long Range Planning Award in October 2005;
♦ In November 2005, the Urban Land Institute provided Vision North Texas with a national Community Action Grant;
♦ The Greater Dallas Planning Council awarded VNT a Dream/Study Urban Design Award in December 2005;
♦ VNT received the AIA Fort Worth’s President’s Award in January 2006;
♦ The Texas Society of Architects recognized VNT with a Citation of Merit Award in November 2006; and
♦ The Urban Land Institute and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provided VNT with a Smart Growth Alliance Grant for 2007 and 2008.

**Contact Information for Vision North Texas**

This report provides an overview of the work accomplished by Vision North Texas from 2005 through 2007. Additional information on these initiatives and on opportunities for future Vision North Texas involvement can be obtained from the following contacts.

**On the Internet**

The Vision North Texas website is www.visionnorthtexas.org.

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