



Vision North Texas Work Plan for 2007 - 2009

North Texas Past and Future

The North Texas region of today is vastly different from the North Texas of 1950. Back then, our 16 counties had 1.2 million residents. By 2000, these counties had 5.3 million residents and by 2050, they may have 12 million people.

Population growth is one reason North Texas has changed dramatically since 1950. Looking ahead, we expect even more change – and challenge – in the future. A new approach to decisions and investments is essential for regional success. For example:

- “Mobility 2030”, adopted in January 2007, identifies \$71 billion available for transportation projects that will be built by 2030. Even with this investment, congestion will nearly double and travel delays will cost the region \$6.6 billion in 2030.
- Traffic congestion also makes air pollution worse. Failure to clean up our region’s air increases the health risks for residents, particularly children, the elderly and others with chronic illnesses. It also may cost the region in terms of lost transportation funding.
- The “2007 Water Plan”, adopted in November 2006, calculates the costs to meet water needs throughout Texas. North Texas counties are included in three of the state’s water planning regions. The capital improvements needed to meet these regions’ 2060 water needs, even after increased conservation, will cost over \$14.3 billion.
- Our regional land use patterns increase stormwater runoff, reducing water quality in our lakes and rivers and placing more homes and businesses at risk from flooding.
- Individual communities are creating parks and preserving open space areas, but the region continues to lose agricultural land and natural places. Though North Texas has many popular trails, they do not connect into a coordinated regional system.
- Changes in the global economy affect the future of businesses in the region, the need for investment in local facilities and the skills needed by the region’s future workers.
- Job growth and economic development mean competition with communities around the world. Strong regional assets will help individual cities and property owners in their efforts to add new jobs and businesses.



If the region continues to sprawl outward as it has since 1950, it will be harder and more expensive to meet residents’ needs and provide a high quality of life.

The choices made today – by private and public investors – will determine the quality of life future North Texans will enjoy and the ability of North Texas to compete with other global regions to attract businesses. “Business as usual” choices do not give us our best chance for success. We need a new way to deal with the challenges and opportunities that will affect all of North Texas in the next 50 years. Vision North Texas is the private-public partnership creating *North Texas 2050*, a new approach to growing a successful and sustainable region.



Benefits of North Texas 2050

North Texas 2050 will change the region’s future because it will give decision-makers new ways to contribute to the region’s vitality. By describing and communicating a shared direction for the future, its Regional Vision Statement will make it easier for public and private sector decision-makers to take action that supports this desired future. Preferred scenarios will combine market forces and community priorities into an image of the region’s future land use and development pattern. For the first time, there will be a regional infrastructure framework that provides a coordinated, comprehensive plan for investment in the major systems that support the region. It will include regional investments in transportation systems, water and wastewater facilities, and open space networks (among others) so these can support one another as well as property owners’ and local governments’ planning for future land uses. Its Action Package will give organizations (non-profits, private businesses, government agencies) and individuals new tools to support sustainable growth. It will enable the region to use its limited resources and incentives to achieve the region’s desired future.

What is Vision North Texas?



Vision North Texas (VNT) is a collaboration led by the Urban Land Institute’s North Texas District Council (ULI), the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). It began by engaging civic leaders from the entire North Texas region in an April 2005 workshop that examined regional development patterns. Participants developed fifteen (15) alternative scenarios. Evaluation of these alternatives shows they offer better choices for quality of life, economic vitality and public investment than the current regional development forecast. Participation and financial support

from cities, counties, businesses and civic organizations during 2006 and 2007 allowed the project to carry out workshops, hold a regional Leadership Summit and begin new research projects. As a result of the public input at these sessions, the partnership’s advisors have now recommended that Vision North Texas create a shared vision for the region’s future and a

2. An Action Package. In this role, *North Texas 2050* will detail tools and techniques that can be used by many different decision-makers to help achieve the regional vision. It will include incentives that respond to market forces and support the region's preferred land use pattern. It will include tools, technical assistance and a 'decision playbook'. A set of indicators and incremental milestones will give the region a way to monitor progress over time. These materials and programs will help private, public and non-profit decision-makers actually implement the regional vision because they provide the information needed for smarter choices.

North Texas 2050 will address key issues that are important to the region's future and its response to anticipated population growth. These include transportation; water and energy use; open space and natural assets; and the region's land use or development pattern. Additional issues may include the region's economic competitiveness in the global economy and regional initiatives related to climate change.



Support for “Best Practices”

Vision North Texas will continue to provide “hands-on” assistance to local governments and other regional stakeholders while *North Texas 2050* is being created. Case studies of “best practices”, efforts to promote green building and other sustainability concepts, design of codes that support water and energy efficiency, a process for certifying ‘development excellence’ projects and similar activities will make practical tools and information available to regional decision-makers even before *North Texas 2050* is completed.

Vision North Texas Project Details

Six Step Process

Vision North Texas will use a six step process to create *North Texas 2050*. Those steps, and the results they will produce, are summarized below.

1. **Mobilizing Resources.** This step will secure the resources needed to carry out this important project. These include professional expertise, financial and other material resources, and support from stakeholders. By the end of this step, partnership agreements will be in place between VNT and other groups that will provide necessary resources.
2. **Examining Regional Choices.** This step provides the foundation for regional decisions and actions. It includes new research on issues facing the North Texas region through 2050 and the implications of regional, national and global trends on our region's future. Also, it uses a range of techniques to engage the region's people and organizations in this discussion of choices. Finally, it defines and



analyzes a set of alternative scenarios for the region's future use of land and limited resources.

3. **Creating A Regional Vision Statement.** During this step, the regional vision statement described above will be drafted and discussed.
4. **Detailing an Action Package.** This step will produce the draft action package that will allow private and public sector decision-makers to take actions that support the region's vision. The package will include tools to allocate limited resources and incentives so they support the preferred, sustainable regional future.
5. **Approving North Texas 2050.** In this step, regional stakeholders will consider and debate the drafts created in steps 3 and 4. This step should conclude with adoption of *North Texas 2050* by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Urban Land Institute North Texas District Council.
6. **Implementing Results.** This step begins implementation of the regional policy document. It includes adoption or endorsement of *North Texas 2050* by public agencies, private sector organizations and entities such as the Regional Transportation Council and regional Water Planning Groups. It also includes creation of a structure for continuing collaboration to shape North Texas' future.



Activities and Engagement

An effective regional policy is one that is widely supported by the many diverse stakeholders in our community. It also must be based on the best and most current research and professional analysis. For Vision North Texas, the activities below are part of each of the six steps in the process:

- ◆ **Communications.** These activities use a speakers bureau, written publications, electronic tools and media contact to tell interested individuals what work is underway and how they can participate.
- ◆ **Research.** These activities bring the best minds and the latest analysis to bear on the questions and choices facing the region.
- ◆ **"Best Practices" Support.** While the regional policy is being created, work will continue on initiatives that define, share and encourage the application of best practices to the region's development.
- ◆ **Expert Advice and Assistance.** Focused issue groups will provide professional expertise on all the topics being addressed in Vision North Texas. They will meet on a regular basis to review VNT progress, provide input and discuss options.
- ◆ **Stakeholder & Public Involvement.** A variety of activities are included that engage people throughout the region. *Elected officials* will be involved at each step





in the process. *Subregional workshops* will bring together diverse stakeholders from smaller geographic parts of North Texas. Leaders and individuals involved in similar communities will meet in *Community Form Type Sessions* to ensure that *North Texas 2050* addresses their issues. Meetings and working sessions with other *partner organizations* (such as the design community, arts organizations or particular ethnic groups) will strengthen their involvement. *Surveys and electronic techniques* will enable any interested resident to contribute to VNT. At key points in the process, *major events* and *media initiatives* will bring people together.

- ◆ **Leadership Direction.** The *VNT Management Committee* provides the most detailed and frequent review and direction for the process. *VNT Advisors* meet quarterly and provide essential stakeholder perspectives throughout the process. The process is intended to result in action by two key groups, so each of those entities receives briefings and participates in discussions at key points. These groups are the *North Central Texas Council of Governments Executive Board* and the *Urban Land Institute North Texas District Council's Executive Committee*. Periodic briefings will also be provided to the groups responsible for regional investment in transportation, water supply and other infrastructure.
- ◆ **Management of the Process.** Throughout all six steps of the process, the VNT staff and consultants will manage aspects of the project such as the VNT website, production of communication materials, sponsor communications, volunteer recruitment and management, and coordination with partner organizations.

Timeline and Major Events

This phase of Vision North Texas begins in October 2007. The table below shows the expected schedule for each of the six steps in the process.

Step	2007			2008												2009												
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1 Mobilizing Resources																												
2 Examining Regional Choices																												
3 Creating A Regional Vision Statement																												
4 Detailing A Regional Action Package																												
5 Approving A Regional Policy																												
6 Implementing Results																												
7 Managing The Process																												

The table on the following page shows the timing for major events from 2007 through 2009. These include:

- ✓ An event to kick off the project in early 2008;
- ✓ Subregional **workshops**, sessions with key partners and stakeholders, surveys and online activities from March through May of 2008 will gather opinions and ideas from a wide range of North Texas residents, businesses and other organizations.
- ✓ The Urban Land Institute's national **Spring Forum** will be held in Dallas in May 2008. Key Vision North Texas research will be released in coordination with this event.
- ✓ A **Vision North Texas Regional Summit**, in September or October 2008, will bring stakeholders together to review, discuss and debate the results of the intensive research and public engagement efforts completed in Step 2.
- ✓ The North Central Texas Council of Governments will hold its **General Assembly** in mid-June of 2009. The *North Texas 2050* draft will be a focus of this annual session for the region's public sector leaders.
- ✓ **Stakeholder and partner events** will be coordinated with the General Assembly in June 2009 so these groups can provide feedback on the draft.
- ✓ A **Vision North Texas Congress** will be the final large gathering of the region's stakeholders and citizens. It will be structured to produce recommendations for approval of *North Texas 2050* and action by each of the participating organizations.



The two key groups (NCTCOG Executive Board and ULI Executive Committee) are expected to take action on *North Texas 2050* in fall 2009. Adoption of these products by other stakeholders should occur by the end of December 2009. Implementation – through local and regional activities – will begin in 2010.

Resources and Support

Leadership and expertise for Vision North Texas are provided by sponsor organizations from the public, private, academic and non-profit sectors. Diverse regional leaders serve as Vision North Texas Advisors, providing direction to the project.

Vision North Texas is funded by voluntary contributions from area cities and counties, sponsorships from private sector businesses and non-profit organizations, grants and in-kind assistance. Karen Walz FAICP is the Project Manager and the North Central Texas Council of Governments provides administrative support through its Center of Development Excellence.

Vision North Texas Work Plan



Major Events	2007			2008												2009										
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Sessions for State & Federal Agencies		⊕																								
Kick-Off Event (includes research collaboration announcement)																										
Subregional Workshops																										
Community Form Type Sessions																										
Stakeholder Sessions																										
Findings Report (at ULI Spring Forum)																										
Vision North Texas Regional Summit																										
Release of Draft 2050 Vision																										
Complete Draft Action Package																										
NCTCOG General Assembly																										
Stakeholder & Partner Events																										
Release of <i>North Texas 2050</i> Draft																										
Vision North Texas Congress																										
<i>North Texas 2050</i> Approval by NCTCOG, ULI																										
<i>North Texas 2050</i> Adoption by Partners																										
Release of Approved <i>North Texas 2050</i>																										

For More Information

Information on Vision North Texas accomplishments and the opportunities for involvement is found at visionnorthtexas.org.