

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Frisco Texas



Urban Land
Institute

Frisco Texas

A Blueprint for the Future

January 9–14, 2005
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
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About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a non-profit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 25,000 members and associates from 80 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals rep-

resented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

Richard M. Rosan
President

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About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI panel teams are interdisciplinary and typically include several developers, a landscape architect, a planner, a market analyst, a finance expert, and others with the niche expertise needed to address a given project. ULI teams provide a holistic look at development problems. Each panel is chaired by a respected ULI member with previous panel experience.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Many long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partic-

ipants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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The panel is indebted to the dozens of community, business, and government leaders who provided their special and valuable insights during the interview process. The panel thanks all of these people for offering their time and expertise, and for helping the panel understand the issues facing the city of Frisco. Panel members appreciate the hospitality extended to them by the people, businesses, and government of Frisco, which made their stay enjoyable.

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

America's frontier is changing. Land is being consumed faster than ever before, as more than 2 million acres of open space are developed each year. Metropolitan areas have spread so far out that a driver on Interstate 95 passes through only three rural counties on a trip from Maine to Florida. The distinction between urban and rural landscapes has disappeared, making the vital question how and where our communities will grow as development moves inexorably outward.

“Boomburbs” and Smart Growth

Over the past 50 years, land development has been predominantly on the urban or suburban fringe. Robert Lang, director of the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, named the fastest-growing of these suburban communities “Boomburbs.” To qualify for Boomburb status, the city must have at least 100,000 residents, not be the largest city in its metropolitan area, and have maintained double-digit rates of population growth in recent years. Currently, 53 Boomburbs exist in the United States, accounting for more than half (51 percent) of the growth in cities with populations between 100,000 and 400,000 during the 1990s. The exceptionally fast growth rates often produce extreme degrees of development-related problems. Among other things, poorly planned suburbs result in environmental degradation, increased traffic congestion, undermined traditional community values, and reduced quality of life. Alternatively, their large size and potential to cooperate with other large municipalities can positively position these suburban “super cities” to participate in comprehensive regional solutions.

In June 2004, the Urban Land Institute held a three-day forum to consider a new pattern for greenfields development, a pattern that will guide the development of new communities in the 21st

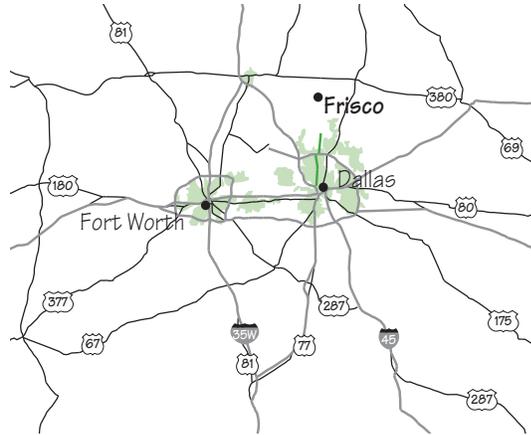


Location map.

century. The forum outlined the *Ten Principles for Smart Growth on the Suburban Fringe*:

1. Create a shared vision for the future ... and stick to it.
2. Identify and sustain green infrastructure.
3. Remember that the right design in the wrong place is not smart growth.
4. Protect environmental systems and conserve resources.
5. Provide diverse housing types and opportunities.
6. Build centers of concentrated mixed uses.
7. Use multiple connections to enhance mobility and circulation.
8. Deliver sustainable transportation choices.
9. Preserve the community's character.
10. Make it easy to do the right thing.

Regional map.



Starting with these principles, this report both answers the sponsor's questions and offers a sustainable vision for Frisco's future.

Background

Originally a farming community, the city of Frisco was incorporated in 1908, gaining its name from its position on the Frisco rail line that connected San Francisco with St. Louis. Frisco's population remained below 6,000 until 1990, when the city quickly evolved into one of the fastest-growing suburbs in the United States. The site has been home to a major north-south trade route since the Shawnee Trail was first traveled in 1838, connecting Austin to the Red River. Today's growth follows a similar path. Construction of the Dallas North Tollway (DNT), which extends from downtown Dallas through Frisco and will continue north, has spurred unprecedented new development.

The intersection of Preston Road and State Highway 121 and the intersection of the DNT and State Highway 121 act as southern gateways to the city. The adjacent cities are also seeing growth. Plano, to the south, and Allen, to the southeast, absorbed the first wave of migration from Dallas and are now nearly built out. Cities to the east and west, such as McKinney and Little Elm, are growing nearly as fast as Frisco.

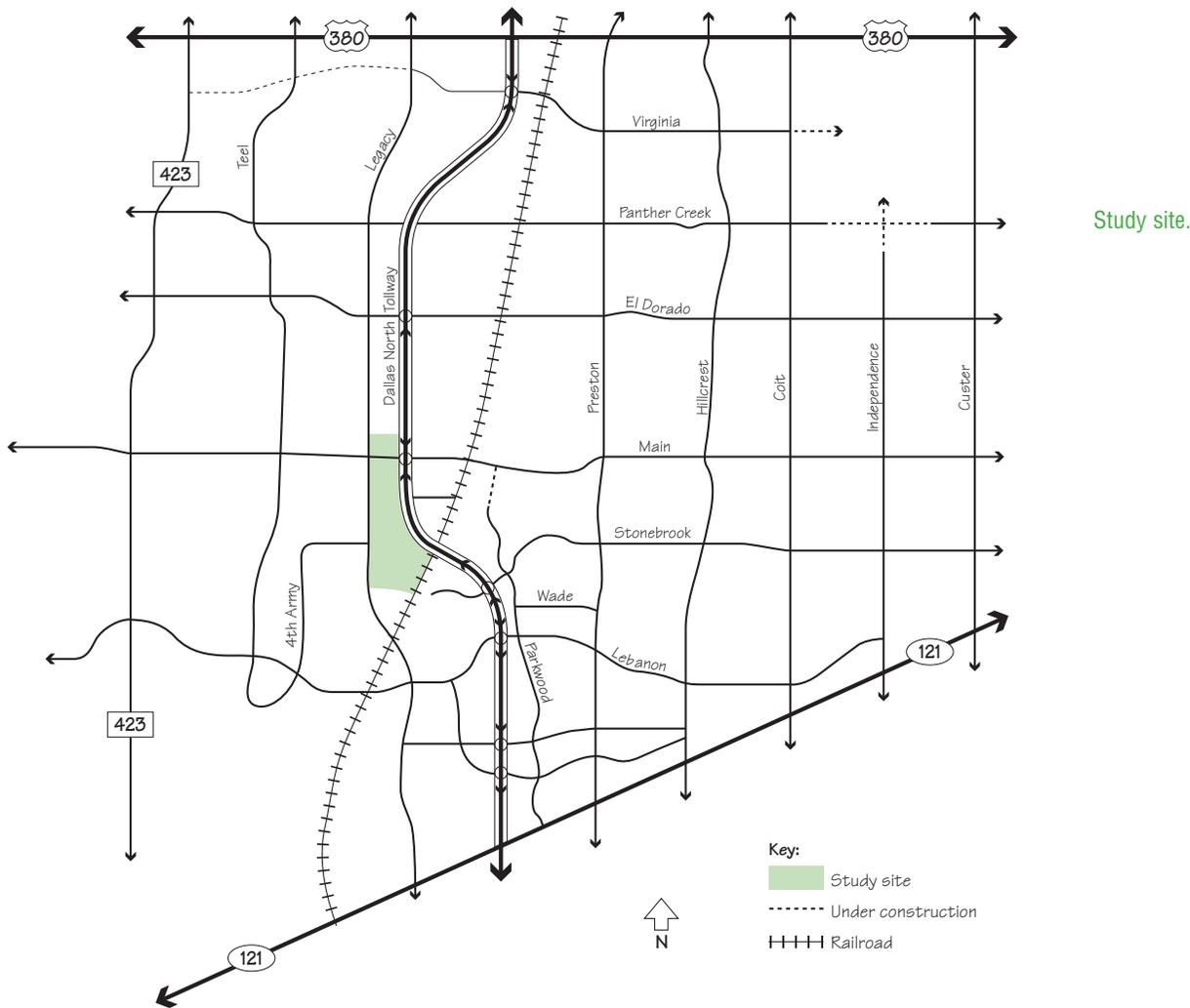
Convenience, climate, and accessibility have made Frisco a desirable location for more than 74,000 people, in addition to the corporate headquarters for the Dallas Stars, Fujitsu Transaction Solutions,

GE Capital, EADS Telecom, Thousand Trails, and Comstock Resources as well as the regional offices for Levi Strauss and Budweiser. Both Dallas/Fort Worth and Love Field airports are within a 45-minute drive. Entertainment and recreation abound in Frisco, including junior league championship hockey, minor league baseball, major league soccer, and National Championship cycling. In addition, with more than 4 million square feet of retail space and the future construction of a 310,000-square-foot IKEA store, Frisco is quickly becoming a major north Texas shopping destination.

Fifteen years ago the city's population was a mere 6,000, but today more than 74,000 people call Frisco home. The dramatic increase is largely attributable to young adults moving to Frisco and starting families. The number of children under the age of five now exceeds the total number of children within the Frisco School District. Census Bureau data indicate that population growth will continue to skyrocket and will reach 250,000 over the next 15 years. The average Frisco resident is 29 years old, Caucasian, and has a bachelor's degree. An additional 25 percent of the population has pursued some college education, and 12 percent has graduate or professional degrees.

Study Area

The ULI panel study area consists of about 650 acres of undeveloped farmland and natural green space at the center of the city. The future DNT will run along the area's eastern boundary. The northeast corner of the site is adjacent to the Frisco Soccer & Entertainment Center, home of the FC Dallas major league soccer team, and Frisco Square, a 145-acre mixed-use development. When completed in 2005, the Frisco Soccer & Entertainment Center will include 17 playing fields for recreational leagues and a stadium with a capacity of more than 20,000 for soccer games and 28,000 for concerts. The Frisco Independent School District will also use the fields for its athletic events. Frisco Square is a mixed-use extension of the original downtown, including a new City Hall/Library Complex and Heritage Park. Heritage Park will be a living monument to Frisco's past with an active museum of restored



structures from the area and a replica of the original Frisco railroad depot near the railroad tracks.

In a southwesterly direction, State Highway 121 leads to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. Along this southern boundary, bisected by the DNT, the most popular destinations are Stonebriar Centre (regional mall), The Centre at Preston Ridge (outdoor shopping center), the Dr Pepper/Seven Up Ballpark (home to the Frisco RoughRiders, a Double-A minor league baseball team), and the Dr Pepper StarCenter (hockey arena). An Embassy Suites hotel (334 suites) and the Frisco Convention Center (115,986 square feet) are under construction just south of the study site.

Legacy Drive runs along the western boundary of the subject property. The land west of Legacy was formerly used for the Frisco Jetport. The airport and runway have been removed, and Frisco Fire Station No. 4 is located on a portion of the property. Legacy Drive will connect State Highway

121 to Main Street by summer 2005 and eventually continue north, connecting with Eldorado Parkway. Frisco's third high school will be located approximately one mile north of Main Street, on Legacy Drive. The five-star-rated Westin Stonebriar Resort is located near the juncture of State Highway 121 and Legacy Drive. Continuing south on Legacy Drive, Legacy Business Park (2,000 acres) is located in the city of Plano. This large development contains headquarter offices for Frito-Lay, EDS, Dr Pepper/Seven Up, J. C. Penney Company, and others.

Platinum Parkway will cross the study property, running east-west, providing another connection between the DNT and Legacy Drive. Construction of the southern two lanes is scheduled to begin February 2005. When finished, it will bend southward, connecting with 4th Army Memorial Drive.

Stewart Creek runs through the southern third of the site; thus sections of the study area are in the

Stewart Creek, a major tributary of the Trinity River, runs through the southern third of the study site.



100-year floodplain. As such, these areas are sensitive habitat and unsuitable for development, but hiking and biking trails are proposed to run along the creek.

The Assignment

The city of Frisco requested that the ULI Advisory Services Panel create a development scenario that focuses on market potential, planning and design, development strategies, and implementation for the 650-acre site and adjacent area. The city is currently updating both the Comprehensive Plan and the Park Master Plan. It is important that the city have a development plan for the subject property before completing Phase 2 of the DNT, scheduled for 2007.

The city desires development that will celebrate Stewart Creek and encourage a mix of land uses, creating a vibrant “Grand Park.” The property should develop in a fashion that draws people to downtown Frisco, is pedestrian friendly, exhibits distinctive architecture, and is integrated into the surrounding development.

Market Potential

The panel's review of Frisco's market opportunities leads to the conclusion that the city's development horizon is bright. Housing demand is expected to continue at a pace equal to or greater than 3,000 new dwelling units per year, and demand for office, commercial, and retail space will continue in tandem with the arrival of new families in Frisco.

Notwithstanding those positive factors, the panel also took note of two potential obstacles to this favorable trend. The first concerns large tracts of land lying in the path of future development. If these tracts are not annexed by the city, or made available for development by their owners, the city's pace of growth will slow.

The second potential obstacle is a pending referendum that if passed could place a new set of financial risks and obligations on residential builders. Without commenting on the merits of such requirements, the panel stresses that, in the highly competitive market in which Frisco competes, any burden placed on builders will likely divert their development activity to areas without those risks and, inevitably, lead to a significant slowdown in construction activity.

Given those two caveats, the question is not whether the subject property has development potential—that potential is clearly enormous. Rather, the question is what types of development on those critical parcels is in the best interest of the city of Frisco and its residents—for this generation and for generations to come.

In the panel's view, this land is a major development opportunity at the heart of the distinctive city the leaders of Frisco have ambitiously set out to create. This property can add to the vitality of Frisco's downtown renewal efforts and speed the pace of development at Frisco Square. It can also help differentiate the city of Frisco from all the

other places along the "golden crescent" from McKinney in the east to Denton in the west.

What kind of land uses can accomplish this strategically critical, threefold objective? The panel believes the answer lies in essential uses that Frisco will inevitably need as it rapidly grows from a bedroom community to a vibrant city of 250,000 residents.

Planning for 250,000

The panel analyzed six different cities with populations approximating 250,000. Three of them—Savannah, Georgia; Columbus, Ohio; and Portland, Oregon—grew over a long period of time without the benefit of supporting facilities in a neighboring city. Three others—Glendale, Arizona; Riverside, California; and Aurora, Colorado—meet Robert Lang's definition of a Boomburb. They were rural towns that rocketed to the quarter million population mark because of their proximity to the rapidly expanding cities of Phoenix, Los Angeles, and Denver, respectively.

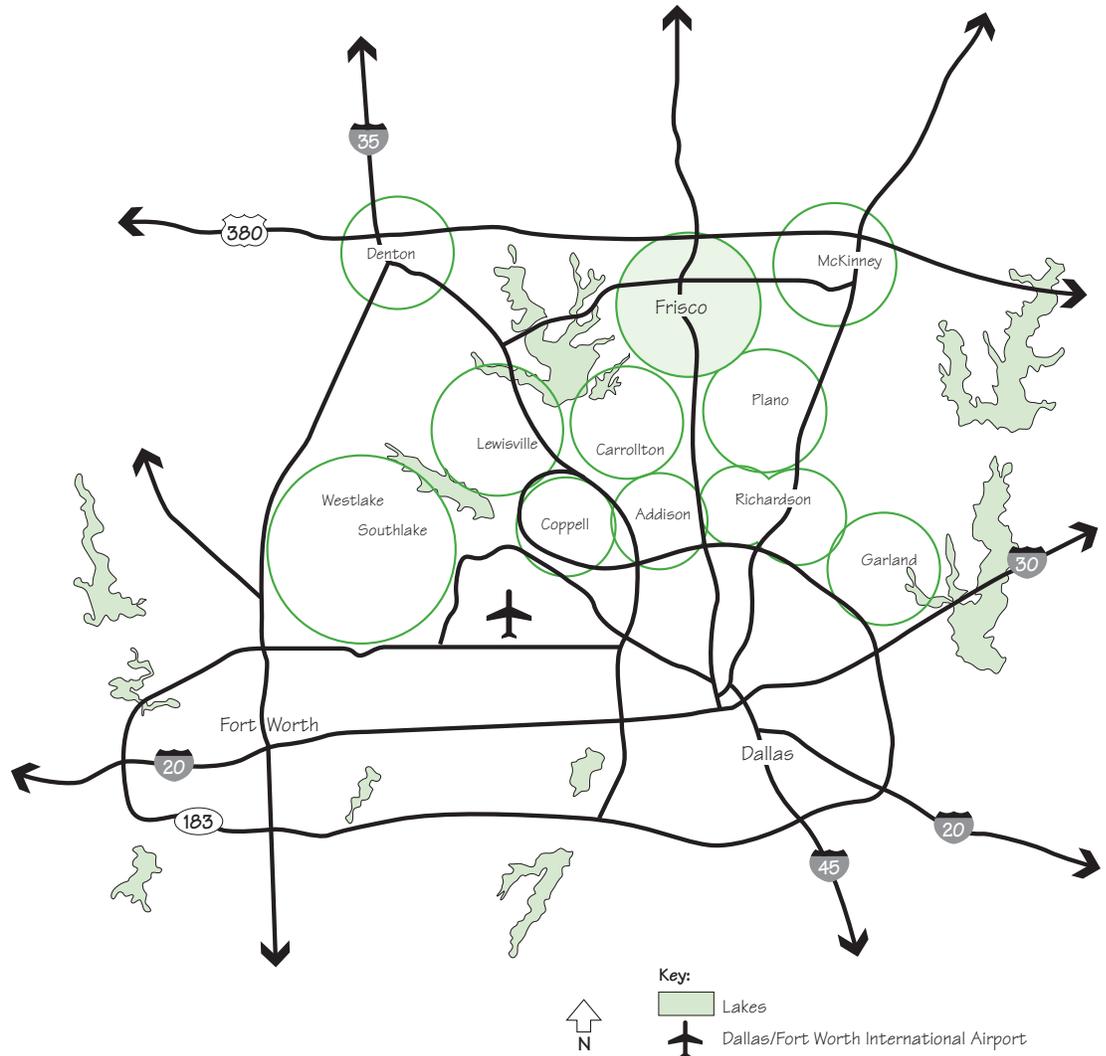
Of importance to the panel, whether the cities stand on their own or are just minutes up the Tollway from the urban amenities and facilities of the central cities that spawned them, the fact that they are home to several hundred thousand people means they are characterized by a relatively common menu of housing types and price points as well as public and private facilities.

Frisco already has many of these facilities. Others, however, will require planning attention and public and private investment as Frisco's population continues to grow at the rate of 10,000 new residents a year. The panel observed the following seven areas of future community need.

Regional Parks

Frisco will need one or more major parks with amenities such as restaurants, nature centers,

Dallas's golden crescent.



botanical gardens, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands preserves, open fields, and miles of hiking, biking, and walking trails. The panel recommends parks that are imaginatively conceived, executed, and promoted, offering a wide range of recreational and cultural events to draw residents and engage them in enjoyable citywide events.

Universities

In addition to a community college, Frisco will need one, two, or even three four-year institutions. For example, two four-year universities supplement Glendale, Arizona's community college, and both Riverside and Aurora have community colleges plus three four-year institutions.

The social and financial benefits of securing a university can be enormous. For example, the estimated effect of Baylor University on the Waco metropolitan area's economy during the 2002–2003 academic year approached \$1 billion. Corroborating this finding, Texas comptroller Carole Ry-

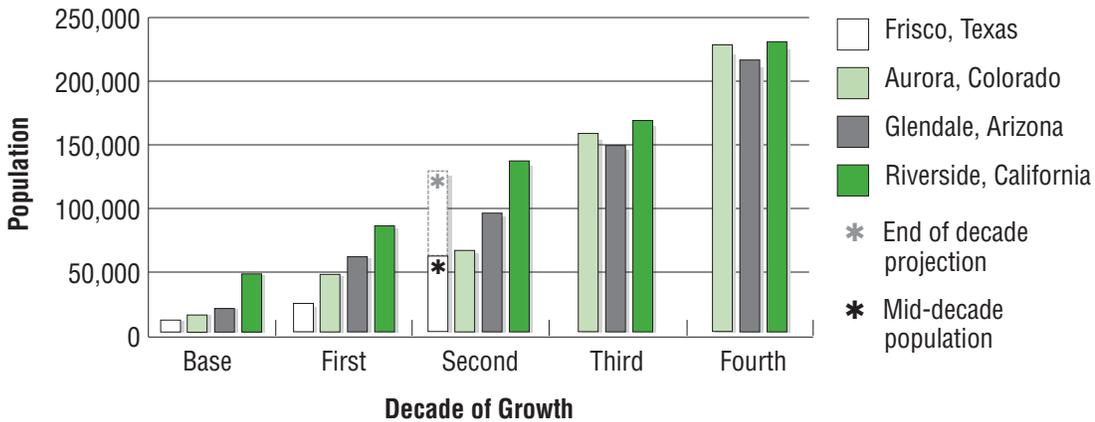
lander noted that higher education helped fuel the Texas economic engine with nearly \$25 billion a year.

Recruiting a high-profile institution like Baylor University, Texas A&M University, Dallas Baptist University, Texas Women's University, Amber-ton University, or the University of Phoenix (the latter four of which have already expressed interest in Frisco by becoming members of the Chamber of Commerce) will naturally require effort on the part of the city. Having a designated site near the Tollway and within walking distance of the downtown will be an important part of any inducement package.

Private Elementary and High Schools

Frisco's high-quality public school system is of vital importance to the city. But, in a pool of 100,000 affluent families, 1,200 or more will want the special educational experience that small schools, both sectarian and nonsectarian, can offer

**Figure 1
Boomburb Growth**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 2
Boomburb Amenities**

Glendale, Arizona

Population
218,812

Medical
3 hospitals

Higher Education
2 four-year universities
1 community college
1 technical school

Cultural
Civic center
Large library system
Visitor center
Historic downtown with 90 specialty shops
Office park
52-acre shopping center

Parks
Multiuse trail system
Lakes
Neighborhood playgrounds
Public pools
Sensory garden
Sand park

Transit
Car and van pooling
Regional bus system
Light rail under construction

Sports
Community and recreational centers
Arena
Multipurpose stadium

Riverside, California

Population
255,166

Medical
3 hospitals

Higher Education
3 four-year universities
1 community college
Cooperative University Research Park

Cultural
3 art galleries
7 museums
Municipal auditorium
Children's theater
1 drive-in theater
Cultural center

Parks
20+ community parks
2 historic parks
Nature center
Botanical garden

Transit
Car pool
Regional bus system
Commuter trains
Amtrak train station

Sports
2 sports complexes
Go-kart track
Skating rink

Aurora, Colorado

Population
276,393

Medical
3 hospitals
1 family medical center
1 children's hospital

Higher Education
3 four-year colleges
1 community college
4 specialty colleges

Cultural
Arts district
Arts center
History museum
7 libraries
19 marked historic sites

Parks
1,100-acre conservation center
50-acre wetland area
130-acre farm
2 reservoirs
Nature center
Miles of hiking, biking, and walking trails

Transit
Rideshare
Light rail under construction

Sports
Sports park
Recreation center
Wheel park (cycling, skateboarding)
Rodeo arena

students who are sharply focused on attending America's most selective colleges and universities.

Hospitals

Despite the fact that some of the largest and most prestigious medical complexes in America are in the major cities that abut their boundaries, Glendale has a community hospital, a medical center and a rehabilitation hospital; Riverside has three hospitals; and Aurora has three, plus a family medical center and a new children's hospital. Frisco, too, will need medical facilities.

Public Transportation

A smart, livable community will demand transportation choices. Frisco needs local cabs, at least, and a well-run regional transportation authority. A commuter train link to the center city also appears to be a possibility in Frisco.

The panel also recommends acquiring local sections of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway right-of-way and track, which may now be, or soon become, available. This purchase would enable the city of Frisco to control activities affecting downtown renewal efforts and create the opportunity to activate train service between downtown and the northern limit of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit system.

Visitor Center

A city information center can assist tourists and travelers with suggestions for restaurants, accommodations, stores, and attractions in and around the city.

Cultural Facilities

Frisco will require history and science museums, fine arts museums and galleries, and special interest museums devoted to local or specialized subjects of cultural interest. Savannah, for example, is currently quadrupling the size of its fine arts museum and is home to attractive museums devoted to model ships and the history of the civil rights movement. Over time, Frisco is likely to need or want similar museums or activity centers devoted to its unique history.

The panel also suggests soliciting a commercially compatible child-oriented theme park, such as Legoland, that offers clean, quiet, interactive activities that can be enjoyed by entire families.

This amenity should meet the precise demographic profile of Frisco's current and, most likely, future resident base.

Specialty Shopping

Particularly important will be a walkable streetscape of small shops that offer a range of items not typically found in national retail outlets and that do so in a pleasurable, pedestrian-oriented "old town" environment. The panel recommends revitalizing Main Street in Frisco's old town by preserving turn-of-the-century Texas buildings and adding to the city's vibrancy by repopulating the storefronts with specialty shops similar to those found in comparable old town settings—art galleries, antique stores, clothing boutiques, restaurants, real estate offices, travel agencies, card shops.

Housing Mix

Diverse housing types are of critical importance to the success of smart growth in Boomburbs like Frisco. Varied housing types and price points will widen the city's appeal to the broadest possible range of market segments and demographic groups. For example, market forces in Aurora, Riverside, and Glendale yielded a housing stock consisting of 65 percent owner-occupied single and multi-family units and 35 percent rental housing units. The panel recommends a mix of single and multi-family homes and apartments to meet the expected demand.

Providing housing for all who work in Frisco, from retail clerks and other service workers to teachers, police, firefighters, and the like, is essential to the long-term vitality of the city. Also, housing affordable to young households just starting out is important if the children now growing up in Frisco are to have a chance to live there after they move out on their own. In addition, over the coming two decades, many of today's parents will become empty nesters and, in time, senior citizens, who will need an appropriate mix of housing types if they are to have the opportunity of remaining in Frisco. As Frisco matures, having a wide variety of housing for people of a mix of ages and incomes will make the city vital and distinctive in the north Dallas region and allow people to live their lives in the city as they once did when it was a small town out on the plains.



The widest sections of Stewart Creek provide opportunity for various recreational activities.

The Grand Park

At 850 acres, Frisco's Grand Park would mirror the scale of the world's most famous urban parks and would best New York's fabled Central Park by seven acres. The park will create a signature public amenity that differentiates Frisco from any comparably sized city in Texas.

When completed, Frisco's Grand Park would feature a wide range of appealing amenities. Illustrating this point, at 130 acres Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, comfortably accommodates gardens, an arboretum, tennis and basketball courts, lawn bowling, pitch-and-putt golf, a roller rink, picnic areas, a floral conservancy, and a delightful overlook restaurant. Frisco's Grand Park might include a variety of active and passive activities such as those in the following list:

- Restaurant similar to Tavern on the Green in New York's Central Park;
- Hiking, biking, and walking trails;
- Fishing ponds;
- Rowing, paddle boating, or canoeing;
- Lighted tennis courts, softball fields, and basketball courts;
- Nature/science center with interactive exhibits sufficient in quality to attract regional visitation from tourists and student groups;
- Aviary or butterfly pavilion;
- Formal garden areas;
- Decorative fountains and sculptures;



The Grand Park will be large enough to accommodate several playgrounds.

The Grand Park will include 100 acres of stormwater management lakes, such as this retention pond in Frisco.



- Off-leash dog park;
- Fountain, wading, and waterslide play area;
- Playground facilities;
- Child care facility;
- Pitch-and-putt golf course;
- Miniature train along with exhibits relating to the railroad's role in the creation of Frisco; and
- Local history interpretive facility, which might include farm animals, old buildings, and antique equipment.

Three compelling reasons exist to build such a park. The first is public need. Frisco's 2004 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan indicates that, at the current population level of 74,000, between 316 and 632 acres should be devoted to a regional park, and by the year 2015 regional park acreage should range between 723 and 1,447 acres. Today, Frisco does not have a single regional park. Thus, Grand Park would be a "Grand First Step"

in meeting a need already identified by Frisco's planning department.

The second reason for building a park is economic benefit. Well-planned parks, just like colleges and universities, tend to have highly positive economic effects on the cities that house them. For example, a study completed four years ago on the economic effect on residential property values of adjoining parks comprising both active and passive activities revealed a 33 percent increase in the value of those lots relative to the average value of their census tracts. A similar study of the estimated gross increase in residential property value resulting from proximity to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park is an additional billion dollars in property values.

Similarly, a survey conducted by the American Association of Museums reveals that the majority of staffed facilities, such as a nature center or interpretive history museum, breaks even or generates modest operating surpluses. Income is generated from a variety of sources, including private donations and modest admission fees.

And third, constructing a Grand Park in a location close to the downtown and highly visible to every car and truck passing Frisco on the Tollway would have an enormous marketing benefit to the city. It would reinforce Frisco's "brand identity" as higher quality, less dense, more progressive, and more family oriented than competing development areas.

Stormwater Management

The panel recommends creating a central stormwater retention pond that would establish an innovative and practical model for other towns and cities throughout the area. This pond could be located on the land freed by higher-density development. A retention pond of this size is sufficient to

handle the runoff from up to 1,000 acres of residential construction and provides important benefits to the city. In the panel's experience, a well-planned and well-constructed central stormwater management pond is more efficient and more cost-effective for both developers and municipalities than using an assortment of individual systems. A central system also offers health and safety benefits by controlling and improving the water quality of the stormwater runoff that eventually finds its way into the city's waterways. Again, the panel's experience indicates the city can reasonably anticipate recovering all, most, or even more than the costs incurred in acquiring the land needed for the retention basin by selling drainage rights to those builders benefiting from the system.

Planning and Design

Sprawl creates sameness in the landscape where communities tend to blend and meld together without any lasting integrity or identity, as is the case with the northern movement of growth from Dallas. To avoid this outcome Frisco should foster smart growth with disciplined public policy.

Smart Growth and Sustainable Development

In the city of Frisco, the large portions of undeveloped land represent an opportunity to marry the right location with appropriate types of development. Accommodating growth in this way will set the city of Frisco apart from its neighbors and will protect the identity and integrity of the community. For this plan to succeed, the city's codes, plans, and policies must support this development, and the following factors should be integrated into the planning process:

- Economically viable development that preserves open space and natural resources;
- Comprehensive, integrated, and regional land use planning;
- Collaboration among citizens and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors on growth and development issues to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes;
- Certainty and predictability in the development process;
- Infrastructure to serve existing and new residents; and
- Integration of compact suburban development of varying land use types (including residential) into existing commercial areas, new town centers, and existing or planned transportation facilities.

Finally, smart growth requires the integrated use of data collected from multiple sources. As an example, planning a trail system requires understanding the location of natural features so that opportunities can be evaluated with respect to compatible alignment and constraints of slopes, unstable soils, or potential for erosion. The panel suggests that the city's data collection efforts and geographic information system database be directed to their full potential, allowing a composite image that would easily define constraints and opportunities for implementation of varying development scenarios.

The ability to use various levels of resource data interactively is paramount to making the best planning and growth management decisions as the city of Frisco moves forward. By layering the locations of valuable resources—such as streams, wetlands, cultural resources, existing transportation and utility corridors, wildlife habitats, and unique physical features—the prime locations for development are clearly defined. In addition, protecting rare natural features increases the value of adjacent land.

It is also important for Frisco to create and sustain lifestyle, development, and growth policies that are conducive to maintaining and supporting community needs. The panel recommends the city of Frisco use ULI's *Ten Principles for Smart Growth on the Suburban Fringe* to provide guidance to the development community while at the same time providing a sense of comfort for its citizens. The panel recognizes that successful smart growth requires that each lot be evaluated, not only by itself, but also in relation to adjacent land and how it fits into the overall vision for Frisco. Therefore, the *Ten Principles* were used to evaluate scenarios for the 650-acre study site and its context within Frisco.

New mixed-use development at Frisco Square includes apartments, offices, and restaurants.



Creating a Shared Vision

The first of ULI's *Ten Principles* recommends creating and committing to a shared vision. Visioning is useful in the following ways:

- To set the stage for short- and long-range planning activities;
- To set new directions in policy;
- To review existing policy;
- To integrate two or more issues;
- To listen to a wide variety of ideas; and
- To find a range of potential solutions.

Successful communities are founded on a strong and collaborative vision of the future. The visioning process directly involves a cross section of constituents from a state or region in setting a long-term policy agenda. It looks for common ground among participants in exploring and advocating



strategies for the future and surfaces issues that are often overlooked. This integrated approach to policy making avoids piecemeal and reactionary approaches in addressing problems.

Long-Term Goals

Visioning typically consists of a series of meetings focused on long-range issues and results in a long-range plan. It also sets a strategy for achieving goals over a 20- or 30-year period. Vi-

sioning has been used to set a long-range statewide transportation plan in Ohio, a statewide comprehensive plan in New Jersey, and a regional land use and transportation plan in Seattle, Washington. The governor of Georgia, acting as chief planner, used visioning to create long-range goals for the state. Central Oklahoma 2020 is a visioning project for a regional plan.

Priorities and performance standards can be part of visioning. Priorities are set to distinguish essential goals. Performance standards allow an evaluation of progress toward goals over time. In Jacksonville, Florida, a community report card is used to determine priorities; each target for the future is evaluated annually. In Minnesota, a statewide report card was used to evaluate the current status and to set up goals and milestones for the future. Oregon established benchmarks to measure progress toward its long-term goals.

Public Participation

Public participation in the visioning process creates a pool of ideas and support for long-range policies. After open consideration of diverse viewpoints, a single, integrated vision for the future is generated. When completed, that vision presents a democratically derived consensus. Invitations to participate are given to the general public or to a representative panel. A broad distribution of information is essential. This information must be simply presented, attractive, and rendered important and timely. It should also include clear goals of participation and show how comments will be used in the process.

Community residents participate through meetings and surveys. A typical method of involving people is through a questionnaire format, seeking comments on present issues and future possibilities. A report card filled in with community opinions was used in Jacksonville, Florida. In Minnesota, opinions were elicited through small and large public meetings at locations distributed equitably throughout the state. In the Research Triangle region of North Carolina, participants drew pictures of their vision of the region's future and of transit opportunities in words and pictures on wall-sized sheets of paper.

Timing

A specific time period is scheduled to develop the vision statement. The schedule incorporates sufficient time for framing issues, eliciting comments through surveys or meetings, recording statements from participants, and integrating those statements into draft and final documents. Staff members for a visioning process are typically assigned from existing agencies that are familiar with issues and essential contacts to be maintained. In Minnesota and New Jersey, staff mem-

bers were assigned from the state planning office, and in Jacksonville, Florida, from the Community Council/Chamber of Commerce.

The entire visioning process is extremely flexible in terms of scheduling and staff commitments. Scheduling takes weeks or months. Staff members are temporarily or permanently assigned to the project. Preparation for visioning is crucial and touches on many complex issues. Advance work is essential to give time for staff members to prepare the overall program, agendas, mailing lists, questionnaires, and methods of presentation and follow-up. The visioning program should be carefully scheduled to maximize local input and response time before final policies are selected.

Visioning is especially beneficial at an early point in the establishment or revision of policies or goals. Used in this way, it demonstrates openness to new ideas or concepts suggested by the public. For maximum effect, a visioning project should have the active support of elected officials, agency heads, and community groups.

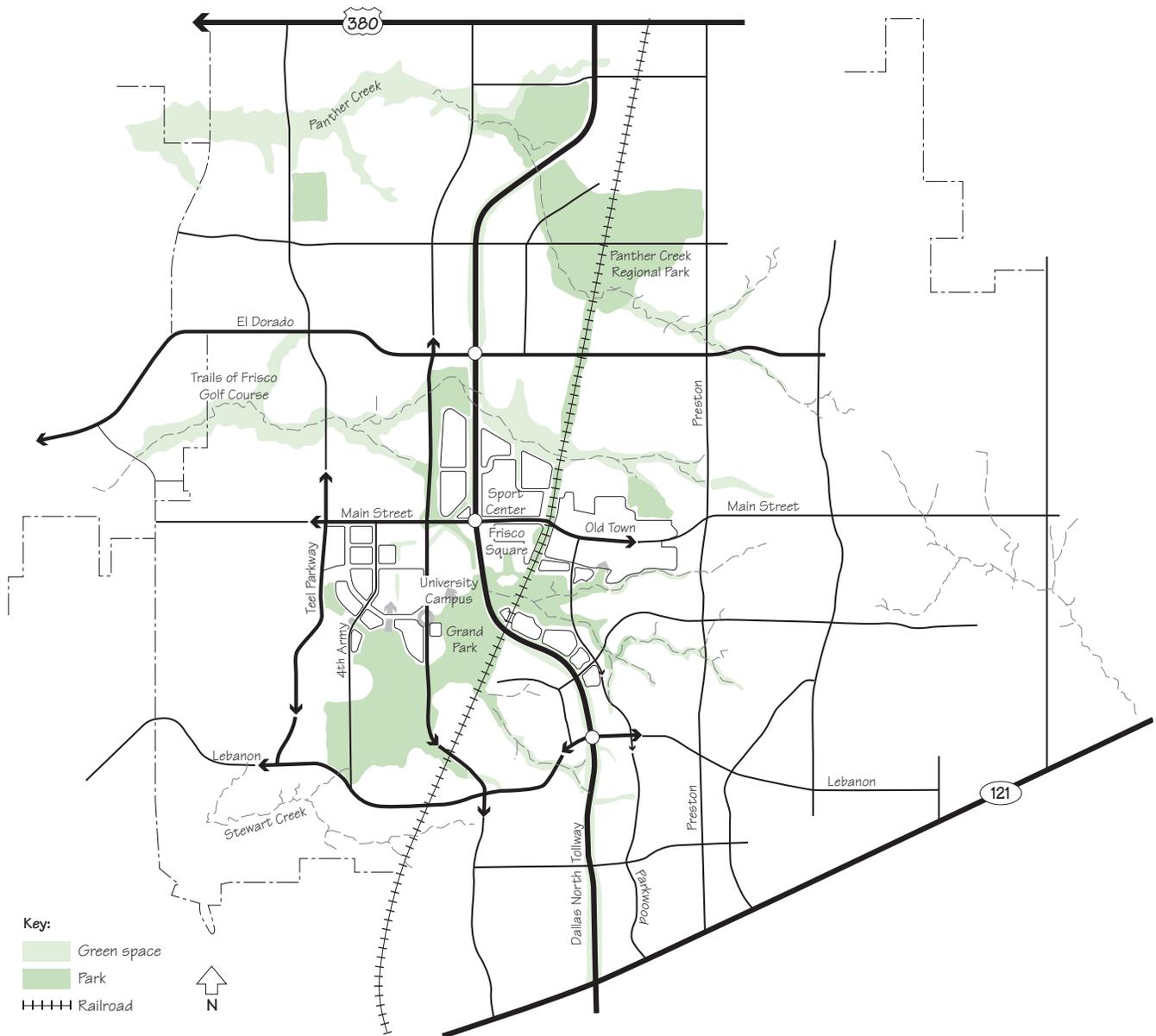
A successful visioning process

- requires leadership and choices;
- is stakeholder centered;
- is collaborative and educational;
- is focused on implementation; and
- is worth fighting for to shape the future.

As soon as a collaborative vision is established, a reasonable and effective development planning process can begin.

Green Infrastructure

Natural systems, such as open space, streams, wetlands, woodlands, waterways, habitat, and parks, set Frisco apart from its neighboring communities. Specifically, the presence of significant aquatic environments is a rare and limited resource. The inventory and evaluation of their current status, the character of these areas, and the ability to access and use them to the benefit of the community and to create a value-added element for both existing and future development within



the city of Frisco are key components of its continued success.

The panel recommends establishing a fully connected open space system to benefit wildlife and people, to link urban areas to rural areas, to create value as an amenity to adjacent development, to provide passive and active recreation, and to establish educational opportunities.

Land is being consumed in all areas of the country at a rate that far exceeds population growth. The city of Frisco must begin to evaluate the cultural, ecological, developmental, agricultural, and recreational values of its available and future open space resources as well as their less defined, economic value-added effects on immediately adjacent parcels.

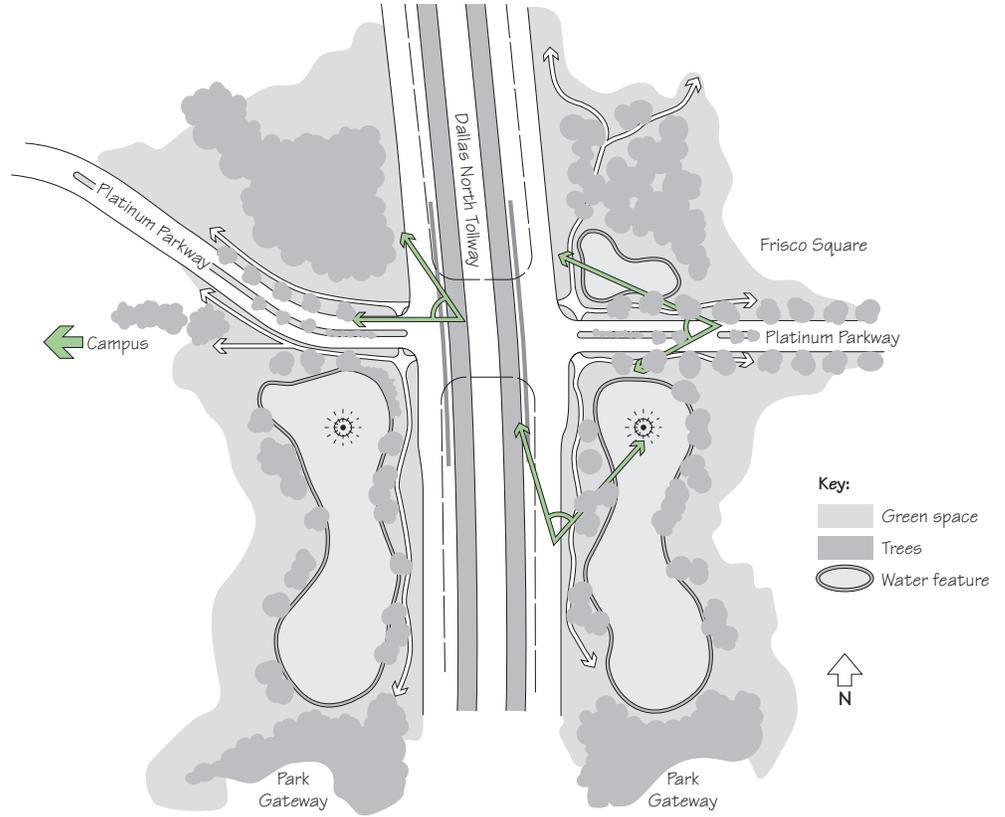
Green infrastructure planning needs to be proactive, systematic, large scale, and well integrated with growth management, transportation planning, and other public policies. The time is critical for the city of Frisco to identify and sustain these remaining open space systems.

Generally accepted standards indicate that every vibrant, successful community—both economically and physically—either has or is within an acceptable distance of a variety of park and open space components. Such communities have access to the following amenities:

- Neighborhood parks (five to ten acres in size);
- District parks (ten to 30 acres);

Greenway plan.

Platinum/Tollway entrance plan.



Parks and paths link areas east of the Tollway with the Grand Park.



- Community parks (150 to 200 acres); and
- Regional parks (500 to 1,000 acres).

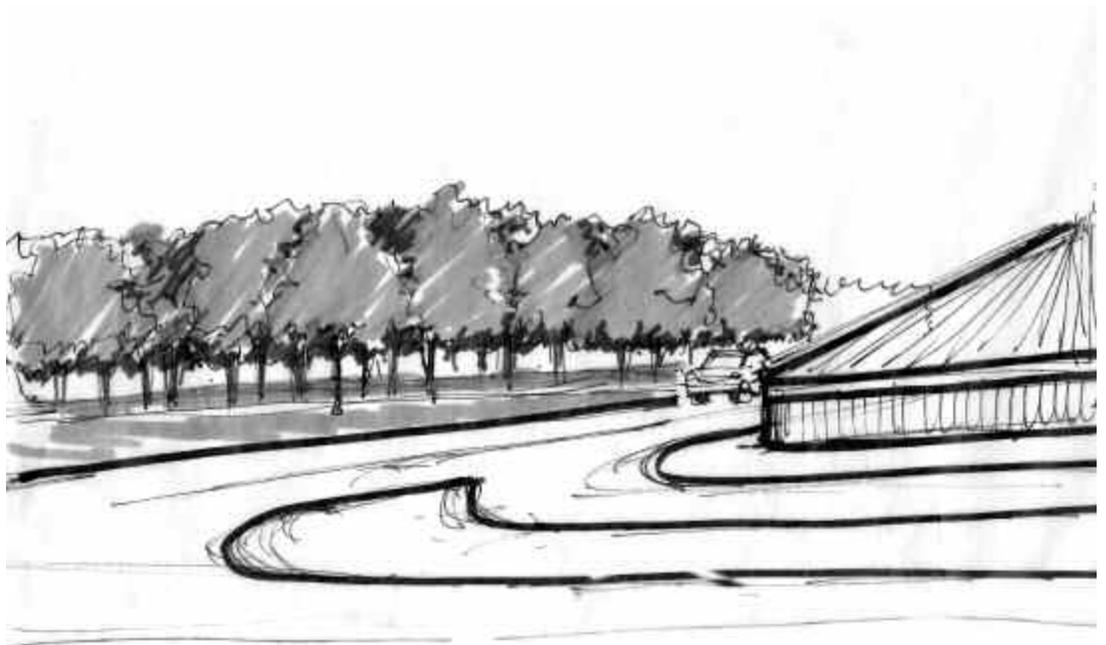
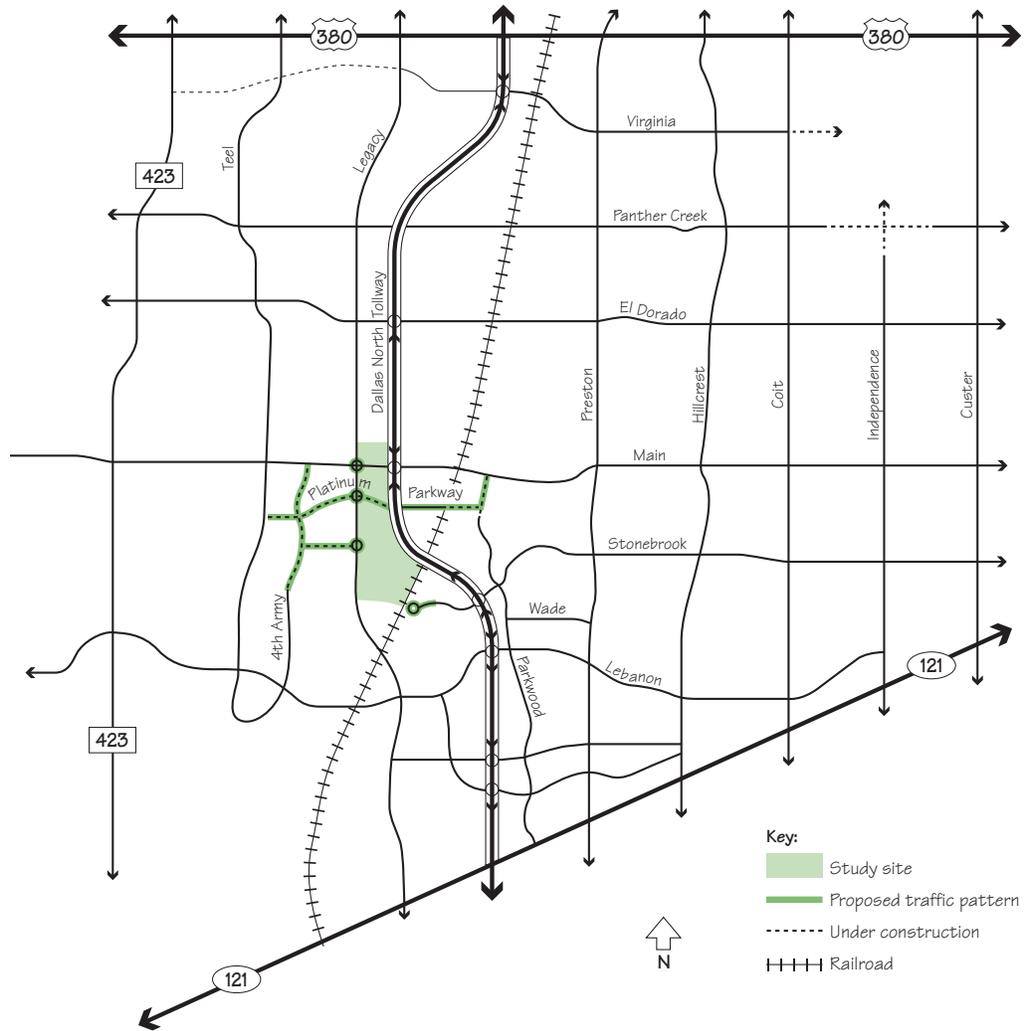
The panel concludes and confirms what the city of Frisco’s consultant has stated, that the city is in a position to support, market, develop, and operate a regional park. Specifically, the panel recommends that the city of Frisco undertake the following:

- Complete the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan and fully integrate it with the Hike and Bicycle Trail Master Plan and the upcoming Stormwater Management Plan for the city.
- Set aside significant natural waterways and corridors in undeveloped areas of the city by either acquisition or zoning.
- Expand the open space and trails program along those streams as community connectors between neighborhoods, employment centers, recreation centers, and education centers.
- Create a centrally located Grand Park that will facilitate multiuse on a regional scale along Stewart Creek. This Grand Park should be as large a tract of contiguous land area as is practical, so that it is easily recognizable and not dissected by major roadways.
- Extend the Grand Park across the Dallas North Tollway to create a recognizable break in the sameness of the development of office and commercial uses that extend from Dallas to Plano and an entry to the city center. This expansion to the east will also begin to provide a stronger connection to the older sections of town and facilitate more-active use of the entire park system.
- Create a second regional park in the Panther Creek area, following the same principles established for the planning of the Grand Park. This regional park may be best suited for a municipal golf course that uses the Panther Creek natural areas to their fullest advantage.
- Look for and create opportunities for an expansion of the green infrastructure of the city into existing and older neighborhoods to provide connections to newly planned and developed amenities. Use existing and improved sidewalk systems on street connectors where necessary.
- Use and locate open space and park systems adjacent to the North Dallas Tollway so that Frisco is visually and physically distinct from other communities.
- Integrate into the Grand Park a series of park experiences—some manicured and better developed along the town edges, and some natural.
- Integrate stormwater management structures into the open space corridors and design them as amenities rather than purely functional, engineered stormwater facilities.
- Develop a program for stormwater management and flood management along the Stewart Creek corridor and in the Grand Park area that allows for the “banking” of retention and detention areas for a region rather than allocating these on a parcel by parcel basis, thereby freeing up developable land for expanded mixed-use development.
- Initiate a series of policies that protect environmental systems and conserve resources in the community by: minimizing disturbance of natural systems; factoring local climate into the site planning and layout of projects; planning for the conservation and recycling of water; and optimizing the efficiency of systems to reduce the demand on nonrenewable resources.
- Complete a thorough and critical review of the existing Subdivision Ordinance, the Major Creek Protection Ordinance, and the Tributary Ordinance to ensure that their continued enforcement is consistent with the long-range goals of this proposed linear and connected fabric of open space systems and trails.

Grand Park

At the core of this green infrastructure is the Grand Park. This significant regional park provides the central anchor for an extensive network of trails and open space corridors that link every neighborhood within the city. Within the Grand Park are a discovery and naturalist center, hiking

Circulation plan.



The panel suggests using roundabouts to calm traffic exiting the Tollway.

and biking trails, ponds and streams for fishing and water recreation activities, natural areas for educational sessions, and extensive wildlife habitat. Areas of quiet solitude and natural experiences balance large areas for open, unstructured play. The park can also be an area for major events, such as fireworks displays or community programs and regional fairs. The park is easily accessible by several roads, trails, bikeways, private and public transit systems, and the future commuter rail.

Traffic Circulation

The ability to move effectively through a community is essential to creating a sustainable city. This process goes beyond basic traffic planning. Efficient roadways should connect with trails, transit, and walkways. The planned traffic flow improvements include extending Platinum Parkway to the east, past Legacy Drive, to connect with 4th Army Memorial Drive and extending Legacy Drive to the south to Stonebrook Parkway, completing the connection to the DNT. In evaluating this fabric of improvements and the existing roadways, the panel recommends the following modifications:

- Connect Platinum Parkway to Legacy Drive, alter the conventional alignment to create more interest, and minimize the “shotgun” appearance of this primary roadway connector.
- Recognize that the DNT will affect continuity of community between the east and west portions of the city and plan to offset those effects.
- Reconsider the proposal to extend Stonebrook Parkway to Legacy Drive. The panel suggests that eliminating this connection will enhance the environment of the Grand Park while preventing the degradation of the stream corridor and saving the expense of the bridges that would be necessary.
- Use roundabouts along Legacy Road. Legacy will become a major alternative to Main Street and its connection to the Tollway. A more efficient flow of traffic over a wider network of streets will lessen congestion and move traffic at a more even pace.

- Reevaluate parking requirements used for development projects. Use parking management, shared parking, and, where appropriate, structured parking to prevent the overbuilding of parking areas. Sufficient parking is critically important to the community and to commerce, but parking should not dominate the landscape.

There has been some discussion of the possible extension of commuter rail along the BNSF Railway corridor. This possibility would provide choices for commuters who live in the city of Frisco and work in adjacent communities and whose normal driving commute is more than 20 minutes. The location of the BNSF rail corridor is significant because it connects directly into the center of the historic downtown areas of the community. The corridor also substantiates the heritage of railroads in the origin of the community. The reinstatement of a train depot for the ultimate commuter rail station will add vibrancy to the town center.

The panel heard that there are currently fewer than ten trips per day on this line. Major freight shipping has now been shifted to surrounding lines that are in better condition and more effective for regional transportation. The city should place itself in a controlling position as to the future of the rail corridor, so that its long-term use is beneficial, either as a commuter rail or as a trail and bikeway connection from the parks and open space systems to the city center.

Land Use

Appropriate and diverse land uses create a vibrant and successful community. Mixed-use development provides a market-driven draw, economic growth, and community cohesiveness. The panel has evaluated the existing and proposed uses surrounding the Grand Park and has created a sustainable alternative. As an emerging Boomburb, Frisco is faced with competing pressures to develop. Strong market pressures attract retailers, small businesses, and residential developers interested in building quickly and efficiently, with no sense of the long-range vision of the community.

A mix of housing types; income levels; employment opportunities; recreational and health care



City center plan.

facilities; and retail, civic, and cultural venues, creates a sustainable community. The city of Frisco has a unique opportunity to establish itself as the address to be in the north Texas region.

If a suburban fringe city is to be dynamic, lively, and sustainable, it must have housing opportunities for a demographically diverse population. Choices must be available, and all segments of the populace accommodated. The proposed Grand Park, open space and trail system, and connection to the city center have led the panel to recommend that this area provide diverse housing opportunities. Given the focus on walkability and connectivity as important objectives, higher-density residential uses are appropriate for the locations designated on the panel’s plan. The need for this type of housing is supported by market analysis.

Demand will still exist for the conventional single-family, detached, residential product in proximity to this newly developed core and the park. Opportunities for mid- to high-rise residential projects adjacent to the Grand Park and Stewart Creek, similar to those of the Turtle Creek area of Dallas, have also been identified.

Unmanaged growth leads to long-term negative outcomes for the realization of short-term gains, as is apparent in the development patterns of identical office, retail, and mixed use for the 30-mile stretch from Dallas to State Highway 121. The panel believes the Grand Park will bring identity to Frisco’s city center and break the characterless monotony of Dallas’s golden crescent. With that goal in mind, the panel recommends the following:

- Optimize connectivity by avoiding the use of superblocks in multiuse centers.
- Provide the infrastructure, especially streets, parking, and public spaces, to enable successful mixed-use centers.
- Make mixed-use centers pedestrian-friendly to encourage community and user interaction.
- Share and manage parking to prevent the overdevelopment of unused, impervious surfaces and large expanses of wasted landscape.
- Continue the successes of the recent past and use public/private partnerships to make things happen more effectively and for the benefit of all parties.
- Recognize that not every development project will be a center of concentrated mixed use. That is, one project may be the residential component, another the office component, and still another the retail.
- Acquire the former rocket fuel facility along the south edge of Frisco Square for inclusion in the Grand Park. This space will allow a better connection to the adjacent natural area.
- Acquire the battery plant—possibly using available brownfields funds—and incorporate it into the Grand Park.

Community Character

Identifying, retaining, and protecting cultural resources are critical to maintaining a sense of history and community character. This cultural identity can be passed along through architecture, by interpretation of significant landforms, or through good-quality reconstructions.

The panel recommends that culturally significant places and structures be identified and preserved. Specifically, the panel suggests the historic ranch house, entry drive, and barn on the study site be



The historic ranch house and barn at the center of the study site should be preserved for educational programs featuring the city's history.

restored and maintained. The significance of this place and the strength of the story that can be told are enhanced by allowing the structures to remain in their original locations. This site can become an environmental education center, adding a valuable asset to the local and regional school systems. Its location can also become a trailhead for hiking and biking in the Grand Park.

Once lost, cultural resources can never be regained. It is critically important that Frisco take action to preserve its remaining historic fabric and cultural distinctiveness.

Development Strategies

The panel's recommendations require a strategy that facilitates distinctive development and meets the diverse needs of families in a growing metropolis. Some of the uses recommended in this report—a major regional park, a four-year college, and a regional medical facility—are civic in nature, and the city of Frisco will play a major role in their development. Others will be developed by the private sector, such as housing and mixed-use retail developments, and the city's role will be to guide planning, designs, and locations. The central elements of the development strategy should include the following:

- **Comprehensive planning:** This element entails a commitment to coordinated, comprehensive land use; open space; and infrastructure planning on a citywide, subarea, and site-specific basis.
- **City center:** An overall strategy that creates a city center anchored around existing civic uses should build from the city's commitments to Frisco Square, the historic old town Main Street, and the Frisco Soccer & Entertainment Center and should take advantage of the natural features present in Stewart Creek.
- **City of Frisco:** The city should be actively involved in creating a vision for the city center through land acquisition and banking, development of parkland and facilities, marketing of the college campus site, and development of design standards and regulatory controls.
- **Sustained community vision and support:** Broad-based political support, generated from stakeholder involvement, should be sustained by using outreach; creating community-based organizations; and delivering uses, facilities, and programs that create interest and excitement throughout Frisco.

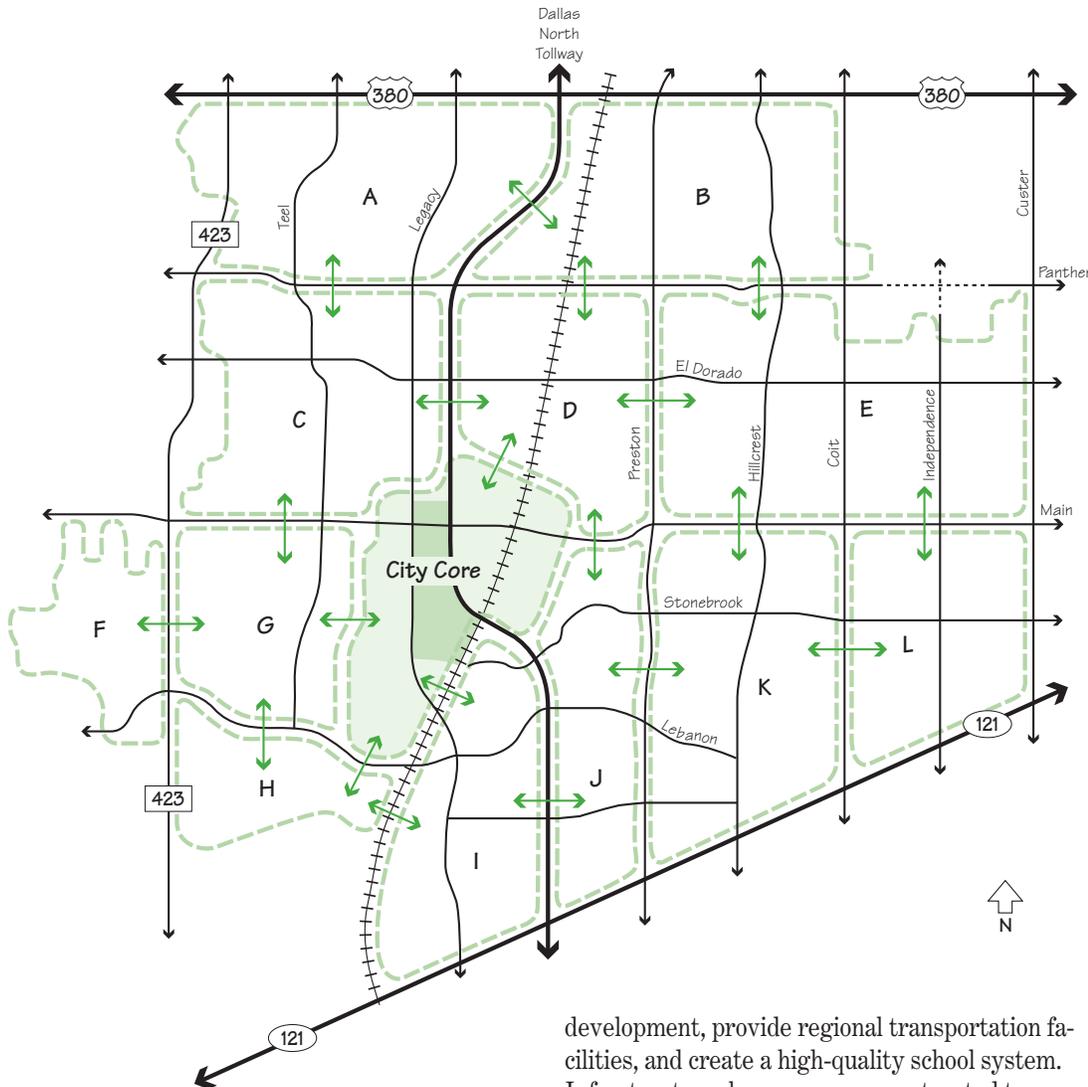
Citywide Strategies

The city of Frisco must assume leadership and direction in implementation of the following strategies.

Vision

The first principle of smart growth on the suburban fringe is to “[c]reate a shared vision for the future . . . and stick to it.” The city has the opportunity in its recently initiated Comprehensive Plan update to engage the community through a meaningful public visioning process. Through this process the city will emerge with a Comprehensive Plan that reflects a common vision of the future, a community that is educated about planning and growth, and genuine enthusiasm about the future of the city. The panel recommends that the city take this opportunity to integrate a variety of previous plans that were independently developed into a cohesive planning framework. For example, the city's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan; the Bike and Trails Master Plan; and the Stormwater Management Plan need to be integrated into a single plan for green infrastructure throughout the community. Similarly, the city's plans for infrastructure, public safety facilities, and roads should be coordinated and phased through a long-term plan and budget for capital improvements.

The importance of comprehensive planning is dramatically increased because of the rapid pace of development in the city. Under the pressure of unprecedented population growth, the City Manager and his staff have done an admirable job of creating a new urban fabric with high-quality development and transportation facilities serving the region. However, the panel has observed that the city lacks the institutional framework to facilitate effective coordination among city departments and between the city and other regional service agencies. Effective comprehensive planning and the creation of a clear bureaucratic structure will



provide the basis for good communication and efficient delivery of services.

Comprehensive Subarea Planning

The panel recommends that the city adopt a process of subarea-specific planning for major geographic regions. To date, the city has undertaken comprehensive planning for the city as a whole. Citywide planning efforts, such as the Bike and Trails Master Plan, Storm Drainage Master Plan, and others, map the basic patterns and relationships between land use and infrastructure. These planning efforts have enabled the city to capture

development, provide regional transportation facilities, and create a high-quality school system. Infrastructure, however, was constructed to serve disparate developments and subdivisions and has created a discontinuous road system, difficulties in providing adequate public safety and other public services, and substantial construction. That construction includes significant carrying costs for infrastructure borne by the city, which takes valuable cash resources, absorbs bonding capacity, and makes the city vulnerable to a short-term slowdown in the pace of development.

Identifying Frisco's planning subareas (the first will be the city core) will allow the city to prepare subarea-specific plans before approving subdivisions. Subarea-specific plans, including plans for subareas of the city already substantially devel-

Existing development, such as this newly finished office park, should be integrated into the city's new vision.



oped, will establish the planning framework for future development of the entire subarea in terms of land use patterns, circulation, provision of infrastructure, and public services and facilities. Each subarea-specific plan will also include a phasing and financing plan that provides the city with a basis for establishing an area of benefit for community infrastructure and facilities, as well as the basis for their orderly phasing. The subarea-specific plans will ensure that the consideration of individual subdivisions and other projects accounts for areawide needs, takes into account the phasing of areawide infrastructure, and does not place undue burdens on city financial resources.

A Backbone of Green Infrastructure

The second principle of smart growth on the suburban fringe is to “identify and sustain green infrastructure.” Networks of open spaces, streams, and other green areas form the permanent structure of communities. Land use and transportation change over time, but the open space skeleton of a community is recognizable for centuries. Frisco has committed itself to a robust level of parks, is traversed by four significant streams, and has planned for natural trails, but the city has yet to create a comprehensive open space plan that establishes the connectivity of green spaces. The panel recommends that the city, through its Comprehensive Plan process, create an indelible green spine through its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan and Stormwater Management Plan. Although the Grand Park will be the active heart of this fabric of open spaces, planning for the next regional park should start today. The panel

recommends that a major regional park be planned for the Panther Creek area. A well-planned open space system creates family-oriented recreation, connects people with nature, increases land values throughout the community, and is central to the long-term sustainability of the city.

City Center Strategies

The panel recommends that the city lead the effort to create a shared vision of Frisco's city center.

Vision

This key element of creating sustainable growth will ensure that Frisco's residents, employees, businesses, and visitors have a common vision of the future physical, social, economic, and environmental characteristics of the city center. A shared vision will be critical for effective implementation, given the substantial public investment that will be necessary to achieve the planning goals for Grand Park, the Frisco university, and other steps to create a vital city center. Creation of the shared vision will require extensive involvement of area stakeholders and leadership by one or more key individuals in the city.

After that vision is established, ongoing dissemination of information about progress toward the vision will ensure that the evolving future of Frisco's city center remains fresh and relevant to the population. Tools such as the city's Web site, regular mailings, monthly city council briefings, informational signage, and the creation of a public

City Center Advisory Committee will “brand” the Frisco city center and will ensure that the vision stays crisp in the minds of the people of Frisco and throughout the region.

City Center Plan

The panel recommends that the city prepare a plan specifically for the city center that will comprehensively guide the future development and, where appropriate, redevelopment of the elements of the central area of Frisco. The specific plan should include an open space plan, land use plan, circulation plan, infrastructure plan, and phasing plan. The specific plan should include an urban design element that sets the policy framework for cohesive design, lighting, and signage throughout the city center. It should also include guidelines for Main Street that

- Reinforce the historic character of Frisco’s old town east of the BNSF Railway line;
- Create building design on Main Street west of the North Dallas Tollway similar in scale and style to that of the old town area; and
- Ensure that development in these areas is visually compatible with yet distinctive from that of Frisco Square.

The specific plan should be coordinated with the city’s Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan, as well as other city and regional agency plans.

City as Master Developer

The panel recommends that the city become the master developer, providing leadership, financial backing, and expertise in land use and development issues, with a particular focus on the acquisition of the open space greenways and the creation of civic uses. The panel also recommends consideration of a City Center Development Corporation (CCDC) to provide a focused organizational structure and staff to pursue the challenge of designing and implementing the area’s development.

As master developer, the city and the CCDC will be able to provide the management needed to take advantage of opportunities and create solutions to the infrastructure challenges (roads and storm drainage) while seeking an institution of higher

learning and developing the open spaces. As master developer, the city and the CCDC would have the wherewithal to consolidate the many property ownerships, create the open space uses, bank the land to be made available for the university campus, and create partnerships with developers of compatible and supportive housing, retail, and office uses.

The CCDC should partner with the Frisco Community Development Corporation (CDC) and, when feasible, the university campus in development of the physical and programmatic features of the Grand Park. The CCDC should also partner with the Frisco Economic Development Corporation (EDC) in actively pursuing technology-based employers who can become tenants in the future Platinum Park Technology Center. Finally, as the master developer, the city and the CCDC can and should adopt a set of cohesive design guidelines that will create appropriate design themes for the different areas of the city center master plan area and that will thematically connect (through design and signage) the elements of the city center.

Site Strategies

The panel recommends the following specific development strategies, which take into consideration both short- and long-term possibilities for development. All of these recommendations are based on the assumption that the city and the CCDC will serve as the master developer of the site.

The panel recommends preserving historic Texas buildings and adding specialty shops to Frisco’s Main Street.



Key:

- Mixed-use
- High-density housing
- University housing
- Greenway
- Railroad
- Water



University neighborhood.

Grand Park: Connecting Families with Nature

The panel recognizes that development of the Grand Park will require leadership, investment, and patience. The city, through the CCDC, will probably have to acquire the land for the park and create a Grand Park Master Plan.

The CCDC should also facilitate the creation of public/private partnerships to support the development of planned facilities and programs for the Grand Park. A nonprofit, community-based support organization (for example, Friends of Frisco's Grand Park) should be established to maintain long-term local public support, raise funds, and develop and implement recreational and cultural programs.

The CCDC's acquisition of land for the 850-acre Grand Park can be accomplished incrementally; however, an initial investment in the first 250 acres of Grand Park, consisting of all of the lands located between the North Dallas Tollway and Legacy Drive, should be undertaken to establish the park's core and create a critical mass of parklands. Other lands should be acquired over time as the lands and financial resources become available.

Attract a University Campus

The panel recommends that the city recruit a four-year institution of higher learning. The two key steps will involve: (1) acquiring a site that will be attractive to public and private institutions, and (2) actively marketing the site and recruiting the institution. The acquisition of an attractive site will involve purchasing approximately 125 acres of land located between Legacy Drive and the DNT, south of Platinum Parkway. The city should offer the site as a dedication to the future campus and provide water, sewer, and roads to the front door of the campus. The site will be attractive to an institution of higher education for many reasons. The university will have access to an attractive wooded landscape and will be close to Frisco Square, old town, first-class sports facilities, and a high-quality primary and secondary school system. Additionally, the site is less than a half-hour drive from a major airport. This land should be held, over the long term if necessary, for the construction of a four-year residential college.

Higher education has become an extremely competitive enterprise. Communities compete for col-

Dr Pepper/Seven Up Ballpark uses design elements recommended for the West Main Street Retail Corridor.



leges; colleges compete for faculty, students, and financial resources; and students compete for limited space in our best institutions. The city of Frisco's successful acquisition of a high-quality college or university will depend on an outstanding program that markets the site within the educational community. Key steps will include retention of a consultant to seek out potential institutions as well as creation of a marketing package that presents the attributes of the site, Frisco, and the region.

West Main Street Retail Corridor

The panel recommends that the West Main Street Retail Corridor provide both retail and commercial uses and that it reflect and complement the

historic old town on Main Street to the east. The city and the CCDC should establish design guidelines that provide a cohesive design theme that reflects the one- to two-story scale of Main Street in Frisco's old town to the east. These guidelines should be similar in nature to the design of the recently completed Dr Pepper/Seven Up Ballpark and should complement and frame the denser urban development of Frisco Square.

Implementation

The panel recommends that the city provide leadership, financial backing, and expertise in land use and development issues, with a particular focus on the acquisition of the open space greenways and the creation of civic uses.

The Frisco City Center Development Corporation

Providing an ongoing focus on the development of the Grand Park and the surrounding land uses will be important. Because much of the city's needed development is already ongoing, creating a separate Center City Development Corporation would be wise. The CCDC could have a board appointed by the mayor and City Council and an executive director appointed by the city manager and confirmed by the council. The CCDC would need a small staff and could draw on the skills and abilities already existing in other city departments, such as planning, the Frisco EDC, and the Frisco CDC. It might also have the following positions.

Grand Park/University Area Director

This person will direct the acquisition of both the Grand Park and university sites and market the university site to potentially interested schools. The Grand Park/University Area Director must be familiar with various acquisition tools and be skilled at negotiating land deals. It is important that this individual be focused only on these tasks and not be drawn into other city functions.

Park Program Manager

This individual will identify and implement program activities to build the identity of the park as a community center. Events may draw tens of thousands and may host spectacular regional festivals or music performances.

Master Plan

The panel recommends that the city, through the CCDC, immediately commission a master plan for the study area and its surroundings. Although the panel's recommendations represent a valid vision for the ultimate development of the Frisco Grand Park area, these recommendations have been developed with limited time and background information. The CCDC should commission a master plan for the study area by hiring an independent planning and design team that will refine the panel's recommendations as well as reflect the community's vision for the study area.

The master plan process will require a planning and landscape architecture team working with a variety of subconsultants to address specific technical areas. Subconsultants should include hydrologists, biologists, tree conservation specialists, traffic engineers, and civil engineers. The initial master plan will be the basis for preparing estimates of the capital costs for implementation and of the operating and maintenance costs. The master plan will also provide insights into the logical and orderly phasing of development and will give the city the means to respond quickly to specific development proposals. The following groups should be included in the process: Parks and Recreation Board, city parks leadership, Frisco CDC, City Council, mayor, city planning, arts and cultural leaders, transportation advocates, landowners, members of the development and financial community, and community representatives.

Land Bank

The panel recommends that the city and the CCDC immediately identify and make available funds for acquiring the land bounded by the Tollway, Platinum Parkway, Legacy Drive, and the southern border of the study area. The city may need to consider several sources of funding for

this acquisition, including tax increment financing, unrestricted Frisco CDC and Frisco EDC funds, and impact fees. Given the anticipated citywide positive effect of the Grand Park development and the dramatic increase in property values that will no doubt follow, the panel believes that the use of these funds is justified.

The opportunity to purchase the property will only become more difficult if the city does not move quickly. The need for expeditious acquisition will require the use of readily available funds and may require a reprioritization of fund uses for a short time. Bond authorizations will likely also be needed and may be used to repay funds used for initial acquisition of the parcel.

The city has a track record of making excellent decisions that have reduced its debt service while building necessary community infrastructure. It is now necessary to take a long-term financial health view. This view includes investing in the elements of a sustainable community. The panel believes that the Grand Park and a new higher-education center will be pivotal elements of a sustainable Frisco. Other land to be included for the final park configuration and the university site should be identified through the planning process.

Funding

A variety of vehicles may be used to fund future acquisitions. Options on land should be negotiated where possible so as to obtain site control until future funding is realized.

Creative Negotiations

The city should work with landowners to encourage donation of land or swapping of land in exchange for up-zoning, increased density, and storm water management services. Benefits of the Grand Park and these incentives to the landowner's residual land should be set off against the cost of acquiring the land.

Transfer of Development Rights

In addition, the city should consider using transfer of development rights (TDRs) from the Grand Park site to future communities in the city as a funding source. Transfer of development rights programs use market forces to promote conserva-



A hawk flying over Stewart Creek.

tion of high-value natural, agricultural, and open space areas while simultaneously encouraging smart growth in developed and developing sections of a community. Successful TDR programs have been in place throughout the country since 1980 and have protected tens of thousands of acres of farmland and open space.

In a TDR program, the city will identify the park area as an area it would like to see protected from development (the sending zone) and other areas where the community desires more urban development (the receiving zone). Landowners or the city in the sending zone can sell its development credits to developers, speculators, or the community itself. The purchaser of the development credits can apply them to develop at a higher density than otherwise allowed on property within the receiving zone.

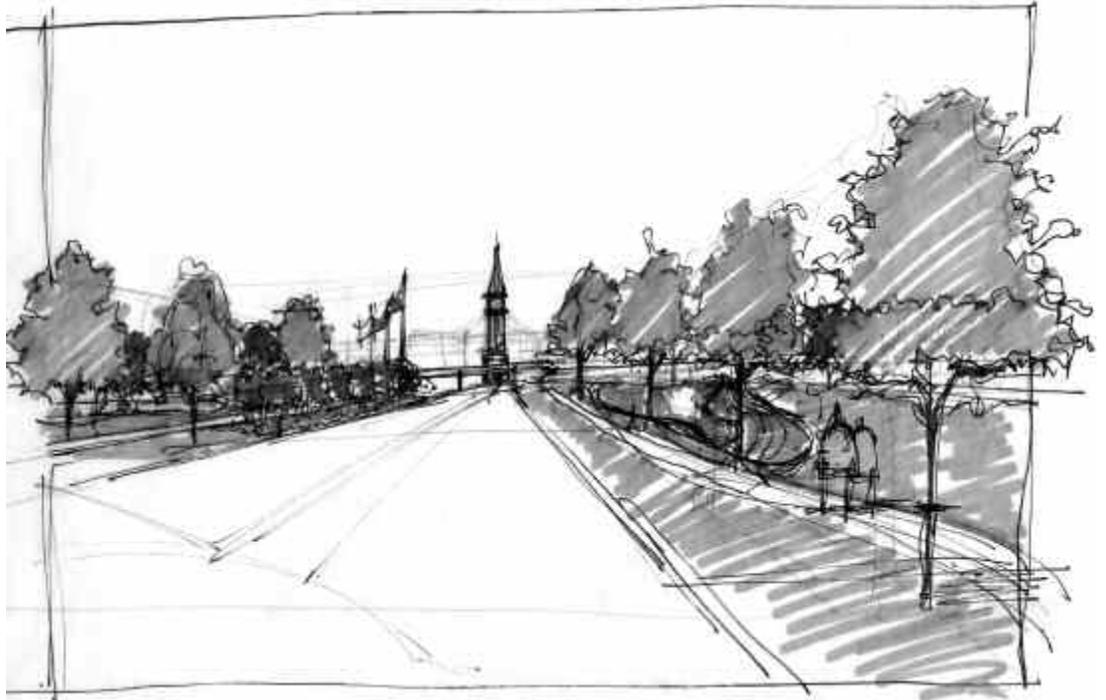
Stormwater Retention

The park plan includes 100 acres of stormwater retention area. These retention lakes accommodate runoff for up to 1,000 acres of residential construction. As with the TDRs, the city could create credits for stormwater development requirements. These would be sold to developers in the surrounding drainage basin in lieu of building their own separate retention areas.

Bond Financing

A public bond referendum and additional millage may be necessary for the complete acquisition of the properties. The panel believes that the city has an excellent track record of identifying projects of value to the citizens of Frisco and of com-

The panel's vision for a pedestrian-friendly Platinum Parkway, linking the city center with the university campus.



municating that value to the community, resulting in successful bond referendums. Although the cost of implementing this vision will be substantial, our calculations indicate that its cost is small relative to the city's investments in roadway projects. Furthermore, as has been stated earlier in this report, well-designed parks more than pay for themselves with dramatically increased property values and tax base. Recall the examples of Central Park in New York City, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, and the riverfront in Chattanooga.

Partnerships

Both governmental and nongovernmental sources should be explored for park funding. Several active nonprofit entities involved in open space and habitat preservation may be able to assist with fundraising from private and governmental sources, such as the Trust for Public Land and The Conservation Fund. In addition, park facilities may be funded through corporate and individual sponsorship and citizen participation.

Key Opportunities

The panel recommends that the city market the university site to potential educational institu-

tions. Rather than waiting for an unsolicited proposal, the city must actively pursue the successful recruitment of the educational institution.

The city should retain a consultant to seek out potential institutions and create a marketing package that presents the attributes of the site, Frisco, and the region. These attributes include the proximity to the town center uses, availability of first-class sports facilities, a highly educated local population, and excellent roadway access. The marketing effort should include a relocation package potentially consisting of land contribution or dedication, employee tax credits or other incentives, and the coordination of infrastructure development.

The marketing effort should culminate in the issuance of a request for proposal (RFP) for the site with a commitment from the city to expedite approvals, streamline the process, and deliver the necessary incentives. Alternately, if initial response to the RFP is unsatisfactory, the city could continue to use a broker to identify prospects and continue the marketing effort.

The presence of the university will have significant long-term sustainability benefits for the city.

But the city should note that it will also realize the immediate effects of job growth and additional retail demand.

Phasing

The activities required to implement the Grand Park and city center vision can be phased in many ways. Different elements will actually occur earlier or later as circumstances dictate. The following is a possible phasing scenario:

2005–2006

- During 2005, the city authorizes and establishes the Center City Development Corporation and hires an executive director.
- An RFP is issued for a team to undertake the master planning of the city center subarea, and the plan is completed.
- The city's overall Comprehensive Plan update is completed.

- An area-specific plan is created for the city center and Grand Park area, and specific design guidelines for Main Street, both east and west of the DNT, are developed and put into effect.
- Financial planning for land acquisition is undertaken, and initial acquisitions are made.
- Marketing for a college or university begins.

2006–2008

Land acquisition begins for the center portion of the Grand Park and the college or university.

2008

Land acquisition is completed, a college or university is brought in, and commercial and housing development are completed.

Conclusion

The city of Frisco, Texas, is at the beginning of a major growth surge that will triple its size over the next ten or 15 years. Before it becomes overwhelmed by growth and development, the city has wisely begun to consider what its future will be. It is time now to create and implement a vision for Frisco's future that has unique character and differentiates the city from the suburban monotony that has developed in earlier growth centers north of Dallas.

The panel has suggested a vision for Frisco when it is built out at 250,000 people. This vision draws from the city's special resources and creates a family-centered legacy for future generations. It is not an easy plan, but it is doable.

The panel believes Frisco has enormous development potential, but it is imperative that the city carefully select the most appropriate land uses. After examining six cities with populations of about 250,000, the panel recommends that Frisco pursue the following:

- **A four-year university.** The panel believes the site and adjacent area are extremely enticing for a university, but the city needs to package and market the site.
- **A park with active and passive recreation.** This strategy includes soliciting a family-oriented theme park such as Legoland.
- **A balanced mix of housing types and price points.** This strategy will provide for diverse demo-

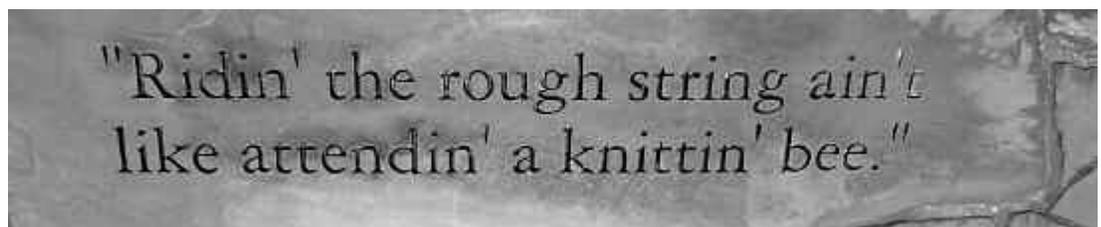
graphics and balance traffic demand, services, and the economy.

- **A mix of well-planned and designed retail and commercial developments.** This strategy will enhance the city center as a locus of shopping and employment for the whole of Frisco.

Many booming cities have lost their ability to create a large system of connected parks and greenways. Frisco has the unique opportunity to create an identity differentiating the city from the northern Dallas sprawl. The recommended 850-acre Grand Park and open space system will celebrate the natural, cultural, recreational, and educational resources of Frisco. Specifically, the panel recommends the following:

- The Grand Park become the scenic south entrance to the city;
- An icon of the university campus be visible from the Tollway;
- Trails and greenways link larger city and regional parks;
- New recreational uses complete community needs; and
- Existing development blend with this new vision.

This ambitious vision has stretched the panel and will undoubtedly stretch the city. Frisco has a history of taking challenges and succeeding. The city's decision over the next year will determine what type of legacy remains for Frisco's children.



The path at Frisco's Central Park celebrates the city's cultural past.

About the Panel

John K. McIlwain

*Panel Chair
Washington, D.C.*

John K. McIlwain is a senior resident fellow and ULI/J. Ronald Terwilliger Chair for Housing at the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. As the senior resident fellow for housing, McIlwain is responsible for leading ULI's research efforts to seek and promote affordable housing solutions, including development and housing patterns designed to create sustainable future environments for the nation's urban areas.

Prior to joining the ULI staff, McIlwain served as senior managing director of the American Communities Fund for Fannie Mae in Washington, D.C. The American Communities Fund is a venture fund founded by Fannie Mae and dedicated to investing in hard-to-finance affordable housing and retail development. In this capacity, McIlwain was responsible for structuring, underwriting, and closing equity investments in more than \$700 million of residential and neighborhood retail developments in lower-income communities around the country. Before taking that position, he was president and chief executive officer of the Fannie Mae Foundation.

Prior to joining Fannie Mae, McIlwain was the managing partner of the Washington law offices of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer and Murphy, where he represented a broad range of clients in the single-family and multifamily housing areas. McIlwain also served as executive assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Housing/Federal Housing Commissioner at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. He began his career in housing as assistant director for Finance and Administration and deputy director of the Maine State Housing Authority.

McIlwain is a past president of the National Housing Conference, an umbrella organization in Washington for low-income and affordable housing issues. He is also a past president of the National Housing and Rehabilitation Association. McIlwain received a law degree from New York University, where he worked for the NYU law review and was a John Norton Pomeroy Scholar. He received a BA, cum laude, from Princeton University.

Donald R. Bauer

Irvine, California

Donald R. Bauer is owner and founder of Bauer Planning & Environmental Services. With more than 28 years of experience in urban and regional planning, he has expertise in strategic planning, economics, new community design, and large-scale development programs. His projects emphasize quality of life, environmental integrity, and long-term economic value and return.

Bauer's experience includes residential villages and commercial complexes for the Irvine Company; large mixed-use projects in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Dallas, Orlando, and Denver; new towns such as The Woodlands, Texas; and resort communities, including Ventana Canyon in Tucson and the Cojo-Jalama Ranch in Santa Barbara. His international projects include the summer national capital of Saudi Arabia; new national capitals in Nigeria, Colombia, and China; Kao Shung, Taiwan; and various projects in Indonesia and the Bahamas.

Bauer is a member of the American Planning Association and, between 1992 and 1996, served as ULI District Council coordinator for Orange County, California. Bauer studied sculpture and architecture at the University of Oregon and participated in an exchange program at the University of Florence, Italy. He is a frequent university guest lecturer.

Brian D. Boxer

Sacramento, California

Brian D. Boxer, senior vice president in charge of EIP's Water Resources Group, specializes in the direction of planning and environmental studies related to general, specific, and redevelopment plans, as well as major development projects for educational institutions, private developers, and public agencies. Boxer focuses on sustainable development; integrated water infrastructure systems; the interrelationships between water, wastewater, and storm drainage technologies; and environmental regulatory compliance. His projects include design for livable communities, multi-modal transportation systems and traffic calming, water and energy conservation and efficiency, and social and economic sustainability.

Boxer served as managing principal of the Merced County University Community Plan and is currently serving as program manager for a series of joint studies for Merced County and the University of California. As program manager, Boxer directs the planning and development of the University of California at Merced, a new four-year public university planned to grow to 25,000 students, and the adjacent 2,000-acre, 31,000-person community. As part of that effort, Boxer designed and managed the preparation of the Conceptual Plan for Integrated Water-Related Infrastructure Systems for UC Merced and the university community.

Boxer holds an MA in Public Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs, Princeton University, and a BA in History from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Richard Burke

Savannah, Georgia

Richard Burke is the founder of RH Burke & Company. Over the past 14 years, the firm has worked with more than 45 community developers, including Fortune 500 corporations, closely held companies, financial institutions, and limited partnerships. Among its assignments, the firm has provided marketing services to United Lands,

GID, Westvaco, and Dominion Resources; completed consulting projects for International Paper, Weyerhaeuser, Wesbuild Holdings, and Del Webb; and trained sales agents for the Litchfield Company, Lowe/Grand Haven, NTS Residential, Worthington Communities, and many other regionally marketed communities.

During the past 24 years, Burke has held various positions in the community development industry. Burke gained expertise in building and training sales staff and in marketing large-scale residential and resort communities to pre-retirees from northern metropolitan areas.

Burke entered real estate as vice president—Marketing of the Branigar Organization in 1976 and was elected its president in 1978. Founded in 1918, Branigar developed primary, recreational, and retirement communities in both the Midwest and the Southeast. Burke left Branigar in 1987 to found RH Burke & Company.

Burke is a native of New York and earned a BA at the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA at the Wharton School of Finance & Commerce. Following two years of active military service, Burke spent five years in consumer marketing with Procter & Gamble and another two in new product development and corporate acquisitions with Crown Zellerbach.

Bruce Hazzard

Asheville, North Carolina

Bruce Hazzard brings to the panel more than 25 years of design, planning, management, and construction experience. Currently, he is director of Planning and Environmental Advocacy for Dolan, Pollak & Schram Development Company, focusing on environmentally challenging development for a series of private sporting clubs around the world. He bases his work on the principles of conservation and sustainable development.

Before joining Dolan, Pollak & Schram, Hazzard was a partner in Design Workshop, a 160-person environmental/resort planning and landscape architecture firm with offices across the nation. During those 18 years, he focused on understanding

natural ecosystems and balancing environmental, financial, artistic, and community values.

Hazzard has been involved on a variety of resort and new community projects around the world with a cumulative construction value in excess of \$2 billion. He has also successfully worked closely with several small, historically significant communities to create redevelopment strategies and policies that focus on balancing the cultural resources of these “special places” with the development pressures of the local economies.

Hazzard is currently involved in continuing preservation and environmentally based conservation planning efforts with projects in the Rocky Mountains, the Great Smoky Mountains, Central America, and the Caribbean.

John C. (Jack) Hewett

Santa Barbara, California

Jack Hewett has been involved in the real estate industry for the past 30 years. He currently assists with tailored financings, plus acquisitions and dispositions of property. For ten years he worked with what is now the CB Richard Ellis organization as an investment broker with a focus on securing funds for existing projects. Before that, he was associated with the Bishop Corporation, a Honolulu-based real estate developer and investor, dealing with all aspects of ownership from acquisition and development through long-term management of investments. Projects included apartments, condominiums, shopping centers, master-planned communities, resorts, theme parks, and luxury hotels.

Hewett received his MBA and JD from Syracuse University and is admitted to the bar in California, New York, and Hawaii. He has also served as a faculty member at five colleges and universities where he has taught business and law courses both domestically and abroad. His professional designations include Certified Property Manager from the National Institute of Real Estate Management, Commercial Investment Member from the National Board of Realtors, Certified Real Estate Financier from the National Real Estate

Forum, and the SIOR designation from the Society of Industrial and Office Brokers.

Ralph L. Nunez

Southfield, Michigan

Ralph Nunez founded Design Team Limited, a landscape architecture and planning company, in 1984. Design Team Limited’s efforts focus on the development and implementation of forward-thinking, realistic, and practical action plans. As design principal, Nunez designs, plans, and manages multimillion dollar redevelopment projects.

Nunez has a multidisciplinary background specializing in the fields of land planning, landscape architecture, and land development. Prior to 1984, his responsibilities encompassed the master planning of residential communities; park and recreation amenities; and commercial, industrial, office, and resort developments ranging from ten to several thousand acres. Additionally, the governor of Michigan appointed Nunez chairman of the State Board of Landscape Architects.

Nunez received his BS from Pennsylvania State University in 1976, majoring in landscape architecture and environmental planning.

Nathan Watson

New Orleans, Louisiana

Nathan Watson is a real estate professional developing commercial and residential projects in the New Orleans metropolitan area. Watson formed his company—Watson Developments—after working for ten years in progressive capacities for Columbus Properties, a major Gulf Coast—region commercial real estate developer. Combining Watson’s diverse background in architecture and planning with real estate finance, Watson Developments focuses on bringing innovative solutions to both urban and suburban real estate development needs. Current projects range from a \$300 million convention hotel in downtown New Orleans to an environmentally sensitive residential development in a nearby rural area.

Watson has been active in real estate development in New Orleans for more than ten years. At

Columbus Properties, Watson was responsible for the development and marketing of a 74-acre mixed-use development in downtown New Orleans. The master-planned urban development—a former rail yard—included more than 700 luxury apartments, an expansion of the Convention Center, and 2,500 hotel rooms. The development venture produced over \$100 million in sales and \$70 million in profits for its owners.

Earlier in his career, Watson launched and served as president of FirsTrust Community Development Corporation, a for-profit developer that fo-

cused on urban infill multifamily housing through a variety of public/private financing sources. The company developed 200 residential units during Watson's tenure.

Watson earned a bachelor's degree in architecture from Auburn University and an MBA from Columbia University.