Key Framework Items for Vision North Texas Phase 1

TO: Suzanne Cartwright, Urban Land Institute
FROM: Karen S. Walz, AICP, Vision North Texas Project Manager
DATE: October 25, 2005
SUBJECT: Key Framework Components of Vision North Texas, Phase 1

The information below summarizes some of the major features of the first phase of Vision North Texas. A list of additional documents that provide additional information is found at the end of this document.

Objectives

Vision North Texas is a project intended to:

- Increase public awareness of the growth that is projected for the Dallas – Fort Worth Metroplex region – the 4.1 million new residents and 2.3 million new jobs projected by 2030;
- Educate participants about the implications of this regional growth;
- Understand the options available to the region as it seeks to accommodate these new residents and new jobs; and to
- Create a forum for discussion about public and private sector actions to make the region more successful and sustainable.

Key Leadership

Three organizations have provided the primary leadership for Vision North Texas.

The Urban Land Institute's North Texas District Council initiated the discussions that led to this project. It has been an active leader throughout the process. John Walsh, ULI North Texas District Chair, has been involved in all aspects of the project. Fernando Costa AICP chairs the ULI Regional Visioning Committee which has directed the work throughout the effort.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) has been a strong and active leader for the project on behalf of the public sector. Earlier work done by NCTCOG's Center of Development Excellence formed the foundation for Vision North Texas. All levels of NCTCOG have supported the project. John Promise, Director of the Environment and Development Department, has been the lead staff participant. Many additional staff from the Departments of Environment and Development, Transportation, Research and Information Services, and Administration have also contributed.

The third lead partner is the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). UTA hosted the April workshop. Its faculty members were actively involved in the project's design and execution. Don Gatzke, Dean of the School of Architecture, was the principal participant for UTA. Other faculty from the School of Architecture and the School of Urban and Public Affairs also contributed.

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Project Direction

The Regional Visioning Committee, chaired by Fernando Costa AICP, provided the direction for the first phase of Vision North Texas. This committee included interested individuals from ULI, NCTCOG, UTA, the development community, planning and engineering consulting firms and city governments. Its membership grew as the project progresses; typically about 20 people participated in committee meetings.

The Regional Visioning Committee agreed that the process needed a Project Manager. The Project Manager, Karen Walz AICP, is the Principal of Strategic Community Solutions. Her services were provided through a contract between her firm and ULI.

Budget and Sponsorships

The overall cash budget for Phase 1 was approximately $86,000. In-kind assistance contributed substantial additional resources to the project. Major categories of out-of-pocket expenses are:

- Facility costs for workshop location, food and drink and other related items were approximately $18,000;
- Professional assistance for the project manager, video, photography and other services were approximately $60,000 (excluding significant pro bono assistance);
- Supplies and materials cost approximately $5,000; and
- Printing costs were approximately $3,000 (again excluding significant pro bono assistance).

Sponsorship levels ranged from $5,000 for Gold Sponsorships and the Reception Sponsor to $500 for sponsors of the maps used by the individual workshop groups. Sponsors included banks, development companies, professional associations, and planning consultants.

Logistics

Phase 1 of Vision North Texas was focused on an all-day workshop conducted on Monday, April 25, 2005 at the Hereford University Center on the campus of the University of Texas at Arlington. The geographic area addressed by the workshop included the ten central counties of the NCTCOG region: Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant and Wise.

Participant Representation

The workshop was designed to include invited participants so a broad range of perspectives would be represented and a balance between viewpoints would be maintained. The interests represented were:

- ✓ Elected and appointed public officials (city, county and other agencies)

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- ✓ Professional and trade organizations
- ✓ Neighborhood and civic groups
- ✓ Non-profit and philanthropic organizations
- ✓ The faith-based community
- ✓ Financial institutions
- ✓ Business and economic development organizations
- ✓ The development community
- ✓ Academic institutions
- ✓ Environmental interests
- ✓ Other interests, including those of seniors and the disabled

The list of invited participants was structured to achieve a balance among these interests as well as representation by county in approximately the same distribution as the regional population.

Participants received a packet of background materials in advance of the workshop. The packet included a Vision North Texas workbook, NCTCOG reports on regional demographic trends and background summaries on environmental issues and the ten principles of Development Excellence adopted by the NCTCOG General Assembly.

Volunteer Assistance

The workshop relied on a large and experienced pool of volunteers. These individuals served as facilitators and recorders for the workshop groups. They provided assistance in tabulating the groups' results. In addition, they managed registration, parking and other logistics, audio-visual support and other necessary tasks.

Volunteers were recruited by the Regional Visioning Committee members. They were trained through two half-day sessions designed by the Project Manager and a final preparatory session just before the workshop.

The Workshop Event

The agenda for the workshop is found in the VNT Participant's Workbook. An initial session began the morning with a Kick-Off presentation and instructions to the participants. During most of the morning, participants worked in 15 small groups and used Legos© to distribute future growth according to desired policy objectives. The group processes were managed by the volunteer facilitators and recorders; additional observers monitored progress and offered assistance as requested. The steps in the workshop exercise are explained in the workbook. All participants returned to a large ballroom for the keynote presentation during lunch. In the afternoon, additional presentations were made, group results were reported and keypad polling was used to gain input about next steps and priorities.

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Reports following the Workshop

A brief Phase 1 Summary was prepared for the NCTCOG's General Assembly, held on June 2nd. Numerous presentations have been made to organizations since the April workshop. A more detailed Phase 1 report is forthcoming.

Recognition

The Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association recognized Vision North Texas with its 2005 Long Range Planning Award on October 7, 2005.

Phase 2

Phase 2 has been developed based on the feedback from workshop participants. It will focus on four major activity areas:

- Education of elected officials, developers and others;
- Expanded involvement of the public throughout the region;
- Completion of key research and design projects; and
- Consideration of the need to adopt a preferred scenario to use in making regional investment decisions.

Vision North Texas will continue as a public-private partnership. Phase 2 is anticipated to occur during two fiscal years (from fall 2005 through summer 2007). The budget is currently estimated at approximately $250,000 per year including the value of in-kind contributions.

Other Information

These reports provide more detailed information on the project and the activities on the day of the workshop. They are available at www.visionnorthtexas.org.

- ✓ Vision North Texas Participant's Workbook
- ✓ SEE Development Excellence Report
- ✓ NCTCOG Demographic Forecast
- ✓ SEE Safe, Clean and Green Report
- ✓ Phase 1 Summary Report
- ✓ PowerPoint Presentations from the workshop
    - Instructions to Participants
    - Keynote Presentation by Shelley Poticha
    - Reports from the Morning Exercise
    - Implications of Growth Scenarios

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- Keypad Polling Session & Results

For More Information

Additional information about Vision North Texas will be posted on the website (www.visionnorthtexas.org) as it becomes available. Also, the Project Manager can be contacted at Strategic Community Solutions, 214-330-1154 or vnt@planforaction.com.