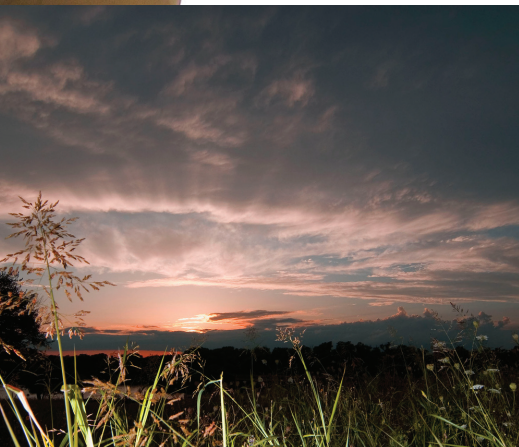


CHARTING THE PATH

A Strategic Plan for Dallas County
2007-2017



An aerial photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the scene. Several tall skyscrapers are visible, with the most prominent one on the left reflecting the bright light. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues. In the foreground, there are various lower-rise buildings and a parking lot. A semi-transparent teal box with a thin yellow border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white and yellow text.

“If it is DONE RIGHT—meaning EVERYONE has EQUAL SAY and it’s NOT just the plan of the administration—then it can be MEANINGFUL for EVERYONE to AGREE on GOALS for THE COUNTY. Unless there is buy-in from everyone, A STRATEGIC PLAN will be a nice book put on the shelf.”

Stakeholder

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Perspectives *and* Key Trends 2007-2017.



SHIFTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Demographics and Responsibilities Point to an Urgent Need for a Plan of Action.



In the coming decade, Dallas County has the opportunity to provide accountability to its stakeholders. Dallas County's overall vision for leadership comes at a time when cities are becoming increasingly urbanized and face metropolitan challenges in providing services, security, and leadership. Transitions in population, demographics, revenue, and land use exacerbate larger scale regional issues such as transportation, affordable housing, and air quality. The stakeholders of Dallas County government, including citizens, cities, businesses, community organizations, schools, and other entities, have expectations that build on the basic definitions of what county government can provide. As the cities of Dallas County have matured, stakeholders

have expressed broader, more nontraditional expectations of county government and more proactive engagement in regional issues.

As the Texas State legislature has assigned new responsibilities to county government with funded and unfunded mandates, the county's inherent and inherited duties have likewise changed.

This strategic plan lays out four specific roles for Dallas County to assume as it faces transitions in the next decade. Five guiding visions and corresponding strategies and indicators capture the pressing issues and anticipated needs of the County's stakeholders.

Dallas County Commissioners Court knows it must seize the moment and chart a path for the County over the next 10 years. The strategic decisions that must be made and the priorities that must be established will be based upon very basic questions:

What should be done?

How should it be done?

How will it be funded?

DALLAS COUNTY

Focus on the Future. A 10-Year Vision.

The Dallas County Commissioners Court

sanctioned the development of this strategic plan.

It is the first of its kind for Dallas County and is based on intensive research concerning the future of Dallas County.

The Commissioners Court hopes to set a bold vision and include unprecedented cooperation from governmental agencies and other elected County officials. The Commissioners Court is responsible for developing and implementing programs and services and for managing the resources for Dallas County. This includes, but is not limited to, citizens, Dallas County cities, governmental organizations, and community-based organizations.

Most County officials, such as the Sheriff, District Attorney and Tax Assessor, are elected at-large by the citizens of Dallas County. They have their own statutory and legislated responsibilities. When it comes to receiving services, the County's stakeholders neither recognize nor endorse lines of demarcation and other

boundaries and neither should the Dallas County Commissioners Court. Stakeholders expect honest, fair, and proactive county governance.

Commissioners Court envisions all Dallas County governmental departments and agencies working together to chart a path for the future. Dallas County is personally committed to:

- * Aggressively meeting responsibilities within the role of a county government.
- * Efficiently and effectively addressing citizens' health, safety, and well-being, within the constitutional, statutory, and moral boundaries placed on Texas county governments.
- * Delivering the highest quality services with the least inconvenience to customers.
- * Ensuring that the County's workforce is exceptionally qualified, trained, and equipped to carry out this plan.

DALLAS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

A Current Snapshot.

The strategic plan will help guide policy and procedure. In Texas, county government is generally an extension of state government, focusing on the judicial system, health and welfare service delivery, law enforcement, and road construction. In contrast to other parts of the country, Texas counties seldom have responsibility for schools, water and sewer systems, electric utilities, or commercial airports.

Each county is governed by a commissioners court, which consists of four commissioners elected from districts and a county judge that is elected county-wide. The county judge does not have authority to veto decisions of the commissioners court, but rather votes along with the others as a member of the court. In some small counties, the county judge performs judicial duties. In larger counties such as Dallas County, the judge's role is limited to serving as presiding officer of the commissioners court.

Throughout county leadership, some officials, such as the sheriff, district attorney and tax collector, are elected at-large by voters. However, the Commissioners Court manages the budget for the entire county, including these offices.

Counties also have less legal authority than do cities. For instance, whereas cities may have zoning power, counties in Texas do not. Similarly, counties do not have “home rule” authority; they cannot adopt ordinances, and the only authority they possess is that specified by statute.

Unlike other states, Texas does not allow for consolidated city-county governments. Cities and counties (as well as other political entities) are permitted to enter “inter-local agreements” to share services (for example, a city and a school district may enter into agreements with the county whereby the county collects property taxes for the city and school district; thus, only one tax bill is sent instead of three).

The Shortcomings Found in this Broad Explanation Include:

- * Lack of clear roles and responsibilities for Commissioners Court.
- * Lack of a way to identify and sustain a formal process to engage the commissioners court with other elected officials in program execution.
- * Lack of a prescribed division of labor between the County Judge and County Commissioners.

Analysis of input from Dallas County

commissioners, Dallas County elected officials, Dallas County department heads, and Dallas County employees produced clearly delineated strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats regarding the County now and over the next 10 years. These findings, coupled with additional stakeholder input, led to the identification of core strategic elements that must be addressed:

- * Delivery method of current and future services to ensure linguistic and age appropriateness.
- * Issues and trends, and sustainability forecast for Dallas County revenue.
- * Critical issues affecting Dallas County over the next 10 years.
- * Programs and services to determine mission critical services.

DALLAS COUNTY

Dallas County’s Demographic Profile *will continue to Dramatically Transform over the next Decade.*

For total county population, Dallas County ranks second in Texas, and with more than 30 municipalities within Dallas County, each represents a very different landscape of demographics and characteristics.

Dallas County’s recorded and expected demographic changes highlight the reality that the County must be as proactive as possible in anticipating the effects of these trends, and in dealing with them.

YEAR	TOTAL	ANGLO	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN	AMERICAN INDIAN
2005	2,345,815	37.6%	20.9%	36.4%	4.4%	0.6%
2000	2,218,899	58.3%	20.3%	29.8%	3.9%	0.6%
1990	1,852,810	67%	19.6%	17%	2.8%	0.5%

- * The Anglo proportion of the County's population has decreased by 100,000.
- * Since 2000, the County's Hispanic population has increased from 31% to 37%. It is projected to continue to increase over the next 10 years.
- * Twenty percent of the County is now foreign-born; this percentage is twice the national average and almost 50% greater than the state average.
- * The median age of the County is five years older now than it was in 1970.
- * The number of people in the County who will be at least 65 years of age is projected to increase by as much as 40% in the next 10 years.

The County's population is projected to become older and more ethnically diverse over the next 10 years. This information must be used to determine what services the County will need to offer, what skills its employees will need, how financial viable its retirement system will be, and the extent to which the over-65 property tax exemption will be utilized.

DALLAS COUNTY'S

Population and Development Continues to Disperse due to Land Availability and Quality of Life Trends.

Although the city of Dallas continues to grow and remains the County's most populated city, its share of the County's total population has declined over the past 37 years. Whereas 64% of the County's population was located in Dallas in 1970, by 2007 this figure had declined to 50% even though Dallas' population had increased by more than 350,000 during the same time frame.

Approximately two-thirds of the County's population is located in its northern half. However, over the last 10 years, growth in the south has begun to exceed that of the north. Because many of the northern cities have already utilized most of their developable land, the County's economic future will largely be dependent upon the continuance of this new southern trend.



STRATEGIC ROLES FOR DALLAS COUNTY

Dallas County Government Roles *and* Tools 2007-2017.



STRATEGIC ROLES

for Dallas County

The ability to successfully implement the visions, strategies, and indicators depends on Dallas County's assuming of four specific roles. Each role reflects different nuances and approaches, and each is defined by a corresponding *"promise"*.

2007-2017		Strategic Roles For Dallas County	
ROLE		PROMISE	
1	Traditional Service Provider	Ensure the maintenance and delivery of programs and services for Dallas County stakeholders.	
2	Leader on Key Issues	Proactively lead on key issues affecting the Dallas County region.	
3	Regional Convener	Facilitate discussions and dialogues with community groups, municipal governments, other county governments, and state representatives to strengthen Dallas County through coordination and collaboration.	
4	Architect	Move beyond managing Dallas County to conducting innovative activities and programs that will brand the region.	

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

Several strategic tools are required for these roles to be successful:

- ✧ Development of a proactive public policy agenda that continues to be friendly to businesses and meets the needs of Dallas County stakeholders.
- ✧ Maintenance of a strong, seamless infrastructure, including systems, processes, and programs.
- ✧ Tracking and marketing Dallas County's natural resources and assets—locally, regionally, state-wide, and nationally.



STRATEGIC VISION

for Dallas County

The following chart outlines the five “*big picture*” visions that Dallas County will exemplify in the next decade. Corresponding strategies enable Dallas County to attain its desired visions and indicators act as benchmarks to success.

2007 - 2017		Strategic Visions For Dallas County	
VISION		STRATEGY	
1	Dallas County government models interagency partnership and collaboration.	Commissioners Court provides leadership and establishes a vision for Dallas County • Elected officials reach alignment and consensus on roles, responsibilities, and functions of Dallas County government	
2	Dallas County is a healthy community.	Provide disease prevention, health promotion and human service programs to Dallas County's citizen. Network with Dallas County cities and regional partners to increase operational efficiency • Support a regional indigent medical and mental healthcare network	
3	Dallas County is Safe, Secure and Prepared.	Synergize public safety programs and services across Dallas County • Coordinate programs and systems to reduce crime in Dallas County • Implement a county-wide emergency response plan • Maximize effectiveness of Dallas County criminal justice resources	
4	Dallas County proactively addresses critical regional issues.	Implement programs and conduct activities to address Dallas County air quality • Implement programs and conduct services to address Dallas County transportation	
5	Dallas County is the destination of choice for residents and businesses.	Improve/maintain Dallas County as a driver for economic development • Partner with cities, local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations to conduct a coordinated economic development plan • Coordinate/undertake programs and services to improve Dallas County quality of life	



VISION 1

Dallas County Government *models* Interagency Partnership *and* collaboration.



STRATEGY 1.1

Commissioners Court provides Leadership and establishes a Vision for Dallas County.

INDICATORS

- * Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Dallas County Commissioners Court.
- * Dallas County Commissioners Court reaches alignment and consensus on roles and responsibilities of the Court.
- * Dallas County Commissioners Court issues formal updates on county-wide and individual member district progress, programs, and planning activities.
- * Commissioners Court publishes an annual report on implementation of the strategic plan.
- * Dallas County Commissioners Court prioritizes mission-critical, statutory, and mandated programs and services.
- * Dallas County Commissioners Court represents Dallas County on local, regional, and state planning committees.
- * The Commissioners Court set standards for attendance and time requirements.

The Commissioners Court has an opportunity to alternate its role. There is an imperative need for Commissioners Court to take the lead on some issues. The Court will frame the issues and the direction of the issues while leveraging its expertise. The Court will understand what issue it is leading and execute and promote the issue. Political leadership is not power; it is rendering other people to want to be a part of something. The Commissioners Court has a role as a visionary

that communicates clear, distinctive, and specific plans for the future.

The Commissioners Court will act as a facilitator with other elected officials. The Court will aggressively promote the region and be the catalyst behind an extensive public relations campaign. Impending alternatives to Dallas County for residential and commercial development necessitate an action plan to communicate Dallas County's unique positioning.

STRATEGY 1.2

Elected Officials reach Alignment and Consensus on Roles, Responsibilities, and Functions of Dallas County government.

INDICATORS

- * Dallas County adopts a unified, clear, and concise mission statement.
- * Dallas County Commissioners Court and partners achieve alignment and consensus on roles and responsibilities of Dallas County individual departments.
- * Roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated to stakeholders.

Dallas County's government is the common denominator that drives the strategic process. The Commissioners Court will work with elected officials in Dallas County government, cities of the County, and other stakeholders to finalize a mission statement that distinguishes it

from the competition.

This will help to define clearly the roles, responsibilities, and expectations that Dallas County residents, businesses, and others have of their government. The County must unify to address the issues of importance and plan its future.

STRATEGY 1.3

Dallas County provides Sound, Financially Responsible, and Accountable Governance.

INDICATORS

- * The Dallas County Commissioners Court uses new operational procedures to manage meetings and external dialogue.
- * Dallas County departments is assessed and streamlined for efficiency and operation.
- * Dallas County develops a 10-year forecast that identifies threats to and opportunities for revenue.
- * Dallas County adopts a community and business-friendly legislative agenda.
- * Dallas County provides mission-critical programs and services to its stakeholders.

If Dallas County government wants to be able to provide mission-critical services to the community in the next decade, it must be accountable, responsive, and flexible.

These strategies should give Dallas County citizens a

sense of comfort that their government is a good steward of the responsibilities bestowed upon it.

Dallas County government will operate in the most streamlined manner based on constituent needs and expectations.

STRATEGY 1.4

Improve the Customer Experience by implementing Standards of Operation, Innovation, and Technology.

INDICATORS

- * Synchronize and align data collection and storage procedures and systems across Dallas County governmental entities (city and county).
- * Increase e-business capacity across all Dallas County governmental entities.
- * Use innovation and modified procedures to increase accuracy and efficiency in billing and collection of Dallas County taxes, fees, and fines.
- * Maintain Dallas County's broad infrastructure.

Over the next decade, Dallas County will have the opportunity to distinguish itself through excellence in information infrastructure. Information infrastructure is central to the County's strategy because proficiencies in processes and customer focused systems will allow the County to better serve its taxpayers/voters/citizens.

Multiple independent technology systems reside throughout Dallas County departments. Information technology is a tool for Dallas County that will allow for more efficiency. It can be effective only if it supports

the County and its stakeholders. Strategically, information technology should improve service delivery and efficiency of County programs and services.

The Dallas County information infrastructure needs to ensure that the end user can conduct business conveniently. The information infrastructure has the potential of enhancing the County's operations and programs.

Dallas County's ability to keep pace with technological breakthroughs will make it a prime hub for advancement and development.

STRATEGY 1.5

Maintain a Strong, Motivated Dallas County Workforce.

INDICATORS

- * Implement an incentive based compensation plan to motivate and reward employee performance and loyalty.
- * Assess ability of workforce to meet changes in systems, technology, and demographic make-up of Dallas County.
- * Maintain a diverse, talented, and capable workforce to execute core Dallas County functions.
- * Conduct training and employee development programs for Dallas County staff.
- * Link annual goals of Dallas County departments to strategic plan.

The Dallas County workforce, in many ways, is the face of the County. It must be knowledgeable, able

to provide the services for which people are hired, and dedicated to helping improve the system.



VISION 2

Dallas County *is a* Healthy Community.



STRATEGY 2.1

Provide Exceptional Disease Prevention, Health Promotion, *and* Human Service Programs *to the Citizens of Dallas County.*

INDICATORS

- * Benchmark Dallas County public health indicators against similarly-sized metropolitan areas.
- * Map communicable disease morbidity to prevention and treatment programs across Dallas County.
- * Assess child and adult public healthcare programs in highly impacted areas of Dallas County.
- * Develop a clear definition of public health and obtain buy-in from stakeholders.
- * Assess current and future public health issues and trends impacting the future trends of disease in Dallas County and develop a response plan.
- * Promote healthy living and wellness programs across Dallas County.

Public health is an aspect of health services concerned with threats to the overall health of a community based on population health analyses. It generally includes surveillance and control of infectious diseases and promotion of healthy behaviors among members of the community.

The County is committed to providing services to improve public health. The important element of disease prevention is evidenced in vaccination programs and free educational materials.

To ensure seamless and effective public health programs, Dallas County must work closely with local city departments of health to identify areas of overlap and gaps in service delivery. Where collaborations and coordination can strengthen the public health infrastructure, we will implement these projects.

By developing a regional public health plan, Dallas County can best determine immediate, short, and long-term needs for our community.

STRATEGY 2.2

Network *with* Dallas County Cities *and* Regional Partners *to* Increase *operational* Efficiency.

INDICATORS

- * Identify opportunities to collaborate or consolidate public health programs with cities, community organizations, and governmental entities.
- * Establish partnerships with community organizations and governmental entities to identify critical health issues and develop a region-specific action plan.

INDICATORS (continued)

- * Map community-based health resources with needs; identify gaps in service delivery and utilization across Dallas County.
- * Convene community organizations, cities, and other partners to develop a regional health plan for Dallas County. The challenge of improving the health of Dallas County requires a coordinated effort of state, county, local and community-based programs.

Using the role of convener, Dallas County will collaborate with municipalities to identify the best opportunities for collaborative projects and to identify issues which should be led by Dallas County or the municipality.

Eliminating duplication improves efficiency of both Dallas County's and the municipalities' government and allows resources to be redirected to higher

priority issues.

Partnerships with community-based groups and other non-governmental organizations is a critical component of this effort. Applying technological advances such as GIS mapping will track existing resources with gaps in service delivery and/or identified needs.

STRATEGY 2.3

Support a Regional Indigent Medical and Mental Health Care Network.

INDICATORS

- * Work with Parkland Hospital to maximize use of its facilities and resources across Dallas County.
- * Convene local and regional partners to implement key action items of the Parkland Blue Ribbon Commission.

STRATEGY 2.4

Support a Regional Trauma Network.

INDICATORS

- * Work with Parkland Hospital to maximize use of its facilities and resources across Dallas County.

Parkland Hospital is the primary medical care provider for indigent persons in the Dallas County region. Parkland also provides Level 1 trauma care for the Dallas County region. Recent studies have shown that Parkland provides medical services for people who do not reside within the county. These factors present challenges in the best manner of allocating scarce resources and improving the health of Dallas County.

Chapter 61, Health and Safety Code, defines the responsibilities of counties, hospital districts, and public hospitals in providing health care to eligible

residents who are considered to be indigent. Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 14 establishes the County Indigent Health Care Program (CIHCP) rules regarding program administration, determining eligibility and providing services.

In addition to executing its traditional role as a provider of health care for the indigent, Dallas County will proactively convene regional partners to develop a comprehensive indigent health care plan. The goal of this plan will be to reduce the burden on existing scarce resources while ensuring that all stakeholders contribute equally.





VISION 3

Dallas County is Safe, Secure and Prepared.



STRATEGY 3.1

Synergize Public Safety Programs *and* Services *across* Dallas County.

INDICATORS

- * Develop common definition of “public safety”.
- * Identify a public safety champion for Dallas County.
- * Synchronize data collection systems and processes across Dallas County governmental entities and departments (fire, police, homeland, other).
- * Develop a coordinated and aligned public safety plan for Dallas County.
- * Eliminate “silos” that cause communication and collaboration barriers for public safety.
- * Facilitate public engagement and hold a conference of cities to discuss public safety issues and strategies.

Public safety is the network of agencies and organizations that coordinate in the interest of general public welfare. Currently, public safety has included law enforcement, local detention, courts, state and federal prisons, probation and parole, and homeland security.

The definition of public safety is evolving. One key measure for success is a reduction in crime. However, the factors that contribute to crime are part of a more complex system.

Over the next 10 years, Dallas County will benefit from a more proactive and collaborative approach to public safety.

When considering law enforcement within Dallas County, the need for an intergovernmental, interagency collaboration is apparent.

For Dallas County to be prepared for the future, we must identify clear lines of communication, unique roles, and opportunities for collaboration.

STRATEGY 3.2

Coordinate Programs *and* Systems *to* Reduce Crime *in* Dallas County.

INDICATORS

- * Benchmark Dallas County crime statistics with similarly-sized metropolitan areas.
- * Assess capacity of the Dallas County Jail and regional partners to provide alternative sentencing options for offenders.

INDICATORS (continued)

- * Align crime prevention and prosecution goals with Dallas County governmental agencies (Sheriff, Constables, District Attorney, city police departments, and others).

- * Leverage impact in the County by implementing best practices.
- * Establish a formal community planning effort to address criminal justice issues.

These issues contribute significantly to the overall quality of life in Dallas County and are important elements in continuing and enhancing public safety services.

Additional strategies outlined in this plan, such as economic growth, greatly depend on the public's positive perceptions related to public safety.

STRATEGY 3.3

Implement a County-Wide Emergency Response Plan.

INDICATORS

- * Identify a central point of contact for Dallas County homeland security issues.
- * Join local, regional, and state committees that address homeland security issues.

- * Assess ability of first responders to communicate across Dallas County governmental and community agencies.

Coordination of emergency resources for the County requires the development of a plan that clearly delineates roles and responsibilities of municipal, county, and state responders to natural and man-made tragedies. The realm of responses runs the gamut from natural disasters to bioterrorism.

Dallas County will lead the region by facilitating the development of a plan that identifies a central, single point of contact, operational procedures, and a communication plan. A threat assessment will identify Dallas County institutions and industries that require special attention.

STRATEGY 3.4

Maximize Effectiveness of Dallas County Criminal Justice Resources.

INDICATORS

- * Evaluate allocation of adult and juvenile justice resources around Dallas County.
- * Benchmark Dallas County Jail operations with similarly-sized entities across the nation.
- * Convene criminal justice partners (Sheriff, District Attorney, Constables, City Police, and others) to identify and expand detention and sentencing alternatives.

Dallas County developed and implemented the Adult Information System (AIS) to enhance communication between the agencies and departments that comprise the local criminal justice system. AIS was based upon the structure of the existing Juvenile Information System (JIS), which is the system used by law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and probation to process cases in the juvenile justice system.

The initial phase of AIS provided a system to track

defendants booked into the jail as they progress through the court system, until final disposition and release from the jail. The second phase of AIS implementation is underway and will provide for direct electronic book-in by law enforcement agencies and direct electronic filing of cases with the District Attorney. An associated project provides an incident reporting system for all law enforcement agencies in Dallas County that promotes information sharing between all agencies.



VISION 4

Dallas County *will* Proactively Address Critical Regional Issues.



SUSTAIN DALLAS COUNTY'S

Future *by* Addressing Critical Regional Issues.

The issues of transportation and air quality do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. An effective solution would not exist if each public entity were to develop an individual plan; therefore, Dallas County will act as the regional convener and where appropriate will assume the lead on various issues. Regional issues require regional solutions, involving collaborations between the county, cities, and community organizations, such as chambers of commerce.

An important strategic role for Dallas County is that of convener of dialogue, networks, and programs with its neighbors and affiliates. Unlike the role of leader, Dallas County, in the role of convener, will participate as one of many stakeholders on particular issues. This may involve convening Dallas County cities, citizens, and/

or businesses to address particular issues or bringing other similar interest groups from outside Dallas County.

As convener, the County should pledge to be responsible for ensuring the coherent design, planning, management, delivery, and assessment by providing:

- * A supportive environment.
- * Opportunities for other stakeholders to contribute in a meaningful way.
- * Support resource development and maintenance.
- * Regular review and evaluation.

The role of convener is a critical communication link between the various stakeholders, neighboring counties, and affiliate organizations that allows for prompt responses to requests for information and timely decision-making.

STRATEGY 4.1

Implement Programs *and* Activities to address Air Quality in Dallas County.

INDICATORS

- * Develop a Dallas County “green plan” that assesses County-owned infrastructure and identifies and addresses emission sources (vehicles, buildings, etc.).
- * Participate in local, regional, state, and national planning groups that develop and implement policies and programs affecting air quality.
- * Support flexible work initiatives to decrease daytime emission sources.
- * Do not place in the top 50 most polluted counties in Texas.
- * Convene key Dallas County industries to identify challenges and meet air quality standards.
- * Do not place in the top 10 Texas counties with air quality related health risks.
- * Work with regional affiliates and counties to leverage Dallas County’s influence on this topic.
- * Meet the NAAQS ozone attainment standard.



Air quality has different meanings to different people; however, one thing is consistent – air is something that should not be seen.

Air quality impacts the health of Dallas County residents

and the ability to attract and sustain businesses. The County should be committed to improving air quality in the North Central Texas area.

STRATEGY 4.2

Implement Programs *and* Conduct Activities to Address Transportation in Dallas County.

INDICATORS

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Achieve a congestion index of 1.5. | and programs that affect transportation. |
| * Support regional public transportation projects to ease congestion and increase efficiency. | * Leverage Dallas County resources and influence to ensure allocation of resources to the region. |
| * Continue to partner with Dallas County cities on local transportation projects. | * Synchronize road and bridge projects with city partners to ensure optimal operation and selection of projects. |
| * Participate in local, regional, state, and national planning groups that develop and implement policies | * Support flexible work initiatives to decrease congestion. |

Public transportation will play an increasingly important role as the County addresses the need for improved mobility and air quality. The Dallas County Commissioners Court will demonstrate its concern for regional issues by committing to understanding air

quality, inviting opportunities to learn about it, wanting to be practical about it, getting the right information so it can inform its constituents, and helping to get the word out that people are part of the problem and the solution.



VISION 5

Dallas County is the Destination of Choice for Residents and Businesses.



The key to supporting economic development in Dallas County begins with creating an agenda that is designed to make certain it compares favorably with other counties.

Initiatives will address quality of life in the form of trails, parks, and transportation amenities. Quality of life also depends on the beautification and maintenance of all cities in

the Dallas County region.

By engaging in a competitive plan to establish Dallas County's unique offerings, Dallas County will act as the architect for the region by facilitating residential and commercial growth.

Dallas County has identified the critical components that drive success in regard to economic development.

STRATEGY 5.1

Improve/Maintain Dallas County as a Driver for Economic Development.

INDICATORS

- * Coordinate and tailor County investment/reinvestment in underdeveloped areas of Dallas County.
- * Collaborate with regional partners to provide tax incentives to facilitate economic development and enhancement in targeted areas of Dallas County.
- * Assess Dallas County resources to help recruit and retain businesses in the Dallas County region.

Economic development will drive the future of Dallas County as it impacts both commercial and residential growth and ensures stability of the region. Strategically, Dallas County will continue to support its core businesses and identify the potential for future expansion.

By using business friendly tax incentives when the County has legal authority and in instances where cities have the lead and ability to influence business decisions with street layouts, zoning, building codes and utilities, Dallas County will have a secondary role and assist where appropriate.

STRATEGY 5.2

Partner with Cities, local Chambers of Commerce, and Economic Development Organizations to Conduct a Coordinated Economic Development Plan.

INDICATORS

- * Serve as a convener/architect to develop joint planning and implementation projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- * Promote Dallas County's assets to recruit and retain businesses.
- * Collaborate with cities to develop specific plans.
- * Utilize the CDBG program to improve cities in Dallas County.

STRATEGY 5.2 (continued)

Many areas and communities of Dallas County are urbanized and have little room for expansion. For the County to experience future economic growth, some of these previously developed areas must be redeveloped. In-fill development will have to occur in the remaining undeveloped pockets that still exist, and larger areas, such as the southeastern portion of the County that generally have been bypassed, will

finally need to experience some type of meaningful economic activity.

Creating a consolidated economic development plan, in partnership with municipalities, economic development organizations and chambers of commerce will assist in identifying the individual and collective strengths of Dallas County and chart a path for sustained growth.

STRATEGY 5.3

Coordinate Programs *and* Services to Improve Dallas County Quality of Life.

INDICATORS

- * Continue/increase funding for the County trail program.
- * Increase its emphasis on facilitating/initiating economic development and improving the area's

quality of life.

- * Continue/increase efforts to improve the attractiveness of County facilities.

This strategic plan defines quality of life as the level of enjoyment and fulfillment derived by stakeholders from the overall community, including the economic, cultural, social, and environmental conditions.

This is, hence, the “feeling of well being, fulfillment, or satisfaction resulting from factors in the external environments”. Quality of life, in this sense, is most directly measured by subjective indicators. Quality of life determines, in part by, the degree to which economic development occurs, and the

presence of economic development largely determines both the extent to which the County has financial resources and how these resources are allocated.

With the preceding five visions, strategies, and indicators, Dallas County will evolve as a leader, convener, and architect and maintain its role as a traditional service provider. This 10 year strategic plan lays out the foundation for Dallas County but allows for amendments and modifications as unforeseen circumstances occur.





STAKEHOLDERS *and Other Information.*



The strategic planning process for Dallas County's Ten Year Strategic Plan began 12 months ago under the direction of SUMA Partners (www.suma.com) in collaboration with all members of Dallas County Commissioners Court and Dallas County Senior staff.

Quantitative analysis began with an electronic survey for Dallas County employees to determine current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for Dallas County. SUMA Partners then reviewed secondary data including benchmarking studies, economic analysis, and trend projections related to the strategic issues and opportunities facing the county.

SUMA Partners facilitated a preliminary offsite strategy session with the Dallas County Commissioners Court that defined specific strategic areas requiring additional data and deliberation. SUMA worked closely with the Court to lead acceleration teams in the areas of information technology, air quality, state/federal legislation, transportation, economic development and quality of life, public

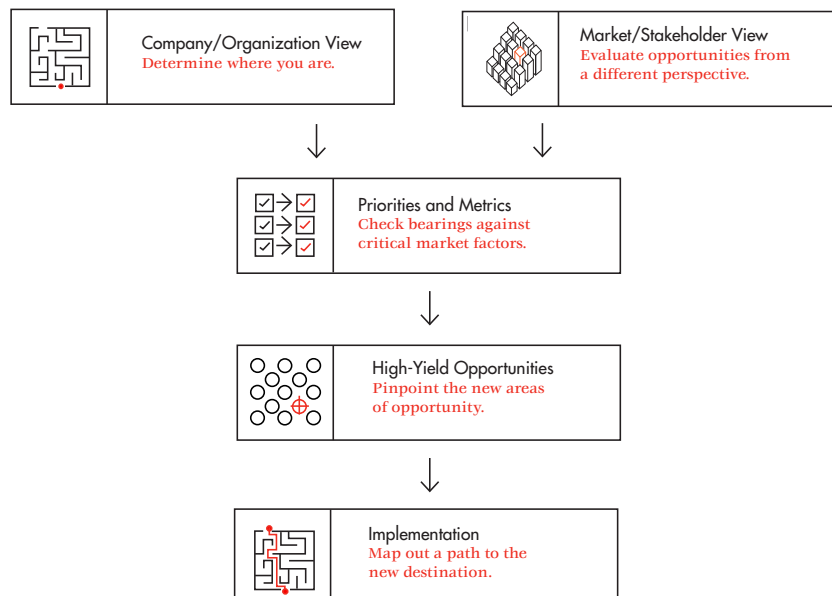
safety and demographics. SUMA Partners conducted strategy sessions with the acceleration teams to determine the critical elements and core strategic recommendations related to each issue.

SUMA Partners then incorporated the preliminary findings from the acceleration teams into a questionnaire for one-on-one interviews with County elected officials and subject matter experts in each of the strategic areas. External stakeholders from local chambers of commerce, hospital systems in the Dallas County region, citizens, and key leaders in Dallas County cities provided SUMA Partners with key qualitative data.

Additional strategic offsite strategy sessions with the Commissioners Court yielded top priorities for Dallas County's focus over the next ten years. Therefore, this plan reflects alignment and consensus of the Court.

This consolidation of data was a deliberative five step process that lays the foundation for implementation over the next decade:

SUMA'S 5 STEP PROCESS



DALLAS COUNTY

Commissioners Court



JIM FOSTER
County Judge



MAURINE DICKEY
Commissioner, District 1



MIKE CANTRELL
Commissioner, District 2



JOHN WILEY PRICE
Commissioner, District 3



KENNETH MAYFIELD
Commissioner, District 4

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

DEPARTMENT	INTERVIEWEE
County Judge	Jim Foster, Margaret Keliher
Commissioners	Mike Cantrell, Maurine Dickey, Kenneth A. Mayfield, John Wiley Price
District Clerk	Jim Hamlin, Angie Morton
District Attorney	Robert Schell
Public Defender	Bradley K. Lollar, Lynn Pride Richardson
District Courts	Judge Mary Murphy
Justice of the Peace Courts	Judge Gerry Cooper, Robyn Klein, Judge Sandra Ellis
Public Works	Donald R. Holzwarth
Elections	Bruce Sherbet, Toni Pippins-Poole
Sheriff	Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Gary Lindsey
Constables	Lisa Retta, Steve Ackerman, Gary Edwards, Mike Dupree, Derick Evans, John Garrett, Ron Pulin, Bud Forester
Institute of Forensic Sciences	Jeffrey Barnard, M.D. , Cathy Self
Community Supervision & Corrections	Michael Noyes, Ph.D.
Security & Emergency Management	Robie Robinson, Christine Jacobs
Juvenile	Mike Griffiths
Health & Human Services	Zachary S. Thompson
Child Support Payments	Angela M. Igrisan
Family Court Services	Pat S. Ross,
Dallas Metrocare Services	James G. Baker, M.D.
Tax Assessor/Collector	David Childs, Ph.D. , Shirley Jacobsen
Treasurer	Lisa Hembry, Deborah Robinson
Human Resources	Mattye Mauldin-Taylor, Ph.D.
Auditor	Virginia Porter, Ann Gibson
Purchasing Department	Shannon Brown
Operations	Dan Savage
Office of Budget & Evaluation	Ryan Brown

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

DEPARTMENT	INTERVIEWEE
IT Services	Robert A. Clines
County Court at Law No. 1	Judge Russell H. Roden
Commissioners Court	J. Allen Clemson
Planning & Development	Rick Loessberg

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

ORGANIZATION	INTERVIEWEE
Richardson Chamber of Commerce	Bill Sproull, President Paul Bendel
Dallas Chamber of Commerce	Jan Hart Black, President
North Central Texas Council of Governments	Mike Eastland, Executive Director Michael Morris, Director of Transportation
University of Texas Southwestern	Kern Wildenthal, President Dr. Alfred G. Gilman, Executive Vice President
City of Garland	Martin Glen, Garland Deputy City Manager
City of Irving	Tommy Gonzalez, Irving City Manager
City of Grand Prairie	Tom Hart, City Manager
Parkland Hospital	John M. Hauptert, Executive Vice President
City of DeSoto	Cammy Henderson, DeSoto Chamber of Commerce
City of Richardson	Bill Keffler, City Manager Dan Johnson, Deputy City Manager Michael Wanchick, Assistant City Manager
Conference of Urban Counties	Donald Lee, Executive Director
Garland Chamber of Commerce	Paul Mayor, President
Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce	Matt McCormick, President
Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce	Mike Sage, Sunnyvale City Councilman Chairman
City of Dallas	Mary Suhn, Dallas City Manager
Regional Transportation Council	Oscar Trevino, Vice Chair
City of Seagoville	George Williams, Mayor Denny Wheat, City Manager

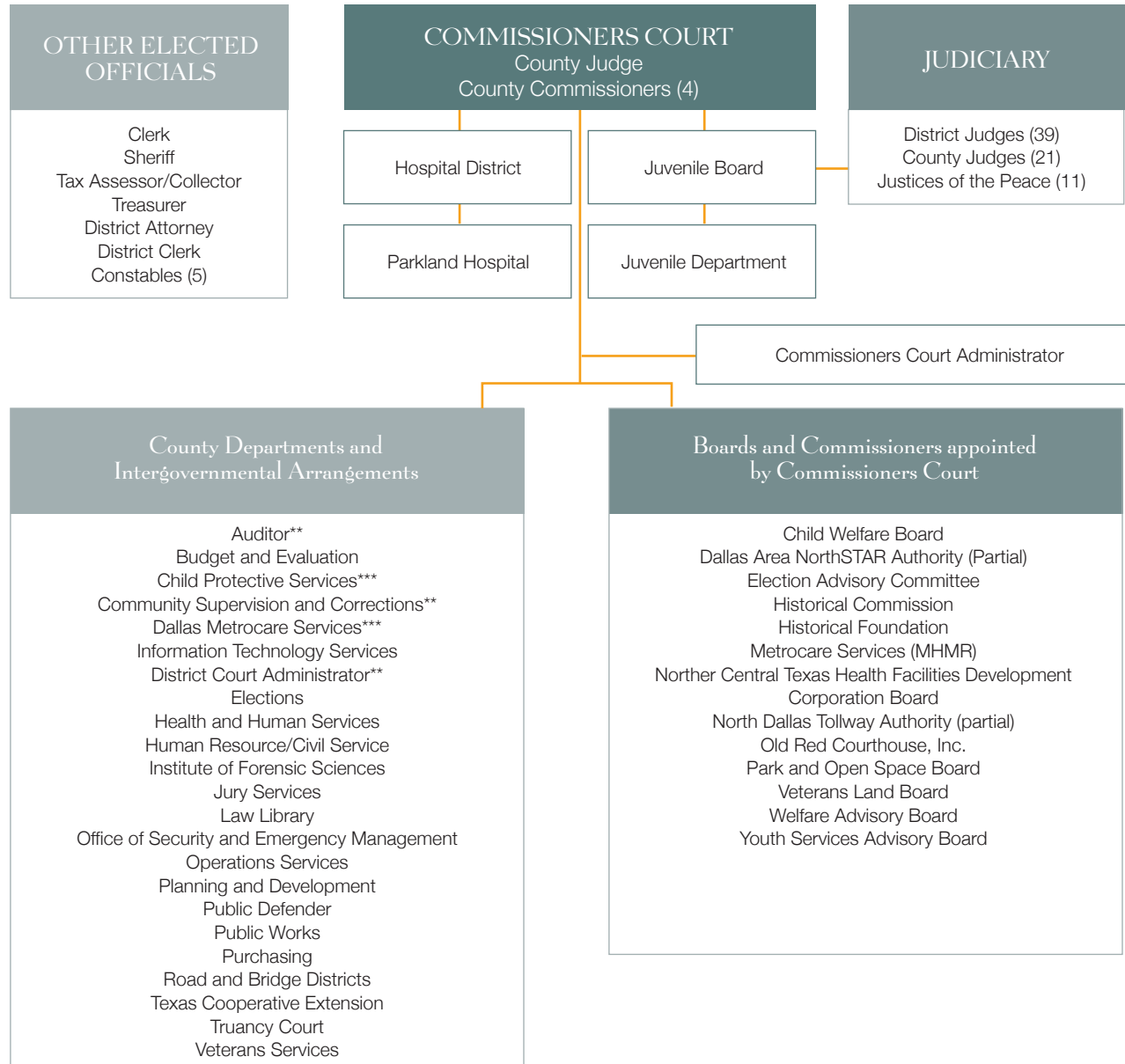




APPENDIX



COUNTY ORGANIZATION



- ★ Members of the Commissioners Court serve on the following boards and committees: Texas Jail Standards Commission, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, Dallas County Juvenile Board, National Association of Counties (NACO), Differed Compensation Committee, NACO Large Urban Counties Cause, Texas Conference of Urban Counties Chair, Texas Association of Regional Councils, IH635 Coordination Committee, North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Board, Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition, Public Health Advisory Board, North Texas Commission, DFW Partners in Mobility, Regional Transportation Council, NCTCOG Air Carrier Policy Council, Loop 9 Policy Advisory Group, Texas 21 Statewide Transportation Coalition, Mental Health Task Force, Dallas County DWI Task Force, Community Justice Council, Dallas Housing Finance Corporation, Dalhoma Trail Advisory Committee, Dallas County Civil Service Commission and Public Employee Benefit Cooperative Board.
- ★★ The 39 District Judges appoint the County Auditor and the District Court Administrator, and participate in selecting the Directors of the Juvenile Department and the Community Supervision and Corrections Department.
- ★★★ CSCD, CPS and Dallas Metrocare Services (formerly Dallas County MHMR) are independent agencies with significant County programatic connections.

2005 COMPOSITION OF FULL-TIME COUNTY EMPLOYEES						
Occupation	% Total Work Force	% Anglo	% Black	% Hispanic	% Asian	% American Indian
Officials	1.7%	51.7%	36.0%	5.6%	2.2%	1.1%
Professionals	30.9%	47.0%	39.4%	11.5%	1.8%	0.3%
Technicians	3.1%	61.3%	25.0%	9.5%	2.4%	1.8%
Protect/Svc	26.8%	40.5%	47.3%	10.3%	0.8%	1.0%
Para-Prof	3.1%	39.0%	41.5%	15.9%	2.4%	0.6%
Admin Support	29.1%	33.3%	40.9%	19.0%	4.2%	3.2%
Skilled Craft	4.4%	61.6%	21.5%	16.0%	0.8%	–
Serv/Maint	0.9%	22.9%	68.6%	25.0%	–	–

2005 COMPOSITION OF DALLAS COUNTY				
Anglo	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
37.6%	20.9%	36.4%	4.4%	0.6%

STRENGTHS,

Weaknesses, Opportunitites *and* Threats

TOP 10 WEAKNESSES, PER RESPONDENTS		
Commissioners Court	Department Heads, Elected Officials	Dallas County Staff
Court dynamics/relationships	Staffing issues (shortages)	Criminal justice issues
Unfunded mandates	Resource issues	Lack of accountability
State/Federal legislative	Interdepartmental/Interagency relationships	HR issues
Resources	Relationship with Texas legislative delegation	Racism/inequalities
External factors	Aging workforce	Lack of resources
Lack of accountability	Quality of life issues	Changing demographics

TOP 10 WEAKNESSES (continued)

Lack of leadership	Infrastructure	Quality of life issues
Lack of mission/focus	Public health issues	Infrastructure
Quality of life issues	Reputation	Taxation issues
Public health issues	Accountability/coordination	Public health issues

TOP 8 OPPORTUNITIES, PER RESPONDENTS

Commissioners Court	Department Heads, Elected Officials	Dallas County Staff
Effective planning and priority setting	County Image	Image/reputation
Addressing criminal Justice issues	Regional leadership	Leadership
Addressing County infrastructure issues	Improved service delivery	Address infrastructure
Relationship building with other elected officials	Interdepartmental/ Interagency coordination	Addressing quality of life issues
Focus	Effective planning and priority setting	Addressing public health issues
Addressing public health issues	Collaborations and coordination across departments	Focus
Leadership	Economic development	Economic development
Working with Texas Legislative delegation	Focus	Addressing changing demographics

TOP 10 THREATS, PER RESPONDENTS

Commissioners Court	Department Heads, Elected Officials	Dallas County Staff
State/Federal legislation/regulation	Resources	HR Issues
Regionalism	Leadership	Changing demographics
Health care issues	Changing demographics	IT infrastructure
Transportation	Regionalism	Public health issues
Criminal Justice	Staffing (aging workforce)	Quality of life issues
Public safety	Economic Development	Resources

TOP 10 THREATS (continued)

Commissioners Court	Department Heads, Elected Officials	Dallas County Staff
Quality of life issues	State/Federal legislation/regulation	Criminal justice issues
IT infrastructure	Criminal justice	Education
Changing demographics	Education	State/Federal legislation
Resources	Community development/ infrastructure	Racism/inequalities

TOP 5 STRENGTHS, PER RESPONDENTS

Commissioners Court	Department Heads, Elected Officials	Dallas County Staff
Staff (dedication)	Dedicated workforce	Dedicated workforce
Natural resources	Legacy of county	Services provided to citizens of Dallas County
Low tax rate	Leadership in the region	Teamwork
Relationships with Cities	Dedication of the Commissioners Court	Technology
Legacy	Services provided to citizens of Dallas County	Tax rate

Composition of County Property Tax Base

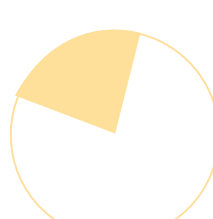
1986



37% Residential



45% Commercial



18% BPP

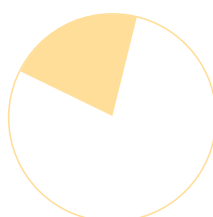
2006



36% Commercial

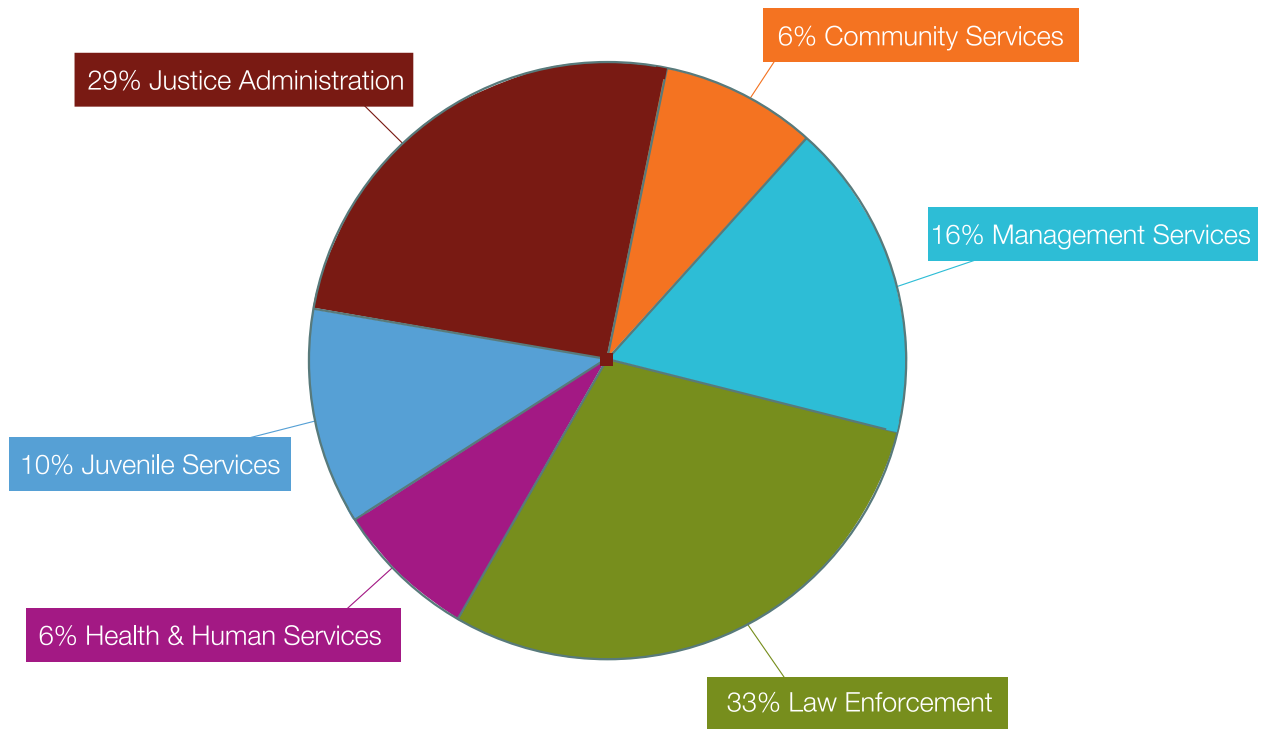


49% Residential

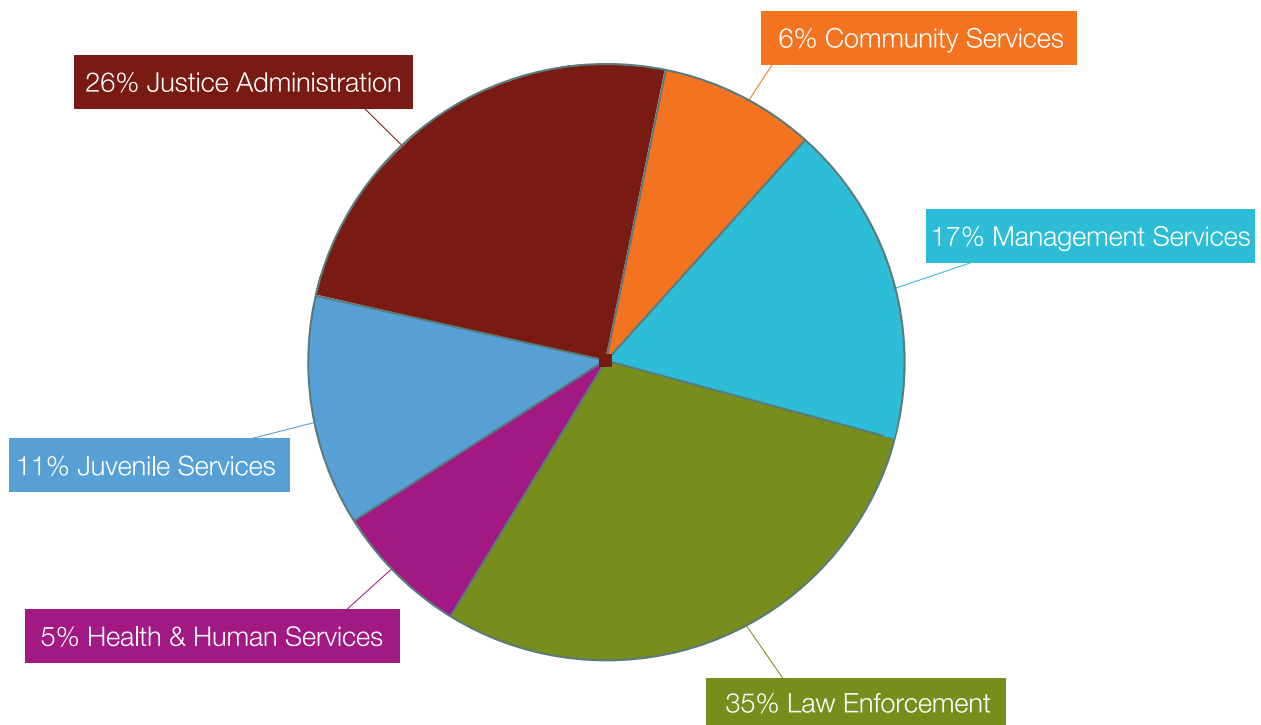


15% BPP

FY1996 Budget



FY2006 Budget



DALLAS COUNTY

is Recognized as the Healthiest Community in Texas.

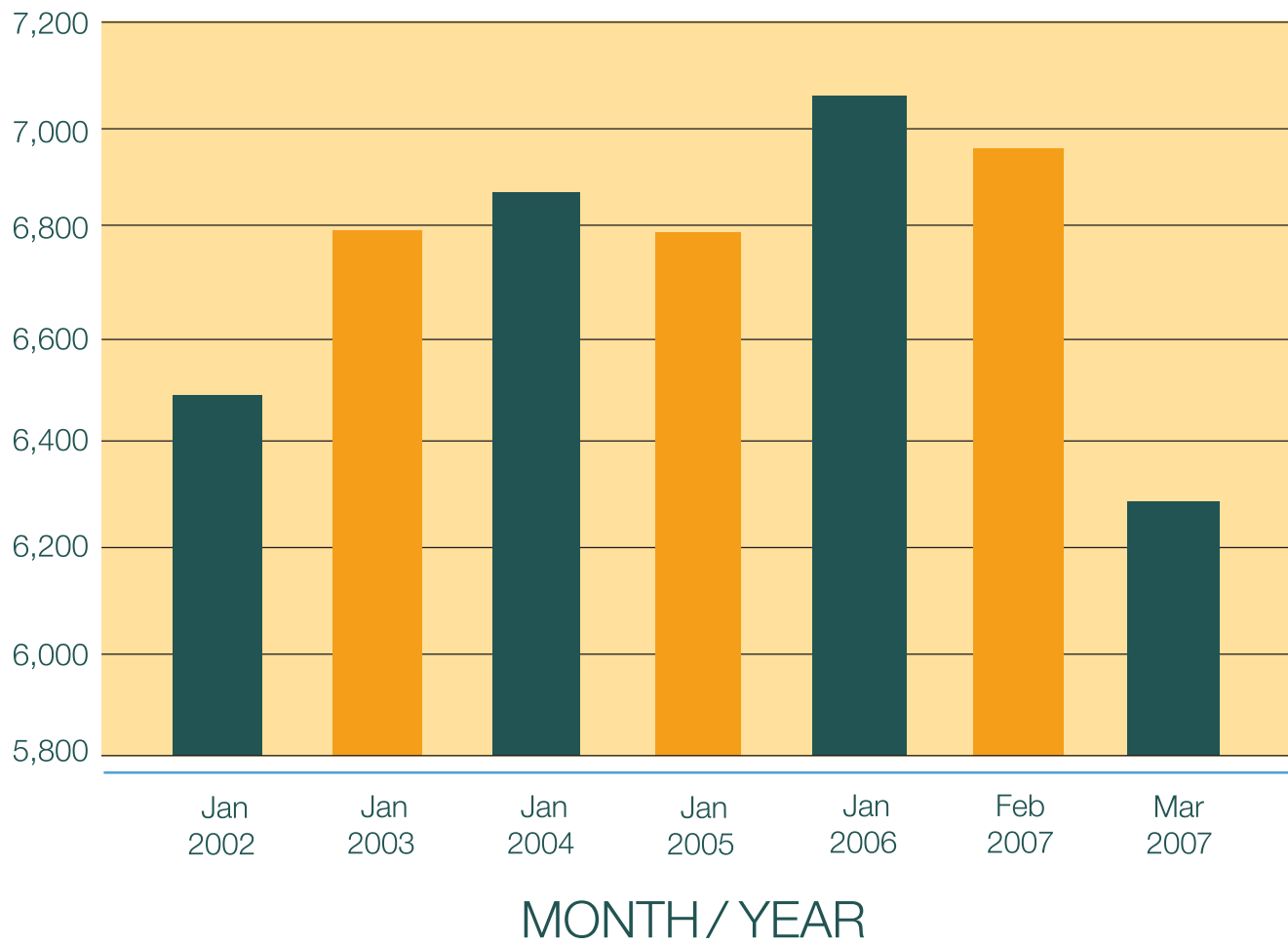


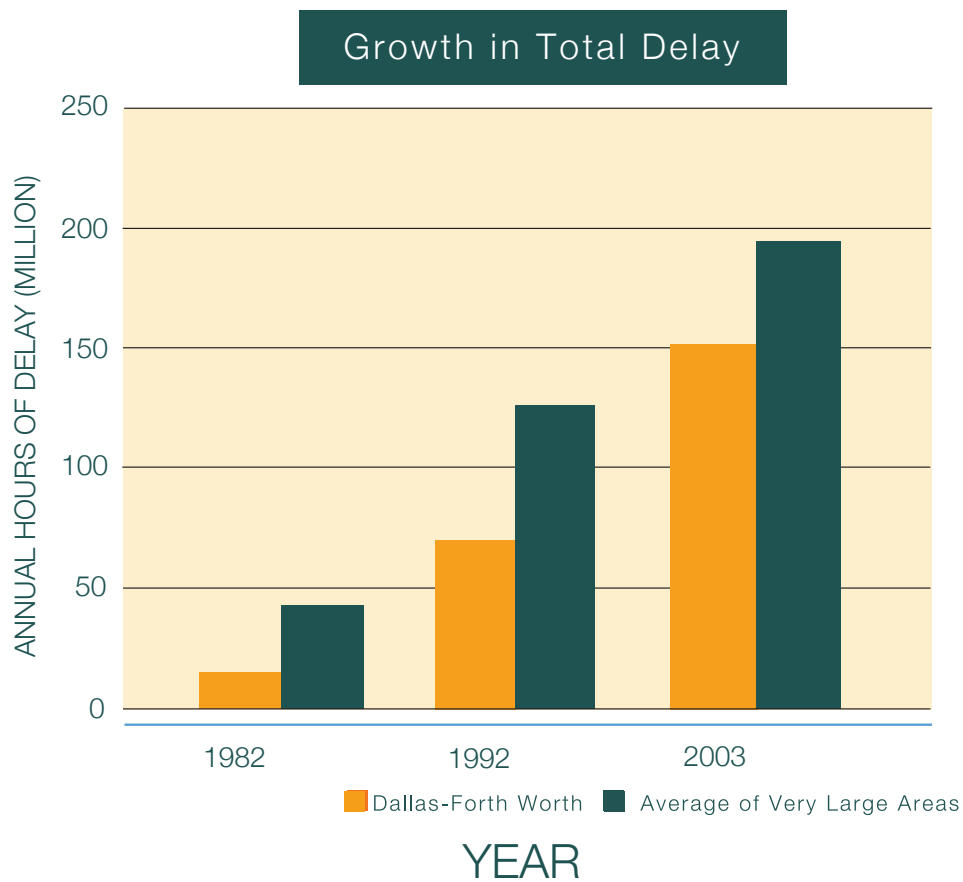
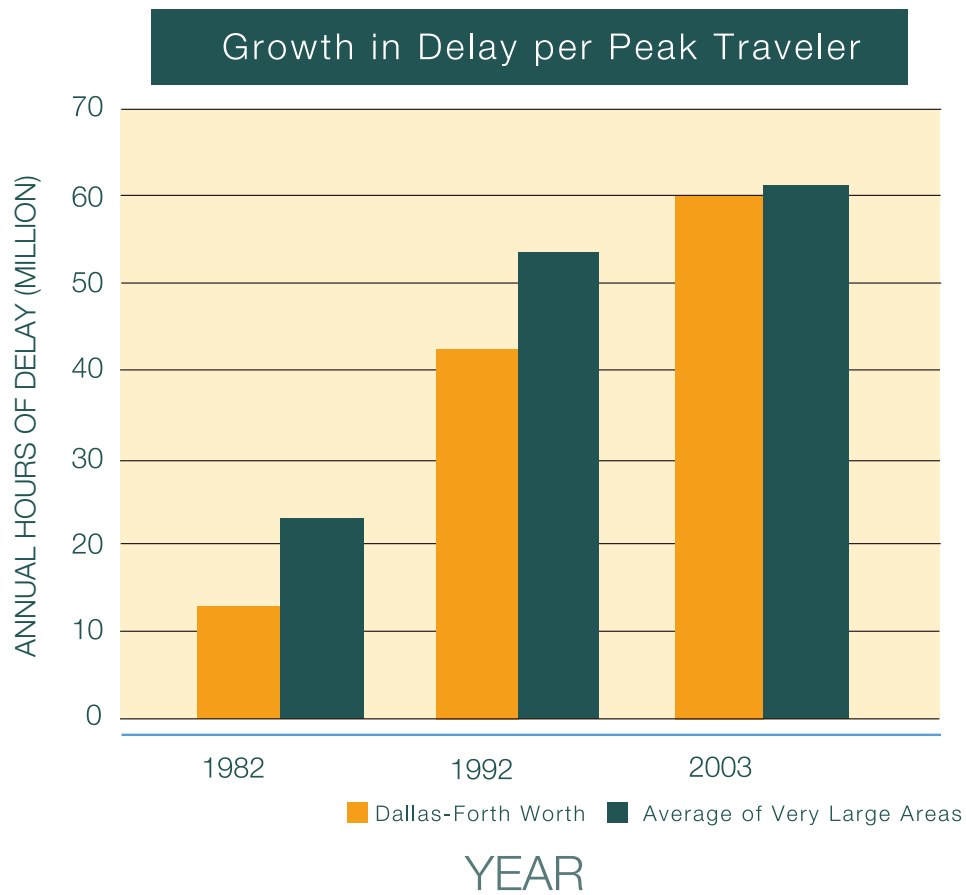
Parkland Hospital has seen the faces of three centuries. Time has changed technology, leading causes of disease and death, emergency transportation, and the outward appearance of the

facility; however, the health and hospital system's mission for the future is based on the same promise upon which it was founded—the pledge of medical care to all in need.

- Founded in 1894
- Current hospital opened in 1954
- Primary teaching hospital for The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center
- 10 Centers of Excellence
- First level I Trauma Center in North Texas
- Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Second largest regional Burn Center in U.S.
- Busiest maternity hospital in the U.S. and second busiest in the world
- Provided \$409 million in uncompensated care in FY 2006
- 968 Licensed beds
- 42,682 Patients admitted in FY 2006
- 16,489 Babies delivered in FY 2006
- 870,005 Clinic/health center visits in FY 2006
- 139,578 Emergency patient visits in FY 2006

Dallas County | Jail Population





THE MOBILITY

Data for Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX

INVENTORY MEASURES	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Urban Area Information								
Population (000)	4,300	4,200	4,090	4000	3,970	3,860	3,740	3,650
Rank	6	6	6	8	8	9	9	9
Urban Area (sq. miles)	1,935	1,920	1,885	1,860	1,835	1,810	1,790	1,770
Population Density (persons/sq. mile)	2,222	2,188	2,170	2,151	2,163	2,133	2,089	2,062
Peak Travelers (000)	2,516	2,440	2,335	2,244	2,191	2,096	1,993	1,916
Freeway								
Daily Vehicle-Miles of Travel (000)	51,870	50,000	49,300	48,000	46,285	45,740	44,165	41,900
Lane Miles	3,105	3,085	3,070	3,060	3,055	3,050	3,040	3,030
Principal Arterial Streets								
Daily Vehicle-Miles of Travel (000)	25,810	25,020	25,015	24,200	23,250	22,500	21,430	19,300
Lane Miles	4,050	4,040	4,035	4,030	4,015	3,970	3,900	3,830
Roadway System								
Daily Vehicle-Miles of Travel (000)	109,175	107,300	105,890	116,550	113,610	108,545	105,135	100,270
Total Centerline Miles	17,760	17,700	17,665	17,830	17,800	17,850	17,890	17,840
Public Transportation								
Annual Psgr-Miles of Travel (mil)	459	342	374	386	293	337	334	242
Annual Unlinked Psgr Trips (mil)	85	68	71	72	64	67	66	55
Cost Components								
Value of Time (\$/hour)	13.75	13.45	13.25	12.85	12.40	12.15	12.00	11.70
Commercial Cost (\$/hour)	72.65	71.05	69.95	68.00	65.80	64.35	63.40	61.95
Fuel Cost (\$/gallon)	1.42	1.32	1.46	1.39	1.07	1.01	1.12	1.21
SYSTEM PERFORMANCE	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Annual Delay (person-hours)								
Total (000)	151,840	148,981	139,171	131,926	132,851	102,779	91,309	83,788
Rank	5	5	5	5	5	7	9	9
per Peak Traveler (person-hours)	60	61	60	59	61	49	46	44
Rank	6	6	6	7	5	14	19	15
per Person (person-hours)	35	35	34	33	33	27	24	23
Percent due to Incidents (%)	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
Travel Time Index	1.36	1.35	1.33	1.32	1.31	1.27	1.24	1.22
Rank	19	16	18	17	20	22	26	29
Annual Delay Saved by Operations								
Total Person-hours (000)	10,088	10,020	9,006	8,659				
Hours per Peak Traveler	4	4	4	4				
Congestion Cost Savings (\$mil)	166	161	143	133				
Annual Delay Saved by Public Transportation	15,068	11,279	11,239	11,244	9,350	8,395	7,981	5,867
Total Person-hours (000)	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	3
Hours per Peak Traveler	249	181	179	173	138	122	115	82
Congestion Cost Savings (\$mil)	68	64	64	59	57	56	50	45
Congested Travel (% of peak VMT)	54	52	52	50	50	50	45	42
Congested System (% lane-miles)								
Number of "Rush Hours" (time when system might have congestion)	7.4	7.2	7.2	7.2	6.8	6.8	6.4	5.8
To Maintain Constant Congestion Level:								
Annual Lane-Miles Needed (freeway & street)	188	194	282	283	264	350	358	315
Daily Transit or Carpool Riders Needed (000)	283	284	409	401	361	473	471	390
Annual Excess Fuel Consumed (gallons)								
Total (million)	83	77	73	68	65	56	48	42
Rank	7	7	7	7	7	8	10	10
per Peak Traveler (gallons)	33	32	31	30	29	27	24	22
Rank	11	11	11	12	14	14	20	22
per Person (gallons)	19	18	18	17	16	15	13	11
Congestion Cost								
Total (\$ million)	2,545	2,429	2,248	2,064	1,984	1,508	1,327	1,190
Rank	5	5	5	5	5	7	9	9
per Peak Traveler (\$)	1,012	995	963	920	905	719	666	621
Rank	6	6	7	7	7	14	19	16
per Person (\$)	592	578	550	516	500	391	355	326

* System Performance statistics for 2000 through 2003 data reflect the effects of operational treatments.

* Zeroes in the table reflect values less than 0.5.

CDBG Program

CDBG is the nation’s primary urban assistance program. Funding from this program can be used for a wide variety of projects provided they either principally benefit low/moderate-income citizens, eradicate blight or eliminate a community threatening condition.

Dallas County operates a CDBG program on behalf

of 14 of its smaller cities (those with populations of less than 50,000). The County receives approximately \$3 million a year in CDBG related funding. This funding, which often represents the only means through which a city can undertake certain types of projects, is typically allocated in the following manner:

Replacement Housing	18%
Water/Sewer/Streets	32%
Code Enforcement/Demolition	9%
Park Renovations	2%

Down Payment Assistance	6%
Home Loan Counseling Center	10%
Housing for Non-Profits	3%
Administration	20%



DALLAS COUNTY'S

Open Space/Trail Program

Recognizing that the area's rapid urbanization was also substantially reducing the area's natural habitat and the amount of undeveloped land that existed, Dallas County first began establishing an open space program in 1976.

Designed to preserve environmentally unique and sensitive land, its open space system now contains 3200 acres in twenty-one preserves located throughout the County.

The preserves are modeled to resemble national parks rather than the traditional city park with athletic fields and playgrounds. Some of the County's most unique environmental features are contained within these preserves: wildflower-populated meadows, forests with 300-year-old trees, the highest elevation points in the County, uninterrupted views of the Trinity River (which is one of the longest rivers in Texas), and the northern-most situated grove of palmettos yet discovered in Texas.

With Dallas County now having one of the largest county park systems in the state and with most County residents now having to travel no more than about twenty minutes to reach a preserve, the primary emphasis of the open space program was changed in 1999 towards establishing a county-wide trail system. With the objective of creating a trail system that would connect major residential

areas, recreational facilities, and employment centers to one another without the need of a car, the County's trail program has already succeeded in constructing thirteen miles of new trail which connect with another eleven miles of existing trail. In addition, the County is also currently in the process of designing another fifteen miles of trail which will connect with an additional twenty-four miles of existing trail.

The benefits of the County's open space system and its trail system are many. Besides creating recreational opportunities and protecting natural features that cannot easily be replicated by man, the County's open space system helps reduce both noise and air pollution, and it helps control storm run-off. Numerous studies have also shown that the presence of open space and trails increase the value of surrounding property and that these amenities have become very important in attracting relocating businesses and residents. Trails, when extensive, can also serve as an alternative mode of transportation, which assists in the improvement of local air quality and the reduction of traffic congestion. They can also help reduce crime and create a new sense of pride within a neighborhood, and they can increase tourism, create new business opportunities along their corridors, and enhance existing adjacent businesses as well.

DALLAS COUNTY

and Transportation

The traditional transportation responsibility for a Texas county is the provision and maintenance of roads in its unincorporated areas. However, as Dallas County has become urbanized and its share of unincorporated territory has diminished, this role has changed substantially.

Over the past forty years, the County has become an important transportation leader in the North Central Texas region, initiating the creation of the North Texas Tollway Authority and supporting the creation of DART. Allocating approximately \$32 million a year for major transportation projects, it is actively involved in the planning and funding of thoroughfares, highways, and toll roads, and it is influential in the shaping of regional and state transportation policy.

That the County has been so willing to be involved in transportation outside of its unincorporated area has been of enormous importance to the Dallas area. Not unlike most major metropolitan areas that emerged after World War II, the principle mode of transportation in Dallas County has been the automobile. With the County's population almost tripling since 1960, the Dallas area has been running the risk that its success will end because it is caught in traffic. Indeed, the amount of the County that is now considered to be congested has increased from less than 25% in 1980 to about 80% today.

At the same time, in the last ten to fifteen years a large number of significant transportation improvements have been completed in the Dallas area by the County, DART, the NTTA, TxDot and local cities. These include doubling the capacity of North Central Expressway, improving local traffic coordination and left-turn/right-turn capacity at approximately 700 intersections, and constructing over forty miles of new toll roads, thirty-five miles of light rail, and forty-five miles of commuter rail. Because of these improvements, the amount of the County that was regarded severely congested has declined from about twenty-two percent in 1999 to less than ten percent in 2007.

While there has been some very noticeable improvement in Dallas area transportation, the North Central Texas Council of Governments notes that the region will still need more than \$90 billion of transportation funding through 2025 to be able to fully address the region's congestion.

Not only has the County's transportation role changed over time, but its objectives in this area have changed as well. Traditionally, one of the County's primary transportation objectives has been to move as many vehicles as possible from one point to another.

TRANSPORTATION (continued)

However, with the Dallas area EPA citations for inadequate air quality and with much of the local air pollution resulting from vehicles slowed by traffic, the impact of transportation projects on local air quality has become an important consideration. Similarly, past experience has shown

how transportation projects can lead to significant economic development in the Dallas area. As a result, the County is increasingly looking at how transportation can facilitate growth—particularly in those areas that have previously experienced little such activity.

DALLAS COUNTY

as a Property Owner

Dallas County is very well-known for its fiscal prudence. Perhaps nowhere has this been more evident over the past 30 years than in the design and maintenance of its buildings. While County facilities are generally not run-down or populated with buckets to catch leaking rainwater, they are often starkly utilitarian with unattractive signage, little landscaping, and few finish-out amenities. For instance, when the County's \$61.5 million Frank Crowley Courts Building was completed in 1989, the architecture critic for the Dallas Morning News called it "a depressing piece of civic architecture" and said that the "best thing" about it was that it helped hide the County's also unappealing Lew Sterrett Justice Center from view.

Dallas County is one of the largest users of office space in the Dallas area. It owns or leases 38 major buildings. Because many are located prominently

in downtown Dallas, along freeways and major thoroughfares, and in neighborhoods, these structures do much to shape the public's perception and the physical appearance of these areas. In addition, improving the appearance of County facilities can help improve employee morale and performance.

Recognizing the benefits that can come from enhanced County facilities, the Commissioners Court has undertaken a number of significant initiatives in the last few years, including a \$3 million renovation of the County's downtown plaza, a \$47 million renovation/expansion of the George Allen Courts Building, and a \$22 million restoration of the Old Red Courthouse.

With various parts of the County beginning to age, continuing such enhancements, especially in the County's older neighborhoods, could do much to stabilize or improve the surrounding economy.



Strategic Plan *for* Dallas County

