



We're working hard to create a comprehensive mailing list for the **TOWN CENTER CONNECTION**. If you would like to be included in this mailing list and receive FREE issues of the quarterly publication, the **TOWN CENTER CONNECTION**, please email Jennifer Arnold, Planner II at jarnold@mckinneytexas.org and include your name and mailing address or call (972)547-7500 to speak with a Long Range Planner.

ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE!
WWW.MCKINNEYTEXAS.ORG

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McKinney Main Street Receives State & National Recognition

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the National Trust for Historic Preservation recently recognized McKinney with the National Main Street Designation. McKinney has earned the distinction each year since 2005. A total of 52 Texas cities were named as National Main Street Cities this year.

"Historic Downtown McKinney is the heart and soul of our city and what makes us unique. Our events, programs and businesses here work together to provide an experience for everyone who comes downtown. We have the total package, and we are proud to have earned national recognition for the hard work of so many people," said Ty Lake, Director of McKinney Main Street.

Cities chosen as National Main Street Cities must show above average

performance in 10 categories. The selection criteria focus on planning, staff and volunteers, preservation ethic, training and program assessment. Out of a possible 105 points, McKinney Main Street earned an exemplary 96.

"A lot of hard work goes into achieving this recognition. Main Street communities exemplify the Texas mystique and this recognition honors the many people, including Main Street directors and volunteers, who put in countless hours to make their Main Street programs work," said Debra Farst, State Coordinator of the Texas Main Street Program.

Visit www.downtownmckinney.com for more information or contact McKinney Main Street at 972.547.2660.



THE TOWN CENTER CONNECTION

Issue 1

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January-March 2009

WHAT IS THE TOWN CENTER CONNECTION?



As the first phase of the Town Center Study initiative came to a close, those who participated made it clear that they wanted to stay involved throughout the second phase of the process. The City is excited to have both public and private support for this initiative and understands that a sustained effort from City leaders and staff, in conjunction with stakeholders, residents and property owners, is the only way to fully capitalize on the unique opportunities presented by the Town Center.

Extending the Town Center planning initiative into Phase 2 will provide the detailed strategies and tools needed to compete with other areas and to continue to attract and guide reinvestment. Staff and the consultant team are currently working internally to examine these strategies and tools, so look for the next issue of the **TOWN CENTER CONNECTION** to read more about the progress of this work.

As a way to maintain communication with you (a stakeholder of the Town Center) on a regular basis and keep you involved and engaged, the City has launched the **TOWN CENTER CONNECTION**, this quarterly publication. Here you can read about the progress of the Town Center Study initiative, learn about upcoming meetings and events, and read news that is specific to the Town Center and important to you.

For more information about the Town Center Study or to get on our mailing list, visit www.mckinneytexas.org and click on the "Town Center Study" link or call (972)547-7500 to speak with a Long Range Planner.

THE MCKINNEY TOWN CENTER is blessed with its location, physical assets, history, community pride, vibrant businesses, cultural arts, diverse demographic composition and a robust municipal tax base. In a commitment to ensure the future health of this vibrant area, the City of McKinney initiated the Town Center Study in 2006 in an effort to address the specific needs of the McKinney Town Center.

Over the last 2 years, City staff, the consultant team and more than 300 stakeholders, residents and property owners have worked together to establish a bold community-based vision for how the Town Center should look, feel and function over the long term.

The process and resulting vision is outlined in the Town Center Study Phase 1 Report, which was unanimously approved by City Council in March 2008 and serves as a meaningful policy guide for city officials, staff, property owners, and private developers when considering proposals for development/redevelopment in the Town Center.

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS

Daddy-Daughter Valentine's Dance
Feb. 6, 2009 | 6:30pm
McKinney Community Center

Towne Lake Trout Derby
Feb. 21, 2009 | 8:00am
Towne Lake East Pavilion

Krewe of Barkus Dog Parade
Feb. 22, 2009 | 2:00pm
Downtown McKinney

Taste of Collin County
Feb. 23, 2009 | 5:30pm
Downtown McKinney

Preserve Historic McKinney

Now Accepting Nominations for the 2nd Annual Historic Home Recognition Program

In 2008, the City of McKinney Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) established the "**Preserve Historic McKinney - Home Recognition Program**" to recognize property owners who have revitalized McKinney's historic residential community by making significant exterior improvements to their individual properties. The program recognizes the outstanding efforts of these property owners and seeks to encourage future individual reinvestment in McKinney's Town Center. The winning homes are featured in the annual Historic Preservation Advisory Board Calendar.

McKinney is now accepting nominations for the 2nd Annual Historic Home Recognition Program and calendar. Now through February 28, 2009, you are encouraged to nominate a historic home that you feel represents the rich history of McKinney and shows dedication to preservation and restoration.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

For more information about nominating a house, contact Guy Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer, at (972)547-7416 or by email at: ggiersch@mckinneytexas.org

Nominations must be received by February 28, 2009.

City Applies for EPA Grant Funding to Assess Potential Brownfields

Dating back over 160 years, McKinney's Town Center has had numerous environmental legacies associated with past industrial and commercial operations (gas stations, agricultural mills, cotton gins, etc.) that used hazardous substances (i.e. solvents, dyes) or petroleum products with their businesses prior to the advent of modern environmental regulations.

Under the 2002 Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides financial assistance to local communities for the purpose of assessing and reclaiming brownfield sites through four competitive grant programs: (1) assessment grants, (2) revolving loan fund grants, (3) cleanup grants, and (4) job training grants.

A brownfield site is defined as a piece of property whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, controlled substances, or petroleum or petroleum-based products.

City staff recently took a first step in establishing a Brownfields Program for McKinney by preparing and submitting a proposal package to the EPA in November 2008. If awarded, the City of McKinney may receive up to \$400,000 for hazardous substances and petroleum contamination assessments through the assessment grants program.

Assessment grants provide funding for developing inventories of brownfields, prioritizing sites, conducting community involvement activities, and conducting site assessments and cleanup planning related to brownfield sites. Assessment grant funds may not

be used to conduct cleanups, but once assessments are completed, they can be used to leverage additional brownfields funding for cleanups.

At a recent City Council meeting, Councilperson Gilda Garza expressed her gratitude to City staff for seeking to initiate a Brownfields Program, "I want to commend City staff for pursuing Brownfields Grant funding. I really appreciate it. The funding could not only help clean up existing environmental problems in my district but could also prevent new problems in the future."

If awarded the funding, the City plans to develop a preliminary inventory of brownfields sites in the Town Center area, support community outreach and involvement activities, and conduct as many environmental site assessments as possible.

As part of Phase 2 of the Town Center Study Initiative, assessment of brownfields would enable the City to create specific redevelopment and revitalization strategies to achieve the conceptual vision established in Phase 1, including connecting downtown to the anticipated sustainable transit village on the east side of McDonald Street.

The target areas included in the proposal generally cover the parts of the Town Center that have historically been used for industrial and commercial uses.

The City anticipates a response from the EPA in the next few months. Keep your fingers crossed!

For more information about the Brownfields Program, contact Craig Sykora, Planner at (972)547-2632

In the Spotlight:

The Garret Art Gallery, 111 East Virginia Street



The Garret Art Gallery opened in 1985 in the 200 block of E. Virginia Street. It was named 'The Garret' since a garret (a room on the top floor of a house, typically under a pitched roof) was where Old Masters painted because of the skylights and cheap rent.

Clara Stovall, the original founder, opened the gallery because she wanted to offer affordable original art by area artists to the public. Co-owners Babs Light, Ginny Bitting, Jodie Baldwin and Gail Delger soon joined her venture, and, after 8 years at its original location, The Garret Art Gallery moved to its current home at 111 E. Virginia St.

Today, The Garret Art Gallery is known as one of the most pleasant experiences on the square. You will see a wide variety of original visual art by its owners and guest artists. Jodie Baldwin's watercolors and acrylics of Downtown McKinney and Ginny Bitting's impressionistic paintings in oil are collected by many. Gail Delger's whimsical and humorous creations in multimedia have won numerous awards in regional and national shows. Babs Light is a signature member of Southwestern Watercolor Society and teaches watercolor at the gallery. Clara Stovall's specialty is Texas hill country bluebonnets in oil which are found all over the USA and abroad. Clara continues to teach at the gallery.

The Garret Art Gallery is open Monday through Saturday 10-5pm and 2nd Saturday's 7:00-10:00pm. You are invited to visit their website at www.garretartgallery.com.



Ussery Wins Election for Vacant City Council Seat



Photograph Courtesy of McKinney Courier Gazette

MCKINNEY DISTRICT 3 RESIDENTS HAVE A NEW REPRESENTATIVE ON CITY COUNCIL.

On January 17th, residents of District 3 headed to the polls to determine who would fill the vacated City Council seat of Bill Vitz, who resigned in December 2008. Certified results confirm that Travis Ussery won 55 percent of the

votes and the right to fill the unexpired term of former Councilmember Vitz. Ussery defeated his opponent, Robert O'Donnell, who received 45 percent of the votes.

A native of McKinney, Mr. Ussery currently works as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and has previously served as Chairman of

the McKinney Planning and Zoning Commission. He has also served on the Parks Board.

Ussery will begin his term on January 26th, but will have to campaign soon after when the seat is, again, up for grabs during the general election held on May 9, 2009.

Downtown Upgrades

Infrastructure Improvements in Square Proper Complete

AT THE START OF 2008, the City of McKinney began construction on an extensive infrastructure improvement project in the downtown square and, after a nine month renovation period, the improvements were completed just in time to kick off the 2008 holiday season. The City spent \$2.2 million to give downtown an updated look and foundation.

Many of the ideas discussed during Phase 1 of the Town Center Study were integrated into the redesign of the Downtown Square, and the improvements mark one of the first physical steps toward making the vision of the Town Center a reality. Some of the most notable improvements include wider sidewalks, new landscaping, street furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles, repaved streets, updated electrical capacity, additional parking, new traffic signals and water lines, and updated sewer lines. The wider sidewalks and extra parking have increased convenience and, because of the extra room on the walkways, many of the eateries now offer patio dining.



Rail: Connecting the Region

During Phase 1 of the Town Center Study, the second public design workshop focused on enhancing the neighborhoods east of SH 5 and linking them with the historic downtown. As part of this strategy, a conceptual plan for a rail transit village was developed.

The "McKinney Line" (from Plano to McKinney) has already been preliminarily identified as a top priority in the Regional Rail Plan developed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG). The creation of a transit village would provide tremendous opportunities for redevelopment and growth in McKinney's Town Center. In addition, the extension of rail would provide more transportation options, promote better air quality, reduce congestion, and create a seamless transportation system for the North Texas region. However, a major challenge to making this a reality is funding.

The Regional Transportation Council (the independent transportation policy body of the Metropolitan Planning Organization) has been working diligently to explore responsible funding options. Many sources are being considered and include (but are not limited to): sales tax, gas tax, motor vehicle registration fees, transportation property tax, revenue sharing, public-private partnerships, federal grants, or a hybrid. While no specific funding mechanism has been determined, a number of them have been evaluated extensively and will be merged into a legislative position by the RTC Transit Authority Partnership. The Partnership will present this information at the 81st State Legislative Session this spring in the hopes of securing options to fund regional rail and authorize metropolitan areas to enact a local option transportation tax with voter approval for rail and roadways.

What does this mean for you? Establishing the funding options that will bring rail to North Texas cannot be achieved without your support. Regular Legislative Sessions occur only once every two years, so the time to act is now. Contact your local representative and show your support for bringing rail to McKinney and the rest of North Texas. To learn more or find your local representative, visit the North Central Texas Council of Governments website at www.nctcog.org/rnt.



Photograph courtesy of Smith Restoration Sash

As a Matter of Fact

A Message from Guy Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer, City of McKinney



"My historic windows are the largest source of energy loss in my home." Familiar words? Science doesn't seem to support the statement.

Research shows that between seventy-five and eighty-five percent of heat energy in a house is actually lost through the roof, walls, floors and chimneys while only fifteen to twenty-five percent is lost through the windows. Research also shows that a historic wood window, properly maintained and fitted with a storm window, can be just as energy efficient as a new window. Typically, replacement windows are vinyl, aluminum, or a composite with wood, and none will last as long as the original window. The "greener" and more sustainable building practice is to repair, rather than replace, your historic windows. So, if you are thinking about replacing your historic windows with new ones, add this to your list of things to consider before making any decisions.

For more information concerning the care and maintenance of historic wood windows, check out the articles on the McKinney homepage at www.mckinneytexas.org or contact me at (972)547-7416.

Information obtained from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.