



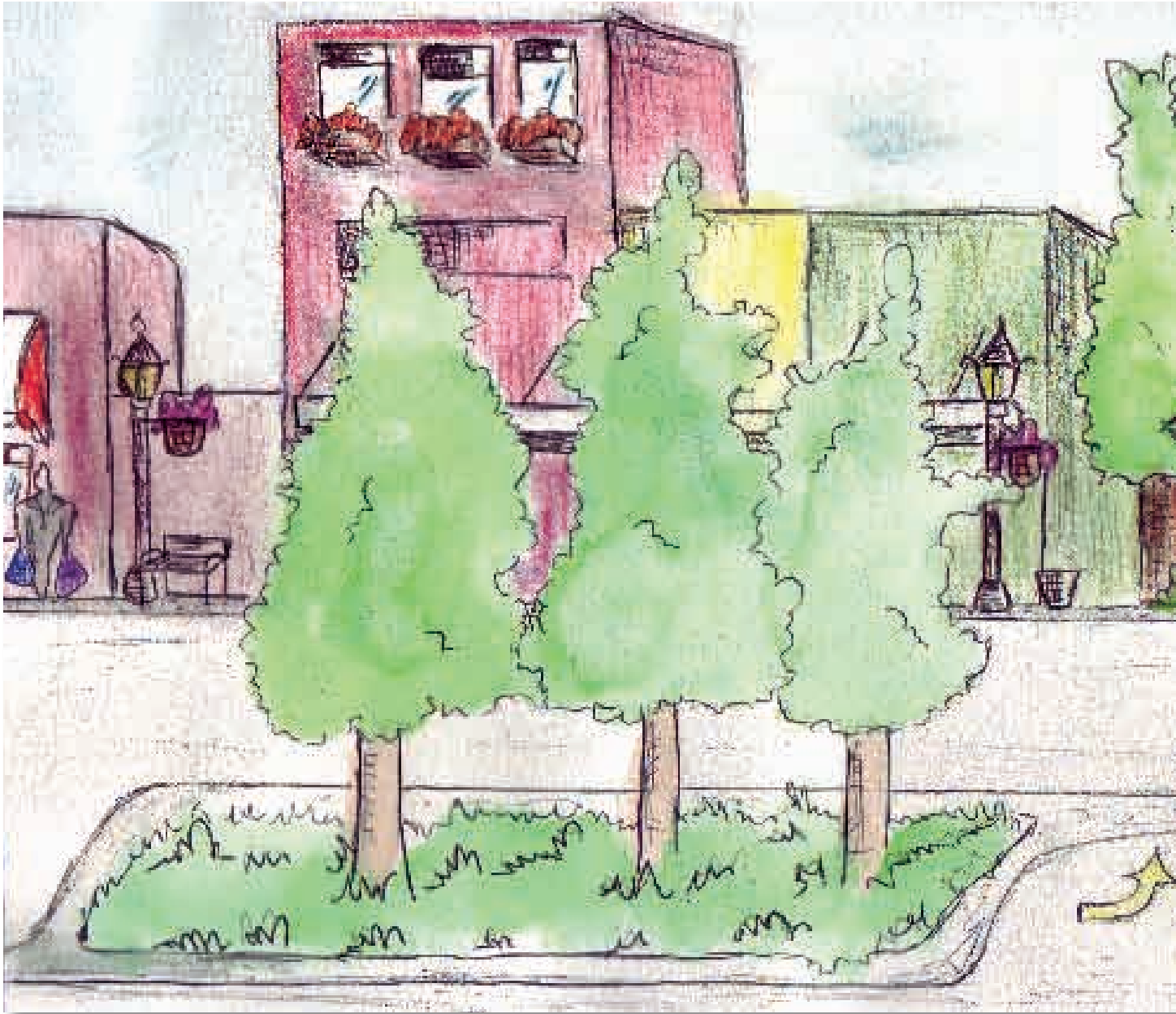
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## What's Next for Frisco? Vision for the Future

By Lindsey Townsend

**HOW DO YOU PERFECT A ROCKET** once it's airborne? No easy task. But perhaps not so different from the one community leaders have faced in the last decade as they struggled to manage Frisco's growth while creating a sustainable community.

Despite the fact that Frisco has already hit so many balls out of the park, city planners are still brainstorming how to score the next grand slam. "We

cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We have seen other cities fall victim to the trend of residents taking flight to move to the next 'hot city,' so we must continue our mission to build a quality city so unique that once our citizens move here, they never want to leave," says Frisco Mayor Mike Simpson.

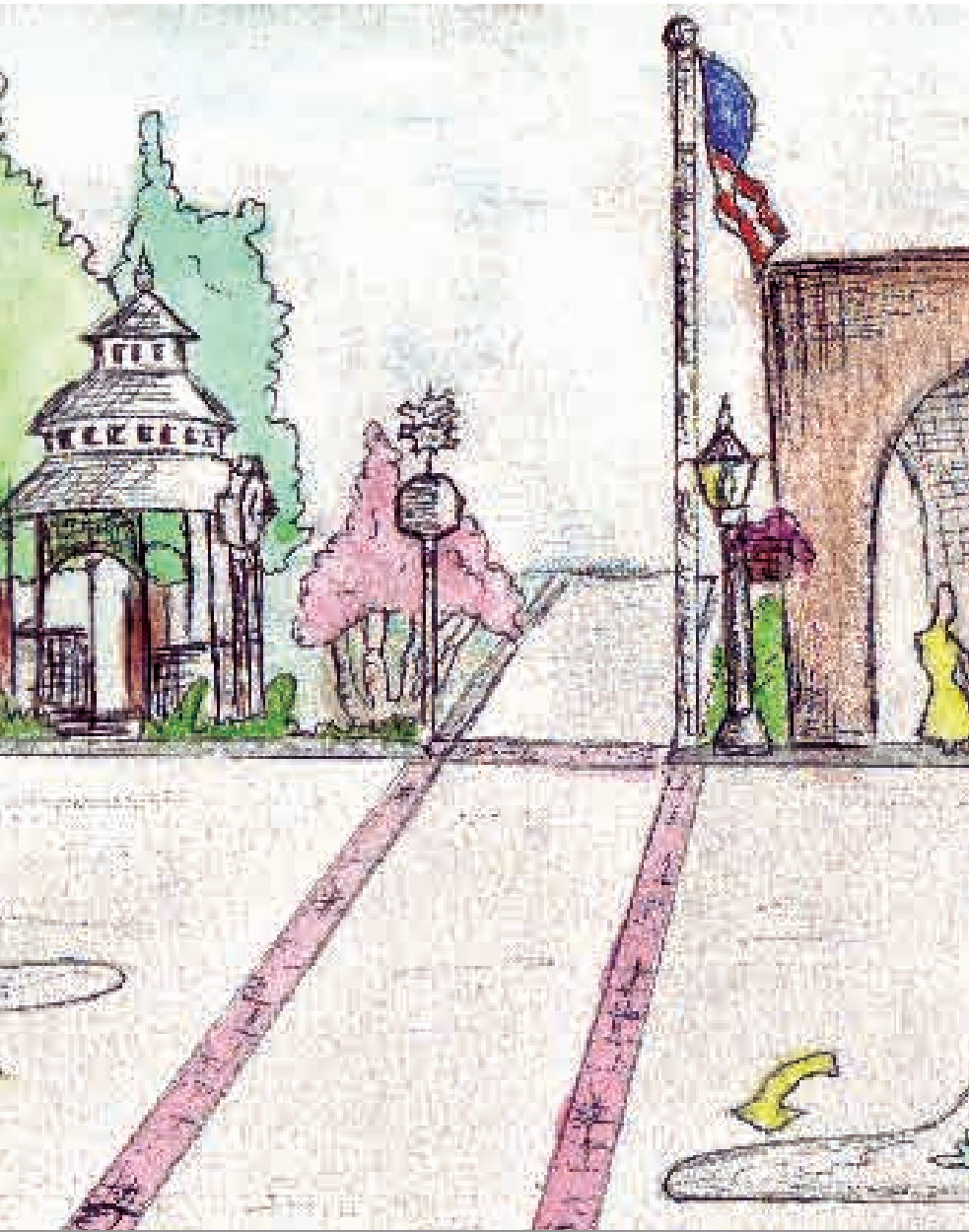
Setting the bar higher is more important than ever, because many surrounding communities are now

aggressively attempting to duplicate the success Frisco has had in developing major public and private partnerships, according to the mayor.

Mayor Simpson was re-elected by voters to a second term in May, along with incumbent city councilmen Jim Joyner and Matt Lafata. "I think the citizens showed by their vote that for the most part, they're happy with the leadership and the direction the city is headed – and they love living in Frisco," Mayor Simpson says.

City officials remain committed to planning their work and working their plan. The City Council has established "Long Term" Strategic

Mayor Simpson's vision for downtown Main Street illustrated by Stephanie Cox



June 2004 Work Session.

"This city has grown so fast in the last five years that it has been impossible to build roads fast enough. Couple this with the growth of our northern and eastern neighbors, and you have traffic situations that are a true challenge for our city to deal with," says City Council member Jim Joyner.

City Council member Matt Lafata agrees. "Obviously, completing all of the road projects that we have going on now is of the utmost priority. In the past three years, we've completed or planned more than \$150 million worth of road projects," he says. "But since Frisco is still only 40% developed, that's a drop in the bucket towards what will have to take place in the future."

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"Main Street will feature two-lane traffic with parallel parking, inviting visitors to park, stay and shop a while."

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Currently scheduled for completion in 2005 are Teel; Legacy; Main St. from the Dallas North Tollway to the railroad; the El Dorado Overpass; sections of Independence and El Dorado east of Preston; South County and Hickory, to name a few. In addition, Main St. should be complete to Preston Road by mid-2006.

Frisco has also helped move a number of state projects up on the priority list by paying for design,

Focus Areas that define major issues for the next three to five years. They then establish short-term priorities for each fiscal year that fall within those areas. Top issues for 2004-2005 included Roads and Transportation, Capital Projects, Comprehensive Plan Updates, Downtown Revitalization, Infrastructure Planning and Development, Information Technology, the beginning of Heritage Village, completing and implementing Impact Fee Revision, and Social Service Needs Assessment.

"We are on target to complete most of our priorities for this year, thanks to some incredibly hard work

by city staff and Council," says Mayor Simpson. "Our No. 1 goal is to make Frisco a unique and sustainable family community and to provide a quality of life that residents won't find in any other city." What follows is a brief look at highlights of current activities as Frisco looks ahead.

#### ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

No matter how great a city is, if you're stuck in traffic for an hour whenever you try to go somewhere, quality of life suffers. Recognizing that reducing traffic congestion remains critical, the City Council named road and transportation issues as their top priority during its

getting right of way donated, or actually paying to expand roads. Working with the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) and TxDot, both the Tollway and SH 121 are under construction. In March, the NTTA broke ground on the first phase of the Tollway extension up to U.S. 380, with the entire project to be completed by fall 2007.

The city also signed agreements with TxDot and the North Central Texas Council of Governments to receive funding for the \$50 million development of State Route 423 south of Lebanon up to 380; a \$12 million expansion of El Dorado (State Road 2934) from 423 to the Tollway, scheduled for design completion this fall; and the \$18 million development of 3537 (old 720 or Main St.) from Preston to Custer.

Other initiatives under consideration include expansion of the free bus service that now offers 12 stops from the downtown area to Stonebriar Centre; and evaluation of commuter rail possibilities as Frisco grows.

### CAPITAL PROJECTS

The next centerpiece of Frisco Square, the City Hall/Library, is scheduled for completion in spring 2006. Plans for the 90,000 square-foot city hall and 50,000 square-foot library include a two-acre park directly in front of the new facilities, with fountains and open spaces where major public events can be held.

In April, the city broke ground on the much-anticipated Police Headquarters building near Parkwood and Stonebrook Parkway to be completed in 2006. Design also began this year on a new \$20 million Recreation and Aquatic center, scheduled to open

next year at the southeast corner of Preston and Wade. "I personally want to see the Rec Center finished as soon as possible," says Lafata. "It will offer our residents access to indoor and outdoor aquatics, exercise and training facilities, and indoor sports courts and equipment."



Councilman Jim Joyner and one of his larger patients.

photo by Chris Johnson

go throughout the week, to shop, work, do busi-ness and dine."

Frisco's Main Street is unique in that the Historic District – from North County Road to the railroad tracks – is located right next to Frisco Square and Pizza Hut Park, the new soccer and entertainment stadium, with Heritage Park in the middle. When Pizza Hut Park opens in August, downtown will become a magnet for sports fans and visitors.

In addition, a Downtown Revitalization committee is working with city officials to provide recommendations on what kinds of businesses should redefine the five buildings that will be vacated when

city employees relocate to the new City Hall at Frisco Square in spring 2006. The committee will develop a recommendation plan by the end of October to be presented to the City Council for approval.

### DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The vision of downtown Main Street is taking shape. When completed by the end of the year, Main Street will feature two-lane traffic with parallel parking on the outside of each lane, inviting visitors to park, stay and shop a while. "Many eclectic shops are moving in – paint your own ceramics stores, candle shops, antique stores – a lot of unique and handcrafted type of retail items that you won't necessarily find in a big mall," says downtown coordinator Janet Maccubbin.

Other ongoing improvements include development of left turn lanes to ease traffic flow, brick pavers on sidewalks and intersections, native Texas landscaping including live oak trees, antique street lights, hanging planters and extensive landscaping. "It will have a very attractive and homey look," says Mayor Simpson. "We want downtown to be a destination location and a beehive of activity where people

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"I would like to develop some facilities to help keep our preteens, teenagers and college-age youth busy in a productive way."

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"The specific types of businesses that would be ideal have yet to be targeted, but the goal is to have a strong arts influence in the use of

the space, along with retail and dining options,” says Maccubbin. Community Theater, a gallery co-op, museum space, small specialty retail shops, bookstores, wine/gourmet food shops and restaurants are all on the table for consideration.

Local merchants are taking a leadership role in the revitalization process. For example, they are now offering Frisco Fridays one Friday a month, featuring bands, gallery openings, and other special events that attract visitors.

Heritage Village, a 4-acre park and working village that will bridge Frisco Square and downtown, is also beginning to take shape and will be a unique draw for local and out-of-town visitors.

**OTHER MAJOR ISSUES:**

Quality of life issues were cited as major priorities by Joyner, Lafata and Mayor Simpson. That includes ongoing development of trails, parks and recreational facilities.

Toward that end, more than 40 park projects are now in the works for the next 4-6 years as part of the Parks Master Plan.

By year-end, Frisco Fairways Green, Shepherd’s Glen, and Heritage Green will open as community parks as well as Phase One of Southeast Community Park featuring new sports fields, trails and lakes. Frisco is also part of a six-city master plan that will someday allow residents to bike from Frisco to White Rock Lake.

Also on the table is a Grand Park concept of trails, creeks and lakes on 600-850 acres of land along Stewart Creek. The plan includes a potential college, hospital, mixed residential areas, and offices all along the creek. A consultant is currently developing a Master Development Plan.

“Continuing to develop family entertainment and youth options, along with tax relief for seniors, are two of

my other major goals,” says Joyner. “I would like to develop some other facilities to help keep our preteens, teenagers and college-age youth busy in a productive way.” Joyner also plans to work toward increasing the senior

to bigger yards, no fences and front-entry garages,” says Mayor Simpson. “We’d like to take advantage of the natural beauty and rolling hills that characterize the vacant land north of Main Street to create developments that are attractive – at a variety of price points.”

The city has already passed an Alternative Subdivision Design ordinance that encourages developers to vary lot size, offer unique designs, and include open spaces, trails, parks and greenbelts, amenity centers, and water and entrance features within their developments.

Lafata hopes to facilitate the arrival of a second post office to town. “We’ve been after the postal service for years to build an additional facility, because our single post office now serves almost 80,000 people,” he says. Frisco has now been listed on the priority list for future consideration by federal administrators but definite plans have yet been determined. The new facility would most likely be located in the eastern part of town.

Mayor Simpson would like to redesign the current city logo to establish a look

that more graphically represents what Frisco stands for. He plans to include the topic as a new discussion item during the Council June Work Session. “I want a logo that reflects what Frisco embodies—progressive yet committed to family and quality of life,” he says. “With all the new municipal buildings and projects that will be completed in 2006, now is the time to change.”

Their plate is full and Mayor Simpson and council members Jim Joyner and Matt LaFata have a fresh new term in front of them. When all their goals are complete, all Frisco residents should benefit from the completion of the ongoing projects.

*Lindsey Townsend is a freelance writer living in Lake Dallas.*



*Councilman Matt Lafata at the new Frisco Conference Center photo by Fran Reisner*

citizen homestead exemption from \$30,000 to \$50,000 in the next one to three years to help provide tax relief for seniors.

Planning for the needs of young children also remains critical, since Frisco is such a family-friendly city. “We’re building an average of five schools a year to keep up with the growth, yet there are more children aged 0-5 in Frisco than there are in the entire K-12 Fisd School District,” points out Joyner.

As demand for single-family permits continues to increase, city officials are working to establish a diversity of quality housing opportunities for all ages and income levels. “We have a lot of people moving here from the East and West Coast, where they’re used