

# Section 5: Alternative City Form Scenarios

## Relationship to Planning Process

The development of alternative city form scenarios is a specific task used during the planning process. This process of using alternatives to describe the options that can be used is an important step in planning for communities. This task occurred during the second phase of the *Plan* development, a phase including extensive public involvement.

## Key Time for Community Input

The alternative city form scenarios were taken out to the citizens of McKinney for their review and input. The public participation occurred during an intensive series of three (3) *Community Workshops*. Each workshop was advertised with print and web-page notices for weeks in advance. The workshops were held during a single week in the month of April. The workshops were facilitated in a different McKinney neighborhood each night.

### Community Workshops

Workshop	Area	McKinney Venue
# 1	East side	Old Settler’s Recreation Center
# 2	Southwest	Wolford Elementary School
# 3	Northwest	Slaughter Elementary Schol

Each of the workshops were well attended for meetings conducted during a comprehensive planning effort. The citizens, or stakeholders, were concerned about the growth pressures that *arewere* affecting their community. Comments regarding preference over city form scenarios are discussed at the end of this section and provided direction toward the development of a preferred scenario and eventual *Future Land Use Plan*.

## Scenarios as Singular Alternatives

The alternative city form scenarios were developed to give stakeholders of McKinney a choice toward future community development. The four (4) scenarios that were used assisted the planning team *to-communicatein communicating* to stakeholders that cities can develop with a different physical fabric or distribution of higher densities. These scenarios acted as conceptual diagrams depicting the characteristics of a particular city form. Each alternative was developed with only one city form pattern; this was to communicate the potential relationships in McKinney’s future if that pattern *waswere to be* desired. It is fair to mention, that cities and towns across Texas and Collin County do not develop with just one pattern of development; in fact, they can use many of the city form alternatives described in this section.

## 5.1 Different Forms of City Development

McKinney, Frisco, Austin, and Dallas have all developed with different forms of physical development. These communities have separate aspects that provided the growth pressures. The growth pressures and vision come from transportation sources



Community Workshop meeting at Old Settler’s Recreation Center

such as rivers, railroads, highways, and airports. City forms also respond to natural features such as steep hills, floodplains, and unstable soils.

McKinney's development pattern historically was affected by the railroad and the distance one could travel in a day (which just happens to be the distance to Dallas). After the railroad/agriculture boom, McKinney has been affected (as have most American cities) by the automobile and the major roads built to accommodate them.

The region around McKinney is blessed with rolling hills and good sources of water. With the aid of road construction, most of the McKinney countryside became open for northern expansion. First, SH 5 provided access; next, US 75 provided the beginning of a highway network. That network brought urban corridor development built on the frontages on these major roads. Next, came the residential neighborhoods in many different types, layouts, and densities. Urban/suburban development was here to replace crop land as the future of McKinney.

## 5.2 Corridor Scenario

The four (4) alternative city form scenarios are discussed in the following pages. Each scenario includes a brief description of its characteristics and relationships to the urban area and is followed by the locational criteria and attributes used to measure its relevance.

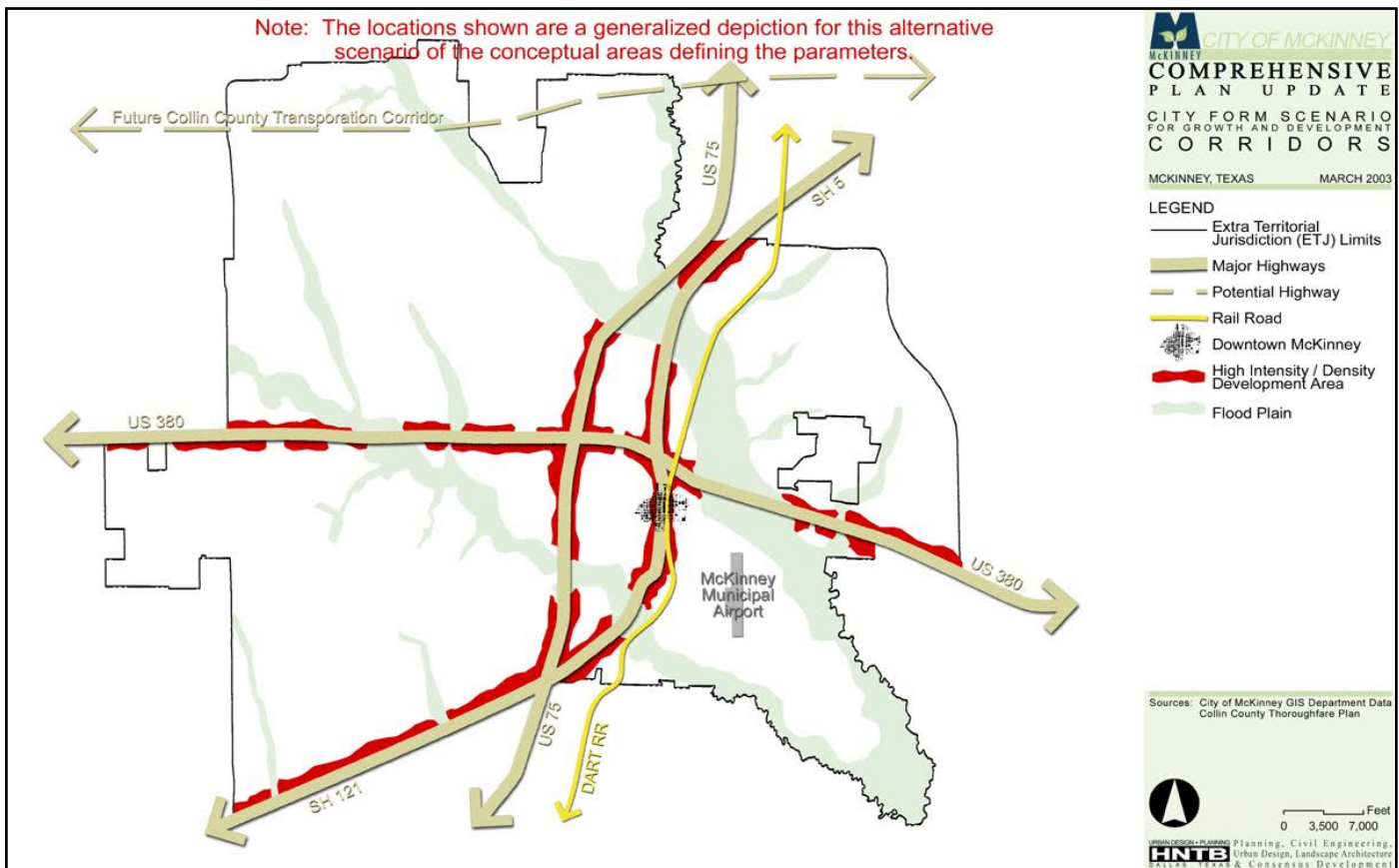


Figure 5.1: Corridor Scenario

The alternative that is represented by corridor development is defining a growth pattern that exists across much of Texas. This scenario suggests that the greatest intensity and highest density land uses are primarily located adjacent to existing

and/or planned highway corridors. A corridor pattern to commercial development establishes a linear form of building that responds to the front street, while creating a back-door (service access) environment that is often ugly, smelly, noisy, and negative for adjacent property values.

In McKinney, existing corridor development can be found along SH 5 (McDonald Street), US 75, and US 380. A large portion of the corridor development along SH 5 represents older commercial developments that took place prior to the opening of US 75 and have been through several users. Development along this corridor is built closer to the roadway and is best seen below 30 mph. More recent types of corridor development are found along US 75 and US 380. The two corridors are characterized by new vehicle showrooms and lots, shopping centers, restaurants, low-rise office buildings, industrial establishments, hotels, some entertainment venues, and land yet to be developed. For the most part, these are commercial uses that can catch the consumers' eye at 35 mph or greater. Development is set back from the roadway to conform to more recent City codes.

### Locational Criteria

Locational criteria distinguish key aspects that can either accentuate or relegate the development possibilities for properties along major corridors. These key aspects can be measured at different levels of importance but tend to focus on the proximity and accessibility of developable land to the major roadway, its site characteristics, and how land along a corridor relates to the needs of an auto-oriented society.

The following locational criteria were used to identify Corridor Scenario patterns in McKinney:

1. Convenient access from developable land adjacent to a highway or limited-access freeway
2. Proximity to highway interchange with high traffic volumes
3. Developable land depth from roadway should be approximately 750 feet
4. Caters to auto-oriented access, visibility, and movement

### Attributes

For City Officials, developers, and residents of McKinney, corridor development provides certain features that make it a desirable option for the City's built landscape.

Listed below are several attributes that distinguish the Corridor Scenario:

1. Provides strong visibility and access that is attractive for commercial tenants
2. Capitalizes on existing development patterns found in nearby cities (Allen, Frisco, Plano, Richardson)
3. Well understood in development community

### Implications

The attributes associated with corridor development make this an attractive option as a community development choice; nevertheless, there are certain consequences that are associated with this development alternative.

Implications associated with Corridor Scenarios are noted below:

1. Major thoroughfares US 75, US 380, SH 121, SH 5, and their supporting frontage roads could require additional capacity



*Prototypical images of Corridor city form development in Texas.*

2. Encourages highest density of land uses along corridors
3. Potential to encourage ugly commercial "strip development" patterns
4. Majority of major commercial development located along regional corridors
5. Traffic congestion can be an issue nearest the corridors during peak hours or events

### 5.3 District Scenario

District development breaks the community down into geographic areas that are identifiable by a particular activity or amenity. Such activities or amenities drive development within these districts providing a focus for sustainability, provided that the focus remains viable to the larger marketplace. Business and industrial districts many times have developed around the agglomeration of a particular technology or natural resource, such as the telecommunication industry in Richardson or the petrochemical industry along the Houston Ship Channel and in Texas City. Public institutions associated with medicine, education, and the arts, are well-known for developing recognizable districts. For residential developments, amenities could spotlight a particular community theme, event, or natural feature.

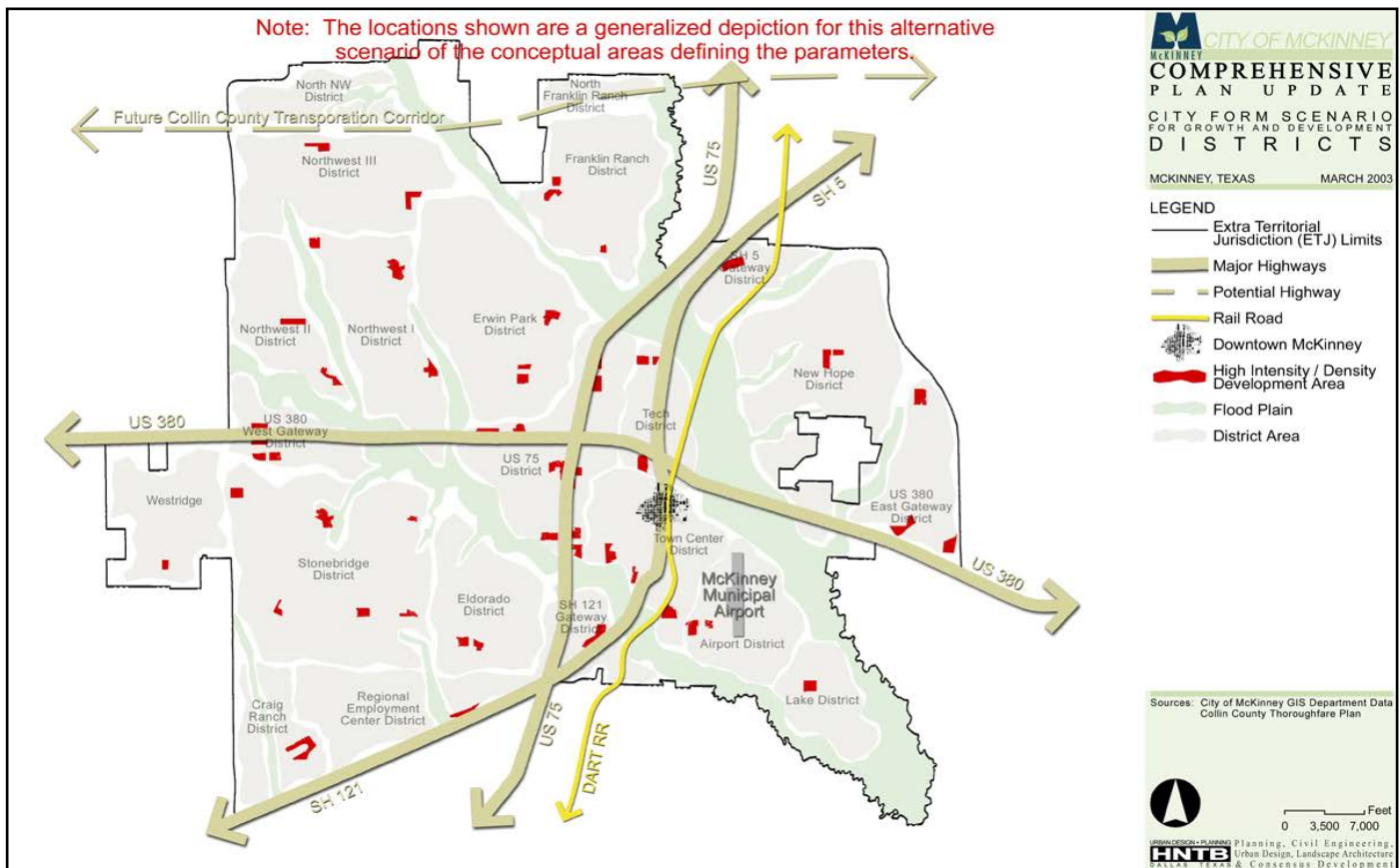


Figure 5.2: District Scenario

In McKinney, district development is limited to a few notable areas - the Downtown Historic District, the Historic Residential District, and the new master-planned developments west of US 75 - Eldorado and Stonebridge Ranch. The former two districts have gained in value as the limited heritage of North Texas communities takes on a new appreciation. The latter two communities-identified developments are attractive to residents searching for a particular lifestyle centered on neighborhood cohesion and outdoor recreation, namely golf. As growth continues to occur in McKinney,

districts could evolve to meet the needs of an expanding population and business sector as well as garner public support to enhance the districts' prominence.

### Locational Criteria

The key aspects that drive district development tend to focus on the primary use or feature that spurs associated development. The locational criteria for each district are usually tied to a unique development pattern tailored to the specific market needs of each area.

The District Scenario locational criteria are listed below:

1. Land use pattern has singular purpose
2. Specialized transportation, infrastructure, or educational resources can be a prerequisite of some districts
3. Depending on the size and location of the district, could cater to a variety of access and relationships

### Attributes

District development has several characteristics that could make this a viable option for a city's development pattern. These attributes can enhance and expand a community's social, physical, and economic resources by allowing key aspects to reach their full potential.

Attributes for the District Scenario are noted below:

1. Works with some existing large-scale patterns of development
2. Districts defined by the major land use
3. Promotes unique character of different districts
4. Intensity and density levels are similar within each like district
5. Attractive to market and promote possibilities

### Implications

Allowing district development to reach its full potential requires special treatment from city leaders who are usually bound by certain limitations. A community containing numerous districts has to cope with the various issues that make each district unique. Each district will take on different physical and land use characteristics, which could present a city with administrative and funding challenges.

Implications associated with District Scenario are noted below:

1. Districts can be single purpose - to a fault
2. Transportation and infrastructure pattern is a wide-spread network
3. Visibility and access are not equal for all

## 5.4 Greenway Scenario

The Greenway Scenario takes what is considered less developable floodplain acreage and raises its value through the development of a series of regional and community parkways and trails that run adjacent to the floodplain. This city form scenario suggests that the development patterns are organized along primary creeks, floodplains, or lakes as scenic amenities. The greenway route consists of a series of single-loaded roads having development along one side. Commercial and/



*Prototypical images of District city form development patterns.*

or residential development along these roads would focuses on the scenic value of McKinney’s natural creek systems and would offers opportunities for special development patterns. Property values could be increased due to the relationship of property to park-like views. The greenway provides a distinct form/structure for development in specific areas (standards for adjacent development would include attention to view corridors in order to optimize these scenic resources). Greenways would function to link distant sections of the community through parkways and trails straddling above and alongside floodplain and woodland acreage.

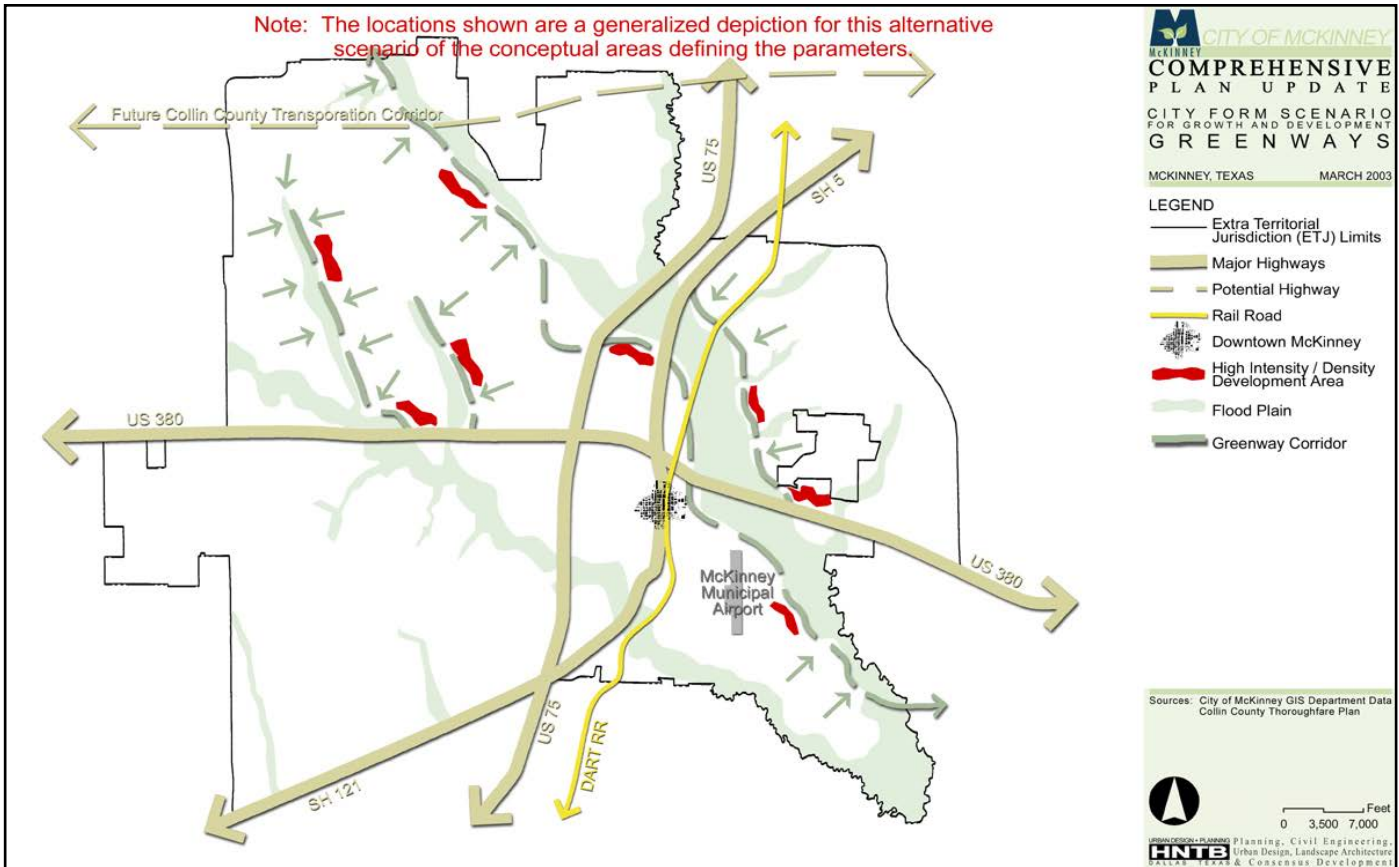


Figure 5.3: Greenway Scenario

The greenway route currently exists in McKinney along Wilson Creek from Rock Hill Road on the west to Wilson Creek Parkway on the east, via Northbrook Drive and Park View Avenue. For travelers on US 75, this greenway passage provides a visual break from the corridor development patterns found along the highway. In addition, the portion of the greenway serves as an unofficial natural gateway entrance to the City for drivers heading north along US 75. Other possible greenway routes in McKinney could include an extension of the existing driveroute along Wilson Creek, both upstream and downstream; along the East Fork of the Trinity River; along Honey Creek; and minor tributaries linked to the three waterways mentioned above.

### Locational Criteria

The locational criteria for Greenway Scenarios tend to be associated more with those quality of life issues emphasizing community aesthetics, sense of place, and pedestrian-oriented movement and less with auto-oriented access, traffic volumes, and a focused activity.

The following locational criteria were used to identify McKinney’s Greenway Scenario patterns:

1. Roadway running alongside floodplains of the area’s rivers, creeks, and tributaries accessing development
2. Development maximizes the views of the open space and parkland
3. Roadway and developable land must be situated outside the floodplain
4. Caters to auto-oriented, pedestrian-oriented, bicycle-oriented access and movement

### Attributes

The appeal of the Greenway Scenario plays to the human desire for proximity and vistas associated with open space and park land. Most communities across America link their attractive quality of life to the acreage, accessibility, and connectivity associated with their green space.

Listed below are attributes related to the Greenway Scenario:

1. Series of interconnected parkways running along the two primary floodplains (Wilson Creek and East Fork/Honey Creek)
2. Allows for expansion through “finger greenway parkways” into adjoining creeks and tributaries
3. Takes advantage of the natural landscape by providing a meandering frontage along the creeks similar to Turtle Creek and West Lawther Drive (around White Rock Lake) in Dallas; George Washington Parkway in Washington, D.C.; and Ward Parkway in Kansas City, MO
4. Promotes residential and commercial developments with scenic views and access to potential parks/open space
5. Links McKinney east and west in a different manner (removes focus from US 75)
6. Improves access between the northwest quadrant, City center, Collin County Regional Airport, US 75, and US 380
7. Creates new community form relating to existing natural features (river, creeks, floodplains, woodlands, and slopes)
8. Builds on existing investment in parks and open spaces
9. Differentiates McKinney’s growth pattern from surrounding communities
10. Higher property values can result from uses adjacent to park-like amenity

### Implications

The Greenway Scenario has many features that would make this a desirable choice for community development. Despite its attractiveness, the Greenway Scenario also carries with it several consequences that prevent this development pattern from being more widely used in communities.

The implications resulting from the Greenway Scenario are noted below:

1. Modification to existing thoroughfare plan is required
2. Collector roads tying into the greenway corridors should also respect interior natural features, including tributaries and slopes
3. Transportation, utilities, and land uses are planned with a greenway focus
4. Establish new design standards for development along the greenway corridors
5. Cost associated with road construction would be absorbed by the City if traditional methods of financing are to be used



*Prototypical images of built Greenways city form development patterns.*

## 5.5 Neighborhood Cores Scenario (Community Village)

The Neighborhood Core Scenario functions as a town square or community village. This pattern of development puts forward that the highest intensity and density is primarily located in the planned areas for neighborhood core development. This development scenario pattern locates commercial, office, and residential uses in a pedestrian scaled setting. Neighborhood cores can include buildings of between one to four stories. The neighborhood cores include residential densities greater than single family.

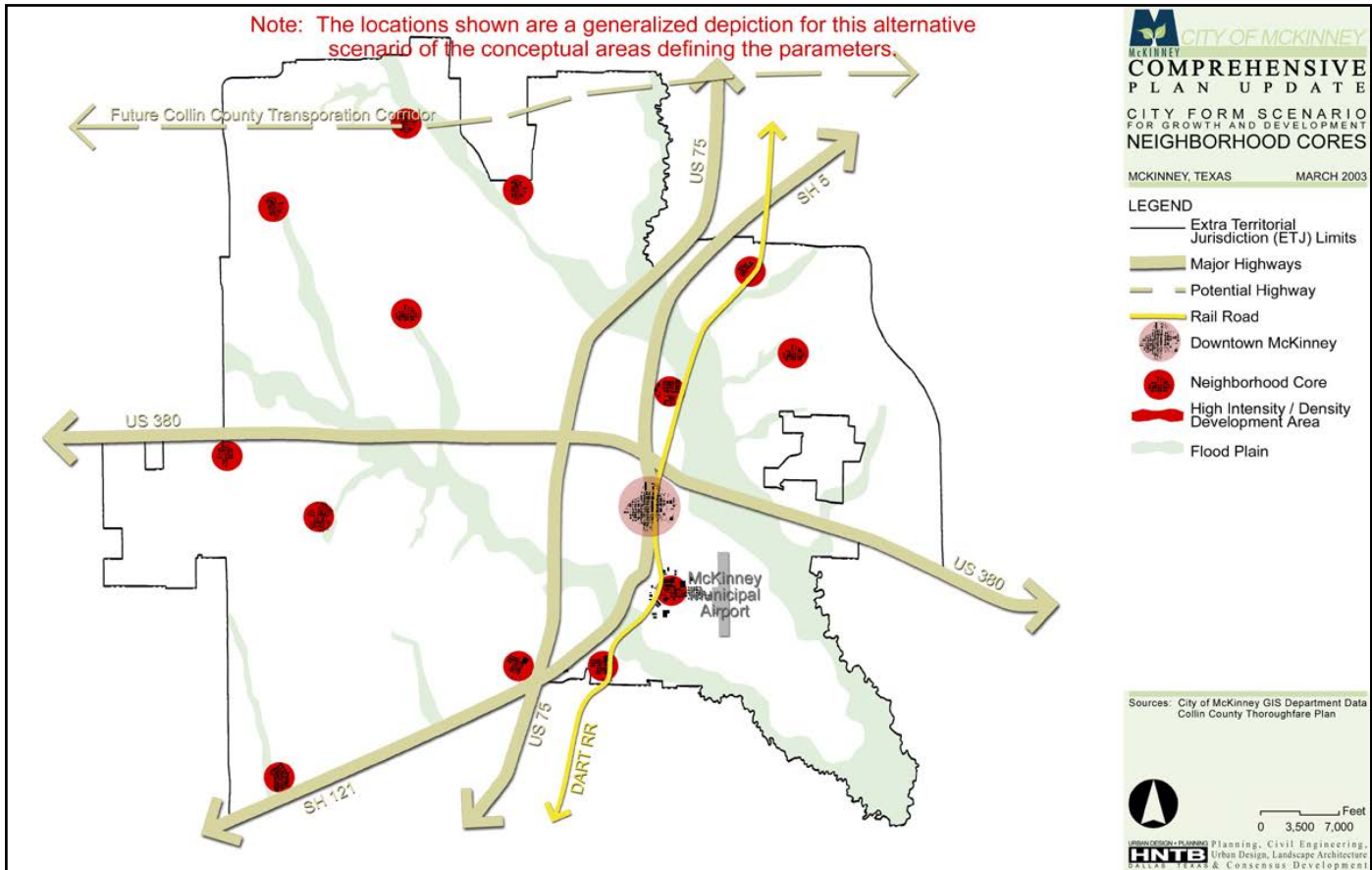


Figure 5.4: Neighborhood Cores Scenario

The primary neighborhood core for this pattern in McKinney is associated with the City's downtown. Downtown McKinney serves the needs of surrounding neighborhoods, yet also attracts users willing to travel further for a specific need. Future neighborhood cores could evolve over time in existing neighborhoods driven by market demands and guided by careful planning. In sections of McKinney that have yet to experience wide-scale development, neighborhood cores would complement new suburban and commercial developments, providing cohesion and continuity.

### Locational Criteria

The key aspects that differentiate the locational criteria for the Neighborhood Cores scenario from other development patterns are its sense of place, connectivity, and scale in relation to its surrounding development. For neighborhood cores to be a draw, this pattern of development needs to be situated near the crossroads of two major thoroughfares. At the same time, the dynamics of this development pattern



requires that it successfully blend pedestrian-oriented activities within a vehicular-dominated landscape.

The following locational criteria are for McKinney's the Neighborhood Cores Scenario:

1. Located near the crossroads of two thoroughfares
2. ~~Neighborhood cores will be~~ centered around a development focus or park
3. Direct adjacency to mix and variety of land uses
4. Pedestrian-scale street environment
5. Caters equally to pedestrian-oriented access and vehicular movement
6. Neighborhood core size dependent on surrounding area being served

### Attributes

Neighborhood cores can help to set the tone and qualities that relate to the surrounding built landscape.

Noted below are attributes associated with McKinney's the Neighborhood Cores Scenario:

1. Creates unique centers tailored to surrounding areas and market needs
2. Neighborhood core development may be adapted to surrounding uses or needs
3. Helps reduce traffic by concentrating development
4. Less emphasis on auto-oriented travel
5. Site for multi-family development
6. Neighborhood core can be a focus for commercial &and employment uses
7. Neighborhood core has extensive pedestrian connections with adjacent uses
8. Neighborhood core could focus on a natural or public amenity

### Implications

Along with the many attributes associated with the Neighborhood Cores Scenario, there are several implications tied to this pattern of development.

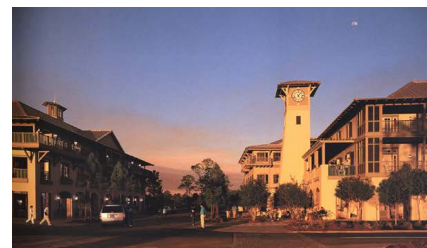
These implications are listed below:

1. Infrastructure and services are concentrated
2. Subject to market demands and pressures
3. Transportation and infrastructure vary from one village to another

## 5.6 McKinney Citizen Input

Community input was strong for the series of public workshops. Questions from McKinney citizens were equally divided among the four (4) alternative city form scenarios. Each of the options had positive feedback from community stakeholders. Each of the options had physical assets that individuals enjoyed and felt would add to the community of McKinney.

In an analysis of citizen's reviews, comments, and concerns, it was a combination of the four alternatives that together brought the best solution to McKinney. Working with the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission, the HNTB team was able to craft a concept that embodied what the citizens desired.



*Prototypical images of built Neighborhood Cores or Villages city form development patterns.*

## 5.7 Preferred Plan

The preferred plan is the option that was chosen. This concept is the document that began the detailed development of the **F**uture **L**and **U**se **P**lan, as described in detail in future sections. The graphic below is the preferred plan. Note the identification of higher intensity development along the northern future multi-modal corridor, US 75 to the north, and US 380.

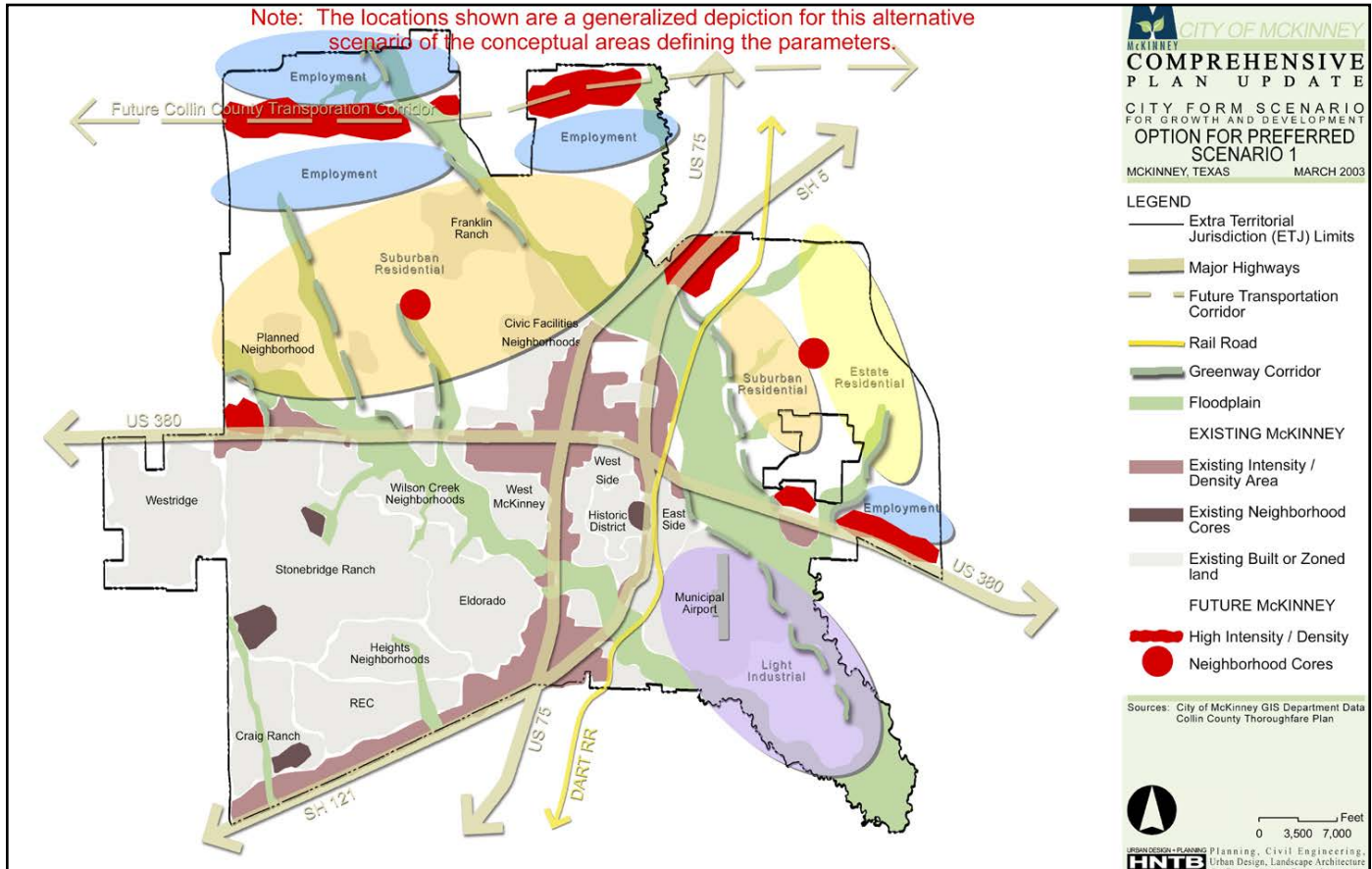


Figure 5.5: Preferred Plan

This preferred plan includes aspects of all **alternative** city form **alternatives** scenarios. The large area of suburban residential north of US 380 and east of US 75 is conceptually a district. The location of neighborhood cores or villages in the preferred plan is using that specific alternative. In this preferred plan several major arterials were defined to be greenway thoroughfares. The greenways thoroughfare concept received good input from the citizens of McKinney during the community workshop meetings, and the preferred plan also uses the corridor development pattern to enhance its opportunity for economic development along existing and proposed freeway corridors.

The preferred plan uses the creeks and streams as a strong environmental feature, providing opportunities for future parks, hike and bike systems, and open space. These floodplains and natural amenities provide much of the character that McKinney is known for throughout the Metroplex.

In summary, the primary attributes from the **a**lternative **c**ity **f**orm **s**cenarios that were desirable and combined together to form the preferred plan are as follows:

- Employment opportunities along the proposed Future Collin County Transportation Corridor expressed as several commercial land uses
- Growth at and around the Collin County Regional Airport providing employment shown as light industrial
- Continued single-family residential development north of US 380
- Include neighborhood cores or villages within the residential areas to provide the major commercial needs of those residents and aggregate the larger commercial structures into a village pattern
- Provide future rail transit opportunities for citizens and employers in McKinney
- Commercial growth along US 75 and US 380 corridors

Much of the preferred plan's development is directly from comments solicited from McKinney stakeholders as a part of the open planning process to develop the McKinney Comprehensive Plan.

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