



The Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050



Letter from the Commissioners Court

Beginning in 2023, the Commissioners Court, in collaboration with a dedicated group of county residents, embarked on developing Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050. This visionary roadmap reflects the priorities and values desired by our community, including maintaining a safe, family-friendly environment by preserving the County's unique character amidst the rapid growth of the North Texas region.

As Rockwall County faces mounting pressures from developers and statewide influences, our commitment to preserving open spaces, historical treasures, and community values has been clearly communicated and become increasingly vital. Through meaningful engagement with citizens, county staff and key stakeholders, we have identified the need to balance progress with the preservation of our distinctive identity. The dedication of our elected officials, government employees, and residents has been instrumental in shaping a strategy that secures a vibrant future without unnecessary government interference.

Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 creates clear, actionable goals to guide responsible growth. It emphasizes enhancing governmental transparency, improving communication channels, and fostering unity through collaboration with local governments and representatives in Austin. By addressing critical priorities such as transportation, infrastructure, development, density, economic opportunities, and public safety, we can protect and enhance the quality of life in Rockwall County for generations to come. By uniting under the shared vision of the Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050, we are laying the foundation for a thriving, sustainable future that honors our community's values and ensures a prosperous, family-friendly environment for all.



Frank New
County Judge



Bobby Gallana
Commissioner
Precinct 1



Dana Macalik
Commissioner
Precinct 2



Lorne Liechty
Commissioner
Precinct 3



John Stacy
Commissioner
Precinct 4

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Introduction

From 2023-2025, a group of resolute County elected officials, employees and citizens created Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 to preserve our quality of life and establish our community's priorities.

The Purpose of this Strategic Plan is to create a roadmap for the future of Rockwall County to continue as a safe, low density, thriving, family friendly community that is an oasis from the urban sprawl of the North Texas region.

This Purpose incorporates our shared values and goals, to achieve our collective future. This Plan will guide future decision making to achieve the desires of Rockwall County residents.

The Commissioners Court developed this Plan based on a robust set of data including the direction of a Citizen Steering Committee, public and employee surveys, exhaustive search of public records, review of existing plans and many public forums designed to capture diverse perspectives and build countywide consensus. Thousands of hours of public in-person and small group collaboration have been dedicated to this effort.

The County partnered with two strategic planning firms, the Baker Tilly Advisory Group and Freese and Nichols, Inc., to produce a plan that will boldly lead us into the future.



The Plan sets out the course using a multi-year roadmap of aspirational yet achievable goals. The Plan ushers in a new era of cooperation between the County, our cities, and regional governments to achieve our community's vision for the future of our County. The Operating Initiatives are the Plan's backbone that will allow us to achieve strategic outcomes, create a sense of urgency and collaboration, while listening to community voices.

The Plan will:

- Promote responsible and sustainable growth and development while safeguarding against unnecessary government interference.
- Enhance governmental transparency while creating better channels for citizens to communicate with their county government.
- Foster a spirit of collaboration and cooperation among local governments and our representatives in Austin and Washington, D.C.
- Preserve our quality of life by creating high-quality transportation networks, improving critical infrastructure and preserving natural resources and open spaces, while enhancing economic opportunities and sustaining a safe, law-abiding community.

We are excited about this Plan and encourage our current and future community and government leaders to see it to fruition.



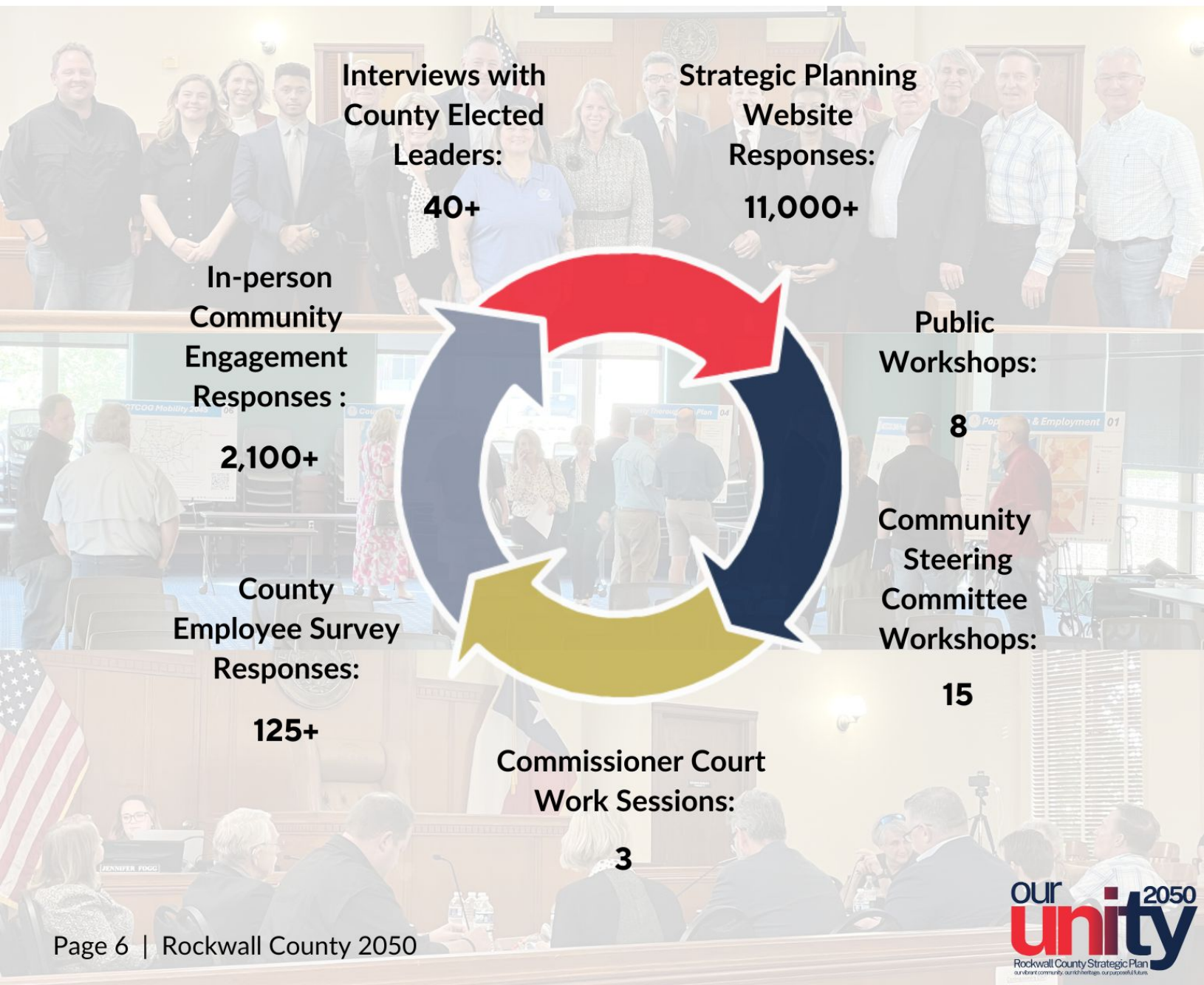
Discovering Rockwall County



Community Engagement

Creating Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 brought together inputs from county residents from all walks of life backed by data gathered from interviews, web-based surveys and community workshops to identify robust facts and figures from multiple sources, public comments, county employees, and elected officials culminating in several Commissioner Court work sessions to create the Plan.

Working together, the Citizens Steering Committee and the Commissioners Court crafted Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050's overarching goals, operating initiatives, and implementation strategies. The Plan is designed to optimize the County's strengths and opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and neutralizing threats to preserve and protect the quality of life for all Rockwall County residents and visitors.



Rockwall County Snapshot

Big enough to matter, small enough to care.

Population:

131,307
(July, 2023)

**Cities
Within the
County:**

10

Average Age:

37.6
Years Old
(2023)

**Rockwall
County Budget:**

\$55.5M
(FY2025)

**Annual
Population
Growth:**

5.1%
(2020-2023)

**County Gross
Domestic Product:**

\$5.173B
(2023)

**Total Land
Area:**

127
Square Miles

Population Density:

1033
People/Per Square Mile
(2023)

**Average
Household:**

3.0
People
(2023)

**Vacant / Undeveloped
Land:**

38%
(FY2025)

**Median Household
Income:**

\$121,303
(2022)

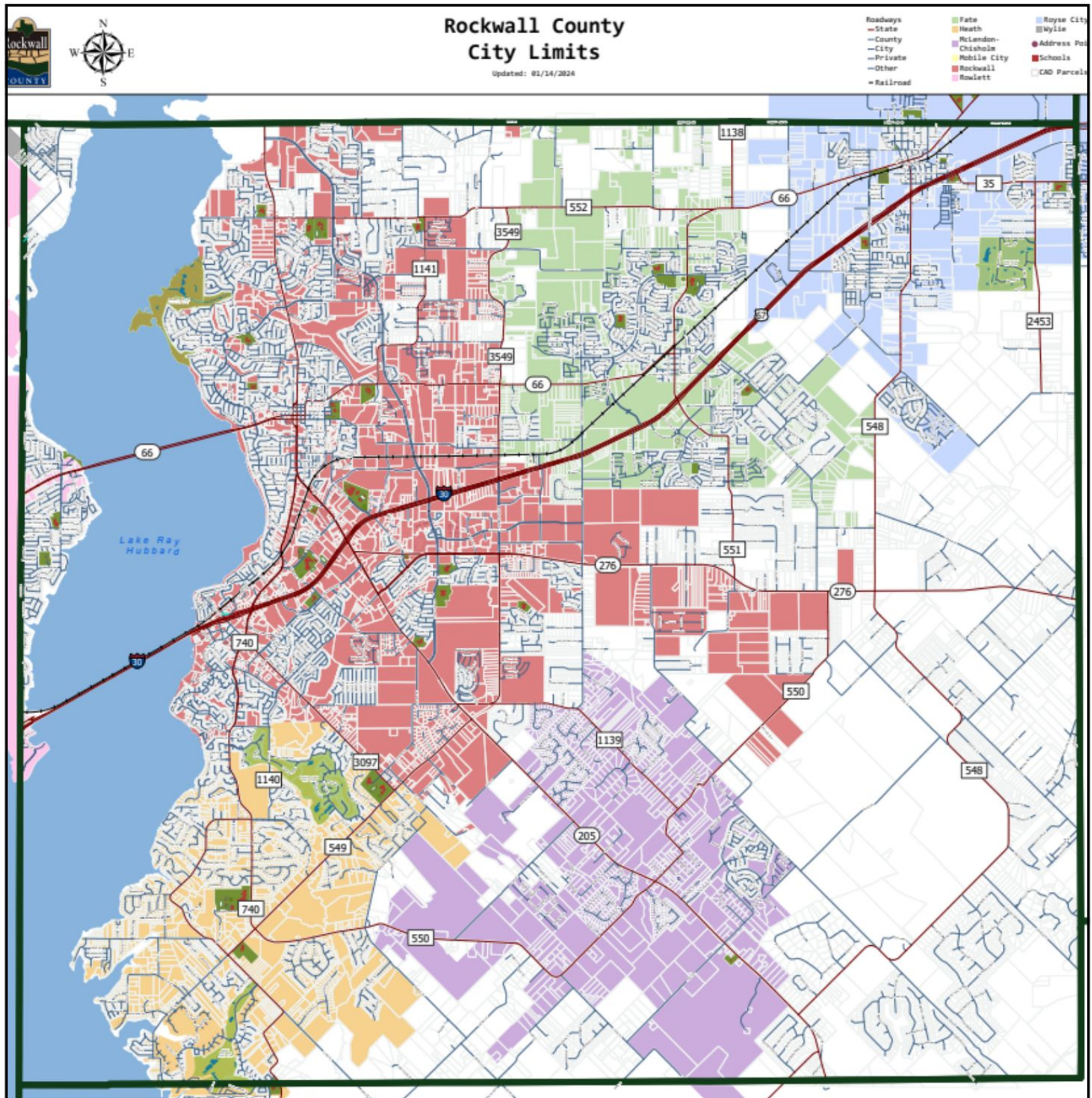
**Median
New Home
Price:**

\$432,327
(2023)

Sources: US Census, North Central Texas Council of Governments, County Government, and Chamber of Commerce

Rockwall County Map

Big enough to matter, small enough to care.



Sources: North Central Texas Council of Governments

Rockwall County Strategic Plan

2050 SWOT Matrix

Based on Rockwall County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threat analysis (SWOT matrix), it is imperative to follow a logical, well-designed plan to achieve our aspirations over the next 25 years. Population growth, water availability, traffic congestion, infrastructure and development pace, are among key concerns facing the Rockwall County community. However, these also pose opportunities that can be addressed through purposeful strategic goals and initiatives.



Matrix above captures current and future considerations:

Strengths are used to mitigate weaknesses and are leveraged for future opportunities.

Opportunities are used for future strategies.

Weaknesses are turned into opportunities or threats.

Threats are enhanced by weaknesses.

Rockwall County Discovery Themes

Throughout the Plan development, multiple insights about the County stood out as key themes which informed the strategic goals and initiatives.

- Participants emphasized maintaining the Rockwall County “quality of life”, while introducing recommended changes for an enhanced future.
- The County has low tax rates and promotes a business-friendly environment.
- The County must leverage its location in the DFW metropollex and its reputation as a community of choice.
- Lake Ray Hubbard and the lake-life lifestyle has transformed the County, creating destination venues, a thriving tourism and recreational sector, and long-standing history that attracts visitors and keeps residents.
- Balancing preservation of culturally significant spaces with the rapidly growing population and the public’s desire for open spaces may mean acquiring land for preservation, public use and management.
- Unfunded mandates pose a significant challenge for the internal operations of the County.
- Development should consider various needs for housing types, locations, and accessibility. Population / density impacts on demand for services will correspondingly increase over the next 25 years.
- Water conservation and shortages are critical concerns for the region, necessitating technological innovation and strategies.



Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 Framework



Plan Framework Elements

Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 was created using facts and data captured during the discovery process to baseline the County and then, backed by extensive public engagement including wide-ranging perspectives, captured public input. Hundreds of discussion hours in workshops and on-line surveys created a robust data set consisting of thousands of data points that captured public sentiment. The Plan framework uses five sub-components to evaluate the Discovery Report and define the future of the County.

- **The vision** sets the focus for the future. It is a statement of where the County wants to be.
- **The mission** is a statement of the Purpose of the County. It fundamentally describes what Rockwall County stands for and what it will do.
- **Core values** guide the behaviors of staff in support of the County and are the expectations of how constituents will be treated.
- **Strategic goals** are closely aligned with the vision, mission, and core values and state the desired outcomes to be achieved. These goals provide a strategic focus for what the County will do.
- **Operating initiatives** are specific tasks, projects or action items (new or existing) that are designed to help the County fully achieve each strategic goal.

Our Vision

Creating a place where families flourish by providing a high quality of life that is welcoming, resilient and safe, by incorporating livable and innovative growth, conservation of our open spaces, and effective use of our natural resources and history.

Our Mission

We will work daily to create a uniquely vibrant community that promotes public health and safety, ensures transparency and accountability in governmental actions, supported by an exceptional educational system, thriving business network, and quality County services. We aim to keep our way of life by refusing to lose our unique local character to uncontrolled growth by embracing positive transformation through collaboration and innovation.

Our Core values

Texas Proud -- Promoting a sense of community to preserve our Texas and Rockwall traditions and history while keeping a small-town atmosphere.

Quality of Life -- Nurturing a safe family-friendly environment where everyone has the liberty and opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Collaboration and Transparency -- Working openly and ethically to make decisions that serve the interests of the residents and visitors.

Diversity -- Celebrating diverse cultures and generosity by understanding and embracing differing perspectives and experiences.

Stewardship -- Practicing responsible use of our cultural, financial, and environmental resources now and for future generations.

Innovative Leadership -- Showing an opportunistic mindset, being open to innovative ideas and courageously trailblazing for the betterment of our citizens.

Strategic Goals

Striving towards these goals will ensure the success of Rockwall County in 2050.

GOAL #1

Promote Trust and Transparency in Governmental Operations

GOAL #2

Position the County Government for Growth

GOAL #3

Strengthen Local, Regional, State, and Federal Collaboration

GOAL #4

Invest in County-wide Infrastructure

GOAL #5

Foster Economic Growth While Preserving and Protecting Local Culture and Traditions

GOAL #6

Expand Support for the Judicial System, Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency, and Public Health Services

Strategic Goals and Operating Initiatives



Strategic Goal #1: Promote Trust and Transparency in Governmental Operations

Trust and transparency are the foundation of effective Rockwall County operations, ensuring accountability and fostering community confidence. Clear communication and ethical decision-making promote more equitable and efficient services, toward which we strive.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Create a County Public Communications Plan to enhance citizen participation and awareness.
2. Adopt a public-facing dashboard that ties the strategic plan to actions and budget.
3. Review and refine the roles and responsibilities of key positions.
4. Create a County Commissioners Court Advisory Council.
5. Create an internal County “Futures Group” focused on trends in innovation, cyber-security and technology for adoption.
6. Find ways to better integrate and expand the roles of existing public committees, and review and engage with outside entities that can provide support for unfulfilled needs.



Strategic Goal #2: Position the County Government for Growth

Preparing for growth is essential to ensure sustainable infrastructure and high quality of life for our residents. Proactive planning will help us manage resources, attract economic development, and anticipate future needs, fostering balanced growth and our community well-being.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Create and implement integrated priority-based planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process.
2. Update and revise the County Facilities Masterplan to evaluate existing facilities, establish future requirements and create a time-phased plan and budget.
3. Conduct a review and plan to forecast capability needs required to accomplish the County's roles and missions under demanding growth scenarios.
4. Conduct a study, and review periodically, to identify best practices for the County's organizational structure, position classifications and total compensation.
5. Review established internal County government working groups to ensure alignment of actions and resources to the strategic plan vision and goals.



Strategic Goal #3: Strengthen Local, Regional, State, and Federal Collaboration

Strengthening collaboration and partnerships is vital for us to address complex challenges. Effective partnerships will allow necessary expertise, funding, and innovative solutions to meet our County's needs.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Establish Rockwall County legislative priorities integrating appropriate agencies at the local, state and federal level; create legislative strategies to increase the County's and cities' authority over approvals and oversight of Municipal Utility Districts and other Special Purpose Districts.
2. Host "Rockwall 2050 Growth Summits" with county, cities, developers, independent school districts, North Texas Municipal Water District, and other key stakeholders including chambers of commerce and economic development corporations.
3. Create an alliance among the County, cities, school districts and local, state, and federal agencies.
4. Conduct a study to identify compatible land use and growth management guidelines, standards, and cost responsibility burden apportionment within state law.
5. Leverage strong working relationships with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), North Texas Commission (NTC), Texas Association of Counties (TAC), the Texas Conference of Urban Counties, and others.
6. Increase public awareness of water supply needs and conservation programs and tools.



Strategic Goal #4: Invest in County-wide Infrastructure

Well-maintained roads, utilities, storm runoff and drainage, and broadband access promote healthy communities and attract business, creating jobs while ensuring reliable services for our community. Proactive infrastructure investments will help the County stay competitive and prepared for future demands.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Refine roles, structure and missions of a Rockwall Infrastructure Consortium to create a county-wide body to integrate city, county, state, and federal transportation, school development, water conservation, and infrastructure efforts.
2. Using the Open Space Alliance, create a county-wide trail plan that incorporates city efforts with utility providers to leverage existing and future easements and corridors.
3. Develop enhanced storm runoff and flood control strategies, including the maintenance of existing conservation lakes.
4. In collaboration with agencies and the County's cities, identify modern practices and technologies to monitor, predict, and manage traffic and transportation patterns.
5. Identify investment mechanisms and funding sources to support County-wide infrastructure development, maintenance and repair costs.

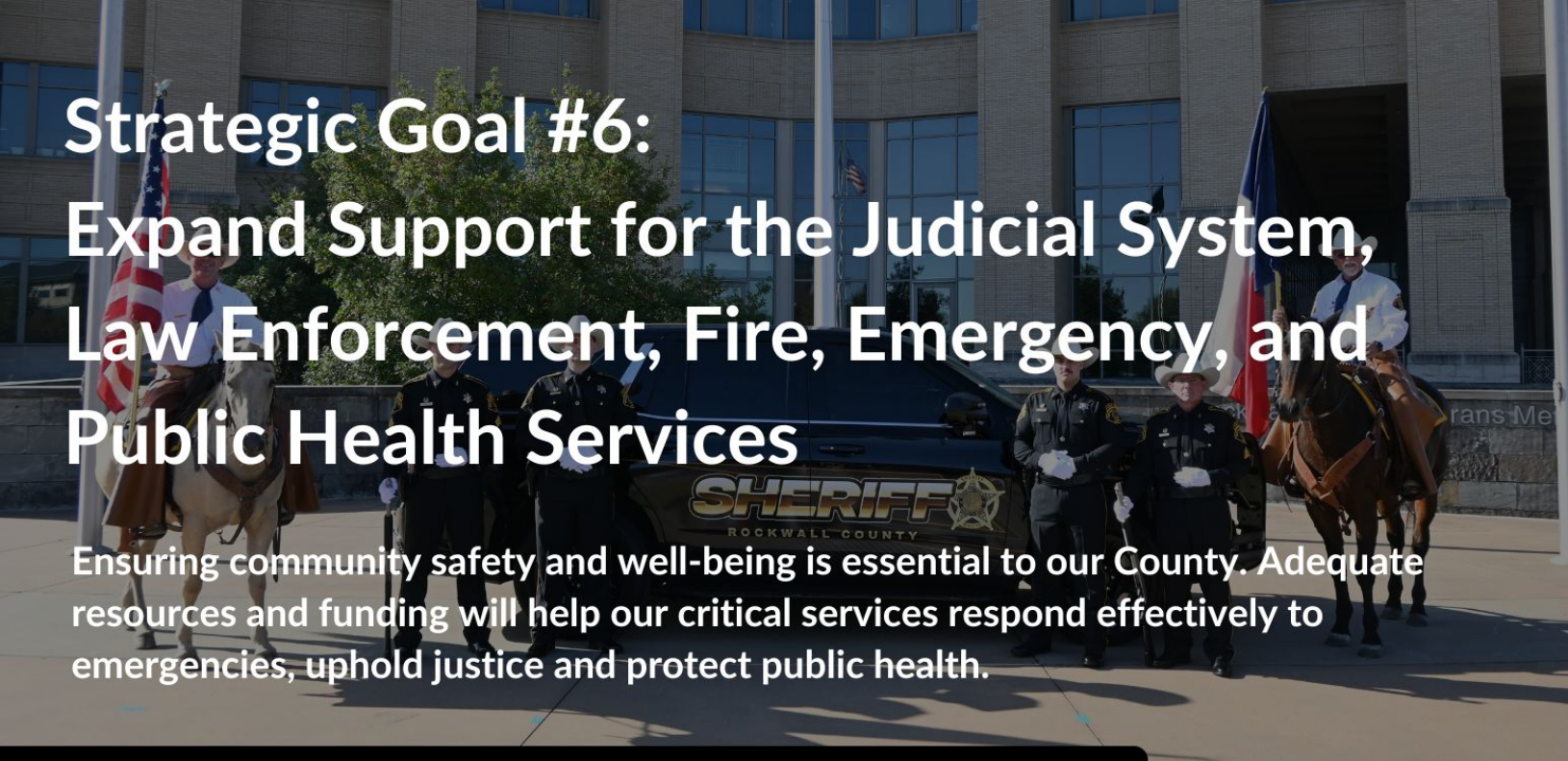


Strategic Goal #5: Foster Economic Growth While Preserving and Protecting Local Culture and Traditions

Fostering economic growth while preserving our local culture and traditions ensures sustainable development that strengthens the economy and bolsters Rockwall County's identity. By supporting local businesses, heritage sites, and cultural events, we can attract investment and maintain our unique character.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Conduct a tourism study to identify ways to use the County's historical assets, cultural programs and recreation industries as key economic drivers.
2. Establish a County Real Property Development team and a County Economic Development Consortium to design and guide residential and commercial development, aligning with city and state ordinances and regulations. Establish County oversight and management of unincorporated area land uses, including the creation of a desired Future Land Use Map (FLUM) to guide development.
3. Conduct an impact study including a cost benefit analysis for the creation of a county multi-event/multi-purpose center and/or a state/regional park.
4. Evaluate opportunities for County and/or public-private partnerships to maintain open spaces and increase resident awareness and involvement in conservation efforts including connecting trail systems together across cities.



Strategic Goal #6: Expand Support for the Judicial System, Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency, and Public Health Services

Ensuring community safety and well-being is essential to our County. Adequate resources and funding will help our critical services respond effectively to emergencies, uphold justice and protect public health.

Operating Initiatives:

1. Conduct a detailed study of the Rockwall County Justice System with the appropriate departments and agencies to determine needs, timelines and costs to meet population growth and increased case filings.
2. Create a plan to address the increase in mental health needs, including enhanced collaboration with veteran groups, first responders, the non-profit community, and partnerships with local, state and federal agencies.
3. Regularly assess the state of the Rockwall County law enforcement and judicial system to achieve better cross-agency operational capabilities and efficiencies, meet training and equipment needs, and develop competitive recruitment and retention strategies.
4. Review the Emergency Services Corporation charter to expand its responsibilities, facilities, roles and missions to enhance public safety training.
5. Leverage the County Disaster Response Plan to improve readiness and increase community awareness and support.
6. Improve County health and welfare outcomes by enhancing relationships with community non-profits through joint planning efforts and increasing access to resources, services, and information.



The Future of Rockwall County

Achieving Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 Vision and Goals

Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 serves as a guide for how we must act to shape, influence, and purposefully design a community that provides civic richness for all residents and visitors over the next 25 years. Implementation will require collaboration, collective action, and governmental accountability, from County leadership and local, regional, and state stakeholders, to turn strategic goals into tangible outcomes. Plan goals will be tracked quarterly through the County's internal dashboard linked to budgets and displayed through public-facing access pages. An annual review of goals and initiatives progress, and multi-year updates, will help maintain overall plan focus and relevance.

Rockwall County elected officials are determined to position Rockwall County as a state and regional leader in a forward-thinking government that is committed to preserving our family-friendly culture by adapting to growth while preserving our core values and long-term vision. To ensure this plan and strategy stays relevant and effective, the County will measure progress toward goals quarterly and revisit the plan at least every three-to-five years.

Throughout the planning process, keeping and strengthening local decision-making that guides residential and commercial development was identified by all participants as a key imperative. A key factor for the plan's success will be achieving alignment of our county legislative priorities and dedicated support from our state representatives and local governments. This unified approach will allow Rockwall County to advocate policy changes needed to strengthen local decision making, achieve critical funding and execute infrastructure projects that support shared goals.

As Rockwall County moves forward into the future, bold innovative and collective leadership between public and private organizations is needed to maintain a high quality of life for all our citizens.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the County Commissioners, and Strategic Planning Leadership Committee, we would like to acknowledge everyone involved from across Rockwall County and the region, including elected officials, County employees and members of our community, with wide-ranging expertise, who participated in the public surveys, data gathering and meetings and made the creation of the Plan possible.

We specifically acknowledge the following members of the Community Steering Committee who dedicated many hours in working meetings to ensure the Plan represents the views of our citizens and steers the focus of the County for years to come.



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Bobby Gallana
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Jenny Krueger
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Dana Macalik
Blake Margolis
Christina McClure
Jeremiah McClure
Patrick McDonald
Bryan McNeal
Scott Muckensturm
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Darby Nielsen
Larry Parks

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Maddie Purk
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Debra Shinder
Trey Slinkard
Mary Smith
Shelly Spearman
Susie Stansel
Sheri Starkey-Parks
Christa Stewart
Dalton Tasset
Cindy Tayem
Kevin Walker
Matt Wavering
Ryan Wells
Brent Weaver
Kami Webb
Kerry Wiemokly
Brian Williams
Asa Woodberry
Denise Zackery

A group of people are sitting on the grass by a lake at sunset. In the foreground, a man in a plaid shirt and a black cap sits on a grey blanket, looking towards the lake. Next to him, a woman in a red floral top sits on the grass, also looking towards the lake. In the background, several other people are sitting on chairs or blankets, watching a fountain that is spraying water into the air. The lake is calm, and the sky is a mix of orange and blue. A dark blue rounded rectangle is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing the word "References" in white text.

References

References

- Implementation Management Planning for The Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 - Baker Tilly Advisory Group - February 28th, 2025.
- Discover Phase Summary Report - Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 - Baker Tilly Advisory Group - October 8th, 2024.
- Rockwall County Strategic Plan 2050 - Public engagement Results Packet - Freese and Nichols, Inc. - August 1st, 2024.
- Miscellaneous strategic planning presentations, documentation, and preparatory materials (phases 1 - 4) - Baker Tilly Advisory Group - February 1st, 2024 - March 1st 2025.

Big enough to matter, small enough to care.

our unity²⁰⁵⁰

Rockwall County Strategic Plan

our vibrant community. our rich heritage. our purposeful future.

