



Economy & Workforce

A vibrant, diverse, & relevant economy

GOAL:

Cultivate and maintain a local economic model and composition that provides a wide range of employment opportunities, encourages financially sound business creation and expansion, and allows for creative reutilization of existing buildings and spaces.

Policy Statements:

- 1 Entrepreneurship and Local Businesses:** *Royse City will grow jobs and small businesses locally by identifying, connecting, developing and supporting local entrepreneurs.*

- 2 Attractive and Unique I-30 Corridor:** *Royse City will create a visually appealing and Royse City-branded I-30 corridor with a combination of regional retail, office, commercial and residential in a flexible, mixed-use development framework.*

- 3 Attracting Business and Talent through Placemaking:** *Royse City will invest strategically in quality placemaking efforts to meet the growing demand for more “live-work-play” environments where companies want to locate, people want to do business and the workforce wants to live.*

- 4 Competitive Workforce:** *Royse City will encourage partnerships between the City, school district and local businesses to provide job skills demanded by the regional market place and create employment opportunities.*

Introduction

Royse City's economic activity is entering a new phase. Employment, retail and entertainment options have been limited some local businesses in the downtown area and a few along the Interstate, but in the past year, we've seen the opening of a number of new franchise and "name brand" businesses and several more are working through the development review process. Our continued population growth and ample amount of developable land combined with our historic downtown and improvements to I-30, Erby Campbell, and FM 2642 will make Royse City a prime target for new businesses in the years ahead. This new development will provide additional sales and property tax revenues to take pressure off residential taxpayers, but it will also impact city services, traffic, parking, and the look and feel of our town.

The most successful and sustainable economic development strategies are more about choosing what not to do (i.e., prioritizing quality) than getting a little bit of everything (i.e., prioritizing quantity). It is important for us to consider the impacts different types of businesses and site layouts will have, and develop a recruitment and retention strategy that aligns our short-term opportunities with our values, priorities, and resources. Because we recognize that placemaking is essential to anchoring talent—people are drawn to work in places they want to live—we need to place special emphasis on creating quality public spaces and walkable neighborhoods. Finally, we will strive to create balance between recruiting new businesses to town, building a strong and self-sustaining local business base, and growing an entrepreneurial culture.

What We've Heard from Residents

"Residents leave town for work. Royse City has housing, but not so many jobs. We're a bedroom community."

"Keep the big chain stores out of Royse City. They move in and out of small towns as they please when store revenues are not as expected, then leave massive eye-sore buildings empty."

"Keep Main Street authentic but help (monetarily by percentage of what owners will spend) to those businesses that need to replace antiquated plumbing, drains, roofs, etc."

"Bring in better stores and restaurants. Be a destination for other towns."

"Our city is prepared for growth but not at the expense of losing what makes Royse City great—Main Street."

"I want to be able to find employment where I can afford to leave off working in Dallas."

"We need things for our youth to do, locally... Not having to bring them (and our \$) to Greenville or Rockwall."

"If baseball team and complex are coming, can we add more entertainment (movie theaters, restaurants) please?"

"I would like to see some type of teen activity going into one of the new business. There is not a lot of opportunity for them to have a safe teen zone. Like a theatre or a skate park or some other teen centric zone."

"Local farm to table restaurants would be a good fit here."

"I like spending my money in local businesses where I know the owners and where my money is going."

Balancing Growth and Resiliency

Jumping on the growth train is exciting. Everybody likes to see new businesses and options come to their community. However, not all economic development is equal. A high-growth strategy prioritizes growth without considering other factors like long-term costs, business loyalty and community interests. This approach shows very strong results in the short-term, but eventually infrastructure and service costs mount, recessions happen, and some businesses decide to close their doors and move on to other communities. An alternative approach is to develop an economic development plan that strategically recruits, locates and grows the businesses that align best with the communities' interests and limit a city's investment and risk. This antifragile approach (see margin) is one that is not just resilient in times of change or economic stress, but one that can take advantage of downturns to capture strategic opportunities. First and foremost, it is made up of a diverse mix of businesses that vary in size and industry sectors. Investments are focused on creating places that attract talent and people and buildings that accommodate flexible uses. This ensures that buildings and spaces can be reused easily and can adapt to serve different uses as the market evolves. The money invested stays in the community and compounds benefits over time, as opposed to monetary incentives that get funneled to company executives in other cities and do not provide any long-term benefit.

LOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Smaller businesses are best suited for our downtown and in local neighborhoods, while larger employers will want to be located along major road corridors. We are located between Dallas and Greenville on I-30, and could have another major corridor running along our western city limits if the Outer Loop materializes. The well-traveled I-30 corridor provides opportunities for Royse City to capture highway oriented retail and commercial, and if the Outer Loop gets built, the northeast corner of the Loop and I-30 will present opportunities for a regional employment center. However, it is important to the long-term resiliency of our town that development in these corridors be done in a form that utilizes the land and infrastructure efficiently (i.e. more compact layout, vertical development, and shared parking areas) and provides flexibility for the sites to evolve over time. Signage and development standards for these corridors need to be created so we can create a unique look and feel through Royse City and make our community stand out. We must also recognize that this land will only increase in value as we grow, so we should balance what we allow to develop today with holding some key sites for future development.

CULTIVATING A SELF-SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMY

The strongest and most resilient local economies are ones that are built around growing local entrepreneurs and small businesses, sometimes referred to as "economic gardening". While it will always be important to invest some resources in recruiting employers and businesses to our community, these efforts are expensive, time consuming and extremely competitive. In comparison, it is much easier and cheaper to invest in programs that identify, recruit, connect and support entrepreneurs and local businesses. An added bonus of local businesses is that the money spent at these establishments tends to stay local and multiply as the owners reinvest in growing their business or spend money themselves in the community, compared to franchise chains where most of the money leaves the community to go the franchise headquarters. Local niche restaurants and businesses can also add to the community's unique identity and brand. We want to research cities that are implementing this approach and implement similar programs.

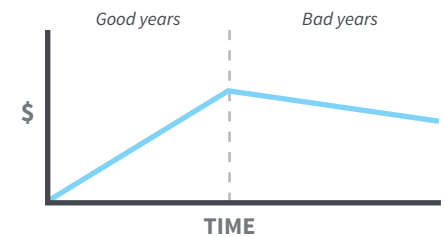
ECONOMIC MODELS

High-Growth Economy



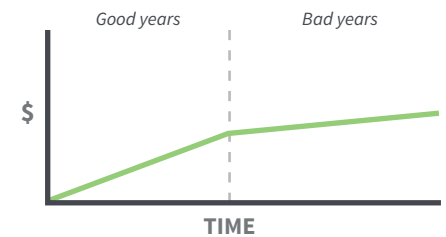
A high-growth strategy shows very strong results in the short-term, but eventually infrastructure and service costs mount, recessions happen, and some businesses decide to close their doors and move on to other communities.

Resilient Economy



A resilient community can weather economic downturns, but ultimately they rely on growth periods to create this capacity.

Antifragile Economy



The antifragile community can take advantage of downturns to capture strategic opportunities. It is based on an economic development plan that strategically recruits, locates and grows the businesses that align best with the communities' interests and limit a city's investment and risk.



PLACEMAKING AS A TALENT ANCHOR

The strongest and most resilient local economies are ones that are built around growing local entrepreneurs and small businesses, sometimes referred to as “economic gardening”. While it will always be important to invest some resources in recruiting employers and businesses to our community, these efforts are expensive, time consuming and extremely competitive. In comparison, it is much easier and cheaper to invest in programs that identify, recruit, connect and support entrepreneurs and local businesses. An added bonus of local businesses is that the money spent at these establishments tends to stay local and multiply as the owners reinvest in growing their business or spend money themselves in the community, compared to franchise chains where most of the money leaves the community to go the franchise headquarters. Local niche restaurants and businesses can also add to the community’s unique identity and brand. We want to research cities that are implementing this approach and implement similar programs.

FIVE FACTORS DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SMALL CITIES

A recent study completed by the Kellogg Foundation and Michigan State University concluded there are five key elements that differentiate small communities experiencing economic success from those who are struggling:

1. Development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Create an environment where people want to do business and then identify and support entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs, small developers and other local champions should find ways to prop up local innovators, share resources between each other and mentor others. The city should not lead from the top, but instead focus on creating and promoting a structure and culture that supports entrepreneurs’ investment and risk-taking. This can include providing free space in municipal facilities, constructing incubator or co-working spaces, holding pop-up markets in public spaces or vacant storefronts, and helping to connect them to others in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

2. Human investments driving new economy growth

Successful communities recognize their vitality is dependent on strong local champions, new innovations, enhanced educational opportunities and a healthy and relevant local workforce. It will be important to partner with the education and business leaders to share ideas and develop a competitive local workforce with skill sets that align with the needs of local and regional businesses and create employment opportunities for local graduates.

3. Strong social capital

Cultivate a strong social fabric with relationships that are go deep and are durable over the long-term. Research has found that successful communities identify and engage

residents to help craft and implement a long-term vision. When residents are informed and engaged and know that their voice matters, they will feel more comfortable investing their own time and resources into their neighborhoods and local businesses.

4. Strong quality of place

Unique, high quality places where people want to be are becoming magnets for recruiting talent and businesses. The most competitive communities create vibrant walkable downtowns and neighborhoods that stand out from the numerous auto-oriented communities in today’s environment. The next generation of talent is the first to select where they want to live first and then find employment. Communities that embrace their assets are viewed as authentic places that tend to become regional destinations.

5. Dedication to progress

The research found that successful, thriving and “cool” cities were proactive and determined to push their community forward. Many of the most successful communities were built by identifying a few, focused goals and then using small, low-risk projects to test concepts and incrementally build momentum. As success and resources grow, they can be reinvested in larger revitalization efforts.

(adapted from a piece by Amanda Maher, <http://icic.org/5-strategies>)

Policies and Priority Action Items

The following policy statements will be used to guide decisions related to the local economy and workforce development. The priority action items are what the city should focus on in the next few years in order to get the big things right.

1

Entrepreneurship and Local Businesses

Royse City will grow jobs and small businesses locally by identifying, connecting, developing and supporting local entrepreneurs.

Priority Action Items

- 1 Review and update ordinances and introduce aggressive incentive policies related to improving buildings in downtown.
 - 2 Develop a local economic gardening program to identify, connect and support local businesses through incentives, resource/service exchange programs, and public recognition efforts.
 - 3 Promote events and pop-up/tactical strategies to test different kinds of innovative businesses in different parts of the city, to give residents the chance to test their ideas and the city the opportunity to find catalyst locations for the economic revitalization of the city.
 - 4 Organize an "Entrepreneur and Small Developer Boot Camp" to identify, connect and train existing and potential business owners and small developers.
 - 5 Create a website and social media channels for Town Center and use them to publish promotional videos highlighting local businesses and events.
 - 6 Create an entrepreneurial network to strengthen businesses and give them more chances to succeed.
- Encourage peer and mentor networks so new entrepreneurs can learn and get guidance from experienced ones.
- Develop a space to act as an incubator for new local businesses and co-working space for freelancers.



Downtown McKinney's pedestrian-friendly setting is a year-round regional tourism magnet.



Main Street, Royse City

2

Attractive and Unique I-30 Corridor

Royse City will create a visually appealing and Royse City-branded I-30 corridor with a combination of regional retail, office, commercial and residential in a flexible, mixed-use development framework.

Priority Action Items

- 1 Identify key sites along the I-30 corridor (those identified as Urban Village Place Types on the Future Land Use Plan) and partner with land owners and interested developers to conduct small area planning studies to further define the type and scale of development best suited to these sites now and in the future.
- 2 Develop a branding, wayfinding and signage strategy for the I-30 corridor



Downtown events like the annual Main Street Car Show are a popular draw for residents of both Royse City and the broader region.



Duncan Switch Street Market in Duncanville, TX

3

Attracting Business & Talent through Placemaking

Royse City will invest strategically in quality placemaking efforts to meet the growing demand for more “live-work-play” environments where companies want to locate, people want to do business and the workforce wants to live.

Priority Action Items

- 1 Invest in infrastructure, building improvements and event programming in Town Center that will strengthen and improve the live/work/play environment in and around downtown so that downtown can be effectively marketed to entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- 2 Partner with the CDC, Chamber and downtown organizations to develop and implement a placemaking strategy for downtown that focuses on attracting small businesses in a traditional mixed-use environment, such as Bishop Arts District or Grapevine Main Street.
- 3 Partner with land owners and developers to develop small area plans and form-based codes for Urban Village Place Types that focus on larger corporate facilities, business incubators and co-working spaces, and regional retail, office and commercial.

4

Competitive Workforce

Royse City will encourage partnerships between the City, school district and local businesses to provide job skills demanded by the regional market place and create employment opportunities.

Priority Action Items

- 1 Partner with Royse City ISD, home school groups, local businesses, places of worship, and other community groups to provide quality education facilities and programs for people of all ages, education levels and income levels.
- 2 Partner with school district, Chamber, and local businesses to develop an internship program where local students and unemployed residents can gain new job skills and experience while working on projects that support the local community.
- 3 Identify a location and organize a "maker-space" district where materials and equipment can be shared between businesses and the school district to connect, train, and develop skill sets related to construction, manufacturing and the arts.

