

REGULAR AGENDA**AGENDA ITEM 14****Hear presentation on Regional Visionary Project.**

Neil Kocurek, President and CEO, St. David's Healthcare System, and Beverly Silas, Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Vision project, gave a presentation. The project, which encompasses growth planning for the Central Texas area, includes land use, transportation, and housing models. The Region area consists of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson Counties.

There are 70 board members on the project, and a stakeholders group consisting of over 100 people from the five-county area. The project has been set up as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Mr. Kocurek stated that the stakeholders group selected Fregonese, Calthorpe & Associates of Portland, Oregon, as the contractor for the project.

Commissioner Limmer asked how many members of the board are from Williamson County. Beverly Silas stated that there are 12 board members from Williamson County.

Judge Doerfler inquired about the goal of the project. Mr. Kocurek stated that the goal is to plan growth in advance to decide what the citizens want the community to look like, and to avoid mistakes made by other communities. He stated that it is a guideline that is not binding on anyone.

Judge Doerfler asked why the region would want to spend 1.4 million dollars on a non-binding project. Mr. Kocurek stated that it would allow the general population to decide what they want in their communities. He stated that expenditures for toll-roads and infrastructure cost billions of dollars, and that he believes that 1.4 million dollars for planning over a 40-year period are dollars well spent.

Commissioner Heiligenstein expressed concern that some good people from this region could be lost to other efforts and endeavors that would shut down communication for awhile, which can translate into real dollars. He believes that this effort would survive that kind of loss. He stated that he sees it as a structured approach to regional planning and cooperation.

Beverly Silas stated that what convinced her to join the project was that the people get to decide how they want transportation, housing and open space in their communities to look.

Commissioner Limmer stated that he is concerned about private property rights issues. He feels that the project might encroach on the rights of property owners to determine land use on their property. Mr. Kocurek stated that this project does not affect private property or tie anyone to anything.

Judge Doerfler stated that he had heard that the project was a "covert" operation to promote light rail. He also asked Mr. Kocurek what the project wants from Williamson County. Mr. Kocurek stated that one reason that the project is a non-profit effort is to preserve objectivity. He stated that they would like for Williamson County to support the program in the amount of approximately \$50,000.

Commissioner Heiligenstein stated that this kind of project could help with planning for light rail by allowing for population density in areas that would be served by it, rather than having people moving farther out into rural areas because they cannot afford property in the core areas. He believes that the shift in population away from the core areas puts a strain on the infrastructure.

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CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISION

PROCESS SUMMARY

This document represents an ongoing process for developing a scope of work for the development of a future vision and growth management strategy for The Central Texas Region. It is a process driven by a group of community leaders working toward a regional framework that addresses growth pressures in the Region. Through intensive stakeholder interviews, focus groups and meetings with local officials, planners, and technicians this process is currently in development.

We have heard resoundingly from participants thus far that the Region is in need of a regional vision, from which local plans can be coordinated, and local officials empowered. This vision will incorporate the public and decision makers in the process of creating a strategy for regional development and will establish a position from which The Central Texas Region and its member governments can work toward comprehensive approaches to growth and change.

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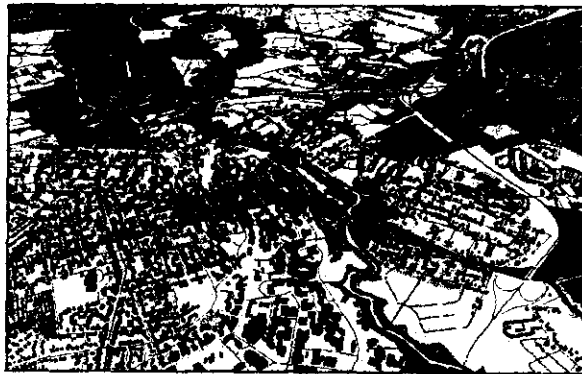


PROJECT SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION

A regional visioning process for the Central Texas Region will involve decision makers, regional stakeholders, and the general public in the conception and evaluation of a range of alternatives to regional development and growth management. The process will explore the trade-offs between different development patterns and types of development and will compare possible futures with the state of current regional growth. The vision and the process of arriving at a common set of regional goals and management strategies for the Central Texas Region will also serve to develop a sense of regional identity among citizens and member governments of the Central Texas Region.

REGIONAL VISIONS

In the last decades, the practice of growth planning has seen fractionalized localities focus almost exclusively on local planning and issues. Policies and practice rarely venture outside jurisdictional boundaries, as cities and towns compete for tax dollars and infrastructure investment at the expense of regional coordination and long-term planning. Consequently, growth management has been closely tied to local land use tools such as the zoning and comprehensive plans.



This local emphasis is counter to the fact that in an increasingly regional and global society cities and communities no longer function as entities unto themselves. They function as regions - interdependent both socially and economically. Most people conduct their lives as regional citizens, living, working, and playing in multiple communities with little regard to jurisdictional boundaries.

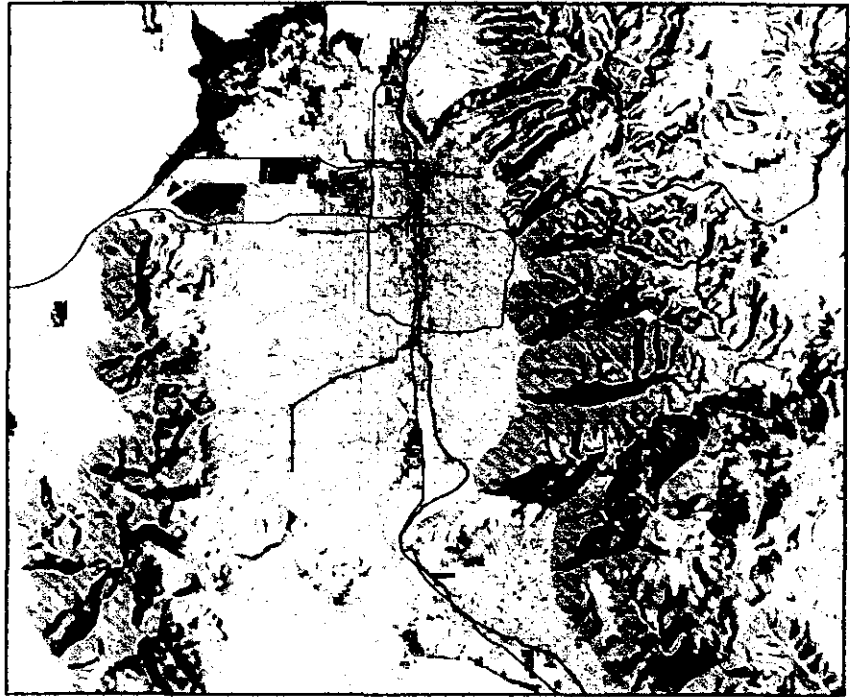
RECORDERS MEMORANDUM

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The form of metropolitan areas in the United States and the world goes far beyond local government boundaries and local planning needs to take place within a region wide context.

There are a number of common elements among successful regional vision plans. The first is a clearly communicated and compelling vision that reflects the local values of the community. The second is a pragmatic, realistic approach that builds this vision with marketable developments. The third is the development of civic symbols, such as plazas, parks, or a community structure, whose success comes to represent the success of the entire region. A final element is a well-defined implementation strategy, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined among a broad cross section of the community. This proposal lays out a path to develop such a vision for the Central Texas Region.

Developing a quality, reality-based plan is a mixture of art, economics, and science. The science in this project is built around the latest techniques and models in land use and transportation planning. Using Geographic Information Systems, and the available geographic data for the Central Texas Region, the consultant team will perform in-depth analysis to determine potential opportunities and constraints that will be a part the



visioning process. Transportation and economic analyses will be conducted utilizing the best available data and models.

Market trends, land use patterns, and physical constraints will be examined to assess the development potential of The Central Texas Region, including an analysis of in-demand housing types that may be limited by current policies. With existing conditions and trends documented, the team will work with the Central Texas Region's residents to begin testing possible future scenarios. The project will use several methods of public outreach, ranging from general circulation newsletters and an Internet website to 'hands on' map-exercise workshops. Following the combination of analysis and public communication, an implementation strategy will be developed, targeting desirable and practical solutions.

CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISIONING PROJECT

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This project will be lead by a citizen based, not for profit organization. Supervision of this region-wide project will be from the Steering Committee of this organization. This committee will consist of representation from the leadership of government, business, environmental, neighborhood and minority communities in the Central Texas Region, and will have overall responsibility for the project. The responsibilities of this group will be the ongoing communication with one another across jurisdictional and regional boundaries; with the broader leadership of the individual communities that they represent; with a broadly representative Stakeholders Group, and a Management Committee to work on day-to-day operations.

The Management Committee and Stakeholders Group are distinct groups whose participation is integral to the success of this project. The Management Committee, consisting of six members, includes the non-profit executive director, four managers representing primary interest groups. This group will provide ongoing managerial support for the Board of Directors, Project Manager, and Project Consultant. Working for the Management committee are two additional entities. First, a project manager retained through the group funding, and second, the consultant team, headed by Fregonese Calthorpe Associates.

Working along side the Management Committee is the Stakeholders Group. The Stakeholders Group, consisting of previously convened groups of citizens and elected officials, with open membership and no limit as to number of participants, will provide a broad range of citizen input at key points throughout the project.

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NON-PROFIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Representation: Consisting of representatives from business, Environmental groups, neighborhood leaders, minority groups, City Councils, County Board OF Commissioners, Cap Metro, Campo, Capco, etc. (about 21 members)

Organizational Role: Representing the leadership of the Central Texas Region, the Board of Directors has the overall responsibility for the project. This group will have the ongoing role to communicate with one another across jurisdictional and regional boundaries, with the broader individual communities that they represent, and with the Stakeholders Group and Management Committee.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Representation: Consisting of 6 members of the Board and the Executive Director of the Non-profit (6 members).

Organizational Role: Provide technical and managerial direction for the Project Manager and Project Consultant. Serves to more closely link the Board of Directors with the Project on an ongoing basis.

STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

Representation: Consisting of previously convened group of citizens and elected officials (no limit as to number of participants, open membership)

Organizational Role: Provide broad range of citizen input.

PROJECT MANAGER

Retained as part of the group funding effort to administer project and arrange logistical aspects of public participation.

PROJECT CONSULTANT

Fregonese Calthorpe Associates et al.

CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISIONING PROJECT

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

One of the keys to developing a successful regional planning and visioning project is to identify and capture a commonly held vision of the future. This vi-



sion must be logical and resonate with the public at large. While the solutions may be complex, the basic conceptual format of the vision must be easy to communicate, and have a "Common Sense" accessibility. In approaching a vision for a Central Texas Region and the cities within it, this project must go beyond traditional planning and public involvement techniques and reach out to a broad spectrum of the population, both talking to them and listening to their concerns. The vision for the Central Texas Region will be well communicated and easily understood by all the region's residents. This requires an innovative and broad-reaching strategy.



This Central Texas Regional Visioning Project will have an ongoing and strong communication strategy as an integral part of the project. It will include a full time communications coordinator, an active press strategy, event sponsoring, an interactive web site, a periodic newsletter that keeps people informed about the progress of the project, and major events that will involve thousands of Central Texas residents.

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This map is from a public workshop that was part of the regional visioning process in the Salt Lake City Region of Utah. Participants grappled with the issues of regional growth and created their own preferred regional growth scenarios.

Community Participation

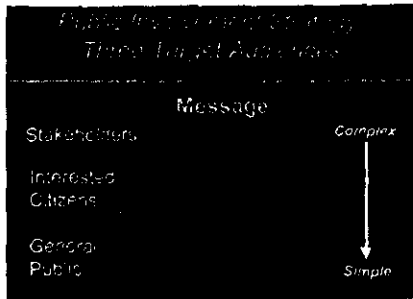
Many public involvement efforts aim only at well-informed stakeholders and involve only those citizens who are willing to attend a meeting. Although this group is an important component of any citizen involvement strategy, concentrating on stakeholders alone leaves more than 99% of the population out of the process. The vast majority of people simply will not take the time out of a busy schedule to attend a meeting or, if they do attend, they are too shy to voice their thoughts. Policy makers thus often get a distorted view of public opinion. The danger of this is that a few motivated individuals can appear to command broad public support by motivating an additional dozen people to consistently attend and speak at meetings; the general public's opinion is often over-shadowed by such an effort.

In part due to rapid growth in the last few years, there is a large population within the Central Texas Region that is not aware of recent planning endeavors. It is vital that additional approaches are utilized to contact and actively involve this segment of the population.



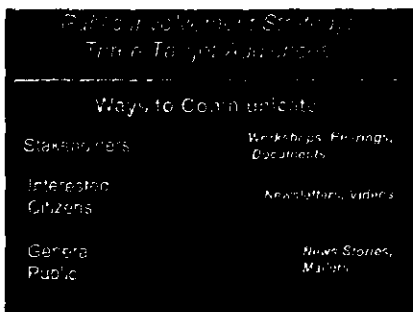
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Target Audience



The public can be categorized into three audience segments. The first audience, the Stakeholders, can be relied upon to comprehend a complex message, read documents, come to meetings, and spend hours on a topic. The second group, Interested Citizens, usually comprises about 30% of a population. These are people who are actively interested in growth management issues. They will follow stories in the paper, read special newsletters sent to them on the subject, and will respond to questionnaires. They form sophisticated opinions about growth management issues. While they will not typically leave their homes to attend a meeting, they are the opinion leaders within their social groups on issues of growth management. The third group, the General Public, only becomes aware of the most controversial and visible growth management issues. They hold relatively rudimentary opinions on growth issues, and will not respond to mailers and questionnaires. However, they form the majority of the body politic, and their opinions and attitudes will often hold the key to successful visions and plans.

Ways to Communicate



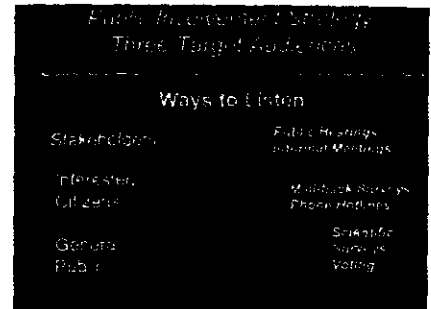
A successful communication program has strategies that reach out to all three of the above groups. Workshops, hearings, and documents are ways to communicate with the stakeholders and active citizens, those who will attend a meeting of some kind. Our proposal also has strategies to communicate with the 99% of the population that do not attend any meetings. For Interested Citizens, there will be bright, lively newsletters and web sites, which allow them to both read and respond to information. The General Public will be engaged through a press strategy that will keep the planning process in the public's view.

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Ways to Listen

In addition to the traditional methods of public hearings, workshops, and informal meetings, the project will utilize methods of soliciting opinions and input from both the Interested Citizens and the General Public segments. Interested citizens will mail back simple questionnaires, almost always adding a comment or two and will generally include their address. Questionnaires not only gather data, they build a mailing list database for these active citizens that can be used for later, cost effective communication. For the General Public, the project will utilize scientific methods to survey and gauge their attitudes, perceptions, and uncover issues that are important to the overall population.



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CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISIONING PROJECT

PROJECT APPROACH

The steps involved in a visioning process for the Central Texas Region are straightforward and inclusive. They include scientific, technical analyses of options as well as more subjective, human evaluation of consequences and options. The overall goal is not to develop a plan for the Central Texas Region, or even to develop a single solution, but to examine ways that the current growth trends in the Central Texas Region can be redirected to a more sustainable, livable future. The basic steps are as follows:

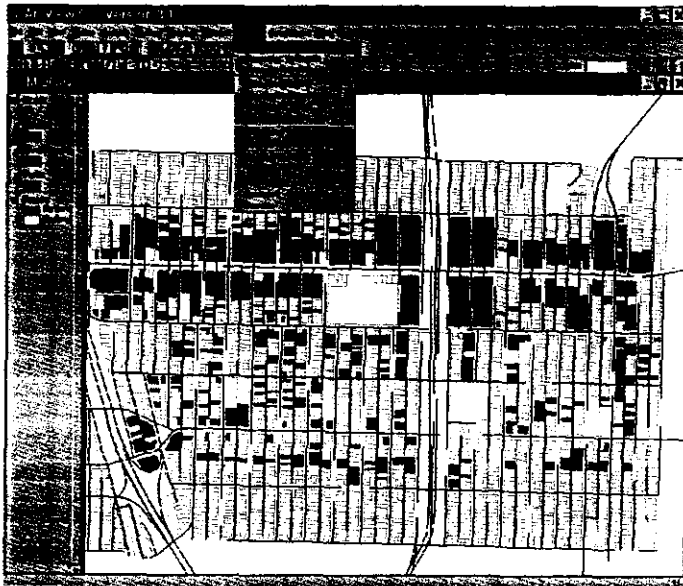
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ANALYSIS

It is not possible to examine options without a realistic assessment of where the Central Texas Region is today. The analysis will examine the essential elements for a successful project: land use; growth and reuse capacity; traffic and transportation; economic conditions and forces; and public opinions and values.

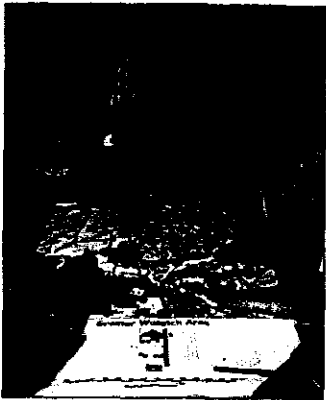
MODELING



While a one-time snapshot of the Central Texas Region will be useful, we believe in developing modeling systems that support long-term decision-making. The analysis will be used to not only understand the current situation, but to also understand the relationship between the various forces that shape growth in the Central Texas Region. The project will develop land use models based on the current regional and city GIS systems, use reuse and capacity models, and utilize and enhance the Central Texas Region's transportation models as well. While modeling is a powerful tool for understanding options, it should support, but not dominate the decision-making system. Common sense plays an important role in understanding the dynamics of a diverse Central Texas Region.

VISIONING

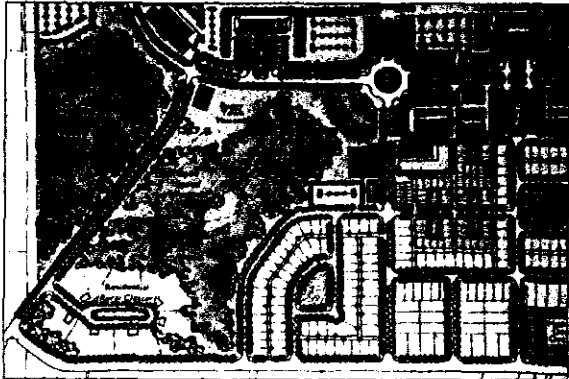
One of the key components in successful projects is the use of a visioning workshop by a broad group of stakeholders. The workshops are reality based, using maps that accurately represent the current physical form of the area and simulating the real tradeoffs that must be made as an area grows and changes. However, they are simple enough that people can use their intuition to examine novel ideas. The process is both a source of innovative ideas and opportunity to discover where a community has reached consensus on certain issues. It also is an educational, and in some cases, eye-opening experience for the participants.



SMALL AREA WORKSHOPS

Often, changes in an area as large and diverse as the Central Texas Region can be made by changes in development patterns that are small scale in nature. Reuse, higher densities, and mixed use can all be used to great advantage if widely adopted and locally supported. However, people often need to understand how these policies will affect their neighborhood. Therefore a series of small area workshops are included to examine the best solutions at a localized level. Information gleaned from these workshops will be used to feed the regional workshops that will follow.

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Detailed design studies will focus on ways to develop, redevelop, and reinvent real locations throughout the Central Texas Region.

CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISIONING PROJECT

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS



The project includes 5 sub-regional workshops, followed by a Central Texas Region-wide workshop to create a selection of alternatives to test and evaluate.

TESTING AND EVALUATION

The combination of a workshop where intuitions can be freely employed, evaluation performed through an objective set of criteria gathered from state of the art modeling will combine to allow a pragmatic approach to developing a Central Texas Region-wide strategy. The land use, transportation, and economic models will be used to evaluate several options.

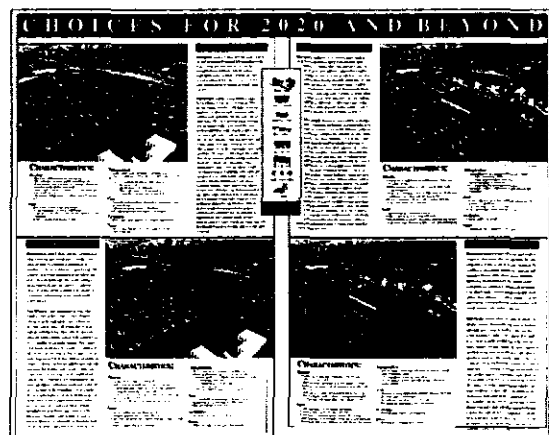
COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

One of the keys to an effective regional study is having the results accessible and approachable to both highly involved individuals and the general public. The results will be communicated to encourage public interaction and involvement through a variety of forms. At least two mass media drives will attempt to engage the attention of hundreds of thousands, and the active participation of tens of thousands. The input at this time in the project will help reach a consensus, with confidence that the results will be accepted by the Central Texas Region's citizens and leaders

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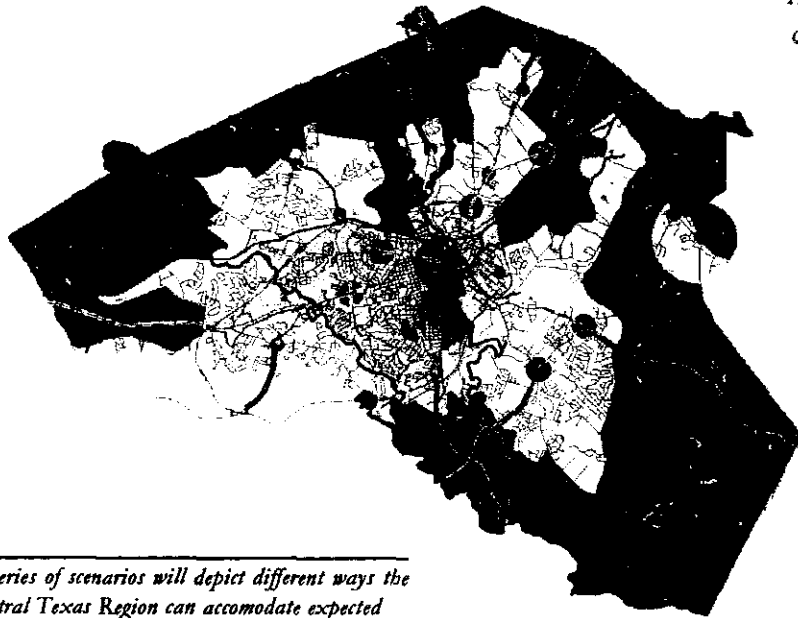
Newspaper and web surveys are just some of the ways to communicate the regional visioning process and its results to decision makers and the public.



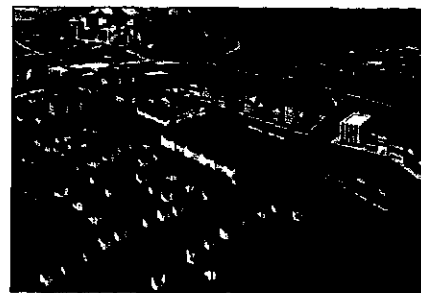
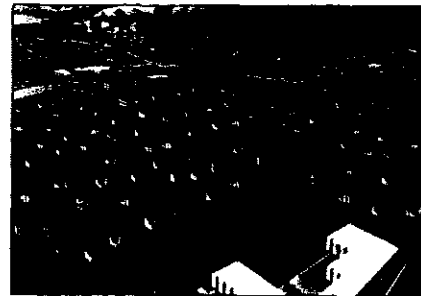
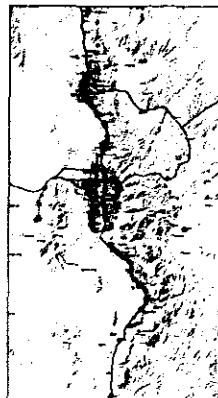
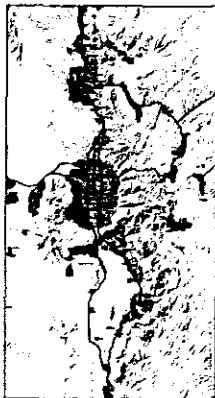
SELECTING A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Following the completion of visioning, evaluation, and testing of ideas in detailed workshops, the task returns to selecting a preferred path. An additional workshop with the Stakeholder Group will be used in order to reevaluate and weigh the results of the public input, and develop a consensus strategy for the Central Texas Regional Vision

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A series of scenarios will depict different ways the Central Texas Region can accommodate expected population and employment growth.

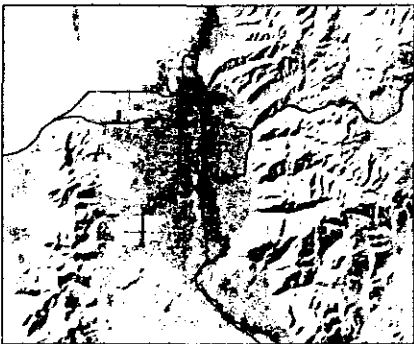


IMPLEMENTATION

This step is a key to success. While it cannot be predicted what will be the right solution for this project, it will likely draw from legislative tools, cooperative compacts, educational and incentive tools, and a host of other techniques. The best implementation package will be strategic, focusing on the changes necessary to achieve the greatest result. While implementation through changes in planning and development laws may be part of the solution, changes should also consider include voluntary actions, education, investment strategies, and local support.

CREATING MOMENTUM TO AFFECT CHANGE**RECORDERS MEMORANDUM**

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Finally, this process will strive to achieve results. The project should create momentum through the support generated and the compelling nature of its work. The "bandwagon" effect is key in planning. If a body of people, especially opinion leaders, begins to talk about a plan, and if significant activities occur regarding the vision development, many other people will begin to pay attention and try to become involved. This point is when the project has "legs" – the project begins to take on a life of its own, and more people begin to see it as a vehicle that has potential to address their issues.

The Central Texas Regional Vision will become a center of attention and activity in the region. Local governments and other participating organizations throughout the region will take it seriously. Elected boards, local government managers and local planning staffs will devote a great deal of time preparing local submittals in response to the most significant elements in the regional development framework: the extent of urban development by the target year; the designation of high density, mixed use, transit oriented urban centers; and the establishment of a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

The local government members of the Region will see that a real and reliable growth management strategy will be developed. Adoption of the vision will mark a significant leap forward for local governments in the Region toward; providing substantive agreement on a complex set of growth management strategies.

CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL VISIONING PROJECT

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

	2001	2002				2003			
	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Task 1: Baseline Analysis									
Task 2: Establish Guiding Principles & Evaluation Criteria									
Task 3: Local Community Test Sites									
Task 4: Visioning & Scenario Development									
Task 5: Testing & Evaluation									
Task 6: Communication Strategy									
Task 7: Preferred Scenario Selection									
Task 8: Implementation Strategy									
Public Outreach/Media Campaign									

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AGENDA ITEM 15

Consider approving escrow agreement form for earnest money deposits and right-of-way contracts.

Julie Wolff of Sheets & Crossfield stated that the agreement would allow Sheets & Crossfield to deposit \$2500 to an escrow account for Austin Title Company, to streamline the process.

Moved: **Commissioner Limmer**

Seconded: **Judge Doerfler**

Motion: To approve an escrow agreement form for earnest money deposits and right-of-way contracts.

Vote: **3 – 0. Commissioner Boatright was absent from the dais.**

< Attachment >

**ESCROW AGREEMENT
(Earnest Money Deposits/Right-of-Way Contracts)**

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF WILLIAMSON

THIS ESCROW AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is entered into on the 19 day of MARCH, 2002, by WILLIAMSON COUNTY and AUSTIN TITLE COMPANY ("Escrow Agent").

RECITALS:

WHEREAS, Williamson County contemplates that it will over the course of time be entering into multiple earnest money contracts with various third party sellers for the acquisition of certain tracts of land situated in and around Williamson County, Texas, including tracts situated along Parmer Lane, CR 272 and Highway 79, for road right-of-way purposes.

WHEREAS, Williamson County desires to pre-deposit funds with Escrow Agent to be applied as earnest money to the earnest money contracts as they are entered into and receipted by the Escrow Agent.

WHEREAS, Escrow Agent is willing to serve as a depository for such funds and to apply such funds, or a portion thereof, to the earnest money contracts for right-of-way acquisitions as they are receipted by Escrow Agent.

NOW, THEREFORE, Williamson County and Escrow Agent agree as follows:

1. Concurrently with the execution of this Agreement, Williamson County has deposited with the Escrow Agent funds in the amount of **\$2500.00** (the "Escrow Funds"), which shall be deposited by Escrow Agent into a non-interest bearing escrow account. The Escrow Agent agrees to serve hereunder as escrow agent and hold and disburse the Escrow Funds for the purposes and on the terms set forth in this Agreement.

2. Escrow Agent, upon its receipt of an earnest money contract between Williamson County, as purchaser, and a third party seller for a tract(s) of land to be acquired for right-of-way purposes, Escrow Agent shall deduct from the Escrow Funds the amount set forth in the contract as the earnest money amount and transfer such amount to the respective file to be applied as the earnest money deposit for such transaction.

3. Escrow Agent shall periodically furnish to Williamson County a report of the Escrow Funds that have been applied to receipted contracts and the remaining balance being held by the Escrow Agent.