

City of Denton



2020

Annual Report

City of Denton

2020 Annual Report

ABOUT DENTON

Denton, Texas is a vibrant and growing community with countless opportunities, no matter your interest or passion. The city is a unique cultural destination where small-city charm pairs with big-city amenities. A blend of history and culture creates a **dynamic suburban environment**, home to two thriving universities, multiple major manufacturing and distribution centers, state-of-the-art medical facilities, and a diversity of choices in employment, lifestyle, and neighborhoods.

Denton is also home to a **vibrant downtown** that, in 2019, was officially designated as a state cultural district to honor the cultural assets present in the downtown area.

The Original Denton District is the city's first official cultural district, joining only 42 others across Texas.

The City of Denton is a **full-service organization** that operates under the council-manager form of government. The City's major revenue sources include property taxes, enterprise fees from City-owned utilities, and general service fees. Services include a municipally owned electric utility; a landfill and resource recovery park; an airport; three libraries; numerous parks, trails, and recreation centers; a water park and natatorium; and a 2,900-acre nature preserve.

Having been ranked by numerous national organizations as a **best place to live and visit**, Denton ranks among the fastest-growing communities in Texas—the city's current population is nearly 140,000 residents and is projected to grow up to 214,000 residents by 2030.

CITY OF DENTON CITY COUNCIL



Gerard Hudspeth
Mayor



Birdia Johnson
District 1



Connie Baker
District 2



Jesse Davis
Mayor Pro-Tem
District 3



John Ryan
District 4



Deb Armintor
At Large Place 5



Paul Meltzer
At Large Place 6

To contact or learn more about the Denton City Council, visit www.cityofdenton.com/citycouncil.



A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read and review this *2020 City of Denton Annual Report*. I am thrilled to be the Mayor of my hometown and I want to take this opportunity to invite you to discover Denton and all we have accomplished...and what is to come.



POLICY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Reducing the tax rate while expanding City services;
- Improving road construction processes and efficiencies; and
- Growing our local tree canopy.

The pandemic in 2020 tested the resolve of both our city and our culture. Our city management, staff, and City Council pivoted from evaluation to action, and the next step will be recovery. I look forward to working with our state, county, educational, and business partners to improve City services and our quality of life. I'm committed to making Denton the best place to live, work, learn, and play. My family and I love Denton and I thank you for the honor to serve as the Mayor of Denton.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Employing 1,700 people over more than 20 departments, the City of Denton is a large municipal organization providing service to our residents every day. From managing parks to airport operations, public safety to energy, the scope of our City government is incredibly broad and complex. We are proud of the diligent and collaborative work accomplished in what would prove to be a unique and challenging year.

We are more than a collection of departments and functions. Our organization is built on and around four core values that permeate our culture. Our shared sense of integrity calls on us to always do what is right. We practice fiscal responsibility to remain wise stewards of the public dollar

and commit ourselves to transparency, so we may faithfully earn your trust. And finally, we hope our genuine desire to provide only the best customer service truly sets us apart.

This Annual Report features our efforts to create a city of which you can be proud. Throughout this report, we provide a glimpse of the accomplishments that we have achieved together, particularly our community's resiliency in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We focus our highlights of 2020 in the key areas of Pandemic Response, Organizational Excellence, Improving Denton and its Infrastructure, Public Safety, Community and Quality of Life, and Development. Each key area of this report demonstrates our commitment to effective management and the delivery of high-quality local government services to our community.

It is our pleasure to serve you.



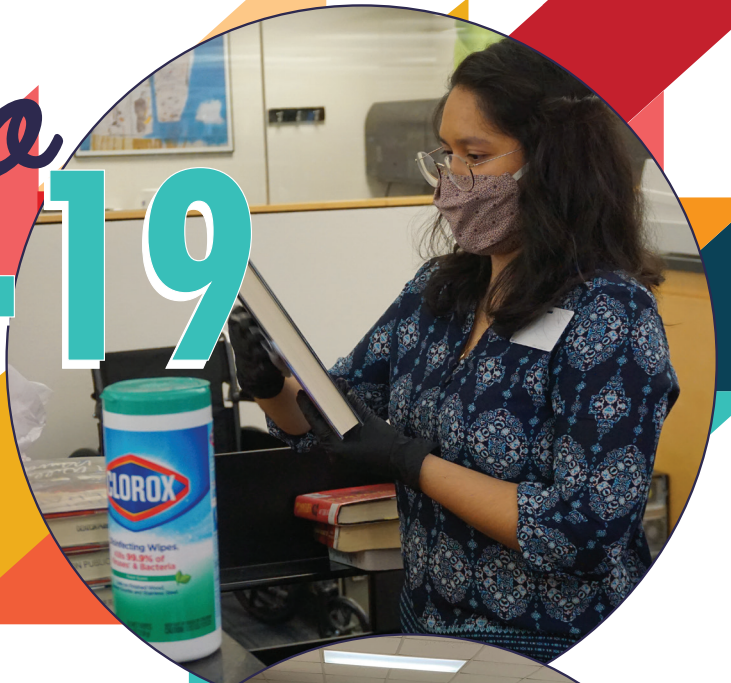
Response to COVID-19

The year 2020 will go down in history as being a time of both challenge and change, for the City of Denton and the world as a whole. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us all to reevaluate how we do most everything, including the ways in which we communicate with one another, how we move about within our communities, and how to accomplish even the most basic of routine tasks and activities.

In early March, City leaders and elected officials recognized the potential severity of COVID-19 and began to proactively work with state and county health officials to **keep the community safe, healthy, and informed**. On March 13, former Mayor Chris Watts signed the first of a number of successive **declarations of local disaster** to minimize the potential impact of the virus in the city of Denton.

With the safety of our citizens and employees as our top priority, the City began **coordinating on a daily basis** with our partners at the State of Texas and Denton County to receive a **steady supply of medical equipment, grant funding** for COVID-19 response, and **personal protective supplies** for our first responders. All public and community meetings swiftly moved to a **virtual format** as numerous City facilities were closed to the public, and a new section was added to the City of Denton website designated for **COVID-19 news, updates, and resources**. Various departments within the organization began to make a number of decisions and adjustments to their operations

in an effort to provide the same important services our residents and customers have come to expect, just in a different way.



City of Denton employees

**VOLUNTEERED
2,094 HOURS
OVER 565 SHIFTS**
with local nonprofit agencies.



The City partnered with United Way of Denton County to start an **EVICTION PREVENTION FUND** and Program. With funding from the federal government and Denton County, more than **2,411 families** have received rent and utility assistance to date.



As the impact of the pandemic on our residents was realized, the City proactively took steps to provide assistance to the community. The City helped to establish initial funding for a **housing assistance program** with the United Way of Denton County, **provided funding for utility assistance** and **temporarily suspended utility disconnections**, provided funding and assistance to create an **alternative emergency shelter arrangement** using area hotel rooms, **supported critical nonprofit agencies** with City employees staffing their locations, and applied for and was awarded federal and state grants to **support housing stability in the community**.

As the year 2021 begins, the COVID-19 pandemic has persisted. The City will continue to adapt to the pandemic, manage its impacts, and respond to the needs of our residents and customers.

The City made a number of **ORGANIZATIONAL AND SERVICE ADAPTATIONS** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

ANIMAL SERVICES worked with the Denton Animal Support Foundation to establish an emergency pet-food pantry.

CAPITAL PROJECTS added contactless payment options for inspections & permits.

COMMUNITY SERVICES assisted nonprofit agencies in shifting shelter operations to local hotels to reduce the risk of transmission.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES moved to online form submittal and began performing permit inspections and contractor registrations via online videoconference.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT coordinated with the Denton Main Street Association to develop new initiatives to support downtown businesses, including working with Development Services to create a pilot parklet and streateries program, and temporary parking spaces for curbside pickup.

HUMAN RESOURCES established a dedicated COVID-19 resource channel, staffed 24/7, to address employee needs and safe return-to-work protocols.

MUNICIPAL COURT implemented safety protocols, remote door access and intercom systems, and an electronic, text-based queuing system for visitors.

PARKS & RECREATION served an essential role in wellness by maintaining access to open space and trails and served 14,081 kids a free healthy “grab and go” meal in the summer food program.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS worked daily to keep the community updated and informed, including the production and distribution of various COVID-19-related items, including posters, flyers, signage, and a special edition of the bimonthly *Resident Update* newsletter.

SUSTAINABILITY moved all outreach and educational events to a virtual platform.



Organizational EXCELLENCE

The City of Denton is committed to our core values of integrity, fiscal responsibility, outstanding customer service, and transparency.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented financial challenges in 2020, the City quickly responded and created financial management strategies to avoid employee layoffs or furloughs or other budget reductions. This quick response also helped the City be able to **maintain the previous fiscal year's tax rate** in the FY 2020-21 budget while continuing the current level of services. The budget also includes funding for a number of service enhancements, including a new **311 system** for efficient response to citizen requests, **six new Sworn Police Officer positions**, and **three new Firefighter positions** for Fire Station 8.



CORE VALUES



-  **INTEGRITY**
-  **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**
-  **TRANSPARENCY**
-  **OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE**

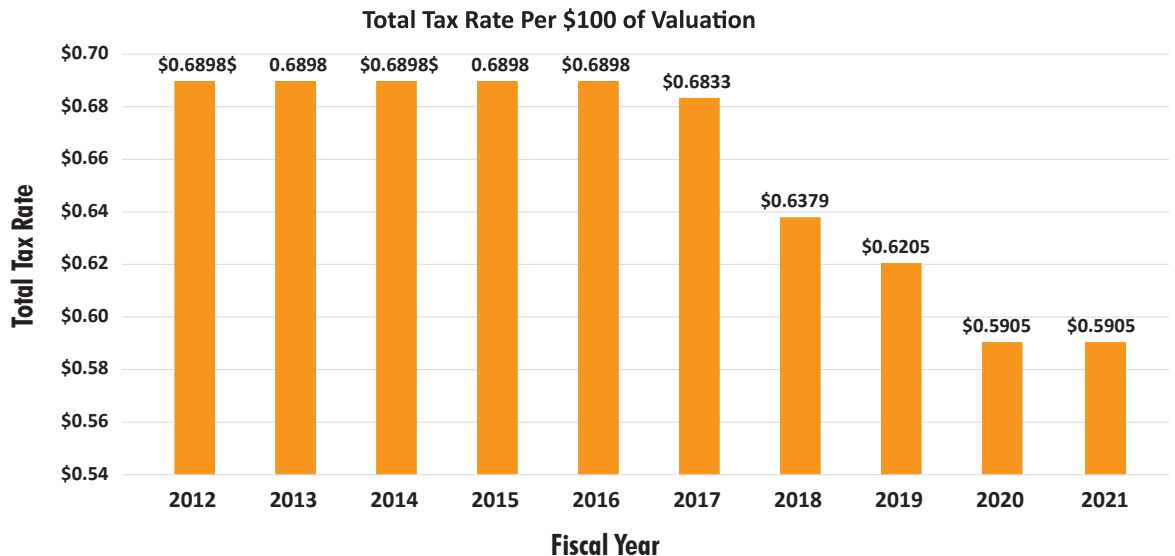
UTILITY RATE HISTORY

	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Electric (1,200 kWh/month)	\$129.26	\$124.80	\$124.80	\$124.80
Water (9,200 gallons/month)	\$54.18	\$54.18	\$54.18	\$53.10
Wastewater (5,400 gallons/month)**	\$33.12	\$31.52	\$31.52	\$31.52
Solid Waste Standard Cart*	\$24.51	\$24.51	\$21.51	\$20.51
Total	\$243.50	\$235.01	\$232.01	\$229.93

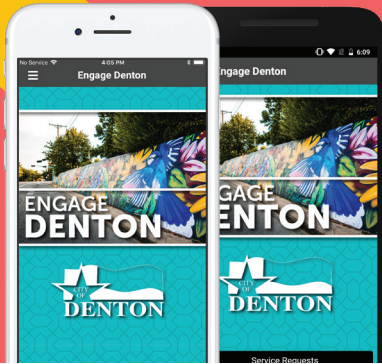
*FY 17-18 and FY 19-20 reflect mid-year rate decreases.
 **FY 18-19 reflects a 5% rate decrease and min volume decrease from 6,000 to 5,400.

2020-21 TAX RATE
\$0.5905
 for every \$100 of property value.
NO CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

TAX RATE HISTORY



ENGAGE DENTON



6,327

requests resolved in 2020. These requests were closed in an average time of **2.8 DAYS.**

The City's utility operations remained stable through the pandemic, resulting in **no utility rate increases** for wastewater and electric services in the FY 2020-21 budget. In addition, residential water and solid waste & recycling **rates were decreased** as of October 2020.

Over the past several years, the City has utilized technology to provide new ways for residents to engage with their local government. The need for such technology was never greater than it was in 2020. The City began hosting **virtual public and community meetings**, introduced a **self-service phone number** for **automated Solid Waste pick-up requests**, and partnered with **QLess** to allow customers to safely wait in line for utility billing or court services on their mobile phone.

25,158 CASES

were handled by the Municipal Court in 2020.

SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS - FY 2020-21

- New 311 system for efficient response to citizen requests (\$1.3 million)
- Six new Sworn Police Officer positions (\$811,598)
- Three new Firefighter positions for Fire Station 8 (\$273,263)
- 2019 Bond Election funds issued for Street Improvements (\$12.4 million)
- 2019 Bond Election funds issued for Public Safety Facilities (\$42.9 million)

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

221,579 CALLS

were received by the Customer Service Department in FY 2019-20.

3,047 OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS

were received by the City Secretary's Office in 2020.



MORE THAN 250 PUBLIC MEETINGS



in 2020. An overwhelming majority of the meetings were held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

654

active accounts participated in the Pay-As-You-Go program in FY 2019-20.

Improving DENTON

2020 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Improvements Underway
on Fannin Street



MAGNOLIA DRAINAGE PROJECT, PHASE 1

Location: Hinkle (University
to W. Windsor) and Windsor
(Hinkle to N. Elm)

Status: Completed in 2020

BONNIE BRAE, PHASE 4 Location: Bonnie Brae Street at Scripture Street

Status: Completed in 2020

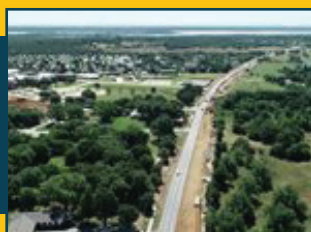


MAYHILL ROAD Location: US 380 to north of Quail Creek Road

Status: Completed in 2020

E. MCKINNEY STREET, PHASE 2 Location: South Fork to Loop 288

Status: In Progress



Following the critical moments of the past year, the City of Denton continues its commitment to improve our community's quality of life through designing, constructing, and maintaining infrastructure that is **accessible for all ages and abilities**, regardless of their mode of transportation.

Over the last year, **more than \$200 million** worth of capital infrastructure projects were initiated or are currently under construction.

Examples of major projects currently under construction include:

- Mayhill/McKinney Intersection – \$4.8 million
- Intersection Improvements – \$4.7 million
- Downtown Storm Sewer, Phase 1 – \$2 million
- 2019 Street Reconstruction Project – \$13.5 million
- Bonnie Brae, Phase 2 – \$19.5 million
- Hickory Creek, Phase 1 (East) – \$3.3 million
- Hickory Creek, Phase 2 (West) – \$6.8 million
- Fort Worth Drive/US 377 – \$43.6 million
- PEC-4, Phases 1 and 2 – \$15.1 million
- West Hercules Street Reconstruction – \$645,000
- West Hickory Street – \$3 million

Staff has developed a detailed work plan to ensure completion of the remaining roadway segments from the 2012 and 2014 bond programs, which estimates full project completion by December 2022.

With the support of Denton residents, the **\$154 million Street Improvement Proposition** of the 2019 Bond Program was initiated with the design of several projects, including the design of Bonnie Brae Street, Phase 6; Hickory Creek Road, Phase 3; design and construction solicitation for the first two phases of the \$70 million Street Reconstruction Program; and preliminary design schematics for Ryan Road. Information and updates on bond-funded projects are available online at www.improvingdenton.com.

IMPROVING DENTON

The City's objective is to maintain the **highest possible level of safety** for pedestrians and vehicles traveling through our rights-of-way, including times when portions of the right-of-way are under construction. A **new Right-of-Way Ordinance** went into effect in January 2020, providing the City the authority to enforce rules and regulations to maintain safety and properly administer activity occurring in the right-of-way.



Clydesdale Drive
Completed Street Improvements

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

86.0% LANE MILES OF ROADWAY were improved by the City in 2020, including reconstructions, mill & overlays, and microseals. That's an increase of 22.73 lane miles over the previous year.

3,784 POTHOLES were repaired and improved.

30,000 FEET OF WATER LINE & 29,000 FEET OF SEWER LINE was replaced as a result of an improved, collaborative approach of aligning replacements with the street rehabilitation program.

MORE THAN 7 BILLION GALLONS of water were pumped through the City's water distribution system in 2020.

1,450 LINEAR FEET of storm drain was installed, including 7 inlets, as part of the Hercules Lane Project.

Public SAFETY

The City is focused on implementing the tenets of community policing, working to build trust and relationships with all members of our community to keep everyone safe. One way we followed through on this promise was by supporting the formation of the **Police Use-of-Force Ad Hoc Committee** in June 2020, which was made up of diverse stakeholders and community members. This committee reviewed Denton Police Department policies, practices, and training, and provided recommendations regarding police use-of-force to the Denton City Council.

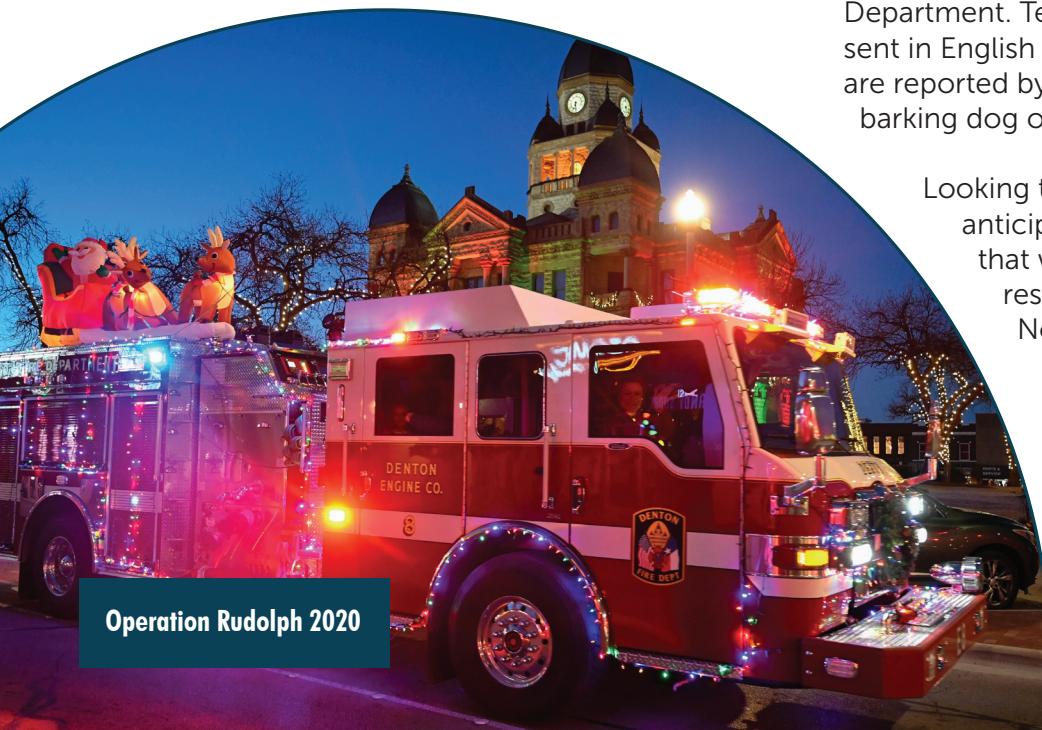


Public Safety Communications

In addition, the Denton Police Department launched the **Take Me Home** program in August. Take Me Home is a free service that allows residents to register loved ones who may have difficulty communicating with or properly identifying themselves to first responders. The program is designed to help individuals who may need special assistance in the event they are alone or in an emergency.

To end the year, the Department launched a new texting feature, which provides 911 callers reporting certain incident types with **text updates** from the Department. Text messages are now automatically sent in English and Spanish when certain incidents are reported by mobile phone to 911, such as a barking dog or a theft.

Looking to 2021, there are a number of anticipated facility projects kicking off that will result in more efficient and responsive police services. In November 2019, residents approved Proposition B of the 2019 Bond Program to approve \$61.9 million in funding for the **renovation of the existing Police Headquarters**, construction of a **new Police Substation** adjacent to the existing Fire Station 7, and construction of a **new Police Indoor Firing Range**.



Operation Rudolph 2020

2020 BY THE NUMBERS

In 2020, Public Safety Communications received

188,350 CALLS 

Total Denton Police Department Priority 1
response time for 2020 was

**6 minutes
& 31 seconds**



The Denton Fire Department received

16,552 CALLS

The Denton Police Department responded to

16,605  CALLS

Total Denton Fire Department response time*
for 2020 was

**9 minutes
& 57 seconds**

**Beginning in January 2021, all response times for the Denton Fire Department take into account the time the call was received at the 911 public safety answering point until the first Fire unit arrives on the scene. This overall time will be reported in the 90th percentile, which provides a more accurate time than averaging.*

Similarly, the City continued construction on **Fire Station 3** and broke ground on the **new Fire Station 8**, the City's first expansion to response capabilities from a fixed location since Fire Station 7 opened in 2007. Both facilities are scheduled to open in early 2021. Outside of facility changes, the Denton Fire Department is also focused on **recruitment** and **community building**. In partnership with Denton ISD and North Central Texas College, the Department launched **Home Grown**, a program for recruitment within the Denton community.

Community relationship building continued with the Fire Department participating in several community events, including partnering with the Denton Rotary Club to **provide smoke detectors to the community** during Fire Prevention Month in October. Additionally, in December, the Fire Department launched **Operation Rudolph** to have fire trucks decorated for the holidays visit Denton landmarks and neighborhoods for two weeks for families to enjoy a fun and safe holiday event.



Public Safety Communications received

75,694  CALLS

for Police, Fire, and Animal Services in 2020.

6

Denton Police Department added
SWORN OFFICER POSITIONS

Community & QUALITY OF LIFE



The Nook at Emily Fowler Central Library

The City of Denton takes pride in providing innovative, high-quality community services while providing a safe, welcoming place for residents to live, work, and play. The City strives to curate diverse cultural and educational opportunities with something for everyone, no matter your interest or passion. In 2020, keeping our community connected, safe, and healthy has been more important than ever.

This year, Denton Public Library partnered with Denton ISD to provide **free library cards for all students** in the district and added **mobile Wi-Fi hotspots** to help provide no-cost internet access to Denton residents. The Library also digitized past issues of the Denton Record-Chronicle from 1908 to 1938 using a **\$24,820 Texas Treasures Grant** from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

The Parks and Recreation Department celebrated the opening of the **North Lakes Dog Park** and completed various other projects, including construction of **The Nook**, an outdoor amphitheater at Emily Fowler Central Library,

the addition of **public restrooms** at Carl Young Sr. Park, renovation of the North Lakes **fishing pier**, and installation of a **golf ball dispenser** and renovation of half the tee boxes at the North Lakes Driving Range. The Department also replaced **6 playgrounds, 24 athletic field scoreboards**, replastered the Natatorium **leisure pool**, and painted all **park restrooms** and **concession stands**. Planning continued for a number of projects, such as, renovation of McKenna Park, dredging of the Lake Forest Park pond, development of numerous sculptures and murals, construction of a mountain bike trail, and various others that will be under construction in 2021.

Challenged by the pandemic, recreation staff hosted safe, in-person events, in addition to modifying new and existing programs to a virtual format. Staff was also committed to helping reduce social isolation by performing wellness calls, hosting drive-thru activities, creating a Senior Talk Hotline, and safely opening two recreation centers that offered fitness and wellness programs.

2,680 ANIMALS

were adopted at the Linda McNatt Animal Care and Adoption Center in 2020.



Renovated Playground at McKenna Park



2020 BY THE NUMBERS



Keep Denton Beautiful volunteers donated

2,114 HOURS

in 2020, valued at \$54,050.63.

923,443 ITEMS



were checked out at Denton Public Library in 2020.

110 HOUSEHOLDS

exited homelessness into housing
in Denton County in FY 2019-20.

20,265 PEOPLE

people were provided meals
through the FY 2019-20
Community Development
Grant Program.

13,198 DENTON RESIDENTS

received assistance through one of the
City's nonprofit partners in FY 2019-20.



8,890 HOUSE HOLDS

at risk of experiencing
homelessness received
housing, food, and other
assistance in FY 2019-20.

108 HOUSEHOLDS



were assisted through the
Homelessness Barriers
Fund in FY 2019-20.

Though the Linda McNatt Animal Care & Adoption Center was open by appointment only for a majority of the year due to COVID-19, the Center was able to find homes for **2,680 pets** in 2020. Animal Services also partnered with the Denton Animal Support Foundation to establish an **emergency pet-food pantry** to help struggling pet owners provide for their animals through the pandemic.

When the COVID-19 outbreak reached our community, the City of Denton acted quickly to assist our most vulnerable populations. When shelters for those experiencing homelessness had to close due to the lack of safe social distancing, the City took immediate action to find alternate **temporary shelter arrangements** for those individuals. For those at risk of experiencing homelessness, the City partnered with United Way of Denton County to establish and provide initial funding to start a local **Eviction Prevention Fund**. To date, the fund has helped to keep **2,411 Denton County families** in their homes, including **729 families** within the Denton city limits. The City also secured **\$2.9 million in federal and state grants** to support housing stability in the community, provide for continued alternative emergency shelter arrangement, and assist non-profit agencies providing critical services.

DEVELOPMENT

As the North Texas region continues to experience significant growth, the City of Denton remains focused on improving development processes to ensure quality development that promotes the health, safety, and quality of life for the Denton community.

The Denton City Council accepted amendments to the Master Planned Community (MPC) zoning districts for **Cole Ranch and Hunter Ranch**, the largest commercial and residential projects in the city. The combined 6,400-acre communities will include more than **24,000 residential units**; **3,721 acres for commercial and mixed-use development**; and **increased open space, parks, and conservation areas**. In conjunction with the MPC zoning update, a Municipal Management District was authorized to fund the public improvements associated with these developments.



2020 BY THE NUMBERS

The Development Services Department
**REDUCED THE AVERAGE
NUMBER OF DAYS**
that private development projects are in review
**FROM 8.57 IN JUNE 2019
TO 3.68 IN JUNE 2020**

The City of Denton approved

\$115,000

in DOWNTOWN REINVESTMENT GRANTS in 2020.



1,004 SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PERMITS

were processed with a total valuation of

\$306,823,170

9 MULTI-FAMILY UNIT permits were processed with a total valuation of

\$250,080,847

Throughout 2020, the City worked to develop a **comprehensive economic development strategic plan**, the first such effort in more than 15 years. To develop the plan, the City engaged a cross-section of the community through **roundtables and forums** and sought community input through an **online feedback** portal. The plan focuses on three primary goals: accelerating recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; fostering growth through connectivity, creativity, sustainability, and competitiveness; and strengthening community inclusion to meet workforce needs. The plan is scheduled for adoption in early 2021.



A Parklet/Streatory Pilot Program was established in 2020

Another key accomplishment was the development of **meaningful community partnerships** with business support organizations. This was achieved through new partnership agreements with the Denton Main Street Association, focused on supporting downtown Denton businesses, and with the Denton Chamber of Commerce, to support business recruitment and attraction efforts. Both partnerships enhance the level of service offered by the Economic Development Department and created new pathways to support Denton businesses. Additionally, the City approved changes to the **Downtown Reinvestment Grant Policy** to allow for ADA improvements as eligible project expenses.

The Denton City Council also approved two **job-based economic development grants** focused on stimulating local technology startups, the first of their kind for Denton. The Council awarded grants to TeamOfDefenders and From the Future, both local early stage tech ventures. The performance-based grants will provide assistance to each company as they rapidly expand. Combined, the companies are projected to add more than **150 high-wage or knowledge-based jobs** in Denton over the next 10 years. These innovative grants further underscore the City's commitment to support entrepreneurs and a growing tech scene.

The Economic Development Department responded to **MORE THAN 650** REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE from Denton businesses

139
new development projects were reviewed in 2020.

Economic Development conducted **56** business retention calls and visits in 2020.

34 NEW COMMERCIAL PERMITS were issued with a total valuation of **\$262,350,025**



GET CONNECTED

Wherever you are, you can connect with the City of Denton to find information, report issues, get the latest news, and more.



Get news straight to your inbox by signing up for our email newsletters at www.cityofdenton.com/stayupdated.



Download the **Engage Denton app** in the App Store or Google Play to report issues and request services.



Learn about major construction projects, track progress, view maps, and sign up for notifications at www.improvingdenton.com.



Pay your utility bill, track your usage, or connect with Customer Service for other services and requests at www.cityofdenton.com/paymybill.



Sign up for CodeRED at www.cityofdenton.com/codered to receive emergency text notifications, emails, and phone calls.



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