

## **4. A VISION OF THE FUTURE: BENBROOK IN THE YEAR 2030**

The Comprehensive Plan should not simply be a reaction to changing conditions, but should have a concept of the desired future of the City. The previous two elements of the Plan have reviewed the history and current conditions in Benbrook. This element outlines a strategic vision of Benbrook 35 years from now.

Of course, no forecast of the future can be entirely accurate, especially one made as far in the future as 30 years. But such forecasts are useful. One only has to look back 30 years to see that three decades is not that long a period of time. Many of our current residents, particularly in portions of the Lakeside Addition area and areas of North Benbrook, have been residents of the City since 1970. During that time, they have seen Benbrook grow from a population of 8,169 to over 20,000. They have seen the construction of Loop 820 and I-20 and the widening of U.S. 377 from two lanes to five lanes. Benbrook Lake had been constructed for 20 years in 1970, but the extensive park system currently available had not been developed.

The Year 2030 has been chosen as a planning horizon because it is when Benbrook is projected to be nearing its maximum population of 47,987. Benbrook is entirely surrounded by the City of Fort Worth and cannot expand more than the 7,744 acres it now encompasses. The City will reach a point when its population will reach a maximum and grow no further. New residents will come only if others leave or if redevelopment occurs and maximum permitted population densities are increased. In fact, many cities decline in population after they reach their maximum population, as families mature, children move away and suitable housing stocks are removed through deterioration. Thus, the year 2030 will be a watershed year, a time when Benbrook will no longer be dealing with growth but rather maintaining its desired population base and lifestyle.

The vision of the future that is presented here is an optimistic view. One could just as easily present an entirely different and pessimistic view. But since the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide the City toward a better future, one must be optimistic in establishing the future image of the City. On the other hand, the City must be vigilant for trends in the opposite direction, and take steps toward making Benbrook a place where we want to live in the future.

### **4.2 The Physical Shape of Benbrook in 2030**

The map of Benbrook 30 years from now will not differ significantly from the map of today. The existing City limits will be essentially the same, with a few minor exceptions for trades between Benbrook and Fort Worth. But the activities and resources within the City will have changed over the 30-year period from 1999-2030.

#### **4.2.1 Population and Demographics**

Benbrook is projected to have a population of approximately 43,988 people in the year 2030, over twice the 1990 population. The City will be approaching its ultimate population of 47,987. Nearly 5,000 of these additional residents will be located in the Whitestone Ranch area, south of R.M. 2871. A projected distribution of the ultimate population, by planning area (see Figure 3.7), is presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1  
ULTIMATE POPULATION BY PLANNING DISTRICT**

Planning Area	Ultimate Population
A. North Benbrook	11,338
B. Mont Del, Ridglea County Club Estates	6,938
C. South Benbrook	14,288
D. Westpark	7,289
E. Trinity Ranch	8,164
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,987</b>

Benbrook will grow at a significant rate during each decade until the Year 2020. But following 2020, the growth will slow and the population of the community will become more stable. Areas of new development will be located beyond Benbrook's city limits. New residents to Benbrook will come only as previous residents leave. The Benbrook population will continue to age, with a projected median age of 39.3 in 2020 up from 35.5 years in 1990. This increase will be the result of increasing longevity and families with fewer children.

Benbrook also will become more ethnically diverse in the next 30 years. The Benbrook community will work to develop and present a variety of programs that encourage and support demographic changes within the community.

**4.2.2 Land Use and Housing**

With the City essentially built-out in the Year 2030, the land uses in the future will be similar in location and extent as those presently shown on the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Minor adjustments will be made to the land use plan over the years as conditions and trends change, but the general arrangement will remain the same. Approximately fifty percent of the City will be developed as residential areas. The new residential areas in Whitestone Ranch and Team Ranch will be completed and the only remaining residential development will be infill of vacant lots within existing developed areas.

Nearly 45 percent of the single-family homes will be over 40 years in age in the Year 2030 and many homes will be 50 to 60 years old. Some neighborhoods may be faced with declining housing quality, but efforts will be led by neighborhood associations and City code enforcement officials to maintain housing quality. Most of the newer houses will consist of large houses on small lots. Even with the reduced lot sizes, the problem of providing affordable housing for young couples will remain a problem.

Newer housing also will be much more efficient than in the 1990s. Energy use, water, and solid waste generation will be reduced through various conservation measures. For example, many houses will become "smart", using microprocessors to monitor and manage energy use. Such systems will also provide better home security.

In partial response to the problem of affordable housing, almost half of the City's residents will live in some type of multiple-family dwelling in the Year 2030, including duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. Approximately 10 percent of the City will be developed for multifamily dwellings, the

majority being located in the Whitestone Ranch area.

Slightly over ten percent of the City will be developed for commercial, office, and light industrial uses. Most of the commercial land will be developed along U.S. 377, U.S. Spur 580, S.H. 183, and along the I-20 frontage roads from the railroad to Winscott Road. Most of the commercial activity will be in retail sales and services. A number of office buildings will be built along I-20 and in the Team Ranch area. Approximately 2.5 percent of the City will be allocated to industrial uses, primarily along Vickery Boulevard. The City and business leaders will have taken an aggressive approach to improving the image and viability of businesses within the major commercial corridors, including improving building appearance and landscaping, improving signage, removing the overhead utility lines, and improving parking and circulation.

Although the City will increase its developed area by over 80 percent from that in 1984, almost 2,000 acres of open space will be retained. The large majority (1,460 acres) of this open space remains within the Corps of Engineers' Benbrook Lake project, but almost 454 acres of floodway along Mary's Creek, Timber Creek, Walnut Creek, and Dutch Branch also will be preserved as open space.

#### **4.2.3 Transportation and Communications**

The private automobile will still be the vehicle of choice in the Year 2030. And with twice the population of 1990, a corresponding increase in the number of automobiles will be driving the roads in Benbrook. Since most of the population growth will be located in the Trinity Ranch area, much of the additional traffic will be traveling on U.S. 377, R.M. 2871, Winscott Road, Vickery Boulevard, and the new Lakeside Drive - Dirks Road connection with south Fort Worth.

Automobiles will change in the 30 years following 1999, with most becoming smaller, more fuel-efficient and operated on alternate energy sources such as compressed natural gas, electricity, and methanol. Service stations will need to be significantly reconfigured to cope with this new variety of fuels. Many work trips will be in vanpools and on a light rail transit system operating between downtown Fort Worth, NAS-Fort Worth-JRB and Lockheed and Benbrook.

Despite the increased traffic, the City will have taken steps to soften the visual impact of streets through various landscaping and design features. Many of these improvements will be made in cooperation with volunteers, neighborhood associations, and business groups.

Communication technology will dramatically advance during the 30 years following the Year 1999. All households will be interconnected by telephone and cable television with two-way interactive communication via voice, computer, and fax machines. Much of the business now conducted by mail will be conducted electronically in the future. City government will also use these new tools for dissemination of public notices and information, broadcast of public meetings, interactive public opinion polling, and direct reading of utility meters.

### **4.3 Economic, Social, and Political Life in the Year 2030**

Although much will have changed in development and technology in the 30 years between 1999 and the Year 2030, people will remain basically the same. Attitudes always change much slower than technology. People will still want occupations that are rewarding and a variety of leisure and social opportunities, without undue interference by government or others.

#### **4.3.1 The Economy and Workplace**

Although many people will perform some of their business from their home via electronic communication in the future, the majority of people will still conduct their business at a central location (such as an office, factory or store) where they can deal with their colleagues and customers face-to-face. Thus, there will still be trips from home to work and to shop.

One major change will be the increased flexibility in work hours in the future. The ability to remain in communication from the home and automobile will allow greater flexibility in work hours for many people. This, coupled with increased business on a national and international basis, will spread the "normal" workday over a 24-hour period. Evidence of recognition of the global economy will be participation by Benbrook with sister cities in Europe and the Pacific Rim.

The economy of Benbrook will be thriving in the Year 2030, with a much broader market area with full development in the City and greater development surrounding the City. Benbrook will become a major retail and service industry center for the emerging southwest quadrant of the Metroplex. Electronics and biotechnology may also be more important industries in Benbrook. Many residents will still work in the Fort Worth central business district and in the aerospace industry at NAS-Fort Worth-JRB and Lockheed-Martin.

Many new jobs will be created in Benbrook. Several major office buildings and light manufacturing and distribution facilities will be located in Team Ranch and along Vickery Boulevard. Benbrook will adapt to the new information industry with the recruitment of financial and other information-based companies. Most jobs will continue to be created in entrepreneurial small businesses, rather than large industries, and the diversity provided by a variety of small businesses will contribute to the stability of the Benbrook economy.

Benbrook also will develop a tourism-resort industry associated with its principal physical asset, Benbrook Lake. In cooperation with the Corps of Engineers and various water-oriented concessionaires, the City will continue to upgrade and enhance the recreational facilities and capacities of the Lake. The City and the Chamber of Commerce will continue to promote various water-oriented events, such as boat races, regattas, and athletic events as a means of promoting tourism in Benbrook. Adjacent facilities, such as restaurants, motels, and golf courses will be developed as well, after approval of less restrictive alcohol sales regulations by the voters.

#### **4.3.2 Changing Work and Leisure Patterns**

The ability to work at home with flexible hours will result in changes in work patterns. But despite technological advances that will release workers from their desks and assembly lines, most workers will continue to work in an office environment so they can have direct interaction with other people. Greater use of part-time employment and worksharing will provide opportunities for multiple wage-earners in each household. The demand for day care facilities will increase. Shorter, staggered work hours will spread morning and evening rush hours over longer periods of time, rather than concentrated around 8:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.

An additional benefit of the new work patterns will be increased availability of leisure time and greater demand for recreational opportunities. Although some people will continue to retreat into their air-conditioned homes, many people will rediscover the outdoors. Walking, jogging and bicycling as exercise will continue to increase and will result in greater demands for safe, suitable and pleasant facilities for such activities. The City will have completed a hike and bike trail using TXU Electric rights-of-way that will connect the various neighborhoods and parks within the City.

Increased leisure time will also result in greater demands for arts and entertainment. While Fort Worth will remain the center of cultural activity in Tarrant County, smaller art galleries, theater groups, and music groups may establish themselves in Benbrook.

Although the structure of the family will continue to change with more single parent households, childless couples and retirees, a resurgence of family and community values will emerge. Neighborhood groups, churches and other social organizations will form the basis of extended families providing support to each other. Additional innovative programs will be developed to combat neighborhood crime and juvenile delinquency.

#### **4.3.3 Education**

After a decline in the image and effectiveness of public education in the 1980s and 1990s, the Year 2030 will see a new attitude and quality in public education. Among the changes that are likely will be increased involvement by community groups in the education process. Classes will be year-round and will offer increasingly advanced training in mathematics, science, and language. The business community will adopt local schools to promote adequate training of the future workforce.

Although the City will continue to evaluate the costs and benefits of participating in the Fort Worth Independent School District between 1999 and 2030, it is expected that the Fort Worth ISD will still be the provider of public education in Benbrook 30 years from now. The political difficulties in separating from the Fort Worth ISD will remain an obstacle.

The year 2030 will also see the presence of a Tarrant County College Southwest Campus located on I-20 just west of Benbrook. This facility will provide additional training necessary for the increasing technical jobs in the future.

#### **4.3.4 The Return of the Neighborhood as a Social Unit**

After several decades of staying within the air-conditioned privacy of their homes, Benbrook residents will rediscover their neighborhoods in the decades between 1990 and 2030. Neighborhood associations will become more active as the vehicles for social organization, neighborhood self-help and improvement and political voice.

The trend will continue toward a decentralization of self-government to the smallest effective unit. The neighborhood association is the logical ultimate extension of this trend. While the City Council will continue to be elected at-large, neighborhoods will become an increasingly powerful voice in city government.

Neighborhoods will be a major player in planning land use, public infrastructure, resource protection, housing maintenance and revitalization, and neighborhood amenities. The City Staff will facilitate these self-initiated planning efforts by neighborhood groups.

The City Council will mediate disputes between neighborhood desires and community needs (e.g. resolving 'not-in-my-backyard' disputes). Neighborhoods may often take the initiative to provide facilities and improvements on their own, using self-imposed assessments and other fund raising activities. Neighborhoods will take an increasing interest in protecting their resources, both natural and cultural.

#### **4.3.5 Government and Community Facilities**

The principal role of city government will continue to be the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. The primary activities will be the provision of police and fire protection, road

and drainage improvements, and recreation. Public safety will be enhanced through more efficient police and fire protection, increased involvement of neighborhood and business groups, improvements in technology, and improved design standards and codes. The City will have assumed responsibility for the water and sewer system by the year 2030 and will continue to contract with private companies for solid waste recycling and disposal.

But city government will do more than simply provide basic services. Local government will provide a forum for managing and brokering scarce local resources, negotiating and mediating disputes among competing interests, nurturing and guiding actions which improve quality of life in the community, and making decisions about the use of public money for the public good.

With greater decentralization from the State and Federal governments, greater demands will be placed upon local government to provide social services. The City will become a broker for such services, by referring cases to other private social service providers rather than providing those services directly. The City will continue to provide certain community facilities, such as parks, libraries and senior citizens centers, but operation of recreation and senior citizens programs will be run by various associations and agencies. Demand for health care and programs for the elderly will increase significantly by the Year 2030, since the "thirty-something" generation of today will be the "sixty-something" generation then.

City government in the Year 2030 will be similar to that in 1999. Since ethnic diversity will be distributed homogeneously throughout the City, single-member council districts will be unnecessary. The City Council will continue to be the principal decision-making body for the City, but will have the added input of organized neighborhood associations and direct polling through various electronic means. The trend toward participatory democracy will continue, with residents having greater input into decisions affecting their neighborhoods. All meetings of the City Council and advisory boards will be carried on cable television. Electronic polling and organized neighborhood associations will provide the opportunity to obtain quick, accurate public opinion regarding an issue, rather than hearing only from a relatively small vocal minority that attends a meeting.

The City Staff will remain relatively small in the future. In 1999, Benbrook had one of the smallest number of city employees per capita of any city in the Metroplex. As the City grows, the number of employees will remain small in comparison with the population growth. City employees continue to become more efficient and productive in providing necessary city services. Productivity will be enhanced through continued computerization and automation.

The financing of city services and facilities will also change significantly by the Year 2030. Reliance on growth and development to increase the tax base will become a policy of the past, since development will be at a near saturation level. City services must be self-sustaining on the available tax base.

Although ad valorem taxes will still be a significant part of the City's funding source, increasing reliance will be placed on other revenue sources such as sales taxes and user fees. Many services such as drainage and streets will be treated as utility services and residents will be charged based on the amount that they contribute or use the service. For example, drainage improvements and maintenance will be billed on the amount of impervious area for each land parcel, since this is directly related to the amount of runoff generated. Capital financing will shift toward a pay-as-you-go program, rather than through the issuance of debt.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The Year 2030 will be a watershed year for the City of Benbrook. The population will be twice that which exists in 1999 and, along with that growth will come all the benefits and problems of rapid growth. But growth will slow in 2030 and the population will become more stable. Shifts in demography will necessitate changes; but active involvement by the City, business leaders, neighborhood groups, and advances in technology will result in a Benbrook which is safe, comfortable and an enjoyable place to live and work.