

6 | PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Public Health & Safety Principles

- PRINCIPLE 1:** Promote community well-being by designing Frisco’s neighborhoods, thoroughfares and public facilities so that residents can choose an active, healthy lifestyle.
- PRINCIPLE 2:** Provide access to walking and biking trails for people of all ages and physical abilities within and close to Frisco neighborhoods.
- PRINCIPLE 3:** Use Code Enforcement and the Housing Rehabilitation Program, which provide assistance to those with special needs—elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged persons—as part of the strategy for helping Frisco neighborhoods remain desirable over time.
- PRINCIPLE 4:** Use Code Enforcement and the Affordable Housing Division as tools to implement the City’s *Neighborhood Partnership Plan (NPP)*, including a focus on older neighborhoods, and evaluate the NPP every five years for its effectiveness and any needed updates.
- PRINCIPLE 5:** Continue to use the City’s annual inspection of multi-family units to ensure that apartments and urban living units are code compliant.
- PRINCIPLE 6:** Address the desire of all people in Frisco, including those with special needs, such as the elderly, disabled and economically disadvantaged, to live active lives and find the resources necessary to meet their daily needs.
- PRINCIPLE 7:** Identify services and programs that can help Frisco residents who are struggling meet their most pressing needs—transportation, affordable housing and mental health services—in an efficient and economical way.
- PRINCIPLE 8:** Train staff to work with applicants in the design of Frisco’s neighborhoods and business areas for safety using the principles of *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)*—a technique that uses design features such as fencing, lighting, open views and access control to deter crime and enhance the police department’s efforts to maintain a secure community.



Community Well-Being

For more than a decade, one of the Frisco City Council's *Strategic Focus Areas* has been to "... provide quality programs and services which promote community well-being," (see also, *Appendix A1, Strategic Focus Areas*). The concept of well-being is multi-faceted. It encompasses aspects such as health, happiness, safety, comfort and prosperity and focuses not only on the health of the body, but on the health of the mind and the fulfillment of the individual. The influence of a city on some of these factors is limited, but a municipality can directly affect others, (see also *Appendix A6, Public Health & Safety Services*).

The goal of public health should be not only to improve the physical condition of the people in a community—increasing activity levels, reducing the incidence of disease such as obesity and diabetes, encouraging smoking cessation—but also to create an environment for better economic and social conditions in a community— attracting employment and providing environments that encourage connections between people. The approach should be to focus on health rather than health care and to include strategies that not only make healthy options available, but make it easier for people to choose those options.

Since 2008, the Gallup polling organization and Healthways, a business that focuses on defining, assessing and improving health and well-being, have collaborated to create the *Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5* and the *Well-being Index*, measuring factors that contribute to how an individual perceives their daily life.³ In the *Well-Being 5*, well-being is defined to include:

Sense of Purpose

- Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

Social Connection

- Having supportive relationships and love in your life

Financial Security

- Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security

Physical Health

- Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

Community

- Liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community

The Well-being Index for the United States for 2013 is based on 178,000 surveys conducted on landline and cellular telephones, with interviews in both Spanish and English. According to the 2013 *State of Texas Well-being* report, also an initiative of Gallup-Healthways, Texas ranks 21 out of the 50 states in a composite scoring of factors related to well-being:

Life Evaluation

- Current life situation compared to the life situation anticipated 5 years in the future

Work Environment

- Factors related to a worker's feelings and perceptions of their work environment

Physical Health

- Related to Body Mass Index, disease burden, sick days, physical pain, daily energy, history of disease, and daily health experiences

Healthy Behaviors

- Lifestyle habits with established relations to health outcomes

Basic Access

- Access to food, shelter, health care and a safe and satisfying place to live

The Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington area received its highest score in the well-being measures related to Physical Health (top 20%) and in the Life Evaluation, Work Environment, and Physical Health categories (top 21-40% range). The lowest scores were achieved in the Healthy Behaviors and Basic Access categories, (see also *Appendix A2, Placemaking & Resiliency*).

3 <http://www.well-beingindex.com/>

Healthy Places

Deliberate, thoughtful community design and development can contribute greatly to the health and well-being of individuals and families. In 2013, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) published a report called *Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places*.⁴ This report includes a set of strategies for development aimed at improving the health of communities, their economies and the people who live and work within them. The 10 principles referenced in the title, and a brief explanation of each, are;

1. Put People First

- Individuals are more likely to be active in a community designed around their needs, *(see also Chapter 3, Place Making & Resiliency)*.

2. Recognize the Economic Value

- Healthy places can create enhanced economic value for both the private and public sectors, *(see also Chapter 5, Economic Policies)*.

3. Empower Champions for Health

- Every movement needs its champions

4. Energize Shared Spaces

- Public gathering spaces have a direct, positive impact on human health, *(see also Chapter 3, Place Making & Resiliency)*.

5. Make Healthy Choices Easy

- Communities should make the healthy choice the one that is SAFE—safe, accessible, fun and easy

⁴ <http://uli.org/wp-content/uploads/ULI-Documents/10-Principles-for-Building-Healthy-Places.pdf>



6. Ensure Equitable Access

- Many segments of the population would benefit from better access to services, amenities and opportunities, *(see also Chapter 9, Transportation/Mobility)*.

7. Mix It Up

- A variety of land uses, building types and public spaces can be used to improve physical and social activity, *(see also Chapter 3, Place Making & Resiliency and Chapter 4, Land Use)*.

8. Embrace Unique Character

- Places that are different, unusual or unique can be helpful in promoting physical activity, *(see also Chapter 3, Place Making & Resiliency)*.

9. Promote Access to Healthy Food

- Because diet affects human health, access to healthy food should be considered as part of a development proposal

10. Make it Active

- Good urban design can help create an active community, *(see also Chapter 3, Place Making & Resiliency)*.

Not every city can be true to all of these principles with every development, but watching for opportunities to encourage physical activity can make a big difference to people seeking a healthier lifestyle.

On its website, Smart Growth America states that “Many of the techniques that make communities more attractive and affordable places to live also make them healthier places. Streets that are safe and comfortable for walkers and bikers encourage people to get



more exercise as part of their daily routines. Having transportation options helps reduce traffic and air pollution, and preserving green spaces helps protect water quality while making communities more attractive...”⁵

- Reduce high blood pressure;
- Lessen the risk of osteoporosis and reduce arthritis pain, the risk of falls, and associated disability; and
- Reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Healthy Lifestyle

Active Living

Lack of physical activity and poor eating habits are leading causes of death and disease in the American population. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the *Journal of the American Medicine Association*, the publication *Health Affairs*, and Smart Growth America, more than one-third of US adults and 17% of children aged 2-19 are obese. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in 2008 was \$147 billion in total, \$1,429 per individual for people who were obese and in 2008, \$83 billion was spent caring for diabetes patients.⁶

Obesity can contribute to a variety of serious but preventable health-related conditions including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer. Physical activity can help minimize these conditions, and cities play an important role in encouraging physical activity among their residents by applying healthy community design techniques. Besides improving the chances for avoiding the diseases listed above, more activity can help people:

- Maintain a healthy weight;

⁵ Corrigan, Mary Beth, et al. Ten Principles for Smart Growth on the Suburban Fringe. Washington, D.C.: ULI – the Urban Land Institute, 2004. (Catalog Number T24.)

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Journal of the American Medical Association and the healthcare journal Health Affairs <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html> (Obesity Prevalence Map by State) http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/obesity_trends_2010.ppt (Obesity Trends)

Proper community design can help promote physical activity and well-being by:

- Accommodating active (human-powered) modes of transportation, such as walking, biking and skating;
- Presenting a variety of recreational opportunities for groups and individuals—active and passive; indoor and outdoor; urban parks and suburban open spaces; and
- Connecting people and their destinations with facilities such as bike lanes and American Disability Act (ADA)-compliant sidewalks and trails that encourage movement.

In Frisco, indoor and outdoor recreational options abound, and many of these activities create opportunities for league play or group participation so that they involve an element of social engagement as well. Examples of these activities include:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| • Walking | • Rock climbing |
| • Aerobics | • Ice hockey |
| • Basketball | • Skating |
| • Jogging/ Running | • Football |
| • Weight-lifting | • Golf |
| • Soccer | • Swimming |
| • Bicycling | • Baseball |



Healthy Food

Obesity and diabetes are major health problems in the United States and Texas is no exception. Many Americans, rushing to fit in all the activities of daily life, find themselves consuming more fast and processed foods and not getting the nutrition they need based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Farmers markets and backyard or community gardens can help supplement a household's food buying patterns, not only providing access to healthy, locally-grown food, but also creating opportunities for people who like to engage in these activities to make connections with others with similar interests.



Social Connection

Social connections (human interactions) are associated with both physical and mental health benefits—happiness, better health and a longer life. By contrast, isolation can contribute to depression, cognitive decline and even premature death. These characteristics can be particularly prevalent in the elderly and the disabled. A 2010 report on stress management from the Harvard Medical School states that social connections can help reduce stress, a major factor in heart disease, digestive disorders, insulin regulation and immune system response. It also notes that providing care for other people can result in the release of stress-reducing hormones in the caregiver.

Companionship, emotional bonding, and human connection can be experienced in a variety of settings:

- At home

- In the workplace
- In a café
- In the neighborhood
- At the playground
- At the community center
- At school
- At a church, synagogue, temple, or mosque
- At a concert or festival

The possibilities are nearly endless, but most of them have one thing in common: the connections occur in places, so to facilitate these interactions, the City should design these important spaces carefully. They should be people-oriented and for some pet-friendly. They should be safe and welcoming and accommodate persons of all ages and abilities. They should include greenery and seating and be walkable and connected to users.



Green Building

Since July 2007, all commercial and multi-family structures have been required to meet the City of Frisco’s Green Building Code, a set of regulations aimed at reducing water and energy consumption and protecting ecosystems. The Green Building Code was adopted for residential construction in 2001, and with the adoption of the commercial Green Building Code, Frisco became the first city in the United States to have a Green Building requirement for all types of construction. Among the objectives of the residential Green Building requirements are improving indoor air quality, increasing energy efficiency, encouraging the use of sustainable building materials and conserving water

As of late 2012, more than 7.7 million square feet of commercial space had been constructed using these standards, resulting in an estimated savings of more than 240 million gallons of water, the establishment of more than 230,000 square feet of bioretention area, and the planting of thousands of trees in Frisco. Since the adoption of the Green Building Code, permits have been issued for 20,793 single-family residential units, or 50% of the total single-family units in Frisco, and 6,020 multi-family and/or mixed-use residential units, approximately 56% as of September 1, 2014.



- Unsecured fences around swimming pools, which pose a particular threat to children;
- Accumulated debris, which is unsightly and can harbor rodents and vermin;
- Fences in need of repair, which can become dangerous and unattractive as well as ineffective as a barrier to unauthorized persons and activities; and
- Problems such as noise, traffic or the storage of hazardous materials which detract from the neighborhood environment and potentially endanger residents.

In addition to improving neighborhood appearance, and therefore property values, property pride and maintenance deter criminal activity. As buildings grow older and the population ages, maintenance will become more challenging, and Code Enforcement will play an even greater role in pre-empting deterioration and preserving the viability of Frisco’s neighborhoods. Residents should be advised of the City’s standards and Homeowners Associations (HOAs) can assist staff in its efforts to keep neighborhoods strong and stable. Reinvestment in infrastructure in the older parts of the community should be a priority so that these areas continue to remain viable. The City’s *Neighborhood Partnership Plan (NPP)* can be used as a tool for identifying infrastructure deficiencies so that plans can be made to address these situations.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement is an important part of the formula for creating successful, sustainable communities. The Code Enforcement Division is responsible for identifying and responding to violations on residential and commercial properties related to:

- Substandard or abandoned structures, which can become unsafe and attract vagrants and criminal activity;
- High weeds and vegetation, which detract from property appearance and compromise the integrity of neighborhoods;

Healthy Natural Environment

A healthy natural environment is an important component of a healthy community. Preserving, and even improving, the natural environment is a fundamental part of creating a sustainable place. Air, water and natural areas are all elements of the natural environment that impact human health and the quality of life for individuals and the community as a whole, (*see also Chapter 7, Ecology & Natural Resources*).

Air

Collin and Denton Counties are both classified as moderate non-attainment zones for 8-hour ozone levels by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Sunlight and high temperatures combine with nitrogen oxide (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) to affect the ozone in the atmosphere, and much of these greenhouse gases are attributable to automobiles and traffic congestion. Reducing NOx by making slight changes to driving behavior and cutting down on the miles traveled by gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles can be effective in the fight to reduce air pollution, and traffic improvements such as intersection widenings, free-moving right-turn lanes and proper signal timing can help move traffic more efficiently, reducing the emissions that cause health problems, particularly for people with respiratory problems. Ride sharing, using transit and modes of travel other than the automobile and choosing alternative fuels can also have a positive effect on air quality.

Walking and bicycling also have the side benefits of reducing commuting costs and increasing activity levels, which may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, and preserving and planting desirable healthy trees reduces temperatures and removes airborne particles and gaseous pollutants from the atmosphere.

Water Supply and Quality

Water concerns fall into two categories: water quality and water supply. Clean drinking water is a basic requirement for human life. Both surface water and ground water are subject to contamination from pollutants in the air; pesticides and chemicals used in lawn maintenance, swimming pools and industrial processes; animal waste; and multiple other sources. Bioretention areas can be established to collect stormwater in ponds and use soils and plants to help filter out pollutants and sediment to improve water quality.

Frisco is one of 13 member cities in the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), which provides water to more than 1.6 million people in 61 cities, towns, utility districts and water supply corporations in the North Texas area. All of Frisco's drinking water is supplied by NTMWD. In recent years, the District has asked its member cities to implement restrictions on outdoor watering and continue to emphasize water conservation measures. As a result of the City's commitment to water conservation, between October 2013 and September 2014, when the District's Stage 3 drought restrictions were in effect, water usage in Frisco was reduced by 33.6%, significantly more than the goal of a 10% reduction.

Other water conservation initiatives sponsored by the City include educational programs and a weekly *WaterWise newsletter*, a rain barrel pilot program and free sprinkler checkups, (*see also Chapter 7, Ecology & Natural Resources*).

Natural Areas

Natural areas within Frisco, such as creek corridors and groves of trees, if properly preserved and sensitively improved, can provide benefits to the population by filtering pollutants from the air and providing recreational opportunities and access to nature. Swales and bioretention areas can help by removing some of the impurities in the runoff from streets and parking lots and the chemicals used in lawn and pool maintenance.

Human Services

The City of Frisco Social Service and Housing Board, which administers the CDBG program and the Social Services Fund, conducted a series of focus groups in 2013-2014 that identified three major challenges facing the Frisco population:

- Transportation;
- Affordable housing; and
- Mental health services.

The first two issues—transportation and affordable housing—pose particular problems for the elderly, the disabled and economically disadvantaged households and may affect a person’s ability to enroll in school, hold a job and meet life’s most basic needs. The third—the need for mental health services—creates problems across all age groups and social and economic classes.

Transportation

Presently, there is not a full-service, fixed-route public transit system in Frisco, but the City is discussing options for alternative modes of travel as part of this planning process, *(see also*

Chapter 9, Transportation/Mobility). TAPS Public Transit currently provides limited service in Frisco including on-demand service, transportation to and from McKinney to the DART station at Parker Road in Plano and to and from Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport and Love Field in Dallas from a Park & Ride lot in McKinney. TAPS is also the provider of approved non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid, Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) and Transportation for Indigent Cancer Patients Program (TICP) members. Fares vary by destination and monthly passes are available at a reduced rate with additional discounts for seniors (age 60+) and disabled persons.

The western portion of the City is in Denton County. Frisco is a member city in the Denton County Transit Authority, but DCTA does not currently provide service to Frisco, *(see also Chapter 9, Transportation/Mobility)*.

Housing

There is an ample supply of quality housing in Frisco, but it may be difficult for some individuals and families to find an affordable home, *(see also Appendix A6, Public Health & Safety Services pp.*



148-149). The median sales price of a home in Frisco is more than \$300,000,⁷ and median rents are approximately \$1,200 per month.⁸ One of the programs explored by the City offered first-time home-buyer assistance for employees of the City of Frisco and Frisco ISD; however, home prices in Frisco have made it difficult for some to qualify, even with down payment assistance, and no applications have been approved. In 2015, the City Council adopted the Social Services Board's recommended changes in the eligibility guidelines for the Frisco ISD/City Employee Homebuyer Incentive Program, making them consistent with the new FHA loan guidelines. This may make the program more effective for people wishing to live in the City.

The *Housing Rehabilitation Program* is another part of the formula for creating and maintaining a successful, sustainable community (see before and after photos below). As Code Enforcement identifies substandard properties, the Housing Rehabilitation Program is notified and responds by contacting the homeowner. If the property is owned by an income eligible individual, the Housing Rehabilitation Program will address the residential property violations.

Mental Health Services

Mental disorders can include a variety of illnesses, and once these conditions become chronic, they may interfere with a person's ability to function on the job and at home. Better access to mental health facilities in Frisco could improve the quality of life for the individuals and the families affected.

⁷ City of Frisco, Housing and Grants program
⁸ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey



Other Services

Besides the three issues identified as most critical by the focus groups, other needs include:

- Child care for working families;
- Job training for the unemployed or those with obsolete skills or a plan to reorient their careers;
- Senior services, which can range from nutrition programs to housing rehabilitation or social services;
- Health care resources (preventive, routine, and emergency); and
- Shelters for emergency situations (domestic violence, homelessness, natural or man-made disasters).

These needs have been noted by Frisco officials and their partner agencies, who will continue to explore solutions to address them in an efficient and economical way. City officials, staff and their local partners have unique insight into the challenges faced by the people in their communities and the resources available to assist them.

Public Safety

The perception of safety is important to current and future residents, businesses and visitors to a community. The portfolio of public safety services provided by the City of Frisco includes:

- Crime deterrence, response and investigation;
- Fire prevention, suppression, investigation, rescue and medical transport; and
- Emergency management, disaster planning and emergency response training.

Police, Fire and Emergency Services

In terms of criminal activity, Frisco, like many suburban cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, experiences mostly property-related crime. Frisco Police officers work with neighborhoods, apartment managers and business security officers, all of whom assist the Department by observing and reporting suspicious behavior.

As the population continues to grow and vacant properties develop, more officers will be needed and more space will be required to house them. The desire of the Police administration is to maintain most departmental functions at the headquarters location in central Frisco, which may need to be expanded as the force grows. There may be an opportunity in the future, however, to locate a “police storefront” in certain mixed-use areas in the city. The Fire Department will continue to build new fire stations as development occurs, and Fire officials would like to design new stations so that they blend in with the character of the surrounding area.

Both Police and Fire plan to continue working to build bridges with the community and to partner with schools, faith-based organizations, cultural organizations, homeowner associations and other institutions and organizations to learn how to respond more effectively to the differences in language and cultures represented in the increasingly diverse Frisco community. The Departments are also beginning to anticipate changes in the number and type of service calls that may occur due to the aging of the population.

Community Design

Police officials and Development Services personnel agree that they want to be more proactive in implementing *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)* in the future. CPTED is a set of community design principles aimed at deterring criminal activity. Certain design features or combinations of features play a role in reducing the opportunity for crime, including:

- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Signage
- Open views
- Access control
- Surveillance equipment
- Activity centers

CPTED: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Use of design techniques to reduce the opportunity for crime



Figure 6-1: CPTED

Source: Omaha by Design, Omaha, NE

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