

A6 | PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICES

Introduction

For more than 10 years, 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*). Community well-being involves a number of attributes, but one of the most important ones, and a key factor in the location/relocation decisions of both individuals and industry, is public safety—protecting people and property from danger, injury, harm, or damage. The government typically assumes much of the responsibility for public safety by preparing for, responding to, and mitigating the damage to a community from unsafe events and conditions, whether they are caused by natural or human-made forces. Forty-six percent of Frisco's General Fund budget for 2014-2015—approximately \$27 million for Police and nearly \$26.5 million for Fire—is allocated to public safety expenditures, a clear indication of the city's commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment for the entire Frisco community.

But the concept of well-being involves much more than safety. It also refers to a sense of health, happiness, and financial and other security, and while the city's role in helping an individual or an entity achieve some of these goals may be limited, it is clear that all of them will be easier to achieve if the context of the community is supportive.

Public Safety

Police Services

Frisco's Police Department consists of more than 200 employees spread across several divisions, all of which work side-by-side to keep Frisco safe.

Those divisions include:

- Administration
- Personnel/ Training;
- Community Services;
- School Resource Officers;
- Evidence and Property;
- Records;
- Investigations;
- Communications;
- Traffic;
- Special Operations;
- Detention; and
- Patrol (95 officers; nearly half of the force).



The Department was first accredited in 2008 and was reaccredited in 2011 and 2014 by CALEA (Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation).

The mission of the Frisco Police Department is to resolve problems, to reduce crime and the fear of crime, to provide a safe environment for all of Frisco, and to promote the responsibility of each individual in maintaining their own safety. The Department also emphasizes the role that community involvement can play in creating a safe environment.

As with many suburban cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Frisco experiences mostly property-related crime—burglary, theft, arson, vandalism. Crimes against persons—murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault—represent less than 5% of all offenses reported. An officer spends about 40% of his or her time responding to calls and the remainder in community outreach activities. The goal of the Department is to achieve a response time of six minutes in emergency situations and

seven to eight minutes for non-emergency calls.

There is currently one police station in Frisco, centrally located on Stonebrook Parkway at Parkwood Boulevard. The station is the headquarters for all police operations except the School Resource Officer (SRO) division; SRO personnel work from the schools to which they are assigned. The police station also hosts the city jail, a crime laboratory, and training facilities. Plans are to maintain all police operations except SRO in a single facility, but an assessment may need to be performed to determine how the station can be expanded to accommodate additional officers, more training space, and other functions as the population of Frisco continues to grow. The existing building includes 85,000 square feet of occupied space and 10,000 square feet of area for future finish-out. The site should be able to accommodate up to 125,000 square feet of building area.

The Frisco Police Department has been particularly quick to adopt new technology to help deter and respond to criminal incidents. Examples include the application of license plate recognition technology to help identify stolen vehicles and the use of social media to inform and connect with citizens and the business community.

The Department has been focusing on developing partnerships with neighborhoods, businesses, schools, and other government agencies to improve their effectiveness. A variety of outreach programs help connect officers with the people they serve, including:

- Presentations to civic and leadership groups;
- City Hall 101, a program designed to acquaint citizens with the workings of their local government;
- Frisco Community Awareness Night (C.A.N.), a local program comparable to National Night Out;
- Safety Palooza, a community event held in conjunction with Baylor Medical Center's health fair;
- Citizen Police Academy;
- Citizens on Patrol, a neighborhood crime watch program;
- The Junior Police Academy and High School Police Academy;
- Presentations to civic and leadership training groups; and
- Attendance at special events.

They have also established crime watch groups oriented towards workplace and apartment complex crime.

Fire and Emergency Management Services

The mission statement of the Fire Department is to "...protect lives, property and the environment from the adverse effects of fires, illness, accidents, natural disasters, other hazards by promoting public safety education and maintaining a well-equipped and highly trained and motivated workforce of professional firefighters and rescue personnel." With the addition of personnel to staff the city's newest facility, which opened in January 2015, the



Department consists of approximately 200 persons in:

- Administration;
- Community Education;
- Training;
- Fire Prevention;
- Emergency Management; and
- Fire Operations, the largest division, which makes up nearly 90% of the force.



There are currently eight fire stations in Frisco, the newest having opened in January 2015. All have been strategically located to provide coverage to neighborhoods and commercial properties as they have developed over the years. With new construction and an increasing population, the Department envisions potentially 12 to 13 stations, depending on the type and density of future development. The time required to design and build a fire station is approximately two years, assuming the land is already owned by the City. If not, land acquisition could add another year to the overall process, and since fire stations are typically funded through bond sales, it is important to plan ahead.

In addition to fire control and fire suppression, the Department provides fire inspection services and Fire-based Advanced Life Support (ALS) pre-hospital medical care and transport. In addition to the ALS Transport Medics, each fire engine is staffed with paramedics and approximately 90% of the fire-fighting force has paramedic certification. In addition, there is a CareFlite helicopter and crew in place at Fire Station 4 (Legacy Drive at Cotton Gin Road) in the event of a need to transport an individual to a Specific Trauma Center or in cases where ground transport is restricted.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls represent about 60% of the Fire Department's total call volume, a figure that is likely to increase

as the population ages. The Department currently meets the goal of a Total Response Time of six minutes, including call processing, turnout and travel time. Maintaining this response time will require that appropriate equipment and personnel will be available when the need arises. Taller buildings may require special apparatus designed to reach higher floors, and response times may increase in the future if it takes longer to make contact with occupants in the upper portions of a building.

Specialized equipment currently owned by the City includes an AMBUS (ambulance bus), which can accommodate up to 26 patients on stretchers and/or wheelchairs in the event of a mass casualty, and a C-COM mobile command vehicle, which is outfitted to serve as a back-up or alternative dispatch/Emergency Operations Center. The City plans to purchase a Mass Casualty Vehicle (MCV) with grant funding. This MCV will be available to transport materials and equipment to the site of a large public gathering for triaging patients in the event of an emergency.

The Frisco Fire Department was recertified in 2013 as a Class 1 (best; exemplary) department. This is a rating from the Insurance Services Office which indicates the highest level of readiness by the local fire protection service on the basis of personnel, facilities/equipment, water systems, and communications. This rating has been given to only 56 cities in the U.S. and only 14 in Texas. The Frisco Fire Department has been rated Class 1 since 2001.

The Department plans to continue its emphasis on training and developing relationships with other cities and partner agencies in the region. In 2009, the Frisco Fire and Emergency Services Departments, Frisco Police Department, Frisco Independent School District, and the Frisco Information Technology Department instituted a cooperative program called SAFER (*Situational Awareness for Emergency Response*). This program gives Frisco emergency responders instantaneous access via mobile computers in their vehicles to:

- Live video of school hallways and common areas;
- Interior, exterior and aerial photographs of school facilities;
- Building plans;
- Information on the location of hazardous chemicals stored in the building; and
- Contact information for school officials.

Additional connections to the community are being made through outreach efforts including:

- Presentations to civic and leadership groups;
- City Hall 101, a program designed to acquaint citizens with the workings of their local government;
- Citizen Fire Academy;
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which trains individuals to be better prepared in the event of an emergency in their neighborhood;
- Frisco Fire Clowns, who visit schools and attend community events;
- Attendance at block parties and other neighborhood gatherings;
- Station tours and special events; and
- Fire Safety Town.

Fire Safety Town is a fire and hazard safety training facility designed especially for pre-kindergarten through fifth grade children. More than a quarter-million people visited Fire Safety Town in its first seven years of operation. The center is located at the Central Fire Station.

A city’s Emergency Management Plan describes the role of various individuals, departments, and outside agencies in responding to a crisis. A good Emergency Management Plan will address not only incident response and disaster recovery, but also include a strategy for emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation. An emergency can be caused by severe weather or a hazardous incident and can involve limited groups of people or large gatherings. In any of these circumstances, the Emergency Management Plan will be the City’s guide in

times of a disaster. Frisco’s plan was developed with input from all City departments and is reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

The City’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is located at the Central Fire Station and includes a video wall and an array of information and communications systems—telephone, television, radio, email, video conferencing—to monitor National Weather Service bulletins, roadway conditions, local media, radio frequencies, and images from cameras in the field. The City also utilizes the CityWatch Community Notification system to send out alerts in the event of a hazard other than a weather-related incident, such as a serious traffic incident, major interruption of water or electrical service, an Amber Alert for a missing child, or a similar crisis. At present, the system is available to all residential and commercial telephones with land lines; the Department is evaluating the possibility of extending the service to cell phones as well.

A separate system of 35 outdoor warning sirens is activated when there is a threat of severe weather. The weekly testing of system performance includes a daily internal silent test, an audible test once a week, and full activation once a month. This testing confirms that the sirens are operational and audible to people who might be outdoors when severe weather approaches. As the community continues to build out, the system will be expanded to include more sirens.

Public Health

The City Council’s goal of promoting community well-being, a priority for more than a decade, will involve more than maintaining a safe environment. Improving public health is a relatively new priority as a stated goal for most communities, but it is clearly a part of well-being. While individuals and families are still primarily responsible for maintaining their own health, local governments can contribute by adopting an overall approach to community planning that promotes a healthy lifestyle. This approach

can address a variety of issues ranging from working for cleaner air and water for current and future residents and businesses to creating and accommodating activities that encourage physical movement and social interaction among the people who live, work, and play in Frisco, (see also Chapter 6, *Public Health & Safety*).

There are a number of development techniques that can contribute to a healthy lifestyle. These relate mostly to providing opportunities for people to be more physically active and to use forms of transportation other than the automobile. Reducing automobile trips can affect not only the physical health of an individual who decides to walk or bike to a destination, but can also have less impact on the natural environment. By burning less fossil fuel, the air can become cleaner, and the pollutants in the atmosphere that are transferred to the earth as a component of rain do not reach the ground and flow into the rivers, lakes, and ground water that are a source of drinking water for Frisco residents.

There are other important ways that a city can encourage physical activity. The Frisco Athletic Center (FAC), just east of Preston Road between Lebanon Road and Wade Boulevard, is a tremendous asset for residents interested in healthy living and social connection. The facility provides 160,000 square feet of space, including:

- Gymnasiums and racquetball courts;
- Classrooms, a dance/aerobic studio and fitness areas;
- An area catering to children up to age 7 and a separate room for children 8-12 years of age;
- Indoor and outdoor aquatic centers and a water park; and
- Men's and women's locker rooms and a family changing suite.

The City has made a significant investment, not only in the construction of the FAC, but also in staffing, maintaining and updating the building and its furnishings and fitness equipment since its opening in 2007. Approximately 800,000 people of all ages visit the FAC annually to

participate in individual and group activities.

Providing recreational facilities and programs and requiring parkland and open space to support new development are not new ideas, but including specific requirements in development codes, particularly those that integrate uses and apply certain design techniques to create pedestrian-oriented places such as Frisco Square, can yield both physical and social benefits. These may include providing wide sidewalks, attracting uses that draw patrons and visitors, creating outdoor gathering spaces, and connecting people with the places they want to be via bike lanes and ADA-compliant sidewalks and trails.

Another technique that can help build healthy places is *Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)*, which applies certain principles to site design to help reduce the opportunity for criminal activity, (see also Chapter 6, *Public Health & Safety*). These principles include, but are not limited to, the use of building and site features such as fencing, lighting, access control, and other means to help discourage crime. Developing neighborhoods that focus on people rather than automobiles increases social interaction, and as people get to know their neighbors and build connections there are more “eyes on the street” and increased vigilance improves security. Personnel in both the Development Services and Police Departments have been trained in CPTED and can evaluate designs for their conformance with these principles with the goal of creating safer—and healthier—neighborhoods, workplaces and recreational areas.

Code enforcement is another part of the formula. Properties that are well-maintained and code-compliant are likely to hold their value and be more sustainable and safer in the long-run.

The availability of adequate health care services in, or within reasonable distance of, a community can be a selling point to new residents and businesses and is clearly one of the attributes of public health. In Frisco, there are three hospitals. One—Centennial Medical Center—offers the full array of services most hospitals

are assumed to provide, including emergency, in-patient, out-patient and surgical services. Baylor Frisco provides maternity services, but neither it nor Forest Park Medical Center has the ability to accept trauma patients that arrive by ambulance. Approximately half of those patients are transferred to a hospital in McKinney or Plano. Current Medicare regulations do not permit a patient to be transferred by ambulance to a minor emergency center.

Nonetheless, being located within a large metropolitan area, the citizens of Frisco do have better access to health care than people in many parts of the state and, indeed, many parts of the country. These services may simply not be located as conveniently as many would like at this time.

Housing and Social Services

The City of Frisco’s Social Services and Housing Board, established in 2002 and assigned greater responsibilities over the years, is appointed by the City Council. The Board administers funding from two sources for the benefit of low- and moderate-income families and individuals in Frisco—the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the City’s own Social Services Fund.



CDBG funds are targeted towards low- and moderate-income households (below \$54,000 in annual income for a family of four) for purposes of:

- Revitalizing housing and neighborhoods;
- Improving community facilities and services; and
- Expanding economic opportunities.

Specific projects funded under the CDBG program include:

- Rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes, particularly repairs and accessibility improvements for the elderly or disabled;
- Homeless prevention and transitional living programs;
- Programs for abused children;
- First-time homebuyer programs for City of Frisco and Frisco ISD employees; and
- Food/Nutrition programs.

The City’s Social Services Fund, which is derived from the General Fund on the basis of a \$1 per capita formula (approximately \$143,000 for 2015), is allocated to a variety of non-profit agencies providing support to low- and moderate-income individuals and households in Frisco with services such as:

- Health care and counseling;
- Child care;
- Nutrition programs for the elderly;
- Housing and homeless assistance; and
- Other support programs.



Grants are awarded by the Board based on proposals from the agencies seeking funding. In order to better identify the type and scope of the issues facing Frisco, the Social Services and Housing Board conducted a series of focus groups involving numerous non-profit, educational, government, religious, and social service agencies over the course of nine months in 2013-2014. The goal of this effort was to determine the needs, trends, and obstacles to meeting the basic requirements of Frisco's low- and moderate-income households. Three major issues emerged from the focus group discussions:

- There is a need for transportation services to connect people with their destinations in Frisco and nearby cities, particularly the elderly and disabled, but also individuals who need transportation to work in order to remain self-supporting. More options for transportation to and from jobs, medical and other appointments and to access basic services was the number one need identified in the focus group process.
- It has been a challenge for many individuals and families to find affordable housing in Frisco.
 - According to the American Communities Survey, 39% of the renters in Frisco are housing-cost burdened, paying in excess of 30% of their monthly household income for housing and utilities.
 - In the 2013-2014 school year, 204 students in the Frisco Independent School District (FISD) were classified as homeless.
 - A local Frisco agency was able to assist 37 people (13 families) with housing during the first nine months of Fiscal Year 2013-2014.
- There is a need for mental health resources to serve the Frisco population. Mental illness can affect households of all types and descriptions and can further complicate other existing and underlying problems. Local facilities often operate at full capacity, making it difficult at times

to find assistance for individuals who have immediate needs.

In the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2013-2014, Frisco Family Services (FFS) assisted 995 individuals with food. FFS relies largely on donations for their supply of fresh and packaged food, but through a partnership with the City of Frisco, they also have access to fruit and vegetables from the FFS Community Garden. This garden, which is tended by volunteers, sits on a quarter of an acre of land at First Street and Ash Street owned by the City. FFS distributes the fruits and vegetables produced in the garden to Frisco residents in need.

City staff has recently begun partnering with other area agencies—Denton County Homeless Coalition, Collin County Homeless Coalition, Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance Board—on programs aimed at addressing homelessness and continues its association with a variety of other non-profits and organizations to tackle the issues facing the most vulnerable citizens of Frisco.

The changing demographics in Frisco will continue to affect the community and its resources. The number of elderly persons is growing, and these individuals often need specialized housing and services. The diversity of ethnic and cultural groups is broadening as well. Persons of Asian descent, for example, currently constitute the fastest-growing minority in Frisco. The multitude of different customs, traditions and languages brings new dimension and richness to the fabric of the City and presents new and interesting challenges.

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