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## **Council Member — District 3**

### **Jack Thomson**

#### **Denton in 2025**

#### **My Dream**

Interviewed by: Jack Thomson, with Sheree Turner

It was the two universities in a smaller town that brought the Thomson family to Denton in 1993. Ten years later, Jack Thomson was elected council member for District 3.

"My wife, Sue, and I liked the quality of life, which is engendered in a university and smaller-town atmosphere," explained Thomson.

One of Thomson's early assignments as a new council member was to imagine Denton in the year 2025. What would the city be like? What amenities would it have that are not in existence today? Thomson imagined himself looking around the city 22 years from now, and this is what he envisioned.

"Now that Denton has a quarter of a million people in 2025, I am gratified to find that the universities have indeed grown and prospered in ways that I had not envisioned in 2003. The University of North Texas has added a law school and a medical school to go with the existing research park and engineering school. Their incubator has spawned nanotechnology companies, which have found homes in a northwest Denton business park. Texas Woman's University has continued to grow and its physical therapy forte has been extended to include biomedical technology.

"The creative aspects of Denton are apparent everywhere. Music venues, community festivals, and specialty films are well attended. Denton is renowned as the Jazz Capital of Texas. Frequent music and drama events performed by community and university folk are on the cusp. Denton is an invigorating and vital place to live.

"As a result of solid effort, there is diversity in ethnic backgrounds, but all work together in harmony for the common good. The downtown has been revitalized. When townhouses were built around the Square, several people moved downtown to occupy them. Denton is a friendly and truly welcoming place for all.

"In the evening, it is wonderful to see the sidewalk cafes jammed, with music playing and people debating politics. Fun and friendly laughter abound. A Conference Center has been built, which brings people to the fine hotels, B&Bs, wonderful boutiques, and hometown crafts companies that are close to the downtown area. Civic Center Park is inviting with a shallow lake for model sailboats and a few swans.

"Denton is very ecology-minded. Bike and walking paths wind all around town and they are well used. Denton has even provided orange and black bikes for people to ride for free. Several bike garages are available in the downtown area and at the train stations.

"One hundred percent of Denton residents participate in the recycling programs and the City employs an environmental protection person. The air is much cleaner because of the new hybrid or hydrogen cars, which everyone uses in Denton; and since almost every resident works in Denton, they walk or ride their bikes to work.

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"Partnerships between the City, the universities, the Chamber of Commerce, and the school district have made for excellence in all areas. No child is left behind. There are numerous recreational activities for young and old so there are no drug problems to speak of. The churches respect one another and work together to help others.

"The transportation network is amazing. A train can get you to Dallas or Fort Worth in 30 minutes and they are never late. You can travel to McKinney or Decatur from the transportation center downtown or from the University of North Texas. Also, the highways all pass under or over the rails so there are no train whistles as they whoosh through town at night. The main highways have two lanes for trucks and two or more for cars.

"Economic development has been furious! People want to live in Denton so much that the City Council will only invite clean industries with better-paying jobs to locate here."

Returning to the present, Thompson contemplates his town.

"Denton is a safe and healthy place to live," he says. "I hope to see these dreams come to pass."