
Mayor Euline Brock

Message from the Mayor, September 5, 2003

Interviewed by: John Cabrales, Jr.

Greetings, Denton residents of the year 2025. At the time this is being written, September of 2003, it is my honor to be Mayor of this wonderful community as we create this time capsule. We have been asked to write our dreams of what Denton will be like in the year 2025, when this capsule is opened. I am hoping that our dreams of today will all come to fruition and will be everyday reality for those of you living in Denton in 2025.

Community

Denton has a population of over 300,000. We have many knowledge-based businesses and industries that provide exciting, high-level jobs. As a result, we have a highly educated population and higher-than-average household income. We are a self-sufficient community, providing residents with all the goods, services, and activities they need or want within our own city limits; there is no need to drive elsewhere for shopping, eating out, or finding arts and recreation. There are nodes of mixed-use development throughout the city, creating a sense of neighborhood and belonging and also reducing traffic and its resulting pollution. We are a walkable community, and numerous linkages of hike/bike trails, green space, bike lanes, and mass transit make it possible for a citizen to reach any destination within the city without getting in an automobile.

Transportation

Numerous major street and highway improvements have taken place by 2025, including the rebuilding of I-35 in a way that unites rather than destroys neighborhoods. The University of North Texas (UNT) north and south campuses are connected by broad bridges and walkways over I-35, which runs along underneath. The western segment of Loop 288 has been completed down to I-35W, and there are several four- to six-lane corridors running through the southern part of our city connecting I-35E and I-35W; all of these new roadways have safe and inviting provisions for pedestrians and bike riders. We have numerous transportation options available, including free shuttle buses in the central city and mass transit connections to other cities in the region and beyond.

Downtown

Much of our community's activities are centered around our busy and very attractive downtown area. The downtown has built on its historic past by adding compatible high-end townhouses and four- to six-story, mixed-use buildings on the streets surrounding the traditional Courthouse Square. These buildings consist of retail and restaurants on the ground floors, offices and workshops on the intermediate floors, and residences on the top floors. There are numerous venues for after-hours entertainment; clubs that showcase our jazz artists and other musicians create a lively and eclectic atmosphere — one where families as well as trendy young professionals and artists feel at home. Live theater flourishes, building on the tradition established by performing arts groups in the Campus Theatre. We have several small plazas in the downtown area, reflecting the strong Latin heritage of the Southwest, as well as small parks. Public art can be seen everywhere, from murals and sculpture to architecturally interesting building facades and decorated benches, trash receptacles, and manhole covers. There is a conference center and a nearby hotel in the downtown area that attract numerous meetings each year. There are also several museums and art galleries, including a Jazz Hall of Fame and a joint museum for Texas Woman's University's (TWU) First Ladies' gowns and the famous UNT Fashion Collection. Sidewalks and streets in the central downtown area have been designed so that the entire area invites walking, strolling, lingering — i.e., enjoying the sense of community that only a vibrant downtown can create.

Housing

Denton has a diverse range of housing types and prices scattered throughout the city. We can find high-end townhouses, large lot homes, courtyard-type homes, and nodes of mixed-use development. Our homes are architecturally diverse as well, with different periods and styles found in the same neighborhood. Denton residents have continued earlier efforts to preserve and enhance the structures built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. North of Loop 288, one can find higher-end housing, including some large-

lot housing, and some residences built around a beautiful golf course. Adding to the water park and sports facilities built early in the twenty-first century, a hockey arena and family ice-skating rinks are among the North Denton amenities. Farther north are an equestrian arena and horse stables.

Arts and Festivals

We have continued our commitment to the arts by placing public art in our parks, business districts, and other public areas, following a Public Arts Master Plan. This art celebrates Denton and Texas artists and is a magnet for tourists. The city's investment in public art has inspired businesses to invest in public art as well. We have also expanded the number and types of festivals taking place in our city. We have created several green spaces throughout the city where these festivals take place, but the Jazz Festival is the city's signature event. Our Civic Center Park continues to be the place for many festivals but now has a small lake in the park that is connected to a waterway built from our enhanced creek, according to plans developed in the early years of this century. There are walkways and public art located along the waterway. Restaurants and entertainment venues have also developed along the waterway. But public art can be found everywhere in Denton, especially in the medians of the rebuilt University Drive. Denton's commitment to public art enhances its reputation as an arts community in a major way.

Universities

Both UNT and TWU have established themselves as outstanding educational and research institutions in Texas, in the United States, and indeed around the world. The students from both universities are more involved in Denton because of the increased shopping and entertainment opportunities. Regional rail service has helped the universities get their students to campus, and Denton's walkable community, bike paths, and arts centers have also worked as an attraction for students. The UNT Research Park is fully developed and the College of Engineering is highly recognized. The TWU College of Nursing has enhanced its reputation by forming partnerships with Denton's large medical centers. The City, Chamber of Commerce, and the universities have formed many successful partnerships that have resulted in the attraction of knowledge-based businesses and research funding.

School District

The Denton Independent School District is recognized as one of the best public school systems in Texas, with highly educated parents moving to the community just to take advantage of its outstanding programs. Among these are the dual-language program and the International Baccalaureate program. They have developed a strong partnership with the City on numerous projects including providing nature experiences, education and research programs, and conservation and restoration projects at the Clear Creek Natural Heritage Center.

Regional Leader

Denton is truly a regional leader and is one of the three most important cities in the metroplex. We are a community with distinct character, being a regional center for retail, employment, medicine, education, entertainment, sports, and the arts. We are known as the creative and intellectual capital of North Texas.

Denton is a dynamic and distinctive city, but we need to continue to work together with vision and determination to create a bright future for all of Denton's residents. Our City Council, City Manager, and other city leaders must continue to plan for the future of Denton and work together to reach these goals. I challenge each of you to take a moment and write down your dreams of what you would like Denton to be like in 2050, and get involved to help make your dreams come true.