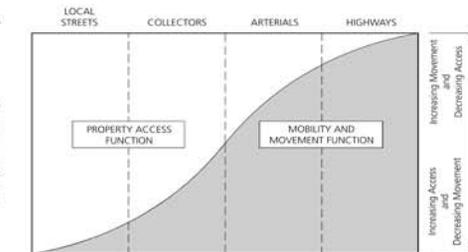
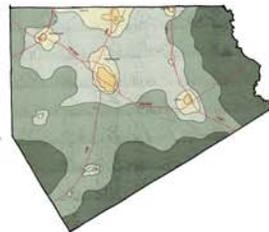
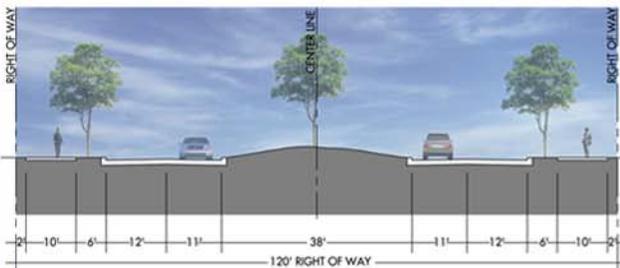


ELLIS COUNTY THOROUGHFARE PLAN

JUNE 2007

HNTB HNTB Corporation
The HNTB Companies
Engineers Architects Planners





REPORT OUTLINE

Executive Summary.....	2
Background/Community Profile.....	3
Purpose.....	4
Goals and Objectives.....	5
Current Thoroughfare System.....	6
Mobility vs. Access.....	7
Land Use and Economic Development.....	8
Coordination with Incorporated Cities.....	10
Functional Classification System.....	10
Regional Thoroughfare Plan.....	12
Metropolitan Transportation Plan.....	12
Future Thoroughfare System.....	13
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	16
Project Team.....	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan serves the entire County. Besides addressing various modes of transportation, the county-wide plan focuses on the thoroughfare hierarchy and roadway system character or design. The County's thoroughfare plan is long-range, planning for the thoroughfare needs for the next 25 to 30 years. To ensure its success, the plan focuses on soliciting public input and fostering cooperation with local cities and towns.

The planning process used to update this plan focused on public input, which consisted of stakeholder interviews, community forums, information from local cities and towns, and Commissioners' Court presentations. The project commenced on July 18, 2005, with Ellis County staff and planners with HNTB conducting several stakeholder interviews to gain a sense of the County's needs, values, and challenges. The stakeholders' responses provided planners a better understanding of the growth and development issues impacting Ellis County as well as identifying those qualities of the County's character valued by residents. Key issues and unique sub-issues mentioned included the following:

- Funding (for maintaining and improving existing roadways and also for future thoroughfares)
- Preservation of right-of-way (ROW) for future roadway improvements
- Accommodating projected growth anticipated for the County
- Challenges of a large geographic area

- In the northern third of the County, a strong east-west roadway network
- Extending the thoroughfare grid network from Dallas County into Ellis County
- In the southern third of the County, maintaining the County's rural character but with minor alterations to the roadway network
- An expanded and well defined radial roadway network centered on the county seat

The information gathered in the stakeholder interviews helped planners in developing the format for the three public meetings in late January and early February 2006. The three public meetings were held at the following locations:

- Red Oak City Hall, Red Oak, Texas
Monday, January 30, 2006
- Maypearl High School, Maypearl, Texas
Tuesday, January 31, 2006
- Ferris City Hall, Ferris, Texas
Thursday, February 2, 2006

The three meeting sites were chosen based on their geographic location from east to west in the County, their facilities' availability, and the convenience to the local population. The format for the meetings included maps generated for discussion, identifying issues concerning growth in the County as well as in the local cities and towns, the need to foster economic growth, and identifying early-on "hot button" issues concerning the County's local character and heritage. A majority of the discussions were focused on three important issues for Ellis County with several key discussion points:



Mobility and Access

- Improved east-west connections across the northern portion of Ellis County
- Enhanced north-south connections out of Dallas County and into Ellis County
- Alternative routes or bypasses around congested downtown areas
- Greater regional access
- Improved connections between Ellis County cities

Roadway Facility Hierarchy and Design

- Lack of a road classification system
- Safety and maintenance
- Roadway design and character
- ROW dedication
- Separation of vehicles and trains along railroad corridors

Land Use, Economic Development, and Maintaining the County's Country Character

- Growth and development
- Importance of Midway Regional Airport as an economic generator
- Balance between amount of development desired and maintaining County's country feel
- Rules, regulations, and rates
- Need to incorporate transit

These key discussion points were analyzed and incorporated into the draft plan map. A presentation of the draft plan map was conducted on August 24, 2006, before the County Commissioners and open to the public at the Ellis County Courthouse in Waxahachie, Texas, to solicit further input and address any questions.

The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan is broken down into 12 sections:

- Background/Community Profile
- Purpose
- Goals and Objectives
- Current Thoroughfare System
- Mobility vs. Access
- Land Use and Economic Development
- Coordination with Incorporated Cities
- Functional Classification System
- Regional Thoroughfare Plan
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Future Thoroughfare System
- Conclusions and Recommendations

BACKGROUND/COMMUNITY PROFILE

Ellis County is a culturally-rich rural Texas community. Located just south of Dallas County, the population and employment hub of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, Ellis County appears to contain a wide spectrum of diversity. Many residents are lifelong Ellis County citizens, while others have chosen to relocate from the urban environs of the Metroplex.

According to the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) 2006 Current Population Estimates, Ellis County is experiencing strong growth in the rapidly growing North Texas region. Since the 2000 Census, NCTCOG shows Ellis County added 26,790 people, which accounts for 19.39 percent of the January 1, 2006 population estimate of 138,150 people. Based on NCTCOG's estimates, Ellis County recorded a population growth rate of 3.14 percent between the January 1, 2005 revised estimate and January 1,

2006 estimate. During that same period the entire nine-county Dallas-Fort Worth urban area experienced a population increase of 2.78 percent. During this one-year period five major cities in Ellis County accounted for growth rates higher than the County's population growth – Red Oak (12.32 percent), Oak Leaf (7.14 percent), Midlothian (5.79 percent), Palmer (5.41 percent), and Waxahachie (5.33 percent). All five communities are either located in the northern third of Ellis County or are located along interstate highways radiating out from Dallas County.

The northern third of the County is experiencing strong growth that is quickly changing the character of the County. Residential rooftops, schools, churches, and commercial developments are springing up on land that once held farms and ranches. County roads that were once sufficient for a rural-based economy are not capable of handling the increased traffic burdens generated by new bedroom communities. To address the County's growth pressures on the thoroughfare system, the Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan will aid in identifying current deficiencies and future thoroughfare needs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a thoroughfare plan is to assist County officials, County staff, planners, citizens and developers in preparing for and accommodating future growth in the County. The Ellis County Commissioners' Court recognized the tremendous amount of growth potential in the County within and surrounding the established incorporated cities. Typically the individual cities will have a thoroughfare plan and associated policies and ordinances to ensure the thoroughfare system is built in an efficient manner that respects the land uses of an area. Outside of the incorporated portions of the County, development pressures are both driven by and influence thoroughfare decisions. Having a county-wide thoroughfare plan is

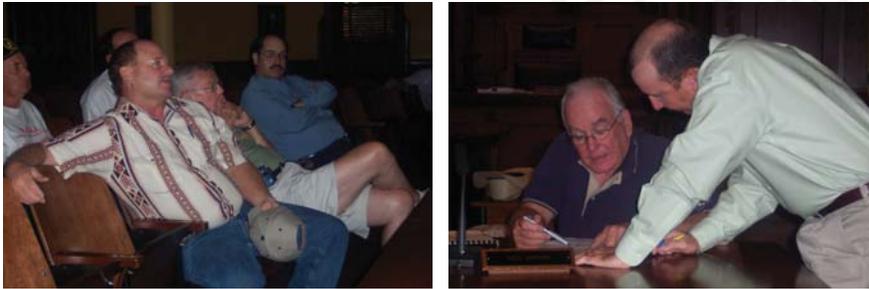
essential to the orderly development of the remainder of the county. Together with a coordinated land use element, the future thoroughfare system grows as the community grows. Some development patterns lead to inefficiencies in the thoroughfare system. It is important to make sure the thoroughfare vision matches closely with the growth vision of the County.

The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan provides elected officials, County staff, residents, and investors a document that identifies mobility needs, a thoroughfare hierarchy, and a framework for identifying and protecting the County's character. Along with the Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan Map, this document includes text describing the planning process and plan graphics ranging from conceptual connections to typical roadway cross sections. This document will help decision-makers anticipate future growth in the County, address health and safety concerns focused on emergency service needs, and serve both residents and investors in fostering economic growth within the County. Besides being a resource for the County staff in their coordination with Ellis County cities and towns, the county-wide plan is an important tool in discussions with state agencies, neighboring counties, interested investors, and regional planning agencies.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted on July 18, 2005, in a vacant storefront across the street from the Ellis County Courthouse square. Planners with HNTB's Dallas and Plano offices conducted each individual interview with the County Judge and the four County Commissioners. Also in attendance was the County Planner for Ellis County. The same questions were asked of the County Judge and each County Commissioner. The stakeholder interview questionnaire contained 24 questions. The questions were grouped

into four categories – (1) Community Profile, (2) Future Growth and Economic Development, (3) Current Thoroughfare System, and (4) Future Thoroughfare System. The stakeholder interview questions were not developed to provide any statistical results, but were instead crafted to give planners a basic understanding of the growth and development issues impacting Ellis County, the county’s residents and investors, and to get a sense of what makes Ellis County special. HNTB will use the answers to the questions to get a general sense from the County officials of the major issues facing the county over the next 25-30 years



Starting with a clean slate, the information gathered from the stakeholder interviews provided planners a good basis for understanding the issues confronting elected officials, County staff, residents, and investors within Ellis County. Among the five stakeholders interviewed there were several common issues that kept coming up, but also there were some unique concerns.

The most common issue focused on funding, both for maintaining existing roadways as well as addressing roadway improvements. Those interviewed expressed frustration regarding funding limitations, the lack of funding alternatives, and stretching the limited funds available to meet the growing demands for maintaining existing roads and improving congested roadways. ROW issues for future roadway

improvements were also a common concern as more land is making the transition from agriculture to being developed for future residential rooftops. Another common issue was the recognition that there was a large area to cover, whether it was for each Commissioner’s district or the County as a whole.

The geographical size of the area also revealed some unique issues concerning the differences in growth and development within such areas. While it was agreed that the northern third of the County was experiencing strong growth and development and the southern third remained rural, how to address these issues varied. A strong east-west roadway network linking the major highways (Interstate 35 E, Interstate 45, and US Highway 67) in the northern third of the County was considered important, but also extending the existing thoroughfare grid network in Dallas County further south into northern Ellis County was seen as an advantage. Also expressed was that the southern third of the County maintain its rural character, but with a slight alteration to the roadway network concerning access, safety, and goods distribution. Despite the pressures of urban growth entering the County, many thought a radial roadway network focusing on the County Seat of Waxahachie needed to be expanded and better defined.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

While not adopted in any formal manner, the goals and objectives have been developed from the information provided by County staff as well as the elected officials during the stakeholder interviews. In addition to that, the project team solicited ideas on the County’s goals and objectives as they relate to the thoroughfare plan.

Anticipation of Growth

- Properly prepare for the growth that is inevitable in Ellis County, especially the northern half of the County

Addressing Needed Capacity

- Identify key facilities needing added capacity within the 20-year planning horizon

Right-of-Way Acquisition and/or Preservation

- Work with existing property owners and active developers to establish the necessary ROW for ultimate thoroughfare facility needs

Preservation of Character

- The citizens desire to have a portion of the county remain rural with very low density

Thoroughfare Funding Options

- Identify potential funding resources the County could tap into now and in the future to bring needed thoroughfare improvements to fruition
- Maintain the existing system

Roadway Design Standards

- Develop a set of roadway design standards that the County could adopt as policy for guiding how new-location roadways will be built, as well as identifying how existing roadways should be expanded, improved, or rehabilitated

Integrated with City Plans

- Ensure the plans of the municipalities with the County are consistent and compatible with the County's thoroughfare plan.

CURRENT THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM**Strengths**

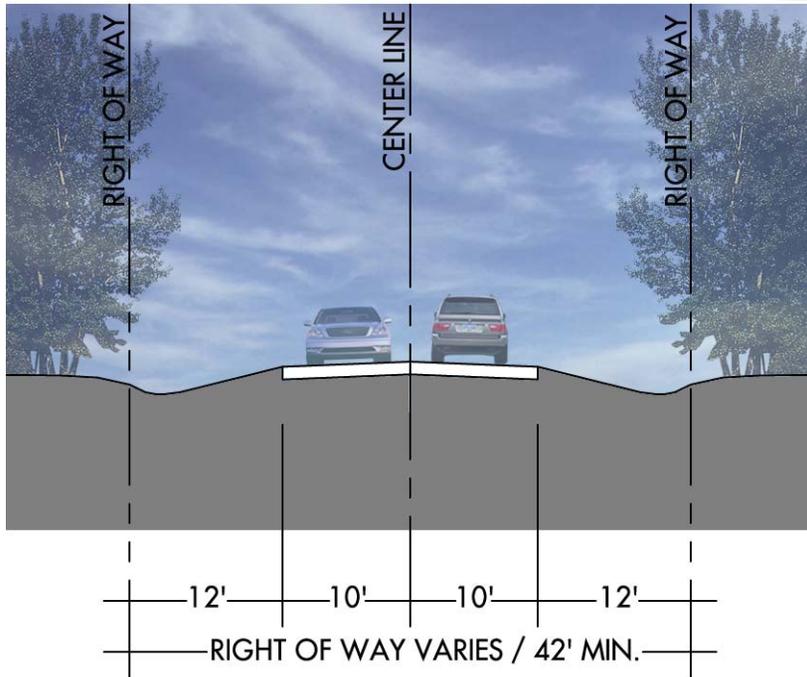
In identifying the strengths of the current thoroughfare system, one has to acknowledge the major facilities crossing the County. These are IH 35E, IH 45, US 67, and US 287. These critical facilities are true assets in the County's thoroughfare system. These facilities connect Ellis County to literally all points in the state. IH 35E, part of the North American Free Trade Agreement network of highways, connects Mexico with the Dallas/Fort Worth area through Ellis County and then to points north up to the Great Lakes region. IH 45 connects the Gulf of Mexico including Galveston Bay and the Houston ship channel with the Dallas/Fort Worth area through Ellis County and other points using US 75 or other facilities. US 67 connects Ellis County to central Texas and on to southwest parts of the state. US 287 crosses the county connecting the three previously mentioned facilities to each other, but also connects Ennis to Waxahachie and Midlothian within the County as well as to Grand Prairie, Arlington, and Fort Worth northwest of the County.

Weaknesses

There are also lots of opportunities for improvements on the existing thoroughfare system. Identified in the stakeholder interviews and/or the public meetings was several key connection points within Ellis County. For instance, not all communities or parts of the County were connected well with Waxahachie. A key north south movement between Midlothian and Maypearl was identified, as was the lack of necessary east-west capacity in the northern part of the County. For now, the County is completely automobile dependent. As future growth and development occurs there will be a greater need to plan

and provide alternative choices of movement and land stewardship for public health and safety, such as a trails and greenway network and seeking opportunities to connect with transit initiatives being planned in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

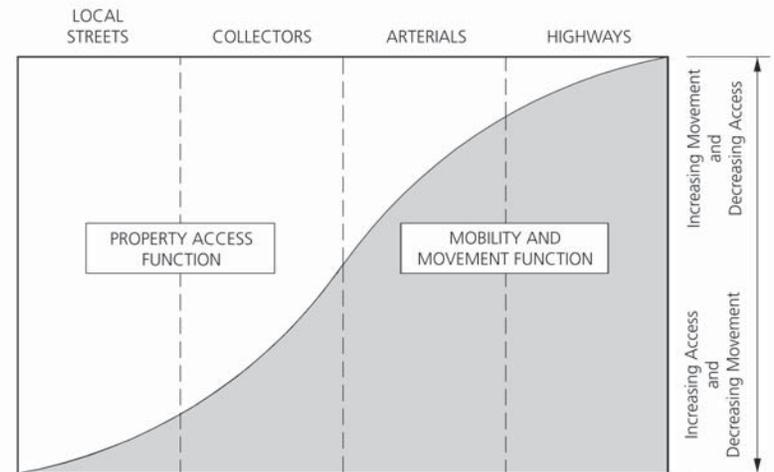
properties and developments. Generally, the higher the measure of mobility of a particular roadway, the lower the access will be. Likewise, roadways having a high degree of access will have a very low degree of mobility. This is portrayed in the following graph.



Existing Typical County Road

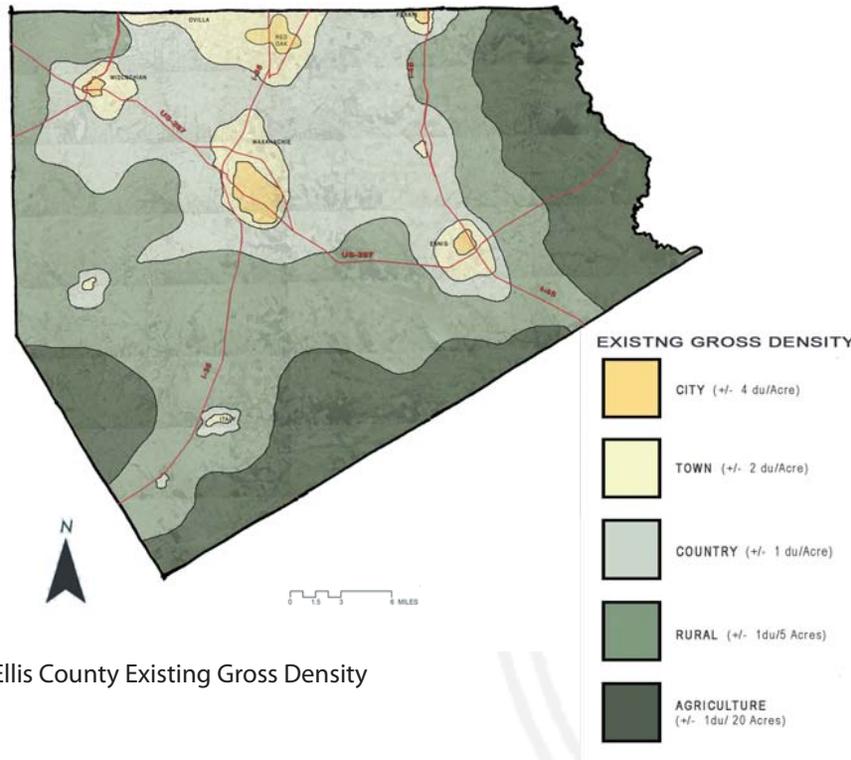
MOBILITY VS. ACCESS

It is important to understand the balance of needs of the thoroughfare system in terms of mobility and access. Mobility here is defined as the ease with which one can travel from one place to another. Access describes the connections from the thoroughfare system to adjacent



Mobility vs. Access

Speed, capacity, safety, and efficiency are all significant components related closely to mobility and access. These principles are used to functionally classify the existing roadway network but they also inform the planning process regarding the development of new-location roadways. This helps to ensure that access points, ROW needs, and other roadway characteristics are considered prior to the construction of new facilities. ROW only gets more expensive as time passes and as growth continues to occur. Without proper ROW preservation activities in place, it is likely that key thoroughfare corridors will be closed to future improvements.



Ellis County Existing Gross Density

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The needs of a thoroughfare system are intertwined with an area’s land use and economic development. Land uses in an area represent the development patterns taking place in that area, while economic development focuses in job creation and enhancing an area’s tax base. A well planned thoroughfare system should provide access to an area’s land uses as well as support an area’s economic growth.

Existing land use data does not capture all of Ellis County and the County does not have a future land use plan to help direct its growth

and development. During the development of the Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan planners had to observe aerials to determine the County’s existing growth characteristics and verify this information during three public meetings to have some understanding of the County’s thoroughfare system before moving forward with the plan’s development.

Land use shares a balance with thoroughfare in defining the activities for a given area. This interrelationship becomes important for local and regional planners since most thoroughfare models have a built-in attraction factor between where people live and where they work and/or conduct certain activities in their lives. The attractiveness between two areas requires some link or connection – roadway, rail line, sidewalk, trail - usually defined in a thoroughfare network.

Land use represents the activities taking place on the land and its impact on an area. Land uses can be general descriptions, such as residential, commercial, institutional, agricultural, and open space. The need for more specific descriptions of land uses takes on a greater role as an area becomes more built-out and populated, most notably in cities and regions with higher densities. For example, the description used for residential land uses could be further defined as low density residential, medium density residential, and high density residential; while an institutional use could be further broken down into educational, religious, hospitals, museums, and government centers.

Economic development also has a stake in an area’s thoroughfare system. The sophistication of an area’s thoroughfare system can shape an area’s growth and development – the more developed the thoroughfare network the greater the chances the area will attract major transfer facilities, employers and businesses wanting to take advantage of the access and proximity to suppliers and markets.

Economic development is important for the retention and creation of local jobs. These local jobs will likely be filled by existing citizens or attract new residents to live in the county, who in turn will likely spend their paychecks with local merchants. Local jobs for local residents also has the add benefit of keeping travel to a minimum and using local thoroughfare routes in an efficient manner. This should help cut down travel time and have a positive impact on air quality resulting in an improved ‘quality of life’ for local citizens. Another benefit that economic development provides for the local citizenry is building a commercial tax base, that in turn helps offset the property tax burden shouldered by residents.

Until recent years, Ellis County’s growth and development has been localized in the cities of Ennis, Midlothian, Ovilla, Red Oak, and Waxahachie with the majority of the land area in the County being rural or vacant. Land use patterns for most of the County’s towns and cities focused on a commercial ‘Main Street’ or downtown square with local streets and highways radiating outward to close-in residential areas and outlying farms and ranches. Economic development was also localized, benefiting from the County’s proximity to the dominant counties of Dallas and Tarrant to the north but not being part of the urban fabric of its northern neighbors.

Looking forward, Ellis County will be significantly different in the years ahead. According to NCTCOG 2030 Demographic Forecast, Ellis County’s population is expected to quadruple between year 2000 and 2030, while its employment is expected to more than triple. By 2030, Ellis County is forecasted to have 448,588 people living in the County and 162,769 jobs in the County.

To appreciate what this influx of people and development can mean, all one has to do is consider the strong growth experienced by several North Texas counties north of Dallas County. In the 30 years prior

to their 2000 census, some counties saw their population expand anywhere from four to six times their 1970 population levels. These counties features employment centers at major highway crossings, major retail centers at key intersections, and public institutions such as medical centers and educational facilities near highways to serve the greater population. These facilities either support or are supported by the thousands of residential rooftops that make up a large majority of the developed land area. To handle all this growth these counties and their communities have found – sometimes through trial and error over time – it is best to work together to manage their growth. In addition, communities that have comprehensive plans developed through extensive community input and consensus provide a stronger foundation for managing their growth based on community values. This is important in preventing run-away development and encouraging sustainable development practices that reflects the resident’s needs and desires. Such considerations will be important in understanding the growth and development patterns that are possible in Ellis County’s long-term patterns of growth.

Most of Ellis County growth will be in proximity to its shared border with Dallas County, the dominant county on the eastern side of the region, and the major highways radiating out of Dallas – IH 35E, IH 45, and US 67. Anticipating and managing this growth and development will be a challenge for Ellis County’s northern towns and cities, the County’s elected officials and the County staff. For Ellis County decision makers, residents, and investors the future role of the County in the region could define if Ellis County will be a commuter county to Dallas and Tarrant Counties or whether Ellis County will provide sustainable growth for its residents and investors that fosters a balanced growth in the North Texas region.

COORDINATION WITH INCORPORATED CITIES

It was considered a necessary and critical step to ensure the Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan took any and all municipal plans into consideration. In addition, it is likely that new or yet-to-be-defined boundaries and borders between communities have led to conflicts between the neighboring entities in the identification and designation of thoroughfare facilities. While the County’s thoroughfare plan is not intended to resolve border conflicts, key connection points between cities will need to be identified and solutions recommended for regionally-significant roadways.

Plans were obtained from many of the incorporated municipalities including Cedar Hill, Ennis, Glenn Heights, Grand Prairie, Mansfield, Midlothian, Oak Leaf, Ovilla, Red Oak, Ferris, and Waxahachie. These plans were used to tie key regional or county-wide facilities into the cities and towns. The municipal plans will have a much finer network of roadway facilities identified as they will typically include the lowest of functional classifications, local streets. Ellis County’s thoroughfare plan is focused on the identification and designation of significant roadway facilities in the principal, major, and minor arterial classifications. This provides more flexibility to developers and municipalities to determine how the layout of local streets directly relates to the specific development. The County’s thoroughfare plan is more concerned about major traffic movements from such developments or clusters of developments to other parts of the County or to points outside the County via higher classification of roadways.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The most defining characteristic of a county thoroughfare plan is the hierarchical classification of the various facilities and their relationship

to other facilities. Each layer or system of a certain classification of roadway is stitched together to create a network of interwoven fabric.

Functional Classification	Mobility	Access	Typical Spacing
Interstate Highway	Very High	Very Low	Greater than 5 miles
Freeway / Tollway	Very High	Very Low	5 to 10 miles
Principal Arterial	High	Low	1 to 5 miles
Minor Arterial	Medium	Medium	0.5 to 2 miles
Collector	Low	High	Less than 0.5 miles
Local Street	Very Low	Very High	Less than 0.25 miles

Existing Freeways

One of the most valuable assets to the citizens of Ellis County is the network of existing freeways. This classification of thoroughfare facility tends to include regional highways built as high capacity facilities intended to carry high volumes of longer distance trips, and are a regional supplement to the arterial system. They usually consist of limited or highly controlled access. Some of these facilities have been improved since they were originally built, while other facilities are either undergoing reconstruction or are planned to be reconstructed due to outdated standards of safety, over capacity, and/or wear and tear related to age. These highways are under the jurisdiction of regional, State, or federal agencies. However, the County does have input regarding how these agencies design future improvements to these facilities.

Among these freeway facilities are IH 35E, IH 45, US 67, and portions of US 287. The first three freeways radiate from a hub around Dallas’ central business district, while US 287 radiates from downtown Fort Worth. Each facility provides linkage to other communities in the County as well as cities in the region. These existing freeways handle significant volumes of traffic.

Proposed Freeways

Proposed freeways are likely to be regional highways recommended for construction to either link together existing freeway facilities or provide higher capacity due to growing demand within the County and throughout the region. Like existing freeways, proposed freeways usually consist of limited or highly-controlled access. One proposed freeway - US 287 – is a recommendation to upgrade an existing thoroughfare facility and would link together portions of the existing freeway sections to form one continuous freeway corridor. Other proposed freeways would be new extensions developed to relieve anticipated travel demands resulting from regional growth, such as South Loop 9 and SH 360. The FM 157 is being proposed as a potential future freeway corridor that would serve as a further extension of SH 360 and as a reliever route for IH 35E.

Like the existing freeways, proposed freeways are under the jurisdiction of regional, State, or federal agencies, but the County does have a say on how these various agencies design these proposed facilities. Of the four proposed freeways noted above, only US 287 radiates out from a central city hub. The other proposed facilities either move traffic around the metropolitan area or directly through suburban locations.

Principle Arterials

Within Ellis County a number of principle arterials are anticipated to handle a higher capacity of traffic due to County and regional growth. The main function of principle arterials is to provide for continuity and high traffic volume movement between major activity centers (local employment and commercial centers, regional highway with limited intersection access, etc.) Property access is a low-to-medium level

priority with an emphasis on limiting the location of driveways and groups of curb cuts that access this thoroughfare type. These arterials are usually divided to provide space for future left turn or through lanes once traffic conditions warrant. Hence, some arterials will contain four travel lanes, two in each direction with a wide median, and others will contain six travel lanes, three in each direction with a median.

Principle arterials can fall under the jurisdiction of regional, State, or municipal entities, but the County does have input on how these various organizations design these facilities. State highways and farm-to-market roads that have been identified as principle arterials include SH 34, FM 66, FM 660, FM 663, FM 664, FM 879, FM 878, FM 916, FM 1387, and FM 2377. In addition, some existing County roads will assume a greater role as principle arterials as portions of Ellis County urbanize.

Minor Arterials

The minor arterial's primary function is to collect and distribute traffic from local access streets and unimproved roads in the County to the principle arterials or existing freeways. These roadways move moderate amounts of traffic volumes and provide limited access to adjacent properties. Minor arterials supplement the principle arterial system and existing freeway network. In more urbanized or highly dense sections of the County, the spacing between minor arterials and some principle arterials ranges from one mile to a mile-and-a-half distance, while in areas with low population density and greater rural activity the spacing can vary from two miles up to five miles and even greater.

Property access is a medium level priority with an emphasis on limiting the location of driveways and groups of curb cuts that access

this thoroughfare type. In urbanized areas minor arterials are usually divided with a median to provide space for future left turn or two through lanes in each direction where traffic conditions are warranted. In rural locations minor arterials should contain sufficient ROW for two travel lanes with one in each direction, spacing for both a left turn lane and a right turn out lane, roadway shoulders and broad grassy setbacks for the roadway.

While a facility's cross-section is part of the defining elements of its functional classification, it is not the only characteristic. The concept of functional classification is a descriptor of the function the facility serves, more than it is a guideline of how a facility should look. However, the two are not mutually exclusive. For safety, efficiency, and effectiveness purposes, there are cross-sections and other features of the different classifications that allow the roadway to function as intended. Some of these characteristics are number of lanes, lane width, shoulder width/type, median width/type, drainage type (open ditch, enclosed storm water sewer system, etc.) building setbacks, presence of bike and pedestrian accommodations, curvature, frequency of driveways, frequency of intersections, types of intersections (at-grade or grade separated), on-street parking (parallel or angled head in), and spacing with other facilities of the same classification.

REGIONAL THOROUGHFARE PLAN

The NCTCOG is responsible for the development of the Regional Thoroughfare Plan (RTP) for the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan planning area. About one-half of Ellis County is in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan planning area. The county and city thoroughfare plans are used by NCTCOG staff to inform the development of the regional thoroughfare plan. Some counties within the planning area have established policies that relate to funding eligibility and how a roadway is functionally classified on the regional thoroughfare plan. Federal funding eligibility is related to the regional functional

classification system established by Texas Department of Transportation and approved and adopted by the US Congress. While there is a relationship between the two, the regional thoroughfare plan is much more flexible with respect to what is allowed to be classified. The federal functional class system has actual mileage constraints by functional classification. The RTP has no such constraints. For the development of the metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) the RTP is used as the arterial component. Therefore it is critical for the county to be able to communicate plans and needs to the NCTCOG staff through the development of the RTP and the MTP. Therefore, this plan, once adopted, will be transmitted to the NCTCOG staff for use in the development of the modeling networks for the Mobility 2030 Plan currently underway.

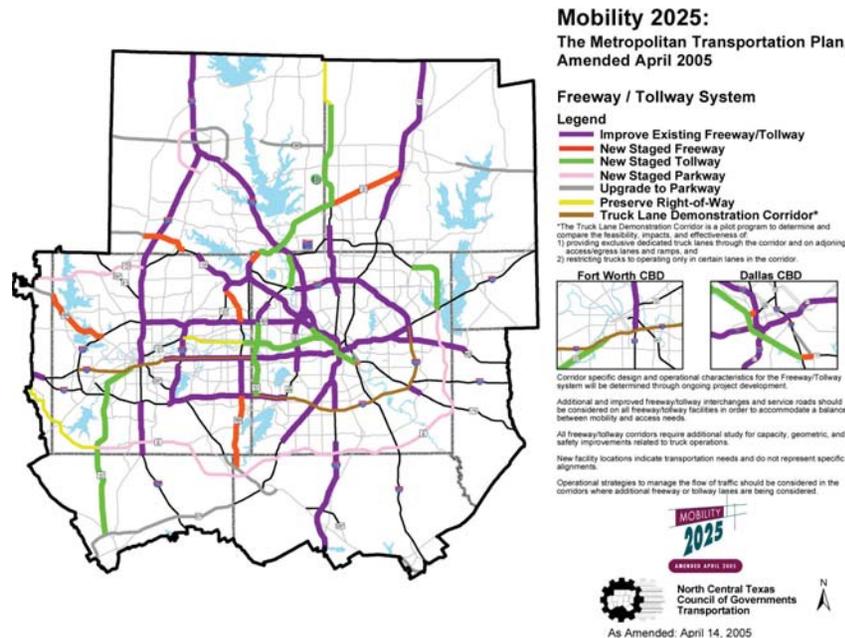
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The MTP is the defining vision for thoroughfare decisions for the entire Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan Planning Area. The NCTCOG staff, and the Regional Transportation Council (RTC) as the policy-making body for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for developing, updating, and maintaining the MTP. The MTP is required by federal law to be financially constrained. That means that all recommended improvements in the 20-year plan must fit within the reasonably anticipated financial resources available during the same time frame.

The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan is a valuable vehicle for communicating the County's thoroughfare vision to the remainder of the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This plan informs the region what the County desires their thoroughfare system to evolve into. The MTP will contain those improvements expected to be completed within the 20-year planning horizon of the MTP. Since the Thoroughfare Plan has no financial constraint, it is valuable to set a future focal point for the County. As the MTP must be updated every three or four

years, the County has multiple opportunities to alter how the regional plan reflects the County’s vision. The Thoroughfare Plan gives Ellis County the opportunity to establish its own future.

One of the most important components of the MTP is the freeway and tollway recommendations. These are found on the following map.



The Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Freeway / Tollway System

This map contains recommended improvements including widening existing roadways as well as new location freeway and tollway facilities. In Ellis County, there are two major facilities being planned as either a freeway or a tollway. These are the SH 360 extension and the South Loop 9 corridor. SH 360 is a north-south facility that will improve connections from the County to the heart of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex and the Dallas/Fort Worth airport. South Loop 9 is an east-west facility proposed along the northern border of the County

with Dallas County. This facility is envisioned as part of an outer loop that may eventually encircle the entire metroplex. The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan takes these facilities into consideration when determining thoroughfare spacing and future functionality of both existing and proposed roadways.

The MTP also contains recommendations for other thoroughfare improvements including High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, Managed Lanes, bike and pedestrian facilities, and transit initiatives. One of the most important aspects of the 2030 MTP is the regional transit recommendations. Currently the region is debating how to deliver necessary rail expansions throughout the area. By providing an expanded rail system to the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, mobility would be greatly improved for people and goods in addition to aiding in improving the regional air quality. Ellis County should continue to participate in and closely monitor the regional transit initiative to determine its impact on the County’s thoroughfare system.

FUTURE THOROUGHFARE SYSTEM

Elements/Modes

Typical elements or modes of a thoroughfare plan include the various ways and means for people and goods to be transported from one place to another. Modes would include walking, biking, drive-alone, shared-ride (as either passenger or driver), transit, truck, freight rail, air, and even pipeline. For Ellis County, we have elected to focus on the roadway elements including automobile and truck.

The County has existing freight rail lines currently serving existing industry and distribution hubs. There is uncertainty regarding the future of commuter rail in Ellis County. This thoroughfare plan does not contain specific transit recommendations other than to suggest that the County continue to participate in regional transit discussions.

Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan



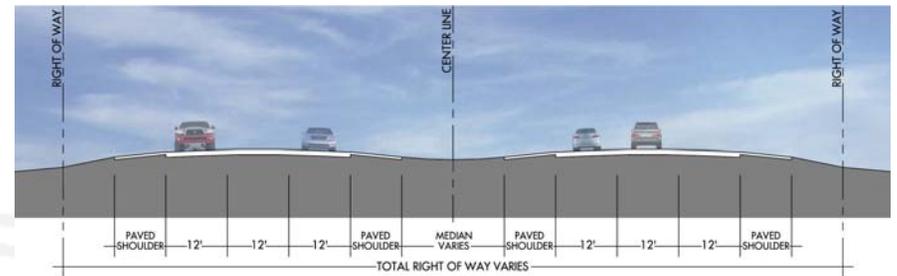
Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan

As the air quality issues become increasingly difficult to solve, the region will be forced to turn to non-automobile modes to assume a higher profile position than today. Since there are a lot of Ellis County residents commuting into Dallas and Tarrant Counties on a daily basis, it is likely they are experiencing trip lengths that are higher than the average commute trip length. That fact alone could cause the MPO to focus on efforts aimed at reducing the per person vehicle miles of travel (VMT). NCTCOG data has shown that our average daily VMT continues to rise each year. However, the alarming metric is that the average VMT per capita is also continuing to rise.

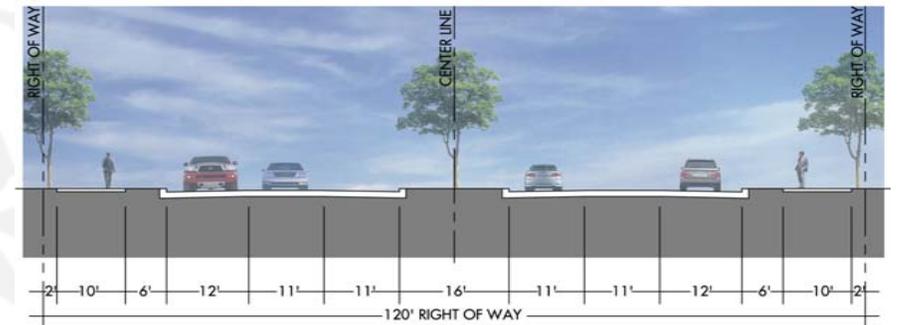
Ellis County is already contributing to clean air in the Dallas/Fort Worth area by participation in the vehicle emissions inspection program. Future updates to this thoroughfare plan should take a close, comprehensive look at potential travel modes other than the private automobile to further reduce the reliance on the personal auto, to reduce the volume of fuel used, and to reduce the overall emissions from autos which is one of the primary causes of the area's air quality problems.

Typical cross-sections

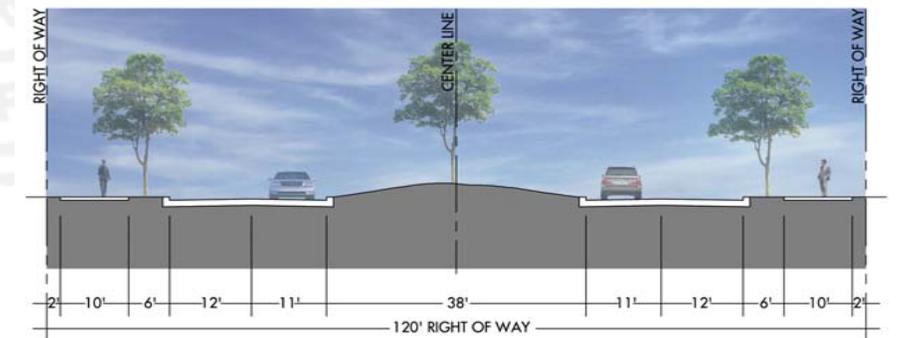
Typical Cross-Sections depict roadway characteristics such as ROW widths, lane widths, number of lanes, type and width of medians, etc.



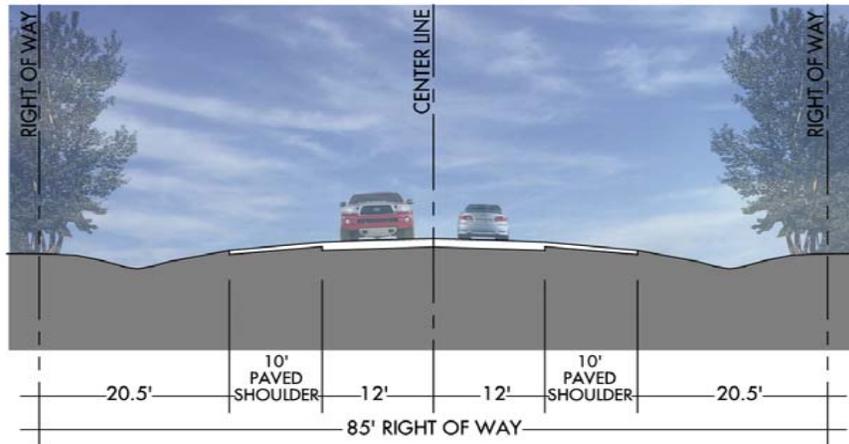
Freeway



Principle Arterial-
Six Travel Lanes Divided



Principle Arterial-
Four Travel Lanes Divided



Minor Arterial-
Two Travel Lanes Undivided

successes that can be afforded the citizens of Ellis County by having a well planned thoroughfare system that encompasses the growth goals of the County cannot be overstated. This plan establishes a starting point in time upon which future thoroughfare decisions may be based. The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan must be revisited to ensure its continued utility and effectiveness. This Plan should be reviewed every five to ten years to first determine if an update is necessary or not. There may be times of minor updates due to changes in a variety of factors and these should not be taken for granted. Most thoroughfare plans are updated at least every 10 years.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the process of the development of the Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan it has been apparent that there is interest from the public and elected officials to participate in the process and influence the outcome. We have placed a tremendous amount of weight in the things learned during the stakeholder interviews and the public meetings in developing recommendations in the plan.

The Ellis County Thoroughfare Plan map represents the convergence of all the ideas, hopes, desires, and expectations voiced throughout the development of the plan. The result is a thoroughfare system map that is intended to guide the development of the roads but also inform the planning process of land development. This is where the connection to land use and thoroughfare can be successful or a total failure. The lack of ensuring an adequate thoroughfare system for specific developments has a host of potential negative outcomes. Likewise, the

PROJECT TEAM

Ellis County Citizens

Ellis County Commissioners' Court

Judge Chad Adams

Commissioner Dennis Robinson - Precinct 1

Commissioner Bill Dodson - Precinct 2

Commissioner Heath Sims - Precinct 3

Commissioner Ron Brown - Precinct 4

Former Commissioner Larry Jones - Precinct 2

Ellis County Staff

County Engineer - Joe White, PE

County Planner - Clyde Melick (Project Manager)

County Planner - Barbra Leftwich

HNTB Corporation (Consultant)

Jerry D. Holder, PE

Scott Forbes, PE

Michael W. Copeland, AICP (Project Manager)

Robert Prejean, AICP

Scott Gussick, ASLA

Andrew Morgan