

VISIONING BONHAM, 2017-2025



6/16/2017

Produced by Texoma Council of Governments

VISIONING BONHAM, 2017-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bonham Vision Plan, facilitated by Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG), was initiated by the City of Bonham, the Planning and Zoning Commission and BEDCO. The project team, Steering Committee, and stakeholders had numerous meetings and public forums to review data and maps, to engage in SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) exercises, as well as focused Values and Visioning sessions. The process of visioning enables the community to define the future they want while identifying and incorporating community assets and understanding where improvements are needed. Visioning is an important tool for community and economic development that assists cities in preserving what works while preparing and addressing needs for the future. The plan analyzes several areas including annexation, parks and greenspace, housing, Infrastructure (broadband, transportation networks, water, and sewer capacity), workforce, and zoning, all in light of projected & planned growth. This plan is not designed to serve as a comprehensive review or plan, but rather an overview that will allow prioritization by the implementation team. The plan produced several strategic initiatives that will be addressed by an “Implementation Committee” appointed by Bonham City Council. At that time the next steps (goals, actions, metrics, responsible parties and more) will be discussed.

Vision Statement

The City of Bonham, Texas, will continue to be a place where history is valued, where there is a sense of pride of place, and where diversity is embraced. In order to bring this about, the City will:

- Encourage a vibrant, sustainable economy, including both retail and industry, and will actively pursue opportunities that produce stable, well-paying jobs;
- Facilitate downtown revitalization, as well as active retail and business corridors;
- Work together with its citizens to produce safe neighborhoods where families and neighbors are valued;
- Value greenspace, parks, and recreational areas to promote the overall health of the City, and will incorporate this value in all projects and plans; and,
- Plan for and embrace change and growth to provide the optimal quality of life for the people of Bonham. Zoning and annexation will be strategic, and in accord with these values and this vision.

Strategic Initiatives

- Capitalize on the courthouse restoration (Historical Downtown)
- Create and maintain recruitment, marketing and restoration plans for downtown
- Review and strengthen code enforcement and maintain cooperation between code enforcement and Planning & Zoning
- Create an infrastructure committee to address current and projected growth; review challenges/solutions related to growth
- Commit to sustainability, including additional greenspace and parks
- Address the growing need for a skilled workforce (educational opportunities; new industrial park; housing)
- Encourage initiatives for safe, affordable housing (at all income levels)

INTRODUCTION

GOALS GUIDING THE PROJECT

The City of Bonham is ideally positioned to create and implement a zoning and development Vision Plan that will guide and direct the city and its leaders as they address the inevitable change and growth that are coming. The North Dallas/Collin County “flow,” (the Concrete Tsunami) is now less than 30 miles away. The two planned reservoirs, especially Lower Bois D ‘Arc Creek Reservoir, along with the expanded opportunities for outdoor sports, hunting and fishing, in the northern part of Fannin County will attract more and more recreational visitors and tourists to Bonham. Available land and other incentives will attract businesses, including retail and manufacturing. Thus, the primary goal for this plan was to create a “roadmap” to assist the transformation of the community into a first-class destination for residents, visitors, and businesses. The implementation of this Plan should help produce economic development, redevelopment, and reinvigorated housing, and will offer an improved tax base, enhanced quality of life, better connectivity, public recreation, tourism opportunities, and planned, sustainable growth. Developing, understanding, and implementing such a Plan will preserve valued elements of the community, while paving the way for new developments and opportunities. Assessing the community; evaluating the opportunities; and advancing a plan for use, reuse, and revitalization will be the focus of this effort.

The following goals guided the project. These goals also should more closely connect the community and the region to its assets.

- *Increase the vibrancy of the community*
- *Encourage sustainable development*
- *Create jobs*
- *Maintain economic sustainability*
- *Enhance and preserve environmentally sensitive areas*
- *Optimize opportunities for recreation*
- *Create connections and access to community assets*
- *Support other revitalization efforts*
- *Recognize the regional initiatives*

Reaching out to the community’s stakeholders and the interested public for input, the city of Bonham (especially those involved in planning and zoning) and the Steering Committee, in collaboration with the

Project Team, formulated this plan that focuses on building upon the community's assets and character, while preparing for future growth and development.

WHY DO THIS?

The impetus for this plan was the realization by the Bonham City Council and city staff that major change in the next ten years is inevitable for the city of Bonham. The cities of Frisco, Prosper, Celina, Melissa, and Van Alstyne have experienced major growth, and continue to experience growth and change. Some cities have developed a vision and a plan to shape the change and growth to match that vision, or have let the growth drive the character and nature of the city. A vision plan has two major components: a vision of what the idealized City of Bonham should be, and strategic initiatives to begin moving toward that vision. A vision plan is not meant to be a comprehensive plan, or a focused zoning plan, or an annexation plan. It is meant to provide a visionary guideline and establish the context, themes, and initiatives for these future plans.

PROJECT TEAM

The project team for *Visioning Bonham, 2017 – 2025* consisted of the following TCOG staff members, and intern.

James Randy McBroom, PhD, Deputy Executive Director

Michael Schmitz, MS, GIS & Planning Program Director

Nicole George, MSW, Planning Program Specialist

Cody Derrick, Austin College Intern

Wes Nichols, Austin College Intern

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The *Visioning Bonham, 2017 – 2025* plan was created through the following process.

Initial Meeting – The TCOG planning team met with city officials, the City Manager, city staff members, and BEDCO staff. The scope of work, data needs, and the composition Steering Committee were discussed and determined. Steering Committee members are: - Bill Chapman, Carlos Gilstrap, Finn Blevins, Garrett Amlin, Jack Lipscomb, Kevin Hayes, Mark Kinnaird, Teresa Stapp, Sean Pate, Stephen Fillipowicz.

Data Collection – TCOG planning team members and interns compiled data from numerous sources, including the US Census Bureau, the Texas State Demographers Office, and other sources of official data.

Project Kickoff – TCOG planning team members presented the entire planning process to members of the Steering Committee, key local leaders, Planning & Zoning Commission members, and city staff members. Selected City of Bonham Census data were also discussed.

Additional Data Collection – As a result of the Project Kickoff, additional data, primarily at the family- level, were collected.

Steering Committee Workshop– In a meeting facilitated by the TCOG planning team staff the steering committee determined and evaluate Bonham values – those values that should guide the vision, and the actions that follow.

SWOC Session – The TCOG planning team staff led in an extended conversation and prioritization of Bonham’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges.

Public Forum – Before and after a Bonham City Council meeting, a modified Charrette exercise was held, as well as an open discussion session on the recommended vision for Bonham.

Vision Plan Outline Developed – Based on information to date, TCOG planning team staff developed a basic outline of the overall Vision Plan.

Walking Focus Groups – TCOG planning team staff developed questions based upon the Values, SWOC and vision that had emerged as of that time. Team members walked the square, and other areas, speaking to business owners, employees, and others, asking the same questions of all. Results corroborated data obtained to date, and added one additional perceived need: more parking for businesses around the square.

Public Presentations – Major components of the draft findings were presented to the Bonham Rotary Club and the Bonham Kiwanis Club. During extensive discussion, several draft trends were verified, and input was incorporated into the draft plan.

Plan Preparation – TCOG planning team staff, using all of the information and data, as well as data from external sources, began writing Visioning Bonham, 2017 – 2025.

Following input and edits and corrections from Bonham Steering Committee Members and City of Bonham staff members, the final version of this plan will be presented to the Bonham City Council for adoption.

BONHAM HISTORICALLY AND TODAY¹

BONHAM – AN HISTORICAL CITY*

In 1836 an Arkansas farmer named Bailey English left Sevier County, Arkansas, and headed for Texas with five of his six children, along with several other families. He settled just west of Bois D'Arc Creek and built Fort English in 1837 in fear of Indian raids. The town that emerged from families settling around the blockhouse was called Bois D'Arc. Bois D'Arc was named the county seat of Fannin County in 1843; the town was renamed Bonham in 1844 to honor James Butler Bonham, a South Carolina native, and a hero of the Alamo. The town incorporated in 1848, and received a charter to incorporate land in 1873. The first charter allowed incorporation within a mile of the courthouse. By 1850 Bonham was a major supply town for settlers in the surrounding counties. Bonham's population in 1850 was 211, with a continued growth to a population of 477 in 1860. During the Civil War Bonham was General Henry McCulloch's military headquarters for the northern sub-district of Texas. It was also the site of a major Confederate commissary, which provided equipment and food supplies for the Confederate forces in the Northern Region of Texas, as well as for civilians of the native tribes who had treaties with the Confederacy. Unlike many towns in the South, Bonham flourished following the Civil War. The first newspaper opened in 1866, the railroad came in 1873 and by 1890 the population was 3,361. In some ways the years between 1890 and 1910 could be considered the "golden years" for Bonham. During those years the population increased to around 5,000, and Bonham was home to The Masonic Female Institute, a seminary for young women, Carlton College (that eventually became Texas Christian University), and Fannin College for Men. The Bonham Public Library opened in 1901. During this time Bonham was also home to the Steger Opera House that became the cultural center for the town. And there was the railroad. This was a major boost to the growth of industry in Bonham. *The Handbook of Texas Online* writes:

Bonham was a division point on the Texas and Pacific railroad in 1873. The Denison, Bonham and New Orleans branch of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas line was built from Bonham to Denison by 1887. By 1888 the town produced row crops including grain and cotton and had 117 businesses, three colleges, three papers, a furniture factory, a sawmill, gristmills, and gins. The Bonham Cotton Mill, once the largest west of the Mississippi, was chartered in 1900. The Bonham Free Kindergarten opened in 1907 to benefit mothers working in the mill.

¹ * Much of this section was sourced from *The Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association.

By 1920 the population was 6,008, but by 1930 the population had decreased to 5,655. The Great Depression brought difficult times to the residents of Bonham, but the Works Projects Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the high school auditorium and other projects, as well as the Bonham State Park. Bonham resident Sam Rayburn began rising in power in Washington, and would play an important role during World War II and beyond World War II. By 1940 the population had rebounded to 6,349. World War II saw Bonham active in the needs of the country. Jones Airfield was built as a primary pilot training unit, and a Prisoner of War camp was located nearby. Post-war growth and prosperity saw the population of Bonham rise to 7,049 by 1950. This period saw a vibrant, active downtown as the supply center for not just Bonham residents, but families throughout Fannin County and beyond. Farm families would “go to town” on Saturdays for the week’s supplies, and would stay around the square into the night. All the businesses stayed open late on Saturday nights, and several hundred people would visit around the courthouse square until midnight or later. Steady growth continued to 1970, when the population was 7,698. In the ‘70’s major changes began for Bonham. Several major industries either closed down, or greatly downsized; the Bonham Cotton Mill closed, the General Cable plant downsized and later closed, the Southwest Pump Company closed, and rail service was truncated. Businesses around the square began closing or moving, and the Highway 121 corridor became a focus of retail. The population decreased to 7,338 by 1980, and continued to decrease to 6,905 in 1990. During the 1990’s Bonham and Fannin County residents were able to attract two Texas Department of Corrections facilities, with combined maximum capacities of a little over 2,000. The 2000 census saw a population increase to 10,004; taking into consideration the prison capacity, this gives a resident population of around 8,000. This still indicates a true population gain of around 1,000 between 1990 and 2000. The population has remained relatively stable since 2000.

BONHAM TODAY

The demographic picture of Bonham today is given in detail in the Bonham Data Book, in Appendix A. Except where noted, data from the US Census Bureau are used in the data book, and the majority of information in this section comes from the US Census American Community Survey (ACS).

POPULATION

The population of Bonham has remained steady since the 2010 Census. Although the 2015 American Community Survey (US Census) estimates showed population numbers dropping slightly from 10,127 to 10,044 the 2016 estimate is closer to the 2010 Census numbers at 10,123. However, whenever using individual-level data for Bonham, it is important to note that of the Bonham population totals, anywhere from 2,000 to 2,200 of them represent the population of inmates incarcerated at the County Jail, the Buster Cole State Jail and the Choice Moore Transfer Facility State Prison. This number fluctuates even more as the Choice Moore unit is a transfer facility, with inmates coming and going daily. Thus, the true resident population of Bonham is closer to 8,000 than 10,000. This individual-level inflation and fluctuation makes it difficult to ascertain precise data at the individual level, and must be kept in mind when interpreting such data. For example, the 2015 American Community Survey data show a population of 6,041 males (60.1%), and 4,003 females (39.9%), but the population of resident males is probably closer to 4,000 also. For that reason trends are given for individual-level data, and, where possible, household-level data are used in this report. While not as precise, the household-level data give more accurate, valid and reliable information.

AGE, RACE & ETHNICITY

Age distributions have remained consistent from 2010 to 2015. In 2010 the median age was 38.7 years; in 2015 the median age was 38.3. Table A, below, compares the age characteristics of Bonham to the entire state of Texas. As shown, the population of Bonham is older than the state population, with fewer children, proportionately, than the state as a whole. However, in the next 10 years this could easily change, and the age distribution of Bonham will more likely reflect that of the state.

Table A. Comparison of Population Characteristics, Bonham and State of Texas

Population Characteristics			
		Bonham	Texas
Median age (years)		38.3	34.1
Under 5 years		6.40%	7.40%
5 to 14 years		10.00%	14.90%
15 to 17 years		2.10%	4.30%
18 to 24 years		11.70%	10.20%
16 years and older		82.80%	76.30%
18 years and older		81.40%	73.40%
60 years and older		20.10%	16.20%
62 years and older		18.20%	14.10%
65 years and older		16.60%	11.20%
75 years and older		8.20%	4.60%

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates

The percentage of White residents in Bonham has remained stable between 2010 (66.5%) and 2015 (66.5%). However, the percentage of Black residents has decreased from 2010 (16.4%) to 2015 (13.0%); conversely, the percentage of Hispanic residents has increased from 2010 (14.5%) to 2015 (17.2%). The percentage of Hispanics in Bonham is similar to that of the national percentage, but it is only half that of the state percentage, with Hispanics making up 17.2% of Bonham’s population, and 37.6% of the total Texas population. However, the percent of increase of the Hispanic population in Bonham shows this group growing at twice the rate of state and national percentages. Texas Education Agency 2016 data for Bonham Independent School District report that Hispanic children make up 23.8% of the total district population, while African American students make up only 7.2% of the total. These trends are expected to continue, with a continued rise in the Hispanic population in Bonham, and decreases in the percentage of both White and Black populations in Bonham. Table B, below compares the racial/ethnic composition of Bonham with the entire state of Texas.

Table B. Comparison of Racial & Ethnic Characteristics, Bonham and State of Texas

Racial/Ethnic Characteristics			
		Bonham	Texas
White alone		66.50%	45.30%
Black or African American alone		13.00%	11.50%
Hispanic or Latino		17.20%	37.60%
Other		3.30%	5.60%

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 5 year estimates

INCOME, POVERTY, & EDUCATION

The American Community Survey 5-year estimates show the 2015 median income for Bonham households as \$36,587, with a per capita income of \$14,976. The same data show that nearly 25% of Bonham families have annual incomes less than \$25,000. Over half of non-family households made less than \$25,000. Median income varies by parts of the city: south Bonham has a median household income of \$23,750 while far north Bonham has a median household income of \$44,223. There are some misconceptions about the amount of financial distress and poverty in Bonham and Fannin County. While Fannin County is NOT “one of the poorest counties in Texas,” there is a pervasive issue of financial distress and poverty in Bonham. The people affected the most by poverty and near-poverty are children.

The ACS shows that in 2015 17.3% of Bonham families were below the poverty level. The same data show that 30.4% of households with children under 18 years are in poverty. Race plays a large role in poverty in Bonham; the poverty rate for Whites is 14.0%, for Hispanics is 13.7%, and for Blacks is 48.0%. The other determinate of poverty in Bonham is educational level. Those families where the householder has a Bachelor’s degree or higher have a 0% poverty rate. The poverty rate for families where the householder has a high school degree, or GED is 12.3%, while those with a less than high school education have a 34.8% poverty rate. Bonham does have a significant number of families who struggle with making ends meet.

COMMUTING

US Census Bureau data show that a significant number of Bonham workers leave the city to work (2,482); this is more than made up for by the number of workers coming in to Bonham (3,200). Many of these are employed at the Sam Rayburn VA hospital complex, and Bonham ISD (see below). What is worth

noting is that only 884 workers who live in Bonham, work in Bonham. The major employers are shown in Table C below.

Table C: Major Employers, Bonham, Texas

Major Employers, Bonham, Texas	
Employer	Number Employed
Sam Rayburn Memorial Veterans Center	730
Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice	498
McCraw Oil/Kwik Cheks	464
Bonham ISD	320
Wal Mart	275
Clayton Homes	200
Texoma Medical Center	170
Texas State Veterans Home	170
Source: US Census Bureau	

HOUSING

The 2015 US Census figures from the ACS show 3,337 total housing units in Bonham. This is a decline from 3,411 in the 2010 census data. Of the 3,337 housing units, 2,900 (86.9%) are occupied. The homeowner vacancy rate is shown as 6.0%, with a rental vacancy rate of 11.4%. Family households make up 63.7% of the total, while married-couple households make up 41.8%. Bonham has an aging housing issue, with 67.1% of the structures built before 1980, and 29.4% built before 1960. The 2015 median property value was \$80,000, with around 20% having values in the \$100K-\$150K range. In 2015 56.7% of housing units were occupied by the owner; this is lower than the state average of 62.2% and the Texoma region average of 68.7%. This reflects the relatively high number of renters in Bonham. From a period of 1/1/2017 to 06/30/2017, Bonham saw the addition of 27 new homes in the city. This trend is expected to continue and pick up well into 2018.

DEMOGRAPHIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Population projections for Bonham come from several sources. One source is the Texas State Data Center; another source is the Texas Water Development Board. The Texas State Data Center projections are obtained by a formula that is held constant across Texas, and do not take into account local conditions or known developments. These projections tend to be very conservative. The Texas Water Development Board projections take into account actual trends and projected needs. For the

City of Bonham, the research team believes the Water Board numbers are more likely to be predictive, and are shown in Table D below.

Table D. Population Projections

**2016 Regional Water Plan - Population Projections for 2020-2070
City Summary**

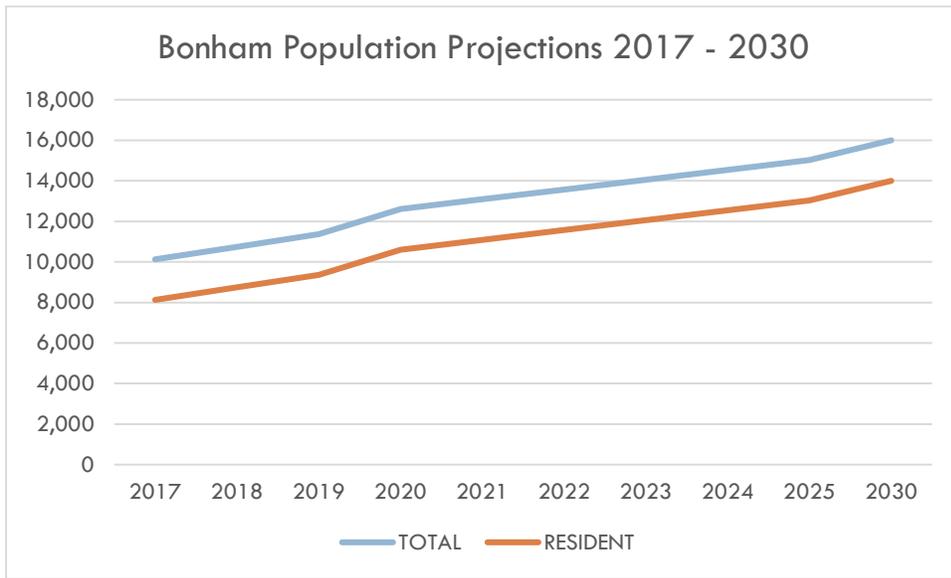
Entity Id	City Name	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070
272	BONHAM	12,603	16,000	22,000	30,000	37,000	45,000

Using these numbers, the resident population should rise to around 8,600 by 2020 (for the foreseeable future the incarcerated population should remain around 2,000). The vigorous projection above shows an increase of an average of 540 per year, for the next 13 years. From this growth the population projections, by year, are derived and shown in Table E, and Figure 1, *Population Projections, 2017-2030* below.

Table E, Population Projections, by Year, 2017-2030

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2030
TOTAL	10,127	10,746	11,365	12,603	13,088	13,574	14,059	14,544	15,029	16,000
RESIDENT	8,127	8,746	9,365	10,603	11,088	11,574	12,059	12,544	13,029	14,000

Figure 1: Population Projections, by Year, 2017-2030



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES ANALYSIS

An in-depth Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenge (SWOT) analysis was completed by the Steering Committee, and then Bonham residents engaged in a modifier charrette exercise before and after one Bonham City Council meeting. Posters indicating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (as developed by the Steering Committee) were set up in the Bonham City Hall foyer before the 2/13/2017 Bonham City Council meeting. Attendees were asked to prioritize the top five issues in each category, as determined by the Steering Committee. They also could add, and rank, other issues in each category on color-coded cards. Following the City Council meeting attendees who remained for the second session were used as a focus group to provide information on not only the SWOC areas, but on the city as a whole, and the planning process. This discussion added deeper qualitative data for the overall SWOT analysis, and the entire Vision Plan. The issues and comments below result from all components of the SWOT analysis. Each category has five prioritized topics

STRENGTHS

The top five perceived strengths, in order of prioritization, are:

1. Proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth. The fact that the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Statistical Area has a population of nearly six and a half million is possibly the most salient factor in this entire Vision Plan. This means that one of the major metropolitan areas in the United States is approximately seventy miles, or an hour and a half drive, away. World-class medical, cultural, finance, manufacturing, technology, wholesale, and retail opportunities abound. Dallas Love Field and DFW International Airport offer connections to the entire world. Fort Worth Alliance Airport is the world's first purely industrial airport, handling over 260 million pounds of cargo. Dallas and its suburbs have some of the greatest population growth in the country. There has been, over the past twenty years, an undeniable northern expansion of this population base. Since 1990, the McKinney population has grown from 21,771 to 156,767. Over the same time span the population of Plano grew from 129,777 to 278,480, while the population of Frisco has grown from 6,582 to 145,035. And the northern surge continues through Anna (1990 population was 909, while the 2014 estimated population was 10,571) and Melissa (1990 population 563, 2014 estimated population 6,703). While some in the focus group believed that major population growth, such as Anna and Melissa experienced, will not occur in the near term, the population growth of Bonham is inevitable (population trends and anticipated growth will be addressed in a later section of this report). ***The research team concurs that the proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth is the greatest strength, and opportunity, for Bonham, and that this should be a major***

- consideration in the development of this forward-looking Vision. The current population growth in north Collin County should be seen as a potential source of the trained workforce that is needed for manufacturing growth in Bonham (addressed later).*
2. The Courthouse Restoration. In November, 2016, a \$12.5 million bond was passed that triggered a grant from the Texas Historical Commission of just over 5 million dollars to restore the Fannin County Courthouse to its 1888 style and condition. The short-term results of this is that nearly \$18 million, or a large portion of it, will be infused into the local economy. The long-term results are an historic courthouse that can be the driver behind downtown Bonham restoration and revitalization. During the 1950's/1960's, and earlier, Bonham had a vibrant downtown, with all storefronts around the square in operation and the buildings kept in good condition. During the 1970's the retail economic "center" of Bonham shifted northward with the opening of the original Wal Mart store. The 1980's saw the beginnings of a "new" highway 121 economic corridor, and retail stores around the square began either going out of business, or moving. This trend has continued, with some recent renewed interest in opening businesses on, or near, the square. The Courthouse Restoration should bring about an upturn in interest in downtown Bonham as a retail center. ***The research team recommends a marketing program, centered on the vision of a new courthouse, and an historic, revitalized downtown, begin as soon as possible. The team also recommends this marketing program first target potential investors and retail operators, and then potential retail customers in selected segments of the greater Dallas/Fort Worth region.***
 3. Available Land – Room to Grow. The City of Bonham covers 9.786 square miles, or approximately 6,098 acres. The area of the Bonham Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is 12,524 acres. It is noted that the city limits of Bonham are "tight," encompassing very little land outside of the inhabited area, with no suburb or exurb areas. The Annexation Analysis section to follow will give more details on this, but simply put, if Bonham were to expand the city limits, thus extending the ETJ, a much larger amount of land is available for growth. There are restrictions on this, of course, some legal, some geographic, and some sociological. The Steering Committee spent considerable time on this issue. Committee members felt growth to the East and Northeast is restricted by Bois D 'Arc Creek flood plains and the new Lower Bois D 'Arc reservoir, and that expansion to the Southeast again is limited due to the flood plains of Bois D'Arc Creek (although there was speculation that some of this land could be used for greenspace, parks, trails, and recreation). Expansion directly West is somewhat restricted by the presence of the jails and prisons, with much of this land owned by the State of Texas, but committee members felt this region could be useful for industry and a possible large industrial park. Areas more "open" to growth are thus North and Northwest, and

South and Southwest. Recommendations on how to leverage this strength will be discussed in following sections of this report.

4. Texas Friendliness. This “strength” is difficult to conceptualize and define, but when it was considered in the steering committee meetings, and by the focus groups and public sessions, everyone understood what was meant by the term. And although Bonham is only 9 miles from the Red River, it is definitely and distinctively Texas, and rural Texas at that. The Texas AgriLife Extension service offers “Texas Friendly Customer Service Training.” The AgriLife service states: “This program is ideal for city and county government employees, volunteer service groups, Convention and Visitors Bureau staff, city parks department personnel and anyone willing to provide clients with consistent, personalized and amazing service.” ***The research team recommends the City of Bonham investigate the incorporation of “Texas Friendly Customer Service Training.”***
5. Three Highways Pass Through Bonham The city is fortunate to have three highways passing through the city: US Highway 82, State Highway 121, and State Highway 78. US 82 was recently widened to four lanes divided by a generous amount of median. This highway is the major east-west route across North Texas; the highway runs from Brunswick, Georgia to Alamogordo, New Mexico. Major Texas cities on US 82 include Lubbock, Wichita Falls, Gainesville, Sherman, Paris, and Texarkana. Perhaps as important are the major north-south highways that intersect US 82 along its route. State Highway 121 was known for many years as “Mr. Sam’s” road to Fort Worth, as it ran from downtown Fort Worth to Bonham, where it intersected with “old” US 82 at the corner of Sam Rayburn’s property. Today SH 121 is a major transportation route through some of the fastest growing cities in Texas, running through Tarrant, Dallas, Denton, Collin and Fannin counties. Major construction to widen SH 121 from McKinney northward is underway. SH 121 is one of the greatest assets Bonham has, and will play a major role in the City of Bonham achieving its vision. State Highway 78 runs northward from Interstate 30 in Dallas through Garland, Wylie, and Farmersville, then on to Bonham where it becomes Center Street through the city. SH 78 gives access to the eastern side of the metroplex, with its many industries. SH 78 continues on to the Oklahoma border, where it becomes Oklahoma State Highway 78 through Durant to Tishomingo. ***The research team recommends the City of Bonham maintain a working relationship with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), and engage in future transportation planning, to leverage opportunities to improve the transportation routes into and out of Bonham.***

WEAKNESSES

The top five perceived weaknesses, in order of prioritization, are:

1. Lack of Ordinance Enforcement. This perceived weakness came out in the Steering Committee meetings and was mirrored in the public meetings. After more specific discussions, looking for the “root cause” of the issue, it appears that due to the visibly poor condition of some houses in Bonham the real issue is simply that: the number of houses in poor to dilapidated condition in Bonham. The City has begun an infill program, but to achieve the Vision for Bonham accelerated code enforcement may need to take place. Other cities have hired temporary “outside” agencies, or persons, to assist in code enforcement for a determined length of time; the City of Bonham may want to consider hiring such an outside agency or person to assist.
2. Aging Infrastructure. The primary concern expressed was that the existing infrastructure, delivering water and sewer, will be pushed beyond capacity by developers and growth. Growth also will impact the streets of Bonham, which were perceived as in poor condition. Bonham has begun addressing storm water problems, but these issues will continue as development continues, along with the impermeable surfaces that come with development in the “retail corridors,” such as parking lots, and sidewalks and driveways. The city may want to revisit its infrastructure plan and update it as needed, especially in light of the expected growth.
3. Collective Attitude: This “collective attitude” was discussed both at the stakeholder meetings and the focus groups. From discussions involving both sources, this weakness has three perceived components. The first component is a collective “inferiority complex.” The phrase “it won’t happen here” was noted several times as being prevalent, as was the phrase “We’re in the poorest county in Texas.” (As noted above, that is not true.) The second component is that there is “little cohesion.” It was noted that there seems to be little coordination between the city and the county, and even between organizations within Bonham. The third component is that the town is collectively “always ready to believe the worst.” These three components are interlinked and influence each other, but they are only shared “perceptions” and may not reflect the underlying truth. This perception will impede managed growth and development, but concerted efforts can be made to ameliorate this perception. Any city marketing campaign must address this, focusing on the strengths and opportunities discussed here, as well as focusing on the “wins” Bonham is having, and will have in the next few years.

4. Lack of Safe, Affordable Housing (For All Income Levels). Housing is a major issue for many of the communities and towns in North-Central Texas that are anticipating growth. Based on available housing data (see Appendix A) the research team believes this may be the greatest weakness, affecting both short-term and long-term growth, expansion and revitalization. The 2015 American Community Survey shows 3,337 housing units for Bonham (down from 3,977 in 2010), with 86.9% of these occupied, and 13.1% unoccupied; this is an improvement from 16.4% unoccupied in 2010. From observation, some areas of Bonham have more homes in disrepair than other areas. The Steering Committee and public comments also noted there are many older homes, primarily rentals, which are not kept in a state of repair. There are incentives to entice developers to build in Bonham, and some of these are already in place. With ongoing attempts to bring industries that need semi-skilled labor, there needs to be more homes that are moderately priced. Simply put, Bonham needs more safe and affordable housing, for all income levels. A large number of apartments for rent in Bonham are HUD Choice Voucher Program, or “Section 8” housing. While this provides housing for a vulnerable population; Bonham may want to consider incentives for builders and developers to produce more “market rate” housing in Bonham. This would also help recruit the resident workforce needed for manufacturing and industrial development.
5. Inadequate, Inconsistent Zoning. The current zoning map shows many inconsistencies; there are areas that are clearly business-oriented that are zoned residential, exemptions that are out-of-date, and some zoning that may have had a purpose at some time, but no longer is in the best interest of the community. As noted elsewhere in this document, the Steering Committee and the research team recommend fewer zoning categories, and that a concerted effort is made to ensure that zoning is carefully reviewed and brought up-to-date, and reflects the Values and Vision of Bonham.

OPPORTUNITIES

The top five perceived Opportunities, in order of prioritization, are:

1. Leverage Courthouse Restoration to Bring Business to the Square. According to the Texas Historical Commission, “Texas courthouses are the most widely recognized, used and appreciated assets in our communities. With some courthouses dating as far back as the mid-19th century, they were among the first permanent structures in many counties. Today restored county courthouses serve as a catalyst to economic revitalization in the business

districts that surround courthouse squares throughout the state. Counties with restored historic courthouses also see an impact in the form of increased tourism, accessibility, safety, energy efficiency, and much more.” Bonham is already a place of heritage and community and with the restored historic courthouse there is great opportunity to leverage existing and similar community assets such as the Sam Rayburn Library and Museum. As noted previously, the research team recommends a special committee be formed to develop a downtown marketing plan, with emphasis on the courthouse restoration.

2. Infill Lot Program. The availability of scattered parcels throughout town makes an infill lot program an attractive one for Bonham. Properly managing the infill lot program will determine how successful such a program will be. It is important to involve many stakeholders, especially the neighborhoods and communities where the program will take place, so that there is support from the community and the program will not be **perceived** as a form of gentrification. Geographic and cultural neighborhoods are often the fabric of the community and therefore must be taken into careful consideration and offered certain protections that at the same time do not stifle development or place excessive burdens on development. Efforts to encourage distinct neighborhoods in Bonham are seen an important component of this plan.
3. New Reservoirs (Lower Bois D ‘Arc and Ralph Hall). New reservoirs are constructed primarily with the goal of increasing water capacity in mind, which is the case with both Lower Bois D ‘Arc and Lake Ralph Hall reservoirs. Combined, both reservoirs will be capable of producing 138 million gallons per day. This increased water availability will meet future demands of both residential and business growth, further strengthening the appeal to live and work in Bonham. Lake Ralph hall will have a surface area of 7,605 acres while Lower Bois D ‘Arc will cover 16,641 acres. The lower reaches of Lower Bois D’Arc reservoir will be close to the northeast city limits of Bonham, and this proximity can provide the largest increase in Bonham’s economy in the next few years. These new reservoirs are community assets that will provide drinking water, recreation, economic stability and will be a source of environmental education for many years to come. In fact, the Upper Trinity Regional Water District expects Lake Ralph hall to provide \$18 billion dollars in economic benefits to the region. And according to analysis by T. Clower and B. Weinstein for the North Texas Municipal Water District, The Lower Bois D ‘Arc will provide Fannin County alone an increase of taxable real estate values an estimated \$316 million dollars; recreational amenities alone could generate \$166 million of annual economic activity per year in Fannin County.

4. Annexation Opportunities. Bonham is surrounded by large available and developable land parcels as possibilities for future annexation. Annexation has many positive impacts for municipalities but the annexation process must be carefully considered and executed, especially in cases of involuntary annexation. Annexation's greatest benefit is to provide areas for future growth. Accommodating for growth in rural areas such as Bonham will alleviate overcrowding and congestion in existing densely populated areas. The process of annexation also can be used as a tool to secure the tax base, further increasing revenue sources. Strategic annexation will allow Bonham to use the additional revenue on existing and future planned services while forgoing or limiting the option of assuming any additional debt. Lastly, annexing property allows the city to assert specific zoning and other control on lands previously outside of the cities jurisdiction. This can be specifically valuable when annexing land for industrial parks or related activities. Annexation is a common practice with many benefits but must be carefully considered and done in consultation with planning and legal consultants.
5. Jones Field Airport. There are multiple benefits from having a local operational airport. Jones Field Airport in Bonham is unique in that it adds value other than the typical economic benefits that municipal airports bring to the community. Jones Field has a storied past as it served as a flight training center for army pilots during World War II. More than 5,000 pilots received primary training at Jones Field. This history can be a primary driver for events that take place at the airfield, such as air shows that draw large crowds. These events contribute to the local economy and assist in preserving the history and heritage in Bonham. Cities that have a municipal airport are also more attractive to prospective businesses that require an aviation component and are often times the deciding factor of whether or not to locate in a given area. Also, as urban populations grow and small, urban or suburban airports are closed, more pilots will seek out the more rural airports to use as a base of operation. With additional promotion, perhaps the number of planes hangered will grow and the City will be able to entice a Fix-Based Operator (FBO) for Jones Field.

CHALLENGES

The top five perceived challenges, in order of prioritization, are:

1. Inadequate Workforce for New Industries and Existing Industry Expansion. This challenge is not unique to Bonham. All of the cities and towns in the Texoma region are dealing with the issue of a lack of skilled workforce. This trend is one that is replicated throughout the US. According to a 2015 CNN Money article titled "America's persistent problem: Unskilled

- workers,” America has millions of job openings – more than at any point since 2000. Bonham’s goal should be to have a resident workforce of skilled and semi-skilled laborers as new industries locate in Bonham, and existing industries expand. The solution to this issue will take many partners, changing of policies, and time. One strategy for the short term is to tap into the expanding populations in northern Collin County. On a local level, stakeholders, including city staff, community representatives, business representatives, workforce development, and institutions of higher education, need to collectively work together on a solution that will be beneficial to all parties in the community and region. The Center for Workplace Learning at Grayson College can play an important role and should be leveraged to the greatest extent possible.
2. Keeping Up With Infrastructure Needs. Adequate and reliable infrastructure is required to not only meet current demands but future demands. When infrastructure is taxed or exhausted, it impacts current operations and can delay or even terminate future growth and expansion projects in the city. This, coupled with the perceived weakness of an aging infrastructure, raises the importance of revisiting the infrastructure plan. The infrastructure plan can incorporate the Vision and Initiatives of this plan, as well as project the expected replacement and expansion to serve expected growth. Service infrastructure, such as electrical power capacity, internet capability, and residential, business and industrial waste removal must be addressed, with the City and BEDCO working with providers to plan for expected growth.
 3. Lack of Freight Rail. Freight Rail is a vital economic driver to local and regional economies and by having such an asset communities with freight rail are able to diversify and enjoy a local economy that is not reliant on one particular industry or sector. The Bonham Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO) estimates that by not having freight rail, hundreds of potential primary jobs have been lost that individually would have paid between \$50,000 and \$70,000 per year. The addition of these wages to the local economy is a story that can be repeated many times over when potential businesses look to establish in Bonham but decide against due to lack of rail. The addition of freight rail would also have large impacts on traffic flow in town, road wear and tear, and possibly a positive impact on air quality. Efforts have been underway to reestablish freight rail in Bonham and it is one that the project team recommends continue. The Texas Northeast Railroad (TNER) still has track rights from Bells to Bonham, and has stated interest in returning freight rail to Bonham. **Returned rail freight service, especially when coupled with a 1,000 – 1,500 acre industrial park, will be a major enticement for industries and business to locate in Bonham.**

4. Neglected Buildings Around the Square. Challenges such as this are not unique to areas with historic downtown squares, such as Bonham has, and must be viewed positively as an opportunity. The opportunity to beautify and improve public areas often energizes and brings excitement to the community because visible changes make the community more inviting. It needs to be understood that when neglected buildings have issues that are more than just surface and are in the realm of structural issues that this can be a challenge. This issue can possibly be ameliorated to some degree by the opportunities afforded by the Courthouse restoration. The redevelopment of the historic buildings around the downtown square must take place to fully capitalize on the Courthouse restoration. The redevelopment of a truly “historic” downtown square, that becomes a destination itself, is a vital component of Bonham’s future development.
5. Aging Housing Stock. Aging housing stocks have many implications for cities across America but perhaps the strain is felt the most in rural areas such as Bonham. This is due to the desirability of communities with a small town feel yet with close proximity to major metropolitan areas with access for more amenities. Young professionals, primarily the millennial generation, have expectations of living in or very close to the community that they also work in, yet there is a lack of available and affordable housing for these young professionals and first time home buyers. On the other end of the spectrum, there is a lack of moderately priced housing stock that is needed to retain homeowners after they graduate from their starter home or have a need for a much larger home due to family expansion. Within a one mile radius of downtown Bonham, per the US Census Bureau 2010-2014 ACS data, only .08 percent of Bonham’s houses were built from year 2010 or later. In fact, only 5.68 percent of homes in the one mile radius were built from year 2000 and later. Housing stocks with aged houses do not, however, need to be completely negative as there is an opportunity to preserve and showcase historic and well-kept homes. This ties into, and can enhance, the historical aspects of Bonham.

There was a clear consensus on the top two threats above, but 4, 5, and 6 were followed closely by one additional threat, “ a lack of Bonham-based higher education.” Efforts have been made, and rejected, to bring a campus of Grayson College to Fannin County. As change and growth occur in Bonham and Fannin County, perhaps this issue can be revisited with a successful result.

VISIONING BONHAM

PROPOSED BONHAM VALUES AND VISION

Multiple “values and vision” sessions with the Steering Committee, as well as input on values at multiple public forums and events led to a consensus on the following values the people of Bonham hold as paramount.

- ***Love of Place; Pride of Place***
- ***Love of Family and Neighbor***
- ***Safety (sense of safe community)***
- ***History – Distinctively “Texas”***
- ***Quality of Life***
- ***Friendship and Helpfulness***
- ***Freedom***
- ***Recognition of Recreational Opportunities and Greenspace***
- ***Economically Viable, with Employment Opportunities***
- ***Environmentally Sustainable (Value of Water and Soil)***

These values provide a useful guide to projects in the 2017 to 2025 timespan. The growth and change expected during this time frame should reflect as well as strengthen these values.

Based upon information obtained in the SWOC exercises and SWOC analysis, the values just cited, and further discussions with the Steering Committee and other stakeholders, the following Vision Statement emerged.

VISION STATEMENT

The City of Bonham, Texas will continue to be a place where history is valued, where there is a sense of pride of place, and where diversity is embraced. The City will:

- ***Enjoy a vibrant, sustainable economy, including both retail and industry, and will actively pursue opportunities that produce stable, well-paying jobs;***
- ***Facilitate historic downtown revitalization, as well as vibrant retail and business corridors;***
- ***Work together with its citizens to produce safe neighborhoods where families and neighbors are valued;***
- ***Value greenspace, parks, and recreational areas to promote the overall health of the City, and will incorporate this value in all projects and plans;***
- ***Plan for and embrace change and growth to provide the optimal quality of life for the people of Bonham. Zoning and annexation will be strategic, and in accord with these values and this vision.***

ZONING ANALYSIS

Zoning is a common tool used by many municipalities to regulate specific tracts of land throughout the city limits. These regulations can often provide protections to both citizens and businesses but do need frequent review to ensure proper protections are in place, while at the same time they are not creating burdens on business development.

The research team prepared large-scale maps of Bonham, with current zones color-coded on the maps (see Appendix M^{*2}). These maps were presented to both the steering committee and the focus group. All participants were encouraged to study the maps and make notes and drawings on the maps, along with their recommendations. Table F, below, shows the current zones, along with the acreage associated with each zone.

² These maps are full-size and are contained under separate cover

Table F: Total Acres per Zoning District

A1 - MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING DISTRICT, LOWER DENSITY	1,072 AC
A2 - MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING DISTRICT, HIGHER DENSITY	72 AC
AG - AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT	108 AC
B - GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	481 AC
D - DUPLEX RESIDENTIAL DWELLING DISTRICT	279 AC
HI - HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	404 AC
LB -LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	382 AC
LI - LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT	1,494 AC
LR - LOCAL RETAIL BUSINESS DISTRICT	52 AC
MH2 - MANUFACTURED HOME SUBDIVISION DISTRICT	3 AC
PCD - POWDER CREEK DISTRICT	88 AC
PD - PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT	266 AC
R - SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING DISTRICT	1,502 AC

Single family residential is the largest zone district within the city, closely followed by Light Industrial and then Multifamily residential. There are, however, several areas zoned Multifamily that may in fact be Single Family.

The downtown corridor is a mix of Business Districts, Local Business Districts and Multifamily Residential District Lower Density. The mix of business districts in close proximity needs further evaluation by Planning and Zoning to determine the effectiveness of current zoning in this area. ***It is the recommendation of the Steering Committee and research team to evaluate modifying current downtown overlay districts or to create new overlay districts that do not inhibit business growth but also offer community and citizen protections. There was also consensus among the Steering Committee to zone for the development of business corridors on both East and West Sam Rayburn Drive.***

Heavy and Light Industrial appear to be properly zoned near existing industries but more importantly these are properties adjacent to the rail line. Future zoning needs to maintain an industrial rail corridor. Measures also are in place to protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas with the zoning of the Powder Creek District which is surrounded by industrial properties to the north and multifamily residential houses to the south.

The research team recommends creating a steering committee comprised of planning and zoning members, city staff, and legal with the task of reviewing current and future zoning ordinances for effectiveness. A separate zoning plan will need to be created for the purpose of referencing for consistency as Bonham experiences residential and business growth.

ANNEXATION ANALYSIS

Current City Limits: 6,098 Acres

Current ETJ: 1 Mile radius 12,524 Acres

Total available land to annex: 6,424

A total of 3,730 acres are available for annexation, 1,544 of which are located within the zoning authority of the future Lower Bois D'Arc Reservoir. A specific area for possible annexation in the future consists of 792 acres of property located south of US Highway 82 and west of North State Highway 121. Other areas, particularly those in floodplains or having other characteristics detrimental to development could provide additional greenspace for the City of Bonham. All of this could be incorporated in a new Bonham annexation plan. With an annexation plan Bonham is poised to grow its tax base while unlocking available and developable land for homes, industry and new businesses, as well as greenspace.

INFRASTRUCTURE

UTILITIES

Bonham municipal utilities include water and wastewater services. Electric delivery is provided by Oncor and natural gas is provided by Atmos Energy. As noted before, the City needs to work with all providers to plan for reliability and capacity required for residential, commercial and industrial growth.

BROADBAND

According to Connected Texas, the city limits of Bonham has access to broadband speeds of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. While this bandwidth is adequate for most users the local network could easily become congested with high bandwidth users such as technology and educational institutions. While providers choose when and where to upgrading their broadband capacity, it is worth noting that having a targeted plan showing expected future demand, with input from many stakeholders, will increase the probability of future upgrades and investments.

WATER AND SEWER CAPACITY

The overall hard infrastructure in Bonham is adequate to meet current demands but not prepared to handle anticipated future residential and industrial growth. The numbers below represent current capacity and locations of water and sewer infrastructure throughout the city.

Current Water Storage

- Armory Tower 500,000 Gallon Elevated Storage
- De Rose Tower 500,000 Gallon Elevated Storage
- East Ground Storage Tank 500,000 Gallon Ground Storage Tank
- Prison Tower 250,000 Gallon Elevated Storage Tank
- Silo Rd. Booster Pump Station 100,000 Gallon Ground Storage Tank
- West Ground Storage Tank 500,000 Gallon Ground Storage Tank

Water Pump Stations

Water Pump Station 1

- Silo Road Pump Station

Current Waste Water Infrastructure

- South Lift Station
- North Lift Station
- West Airport Rd Lift Station
- West 10th Lift Station

- Legacy Ridge Lift Station

TRANSPORTATION, TRAFFIC FLOW, AND GREEN SPACE ANALYSIS

TRANSPORTATION

Automobile travel in and around Bonham is the primary mode of transportation, largely due to the lack of a mass transportation option. Bonham does have a handful of taxi cabs operating but this does not fill the mass transportation gap. The most walkable portions of the city are within a 3 block radius of the square, which is where the Fannin County Courthouse is located. This central business district conducts weekly business generally during the hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is the source for the most concentrated area of pedestrians and automobiles in one place throughout the community. Many areas of the city are not conducive to walking, with some where walking is dangerous. Neighborhood walkability will help define the distinct neighborhoods that are a focus of this Vision Plan.

Traffic congestion is at a minimum thanks in part to recent expansion of State Highway 121. Future growth will require additional studies, primarily at the State Highway 121 and State Highway 56 intersection. The downtown walking focus group results show one issue that all raised: the perceived lack of parking space for businesses around the square.

Future transportation planning, to be efficient, must address road networks that are connected and allow for accommodations for all modes of travel; including cyclists and pedestrians. When common spaces are activated and connected, drivers and pedestrians feel safer, more confident and are likely to spend more time frequenting public spaces for business and leisure.

TRAFFIC FLOW

The top 5 ADT (Average Daily Traffic) traffic intersections based off of TxDOT 2015 average daily traffic counts are:

11,204 W US Highway 82/78

10,807 SH 56 W/121 N

8,122 SH 121 S/SH56

7,502 E US Highway 82/78

7,481 W US Highway 82/121

Traffic flow patterns on major roads in Bonham are primarily from a north to south and south to north direction, with the exception of state highway 56 which moves traffic in an east to west and west to

east direction. For this reason future considerations may need to include a thoroughfare study completed prior to annexation and the growth that will follow. A cursory review finds the lack of major east to west through-roads and a thoroughfare plan would address strategies for moving people and products throughout town in the most efficient way.

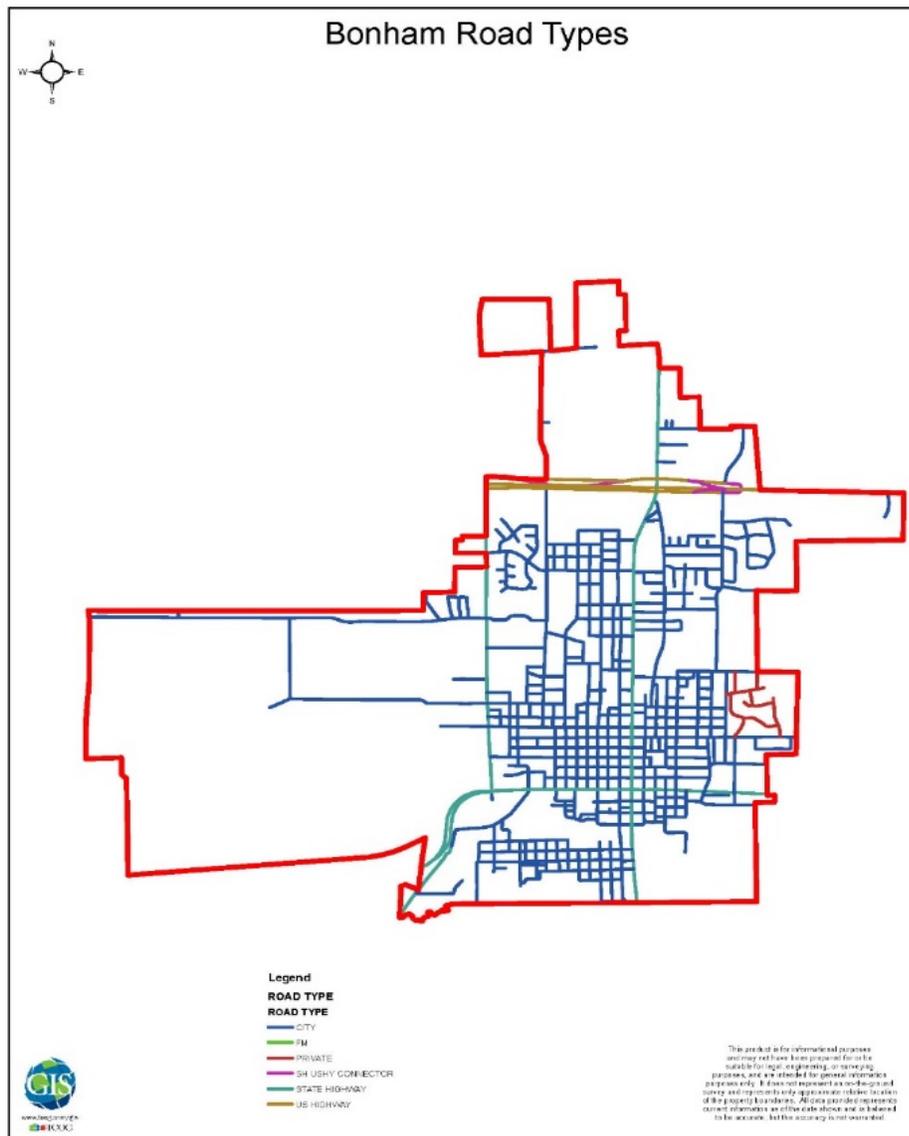
BONHAM STREET ANALYSIS

City Streets: 67.80 miles

Private Rods: 1.54 miles (Sam Rayburn Memorial Veteran's Center)

State Maintained Roads: 11.73 miles (Farm to Market, State Highway)

US Highway: 5.26 miles



GREEN SPACE ANALYSIS

Bonham has 38.4 acres of park greenspace within the city limits, not including school properties. This is only 1/6,000th of the total acreage of the city. The majority of park space is south of highway 56, with one park, Simpson, south and east of I.W. Evans and L.H. Rather schools in the mid-city area. The relatively new Powder Creek Park immediately south of the railroad on the site of the Bonham Cotton Mill, is very well-developed and kept, but appears to be underutilized. Catron Park, in the Southeast corner of the city, in one of its oldest areas, is small, has few amenities, and has very little use. Other than the very nice athletic fields in far west Bonham, there is no park space serving the west, north, and east areas of town. Overall there is a lack of basketball courts, skateboard facilities, climbing walls and other amenities standard in modern recreational and park space.

As noted, Bonham has a relatively small area of park space/greenspace for a city of its population and size. Increasing the area of park greenspace can have multiple positive benefits for Bonham. The American Planning Association has developed Briefing Papers on city parks. Attached as Appendix B is the *Briefing Paper on the Economic Impact of City Parks*. The following quote is from the executive summary:

“Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees. At the bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for a community. Understanding the economic impacts of parks can help decision makers better evaluate the creation and maintenance of urban parks.”

In addition to economic impacts, park greenspace has been demonstrated to enhance feelings of “community,” become vital neighborhood spaces, and enhance public health. Greenspace can also mitigate the issue of storm water drainage due to the increase in impermeable surfaces that often accompanies growth.

“Pocket parks,” or small areas of greenspace as small as a city lot are one possible component of a park plan to increase park space, as well as enhance the development of neighborhoods and communities within defined areas of the city. One of the Bonham *Values* cited previously focused on the value of recreational areas and greenspace. Table G, below, is a Bonham Tree Canopy Report. The area covered by trees is shown to be 28%, with 72% non-tree (plus or minus percentages are shown on the report). The organization *American Forests* recommends an average tree coverage for cities and towns in the Southwest of 25% - 35%. They also recommend incorporating healthy, native trees into the city canopy. A guide on invigorating the tree canopy, in the context of sustainability, can be found in Appendix C, *The Sustainable Urban Forest; A Step-by-Step Approach*.

Table G: Bonham Tree Canopy Report

Cover Class	Description	Abbr.	Points	% Cover
Tree	Tree, non-shrub	T	7	28.0 ±10.6
Non-Tree	All other surfaces	NT	18	72.0 ±8.98

Tree Benefit Estimates

Abbr.	Benefit Description	Value	±SE	Amount	±SE
CO	Carbon Monoxide removed annually	\$67.67	±25.58	1,596.31 lb	±603.35
NO2	Nitrogen Dioxide removed annually	\$116.50	±44.03	4.35 T	±1.64
O3	Ozone removed annually	\$6,067.04	±2,293.13	43.35 T	±16.38
PM2.5	Particulate Matter less than 2.5 microns removed annually	\$12,541.68	±4,740.31	2.11 T	±0.80
SO2	Sulfur Dioxide removed annually	\$20.36	±7.70	2.74 T	±1.04
PM10*	Particulate Matter greater than 2.5 microns and less than 10 microns removed annually	\$4,404.51	±1,664.75	14.52 T	±5.49
CO2seq	Carbon Dioxide sequestered annually in trees	\$311,158.90	±117,607.01	8,825.86 T	±3,335.86
CO2stor	Carbon Dioxide stored in trees (Note: this benefit is not an annual rate)	\$7,845,285.23	±2,965,239.10	222,527.35 T	±84,107.43

i-Tree Canopy Annual Tree Benefit Estimates based on these values in lbs/acre/yr and \$/T/yr: CO 0.902 @ \$85.08 | NO2 4.917 @ \$26.86 | O3 48.968 @ \$140.47 | PM2.5 2.379 @ \$5,975.67 | SO2 3.098 @ \$7.45 | PM10 16.403 @ \$304.43 | CO2seq 9,970.817 @ \$35.38 | CO2stor is a total biomass amount of 251,395.359 @ \$35.38*

Note: Standard errors of removal amounts and benefits were calculated based on standard errors of sampled and classified points.

About i-Tree Canopy

The concept and prototype of this program were developed by David J. Nowak, Jeffrey T. Walton and Eric J. Greenfield (USDA Forest Service). The current version of this program was developed and adapted to i-Tree by David Ellingsworth, Mike Binkley, and Scott Maco (The Davey Tree Expert Company).

Limitations of i-Tree Canopy

The accuracy of the analysis depends upon the ability of the user to correctly classify each point into its correct class. As the number of points increase, the precision of the estimate will increase as the standard error of the estimate will decrease. If too few points are classified, the standard error will be too high to have any real certainty of the estimate.

A Cooperative Initiative Between:



On the issue of parks and greenspace the values and vision do not match the existing reality. By any analysis Bonham is deficient in greenspace and parks. **The research team recommends that the City of Bonham, as soon as possible, begin addressing the need to add additional park greenspace in underserved areas of town, as well as incorporating greenspace, with a focus on native trees, in all future projects.**

THE VISION PLAN

The following Vision Priorities are derived from the Steering Committee discussions and priorities, the goals of this project, the results of the SWOC analysis, the data shown above and in the Data Book, and the *Values* and *Vision* developed above.

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

All of these plan priorities, show as strategic initiatives, are driven by the SWOC analysis and the Bonham *Values* and *Vision*.

Strategic Initiative – Capitalize on the Courthouse Restoration

- Bonham will take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the courthouse restoration to recreate an “historical downtown,” that will be a destination for visitors and a gathering place for residents.

Strategic Initiative – Create and maintain recruitment, marketing and restoration plans downtown.

- Develop a Downtown marketing plan, first to retailers, then to potential customers.
- A Downtown restoration initiative, involving a partnership between the City of Bonham and Fannin County, will begin.

Strategic Initiative – Review and strengthen community enforcement and maintain cooperation between code enforcement and planning and zoning.

- Review zoning philosophy, consider simplifying zones, use overlay district zoning, floating zones, and other zoning strategies to encourage development.

Strategic Initiative – Create an infrastructure committee to address current and projected population growth. This committee, or a subcommittee, shall also be tasked with coordinating mobility solutions related to growth.

- Project the infrastructure needs for residential, business, and industrial growth.
- Conduct a thoroughfare study that includes a review of the need for an East-West Boulevard through Mid-town, as well as increased mobility, walkways, and bike space in concentrated areas of the town.

Strategic Initiative – Commit to sustainability; including greenspace.

- Incorporate greenspace, with a focus on native plants and trees, in all future projects.
- Address the need for additional parks/greenspace in targeted neighborhoods.
- Upgrade amenities and features at all existing park space.

Strategic Initiative – Address business and industrial growth as well as the need for a resident, skilled workforce.

- Begin plans for a 1,000 acre (minimum) industrial park adjacent to the existing rail line. The optimum site appears to be on the west edge of the current city limit.
- Incorporate a downtown investment and recruitment initiative to attract new business and retain existing through use of economic development tools.
- Form and participate in a community driven forum of stakeholders that is tasked with addressing the need for a resident, skilled workforce as this issue has many corresponding implications.

CONCLUSION

This vision plan will be useful only if it is used as a constant reminder to the City of Bonham, City staff, elected officials, and others in position to effect policy and change, of how the future of Bonham can be shaped. Hopefully this plan will be a starting place for other more focused and strategic plans. These plans should involve concrete goals and strategies to meet these goals, measures and metrics of success, responsible parties, and accountability measures. Additionally, these plans need to be coordinated, with regular progress checks.

The City of Bonham has a bright and shining future if everyone works together to bring vitality, energy, and cooperation to create a Bonham that is vibrant, alive, and welcoming.

The goals of this project, as stated at the beginning, are to increase the vibrancy of the community, encourage sustainable development, create jobs, maintain economic sustainability, enhance and preserve environmentally sensitive areas, optimize opportunities for recreation, create connections and access to community assets, support other revitalization efforts, and recognize the regional initiatives. Hopefully this plan will help Bonham achieve these goals.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Bonham Data Book

Appendix B: How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development



Executive Summary

Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees.

At the bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for a community. Understanding the economic impacts of parks can help decision makers better evaluate the creation and maintenance of urban parks.

Key Points

- #1 Real property values are positively affected.
- #2: Municipal revenues are increased.
- #3: Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
- #4: Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work.
- #5: Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes.

KEY POINT #1: Real property values are positively affected.

More than 100 years ago, Frederick Law Olmsted conducted a study of how parks help property values. From 1856 to 1873 he tracked the value of property immediately adjacent to Central Park, in order to justify the \$13 million spent on its creation. He found that over the 17-year period there was a \$209 million increase in the value of the property impacted by the park.

As early as the 19th century the positive connection between parks and property values was being made. Olmsted's analysis shows the real dollar amount impact of parks. His study was not a unique situation, however. Several studies conducted over the last 20 years reaffirm his findings, in cities across the country. Below are more examples of how proximity to a park setting is connected to property values.

Chattanooga, Tennessee: In the early 1980s this city was facing rising unemployment and crime, polluted air, and a deteriorating quality of life. To lure middle-class residents back, local government, businesses, and community groups decided to improve the quality of life by cleaning the air, acquiring open space, and creating parks and trails. As a result, property values rose more than \$11 million, an increase of 127.5 percent.

Atlanta: After Centennial Olympic Park was built, adjacent condominium prices rose from \$115 to \$250 a square foot. As noted on the Centennial Olympic Park website, "Thousands of people who have made the move to downtown Atlanta have chosen Centennial Olympic Park as their front yard." www.centennialpark.com.

Amherst, Massachusetts: Cluster housing with dedicated open space was found to appreciate at an annual rate of 22 percent, compared to a comparable conventional subdivision's rate of 19.5 percent. This translated in 1989 dollars to a difference of \$17,100.

KEY POINT #2: Municipal revenues are increased.

Another component of the Central Park study was an assessment of increased tax revenue as a result of the park. The annual excess of increase in tax from the \$209 million in property value was \$4 million more than the increase in annual debt payments for the land and improvement. As a result of building Central Park, New York City made a profit.

Increased property values and increased municipal revenues go hand in hand. Property tax is one of the most important revenue streams for cities. By creating a positive climate for increased property values, the tax rolls will benefit in turn. As shown with Central Park, parks can both pay for themselves and generate extra revenue. In addition, tax revenues from increased retail activity and tourism-related expenditures further increase municipal monies.

PROPERTY TAX BENEFITS

Chattanooga: Improvements in Chattanooga resulted in an increase in annual combined city and county property tax revenues of \$592,000 from 1988 to 1996, an increase of 99 percent. (Lerner and Poole, 1999).

Boulder: The presence of a greenbelt in a Boulder neighborhood was found to add approximately \$500,000 in property tax revenue annually.

SALES TAX BENEFITS

Oakland, California: The presence of the East Bay Regional Park District is estimated to stimulate about \$254 million annually in park-related purchases, of which \$74 million is spent in the local East Bay economy.

Shopping Districts: Surveys indicate that prices for products in districts with trees were on average about 11 percent greater than in no-tree districts; the quality of products were rated 30 percent higher than in areas with no sidewalk landscaping.

TOURISM-RELATED BENEFITS

Atlanta: Centennial Olympic Park has an estimated 1.5 million visitors each year, attending 175 public events.

San Antonio, Texas: Riverwalk Park, created for \$425,000, is lined with outdoor cafes, shops, bars, art galleries, and hotels, and has overtaken the Alamo as the most popular attraction for the city's \$3.5-billion tourism industry.

KEY POINT #3: Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.

"There is a new, clean growth industry in America today — The industry is retirement migration" (Foreword in Longino, 1995, 7).

By the year 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 1 in every 4 Americans will be 65 years of age or older, creating an affluent group of retirees with financial benefits, including Social Security, military benefits, and pension plans. With an average life expectancy of between 75 and 83 years, this is a significant population group, both in size and affluence.

They are also mobile, moving to various locations across the country — places as diverse as northern Wisconsin and Michigan, the mountains of Colorado and Montana, and New England. Members of this mobile retiree cohort have been termed "GRAMPIES": (Growing [number of] Retired Active Moneyed People In Excellent Shape).

GRAMPIES want communities that provide leisure and recreation amenities. In a study by Miller et al. (1994), a retiree sample was asked to review 14 features and indicate their importance in the decision to move. The first three in rank order were scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and mild climate.

Retirees bring expendable income into their communities. If 100 retired households come to a community in a year, each with a retirement income of \$40,000, their impact is similar to that of a new business spending \$4 million annually in the community. (Crompton, p. 65).

They increase the tax base and are "positive" taxpayers, using fewer services than they pay for through taxes. For example, they pay taxes to school districts but do not send children there.

Retirees transfer significant assets into local investment and banking institutions, expanding the local deposit base that can be used for commercial and industrial financing.

KEY POINT #4: Knowledge workers and talent are attracted to live and work.

"...cities are characterized by a sense of place, beauty in the natural environment, a mixed-use transportation system and a 24-hour lifestyle. These are the characteristics that will attract the creativity and brainpower that undergird the new economy." Steven Roulac, futurist, The Roulac Group.

A significant change has occurred in the American economy. Industry today is composed of smokeless industries, high technology, and service-sector businesses, collectively referred to as the "New Economy." The workers in the New Economy are selling their knowledge, as opposed to physical labor, as the main source of wealth creation and economic growth. These employees, referred to in studies as "knowledge workers" or "talent," work in a "footloose" sector — companies are not tied to a certain location in order to achieve a competitive advantage.

What the companies are attached to is retaining their talent and attracting more talent. As a result, several studies have been conducted to determine what factors are important to talent when they are making employment decisions.

A survey of 1,200 high technology workers in 1998 by KPMG found that quality of life in a community increases the attractiveness of a job by 33 percent.

Knowledge workers prefer places with a diverse range of outdoor recreational activities, from walking trails to rock climbing. Portland, Seattle, Austin, Denver, and San Francisco are among the top cycling cities; they also are among the leaders in knowledge workers.

Workers attracted to an area are then positioned to put money back into the local economy through jobs, housing, and taxes, which then contribute to parks.

KEY POINT #5: Homebuyers are attracted to purchase homes.

"Parks, ponds, bike paths." "Nearly five acres of woodland protected as a nature sanctuary" "My lake...my park...my home."

All around the U.S. real estate brokers and homebuilders are advocating parks as one of the top residential selling points. The desire to live near parks also translates into real dollars.

A 2001 survey by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) revealed that 57 percent of voters would choose a home close to parks and open space over one that was not.

In addition, the NAR survey found that 50 percent of voters would be willing to pay 10 percent more for a house located near a park or protected open space.

The National Association of Home Builders found that 65 percent of home shoppers surveyed felt that parks would seriously influence them to move to a community.

According to Economics Research Associates (ERA), a 1991 survey in Denver found that 48 percent of residents would pay more to live in a neighborhood near a park or greenway.

One of the most popular planned community models today is golf-course residential development. However, surveys have shown that the majority of people who live in golf course communities don't play golf regularly — as many as two-thirds, according to ERA. They are attracted to the dedicated open space, the expansive views, and the guarantee that both elements will stay the same. By promoting, supporting, and revitalizing urban parks, cities can help attract a significant portion of the home buying community.

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For further information on this paper, please contact the author, Megan Lewis, AICP, Assistant Director of The City Parks Forum, 312-786-6363; mlewis@planning.org.

City Parks Forum Briefing Papers

This is one in a continuing series of briefing papers on how cities can use parks to address urban challenges. We hope the information here helps you to create great urban parks in your city.

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