

*The Vision: Round Rock will be the City of Choice for entrepreneurs, business leaders, researchers, educators and members of the various creative professions who want to combine professional accomplishment and achievement with a culturally rich, socially diverse and family-friendly lifestyle. At the same time it will offer opportunities for personal growth, safety, and well being for all its residents.*

## Development Philosophy Draft 1

This document is intended to communicate to residents, business owners, staff and the development community the philosophy of the City of Round Rock regarding development and redevelopment. This document will be created via a dialogue with all stakeholders and should be viewed as draft until formal adoption by the City Council. As such, it will evolve as new perspectives are identified and discussed. The first draft is built upon the City's strategic plan, stakeholder input gathered via the general plan process and the Council's discussion of quality development at its August 2009 retreat.

How does one determine whether development or redevelopment is consistent with the desires of the community and will assist in the on-going effort to maintain and improve the quality of the City. This document offers the following tests to facilitate that determination.

**Test 1: Is the development or redevelopment consistent with the long term results the City is seeking?**

The City's strategic plan presents a vision for the City to achieve by the year 2060. A first test of any development or redevelopment effort is whether the project is consistent with that vision. The City's vision is provided in textbox 1. The full strategic plan can be available on the City's website at [www.roundrocktexas.gov/strategicplan](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov/strategicplan).

Obviously a vision statement is generic and not intended to communicate particular development approaches. Neither does it attempt to predict changes in technology, design, environmental sustainability or other practices that may impact development and redevelopment. What it does do is establish a standard that the City is striving to reach. It is that standard that provides the context for a broad range of actions, including development and redevelopment. Development and redevelopment projects that align with and advance the 2060 vision will have an advantage.

**Test 2: Is the development consistent with the quality standards desired for the City?**

Development and redevelopment opportunities will occur in many forms. Given the strategic direction of the City and its targeted economic development focus, Round Rock seeks and supports those opportunities that are of a quality that represents improvement and long-term sustainability. Development and redevelopment should serve to create a place that is attractive to the type of businesses the City wishes to attract while at the same time attracting and keeping the human talent these businesses require. The City understands that quality is an ever-rising standard and therefore it views the quality of a project from a long-term perspective.

While quality is sometimes referred to being in the eye of the beholder, in reality quality can be defined. Each professional discipline establishes quality standards. From a development/redevelopment perspective, the City defines quality as good design. Design professionals view quality as consisting of the following elements:

Functionality of use. How well does the development work in and of itself. Is it highly functional from perspectives of ease of use, economy of operation, safety, and ability to serve the purposes it was intended.

Functionality of broader use. How well does the development work in a broader context. Does it work with adjacent developments? Does it interface well with transportation networks, other uses, public safety services, etc.?

Durability. How will the development hold over time? With proper maintenance will its quality standard remain?

Energy efficiency. How efficient is the development from an energy use perspective?

Water efficiency. How efficient is the development from a water use perspective?

Air quality. If relevant, is the impact on air quality acceptable?

Compatibility of scale. Does the development fit with adjacent developments from a scale perspective? How will it fit in the future?

Compatibility of land use. Is the use compatible with adjacent uses?

Architectural detail. Is there variation in the design? Does it evoke interest? Is it visually appealing or boring?

Test 3: Is the development consistent with the economic development strategies, planned land uses, transportation networks and recreational services of the City?

In the strategic plan, general plan and a variety of other plans the City has developed, based on the priorities of its residents and stakeholders, that articulate the future form, structure of the economy and services of the City. Development and redevelopment projects which are consistent with those strategies will have an advantage.

It is the intent of the City to appropriately support and facilitate development and redevelopment projects which pass these three tests. The City will do this by adhering to a set of values and principles, explicated below. These values and principles will guide the efforts of the City to support development and redevelopment consistent with the above three tests.

## Values

In seeking to promote development and redevelopment projects consistent with the above three tests, the City seek to ensure its policies and processes are consistent with the following values:

**Predictability.** For those parties seeking to engage in development activities, the ability to plan with confidence is important. The City will therefore seek to provide standards, guidelines and processes that will increase or ensure the predictability of timelines, requirements and methods for resolving conflicts or addressing unforeseen issues.

**Long-term economic development approach.** It is the intent of the City for Round Rock to be a place where desired businesses want to do business. The City will seek to ensure that its policies and procedures are favorable to businesses which will contribute to the desired future of the City as a distinctive place with a superior economic climate.

**Balance.** The City will seek a balanced approach to development and redevelopment which seeks to foster such activities while at the same time ensuring the quality of life in the City, including aesthetics, is not diminished. Public safety along with maintaining and development Round Rock as attractive City with numerous amenities will be factored into the development decision process.

**Quality.** The City is seeking to promote development and redevelopment that will be sustainable from durability, energy efficiency and design perspectives. What the project will look like twenty years from now is as important as what it will look like when newly constructed.

**The Customer Experience.** The City desires that each customer has a positive experience defined as timely responses, responses which are respectful and considerate of the other factors the customer is trying to balance and manage, responses which seek to make vision-consistent projects occur in a timely and competitive manner and which are predictable as discussed earlier.

## Principles

To promote and support the desired quality of development and redevelopment, the City will adhere to the following principles in its everyday actions. These principles are intended to operationalize the values stated above.

Bounded flexibility. Within the context of the formalized policies, procedures and regulations, the City recognizes that each development/redevelopment project is distinctive and will have special features that need to be addressed. Therefore the City will provide within its regulatory framework for development a number of levels and processes through which judgments and decisions as to these special features can be made.

Up front and broad based communication and feedback. All stakeholders in a project benefit from clear communication at the onset at to project intent and design, project constraints, the nature and structure of the review and approval process, and project impact. Up-front communication seeks to minimize errors and changes in the latter stages thereby providing predictability and timeliness. In addition to up-front communication, reports of project review status should be available to all parties in a transparent manner so that the progress of the project can be tracked by the owner, the developer, the developer's representatives, city staff and any other interested parties.

Consistency. For predictability to occur, the City understands that it must be consistent in its interpretation of the regulatory framework and that the internal city departments must be consistent in their approaches with each other.

Timeliness and process efficiency. Time equates to money in projects of this nature and therefore the City intends to respond in a reasonably quick manner on its part via both efficient processes and timely communication.

Joint error reduction/minimization. In order to achieve the desired level of timeliness, errors and re-work on everyone's part must be minimized. This holds for all parties involved in a project. The City has four responsibilities in error minimization. The first is to ensure that its standards and requirements are clear and transparent. The second is to design and institute processes and checks to minimize its own errors. Third is to provide specific feedback to others when errors are made or work is incomplete. Fourth is to provide information about both status and error to all parties.