GATEWAYS, PORTALS & STREETSCAPES
PURPOSE

At one time, getting from one place to another was a significant event in people’s lives, often taking up an entire day or longer only to travel what now seems like a relatively short distance. The sacrifice in time, however, would have been offset by the beauty of idyllic pre-developed landscapes. Now, our built environment is extremely convenient, but crowded with cars, making the experience of going to most destinations less than enjoyable. The purpose of this chapter is to set forth recommendations that can enhance the experience of navigating McKinney, from those quickly passing through on their way into the Metroplex to residents carrying out their daily routines.

To achieve this, the master plan consists of two elements:

- Gateways
- Streetscape Treatments

Gateways are broken down into 4 separate categories in this chapter:

- The Gateway Ring
- City Entry Gateways
- District Gateways
- Neighborhood Portals

Many different elements make up what we call “Streetscapes”, but for the purposes of this chapter, we will limit them to:

- Landscape Plantings
- Site Amenities & Furnishings
- Lighting
- Decorative Paving

WHY GATEWAYS?

Cities have been punctuated with gateways in one form or another for thousands of years. They have been used to demarcate entry points, passages and highlight important features. While no longer serving as a defense tactic, gateways in modern cities have become landmarks that create interest and draw attention to a specific location. Branding and identity are also conveyed through these monuments, which help to distinguish communities from one another and provide a sense of place – a critical component that brings much-needed diversity of experience to cities.

Gateways and monumentation also aid in establishing visual continuity. A “family of elements” spread out across a large area can establish that continuity when there is a consistent use of form or materials, linking together the different sectors of a city.
AUTO-ORIENTED | FREeways | ARTERIALS | COLLECTORS

Speed of travel is one of the biggest factors influencing the design of an effective gateway or portal when designing for automobiles. The 2 most basic approaches to the layout of features are:

TALL | MONUMENTAL
Utilizing height to create visual cues from a distance and give the sense of passage through a threshold

LINEAR | RHYTHMIC
Utilizing the length of a roadway to implement elements at regular intervals and create a defined space

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED | COLLECTOR STREETS | RECREATIONAL TRAILS

HUMAN SCALE
A component of the elements and features in the gateway is scaled for people to be able to walk up to, see, touch and experience

INTERACTIVE
People have the ability to stop at the feature, read text, stand inside or on top of, etc.
MONUMENTATION CONCEPT

THE GATEWAY

The primary concept is based on the principle of creating places of interest at strategic points around the City where both pedestrians and automobiles have the opportunity to experience them. Looking down from high up above, McKinney is divided into quadrants by US 75 and US 380. Two wide greenbelts then cut diagonally across these quadrants, which contain the city’s existing and planned spine trails.

The series of three graphics to the right follow the sequence of identifying major bridge crossings, locating the most significant of those crossings and finally, the “Gateway Ring” concept resulting from this analysis.

At these critical roadway-nature intersections the monumentation will accomplish three things:

- Signify the importance of greenbelts to McKinney
- Draw attention to the pedestrian trail network
- Provide landmarks for vehicular travel

To fully demarcate the importance of these nodes in the city, the concept calls for truly monumental structures to be placed at these locations – drawing the attention of motorists from far away as well as pedestrians who may wish to stop and explore the structure. Heights in excess of 80’ to 100’ are suggested to capture the significance of these areas along with an interactive component where visitors can, for example, learn about the history of McKinney.

The “Gateway Ring” is supported by three additional monumentation types whose locations and characteristics are described in the following pages:

- City Entry Gateways
- District Gateways
- Neighborhood Portals

The family of gateways and monumentation proposed for McKinney should further enhance the experience of traversing the city and promote a new “brand” that visitors will come to see as unique for the region.
FOUR PRIMARY ROADWAYS SET WITHIN NATURE CORRIDORS

“GATEWAY RING”
THE FOUR PILLARS OF McKinney

INTERACTIVE
HIGHLY VISIBLE
CAPTURES THE BRAND OF McKinney
“UNIQUE BY NATURE”
PARKS, OPEN SPACE & MONUMENTATION
EXTRUDED VIEW

THE FOUR PILLARS
OF MCKINNEY

THE GATEWAY RING

CITY ENTRANCES

STRING OF PEARLS + GEMS
The following pages describe each of the monumentation types in further detail.
Gateways and monumentation also aid in establishing visual continuity. A “family of elements” spread out across a large area can establish that continuity when there is a consistent use of form or materials, linking together the different sectors of a city.

Each concept has an iconic feature for each city sector that tells a unique story throughout the City. Thus creating a unique opportunity for city wide marketing and branding.

**VISUAL CONTINUITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LARGE</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>SMALL</th>
</tr>
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**GATEWAY RING CONCEPT**

**TYPE “A” - SINGULAR ICONIC ELEMENT**

This concept includes elements of the same form and structure that is easily identifiable and recognizable.

A **FUTURE** must have a **PAST**

Represent time through materials and the illusion of movement

“Taking a step **BACK + FORWARD**”
The two families of elements shown are studies in theme options for monumentation which could be placed at the Gateway Ring location. Each structure is unique and has a strong presence individually in the landscape, but as a group they tell a larger story (McKinney's history or environmental education are two possible examples) through their form and associated informational signage.

The final detailed design of the Gateway Ring should be done by a consultant / artist team and vetted through the citizens of McKinney.

**FAMILY 1: “FUTURE”**

All concepts portray the Past, Present, and Future of McKinney

- **“THE NEXT STEP”** (1 Structure)
- **“THE WINDOW”** (2 Structures)
- **“THE ROOTS”** (3 Structures)
- **“THE WINDS OF CHANGE”** (4 Structures)

**FAMILY 2: “GROWTH”**

Structures represent the Growth of McKinney

- **“ROOTS”**
- **“SPROUT”**
- **“STEM”**
- **“LEAF”**
City Entry Gateways are located at the City boundaries and announce entry into McKinney to motorists along HWY 75, HWY 380 and the Sam Rayburn Tollway. Theming for these gateways revolves around the City’s concept of “Unique by Nature”, with the idea being to make nature the first thing one associates with McKinney.

Along the freeways at the City limits there is abundant right-of-way which consists primarily of open turf grass. By implementing significant shade tree plantings at these key intersections, the character of each entry point into the City can be transformed, such that drivers have the feeling of McKinney emerging from the forest as one passes through. To further strengthen the concept, decorative, dynamic lighting can also be applied to the many bridge structures — highlighting the architectural features of the roadway.

The imagery to the right shows the Sam Rayburn Tollway and US 75 interchange with proposed lighting enhancements as described above. This is the entry point to the Gateway Business District and Collin McKinney Commercial District where there is tremendous opportunity for additional tax revenue for the City as new businesses relocate and expand in these areas. Thus, enhancements to the experience of driving to these districts is appropriate and helps to reinforce these commercial zones identified in the One McKinney 2040 Comprehensive Plan.
This Master Plan has coincided with the One McKinney 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and in order to ensure that one common message is communicated between the two documents, the Parks and Recreation Plan has adopted the proposed new "Districts" within McKinney. Within the "Scenic District" the City is developing plans for a signature gateway bridge on Laud Howell Parkway where it crosses Honey Creek. The dramatic monumentation here is now setting the standard for additional monuments in the City and has become the basis for District Gateway monuments.

Each district’s unique character is captured by utilizing the form of the Laud Howell monuments and applying different materials to the exterior that signify its relationship to the individual districts. The Mill District Gateway, for example, features materials of an industrial character harking back to the original function of the area.

Figure 6.2: District Gateway locations

Pictured:

The image shows a typical intersection of major arterials based on the current thoroughfare standards. To signify the entrance into the district (Collin Crossing District shown here) monumentation based on the Laud Howell Parkway bridge is placed at all four corners of the intersection.
GATEWAYS EXAMPLES

MEDICAL DISTRICT

Pictured:
Potential District Gateway monuments to be located at points identified in Figure 6.2.

COLLIN CROSSING DISTRICT

MILL DISTRICT

TOWN CENTER DISTRICT
Neighborhood portals are smaller structures placed at the edges of the City that reinforce the brand of McKinney at entry points along arterial streets. Like the District Gateways the design of Neighborhood Portals mimics Laud Howell Parkway in form, but at a scaled down size. Additional aesthetic features of the monumentation should include the City of McKinney logo or other appropriate district identifiers. The addition of decorative landscaping makes for a classic entry portal defining the limits of the City.

**TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOOD PORTAL MONUMENTATION (BIRD’S EYE VIEW)**

This graphic shows the typical layout and monumentation design for the Neighborhood Portals. The curving walls (highlighted in red) help emphasize the focal nature of the intersection.

For new road and intersection construction, right of way should be set aside during the design phase of the project to accommodate this type of monumentation which would be paid for by the city. Each instance of this entry monument will be site and district-specific, requiring slight changes in layout, materials and size based on existing conditions. While materials and colors will differ between districts, it is generally recommended that the crosswalk paving be sufficiently darker in color tone than the surrounding concrete such that it clearly identifies the pedestrian route. Other decorative paving should be lighter in color with darker accents.

In the event that signage will not be constructed with the first phase of road work, it is critical that utilities, lighting and signalization be placed in a manner not to impede construction in the future. Coordination between City departments is crucial at this early stage.

For monumentation construction in built-out areas of the city, existing roads should be evaluated for available space to determine feasibility of construction.
Textured and colored concrete banding - materials and colors to coincide with associated district.

Neighborhood Portal signage consists primarily of stone veneer with metal accents - final materials to coincide with associated district.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

PRESERVATION OF EXISTING TREES

With new streets and roadways proposed in the undeveloped areas of McKinney, it is recommended that as much of the existing mature vegetation within the R.O.W. be preserved as possible. Preservation should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, however the standard proposed in this chapter is to consider the possibility of tree preservation when that tree’s elevation falls within 3’ of the proposed road’s elevation.

Continuity should be achieved by consistency in materials, indicated below by the retaining wall with limestone veneer. Ideally, walls of this type used for tree preservation should be located outside of the drip line of associated trees.
DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTING

The following is a portion of the list (see appendix) of recommended plants for the planting plans required by the City landscape ordinance, as well as the City planting in parkways and medians. The plants have been chosen because they are native or are adapted to the region.

<18”

18”-30” SHRUBS AND GRASSES

> 30” SHRUBS AND GRASSES

SHADE TREES

ORNAMENTAL TREES
PLANTING INTENSITY ZONES

EXISTING | STREET RENOVATIONS

This diagram shows the various zones along existing street renovation typology, centered on a typical existing intersection. This concept focuses on the intersection with a simple treatment along the existing streetscape corridor. A high-intensity Zone A is at the center of the intersection. Then there is a rapid decrease in intensity through Zone B until reaching the lower-intensity nature of Zone D, which extends between intersections.

Note: A series of four zone designations are used in each of the conceptual diagrams in this chapter. Not every zone designation will apply to each conceptual diagram. While there are minor differences within a zone between diagrams, the intent is that a specific zone designation in one diagram will have similar characteristics in terms of intensity and materials as the same designation in another diagram.
FUTURE | NEW STREETS

This diagram shows the various zones along the future street typology, centered on a typical intersection. This concept is intersection-focused with a high intensity of materials and ornamentation used in Zone A. Low-growing shrubs, low grasses, and enhanced paving emphasize the focal nature of the intersection. Streetscape intensity decreases through Zones B and C until reaching the lower-intensity nature of Zone D, which extends between intersections.

Note: A series of four zone designations are used in each of the conceptual diagrams in this chapter. Not every zone designation will apply to each conceptual diagram. While there are minor differences within a zone between diagrams, the intent is that a specific zone designation in one diagram will have similar characteristics in terms of intensity and materials as the same designation in another diagram.

For new streets, trees and landscaping should be planted within medians as a part of the scope of the project. Developers will be responsible for street tree planting outside the R.O.W. within the designated landscape setback.
EASE OF MAINTENANCE

Streetscapes are challenging environments for decorative landscape design. Medians are subject to damage from vehicles, wind, heat and are difficult to access for maintenance. It is, therefore, crucial that streetscape design considers these realities for an efficient, lasting and cost-effective landscape layout. The following 8 graphics and drought tolerant plant palette listed previously are guides for consistent planting design which, when applied to medians and landscaped parkways, results in reduced maintenance cost while maintaining a high level of aesthetic quality.

CROWNED MEDIAN

Slope median to drain towards street

3%-6%

TREE LOCATIONS

Use plan material capable of sustaining periodic wet soil

Use plan material capable of sustaining periodic wet soil

Curb cuts should be armored with gravel or riprap

3” Mulch

Sub-grade

INVERTED MEDIAN (BIOSWALE)

Drip line

DRIP BURIED UNDER MULCH
McKinney Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails & Streetscape Visioning Master Plan

Gateways, Portals & Streetscape

- **GRAVEL**
  - Filter fabric
  - Gravel
  - Min. 4"

- **MOW AREA**
  - Turf
  - Tree well with mulch ring
  - Min. 4"

- **MULCH FLUSH WITH CURB**
  - Lower soil elevation to allow for mulch containment

- **MOW STRIP AT 90 DEGREES**
  - Dowel into curbs
  - 90°
  - Turf

*Use tackifier if decomposed granite is specified.*
SITE AMENITIES & FURNISHINGS

Site amenities and furnishings are non-vegetative elements introduced into streetscapes that further create a cohesive appearance throughout the City of McKinney. A combination of natural materials and modern design pieces create a unique contrast between the progressive culture and natural environment of the City of McKinney. This section provides a palette of furnishings that can be used across the City. However, traditional design elements such as those currently in the Historic Downtown area may be desirable in select areas.

LIMESTONE
Limestone will be used throughout the City of McKinney for monumentation in order to blend with the City’s natural character. Smooth-cut limestone shall be used within formal or urbanized areas, transitioning to rough-face finish limestone to complement natural environments.

METAL
Metal will serve as an accent material on monumentation and signage. Polished stainless steel is appropriate for urbanized settings while weathered steel (Corten) is appropriate for natural areas. Metal can be used as accent bands or can be laser-cut in the form of the City’s tree logo.

BRICK / WOOD
Brick and wood will generally be used in areas where a rustic design theme is desired, however these materials can still be used in contemporary applications to contrast other more refined materials.

DISTRICT MONUMENTATION MATERIALS PALETTE OPTIONS

Palette A
Metal  Limestone

Outer Loop District; Medical District; Honey Creek Entertainment District; Collin McKinney Commercial District

Palette B
Brick  Wood
Metal  Stone

Northridge District; Scenic District; East Fork District; Agricultural Lifestyle District; Homestead District; Mill District

Palette C
Metal  Limestone
Concrete

Collin Crossing District; Business and Aviation District; Gateway Business District

Palette D
Metal  Stone
Limestone

Trinity Falls District; Oak Hollow District; Town Center District

PEDESTRIAN LEVEL OVERHEAD LIGHTING
The palette includes three types of lighting: pedestrian overhead lighting, vehicular lighting, and lighted bollards.

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces
VEHICULAR / PEDESTRIAN LEVEL LIGHTING

Source: Kim Lighting

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces

BOLLARDS

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces

Source: Forms + Surfaces

Source: FairWeather
SITE AMENITIES & FURNISHINGS

BENCHES

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces

Source: Forms + Surfaces

TABLES

Source: Forms + Surfaces

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces

TRASH RECEPTACLES

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces
BIKE RACKS

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Landscape Forms

Source: Forms + Surfaces

CROSSWALKS, ENHANCED PAVING BANDS, AND MEDIAN NOSING

Source: Hanover Pavers

Source: Hanover Pavers

Source: Hanover Pavers

HANDICAP ACCESS RAMP

Source: Paverstone

Source: Paverstone

Source: Paverstone