

Vision for a Learning Village—UTD and beyond

Life-long learning is a concept that escapes many people. So much of the focus is concentrated on graduation, obtaining a post graduate degree, receiving certification and the all encompassing passing the test--TAKS, SAT, GRE, MCAT, LSAT and etc. Is there a way to capture the imagination of people to embrace life-long learning beyond the walls of an educational institution, beyond a finite achievement? Can a university embrace the concept of life-long learning and in return gain a student body passionate for learning? Can entities of a community come together to establish a Learning Village similar to informal learning venues such as museums **but more**?

Who:

University of Texas at Dallas
City of Plano
Collin County Community College
Plano Independent School District
Sci-Tech Discovery Center
SilverTree Properties
And more

Where:

University of Texas at Dallas property that is north of George Bush Tollway between the Central Market to the west and the railroad tracks to the east.

Future plans for land adjacent to this site include a hotel, high-end retail and a 16 screen theatre. Property is also very close to Walmart, Sam's Warehouse, and several restaurants.

What:

A Learning Village or UTopia (If can be reused, current name of UT Austin life-long learning website) comprised of different components that furthers the missions of all participating institutions and entities.

A campus environment created for all learners at all levels. Components could include

- **Sci-Tech Discovery Center**—hands-on learning center where participants of all ages have dynamic math, science and technology discovery experiences. Faculty, Staff and Students from UTD would support with design and fabrication of exhibits that reflect science concepts being researched at the University. Operation of the facility would be done by Sci-Tech Discovery Center. Built by bonds from City of Plano.
- **Science Park**—Next generation outdoor park that includes recreational equipment for all ages that reflect basic scientific principles with an emphasis on physics. Could also have a water

feature where participants could experience the power of water. Again, designed by UTD faculty , students and staff; built by City of Plano Bonds and maintained by City of Plano Parks and Recreation.

- **Science Academy**—An immersion science experience for kids in a specific grade level (5th or 6th?). Run and operated by Plano ISD with support from UTD Science Ed Department. Students would benefit from additional University resources.
- **Affordable Housing** for both UTD and Collin County Community College Students. Create housing village in which students who are taking courses at one or both institutions live and require little to no transportation. Possibly a co-op situation in which student living in the Learning Village also provide community service to the Village.
- **Light rail connection** from Learning Village to UTD main campus utilizing track that already exists.
- **University Welcome Center**—A University built and operated facility that would be a dynamic overview of the University’s offerings. To be used for new students, economic development and could include a lecture hall so that the community would have easy access to learning about the University. Would also be ideal for receptions, and small conventions and could serve as a community resource complementary to the Sci-Tech Discovery Center. Additional components may include:
 - Center for Brain Health—Research facility to capture data on how the mind learns using Sci-Tech Discovery Center and Science Academy as potential venues.
 - Center for Teacher Education—Possible extension with Region X. Easy access for teachers across the area to receive continuous learning and established lab with Sci-Tech Discovery Center and Science Academy.
 - College of Management—Opportunity to develop business case for Learning Village, envision entrepreneur training through easier access to community.
 - Colleges of Engineering and Natural Science—unlimited exposure and opportunities.
 - Institute of Arts and Technology—Opportunity to design village in a way that is both technologically advanced and aesthetically attractive.
 - Extension of UT Southwestern—Opportunity to service community through onsite teaching clinic.

(Could also involve Collin County through this and serve health care needs. An ambulatory hospital is also being planned for adjacent land with professional offices.)

- And more
- Library—A joint effort of The University and the City of Plano. Would include next generation implementation of how information is conveyed and retrieved. A marriage of books and technology. Would be resource for community, public and higher education students.

How:

Would have to be approved by UT Regents and synergies formed between all partners. Visionary person/people would need to be identified who can articulate vision and bring partners to the table.