



Joint Press Release

City of McKinney and McKinney Independent School District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Major Steps Taken Toward New Aquatic Facility; MISD Bond Approval Needed to Make Facility a Reality

McKINNEY, TEXAS (Aug. 26, 2009) –This week the McKinney City Council was presented with recommendations for its next Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces master plan. Survey and focus groups conducted with citizens in preparing the plan showed McKinney residents consistently rank an Aquatic Facility as their number one desired recreational facility for the city.

This comes as no surprise to the McKinney Community Development Corporation (MCDC), who led the way over a year ago in taking steps to make such a facility a reality, asking the City's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department to bring forward a plan identifying a location and funding sources for such a facility. MCDC is a 4b sales tax corporation that receives a half-cent from sales tax in order to enhance McKinney's aesthetic, cultural and leisure amenities.

"Parks and recreational facilities, like an aquatic center, are part of the quality of life that make McKinney unique and draws new residents here in record numbers," said Ray Eckenrode, MCDC Board Chair. "A new aquatic recreational center would benefit so many in McKinney, from the organized swimming groups to the beginners to families."

While full funding for the facility is not yet assured – a May 2010 bond election for McKinney Independent School District's (MISD's) portion of the funds is critical to complete the funding triangle in this unique partnership and joint-use facility – several steps have been taken to make it closer to reality: a location has been secured; the MCDC board has approved their portion of the funding; and the City Council has given a go-ahead with funding already in place through its Capital Improvements Project (CIP) budget and the general fund.

"We have a strong partnership working with MCDC and the McKinney Independent School District for the benefit of students and the community at-large," said Brian Loughmiller, McKinney Mayor. "There has been significant input from the public and the funding entities on what they need in a facility to get us to this point. Without partnering together, this facility will not be possible."

A consultant team hired in December 2008 presented the recreation and aquatic plan to City Council and the MISD school board to define details like cost, the size and the features of the facility. The master plan examined the needs for the community at the full build-out population and the plans for the years in the nearer future. Design details are not finalized, but it will include both indoor and outdoor water parks, a 50-meter pool and a recreation center component like a gym or fitness room.

Earlier this month, MCDC approved funding \$19 million toward the project. Through its Capital Improvements Project (CIP) budget, which is separate from the general fund, the City will contribute \$10 million. Of that amount, \$8.5 million is from a voter-approved bond previously passed specifically for an aquatic facility. The rest is from funds in the CIP budget dedicated to parks. MISD has pledged \$15 million from a planned May 2010 bond election to support the construction cost of the facility. They also will split the \$3 million design cost with the city prior to the bond election in order to keep the facility on a fast-track schedule.

McKinney's first aquatic facility will be built on a 12-acre school-owned site at the southeast corner of White Ave. and Hardin St. adjacent to a larger piece of land that is dedicated for future development of a city park. The major hike and bike trail through the city will be built through that park, allowing for many access points. The site is across the street from Jack Cockrill Middle School, a site considered central to MISD's existing and planned high schools.

"This is the ideal project to continue the valuable partnership between the McKinney Independent School District and the City of McKinney" said Tom Crowe, McKinney ISD Superintendent of Schools. "McKinney ISD parents and community members have expressed a desire for such a facility, not only for competitive swimming, but for families and people of all ages. Aquatic facilities have become far more than simply a natatorium, and now are viewed much more like a recreation center with the ability to offer a wide variety of activities to its community members."

In addition to the input gathered from focus groups and in public meetings by the City of McKinney, McKinney ISD swimming and diving coaches, parents, and representatives from the McKinney Sea Lions swim program have provided input regarding what could be included in the facility. The District's financial contribution to the project is dependant upon the successful passage of a bond election, currently slated for this May. In addition to the aquatic facility the bond election will include renovations of existing facilities and new schools to accommodate future growth. Details of what will be included in the bond proposal will be developed by a long-range facility planning committee, comprised of District staff, parents, and community representatives.

"While we continue to be a fast-growth district, the slowdown in housing starts and growth does present us with unique opportunities," added Mr. Crowe. "In the past we simply did not have the bonding capacity to consider a facility of this kind. Now we can continue to focus on academic needs, but also propose a partnership that benefits students and the community at large. Our responsibility will be to work with community members to develop a sound bond program for the future of our district, communicate this to our constituents, and then encourage them to become engaged and vote based upon their desires for our schools and community. McKinney has a strong tradition of supporting education as well as projects that add to the overall quality of life in our community."

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About McKinney

McKinney, Texas, is unique by nature. As one of the fastest-growing cities in the U.S., McKinney has a current population of 122,000. Incorporated in 1848, the city is located 30 miles north of Dallas and is the county seat of Collin County. McKinney offers rolling hills, lush trees, a historic downtown square and unique neighborhoods and developments. Visit the city's Web site at www.mckinneytexas.org.

Media contacts: Anna Folmsbee, City of McKinney, 972-547-7525
Cody Cunningham, MISD, 469-742-4095