

A VISION FOR LEANDER PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Six years ago, a small group of Leander residents decided to turn Leander in a new direction. This “course correction” was a very difficult one. We had 11 city managers in 13 years and our financial position was bleak. We were at near junk bond status, we did not have any money to work with and the council meetings prior to 2003 we considered the “The best show in town.” Yet Leander, full of promise, was limping along and meandering down a path that most small towns travel. The town was divided almost exactly in half. Something had to change: we needed to find common ground, a common cause. We found that common ground by calling 24 people, 12 who did not like the other 12, to a meeting. At that meeting, a common cause was established: all 24 agreed to do one thing, and that was to build a public library. Today, our new library stands tall and is an example of what we can do when we work together. Our new library is a shining beacon, the anchor of our community; clearly defining who we are, and who we are becoming. The progressive movement was well underway, and Leander, your city, was leading the way - not just within our city boundaries, but leading the entire region. We became successful and that was acknowledged when we won the “Best Planning Practices” award from Envision Central Texas. We all know that success is contagious, and Leander’s success began to spread.

A bi-product of this success then occurred; other cities, public and private entity’s and the like, began to ask me, as Mayor, to become engaged and help them do what Leander did. I was asked sit on numerous boards and commissions outside of Leander: Envision Central Texas (ECT), The Alliance for Public Transportation (APT), The United Way, Capital Metro, YMCA, BCRUA and others. Although I do sit on a few of these boards, I had to decline most as I would be spread too thin. I asked if rather than me, would they consider a Leander City Councilman to the post; and to date, all have agreed. The ideology that we started here in Leander is now represented all over our region, by your Leander City Council! The Leander Mayor’s office is now being used as a conduit to spread our message throughout the region; and your Leander City Council is opening the doors to a region, and its working!

Currently, your city council is working on **1) Local and regional transportation issues:** public transportation, tax and toll roads, rail, pedestrian and bikeways and the downtown Austin streetcar initiative **2) Local and higher educational issues:** Leander ISD and ACC **3) Local and regional economic issues:** Build Central Texas and Build Greater Austin, working closely with the Greater Leander Chamber to attract business to Leander **4) Local quality of life issues:** a quality of life bond election is being called for in November. **5) Creating a sustainable Leander:** the ‘new urbanism’ approach and our comprehensive planning of the city **6) Leander accessibility issues:** to make Leander the most accessible city in the region **7) Support the Troops initiative:** we provide support with the “Adopt-a-Unit” program of all kinds to the U.S. Army 4th Combat Aviation Brigade (3-4 AV) at Fort Hood, Texas, and **8) The Leander Arts:** Performing, Cultural and Arts in Public Spaces initiative **9) Healthcare:** both private and indigent care and **10) A YMCA for Leander.**

These are just some of the reasons I can’t wait to wake up in the morning, and as your Mayor, I will keep Leander on this exciting path of prosperity. I am Leander Proud, how about you!