



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **University of Texas at Arlington Students Deliver Strategic Plan Recommendations for the City of Melissa**

Melissa, TX – The University of Texas at Arlington Students submitted their report summarizing the efforts of the Mayor, City Council, City Staff and representatives of the Melissa Independent School District, Melissa Industrial and Economic Development Board, Melissa Community and Economic Development Board, as well as other community leaders participation in a strategic planning retreat to discuss the vision and strategies for taking Melissa forward.

The Masters degree students were charged with conducting the visioning process and delivering a plan that included a clear vision for the City of Melissa's economic development focus, as well as strategies and action steps the City should take to accomplish the vision for Melissa.

The students led the exercises in visioning where each participant painted their own vision for Melissa in 2015. The report included a draft vision that will be refined and finalized in the near future. This draft paints a vision of Melissa maintaining its "small town feel" at the same time as boasting a thriving business economy providing meaningful employment opportunities. The participants envision a Melissa that allows residents to shop locally for everything they need. Additionally an emphasis was placed on connectivity through the development of a citywide hike and bike trail system. The vision includes maintaining our exemplary schools that properly prepare students for successful careers and life. The overall vision is one of a well balanced Melissa in terms of growth and quality of life.

"The exciting thing about this process is it has also shown us that we are on the right track with a number of initiatives that Council and Staff have undertaken," commented City Administrator Jason Little; "this process revealed that although members of the community may have differing views on some issues, when it comes down to the core vision of the City of Melissa, there is a lot of common ground to build upon."

Participants identified strategies for attaining this vision which include a Master Plan for a City Park System, Sustained and Sophisticated Communications Plan, and revisiting and updating the City's 2006 Comprehensive Plan. Additionally it was suggested that a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan be adopted, with attention to the importance of partnering with others in the region for maximum success.

City leaders and Staff will now take this report and use it to help build a Strategic Work Plan for achieving the vision identified by the retreat's participants. "A key piece of the vision is identifying how to sell Melissa as a package by defining a message for all the stakeholders to present in attracting businesses to Melissa," Stated Mayor Reed Greer. "By partnering together we have a greater impact; however, we need to make sure we are presenting a unified vision at the same time."

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