



"BUILDING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE"

# Fort Worth Avenue

VISIONING AND CONCEPTUAL  
LAND-USE PLANNING STUDY

Project Summary and Final Report  
December, 2003



**Fort Worth Avenue**  
DEVELOPMENT GROUP

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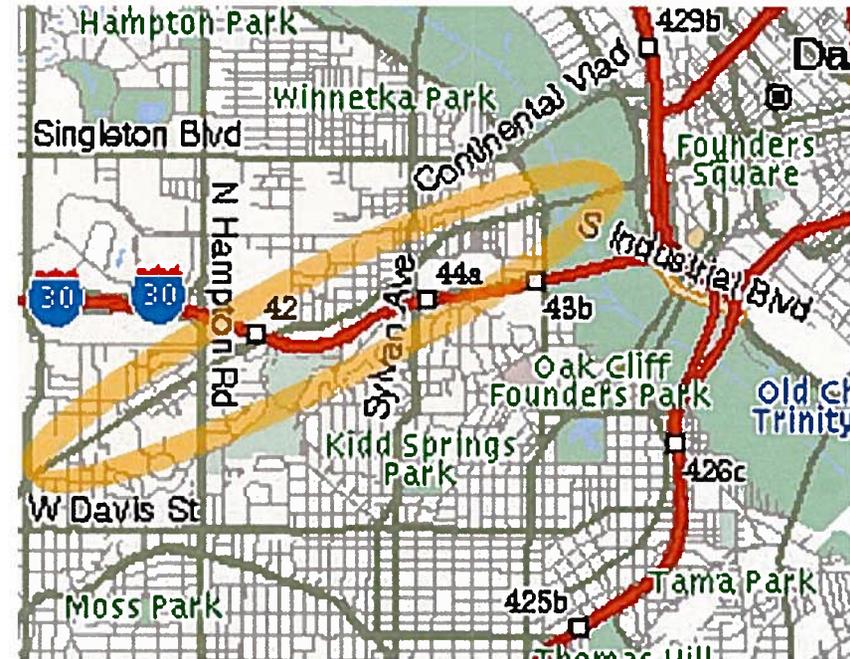
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A map showing the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor's proximity to downtown Dallas, the Trinity River and Interstate 30.





## Overview

### BOUNDARIES OF THE PROJECT AREA

Located immediately west of Downtown Dallas, the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue Corridor is defined by diverse communities and a series of neighborhoods. The area has experienced lackluster growth over the past decade, but is now poised for significant change due to a number of factors. These include: the redevelopment of downtown; development of the Trinity River Corridor; and most importantly, a grass-roots effort by residents to improve their neighborhoods and foster a greater sense of community.

The corridor is defined by the G.C. & S.F. rail line, Hampton Road, Remond Road, Westmoreland Road, Pinnacle Park, Davis Street, Stevens Park, Colorado Boulevard and the Trinity River Corridor.

Like many communities around the country, the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor has been marked by years of non-comprehensive city planning. Until recently, planning for the corridor focused solely on individual and separate land uses, based around a fragmented traffic framework. This planning never comprehensively addressed the needs of either the neighborhoods or the community as a whole. It is essential that any new development or redevelopment be coordinated to create a cohesive

*The current view of the downtown Dallas skyline from the intersection of Fort Worth Avenue and South Hampton Road.*



community experience. Otherwise, much of the area will be in danger of losing value through a lack of a competitive edge within the local and regional markets. In fact, much of the area is already exhibiting natural signs of age and wear.

The community has a challenge in planning for the future of this area. The various stakeholders (informal and formal groups of people with an identifiable interest in a common goal – everyone who lives, works, shops, or visits the area) must work together to ensure that the area maintains and increases its qualitative value within the neighborhoods and community. The corridor has a great deal of developed property separated by large areas of undeveloped land and unmaintained properties. These undeveloped areas become of central importance offering the greatest opportunity for new development patterns and new identity for both the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor and the surrounding communities.

Vacant, and poorly tenanted, spaces have a direct, negative impact on neighboring residential areas. Poorly positioned and declining office development does not attract a healthy residential base. Meanwhile, decaying residential areas will have a direct negative effect on the quality of commercial uses that locate or stay in the area. This planning effort seeks to proactively address a number of these issues, as well as other development constraints that exist. The constraints include a lack of cohesive planning and a lack of coordination of the separately owned properties, as well as current zoning. These are a direct result of the area's unregulated and nonintegrated evolution from a largely suburban fringe neighborhood whose density in select locations can now be described as "urban."

### INVOLVEMENT OF NEARBY NEIGHBORHOODS

The neighborhood plan presented in this document, reflects the consensus-based planning process that has been undertaken by



*"As is" views of various commercial properties along the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor.*

the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group, citizens, other stakeholders and their consultants. These participants have proactively addressed a wide range of issues and enabled those interested the opportunity to have a profound effect in directing the future of the community.

Several key elements that the plan addresses include: infill and mixed-use redevelopment/development, an improved roadway system, open lands, and improved streetscape. The plan positions the corridor as an active, mixed-use series of neighborhoods where multiple properties are perceived

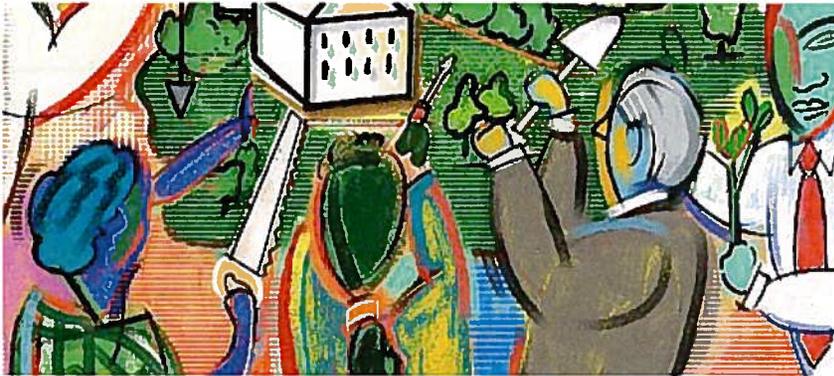
increasingly as a single cohesive unit, and where residential and commercial uses can both thrive.

In the end, this planning effort was directed at making the West Commerce/ Fort Worth Avenue corridor a memorable place to live, work, play, and shop. No longer is it to be just another in a series of homogenous decaying suburban developments that people simply pass through. In taking a proactive stance and creatively planning how the area can be repositioned along the corridor itself and in the larger regional market, the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group strives to help this area reemerge as a unique and identifiable residential, commercial, and retail core.



*The Mission Motel on West Commerce, once a motor court bustling with tourist and business customers.*





## The Process

### CREATION OF THE FORT WORTH AVENUE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

This community-based visioning process began in 1999 when three North Oak Cliff neighbors began to re-imagine the retail corridor adjacent to their neighborhood. The process took a giant step forward when these and other residents decided to publicly present their ideas at the first Fort Worth Avenue Summit in January of 2002. Through the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group's ever-widening and largely digital network, word of the Summit spread quickly. Soon, more than 120 interested North Oak Cliff and West Dallas residents and business owners attended the presentation of the vision at the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce.

### IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES AND ASSETS

This group identified both challenges and assets/opportunities existing along the corridor. To help describe these challenges to development, they enlisted representatives from local government, law enforcement and code enforcement. They presented a snapshot of the current condition of the corridor. Meanwhile the core community group focused on the possibilities for the future.

An illustration from the first Fort Worth Avenue Summit showing initial community skepticism.



*"Nothing will ever happen."*

**"You're fighting a losing battle."**

"We plan to open a...**used car**  
 "Good Tuck."**dealership.**  
 ...**auto repair...everything-under-**  
**business.** **a-dollar store.**"

"Oak Cliff doesn't have the 'demographics'."

Some of the challenges facing the corridor identified at this meeting included:

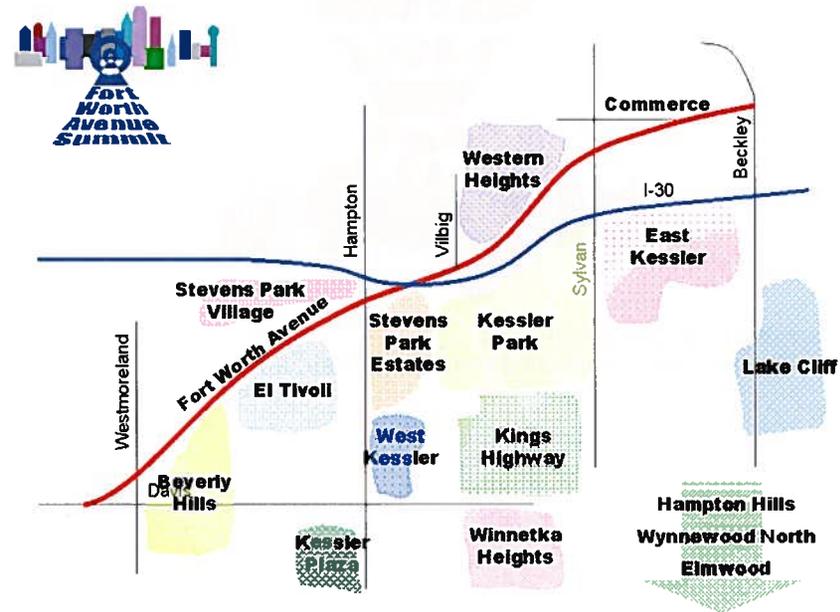
- Petty crime
- Prostitution
- Graffiti
- Non-code-conforming uses
- Poorly maintained road and infrastructure
- Uncontrolled trash and illegal dumping
- A lack of neighborhood service retail
- A lack of greenery and green space
- A lack of signage standards
- A general overall lack of beauty, continuity and sense of place

The same group was in agreement on the obvious amenities and development potential existing along the corridor, which included:

- Direct connection to downtown Dallas via the Commerce Street bridge
- Proximity to Downtown Dallas and the Trinity River
- Best and most photographed view of Downtown Dallas' skyline
- Strong and diverse single- and multi-family residential neighborhoods to the north and south
- Rising elevation from downtown
- Strong connection to the history of the City of Dallas
- Some historic buildings and landmarks worth preserving
- Proximity to the under-utilized Coombs Creek and Stevens Park green spaces
- Recent employment and retail development at Pinnacle Park, located at the corridor's western end

Slides of the current condition of the corridor reinforced the grim

*Another illustration from the first Fort Worth Avenue Summit indicating neighborhoods involved in the revitalization initiative at that time. More stakeholders are involved today.*



reality that the officials described with their statistics. A series of “Before and After” photos helped to describe the group’s vision for the future. The “Before and After” images took existing businesses and properties along the corridor and presented them as they look today and then as they might look with some small improvements. For many it was only a matter of cleaning up trash, screening storage, applying a fresh coat of paint and installing some small amount of landscaping. For others, it was the elimination of an illegal non-code conforming use or the addition of a new neighborhood retail building.

In all, greenery, in the form of street trees and landscaping at both the street and the base of the buildings, and improved street paving, were added to the photos. These images dramatically illustrated the vision the group had started to formulate for the corridor.

## INCORPORATION OF THE FWADG

This presentation struck a cord with those who attended and effectively galvanized the group to move forward with its vision. Feedback after the summit from elected officials and professionals pointed to the need for rezoning along the corridor, as well as the need for a more defined plan and broader base of community support to achieve the vision.

A land-use study initiated by the City of Dallas would be a necessary step toward rezoning a desired area within the city limits. However the group wanted to make sure its vision was reflected in whatever study the city would commission.

The idea of a community visioning charrette, a day-long community design workshop, emerged as a way of further defining community desire. It could also provide support for the vision and serve as a precursor to any City of Dallas initiative. The cost of sponsoring this charrette necessitated the incorporation of the group as a

*One of the “before” photos with its digitally-altered “after” version by Kevin Misak, as shown at the first Fort Worth Avenue Summit. These photos dramatically illustrated how “curb appeal” can impact property values and inspired hundreds of volunteers to get involved.*



non-profit corporation.

The newly incorporated Fort Worth Avenue Development Group (FWADG) selected board members from existing supporters including a liaison to the City of Dallas Planning Department. It then held a general membership meeting in April 2002. Membership fees and donations provided more than was necessary for the sponsorship of the charrette event.

### STAGING THE WEST COMMERCE/ FORT WORTH AVENUE CHARRETTE

The West Commerce / Fort Worth Avenue Charrette took place Saturday, October 26, 2002 at the Bronco Bowl on Fort Worth Avenue (see agenda in attachments). More than 600 commercial property owners, business managers, community leaders and area residents were invited to participate. Including elected officials, volunteers and design professionals, 80 individuals took part in the six-hour visioning session (see list of charrette participants in Appendices).

The workshop strategy was prescriptive.

Participants broke into “villages” (or teams) of no more than seven (7) community members, supported by a recorder and a design professional. Commercial property owners, business managers, residents and institutional representatives were broken evenly among the teams. Leaders of the charrette provided some basic analysis of the area of interest, including street framework and circulation, green space and use zones, and a general analysis of existing districts and context of the area. They also provided participants with a basic understanding of the components of a successful, neighborhood-friendly street development, some understanding about funding mechanisms and city support services, and an understanding about what draws new retail development to locate along the corridor.

*An illustration from the Fort Worth Avenue charrette.*



Through a “Visual Preference Survey,” the participants studied visual tools to help them clarify their own understanding of place-making. Then, the leaders let the community identify and prioritize the challenges and assets of the corridor, clarify their needs around a “live/work/play” model, and formulate a strategy for the transformation. Someone recorded each group’s efforts in both written and visual form. Finally, each team presented a summary of its strategy.

The goal of the charrette process was two-fold. First, identify and prioritize negative (challenges to development) and positive (assets to development) aspects of the corridor. Items at the top of the negative list posed the most potential for transformation if successfully overcome. Items at the top of the positive list represented important and unique aspects of the corridor whose preservation and enhancement would most contribute to the creation of “place” and the success of the corridor.

Beginning with a “village” concept and the idea of the corridor as the potential commercial center of the existing residential and industrial base, the second goal of the Charrette process was to focus the team members’ attention on their own daily and weekly routines (live/work/play). It also asked them to imagine those needs being met along the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue Corridor – to view the corridor as a center serving the varied and diverse residential and industrial tenants on and near West Commerce and Fort Worth Avenue.

An important tool the participants used in this charrette process was the “Visual Preference Survey”. This tool helps those in a community to understand their own preferences for the form and character of future development.

This visioning exercise occurs through the presentation of a series of carefully selected photographs arranged by subject areas.

*Another illustration from the Fort Worth Avenue charrette, a French word for “wagon,” specifically referencing a wagon once used to carry class projects for students of architectural design.*

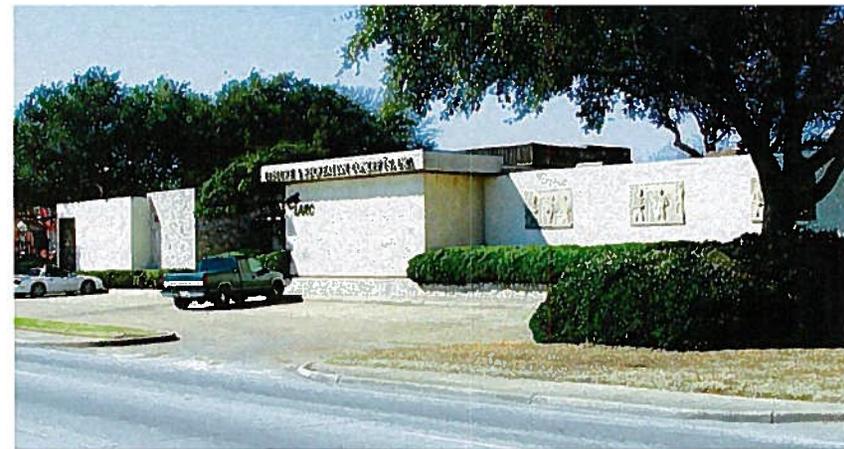


Participants must identify their preferred development patterns for each category by affixing stickers to the boards. Initial approaches to overall project identity, architecture, and landscaping were presented, as were more specific categories including: single-family and multi-family development, retail development, mixed-use development options, office developments, and public spaces. By presenting these different development options in a simple and readily understandable manner, the participants were able to determine for themselves what they wanted to see in their community.

The first part of the visual preference survey focused on the overall vision for the neighborhood and presented alternatives for project identity, general architecture style, and landscape architecture. Summarizing the results of this portion of the survey, participants indicated a preference for a suburban village setting with a unique and identifiable character comprising a mixture of commercial and residential uses. In addition, there was preference expressed for a traditional boulevard, urban streetscapes, and setbacks of well-designed, natural but manicured landscapes. (See Appendices for survey board illustrations.)

The second part of the survey focused on a wide range of building types, including: offices, retail, live-above-the-shop (mixed-use), single-family, multi-family, and public spaces. Participants overwhelmingly supported a mixed-use-development approach (with surface parking) that would offer them the opportunity to live, work, shop and play within a walkable environment. There was also a desire to incorporate a large formal gathering space into the neighborhood. Multifamily developments would build upon the mixed-use development and include two- to four-story buildings. If any new single-family developments were to take place, the survey showed a preference for either “neo-traditional” or suburban housing patterns, which engage the street through front porches and pedestrian-scaled design.

*LARC, Inc., one of the good business neighbors  
along Fort Worth Avenue*

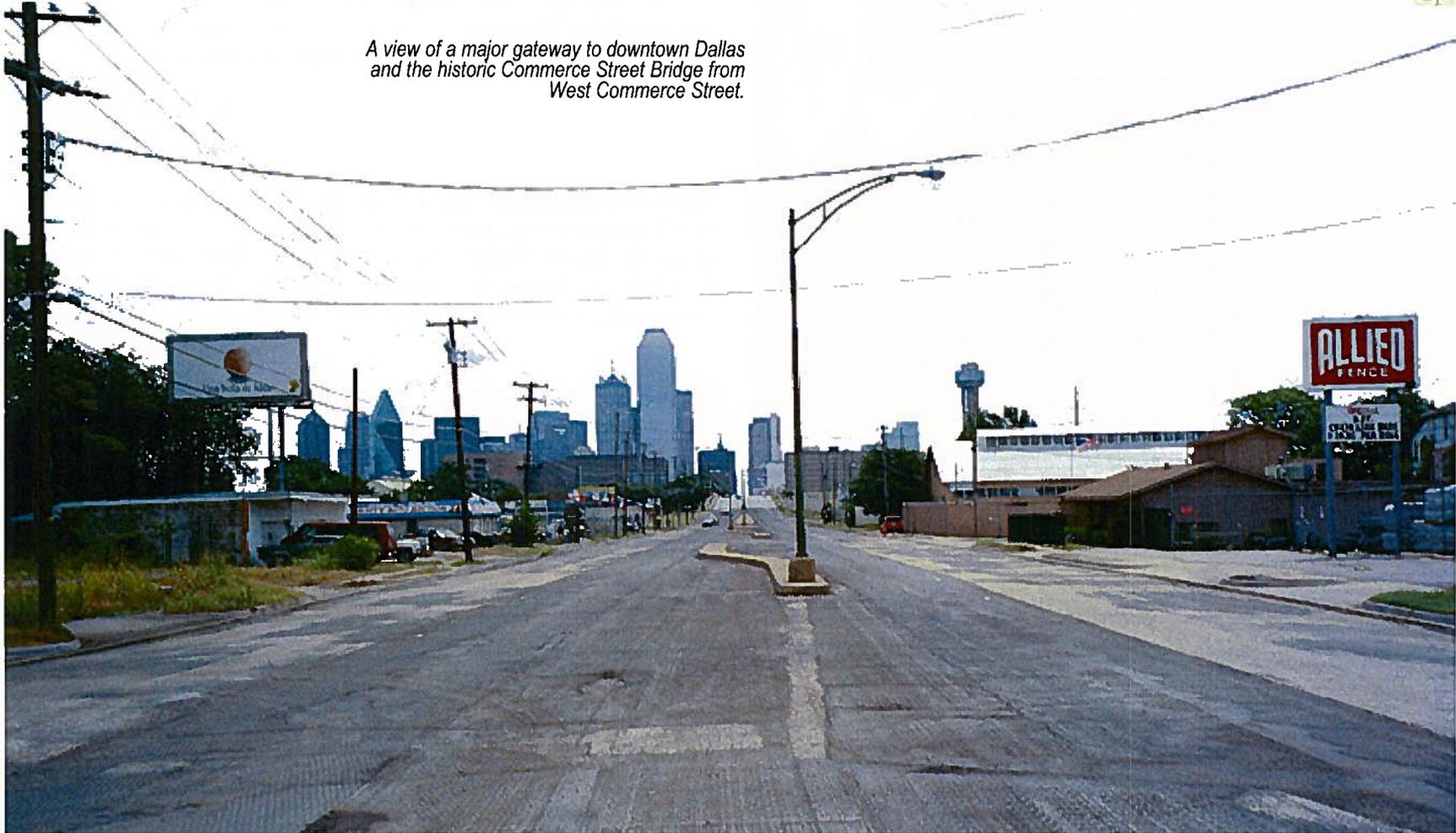


Traffic and transportation issues were of concern to the community and will significantly affect the area's development. Participants clearly preferred alternative transportation choices like bike lanes, pedestrian friendly streetscapes and greater access to mass transit options, including light rail.

In summary, the visual preference survey clearly established the community's proactive desire to respond to the challenge of developing a unique identity for a pedestrian-friendly West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue Corridor.



*A view of a major gateway to downtown Dallas and the historic Commerce Street Bridge from West Commerce Street.*





## Results of the Charrette

While the community's existing impression of the corridor was overwhelmingly negative, community members were equally optimistic about its transformation. This was clear from the equally strong lists of challenges (negative influences on development), opportunities (positive influences on development) and recommendations.

What follows is a consensus summary of the work of the seven teams. In each list, the items/issues are listed in order of importance and agreement among the teams. A list of other challenges named by the teams, but not part of the overall group consensus, follow the descriptions of the individual consensus items.

### CONSENSUS CHALLENGES

#### 1. Lack of Retail and Services

Current West Commerce / Fort Worth Ave (WC/FWA) commercial offerings are not reflective of the economic and cultural diversity of all of the nearby residents and tenants, nor do they adequately serve the day-to-day needs of the community.

*The Fort Worth Avenue charrette included residents, commercial property owners, business proprietors, civic leaders and volunteer design professionals.*



## 2. Lack of Neighborhood-Friendly Qualities

Current WC/FWA corridor is not community, or family, oriented. It is not pedestrian-friendly, has few places to walk to, and few continuous sidewalks. Destination sites are needed.

## 3. Safety & Security

WC/FWA is not safe and secure. WC/FWA businesses, area residents and through-traffic are all plagued by transients, prostitutes, drug trade, illegal dumping and panhandlers. WC/FWA substandard motels contribute to the transient, prostitution, and drug-trade problems.

## 4. Lack of Leadership

WC/FWA is on the southwest side of the Trinity River and split among three City Council districts, two city and police department jurisdictions and the two long-divided communities of North Oak Cliff and West Dallas. Therefore, WC/FWA is no official's priority, encounters slow response, is not well-maintained, is overlooked by most resources, and has no ownership from most city decision-makers.

## 5. Poor & Decaying Infrastructure

WC/FWA infrastructure (bridges, streetlights, street signage, intersections, neighborhood interface, public right-of-ways, road conditions, sidewalks, public area maintenance) is in dangerous disrepair and/or unsightly.

## 6. Lack of Aesthetics

WC/FWA needs more landscaping, "streetscaping," and nearby green spaces. Unsightly power lines and other items that obscure views must be

*A Fort Worth Avenue charrette work team discussing preferred land uses.*



addressed. Currently, medians are cement-only, with no landscaping and no panhandler deterrents. A visual identity must be developed and consistent.

#### 7. Lack of Law and Code Enforcement

WC/FWA code enforcement, building quality and maintenance standards do not achieve the minimums expected by law. The area is plagued by businesses operating without certificates of occupancy and non-complying practices (such as signage, fences, vehicle storage). WC/FWA vehicle traffic and speed need to be better managed.

#### 8. Lack of Stewardship

Many WC/FWA property owners and developers, particularly absentee owners, have little if any community stewardship. Properties are not maintained and a lack of business and community-watch programs contribute to area crime and neglect.

#### 9. Lack of Cohesive Planning/Sense of Place

There is no master plan for land use in the WC/FWA corridor. Current zoning exacerbates all problems. We should move forward with a strategy that maximizes a "village nodes" approach to development.

Rounding out the list of perceived challenges to development along the corridor, are the following (this list represents important issues listed by some teams but not listed unanimously by all teams.)-

#### 10. A lack of authentic identity and connection to the important history of the area

*Charrette work teams developed community standards by consensus.*



11. Few incentives either physical and economic for new economic development
12. Lack of access to alternative modes of transportation, including light rail
13. Underdeveloped areas and an abundance of vacant land
14. No on-street parking
15. Limited access to new technologies, such as high-speed internet and mobile-phone coverage
16. Lack of restaurants and entertainment – area is hindered by the inability to sell liquor by the drink

## CONSENSUS OPPORTUNITIES

### 1. Location, Location, Location

The WC/FWA corridor offers outstanding access to freeways and downtown with attractive proximity to DFW Airport, the West End, the Arts District, and the Stemmons corridor. Accessibility in and out of the area is enhanced by crossroads and feeder streets. WC/FWA and its adjacent neighborhoods offer the best and most-photographed views of the Downtown Dallas skyline.

### 2. Diverse Neighborhood Character

Near to WC/FWA are established neighborhoods with historic homes and an economically and culturally diverse residential population. The area's residential communities have character, natural topographic beauty and older trees, unlike most other areas of greater D/FW. There is excellent

*Charrette work teams also created their own illustrations recommending traffic flow, retail and residential development and land use.*



potential for hike-and-bike trails along Kessler Park way and Coombs Creek.

### 3. Existing Open Space Framework

WC/FWA has excellent potential for hike-and-bike trails and “green” pedestrian connections through the existing neighborhood parks and proximity to the Trinity River Greenbelt Park. Planned expansion and development of the Trinity River Corridor will bring the KATY trail across the river and through Coombs Creek in North Oak Cliff to provide miles of pedestrian and biking enjoyment. Furthermore, Fort Worth Avenue’s existing 100ft right of way provides ample dimension for the “greening” of the street – a true boulevard. Street trees and median landscaping can be added while still providing four lanes of traffic and a turning lane.

### 4. Existence of Anchor Tenants

The WC/FWA corridor is well-anchored by Downtown Dallas and the Trinity River Corridor to the east and by Pinnacle Park to the west. These major activity centers – as well as adjacent neighborhoods – need the connection of a vital economic corridor. They need a corridor that is like a zipper, knitting the areas together.

### 5. Authentic and Unique History and Character

The WC/FWA area has a rich and, perhaps, overlooked past, revealing both the glamour and secrets of mid-20th Century America. There is much history to treasure from pioneer settlements and the Great Depression (including the Clyde Barrow gang) to FWA as the first major thoroughfare in Texas to head west from the east and the corridor’s post-WWII automotive, nightclub and

*Charrette participants engaged in exercises to identify and prioritize urban design components that reflect community preferences and standards.*



restaurant culture. Connections to the JFK assassination and scattered architectural uniqueness augment our shared past.

#### 6. Demographic & Commercial Diversity

WC/FWA residents are a demographic mix of Anglo, Latino, Asian and African-American cultures spanning all economic groups. We have a mix of traditional and non-traditional families, straight and gay households, original owners and seniors plus new residents and young singles. We have a nice balance of homeowners and renters and we value the current and continued mixed-use of light industrial, commercial and residential developments along the WC/FWA corridor.

#### 7. Emerging Community Joint Support for the Corridor

Commercial and residential property owners support planned, inclusive development along the WC/FWA corridor. They recognize the opportunity for the area to become a “zipper” that brings together diverse businesses, neighborhoods, our “anchor tenants,” and the past with the present. Many community residents know their neighbors, are highly educated, socially conscious, and offer both expendable income and an under-measured cash economy. This community is supported by the design of these older suburbs, whose structures directly address the street, providing opportunities for neighbors to know one another.

#### 8. Key Existing Businesses

The WC/FWA corridor already enjoys and values the existence of key, community-minded businesses and organizations. These include area

*Even preferred building materials were identified by Charrette participants.*



banks, schools, churches, Stevens Park Golf Course, the Main Post Office and Bulk Mail Center, Wedgwood and Virginia Manor Apartments, and businesses such as Bank One, Luby's, FedEx, LARC, Commerce Grinding and, soon, Home Depot. These community partners are viewed as assets upon which the future can be built.

#### 9. Blank Slate Offered by Many Vacant Properties

The future of the WC/FWA corridor is there to be written upon by developers and civic leaders who balance profit and opportunity with vision and community-minded stewardship. WC/FWA has plenty of available space, a wide boulevard able to handle alternative transportation and landscaping, and high traffic counts (augmented by traffic on its cross streets of Hampton, Westmoreland, Sylvan, and Beckley plus the parallel I-30). Opportunity is here.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Strengthen Stakeholders

Review consensus recommendations with charrette participants. Convey recommendations to neighbors and commercial property owners and businesses. Communicate recommendations through media. Invite stakeholders to presentation at 2003 Fort Worth Avenue Summit.

### 2. Accelerate the Land-Use and Development Plan

Kick-start city's land-use study with charrette results. Develop new zoning and economic enhancements for the entire corridor. Entice business services and big-box retail to the ends of the corridor, consumer retail to major intersection

*Charrette participants also offered residential and commercial density preferences.*



hubs (including upscale restaurants with legal liquor-by-drink and upscale groceries with in-store wine sales) and add neighborhood services and additional residences to areas all along the corridor. Use the “node” strategy to develop a series of villages.

### 3. Make FWA a Political Priority

Use pressure and public attention to make WC/FWA a political priority. City, state and federal entities must treat area as a unified jurisdiction. Bring consolidated weight of all relevant agencies to address crime and safety, code and ordinance enforcement, non-compliant businesses, traffic management, infrastructure needs, mass and alternative transit, aesthetics, commercial property appraisal, sales tax collection, public school neglect, community services and pedestrian accessibility.

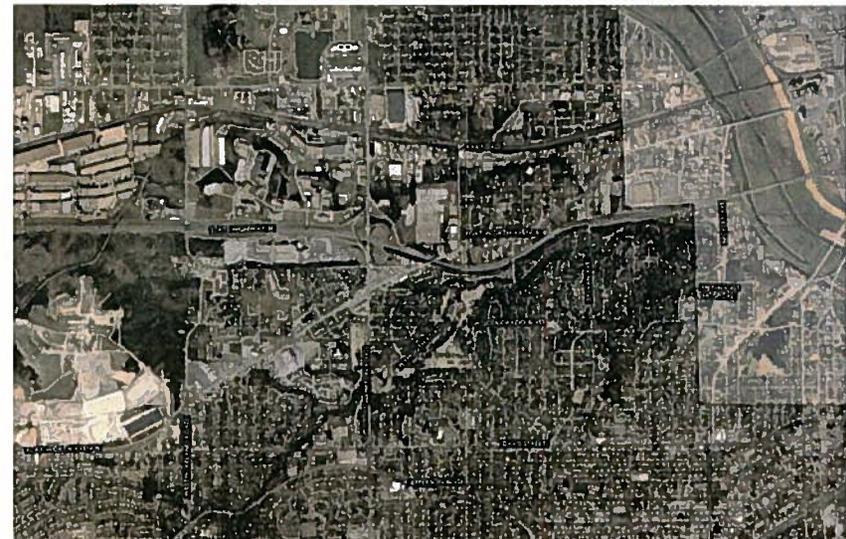
### 4. Create Green Space

Connect existing public parks, schools and neighborhoods with pedestrian and/or bicycle paths. Convert the city’s auto pound into innovative residential development that incorporates park space and recreational fields. Establish Coombs Creek Trail. Save open views. Bury utilities. Plant trees and protect current old growth trees. Landscape public right-of-ways. Create more public open space for families and events. Create streetscapes and visual identity for corridor.

### 5. Integrate Existing Businesses

Educate current business and commercial property

*A topological map showing the area around the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor.*



owners on value-added improvements they can make in order to become good citizens, contributing to the community rather than taking away from it.

#### 6. Invest

The FWADG needs to establish its own investment corporation so it can develop the corridor. The group can assess current properties and research potential businesses. Potentially create a self-taxing entity that creates a fund to draw on for infrastructure improvements

#### 7. Honor the History

Historical architecture must immediately be assessed and protected. Area historical archives need to be developed, consolidated and shared. Streetscape, design, graphics and marketing themes for the WC/FWA area need to honor the corridor's mid-20th Century Americana traditions and tales. Special events need to be developed to bring attention to the area and honor the past.

#### 8. Develop New Businesses

Act as marketing entity for the corridor to augment the current balance of businesses by enticing businesses to fill the retail and service gaps and population gaps that are not currently being served. Maintain neighbor-friendly and truly diverse mixed-used development along the corridor, creating a model for other urban communities to follow. Create a "demonstration" mixed-used development with a nationally-recognized company.

*Charrette work teams presented summaries of their ideas and recommendations to the full group.*



**9. Create 2003 Program of Work**

From these recommendations, the all-volunteer Fort Worth Avenue Development Group board of directors will shape its 2003 program of work and goals.



*One of the vacant properties facing Fort Worth Avenue and backing up to Interstate 30.*





## Conceptual Plan for the Corridor

### OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE PLANS

The next phase in the planning process saw the FWADG take the information generated by the community teams at the charrette and create a rough draft of a conceptual plan with developmental standards. The main objective was to create a neighborhood plan and a framework for development that supports a range of densities and land uses, and at the same time creates pedestrian activity, street life, and a sense of community. The conceptual plan addresses:

- quality of life and sense of community;
- overall land-use relationships;
- ability to create synergies of use;
- appearance, visibility, and distinction of development;
- local and regional transportation system dynamics and traffic patterns;

*A digitally-enhanced photograph by artist Kevin Misak showing the possible appearance of the Fort Worth Avenue corridor from Hampton Road.*



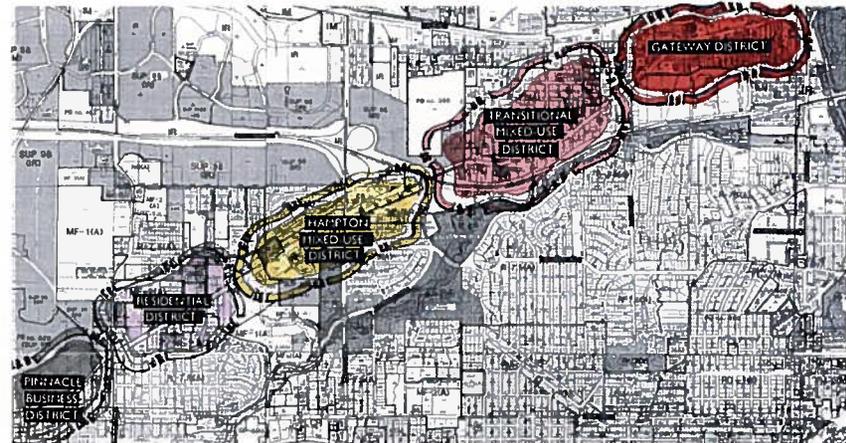
- existing and future public infrastructure and streetscape improvements;
- location of activity centers; and
- amenity, open land, and landscape opportunity zones

**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The accompanying development standards seek to address issues of place and place-making using the following as guides

<b>Memorable</b>	Successful mixed-use places are memorable
<b>Authentic</b>	They generate experiences that are authentic
<b>Experience</b>	They are not about product but an experience
<b>Orchestrated</b>	They are planned to be visually orchestrated
<b>Unexpected</b>	However, they allow for the unexpected
<b>Creativity</b>	Their blend of uses and density needs creativity
<b>Place</b>	Their strength lies in the quality of the place
<b>Market</b>	And a planning strategy tied to the market

*First-draft analysis, recommending five districts with distinct "village" character.*



**Collaboration** Success depends on the collaboration of all

The hallmark of the conceptual plan is connectivity. The centerpiece is the transformation of the West Commerce / Fort Worth Avenue Corridor into a beautifully landscaped, vibrant and interesting boulevard that connects the surrounding communities. It will accomplish this by providing new pedestrian-friendly retail and commercial development opportunities organized in nodes along the length of the corridor while at the same time supporting existing legal businesses.

The plan strives to connect a developing urban Downtown Dallas with a growing light-industrial and big-box retail center at Pinnacle Park and the thriving neighborhoods on either side of the corridor. It builds on the proposed transformation and development of the Trinity River Corridor, the improvements just initiated along Singleton Boulevard in West Dallas and the first of three proposed signature bridges that will connect Woodall Rogers Freeway to Singleton Boulevard in West Dallas, just north of the Fort Worth Avenue Corridor.

## FEATURES OF THE PLAN

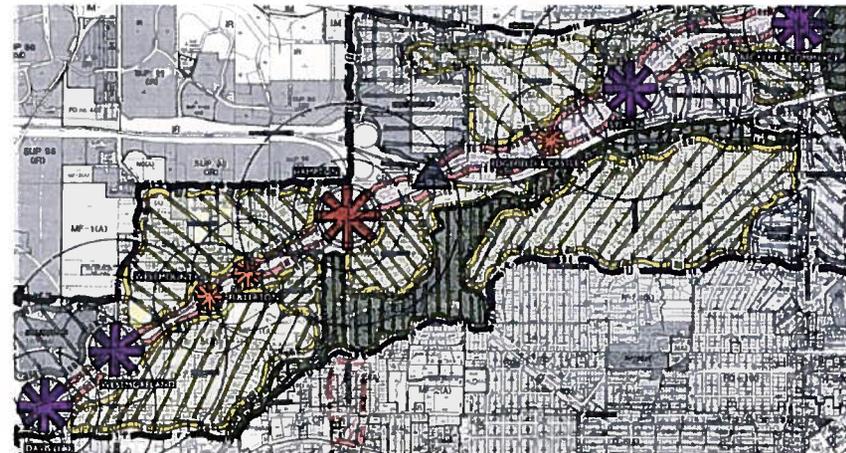
The main features of the conceptual plan include:

**Village Nodes** – A series of large, commercial nodes where activity and development are concentrated.

**Gateways** – Two gateway nodes that define the boundaries of the corridor.

**Events along the Street** – Several intermediate “events” or nodes that mark the main pedestrian

*Another first-draft analysis, showing the immediate, adjacent residential neighborhoods, important intersections, and existing green space.*



connections between residential neighborhoods across the corridor and Interstate 30.

**Distinct Districts** - Three districts distinct in development and use-mix, as well as in character.

**The Green Boulevard** - A reconfigured, landscaped, pedestrian-and car-friendly Fort Worth Avenue that serves all of the surrounding communities.

**Pedestrian Connections** - A grid of enhanced pedestrian-friendly streets including the corridor but extending across the corridor to link existing parks and green space amenities on both sides of it.

**Light Rail** - Location of possible light-rail stops along an existing rail line, with pedestrian and car-oriented links to the surrounding neighborhoods.

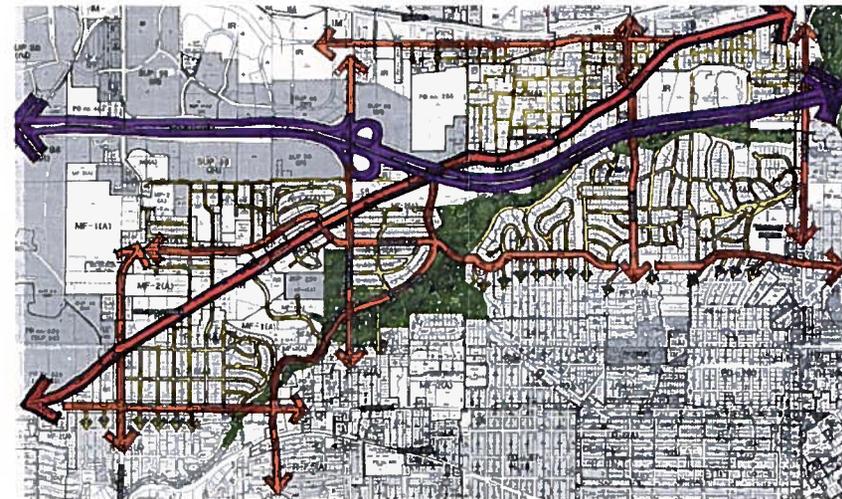
**Development Opportunity Zones** - Designation of the city car pound, the city police car repair shop as well as several vacant properties along the corridor as development-opportunity zones.

## THE LARGE NODES

The plan identifies several important nodes established by the existing street grid, the existing development pattern and the natural topography. These nodes (or activity centers) are marked by a red or orange star and are located where West Commerce / Fort Worth Avenue intersects with Sylvan, Hampton, and Westmoreland. The two important gateway nodes - Beckley on the east and Davis on the west - are indicated by purple arrows.

Beginning at the eastern end of the corridor, the intersection of

*A first-draft illustration showing traffic thoroughfares adjacent to the corridor.*



Beckley and West Commerce marks the gateway to the corridor from downtown and the corridor's connection to the proposed Trinity River parklands. It is important as a threshold, a place to distinguish the corridor as distinct from downtown. However, as Beckley currently passes under the Commerce Street bridge, the intersection is not desirable in its current configuration. A reconfiguration would clarify this intersection and help to define this as a gateway, as well as create better development opportunities for the nearby properties.

Designated by an orange star, the next node west, at Sylvan Avenue is identified as a "75 percent" retail intersection. Retail thrives on visibility. Corners at an intersection have greater visibility than locations along a street. The cliff that rises on the northwest corner of the intersection, though a wonderful and unique asset to the character of the corridor, makes that corner undesirable for retail development. However, the remaining three corners are quite desirable and partially developed.

Two factors do hinder pedestrian improvements to Sylvan Avenue, which is currently a four-lane road at its intersection with Fort Worth Avenue. First is the existence of the cliff, which doesn't allow room at its base for a sidewalk along both Sylvan and Fort Worth Avenue. Second, and more importantly, is the older stone train trestle underpass four blocks north of Fort Worth Avenue on Sylvan that narrowly fits four lanes of traffic and allows no pedestrian access. These two aspects limit the north/south connectivity that Sylvan provides. Changes to improve these conditions – though costly – would improve the commercial and pedestrian life of Sylvan and thereby provide better automobile and pedestrian access to the corridor and to surrounding commercial and residential areas.

The corridor's intersection with Hampton Road marks the first of two "100 percent commercial / retail nodes" (designated by the

*Elected City of Dallas officials and Fort Worth Avenue Development Group volunteers at the second Fort Worth Avenue Summit.*



red stars). This intersection has the most developed retail investment along the corridor with good reason. Hampton is a major north/south corridor for commuters living in Oak Cliff and far South Dallas, connecting them to Interstate 30 and north of the city center. Also, upon crossing the Trinity River, Hampton Road becomes Inwood Road, a major thoroughfare in North Dallas. Though recent improvements to corner properties including upgraded storefronts and landscaping are evident, the conceptual plan strives to establish standards for existing businesses as well as guidelines for new development that will define a uniform quality standard for all. This will, in turn, support and enhance the success of the corridor.

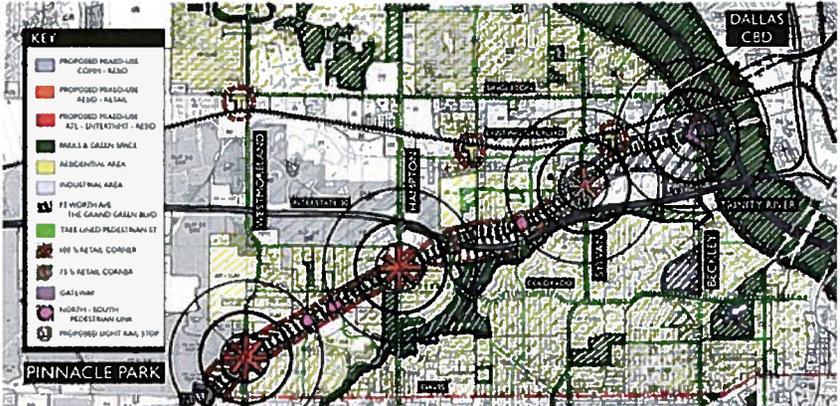
Westmoreland Avenue is the second “100 percent” corner along the corridor. Though all four corners are currently underdeveloped, the development of all four corners is not obstructed by any natural impediment. There is less north/south traffic on Westmoreland than on Hampton Road because it does not currently connect to Interstate 30. However, Westmoreland does handle a fair amount of daily commuter traffic which makes it attractive for retail and commercial development. In addition, upon crossing the Trinity River, Westmoreland becomes Mockingbird Lane, another major North Dallas thoroughfare which passes through the Medical District and the entrance to Dallas Love Field.

Davis Street is the last link in the string of large nodes along the corridor. Davis’ Y intersection with Fort Worth Avenue is unique in its configuration and creates a natural kind of threshold or starting point for the corridor and Davis Street coming from the West. In fact, this ‘Y’ has historical significance as the location of Sivil’s – the first drive-in restaurant in Texas – which lasted until the early 1970s.

Davis Street going east runs through the heart of several North



*Proposed master plan illustrating the community's recommendation for a green boulevard punctuated by a gateway abutting the Trinity River and three retail villages to the west .*



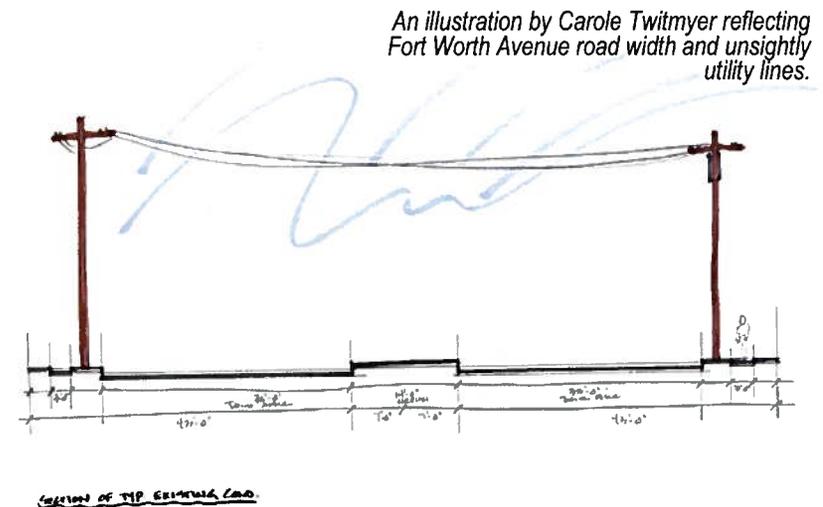
Oak Cliff neighborhoods and is the next closest commercial strip (though very small in development scale) south of Fort Worth Avenue. Heading west, Davis joins Fort Worth Avenue and connects Dallas with the suburbs of Grand Prairie and Arlington and eventually the city of Fort Worth. The triangular green space created by the Y intersection of the two streets marks the entrance to the Pinnacle Park development and lends itself to wonderful possibilities for marking the beginning of the corridor distinct from the west.

## WALKABILITY

The five nodes created by where Fort Worth Avenue intersects with Beckley, Sylvan, Hampton, Westmoreland and Davis set up an important framework for developing the desired pedestrian-friendly neighborhood development. However, these nodes exist due to conditions that have more to do with the operation and scale of car-oriented development. As previously stated, community members were clear about their desire for a more walkable, pedestrian-oriented development.

This objective was achieved through the understanding that walkability, scale, and human attention span, or interest, are key to the success of any pedestrian-oriented development. An average person will walk comfortably for about five minutes without some visual stimulation or interesting event. That person might extend the walk to ten minutes to reach an intended destination.

This defined walking distance translates to about 1/8 mile for a five-minute walk and just under a quarter-mile for a ten-minute walk. These distances were overlaid on each node and are represented by the black concentric circles. If the large nodes represent concentrated activity centers, the circles illustrate the degree to which a person is willing to walk to get to the activities



(shopping, entertainment) located at the node.

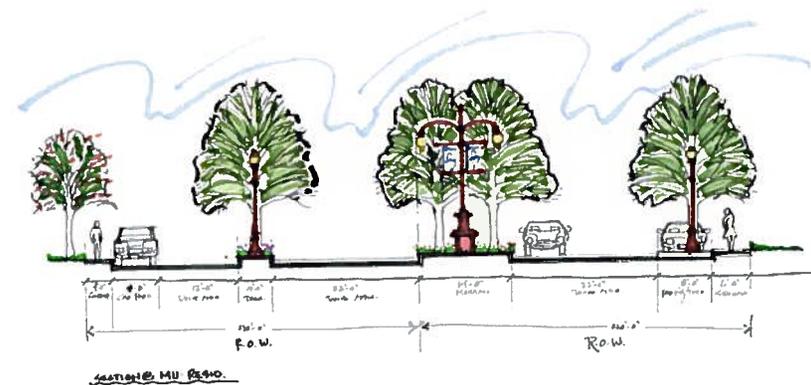
Climate is an important factor to consider when creating a walkable environment in Dallas. During a large part of a typical year, shade from the brilliant light and heat of the North Texas sun will be a deciding factor for any pedestrian along the corridor. The provision for shade both built and natural is an important addition to the corridor and a factor in its future success.

### THE INTERMEDIATE NODES

The measure-of-walkability exercise revealed gaps along the corridor between the large nodes. It pointed to the need for some intermediate nodes or “events” that would not necessarily compete with the larger activity centers, but would provide interest and enhance the walkability of the corridor as a whole. (These intermediate nodes are designated on the map by the violet dots.) Further investigation revealed that these intermediate intersections tended to be at those locations along the corridor where the residential neighborhoods to the north and south of the corridor come closest together.

The first walkability gap going west from the Trinity River occurs at the Y intersection where Fort Worth Avenue begins and West Commerce veers to the right (north). The uniqueness of the intersection – combined with its proximity to the rail line to the north and important employment centers like the Central Dallas Post Office – make this a great opportunity for an enhanced north/south pedestrian connection. The unique parcels created by the Y intersection lend themselves to interesting building forms that would help to mark the importance of this connection. The addition of special landscaping, lighting and enhanced paving would create the desired pedestrian environment. Furthermore, enhancing this north/south connection to the future light rail stop will help this district achieve the charrette team’s goal of

*An illustration by Carole Twitmyer showing the same cross-section with streetscaping and traffic-calming enhancements.*



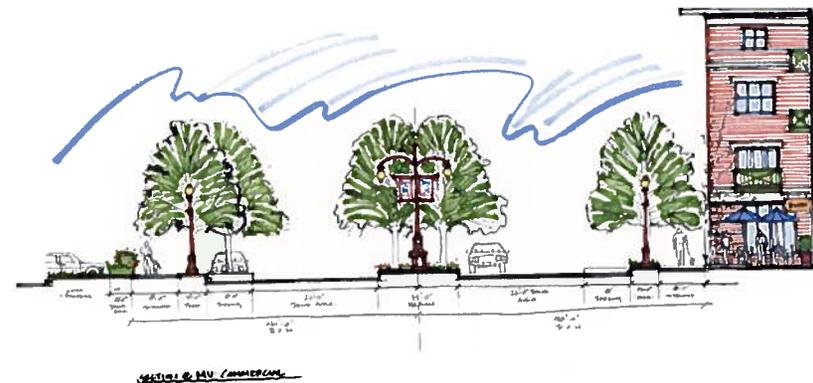
maintaining current employment centers and attracting new residential and employment developments by providing access to mass transit and by alleviating future parking pressures.

The next walkability gap along the corridor occurs between the Sylvan and Hampton nodes. It is here where the corridor and Interstate 30 run parallel and then cross; Fort Worth Avenue goes over Interstate 30, which is in a canyon below. This segment also most closely connects a rather isolated West Dallas neighborhood to the north with the Stevens Park Estates neighborhood in North Oak Cliff.

Only one secondary street from the original street grid in this segment – Edgefield Avenue – survived the creation of Interstate 30. Even so, Edgefield does not make a direct connection across Fort Worth Avenue but jogs to the east before continuing along to connect with West Commerce to the north. Edgefield Avenue is also an important link between the Coombs Creek and Kessler Parkway to the south of the corridor and Edgefield Park to the north. It is for these reasons that the Edgefield node is not a desirable location for large retail development. A mixed-use development with some neighborhood service retail and a strong emphasis on new higher-density residential infill would be appropriate. This is the best location for an enhanced pedestrian connection between the north and the south that could include upgraded paving, landscaping, lighting and more street trees that can provide beauty and shade on both Fort Worth Avenue and Edgefield.

Another tenuous and indirect connection can be made via Plymouth and Vilbig by way of the Fort Worth Avenue bridge across Interstate 30. While this is not the direct connection desired by retail and commercial development, it does provide a connection that could be made to accommodate pedestrians connecting across the corridor. In the current state, the pedestrian path

*A thoroughfare illustration with the addition of screened parking, urban corridor-style residential options, and retail uses.*

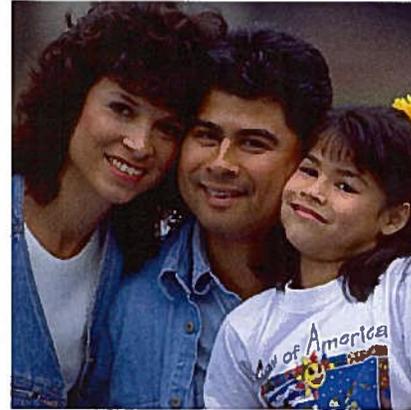


across the bridge does not feel safe (sidewalk is too narrow, guardrail doesn't provide enough of a sense of security at the height of the bridge) though the experience of crossing the bridge is surprisingly beautiful.

Ideally, a separate, five-six-foot pedestrian walkway would be added to the bridge on the south side only allowing safer pedestrian crossings. In this way residents from the northern neighborhoods could access the parks and trails to the south by Fort Worth Avenue at Vilbig. They could also come along the south side of the bridge on the new pedestrian walk and turn south on Plymouth to access the parks. Plymouth to the south runs almost the full length of the Stevens Park public golf course. The crossing at Vilbig would then require enhancements like improved sidewalks and crossing paths, landscaping including trees for shade and lighting for safer pedestrian crossing. This connection presents obvious benefits to both of the neighborhoods it seeks to connect.

Vilbig borders a large property occupied by the city car pound and was identified by the charrette teams as a potential opportunity for mixed-use residential and greenway amenity development. The current 24-hour use of the pound is incompatible with the residential neighborhoods that surround it. Converting most of this property to residential development would help to strengthen and stabilize the existing neighborhoods and provide much needed residential density required to support the retail development along the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor. The charrette teams also felt that a smaller portion of the parcel should be set aside for a greenway/park or open space, giving the new, larger neighborhood some much-needed green public amenities.

The other walkability gap occurs between Hampton and Westmoreland just about at the property soon to be occupied by Home Depot. Here again, it is along this segment that two



*The Fort Worth Avenue Development Group wants to create a sense of "place" along the corridor, where all are welcome and safe.*



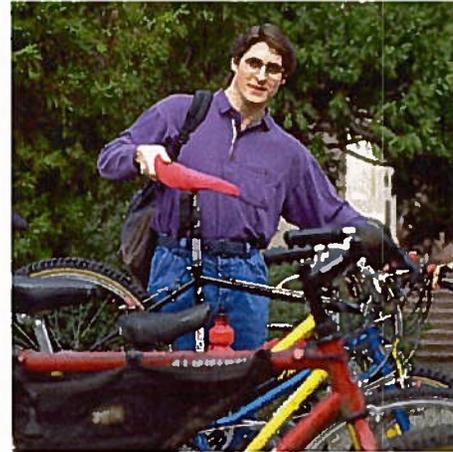
residential neighborhoods come closest across the corridor. Enhanced pedestrian connections at both Bahama and Westmount will give important pedestrian access to the Stevens Park School and Westmount Park for the southern neighborhoods, and access to Stevens Park public golf course and Coombs Creek Greenway for the northern neighborhoods. Furthermore, these enhanced connections frame the future development of the Home Depot property. The charrette teams envision this large parcel developed to include retail and restaurant amenities that are further supported by some more dense residential offerings. Providing enhancements at both locations will provide strong support for neighbors to walk to this destination.

Delineating these pedestrian connections as “events” in the landscape along the corridor will help to create interest and a unique character for the corridor. It could also help to organize bus coverage for this corridor by providing more frequent stops at these locations to help concentrate pedestrian activity to the safer pedestrian oriented intersections. It is hoped that small neighborhood service retail is also concentrated at these enhanced intersections allowing neighbors from both the north and south an opportunity to walk to these services. These may also be opportunities to refer to the rich history of the corridor and in turn help to further unite north and south through a shared history.

## THE DISTRICTS

Once the large and intermediate nodes were defined, the districts seem to naturally define themselves. A simplified version of the preliminary analysis emerged with three mixed-use districts of varying make up and character replacing the five original districts.

The preliminary analysis of the corridor presented to the participants at the charrette divided the corridor into five districts; a Pinnacle Park Business District from the intersection of Fort



*The Fort Worth Avenue Development Group wants to create a pedestrian-friendly corridor.*



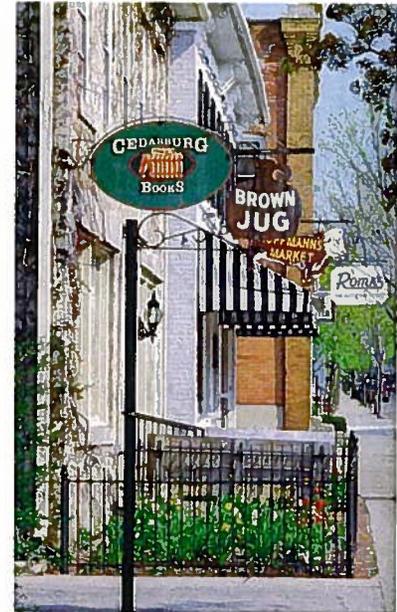
Worth Avenue and Davis extending east to Westmoreland, a Residential District from Westmoreland to the Home Depot property, a Mixed-Use District from the Home Depot to the bridge over Interstate 30, a Transitional Mixed-Use District from the bridge at Interstate 30 to Sylvan and a Gateway District from Sylvan to the Commerce Street bridge.

The revised analysis of the corridor that took into account the input from the charrette teams calls for mixed-use development along the entire corridor, but grouped into three districts distinguished by the mix of uses and the aesthetic character of each. Foremost in the teams' vision for the corridor was a series of places unique in character from other commercial strips in suburban Dallas and distinguished by ties to local history and traditions. To this end, the teams' work and desires suggest a survey of existing buildings to be initiated to assess possible historic value and potential for preservation. The aesthetic/development guidelines might take their cue from what historic building fabric, if any, is left.

## DISTRICT I

District 1 (hatched in lavender on the map in the Appendices, on page 51) is bounded by the Trinity River to the east and Willomet to the west and includes both the Beckley and the Sylvan intersections not including the top of the cliff at the northwest corner of Sylvan. This is the oldest section of the corridor as evidenced by the proximity of the buildings to the street. Though some of this proximity is due to a widening of the street over the years, many storefronts connect directly to the sidewalk at the street. Several still have old-fashioned, head-in parking from the street. In areas where the street paving is poor, the original red brick paving is evident.

This area is currently predominantly zoned IM (Industrial Manufacturing District) and IR (Industrial Research District),



*Vibrant and attractive urban corridors increase property value and make for livable spaces.*



allowing the most intensive industrial uses. A residential trailer park operates as a non-conforming use. Also existent are several hotels built in the 1950s that are in decay but still operating at a substandard level. A substantial amount of street front is undeveloped, while the rest of the businesses fall into the IM and IR zoning category. The Sylvan exit on Interstate 30 is the first exit out of downtown going west and plays an important role in the development of the Sylvan/Fort Worth Avenue intersection and this district due to this connection.

For this district, the desire of the many charrette teams was to see medium to high-density mixed-use development that respected existing legitimate businesses but gave incentive for more mid-rise commercial and residential development. Development guidelines should support Beckley as the gateway to the corridor from downtown and strengthen Sylvan as a retail anchor for this district.

However, this district was envisioned to be the most densely developed of the three and to have the most urban character due to its proximity to the Trinity River, the Justice Center and Downtown Dallas. The density of development envisioned for this segment would create a corridor of consistent development between Beckley and Sylvan. The mix of uses should lean more to commercial and other compatible uses, with some smaller amount of residential most likely along the Trinity River or in multi-level developments.

In this district, the buildings should front the street and directly connect to broad (8-15 foot) sidewalks. Street trees should line the street edge, and on-street parallel parking should be provided. Other parking should be in lots behind the buildings or in designated parking structures. The median should be widened to allow trees and landscaping. This district should have an overall urban feel in its street/building configuration, as well as in its aesthetic.



*In many areas of the corridor, the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group wants to create neighbor-friendly environments with traffic-calming elements, street-level retail, increased residential units and attractive streetscaping.*



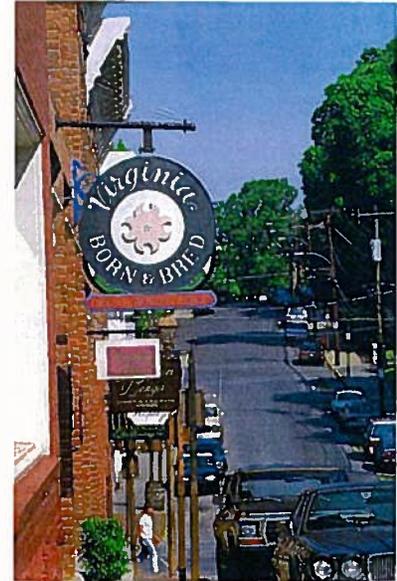
Though a denser urban character is desired in this district, the charrette team members were careful to allow for public access to the Trinity River Park System and above all to control the building heights so as not to obstruct the view of Downtown Dallas for as many as possible. A view corridor controlling building heights along the corridor in sight of the downtown view was proposed. Unlimited development and privatization along the entire Trinity River edge was also seen as undesirable.

Many ideas emerged for the conversion of the undeveloped land. Some thought that the proximity to the justice center would make office development appropriate. Some thought that an urban up-scale grocery store would benefit residents on both sides of the corridor as well as those across the Trinity River in the City Center. Some suggested that the land owned by SMU could possibly be developed as a satellite school or an educational center for continuing education. Others thought an educational center based on a partnership between SMU and Methodist Hospital would benefit the community. Still, all felt that the inclusion of residential options was essential to the mix.

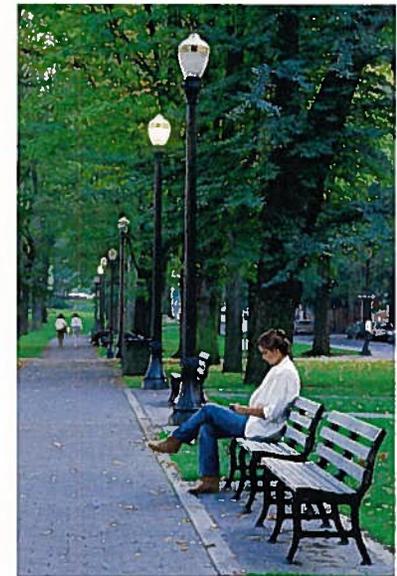
Last but not least, many of the charrette team members expressed a desire to preserve the hotels and perhaps bring them back to their former glory. All agreed that the current problems with prostitution, drugs, and petty crime are linked to the existence of these substandard hotels, but all also remarked upon their unique, kitschy, historic appeal and felt that they might be worth rehabilitating. These ideas reflect some of the charrette teams' desired uses for this district and lay the groundwork for the redefinition of the allowed uses and the beginnings of design guidelines in District 1.

## DISTRICT 2

District 2 (hatched in orange on the map on page 51) is bounded by Willomet to the east and just across the Interstate 30 bridge



*As Dallas City Councilwoman Dr. Elba Garcia says, "We all deserve nice."*



beyond Plymouth to the west. Included in this district is also the property along the north side of Fort Worth Avenue from the cliff at Sylvan to Willomet. This property is included in District 2 because of its geographic challenges and its physical disconnection from Sylvan. This district is marked by residential neighborhoods in close proximity on both the north and the south sides of the corridor.

This district contains no large nodes and only two intermediate pedestrian nodes. This is one of two locations where residential neighborhoods to the north and south closely align with the corridor. The property fronting the corridor is currently zoned predominantly CS though many of the lots are too narrow and too shallow for today's commercial development due the diagonal direction of Fort Worth Avenue across the north / south-oriented residential street grid. Development on the south side of the corridor is limited somewhat by sloping topography and the proximity to the Interstate 30 canyon which runs parallel to Fort Worth Avenue along this segment.

A small neighborhood commercial center dating to the 1910s or 1920s at Castle and Winnetka struggles, yet remains to serve the neighborhood adjacent to the north. Several nondescript substandard hotels, a non-conforming trailer park, tire and used car sales and repair shops round out the unusual mix of uses along this segment of Fort Worth Avenue. Much of the property to the south and the north is undeveloped.

The lack of direct vehicular access across the corridor at this point inhibits the creation of the all-important node to entice retail and commercial development. This combined with the psychological and physical barriers created by the cliff to the east, the Interstate 30 bridge to the west, and the proximity of the established residential neighborhoods make this district less than desirable for retail development other than small neighborhood service type. However, the unsurpassed view of Downtown Dallas offered by the

*Infill residential housing and street-level retail fit nicely along urban corridors, respectfully blending new construction with existing architecture near the city center.*

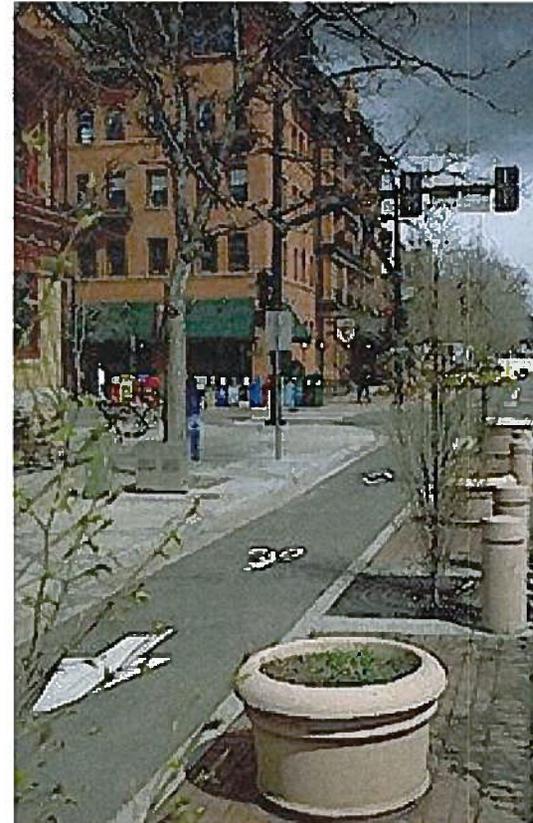


cliff and the street itself, the existing residential base and the lack of crossing vehicular traffic make this area ideal for residential development.

For these reasons District 2 is designated as a mixed-use district that is predominately residential, with some small neighborhood service-oriented retail/office uses at the street. The teams felt that allowing for more residential development along this portion of the corridor, would strengthen the existing neighborhoods to the north and help to create a pedestrian connection between the north and south neighborhoods that was safe and accessible. A strong desire to preserve remaining bits of unique physical history – including the cemetery where Clyde Barrow is buried – the historic neighborhood commercial center at Castle and Winnetka, and the 1950s era Ranch Motel, was also expressed.

District 2 is different in character than District 1, and the charrette team members were clear that a distinctive aesthetic character define this district. Buildings should still front the corridor with minimum to no setbacks. Broad sidewalks should connect to building faces wherever possible. And since the potential for residential development along the street would exist and should be encouraged, the street configuration should reflect this desire.

This street configuration should offer more protection for pedestrians; a kind of separation from the traffic traveling along the corridor. This means on-street parking, street trees and tree lawns separating the broad sidewalk from the street. Reconfiguring the current six-lane road with a median to a four-lane road with a broader landscaped median and on-street parking would allow for safer pedestrian crossings. Or alternately, the use of a one-way slip road with a small median alongside a four-lane road with a broad landscaped center median might provide the protection and separation that residential development along the corridor might need. The charrette teams imagined this as a more quiet and serene segment of the corridor



*An environment that encourages alternative transportation enlivens a corridor, decreases fossil fuel demand, and reduces pollution.*

in comparison to the other two districts.

It is within District 2 that the views of Downtown Dallas are at their best. Here again, the teams were careful to limit building heights to four stories on the cliff and the north side of the corridor so as not to obstruct any views of Downtown Dallas and to be sensitive to the existing single-family neighborhood.

However, because of the orientation of the street toward downtown and the proximity to Interstate 30, team members felt that four-story height restrictions were not necessary on the south side of the corridor. Some team members suggested that these properties between the corridor and Interstate 30 might make good locations for some mid-rise residential development that would take advantage of the views of downtown to the east and over the tree tops of North Oak Cliff to the south. Though the current mostly single-family residential areas are stable, all acknowledged the need for more residential density in order to support the quality of retail and commercial development that team members envisioned for the corridor.

Since key aspects of the vision for the corridor are the ideas of inclusion and diversity, residential developments that will appeal to a broad range of economic and demographic levels is important to the charrette team members. All agreed that grouping the different economic levels was not the best way to provide the fully integrated community that is desired, and that that approach sometimes compromised issues of quality. Some members felt that a better solution was to require a mix by percentage in all developments, thus providing quality development for all.

Last but not least, the team members felt that given the amount of available undeveloped land along this segment of the corridor, District 2 should include some public green space. Ideas included

*An environment that stimulates vibrant street life enhances the quality of life and attracts businesses, which in turn add to a city's tax base.*



upgrading the existing cemetery to include some additional parklands and developing a park that would include public spaces on the cliff to allow all to share in the spectacular views.

### DISTRICT 3

District 3 (hatched in red on the map on page 51) extends from just to the west of the I-30 Bridge to Pinnacle Park at Davis Street. This district contains the two “100%” Large Nodes at Hampton Road and Westmoreland Road, the Gateway at Davis Street and two Intermediate Pedestrian Nodes at Bahama Drive and Westmount. Avenue. It is the largest in corridor length of all of the districts. The properties in District 3 are zoned predominantly RR (Regional Retail) and MF (Multifamily District) with some CR (Community Retail).

This district contains both the most retail and the most residential development in a mix that most closely approximates the intent for the whole corridor. The more intensive retail development existing at the intersections at Hampton and Westmoreland is easy to understand as these roads are heavily traveled north/south corridors and Hampton is the second exit on Interstate 30 going west from downtown. The fact that all four corners are topographically available and that they are currently developed, make them 100% intersections and ideal for more intensive retail development.

Surrounding these large retail-oriented intersections is a mix of strip center convenience retail, substandard hotels, fast food, small office, storage, used car, tire, and car repair shops. Very little of the available land along this portion of the corridor is vacant. Though a few large vacant parcels do exist, this portion of the corridor shows the most vibrancy in its mix of uses and its land development though there is much room for improvement.



*Other urban areas of Dallas have already benefitted from careful mixed-use development planning.*



In addition to the existing retail are several well-maintained garden-style apartment complexes and one mid-rise apartment tower for disabled residents and seniors. In this district are the second and third areas where residential neighborhoods connect across Fort Worth Avenue. These connections occur in between the large nodes and the intermediate nodes, between Hampton Road and Bahama Drive and Westmoreland Road and Westmount Avenue.

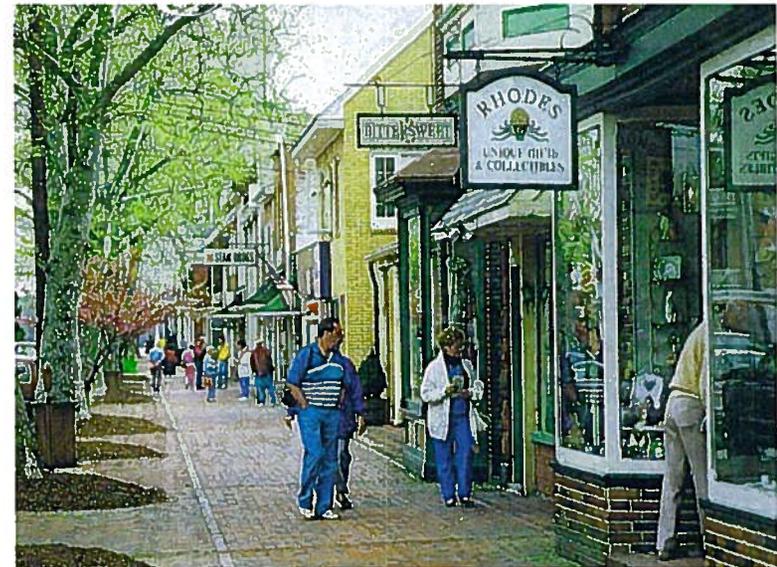
District 3 also contained the only purely entertainment venue along the corridor, the Bronco Bowl. For years the Bronco Bowl played host to a number of musical acts big and small as well as providing other distractions and amusements for many growing up in Dallas. It was the intent of the charrette teams to provide support for this landmark by allowing sympathetic development to surround this property. The creation of an entertainment destination with restaurants, entertainment retail, and a small movie theater mixed with some denser residential development was imagined.

However, the Bronco Bowl property has changed hands since the charrette. Currently, the 14-acre Bronco Bowl property is in the process of becoming a regional and community retail center that includes a Home Depot, two sit-down restaurants, a neighborhood bank and some other neighborhood service and regional retail tenants. Though many will miss the Bronco Bowl as a unique music venue, the new retail development has brought attention to the development potential existing along the corridor and has become a catalyst for further improvements.

Though this development represents a significant change in uses on this property, it does not represent a significant change in the basic planning approach to District 3. Originally, the charrette teams envisioned District 3 as a mixed-use district with more emphasis on neighborhood service and amusement retail at the



*Walkable commercial corridors are more successful when they are accessible to nearby residential neighborhoods and vehicular traffic.*

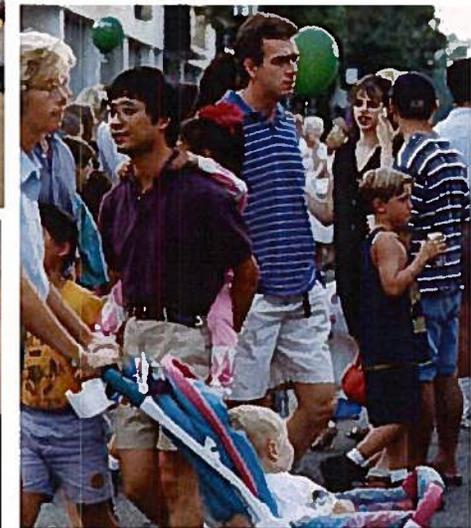
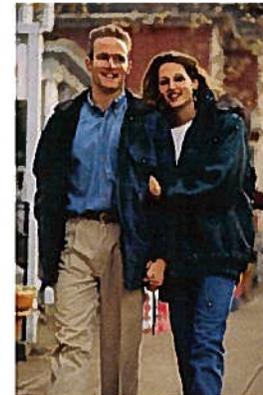
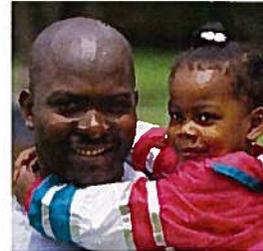


ground level with residential above. The Bronco Bowl served more as an entertainment destination that could be enhanced by the addition of some destination restaurants and shops. The transformation of the property from an entertainment use to a regional retail use creates a destination opportunity of a different sort. The pedestrian and car traffic that the Home Depot will create will attract restaurants and shops that want to capture this market. So, for the same reason that the teams wished to support the Bronco Bowl as an entertainment destination, they will support this redefined retail destination.

It was the consensus of the charrette teams that District 3 be distinguished from District 1 in that developments incorporate buildings of the type that mix uses and strengthen neighborhoods so as to serve local needs. (District 1 would have a more urban development pattern and perhaps serve more regional and city center needs that take advantage of the proximity to downtown and to the proposed Trinity River improvements). District 3 is surrounded by stable residential development to the north and the south. The teams were clear in their desire to provide development zoning and standards that would support these neighborhoods without adversely affecting their quality of life.

To this end, the teams preferred to control the building heights to four stories at the street with building setbacks that allowed for a small tree lawn or planting strip with street trees at the curb of Fort Worth Avenue, a minimum four-foot-wide sidewalk, a planting strip for screening at the base of a building or in front of a parking area, and/or a single aisle of parking in front of the building that fronts Fort Worth Avenue. The teams wanted to avoid typical building patterns that allow a stand-alone, single-story building placed at the back of the lot with unscreened and under-landscaped parking lots extending from the Fort Worth Ave curb to the building face.

*Truly diverse, commercial corridors welcome all groups and enhance the quality of life for all.*



The teams find the typical retail development pattern to be inefficient and ugly. The same uses and parking requirements can be accommodated by bringing the building to the front of the lot and moving the parking to the side and behind the buildings. Furthermore, grouping the buildings together and building multi-levels provide several community opportunities.

Building more levels closer to the street provides more leasable space. A four-level building might provide retail at the ground level, a combination of office and residential on the second level and more residential above. Allowing for vertical stacking of uses makes more efficient use of the available land. The density of this type of development also justifies the expense of parking structures which keep cars out of view. Once cars are secured out of view, the street and shopping environment becomes more pedestrian-friendly.

With the stacking of uses also comes the possibility of shared parking between uses that typically operate at different times during the day. Sharing the parking for office and residential uses, for instance, can cut the number of parking spaces required, thus using less land for parking and more for revenue-producing uses.

Team members agree that current parking requirements and standards for parking lots create unsightly continuously paved areas with no “green” relief. The City of Dallas’ parking requirements do not currently allow shared parking between residential and any other use. It is the hope of the teams to make some new provisions for shared parking for all districts along the corridor and to raise the aesthetic standards for the creation of any parking lot along the corridor.

Because retail thrives on itself, the provision for more retail creates synergies that help define this area as a shopping destination. And, because retail requires a certain residential



*Close to Downtown Dallas, Interstate 30, and the upscale neighborhoods of North Oak Cliff, the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue Corridor as it appears today (above) could be transformed into a vibrant, urban corridor. Similar transformations have already taken place in many other American cities (at right).*



density to survive, the addition of denser residential development, along with the retail and office, is essential to support the type of retail mix that the teams desire.

Bringing the buildings closer to the street — and closer to the street trees, the tree lawn and the broader sidewalk — helps to enclose and define the street edge as a pedestrian-friendly realm. Most of the neighborhood resident members of the teams expressed a desire to walk from their homes to shops and restaurants on the corridor. All team members desired a corridor that was beautiful and felt safe to walk along. Three- to four-story continuous buildings and landscaping will provide containment, appropriate scale, beauty, and shade for both the passerby in a car and the pedestrian.

Last but not least, issues of security and safety are addressed by this type of more efficient building. Building closer to the street allows passive policing by the street traffic. Light provided by pedestrian street lighting helps with nighttime visibility. By stacking uses that have different or opposite occupancy time frames, the area or property gains a range of pedestrian activities taking place over a broader range of time during the day. Adding residential uses (which typically occupy the building during the evening through the morning hours) above retail or office uses (which occupy the building during daytime business hours) provides a passive security system. The residential occupants provide “eyes on the street” during times that typical retail development is unoccupied.

Clearly defining the pedestrian realm from the automobile, and designing the public space with the pedestrian in mind, keeps pedestrians safe. Putting pedestrians along the corridor provides another level of activity beyond the automobile and helps to define the area as a neighborhood shopping destination. Providing for pedestrian activity has the added benefit of neighbors and

*North Oak Cliff and West Dallas  
deserve a walkable village where  
all are welcome.*



neighborhoods strengthening their bonds through casual contact in their daily lives. One of the best defenses a neighborhood can have is knowing who belongs and who doesn't. Suspicious activities are more likely to stand out in neighborhoods that know one another.





## Our Vision

In summary, after a three-year process, participating stakeholders assert the following, prioritized goals for the West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue corridor:

### MAKE IT VIBRANT

- Create a vibrant retail/restaurant/residential/commercial corridor that reflects the economic and cultural diversity of all nearby residents and draws on its unique location between downtown and Pinnacle Park.
- Create a walkable family and community-oriented series of destinations that refer to and strengthen our unique community history and character.

### MAKE IT SAFE

- Make this new series of destination villages code compliant and safe from crime for both businesses and area residents alike.
- Strengthen and build the network of current business owners in order to provide better onsite community leadership.

### MAKE IT GREEN

- Create a grand, tree-lined and landscaped boulevard that both cars and pedestrians can enjoy.
- Create a parks, trails and greenway system that connects existing parks (Kessler Parkway, Stevens Park, Westmount Park, Kidd Springs, etc.) and park plans (Coombs Creek, Trinity River, KATY trail, etc.) with tree-lined pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets.

### MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL

- Create a master plan that guides new and existing development to enhance the street experience as well as protect the brilliant views and unique topography/natural beauty of this area.
- Raise the standard of attention to existing public infrastructure – including bridges, street lights, utility structures, sidewalks and intersections – to a level that contributes, not detracts, from the overall street experience.

### MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE

- Provide area residents transportation choices besides the car that include bicycle trails, improved bus route coverage, downtown trolley/shuttle, commuter rail and light rail.
- Ensure availability of various new technologies that provide connection beyond our immediate neighborhoods.





## Appendices

- *Charrette participants*
- *Transportation survey board illustration*
- *Land use and retail node survey board illustration*
- *Charrette work team maps*
- *Charrette work team notes*
- *Additional inserts*

*For more information:*  
Fort Worth Avenue Development Group  
P.O. Box 225337  
Dallas, TX 75222-5337

[www.fortworthavenue.org](http://www.fortworthavenue.org)

# West Commerce/Fort Worth Avenue

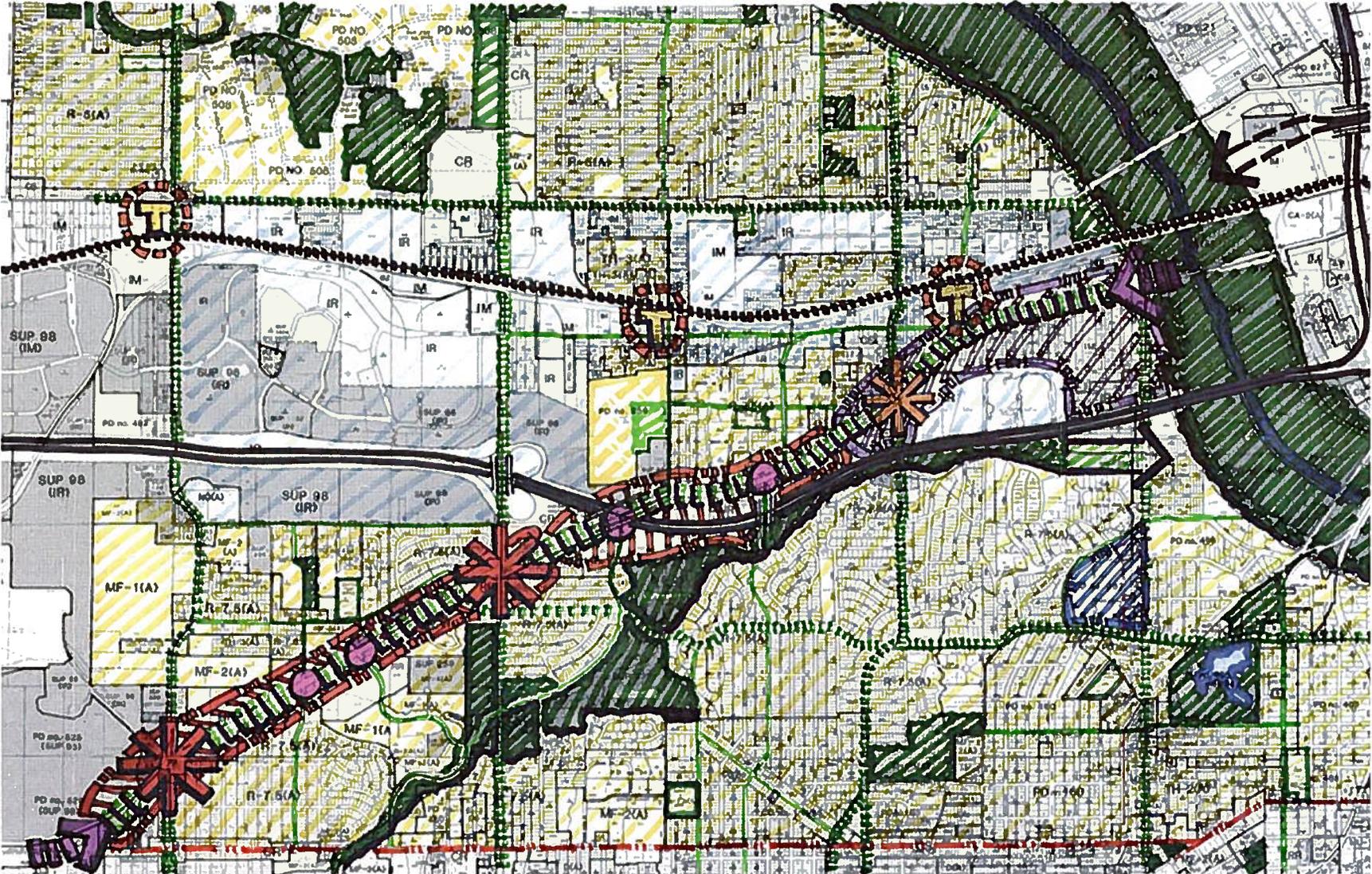


# Charrette

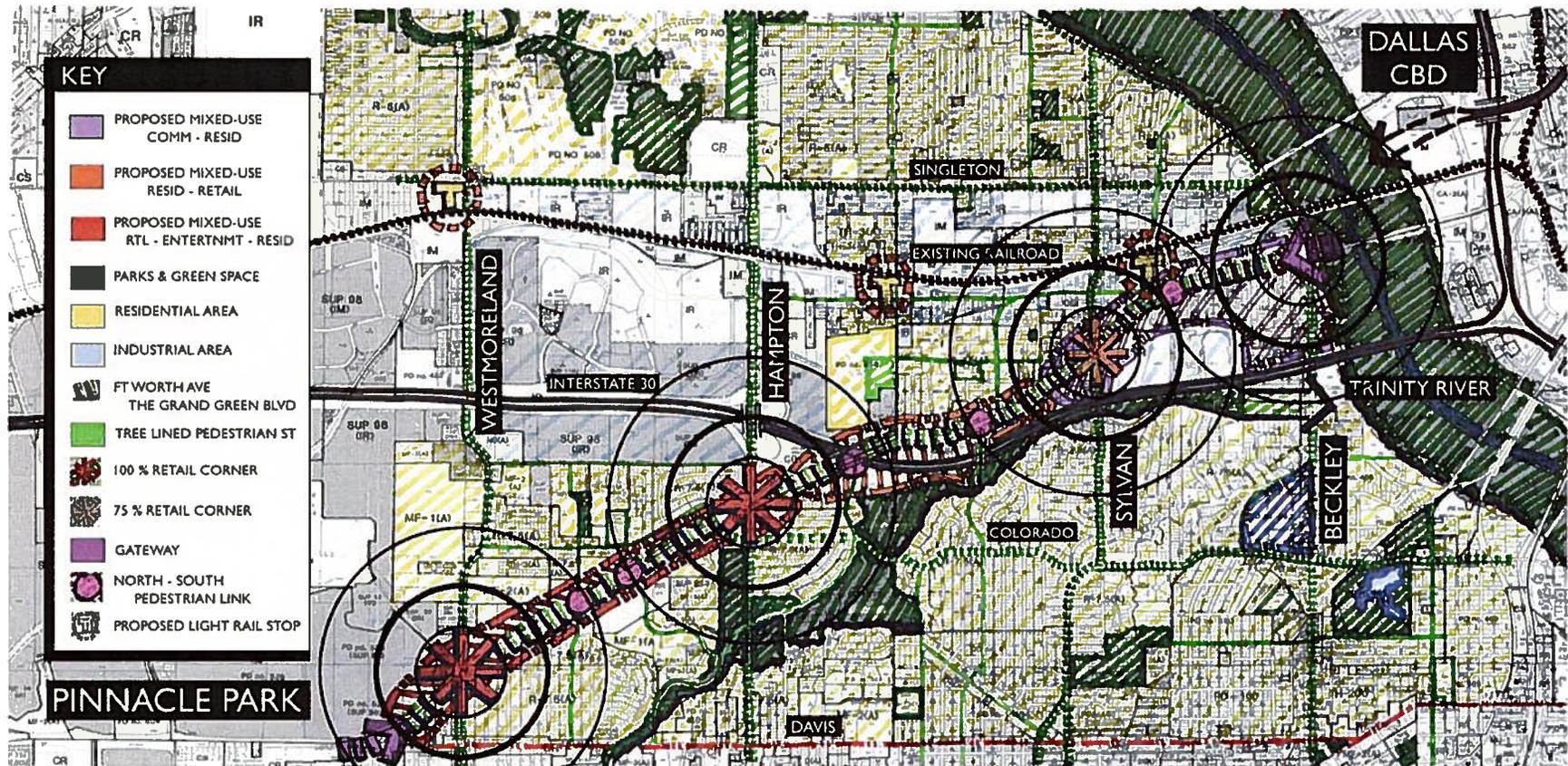
## ◆ Charrette Participants

Monte Anderson, Options Real Estate  
 Barbara Barbee, Beverly Hills neighborhood  
 James D. Barnes, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 Ann Beytagh, Southern Methodist University  
 Clifford A. Booth, SWPG / The Bronco Bowl  
 Gloria Brown, Fred Douglas neighborhood  
 Lee Bruce, Genesis Graphics  
 John Cappello, West Dallas Chamber of Commerce  
 Mary F. Caraway, West Kessler neighborhood  
 Deborah Carpenter, Western Heights neighborhood  
 James Cinquemani, 2412 Hardwick  
 Rafael Ciordia, Kidd Springs neighborhood  
 John W. Collins, 901 Fort Worth Avenue  
 Rudolph Colorado, Crystal Rose Bridal  
 Rudolph Colorado Jr., Crystal Rose Bridal  
 Stephanie Colovas, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 John C. Cramer, Hampton Hills neighborhood  
 Erich Dohrer, RTKL Associates Inc.  
 Jesse Elguea, Benavides Restaurant  
 Jose Falcón, Oak Cliff Kiwanis  
 Ruben Flores, 2601, 2605, & 2727 Fort Worth Avenue  
 Mary Garcia, Westmount neighborhood  
 Ann and Marvin Goldberg, 2408 Guest Street  
 Joel Goldsteen, Ph.D., UTA School of Urban Public Affairs  
 Maria Gomez, Salon Las Americas  
 Troy Greenstreet, Kessler Park neighborhood  
 Sophie Guerra, Bank One  
 Jeff Herrington, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 David Isom, Stevens Park Village neighborhood  
 Tim Jones, El Tivoli neighborhood  
 Dwayne Jones, Preservation Dallas

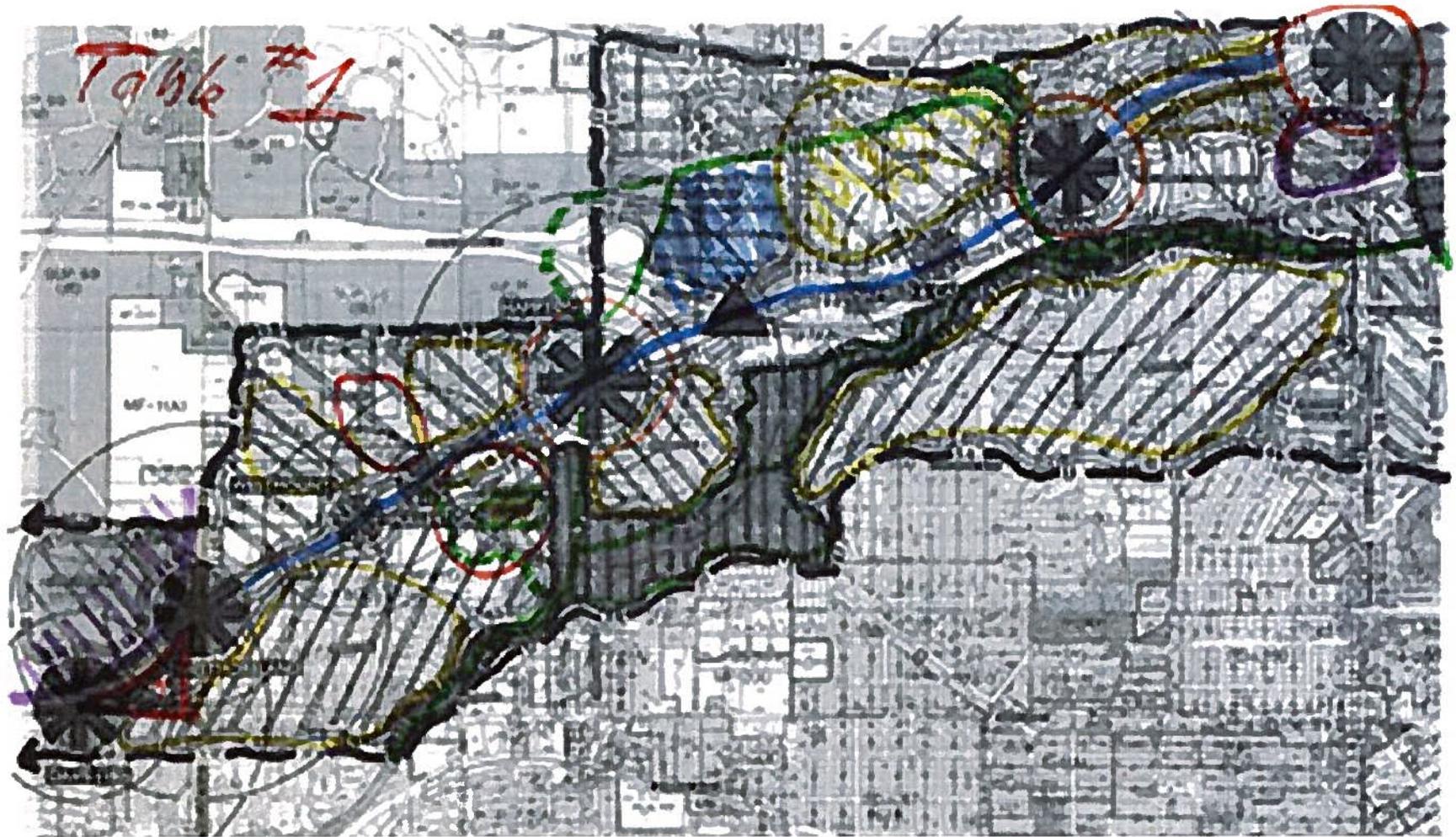
Julia Laxson, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 Steve Leavell, Contractors Iron and Steel  
 Rick Liesner, HNTB Corporation  
 Michael Lindsey, 2519 Fort Worth Avenue  
 Joseph Lodor, Commerce Grinding Company  
 Rosa E. Lopez, Vecinos Unidos neighborhood  
 Janice Mattox, Gator Car Wash  
 Nancy McCoy, ArchiTexas  
 Ninette McDonald, Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce  
 Stephen Miano, Kessler Park neighborhood  
 Rebecca Mohr, El Tivoli neighborhood  
 Marie Morin, Western Heights neighborhood  
 Daryl Nance, Virginia Manor Apartments  
 Mark S. Odneal, Stevens Park Village neighborhood  
 Tania Oliva, Kessler Park neighborhood  
 Pia Parkkila, University of Oulu (Finland)  
 Robert Prejean, HNTB Urban Design  
 David Robbins, RTKL Associates Inc.  
 Warren Rutherford, Methodist Medical Center  
 Leif A. Sandberg, City of Dallas  
 Chris Tom Semos, 601, 1900, 1914, & 1918 Fort Worth Ave.  
 Charles Tom Semos, Semos & Co. Real Estate Investments  
 Paul N. Shaw, RTKL Associates Inc.  
 Dorcy Siegel, City of Dallas  
 Roman Smith, Kessler Plaza neighborhood  
 Steve Springfield, East Kessler neighborhood  
 Pat Stephens, Westmoreland Heights neighborhood  
 John Terrell, Christon Company / Pinnacle Park  
 Kacey Thomas, UTA  
 Carole Twitmyer, Wynnewood North neighborhood  
 Fran Tynan, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 Michelle West, LARC Inc.  
 Randall White, Stevens Park Estates neighborhood  
 Brent Willmott, Kessler Park neighborhood  
 ...plus volunteers and VIP observers



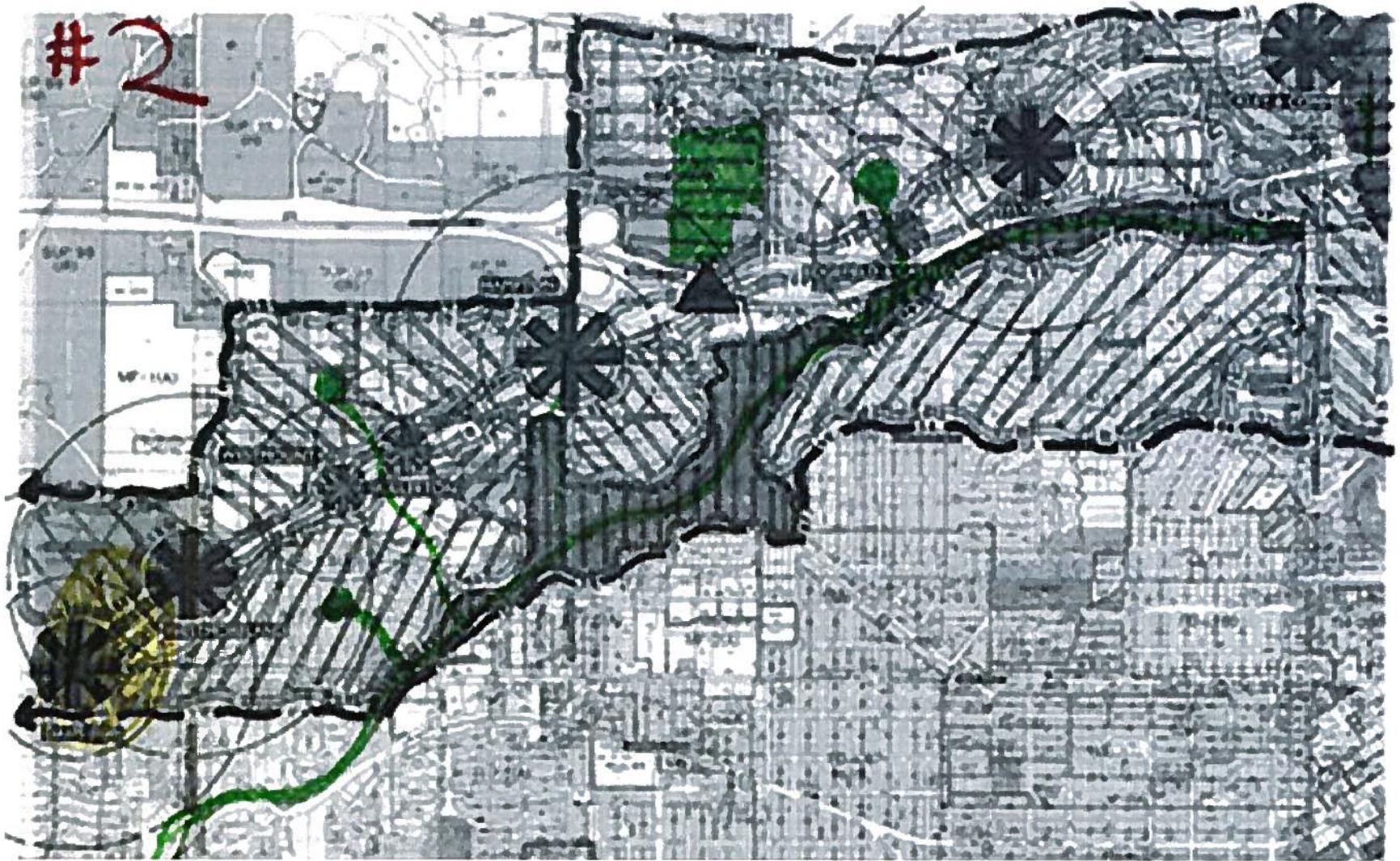
Transportation survey board illustration.



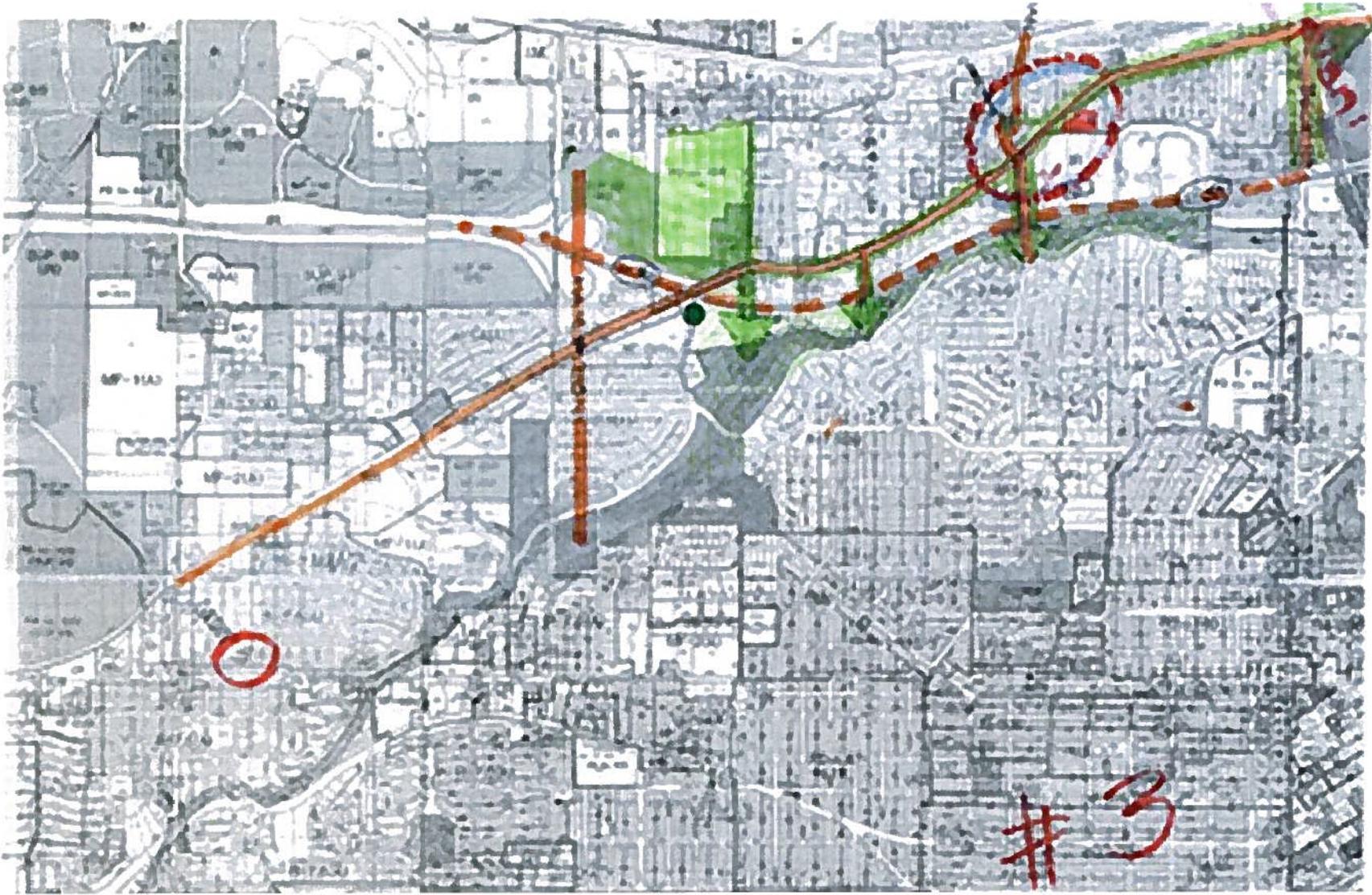
Land use and retail node survey board illustration.



Charrette Table 1 worksheet.

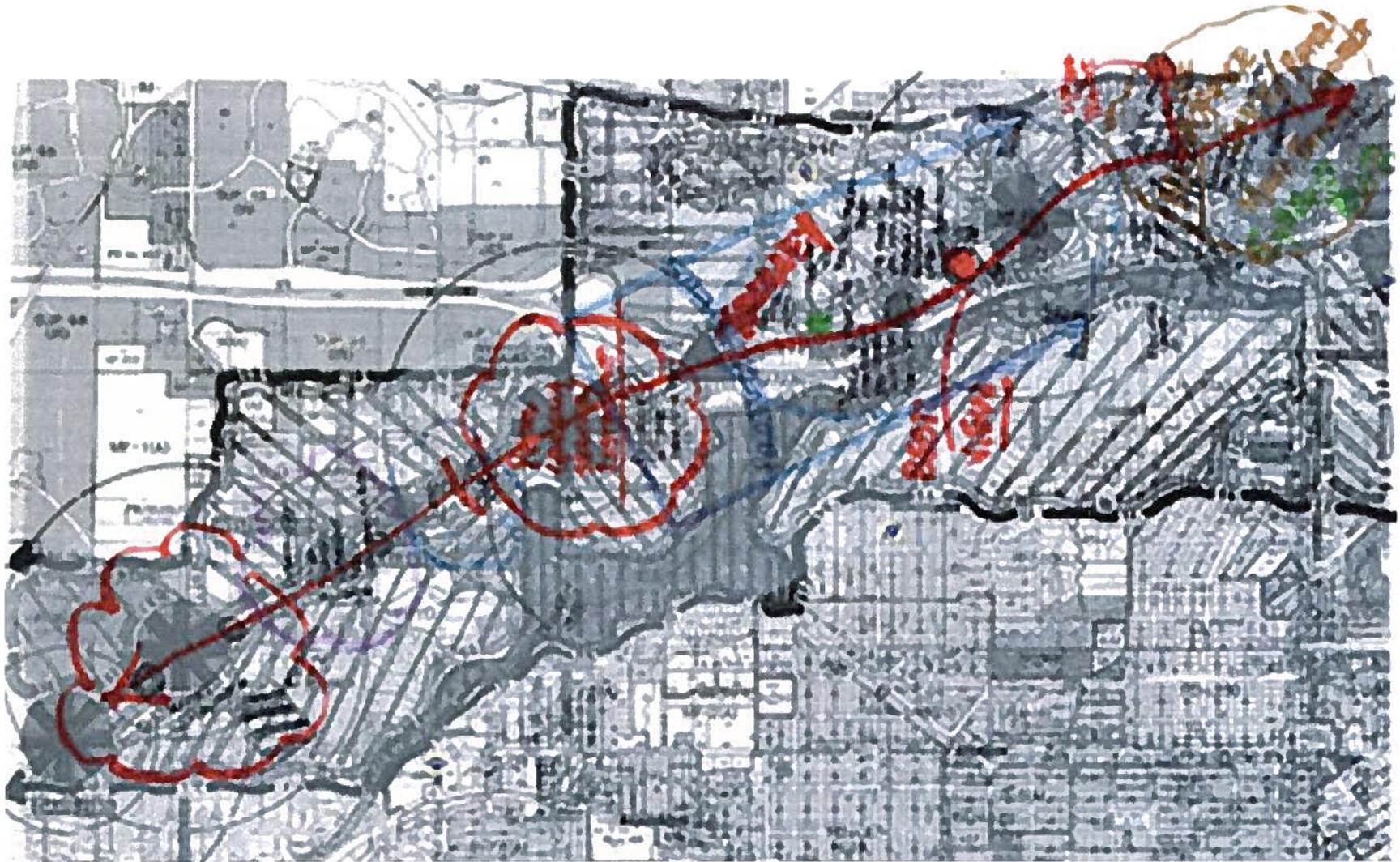


Charrette Table 2 worksheet.



Charrette Table 3 worksheet.





Charrette Table 6 worksheet.

**FORT WORTH AVENUE DEVELOPMENT GROUP  
CHARRETTE: OCTOBER 26, 2002**

**Notes from Table 7**

**Participants:**

Lee (business oper  
Mary  
Stephanie (resident:  
Joel (UTA professor)  
Mike (realtor)  
Jesse (business oper  
Roman (resident: Kes  
Erich (RTKL: design le  
Leif (Planning Departm

**Identified "negatives" in**

1. Utility poles and o
2. Commercial buildi
3. Roads (Fort Worth
4. Medians are center
5. Overall lack of land
6. Too many vacant lo
7. Lack of sidewalks
8. No "on-street" parkin
9. Types of businesses
10. Limited variety in type
11. Motels are in poor cor  
(prostitution, drug abu,
12. Panhandling is preval
13. Prostitution is preval
14. Many existing buildings
15. Incentives are lacking th
16. Economic incentives are
17. Minyard's grocery store
18. Lack of identity througho
19. Lack of code compliance
20. Police response times are
21. Illegal dumping, especially
22. High-speed internet acces

TABLE 6  
PAGE 3

daily  
weekend  
vacation? work  
PLACES WE GO  
recreational  
eat out  
grocery shopping  
coffee break  
pets / vets  
school activities  
dry cleaner  
dry store  
bank  
hardware  
direct  
movies  
drinks  
book store  
antique  
clothing  
grocery  
dentist / doctor  
beauty shop / barber  
nail salon  
spa  
hotels - guests, getaways

**West Commerce / Fort Worth Avenue  
Charrette Notes  
Saturday, October 26, 2002**

Table #4 Participants: Barbara Barbee (Bevenly Hills neighborhood), John Cappello (West Dallas Chamber of Commerce), James Cincquomani (2412 Hardwick), Tim Jones (El Thovl neighborhood), Joseph Lodor (Commerce Grinding Co.), Janice Mattox (Gator Car Wash)  
Table #4 Volunteers: Troy Greenstreet (notes) & David Robbins (RTKL Assoc.)

**Identify list of negatives:**

1. There is no sense of ownership by residents, businesses, or City of Dallas.
2. There is no city enforcement / cooperation of codes / laws. City must enforce current laws.
3. Businesses on Ft. Worth Ave. are not cohesive.
4. Ft. Worth Ave. is a dry area and private clubs are not regulated.
5. No support services for residents. Lack of entertainment, restaurants, and quality establishments.

**Identify list of positives:**

1. Proximity to downtown Dallas.
2. Many businesses are established on Ft. Worth Ave. today.
3. Large amount of development opportunities currently exist (i.e. many vacant and for sale lots).
4. Beautiful views of downtown Dallas. This is great for quality of life (i.e. walking, bike trails, etc.).
5. More money in this area than is currently known or understood.

**Top 5 Items:**

1. Basic cleanup needed of entire Ft. Worth Ave.
2. City enforcement of code violations (long and short term). City should work with existing businesses to get them up to code and educate new business on codes up front.
3. Comprehensive marketing presentation plan / strategy & Land Use Study.
4. Build a sense of community through education.
5. None.

**Favorite idea for kick off strategy:**

**Idea #1:** Organize a street fair to support, encourage, and allow neighbors to shop The Avenue area and shop. Send out newsletter that educates residents on the history of Ft. Worth Avenue, current businesses and services on Ft. Worth Ave., etc. One suggestion was to name this street fair event "Bonnie & Clyde Day".

**Idea #2:** Streetscape and landscape project, as well as a campaign (City of Dallas) against litter (i.e. litter education should be taught in the schools). Have neighbors and business owners participate in the beautification of Ft. Worth Ave. Use this event as a time to continue to educate residents on the history of Ft. Worth Avenue, current businesses and services on Ft. Worth Ave., etc.

**Important Theme:**

⇒ One additional theme that we picked up on was that we need to ensure that we don't talk about taking the business owners property away from them or forcing them off of Ft. Worth Ave. Instead we need to work with the owners to help them understand and educate them on city programs that will allow them to be good citizens of Ft. Worth Ave.

Management committee  
FAW of random entrepreneurs  
translating  
and identify there

all development can shoot  
we don't want more  
water, matter it costs

alan untaher  
cleanup  
compost  
composting

existing app.  
what's for lease  
what's for sale  
rent

FAW vision  
spiritual forest // The air

Samples of charrette table notes.