

WESTMORELAND DART STATION AREA PLAN

Map III-2.24 The Westmoreland DART Station Area



The Westmoreland DART station area has great potential to become a model for sustainable development.



A new bikeway similar to this one is planned for the area.

In the heart of the Southern Sector is a diamond in the rough—the Westmoreland Transit Station. This DART station, near a charming neighborhood, provides plenty of parking and an attractive, tree-canopied facility at the Westmoreland Road-Illinois Avenue intersection. Opened in 1996, the Westmoreland DART station is the terminus of the West Oak Cliff DART light rail line.

North of the station, across Illinois Avenue, are the neighborhood and schools. Land south of the rail line is primarily commercial. Many of the industrial buildings south of the rail line are either obsolete or underutilized.

The commercial property is separated from the neighborhood and schools by both a major road and the DART line thus making it appealing for redevelopment. Potentially, residential, retail and office space could be located on these redevelopment parcels near the DART station. A retail/office complex has also been proposed for the site southwest of the Illinois-Westmoreland intersection. Finally, DART owns excess land at the station and is eager to become a partner in this future TOD.

Westmoreland acts mostly as a “kiss and ride” station, where transit riders either get dropped off or park for the day in the nearby lot. Sustainable development means creating a village around the train station that would feature bustling commercial, residential and employment activity within a compact, architecturally diverse and engaging space. Because Westmoreland is near good parks and a soon-to-be-finished bikeway, and poses few obstacles to development, it presents a blank slate open to new building types and sustainable treatments.

A sustainable development design for Westmoreland would be a showcase pilot project for the city and DART. By using innovative ideas and environmentally savvy design, the development here could spur similar development at any of the other 20 or so transit stations in Dallas featuring similar characteristics. Investment in TODs throughout the Southern Sector could nurture hubs of town center life along transit lines, where residents would find what they need near their home—entertainment, shopping and transportation. Clustering housing, retail and employment around train stations will also improve DART ridership.

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Eco-roofs reduce storm water run-off from roofs and offer pleasant landscaping for building tenants. Vegetated roof treatments help cool the building in the summer and provide added insulation in the winter.



A neighborhood bioswale absorbs water run-off and filters road and parking pollutants on-site utilizing principles of storm water management.



The lack of surrounding development near Westmoreland Station presents a blank slate for implementing new ideas.

What is Sustainable Development?

Planners use many tools trying to make communities more livable. They try to balance the location of jobs in relation to housing, wages in relation to rents, and open space in relation to density. Sustainable development takes the extra step to assess the development's impact on the natural environment. Sustainable development incorporates principles of energy efficiency, storm water management, green building and pedestrian and bike friendly design. These combine to ensure that housing, infrastructure and other development is ecologically friendly and does not lead to a breakdown of vital natural systems. Even better, sustainable development by its very nature encourages healthy, vibrant and aesthetically pleasing community spaces that promote viable alternatives to car travel.

Sustainable development, for example, may incorporate storm water drainage measures such as permeable pavement, eco-roofs, rain gardens or vegetated bioswales that capture and naturally filter run-off from paved or hard surfaces. This reduces the demands of municipal sewer systems, naturally restores ground moisture and is aesthetically pleasing with streetside plantings and natural landscaping. The result: Less demand on municipal services, healthier ground moisture, and more pleasant walkways, and pockets of greenery.



An aerial oblique of the Westmoreland station area shows existing low-density development with buildings usually no more than one story tall.

A “green building” infuses building design with elements of resource efficiency, waste reduction, TOD, walkable design and energy conservation. A rating system called LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) provides a national standard and voluntary program for accrediting high-performance, sustainable buildings.

New construction in the Westmoreland area could follow LEED standards. Currently, only seven LEED buildings exist in Texas, and only one in Dallas, the Dallas Police Station. Bringing LEED buildings to Westmoreland would spotlight the area, giving it cache as a progressive neighborhood looking to attract similarly minded residents, employers and visitors.

Map III-2.25 The Westmoreland Community Workshop Map



The Westmoreland station area consists of underutilized retail and warehouse buildings that could be converted into new mixed-use buildings offering different types of housing such as live/work spaces, condos or apartments.

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Land uses surrounding the Westmoreland DART indicate the opportunity and need for revitalization and redevelopment.

Current Conditions

Land near the Westmoreland DART station is a mix of stable, single-family neighborhoods of 7,500 square foot lots on R-7.5 zoning (north and east of the station) and IR industrial zoning (south of the station, primarily for warehousing). Many industrial properties near the station are underutilized or vacant. Large tracts of vacant land south and southeast of the station are zoned residential and some new construction is taking place.

Existing retail along Westmoreland Road does not meet the demands of the surrounding neighborhood and the area's busy roads make it difficult for residents to patronize businesses without driving. While some businesses are doing well, several are in decline and would detract from new development. Local residents eagerly await redevelopment, citing the need for a modern grocery store that offers a variety of foods; quality sit-down restaurants; basic commercial services such as dry cleaners and small retailers, including stationery stores; and personal services such as hair salons. In all instances, residents stressed the desire for businesses of higher quality than currently available nearby.

The DART line and transit station is the most significant infrastructure improvement in the area. Over the long term as the area's population and jobs increase, basic infrastructure such as sewer, water and wastewater, will need to be addressed. Money from the 2004 bond package will be used to improve area parks, and the Five Mile Creek Bikeway, now being built, will pass through this area.

Illinois Avenue and Westmoreland Road act as main thoroughfares in the area. Street crossing problems on Illinois Avenue near Lenore K. Hall Elementary School need to be addressed. Redesigning Illinois and Westmoreland will improve crossing safety and at the same time allow better pedestrian and bike connections with nearby development.



Involving the Community

ForwardDallas! held workshops to identify what area residents wanted to preserve and what they wanted to change in their communities as well as how they wanted those communities to look and function in the near and distant future. These forums were open to all city residents, businesses and organizations, but extra effort was made to attract people who live, work or are directly impacted by the Westmoreland DART station area. The Westmoreland DART station area is a pilot project in the city to see how different planning tools can be used to address future growth and development.

Workshop participants gathered in groups to create ideas for accommodating the area's projected growth. Using "game pieces" representing different development types (single-family homes, small-scale stores, office complexes, schools, etc.), each group came up with a plan. Ideas from the workshop were incorporated in a draft concept plan for the area.



Map III-2.26 The Westmoreland Concept Plan



The Westmoreland Concept Plan map calls for new commercial development in red, multifamily housing in purple, civic uses in blue, compact neighborhood development in orange and surrounding single-family residential housing in yellow. Throughout, new street trees will improve the streetscape.



Westmoreland workshop participants designed new streetscape cross-sections and determined what land uses should surround the area. Their ideas helped inform the concept plan map.



Station areas are great places to concentrate retail shops, condos, townhomes, multifamily housing and parks in order to provide convenient services to DART riders.

Transit Station Center or Multi-modal Corridor/ Urban Neighborhood

The forwardDallas! Vision designated this area as a Transit Station Center. This means citizens want a mix of housing, retail and offices to be built near the Westmoreland DART station. Making this happen not only fulfills the citizen's goals but would also bring economic vitality to the area, benefiting current residents, future homeowners and businesses. In this way, prosperity is tied to costs already assumed by the City to improve transportation.

Such mixed-use development would:

- Consolidate employment, retail and housing in the area near the transit station;
- Strategically link the development to mass transit, where housing development closest to the station is multifamily, transitioning over about one-half mile to single-family on the fringe;
- Offer a range of housing—from multistory condos and apartments above retail to townhomes and small single-family homes;
- Possibly convert old industrial facilities at Westmoreland into small residential lofts and institute gradual height transitions and landscaping plans to move from stable residential neighborhoods to the active transit hub.

Getting Started

The City will create an Area Plan for Westmoreland Transit Station. To begin the process, the City will conduct interviews with area residents, property owners and DART staff. The City will also initiate a market analysis, transportation design and a parking study. This plan will include a clear idea for the future use of DART-owned properties and an analysis of nearby opportunities for redevelopment. Of particular importance will be measures to integrate new development with nearby neighborhoods without negatively impacting quality of life.

A street plan should also be completed. Although the area has lots of roads, new alignments could better link the isolated industrial area with the DART station and local residential communities. The forwardDallas! Policy Plan provides guidelines for incorporating Context Sensitive Design into street planning. Using this street planning tool in the Westmoreland area would create better

pedestrian access to transit, a way to move traffic through the area and contribute toward safer travel by pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.

Developing this Westmoreland Transit Center will require a detailed infrastructure plan identifying street orientation improvements including traffic signals and signs, water and sewer system updates, landscaping and public safety. This Area Plan must also include a capital improvements plan that integrates financing strategies. Funds from a tax increment finance district, Dallas capital improvement and regional DART capital improvement funds as well as state and federal funds earmarked for transportation efficiency all might play a roll in developing the area. An economic analysis will make sure land uses and businesses complement the transit area.

Zoning standards for the Westmoreland Transit Center must be clear and objective. Urban design standards will guarantee district and community goals are met and will produce predictable outcomes. Zoning will be sensitive to market realities, for instance allowing sufficient density to permit developers to earn a reasonable return on investment. New design standards specific to the Westmoreland Transit Center will provide easy-to-use, effective and objective standards, allowing quick processing of permit applications.

Accomplishing this final Area Plan will require additional meetings with local residents and landowners. While 150 local residents participated in the forwardDallas! workshops (which resulted in 12 maps about the possible future look of the Westmoreland neighborhood), more public involvement is needed. This will allow the City to pinpoint stakeholders' preferences for a Westmoreland Transit Center area. This new information will combine with the data collected at the ForwardDallas! community workshop to create detailed scenarios—or concepts—of what Westmoreland might look like in the future.

By analyzing these various scenarios, important information will emerge about change and stability, rough costs of implementation, overall land use patterns and how transportation will impact development.



Establishing urban design standards such as building frontages, orientation and landscaping ensures that new development will adhere to community preferences.

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New zoning regulations will guarantee a diverse mix of building and development types appropriate for a multi-modal corridor.



Shared parking allows for an efficient consolidation of parking stalls in order to avoid the waste and blight of large empty surface parking lots.

1. Recommended Zoning

Recommendations for changes to zoning regulations and locations will be necessary to achieve a transit oriented development.

2. Shared Parking Demand Analysis

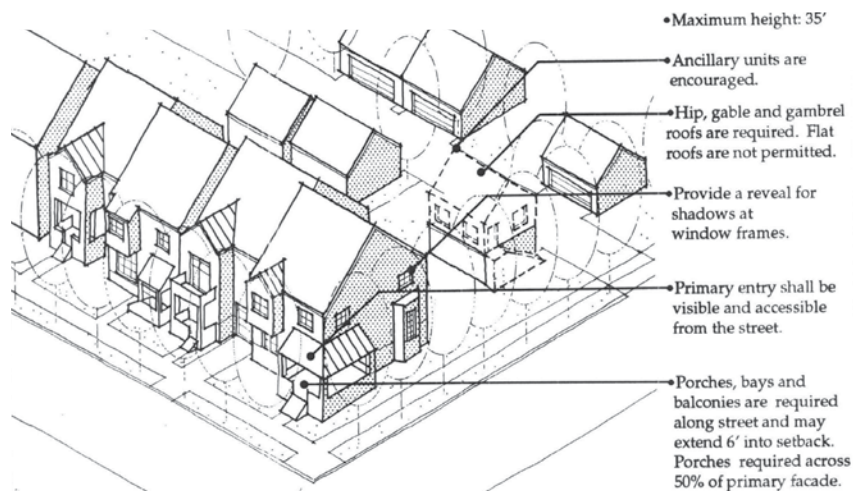
A shared parking study will pinpoint areas where agreements could be enacted for buildings or land uses to share parking lots. Shared parking provides a more efficient use of land by capitalizing on the different parking needs that residential, commercial and office buildings have throughout the day. For example, parking for daytime shopping also can be used for evening entertainment venues.

3. Urban Design Standards

Urban design standards that monitor the quality, function and look of buildings can be shaped to invite certain types of development. These might include street level windows, awnings or corner entrance orientation, which all contribute toward dynamic and engaging commercial districts.

4. Market Feasibility

A market feasibility analysis will help determine the type of jobs and housing needs anticipated for the area and what buildings would answer those needs. This will require return on investment analysis using market rate assumptions to outline investment opportunities for developers.



Urban design standards provide clear guidelines developers must follow and help communities know what to expect from new development.

5. Transportation Design

- Transit feasibility study: This study would determine the quality of current transit service and examine future transit capacity for the area.
- Transportation Improvement Study: This element would detail the transportation improvement needs of the area providing an approximate timeline for when these facilities would be needed.
- Future Street Plan: A future street plan would identify possible locations for street improvements and where additional street connections are needed to implement the Area Plan.
- Context Sensitive Design: Context Sensitive Design, or “livable street design,” will match street design with the expected land uses and identify where the City’s thoroughfare plan must be amended and where investments will be necessary.

6. Utility Needs

It will be necessary to assess the capacity of infrastructure such as sewer, water, drainage and flood protection. In addition, other services such as police, fire, and public safety, transit, parks, and school services should be contemplated to make sure they keep pace with growth. Emphasis will be placed on sustainable development when planning to expand these services.



A new street design for the Westmoreland station area could incorporate vegetated medians, brick crosswalks, signalized intersections, wide sidewalks with street trees, and street parking in front of businesses oriented to the street (above).



The existing Westmoreland station area lacks safe crossings or an attractive streetscape amenable to pedestrians.



Housing options in the Westmoreland station area are predominantly single-family detached homes. Most residents access the DART station by driving and parking.

As part of this Area Plan, the City’s Capital Improvement Program needs assessment should be reviewed to consider new, relevant projects. In addition, other ways to fund proposed capital improvements must be identified. Developing an economic program for the area will help determine the best ways to leverage public and private investment and to implement methods to stimulate and support the job market. Key private investments and specific industries should be identified and targeted to jump-start the plan.

An Area Plan for the Westmoreland Transit Station neighborhood will help secure quality, economically vibrant and culturally significant development. Embracing sustainable development will attract future investment and perhaps become a showcase for transit oriented development in Dallas. This Southern Sector project will provide new housing options and opportunities for homeownership. With savvy utilization of the land and transit options, this whole area will rely less on cars, helping the city manage congestion and reduce transportation costs for residents.



Locating new housing options near the Westmoreland station area will boost ridership as well as provide a convenient and low-cost alternative to the car.