When citizens think about what they like about Dallas, great shopping, entertainment and employment opportunities top the list. What people say they would like to change the most about Dallas is to make it more beautiful, with trees and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Dallas is a city with world-class examples of neighborhoods, retail areas, mixed-use developments and signature buildings. Many of these areas and developments, however, have only occurred through Planned Development Districts, often requiring months and even years of City review.

Almost every aspect of the city’s character and features is impacted by the way Dallas uses its land. It is often difficult to build development that is desirable and consistent with the forwardDallas! Vision while it is easy to obtain permits for less desirable types of development. Dallas manages its land through regulations and investment in public infrastructure and its partnership with the private sector. This Land Use Element analyzes the city’s land use patterns today and its options for the future, and then provides a comprehensive policy framework to achieve optimal land use for the future.

This element recognizes the important relationship between the economics of development, the style and locations of buildings and how residents and visitors travel. It plans for growth that accommodates expected needs for jobs and housing and recognizes the importance of healthy neighborhoods.

The forwardDallas! Vision forecasts 220,000 new households and 400,000 new jobs added through the year 2030.
This Land Use Element focuses on the regulations, investments and other tools needed to achieve the forwardDallas! Vision. Building Blocks used to create that Vision identify city characteristics Dallas residents want. Land use regulations follow the Guiding Principles to ensure the buildings that make up Dallas work together with public infrastructure to create these critically important places.

These areas are created by establishing clear and objective standards for development, allowing appropriate mixes of uses and densities and prohibiting or limiting inappropriate uses. While creating the regulatory framework, the public sector must also create a climate that attracts private investment. To encourage private-sector redevelopment, the public sector can create opportunities for economically rewarding development. Although regulations cannot increase the market demand for a specific type of building, they can encourage development by allowing sufficient development density and appropriate mixes of uses that support economically sound land uses.

The forwardDallas! citizen survey results show:

- 93 percent of respondents say it is important for the City to provide safe, convenient ways for children to walk to school and adults to walk to shop and dine out.

- 60 percent say that having more housing choices, such as townhomes, condos and apartments, will have a positive influence on the city.

Rendering of planned redevelopments around the Southwestern Medical District.
Map II-1.4 Generalized Land Use 2002
This Land Use Element provides goals, policies and implementation measures to direct the City’s actions and guide land use strategies to achieve the forwardDallas! Vision.

The following key land use implementation strategies address development issues throughout the city. The strategies are based on existing conditions and information gathered while creating the forwardDallas! Vision. The purpose is to guide future land use decisions as they are made through the public process as well as to guide the initiatives outlined in the Implementation Plan.

**GOAL 1.1  ALIGN LAND USE STRATEGIES WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

A goal of the forwardDallas! Vision is to create a healthy balance between jobs and households throughout Dallas by adding about 220,000 households and about 400,000 jobs between the years 2000 and 2030. The City should facilitate balanced growth with the goal of achieving and maintaining a sustainable tax base. Tools and strategies for achieving the City’s economic development land use goals should direct public investment and encourage private partnerships.

**Policy 1.1.1  Implement the Trinity River Corridor Plan.**

The Trinity River Corridor runs through the heart of Dallas and presents a unique opportunity to place urban-level density development near a magnificent natural setting. Significant public improvements within the corridor will spur new development in the central city and Southern Sector. The City should safeguard this immense public investment by working with stakeholders to ensure that private development and investment is of the highest quality.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

1.1.1.1 Develop a phased strategy to implement the recommendations in the Trinity River Corridor Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Prioritize implementation areas to leverage and maximize public investment.

1.1.1.2 Implement a coordinated public-private strategy to enhance conditions for redevelopment and new development opportunities in the Trinity River Corridor.
1.1.1.3 Develop tools to address land use and design issues in order to maximize and safeguard the public investment in and assets of the Trinity River Corridor.

Policy 1.1.2 Focus on Southern Sector development opportunities.

Dallas’ future development opportunities and much of the projected growth capacity lie in the Southern Sector, offering a great opportunity to guide development and direct economic activity. It is important to create a balance between jobs and housing, improve public transit opportunities and promote high quality development. While some people may continue to commute long distances, others can benefit by increased employment opportunities and improved public transit options near their home. Continued investment in the Southern Sector is necessary to accomplish this goal.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.1.2.1 Initiate Area Plans to evaluate land use opportunities for appropriate and compatible development and to coordinate public investment and land use regulations with development activity. Include area stakeholders in the development of Area Plans.

1.1.2.2 Focus on developing strong middle-class neighborhoods anchored by successful schools and supported with sufficient retail.

1.1.2.3 Capitalize on emerging educational opportunities to build a sustainable community that supports the University of North Texas campus with incubator office space, retail and commercial opportunities and a wide range of housing options for faculty, staff and students.

1.1.2.4 Target economic development opportunities to the Southern Sector, especially to improve access to jobs or housing choices.

1.1.2.5 Identify land appropriate for supply chain industries.

1.1.2.6 Partner with community development organizations and other similar groups to ensure that current residents will not be displaced as prosperity increases land values and spurs redevelopment.
Policy 1.1.3 Build a dynamic and expanded Downtown.

Downtown Dallas must get the public and private support it needs to be transformed into a vibrant central business district and to restore the Downtown area as the economic and cultural heart of the region. The City should continue to promote Downtown as an exciting place to live and encourage developers to reuse historic buildings in order to enrich the character of Downtown.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.1.3.1 Promote Downtown Dallas as the regional urban center.

1.1.3.2 Develop public spaces in key locations to enhance Downtown’s identity.

1.1.3.3 Enhance Downtown’s character and identity with consistent standards for public and private improvements.

1.1.3.4 Strengthen connections between Downtown, the Trinity River Corridor and adjacent neighborhoods.

1.1.3.5 Encourage the development of vacant parcels and surface parking lots with mid-rise buildings.

1.1.3.6 Use incentive programs to encourage reusing older and historic buildings for housing and mixed-use development.

1.1.3.7 Encourage parking mechanisms to provide joint parking opportunities.

1.1.3.8 Limit surface parking lots in Downtown.

1.1.3.9 Implement a trolley system to spur development and provide connectivity within Downtown.

Policy 1.1.4 Capitalize on transit oriented development opportunities.

Dallas has 40 DART light rail stations planned by 2030. High-density mixed-use development in these transit centers improves DART ridership, reduces auto trips, improves air quality and efficiently uses land resources. Development near stations and along multi-modal corridors should respect the character of surrounding neighborhoods, when appropriate, and should always be of the highest quality.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.1.4.1 Maximize development opportunities around DART stations.
1.1.4.2 Initiate Area Plans to identify and evaluate land for high-density mixed-use development near transit centers. Coordinate public investment and land use regulations with development activity. Include area business leaders as well as neighborhood stakeholders when creating Area Plans.

1.1.4.3 Use existing and historic buildings when possible to retain the character of surrounding neighborhoods, to build neighborhood identity and to provide opportunities for mixed-use development.

1.1.4.4 Use land use regulations to define the appropriate mix and density of uses and appropriate transitions to adjacent areas. The range of regulatory measures should reflect the need for various scale and densities in transit centers.

Policy 1.1.5 Strengthen existing neighborhoods and promote neighborhoods’ unique characteristics. Acknowledge the importance of neighborhoods to the city’s long-term health and vitality.

Dallas is a city of great neighborhoods. To attract new families and maintain existing stable neighborhoods, residents must take pride in and feel confident in investing in their neighborhoods over the long term. Existing neighborhoods require public and private investment and attention to maintain their desirability as places to live. New neighborhoods must be pedestrian-friendly, have a sense of community and exhibit long-term viability.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.1.5.1 Recognize adopted area/neighborhood plans in guiding development and zoning decisions.

1.1.5.2 Encourage applicants for zoning changes to meet with neighborhood organizations prior to the zoning review process.

1.1.5.3 Encourage neighborhood-serving office, retail, or other non-residential uses to be located in residential community areas, primarily on significant roadways or at key intersections.

1.1.5.4 Provide appropriate transitions between non-residential uses and neighborhoods to protect stability and quality of life.

Promoting and expanding upon the unique characteristics of Dallas’ diverse communities will help the city maintain its great neighborhoods.
1.1.5.5 Continue to facilitate neighborhood initiatives to stabilize and revitalize residential areas using historic districts, conservation districts and neighborhood overlays.

1.1.5.6 Facilitate communication between neighborhood associations, other organized groups and the City to expand public involvement and provide easy access to information for all residents.

1.1.5.7 Ensure that neighborhoods are served by and accessible to neighborhood commercial areas, parks and open space, libraries and schools. Encourage the development of these facilities in priority Area Plans.

1.1.5.8 Assist city, state, federal and private agencies in addressing crime, education and social service issues to strengthen neighborhoods and stem deterioration.

**Policy 1.1.6 Prioritize resource allocation through annual updates to the Implementation Plan.**

The City should allocate resources based on the regular update of the two-year Action Plan which identifies implementation programs and targeted priority areas citywide. Consideration should be given to:

- Development potential consistent with this Vision, Building Blocks and Policy Plan;
- Significant growth pressure causing land use conflicts; and
- Neighborhoods that are experiencing incompatibility pressures from surrounding non-residential land uses. Explore alternative mitigation measures to eliminate negative effects.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

1.1.6.1 Use the Vision Illustration and Building Blocks as a guide in determining Implementation Plan priorities and locations for Action Plans.

1.1.6.2 Direct resources and coordinate economic development and transportation planning to encourage redevelopment or stabilization in Area Plan priority areas.

1.1.6.3 Include consistent implementation measures and monitoring procedures in Area Plans.

1.1.6.4 Promote neighborhood and private sector initiation and development of Area Plans that are consistent with this Policy Plan.
Policy 1.1.7 Ensure appropriately located capacity to achieve growth targets.

The City should maintain a zoning capacity sufficient to meet market demand for a 15- to 20-year time frame. These growth targets should be regularly monitored and adjustments made as needed.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.1.7.1 Establish an accepted method for calculating jobs and housing forecasts. Develop a reliable zoning capacity measurement to assess existing conditions and effectively plan for future growth in a balanced manner.

1.1.7.2 Use adopted Area Plans to guide public decision-making regarding land use and public investment. Zoning decisions should reflect Area Plan recommendations.

Map II-1.5 Vacant Land

The above charts illustrate that current zoning does not match the forwardDallas! Vision and established Council priorities.
NOTE: This is not a Comprehensive Plan map. It is an illustration only, and does not constitute zoning regulations, establish zoning district boundaries, or indicate official City policy relating to specific sites or areas. The categories and colors must be interpreted based on the policies contained within the forwardDallas! Plan.
GOAL 1.2 PROMOTE DESIRED DEVELOPMENT

A consistent theme expressed by Dallas residents is a desire that new development embrace improved transportation, urban design and housing options. These desired types and patterns of development are reflected in the Building Blocks used as guidelines in forwardDallas! The City should facilitate development that furthers economic, transportation and land use goals supported by Dallas residents.

Building Blocks have been created to arrange housing and employment opportunities in ways that can decrease the use of cars, increase the use of public transit, improve air quality and increase land use efficiency. These Building Blocks are described in detail in the Introduction to the Policy Plan. In addition to general guidelines provided by the Building Blocks, new regulatory tools are necessary to achieve desired development types, quality and patterns. General locations for building blocks are identified on the Vision Illustration and may be designated in Area Plans.

Policy 1.2.1 Use Vision Building Blocks as a general guide for desired development patterns.

Building Blocks are a key component of this Policy Plan and the Vision Illustration. The Building Blocks, identified through the community planning process, represent the land use patterns Dallas residents desire. The majority of land within the city is allocated to residential neighborhoods and their nearby commercial areas. Change in these areas is expected to be limited. The City will work to maintain the stable character of these areas while accommodating new development and redevelopment. Unless consistent with the City's preservation goals and ordinances, new development should be directed away from historic and conservation districts. The majority of new growth and development will occur in the priority areas identified in the Implementation Plan. These areas will be targeted for public investment to foster new housing, jobs and commercial development.
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.2.1.1 Use the Vision Illustration and Building Blocks as a general guide to shape zoning and land use concepts, while also considering site specific and area specific issues. Site specific zoning cases must consider relevant policy statements contained within the Policy Plan, such as environmentally sensitive land, the site’s proximity to the edge of a Building Block and appropriate transitions between Building Blocks.

1.2.1.2 Use Area Plans to guide site specific and area specific zoning, platting and investment decisions in targeted areas.

1.2.1.3 Use the Vision Illustration and Vision Building Blocks as one guide in determining locations for Area Plans.

Policy 1.2.2 Establish clear and objective standards for land use planning.

Decisions related to land use policies must be based on clear and objective criteria. Objective standards help establish a level playing field and take the guesswork out of the development process for both developers and neighbors.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.2.2.1 Develop clear and objective criteria for making land use planning decisions. Standards are clear when they are easily understood and use language that has unambiguous meaning. Standards are objective when they can be measured and evaluated using data that is reliable and can be replicated.

1.2.2.2 Incorporate findings that demonstrate consistency with the Policy Plan’s goals and policies into land use planning decisions. Findings should guide private development toward zoning that:

- Maintains a healthy balance of jobs and households;
- Protects and stabilizes existing neighborhoods;
- Establishes healthy neighborhoods;
- Emphasizes mixed-use development, especially around transit stations;
- Maintains an adequate transportation and circulation system;
• Provides land use consistent with the established growth targets;
• Protects existing industrial and employment centers;
• Promotes appropriate growth in the Trinity River Corridor and protects the public investment there; and
• Enables development consistent with Vision Building Blocks.

**Policy 1.2.3 Review and improve regulatory strategies and tools to achieve the Vision.**

Land use regulatory strategies are a primary tool to achieve the forwardDallas! Vision. At this time, the City does not have the tools needed to achieve the types of development desired by Dallas citizens. Since the time when many of the existing zoning districts and Planned Development regulations were created, both building and planning industries have created a broad array of innovative products and ideas. Many of these, such as mixed-use and transit-oriented developments, provide housing choices affordable to people at several income levels and at the same time provide access to public transit. These districts must be crafted to allow builders to provide a range of housing products that Dallas residents desire.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

1.2.3.1 Update the zoning code by creating market-tested mixed-use zoning designations reflected in the Building Blocks. Amend residential zoning regulations to ensure they provide predictable, desirable development patterns.

1.2.3.2 Periodically conduct a review of zoning requirements and development standards to ensure market feasibility.

1.2.3.3 Revise off-street parking standards to reflect actual market demand. Promote targeted development by appropriately reducing parking requirements through the use of innovative parking management tools in designated areas.

1.2.3.4 Implement design standards to facilitate the development of more pedestrian-friendly and human-scaled environments, to promote a sense of identity and safety, to encourage walking and to promote cultural and civic pride.

1.2.3.5 Review the Plat Regulations to ensure that desired types of mixed-use and single-family attached housing are permitted and encouraged.
GOAL 1.3 PROVIDE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DALLAS RESIDENTS

The city has a lower-than-average homeownership rate. Demographics reveal that almost 40 percent of Dallas families will never be able to purchase a home. Nevertheless, residents want more opportunities for homeownership in Dallas and a higher quality and diversity of housing types for both renters and owners.

Policy 1.3.1 Create housing opportunities throughout Dallas.

The City must ensure affordable, quality rental housing and investments in multifamily housing. Using creative financing options will help create higher standards of living for all Dallas residents.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.3.1.1 Encourage creation of diverse housing types by establishing ways to foster such development and find ways to foster homeownership.

1.3.1.2 Calculate the existing and predicted need for affordable housing as the City conducts its capacity analysis.

1.3.1.3 Develop a program to address improperly maintained and/or aging multifamily buildings.

1.3.1.4 Coordinate all City agencies’ work with the Dallas Housing Authority to promote goals of affordable housing and specifically the “Housing Choice Voucher Home Ownership Program.”

1.3.1.5 Take part in public-private partnerships to promote affordable rental housing and owner-occupied units.

1.3.1.6 Promote incentives for ownership and affordable housing development in Dallas.

1.3.1.7 Implement zoning tools to accommodate alternative housing products.

1.3.1.8 Encourage converting existing buildings into creative housing options and recognize a developer’s additional costs associated with such redevelopment.

1.3.1.9 Prioritize infrastructure improvements to areas where development will result in affordable housing for renters and owners.
GOAL 1.4 COORDINATE PLANNING ACTIVITIES TO BALANCE TRANSPORTATION, LAND USE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The City must take the lead in developing cooperative relationships between various government and other agencies to coordinate the forwardDallas! Vision and other adopted plans.

Policy 1.4.1 Coordinate development and planning activities.

Dallas is engaged in a myriad of development plans and projects at any given time. Housing and jobs are inextricably intertwined, as are jobs with transportation and the allocation of services. The coordination of related activities will result in more efficiently allocating public resources and enabling public agencies to implement projects in a cooperative and organized manner.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.4.1.1 Coordinate infrastructure, transportation and economic development planning, particularly in targeted areas where the majority of resources will be used on desired development.

1.4.1.2 Coordinate with public school systems by sharing forecast, capacity and other demographic assessments.

1.4.1.3 Use the Vision Illustration as a guide in determining public expenditures on infrastructure.

1.4.1.4 Develop a capital improvements plan for the Vision Illustration that will address the needs of targeted areas identified in the Implementation Plan. This will provide the public services needed to allow envisioned development.

Policy 1.4.2 Develop a multi-modal transportation network.

A multi-modal transportation network—one that uses a variety of transportation systems, such as buses, light rail, trolley and even bicycles—is necessary to reduce reliance on personal cars and to achieve the quality of life residents want. Creating more opportunities for walking, biking and taking transit to conduct daily activities meets the desires of Dallas citizens. Multi-modal...
transportation networks also offer opportunities for economic development, proving that development and environmental stewardship are not mutually exclusive.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

1.4.2.1 Establish mixed-use zoning designations in strategic locations and invest in transit oriented development (TOD) pilot projects.

1.4.2.2 Develop a cross-town transportation linkage plan in collaboration with DART to provide an efficient local and regional transportation network.

1.4.2.3 Develop a commuter bike trail network throughout the city.

1.4.2.4 Invest in airport connections including access to the regional transportation system.

**Policy 1.4.3 Embrace environmental sustainability.**

Residents want to maintain access to open space and parks and enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities. Residents also want to pursue more sustainable living practices, including the conservation of Dallas' natural resources and providing cleaner air.

**IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

1.4.3.1 Establish areas of conservation and establish criteria for evaluating those areas, which should include floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors, steep slopes and the escarpment.

1.4.3.2 Prioritize resources to develop recreational opportunities in Dallas including creating continuous recreational trails for bicycling and walking.

1.4.3.3 Coordinate forwardDallas! growth projections with the Parks Department’s updates to the Renaissance Plan to ensure the future need for parks and open space is met.

1.4.3.4 Review zoning regulations to encourage clustering development. Also make sure transferring rights to protect natural resources is a viable option and encourage the use of other environmentally sensitive building practices.
GOAL 1.5 DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A MONITORING PROGRAM

Constant monitoring of developable or redevelopable land will ensure the Policy Plan and zoning capacity provide the locations needed for development. A land use and capacity tracking and monitoring system will reveal successes and failures of efforts to implement the Policy Plan. This monitoring can provide an early warning system if goals are not being met. It also can alert the City to early successes, providing valuable input for achieving the Vision’s goals.

Policy 1.5.1 Monitor key benchmarks based on the Core Values and Guiding Principles. These benchmarks will be the basis for judging success of planning efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

1.5.1.1 Maintain a way to periodically gauge the success of the Policy Plan. The system should track changes in land use, specifically jobs, housing and levels of investment at a small geographic scale, and the city’s zoning capacity — how much growth can be accommodated in the future.

1.5.1.2 Monitor variances and Planned Development applications and similar development activities to identify possible code amendments to facilitate achieving the forwardDallas! Vision.

1.5.1.3 Use the monitoring system to trigger park and infrastructure planning to accommodate growth.

1.5.1.4 Work with other agencies and the nonprofit sector to develop a system for monitoring neighborhood quality of life.