

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD

03.11.11



PREAMBLE

Collaborative Design

Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard functions as a significant spine for the South Dallas community and serves as a cultural and historical center for the area. Recognizing the significance of this corridor, District 7 Council Member Carolyn R. Davis and the Dallas CityDesign Studio hosted discussions with the community, business stakeholders in the area, city departments and City Council’s Trinity River Corridor Project Committee to establish a future vision for the boulevard. The community’s voice resounded loud and clear through this conversation, and the opportunity to create a unique urban experience that was a celebration of culture and history became the driving idea behind this investigation. The recommendations that follow are grounded in this principle.

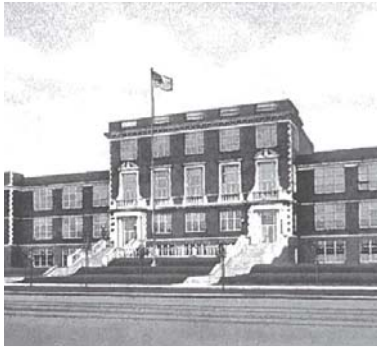
The **citydesign studio** was created in October 2009 with a grant from Deedie and Rusty rose through the Trinity Trust Foundation: The purpose of the Studio is to elevate the design consciousness and culture of Dallas, while working to balance social, economic, environmental, and design sustainability toward enhancing livability for all Dallas residents.



THE HISTORY OF THE STREET

Events on MLK JR Blvd

Located in South Dallas, MLK Jr. Boulevard is predominantly an African American business and residential district. It's proximity to downtown, only a five minute drive and connector of Fair Park and the Trinity River are two major benefits of the boulevard. Many of the large homes located in the adjacent Park Row and South Boulevard National Register Historic districts were built by Dallas financial leaders who worked downtown and lived in the neighborhood in the early 1900s. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the neighborhood became predominantly African-American. Originally named Forest Avenue, in 1983 the name was changed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. In 1994 the City of Dallas and the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce applied for and received Urban Main Street status.



AREA CONTEXT

Opportunity

- mlk corridor functions as a significant spine for the south dallas community and functions as a cultural and historical center
- several key trinity-related projects including Moore Park, The Standing Wave, and The Santa Fe Trestle, will strengthen th boulevard’s role in connecting the trinity corridor with the community and key assets such as fair park
- 1998 bond money [\$2.8M] represents an opportunity to highlight the area’s history and improve access to recreational amenities offered in the trinity corridor



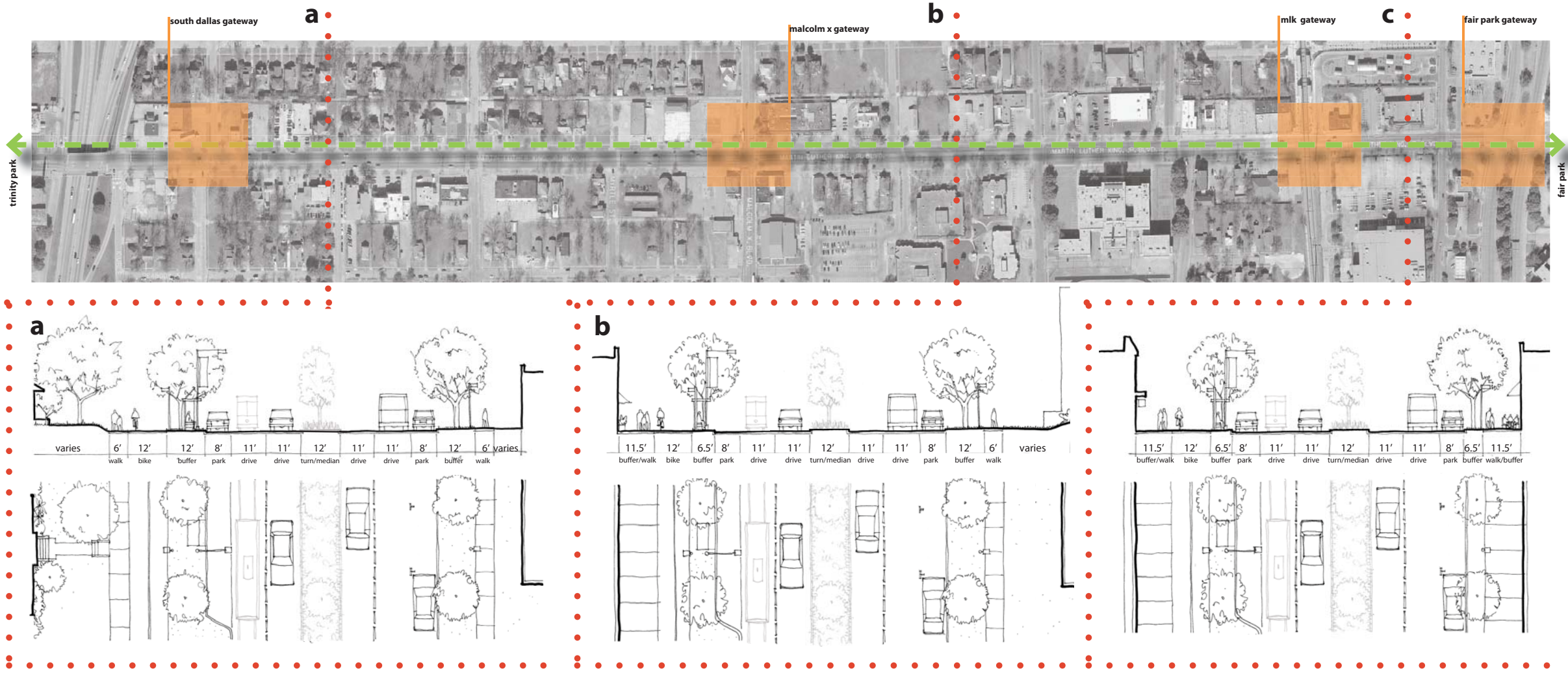


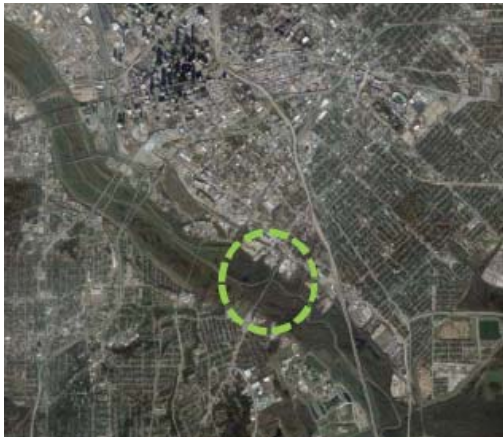
[HOW WE BECAME INVOLVED]

Improving The Street

Staff from the Cities Transportation Planning Division approached the Studio to generate ideas for public improvements along MLK that could be included in a future bond program. The Studio saw an opportunity to strengthen a valuable link between two assets- Fair Park and the Trinity. Working with council member Davis, the Studio guided a community dialogue about the importance of this street and the opportunity to remake it into a better reflection of the rich cultural history of the area, while increasing business opportunities and improving the public realm along the corridor. The project was divided into two components.

1. Capitalizing on existing bond money to transform cedar crest bridge.
2. Long-term improvements to strengthen the remainder of the corridor.





CEDAR CREST BRIDGE

Opportunity

- Unique opportunity to experience the Great Trinity Forest.
- Utilize existing footprint of bridge to provide enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities to connect the MLK corridor to amenities within the Trinity Corridor Project.
- \$2.8 million available for design and construction for improvements to this critical link.
- Continued community input into the design of the facilities is necessary to shape these public improvements and ensure that they reflect the broader vision for the MLK corridor.



FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO MLK

The corridor presents and opportunity to illustrate social and cultural history of the surrounding community.

Design Direction

- Improve bike and pedestrian connectivity.
- Create a cultural walk/time line reflection the history and culture of South Dallas.
- Create pilot block/intersection along MLK to illustrate ideas (possibly between Atlanta and Latimer or at the intersection of MLK and Malcolm X).
- Enhance lighting along the street and provide amenities such as benches that are consistent with the theme.
- Study physical conditions at teach end of the Cedar Crest Bridge.
- Enhance public realm to improve business frontage, increase foot traffic and address long-term parking issues.



BACKGROUND ON THE PROCESS AND DESIGN DIRECTION

3 Step process

Public Meetings

Councilmember Carolyn Davis, District 7 hosted three design workshops focused on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Close to 50 people attended the workshops. Facilitated by City of Dallas’ CityDesign Studio, the workshops focused on generating community participation and input on future enhancements for Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and design ideas to create a grand gateway using available bond funds from MLK Jr. Blvd to the Trinity River Corridor. Residents, community leaders, landowners and business owners along MLK Jr. Blvd and South Blvd were invited to attend the evening events.

Workshops

The initial two workshops were led by world renowned Urban Planner, Larry Beasley. They incorporated table sized maps of MLK Jr. Blvd to inspired ideas, and an urban designer at each table facilitate the discussions and draw the participant ideas. The last workshop combined the ideas from the initial two workshops and gave participants the opportunity to respond and comment on design ideas. Each meeting served as a stepping stone, working off results from the previous meeting, to identify the communities’ desires for the boulevard.

Designs

The workshops not only allowed the City staff to understand the communities’ desired enhancements for the boulevard, but the hands-on workshops also allowed the community to re-imagine the possibilities of the boulevard and create a unified vision for Martin Luther King Blvd as the historic center for the community, a vibrant pedestrian area and a strong linkage between two of Dallas’s biggest assets, Fair Park and Trinity River Project.



WORKSHOP 1

Description

Over twenty people attended the workshop, held on June 29, 2010 in the heart of community, at the Martin Luther King Jr. recreation center. The workshop served as a dreaming session for community participants. Led by Larry Beasley, participants dreamed, realizing no were ideas were too big or too small, about the possibilities for MLK Jr. Blvd. Urban Designers worked with groups of 4-5 people. Participants discussed their concerns and brainstormed on ideas to the boulevard. At the end of the evening participants used dots to indicate ideas they felt deserved the most attention.

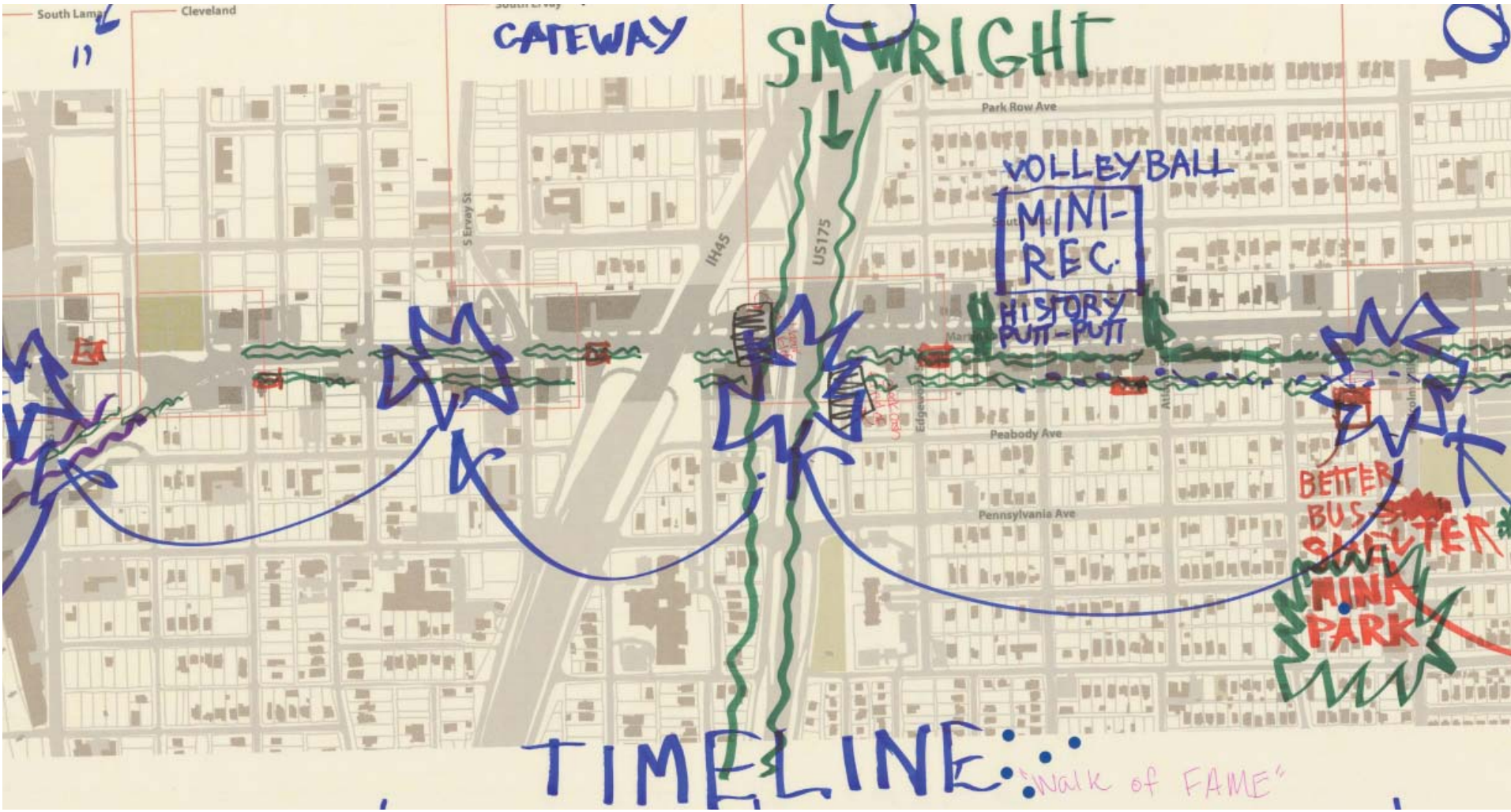
Results

Dot-mocracy results:

- 1. Bike/Pedestrian connectivity [9 dots]
- 2. Security [6 dots]
- 3. Focus block between SM Wright and Edgewood [6 dots]
- 4. Timeline/Walk of Fame concept [5 dots]
- 5. Improvement and MLK and Malcolm X [5 dots]
- 6. Replace the car wash [4 dots]
- 7. Amenities “The Boulevard” [3 dots]
- 8. Computer Sales/Service [1 dot]
- 9. Mini-park/bus shelters [1 dot]
- 10. Slow traffic [1 dot]
- 11. Paving enhancements at intersections [1 dot]

Other common themes that emerged from the drawings:

- 1. Guerrilla gardens, community gardens, pocket parks
- 2. Better lighting, Sidewalk cafes
- 3. Acknowledge the history of the area and leaders, use the street as a tool to teach about the history and culture of the area.
- 4. Family-oriented, More green



WORKSHOP 3

Description

Workshop #3, held on September 21, 2010 at the Muhammad Mosque #48, combined the ideas expressed in the prior two workshop. Using a sheet with design examples medians, parking, sidewalks, benches, lighting and bus stop seating, participants ranked and commented on the designs. These examples along with the comments help identify solid design ideas the participants wanted to see along Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Furniture

General Comments & Suggestions:

- 1. Oncor only services acorn and nyhavin lights. Property owners will need to pick up operation and expenses for other lamp types. Benches to be setback from street-not adjacent. May need arms on benches to discourage sleeping. Is there a standard needed for trash collection?
- 2. More in keeping with neighborhood architecture. Consider lighting similar to Mockingbird lane between Central and Greenville
- 3. Pedestrian amenities are essential to attracting pedestrian traffic to the area. The street furniture and pedestrian lighting should provide visual continuity with the new median and sidewalk design
- 4. Should match the theme of the area
- 5. Like bike lanes on streets and sidewalk designs with motorized scooters in mind.
- 6. Need more options
- 7. Furniture should blend with the median designs, prefer traditional/historical

Participant comments on design idea:

- 1. Like trashcan, something similar to the lamp
- 2. May fit better with the designs of the new train stations
- 3. The lighting needs to be wider. Prefer modern look.
- 4. Dislike-Shrubs only



Median Design

General Comments & Suggestions:

- 1. How can the sidewalk designs be with private property between the sidewalk and buildings?
- 2. I like the landscape near sidewalks rather than in median. I like C, but could put bike parking on/next sidewalk.
- 3. All solutions are good. Bioswale included in street design will make Dallas a more sustainable city
- 4. The design should be conducive to attracting bike and pedestrian traffic to the area. It should also incorporate tree grates as well as encourage spending by visitors. This would assist local business' efforts to capture residential spending from tourist and patrons to Fair Park.
- 5. Bike lanes in this area should be wide enough to facilitate the use of 4 wheel scooter vehicles, which are prevalent this area.

Participant comments on design idea:

- 1. The median should be flat
- 2. Make similar to DART station paving patterns reflecting neighborhoods
- 3. Like the colorful design
- 4. Like the colors and design with boulevard effect and mixture of artwork and vegetation
- 5. Like. As turning lane substitute with vegetation as the intersection only
- 6. Something similar-Shrubbing a bit shorter. Historical art from specific periods. Example, share croppers=>first black families in Dallas

Parking & Bulbout

General Comments & Suggestions:

- 1. How can the sidewalk designs be with private property between the sidewalk and buildings?
- 2. I like the landscape near sidewalks rather than in median. I like C, but could put bike parking on/ next sidewalk.
- 3. All solutions are good. Bioswale included in street design will make Dallas a more sustainable city
- 4. The design should be conducive to attracting bike and pedestrian traffic to the area. It should also incorporate tree grates as well as encourage spending by visitors. This would assist local business’ efforts to capture residential spending from tourist and patrons to Fair Park.
- 5. Bike lanes in this area should be wide enough to facilitate the use of 4 wheel scooter vehicles, which are prevalent this area.
- 6. All shrubbery should be in same family.

Participant comments on design idea:

- 1. Great Idea!
- 2. Like-Especially at intersection
- 3. Metal tree grates have been stolen and sold for scraps in other areas
- 4. Like.This is like NW Highway between Hillcrest and Bodecker
- 5. Like tree grates
- 6. Like inclusion of trees
- 7. Like for areas with historic homes
- 8. Like.This design makes it safer for drivers to get in and out of cars



Sidewalk

General Comments & Suggestions:

- 1. Option A is more versatile, but I would consider one direction bike lanes opposite directions on opposite side of streets
- 2. Sidewalk as art project directed by community bicycle traffic on street side of sidewalk
- 3. Sidewalks should be wider to support pedestrian and scooter traffic. The streets should be wider to support bike traffic
- 4. Should be aesthetically similar

Participant comments on design idea:

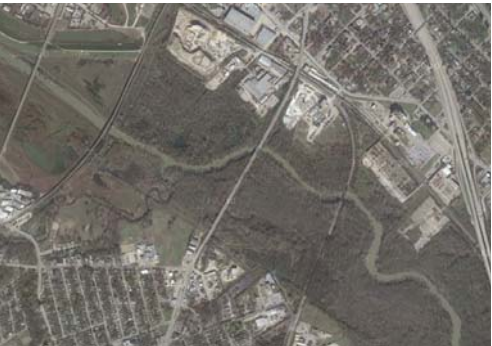
- 1. Would rather see bike lanes on street
- 2. Safer option. Can be built without graphics, later graphics added as bicycle traffic increases
- 3. Quotes, images and afro centric colors on each block of pavement. Make the bike lane narrower and walk area larger
- 4. Like. But like bike lane in street. Need a different look for pedestrian and scooter lanes.
- 5. Add historical information/quotes on pavement. Add scooter use to increase safety. Put bike lane on street provided it does not reduce lanes or parking. Dislike two directional bike lane.
- 6. African American history



FUTURE STEPS

Opportunity

- Design and construction of pedestrian and bicycle enhancements to the Cedar Crest Bridge as part of an important link to connect the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor to planned and existing amenities within the Trinity River Corridor. The project represents an opportunity to highlight the area's history and improve access to recreational amenities offered in within the area, as well as strengthen the city's tie to the river.
- Improvement to the remainder of the MLK corridor to be funded through a future bond program.
- Continued community input into design of both projects.
- Detailed study needed at both ends of Cedar Crest Bridge.



“ALL LABOR THAT UPLIFTS HUMANITY HAS DIGNITY AND IMPORTANCE AND SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITH PAINSTAKING EXCELLENCE.”

-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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AND
Muhamed Mosque #48
for meeting location and nourishment during design workshops

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