

# Memorandum



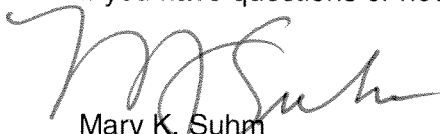
DATE February 25, 2011

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **West Dallas Urban Structure and Guidelines**

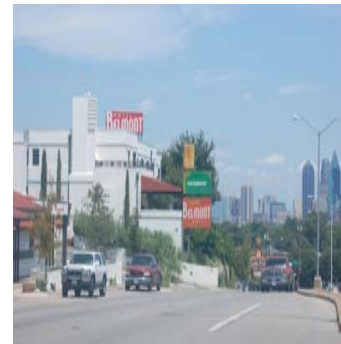
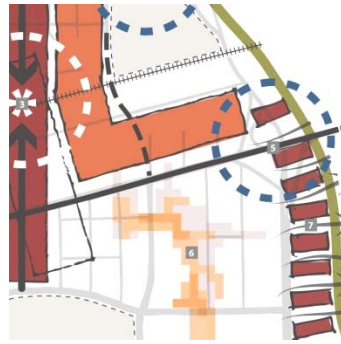
On Wednesday, March 2, 2011, you will be briefed on the West Dallas Urban Structure and Guidelines developed with the community by the Dallas CityDesign Studio over the past eighteen months. The attached presentation outlines the process to develop the plan, key recommendations, and steps toward implementation. A public hearing on the plan is scheduled for March 9, 2011.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.



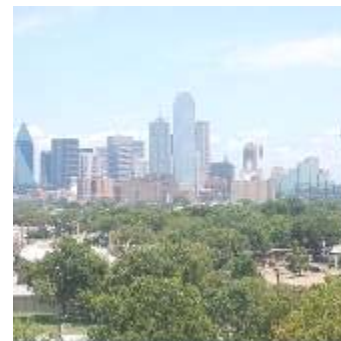
Mary K. Suhm  
City Manager

C: Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager  
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager  
Jill Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager  
Forest E. Turner, Assistant City Manager  
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer  
Deborah A. Watkins, City Secretary  
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney  
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
Judge C. Victor Lander  
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager  
Frank Libro, Director, Public Information Office



# west dallas .01

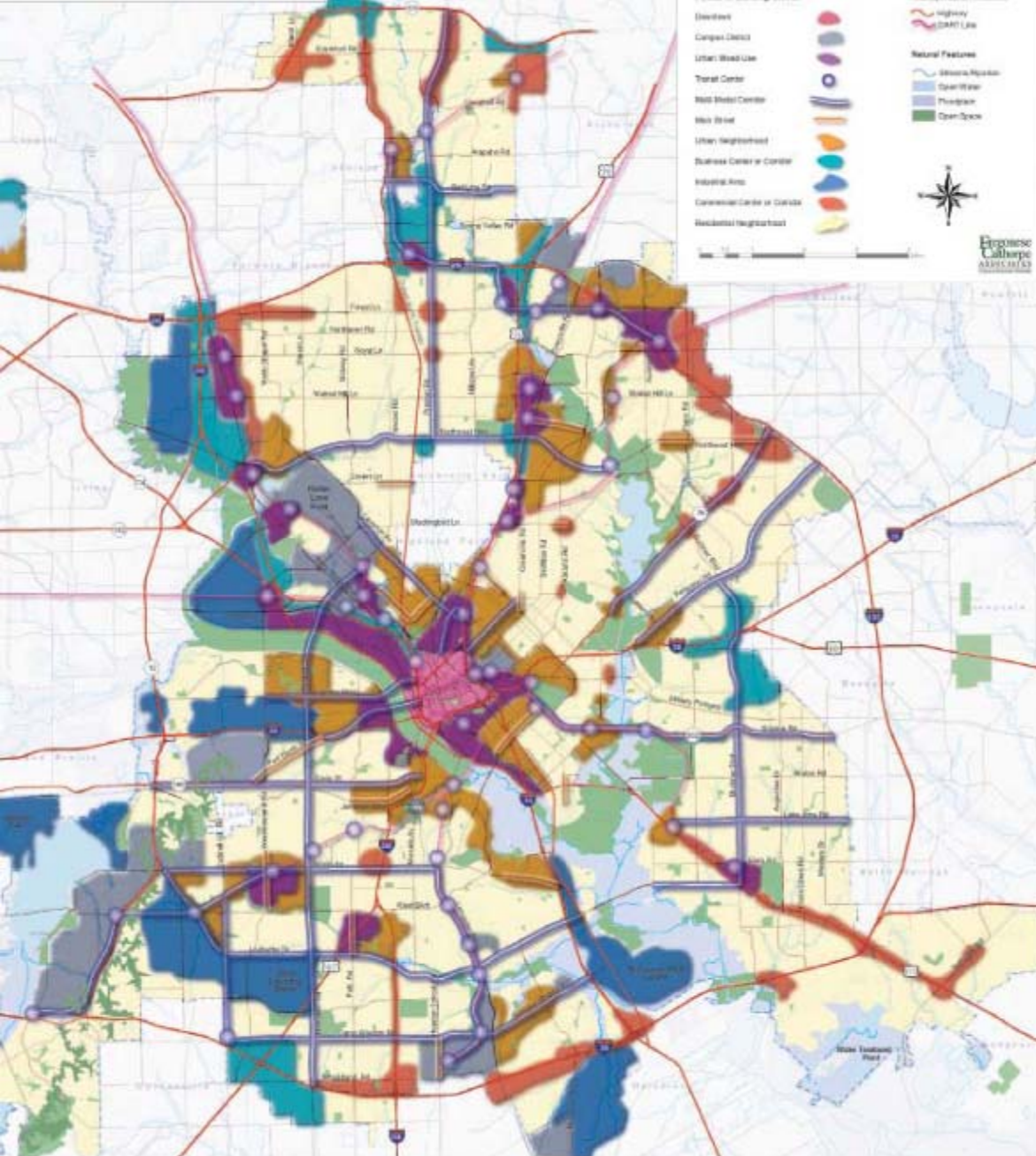
urban structure and guidelines



- outline the process to-date and plan recommendations
- introduce the approach to implementation

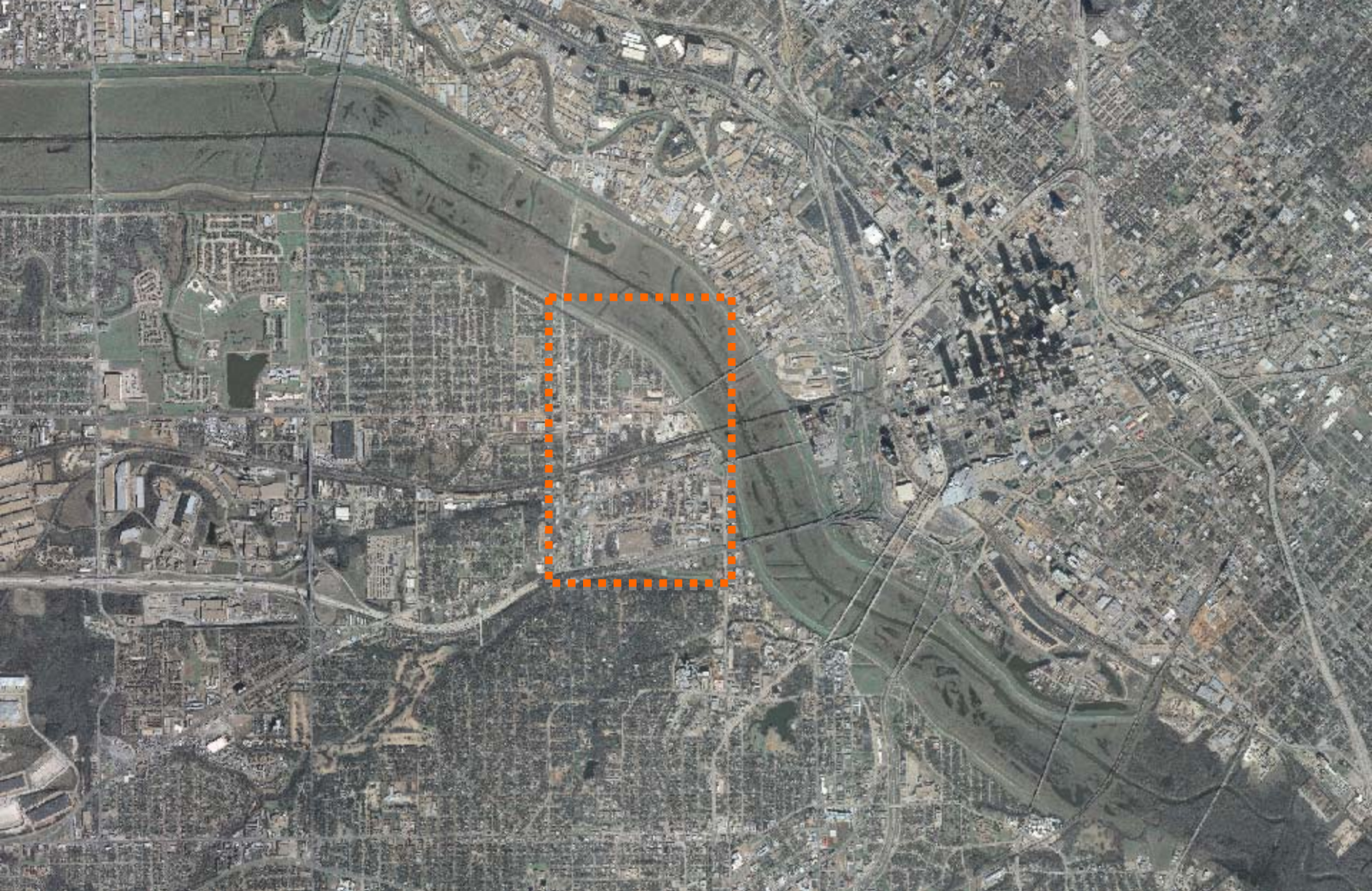


**purpose**



- forwardDallas! was the beginning of defining a new planning objective for the city
- In the years since its adoption, the way planning has endeavored to shape our city has changed
- The Studio blends in with the broad efforts underway now by the city to reshape the built environment
  - Complete Streets
  - Street car
  - Bike Plan

## planning context





# WEST DAL- LAS DREAM

# SUEÑO DE WEST DAL- LAS

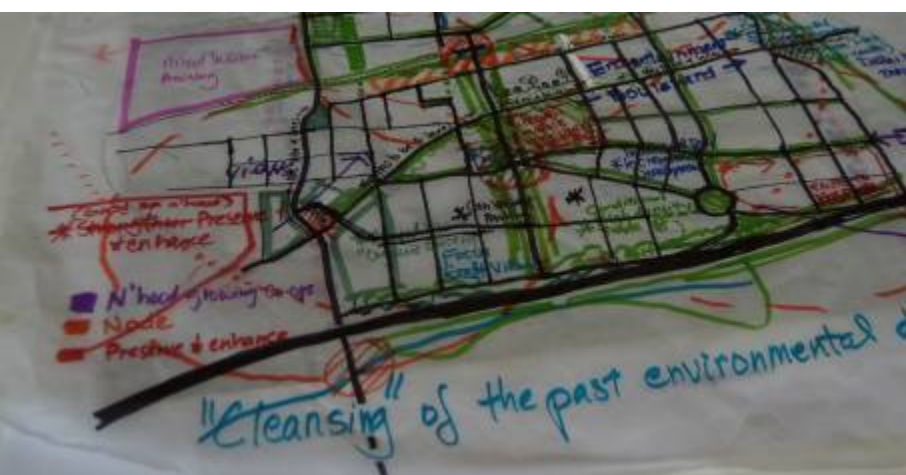
west dallas  
city design .01



[www.dallascityhall.com/citydesign\\_studio/westdallas\\_project.html](http://www.dallascityhall.com/citydesign_studio/westdallas_project.html)



focus area



# URBAN STRUCTURE CHARRETTE

## TALLER DE DISEÑO DE ES- TRUCTURA URBANA

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[www.dallascityhall.com/citydesign\\_studio/charrette\\_project.html](http://www.dallascityhall.com/citydesign_studio/charrette_project.html)







- August 2009 Dream Session
  - February 2010 Charrette
- 30+ community meetings with over 300 participants
  - January 2011 town hall
- February 2011 City Plan Commission Hearing



**input**



- Organizations involved
  - La Bajada Neighborhood Association
  - West Dallas Chamber of Commerce
  - Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce
  - Fort Worth Avenue Development Group
  - West Dallas Investments
  - Non-profit builders
  - Professional/Planning groups: TREC, AIA, GDPC, CNU

**participation to-date**



- organization-wide approach
- partnership in development and implementation
  - participation and facilitation at charrettes
    - internal workshop
- direct review and discussion



## city staff involvement



**DRAFT**  
for public comment

west dallas .01 | guidebook  
urban structure and guidelines



- guidebook
- urban structure and guidelines
  - background
  - concept plan and vision
  - organic growth
  - guidelines for building the vision
  - economics
  - implementation

## document & contents

# Concept Plan

## Process

The first step in any successful urban revitalization and redevelopment effort is the creation of a shared vision for how the area should change. This vision must be generated through a partnership between those most affected by change working with those attempting to make change.

This Urban Structure has been formed, crafted, and endorsed through a collective and inclusive process made up of individual property owners, residents, businesses, civic staff, non-profit organizations, and design specialists. Work sessions have been convened in the community and at Dallas City Hall. These gatherings involved listening to ideas and concerns while discussing options for the future design of this area in West Dallas. Going forward, many groups, working at their own schedule and scale, will construct projects shaping this area's landscape with the ultimate goal of achieving the shared vision as well as their private interests.

## A Conceptual Vision

The conceptual plan takes into consideration the many ideas generated at the design charrette and synthesizes them into a set of development objectives. Regardless of the precise development response, these development objectives and corresponding conceptual diagram shall be maintained and adhered to as the benchmark for evaluating future development proposals. These development objectives are represented in the diagram on the next page and include:

- 1 preserve, conserve, enhance La Bajada neighborhood in its entirety
- 2 re-create Singleton and Commerce as handsome "parkway" streets
- 3 create new neighborhood spine street (north-south) with high density mixed-use clustered along it
- 4 step-down in density from new neighborhood spine east, west and toward La Bajada
- 5 development of 3-4 active mixed-use nodes at major intersections
- 6 allow for incremental rehabilitation and infill of properties east, west and south of new neighborhood spine
- 7 create high density, residential focused neighborhood along levee with connections into the Trinity River



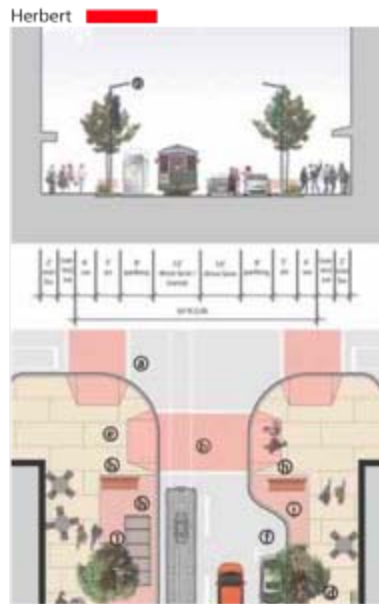
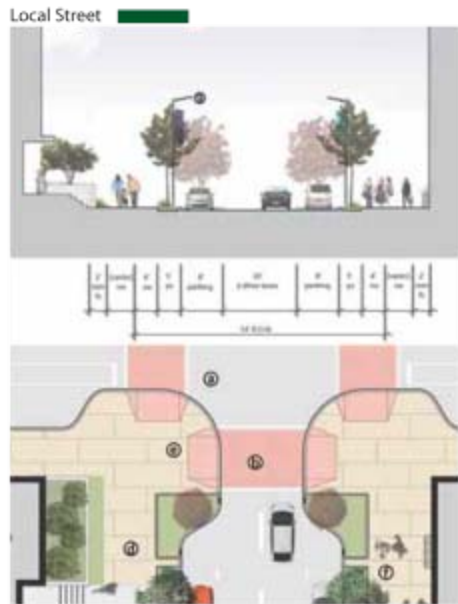
# Neighborhood Character



# Street Character

Streets will serve many functions accommodating all modes of travel including pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation, movement of service and goods, and private vehicles in that order. Design of streets will balance vehicle movement and access with other forms of transit making connectivity, walkability, development flexibility over time, and livability of foremost importance. Key street design features critical to its success as the most extensively used civic space in our communities shall include:

- A pattern of small-scale grid system of interconnected streets
- Wide sidewalks with shade trees and street furniture
- Parallel and head-in parking to shield pedestrians from traffic movement
- Narrow street crossing sections and curb extensions at crosswalks
- Enhanced crosswalk demarcation at street intersections



NOTE: This plan represents themes to be refined in further planning and design. Land uses, building size and configuration, street patterns and exact alignments in all areas are conceptual and to be subjected to detailed evaluation and confirmation. Under no circumstance should this plan be assumed as final directive for specific sites or areas.



# Public Spaces

## Park and Open Space Guidelines

Publicly accessible parks and open space organize and reinforce community structure and can create a strong identity for West Dallas. These spaces can provide a wide variety of passive and active recreational experiences ranging in size and type. Together they create an integrated system enhancing livability, natural appearance, and ecological values while providing gathering places and interaction opportunities for the community and visitors to the area. The type and character of park and open space should be influenced by its surrounding uses (e.g. retail, office, high, medium, or low density residential) and prospective user groups (e.g. workers, shoppers, children, visitors, residents).

The area-specific public spaces outlined represent the intended framework of public space within the Urban Structure. This reflects a pattern of development that designs neighborhoods around access to public space.



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### Regional Park

A Regional Park provides active and passive recreation opportunities, with a wide selection of facilities for all age groups. West Dallas is fortunate in having the Trinity River Corridor Park as its backyard. Efforts should be made in providing logical, aesthetically pleasing, convenient, and accessible entry points into the park.

Size: 10+ ac



### Special Public Space

Special Public Spaces may serve as a destination for users from outside the community rather than solely providing open space for the community. Special Public Spaces may be most any size and generally are sited at significantly important locations making them gateways into the the community or special gathering social spots for events and celebrations.

Size: .25+ ac



### Neighborhood Parks [large+small]

Neighborhood Parks are usually one to fifteen (1-15) acres in size with the preferred minimum size of four-five acres (4-5) to allow a variety of landscape and recreation experiences. Neighborhood parks shall be landscaped and provide for passive and/or active recreational pursuits. Neighborhood parks shall be designed to accommodate all age groups. They may have playground areas, play fields, and/or athletic facilities. Neighborhood parks have a service area of one-quarter to one-half (1/4 - 1/2) of a mile or approximately a five to ten (5-10) minute walking distance.

Size: 1+ ac



### Mini Park

Mini parks are generally less than one (1) acre in size and typically serve a quarter (1/4) mile radius, or a five minute walking distance. These parks may be either active or passive. In these small spaces, athletic facilities are usually not available.

Size: .25+ ac



# Architecture

## Architectural Guidelines

The Urban Guidelines define suggested parameters around design decisions that define street character and how buildings relate to and form public space. These guidelines seek to strike a balance between predictability and flexibility that allows and even facilitates variations in regards to land use, architectural style, and market conditions while remaining consistent with the overall vision and intent of the Structure. These guidelines aim to provide a more sustainable development paradigm than current development practices generally afford. West Dallas is intended to facilitate the creation of a rich tapestry of neighborhood identities while encouraging a new mix of development scenarios.

For those using this guidebook for design purposes, it is essential that you reference the Urban Structure and Guidelines.

### Transitions to the Existing Neighborhood

#### Respect Neighborhood Character

Buffering of La Bajada neighborhood edges should be addressed through use, height, setback, scale, massing and detailing of adjacent buildings. Vehicular access and parking requirements for new development(s) should minimize impact on neighborhood traffic flow and avoid disturbing the character of the neighborhood.



#### Respect Neighborhood Scale

The positive elements and patterns that characterize the neighborhood of La Bajada should be protected and reinforced through building use, scale, mass, building patterns, and details.

### Siting of Buildings

#### Relating to Public Realm

Buildings, as they meet the ground, form the space around our city streets. The shape of our streetscape is created by the height and location of the buildings which line the sides. Buildings which meet the street acknowledge the greater importance of the public space through which the streets run. They can, in this way, create an awareness of the greater importance of the civic whole, where building facades are shaped by the public spaces around them.



#### Service and Equipment Areas

Service areas are zones and loading docks where servicing of the site takes place and include wall-mounted, ground-mounted or roof-mounted mechanical or equipment areas. The placement of service areas is a key factor in avoiding unsightly vistas and creating unnecessary conflicts within the pedestrian streetscape.



### Massing and Street Wall

#### Framing the Public Realm

Building massing may consist of low-rise, mid-rise, tower elements, or combinations, depending on use and needs. An important aspect of livability is the preservation of natural light, sunlight, and ventilation. Preserving this and public views to downtown, into the Trinity River Corridor, and important street end views shall be facilitated by requiring towers set-back from the streetwall, employing the use of tower separation rules, and requiring towers built adjacent to the levee to step-back from the levee as they increase in height. Various massing options may be possible on a given site and should be explored to determine how guideline objectives such as preserving views and sunlight can best be met.



### Variations in Facades and Materials

#### Facade Importance

A building's frontage is a primary contributor to a pedestrian's understanding and enjoyment of a city and thus greater care, expense and workmanship shall be given to its design.

#### Facade Design

A building's lower level shall be carefully designed to relate to the scale and enhance the "close up" view of the pedestrian. The use of high-quality materials, more intensive detailing, and window arrangements, etc., which contributes to a heightened pedestrian interest is encouraged. Ground level commercial uses whether retail, service, restaurant, or office shall use clear glass windows, individualized shop fronts, lighting, and weather protection to achieve pedestrian scale and interest. Mirrored surfaces, views into parking areas, blank walls, etc. shall be avoided.



### Building Access and Circulation

#### Residential Access

When a residential use is located on the ground level, individual unit entries with windows shall engage the street providing "eyes on the street." A low, raised porch or front garden is encouraged to define usable space in the setback behind the property line. Pedestrian-scaled entrance canopies projecting over residential lobby entryways are encouraged.



#### Primary Entrances

Major building entries shall be designed and located to provide the primary building access oriented to the public street and sidewalk. Doorways should be prominent and obvious in appearance. Major entry features should primarily address the street, with entry courts, display windows, signage, lights, walkways, and vestibules, as appropriate.



# Phasing [10 years]

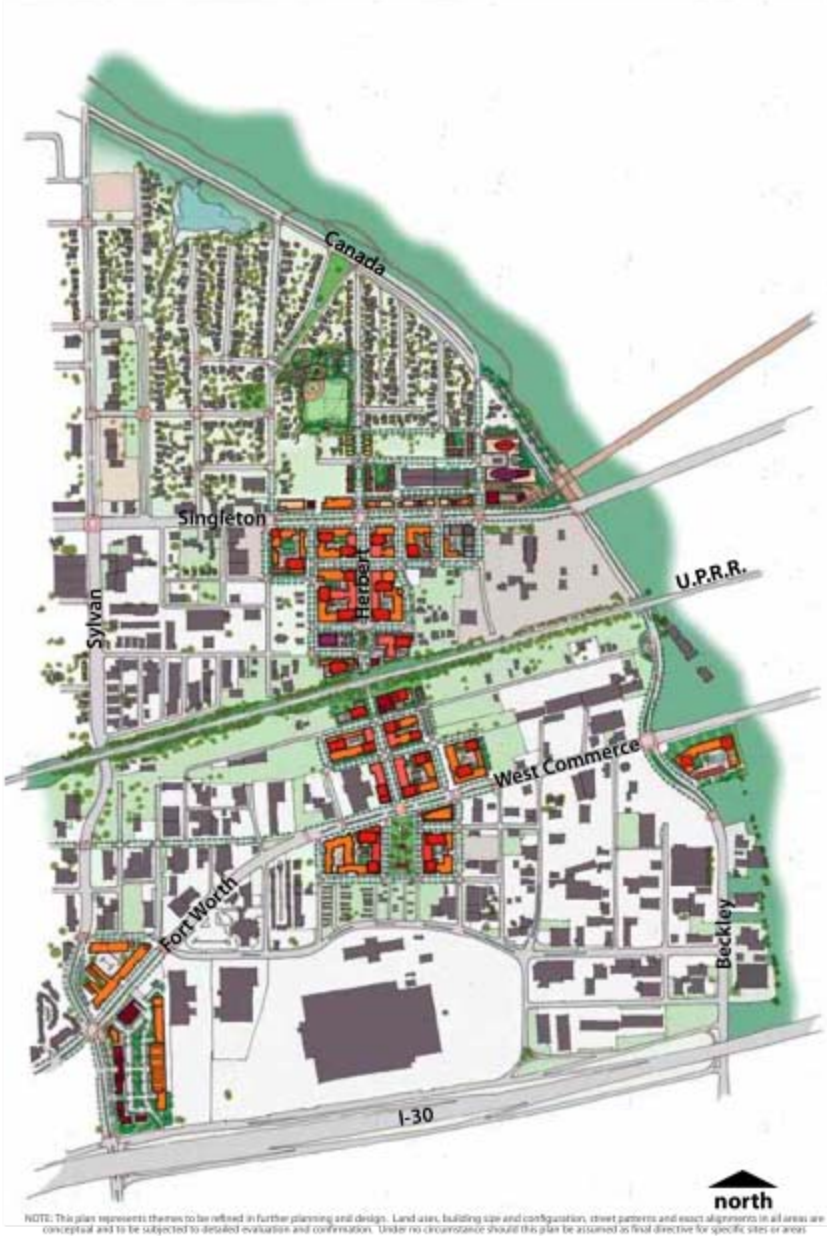
**Target Population:**  
**10,500 individuals/7,000 households**  
**Target Renovated/ New Building Space:**  
**250,000 sq. ft./ 8,400,000 sq. ft.**  
**Target Improved/ New Open Space:**  
**10 acres/15 acres**

## Phase 1

Significant changes to the public realm include the completion of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, the Continental Pedestrian Bridge and its western gateway into La Bajada, important traffic calming initiatives for the street network within the La Bajada neighborhood, as well as solid strides toward enhanced amenities in La Bajada. Construction of three underpasses at the Union Pacific Railroad will help establish Herbert Street south of Singleton as the center of this emerging community and will provide local shopping and service opportunities for area residents.

These and other amenities will result in increased desirability for the area. Additionally, improved access to downtown and uptown employment and entertainment centers, along with proximity and easy access to regional recreational amenities, provides the area with a location advantage that enhances its competitiveness with other in-town markets.

The idea of creating a destination for artistic production and living will take hold through an eclectic mix of redevelopment and new development that reflects the character of area. The Trinity River's edge will begin to be defined more strikingly through landmark development sites at the western gateway to the Continental Bridge and the re-aligned intersection of Beckley Avenue and West Commerce Street. Economically, ground work for entrepreneurship and adaptive reuse will fuel the necessary incremental development opportunities that can capitalize on smaller changes in the area that will inject energy and activity into currently underutilized industrial property.



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## Phasing [15 years]

### Target Population:

**19,500 individuals/13,500 households**

### Target Renovated/ New Building Space:

**400,000 sq. ft./ 21,400,000 sq. ft.**

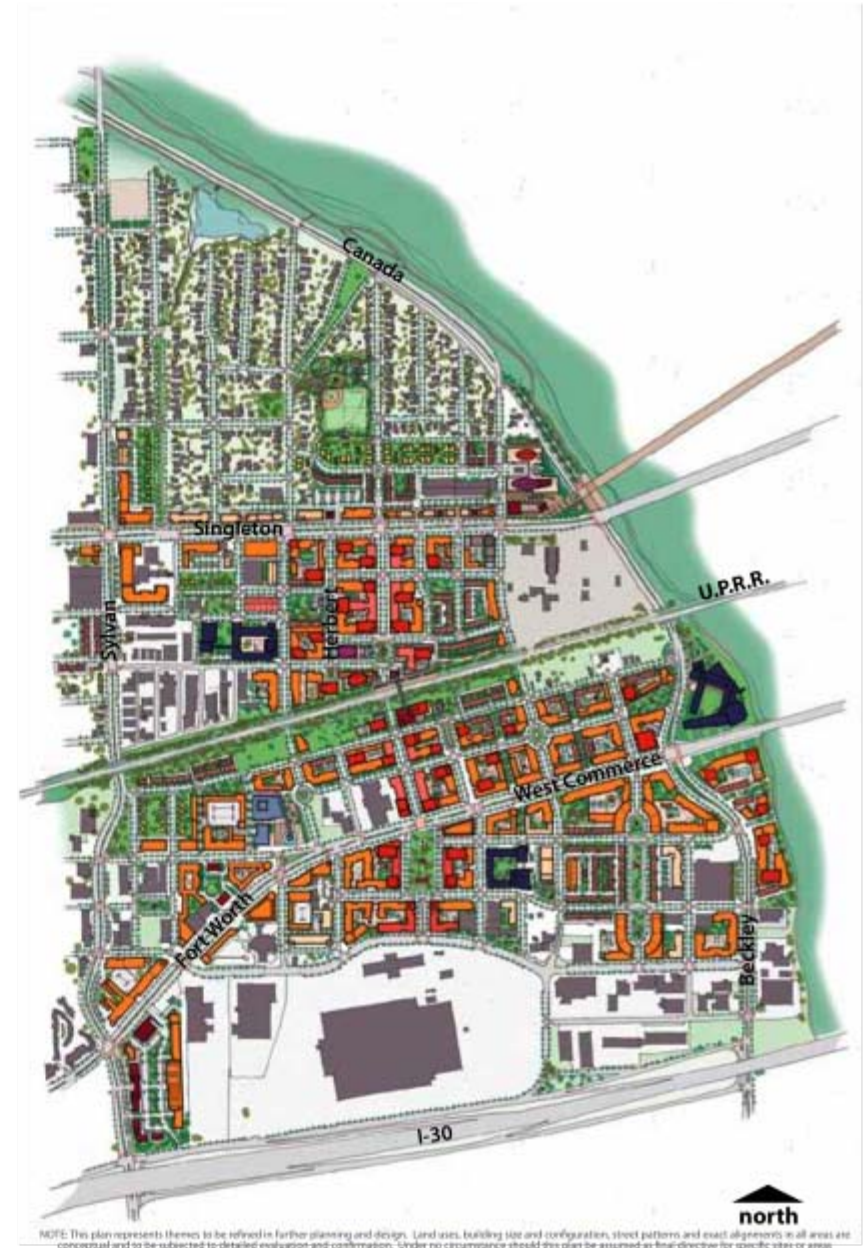
### Target Improved/ New Open Space:

**15 acres/55 acres**

### Phase 2

While incremental development is still part of the development pattern, the focus will be shifting to encourage new development on a larger scale. Much of the initial enhancements and stabilization to secure La Bajada as a high quality modest-income single family neighborhood will have been accomplished; however, ongoing attention and investment is needed for the neighborhood to remain a great place to live.

The Trinity River's edge will be even more well-defined as a development shoreline commanding views of the downtown skyline and signature bridges over the Trinity. Connectivity into the park will be a highly-desired asset that shapes development patterns throughout the area. The spine along Herbert Street is well established as the community's center, as are key development nodes. The focus for redevelopment will shift toward outside of the Herbert Street spine and major development nodes. Developments could be as small scaled as row houses on quiet side streets, to the continuation of podium and tower construction near highly desirable activity centers. Maintaining economic diversity through available housing options will be an important challenge that must be faced.



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## Phasing [17+ years]

### Target Population:

**24,000 individuals/16,000 households**

### Target Renovated/ New Building Space:

**500,000 sq. ft./ 29,800,000 sq. ft.**

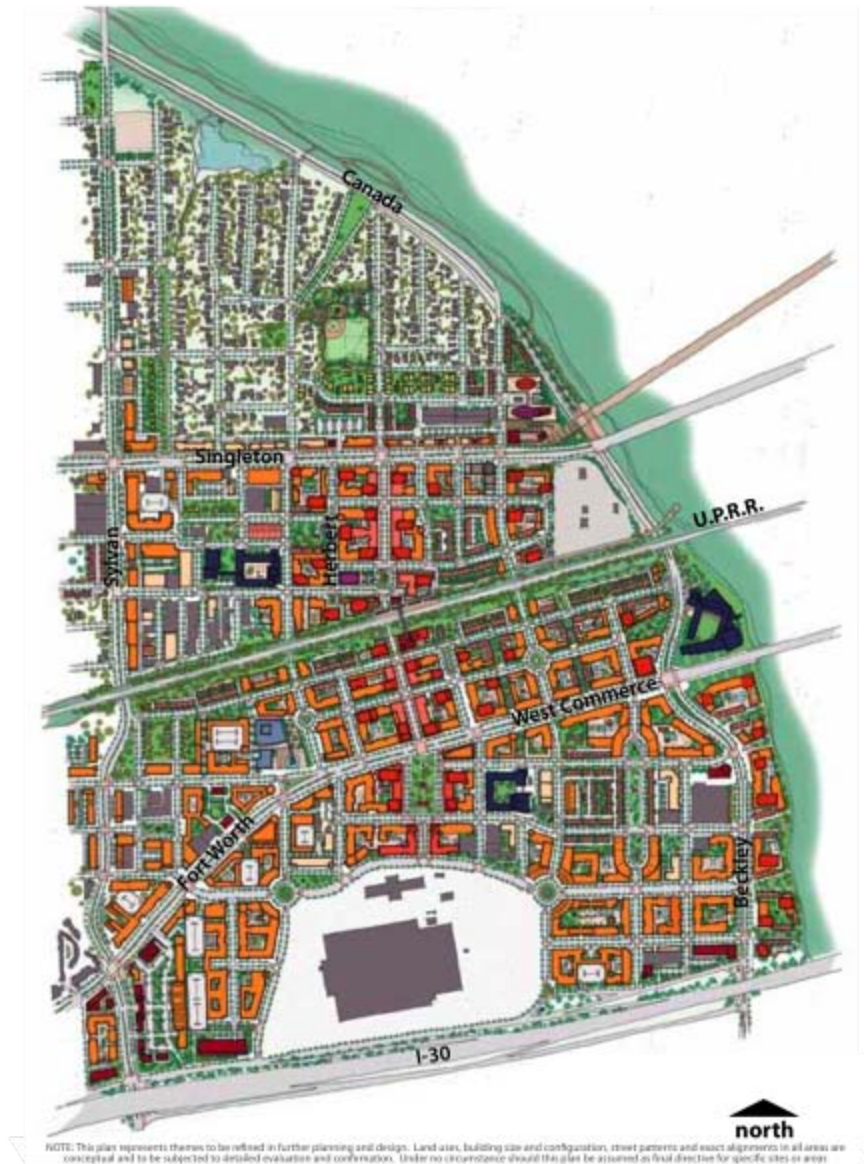
### Target Improved/ New Open Space:

**15 acres/85 acres**

### Phase 3

Over the course of its evolution, the area will have established itself as a unique community within Dallas with abundant assets and a high-quality of life. The La Bajada neighborhood will continue to thrive and benefit from the core of activity and services available south of Singleton Boulevard. The developed edge of the Trinity River will be completely defined. The area, in general, will serve as a successful model of redevelopment that is founded in community-led ideals.

Development will be driven by market forces without intervention by city. The primary role of the plan during this phase of redevelopment is to ensure continued adherence to design standards and development of public amenities in tandem with private development projects. This will ensure that the needs of the community continue to be met. Specific efforts will need to be continued to ensure that an affordable housing base is still accessible.



### Enhance and Protect La Bajada

- Continue a collaborative approach to planning and development in the area by convening a committee of local residents to provide input into plan implementation
- Foster stabilization of zoning concerns to maintain the single family character within La Bajada
- Do not support any commercial or higher density rezoning from existing single family zoned parcels within La Bajada
- Work with the City's Housing and Community Services Department and nonprofit builders to provide residential infill on vacant single family lots for continued availability of affordable housing options
- Complete neighborhood projects with input and direction from the community.
  - Construct Herbert Street traffic calming projects in cooperation with Housing and Community Services through the existing Neighborhood Investment Program and Public Works and Transportation Department
  - Design and build the western gateway to the Continental Pedestrian Bridge to ensure neighborhood and community access
  - Transform existing electric utility infrastructure into public art gateways into the area in cooperation with Oncor and the Office of Cultural Affairs
  - Continue green space enhancement such as the recently completed median enhancements along Topoka
  - Revive the Bataan Center as the social and cultural hub of the neighborhood
  - Complete flood control improvements to the Pavaho sump, and identify future initiatives to transform this utility into a neighborhood amenity
- Adopt a housing policy that secures affordable housing options as part of new development in this area
- Identify tools such as the existing Municipal Management District to provide maintenance and upkeep of amenities in the area

### Encourage Incremental Development

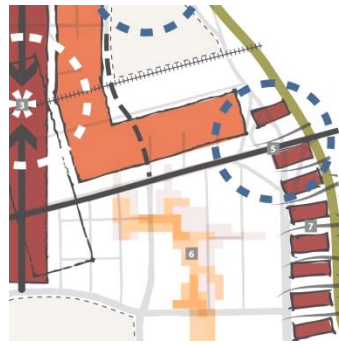
- Initiate public-led regulatory changes to remove impediments as appropriate to facilitate redevelopment, such as:
  - Allow temporary/transitory uses that bring activity and excitement to the area
    - Additional provisions in the City's Special Event regulations that can establish a process to vet each proposed initiative to facilitate the activity within existing structures, while maintaining public safety
    - Evaluate and make appropriate code amendments to foster the operation of mobile commercial services such as restaurants
  - Development code amendments to allow for live-work associated with compatible commercial uses
  - Encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures where feasible through code equivalencies
- Market existing programs through the Office of Economic Development to support start up businesses in the area
- Place a satellite Business Assistance Center in this area to coordinate small business development with a focus on arts and crafts production and boutique manufacturing.
- Work with the community to provide opportunities to showcase existing talent within the neighborhood in cooperation with the Office of Cultural Affairs and Office of Economic Development

### Focus high density along the Herbert Street corridor south of Singleton and foster key development nodes

- Convene a committee of local business owners to provide input into economic development aspects of this plan in cooperation with the Office of Economic Development
- Fund high-priority capital projects, including:
  - Construct railroad crossings at Herbert, Guilden/Hardwick, and Bataan/Pitman
  - Construct Herbert Street as a main street connecting Singleton Boulevard to West Commerce Street
  - Complete design and implementation of improvements to the Beckley/Commerce intersection and western gateway to the Continental Pedestrian Bridge
  - Phase 2 improvements for the western gateway to the Continental Pedestrian Bridge
- Work with developers to pursue zoning applications for redevelopment consistent with the plan
- Work with the Fort Worth Avenue Development Group and other stakeholders regarding an evaluation of PD 714 to identify any potential changes to better facilitate this vision
- Specifically work with West Dallas Investments as the area's largest land owners to facilitate conferrence of development rights over time, to stage the area for strategic redevelopment
- Amend Thoroughfare Plan to address discrepancies with street network plan included as part of this Urban Structure. Coordinate this initiative with Bike Plan currently underway, the Complete Streets Initiative, and the existing Trails Masterplan
- Coordinate with the Streetcar System Plan being initiated in partnership with the City of Dallas, NCTCOG, and DART to identify transit opportunities to support development
- Evaluate the plausibility of a new TIF in the area to support needed public improvements once a catalyst project has been identified. The TIF can provide mechanisms to focus development by placing greater benefits to the new Herbert Street spine along with key development sites in the area
- Engage the United States Post Office regarding the long-term development potential of the existing Post Office facility along I-30
- Facilitate strong development presences at key gateways including adjacent to the western entrance to the Continental Pedestrian Bridge, return excess ROW following reconstruction of Beckley/Commerce, establish strong linkage to North Oak Cliff at Sylvan and I-30 development site
- Facilitate development along Singleton as an appropriately scaled corridor to transition from the high density to the south to the residential area to the north
- Develop a detailed urban design plan led by the Dallas CityDesign Studio for Singleton Boulevard, Commerce Street and Herbert Street

### Monitoring and advancing the Urban Structure

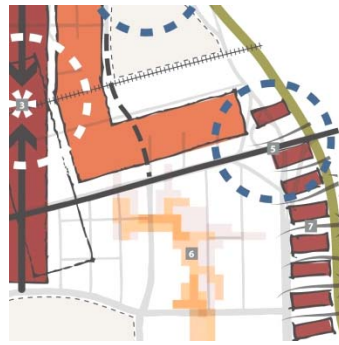
- Include a community input strategy into each design initiative outlined in this Urban Structure
- Establish a design approval process as a means to expedite development review and approval for projects that are consistent with the Structure
- Ensure good urban design through the creation and application of a strong set of urban design standards created based upon the urban guidelines within the Structure
- Convene a staff team led by the CityDesignStudio and Sustainable Development and Construction Department to oversee the implementation of the plan and highlight any needed areas of change to the urban structure as it unfolds.
- Provide an annual review of accomplishments and identify any needed amendments to the action items of the Framework
- Develop a coordinated capital improvement plan for the area to identify priorities for capital projects and assign funding responsibilities among the development community, the city and incentive programs such as new or existing TIFs. Prioritize capital projects to align with the proposed phasing of the build out of the urban structure in order to align the development of amenities in accordance with established community standards. Consider activating and possibly expanding the existing Municipal Management District as a means to provide for maintenance
- Identify high priority capital projects for inclusion in the anticipated 2012 bond program
- Market the plan to continue to raise awareness within the residential and business community of the vision and its progress so that it maintains relevance and acceptance within the community and also so that it engenders reuse and redevelopment proposals that progress the Structure



- key projects underway:
  - enhancing la bajada
    - herbert street traffic calming
    - west dallas gateway
    - flood control improvements
  - encourage interim uses
    - mobile restaurants
  - position for new development
    - street improvements for Beckley/Commerce
    - planning initiatives such as complete streets initiative, bike plan, and streetcar system study



## implementation through innovation



- implementation allows the opportunity for the City to serve as an innovator
- this area can serve as a full-scale urban laboratory
- keep the conversation going with a focused discussion around implementing the vision

## implementation through innovation





