

EDUCATION VISION

The vision for Downtown is to become a place where learning and human development take place in a variety of venues and forums, both formal and informal. We live in a time of constant and sometimes exponential change in the way people do business and live their lives. Increased knowledge, skills, and abilities are important for getting jobs, keeping jobs, moving on to new jobs, opening a business, and for enjoying life, leisure time and retirement. People of all backgrounds and ages continually need to learn and grow intellectually.

The current vitality of business, arts, government, and other cultural diversity in the Downtown vicinity makes for an excellent environment for learning. The human, business, and cultural resources of Downtown are unequaled in any other place in the Metroplex.

Downtown Fort Worth Inc. (working with the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Fort Worth Independent School District, Tarrant County College, area universities, and federal and state government) would like to create a full array of learning opportunities, formal and informal, degree based, certificate based, and course based for all ages, early child care to senior citizen learning and mentoring programs.

This Education chapter is a work in process and addresses child care, childhood development, elementary and secondary school, higher education, and lifelong continued learning opportunities.



TEXAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL IN DOWNTOWN

OBJECTIVE:

Develop an Education Center in Downtown that would attract several universities to offer programs tailored to this unique market. Both undergraduate and graduate level programs should be considered. Examples of potential offerings include business programs, medical industry programs, paralegal training, design and engineering programs, art related programs, public administration, and others.

EXPLANATION:

Downtown and the adjoining Fort Worth South area is the major business, government, and medical center of Tarrant County. There is a concentration of business, medical, government, arts, and other entities totaling to over 75,000 jobs. This base of employment and venues provides an array of potential students and also a wealth of resources for enrichment of the faculty and learning experience.

Access to a variety of educational opportunities is crucial to retaining and attracting business growth. People will choose to live and work in cities that offer their families easy access to on-going educational opportunities. More and more people are choosing where to live first, then finding a job where they choose to live. This "creative class" of people highly values access to ongoing learning opportunities, both formal and informal.

The central location of Downtown provides easy access for Tarrant County citizens that work or live within the Loop 820 area. The radial public transportation system provides convenient access for almost all citizens.

Texas Christian University (TCU), University of North Texas (UNT), University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), Texas Wesleyan University (TxWes), University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC), and others have expressed a desire to continue discussions about possible Downtown programs. Some universities outside of the Metroplex have also made initial contacts.



TEXAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL IN DOWNTOWN

Research has demonstrated that shared educational activities are most successful when each institution offers unique and complete degree programs that are tailor-made to a particular market segment.

STRATEGIES:

1. Encourage Tarrant County College (TCC) to provide space within their proposed Downtown campus for the Education Center. Subject to further study and level of interest, 40,000 to 100,000 SF of space could be needed for classrooms, lecture hall, limited offices, and other support spaces during the next five to ten years.

2. It is recommended that TCC be the owner and host of the Education Center. The respective university tenants would pay rent or use fees to help defray the cost. The Education Center space could also be used to sponsor special conferences, business retreats, and seminars.
3. The Education Center spaces should be flexible to adapt to a range of class sizes. The spaces must be state of the art with respect to media capability and connectivity. Distance learning, using a variety of remote location technologies, will be a frequent use for the education center spaces.
4. Some higher education programs such as theater arts, music, and specialized business programs could be housed in existing venues such as the rehearsal space at Bass Hall, training facilities offered by government and business entities, and others. In these cases, the concept of an Education Center is not place-driven, but is tied to existing Downtown resources.
5. TCC and Downtown Fort Worth Inc. (DFWI) / greater Downtown leadership should continue discussions with appropriate universities to find the right programs to serve the Downtown and central Tarrant County area. DFWI should establish an Education Center implementation task force for the purposes of exploring and attracting the right educational programs. This task force should include representatives from business, higher education, local government, state and federal government, local foundations, and interested citizens.
6. The Education Center should be central, easy to access by both private and public transportation and, if at all possible, within easy walking distance of other attractions within the Downtown core. This synergy between a very vital Downtown core and various education events and programs is what can attract more students and users.



MONTESSORI SCHOOL AT SUNDANCE SQUARE IN DOWNTOWN



TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE MAY OWEN CENTER IN DOWNTOWN



OBJECTIVE:

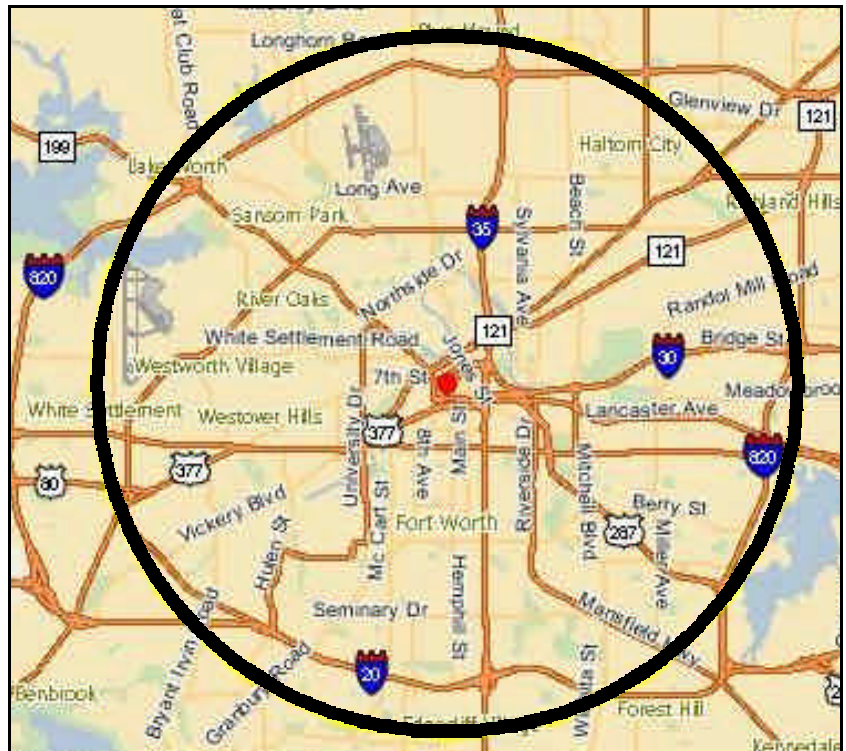
Continue to support Tarrant County College (TCC) in their efforts to build a Downtown campus. Encourage and support TCC to include a full offering of courses that are now offered in the outlying campuses. In addition, there are probably special programs that are particularly suited for Downtown, such as business courses, hospitality management, culinary courses, design, engineering, and architectural courses, art programs, web page and other computer specialties, and others.

Downtown Fort Worth Inc. is very supportive of TCC locating in Downtown. TCC should be encouraged to find a sufficient size site that is in the current Downtown walkable core. Otherwise, it is preferred that they be within walking distance of the Downtown core. Having easy walking distances to current Downtown businesses, restaurants, arts venues, and government offices is important to make for a convenient, fun, and unique educational experience. This area also offers the best access to current public transportation systems.

EXPLANATION:

The Fort Worth Central City has seen large growth in the last decade. Many potential students that can benefit from convenient and affordable education currently reside within 7 miles of Downtown (generally just outside of Loop 820). Approximately 411,000 people reside within 7 miles of Downtown according to year 2000 census numbers. Also, the 70,000+ workers within the greater Downtown area would be attracted to college credit, career changes, special training, and many other programs.

TCC is currently exploring several sites to build a major campus in the Downtown area. To build the proposed 350,000 square feet to 500,000 square feet of building program, TCC will need at least 8 to 12 blocks of Downtown area. It is anticipated that over 800 parking spaces will be needed. This campus will also include over 100,000 square feet for TCC Central Administration and it is hoped that an Education Center with multiple university participation can be incorporated into the planning of the campus.



7 MILE RADIUS OF DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH



TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE EXISTING LOCATION IN DOWNTOWN

STRATEGIES:

1. Downtown Fort Worth Inc. (DFWI) should continue to support Tarrant County College in their initiatives to build a Downtown campus. DFWI should encourage TCC to stay in the current Downtown core.
2. DFWI should work with all businesses and others to recruit students and other users to use the new campus.
3. The City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, and state and federal offices should fully explore ways to use Tarrant County College for their training and education needs. Government employees should be encouraged to pursue degrees, certificates, and continuing education which will benefit the overall local government work force.
4. Make every effort to include an Education Center as part of the Tarrant County College Downtown campus (see Objective on page 95).

OBJECTIVE:

The Downtown Fort Worth Inc. Education Committee should continue to work with the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD) to consider developing a Downtown High School that offers concentrated training in visual and performing arts. This effort should also be coordinated with Downtown Fort Worth Inc., Tarrant County College and perhaps other Tarrant County based Independent School Districts as partners.

EXPLANATION:

Currently the FWISD does not have a high school with emphasis on the visual and performing arts. Downtown and the Cultural District area offer enormous resources in terms of people and venues to support such a program. The school would be fully accredited and offer all of the same graduation requirements of other ISD schools.

The key difference would be that the high school for the visual and performing arts would integrate the arts into the required academic studies. It is very common for high school students with a focus in the arts to go on to higher education. Therefore, the school should take on a college preparatory emphasis also.

Several studies show that students that focus on the arts learn valuable life lessons, regardless of their future career paths. Students develop important abilities, such as self-expression, public speaking, creativity, sense of value, and problem solving. Students that focus on the arts also tend to do well on standardized testing.

A near by success story is the Houston ISD High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) founded in 1971 (See website at www.hspva.org). The HSPVA offers more in-depth study in dance, instrumental music, vocal music, theater arts, and most forms of visual arts.

There is a growing "creative class" that places high value on access to the arts and creative fields. Such a school would be an important ingredient in attracting talented people and businesses to stay, grow, and relocate to Fort Worth.

STRATEGIES:

1. Downtown Fort Worth Inc. (DFWI) and the Education Committee should continue to encourage the FWISD to consider this opportunity.
2. DFWI should work with Downtown developers and investors to find locations for such a school.
3. DFWI should work with the Fort Worth Arts Council and interested independent school districts to network with area arts groups to determine the level of support and resources that could assist with such a school.
4. Work with TCC to see if multiple independent school districts in Tarrant County would desire to partner for such a high school, perhaps located with or adjacent to the proposed Downtown TCC campus.

OBJECTIVE:

Work with the FWISD to retain Nash Elementary. Also continue to monitor the nature of an expanding Downtown residential population to possibly add an elementary school west and /or northwest of the Downtown during the next 5 to 10 years.

EXPLANATION:

The only elementary school within a one mile radius of the Downtown core is Nash Elementary School. This years attendance (2003-2004) at Nash is 229 students. I. M. Terrell Elementary School is close to Downtown, but outside of the one mile radius and separated from Downtown by a major railroad and freeway.

The Education Committee discussed concepts for providing an elementary school in the Downtown core that would possibly cater to families with parents working in Downtown. After discussion with FWISD officials, the committee agrees that families prefer to send elementary age kids to schools near where they live.

With planned residential growth west of the Downtown core and north of the Downtown core, it is possible that one or two new elementary schools could be needed in these areas. As planning proceeds with the Trinity River Vision, accommodations for future elementary schools should be addressed.



NASH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

STRATEGIES:

1. Downtown Fort Worth Inc. and the Education Committee should continue to monitor the elementary school age population growth and be sure to reserve appropriate sites as redevelopment occur.
2. Pending the Downtown Workforce Needs Assessment currently in progress, explore the need for a feasibility study of Nash Elementary as a possible child care center site.



KIDS IN ART CLASS

OBJECTIVE:

Establish Child Care Network(s) for the Central City area to meet the early child care and education needs of the greater Downtown area.

EXPLANATION:

Child care networks are a compilation of child care providers who care for children in their home and child care centers. They are usually pre-qualified child care providers who are recruited to be part of the network.

The advantage of child care networks are the flexibility of choice within the network, the ease of working with already established child care providers and centers, and the greatly reduced cost since there is no initial investment of building a child care facility. By design, child care networks cover a larger geographic area to meet the needs of families who want child care closer to home or school. In addition to reducing cost, networks reduce the liability for each employer investing in the network.

Also, child care networks (or a series of networks) can work cooperatively rather than competitively with existing (or new) child care centers in Downtown through referrals, back-up programs, etc. Another benefit to developing a child care network is the opportunity to build quality into the program by providing training, mentoring and equipment to members of the network.

STRATEGIES:

1. Downtown Fort Worth Inc. should work cooperatively with Corporate Champions for Children, Camp Fire, the existing child care centers in Downtown, churches and major corporations to establish a network of child care providers.
2. Work with the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown businesses and residents, employee representatives, schools, and others to distribute information and possibilities of the child care network(s).



CHILDREN AT PLAY



CHILD PAINTING