

INTRODUCTION

Downtown Fort Worth Inc., in partnership with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority and the City of Fort Worth, initiated the process of updating the Downtown Strategic Action Plan adopted in November 1993. The update of the 1993 Downtown Strategic Action Plan began in February 2002. A Steering Committee consisting of stakeholders was established, chaired by John Robinson of the Carter Foundation and facilitated by James Toal of Gideon Toal. Six sub-committees were formed to address issues regarding Transportation, Business Development, Education, Housing, Retail/ Arts/ Entertainment, and Urban Design/ Open Space/ Public Art.

Geographic Scope:

The 1993 Downtown Plan was bounded by the Trinity River on the north, I-35 on the east, I-30 on the south, and the Trinity River on the west. The 2003 Downtown Plan update has an expanded planning boundary, extending to Northside Drive on the north and Carroll/ Foch Streets on the west, with cooperation from adjoining districts and stakeholders to assure proper linkage and regard for neighboring areas. The expanded boundaries, depicted in the map to the right, reflect an approximate doubling of the Downtown planning area. Major developments within this area would have a significant impact on Downtown, as projects such as the Trinity River Vision extend Downtown’s density and vitality to the north and west of the Trinity River.



SCOPE OF WORK

Content Scope:

The Downtown Plan update is comprehensive to include transportation (public and private), land use, urban design, housing/ residential, parks/ open space, retail, entertainment, visual and performing arts, visitor/ tourism support, hotel issues, parking, office and business development.

Incorporate and Coordinate Recent Studies:

A significant part of the Downtown Plan update is to help assure that various plans and initiatives developed since the 1993 Plan are being properly coordinated. These include Convention Center hotel initiatives, Water Garden improvements, Lancaster Avenue redevelopment plans, trolley/ public transportation plans, Trinity River Vision plans, Urban Design Standards, Downtown Access and Circulation studies, RadioShack and Pier1 corporate campus issues, ITC development, Rail Market development, parking studies, new projects such as the Tarrant County College downtown campus, 500 Throckmorton, Bluff Street housing, and others.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 1993 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Many of the goals and objectives set forth in the 1993 Plan have been achieved and are highly successful today. A few of these include:

- Greatly increased residential development
 - Firestone Upper West Side
 - AMLI Upper West Side
 - Hillside Apartments
 - AMLI 7th Street Station
 - Remington Place Townhomes
 - Cassidy Corner
 - Flatiron
- Expanded day/ night retail and entertainment activity along Main, Houston & Commerce Streets between the Courthouse and the Convention Center
- Expanded cinema/ theatre district
 - Bass Performance Hall
 - Jubilee Theatre
 - Sundance Palace
 - AMC Sundance
 - Circle Theatre
- Intermodal Transportation Center
- Rail Market
- Convention Center expansion
- Trinity Railway Express commuter rail
- Additional night and weekend free parking
 - City Center parking garages
 - Carter & Burgess parking garage
 - Tarrant County Family Law Center parking garage
 - Bank One parking garage
- Implementation of Urban Design Standards
- Corporate campus relocations
 - RadioShack
 - Pier1 Imports
- Lancaster Corridor redevelopment plan
- Linkage to the greenbelt system
 - Trinity Trail sign system
 - Trinity River Vision plan
- Overall sign and information system
 - City Linkage sign system
 - Parking sign system
- Texas Wesleyan Law School Downtown campus
- Better security, actual and perceived
 - Bike Patrol
 - Mounted Patrol



FIRESTONE UPPER WESTSIDE APARTMENTS



INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER



BASS HALL



TRINITY RAILWAY EXPRESS

THE VISION FOR THE 2003 DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

"Our vision is to reflect the city's culture, warmth, character, and artistic grace making Downtown a major world gateway and vibrant center for business, education, government, retail, entertainment, and great residential neighborhoods."

The vision for Downtown Fort Worth is to continue the tremendous momentum that has occurred since the 1993 Downtown Plan. Private investments completed or now under construction since 1993 total over \$700 million dollars. These investments have included a balance between residential, office, corporate headquarters, restaurants, entertainment, and performing arts. Perhaps the only disappointment has been the lack of success in attracting retail.

Public investments exceed \$230 million (not counting over \$300 million for I-30 and the rail portions of the Trinity Railway Express). Over 1900 housing units have been added in that same time period.

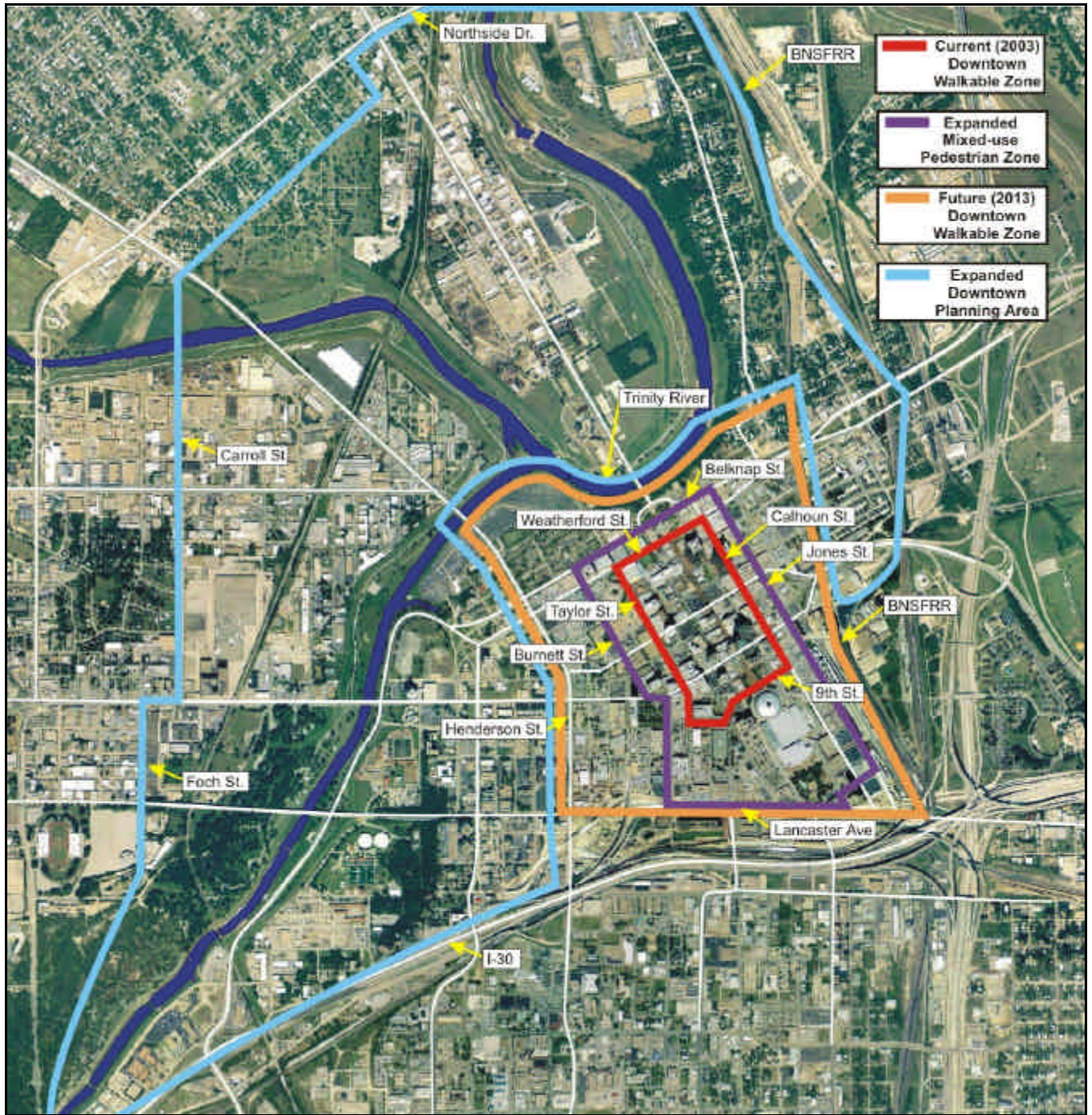
The 2003 Plan recognizes that much of Downtown's current success has to do with being pedestrian friendly and having a critical mass of street level venues and special activities that attract people back to Downtown during the weekdays, week nights and weekends. This same urban vitality causes people to want to live and work in Downtown. The "walkable Downtown" now expands from the Tarrant County Courthouse south to the Convention Center, and from Calhoun Street westward to Taylor Street. While the 2003 Plan addresses an expanded geographic area, it is important to note that the higher density urban core is what now makes Downtown a distinctive and vital district.

The 2003 plan is cautious to suggest that the restaurant, specialty retail and entertainment core can only incrementally expand over the next ten years by extending southward to Lancaster and northward to Belknap Street. It is important to build on this successful core rather than create new retail / entertainment clusters that could cause one or both to fail.

The comfortable "walkable zone" should be expanded to at least west of Henderson Street, north to the Trinity River, south to Lancaster Avenue, and east to the BNSF Railroad. The areas just west of Henderson Street now contain over 800 residential units. The number of units could double to over 2,000 in the next ten years, but only with pedestrian friendly access to the Downtown core. Likewise, it is very possible that approximately 1,200 units can be built in the Lancaster Corridor with an extension of the pedestrian friendly environment. And, the Trinity Bluffs area immediately northeast of the Downtown core could add 1,400 residential units over the next ten years.

Office, support commercial, neighborhood shopping, and additional corporate office can occur anywhere within the expanded Downtown planning area over the ten year period. During the next five years, there will be substantial office space (approximately 1,000,000 square feet) available when Pier1 and RadioShack move to new Downtown campuses in late 2004 or early 2005.

The expanded Downtown planning area is designed primarily to attract a critical mass of residential, corporate office and community support retail that cannot fit or park sufficient vehicles in the Downtown core. For example, the concept of bringing a major grocery store to Downtown may require more land and parking than can be assembled in the walkable Downtown area.



DOWNTOWN ZONES

In summary, the central focus of this plan is to strengthen and slightly expand the Downtown core as the most vital urban center of North Texas. At the same time, expanding the Downtown using the Lancaster Corridor and Trinity River Vision areas will enable Fort Worth to attract a critical mass of residents and community support retail to within two miles of Downtown. All of these developments will provide the vital urban core that keeps and attracts continued office and commercial growth.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES FOR THE 2003 DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

- **Encourage urban density and urban character in the expanded Downtown area.** Attract as many as 10,000 new residential units over the next 10 years. Encourage urban character except in the historic Sunset Terrace and Samuels Avenue (north of Pioneers Rest Cemetery) neighborhoods. These two neighborhoods should have special design criteria and overlay zones to allow compatible in-fill development while protecting the historic integrity.
- **Implement the Development Standards Task Force recommendations and associated amendments to the building codes, zoning, and process improvements to create a review process that is more supportive of urban housing and urban mixed-use developments.**
- **Develop a Downtown open space and recreation system that creates livability for urban residents of all ages and family types.**
- **Attract retail support services using urban models where possible.**
- **Expand Downtown safety and security initiatives outward to include the expanded Downtown zones.**
- **Develop a coordinated marketing message and strategy for the expanded Downtown neighborhood.**
- **Implement noise control standards and initiatives with the railroads for Downtown railroad corridors.**
- **Encourage a variety of housing opportunities.**
 - a. Promote home ownership - condominiums, single family, and other types
 - b. Encourage a range of pricing - low/ moderate income to high income
 - c. Attract senior citizen developments
 - d. Promote live/ work spaces for artists, professionals, and others



SUNDANCE WEST

TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES

- **Implement Fort Worth’s Long-Term Transit System Vision for the expanded Downtown area.**
- **Implement the Downtown Access and Circulation Study Recommendations.**
- **Encourage transit / mixed-use oriented developments.**
- **Create pedestrian-friendly environments on major streets and corridors and extend walkable areas to the outer edge of Downtown.**
- **Provide a heliport/ vertiport in the Downtown area.**
- **Extend Crestline Road (“Trinity River Parkway”) from University Drive to White Settlement Road.**
- **Implement the Trinity River Vision proposed transportation improvements.**
- **Implement the Lancaster Corridor Redevelopment Plan.**
- **Create new Park View Drive in Park Plaza Area.**



INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER, DOWNTOWN FORT WORTH

URBAN DESIGN, OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC ART OBJECTIVES

- **Implement the Trinity River Vision including the urban lake and North Fork bypass channel concepts recently developed.**
- **Implement the Lancaster Corridor Redevelopment Plan including all aspects of the approved urban design and economic development initiatives.**
- **Increase the presence of public art throughout the expanded Downtown area.** The goal is to beautify the community, celebrate the City's cultural and ethnic diversity, promote the work of local, regional, and national artists and boost visitors and tourism.



HERITAGE PARK, COURTHOUSE AND CITY CENTER TOWERS

- **Create a "Central Plaza" in Sundance Square which can become a focal point for major public and private events, and also a focal point for the addition of retail and entertainment adjacent to the plaza and adjoining streets.**
- **Increase pedestrian activity along Main Street.** Consider temporarily closing portions of Main Street to vehicular traffic between Weatherford Street and the Convention Center more frequently, while allowing cross-streets to remain open for vehicular movement.
- **Expand Urban Design Standards to include the areas in the expanded Downtown area.** Areas such as Lancaster Avenue, Samuels Avenue, Sunset Terrace, the Trinity River Vision area, and others will require guidelines and standards that specifically respond to the unique character envisioned for these areas.
- **Prioritize and implement pedestrian-friendly gateways and parkways on major streets and extend walkable areas to the outer edge of Downtown.**
- **Implement a coordinated and comprehensive wayfinding system for the Greater Downtown area.**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- **Continue to leverage new private investment through creative public/ private partnerships.**
- **Market downtown as an enriched commercial center in which to live, work, and play.**
 - Stress the unique amenities of retail, entertainment and cultural venues and residential options
 - Stress that Downtown has become a master planned community with unique authenticity
- **Implement the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan for Economic Development.** Implement specific strategies to promptly absorb office space to be vacated by RadioShack and Pier1.
- **Find specific strategies and solutions for key vacant buildings.**
- **Develop a comprehensive strategy for building a convention center hotel and upgrading and/ or expanding certain existing hotels.**
- **Implement the Lancaster Corridor streetscape and associated economic development strategies.**
- **Establish the "Rail Market District" that focuses on the Fort Worth Rail Market, the Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC), and the continued redevelopment of Lancaster Avenue.**
- **Implement the Trinity River Vision.**



PROPOSED RADIOSHACK CAMPUS

RETAIL, ARTS, AND ENTERTAINMENT OBJECTIVES

- **Expand and refresh retail, restaurant, arts and entertainment in the proposed expanded Downtown core. Emphasis must be on infill and refreshing current occupancies in or adjacent to the now existing retail core and less on expansion of the retail core at least in the next 10 years.**
- **Focus on developments in the expanded Downtown core that assure a long term sustainable central city which include 10,000 residential units over the next 10 years. This area could also support grocery, department store, home improvement store, and other retail designed to support neighborhoods within a two to four mile radius. Destination retail that would compete and dilute the critical mass of the Downtown core and the Stockyards Area is not recommended for this area.**
- **Improve the ease of use for free parking at night and weekends and increase the amount of affordable, accessible parking during the day for shopping, lunch, and other customer visits.**
- **Use existing and proposed public transit to provide easy movement of people within the Downtown Area.** This will need to include a "circulator system" once the Pier1 and RadioShack campuses are finished with over 3,800 people working at the two corporate campuses.
- **Conduct market study to determine the types of retail, merchandise mix, and restaurant mix that would best attract a destination, visitor, and tourism market.** Based on the study, develop a coordinated marketing strategy for all Downtown Core retail and entertainment venues.
- **Develop the "Central Plaza" centered on Main Street between Commerce Street and Houston Street and between 3rd Street and 4th Street.** Flank this plaza on the east and west sides with retail and entertainment that orients to both the adjoining streets and plaza.
- **Work with developers and the City to find one or more locations where the concept of artists live / work can be implemented.**



THE FLYING SAUCER IN SUNDANCE

EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

- **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.**
-
- TEXAS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL IN DOWNTOWN*
- **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.**
 - **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.**
 - **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.**
 - **Establish Child Care Network(s) for the Central City area to meet the early child care and education needs of the greater Downtown area.**

