

DOWNTOWN DENVER PEER CITIES ANALYSIS REPORT

DOWNTOWN DALLAS

INTRODUCTION

The following report is intended to provide the Downtown Denver Partnership with information about Dallas' location, boundaries, characteristics, zoning, population, development, retail, parking, transportation, policies, and politics. The information provided will assist in analyzing existing conditions, opportunities and constraints, past successes and failures, and current plans and policies of Dallas, a city of similar size and demographics to Denver.

Data was collected through conversations with the Dallas Downtown Partnership, local real estate agencies, parking managers, and various city employees. Additional information was gathered from websites and local newspapers.

DOWNTOWN DEFINITION & CHARACTERISTICS

Location



Central Dallas is anchored by Downtown, the center of the city and the epicenter of urban revival, coupled with Oak Lawn and Uptown Dallas, the shiny new urban areas thriving with

shops, restaurants, and nightlife. Downtown Dallas has a variety of neighborhoods, including the West End Historic District, the Arts District, the Main Street District, Farmers Market District, the City Center business district, the Convention Center District, the historic Vickery Place, the Reunion District and Victory Park. North of downtown is Oak Lawn, a densely-populated area that contains beautiful parks along Turtle Creek and the popular Uptown area with LoMac, Cityplace and the West Village.

The east side of Dallas contains the community of east Dallas, home to Deep Ellum, a trendy arts area close to downtown, homey Lakewood, Bryan Place, and historically and architecturally significant homes on Swiss Avenue. Ave the Park Cities is north Dallas, home to mansions as palatial as Versailles in Preston Hollow, strong middle and upper-class communities north into Dent Tree and Far North Dallas, and high-powered shopping at Galleria Dallas, NorthPark Center, and Preston Center. East of north Dallas and north of East Dallas is Lake Highlands, one of the most unified middle-class areas in the city, with the strongest definition – it is in the northeastern part of the city above White Rock Lake and east Dallas.

The southern portion of Dallas is home to Oak Cliff, a hilly area in southwest Dallas that is predominately Hispanic and includes entertainment districts such as the Bishop Arts District. South Oak Cliff became a predominately African American district after the early 1970s and has struggled with high rates of poverty and crime¹. To the east, south Dallas lays claim to the Cedars, and eclectic artist hotbed south of downtown. Fair Park, and areas west of the Trinity River and east of Interstate 35E. The University of North Texas at Dallas, currently located south of Oak Cliff along Interstate 20², is being built in the area along Houston School Road. Further east, above (north and east of) the Trinity River, is Pleasant Grove – once an independent city, it is a predominantly black collection of neighborhoods stretching to Seagoville to the southeast.

The city is further surrounded by many suburbs, with enclaves such as Cockrell Hill, Highland Park, and University Park.

¹ "Dallas at the Tipping Point: Costs of Crime." *Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved 25 October 2006.

² University of North Texas Dallas Campus - Location. Retrieved 4 October 2006.

Dallas is the county seat of Dallas County. Portions of the city extend into neighboring Collin, Denton, Kaufman, and Rockwall Counties. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 385 square miles – 342.5 squares miles of it is land and 42.3 square miles of it is water. These statistics are only for the city of Dallas proper. In fact, Dallas only makes up about one-fifth of the much larger urbanized area known as the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. About a quarter of all Texans live in the DFW Metroplex³.

Boundaries

Downtown Dallas is 832 acres of land bound on all sides by highway; I-345 on the east, I-35E on the west, I-30 on the south, and Woodall Rodgers Freeway on the north. These clear boundaries have limited confusion about the downtown area definition. While new development occurring north of downtown in the uptown area may be stretching people's perception of the downtown area, the official boundary remains the loop of highways surrounding downtown.

Characteristics

Downtown Dallas has eight distinct districts within the downtown borders. In addition to those eight districts we will also discuss three close-in districts that we feel have an immediate impact on the downtown area as defined by the City of Dallas. The following districts are arranged in a clockwise manner from northeast to northwest starting with the top of the page.

³ "Geography and Environment: Cityscape." Dallas, Texas. 20 Nov 2006
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dallas#Geography_and_environment>.



Arts District

The Arts District is bounded by Field Street on the west, Ross Avenue on the south, I-45 on the east and most importantly, Woodall Rogers Freeway on the North. The Arts District is home to many of Dallas' major attractions including the Dallas Museum of Art, the Dallas Symphony and several theaters.⁴ The area is directly south of the bustling Uptown District, which I will discuss later. This district has been targeted by the City of Dallas for a future boom in pedestrian traffic and tourism growth. This will be accomplished by the construction of the Woodall Rogers deck-over in 2009 (see attached picture). The deck-over will be a mixed land use of park, residential, an amphitheater and retail that will span four to five blocks over the Woodall Rogers Freeway, and connect the Uptown area with the Arts district. This will allow residents and tourists to walk freely from the Uptown area to the Arts district and vice versa. Some residential growth is occurring in this area.

⁴ "Downtown Dallas." Wikipedia. 20 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas>.

City Center District

The area just south of the Arts District is the City Center District. This area would be considered Dallas' central business district. There are many skyscrapers in this area and a large, grassy open space in Thanksgiving Square.⁵ This area has experienced some marginal residential growth over the last couple of years but remains more of a nine to five commuter district.⁶

Main Street District

Just to the south of the City Center District is the vibrant Main Street District. Traditionally, many people in the Dallas' area considered the Main Street district to be the heart of downtown Dallas. It is not surprising then that this area led the way five to ten years ago in terms of renovation and the creation of downtown residential lofts. The area will have over 1,400 residential units by the end of next year.⁷ The two crown jewels of the district are the 330 room Magnolia Hotel and the renovated Mercantile Bank building, which will contain over 200 residential units. Those two historical buildings were renovated in the late 1990's. In addition to these developments, a grocery store has been helped by local government in hopes that the downtown population will begin to keep it afloat. This is the essential egg before the chicken question. People want to live downtown, but they also want a grocery store before they move. The grocery store, in turn, wants a population already in place before they move into an area. The City of Dallas has eliminated this problem by subsidizing the grocery store for the first couple of years.

Farmers Market District

At the southeastern corner of downtown Dallas lays the Farmers Market district. As the name implies, this is where the people of downtown Dallas come to buy fresh produce in an open-air setting. The area had been a sleepy enclave that, until very recently, experienced almost no

⁵ "Downtown Dallas." Wikipedia. 20 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas>.

⁶ Garrett, Kourtney. Downtown Dallas. Telephone interview. 15 Nov 2006.

⁷ Garrett, Kourtney. Downtown Dallas. Telephone interview. 15 Nov 2006.

residential growth.⁸ In the next few years over 400 residential units will be built in the area. According to a local developer, this is the cheapest land left within the interstate loop of downtown Dallas and is ripe for residential development.

The Government District

The Government district is home to all of Dallas' city buildings, including the Dallas City Hall and the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library. As is the case with most government areas of downtowns, there is very little residential and retail in this district.

Convention Center District

Just to the west of the Government district is an area known as the Convention Center district. This district contains the Dallas Convention Center, a building with over 1,000,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 9,800 seat arena and the world's largest heliport. The convention center, which was completed in the 1970's, is also a hub of downtown transportation with the Convention Center Station, which houses two light rail lines that connect other areas of downtown. The convention center, which was a premier facility in the 1980's and 1990's, is now competing with strong, new competition from areas north of the downtown interstate loop.

⁸ Brown, Steve. "New Housing Stirs Interest in Long Dormant Farmers Market Area." *Dallas Morning News* 23 May 2006 <<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/bus/stories/051906dnbusfarmersmarket.2203c43d.html>>.

Reunion District



Reunion Tower

To the east of the Convention Center district and at the western most part of downtown is the Reunion Arena district. This area is home to the mass transit hub of Union Station. The largest hub of its kind in Dallas, Union Station is a transit point for the DART light rail, Amtrak trains and Greyhound buses. This historic station was built in 1916 and was once the home of the Dallas City Hall.⁹ The once famous Reunion Arena and the most recognizable building in downtown Dallas, the Reunion Tower also exist within the Reunion district. With the completion of the 17,000 seat Reunion Arena in 1980, Dallas had hopes of making this district the most vibrant in all of downtown. The arena was home to the pro sports teams, the Dallas Mavericks and the Dallas Stars but due to an economic downturn in the 1980's, this goal of creating a vibrant entertainment district was never realized.¹⁰ After this real estate bust, investors and developers were not willing to develop anything in the area beyond a Hyatt hotel and the aforementioned Reunion Tower. In 2001, the American Airlines Center was opened north of the Reunion district in Victory Park at a cost of \$400 million. The Mavericks and Stars moved to the new facility and

⁹ "DART - Union Station." Downtown Area Rapid Transit. 20 Nov 2006 <<http://www.dart.org/unionstation.asp>> .

¹⁰ "Downtown Dallas Living." Downtown Dallas, Texas. 20 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org>> .

subsequently left the Reunion district without its two major tenants. Looking toward the future, the City of Dallas was in the process of working out a land swap deal with a local development firm. The deal would have ultimately call for the demolition of Reunion Arena and create an entertainment district in the area. The area may be well suited for an entertainment district as it contains a major transportation hub and sits adjacent to the Trinity River, an area that has been marked by the City for dramatic recreational improvements in the next few years.¹¹ At this time, that land swap appears to be terminated and the City is considering keeping Reunion Arena to fill other needs.¹²

West End Historic District

The final district within the downtown loop is the West End Historic district. This area sits in the northwest corner of downtown and is directly south of the massive project know as Victory Park. Although most people knew the area as the place of Kennedy's assassination, the area is also known for setting up one of Dallas' first historical districts. While most of Dallas was being torn down in the 1970's and 1980's in the name of Urban Renewal, this district retained its turn of the century warehouses local business.¹³ Recently, however, the area has experienced some stagnation. In the summer of 2006, an enormous mall/entertainment complex called the West End Marketplace closed down. This has left a void in the district's retail sector and local agencies are currently trying to figure out ways to fill this void.

The prior districts compose what is officially known as downtown Dallas. The following three districts, Victory Park, Uptown and Deep Ellum are the close-in areas that influence the downtown area directly.

¹¹ Levinthal, David. "Land Swap Could Be End of Reunion Arena." *Dallas Morning News* 15 Aug 2006 <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/politics/local/stories/DN-reunion_11met.ART0.North.Edition2.e7723f6.html>.

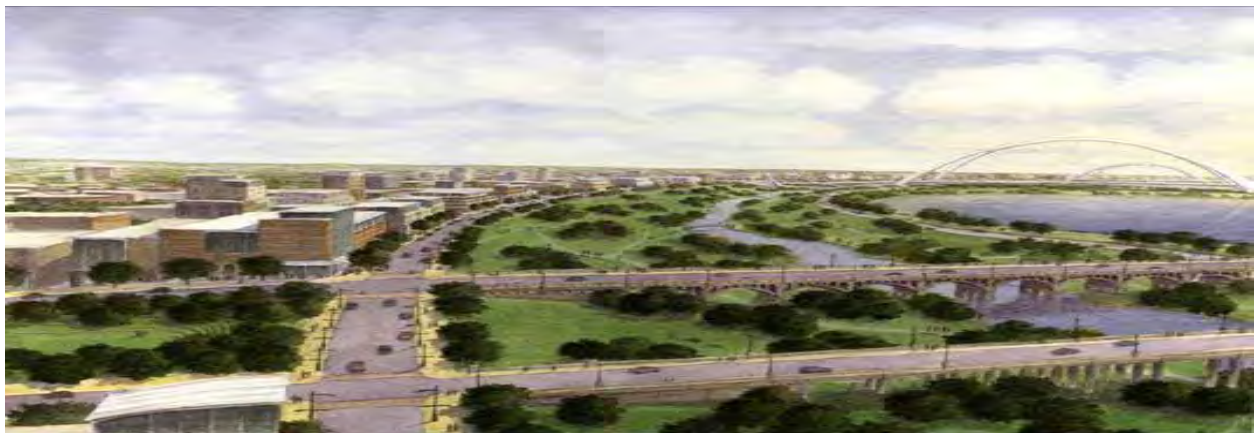
¹² Finely, Michael. City of Dallas. Telephone interview. 17 Nov 2006.

¹³ "Downtown Dallas." *Wikipedia*. 20 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas>.

Victory Park



Victory Park



Trinity River Corridor Project

This area lies directly north of the West End Historic district, separated only by the Woodall Rogers Freeway. Victory Park is a 75 acre, \$3 billion master planned development. Victory Park, along with the Trinity River Corridor Project, are the two largest development projects in Dallas at this time. When the project is finished it will contain 4,000 residential units and over 4,000,000 square feet of office and residential space.¹⁴ The area will contain the W Hotel, the American Airlines Center, and several other over 40 story buildings. The district is also home to the light rail hub named Victory Station. This area is directly affecting the retail and

¹⁴ "Downtown Dallas." [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas). 20 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas>.

entertainment of the official downtown area. Since in inception, Reunion Arena has been virtually closed down and the West End Marketplace has closed its doors. Although the light rail will provide access to downtown, the area will remain separated from downtown for any sort of pedestrian movement. In our opinion, this will not encourage the mixing of the districts and may lead to more decline in the West End Historic district.

Uptown

Directly to the east of Victory Park is the district known as Uptown. Uptown is a TIF district that has been the residential and retail hotspot of Dallas for the last few years.¹⁵ It sits adjacent to Victory Park and the two areas are easily accessible to each other by walking. In the construction of the current Uptown area, many Hispanic and African American communities were destroyed. High-rise condos and upscale retail now dominate the area.¹⁶ An excellent example of New Urbanism exists within an older area of Uptown called the West Village. People who live here have all the necessities within walking distance of their condos. The Uptown district is also serviced by a street car system that connects the district to the downtown area. With the addition of the Woodall Rogers deck-over, Uptown will be a major pedestrian gateway to the Arts District and the rest of downtown.



West Village

¹⁵ Garrett, Kourtny. Downtown Dallas. Telephone interview. 15 Nov 2006.

¹⁶ "Downtown Dallas Living." Downtown Dallas. [downtowndallas.org](http://www.downtowndallas.org). 20 Nov 2006
<<http://www.downtowndallas.org>>.

Deep Ellum

Deep Ellum is an area just outside of the Farmers Market district, separated by US-75. Deep Ellum, from the 1970's to the 1990's, was a music and cultural mecca in the downtown area. It was home to many music venues and independent restaurants and shops. This feel began to recede in the late 1990's and crime rates began to surge. Most of the older clubs began to shut down and the area went into a recession. Currently, some new business has moved into the area but they are mainly national chains and not the old, independent businesses.

We point out Deep Ellum because of its border with the underdeveloped Farmers Market district. The crime that has existed in Deep Ellum has crossed over into the Farmers Market area. This is why I believe the Farmers Market district is the one area downtown Dallas needs to target the most right now. As I mentioned earlier, developers are stepping into this role and creating over 400 residential units that will cover some of the parking lots that dominate the area. Another optimistic sign is that the farmer's market is still a thriving source of community activity and income on the weekends. With the district's proximity to the City Center district, it is not unreasonable to think that many downtown employees will want to purchase condos in this area as they will not be as expensive as in other parts of the downtown.

Zoning

Prior to the adoption of *Forward Dallas* in 2006, the city's first comprehensive plan, land use planning in Dallas was principally dictated by zoning codes special district guidelines. What many referred to as Dallas' "tipping point" has now become its turning point. Emily Ramshaw of the *Dallas Morning News* has said that, "When Dallas residents and business owners look to the future, they see a city interconnected: where light rail, bike paths and wide, well-lit sidewalks link tree-lined neighborhoods to urban lofts and lively retail centers." In speaking to this grand vision portrayed with the adoption of *Forward Dallas* Theresa O'Donnell, *Dallas Development Director*, explains that, "implementing this vision however, outlined in a rough draft of the city's *Forward Dallas Comprehensive Plan*, won't be possible without an upheaval of some existing codes and zoning standards."Our codes are so outdated. They're very auto-oriented; they don't encourage

us to be pedestrian-friendly," Ms. O'Donnell said. "We make it difficult to do a West Village, a Mockingbird Station."

The need for a zoning-code overhaul and overwhelming citizen support for such transit-oriented developments are just two key findings of the plan, released this week after months of public meetings orchestrated by renowned urban planner John Fregonese.¹⁷

The proceeding pages illustrate the existing, "outdated," zoning rules:

¹⁷ Ramshaw, Emily. "Pedestrians, Not Cars, Star in Draft of Plan, but Code Changes Sought." *The Dallas Morning News*. 21 Jan 2006.

THE ZONING RULES

HIGHLIGHTS OF 51A

- No change in District regulations for the following districts: A, R-5, R-7.5, R-10, R-13, R-16, R-1/2ac, R-1ac, TH-1, TH-2, TH-3, D, MH, P, CA-1, CA-2.
- Nonresidential districts revised to focus the uses and design standards on the purpose of the district.
- No residential uses allowed in nonresidential districts except for mixed use districts.
- Heights and Floor Ratio related to principal uses allowed in district.
-e.g. retail districts have heights and FAR that accommodate all types of retail uses.
- Added provisions for reduced height of structures when next to SF, D, TH, districts for each foot in height over 26', buildings must be 3 feet further away from low density residential development.
- The following charts summarize districts in Chapter 51A. Please note that many districts have significant changes in permitted height, density, and coverage.

	DISTRICT	SETBACKS		Density	Height	Lot Coverage	Special Standards	PRIMARY Uses	
		Front	Side/Rear						
RESIDENTIAL	A(A) Agricultural	50'	20'/50'	1 Dwelling Unit 3 Acres	24'	10%		Agricultural and residential uses	
	Single Family	R-1ac(A) Residential	40'	10'	1 Dwelling Unit 1 Acres	36'	40%		Single family residential uses
		R-1/2ac(A) Residential	40'	10'	1 Dwelling Unit 1/2 Acres	36'	40%		Single family residential uses
		R-16(A) Residential	35'	10'	1 Dwelling Unit 16,000 sq. ft.	30'	40%		Single family residential uses
		R-13(A) Residential	30'	8'	1 Dwelling Unit 13,000 sq. ft.	30'	45%		Single family residential uses
		R-10(A) Residential	30'	6'	1 Dwelling Unit 10,000 sq. ft.	30'	45%		Single family residential uses
		R-7.5(A) Residential	25'	5'	1 Dwelling Unit 7,500 sq. ft.	30'	45%		Single family residential uses
		R-5(A) Residential	20'	5'	1 Dwelling Unit 5,000 sq. ft.	30'	45%		Single family residential uses
	DUPLEX / TOWNHOUSE	D(A) Duplex	25'	5'	1 Dwelling Unit 6,000 sq. ft.	36'	60%		Duplex and single family uses
		TH-1(A) Townhouse Residential	0'	0'	6 DU Acre	36'	60%		Single family residential uses
TH-2(A) Townhouse Residential		0'	0'	9 DU Acre	36'	60%		Single family residential uses	
TH-3(A) Townhouse Residential		0'	0'	12 DU Acre	36'	60%		Single family residential uses	

	DISTRICT	SETBACKS		Density	Height	Lot Coverage	Special Standards	PRIMARY Uses	
		Front	Side/Rear						
RESIDENTIAL	CLUSTERED HOUSING / MULTIFAMILY	CH Clustered Housing	0'	0'	18 DU Per Acre	36'	60%	Proximity Slope	Single family and multifamily residential uses
		MF-1(A) Multifamily residential	15'	15'	Min lot 3,000 sq ft 1,000 sq ft - E 1,400 - 1 BR 1,800 - 2 BR + 200 sq ft each add BR	36'	60%	Proximity Slope	Multifamily residential uses
		MF-2(A) Multifamily residential	15'	15'	Min lot 1,000 sq ft 800 sq ft - E 1,000 - 1 BR 1,200 - 2 BR + 150 sq ft each add BR	36'	60%	Proximity Slope	Multifamily residential uses
		MF-3(A) Multifamily residential	15'	10'	Min lot 6,000 sq ft 450 sq ft - E 500 - 1 BR 550 - 2 BR + 50 sq ft each add BR	90'	60%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing	Multifamily residential; supporting limited retail and personal service uses
		MF-4(A) Multifamily residential	15'	10'	Min lot 6,000 sq ft 225 sq ft - E 275 - 1 BR 325 - 2 BR + 50 sq ft each add BR	240'	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing	Multifamily residential; supporting limited retail and personal service uses
		MH(A) Mobile home	20'	10'	1 DU/ 4,000 sq ft	24'	20%	Proximity Slope	Manufactured homes
NONRESIDENTIAL	office	NO(A) Neighborhood office	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.5 Floor Area Ratio	30' 2 stories	50%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Office
		LO-1 Limited office - 1	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.0 FAR	70' 5 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
		LO-2 Limited office - 2	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.5 FAR	95' 7 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
		LO-3 Limited office - 3	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.75 FAR	115' 9 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
		MO-1 Mid-range office - 1	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	2.0 FAR	135' 10 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; lodging; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
		MO-2 Mid-range office - 2	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	3.0 FAR	160' 12 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; lodging; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
		GO(A) General office	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	4.0 FAR	270' 20 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; lodging; retail and personal service uses as limited uses
	Retail	NS(A) Neighborhood service	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.5 FAR	30' 2 stories	40%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Retail and personal service; and office uses
		CR Community retail	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.75 overall 0.5 office	54' 4 stories	60%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Retail and personal service; and office uses
		RR Regional retail	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.5 overall 0.5 office	70' 5 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Visual intrusion	Retail and personal service; and office uses

	DISTRICT	SETBACKS		Density FAR	Height	Lot Coverage	Special Standards	PRIMARY Uses	
		Front	Side/Rear						
NONRESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL	CS COMMERCIAL SERVICE	15' 0" on minor	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.75 overall 0.5 office/lodging/ retail combined	45' 3 stories	80%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Commercial and business service; supporting retail and personal service, and office
		LI Light industrial	15'	30' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.0 overall 0.75 office/retail 0.5 retail	70' 5 stories	80%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Industrial; wholesale distribution and storage; supporting office and retail
		IR Industrial research	15'	30' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	2.0 overall 0.75 office/retail 0.5 retail	200' 15 stories	80%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Industrial; wholesale distribution and storage; supporting office and retail
		IM Industrial manufacturing	15' 0" on minor	30' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	2.0 overall 0.75 office/retail 0.5 retail	110' 8 stories	80%	Proximity Slope Visual intrusion	Industrial; wholesale distribution and storage; supporting office and retail
	Central area	CA - 1(A) Central area - 1	0'	0'	20.0 FAR	Any legal height	100%		All but the heaviest industrial uses
		CA - 2(A) Central area - 2	0'	0'	20.0 FAR	Any legal height	100%		All but the heaviest industrial uses
	Mixed use	MU - 1 Mixed use - 1	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.8 base 1.0 max + bonus for residential	90' 7 stories 120' 9 stories with retail	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging; residential
		MU - 2 Mixed use - 2	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.6 base 2.0 max + bonus for residential	135' 10 stories 180' 14 stories with retail	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging; and residential
		MU - 3 Mixed use - 3	15'	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	3.2 base 4.0 max + bonus for residential	270' 20 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging; residential; trade center
	Multiple commercial	MC - 1 Multiple commercial - 1	15' Urban Form	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.8 base 1.0 max	70' 5 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging
		MC - 2 Multiple commercial - 2	15' Urban Form	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	0.8 base 1.0 max	90' 7 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging
		MC - 3 Multiple commercial - 3	15' Urban Form	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.2 base 1.5 max	115' 9 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging
		MC - 4 Multiple commercial - 4	15' Urban Form	20' adjacent to residential OTHER: No Min.	1.6 base 2.0 max	135' 10 stories	80%	Proximity Slope U-form setback Tower spacing Visual intrusion	Office; retail and personal service; lodging
	PARKING	P(A) Parking							Surface parking

Forward Dallas

A Comprehensive Plan uses a community's vision and priorities to develop guidelines for future development and strategies to help achieve those goals. Dallas' plan will focus on guiding and integrating three elements:

- *Land use* - Working strategically to stabilize existing residential neighborhoods and to accommodate growth, housing needs and development patterns
- *Transportation* - Using roads efficiently, reducing congestion, and supporting development around DART stations
- *Economic development* - Supporting business recruitment and retention, retail growth, and small business development¹⁸

The Downtown Improvement District

The Downtown Improvement District (*DID*) is a public improvement district created to offer enhanced safety, maintenance, communications/events and capital improvement projects in Downtown Dallas.

- The *mission* of *DID* is to make Downtown Dallas “Clean, Safe, and Fun,” a strong competitor among places for people to work, live, visit and invest.
- *DID* is funded by Downtown property owners through a special assessment paid on real property. In June 2001 the Dallas City Council unanimously approved a five-year renewal of the district, following overwhelming endorsement by stakeholders. The annual assessment is approximately \$3 million.¹⁹

¹⁸ “*Forward Dallas: Comprehensive Plan.*” 20 Nov 2006. <<http://www.forwarddallas.org/index.php>>.

¹⁹ “*Downtown Improvement District.*” Dallas, Texas. 18 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/>>.

Current Priorities & Efforts

- *The Downtown Safety Patrol*, a daily safety presence on the streets of Downtown
- *The Clean Team*, a daytime maintenance and litter control program
- A new Downtown pedestrian map
- Phase I of *Downtown Signage & Wayfinding System*
- Improvements to *Ferris Plaza*

Conservation Districts

A Conservation District is a zoning tool used to help communities protect certain characteristics in their neighborhood. Conservation Districts have existed in the city of Dallas since 1988. These districts exist primarily in East Dallas and Oak Cliff. They concentrate on protecting such things as architecture styles, densities of the area, heights of structures, and setback guidelines. The process to become a conservation district typically takes 12 – 18 months from the initial authorizing of a study until the adoption by the city council.

These districts are similar to and often compared with historic districts. While exhibiting comparable characteristics, the two are quite different. Historic Districts look to preserve the original structure exactly as when it was first built. They also attempt to preserve original materials, colors, styles, and other elements of the original structure. Conservation districts wish to maintain certain standards of an area.²⁰

Dallas Downtown Partnership

The Dallas Downtown Partnership, in conjunction with the City of Dallas, the City Center TIF, the Downtown Improvement District and the Central Dallas Association, as part of their overall downtown redevelopment efforts, are working to restore the downtown Dallas retail core to its former prominence. The intent is to create a living and breathing urban landscape open 24/7 to serve both residents and the enormous daytime population that is already present. Retail is a

²⁰ Dallas City Hall. "Conservation – Homepage." 19 Nov 2006
<http://www.dallascityhall.com/html/conservation_districts.html>.

major building block in leading the revitalization of downtown Dallas. Main Street, which once served as the principle retail district in Dallas, is once again becoming home to a growing base of upscale restaurants and bars as well as retailers.²¹

POPOULATION

Over 3,100 live in the downtown area bounded by the highway loop. Additionally, around 27,000 people live in the surrounding downtown neighborhoods.²²

Population Growth			
	1990	2000	2004
Downtown	3,444	2,198	3,170
City of Dallas	1,007,618	1,188,580	1,214,800

Note: 1990 Census for Downtown includes 3,144 people in group quarters, ie, jails and homeless shelters; some of these facilities had relocated before 2000 Census.

Source: Live Downtown

A survey of Downtown residents from downtowndallas.org showed:

- 69% of people live in one person households
- 30% of people live in two person households
- 57% of people are married
- The median age is 34 years
- 46% of people have undergraduate college degree or higher
- 62% of people are in management or professional careers
- \$67,224 is the median household income
- 69% of people are white, 21.2% are black, 1.5% are Asian/Pacific Islander and 13.8% are Hispanic (any race)

²¹ Downtown Dallas Partnership. City of Dallas, Texas. 13 Nov 2006 <http://www.downtowndallas.org/downtown_partner/news.html>.

²² Live Downtown. Downtown Dallas. 22 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/live.asp>>.

Downtown Dallas is following national trend of urbanism. People want to live downtown and developments are going on to encourage that. The North Central Texas Council of Governments said that downtown “may change more over the next 30 years than any other area of its size in the region. Historic office buildings will continue to be reshaped into mixed-use residential towers...as a self-sufficient, livable downtown emerges.”²³

Demographic Forecast for Downtown Dallas					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	10,446	12,139	13,781	15,098	16,337
Households	6,015	7,029	7,868	8,611	9,340
Employment	138,224	140,961	149,936	155,996	160,733

Source: NCTCOG

People want to live downtown for a variety of reasons. 69% of downtown Dallas residents want an urban lifestyle, 56% like the central location, and 55% want to be close to work. As more people realize the benefits of living downtown the housing demand will continue to rise. There are currently 2,227 units within the downtown freeway loop and 1,914 units are under construction or propose.²⁴

Downtown Dallas has many amenities that draw people to downtown living. The Urban Market is a full-service grocer serving both the downtown work force and residents. In addition there are six churches, five child care centers, four full-service health clubs, seven major medical centers and 48 acres of public parks and greenspaces.²⁵

²³ *Live Downtown*. Downtown Dallas. 22 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/live.asp>>.

²⁴ *Live Intown Housing*. Downtown Dallas. 22 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/intownhousing.asp>>.

²⁵ *Live Quality of Life*. Downtown Dallas. 22 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/qualityoflife.asp>>.

DEVELOPMENT

The following statistical information on vacancy and rental rates has been provided by Craig Christensen of Henry Miller Real Estate in Dallas with the assistance of CoStar and DFW Real Estate reports. It must be noted that the commercial real estate section is not a precise figure as some former office buildings have been converted to residential and were still counted as vacant for a period of time. Also, in providing the data for residential vacancy, rent per square foot and average rent, we were only able to go back to 2001. Before 2001, Henry Miller Real Estate included sections north of the current area and would skew the accuracy of the report.

Downtown Dallas Vacancy and Rental Rates

<u>Office</u>			
Year	Vacancy Rate	Rent per Sq. Ft.	
3rd qrt. 2006	21.6%	\$19.40	
2001	19.7%	\$18.92	
1996	26.1%	\$15.45	
<u>Retail</u>			
Year	Vacancy Rate	Rent per Sq. Ft.	
3rd qrt. 2006	21.1%	\$16.26	
2001	15.3%	\$19.00	
1996	13.6%	\$23.79	
<u>Residential</u>			
Year	Vacancy Rate	Rent per Sq. Ft.	Avg. Rent
3rd qrt. 2006	5.6%	\$1.26	\$1,161.00
2001	6.2%	\$1.24	\$1,081.00

As you can see from the above table, there are some differences between how the three categories have progressed over the last ten years. We will discuss the retail portion in the next section of the paper. The commercial office sector has seen vacancy decline and rental rates rise. A series of factors has led to this current situation in downtown Dallas. Dallas began a downtown building boom before most cities in the 1970's. When other cities were relocating large office parks to the suburbs, Dallas was building skyscrapers downtown due to the late 1960's oil boom. Most of these buildings were designed with eight foot ceilings. When many of these buildings started opening up leases, more than a few employers did not want the "caged in" feeling that the low ceilings provided. These poorly designed buildings, coupled with the increasing deterioration of the downtown area, led to a higher vacancy rate than expected.²⁶ This high vacancy rate has continued for the last 25 years. Only recently, with the adaptive reuse of these buildings from commercial to residential, has the vacancy rates began to drop.

The converting of downtown office space to residential has been the largest shift in downtown Dallas development over the last ten years. This has been fueled by the high vacancy rates and massive amount of space available in the office buildings. This has been a very positive change for Dallas. Instead of letting the office buildings continue to deteriorate, some local developers began renovating them in the late 1990's. The growing residential, especially in the Art District and the Main Street District, has led to the resurgence of those areas of downtown. The renovation of the Magnolia Hotel and the creation and survival of the grocery store are direct results of this shift in development patterns from office to residential.

²⁶ Christiansen, Craig. Henry Miller Real Estate. Telephone interview and statistical information. 11/20/06.



Magnolia Hotel

Overall, one could make the statement that the high office vacancy rates are not what they appear to be on paper. Many office building owners are no longer even attempting to market their space to companies for commercial use. They are instead, beginning to court developers and many buildings have deals that are in the works for the conversion of that space to residential.

Residential vacancy and rental rates have remained fairly steady over the last five years. This is because of the tremendous amount of new residential being built or converted in downtown Dallas in that time frame. The City of Dallas currently expects to double the downtown residential population within the next five years. Because of this push for downtown living, rents have only risen slightly in the last five years with more options being made available to everyone. That is to say, landlords can not raise rents a considerable amount because residents can now simply move to a similar unit at a similar price. The emerging market of downtown condos for sale has also factored into this equation. Although there are most certainly condos that are over the \$300,000 mark, many new developments have prices below \$200,000. That is to say, the people who want to live downtown now have the option of owning instead of just renting and that has also kept the average rental prices down. The overall vacancy rate has dropped over the last five years and remains at about the national average. The development of residential units continues to be scattered with no real core area for community growth. The renovated Mercantile Building, which takes up a large portion of a block

and will contain over 200 units, is an attempt to change this and create a denser area of retail and residential downtown.



Mercantile Bank Building

The zoning regulations of downtown Dallas have changed very little over the last 50 years. In fact, the only prohibited area of development has continued to be heavy industry.²⁷ Most of the regulations that the City of Dallas has created has to do with urban design and not zoning.

They have regulated that parking lots must be landscaped and street corners were given ornamental decorations in terms of flower beds and low, aesthetically pleasing turn of the century lighting. The feeling from City Hall is that the market has dictated the development of residential units and not the any change in the zoning regulations.

²⁷ Finely, Michael. City of Dallas. Telephone interview. 17 Nov 2006.

RETAIL

Retail is experiencing an overall decline in downtown Dallas. Vacancy rates are rising and rental rates are declining. The retail sector is being aggressively targeted by several downtown organizations.²⁸ Some of the problems that have led to the decline in retail have to do with the scattered residential and hotel patterns.²⁹ Because these two areas of housing are so spread out throughout the downtown, no place like the 16th Street Mall or LoDo exists in Dallas. That is to say, there is no focal point of retail because there are no focal points of residential and hotels. The Neiman Marcus headquarters, which is located a few blocks away from the renovated Mercantile Building and has been at the same downtown location since 1907, appears to be the City's best chance for creating this sought after focal point. With the addition of over 200 units along with the upscale success of Neiman Marcus, Dallas hopes that other retail will piggyback off of that and develop around the Main Street District. Another area that was hoping to become the epicenter for downtown retail was the West End Marketplace. Unfortunately, the concept was marred with bad decision making in terms of what shops went into the development. Over time, the marketplace became an area which catered to tourists with Dallas souvenirs and other cheap items. This, along with the upscale retail of close by Victory Park, caused the marketplace's decline and eventual closing in the summer of 2006.³⁰

The overall feeling of some of the citizens that I spoke with regarding retail in Dallas is that, in order for retail to flourish some sort of focal point will needed to be created to attract people from the close-in neighborhoods. Some of the businesses that formerly existed on the amount of downtown employee's, are being closed because of the decrease in the amount of office space. Another unfortunate reality for downtown retail is that one of the country's most successful malls exists just five miles north of downtown. Northpark Center has over 160 stores including the upscale giants Tiffany's, Nordstroms and another Neiman Marcus. It is more convenient for the Uptown residents to visit Northpark's Neiman Marcus than the downtown

²⁸ Garrett, Kourtny. Downtown Dallas. Telephone interview. 15 Nov 2006.

²⁹ Christiansen, Craig. Henry Miller Real Estate. Telephone interview and statistical information. 11/20/06.

³⁰ Christiansen, Craig. Henry Miller Real Estate. Telephone interview and statistical information. 11/20/06.

location because of the amount of other shops in the mall.³¹ All of the news is not bad however, as many are hoping that the Woodall Rogers deck-over will create more retail by encouraging residents of Uptown to walk across the freeway and shop in the downtown loop. This, along with the process of building a sizeable residential community within the downtown loop will be essential for the growth of retail in the downtown area.

TRANSPORTATION & PARKING

DART

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) was created by voters on August 13, 1983 when a one-cent local sales tax was approved. Dallas and 12 additional member cities with approximately are served by DART's 130 bus routes, 45 miles of light rail, 31 miles of highway high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and paratransit service for the mobility impaired. Additionally, DART works in association with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority to run the 35 mile Trinity Railway Express that links downtown Dallas with Forth Worth and the DFW International Airport.³² Overall, DART transports over 200,000 people daily within its 700-mile service area.³³

³¹ Christiansen, Craig. Henry Miller Real Estate. Telephone interview and statistical information. 11/20/06.

³² *Agency Overview*. March 2006. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). 21 November 2006 <<http://www.dart.org/DARTOverviewMar06.pdf>>.

³³ *Work Transportation & Parking*. Downtown Dallas. 21 Nov 2006 <http://www.downtowndallas.org/work_trans.asp>.

DART Existing Rail Lines



Source: Agency Overview

The DART light rail lines have been very successful. Ridership was 10% higher than original expectations.³⁴ With 62,400 riders each day Dallas’ light rail is ranked the 7th most ridden light rail in the United States.³⁵ DART is planning to expand its rail line to 93 miles by 2017.

³⁴ *Public Transportation Ridership*. Center for Transportation Excellence. 22 Nov 2006. <<http://www.ctfe.org/critics/MythFactRidership.pdf>>.

³⁵ *List of United States Light Rail systems by Ridership*. 20 Nov 2006. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 22 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_light_rail_systems_by_ridership>.

DART Proposed Light Rail Expansion



Source: Agency Overview

The DART light rail line has created great opportunities for transit oriented development (TOD). One stop in particular has made a big splash; Mockingbird Station has proven a great success. It has demonstrated stability through fluctuations in the economic market with residential units near full occupancy and sales increasing at local retail shops.³⁶ Mockingbird station is a prime example of what TOD developments strive for with local access to transit, 211 loft apartments, many stores for shopping, 250,000 square feet of office space, 1,440 parking spaces (mostly



³⁶ Agency Overview. March 2006. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). 21 November 2006 <<http://www.dart.org/DARTOverviewMar06.pdf>>.

underground) and a great community.³⁷

Project Pegasus

The highways that serve downtown Dallas have become increasingly congested. Currently the highway sees bumper to bumper traffic for 6 hours a day and if nothing is done that is expected to increase to 9 hours a day; in other words constant traffic jams.³⁸

The project will focus on three main highways that service downtown Dallas.

1. “*Mixmaster*” - IH 30/IH 35E interchange on the western edge of downtown Dallas,
2. “*Canyon*” - the depressed portion of IH 30 south of downtown,
3. “*Lower Stemmons*” - the portion of IH 35E from the Mixmaster to SH 185.



Source: Project Pegasus

³⁷ Dallas, TX - Mockingbird Station. 2003-2004. Reconnecting America. 24 Nov 2006 <<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/html/revit/dallas.htm>>.

³⁸ Project Pegasus. 21 Nov 2006 <<http://www.projectpegasus.org/overview.htm>>.

The areas listed above were originally designed in the 1950's and have not been retrofitted to accommodate changes in trip destination or the general increase in population and vehicle miles traveled. The major goal of Pegasus is to relieve traffic congestion in the areas described above. Other goals include:

- Maximize traffic carrying capacity by integrating high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), Transportation Systems Management (TSM), and TDM elements,
- Minimize the need for additional right-of-way, and
- Enhance bicycle and pedestrian access across the highways.³⁹

Construction is expected to begin in 2010 with a target completion in 2017, provided that all funding is in place. The project has an estimated cost of \$500 million. State and federal funding will provide most of the money for the project.⁴⁰

Parking

Downtown Dallas has over 70,000 off-street parking spaces that are managed by a variety of companies.⁴¹ Parking in these lots ranges from \$1.00 - \$6.00 per hour.⁴² Property owners can contract their parking management with the company of their choice. Many of the parking lots downtown are managed by Central Parking Systems. There are city regulations about space sizes and upkeep but the pricing is left to the market and judgment of the management company.⁴³

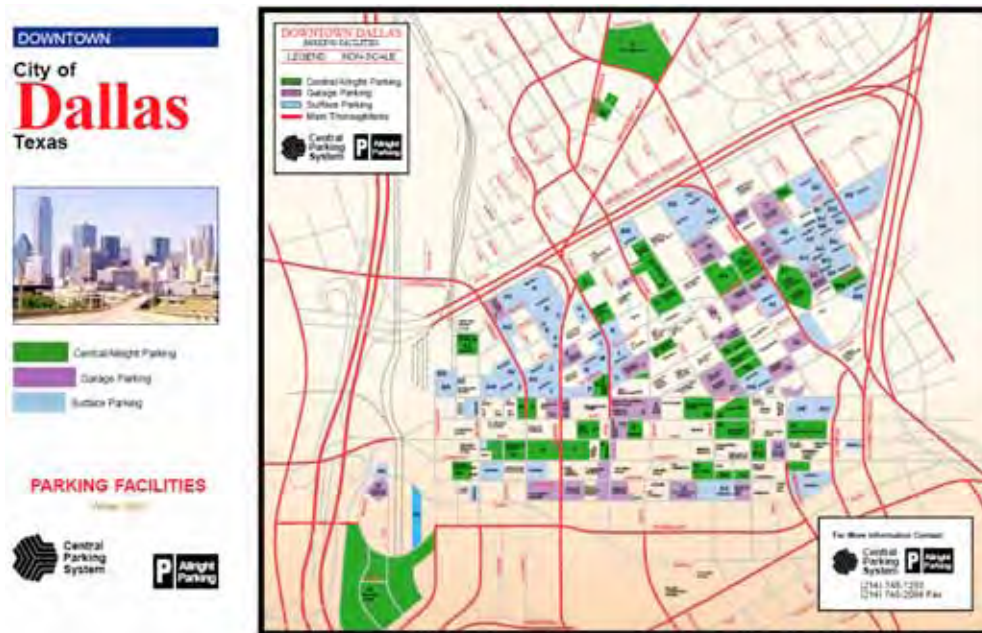
³⁹ *Project Pegasus*. 21 Nov 2006 <<http://www.projectpegasus.org/overview.htm>>.

⁴⁰ *Project Pegasus*. 21 Nov 2006 <<http://www.projectpegasus.org/overview.htm>>.

⁴¹ *Work Transportation & Parking*. Downtown Dallas. 21 Nov 2006 <http://www.downtowndallas.org/work_trans.asp>.

⁴² *Parking Facilities*. Winter 2003. Downtown Dallas. 21 Nov 2006 <<http://www.downtowndallas.org/ParkingFacilities-Brochure-5a2.pdf>>.

⁴³ *Phone Conversation with Derek Hay*. Central Parking System. 21 November 2006, (214) 748-1293.



Source: Work Transportation & Parking

In addition to the privately managed downtown parking, the Central Dallas Transportation Management Association (TMA) implemented and operates Pegasus Parking. This system uses Tolltag technology for access to their parking garage system.⁴⁴ People using the system are given a Tolltag and granted access to six parking garages, Love Field, DFW International Airport as well as four toll roads in the area. Fees are charged to an account set up with the system.⁴⁵

Downtown Dallas has also created a system called CityPark, which is an easy and affordable way to find parking downtown. Started in coordination with the City of Dallas, the program aims to provide parking for shoppers at \$1.00 per hour during the week from 5am – 5pm and \$2.00 per hour after 5pm and on weekends. Currently downtown Dallas is in phase one which

⁴⁴ *Transportation Management Associations (TMA)*. North Central Texas Council of Governments. 21 Nov 2006 <<http://www.nctcog.org/trans/cms/tdm/tma.asp>>.

⁴⁵ *Work Transportation & Parking*. Downtown Dallas. 21 Nov 2006 <http://www.downtowndallas.org/work_trans.asp>.

includes three garages in the downtown areas: 1200 Ross Garage, DalPark Garage, and Metropolitan Garage.⁴⁶

Three CityPark Garages



Source: Work CityPark

POLICIES & POLITICS

The Dallas area is seen as right-wing politically, with a heavy cultural emphasis placed on Protestant Christianity and close historical and cultural ties to both the rugged American West and agricultural South. The popular television series *Dallas* bolstered this view epitomizing the city with wealthy oil barons, big hair and cowboy hats. However, in the 2004 presidential election, 75.05% of Dallas voters voted for the Democratic candidate. Dallas as an individual entity lies roughly at the center of the political spectrum, and is locally much more diverse with significant Hispanic, Korean, German, African American, Muslim and Jewish populations.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Work CityPark. Downtown Dallas. 21 Nov 2006 <http://www.downtowndallas.org/work_citypark.asp>.

⁴⁷ "Downtown Dallas." Wikipedia. 20 Nov 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Downtown_dallas>.

THE COMPARISON TO DENVER

Downtown Dallas and downtown Denver have several key similarities. First, they are similar in size. Downtown Denver is approximately 950 acres while Dallas is 832 acres. Second, over 70% of the downtown population in both cities is Caucasian. Third, median incomes in the downtown areas are much higher than the greater metro areas. Fourth, both cities have seen explosive condo growth over the past couple years. Finally, both cities have around 120,000 employees in the downtown area.

The cities also have several notable differences. First, Dallas' mass transit system is larger than Denver's with over 41 current miles, and an expected 93 total miles by 2017. Second, while Denver has established pro sports facilities in the downtown area, Dallas has allowed their main arena to be moved outside of the downtown loop. This has contributed to Dallas' slump in downtown retail. Third, while Denver has several "destination" areas such as LoDo and the 16th Street Mall, Dallas is struggling to create such "destination" areas.

Although Dallas has had a substantial amount of public/private investment in the downtown area, development outside of the interstate loop has continued to plague the downtown core with high retail vacancy rates and a general lack of activity. It is the hope of City officials that the construction of the Woodall Rogers deck-over will help connect to downtown with the thriving Victory Park and Uptown areas, thereby encouraging retail and residential growth inside of the downtown loop.

SUMMARY & LESSONS LEARNED

There is an emerging vibrancy alive in Dallas. Public and private partnerships have certainly served to encourage growth and economic development in the urban core. *Forward Dallas* has provided the city with a fresh vision towards the future, and several efforts are underway which will serve to transform the downtown and propel Dallas into a new era. Since adopting their first comprehensive plan this year, the city has launched efforts to make their development code

more compatible with its broader plan and to further encourage pedestrian friendly mixed use projects.

DART, their area rapid transit system, is in many ways far more mature than ours here in Denver. Furthermore, massive transportation efforts are also currently underway to achieve a more viable sense of connectivity in the downtown area. In particular, the downtown connectivity via the Woodall Rogers deckover to Victory Park and downtown clearly contributes to the overall sense of liveliness in the city.

"A can-do city," that's how Dallas loves to see itself -- and with good reason. Energy, ambition, vision and hard work have made it the centerpiece of the fastest-growing region in the country. The trouble is that Dallas itself isn't nearly as healthy as the region. And a lack of self-analysis blinds it to that fact.⁴⁸ In many ways Downtown Dallas has much to learn from the progress and success we currently see in Denver.

⁴⁸ Loe Hicks, Victoria. "Dallas at the Tipping Point: A Road Map for Renewal." *Dallas Morning News*. Retrieved 20 Nov 2006.

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