

**DRAFT**

**PLAN 2023:**

**A Ten Year Strategic Action Plan for  
Downtown Fort Worth**

**April 2013**

**Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth**

Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

**Table of Contents**

**About The Plan.....Page 2**  
**Vision.....Page 9**  
**Transportation.....Page 14**  
**Housing.....Page 20**  
**Retail, Arts and Entertainment.....Page 24**  
**Urban Design, Open Space and Public Art.....Page 27**  
**Business Development.....Page 35**  
**Education.....Page 41**

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### About The Plan

In the summer of 2012, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. (DFWI), the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) and the City of Fort Worth initiated the process to update the 2003 Downtown Strategic Action Plan. PLAN 2023 is a 10-Year Strategic Action Plan (SAP) developed to guide Downtown workplans and decisions and set a vision for 2023.

Plan 2023 was developed with input from DFWI volunteer committees, community stakeholders, City and T staff, neighborhood representatives and the general public through the online portal, [futuresdowntown.com](http://futuresdowntown.com).

The work is presented in six major focus areas:

*Transportation*

*Housing*

*Retail, Arts and Entertainment*

*Urban Design, Open Space and Public Art*

*Business Development*

*Education*

Planning consultants Freese and Nichols, Inc. (FNI) with collaboration by MIG and Catalyst Group facilitated the planning process and coordinated the production of the PLAN 2023 report.

Plan 2023's purpose is to build consensus around and establish a common vision for Downtown Fort Worth as a livable, healthy and economically vibrant center for the community. PLAN 2023 builds on Downtown's decades of success, natural features, urban context and culture. It is intended to guide policy development and future planning initiatives. The plan aids in prioritizing actions to promote Downtown and attract investment.

The planning process and resulting workplan allow the community to make informed decisions. These decisions will lead to thoughtful growth, maximization of Downtown's social assets and strategic improvements to the physical environment.

Embedded in the Plan's Objectives and Strategies is the underlying belief that a vibrant and healthy urban setting is the best formula to maintain Downtown Fort Worth's significant role as a regional hub of innovation, a headquarters for industry clusters, a focal point of educational and civic institutions, and a premier residential and hospitality address.

Plan 2023 is thus constructed in part upon the foundation of certain assumptions:

- 1) Millennial knowledge workers (i.e. the generation born between approximately 1982 and 2003) have expectations regarding urban environments and mixed-use urban areas. In particular, knowledge workers find districts, which include walkable and secure

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

environments with small-scale amenities such as cafes, galleries and independent stores appealing.

- 2) Future generations of the knowledge workforce (which include traditional downtown industries such as law, finance, energy, architecture, engineering, advertising, design, government, etc.) will prefer dynamic, value-added urban environments. Downtown Fort Worth needs to position itself to attract these workers and those that employ them.
- 3) Downtown should position itself as a vibrant, tech-savvy urban core that attracts and serves next-generation information technology companies, advanced oil and gas innovators, healthcare professionals, researchers and design professionals. These innovators will serve critical industries expected to produce significant growth over the next two decades.
- 4) Positioning Downtown at the center of an advanced regional transit system will increase land use and infrastructure efficiency, concentrate and increase market demand for dense urban uses, reduce air pollution and improve quality of life.
- 5) Expanding Downtown residential will add market force that supports retail and dining and will require more primary education options. More residents and the buildings that house them will also add to the safety of downtown, fill development and pedestrian gaps and make downtown a more well rounded urban center.
- 6) Positioning Downtown as a destination for lifelong learning will yield significant economic, societal, and image benefits for all of Fort Worth and its present and future companies, residents and workers.
- 7) Incremental/do-it-yourself/lighter-quicker city building techniques will help optimize the use of vacant or underutilized spaces in the Downtown. While temporary in nature, the combination of these short-term uses can have a visible effect on the mood and image of Downtown as a vibrant and productive place for experimentation and creativity.

### Study Area

The study area is bounded by the Trinity River and neighborhoods to the north, the Trinity River to the west, Interstate 35 to the east and Interstate 30 to the south. While the planning study has a defined physical boundary, DFWI and its partners are mindful that the benefits of Downtown success radiate far beyond the study area. Likewise, Downtown is influenced by other developments, policies, market dynamics, funding, transportation, activity generators, events and regional issues. It is and will remain imperative that Downtown Fort Worth serve as the central image of the City with strong connections to and partnerships with the surrounding districts and neighborhoods.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### **Planning Process**

The 12-month SAP process kicked off in the summer of 2012 and spanned three key phases; Input, Draft Strategies, Final Recommendations and Adoption. The effectiveness of the planning process was achieved through overwhelming stakeholder and community involvement. The PLAN 2023 process was inclusive of many citizens, community leaders and stakeholders; approximately 1,000 ideas were collected, sorted and provided to the committees to consider and discuss.

**Steering Committee-** The Steering Committee was formed to oversee the process, provide insight to Downtown's issues, provide support and ultimately approve consultant and committee recommendations. Allan Howeth chaired the Steering Committee which included representatives from DFWI, the City, The T, local businesses, local organizations, design firms, PLAN 2023 Committees and surrounding districts. The Steering Committee met at key milestones throughout the project.

**Committees-** Each committee (Housing; Transportation; Urban Design, Open Space and Public Art; Business Development; Retail, Arts, Entertainment; and Education) was formed to provide specific analysis and recommendations per topic area. Each committee consisted of a chair or co-chairs and had representation from DFWI, the City, stakeholders, topic specialists, local businesses, local organizations and design firms. Each committee met numerous times during the input phase to analyze input, identify issues and formulate its respective objectives and strategies.

**Stakeholder and Public Workshops-** Workshops were conducted to allow stakeholders and citizens the opportunity to provide input for Downtown's future and discuss each of the six focus areas and the larger vision for Downtown. During these meetings, participants heard an overview regarding recent projects and the current planning process in addition to presentations of national and local trends. Following the overview, table discussions and exercises were facilitated to solicit feedback and ideas and guide the development of PLAN 2023. Approximately 100 people participated in the initial Stakeholder workshop and 50 people participated in the Public workshop.

**futuredowntown.com-** In addition to the public meetings, DFWI launched futuredowntown.org to ensure the broadest possible participation. During the course of this process, over 370

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

citizens joined and participated in an “online town hall.” This forum allowed participants, many of whom may not have been able to attend the public meetings, to contribute ideas and topic discussions by adding thoughts, uploading images and videos. Ideas grew and improved as users acknowledged, expanded, commented on and supported other’s ideas. In total, over 200 new ideas were generated with nearly 600 comments and idea expansions.

### Relevant Studies, Plans and Coordination

An important component of PLAN 2023 is to examine existing plans, studies and initiatives to help better organize efforts towards a common vision. This plan is designed to complement existing efforts and prioritize coordination between individual goals. PLAN 2023 should work in concert with existing plans and both should relate to one another in order to ensure success. At the time of this planning process, key efforts and existing plans included the 2003 Strategic Action Plan, City of Fort Worth’s Comprehensive Plan, the T’s 2010 Strategic Plan, Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines, Heritage Park Study, Trinity Uptown, Chisholm Trail Parkway, IH-35 Expansion, Downtown Access and Circulation Study (updated and included as a part of Plan 2023), 3rd Street Corridor Improvements, Sundance Square Plaza, TEX Rail, DFWI’s Public Art Plan, DFWI’s Downtown Fort Worth Parks & Open Space Plan, Bike Fort Worth Plan, Trinity Uptown Form Based Zoning District, Trinity Uptown Peripheral Zone Design Overlay, and Tower 55 improvement plan.

### 2003 Strategic Action Plan Implementation and Major Accomplishments

Prior to the PLAN 2023, the 1993 and 2003 SAP set the tone and expectations that led to countless improvements in Downtown. Through the years numerous partners, committee members and volunteers have overseen these action items and implementation projects from the previous plan. An extraordinary amount of work has been done since the 2003 SAP.

### Funding Partners

Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.  
The City of Fort Worth  
Fort Worth Transportation Authority

### DFWI Executive Committee

Joy Webster, Chair  
William V. “Bill” Boecker, Johnny Campbell, Jack Clark, Gary W. Cumbie, Douglas K. Eller, John Podraza, Randall Gideon, Mike Guyton, Brian E. Happel, Robert L. Jameson, Walter Littlejohn, Nina Petty, Robert W. Semple, Tom L. Struhs, Andy Taft, Greg Upp

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### **DFWI Board of Directors**

Update prior to Final Draft

### **SAP Steering Committee**

Allan Howeth, Chair

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### **Housing Committee**

Robert W. Semple, Chair

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### **Transportation Committee**

Karl Komatsu, Co-Chair

Ann Kovich, Co-Chair

Ric Adamski, Nancy Amos, Mike Brennan, Randy Burkett, Kristen Camareno, Peter Elliott, Matt Geske, J.D. Granger, Curvie Hawkins, Jon Horton, David Jodray, Walter Littlejohn, Barry Lohr, Drew Martin, Julia McCleary, Lisa McMillan, Aaron W. Nathan, Laura Paredes, Brinton Payne, Roxanne Pillar, Mark Rauscher, Tom Reynolds, Dick Ruddell, Patricia Ward, Doug Wiersig

### **Urban Design, Open Space and Public Art Committee**

Michael Bennett, Chair

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# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

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### **Retail, Arts and Entertainment Committee**

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### **Education Committee**

Michael Buckley, Chair

Ric Adamski, Mary Burke, Walter Dansby, Tahita Fulkerson, Lori Gordon, Erma J. Hadley, Lauren Hexton, Allan Howeth, Betsy Pepper, Frederick G. Slabach, Glenn Spoons, Vernell Sturns, Greg Upp, Mike West, Michael Wollman, Adam Wright

### **DFWI Staff**

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# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### Vision

**Downtown Fort Worth is a progressive, world-class destination for businesses, visitors, residents, entertainment, government and education that capitalizes on its history, culture and authenticity, making Downtown a center of connectivity, entrepreneurship, and livability.**

Building upon decades of success, our focus continues to be making Downtown Fort Worth the premier metroplex destination for investment, living, working and visiting. Over the next ten years, we will expand the vibrant core of Downtown and improve the edges through new development and high quality urban design. We will increase the number of people living Downtown to capitalize on both local and national trends of urban living. Downtown will continue to be the heart and soul of our city. We will improve and provide new open space and park amenities along with improved pedestrian streetscapes. Our educational facilities will create new opportunities for learning and will encourage families to stay in Downtown.

We will promote our friendly culture, rich heritage and unique character. At the same time, we will possess a progressive attitude that inspires a world-class urban environment. Downtown's business and office environment will continue to be recognized as a market leader.

Downtown will increase its restaurant and retail offerings with a unique blend of national and local retailers. Entertainment venues, festivals, events and performing arts will continue to attract day and night visitors with thoughtfully scheduled and produced activities. We will maintain our impeccable reputation for cleanliness and safety. An efficient and user friendly transportation system will support all uses. Downtown's livability will be re-enforced by Downtown's role as a multimodal hub accommodating pedestrians, bike, car, bus, and rail.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### Observations

Consumer expectations have steadily increased for access to walkable urban places that offer entertainment, shopping, employment and housing. This is recognized in national trends as city cores expand and younger generations gravitate towards urban centers. While Downtown's study area has a walkable, vibrant core, the inner edges toward Henderson, the railroad, Lancaster and the Trinity River, become more auto dominated and lack street level activity and continuity. These inner edges offer the greatest opportunities for redevelopment, particularly housing. Key redevelopment sites should be identified and need to be strategically evaluated to accommodate new density with improved amenities and streetscapes.

The 2003 Downtown Fort Worth Strategic Action Plan identified a "Downtown Walkable Zone" that outlined what was considered the core of Downtown. The past plan called for an expansion of the core to include a "Mixed-Use Pedestrian Zone" and a much larger, long-term "Future Downtown Walkable Zone". While the boundary of the Downtown Core can be debated, general consensus from the 2003 Plan was the walkable zone was defined as Sundance Square to the Convention Center. While the "Future Walkable Zone for 2013" did not experience the aggressive expansion hoped for, it did see very successful developments, mainly to the north and south that helped to achieve a larger walkable area.

For the purposes of Plan 2023, the "Downtown Core" is defined as:

*A walkable place that has a continuity of safe, active spaces that are perceived by pedestrians as offering a seamless enjoyable experience.*

*It is an area the average pedestrian feels comfortable walking due to a critical mass of street level venues, urban amenities and special activities.*

Since the 2003 plan, improvements to Lancaster Avenue, 9<sup>th</sup> Street and south parts of Throckmorton Street and Houston Street created critical urban areas. Parks were improved including areas such as Hyde Park, Burnett Park and the new JKF Tribute in General Worth Square. New and renovated buildings including the Neil P. Building, XTO buildings, Convention Center, Omni Hotel, Cantey Hanger Plaza, T & P Lofts added to the density and experience of south Downtown.

Additionally, Tarrant County College east and west campuses, Tarrant County legal facilities, and the Trinity Bluff area housing developments added substantial developments in the north section of downtown.

Many opportunities still remain to expand a critical mass of development towards the west and east. By focusing on key expansion areas, Downtown can expand the walkable core and fill key voids within the urban fabric. The strategies of the focus areas should not inhibit other investments. Increases to critical mass and stronger connection with surrounding areas can be

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

accomplished through targeted infill development and redevelopment. Although focused attention should be given to the “Expansion Zones” described below, attention and investment should be continued within the current core to maintain district vibrancy and growth. In addition, areas outside of the core and “Expansion Zones,” “Opportunity Areas” may warrant further consideration over the course of the plan.

### Expansion Zones

An overarching objective for this plan is to expand the Downtown Core through strategic targeted focus areas. These areas, referred to as “Expansion Zones” have been identified for improvements that incorporate objectives in urban design, transportation, business development and housing. The SAP’s objectives provide numerous strategies that collectively support the Expansion Zone concept. Additionally, key opportunity zones have been identified that offer a high potential for redevelopment or infill to accomplish objectives in the following sections.

#### Lancaster Avenue Corridor

- Support the redevelopment of the T & P warehouse into residential units/mixed use
- Support thoughtful mixed use infill along the north side of Lancaster Avenue
- Explore reuse of the Post Office
- Improve gateway experience and better connections to Near Southside
- Implement the Lancaster “West Park”
- Support the Hemphill Lamar extension
- Revisit the Water Garden’s south side and programming opportunities
- Encourage active programming in the Water Gardens

#### Convention Center/Commerce Jones

- Revisit the east side of the Convention Center to improve appearance, programming, walkability and functionality
- Revisit the north side of the Convention Center to improve programming and Main Street connection/appearance
- In conjunction with Convention Center expansion, consider straightening Commerce Street to create redevelopment opportunities
- Foster partnerships, shared facilities and joint ventures between UTA and Texas A&M at Texas Wesleyan School of Law
- Support Transit Oriented Development, new mixed use and residential developments around the ITC
- Encourage development of new office, retail and entertainment spaces
- Consider open space as part of east side amenity package

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- Improve all streetscapes and increase walkability for students and commuters near ITC

### East Sundance

- Expand the Downtown Core
- Provide new office, retail and entertainment spaces
- Encourage new high density buildings
- Support new mixed use and residential developments
- Support high quality pedestrian spaces

### County Government and Institutional Area

- Improve pedestrian experience across Weatherford and Belknap
- Provide better pedestrian link to Trinity Uptown Area
- Revisit Paddock Park
- Implement Heritage Plaza improvements
- Improve circulation from Main and Houston/Commerce split
- Provide better connection to Trinity Trails from Heritage Plaza
- Support restoration of Tarrant County Courthouse block
- Work with County to consider future land use of 300 West Belknap, “Old Jail” site.

## Opportunity Areas:

### North Hillside

- Encourage additional residential infill
- Support similar and compatible residential products
- Support reuse of the Knights of Pythias building
- Strengthen the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street connection to the Downtown Core
- Improve streetscapes in conjunction with new residential and commercial infill

### Henderson Corridor

- Conduct Henderson Corridor study to identify land use, infill, transportation, urban design and economic development improvements
- Encourage development at the edges of the Downtown Core that create better urban forms and more seamless connections to surrounding areas.
- Support/encourage a significant amount of residential infill and mixed use development
- Revisit West Side park
- Support high quality pedestrian spaces
- Improve Henderson Street, Summit Avenue, Cherry Street and Forest Park Boulevard gateway experiences

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### Peach Street Area

- Encourage additional residential infill
- Support similar and compatible residential products

### Northeast Edge Area and Southeast Edge Area

- Conduct design study or support out-of-the-box thinking to improve area with goal of supporting redevelopment and infill, and improving aesthetic and image of Downtown's edge

### West Broadway Area and Parkview Area

- Consider redevelopment of underutilized city land
- Encourage dense mixed use and residential infill developments that consider proximity to the Trinity River and Trails.
- In conjunction with redevelopment, improve streetscapes and walkability
- Support high quality pedestrian spaces

Along with Downtown, many surrounding districts have seen recent growth. These areas and districts include the Cultural District/West 7<sup>th</sup> Area, Trinity Uptown, Near Southside, Near Eastside, and Southeast Fort Worth. Downtown's success and that of the surrounding areas is a reversal of 50 years of center city disinvestment. Improving Downtown's connectivity with surrounding districts will be crucial to the future growth of center city Fort Worth.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### TRANSPORTATION

#### Vision:

Downtown should be a vibrant and sustainable environment, where people of all ages and mobility choices can be accommodated efficiently and safely to a place that attracts a diverse variety of activities throughout each work day, evening, week, weekend, season, and year.

Downtown Fort Worth should:

- Be the regional multimodal transportation hub for Fort Worth and Tarrant County
- Serve as the gateway for those arriving into Fort Worth
- Fully integrate pedestrian, transit, automobiles, and bicycle infrastructure and networks within the Downtown core
- Have substantial linkages connecting to both the region and surrounding neighborhoods

#### Objectives and Strategies:

##### 1. Objective: Adopt and support the regional rail plan and develop a regional transit plan.

- a. Strategy: Work with The T, City, County and NCTCOG to accelerate Tex Rail arrival in Downtown by 2016.
- b. Strategy: Continue to expand Downtown Fort Worth's role as the center of the regional transportation system, including initiatives for passenger rail from the suburban areas of the Metroplex into Downtown's two rail stations. Work with stakeholders to plan for and support other regional connections, priorities and routes including Speedway Line, Cleburne Line, high-speed rail, and other initiatives that create a nexus of passenger rail in Downtown.

##### 2. Objective: Develop a comprehensive central city transit strategy and system that connects regional rail at the ITC and the T & P Terminal through Downtown to the surrounding communities in conjunction with a regional transit plan.

- a. Strategy: Work with The T and adjoining districts to identify funding and operational strategies for the expansion of a downtown circulator (Molly or similar type service) within Downtown as needed and to urban villages and growth centers. As a lower cost, short term option to a permanent fixed rail system, expand Molly the Trolley to include the following routes in addition to Downtown circulator:
  - Stockyards Route
  - Cultural District Route
  - Southside Route
  - Other

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- b. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to evaluate and identify preferred routes to adjacent districts, urban villages and growth centers through fixed rail, bus rapid transit and conventional bus service.
  - c. Strategy: Work with the City and The T to evaluate, develop and enhance bicycle infrastructure such as bike sharing, cycle tracks, bike lanes, sharrows, and commuter hubs with rider amenities.
  - d. Strategy: Work with T and other partners to investigate use of car sharing systems.
- 3. Objective: Support The T in its efforts to increase public transit system ridership into and passing through Downtown by 30 % in order to improve air quality, decrease congestion, increase economic opportunities expand transportation choices and improve health.**
- a. Strategy: Monitor and measure the number of public transit boardings in Downtown.
  - b. Strategy: Examine current transit modes and compare them to choice and non-choice rider service preferences and implement service changes.
  - c. Strategy: Partner with The T to develop real-time passenger information for transit.
  - d. Strategy: Assist The T in the promotion, marketing and education of downtown employers and commuters regarding the existing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs available such as carpooling, vanpooling and use of transit. This strategy will also work to increase awareness of non-traditional single occupancy vehicles options such as walking, telecommuting, bicycling, and working compressed or flexible schedules.
  - e. Strategy: Investigate traffic control measures that give appropriate priority to public transportation vehicles in the Downtown area.
- 4. Objective: Study the impacts of additional traffic into Downtown caused by the completion of the Chisholm Trail Parkway and the expansion of IH-35W north of Downtown and other future improvements. Advocate for I-35W and 121 improvements.**
- a. Strategy: Monitor traffic impacts at Chisholm Trail Parkway and IH-35W connections into Downtown.
  - b. Work with the I-35 Coalition, City of Fort Worth and others to identify funding for the I-35/121 improvements.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- c. Strategy: Monitor traffic impacts at Chisholm Trail Parkway and IH-35W connections into Downtown.

### 5. Objective: Improve Downtown wayfinding.

- a. Strategy: Implement first phase of wayfinding program by the City and DFWI, including the removal of any unnecessary and redundant signage.
- b. Strategy: Develop social media along with interactive GPS technology for wayfinding and to identify available parking spaces.
- c. Strategy: Work with TxDOT to improve wayfinding from highways into Downtown.

### 6. Objective: In conjunction with the Urban Design objectives, work to advocate and ensure all streets and trails in Downtown are pedestrian-friendly. Use walkability of the pedestrian realm to create connections between the core of Downtown and other developed areas. This will require a commitment that extends beyond the term of this 10 year plan.

- a. Strategy: Support and participate in the implementation of the City of Fort Worth's pedestrian safety study. Integrate XTO study findings into City discussions. Create an action plan to address areas of pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- b. Strategy: Conduct a walkability assessment/audit of Downtown streets with recommended improvements. The conditions analysis should include photos, width of sidewalks, conditions of sidewalks, trees (type, age, and condition), lighting (type, age and condition), trash receptacles and benches.
  - Create access database and/or website of all streetscapes in downtown.
  - Update as improvements are made (public or private).
  - Use Complete Streets strategies as a resource for streetscape enhancements.
  - Divide recommendations into two categories, lighter cheaper and faster and more intensive capital needs.
- c. Strategy: Create capital improvements streetscape plan and prioritize streetscape improvements based on condition report and connectivity issues. Recommended priority streetscape and pedestrian improvements should support infill development, park connections and better linkages.
- d. Strategy: Work with City and TxDOT to improve Henderson Street between the Trinity River and IH-30 to better support pedestrian crossings and complement development.



## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- e. Strategy: Promote Main Street from the Courthouse to the Convention Center as Downtown's signature pedestrian commercial corridor by examining street and sidewalk widths, crosswalks, intersections and signalization. Sidewalk programming, amenities and urban design treatment should also be considered.
- f. Strategy: Encourage hardscape and landscape upgrades within the public right-of-way.
- g. Strategy: Improve curb ramps and add curb bulb-outs and on-street parking throughout Downtown based on pedestrian activity and new development. Coordinate Improvements with The T.
- h. Strategy: Working with stakeholders, create a long term strategy/master plan to improve and enhance pedestrian and permanent transit connections between Downtown, TCC, Heritage Plaza, Trinity Uptown, Paddock Park, and the Tarrant County Courthouse, focusing on the area roughly bounded by TCC (Trinity River and Trinity River Campus East) on the east and west and Weatherford on the South.
- i. Strategy: Create and improve pedestrian connections from Downtown to the River and Trinity Uptown on both the west and north ends of Downtown. Work together with stakeholders to:
  - create trails connecting TCCD's campus
  - create a connection through the Trinity Bluff area down into Trinity Uptown
  - improve trail connectivity at 5th Street and 10th Streets
  - improve trail access signage at Heritage Plaza
  - create a connection from Rotary Park to I-30
- j. Strategy: Evaluate the challenges associated with North Main Bridge as the primary pedestrian connector between Downtown and Trinity Uptown.
- k. Strategy: Encourage stakeholders to identify ferry stops on the southern edge of Trinity Uptown for close access to Downtown.
- l. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to provide additional pedestrian bridges as needed.
- m. Strategy: Complete the Hemphill-Lamar extension.
- n. Strategy: Improve other connections into downtown via South Main, Jennings and Henderson.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- o. Strategy: Advocate for the elimination or mitigation of any trenching option as part of the long term strategy for Tower 55 Improvements, especially as it pertains to an East-West trench.

### **7. Objective: Encourage transit oriented mixed use development along target corridors.**

- a. Strategy: Assure involvement of The T in future plans for development specifically along Lancaster Avenue and the Commerce Jones corridor to ensure development that is integrated with the ITC and T&P Stations.
- b. Strategy: Encourage the development of high density mixed use projects in the Upper Westside, Lancaster Corridor and along the Commerce Jones Corridor. Pursue economic development incentives to encourage mixed use development, specifically along transit corridors, near transit centers and areas targeted for pedestrian improvements, and accelerate increases in the tax base.
- c. Strategy: In conjunction with the Convention Center updates and the Commerce Jones corridor, study feasibility of straightening Commerce Street from 9<sup>th</sup> Street to 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Provide improved streetscape.

### **8. Objective: Accommodate parking and promote alternative transportation for large events and civic amenities.**

- a. Strategy: For new large event parking, work with The T, the City, and private institutions to market public transit options and provide remote parking with shuttle service similar to services provided for events such as Main Street Arts Festival, Parade of Lights, TCU and Dallas Cowboy games, and the Colonial Golf Tournament.
- b. Strategy: Work to ensure parking and information for alternative transportation is available for civic amenities, library, and parks.
- c. Strategy: Encourage private garage operators to open garages for fee based parking for special events.
- d. Strategy: Encourage large event producers to consider temporary bike parking.

### **9. Objective: Downtown Access and Circulation Study Implementation.**

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- a. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to evaluate concepts and implement approved recommendations.

#### **10. Objective: Encourage more efficient and customer-oriented approach to on-street parking and use of parking garages.**

- a. Strategy: Maintain free night and weekend parking program on street and in garages.
- b. Strategy: Explore additional on-street parking opportunities with City.
- c. Explore public-private parking strategies to create additional innovative off-street parking methods and solutions.
- d. Strategy: Improve customer friendliness of on-street parking compliance.
- e. Strategy: Explore the establishment of a Parking Enterprise organization that addresses the parking concerns of both citizens and the business stakeholders of Fort Worth, while striving to meet the parking demand for residents, commuters and visitors in the central business district, outlying business clusters and the surrounding neighborhoods.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### HOUSING

#### Vision:

Building on past successes, the development of multi-family housing in Downtown Fort Worth and the surrounding areas should be intentionally accelerated through targeted incentives and policies supporting this land use. We will set the stage for producing all the housing the market can deliver by removing barriers to development. With a bias toward density, high-quality design, and a variety of price points including workforce-affordable housing, quality owner-occupied and rental housing, we will add to the diverse mix of residents in Downtown and increase the tax base. These residential developments must create walkable linkages and support urban design principles. Increase in overall residential supply will support transit growth and more retail, restaurant and entertainment businesses. The residential development mix and amenity offering should serve Downtown and nearby workers, students, retirees, families with children and all those interested in living in a vibrant Downtown.

#### **1. Objective: Increase the overall number of residential units in Downtown and adjacent districts.**

- a. Strategy: Attract an additional 7,500 units of housing in Downtown and the adjacent district of which 2,500 units of housing would be in Downtown. Housing types include the following:
  - Workforce/Affordable Housing
  - Market Rate Housing
  - Luxury Housing
  - Senior Housing
  - Student Housing
- b. Strategy: Create incentive package to support desired density - bridge economic gaps.
- c. Strategy: Encourage the development of high density mixed use projects in the Expansion Zones including the Upper Westside, Henderson Summit Streets Corridor, Lancaster Corridor and along the Commerce Jones Corridor to maximize land use, encourage success of ground floor amenities and support the long-term vitality of the core.
- d. Strategy: Support additional high density infill housing in the Trinity Bluff area and in the northeast Opportunity Areas including Hillside and Rock Island.
- e. Strategy: Generate market and economic data to support downtown residential investment decisions.

#### **2. Objective: Develop and market an incentive program to encourage higher density, transit-oriented and sustainable residential development in Downtown.**

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- a. Strategy: Assure involvement of The T in future plans for development specifically along Lancaster Avenue and the Commerce Jones corridor to ensure development complements the ITC and T&P Stations.
- b. Strategy: Pursue economic development incentives to encourage mixed use development, specifically along transit corridors, and near transit centers and areas targeted for pedestrian improvements.
- c. Strategy: Develop criteria for economic incentive packages. Address market gaps for targeted land uses with emphasis on residential and other priorities.
- d. Strategy: Support urban design enhancements around transit-oriented developments.
- e. Strategy: Encourage the development of a program to educate developers and the public with respect to green infrastructure and the benefits of density.
- f. Strategy: Develop high quality pedestrian spaces within five minute walking distance of all residential developments.

### **3. Objective: Add to Primary and Secondary School Options in Downtown.**

- a. Strategy: Support Nash Elementary.
- b. Strategy: Support and promote programming in the Central Library.
- c. Strategy: Support the Fort Worth Young Women's Leadership Academy expansion plans.
- d. Strategy: Encourage the development of a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) (STEAM-Arts?) school in Downtown (see education section)

### **4. Objective: Encourage development of residential and mixed-use projects in the core, Expansion Zones and Opportunity Areas.**

- a. Strategy: Work with property owners to develop strategies for key sites and explore underperforming land uses close to the core; develop strategies for reuse/repositioning.
- b. Strategy: Explore zoning and minimum densities along key corridors and opportunity nodes in areas including Lancaster, Commerce Jones Corridor, Trinity Bluff, and Upper West/Henderson Corridor to ensure predictability of development.

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- c. Strategy: Promote reuse of existing buildings by marketing economic incentives.
- d. Strategy: Work with local authorities to develop land assemblage and RFP strategy.
- e. Strategy: Work with Tarrant County College, UT-Arlington, and Texas A & M at Texas Wesleyan to explore options for student housing in Commerce Jones Corridor and greater TCC area.

#### **5. Objective: Encourage the development of affordable workforce housing units in Downtown.**

- a. Strategy: Encourage a range of affordability – low, moderate and high income – with a goal of 10% of the housing to be developed in quality mixed income developments as affordable to persons/households whose income is less than 60% of the area median income adjusted for family size. Mixed income projects should be a blend of market rate and affordable units.
- b. Strategy: Use assets generated from DFVII housing activities to further the construction and preservation of affordable units in the context of mixed-income developments.
- c. Strategy: Support efforts to preserve affordable units in developments nearing the end of their affordability compliance period.
- d. Strategy: Work with public (City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Fort Worth Housing Authority) and private (non-profit and for-profit) partners to construct new affordable units.
- e. Strategy: Use TIF funds and other incentives to promote affordable housing in mixed-income developments through land acquisition; provision of gap funding on specific residential developments; or by funding streetscape, utility or parking garage improvements in exchange for the provision of affordable housing.
- f. Strategy: Support efforts to bring seminars on workforce housing to the community.

#### **6. Objective: Design buildings, streets and places to promote activity.**

- a. Strategy: Revisit and update Downtown Development Design Standards every 3-5 years.
- b. Strategy: Ensure streetscape and connectivity from residential developments to core activities by eliminating “dead zones” and minimizing disruption of the pedestrian experience by fixing the current gaps in the downtown fabric.

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- c. Strategy: Design open spaces to be vibrant and usable and to meet the needs of a growing residential community.
- d. Strategy: Ensure that surrounding street and sidewalk activation are considered at the beginning of the design process.

#### **7. Objective: Support initiatives that strengthen the Near East Side Urban Village.**

- a. Strategy: Support Directions Home to make homelessness a rare, short-term and non-recurring experience in Fort Worth.
- b. Strategy: Encourage supportive housing as a preferred alternative to long term shelter residency.
- c. Strategy: Support a new Day Resource Center/Central Resource Facility that does not front on East Lancaster Avenue.
- d. Strategy: Explore providing contract PID services along East Lancaster Avenue to improve cleanliness and sustainability of this area.
- e. Strategy: Review/improve public safety presence initiatives.
- f. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to improve connections from Downtown to the east side of Fort Worth along East Lancaster Avenue.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### RETAIL, ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

#### Vision:

Downtown Fort Worth should be the most vibrant area of the city, built for our local residents and highly appealing to our out-of-town visitors. Entertainment venues, restaurants, performing and visual arts, live theaters, public art and retail will combine to bring activity throughout the day and night, attracting a great diversity of people with broad interests, and enlivening our streets, sidewalks and buildings with activity and inspiration.

#### Objectives and Strategies:

**1. Objective: Coordinate with stakeholders to maximize potential for marketing plans that make Downtown *the* destination in Fort Worth to attract people at all times. Support/strengthen the “IT” factor that brings people into Downtown.**

- a. Strategy: Pursue Downtown’s “pedestrians first” philosophy.
  - Ensure a pleasant rhythm of storefronts, activity and visual cues along building walls and along pedestrian corridors.
  - Provide shade and benches, good lighting and well-marked crosswalks.
  - Encourage architectural lighting; add to Downtown’s signature “romantic feel” at night.
  - Encourage a wide, yet balanced variety of things to do and see.
  - Maintain Downtown’s impeccable reputation for safety, beauty and cleanliness.
- b. Strategy: Encourage street level building activity that attracts people both day and night.
- c. Strategy: Create thoughtful permanent and temporary “on street” activity, including buskers, public art, interactive experiences and other experiences that create unexpected and serendipitous moments for the Downtown visitor.
- d. Strategy: Target new developments that create something new and different in west, east and south Downtown.
- e. Strategy: Program parks and open spaces to attract visitors and add vibrancy throughout Downtown.
- f. Strategy: Explore consolidation of events calendars for city wide events.
- g. Strategy: Expand the use of social media and technology to tell the story of downtown Fort Worth arts and events.



## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- h. Strategy: Create competitions for marketing strategies to highlight the “IT” factor and other future efforts.
- 2. Objective: Encourage additional housing in Downtown to help support types of desired retail. (See Housing Section)**
  - a. Strategy: Promote residential development on empty upper floors of buildings.
  - b. Strategy: Encourage high density residential development in and adjacent to the core. Work with City and County to develop targeted incentives.
- 3. Objective: Market existing public transit and free parking to underscore ease of access to Downtown.**
- 4. Objective: Determine appropriate ways to interpret the City’s Cowboys & Culture tagline, which recognizes the City’s rich heritage and character, but also communicate a young, modern and progressive posture.**
  - a. Strategy: Define how “Cowboys” and “Culture” themes can support future Downtown offerings and messaging.
  - b. Strategy: Encourage and promote existing available arts and entertainment in Downtown Fort Worth (i.e. Historic Fire Station, Heritage Trail, Water Gardens and public art).
  - c. Strategy: Reinforce Downtown Fort Worth’s history and heritage in the Downtown Public Art Plan.
  - d. Strategy: Partner with the FWCVB to utilize the downtown Visitor Information Center as a space for programming and center for downtown visitor engagement.
- 5. Objective: Support retail development - Expand current ground floor retail activity in underutilized buildings in and immediately surrounding the Downtown core. Develop a merchandising plan and strategy for Downtown.**
  - a. Strategy: Conduct void analysis of retail overlaid with business, housing, and convention trade.
  - b. Strategy: Work with current property owners to develop retail strategies for vacant storefronts. Encourage and incentivize retail reuse in underutilized buildings in key pedestrian areas. Encourage uses open both day and night.

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- c. Strategy: Support and encourage soft goods retail in the Downtown core.
- d. Strategy: Support both day and night retail opportunities to attract visitors to Downtown on weekend days and early week nights. Example: farmer's market or nighttime market.
- e. Strategy: Encourage and recruit arts organizations to activate empty ground floor spaces with pop up galleries, artist studios or other uses until leased.
- f. Strategy: Create a local retail incentive to improve facades.

#### **6. Objective: Support long term downtown arts and entertainment activities.**

- a. Strategy: Draft long term downtown arts and entertainment goals.
- b. Strategy: Support Mayor Price's initiative to identify and develop a reliable and dedicated public funding source for the arts.
- c. Strategy: Encourage private funding for the arts.
- d. Strategy: Encourage temporary art, street art, youth exhibitions, competitions and other types of art that are not as formal and are more spontaneous in nature.

#### **7. Objective: Develop opportunities for additional performance venues to build arts and entertainment critical mass and excitement.**

- a. Strategy: Work with current property owners to identify potential arts performance and exhibition locations. (Examples: office building lobbies, restaurants and retail stores, churches, library, etc.)
- b. Strategy: Systematically promote existing cultural resources, some of which exist on shoestring budgets and without extensive promotion (e.g. The Lone Star Film Festival, weekly poetry readings, small-theatrical performances, improvised and stand-up comedy, etc.).
- c. Strategy: Encourage and recruit arts organizations to activate empty ground floor spaces with pop up galleries, artist studios or other uses until leased.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### URBAN DESIGN, OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC ART

#### Vision:

Downtown's urban design, open space and public art should promote community pride and engagement, attract national and international acclaim and notoriety, add vitality, foster intellectual stimulation and reinforce activity both day and night by providing high quality and stimulating designs and arts, permanent and temporary, contemporary and historic.

The public realm of Downtown should:

- Be clean and feel safe
- Be walkable with engaging pedestrian rhythm
- Be everybody's neighborhood
- Appeal to all ages
- Be highly appealing
- Be connected
- Be fun and creative
- Provide an environment that embraces and encourages leadership, relationships, and partnerships
- Be timeless

#### Objectives and Strategies:

1. **Objective:** Build on Downtown Fort Worth's reputation as a premier urban design environment showcasing the advantages of good design and harnessing educational resources.
  - a. Strategy: Working with educational partners, Central City Committee, AIA, ULI and other interested groups, create a Central City Civic Design Center/Consortium/Group to promote and explore big ideas each year. This could be an expanded role of the Center for Architecture or fund a separate urban design center with a distinct mission.
    - Provide technical assistance to development community.
    - Host one design/ ideas competition every other year. Potential areas could include Commerce Jones corridor, Henderson Street, 7th Street, Forest Park, north and east of Hillside, south of the Holly Treatment Plan.
    - Host two to four national/ international experts on urban issues each year.
    - Work with educational partners to explore strategic design and development opportunities, scenario building.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### 2. Objective: Encourage high-quality overall design of Downtown.

- a. Strategy: Encourage signature architecture when future skyline-changing developments are proposed.
- b. Strategy: Encourage buildings to be outlined at night to enhance skyline.
- c. Strategy: Design spaces that adapt and accommodate all ages and abilities.
- d. Strategy: Develop strategies to eliminate chain link fences.
- e. Strategy: Create interest at every major street terminus to help anchor ends of streets and provide exciting view corridor. Terminus could be iconic buildings similar to Courthouse and ITC or simply art, lighting or building façade improvements.
  - Main Street terminus at 9<sup>th</sup> Street: arena and replacement should be dramatically illuminated
  - Throckmorton Street terminus at Belknap Street: ensure landmark treatment
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Street terminus at Houston Street: explore ideas for improving blank wall
  - Cherry Street terminus at 5<sup>th</sup> Street: Work with First United Methodist Church to improve area
- f. Strategy: Encourage infill development to create increased walkability and create a seamless connection to surrounding areas.
- g. Strategy: Work with City to complete and update a virtual 3-D model of Downtown for use in economic development and to evaluate large scale new developments.

### 3. Objective: Continue to promote livelier and more diverse pedestrian environment.

- a. Strategy: Always encourage mixed use development with ground floor uses that activate the public right of way. Ensure that surrounding street and sidewalk activation are considered at the beginning of the design process.
- b. Strategy: Design large, visible, public improvements to be local landmarks and points of civic pride. The County's commitment to high quality design in recent years is an outstanding local example.
- c. Strategy: Create a capital improvement streetscape plan and prioritize improvements based on a condition report and connectivity issues.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- d. Strategy: Ensure streetscape and connectivity from residential developments to core activities. Allow no streets to be considered and designed as “unimportant.”
- e. Strategy: Design open spaces to be vibrant and usable when not actively programmed and to meet the needs of a growing residential community and Downtown visitor base.
- f. Strategy: Work to ensure that lighting and pedestrian appeal of East-West Streets is comparable with the North-South Streets.
- g. Strategy: Provide more places to sit, relax and play. Provide additional comfortable seating along key corridors.
- h. Strategy: Dedicate more of the public right of way to pedestrians where possible.
- i. Strategy: Create a list of priority areas and work with the City to install proper pedestrian lighting. In unique situations where sidewalk width and underground utilities preclude installation of pedestrian lights, work with adjacent property owners to develop creative ways to illuminate pedestrian ways and highlight building architectural features.
- j. Strategy: Provide more connectivity for southern and northern portions of Downtown by extending the walkable environment to Lancaster Avenue and by improving the streetscape between Omni Hotel-Convention Center area and Sundance Square. Encourage all new development on Houston Street to reinforce and maintain the pedestrian rhythm.

#### **4. Objective: Encourage higher density and high quality design in the core, in Expansion Zones and Opportunity Areas.**

- a. Strategy: Consider updates to Downtown Urban Design Standards and Guidelines:
  - Minimum heights along key corridors and opportunity nodes in areas including Commerce Jones corridor, Northeast, Lancaster corridor, and Upper West side.
  - Review and update every 3-5 years, as needed.
- b. Strategy: Work with stakeholders and property owners to develop key vacant properties such as the T & P Warehouse and Hilton Annex.
- c. Strategy: Work with stakeholders and property owners to consider the future of underutilized/low density public and private assets in the core. Such properties include

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

City Hall, Post Office, Downtown Library, Cherry Street service area, W. Daggett Ave storage area, YMCA lot, 300 West Belknap (“Old Jail”) and many others.

- d. Identify key infrastructure issues in the core and strategic areas and create public-private partnerships to address impediments to development (for example, the mid-block sewer line in Commerce Jones corridor).

### 5. Objective: Encourage sustainable development in Downtown.

- a. Strategy: Coordinate urban design improvements based on transportation plans.
- b. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to develop program to educate developers and public about green infrastructure and explore financial support for the installation of green infrastructure (such as low impact design stormwater treatments, green roofs and solar roofs).
- c. Strategy: Explore Downtown Urban Design Standards changes to consider sustainable design elements such as vegetated areas, green roofs, solar panels, capturing and using rainwater, and reducing impacts of storm water through context sensitive low impact design techniques.
- d. Strategy: Design future public spaces to incorporate appropriate planting material for Downtown’s environment and North Texas climate.
- e. Strategy: Continue to encourage the adaptive re-use and sensitive renovation of existing buildings and a commitment to historic preservation to reduce waste and save resources while preserving the architectural character of Downtown.

### 6. Objective: Encourage better connectivity in Downtown to adjacent districts and trails.

- a. Strategy: Develop inventory of connections into Downtown via streets, paths, etc. Based on inventory, prioritize streets and develop design strategies to address the connectivity gaps.
- b. Strategy: Explore enhancements of gateways, bridges, overpasses and underpasses.
- c. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to address “orphaned” open spaces and right-of-ways. Improvements could include increased maintenance, new landscaping and park space, improved aesthetics or gateway treatments.
- d. Strategy: Work with stakeholders to create a long term strategy/master plan to improve and enhance pedestrian and permanent transit connections between Downtown, TCC, Heritage Plaza, Trinity Uptown, Paddock Park, and the Tarrant County

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

Courthouse, focusing on the area roughly bounded by TCC (Trinity River and Trinity River Campus East) on the east and west and Weatherford on the South.

- e. Strategy: Create and improve pedestrian connections from Downtown to the River in Trinity Uptown on both the west and north ends of Downtown. Create a connection down the bluff from Trinity Uptown to the Trails.
- f. Strategy: Support the extension of the Trinity Trails along the east shore from Lancaster to Interstate 30 and beyond into the Mistletoe Heights area.
- g. Strategy: Evaluate solutions for the North Main Bridge as the primary pedestrian connector between Downtown and Trinity Uptown.
- h. Strategy: Encourage the City to work with Eastside Stakeholders to create a plan for the Eastside along the Trinity River.

#### **7. Objective: Highlight the importance and role of Main Street from Courthouse to Convention Center from very good street to a “great street”.**

- a. Strategy: Widen sidewalks, move trees to outside edge, update furnishings and fixtures.
- b. Strategy: Evaluate reduction of street width by eliminating lanes and/or creating bulb outs to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.
- c. Strategy: Encourage more sidewalk cafes, programming and other amenities.
- d. Strategy: Enhance “corner life” at each intersection through building design and programming.
- e. Strategy: Develop strong connections and improve pedestrian experience along immediately adjacent streets, when needed as guided by the results of a Walkability Audit.

#### **8. Objective: Increase the prominence and usefulness of Downtown open spaces and parks and create new park and green space opportunities.**

- a. Strategy: Update the Downtown Parks and Open Space Plan to incorporate SAP recommendations and evaluate idea of amenities, open space and plazas for current and future residential developments (“West Side” Park).

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- b. Strategy: Proceed with interim improvements for Heritage Plaza and develop a long-term strategy for permanent improvements.
- c. Strategy: Review plans for the Water Gardens, Lancaster “West Park” and Al Hayne Memorial Park and determine next steps to move forward.
  - Utilize Water Gardens as a feature attraction: restaurant and bar/coffee shop/ice cream parlor; support events and programming concepts/strategies for the Gardens.
  - Create a new green space at Lancaster and Henderson in TxDOT-owned property. Amenities could include: walkways, landscaping, dog park, skate park.
- d. Strategy: Support the County with respect to planned open space at the former Family Law Center.
- e. Strategy: Work with the stakeholders to:
  - Ensure planned improvements at new Rotary Plaza near Phyllis Tilley Bridge occur.
  - Implement the Trinity River Vision Neighborhood and Recreation Plan.
  - Consider programming at Heritage Park, such as children’s play equipment or outdoor instruments.
- f. Strategy: Package Downtown parks and open spaces. Improve park identification and improve public awareness. Create a “park walk” to encourage weekend walks between parks and open spaces (Water Gardens, General Worth Square, Burnett Park, Sundance Plaza, Paddock Park and County open spaces, Heritage Plaza and Park, planned McMillan Plaza, etc.) Improve pedestrian connectivity where needed.
- g. Strategy: Explore options for a Downtown parks conservancy that focuses on improving parks and open spaces.
- h. Strategy: Identify partnerships and funding opportunities for programming parks and open spaces.
- i. Strategy: Work with property owners, where possible, to open up ground floors of buildings with uses that activate parks and open spaces.
- j. Strategy: Encourage durability, sustainability and maintenance of public spaces when designing and selecting materials and other elements.
- k. Strategy: Use existing alleys and spaces between buildings to create interesting, unexpected small urban parks.
- l. Strategy: Explore a comprehensive approach to new urban parks and large public spaces as key amenities for future Expansion Zone redevelopment.



# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### **9. Objective: Encourage the installation of public art throughout Downtown.**

- a. Strategy: Update Downtown Public Art Plan.
- b. Strategy: Support installation of new Tabachin Ribbon public art piece.
- c. Strategy: Support installation of new Major Ripley Arnold Sculpture.
- d. Strategy: Promote pedestrian-scale public art and create a juried performance art program.
- e. Strategy: Encourage publically accessible art as a part of private developments and explore incentive tools.
- f. Strategy: Encourage functional public art (ex. Bike racks, swings, bike shelters, play equipment, etc.).
- g. Strategy: Encourage the installation of significant, iconic public art by identifying funding and partnerships and collaboration with Fort Worth Art Commission.
- h. Strategy: Develop program to allow “pop-up” and temporary opportunities in vacant storefronts, empty spaces or display windows.
- i. Strategy: Explore enhancements of gateways, bridges, overpasses and underpasses.
- j. Strategy: Implement an Art Walk featuring Downtown Parks and Open Spaces.

### **10. Objective: Celebrate arrivals into Downtown and establish a sense of expectation by strengthening gateway experiences, attractive corridors, and stronger/improved edges.**

- a. Strategy: Improve gateway experiences and extend the experience by improving key corridors as part of the arrival and experience sequence. A gateway experience takes into account the entire visitor perspective, not only entry monumentation, but also aesthetics, views, streetscape, urban forms, facades, maintenance, etc. Potential improvements could include art, trees, new buildings, improved views, regular maintenance, landscape elements, signs, and landscaping. Each recommended experience site will require detailed study and plan. Potential areas could include:
  - North Main and Belknap
  - Forest Park Boulevard from north of Lancaster Bridge to Weatherford/Belknap split

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- Weatherford/Belknap entrance from SH 121 to Peach Street
  - Eastside access streets
  - Cherry Street from Interstate 30 underpass to 7th Street
  - Henderson Street from Interstate 30 to Lancaster and from the Trinity River to Belknap Street
  - Summit Street from Interstate 30 north side frontage road to Rio Grande Avenue
  - W. 7th Street from new bridge to Summit Street
  - Study vacant rail yards and right-of-way areas directly adjacent to Interstate 35W and up to the rail corridors. Consider unique out-of-the box solutions to improve visual quality. Concepts can include: plant and colorfully light hundreds of trees as a public art initiative or install temporary sculptures or whimsical installations.
- b. Consider an idea/design competition for gateways.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

#### Vision:

Downtown Fort Worth will be the recognized premier business location in North Texas by providing a robust economic, intellectual and cultural environment through supporting infrastructures necessary to retain current and recruit future employers.

- 1. Objective: Expand Downtown's traditional business clusters to include life sciences, including corporate offices, research and development laboratories, insurance carriers, healthcare providers, consultants, manufacturers and clinics.**
  - a. Strategy: Support University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) in creating a new Doctor of Medicine degree-granting program.
  - b. Strategy: Explore opportunities to leverage business with UNTHSC graduate degree programs in the fields of Osteopathic Medicine, Biomedical Science, Public Health and Health Administration, Health Professions and Pharmacy.
  - c. Strategy: Participate in the development of a community-wide plan for a life sciences cluster.
  - d. Strategy: Explore options identified in the community plan for life sciences, particularly to recruit office users to Downtown.
  - e. Strategy: Work with Convention and Visitors Bureau and medical institutions to attract life sciences conferences and symposia to the Fort Worth Convention Center.
  - f. Strategy: Orient a segment of the Downtown housing market to cater to healthcare students, educators, researchers, and providers.
  
- 2. Objective: Provide the educational systems that encourage a healthy business environment.**
  - a. Strategy: Support improvements in K-12 public education.
  - b. Strategy: Encourage the growth of higher education offerings in Downtown by Tarrant County College, the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas A&M/Wesleyan Law School and other institutions.
  - c. Strategy: Support developments in Adult Continuing Education to make connections with existing and future industry including biomedical initiatives.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- d. Strategy: Make Downtown a centralized location for vocational and professional training opportunities and continuing education through FWISD, TCC and UTA.
  - e. Strategy: Foster the development of public healthcare administration and nursing school programs.
  - f. Strategy: Support partnerships between training and healthcare providers for wellness, nutrition, therapy, and preventive healthcare.
- 3. Objective: Increase transportation connectivity for healthcare/cultural/tourism opportunities that support the business environment and future job growth.**
- a. Strategy: Develop strong transportation connectivity between Medical District, Cultural District (UNTHSC) and Downtown to support healthcare training/providers.
  - b. Strategy: Capitalize on impact of major sports arenas in North Texas area by providing transportation access (buses to venues).
  - c. Strategy: Enhance Stockyards and Cultural District connectivity for visitors by creating tourist and visitor-friendly transportation options.
- 4. Objective: Pursue the implementation of fiber optic systems and high speed internet to help Downtown broaden its business horizon.**
- a. Strategy: Investigate feasibility of fiber optic cable connections between hospitals, UNTHSC and Downtown to support life sciences initiative.
  - b. Strategy: Use availability of superfast internet connections through fiber optics to recruit businesses to Downtown and near-downtown areas.
- 5. Objective: Assess the current use and accessibility of incentive programs on the state and federal level for Downtown redevelopment.**
- a. Strategy: Preserve historic/cultural buildings as landmarks for Downtown and potential investment and infill development opportunities.
  - b. Strategy: Encourage use of various incentives (historic preservation/adaptive reuse, brownfields grants, state incentives, SBA loans, CDCs, etc.) by gathering information resources on a common web site and marketing it as a development resource.
  - c. Strategy: Investigate feasibility of New Markets Tax Credits use in Downtown.
- 6. Objective: Focus on quality of life in Downtown Fort Worth with regards to the development of existing and future business.**

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- a. Strategy: Create a balance of risk / reward for enterprises to occupy Downtown Fort Worth with an emphasis on quality of life.
- b. Strategy: Explore creation of an Emerging Leaders Alliance with existing organizations within the community.
- c. Strategy: Promote internship programs to attract and retain students from area colleges and universities.

#### **7. Objective: Establish Downtown Fort Worth as a desirable location for emerging businesses by creating incentives, providing access to resources and opportunities for promotion to establish a physical presence in Downtown Fort Worth.**

- a. Strategy: Create a public private partnership for providing cost effective incubator space for the emerging business.
- b. Strategy: Regularly review business types and ownership with a goal of maintaining diversity of industry.
- c. Strategy: Work with the City to establish a task force to review and recommend updates to Downtown infrastructure required by incoming businesses.
- d. Strategy: Create an Advisory Board made up of DFWI member business owners.
- e. Strategy: Establish an Emerging Business information clearing house and referral network where participants have access to a network of established connections.
- f. Strategy: Develop relationships with local universities to provide access to research programs, student internships, etc.
- g. Strategy: Establish an Emerging Business mentor program with access to various pools of mentors based on industry, i.e. health care, development, technology, oil and gas, etc.
- h. Strategy: Assign a steering committee of marketing professionals, specializing in various targeted industries, to set a marketing platform that is effective in reaching out to each industry group throughout the nation with a goal of drawing emerging businesses to Fort Worth.
- i. Strategy: Develop a fully integrated web presence with access to resources, relevant topics and news, and business leaders in the Downtown Fort Worth community.
- j. Strategy: Offer a qualification process, after which company would have opportunities to do business with the city or other significant organizations in the area, similar to qualifying as a MWBE business.

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- k. Strategy: Integrate the program with other relevant constituent groups in the community as applicable.
- l. Strategy: Develop a recognition event.

### **8. Objective: Maintain current office market strengths.**

- a. Strategy: Retain large employers by monitoring property tax policies and encouraging judicious use of incentives to maintain a vibrant and diverse employment base in Downtown.
- b. Strategy: Actively monitor parking enforcement policy and implementation for customer friendliness and market sensitivity.
- c. Strategy: Continue to recruit firms in oil and gas, law, transportation/logistics and finance, insurance and real estate.
- d. Strategy: Support the initiative to expand beyond Downtown's traditional business clusters by adding life sciences and enhancing the value of downtown to geotechnical/energy firms.

### **9. Objective: Capture millennial generation and creative class.**

- a. Strategy: Engage with Steer Fort Worth, Vision Fort Worth and similar initiatives.
- b. Strategy: Engage young leaders in mentorship and leadership roles.
- c. Strategy: Foster the creation and expansion of companies that appeal to local graduating students.
- d. Strategy: Support and foster the creation of internship programs with downtown businesses to retain students from area post-secondary educational institutions working and living in Downtown.
- e. Strategy: Support the construction of housing to include mixed income and mixed use within Downtown that appeals to young professionals and students.
- f. Strategy: Identify venues for artistic expression (Makers Space) and market to the creative class to lay the foundation for future employment growth

### **10. Objective: Focus efforts on sustainability.**

- a. Strategy: Support local post-secondary educational institution initiatives that focus on renewable energy and sustainability programs.

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- b. Strategy: Recruit companies engaged in the sustainable industry to Downtown Fort Worth.
- c. Strategy: Encourage the use of LEED certification and sustainable practices within Downtown.

#### **11. Objective: Facilitate the enhancement and expansion of the Fort Worth Convention Center in order to support the growth of the convention economy in Fort Worth.**

- a. Strategy: Commission an update of the study on the Convention Center needs and amenities.
- b. Strategy: Identify related needs such as arena/general assembly services, large-scale meeting facilities, improving the pedestrian/visitor experience on the east and west facades, servicing, etc.
- c. Strategy: Identify financing opportunities and strategies.

#### **12. Objective: Utilize market demand analysis of Fort Worth to determine the needs of citizens, visitors, the hospitality industry, and meeting and event management professionals. Focus on ways to improve and market Downtown's appeal as the core of Fort Worth's successful convention/event destination.**

- a. Strategy: Conduct an analysis of current hotel inventory and locations for the use of convention, meeting, trade and exhibition/event businesses.
- b. Strategy: Determine the current and future market potential for hotel growth. Analysis should include a survey of critical hotel/motel statistics and forecast of available rooms, occupancy and room rates.
- c. Strategy: Identify the type and size of facility(s) that best meet the needs of the City, hospitality industry and meeting/event management professionals.
- d. Strategy: Evaluate comparable facilities (current & proposed) and operational characteristics.
- e. Strategy: Forecast the convention and event market demand and market share by market segment.
- f. Strategy: Identify and analyze economic impact and projected operating expenses and revenues of any proposed facility(s).
- g. Strategy: Identify possible sources of funding for such facility(s).

## **Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth**

### **Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT**

- h. Strategy: Detail types of facilities, attractions, nightlife, accessibility, restaurants and other amenities that make up the elements of a successful convention/event destination and relate them to Fort Worth.



# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

### EDUCATION

#### **Vision:**

Targeted educational programs and new learning institutions in downtown will focus on current and future industry clusters to attract and hold knowledge-based users, maintain Fort Worth's primacy as host to a vibrant and innovative regional workforce, and provide critical lifelong learning experiences for its residents.

#### **Mission Statement**

A vibrant urban core will attract and hold knowledge workers, strengthening Fort Worth's concentrated office core and dominant workforce location. Downtown must be recognized as an innovative learning and human development environment, with educational activities hosted in a variety of venues, from formal institutions to informal events.

Selected specialized learning opportunities will focus on delivering new skill sets for the evolving economy as well as primary education for children and mid-career learning for adults. Educational offerings will enhance the image of Downtown Fort Worth as an innovation center, with programs designed for a diverse audience seeking a variety of cultural, educational and entertaining experiences.

*New programs will leverage existing educational/cultural institutions and will focus on current and future Fort Worth industry clusters with an overriding goal of lifelong learning for all residents. The programs will relate to the Downtown workforce, enhancing corporate recruiting and career mobility. The benefits of these programs include an enhanced image, improved workforce skills, innovation capacity, improvements in quality of life, and potential to cut across income and ethnic barriers in support of discovering talent and increasing human potential.*

While education always provides a core essential service to society, educational facilities in downtown areas perform "double duty" by providing energy and vitality for core city. Cities throughout the United States have demonstrated the vibrancy that a flourishing learning environment can help create in downtown areas.

#### **Objectives and Strategies:**

##### **1. Objective: Establish a Digital Media Academy within a Middle and High School STEM/STEAM (Science Technology Engineering and Math, add Arts) School.**

- a. Strategy: In support of the growing worldwide demand for machine/human graphic interfaces, such as those pursued by Lockheed Martin, Bell, smart phone and PC manufacturers, and other IT-related firms, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. should work with the Fort Worth ISD to create an educational institution to develop a digital media arts and coding curricula. Combining an accelerated liberal arts curriculum

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

with a more applied and broadened graphic and visual arts specialization, this educational institution will offer highly specialized training in simulation, gaming, digital media arts, and the associated disciplines of human/machine interface design.

- i. Models for examination: Hightower High School's Digital Media Academy, in Missouri City, Texas (near Houston). The Digital Media Academy offers Stanford University credits for adults and summer program for children. The Academy currently offers classes at various top universities, including adult classes at the University of Texas at Austin.
  - b. Strategy: Encourage a new Fort Worth ISD STEM/STEAM school to be established in Downtown with open enrollment based on merit, focused on skills development for Aerospace, Engineering, Bio-Science and IT Industry clusters existing in FW and those to be recruited in the near term. Graphic interface and coding classes should be a differentiating specialty of this school.
  - c. Strategy: Explore partnerships with Bell Helicopter and Lockheed Martin to begin a wider pattern of long-term relationships between Downtown education providers and Fort Worth's advanced technology employers.
  - d. Strategy: Establish a young leader's mentor program within the STEM/STEAM school.
- 2. Objective: Support existing higher education institutions as they plan for their future growth and encourage them to ensure their expansion is consistent with the urban design guidelines.**
- 3. Objective: Work with educational institutions to maximize and promote on-site cultural and space resources. Promotion and coordination of these resources (in conjunction with other Downtown events and offerings) will enhance the status of Downtown as a hub of creativity and culture.**
  - a. Strategy: Downtown colleges and universities have significant physical resources that could be programmed during "off" seasons and hours. For example, many classrooms and lecture halls are vacant at times. Some are available for community use, but are not well-promoted or generally known. These facilities could be used for lectures, performances, screenings and similar uses.
  - b. Strategy: Promote existing art galleries and displays at the Downtown Fort Worth campuses of TCC, UTA Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Public Library as part of a larger art messaging objective.
  - c. Strategy: Conduct an assessment of available resources in other Downtown institutions (e.g. churches, civic groups, government buildings). Resources may be

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

available to adaptive reuse (for example, underutilized parts of schools, recreational or church complexes can be repurposed for new educational uses as is done in other cities).

### **4. Objective: Increase utilization of Central Library.**

- a. Strategy: Review underutilized spaces and pursue a use plan that serves the library's mission and actively programs the building's unused space.
- b. Strategy: Market the library's classroom and auditorium space throughout the community as a resource for both formal and informal educational activities. Collaborate with the Fort Worth Public Library Foundation to market programs for young adults and midcareer workforce programs as well as cultural learning events focused on specific aspects of literature or history.
- c. Strategy: Add additional programs that focus on adult education such as computers for boomers, credit card management, household budgeting, and information retrieval.
- d. Strategy: Improve visual access to currently-vacant space to encourage new uses and create potential opportunities to add displays to activate the space.

### **5. Objective: Generate opportunities for informal educational events.**

- a. Strategy: Add educational components to cultural/entertainment events
  - i. Math and science-made-fun events, group gaming competitions, digital photography and video clinics, "app-athons", "Teen Chef" or "Top Amateur Chef" competition, "Build your own Robot," etc...
  - ii. Performance-oriented events could include an "Amateurs Pavilion" to showcase local talent of all ages.
  - iii. Experimental role-play "Wannado" programs.
- b. Strategy: Invite specialty groups to hold their functions in Downtown. Examples include sketching groups, performance art, geology clubs, history and architectural societies, and science fairs.
- c. Strategy: Cross promote these educational programs with existing events to generate a cultural expectation that Downtown is an engaging and genuine place for lifelong learning.

### **6. Objective: Explore corporate interest in the development of a Geotechnical Institute that capitalizes on existing industry needs and success of the Barnett Shale-led extraction technologies. Develop an international reputation for geotechnical education, workforce**

# Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

## Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

**training and best practices. Work with TCU Energy Institute and local companies to explore additional benefits/market use of geotechnical expertise developed in the Barnett Shale. Establish Fort Worth as a world geotech innovation center.**

- a. Strategy: Establish a new Geotechnical Institute to focus on Fort Worth's Oil and Gas Industry Cluster with a resident program of research, organizational hub for symposia, and knowledge clearinghouse for the geotechnical industry. Envisioned is a center where resident scholars and researchers will be complemented with oil and gas symposia and targeted meetings to support vital industry expansion in the future. It will attract sponsorship for dedicated research efforts to improve benefits of more sustainable energy production as well as to identify and qualify best practices. In distinction to the educational programs which are available in the region, this Institute will serve as a think tank and clearinghouse for the industry itself.
- b. Strategy: Use this institute as an attractor for workforce recruitment efforts, commercial office space users and innovation to further support this unique industry cluster in Downtown.

**7. Objective: Support and promote Nash Elementary and the Young Women's Leadership Academy. Work to make Nash among the highest performing elementary schools in the Fort Worth ISD.**

- a. Strategy: Work with PTA
- b. Strategy: Encourage parent participation in PTA
- c. Strategy: Target campus aesthetic improvements
- d. Strategy: Explore additional volunteer opportunities and programs

**8. Objective: Encourage more childcare with early-learning options.**

- a. Strategy: Existing childcare programs in Downtown are limited, but could offer flexible operating hours for the unique working circumstances of many in the workforce or the extended hours generally expected of knowledge and service workers.

**9. Objective: Explore enrichment and hands-on learning opportunities for families and children.**

- a. Update and expand exhibits to be more interactive and engaging at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History's 150 Years of Fort Worth Exhibit at Fire Station No. 1.

## Plan 2023: A 10 Year-Strategic Action Plan for Downtown Fort Worth

### Vision, Objectives and Strategies - DRAFT

- b. Reach out to the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History and other cultural institutions to explore the concept of site specific programming.
- c. Assist existing Downtown institutions in promoting existing educational opportunities and events for families.
- d. Expand interactive programming and/or interpretation at existing assets such as the Water Gardens, Burnett Park, General Worth Square, Heritage Park.

**10. Objective: Endorse the proposed UNT Health Science Center MD Degree program as an important major catalyst to Fort Worth’s future growth in the Healthcare sector.**

**11. Objective: Facilitate creation of “Maker Spaces” in the Downtown.**

- a. Strategy – Partner with educational institutions, the library, and other key players to provide opportunities for creation of “Maker Spaces” in Downtown Fort Worth. “Maker Spaces” are community-operated “hands-on” centers for people of similar interests to create, collaborate, discover and learn. For example, a Maker Space may allow computer engineers, designers or inventors to tinker collaboratively or work on common problems. Such places may include electronic components; books, electronic equipment, and other tools or resources. They encourage both education and creation—and provide resources for individuals wishing to develop business ideas.

**12. Objective: Establish a Basic Writing / Presentation Skills Laboratory.**

- a. Strategy: Pursue the creation of a new, Downtown-housed educational program focused on reasoning, writing, presentation, and team participation skills.

It is widely recognized within industry and in secondary and college education that these skills, which are the fundamental building block for industry learning, have eroded over time.

A special laboratory of this kind established in Downtown Fort Worth would offer specific instruction and best practices, role-playing for effect, and off-the-shelf employer programs, with consortium-derived curricula tailored to a variety of high school juniors and seniors as well as adults entering the workforce or attempting to change careers. The laboratory could be funded initially by federal, state and private grants and eventually by industry-contracted training in addition to tuition fees.