

# DOWNTOWN CARROLLTON

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## TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT



Adopted by the Carrollton City Council on February 5, 2008  
Resolution No. 3164

## CREDITS

### CITY COUNCIL

Becky Miller, Mayor

Matthew Marchant, Mayor Pro Tem

Tim Hayden

Larry Williams

John Mahalik

Terry Simons

Pat Malone

Herb Weidinger

### PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Kevin Falconer, Chairman

Joyce Frazier

Roy Atwood

Harry Hunt

Kristin Taylor

Zahid Kassem

Susan Ernst

Terrence Wright

Craig Simpkins

### STAFF TEAM

Marc Guy

Peter J. Braster

Ravi Shah

Chris Barton, AICP

Cesar Molina, PE

### CONSULTANT TEAM

Townscape, Inc.

Leland Consulting

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Carrollton Comprehensive Plan

# Downtown TOD

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## BACKGROUND

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For close to 100 years, Downtown Carrollton served as the heart of the community, but in the recent 30-40 years it has taken a back seat to new suburban development on its fringes. New residential, retail and industrial districts farther out have sprung up to attract new investment. Now, as Carrollton begins the new millennium,



and transit is becoming a growing necessity in the region, there is a renewed interest in the extraordinary opportunities offered by Downtown.

DART's service plan has the Carrollton Downtown station opening in 2010 as part of the northwest Green Line. When the first concept plan was completed for Downtown Carrollton in 2002 as part of the "Carrollton Renaissance Plan", incredible opportunities began to emerge for this important area to become a major regional center. Further work with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), Denton County Transit Authority (DCTA) and property owners in the area have pointed to even greater opportunities for this particular station area.

Following on the Renaissance Plan, the City put in place a form-based code for the transit station area that includes TOD (Transit Oriented Development) standards

for site design, architecture and parking. These same standards have also been applied to the Trinity Mills station.

This document updates and expands the original Renaissance Plan to include—

- TOD opportunities west of IH 35E, and north of Hutton Branch
- An Updated Market Feasibility Study
- New Roadway configurations in the downtown
- The addition of the Denton County Transit Authority (DCTA) Line
- The impacts of the preliminary station platform analysis



Downtown is both blessed with abundant opportunities and impeded with obstacles. It is in taking advantage of the former and overcoming the latter that will make Downtown Carrollton a successful regional center.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CITY

As pointed out in *Carrollton By Design* (the City’s Comprehensive Plan) the Downtown Carrollton Station area provides one of the City’s greatest opportunities for growth over the next 15-20 years. Within the next 3-7 years, Carrollton will run out of vacant land for significant new “greenfield” development, and it will need to look to redevelopment opportunities in order to re-invigorate its tax base.

The arrival of DART in 2010 will provide heightened accessibility to this area that will, over time, attract residences, businesses and retail activity. In addition, an east-west line along the Cotton Belt line which will connect D/FW Airport to Addison and Plano has been placed on DART’s 2030 Service Plan which was

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DOWNTOWN TOD

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adopted in October 2006. This will be the only transit intersection in the region capable of 3 or more transit lines outside of downtown Dallas in the foreseeable future, and could attract a large amount of development. In fact Michael Morris, COG's Director of Transportation Services, has proclaimed it as having the long term potential of being the fourth largest transit hub after Downtown Dallas, Downtown Fort Worth and DFW Airport.



2030 Transit System Plan

- Light Rail Blue Line & Station (Existing)
- Light Rail Red Line & Station (Existing)
- Trinity Railway Express (TRE) Commuter Rail & Station (Existing)
- Light Rail Orange Line & Station (Committed)
- Light Rail Green Line & Station (Committed)

2030 Rail

- Express Rail
- Rapid Rail

2030 Bus

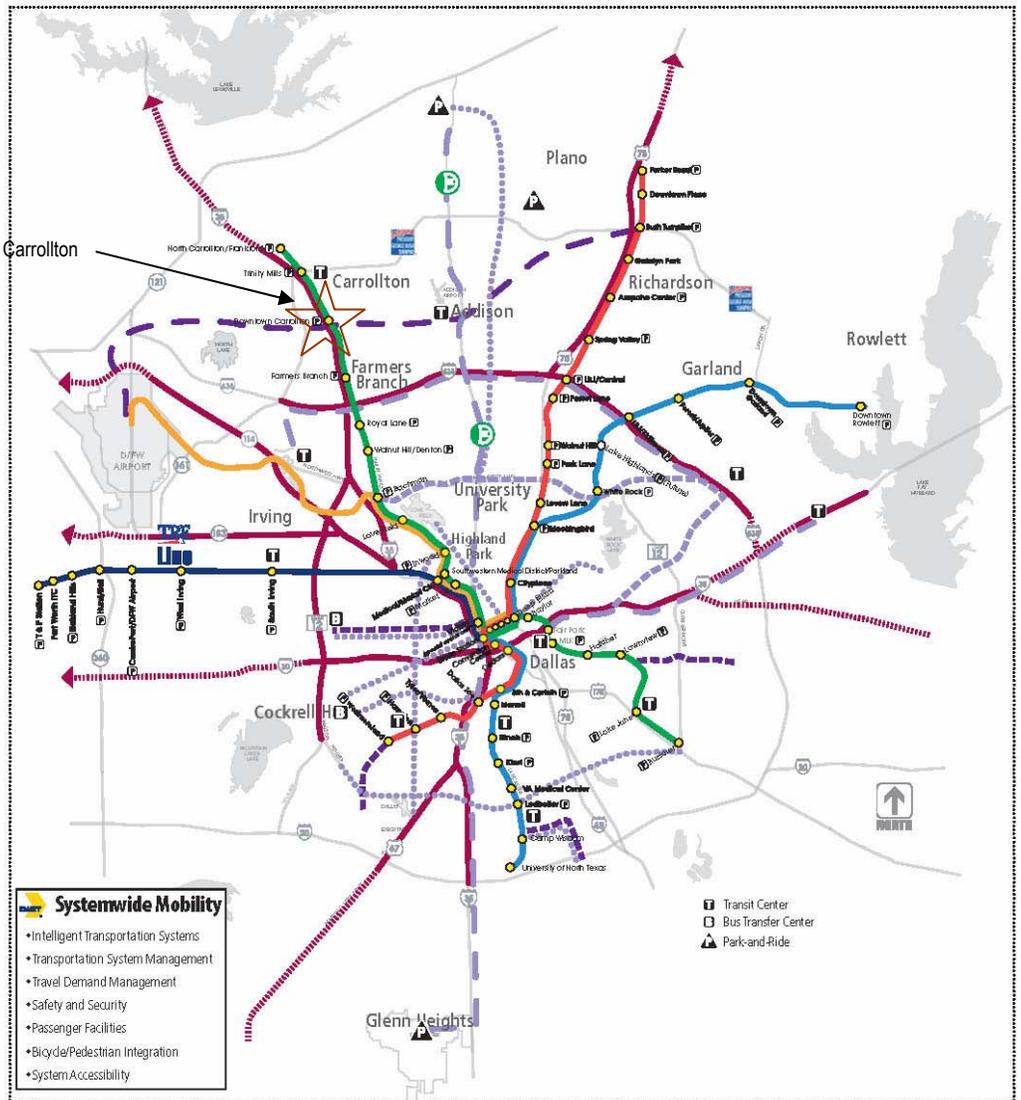
- Express Bus
- Enhanced Bus
- Rapid Bus

2030 Managed HOV Lanes

- DART Participation
- No DART Participation

2030 Paratransit (service provided systemwide)

2030 Systemwide Mobility





### **LARGE LAND PARCELS WEST OF IH 35E**

The area west of IH 35E includes property which was developed for industrial use in the 1960s and 1970s. The land parcels are relatively large and can be readily redeveloped. Additionally, some existing large buildings could be converted to office, light assembly and possibly residential loft uses. This area will likely lag behind properties east of IH-35E near the station because of the psychological barrier that the freeway provides and the fact that the freeway and Belt Line Road will be undergoing reconstruction in the near future.

### **OPPORTUNITY TO ATTRACT REINVESTMENT OVER TIME**

A key element to sustainability is creating an environment where existing and new owners will want to reinvest in properties over time because the area is healthy and vibrant, and buildings are constructed to last (just like in many traditional urban centers). This is in stark contrast to typical suburban developments where buildings are constructed for a particular use and once they reach their intended economic life of 20-30 years, they often wait to be torn down and rebuilt.

## **OBSTACLES**

Obstacles to taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Downtown and arrival of transit, include some continued freight train operations, roadway congestion and the large number of small properties under separate ownership. Each of which the City is currently aggressively addressing.

### **FREIGHT LINES.**

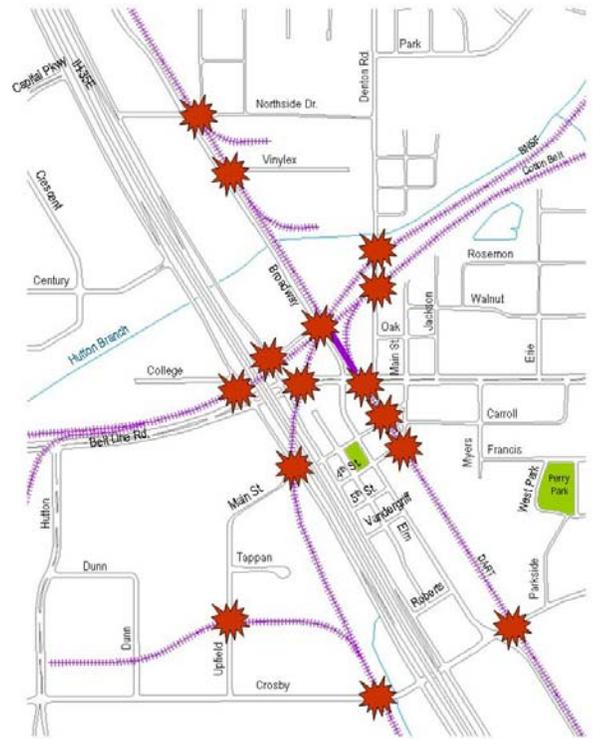
Three railroad lines - the Union Pacific/DART (UP), the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF), and the Cotton Belt - intersect in close proximity to the crossing of Belt Line Road and IH-35E, and their operations are clearly the greatest limiting factor to attracting new growth in the area, by blocking roadways. Freight trains and shunting operations in the Mercer rail yard, just east of Denton Drive,

routinely block every through street in the area. Drivers therefore try to avoid the Downtown whenever possible. These rail lines, responsible for the early creation and growth of Carrollton and the more recent decline of the old downtown area, could ironically become the source of the area’s renaissance with the coming of DART’s LRT (light rail transit) and DCTA’s (Denton County Transit Authority) commuter rail lines.

This complexity of interwoven railroad corridors affects traffic circulation and platform design in the vicinity of the new transit station. The railroad tracks are shown in the Current Rail-Auto Conflict Points diagram. They are all owned by DART in the downtown area, but rail companies have the right to freight operations on them.

The Northwest Line for the DART LRT (called the “Green Line”) is located within the Union Pacific right-of-way from downtown Dallas to its terminus at Frankford Road. At present, there is one customer south of downtown that requires continued freight service – International Paper. This requires that the at-grade rail in this corridor stay in place.

The Dallas Garland and Northeastern (DGNO) short line railroad company provides rail service to shippers located along the Cotton Belt and Union Pacific rights-of-way. The DGNO operates this service from the “Mercer Yard” located north of Belt Line and east of Denton Road. Their shunting operations block streets at various times throughout the day. In addition, their service yard is located on the Cotton Belt Line just east of the planned transit station in the downtown and



**Current Rail-Auto Conflict Points**

adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods. Relocation of the service yard will reduce traffic conflicts, and lessen the impacts of noise and vibration on existing and new residences and offices. It will also free up land that can be utilized for TOD (Transit Oriented Development). Possible sites for the DGNO Service Yard have been identified in the Phase I Report of the *Transit Station Master Plan Study*.

This unusual confluence of railroad tracks creates some other significant issues:

- There are approximately 10 trains per day that operate on the BNSF tracks, which block at-grade street crossings of regional and local roadways for long periods of time. This does not include switching operations that occur out of the Mercer Yard.
- There are about 10 existing at-grade street crossings that create conflicts and access problems with pedestrian and vehicular traffic within a quarter mile of the station. A planned grade separation of Belt Line with IH-35E will eliminate about half of them.
- The noise and vibration from large freight train diesel engines and heavy load operations adversely affect residences and businesses in the immediate area.
- Federal Railroad Administration (FTA) rules do not allow the at-grade crossing of freight and passenger-carrying LRT system tracks. The DART platform must therefore be elevated.
- The space available for a LRT station is constricted by freight railroad tracks.

**ROADWAY CONGESTION**

The combination of possible high density mixed use development in a turn-of-the-century downtown, combined with three railroads and an interstate highway requires analysis and study to ensure that public and private investment can be effectively accommodated. To that end, the City has embarked on a traffic and street analysis of the area with a range of development density options.

**PRESENCE OF SMALL LOTS IN THE DOWNTOWN**

The final obstacle to growth in downtown Carrollton is the large number of small, individually-owned lots on the east side of IH-35E. Though there are three larger properties of approximately 5.5 acres, 3.5 acres and 8 acres respectively, most of the remaining land in the primary impact radius (1,500 feet) of the station is split into small parcels with separate ownership. This situation can have the effect of slowing development by increasing the developer's time and cost necessary to acquire property and assemble parcels large enough to accommodate current development needs. This is a problem which is common in almost all older downtown areas.

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## **ASSOCIATED TECHNICAL STUDIES**

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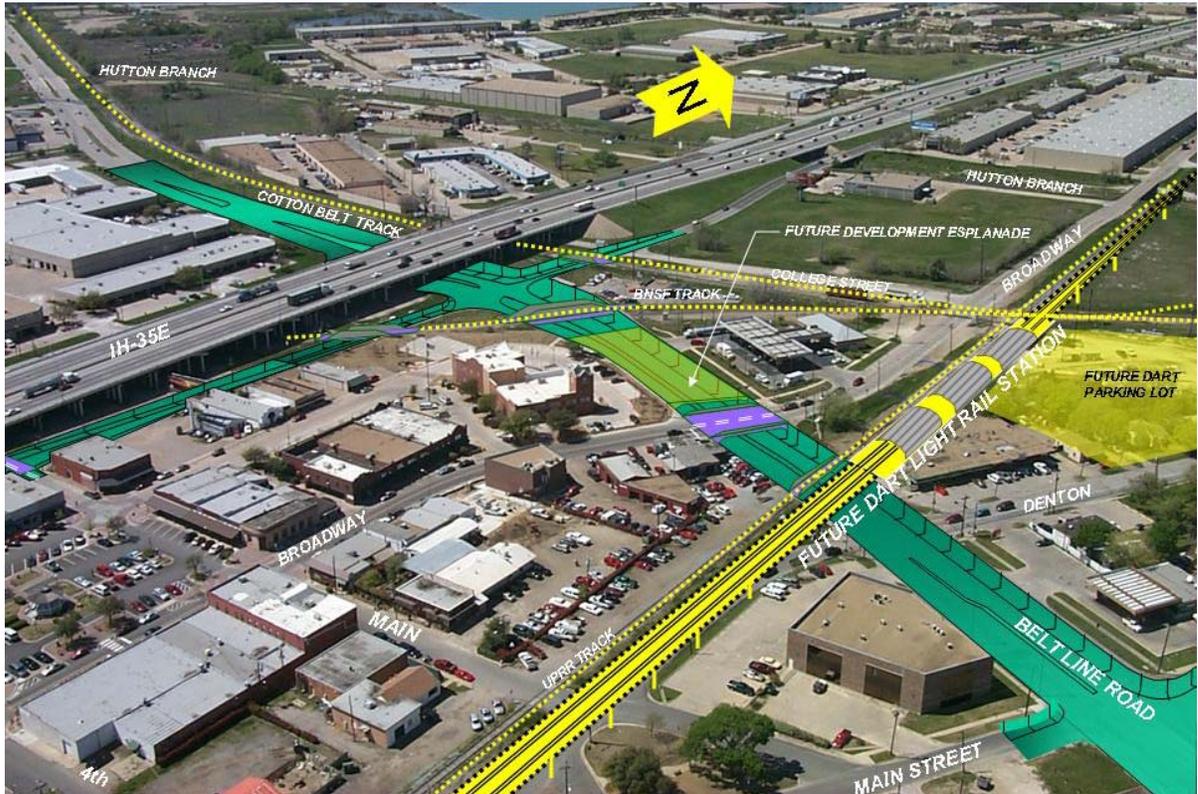
Over the past few years, the city has undertaken several additional studies to enhance the opportunities afforded by this station area –

- Feasibility of Lowering Belt Line Road below the BNSF Tracks
- Street and Streetscape Standards
- Station Master Plan
- Market Research and Strategy Study
- Vehicular Transportation Study
- Infrastructure Master Plan
- Drainage Master Plan

Below is a brief overview of the first four studies which have been completed.

### **FEASIBILITY OF LOWERING BELT LINE ROAD UNDER THE BNSF AND UP LINES**

The feasibility of lowering Belt Line Road under the BNSF and UP freight tracks was completed in 2002 by Bridgefarmer and Associates. It was found to be feasible, but involves the depression of the IH 35E service roads and their intersection with Belt Line. Belt Line would be depressed between Main Street on the east and Hutton Drive on the west. A portion of the funding has been earmarked for this project in the 2006 Federal Highway Bill.



Some key conclusions were:

- Westbound Belt Line would be slightly depressed at the Main Street intersection in order to get below an at-grade crossing of the DART/UP line which is continuing to service one customer south of Crosby (International Paper) from the BNSF corridor.
- The lowest point of the depressions will be below the BNSF track which crosses over Belt Line Road, and the northbound service road beneath the Cotton Belt line just north of Belt Line.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Main Street will cross over the service roads and connect to the lands west of the freeway.

### STREET AND STREETScape STANDARDS

Detailed street and streetscape standards have been prepared by Townscape, inc. and NJB, Inc. which will become part of the City's Engineering Standards for the Downtown District. They include such things as street sections, landscaping, pavement treatments, street trees, pedestrian and street lighting, traffic signal and pole design, and street furniture.



### TRANSIT STATION MASTER PLAN STUDY

The *Transit Station Master Plan Study* by Carter Burgess is addressing the long term ability to accommodate transit platforms on all three rail lines running through the downtown while maintaining necessary freight operations. It is also identifying sites to relocate the Mercer Yards, preparing a development program for the station facility and a concept design of a multi-modal station. Generally, it has already concluded that the three rail lines could be accommodated for transit use utilizing a central station. (See Phase I Report of the *Transit Station Master Plan Study*.)

**DOWNTOWN MARKET ANALYSIS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

The *Downtown Carrollton Market Analysis and Implementation Strategy* by Leland Consulting, provides the City of Carrollton, potential development partners, and other stakeholders with a technical framework for discussions regarding market opportunities, and partnership strategies in advance of, and in connection with, the introduction of transit improvements.

The *Market Analysis and Implementation Strategy* has also provided a basis for the vehicular traffic study by providing possible densities and uses allocated to certain blocks in the area.

## DART PROGRAM FOR STATION SITE

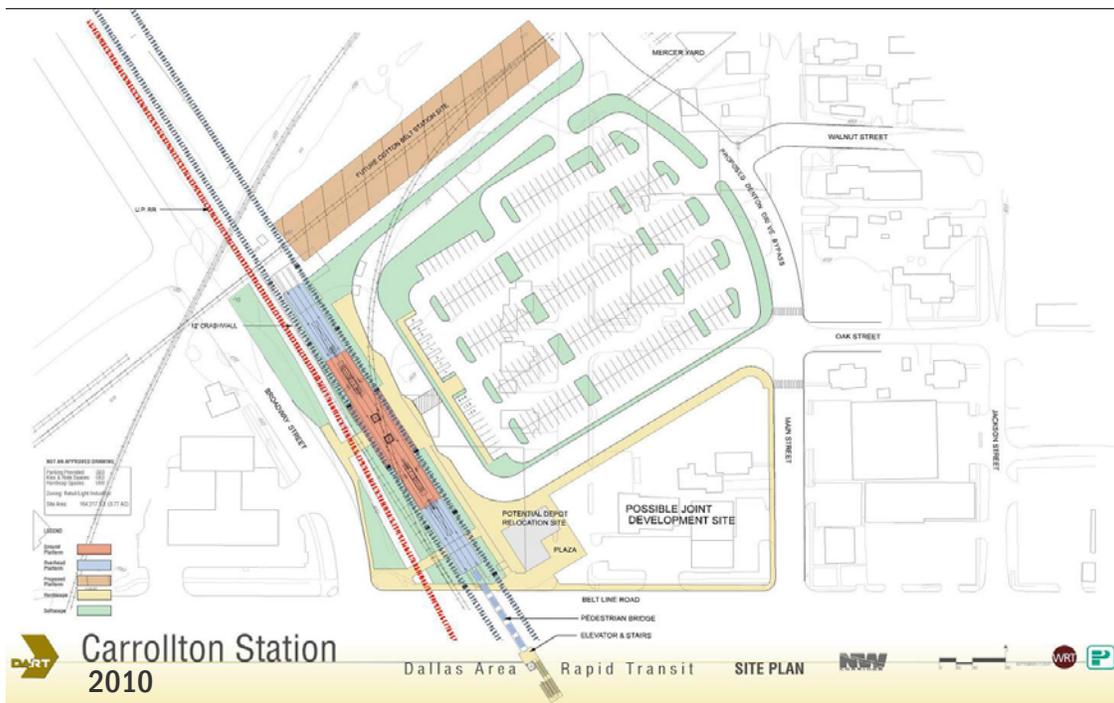
The downtown Station is not intended to be a typical park-n-ride station. Trinity Mills will have greater regional auto access and greater parking capacity for patrons. Additionally, it will also have a DCTA station stop and in the early years will be the transfer point for Denton County patrons who are continuing their trip on DART.

The current program for the DART station in Downtown when it opens in 2010 is—

- 5 Bus bays
- 3 Kiss & Ride Spaces
- 219 Parking Spaces

When Cotton Belt service is added, the program is expected to expand to—

- 11 Bus bays
- 4 Kiss & Ride Spaces
- 275 Parking Spaces



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## MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

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The *Downtown Carrollton Market Analysis and Implementation Strategy* points to the fact that the amount of development occurring will be influenced by competition from other projects in the market place. Similarly, the timing of demand will depend on market demand, availability and condition of supply, activity at other stations on the line, availability of vacant and under-utilized properties (potential for assemblages), and the availability of financing and incentives.

Experience shows that households at transit stations are smaller (around 1.65 to 1.9 persons) irrespective of the surrounding area household size. Approximately one-half of the households within rail stations are one-person, while only one quarter of the households in surrounding areas are one-person households. This pattern is suggestive of heightened demand for multi-family or “urban style” residential and single family attached ownership products within the impact area, and is explored further under the discussion of age distribution and psychographic/lifestyle characteristics in the report. Transit based housing tends to draw two age groups – residents 25 to 44 and residents over 65 years.

Key market observations for moving forward include the following:

- The Trade Area has been, and is expected to continue to densify with smaller households comprised of younger residents with moderate and higher-income residents. Although there is not a significant concentration of older residents 65 years and older, 6 percent of the population base (versus 8 percent in the Metroplex and 10 percent statewide), this figure is expected to increase creating additional demand for a greater diversity of residential product types. Other potential housing niches for the station include: workforce housing; attached ownership products (such as townhomes, condominiums, lofts and rowhomes); senior housing; and work / live housing.

- Densifying housing near or in the station areas will increase demand for convenience and/or service retail space. Potential retail niches for the station, in response to these residential concentrations, include: entertainment; dining; general merchandise; and, personal service.
- The station area’s access to regional markets via new rail connections, as well as the potential for turnover in the land base as property values increase, raises the potential for Downtown Carrollton to support a wider range of retail formats.
- Significant growth in the Trade Area is projected to occur in the manufacturing, retail trade and service industries. This represents an opportunity for the station to develop smaller multi-tenant office space, incubator space, work / live units and ultimately Class A and Class B office space.
- Station area commercial office vacancy and rental rates are not currently at levels required to support the density of new development and/or redevelopment envisioned for the area. Therefore, “gap” financing will likely be necessary to leverage private investment in projects that will “jump-start” re-investment activity within the station area in a format consistent with long-term goals.

Given the City of Carrollton’s central location within the North Metroplex, and Downtown’s central position on the DART Green Line, the area is strategically located to capture a substantial share of the region’s traffic and business growth. Forecasts indicate that more than 475,000 square feet of office space, nearly 24,000 residential units, and 1.3 million square feet of retail space could be absorbed in the Trade Area over the next 10 years, from which the primary impact area could benefit. The level of investment which actually occurs, however, will be directly proportionate to the City and property owners’ commitment to stronger physical

connections, supportive infill policies, creative financial solutions and removal of barriers.

A key issue is that the market for development around transit stations often takes time to mature. For example, early development in close proximity to a station might include a modest one or two story building that may be opened by the time service arrives. However, this does not take advantage of the ability for some station areas like downtown Carrollton to attract high density housing and office to meet the growing demand for uses with such amenities. In fact, premature low density development would have the effect of sterilizing properties until they can be economically removed and redeveloped.

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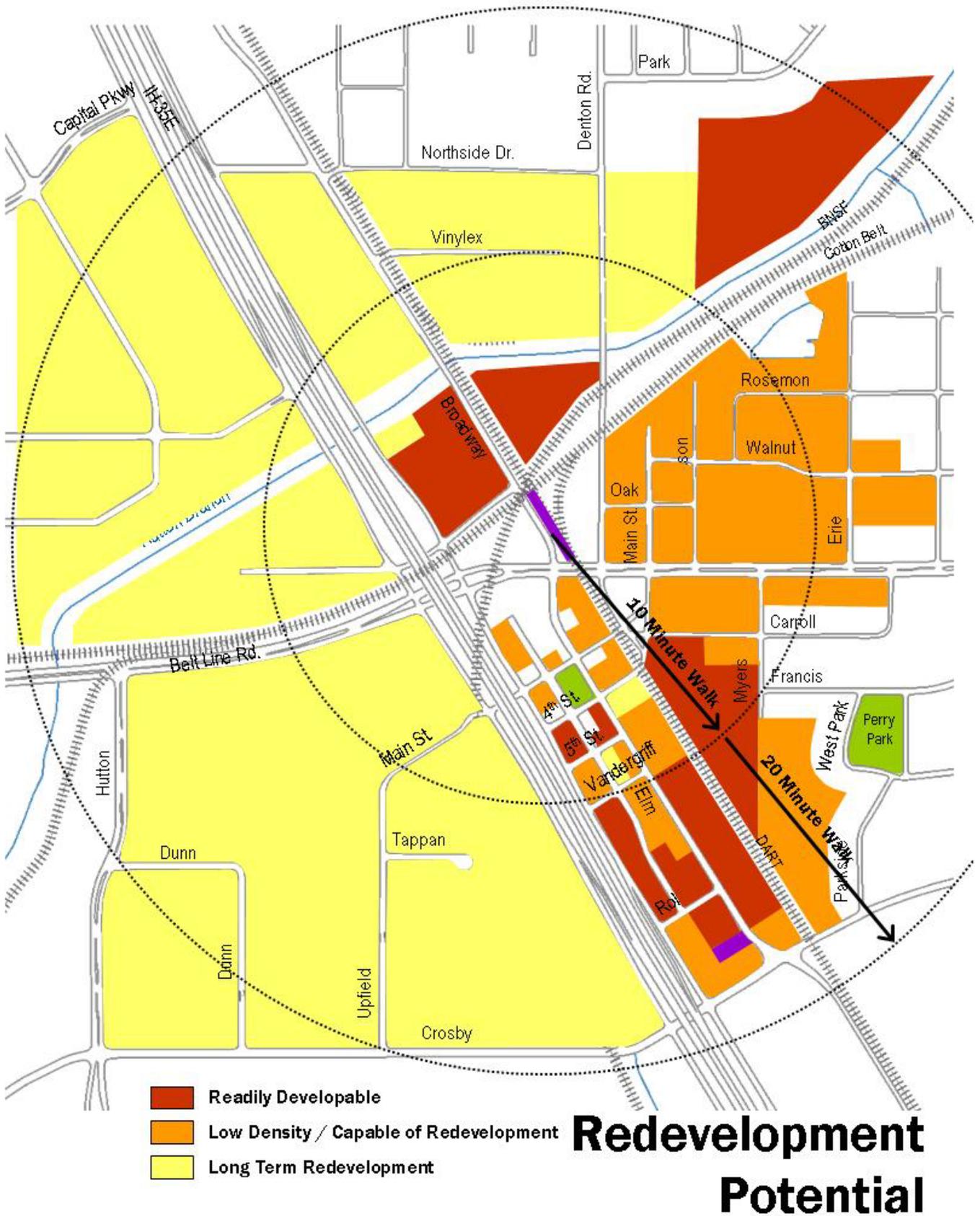
## DEVELOPABILITY

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Based on a review of site condition and land use, the potential for redevelopment was mapped. There are several vacant tracts of land east of IH-35E within the 1,500-foot primary impact zone of the DART Station that are readily developable. The City has acquired the largest tract which was the old lumberyard south of Carroll and east of the UP tracks. In addition, there is an equal amount of land in separate parcels that is under-utilized or in industrial use that could redevelop if sufficient economic pressure were to exist. This assumes that the stable single family neighborhoods north and east of the TOD area would be preserved, which is a recommendation of this plan.

The secondary impact zone, i.e. between 1,500 and 3,000 feet from the station, includes a significant amount of commercial land in the downtown that could be developed, and a large 10-acre tract of residentially zoned land north of Hutton Branch (if drainage issues are resolved). West of IH-35E, land is in large parcels. This area will take longer to redevelop because of current active industrial uses, and because there will need to be a finer grain of interconnecting streets to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular circulation. However, it could accommodate a significant amount of growth when the market around the station matures. Direct access to a quaint downtown, to a regional open space corridor along Hutton Branch, and to a DART LRT station are types of amenities that could attract a mixture of office, technology and urban residential uses in this area.

Land identified in the “Redevelopment Potential” diagram reflects property which may be considered under-utilized or vacant and a prime candidate for redevelopment. Many of those properties however are relatively small and would need to be consolidated into larger holdings, or would require a district-wide parking program that would construct parking spaces and make them available for redevelopment of smaller sites.



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## EXISTING LAND USE

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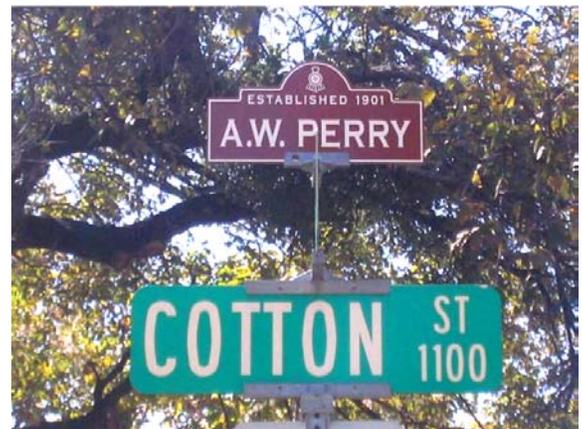
The study area contains a range of uses from well-maintained single family residential to industrial (see Existing Land Use and Features map), many of which are up to eighty years old. Part of the older residential area east of Denton Road to Erie Road and north of Belt Line has been transitioning for several years, to light industrial uses on relatively small lots, multifamily and a mix of commercial uses. Churches dominate the area of Walnut and Erie

Carrollton Heights, the historic residential area east of Erie, celebrates its centennial in 2008. It appears relatively stable and contains several historic structures. There is however, encroaching duplex and multi-family development as well as an unusual concentration of churches. In addition, the neighborhood around Perry Park (Frances Perry Estates) and residential north of



Northside are stable areas and contribute to the mix of residential unit type in the station area. These neighborhoods should be preserved and protected from encroachment.

The A.W. Perry neighborhood is a small area of about 34 single family houses located east of Denton Rd. and north of Hutton Branch, and is currently stable with some re-investment occurring. However, as TOD development occurs and leaps across Hutton Branch, this older small neighborhood could be surrounded on three sides

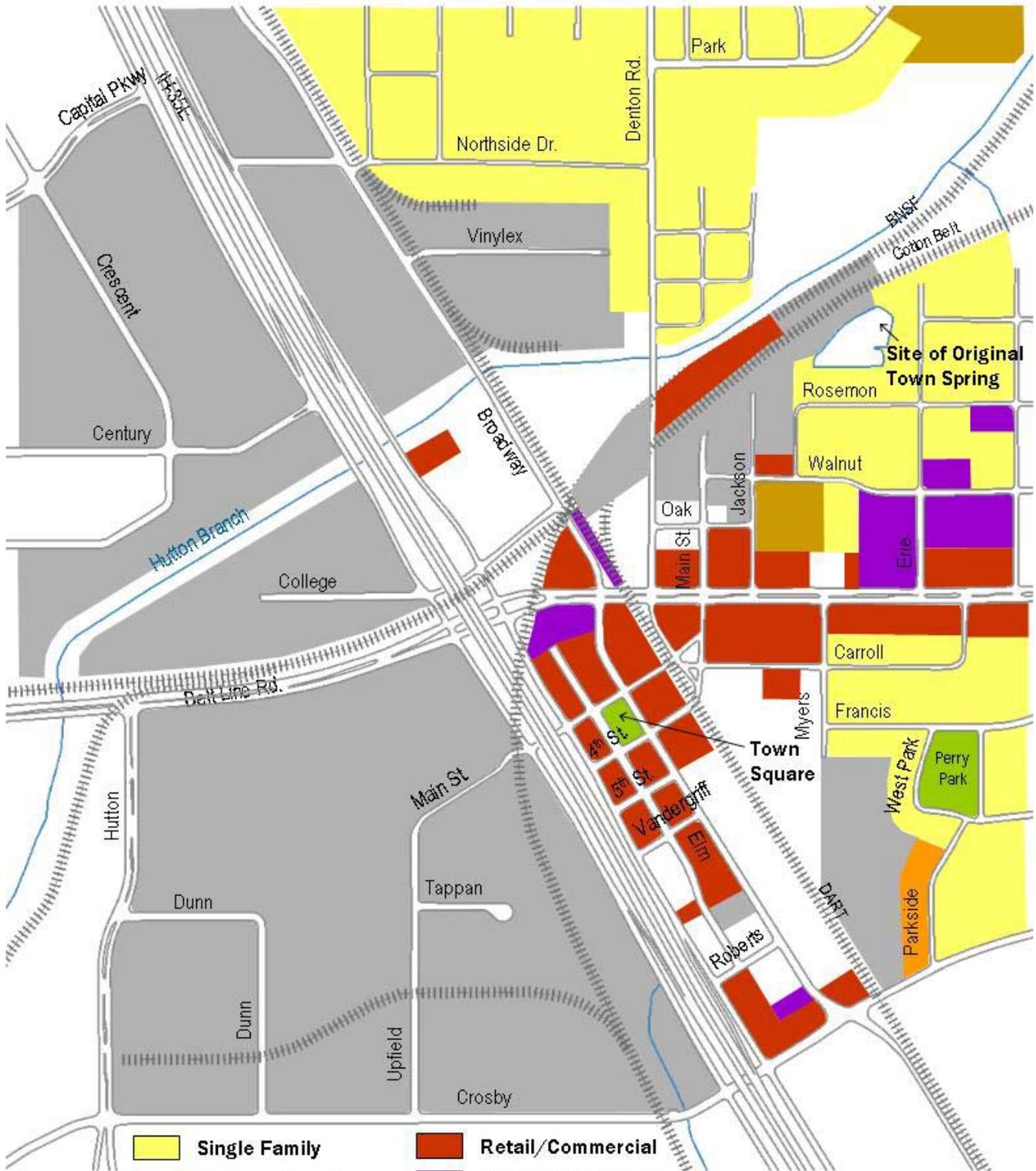


by fairly high density development.

Significant parks dot the area - the downtown Carrollton Square serves as open space and parking; Perry Park serves the surrounding residential area; Gravley Park (just off the map but adjacent to Hutton Branch) contains the A. W. Perry Homestead Museum and serves as a larger community park; and the Crosby Road Recreation Center (located on Crosby at Fannidella Drive) provides formal recreational facilities.

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## Existing Land Use and Features

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## **ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

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Access to and within the Downtown is one of the biggest issues facing the area. Fortunately, two major initiatives are underway. Belt Line road will be lowered to run under the UP and BNSF freight tracks, and the section of IH-35E adjacent to the Downtown will be reconstructed. These projects however, must be supplemented by improvements to the local collector road circulation system.

### **CIRCULATION CONCEPT**

#### **GOOD REGIONAL CIRCULATION**

The goal in the downtown Carrollton is to have a circulation system that allows cars, bicycles and pedestrians to co-exist and function well together. But it must be more than that. Many regional residents avoid Downtown Dallas because it is confusing to get in and out of, and it is hard to find a particular destination. The combination of one-way streets and discontinuous thoroughfares combined with difficulty in finding parking acts as a major deterrent.

Carrollton has historically had similar problems with its downtown, which has languished for years even though it is located immediately adjacent to the freeway and has a charming old Texas Town character. The City has invested heavily in enhancements, but to little avail.

If Carrollton wants to overcome these problems, new routes for circulation will need to be constructed in combination with sensitively designed streets for pedestrians and cyclists, and significant amounts of consolidated parking will need to be provided.

To achieve a good level of regional access and circulation, two important things need to happen—

1. Streets will need to connect across IH-35E to both north-bound and south-bound service roads (Northside, a new street south of Hutton Branch and 4<sup>th</sup> Street are suggested)
2. A “loop connector” comprised of Roberts/Myers/ Northside, with Vinylex as an additional connection to IH-35E

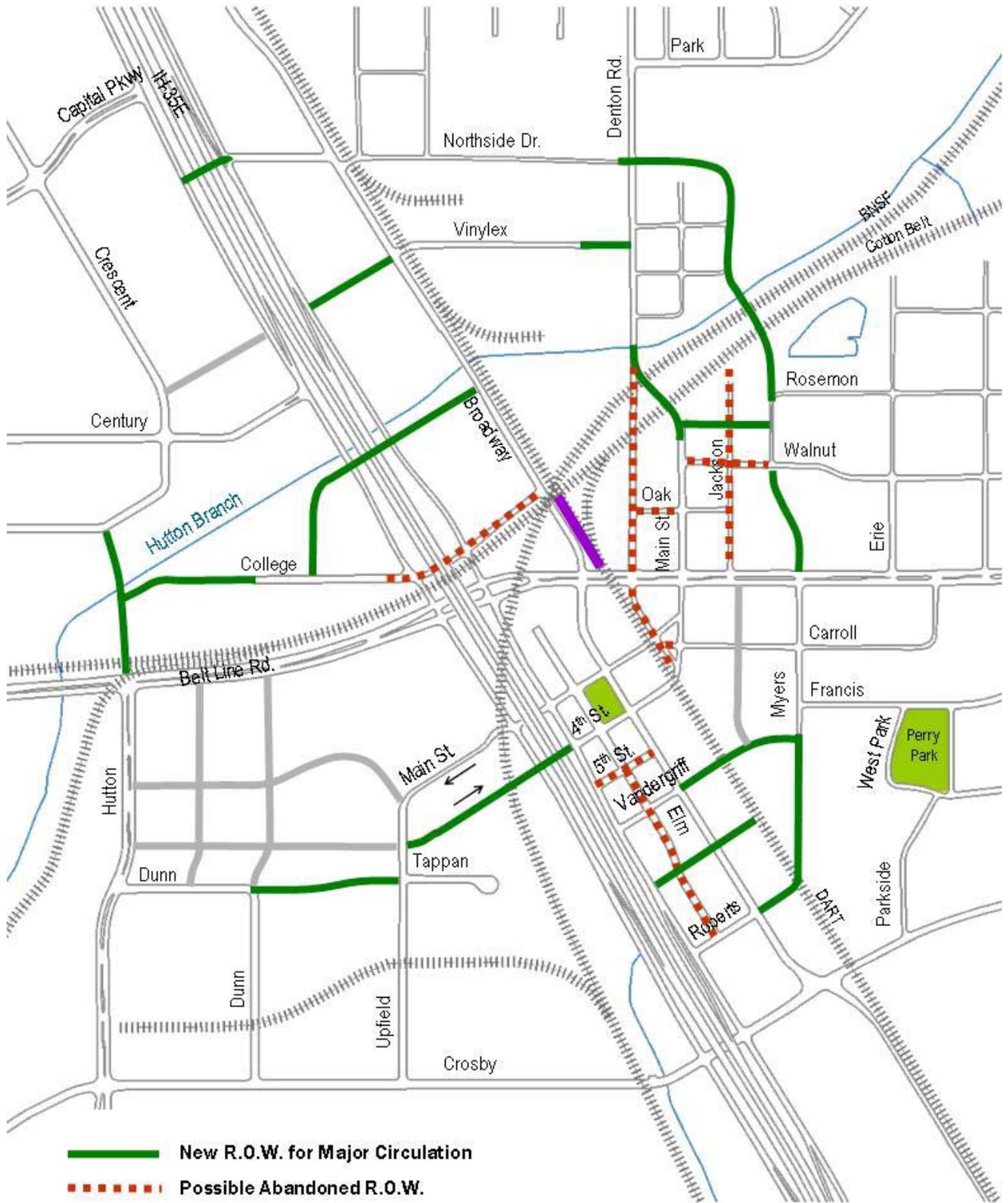
#### **CIRCULATION TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT**

For a successful pedestrian district, blocks should be of a size that can accommodate on-site parking in the center of the block while being lined with buildings. They should also not be so large that pedestrians must walk a long distance out of their way to get around the development. For most urban pedestrian-oriented districts blocks with a minimum dimension of 260 feet and a maximum of 300-500 feet is considered ideal.

The historic downtown core around the Square already has a parking shortage and several blocks are too small to accommodate on-site parking. This necessitates the provision of consolidated parking in the area to serve these uses and any redevelopment that may occur.

Other blocks south of the historic core are inefficiently shaped to accommodate parking internal to the block, such as south of 4th street. It is recommended that 5th street and Elm (south of 4th) be abandoned as a roadway to allow consolidation of adjacent properties which could be built to a higher mixed use density including on-site parking garages. In addition, it is recommended that Vandergriff Street be extended to Myers and a new street be placed midway between Vandergriff and Roberts to improve circulation.

Industrial areas west of IH-35E will required a finer block pattern with interconnecting roadways prior to significant redevelopment. The existing blocks were created for large industrial buildings and truck use, not for pedestrian traffic and smaller scale mixed uses.



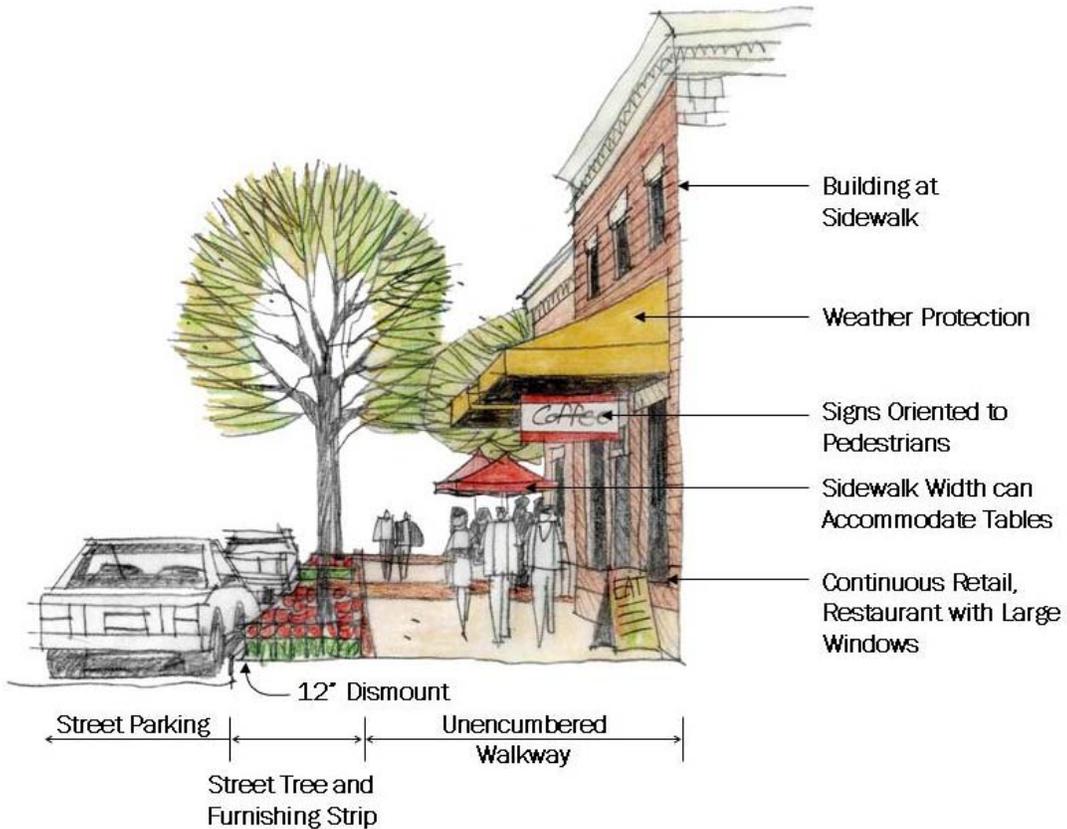
- New R.O.W. for Major Circulation
- - -** Possible Abandoned R.O.W.
- Additional Roadways that would facilitate redevelopment

## Roadway Modifications

## STREETSCAPE DESIGN CONCEPTS

Streetscape design is a vital ingredient to creating a place where people want to be. It involves creating an attractive “outdoor room” with on-street parking and trees to buffer the traffic, pedestrian level lighting and other street furniture enhancements such as trash containers, seating and newspaper racks.

The other critical aspect is to ensure that streets be designed to result in traffic which moves at 25 miles per hour or less without the aid of stop signs and speed bumps. On-street parking, street trees, lane-width and roadway texture can combine to result in a speed that drivers do not feel comfortable exceeding. Such designs are proven to reduce traffic fatalities and support pedestrian and bicycle use.



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## PARKING IN DOWNTOWN

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Two types of parking are important to a downtown pedestrian district like Carrollton's – on-street parking and consolidated off-street parking (parking for a sub-district or multiple developments). Both need to be managed in a way that will provide visitors with the feeling that there is an abundance of easily accessible short and long term parking available.

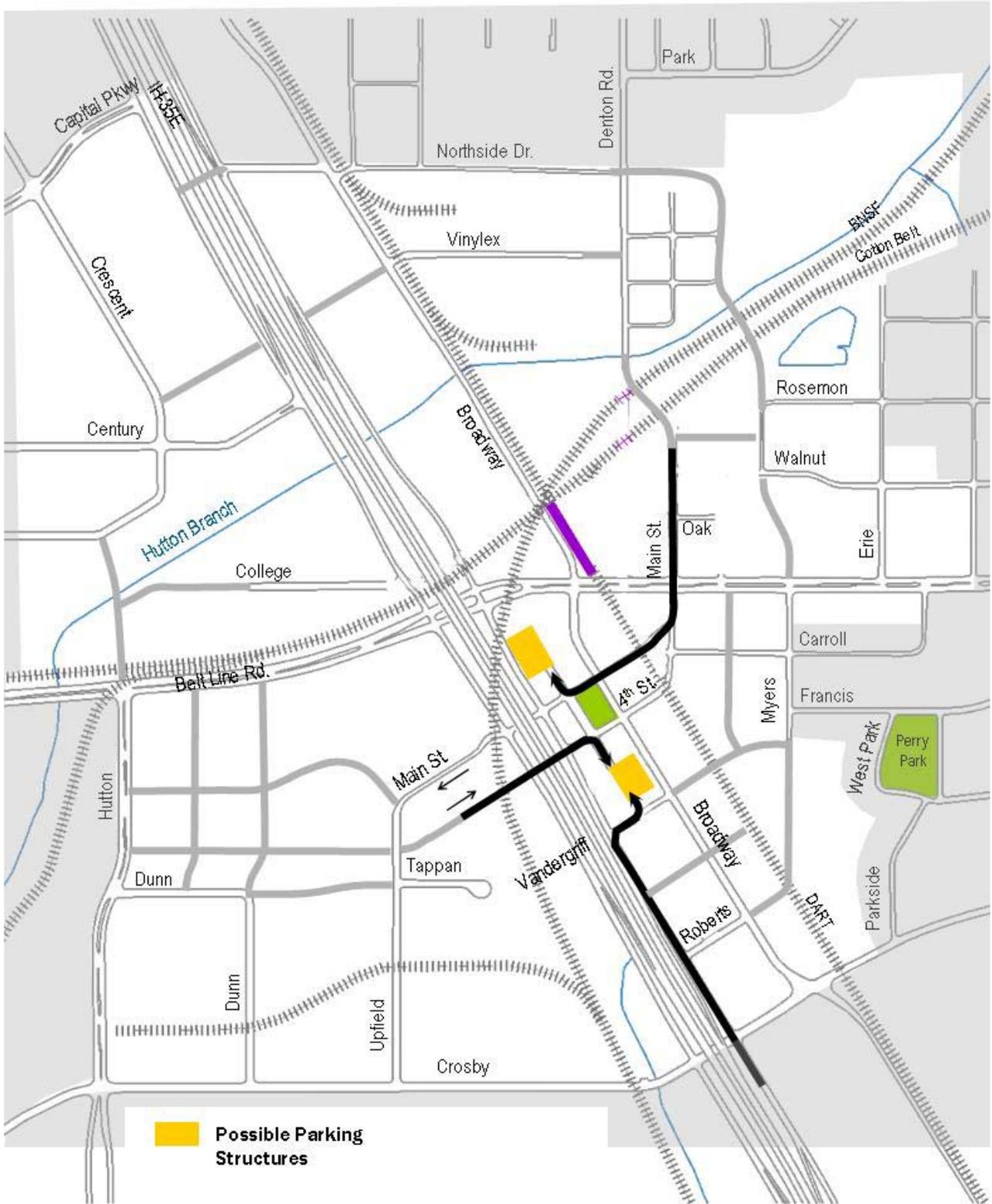
This means that on-street parking should be limited to possibly 2-hour parking to ensure that there are convenient spaces for customers, while employees park in more remote lots. As development occurs and the Downtown becomes more active and parking garages are constructed, parking meters may be necessary to ensure that about 8-10% of on-street spaces remain available throughout the day for customers. Downtown Pasadena, CA, has instituted a parking and pricing system that attracts visitors and customers and resulted in a phenomenal renaissance of the area over the past 10 years. This was accomplished by balancing the pricing of on- and off-street parking to make efficient use of spaces and convey a feel that there is plenty of parking. (A very positive side benefit is that revenue from the parking meters is used to clean sidewalks regularly and maintain the streetscape.) Managing parking will also help control overflow transit parkers.

Consolidated parking is a highly efficient use of spaces because it combines numerous uses with differing peak demand times, and ensures that vacant stalls are utilized. Parking which is provided on individual properties often contain a few unused spaces as well as many “dedicated” spaces for particular tenants. It is important to limit the number of spaces dedicated to tenants in a consolidated garage, and make sure that they are available during off-peak hours for other users.

Much of the downtown area, especially in the vicinity of the Square, is comprised of properties which cannot provide a full compliment of on-site parking. This necessitates the construction of a public parking garage(s). Such structures should be

located so that they are easily accessible and minimize drivers having to drive around looking for parking spaces and clogging intersections. This would tend to locate possible structures in the vicinity of Vandergriff and Broadway, since Vandergriff is the last road that is accessible from the north bound service road before it depresses to go below 4<sup>th</sup> Street and the lowered Belt Line intersection. Additional parking facilities could utilize land which is not prime for commercial or residential uses such as adjacent to the freeway, north of Main Street.

Additional surface parking for downtown employees could be made available beneath the elevated travel lanes of IH-35E on TxDOT right-of-way. These spaces would be easily accessible to the downtown via the Main and Fourth Street bridges.



## Possible Parking Structure Locations

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## CONCEPT PLAN FOR TOD AREA

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### PLACEMAKING AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Transit-oriented development is a key strategy for revitalizing Carrollton’s economic base, as identified in *Carrollton By Design*; and Downtown offers the greatest opportunity for long term growth and investment of the city’s three station areas.

To be successful, Downtown must not just move cars and pedestrians effectively, it must be a living, breathing “place” where people want to go and spend time. In order to do that, the congestion of railroads and the awkwardness of automobile access need to be resolved. The downtown will not grow just because transit lines cross there - only a small fraction of the population will be arriving by transit. It must be easy to access and circulate by car and bicycle. This has huge implications for the management of rail lines, and the reconstruction of IH-35E and roadway infrastructure to provide an intuitive circulation pattern.

***“Enhancing livability, therefore, should be a central objective in every city’s economic transition strategy, and the elements of livability should be employed as economic development tools.”***

Partners for Livable Communities, Urban Land, May 2006



Artist view along Broadway to Gravelly Center

### KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN

People are attracted to places that “feel good”, are comfortable and provide the opportunity for social interaction. This, and the explosive growth in non-children households such as singles, empty-nesters and young professional couples, is what is fueling developments such as Up-Town Dallas, Legacy Town Center, Addison Circle, Downtown Plano and Southlake Town Square.

These developments are a result of studying successful urban areas across the United States and around the world. Some of the common elements that they share include a distinctive destination, compactness, great streets, walkability, an engaging street wall, giving preference to people over cars (parking and circulation), a lively mix of land uses, public space, a sense of authenticity and good details. Downtown Carrollton has the potential to combine all these key ingredients to create an attractive “place”.

### **DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION / COMPACTNESS**

Downtown Carrollton is unique in its location adjacent to IH-35E and in its historic square. Many cities in the Metroplex work hard to create places with such a sense of identity. The visibility and regional access from the freeway, coupled with a convergence of transit lines combine to provide a focus on Carrollton’s historic downtown like no other community of its size in the region.



**Artist view along Oak Street toward the station plaza**

The compactness of the area, to create a sense of identity and facilitate walkability and social interaction, is a key element in “placemaking”. To create such a distinctive destination with compactness, a successful plan should include—

- At least 2-5 Story development adjacent to the sidewalk with continuous frontage along the block face, ensuring a two story transition to adjacent single family areas
- Public space for community events, festivals and passive recreation

- Building on its authentic historic architectural elements

The area east of the freeway should develop as a tight high density urban center. The industrial area west of the freeway will likely become a looser mixed use area over the long term – overall not as dense, but with a high level of pedestrian amenity

#### **GREAT STREETS / WALKABILITY / ENGAGING STREET WALL**

Streets within the TOD area should be designed to facilitate all modes of circulation – pedestrian, bicycle and automobile – without one dominating the others. This includes designing streets with a range of amenities for pedestrians—

- Bulb-outs at crossings to shorten the distance that pedestrians are subjected to traffic
- Special paving at crosswalks to clearly identify pedestrian zones
- On-street parking and street trees to help slow traffic and provide pedestrians on sidewalks with a secure buffer from traffic
- Pedestrian-oriented signage
- Windows at grade along all street faces to increase both safety and pedestrian interest, including views of retail activities and residential views of the sidewalk
- Trees and awnings to provide shade and increase comfort (pavement that is shaded is 40 degrees cooler and the ambient temperature is 7-11 degrees cooler than where pavement is not in shade)
- Enduring materials at grade level such as brick and stone that require little maintenance and will age gracefully

These elements are reflected in the roadway design standards and the adopted form-based code.

## **PARKING**

Parking is one of the most critical elements in the successful redevelopment of older downtowns. Its provision and management are vital to the success of retail and other businesses as well as to residents and their visitors.

- On-street parking should be maximized and managed to provide easily accessible visitor parking.
- New parking should be encouraged to be structured to minimize the amount of land consumed by parking and to encourage higher density development
- Surface parking lots adjacent to pedestrian corridors should be avoided.
- Blocks should have continuous building frontage except for mid-block access to parking in the center of the block.
- A public parking facility should be provided by the city or parking authority to facilitate redevelopment of small properties in the vicinity of the historic town square

High density TOD districts from Washington DC to San Jose tend to consolidate district parking in garages which are located in the center of blocks and lined by buildings. In addition, a reduction in parking requirements is offered to development within close proximity to stations. The adopted Carrollton Transit Center District Ordinance includes these considerations.

## **MIXTURE OF USES / THIRD PLACES**

The mixture of land uses including retail, residential, office and hotel are critical to the success of a district. There should be ample opportunity to “live, work, play and learn”.

- Ensure retail uses will line primary pedestrian corridors to provide interest and activity

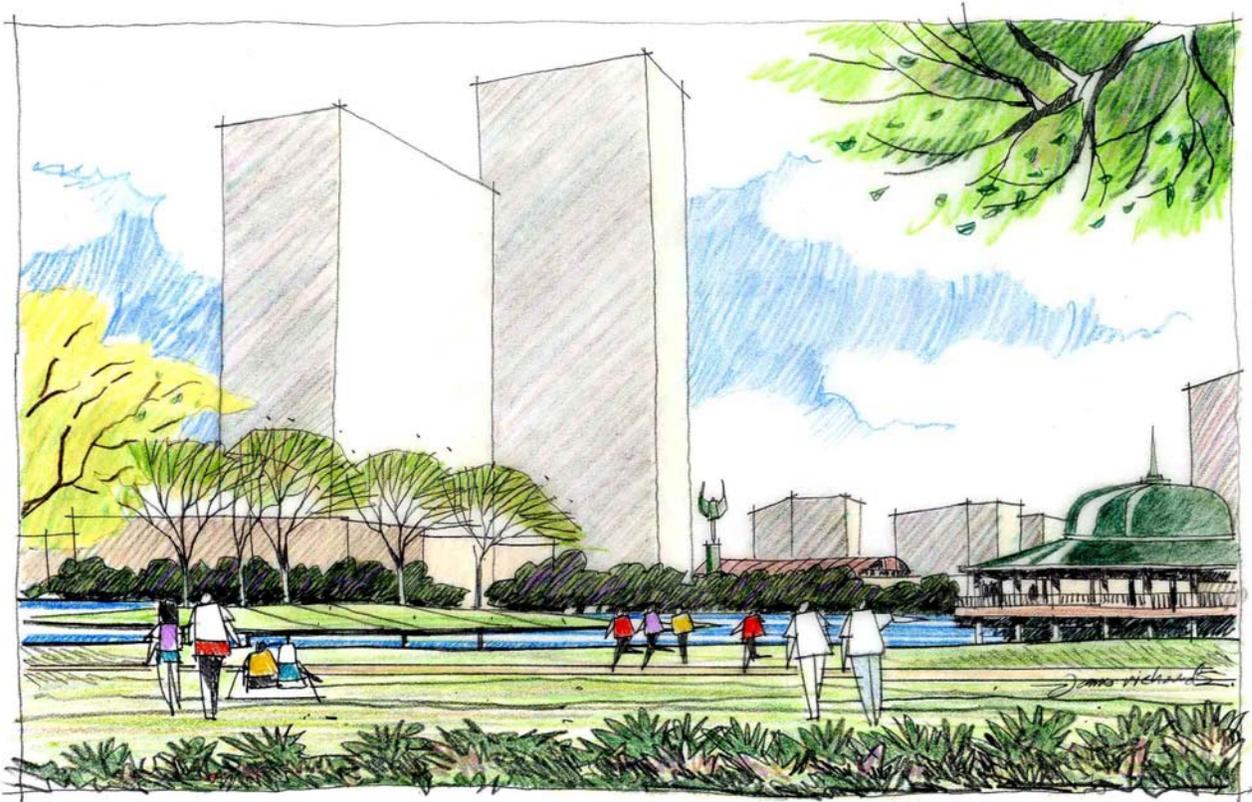
- Provide “Third places” (where people socialize and exchange ideas outside of their home and office) such as coffee shops, book stores, fitness centers and cafes
- Provide a range of housing types such as lofts with or without retail at grade, live-work, townhomes and hotels

Urban style housing is uniquely different than typical suburban style housing. It should have the following characteristics—

- Targeted to young professionals, empty-nesters, retirees
- Direct access to ground floor units from the sidewalk
- First floor approx 3 feet above grade
- Windows and balconies facing the street or public open space
- On-site parking internal to the block



Artist concept of an aerial view



**View looking south toward station across the Grand Park**

## **PUBLIC SPACE**

Public space is a key ingredient in "placemaking" and providing "civic-ness". When creating a high density center, it is even more important to provide open space and plazas where residents can congregate, socialize and play. Such publicly accessible open space should be located within a quarter mile of all high density housing.

Public space also serves to create value for nearby properties. Homes adjacent to public open space have been shown to have over a 23% premium value than homes located more than a quarter mile away. Another sign of its value is the fact that most of the pocket parks in Downtown Dallas were the result of funding from neighboring property owners.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CONCEPT PLAN

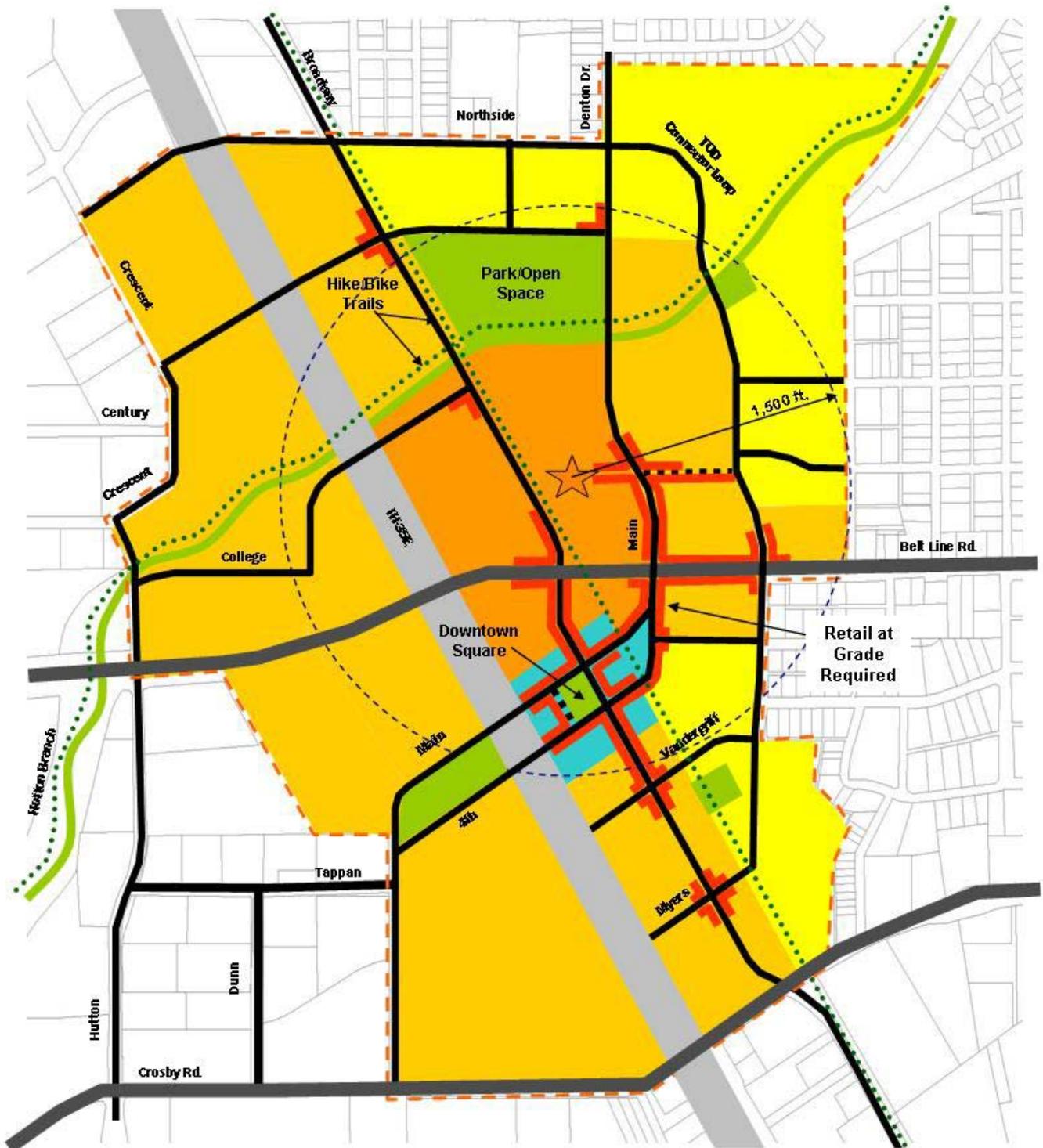
The Framework Plan below sets out a framework for street types, open space, certain land uses and intensity which embody the principles in this plan. (See also the adopted Transit Center Zoning Ordinance for the Downtown.)

The Artist Concept is a representation of what could occur in the Downtown TOD, not necessarily what will occur. However, it reflects the principles above, and includes some additional site-specific concepts:

- Tree buffer against the elevated DART transit line to both buffer the structure from adjacent development and to provide an attractive entry to Carrollton for train passengers.
- A range of amenity areas for urban residents, from private open space/recreation areas within residential developments, to local parks such as the 2.5-acre park bordered by Meyers, Vandergriff and the DART transit line, the 2.5-acre park between Main and Fourth Streets west of IH-35E, and the 16.5-acre park bordered by Broadway Street, Vinylex, Denton Drive and the rail station.
- Retail is focused along key pedestrian corridors such as Broadway Street between the square and the rail station, Main and Denton, and along Vinylex across from the park.
- Consolidated parking garages located in the vicinity of the Square to provide visitors with easy parking access to the old Downtown.
- A majority of the land uses adjacent to parks are residential in order to maximize the amenity value of such open space.

CARROLLTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
DOWNTOWN TOD

DRAFT V.6



**Legend**

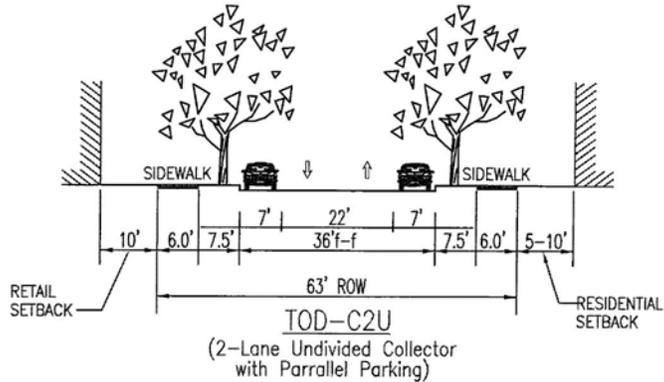
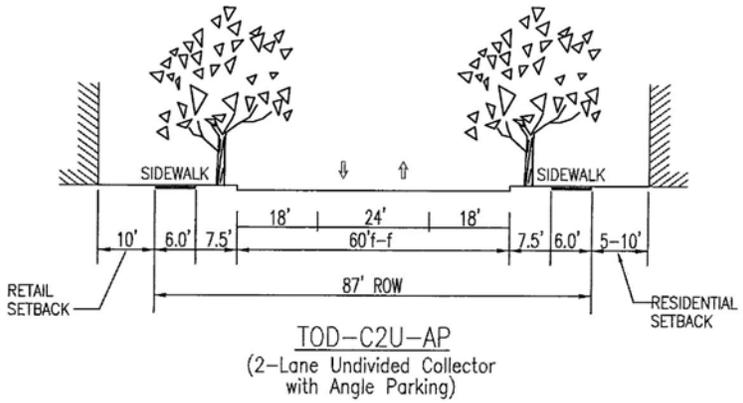
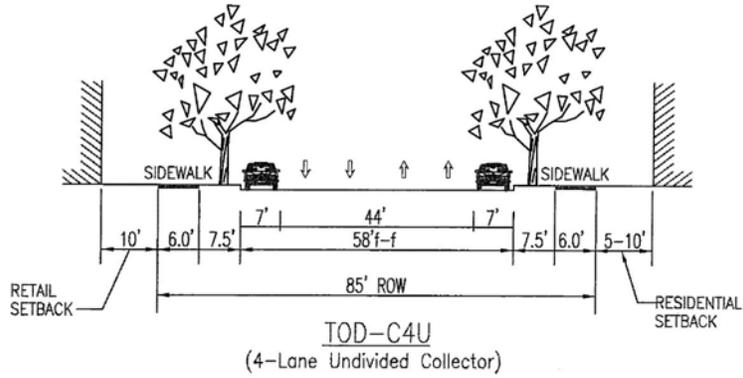
	Urban Core – 4 Stories & Up		TOD – C4U
	Urban Center – 2 to 6 Stories		TOD – C2U
	Urban Fringe – 2 to 4 Stories		TOD – C2U – AP
	Historic Core – 2 to 3 Stories		City Standard C6D

**FRAMEWORK  
PLAN**

CARROLLTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
DOWNTOWN TOD

DRAFT VERSION 6

STREET CLASSIFICATIONS  
CARROLLTON TOD DISTRICTS





# DOWNTOWN CARROLLTON ARTIST CONCEPT

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## KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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The creation of a successful high quality transit-oriented district which captures a high density of uses will not be easy. It will require an extraordinary focus on taking advantage of the opportunities and overcoming the obstacles outlined in the “Background” section of this plan, and in blending them in a careful way to create a truly great place.

### TRANSPORTATION

1. **Ensure the downtown Carrollton area is easily accessed from IH-35E. Work with TxDOT to incorporate a high degree of roadway access to support high density development in the downtown area.**
2. **Ensure long term circulation improvements such as**
  - **Creating the Roberts/Myers/Northside “loop connector”.**
  - **Connecting Vandergriff to Myers.**
  - **Extending 4<sup>th</sup> Street across IH-35E.**
  - **Extend Vinylex to connect with the north and south bound service roads and to Denton Drive. Extend Hutton Drive across Belt Line to connect with Crescent.**
  - **Create a new roadway (shown as Vinson Drive for the first Mayor of Carrollton) just south of Hutton Branch (replacing College) from Broadway to the service roads and College on the west side of the freeway.**
  - **Ensure connectivity of hike/bike trails to the region.**

#### Opportunities:

- To re-invigorate growth and increase the City’s tax base
- To diversify life style Environments within the City
- Large Land parcels west of IH-35E and south of Fourth Street
- Create an environment that will attract re-investment over time

#### Obstacles:

- Freight line conflicts
- Roadway congestion
- Presence of small lots

- Ensure that development parcels are sized to facilitate pedestrian flow, automobile circulation and parking in the center of blocks.
3. Ensure a high quality public infrastructure such as street trees, pedestrian lighting, public open space, plazas and squares.

#### TRANSIT

4. Ensure that DART facilities which are constructed for 2010 service will be done in a way that will facilitate accommodation of a future Hub transit station with interconnecting platforms.
5. Ensure that site layout of DART facilities, including bus bays, kiss and ride spaces and parking will accommodate mixed use joint development on the station site over the long term.
6. Ensure that there is attractive, comfortable and direct pedestrian access between the station and surrounding development in both the near term and long term.

#### PARKING

7. Create a Parking Authority or district to provide and manage parking for the success of the district.
8. Establish a parking program that will provide consolidated shared parking which will facilitate small lot redevelopment, and locate such parking so that it will result in easy regional access and minimize vehicular circulation in the downtown.
9. Reduce the amount of parking – with consolidated joint use or shared parking (where several businesses share parking facilities), a station can reduce its amount of parking by 20 to 25 percent.
10. Use parking structures - All new development should provide mechanisms to allow parking to move into structures over time.

11. Consider establishing a maximum parking ratio to “cap” the amount of parking provided in the Downtown so that too much land is not used for parking; allow only when the additional parking will be easily available for public use, and it is needed for the area.
12. Locate buildings and infrastructure to allow for eventual conversion of surface to structured parking.
13. Encourage use of on-street parking and count then towards required parking.
14. Create a cash-in-lieu alternative to allow small sites to redevelop.

#### LAND USE

15. Encourage a variety of housing type such as urban apartments, lofts, townhouses and live-work units.
16. Focus high density in the immediate vicinity of the transit station, and ensure a lower density residential transition such as townhomes to existing stable neighborhoods.
17. Create, preserve and enhance open space through out the Downtown TOD area.

#### INCENTIVES

18. Establish programs and incentives to encourage high quality, high density development in the near term such as—
  - Bond financing for infrastructure improvements (e.g., the City’s existing G.O. Bond)
  - Land cost discount/write-down
  - Off-site infrastructure investments, including streetscapes and parking structures

- **Public sector grants and/or loan programs**
  - **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**
  - **Special districts**
  - **Systems development charge**
  - **Transportation impact fee credits**
  - **Permit expediting**
  - **Zoning**
19. **Provide incentives to restore, revitalize and preserve historic buildings of value around the square.**
20. **Evaluate projects for granting incentives based on the criteria set out in the *Downtown Carrollton Analysis and Implementation Strategy*.**