

## V. URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

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### OVERVIEW

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Over the past half-century, Carrollton developed as a suburban community with low-density, single-use developments oriented to and designed for the single-occupant automobile. With imminent "build-out," increasing traffic congestion, changing demographics, increasing property values and the upcoming arrival of DART LRT, a significant opportunity presents itself for a different development pattern. This would include higher intensity, high value, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, "urban-style" development focusing on the LRT stations.

The *Carrollton Corridor Plan* (1994) addresses the automobile-oriented environment by establishing a guide to enhancing the image and appearance of the City's roadway corridors, intersections, parkways, drainage ways, and entryways.

Another challenge facing Carrollton is its aging and obsolete retail base. The *Retail Study of Underperforming and Vacant Retail Areas*, jointly conducted by the cities of Carrollton, Richardson and Plano in 2002, found that an excess of retail-zoned land leads to chronically under-performing - even vacant - retail development. Additionally, consumer tastes and market conditions have changed, but the design and layout of retail development in Carrollton has not. For example, one new trend in successful retail developments is the creation of pleasant, pedestrian-oriented environments. Future development and redevelopment should anticipate retail trends as much as possible and respond to them quickly. The City should develop programs to assist in upgrading, recycling, and strengthening retail development.

With the City largely developed, there is an increased focus on attracting and encouraging compatible infill development. A major factor in improving a community and in maintaining and enhancing property values involves continued reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and commercial areas.

The following policies establish guidance on how the City and property owners should deal with new and infill development.

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**URBAN DESIGN POLICIES**

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**GENERAL**

UD-1 Landscaping is an important factor in establishing community image and value. It should be designed and installed to ensure that its objectives are achieved, and the long-term health of plant material is assured.

- a. Required landscaping should consist of hardy, drought-tolerant, indigenous, or naturalized plants adapted to local soils and conditions.
- b. Irrigation should be included for supplemental water during drought.
- c. Incentives and standards for the preservation of existing mature trees should be established and followed.

UD-2 The City should pursue a coherent citywide identity through the design of its streets and transit corridors.

- a. Street designs should be in accordance with the guidelines established in the *Carrollton Corridor Plan*.



- b. Design concepts should be developed and implemented for all light-rail and commuter-rail transit corridors.



UD-3 Key thoroughfares should be enhanced to reinforce community character, provide a more pleasurable driving and walking experience, and discourage excessive speeds.



- a. Use tall canopy trees along key streets to give them a comfortable and pleasing sense of visual containment, to aid in traffic calming, and to create separation between vehicles and pedestrians. Where aboveground utilities prevent the use of larger canopy trees, shorter ornamental trees should be substituted.
- b. Design streets to the minimum width feasible to minimize cost and storm water runoff, and to help control speeds.

UD-4 The City should work with the Texas Department of Transportation, North Texas Turnpike Authority and Collin, Dallas and Denton Counties to achieve the designs recommended in the *Carrollton Corridor Plan* when constructing new roads.

UD-5 All on-site drainage features should be treated in a natural manner so that they create an amenity.

a. Water detention facilities should be treated with soft edges, using natural materials such as stone and vegetation for erosion control.

b. Headwalls should be faced with natural stone when visible from public areas.

c. Drainage courses should use vegetation, stone, and soil engineering (soil lifts and plant material used in a structural manner) as appropriate, rather than concrete for erosion control.



UD-6 All utilities should be placed below ground, with the exception of major transmission lines.

UD-7 The City should consider property-owners associations in neighborhoods where homes back up to streets and in commercial centers where there are multiple property ownerships, in order to ensure proper maintenance of roadways, parkways and common areas.

#### URBAN CENTERS

UD-8 Development standards should be established for "urban center" areas that reflect an urban "walkable" style of development.

UD-9 Buildings should be placed close to the street, with parking to the rear or side.



UD-10 Work with property owners to ensure that pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development occurs within approximately one-half mile of transit stations. This may include:

- a. Retail uses at ground level along pedestrian corridors
- b. Establishing incentives and programs for this style of development
- c. Purchasing key parcels of land on an opportunity basis



UD-11 Work with DART, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), TxDOT and other agencies to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian movement, and consolidate automobile parking in these areas.

- a. The quality of the pedestrian experience should prevail over the movement and storage of vehicles.
- b. The visual impact of consolidated parking facilities should be mitigated by placing retail, residential or service uses along the street face.

UD-12 In the Downtown Urban Center, work with DART, NCTCOG, TxDOT, and other agencies to:

- a. Remove freight traffic from the Union Pacific railroad south of the LRT station;
- b. Depress Belt Line Road below Broadway Street and the Burlington Northern Railroad;
- c. Relocate the Mercer Yards to an appropriate industrial district; and,
- d. Relocate the Cotton Belt Railroad northward east of Broadway Street in order to create a larger joint development tract.

UD-13 In all Urban Center Areas:

- a. Zone the primary impact areas (within one-quarter to one-half mile) of stations for mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented urban-style development consistent with the *Carrollton Renaissance* and *Carrollton Station Area Plans*.
- b. Create Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts to capture the increase in property tax income to help fund infrastructure improvements and amenities.

**RETAIL/COMMERCIAL**

UD-14 Encourage the creation of "Pedestrian" and "Mixed-Use" Districts in conjunction with retail development by:

a. Targeting under-performing and vacant retail centers for conversion to mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented centers on a case-by-case basis.

b. Incorporating key aspects of pedestrian districts by:

- Setting buildings close to the street or drive;
- Providing wide sidewalks with shaded seating, pedestrian-level lighting, special paving, planters, bicycle racks and trash receptacles;
- Ensuring shade for pedestrians by using trees, trellises, awnings, porches or building overhangs;
- Providing plentiful retail display windows and landscape features such as public art, fountains, kiosks and identification graphics along walkways; and
- Ensuring sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate outdoor dining.



c. Integrating housing and encouraging pedestrian connections between adjacent residential and commercial developments

UD-15 Ensure that negative visual impacts of large commercial buildings are minimized or mitigated.

a. Long blank facades should be subdivided with vertical breaks ("articulated," in architectural terms) to reflect the scale and rhythm of smaller, pedestrian-scaled buildings.



UD-16 Use Landscaping to improve development by:

- a. Creating "green" areas for heat reduction, visual relief and interest.
- b. Incorporating water features to invigorate retail areas and provide cool relief in a hot climate.
- c. Providing attractive landscaping along the street edge to attract customers, while screening automobiles from public view.
- d. Providing tree plantings that "frame" views to retail signs, rather than screen them.
- e. Softening large parking areas by breaking up with landscaping.
- f. Concentrating colorful annual flowers in high visibility areas for greater visual impact and reduced maintenance costs.

#### INFILL DEVELOPMENT

UD-17 Encourage infill development that blends with, or is in character with, adjacent properties and the area (but not including urban center areas) by imposing similar setbacks, height, and building materials.

