

# 2009 Comprehensive Plan

City of Richardson, Texas



Adopted January 12, 2009 ■ Ordinance No. 3735

***2009 Comprehensive Plan  
City of Richardson, Texas***

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# *Introduction*

## **Welcome to Richardson**

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The City of Richardson, located 15 miles north of downtown Dallas, is part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex (the Metroplex). Originally a farming community chartered in 1873, Richardson has evolved into a city with more daytime workers than residents. The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) estimated Richardson's resident population as 97,488 (January 1, 2008) and its employment as 110,124 (January 1, 2005).

As a first-ring suburb, Richardson is surrounded by incorporated cities—Dallas (the central city), Garland, Plano, and Murphy. Except for minor boundary adjustments, Richardson will not grow beyond its current limits. Vacant land within the City is becoming more and more scarce, with less than 10% of Richardson's land area available for development. At the same time, with the Metroplex population projected to grow from 6.1 million to 9.1 million over the next 20 to 30 years, Richardson is projected to be home to approximately 113,800 residents and 163,000 employees by 2030. The increases in population and employment will require new strategies as the limited amount of vacant land is developed and redevelopment efforts become more prevalent.

## **The Comprehensive Plan**

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This update of the City's Comprehensive Plan was initiated as a joint effort between the City Council and City Plan Commission. As the long-range vision for the City of Richardson, this Plan is intended to direct development and redevelopment for the next 20 to 30 years.

Various Elements of the Plan, such as Transportation, Land Use, and Neighborhoods, are integrated into a cohesive vision. The Plan builds on Richardson's history, existing conditions, and previous planning efforts. Current trends, planning practices, and the community's vision for its future are added to form the structure of the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan is an important tool for day-to-day decision-making, encouraging consistency, and coordinating a variety of City efforts, particularly those that relate to the physical development, sustainability, and long-range benefit to the community. The guiding principles and themes in the Plan will provide a foundation for:

- The development of physical plans for the City;
- The study of subdivision regulations and zoning standards;
- The location and design of thoroughfares and other major transportation facilities;
- The identification of areas in need of utility development, enhancement, or extension;

# Introduction

- The acquisition and development of community facility sites;
- The protection of open space;
- The evaluation of development requests (zoning changes, subdivision proposals, site plan applications) and other day-to-day decisions

Used in this manner, the Comprehensive Plan is an important tool in steering the City's future.

## **Elements**

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The Plan is organized into ten components, or Elements, that discuss various aspects of Richardson.

### ***Background***

Outlines the history of Richardson and lists past planning efforts that form the foundation of Richardson's present and future.

### ***Demographics***

Looks at the past, present, and future of the city's population, employment, and development.

### ***Land Use***

Describes the variety of Richardson's land uses.

### ***Transportation***

Examines all aspects of mobility within Richardson, from roads and transit services to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

### ***Urban Design***

Looks at the design and aesthetic appeal of Richardson's built environment.

### ***Neighborhoods***

Evaluates, illustrates, and affirms the City's commitment to supporting its diverse residential neighborhoods.

### ***Community Facilities***

Surveys public facilities within Richardson, from government services to schools.

### ***Parks and Recreation***

Outlines Richardson's parks, trails, leisure opportunities, special events, and festivals.

# Introduction

## *Environment*

Reports on Richardson's natural environment, from air quality and water use to development techniques and open space.

## *Economic Development*

Discusses efforts to retain and expand business in Richardson.

## **Themes**

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A number of themes emerged during the formulation of the Comprehensive Plan. These themes will shape the future of Richardson well into the 21st century and are woven into the vision for the City throughout the Plan.

## *Diversification*

In recent years, Richardson has become more diverse in a number of ways. Residents are more varied in terms of age, ethnic background, income, educational attainment, occupation, and lifestyle. The economic base has broadened to include a more varied mixture of businesses and industries. The City's transportation system encompasses transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, along with the traditional roadway system for automobiles. As the Metroplex grows and the City matures, this trend towards diversification will continue.

## *First-Ring Suburb*

Richardson developed as one of the first suburbs outside of Dallas. While this presents certain challenges in regard to aging infrastructure and competition from newer suburban cities, it also offers certain benefits, such as stability and a location that is more favorable compared to many of the outlying suburbs. Responding to the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities of a first-ring suburb will be a key part of securing Richardson's future.

## *Sustainability and Livability*

Sustainability—meeting the demands of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs—has become an important topic of discussion in many aspects of modern life. Richardson's ability to continue to grow and flourish depends on proactive efforts ranging from protecting open space and improving the quality of the region's air to encouraging high-quality development and preserving neighborhoods for an increasingly diverse mix of lifestyles.



# Introduction

## Plan Foundation

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A comprehensive plan begins with a solid understanding of the principles that have carried the city from the past to the present and a thorough assessment of the strategies that will transport the community successfully into the future.

### *Defining Richardson as a Signature City*

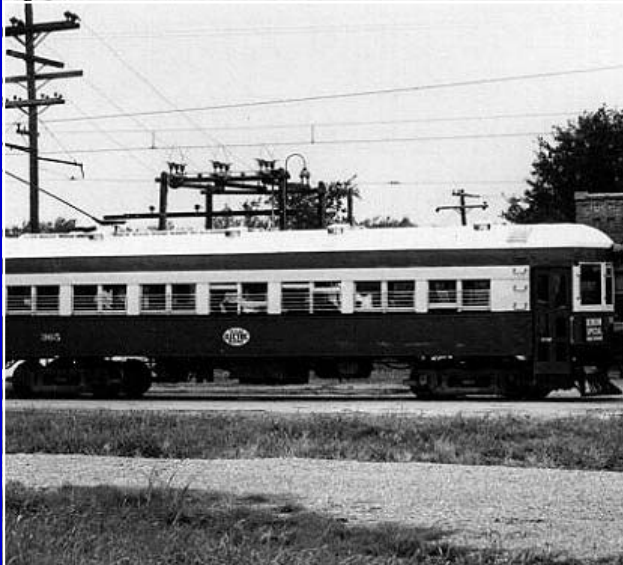
- Promote and preserve safe, distinctive, diverse and attractive neighborhoods for people of varied backgrounds and interests.
- Nurture a strong economic base encompassing small, independent businesses as well as prominent Fortune 500 companies.
- Operate an innovative, responsive, and fiscally responsible government.
- Continue to play a leadership role in regional issues.

### *Richardson's Place in the Future*

- Maintain the City's premier status in the Metroplex by simultaneously preserving attractive residential and commercial areas and promoting redevelopment opportunities.
- Develop the City's remaining vacant land in a manner that strengthens desirable community characteristics and promotes long-term sustainability.
- Enhance the sense of community in existing and new residential areas through the shared use of educational institutions, parks and open spaces, retail services, public facilities, and transportation.
- Encourage a favorable business climate and diverse economic growth by capitalizing on the City's location, infrastructure, transportation assets and skilled labor pool.
- Emphasize the link between transportation, housing, education, and jobs.
- Embrace a shift toward different modes of transportation while recognizing the ongoing importance of the automobile as one of several means of transportation available to Richardson's citizens and businesses.
- Continue to promote the positive attributes of Transit-Oriented Development at existing and planned rail stations.
- Participate in regional efforts to address traffic congestion, air quality, and water resources.
- Continue to monitor and adapt to future changes in population characteristics and economic conditions.

# Background

## Chapter 1



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**

# Background

Before examining present-day Richardson, a look at the City's past and the planning efforts that guided its development are worthwhile.

## Richardson's History

Prior to the arrival of the first white settlers, the area that is now Richardson, Texas was inhabited by Comanche and Caddo Indian tribes that hunted the deer and buffalo that wandered the nearby grasslands and prairies. In the 1840s, settlers began arriving from Tennessee and Kentucky, clustering around the town of Breckinridge, near today's Richland College. Breckinridge consisted of a general store, a blacksmith shop and an inn in 1857, the year of its founding.



### *Riding the Rails*

Following the Civil War, the railroad became a driving force in shaping the future of the entire country. The village of Breckinridge was bypassed by this vital transportation link and eventually disappeared from the map. Richardson, to the northwest, became the new center of activity. John W. Wheeler donated approximately 100 acres for the town site and railroad right-of-way, but declined to have the village named in his honor. Instead, the town was named for contractor E.H. Richardson, who built the railroad line from Dallas to Denton. Richardson was chartered in 1873 and soon many of the Breckinridge settlers relocated to be nearer the new town. The original town site was situated generally between present-day Greer and Phillips Streets on the north and south, and between Central Expressway on the west and Greenville Avenue on the east; a small section did lie west of Central Expressway in its present alignment. Originally, there were three businesses—a general store, a post office and a drug store—which faced the railroad on Texas Street, south of Main Street.



By the turn of the century, many Richardson residents were taking the train to Dallas to work. In 1908, the Interurban, an electric railway, began service north to Denison, south to Waco, southeast to Corsicana, and west to Fort Worth. In 1924 the Red Brick Road (Greenville Avenue) was completed, bringing an increase in both traffic and population. The following year, the town was incorporated and elected its first mayor under the commission form of government. Bonds were

# 1. Background

issued and in 1926 waterworks were completed so that homes on the system could be furnished with indoor water. Soon after, a sewage treatment plant was constructed, the volunteer fire department began operating, and utility franchises were awarded to Lone Star Gas and Texas Power & Light Company.

Few significant events took place during the 1930s, but by this time 27 businesses were located in Richardson off of Greenville Avenue. The separation between the town and the center of Dallas was enough to support the commercial activities of the area.

## *Building Boom*

By 1940, the population was hovering around 740. Growth in the Dallas County area slowed during this decade, and Richardson experienced practically no increase in population. Following World War II, however, the town experienced a surge, primarily due to an influx of young families in search of new housing. By 1950, the town boasted a population of approximately 1,300 inhabitants. Additional community services, such as emergency ambulance service, police



protection, and parks and recreation facilities, became available to residents and in 1951, Collins Radio opened a Richardson office, ushering the town into the electronic era. A vital transportation link was established with the opening of Central Expressway in 1954 and what had been an agricultural town became a community of shopping centers, industries, and homes.

In 1955, voters adopted a home rule charter and the City's current council/manager form of government. Door-to-door mail delivery became available to the 5,000 residents and funds were approved for a park and City Hall (currently the site of the Public Safety Complex). The following year, Texas Instruments opened its offices just south of the Richardson border and land values increased dramatically as the City made significant advances in population and economic status.

The 1960s saw a notable increase in parkland acquisition and the construction of additional facilities, including Huffhines Park, Prairie Creek Park and Cottonwood Park. Educational opportunities increased with the dedication of the Southwest Center for Advanced Studies and the opening of the University of Texas at Dallas in 1964 and 1969, respectively. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the City annexed a significant amount of acreage along its northern edge west of Jupiter Road and in its northeastern sector (the Breckinridge area). Development east of Shiloh Road was slow in coming, however, due to the lack of roadways and utilities in their relatively remote portion of the City.



# 1. Background

Most of the nonresidential development that took place in the 1960s consisted of light industrial buildings. By contrast, development in the following decade was primarily in the office or office/technology category. The population in 1972 was approximately 56,000, and that year the Richardson Independent School District (which includes some areas outside the City of Richardson) had an enrollment of approximately 32,000 students in 26 elementary schools, seven junior high schools and four high schools.

## *Employment Growth*

Construction activity in the early 1980s was brisk, but declined significantly during the latter half of the decade due to a real estate bust that hit Texas and the Dallas area especially hard. Nonetheless, there was important growth by several major Richardson employers who took advantage of lower land and construction costs to implement much-needed expansion plans.



The 1990 Census counted the population of Richardson as 74,840 persons in approximately 28,700 households. The annexation of the Town of Buckingham in April 1996, with the consent of the Buckingham voters, added approximately 155 acres and about 600 residents to the Richardson community. New home construction, especially in the Breckinridge area, also led to population growth, which had lagged somewhat in the 1980s.

During the late 1990s, Richardson became known for its concentration of high-tech businesses, to become known as the Telecom Corridor<sup>®</sup>. At its peak, the area located along North Central Expressway and President George Bush Turnpike was home to over 600 corporations, including numerous international telecommunication companies. The Telecom Corridor<sup>®</sup> was hard-hit by the economic downturn in 2001 leading many businesses to downsize and some to close their doors.

## *Moving Forward*

Due to the City's strategic location and an improving regional economy, existing businesses are again beginning to expand and new and diverse businesses are locating or relocating to Richardson. Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) light rail arrived in Richardson in 2002 with the opening of four stations, part of the evolving regional transit corridor that currently extends from Plano through downtown Dallas to Westmoreland Avenue in Oak Cliff and which will extend even farther north and south in the future. Developers are exploring new land use options, including transit-oriented development and mixed-use projects, along this important rail corridor.

Looking forward, the City's future growth is likely to focus on the proper use of the small amount of vacant land that remains and on the redevelopment of older areas of the City.

# 1. Background

## Previous Planning Efforts

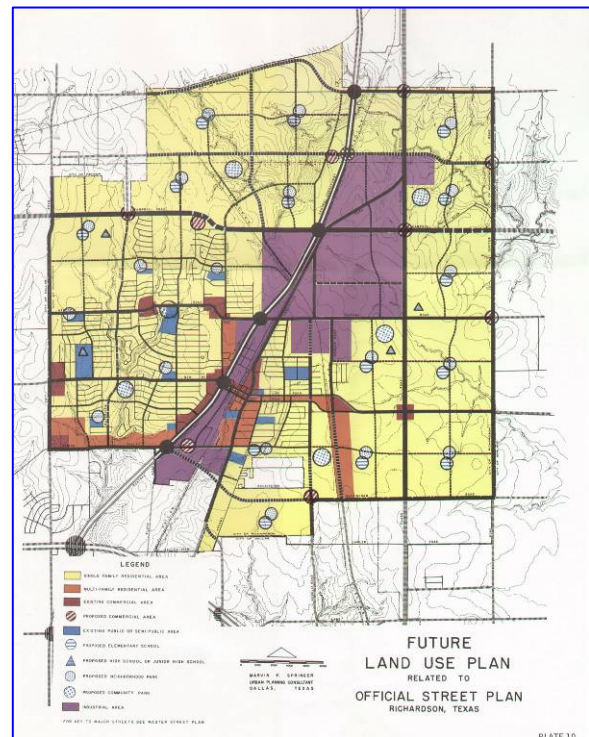
Since planning is an ongoing process, it is important to understand past efforts and their relationship to the current comprehensive planning program. Each plan has been an incremental step in the overall approach to directing the growth of the community over the course of time.

### *Comprehensive Plans*

#### *1962 Comprehensive Plan*

In the early 1960s, the Richardson City Council engaged the urban planning and development consulting firm of Springer and Foeller of Dallas to prepare the first comprehensive plan for the City. This document, the *Comprehensive Plan—Richardson, Texas*, submitted in February of 1962, contained sections on Economic Background, Land Use and Population, the Major Thoroughfare Plan, the Park and School Plan and Special Studies. It included information gathered from previous years and made projections to 1980. It also compared Richardson to surrounding communities and national standards for a city its size. The end-product of the study was a Future Land Use Plan map based on the official street plan in effect at the time. The plan did not specifically enumerate goals, objectives, and policies and it did not discuss or evaluate alternative plans or implementation of the recommended plan.

Though commissioned by the City Council and prepared by the consultant with the cooperation of City officials, the 1962 plan was never formally adopted. The 1962 plan has, however, had a noticeable effect on the direction of subsequent planning efforts in the City. For example, the 1962 Future Land Use Plan map closely resembles the current Richardson zoning map in many areas of the City.



#### *Comprehensive Planning Guide (1988 to 2000)*

In 1985, the City initiated the preparation of its first comprehensive plan since 1962. An extensive planning process resulted in a Comprehensive Planning Guide that was completed in December 1988. The Guide consisted of three sections: Basic Studies; Goals, Objectives and Policies; and the Plan, which included guidelines for both the public and private uses of land. The Comprehensive Planning Guide notebook and brochure were updated in 1993 and 1997. There was an additional update of the brochure in 2000.

# 1. Background

## *Other Plans*

Besides these comprehensive planning efforts, Richardson has initiated other specialized studies over the years, with topics ranging from infrastructure to economic development.

## *Master Transportation Plan*

The City's first Master Street Plan was adopted in April 1957. Since then, the plan has been periodically updated to reflect changes in important roadway alignments, and to notify developers, landowners and citizens of proposed thoroughfare improvements. The updated Master Transportation Plan consists of a map that represents road widths and general alignments; a transit plan, which depicts existing and proposed commuter rail lines and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes; and a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which depicts the City's planned network of cycling trails and walking pathways. The updated Master Transportation Plan will support the Future Land Use Plan as presented in the Transportation Element of this plan.

## *Vacant Land Studies*

In 1982 and 1984, the Plan Commission undertook studies to analyze the development capabilities of the vacant land along the northern City limits and in the far northeastern sector of the City. The result of both studies was a set of findings that served to clarify the perspective from which the Commission would view future development proposals and zoning requests in these areas.

These Vacant Land Studies consisted of data gathering and analyses to support the observations and findings. The studies were limited to the areas described above and were not developed with the assistance of public input from residents or the development community. Recognizing the advantages of managing growth on a City-wide basis, the Plan Commission and City Council decided to expand the scope of these studies to include the entire community, which led to the development of the Comprehensive Planning Guide that was completed in 1988.

## *Transit-Oriented Development Planning Efforts*

In 2000, prior to the opening of Richardson's DART rail stations, the City began examining the potential for development and redevelopment near the five planned rail stations. The efforts began with a broad look at the entire corridor; subsequent studies were more specific and detailed.

During the summer of 2001, the City engaged the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to conduct a panel study of the Richardson portion of the DART light rail corridor. The weeklong intensive study brought in real estate, development, transportation and economic professionals from across the country. At the end of the week, the panel presented its findings to the Richardson City Council and community. A report of its findings and recommendations was published a few months later.

In 2002, the City of Richardson hired professional consultants to further refine the ULI Panel Study and to create area plans for the City's three southern rail stations—Spring Valley, Arapaho Center,

# 1. Background

and the Main Street station, which has subsequently been deleted from the Plan. In addition, a market analysis was conducted to designate the amount and type of development each of the stations could support through the year 2020.

Since the publication of the market analysis and station area studies, the City of Richardson has rezoned the area surrounding the Spring Valley station for transit-oriented development through Planned Development regulations and design guidelines. The Spring Valley Station District zoning was adopted in August 2004 and amended in January 2007. Currently a mixed use redevelopment plan is under construction on approximately 30 acres east of the rail line.

## ***Retail Study of Underperforming and Vacant Retail Areas***

In the fall of 2001, the City of Richardson joined with two other neighboring first-ring suburbs, Plano and Carrollton, to look at a common concern—underperforming retail centers. In addition to staff from each city, participants included consultants and a committee of local stakeholders—board/commission members, business owners, and representatives from the real estate and development communities. The report looked at current trends and best practices in retail development, evaluated prototypical sites in each city, and established common implementation strategies.

## ***Capital Improvements***

Many of the capital improvements undertaken by the City have been made possible through bond programs. Since the mid-1970s, a number of significant projects, including storm drainage enhancements, water and sewer improvements, street and traffic projects, and the construction or expansion of community facilities such as the Library and City Hall, park facilities, recreation centers, and fire and police stations, have been accomplished through bond program funding. The most recent bond election was held in May of 2006. Another is tentatively planned for May 2009.

## ***Park Plan***

The City's Parks and Recreation Department revises the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* every five years, with the last update completed in May 2003. The report consists of a history of the park system in Richardson, goals and objectives, an inventory of existing facilities, and a projection of needs through 2008. It also includes a series of maps outlining existing and proposed park sites and recreational facilities. The Parks and Recreation Department has also developed plans focused on specific facilities, including Breckinridge Park, Huffhines Recreation Center, the City's trail system, and Heights Park and Recreation Center. An update of the plan will begin in 2009.

In addition to the City's *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*, the Parks and Recreation Department has been actively involved in regional park and open space planning efforts, such as the Six City Trail System and the North Central Texas Council of Governments' pedestrian and bicycle planning efforts.



# 1. Background

## *Water and Wastewater Plans*

The City's water distribution and storage plans are discussed most recently in a January 2006 document prepared by Black & Veatch Corporation, which looked at the 825 Pressure Zone and Eastside Pump Station. This study, coupled with a study completed in 1999, provides a clear perspective of the City-wide water distribution and storage system. The reports discuss, analyze and make recommendations regarding existing and projected conditions from normal wear and tear on the existing facilities and show the respective cost estimates and comparisons for future improvements to the City's water system.

Richardson's wastewater (i.e., sanitary sewer) collection and treatment system has been examined in a number of studies since 2000. Each has focused on reducing inflow and infiltration within the individual drainage basins. The results from these studies were compiled to establish an up-to-date priority list for repairs and/or improvements to the City's wastewater collection infrastructure.

In 2006, a wastewater capacity study was initiated for the Cottonwood Creek sewer trunk system to ensure future development in the northern part of the system could be accommodated. Results showed that there is adequate expansion capacity, but definitive results will require wet-weather data for final verification.

# Demographics

## Chapter 2



City of Richardson, Texas

2009 Comprehensive Plan

# *Demographics*

Richardson has evolved into a well-rounded city that combines residential and employment activity with amenities such as parks and educational opportunities. The City has always been a collection of neighborhoods. Beginning in the early part of the 20th century with the opening of Collins Radio, Richardson's role in electronics and telecommunications was determined and employment grew as these industries flourished. With a daytime population that is second only to the Dallas Central Business District, Richardson is not simply a "bedroom suburb" and as the remaining vacant land is developed over the next 20 to 30 years, both population and employment are projected to grow.

## **Population**

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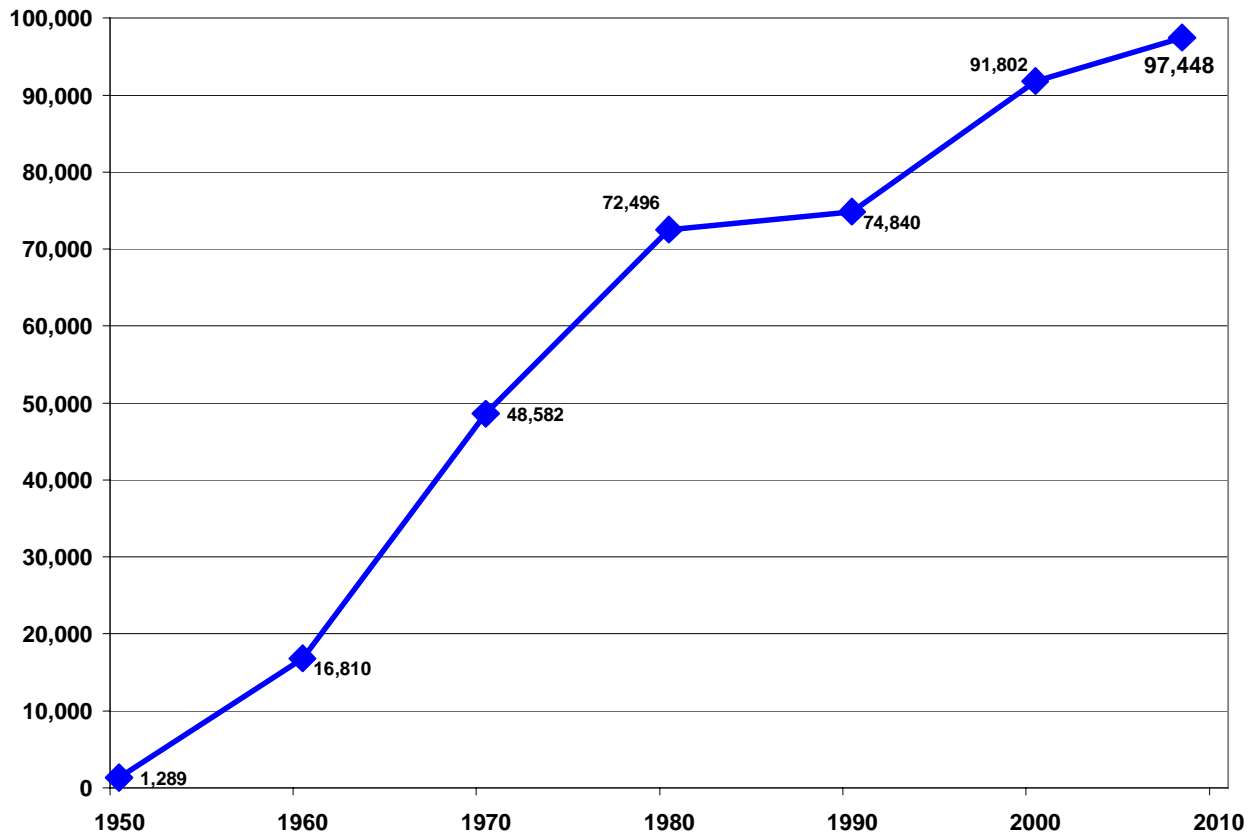
While Richardson's population was relatively stable between 1910 and 1950, during the 1960s and 1970's the City was one of the fastest-growing communities in Texas. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s population growth leveled off, but with the telecom boom of the late 1990s and the development of the Breckinridge area, the "panhandle" sector of Richardson, the City's population reached 91,802 persons as of the 2000 Census. Since 2000, Richardson has continued to grow steadily with the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) estimating the City's population at 97,488 as of January 1, 2008.

Richardson's average owner-occupied household size of 2.74 persons is below the D/FW regional average of 2.88. The City's average renter-occupied household size of 2.32 persons is also below the 2.41 regional average. Overall, however, household size has been decreasing—from 3.69 persons per household in Richardson in 1960, to 2.59 persons per household in Richardson and 2.70 persons per household in the region in 2000.

In order to fully understand the character of Richardson and the future needs of the community, it is important to understand the population profile of the City and its projected future population growth.

## 2. Demographics

*Chart 2.1. Population Growth*



*Decennial population: US Census Bureau*

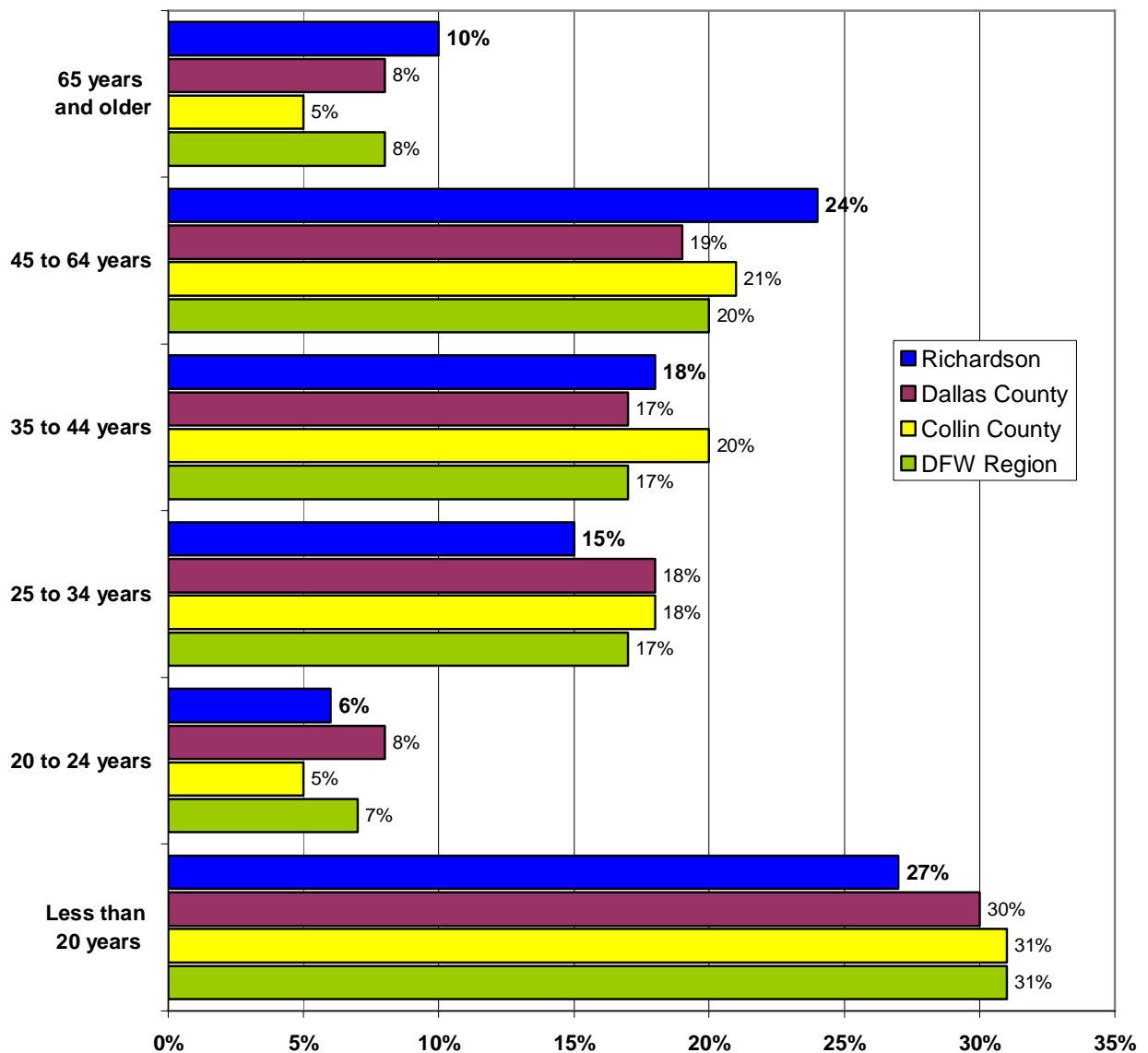
*2008 population: NCTCOG estimate*

## 2. Demographics

### Age

Richardson's population tends to be older than the rest of Dallas County and the D/FW Region. Richardson and the DFW Region have similar percentages of residents between the ages of 25 and 44 (33% in Richardson and 34% for the region). At the same time, the number of residents 45 and over is significantly higher in Richardson (35% in Richardson and 28% for the Region). For this reason Richardson's median age (35.8 years old) is higher than the Region's (32.1 years old).

*Chart 2.2. Comparison of Age Distribution of Population, 2000 Census*

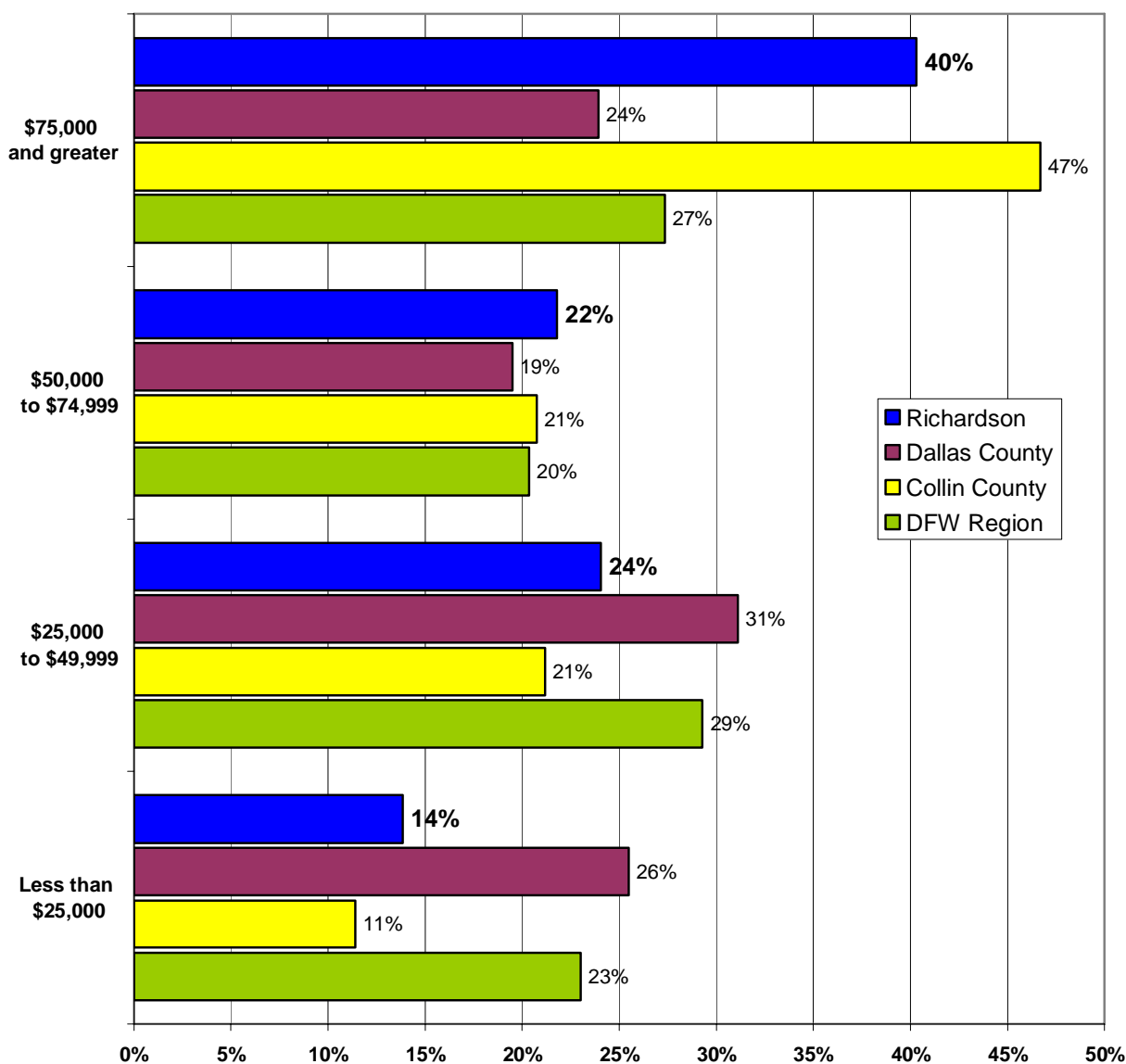


## 2. Demographics

### *Income*

In terms of household income, Richardson has distinctive characteristics. The 2000 Census indicates that 62% of the households in Richardson have average annual incomes that are greater than \$50,000, compared to 43% of Dallas County households. Further, while 26% of the households in Dallas County have average annual incomes under \$25,000, only 14% of the households in Richardson are included in this category. Richardson's median income in 2000 was \$62,392, compared to Dallas County's \$43,324 and the D/FW regional median income of \$47,418.

*Chart 2.3. Comparison of Income Distribution of Population, 2000 Census*

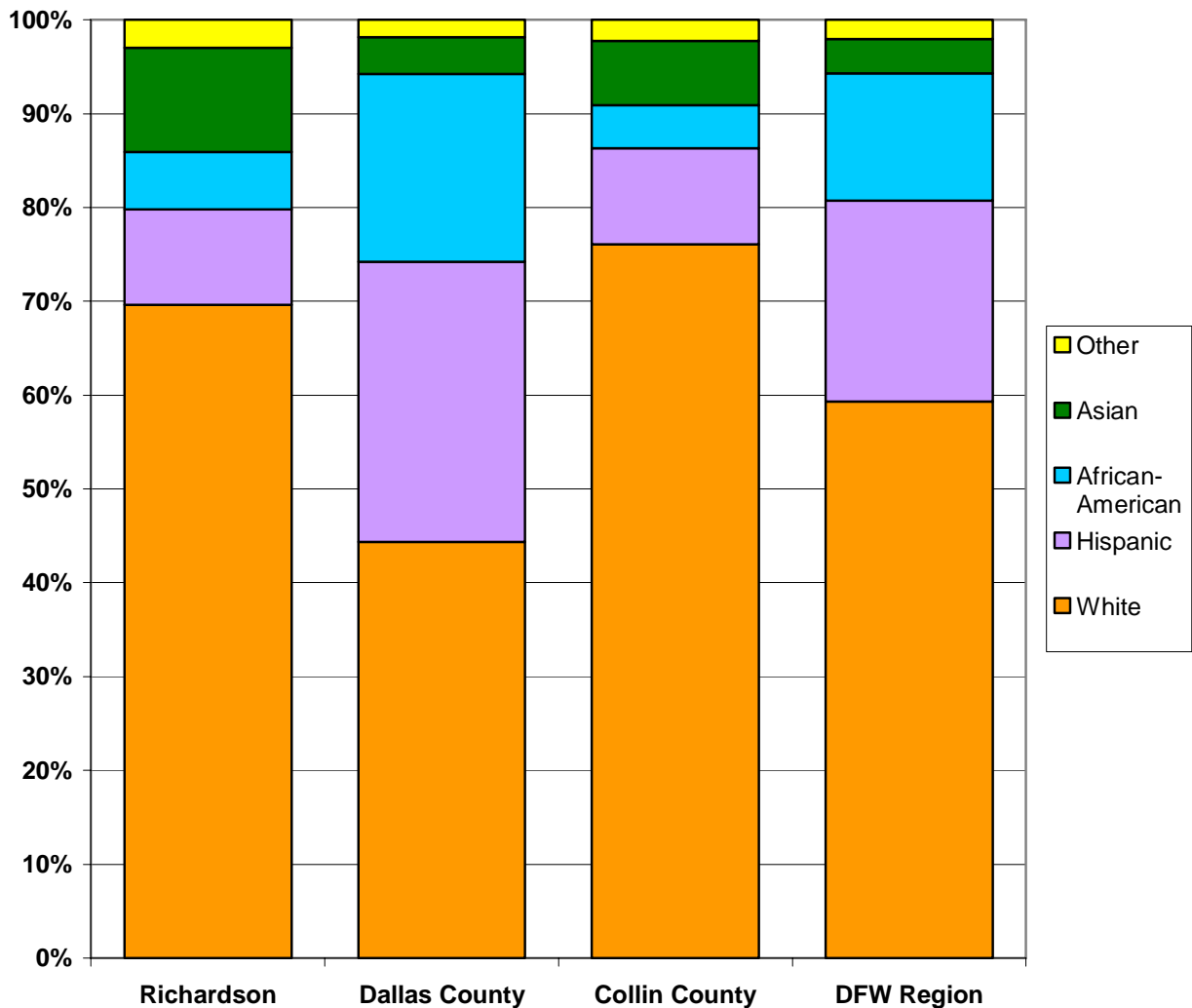


## 2. Demographics

### *Ethnicity*

With respect to the ethnic characteristics of the City's population, the 2000 Census indicates that Richardson is comprised primarily of people who consider themselves Caucasian, with other ethnic groups representing slightly more than 24% of the population. This percentage has increased from 17% (13,148 persons) in 1990, to the 2000 Census estimate of 22,369 persons, which indicates that the City is becoming more diverse in the ethnic makeup of its population. The population of other ethnic groups in Richardson consists of 6.2% African-American, 11.7% Asian, and 4.1% Other. The 2000 Hispanic population of Richardson was estimated at 10.3% of the total population (9,420 persons).

*Chart 2.4. Comparison of Ethnic Distribution of Population, 2000 Census*

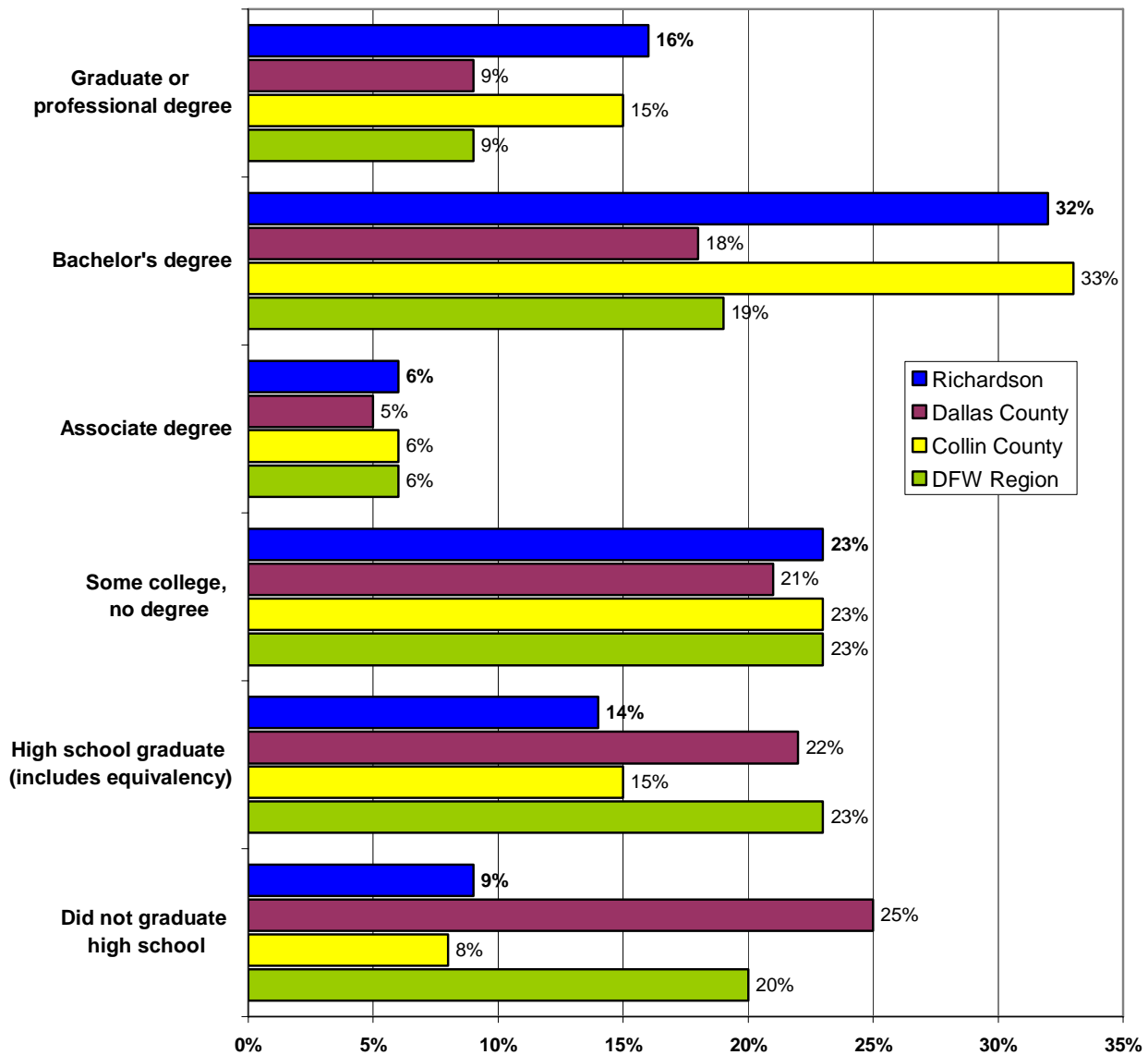


## 2. Demographics

### Education

Richardson's residents have attained relatively high levels of education. The 2000 Census indicates that 38% of adults have graduated from college, with an additional 16% having a graduate or professional degree. These figures are well above Dallas County's 23% of adults with college degrees and 9% who have advanced degrees.

*Chart 2.5. Comparison of Educational Attainment Distribution of Population, 2000 Census*



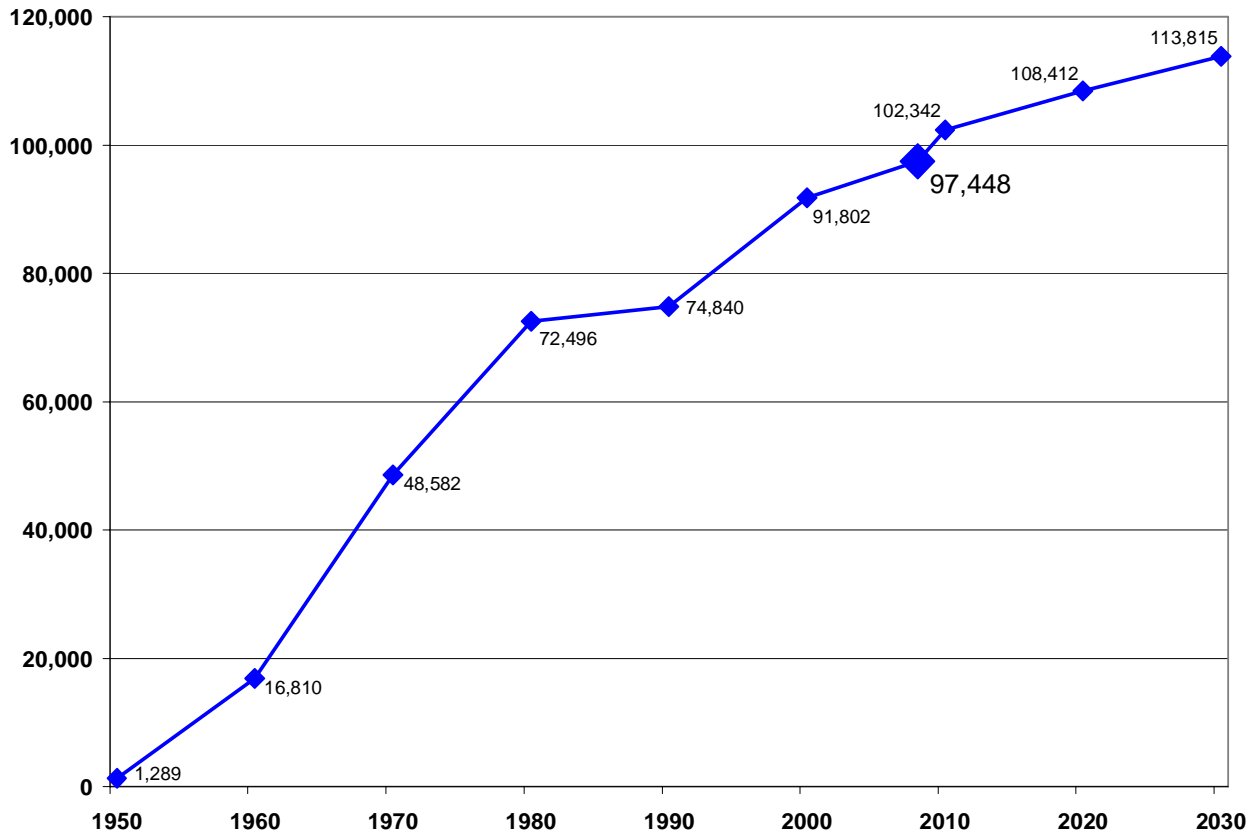


## 2. Demographics

### *Population Projections*

Population growth is projected for the region on a regular basis by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), which then distributes the projected growth among individual cities based on land use allocations and other factors. The latest NCTCOG population projections indicate growth through the year 2030. Richardson's population is projected to be 102,342 persons by the year 2010, 108,412 persons by the year 2020, and 113,815 persons by the year 2030.

*Chart 2.6. Population Growth and Projection*



## 2. Demographics

### **Employment**

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Richardson's economy is based on both the employment of its residents and the jobs generated within its boundaries for people who may live outside the community. The City's ability to generate income, sales, services and employment opportunities helps support the growth, vitality and future sustainability of the City. The nature and extent of the City's current economic resources are important as they influence the manner in which the City continues to grow and mature.

#### ***Labor Force***

The City's residents work in a variety of industries, primarily in professional occupations. As of January 2005, over 45% of the City's residents were in management and related occupations, while over 40% were in service, sales, and office occupations. The remaining 15% of residents worked in jobs ranging from construction and maintenance to manufacturing and transportation.

Unemployment rates in Richardson have historically been relatively low. While the unemployment rate for Richardson rose to 5.6% in 2002, it has steadily fallen. The average unemployment rate for Richardson from January 2007 to July 2008 was 3.8%. The City's unemployment rate tends to be generally lower than the average rates for Dallas and Collin Counties, which were 4.6% and 4.0%, respectively, during the same period.

#### ***City Businesses and Employment***

As of January 2005, over 7,000 businesses and 110,000 employees operated within the city. 140 of the City's businesses employed at least 100 persons. Of these larger businesses, almost 23% were in the information/technical services sector and almost 20% were in the retail/wholesale trade sector.

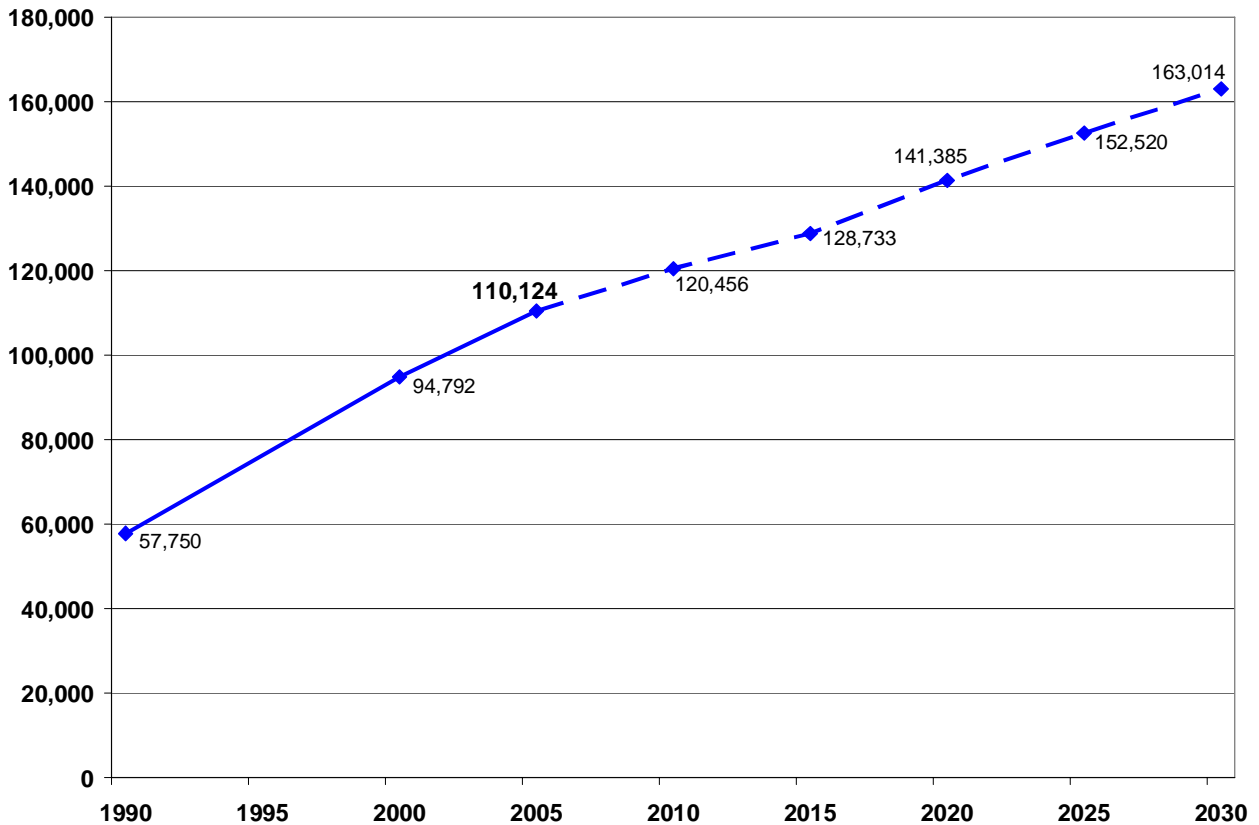
## 2. Demographics

### *Future Employment*

Future employment levels in Richardson can be projected as a function of the amount of land that has been allocated for various types of land uses.

NCTCOG has projected an increase in the City's employment base to 120,456 jobs by the year 2010, 141,385 jobs by 2020, and 163,014 jobs by 2030. As with its population projections, the NCTCOG's employment projections are based on several factors—the anticipated future land use mix, densities and acreages as shown on the City's Future Land Use Plan, current employment figures, and the allocation of regional employment. These projections continue to make the City of Richardson second in the region's total employment base through 2030, behind only the Dallas Central Business District.

*Chart 2.7. Employment Growth and Projection*



# Land Use

## Chapter 3



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**

# *Land Use*

Planning for a city's land use is one of the primary roles of local government, balancing the needs of the population for homes, employment, entertainment, education, recreation, cultural enrichment, and shopping with the preservation and enhancement of the community's natural resources and features. Richardson's previous Future Land Use Plans guided the City's growth from farming community to high-tech corridor. A new Future Land Use Plan has been formulated as a component of this Comprehensive Plan based on Richardson's existing land use patterns and an examination of current issues. The Plan can be used by the City to improve the connectivity, cohesiveness, inclusiveness, and long-term sustainability and quality of the entire community.

The Future Land Use Plan (Map 3B) is the "blueprint" for the future physical development of the City and for its long-term sustainability as a "full life-cycle" community that meets the needs of an evolving, diverse population. The Plan considers important land use issues such as compatibility and intensity, identifies the best uses for the City's remaining undeveloped land, acknowledges special areas within the City such as its anticipated transit villages and its original downtown area, and integrates land use assumptions with multi-modal transit/mobility options throughout the City.

## *Land Use Compatibility*

Traditionally, residential land uses (that is, neighborhoods where people live) have been isolated from nonresidential land uses (places where people work and shop) for quality-of-life, safety and property valuation purposes. Current studies and trends, however, indicate that certain residential and nonresidential land uses are actually more sustainable, valuable and desirable when integrated into the same area and in closer proximity to each other. For example, a variety of medium- and high-density residential dwelling units (such as apartments, townhouses and condominiums), which are well integrated with retail, office and entertainment uses, can function as a cohesive "live/work/socialize" unit. In this instance, the various land uses are not only compatible; but also mutually beneficial due to their proximity.

Not all types of land uses can easily be combined, however. Heavy commercial and industrial businesses often need to be separated from residential areas due to their operational characteristics, size, noise, odors, traffic generation and other factors. When land uses which are not compatible are located adjacent to one another, buffers or transition areas can help to minimize the adverse affects. These transitions and buffers can range from simple landscaping strips to screening walls or other manmade devices, depending upon the level of buffering or screening required. Also, a reasonable degree of auto and pedestrian connectivity can often be incorporated into neighboring land uses to ensure that adjacent activities are mutually beneficial and factors such as safety, security and property value stability are not compromised.

## 3. Land Use

Through the years, Richardson has required reasonable buffering and transitions between residential and business areas. The continuation of this practice should ensure the long-term protection and stability of the City's residential neighborhoods, as well as the long-term sustainability of its business areas. Additional emphasis on pedestrian connectivity should be considered where opportunities arise.

### *Land Use Intensity / Residential Density*

The land use term "intensity" refers to the amount or degree of activity or development that occurs on a given site or within a given area. This is generally referred to as "density" in the discussion of residential areas, and is usually expressed as the number of dwelling units per acre of land.

"Intensity" is a more common term for nonresidential areas, and is usually expressed in terms of the allowable (or desirable) building square footage relative to the square footage of the property (i.e., the ratio of the building floor area to the area of the lot on which the building is located). Similar to residential density regulations, nonresidential intensity regulations are intended to ensure that appropriate levels of development occur with respect to adjacent land areas.

With the advent of new types of land uses and development patterns, such as Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) and mixed-use districts, the City should continue to use the Future Land Use Plan (Map 3B) as well as the vision statements herein to allow, and even encourage, these innovative developments in appropriate areas of the City.

### **The Big Picture—A Balanced Land Use Pattern**

One of the secrets of a full life-cycle community is providing opportunities for people to live, work, play, learn and grow within their home town. A city should strive not only to accommodate the basic needs of daily life, such as water and police/fire protection, but also to provide places that are suited to a full range of other daily activities. Richardson's existing land use (Map 3A) provides for all of the activities needed for a sustainable population and employment base.

While nearly half of the City's land area is utilized for residential uses, the remainder is divided among employment, institutional, shopping and recreational uses. A limited quantity of vacant land is still available for new development, but the City also has numerous neighborhoods and non-residential districts that represent opportunities for redevelopment and rebirth in response to the changing economic and lifestyle needs of its citizenry.

## 3. Land Use

### ***Single-Family***

Over forty-five percent of Richardson's land has been developed as single-family neighborhoods. These neighborhoods form the foundation of the community and each has a distinct character influenced by the time period in which it was built and the people who now call it home.



Although the land available for new traditional single-family neighborhoods is limited, other housing alternatives such as townhome and patio home developments are becoming more prevalent as the market responds to changing demands. These new developments offer alternatives to people who are not interested in taking care of a lawn but do want to own their home—people with a busy/active lifestyle, people who travel frequently, empty nesters, and retirees. In addition, recent developments have taken advantage of redevelopment and infill opportunities. (see also Neighborhoods)

### ***Multi-Family***

There are multi-family developments located throughout the City, accounting for five percent of the City's land area. They exist in various formats for diverse life stages and lifestyles.



Most of the multi-family units recently approved have been at or near Richardson's rail stations to take advantage of the adjacency to transit. They also tend to be within mixed-use developments, with retail and/or office uses within walking distance or even in the same building.

### ***Retail/Commercial***

Retail/Commercial uses in Richardson are located primarily along major transportation corridors. The more intense uses, such as automotive dealerships, are located along the Central Expressway corridor, while traditional retail centers are typically situated adjacent to neighborhoods. The areas surrounding the intersections of Belt Line Road/Plano Road and Coit Road/Campbell Road are home to larger concentrations of retail shops.



The Belt Line Road/Plano Road intersection, a major retail node since the 1970s, has seen redevelopment activity recently, which is expected to spur additional property improvements in the area nearby. (see also *Economic Development*)

## 3. Land Use

### *Office*

While Office uses occupy just seven percent of Richardson's land area, there is almost 14 million square feet of office space currently built in the city. Formats range from neighborhood offices to high-rise buildings. Major employment centers have developed throughout the City adjacent to important roadway corridors and intersections, particularly around Central Expressway north of Campbell Road. As the center of what has become known as the Telecom Corridor<sup>®</sup>, this area has seen diversification and growth in recent years. Development in the vicinity of President George Bush Turnpike began occurring after the opening of this important roadway in 1999. The majority of the vacant land in the city is along the Turnpike, so this area offers the best potential opportunities for significant office development in the future. (see also *Economic Development*)



### *Industrial/Manufacturing*

Industrial/Manufacturing uses, eight percent of the City's land area, are located in several areas of Richardson and vary by scale, character, and age. Small-scale buildings are located south of Main Street and east of Central Expressway in one of the oldest sections of the City. The City's largest concentration of Industrial/Manufacturing uses, primarily in the form of low-rise office/warehouse flex space is in the area east of Central Expressway between Apollo and Campbell Roads is. The most recent additions are located in the northern portion of Richardson. These include facilities east of the intersection of Shiloh Road/Breckinridge Road, in east Richardson, and the TI Wafer Fabrication plant at Renner and Alma Roads, west of Central Expressway. (see also *Economic Development*)



### *Public/Institutional/School*

Land classified as Public/Institutional/School represents nine percent of the City's land area. This broad category includes government facilities, schools, freestanding churches and other religious buildings, and hospitals. (see also *Community Facilities*)

**Government.** From the City Hall/Civic Center and Library to fire and police stations, Richardson has service facilities located throughout the City. Several, such as the Service Center and water pump stations, are not visited by the general public but provide the infrastructure and utilities that keep Richardson moving. Dallas County has two facilities within Richardson—a tax office and a Justice of the Peace Court.





## 3. Land Use

**Schools.** Educational institutions in Richardson provide opportunities for learning from pre-school through post-graduate studies. Two public school districts serve Richardson's population—the Richardson Independent School District (RISD) and the Plano Independent School District (PISD). Students that live in the Dallas County portion of the City attend RISD schools, while students that live in Collin County attend PISD schools. The University of Texas at Dallas started as a research institute in 1961 before becoming part of the University of Texas system in 1969. The school has broadened its programs offering only graduate degrees to developing diverse graduate and undergraduate programs, and is actively seeking status as a First Tier research institution under the University of Texas system.



**Religious Institutions.** Richardson is home to a diverse spiritual community, which includes Christian churches, Islamic mosques, Buddhist temples, and a Jewish synagogue. These religious institutions are located throughout the City; some include private schools.

**Hospitals.** Richardson has two major medical centers. The original Richardson Hospital, now the Richardson Regional Medical Center (RRMC), is located west of Central Expressway on Campbell Road. New RRMC facilities at the President George Bush Turnpike and Renner Road have spurred additional medical and support uses nearby. Plans are to expand the facilities at the Bush Turnpike campus to include additional hospital beds and other health care functions.



### ***Parks/Open Space***

Parks and open space are scattered throughout the City and occupy eleven percent of the City's land area. City of Richardson parks range from neighborhood playgrounds and picnic areas to the Sherrill Park Golf Course and the 417 acre Breckinridge Park. In addition, the Canyon Creek County Club offers members golfing, tennis, and other recreational facilities. An ever-expanding network of public and private trails provide both recreational and transportation opportunities. (see also *Parks and Recreation*)



### ***Transportation/Utilities***

Utility, roadways, and rail corridors are located throughout the City. The roadway system is nearly complete, with only a few remaining links to be built. DART's Red Line has provided service to Richardson since 2002, and the Cotton Belt Line was recently designated on the agency's service plan as a priority corridor (see also *Transportation*). As development and redevelopment occurs in Richardson, the City's existing utility infrastructure may need to be upgraded in certain areas to properly serve the new construction.



## 3. Land Use

### **Future Land Use Plan**

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The Future Land Use Plan (Map 3B) illustrates a potential development concept for the City of Richardson. Because only 8% of the City remains as vacant land, the redevelopment of existing sites is likely to become a more common occurrence, even in the short term. The Future Land Use Plan indicates generalized land uses and their relationships. It is not intended to reflect precise development densities or property dimensions, nor does the Future Land Use Plan constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

#### ***Neighborhood Residential***

Neighborhood Residential is the most prevalent land use classification in Richardson, and includes a variety of single-family housing types available for ownership, from detached single-family homes and patio homes to duplexes and single-family attached homes (townhomes).

#### ***Multi-Family Residential***

Multi-family Residential includes conventional apartment and condominium complexes, as well as senior housing and group quarters.

#### ***Neighborhood Service***

Neighborhood Service includes service-related uses such as retail sales; personal services such as cleaners, barbers and beauty shops; entertainment; recreation; and office uses oriented to the immediate area. Retail centers often contain a major or junior anchor, but may not. Office uses in this category are usually integrated into retail centers, but may include small freestanding office buildings that provide services for the surrounding neighborhood. Some Neighborhood Service districts may include senior housing.

#### ***Community Commercial***

Community Commercial includes retail centers with multiple anchors, mid-rise office, entertainment and hospitality uses. The trade area for these districts extends beyond the immediate neighborhood, sometimes to the City as a whole or even beyond Richardson's boundaries.

#### ***Regional Employment***

Regional Employment districts are generally located along Richardson's highways north of Arapaho Road, and at the intersection of Spring Valley Road and Central Expressway. Higher density development is appropriate in these areas, with the primary use being high-rise office. Secondary uses include retail centers and entertainment venues.

#### ***Office/Industry***

The Office/Industry category designates areas of low- and medium-density office, as well as manufacturing and distribution facilities. Redevelopment is anticipated in low-performing areas to in response to changes in building format and market demand. Higher intensity office uses may be

## 3. Land Use

appropriate at certain locations. Manufacturing and distribution facilities within this classification should be carefully located and designed to minimize their impact on nearby residential uses.

### *Neighborhood Mixed-Use*

Neighborhood Mixed-Use areas are characterized by mixed or multiple land uses occurring within a single development and/or a single building. These districts are typically built around small, pedestrian-friendly blocks and common open space. Uses include various types of residential (single-family and multi-family), retail, personal service, and neighborhood-scale offices. The overall intensity of development within Neighborhood Mixed-Use is generally low to medium depending upon surrounding land uses and the transportation infrastructure serving the area.

### *Transit Village*

Transit Villages are nodes of mixed or multiple land uses within a development and/or a single building, often in a vertical or “stacked” format, built around small-scale pedestrian-friendly blocks. These districts are located at each of the City’s rail transit stations. Uses include medium- to high-density residential (townhomes and multi-family), retail, entertainment, hospitality and offices. The intensity of development within Transit Villages can range from medium to high based on the proximity of the rail transit facility, the adjacent roadway infrastructure, and surrounding land uses.

### *Public/Semi-Public School*

Public/Semi-Public sites are located throughout the City and include hospitals and major municipal or other governmental facilities. School sites are located throughout the City and include public schools and universities.

### *Parks & Open Space*

Parks & Open Space includes existing and planned parks, open space, recreational facilities, and trail corridors, both publicly and privately owned.

## **Enhancement/Redevelopment Areas**

As a first-tier suburb, Richardson has areas of aging development and infrastructure, several of which are underperforming due to changes in the development market, demographics, technology, or building format. The City has designated these areas as Enhancement/ Redevelopment districts, where reinvestment and redevelopment is encouraged. Further study may be necessary to understand the full potential for redevelopment in each of these areas, which are indicated on the Enhancement/Redevelopment Areas map (Map 3C).

### *Central Expressway*

The property on either side of Central Expressway, extending from Arapaho Road to the southern City limits, is part of the City’s Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district. Enhancement and

## 3. Land Use

redevelopment within this area should include new and renovated office space, upgraded retail centers, and additional hospitality uses (restaurant, hotel, entertainment). Mixed-use development may be appropriate at major intersections and adjacent to the Spring Valley rail transit station.

### *Coit Road*

Development along Coit Road from Arapaho Road to Belt Line Road includes retail and office buildings. This corridor, bordering Dallas, has been affected by market and demographic changes, as well as a predominance of aging structures. Efforts should focus on enhancement and redevelopment. New development will likely be of a similar type, with more modern building formats and site design that respects adjacent neighborhoods.

### *East Arapaho/Collins*

The area bounded by Greenville Avenue, Campbell Road, Plano Road, and Apollo Road is the center of Richardson's Office/Technology district. Much of the area has been challenged in recent years by evolving markets, technology, and user requirements. Redevelopment, enhancement, and building format changes should be considered to address these changes. Mid-rise office uses are appropriate throughout the area and mixed-use buildings with ground-floor retail could be appropriate at key locations, including adjacent to the Arapaho Center rail transit stations.

### *Main Street/Old Town*

This area represents the historic downtown of Richardson. While the City does not have a traditional "Central Business District", the identification and support of this unique area could help strengthen community identity, cohesiveness, and pride. Redevelopment as a pedestrian-oriented district, with a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses preserving the scale and character of the old street grid, is a possibility. Buildings should include small-scale retail uses, such as boutiques, restaurants, specialty stores, and arts and craft shops, in ground level space in buildings with two or more stories. Building height should be limited to three to four stories to enhance the pedestrian character of the district and to respect the proximity of nearby residential neighborhoods.

### *West Arapaho*

The area along Arapaho Road between Central Expressway and Floyd Road includes several retail and low-density office developments, as well as the property north of the City Hall/Civic Center/Library complex. Many of the underperforming commercial properties in this corridor have outlived their usefulness and redevelopment and enhancement efforts should focus on better serving the retail and office needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. Residential uses such as duplexes, townhomes, or senior housing may be appropriate at certain locations, especially adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

## 3. Land Use

### *West Spring Valley*

Along Spring Valley Road, west of Central Expressway, the City is interested in the redevelopment of aging multi-family and retail properties which have become difficult to maintain to minimum property and habitation standards. Alternative uses may include housing, institutional uses, office, select retail activities, or combinations of these uses. Housing may range from duplex and townhome to high-quality multi-family or mixed-use.

### Map Interpretation Guidance

At times, the City will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the Future Land Use Plan (Map 3B). The review of such development proposals should include the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the site and the surrounding area?
- Is the proposed change a better use than that recommended by the *Future Land Use Plan*?
- How does the proposed use impact nearby residential areas? Will the proposed use be compatible with and/or enhance adjacent residential uses?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of intensity, appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare of the community and would it contribute to the City's long-term economic sustainability and well-being?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or that do not appear to meet its general intent) should be reviewed based upon the above questions and should be evaluated on their own merit. A development proposal that appears to be contrary to the Plan could be an improvement over the uses shown for a particular area due to evolving markets, the quality and economic potential of a proposed development, and/or changes in economic trends that occur after the Plan is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City of Richardson, these proposals should be reviewed with the above factors in mind.

## 3. Land Use

### **Vision Statements**

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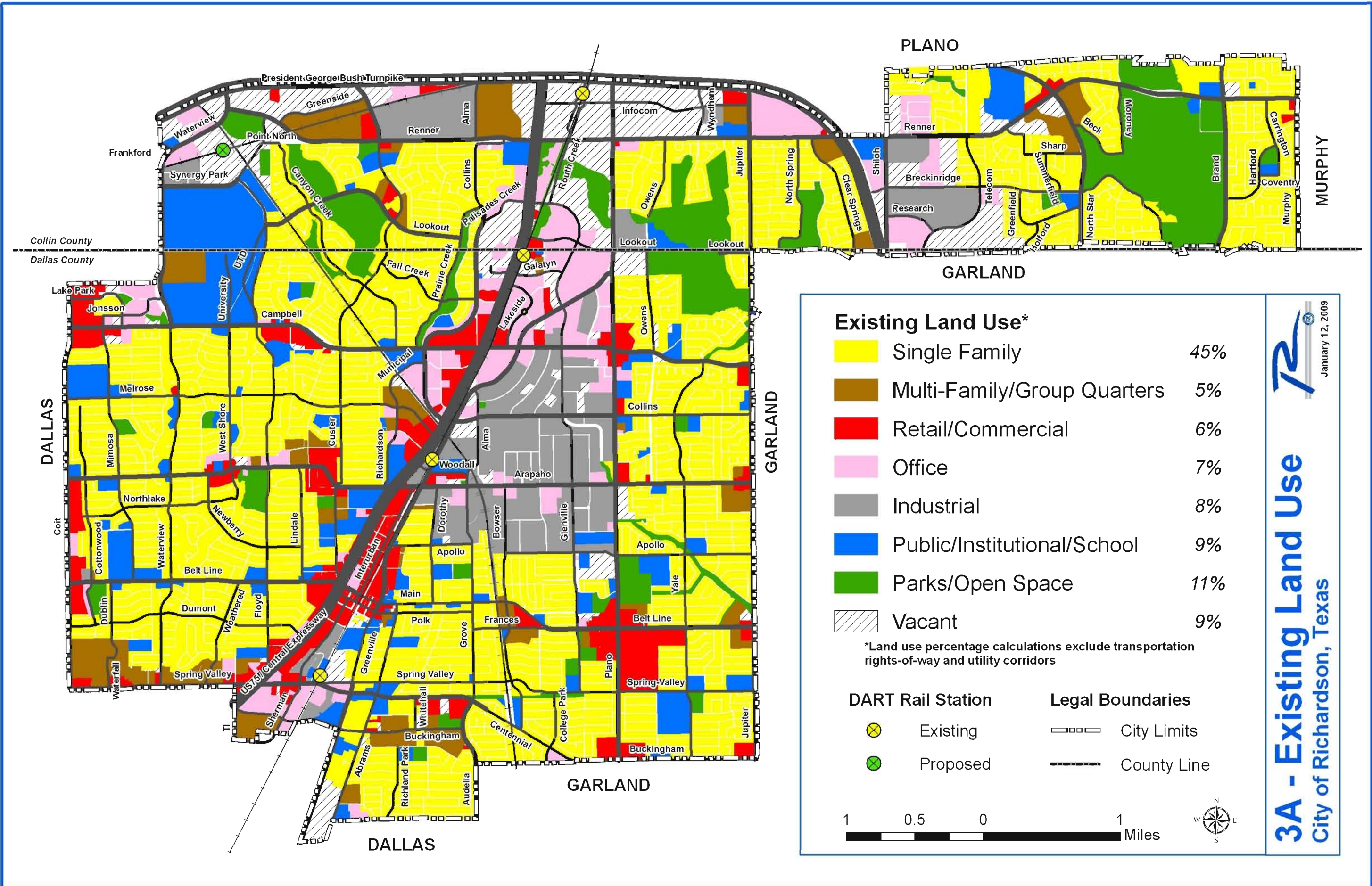
- Encourage the efficient and appropriate use of all land areas by promoting orderly, sustainable, and environmentally responsible physical development.
- Maintain the general mix of residential and non-residential uses that presently exists within the City.
- Encourage development that is aesthetically pleasing and properly oriented in relation to adjacent streets and surrounding properties.

### ***Residential***

- Continue to develop and refine programs designed to maintain, stabilize, and enhance the City's older housing stock.
- Support the development of a variety of housing types in response to the City's changing demographics and lifestyles, with an emphasis on senior housing.
- Consider all housing options in new or infill areas that provide access to transportation, amenities, and services.
- Locate higher-density housing near the City's rail transit stations and major transportation corridors.
- Require that new multi-family developments (ownership and rental) incorporate design and construction techniques that will ensure high-quality, sustainable housing.

### ***Commercial/Employment/Mixed-Use***

- Explore alternative land uses for existing, underutilized commercial, retail, and industrial areas.
- Encourage a mix of retail, office, and service uses in neighborhood commercial centers that supports the area being served and reflects the identity, character, and scale of surrounding residential areas.
- Promote mixed-use developments that are market-supported and located in areas where more intense and diverse types of development are appropriate.



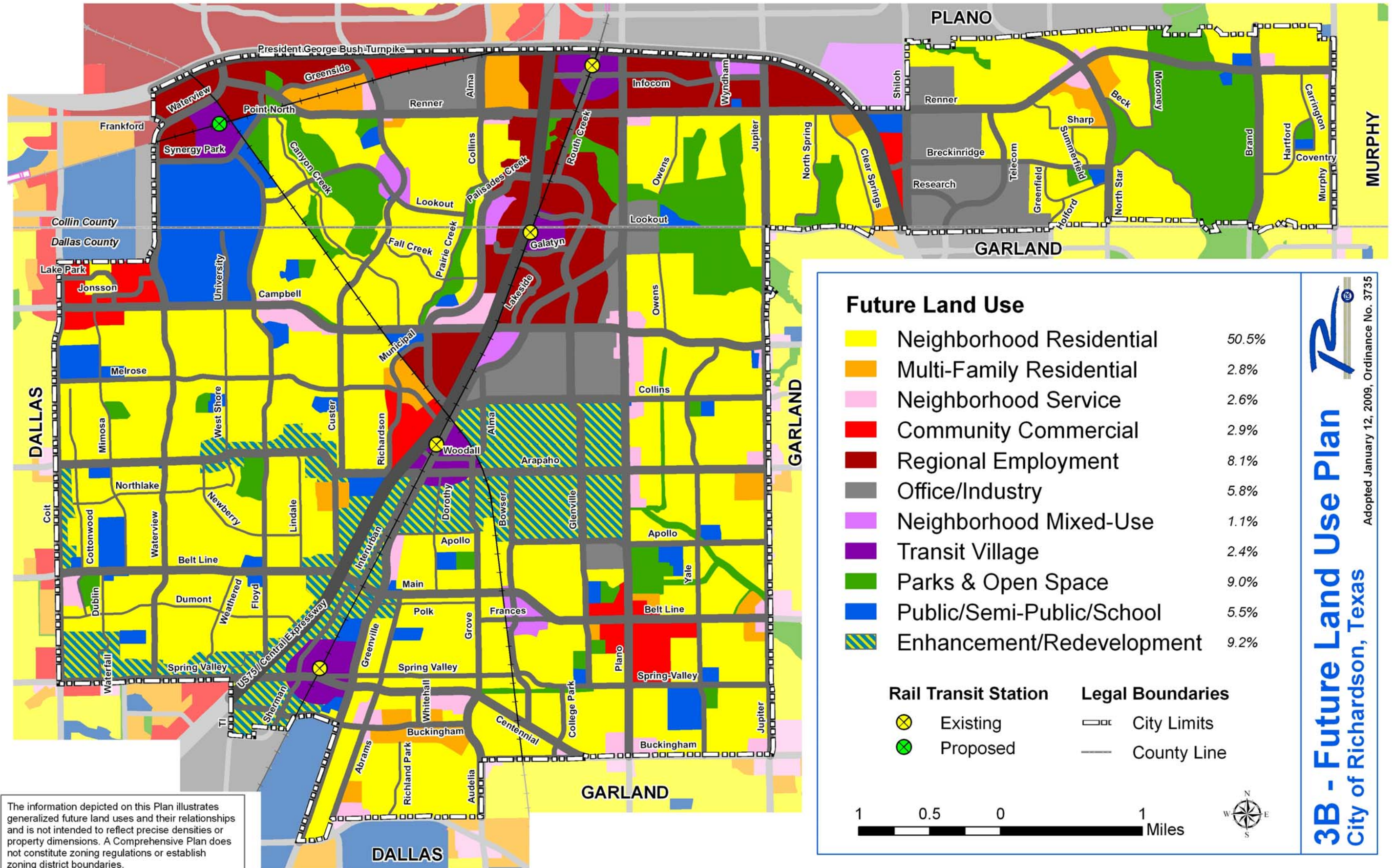
**Existing Land Use\***

	Single Family	45%
	Multi-Family/Group Quarters	5%
	Retail/Commercial	6%
	Office	7%
	Industrial	8%
	Public/Institutional/School	9%
	Parks/Open Space	11%
	Vacant	9%

\*Land use percentage calculations exclude transportation rights-of-way and utility corridors

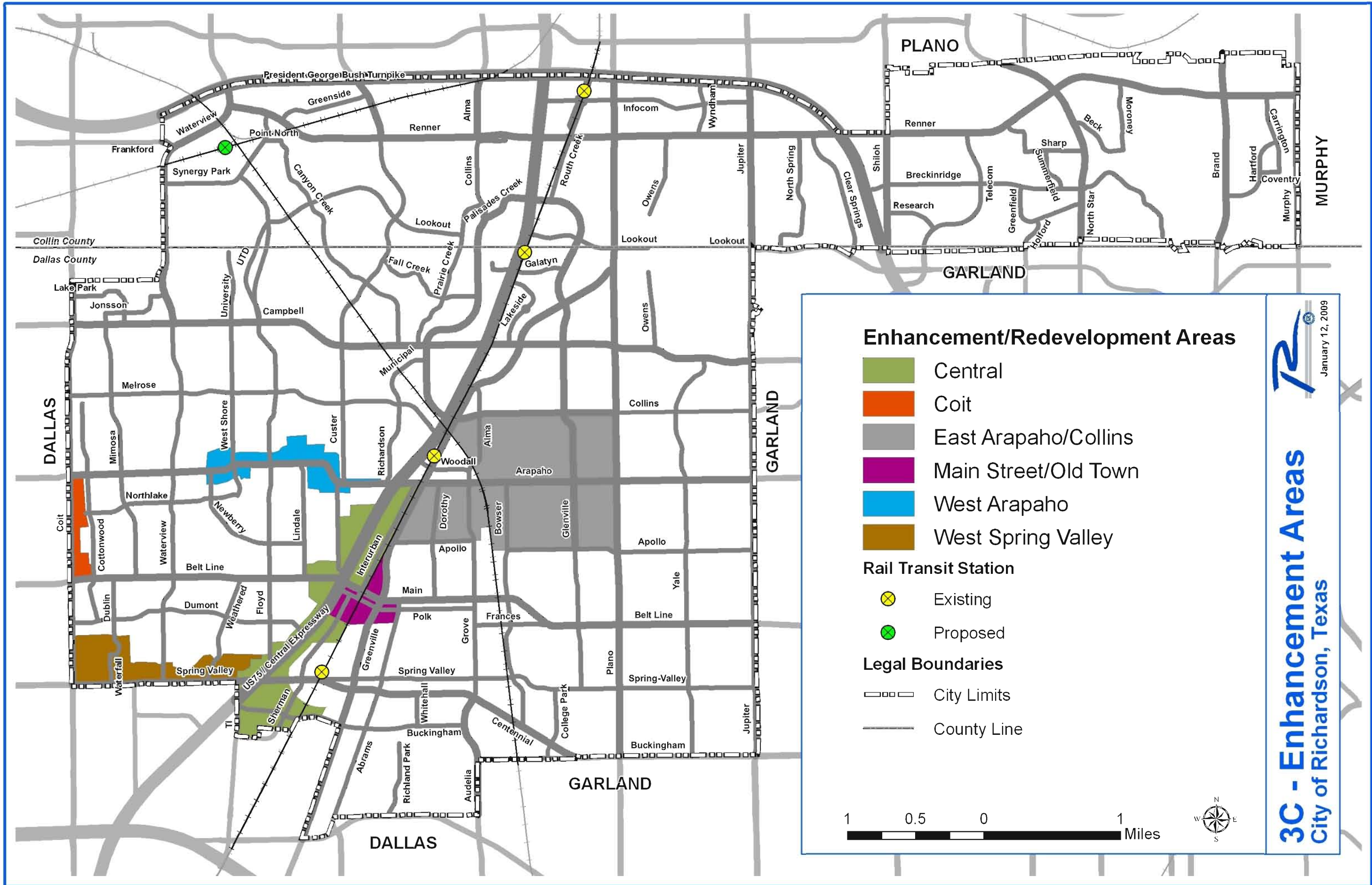
	Existing		City Limits
	Proposed		County Line





The information depicted on this Plan illustrates generalized future land uses and their relationships and is not intended to reflect precise densities or property dimensions. A Comprehensive Plan does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.





**Enhancement/Redevelopment Areas**

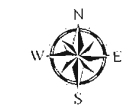
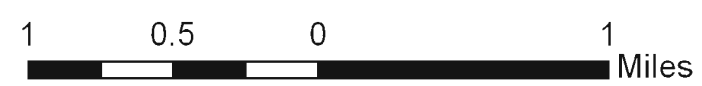
- Central
- Coit
- East Arapaho/Collins
- Main Street/Old Town
- West Arapaho
- West Spring Valley

**Rail Transit Station**

- X Existing
- X Proposed

**Legal Boundaries**

- City Limits
- County Line



# Transportation

## Chapter 4



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**

# Transportation

To be effective, transportation must be safe, convenient and efficient as it moves people, goods, and services to, within, and through the community. Even though the street system carries the majority of the travelers within Richardson, a review of the overall transportation structure must include a variety of system components—from thoroughfares and public transportation to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

## ***Regional Transportation Structure***

*Mobility 2030: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan for North Central Texas* is the guiding document for all major transportation-related improvements in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area. The plan, published by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), calls for significant transportation infrastructure improvements in several areas: rail and bus transit, freeways and toll roads, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) and express lanes, arterial roadways, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The Plan was developed by superimposing population and employment projections through the year 2030 onto the regional transportation network.



In 2007, vehicle travel within the region topped 151 million miles, up from 102 million in 1990. The plan predicts an increase to 241 million by 2030; therefore, congestion mitigation and traffic management strategies are important elements of *Mobility 2030*. This regional transportation plan is also used as a guide for allocating federal, state, and local funds for transportation and air quality improvements.

## **The Master Transportation Plan**

The City's Master Transportation Plan (MTP) is Richardson's version of *Mobility 2030*, with special consideration built in for local conditions and goals. The alignment and classification of streets should be consistent between the Richardson MTP and *Mobility 2030* for roadways shown on both plans in order for the most effective transportation system to be developed. While some of the major features in the MTP are derived from a regional need standpoint, most of the Plan describes facilities that are important



## 4. Transportation

and necessary for Richardson and the immediate surrounding area. The regional plan does, however, serve an important function in the coordination of arterial street alignments across municipal boundaries.

If the goal of the MTP is to provide an efficient transportation system for the future population and employment of Richardson, it must be closely coordinated with the Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan and improvements to the transportation infrastructure should be programmed in conjunction with the development and redevelopment of land within the community.

The purpose of the MTP is to:

- Indicate the locations and alignments of Richardson's existing and future transportation facilities
- Classify the roadways based on their function and connectivity
- List the existing and proposed cross-section of each roadway
- Facilitate the acquisition of necessary rights-of-way as development on adjacent property occurs
- Establish the vision for Mobility 2030 within Richardson

The Plan must be continuously monitored, evaluated, and updated as necessary to respond to changing conditions; however, the foundation of the MTP will continue to be the arterial grid system, just as it was under the original 1961 Master Street Plan.

### *Thoroughfare System*

Richardson's functional roadway classification system recognizes that streets are part of a larger network serving travelers with diverse origins, destinations, and purposes. The functional classifications are based on characteristics common to roadways within each category. The primary role of a given street may range from providing mobility for through traffic and major traffic flows to providing access to adjacent properties. Each classification is described based on roadway continuity and daily traffic volumes.



Richardson's road system is divided into four general classifications based on function, with sub-categories that further define street capacity. The functional classifications are depicted on Map 4A and the existing and planned cross-sections for specific roadways are listed in the Master Transportation table. Sections and construction specifications for each are detailed in the City's roadway design standards.

Modifying existing streets to conform to the design standards for all the functional classifications may not be practical or even possible in developed areas. Where residential areas are bisected by

## 4. Transportation

major roadways, alternative cross-sections may be required to assure that neighborhood integrity is preserved and adequate traffic access and efficiency is provided.

### *Roadway Classifications*

- **Freeways/Tollways** move a large amount of traffic with little or no emphasis on access to adjacent land and are characterized by limitations on driveways and intersections. This classification is reserved for multi-lane, divided roads with no at-grade intersections. These roadways serve large volumes of high-speed traffic and long trips.
  - In the Metroplex area, Freeways/Tollways may carry 250,000 vehicles per day or more.
- **Arterials** bring traffic to and from freeways/tollways and serve large numbers of vehicle trips within and through the City. Arterials interconnect the principal traffic generators within the City (major retail or employment centers, for example, with large residential areas), and connect to surrounding communities. They handle long trips between different parts of the community and form a reasonably integrated system City-wide. The length of a trip on an arterial street normally exceeds one mile.
  - Arterials typically carry between 15,000 and 60,000 vehicles per day.
- **Collectors** serve internal traffic movements within a specific area of the city, such as a subdivision, and connect the area with the arterial system. Major Collectors may handle relatively long trips, carrying traffic for several miles from a traffic generator or connecting to the next Arterial roadway. Minor Collectors and Neighborhood Collectors typically do not handle long trips, so they need not be continuous for any great length.
  - Major Collectors typically carry between 5,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day.
  - Minor Collectors typically carry between 2,500 and 8,000 vehicles per day.
  - Neighborhood Collectors typically carry between 1,000 and 4,000 vehicles per day.
- **Local streets** provide access to adjacent land. These streets make up a large percentage of the total street mileage in the City, but carry a small proportion of the total vehicle miles of travel.

The standards used in the design of Richardson thoroughfares are based on the regional transportation plan, but have been modified to address local conditions. The City complies with the minimum safety and design criteria established by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and all public works projects within the City are constructed using the *Standard Specifications for Public Works Construction, North Central Texas*, published by the NCTCOG and amended by the City.

## 4. Transportation

### *Connectivity*

Land planners and developers typically provide vehicular access and connections between land uses, but pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is also part of a livable and sustainable community. Linking neighborhoods with other parts of the community, including shopping districts and entertainment venues, not only helps with the economic vitality of those areas, but also promotes community cohesion and inclusiveness. Designing developments with a focus on connectivity can encourage physical activity, make travel more convenient, provide additional opportunities for social interaction, and improve environmental responsiveness. The challenge is to connect individual developments to encourage people to walk or bike between them (instead of driving). Such connections contribute to feelings of belonging and inclusiveness among neighbors and help to address concerns about the issues expressed above—rising energy and gasoline costs, lack of physical fitness in the general population, and environmental impacts.

As the development of Richardson's remaining vacant land occurs, and as properties redevelop in the future, interconnectedness should be encouraged through increased pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to schools, retail areas, transit villages, entertainment and cultural venues, parks and places of employment.

### *Transit*

Richardson has been a member city of Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) since its founding in 1983. The City has been active in the formulation and implementation of the agency's plans and programs, including bus service, which became available in 1984, and rail transit system, which has begun operating in 1996.

Light rail service arrived in Richardson in 2002, when the Spring Valley, Arapaho Center, Galatyn Park, and Bush Turnpike stations opened. Light rail provides access north to Plano and south to Dallas. In addition

to adding a new option for commuters, the rail stations have provided an opportunity for a new land use in the form of Transit-Oriented Development, as discussed in the Land Use element.

DART's 2030 Transit Service Plan, adopted in November 2006, included the Cotton Belt Line as part of the future North Crosstown Corridor. This high priority line will connect Richardson to D/FW Airport, with service to Addison, Dallas, Carrollton, and Irving. There are also plans for an extension of the line southwest into Fort Worth at some time in the future. A station at the University of Texas at Dallas (in Richardson) is being promoted by the City and the University. The City of Richardson, UTD, and DART are all working together to establish a master plan for this station area.



## 4. Transportation

In addition to rail service, DART provides bus service in multiple formats throughout the City. Richardson is served by twelve regular bus routes, a DART On-Call zone, an E-Shuttle in the Galatyn/Palisades area, and Paratransit services for riders with special physical needs. DART evaluates its bus program, overall and within Richardson specifically, on a regular basis to ensure a high level of service for riders.

### Moving Everyone Forward

#### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities*

Alternative forms of mobility are becoming increasingly important. Society is becoming more aware of healthier lifestyles that involve walking, running and bicycling and the rising cost of energy and gasoline is helping to fuel the trend toward other mobility options.

The network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Richardson is expanding. These facilities provide an alternative to motor-vehicles, offering a number of recreational opportunities in the City today and even more options throughout the region in the future.

They also contribute toward making the City a more livable and sustainable community (see discussion in the Land Use element).

- Sidewalks are required along all streets and are installed during property development or redevelopment.
- On-street bicycle routes have been suggested along certain city streets.
- The trail system includes pathways along creeks, roadways, and the DART rail right-of-way.

(Additional information on the City's trail system can be found in the *Parks and Recreation* element.)

#### *Traffic Operations*

In addition to planning for future transportation needs, Richardson is on the cutting edge of traffic management in its proactive efforts to monitor and respond to the City's ever-changing traffic conditions. Traffic signals are synchronized to optimize traffic flow and efficiency and adjusted throughout the day to respond to shifting travel demand patterns. The City's Traffic Management Center allows real-time observation of intersections and remote adjustment of signal timing in response to accidents, unusual traffic congestion, or other unexpected situations.



## 4. Transportation

### *Freight Rail Service*

Richardson is served by two freight rail lines. The Kansas City Southern Railroad runs through Richardson from northwest to southeast and the Cotton Belt Railroad cuts across the far northwestern corner of the City. The Cotton Belt right-of-way is owned by DART and is expected to be converted in the future to accommodate passenger service as well as freight service. No rail terminal facilities are located within the City.



### *Air Service*

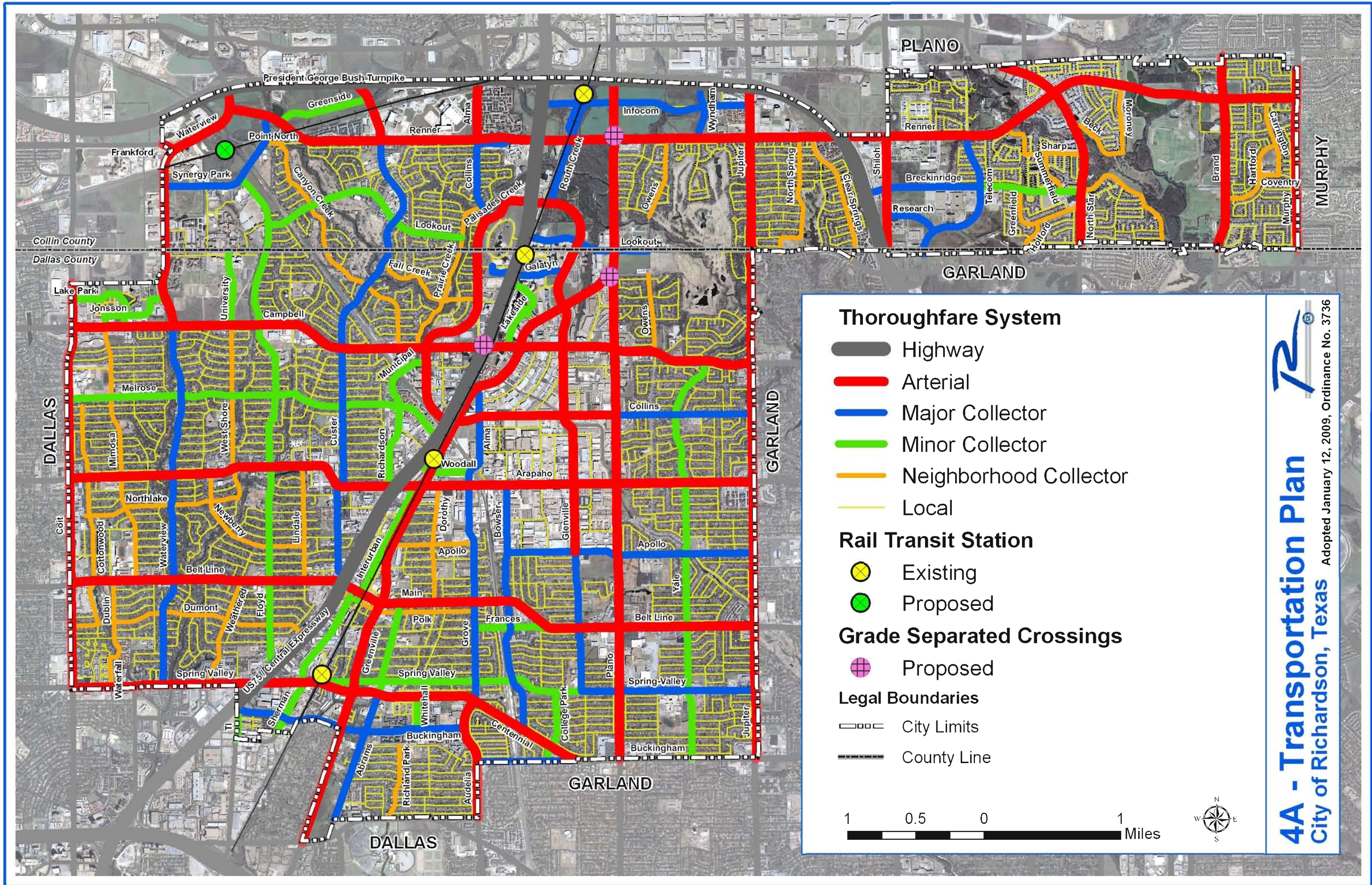
There are no airport facilities within Richardson. Air service is available at the municipal/corporate airport in Addison, 7.5 miles west of Richardson; Love Field, 15.5 miles to the southwest; the Collin County Regional Airport in McKinney, 18 miles to the north; and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, 23 miles west of the City.

Some local corporations have had permission for heliport operations in the past; however, to date there has not been enough demand to support the development of a commercial heliport within the City.

### **Vision Statements**

- Recognize and manage the limited opportunities still available to add capacity to the existing roadway system.
- Provide an efficient and well-maintained multi-modal transportation system.
- Anticipate the demands of growth and redevelopment on the transportation network, planning and constructing improvements which promote local and regional accessibility.
- Continue to seek funding for modes of transportation that reduce the reliance on the automobile.
- Seek creative technical and technological solutions to site-specific transportation challenges.





**Thoroughfare System**

- Highway
- Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Neighborhood Collector
- Local

**Rail Transit Station**

- Existing
- Proposed

**Grade Separated Crossings**

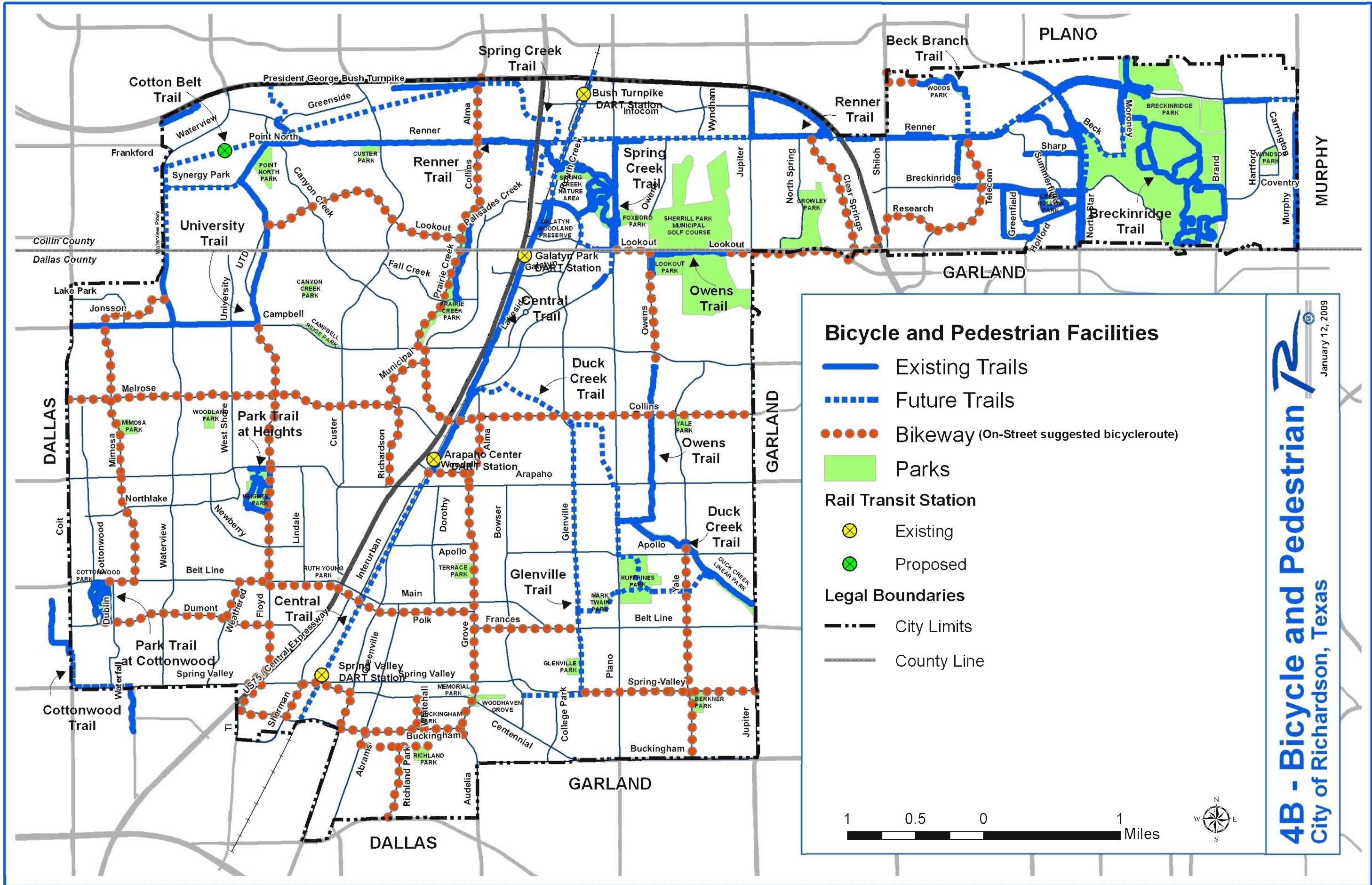
- Proposed

**Legal Boundaries**

- City Limits
- County Line

1 0.5 0 1 Miles

**4A - Transportation Plan**  
 City of Richardson, Texas  
 Adopted January 12, 2009, Ordinance No. 3736



# Urban Design

## Chapter 5



**City of Richardson, Texas**

2009 Comprehensive Plan

# Urban Design

Urban design focuses on the physical improvement of the public and private environment, from streetscapes and entry features to building architecture and development design. The aesthetics and amenities of urban design strengthen and enhance community identity and establish and maintain economic value.

Strategies for creating a vibrant and attractive city range from implementing development standards and design guidelines to requiring physical improvements such as screening walls and landscaped medians. All of these provide a framework for future development while preserving the City's positive characteristics.

## Livability By Design

A truly livable community is one that supplies its inhabitants with the basic services of daily living and is sustainable and environmentally responsible over the long-term. Livability involves creating communities that are people-centric rather than auto-centric—environments that focus on the needs and well-being of people with less emphasis on the convenience of the automobile. This has implications for how neighborhoods, retail and business areas, civic places, open spaces, and the connections between them are designed.



From a land use perspective, the creation of a livable community starts with how available land area is developed and used in the early stages, and how thoughtfully land areas are redeveloped when the time finally arrives. Richardson's evolution from a farming community to a prominent north central Texas business center has presented both opportunities and challenges for creating a livable environment. The following principles should be included in the City's strategy for developing a more livable community:

**Provide Choices.** Variety and choice are key ingredients in a full life-cycle city. Alternatives for shopping, employment, entertainment, education, leisure and, most importantly, housing all contribute to a strong sense of community and allow people of all ages, educational backgrounds, and income ranges to be included.

## 5. Urban Design

**Design for Long-Term.** Quality design that is durable, low-maintenance, and aesthetically pleasing is a critical part of creating livable communities. Quality breeds quality. People who want to improve and reinvest in their properties are much more likely to do so when neighboring properties are attractive and well-maintained. And when one property owner makes improvements, others will often consider upgrades as well.



**Design on a Human Scale.** People feel more comfortable and secure in places where the size and scale of surrounding structures is not overwhelming. Storefront (i.e., street-level) windows, street furniture, shade trees, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, and landscaped areas are inviting and create a comfortable environment for walking to shops, cafes, services, and jobs.

**Build Vibrant Public Places.** Strategically located focal points and gathering places create opportunities for human interaction. Activity produces energy and encourages social engagement.

**Encourage Mixed-Use Development.** Mixed-use developments allow people to interact, conduct business, be entertained, and live all in a single location. Carefully designed and strategically located mixed-use developments tend to be sustainable over the long term.

**Promote Inclusiveness.** A truly livable community recognizes the needs of a diverse population. Citizens of all ages, income levels, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, and lifestyles should feel like they are part of the community. Inclusiveness promotes long-term residency, good community stewardship, civic pride, and goodwill among neighbors.

**Vary Transportation Options.** The automobile is no longer the center of the mobility universe. Alternative options such as bus and rail transit, walking trails and bicycle routes, should all be a part of transportation planning. The City should continue to promote freedom from the automobile in designing neighborhoods and nonresidential developments, and in requiring efficient and appropriate connections between land uses.

**Create Local Identity.** People like the feeling of returning home after a long trip or a day's work. Design elements and amenities that set a town or neighborhood apart create identity and cause people to unwind in familiar surroundings. This sense of belonging is part of what makes people feel at home in their community.

**Protect Environmental Resources.** Natural areas can add to the aesthetic quality and livability of an area, and create appealing places for relaxation and connecting with nature. Designing projects with the land (not in spite of it) contributes to environmental preservation and provides important public health benefits in terms of improved air and water quality.

## 5. Urban Design

### Sustainability by Design

In city planning, one of the key elements of sustainability involves creating an environment that attracts investment and reinvestment, so that the community thrives and flourishes over the long term. This desirability encourages initial investment and long-term reinvestment by citizens and business owners alike, forming a strong community bond through work towards a common goal.

The following principles can be applied to the creation of a sustainable community from a land use and physical development perspective:

**Be Livable.** Livability is an important part of creating places that attract people. As the previous discussion suggests, a truly sustainable environment and full array of assets and amenities (a variety of home choices, distinctive neighborhood design features, quality retail and business areas, inviting public spaces, etc.) all contribute to a high degree of livability.

**Be a Full Life-Cycle Community.** This concept involves providing services and choices, especially in housing options, that allow a person to live in the community from birth to maturity and old age (that is, throughout the entire life cycle). A broad range of quality housing that can accommodate single persons, families, retirees and elderly persons who may require varying levels of assistance is particularly important since shelter is a basic need for every individual.

**Be Adaptable.** As times change, communities are challenged to adjust. A community should develop the ability to adapt to evolving population characteristics, employment trends, and economic conditions as it continues to mature.

**Be Timeless.** A sustainable community strives to create building, cultural and open space infrastructure that contributes to its desirability over time and improves with age. Examples include permanent and easily maintainable parks and open spaces, long-lifespan infrastructure and cultural facilities, and high-quality and easily adaptable non-residential buildings that can successfully survive varying tenants, shifting market forces, and changing architectural trends.

**Be Mobile.** A variety of transportation and mobility options should be provided to complement the City's land use and development pattern, reduce reliance on the automobile, minimize the impact on the environment, and decrease the amount of time people have to spend getting from place to place.

**Be Environmentally Friendly.** Development can, and should, respect the land. There are many ways for new development and construction to be sensitive to the environment—by applying “green” building techniques, implementing practices that reduce stormwater runoff and pollutants, and preserving areas of mature tree cover and wildlife habitats. These techniques will be increasingly important as environmental quality becomes a more pressing concern at all levels of government.

# 5. Urban Design

## Development Review & Regulations

Long-term sustainability begins with quality development. In Richardson, each development application is reviewed by a team of staff members from development-related departments within the City—Planning, Development & Engineering, Transportation, Fire, Police, and Building Inspection, to name a few. This development review team studies each proposal to assure compliance with City requirements and identifies areas where site design can be improved or variances may be required. City staff works with applicants to ensure that new development and redevelopment will add value and improve Richardson's built environment.

The City Plan Commission is the appointed body that makes decisions and recommendations to the City Council regarding planning and development issues, including long-range planning, land use, public improvements, zoning, and thoroughfare improvements. The Commission also reviews and approves subdivision plats, development plans, site plans, and certain variance requests. During the deliberation of certain zoning change requests, including Planned Developments, the City Plan Commission may exercise its authority regarding building material selection and appropriate design. The Commission's review is intended to enhance the compatibility of the proposed structure with the surrounding development and improve the appearance of the city along major corridors and gateways.

Richardson's development code sets high standards, with the goal of improving the character of the built environment. Minimum landscaping standards for non-residential and multi-family developments are based on a percentage of lot area and address parking lots, maintenance and irrigation requirements, landscaped buffers along streets and drives, screening of loading areas and mechanical equipment, and perimeter screening where appropriate. The City's suggested plant material list emphasizes varieties that are adapted to the local climate. These regulations enhance the City's environmental, aesthetic, and economic qualities.

Quality building materials contribute to the long-term appearance and durability of development. Richardson codes require the majority of a building exterior to be constructed of masonry materials, both for aesthetic reasons and to minimize long-term maintenance.



# 5. Urban Design

## Transportation Corridors

Views along highway corridors reveal the character and form of the physical and natural environments of cities, contributing to their overall image. Two highway corridors travel through Richardson—US 75 (north-south) and President George Bush Turnpike (east-west). Both are governed by design guidelines aimed at creating a consistent character along the highway frontage.

### *US 75 Corridor*

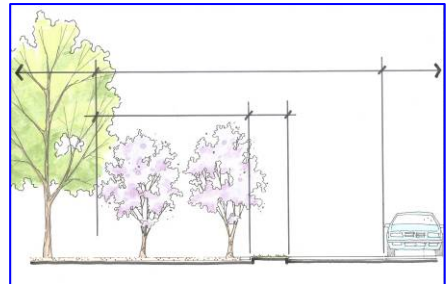
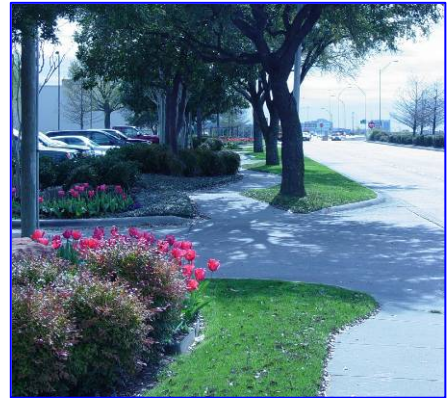
The US Highway 75 (Central Expressway) corridor is the primary north/south transportation spine through Richardson. Both public and private enhancements have improved the appearance of the parkway areas along the edge of the highway.

Private properties along the corridor are encouraged to implement the US 75 Amenities Planning Guidelines. These Guidelines were created through a joint effort of several parties, including the Cities of Dallas, Richardson, Plano, and Allen, and have had a positive influence on the visual and functional qualities of US Highway 75 (Central Expressway). They ensure a reasonable degree of uniformity, continuity, and aesthetic character along the right-of-way between Interstate Highway 635 south of Richardson and State Highway 121 to the north. The guidelines call for a consistent streetscape, including a wide amenity zone with meandering sidewalks, a specific landscape palette, and enhanced crosswalks.

Richardson recently completed a landscaping upgrade along the Central Expressway and DART corridors to create a string of wooded and meadow environments. The landscaping mitigates the hard views of fence lines, rail tracks, overhead wires, and concrete while adding seasonal color and year-round appeal.

### *PGBH Corridor*

The President George Bush Highway (PGBH) Design Guidelines are intended to preserve and enhance both the natural and built environment along the corridor through the implementation of landscape amenities and site characteristics that will improve the image of the City as viewed from the tollway. The PGBH Guidelines integrate certain elements from the US 75 Amenity Planning





## 5. Urban Design

Guidelines to create a commonality between the two, and to ensure unity and continuity among the properties adjacent to the corridor. In addition to creating a consistent streetscape along the highway, the guidelines designate preferred locations and screening of parking and service areas, and vehicular circulation.

### *Road and Transit Corridors*

The City maintains and enhances a number of major street corridors each year with a wildflower planting program that has become a community trademark. Each spring since 1990, wildflowers have bloomed in many of the City's parks, in the medians of arterial roadways, and on the lawns of public buildings in the weeks leading up to the annual Wildflower Festival.

### Neighborhoods

Richardson's neighborhood enhancement strategies are proactive measures that encourage residents to improve their homes and their neighborhoods. Enhancement strategies are individually fashioned based on the specific needs of each neighborhood.



For a number of years, the City has been making physical improvements within the public realm—street and sidewalk repair, screening wall construction, neighborhood identification features, and landscaping enhancements. Funding for these improvements comes from a variety of sources, including the sale of bonds, City general funds, neighborhood contributions, and grants. In addition, the Home Improvement Incentive Program encourages reinvestment in individual homes by providing partial reimbursement to homeowners that make improvements to their homes which increase the value of the City's housing stock.

### Transit-Oriented Development

Light rail transit has brought a new dimension to city planning. Transit-oriented development (TOD) principles allow greater flexibility in many aspects of development—uses, development rights, building regulations, area regulations, open space, parking requirements, signage—to support light rail ridership and create a cohesive mixed-use district.

The property around the City's northern stations is undeveloped and the areas around Richardson's southern light rail stations present a unique opportunity to revitalize older existing development. Transit-oriented development offers an alternative for both new development and redeveloping underutilized land in a more sustainable manner with urban land use and building patterns and unique pedestrian-oriented environments.

## 5. Urban Design

### *Spring Valley Station District*

The City of Richardson created a special set of development regulations for the 56-acre Spring Valley Station District at the City's southernmost DART light rail station. The District stands to benefit from an enhanced development potential due to its proximity to the station. Planned Development (PD) zoning and design guidelines were adopted as a means of creating a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use environment and promoting consistent, high-quality design. The guidelines for new developments call for additional detail and character that will bring a special sense of place to the District. These include recommendations for building design and placement, the development of public space, street furnishings, and many other aspects of attractive, human-scale design.



The primary uses on the east side of the District will be residential with provisions for retail, restaurant, office and a 2-acre park. On the west side of the District, office, retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses are allowed.

### *Galatyn Park*

The Galatyn Park development combines a unique mix of uses with several public and private spaces to create an iconic destination. Public/private cooperation has been a hallmark of the development throughout the project's history. The master plan has evolved over time, but has been consistent in its vision for a cohesive district, including a mix of uses—hotel/conference facility, performance center, residential, employment, support retail—and special requirements for building materials and landscaping.



### **Public Art**

Public art is visible from public places—streets, sidewalks, in parks—and within private developments.

## 5. Urban Design

### *Private Development*

The City of Richardson encourages sculptures, fountains, monuments, and other types of art that add identity and character to private developments. Examples of public art can be found at Block 24, a mixed-use development at Jupiter Road and Arapaho Road; at the Palisades office development on Central Expressway, north of Galatyn Crossing; and a few other locations in employment areas. A plan is also underway for a major installation of artwork at DFW Chinatown, an ethnic retail center in east Richardson.

While there are only a few examples of art visible to the public on private property at the present time, the hope is that more developers will incorporate public art into their project plans because of the aura quality artwork lends to its surroundings.



### *City of Richardson*

At Galatyn Plaza, the interactive Texas Instruments Foundation Family Fountain features 60 water jets and integrated lighting. Unveiled in 2002, the fountain is computer controlled, allowing a variety of programs and effects to be displayed. The fountain at the City Hall/Civic Center/Public Library complex depicts the harmony of the community and symbolizes the people of Richardson working hand in hand to accomplish all avenues of excellence.

### *DART Light Rail Stations*

Each rail station in the DART system includes individualized art and design elements that were created to reflect the environment, history and culture of the surrounding community.

- The Spring Valley Station includes elements reflecting the nearby McKamy Springs.
- The Arapaho Center Station captures Richardson's history with icons representing cotton plants.
- The Galatyn Park Station, center of the Telecom Corridor<sup>®</sup>, features a technology theme, with large columns symbolizing twin satellite dishes and a circuit board fence design.
- The Bush Turnpike Station unites the City's rural past and urban present with paving stones forming traditional quilt patterns and station columns that reflect the adjacent freeway overpass.



## 5. Urban Design

### Community Revitalization Awards

More than 140 properties have been recognized through the Community Revitalization Awards program since its inception in 1994. The awards recognize property owners who have made significant exterior improvements to their individual properties, which have, in turn, had a positive impact on the surrounding area. Recipients are recognized by the City Council with a reception and award presentation ceremony each year. Both residential and non-residential projects are eligible for consideration. Over the years, the recipients have ranged from single-family houses, retail centers, and offices to churches and schools.



*2518 Grandview Drive, before and after*



*707 E. Arapaho, before and after*

## 5. Urban Design

### Vision Statements

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- Apply sound urban design principles throughout the development process to create and reinforce a positive community image.
- Require design and construction standards that incorporate quality materials, walkable environments, and an attractive public realm to ensure sustainability and livability.
- Encourage distinctive architecture that conveys a sense of quality and craftsmanship, incorporates appealing site and building design, and respects adjacent development.
- Promote the use of exterior hardscape features and landscape designs that are sustainable, environmentally-friendly, and appropriate for their surroundings.
- Encourage a variety of artwork in public spaces and private development.
- Promote development and public spaces that will attract activity and social interaction.
- Design development adjacent to highway corridors and the City's rail transit stations that present an attractive impression of the city.
- Create gateways, intersections, and corridors that reflect Richardson's distinct identity, attract bicyclists and pedestrians, and accommodate motor vehicles.

# Neighborhoods

## Chapter 6



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**

# *Neighborhoods*

Suburbs were born in the 1950s when improved roadways, higher automobile usage, and the desire for home ownership and a slower pace of life drew families away from the central city. The growth of Dallas' first-ring suburbs, including Richardson, was given a boost by the post-World War II building boom and the creation of jobs outside the urban core.



But neighborhoods have life cycles in which they rise and fall based on the age of homes and infrastructure, the level of maintenance, and other related factors. Individual neighborhoods are unique, each with its own assets, challenges, and opportunities. Central cities have endured cycles of growth, decline, and reinvestment for decades; first-ring suburbs are now experiencing the same types of challenges.



Neighborhoods exist within a marketplace where current residents and newcomers make choices about where to live. In a healthy neighborhood, people are willing to invest their time, money, and energy, and neighbors and local government respond successfully to changing conditions. Since almost one-half of Richardson's land area is dedicated to residential uses, the vitality and integrity of neighborhoods is a high priority.

## Housing Stock

Housing in any community is a multi-faceted land use issue and the location, type and intensity of residential development are important to the planning process. As is the case in most American suburban communities, the predominant land use in Richardson is single-family residential, which represents over 46% of the City's developed area. Slightly more than 5% of the City's developed land is devoted to multi-family housing. In terms of the number of housing units, Richardson has 27,272 single-family homes (70%) and 11,563 multi-family units (30%).



## 6. Neighborhoods

### *Single-Family*

Although there are a few examples of housing construction in the early part of the 1900s, the largest building period for single-family homes in the City was from 1960 to 1980, when almost 65% of Richardson's single-family units were built. Most recent single-family construction has taken place in the Breckinridge area of northeast Richardson and in the area that was the former Town of Buckingham before it was annexed in 1996. There are also a few infill and redevelopment parcels throughout the City. Recently, the housing market has reacted to the increasing demand for townhomes, which offer the benefits of homeownership fewer maintenance responsibilities than a traditional single-family home.

### *Multi-Family*

Approximately 5% of the land in Richardson is classified as multi-family in use, with apartments and condominiums accounting for approximately 30% of the City's dwelling units. No multi-family units were built between 2003 and 2005, three new mixed-use projects along the DART corridor and an apartment complex near Bush Turnpike west of US75 are under construction.

### **Sustainable Neighborhoods**

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The word "neighborhood" does not simply refer to a collection of houses in a geographical area. The term also includes the quality of life and the sense of community that can be enjoyed by residents.

Generally speaking, a healthy neighborhood is comprised of quality housing that is occupied by residents who take pride in their homes and property. A neighborhood is the setting in which residents should feel a sense of belonging based on their interactions, common interests, and identity as a neighbor. It is in the public interest not only to maintain quality standards for individual housing units but also to promote the overall well-being of neighborhood areas. This requires cooperation from property owners, tenants, the municipality and volunteers (such initiatives are discussed later in this Chapter).

In the context of neighborhoods, the following attributes define the term "sustainability":

- Housing units that are of quality construction and well-maintained;
- Schools and recreational facilities that are located close to or in the center of the neighborhood;
- Nonresidential land uses (e.g., public, office, retail, entertainment, etc.) that are carefully and strategically placed in relation to the neighborhood;
- Emergency services, such as fire, medical and police services, that are readily accessible;



## 6. Neighborhoods

- Adequate lighting and other features that promote feelings of safety;
- Continued investment in public and private property that stabilizes property values;
- A high degree of owner-occupied units;
- Well-maintained neighborhood public facilities and infrastructure;
- Opportunities for social interaction;
- A sense of community and belonging among residents; and
- Proximity to hike and bike trails and/or open space.

The City should strive to make these qualities part of existing neighborhoods where feasible and ensure that future and redeveloped neighborhoods are designed and maintained in accordance with these sustainability characteristics.

### Elements of Great Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods differ in terms of size and scale, lot and house size, construction style, and other features, but certain elements provide quantifiable and unquantifiable value and should be consistently designed into all new, infill and redeveloping Richardson residential neighborhoods to the extent possible.

#### *Preservation of Existing Site Features*

Preserving existing site features—mature trees, topography, ecologically sensitive areas—has a substantial influence on the long-term quality and sustainability of neighborhoods. For instance, preserving mature trees can provide the following benefits in both new developments and infill/redevelopments:

- **Increase Land Values.** Trees can enhance the value of a lot, especially in residential areas.
- **Increase Aesthetic Value.** Home sites with mature trees are generally considered more visually pleasing and desirable.
- **Air Pollution Reduction.** Trees help improve air quality by removing carbon dioxide and other pollutants and by producing oxygen.
- **Decrease Light Pollution.** Trees can serve as a buffer from light produced by street lights and buildings.
- **Reduce Noise Pollution.** Trees reduce noise from roadways and other sources by modifying humidity and climate, by absorbing sound, and by deflection and refraction.

## 6. Neighborhoods

- **Prevent Soil Erosion.** Trees function as both windbreaks and soil stabilizers, minimizing soil erosion.
- **Save Energy.** Properly placed trees and landscaping can save 20 to 25 percent on energy use in the home by providing shade and a wind break.

### *Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections*

Connectivity and the ability to travel from one part of the city to another without the use of an automobile is an important neighborhood element, as discussed in the Transportation chapter. Residents should have the choice of walking or riding a bicycle to a store, park, trail, school or through an adjoining neighborhood. All new and redeveloping neighborhoods should provide safe and convenient connections to surrounding destinations.

- **Barrier-Free Mobility.** Pedestrian and bicycle pathways should be free of barriers and severe slopes for the convenience and safety of mobility impaired persons.
- **Shading and Vegetation.** Pedestrian and bicycle pathways should be framed with landscaping and located so that they are shaded for much of the day.
- **Future Connections.** In new and redeveloping areas, future pedestrian and bicycle access should be planned to connect to adjacent areas.

### *Street Environments*

As one of the most common public features in any built environment, streets have a direct influence on the quality of life and sustainability of a neighborhood. Street design should not be based solely on the desire to move automobile traffic. Pedestrians and their relationship to the street also need to be considered. New and redeveloping residential neighborhoods should incorporate the following design elements where feasible:

- **Sidewalks.** Paved sidewalks should be provided along most, if not all, streets, especially where pedestrian connectivity with schools, parks or other land uses is important. Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic, separated from street paving where possible, and shaded with trees wherever practical.
- **Streetscape Furnishings.** Where it makes sense, such as in pedestrian-oriented mixed-use developments, gathering places and furnishings should be provided to allow people to sit and rest, park their bicycles, and dispose of trash.

### *Exterior Building Materials*

In the interest of long-term sustainability, value stability, and maintenance ease, the City should continue to require high-quality exterior building materials for all residential types.

## 6. Neighborhoods

### *Garages*

Having a place to store and secure the family automobile(s) is important to many people. For front-entry homes, allowing the garage doors to face the street establishes the garage as the most dominant visual feature of the home, and does not contribute to the visual appeal of the neighborhood. Where alleys are available, garages should be located in the rear of the home. In a neighborhood without alleys, garages should either be set back from the front façades of the home or a swing-entry design should be used.

### *Landscaping*

Trees and vegetation have a substantial and positive impact on the quality of life in a neighborhood. The City should continue to encourage landscaping and promote the use of xeriscape materials—plants requiring low level of care and little irrigation—for better longevity, maintenance, and water conservation.

### *Subdivision Entryway Features*

Attractive subdivision entryways improve neighborhood identity, image, and character. They also serve as valuable wayfinding icons for residents and visitors. The City should continue to encourage these features in new and redeveloping areas and assist existing neighborhoods with identity projects to enhance visual character and boost neighborhood pride.

## **Neighborhood Services**

Since the creation of the Neighborhood Integrity Program in 1979, Richardson's commitment to maintaining its residential neighborhoods has expanded substantially. In recent years, the City Council has adopted a variety of comprehensive, multi-faceted neighborhood strategies, including designating the Neighborhood Services Division as a new City department.

The mission of the Neighborhood Services Department is to protect the vitality and integrity of Richardson's neighborhoods through the proactive and fair enforcement of codes and ordinances, and to partner with neighborhood groups to organize for the betterment of their community.

The Neighborhood Services Department is at the center of the Neighborhood Vitality and Integrity Strategy, which coordinates code enforcement, neighborhood enhancement strategies, and neighborhood relations efforts.



### *Neighborhood Integrity*

## 6. Neighborhoods

The Neighborhood Integrity Program was established to complement residents' efforts to maintain neighborhood appeal and encourage reinvestment. Over the years, minimum property maintenance standards have been established to help realize this goal.

- **Code Enforcement.** The Code Enforcement Program is designed to ensure that minimum property, health, safety, and zoning standards are observed for both commercial and residential properties. Inspectors seek out code violations, respond to resident complaints, and work with residents to resolve issues in a fair and reasonable manner.
- **Apartment Inspection Program.** In addition to responding to tenants' concerns, representatives from Neighborhood Services, Building Inspection, the Health Department, the Fire Marshall's Office and the Police Department inspect all Richardson apartment complexes annually to ensure that the City's multi-family housing is maintained in a safe and healthy condition.
- **Email Update Program.** Neighborhood groups that take part in the Email Update Program receive an email every two weeks detailing code enforcement activity in their neighborhoods, along with helpful reminders about City services and events. Code enforcement activity reports for apartment complexes are posted on the Neighborhood Services website every two weeks.
- **Brush and Bulky Item Collection Program.** The Brush and Bulky Item Collection Program is a free service designed to help residents dispose of brush and bulky materials that cannot be placed out for regular trash collection.
- **Graffiti Abatement Program.** Prompt and persistent removal of graffiti prevents the degradation of neighborhoods and discourages further vandalism. The Graffiti Abatement Program minimizes these negative impacts in a timely manner at no cost to affected residents and business owners.
- **Volunteer Assistance Program.** The Volunteer Assistance Program matches owners who cannot properly maintain their homes due to age, financial situation, or disability with volunteer groups who want to provide assistance.

## 6. Neighborhoods

- **Regulation and Program Initiatives.** A number of regulations and programs have been initiated or updated in recent years to provide the framework for managing the quality and condition of Richardson's neighborhoods.
  - Rental Registration Program
  - Garage Enclosure Standards
  - Home Occupancy Regulations
  - Home Occupation Ordinance
  - Oversized Vehicles and Trailers Regulations
  - Recreational Vehicle Parking Regulations
  - Yard Paving Limitation Ordinance
  - Brush & Bulky Item Collection Program Rules
  - Garage Sale Ordinance
  - Open Storage Requirements
- **Building Standards Commission.** Neighborhood Services brings properties plagued by severe, on-going code violations before the Building Standards Commission for review. In extreme cases, where delinquent property owners do not respond to citations or more severe orders, property can be siezed and buildings can be demolished.

### *Neighborhood Enhancement*

Neighborhood enhancement strategies encourage residents to improve their homes and neighborhood beyond minimum standards. Enhancement strategies are customized to address the specific challenges faced by individual neighborhoods.

Successful enhancement begins with an understanding of a neighborhood's strengths and weaknesses and results in a set of strategies that reinforce successes and improve upon problem situations. Once the dynamics of the neighborhood are understood, there are a number of strategies that can be customized to fit the individual neighborhood.

- **Home Improvement Incentive Program.** The Home Improvement Incentive Program encourages reinvestment in residential neighborhoods to enhance the value of the City's housing stock and lower the financial hurdle for homeowners who want to make significant improvements to their property. Through the program, the City provides an economic incentive equal to 10 times the increase in property taxes for the tax year following completion of an approved project. The increase in the certified value is reflected in appraisal district records and the total incentive is paid in a single lump sum on April 1 of the calendar year after completion.

## 6. Neighborhoods

### *Neighborhood Vitality Program*

The Neighborhood Vitality Program helps create a stronger neighborhood image in older areas by providing funding for bridge enhancement, entry feature, and screening wall projects throughout the City.

- **Matching Fund Beautification Program.** The Matching Fund Beautification Program enables neighborhood groups to partner with the City to fund beautification projects—typically landscaping enhancements—in their communities. The cost and the labor associated with the project is divided evenly between the neighborhood group and the City.
- **Sign Topper Program.** The Sign Topper Program promotes neighborhood identity by allowing the addition of special signage above standard city street signs at entry points and major intersections throughout a neighborhood. The signs toppers, which are paid for by the neighborhood, increase identity and encourage community pride.

### *Neighborhood Relations*

Richardson works with citizens to create strong relationships between government and neighborhoods in several ways.

- **New Neighborhood Association Development Program.** The Neighborhood Association Development Program assists potential leaders interested in establishing a neighborhood association in areas of the City not currently represented by a formal group. The City works with interested parties to organize a core group, provides valuable information, and identifies resources needed during the early stages of group formation.
- **Neighborhood Leadership Workshops.** Neighborhood Leadership Workshops focus on supporting established neighborhood associations by providing leadership training. Workshops are scheduled several times a year with presentations from City and community leaders on general topics or special areas of interest such as neighborhood association management techniques and “best practices.”
- **Homeowners and Neighborhood Associations Council.** The City meets with the leaders of Richardson’s Homeowners/Neighborhood Associations on a monthly basis. These meetings are a forum for the exchange of information on issues facing neighborhoods and the City.
- **Apartment Managers’ Crime Awareness Meetings.** Apartment Managers’ meetings are co-sponsored by the Richardson Police Department and Neighborhood Services. The quarterly meetings keep apartment leadership informed of the latest code enforcement and crime prevention initiatives aimed at keeping Richardson’s multi-family communities safe and viable.

## 6. Neighborhoods

- **Realtor Workshops.** Annual Realtor Workshops keep real estate professionals who do business in the City up-to-date on the special programs and incentives available to persons looking to invest in a home in Richardson.

### Neighborhood Development Overlay

Property owners concerned that the construction of new single-family structures or the renovation of existing structures may adversely affect an established neighborhood's stability or character may choose to apply for Neighborhood Development Overlay (NDO) zoning. An NDO is a tool that allows a neighborhood to propose special zoning regulations that reflect its current character and encourage development and redevelopment that is compatible with existing conditions. An NDO application is initiated by a neighborhood committee, with City staff providing technical and administrative support throughout the rezoning process. The NDO review process requires public hearings before the City Plan Commission and City Council and notification of all property owners within the proposed district and within 200 feet of its boundaries.

### Vision Statements

- Protect and enhance the appeal of Richardson's neighborhoods.
- Reinforce neighborhoods as the building blocks of the community.
- Recognize and nurture the diverse character of the City's neighborhoods.
- Encourage private investment to maintain the stability of existing neighborhoods.

# Community Facilities

## Chapter 7



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**



# *Community Facilities and Services*

A variety of organizations and agencies provide the facilities and services necessary to support the residents and business of the City of Richardson. They encompass a broad range of uses and buildings—from administrative offices and schools to hospitals and places of worship. Property classified as Public/Institutional/School represents eight percent of the City's land area.

## City Government

City facilities—from the City Hall/Civic Center and Library complex to fire and police stations—are located throughout Richardson. Many are visited by residents on a regular basis. Others, such as the Service Center and water pump stations, provide behind-the-scenes support for Richardson's day-to-day activities.



A home-rule city under the Texas Local Government Code, Richardson has a Council/Manager form of government, which places daily administrative responsibility with the City Manager. Approximately 970 employees deliver municipal services and programs to the community, including:

- Building inspections and plan review
- Public health and animal services
- Engineering and capital projects planning
- Planning, zoning, and development review
- Municipal court functions
- Neighborhood services and code enforcement
- Parks and recreation operations
- Public safety and emergency response services (police and fire departments, emergency management)
- Public library services
- Traffic operations and transportation engineering
- Water, sewer, and solid waste services
- Administrative and support services (general government, financial management, human resources, public information, etc.)

The City of Richardson maintains a number of buildings throughout the community that serve a variety of needs. A list of these facilities is available on page 7-4.

## 7. Community Facilities

### *Library Services*

The Richardson Public Library is visited by 45,000 people per month. Constructed in 1970, the Library is located near the southwest corner of Central Expressway and Arapaho Road. The Library had an annual circulation of over 1,000,000 items in 2008 including print and non-print materials and Library patrons have access to the Internet as well as numerous electronic databases. Per capita operating expenditures for the Richardson Library are approximately \$27.42, compared with the Texas average of \$17.39 per capita (2005 Texas State Library figure), and cities that are comparable to Richardson averaging \$22.90 (range, \$15.08-\$35.89) per capita.

The Library has space for 330 readers and two program rooms. The facility underwent a complete renovation and modernization in 1995. More recent upgrades focused on the children's area, a new Teen Center, and reallocated space for adult materials and public access Internet computers.

### *Police Department*

The City of Richardson maintains its own police force, which includes approximate 150 sworn officers and 100 civilian positions. The department emphasizes strong community and customer relations and a commitment to provide thorough service. High priority is placed on crime prevention and developing community partnerships. This partnership with the community is reflected in City-wide Neighborhood Crime Watch groups, an increase in Crime Watch Patrols, regular sessions with local business security directors and apartment managers, special school programs, and more.



Participants in the Volunteers in Policing program (VIPs) contributed 12,112 hours of time to the Department in 2006. Volunteers are assigned to almost every division and section of the operation, including patrol, investigations, communications, crime prevention, records, property and others. The Department also runs the Citizens Police Academy and sponsors a group of Explorer Scouts. Both programs are aimed at educating the public about the internal workings of the Police Department and improving communications between the Department and the community.

### *Fire Department*

The Richardson Fire Department provides a full range of emergency and non-emergency services to the Richardson community. The three primary services are fire prevention/education, fire suppression and rescue, and emergency medical service. Service is provided from six fire stations distributed geographically throughout the City. Each station is staffed with firefighters certified in various levels of emergency medical service and equipped with state-of-the-art fire apparatus and equipment.



## 7. Community Facilities

The fire prevention division provides services aimed at enhancing quality of life by partnering with citizens and businesses. The division's programs include site inspections, plan reviews, fire cause determination, and arson investigation. Fire safety education programs include the Citizen's Fire Academy, an Explorer Scout post, a safety clown/puppet program, and assistance with businesses' first responder programs.

Fire and rescue services include fire suppression, hazardous materials emergency response, vehicle extrication, and specialized rescue. Service vehicles include compressed air foam rescue style pumpers, quint fire trucks, and other specialized equipment. The department participates in regional response agreements with other agencies to enhance the overall level of emergency services and regularly takes part in a variety of training and education programs.

Four mobile intensive care ambulances staffed by certified firefighter/paramedics provide advanced life support (ALS) emergency medical services. The ambulances provide patient transport to area hospital emergency rooms. This service is enhanced by paramedic fire and rescue companies staffed and equipped for on-scene advanced life support, and medical intervention.

### *Emergency Management*

The Office of Emergency Management, in coordination with all city departments, provides an all-hazards approach to natural, technological, and environmental emergencies and homeland security needs. The focus areas include emergency management and homeland security planning; continuity of government and critical services; coordination of citywide emergency training, response, and recovery capabilities; public preparedness and education; resource management; and grant administration. Additionally, the Office acts as a liaison between other local, regional, state, and federal governments as well as private, faith-based, and volunteer organizations to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant emergency and disaster events.



To ensure a coordinated response, the Emergency Management staff facilitates emergency training and simulation exercises necessary to prepare other city staff to carry out their roles in the event of a major emergency or disaster. In such an event, the Office is prepared to activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which becomes the coordination point for all City emergency management activities. The Office also manages the development and maintenance of the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The EOP guides strategic organizational behavior before, during, and after a significant emergency or disaster, including activation of the Public Warning System (i.e. outdoor warning sirens, Emergency Alert System, Reverse 911, and Cable Channel Override).

Since public education and awareness is so critical to the success of an emergency management plan, the Office of Emergency Management provides information, including the KnoWhat2Do program and emergency management resources, on the City's website.

## 7. Community Facilities

### *Community Facilities List*

- City Hall/Civic Center  
411 W. Arapaho Road
- Public Library  
900 Civic Center Drive
- Municipal Court  
2100 E. Campbell Road
- Central Police Station  
311 E. Main Street
- Central Fire Station  
309 E. Main Street
- Communications Facility  
160 N. Greenville
- Fire Station No. 2  
Waterview Parkway at Arapaho Road  
(under renovation 2008-2009)
- Fire Station No. 3  
Lookout Drive at Custer Road
- Fire Station No. 4  
Plano Road at Collins Boulevard
- Fire Station No. 5/Police Sub-Station  
Renner Road at Jupiter Road
- Fire Station No. 6  
Renner Road at Park Vista Drive
- Richard Russell Fire Training Center  
2600 Owens Boulevard
- Heights Park Recreation Center  
711 W. Arapaho Road
- Huffhines Park Recreation Center  
1500 Apollo Road
- Tennis Center  
1601 Syracuse Drive
- Senior Citizen Center  
820 W. Arapaho Road
- Sherrill Park Golf Course  
2001 E. Lookout Drive
- Greenhouse/Office  
St. Johns Drive
- Westside Pump Station  
107 N. Cottonwood
- Eastside Pump Station  
Apollo Road at Jupiter Road
- Northside Pump Station  
1201 Renner Road
- Service Center  
1260 Columbia Drive
- Warehouse/Employee Facility  
1280 Columbia Drive
- Animal Shelter  
1330 Columbia Drive
- Neighborhood Youth Services Office  
312 E. Tyler Street

# 7. Community Facilities

## **Telecommunications**

### ***Fiber Optics***

As home to the Telecom Corridor<sup>®</sup>, Richardson has an extensive fiber network, including systems installed by AT&T, Verizon, and several other providers. These companies offer a wide variety of voice and data transmission services along with redundancy to meet all commercial and industrial needs. The City and the Richardson Independent School District (RISD) entered into an interlocal agreement to construct a fiber optic network in 2002. This network connects all RISD facilities and most City facilities and allows for significant reductions in telecommunications costs, better management of data, and improved performance between City facilities.

### ***Wireless Communications***

Most major wireless telecommunication providers are actively providing service in the Richardson area. Communications companies are very interested in offering cutting-edge service to employees and residents in the City, where the degree of sophistication and technical know-how makes interest in these types of services high. Several companies are currently considering the provision of broadband WiFi data service to residents as well.

### ***Broadband Internet***

The City is served by three hard-wired broadband providers—Time Warner (cable modem), AT&T (VDSL over Fiber), and Verizon (ethernet over fiber). All three companies provide access to the Internet at high speeds using traditional wired and fiber optic networks. There are also a variety of wireless offerings available, including satellite, and 3G.

### ***Cable Television***

Cable television service has been available to Richardson residents since 1983 through a franchise agreement with Time Warner (formerly Telecable, Inc., TCI and AT&T Broadband). In January of 1998, AT&T introduced digital cable to the Richardson area. This new service increased the number of programming channels, including high-definition channels, to subscribers and enhanced signal quality. In addition, Time Warner provides cable Internet service, making ultra high-speed data services available to Richardson residents. AT&T is currently deploying their new U-Verse service, which provides cable television channels and internet data service over fiber optic cables. This system is already available to many Richardson citizens, and the network is expected to be completed soon.

## 7. Community Facilities

### County, Regional, and Federal Government

In addition to the numerous City facilities, there are also county and federal offices located in Richardson and as part of the D/FW Metroplex, Richardson is an active participant in the Council of Governments and other regional entities.

#### *Dallas County*

Dallas County has two facilities within Richardson—a tax office and a Justice of the Peace Court.

The County tax office on Twilight Trail allows Dallas County residents to pay their property taxes and renew their motor vehicle registrations in person without having to drive to downtown Dallas.

The Justice of the Peace Court on Belt Line Road near Coit Road hears misdemeanor cases, traffic violations, and other minor criminal infractions. The Court also has authority over cases involving small debts, landlord and tenant disputes, and other small claims court proceedings. The Justice of the Peace is also the judge that performs civil marriage ceremonies.

#### *North Central Texas Council of Governments*

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG or COG) is a voluntary association of governments. NCTCOG was established to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments, and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of north central Texas with over 230 member governments centered around Dallas and Fort Worth. Each member government appoints a voting representative from its governing body, and these representatives comprise COG's General Assembly, which annually elects the Executive Board. The Executive Board, composed of 13 locally elected officials, is the policy-making body for all activities undertaken by the Council of Governments, including program activities and decisions, regional coordination, and fiscal and budgetary planning. The Board is supported by technical, study and policy development committees and a professional staff.

#### *North Texas Municipal Water District*

Richardson is a member of the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), a coalition of thirteen communities in northeast Texas. The NTMWD supplies the City's water, provides wastewater collection and treatment, and provides solid waste disposal services. As a member of the NTMWD, the City has representation on the NTMWD Board of Directors.

## 7. Community Facilities

The NTMWD Transfer Center on Lookout Boulevard serves as the collection site for Richardson's commercial and household municipal waste. Plans are underway to renovate the site, which shares a location with some City service and storage operations. This new facility is slated to be on-line by 2011.

### *United States Post Office*

Richardson's main post office is located on Belle Grove Drive, just west of Central Expressway. The building was constructed in 1978 and has 31,000 square feet of space. In addition to the main location, there are substations on Coit Road in the Promenade retail center and at 1206 Apollo Road near Glenville Drive.

## Education

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Educational institutions in Richardson provide opportunities for learning from pre-school to the post-graduate level. Map 8B indicates the location of the major educational facilities in Richardson.

### *Primary and Secondary Education*

Two school districts serve Richardson's population—the Richardson Independent School District and the Plano Independent School District. The Dallas/Collin County line forms the boundary between the two.

### *Richardson Independent School District (RISD)*

The Richardson Independent School District serves students in the Dallas County portion of Richardson. The District covers 38.5 square miles and includes not only the majority of Richardson, but also portions of the cities of Dallas and Garland. Thirty-five percent of the District is in Richardson, sixty percent in Dallas, and 5 percent in Garland.



RISD facilities include 41 elementary schools, eight junior high schools, one freshman center, four high schools, and one alternative-learning center all serving more than 34,000 students. Fifteen elementary schools, two junior high schools, three high schools, and the alternative-learning center are located in Richardson.

## 7. Community Facilities

### *Plano Independent School District (PISD)*

The Plano Independent School District serves students in the Collin County portion of Richardson. The District covers 100 square miles of southwest Collin County. In addition to the portions that lie within Richardson, PISD includes land within the City of Plano, the northern portion of Dallas, the City of Parker, and parts of Allen and Murphy.

PISD's facilities include three preschools, forty-two elementary schools, twelve middle schools, five high schools, three senior high schools, and two special programs centers. Four of the elementary schools are located within Richardson's boundaries.

### *Private Elementary and Secondary Schools*

Several private schools, many associated with local religious institutions, are located in Richardson. The programs at the schools range from pre-school and kindergarten to junior high and high school.

### *Higher Education*

Educational opportunities in Richardson extend beyond high school graduation.

### *University of Texas at Dallas.*

The University of Texas at Dallas, located in northwest Richardson, began as a research institute in 1961 and has evolved into a full university with graduate and undergraduate programs. UTD's seven schools and 29 research centers offer an array of interdisciplinary degree programs to a diverse student population. Ranking at or near the top in the number of computer science degrees awarded each year in the United States, the school's goal is to become a Tier One academic research institution. The school is also looking to increase its current enrollment of 14,000 to over 20,000 in the coming years.



### *Richland College.*

Richland College, located on 243 acres immediately south of the City limits, is part of the Dallas County Community College District. Established in 1972, Richland is one of the seven campuses in the District and it has a student body of more than 14,000 college credit students and about 5,000 continuing education enrollees. Students at Richland are both internationally and ethnically diverse, with more than 79 languages spoken.



# 7. Community Facilities

## Health Care

Health care is accessible to Richardson residents and businesses from hospitals and physicians in the City and throughout the Metroplex. Most health services are offered in Richardson, but certain specialized functions are provided by other Dallas area hospitals. Richardson has one hospital, Richardson Regional Medical Center (RRMC), with its main campus on Campbell west of US 75, a satellite campus at George Bush Turnpike and Renner Road, and a senior health center operated in conjunction with the City's Senior Center. RRMC is served by more than 700 staff physicians.

The main RRMC campus is a not-for-profit, 205-bed, acute-care hospital accessible to residents of Richardson, Plano, North Dallas, and surrounding communities. RRMC offers inpatient and outpatient services, ranging from medical/surgery and ICU/CCU to emergency care and nuclear medicine. The emergency services area is staffed round-the-clock by full-time emergency physicians. The cancer treatment center, women's health facility, and the highly successful primary care senior health center are important components of this regional healthcare facility.

To help improve access, expand the medical staff, and offer new programs, specialties, and services to Richardson and the surrounding communities, the hospital is developing its new satellite facility at the intersection of George Bush Turnpike and Renner Road. Phase I of the project includes a five-story, 100,000 square-foot medical office building accommodating up to 60 physicians, an outpatient surgery center, and an urgent care center with diagnostic and treatment facilities, which will ultimately be converted into a 24-hour emergency department. A comprehensive cancer center, part of an oncology affiliation with UT Southwestern Medical Center, will provide a clinical research facility as well as medical, surgical and radiation oncology programs. The physician office building opened in August 2004, and the surgery and urgent care center and cancer center opened in late 2008.

Phase II of the master plan includes an acute care hospital, a physical rehabilitation center, and a second physician office building. Each phase of the master plan will be implemented according to community need. Based on continued increase in demand, construction on the hospital could commence within three to five years.



## 7. Community Facilities

### *Senior Housing*

As Richardson's population ages, alternative facilities for housing and care of the City's senior residents will become increasingly important. Existing or planned facilities include over 800 nursing home beds, almost 400 assisted living units, and over 700 independent living units. This segment of Richardson's population requires a variety of housing choices due to varying levels of physical acuity, income and lifestyles, and it will be important for the City to ensure an adequate supply of these choices if these elderly citizens want to continue to live in Richardson as their needs change.

### Other Community Facilities

#### *Places of Worship*

Richardson is home to a diverse spiritual community represented by various denominations—Christian churches, Islamic mosques, Buddhist temples, and a Jewish synagogue. Located throughout the City, many of these places of worship have facilities for day care and kindergarten; others provide education for students through the eighth grade and beyond.

#### *Cultural Arts*

The City of Richardson is committed to maintaining a superb quality of life for its residents. The City strongly supports cultural arts within the community by providing financial assistance to local arts groups through a grants program. This program funds a broad spectrum of local visual and performing arts groups, and it provides the community with opportunities for exposure to a wide array of art forms. Richardson has its own symphony orchestra, theatre centre, children's theatre, chamber music society, visual art society, and a number of dance and ballet troupes. The Charles W. Eisemann Center for Performing Arts and Corporate Presentations, located in the Galatyn Park Urban Center, provides the setting for performances of community arts groups and nationally-recognized troupes.



#### *Historic Cemeteries*

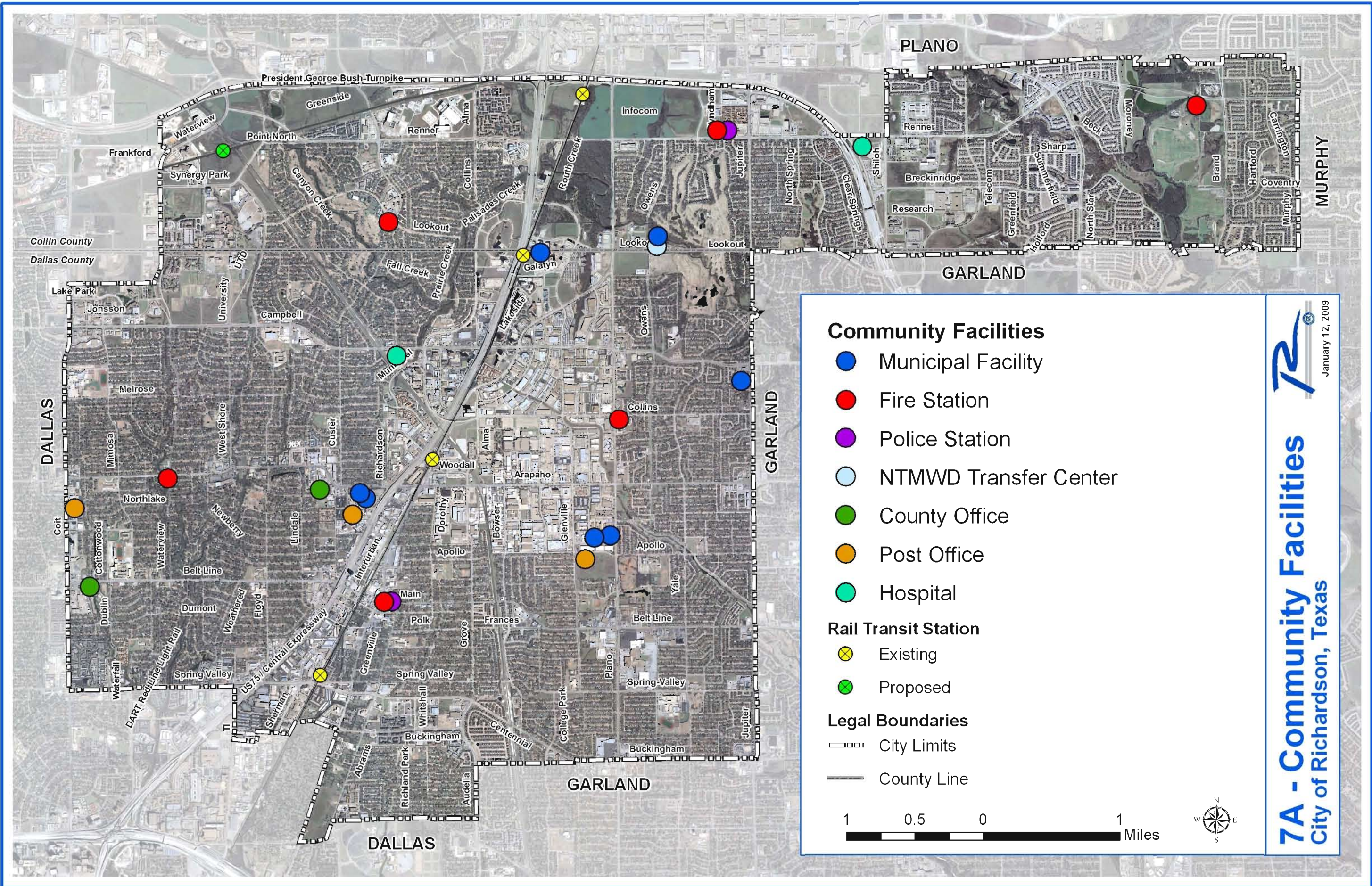
There are four known cemeteries within the boundaries of Richardson that are present or past burial sites. Two inactive cemeteries—the Routh Cemetery southeast of the Central Expressway/Renner Road intersection, and an unnamed cemetery just south of the Routh Cemetery site—are the burial places of some of the area's founding families and their servants. Hilltop Cemetery is situated on the west side of Brand Road near Breckinridge Park. In 1995, the City assumed responsibility for the maintenance of Blewett Cemetery, an active family burial place located on Arapaho Road east of Greenville Avenue, and has renovated the grounds, headstones and perimeter fencing.



# 7. Community Facilities

## Vision Statements

- Plan, provide, and manage City facilities and services in a manner that maximizes efficiency and responds to increasing demands.
- Ensure that existing public property, buildings and capital projects receive appropriate maintenance, upgrades or replacement.
- Require that all new City facilities adhere to high standards of urban design and energy efficiency and minimize environmental impacts.
- Maintain effective communication with the educational institutions in our area, ensuring that the City is responsive to their current and future needs.
- Continue to recognize the importance of quality health care as a community asset, supporting the Richardson Regional Medical Center (RRMC) and other health care providers in their efforts to provide excellent health services.



**Community Facilities**

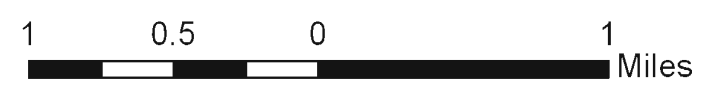
- Municipal Facility
- Fire Station
- Police Station
- NTMWD Transfer Center
- County Office
- Post Office
- Hospital

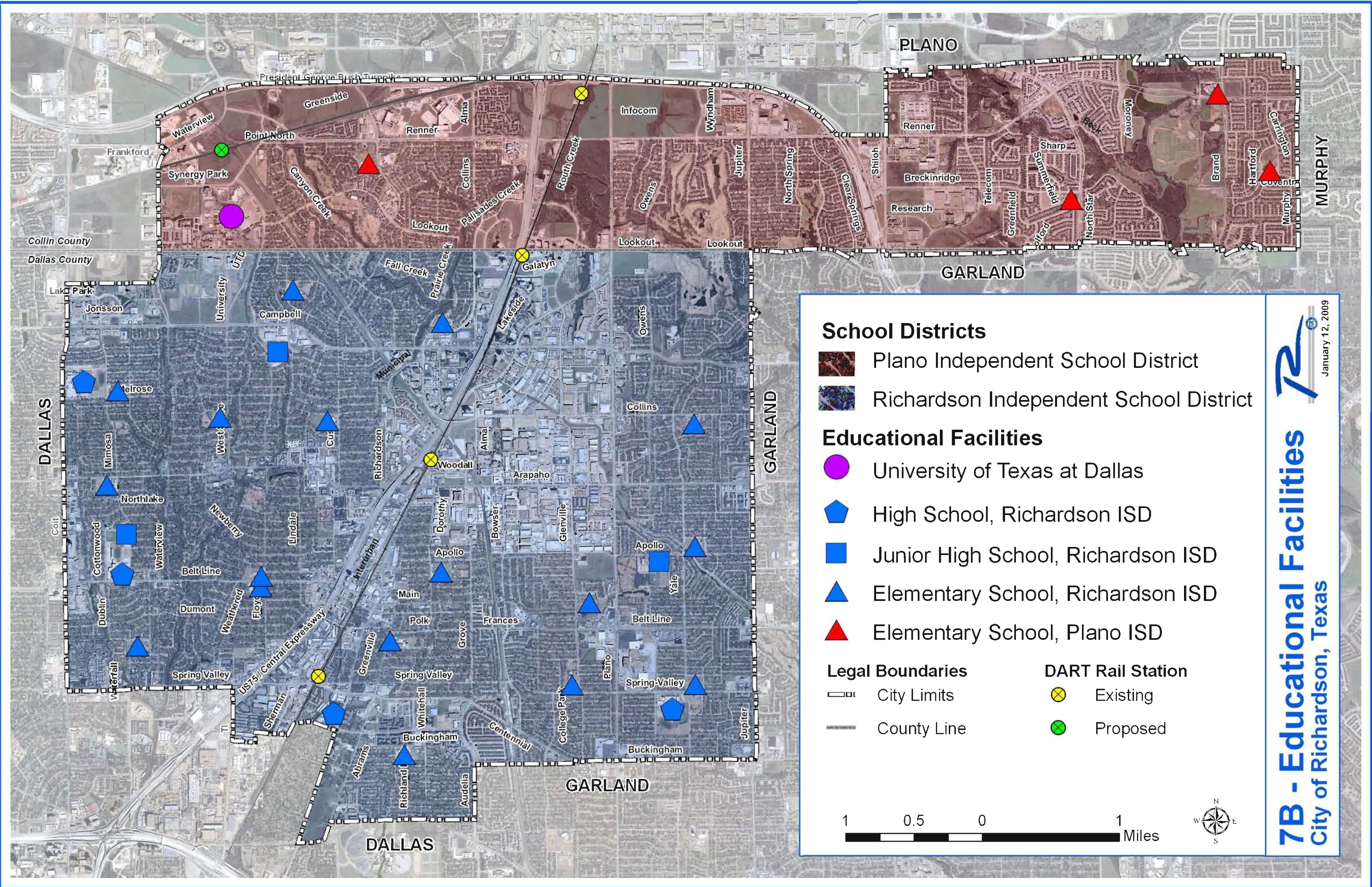
**Rail Transit Station**

- ⊗ Existing
- ⊗ Proposed



**Legal Boundaries**

- City Limits
- County Line











**School Districts**

-  Plano Independent School District
-  Richardson Independent School District



**Educational Facilities**

-  University of Texas at Dallas
-  High School, Richardson ISD
-  Junior High School, Richardson ISD
-  Elementary School, Richardson ISD
-  Elementary School, Plano ISD

**Legal Boundaries**

-  City Limits
-  County Line

**DART Rail Station**

-  Existing
-  Proposed



# Parks & Recreation

## Chapter 8



City of Richardson, Texas

2009 Comprehensive Plan

# ***Parks and Recreation***

The benefits of parks and recreation to individuals and communities have been well-known for many years. Active people tend to be healthier and have less stress, which provides the added benefit of reducing health care costs. Parks and recreation facilities provide an added dimension to the quality of life within a city, boosting neighborhood vitality, desirability, and sustainability (see additional discussion on how parks and recreation foster community livability and sustainability in the *Land Use* element). In searching for a corporate home, companies consider a city's amenities, including parks, in the decision-making process. On a larger scale, open space and natural areas are essential to ecological survival.

Richardson's commitment to providing these amenities and services is evident in the indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation opportunities available to citizens and local businesses. In addition to high-quality City parks, swimming pools, and recreation centers, the Parks and Recreation Department presents award-winning special events, festivals, and activities throughout the year.



## ***From a Single Park***

Richardson's first park lands, Terrace Park and a portion of Heights Park, were purchased in 1956, when Richardson's population was approximately 5,000 persons. The next year, a 7,000 square-foot community center was built for general recreational use on Lockwood Drive across from the First Methodist Church. A \$100,000 bond was issued for park improvements in 1958, resulting in the purchase of a second segment of Heights Park. That summer, a 10-week morning recreation program was conducted and by the end of 1959, the City had created the Department of Public Parks.

## ***Master Planning***

To provide exemplary facilities and services, the Parks and Recreation Department regularly updates their *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* and the *Trail-Way Master Plan*. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains the latest editions of these plans.

## 8. Parks and Recreation

### Structure

The Parks and Recreation Department employs over 350 persons, including 82 full-time and approximately 280 part-time and/or seasonal employees. Under the overall guidance of the Administrative Division, the Department is divided into two major areas: Parks Maintenance and Park Planning and Recreation and Events.

**The Administration Division** is responsible for overall guidance of the Parks and Recreation Department, preparing and managing the Department's annual operating budget, and managing capital projects spending related to park improvements.

**Park Maintenance and Park Planning** is responsible for maintenance of all parks, plazas, trails, open space, City-owned land and thoroughfares, and for natural resource management. In addition, the division oversees park planning, horticulture, urban forestry, and project management.

**Recreation and Events** is responsible for traditional recreational activities and services as well as multiple community events held throughout the year.

**Corporate Recreation** is a function of the Athletic and Corporate Challenge staff. Each summer the City sponsors the Corporate Challenge which stretches over several weeks and involves hundreds of amateur athletes employed in area businesses.

### Parks

Richardson's current inventory of parks has grown to 31, ranging in size from Buckingham Park at 0.25 acre to Breckinridge Park at 417 acres. In addition to varying in size, Richardson's parks feature different amenities based on size, age, and function (see Map 8A).

**Pocket/Ornamental Parks** are usually less than one acre in size and are developed with passive elements, such as sidewalks, fountains, gazebos, plazas, benches, and landscaping. *(4 parks)*





## 8. Parks and Recreation

**Mini-Neighborhood Parks** are usually between one and two acres in size. These parks serve the same function as a Neighborhood Park, but do not have an athletic or ball field. Typically the park will contain a playground, a pavilion with hard surface, a play court, restrooms, drinking fountains, landscaping, walks, and benches. *(1 park)*



**Neighborhood Parks** are approximately five to 10 acres in size and generally serve an area within a 0.5-mile radius. Facilities typically include play apparatus, picnic areas, pavilions, play courts, play fields, restrooms, trails, parking, pools, and tennis courts. *(16 parks)*



**Community Parks** are approximately 40 to 150 acres in size with a service area of two miles. In addition to the amenities found in Neighborhood Parks, usually in larger numbers or scale, Community Parks will typically include separate or multi-purpose sports fields and recreation centers. *(4 parks)*



**Regional Parks** are large, normally between 200 and 1,000 acres, and serve the entire community and perhaps beyond. Regional Parks are suitable for a wide variety of activities, with sports fields, recreation centers, nature areas, pools, bicycle and hiking trails, and ample parking being the most common elements. *(1 park)*

**Greenbelt/Greenbelt Parkways** are linear parks most often developed along creeks, railroad easements, transit corridors, or utility easements. While a greenbelt may preserve open space and natural habitat, it can also provide an opportunity for trails for jogging, walking and bicycling. These trails, which are relatively free from the presence of automobiles, can form important pedestrian and bicycle transportation linkages and connections between land uses. *(3 parks)*

**Natural Areas** contain ecosystems, minimally disturbed by man-made intrusions. They offer preservation of wildlife habitats and nature study opportunities, and they may contribute to flood protection. *(3 parks)*

## 8. Parks and Recreation

### Recreation Facilities

#### *Pools*

The City has five outdoor pools for public swimming. In addition to the main pools, the Arapaho Pool and the Glenville Pool each have a splash playground. The other three locations include baby pools. The City also offers Learn-to-Swim and Lifesaving classes taught by Red Cross certified instructors.



#### *Recreation Centers*

Richardson has two recreation centers—Huffhines, on Plano Road east of US75, and Heights, on Arapaho Road west of US75. Both centers feature various facilities, including weight rooms, basketball courts, and table tennis. Recreational classes and special activities are offered year-round.

The Parks Department has developed a master plan for the Heights Recreation Center and the surrounding Heights Park. The master plan for the Huffhines Recreation Center and Park were adopted in 2006 with implementation funded by bonds approved during the 2006 referendum. A new Huffhines Recreation Center with many modern features will be built adjacent to Plano Road. The site of the existing recreation center will ultimately be converted to parking. The current ball fields will be replaced by state-of-the-art facilities and a fifth ball field will be added.



#### *Tennis Center*

The Huffhines Tennis center is a 10-court lighted facility located in Huffhines Park. The center has a fully stocked pro shop, and tennis lessons, league play, and tournaments are available.

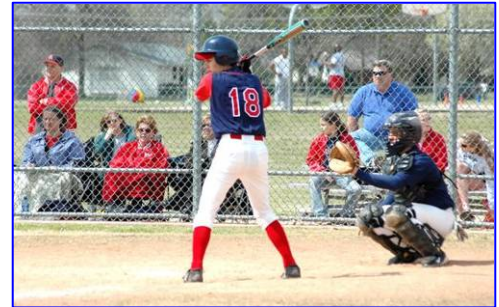
#### *Gymnastics Center*

The Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide range of gymnastics programs. Classes are available year-round for pre-school to teenage students, whether they are just looking for a fun experience or hope to become serious competitors.

## 8. Parks and Recreation

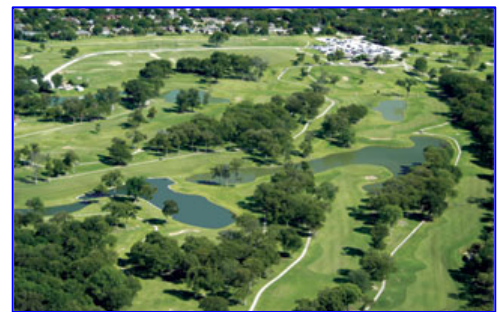
### ***Athletic Fields***

A total of 45 athletic fields are located throughout Richardson. These fields are maintained and coordinated for soccer, flag football, lacrosse, softball, and baseball. In addition to City of Richardson softball and flag football leagues, the fields serve the needs of Richardson Sports Inc., Richardson Soccer Association, Spring Valley Athletic Association, YMCA, Senior Softball, and other leagues for year-round sporting competition. The City also hosts a number of tournaments, including a major soccer tournament and corporate softball tournaments.



### ***Sherrill Park Golf Course***

Originally designed by Leon Howard, both Sherrill Park courses were recently redesigned by PGA Tour Professional D.A. Weibring and Design Resource, Inc. The redesign helped create a variety of shot-making choices from the tee to the greens for players at all levels. Course One, completed in 1997, is a championship design with narrow fairways lined by large trees that has consistently been ranked among the top ten municipal golf courses in Texas. In 2005, the *Dallas Morning News* ranked Course One as one of the top 9 in the state for play under \$45.00. Course Two, completed in 2001, is shorter and features wide-open fairways, with water hazards on many holes. In 2005, this course was ranked 22nd in the state by the *Dallas Morning News* for courses under \$45.00.



### ***Older Adult Programs & Senior Center Operations***

The Parks Department has offered special programs and services to residents who are 55+ years of age since 1978. The 19,000 square-foot Senior Citizens Center includes a fitness room, classrooms, reading room, snack bar, senior craft shop, and public computers. The City partners with the Richardson Regional Medical Center to bring wellness programs, health seminars, screenings, and counseling to the Center. In addition, recreational classes, weekly dances, benefits counseling, holiday parties, a variety of games, exercise classes, and more are available. A van service offers transportation to and from the Center.

## 8. Parks and Recreation

### Trail System

Trail activities are the most popular outdoor activities for Texans, according to a Texas Parks & Wildlife Department study, with one-quarter of Texans engaging in trail activities close to home. Trails can be an appealing feature in attracting companies for economic development and have been shown to increase the value of nearby properties.

Richardson currently has more than 25 miles of trails and walkways throughout the City, ranging from walking trails to multi-use trails. The trails address both recreational and transportation needs, linking the City's parks, neighborhoods, and rail stations (see additional discussion on connectivity in the *Transportation, Land Use, and Neighborhoods* elements). Many trails border other City park and recreation facilities, including picnic areas, recreation centers, tennis courts, sports fields, and golf courses. Others parallel roadways and rail corridors.

#### *Six Cities Trail Plan*

In 1999, staff from the cities of Allen, Frisco, Garland, McKinney, Plano, and Richardson conceived the Six Cities Trail Plan. Rated among the best "quality of life cities" in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, the staff members saw the need to work together to establish a joint plan that would link the trail systems created in each community. The Plan was adopted in late 2001.

#### *Trail-Way Master Plan*

The Trail-Way Master Plan (see Map 8A) illustrates Richardson's trail system and includes both existing and planned trails. An additional 20 miles of multi-use trails are envisioned throughout the City. The planned trail segments will fill in the gaps between existing trails, add new routes within Richardson, provide important connectivity linkages between various community land uses, and connect to surrounding cities. This system provides avenues for alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, between home, work, school, shopping, and mass transit.



## 8. Parks and Recreation

With clean air a critical issue in society today, trail funding has been part of federal transportation programs such as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), and Texas' Statewide Transportation Enhancement Program (STEP). Richardson has been successful in securing funding from these programs for trail construction, and will continue to seek opportunities from outside sources for future trails.

### Community Events

The Parks and Recreation Department produces a number of award-winning festivals, special activities, and events throughout the year, ranging from the Cottonwood Art Festival to the Corporate Challenge competition. These events bring the community together and draw attendance from around the region and the country.

- Cottonwood Art Festival—Spring and Fall
- Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival—Spring
- Family 4th of July Celebration—Summer
- Corporate Challenge—Summer
- Great Fountain Plaza Festival—Fall
- Huffhines Art Trails—Fall
- Santa's Village—Winter
- Senior Holiday Bazaar—Winter

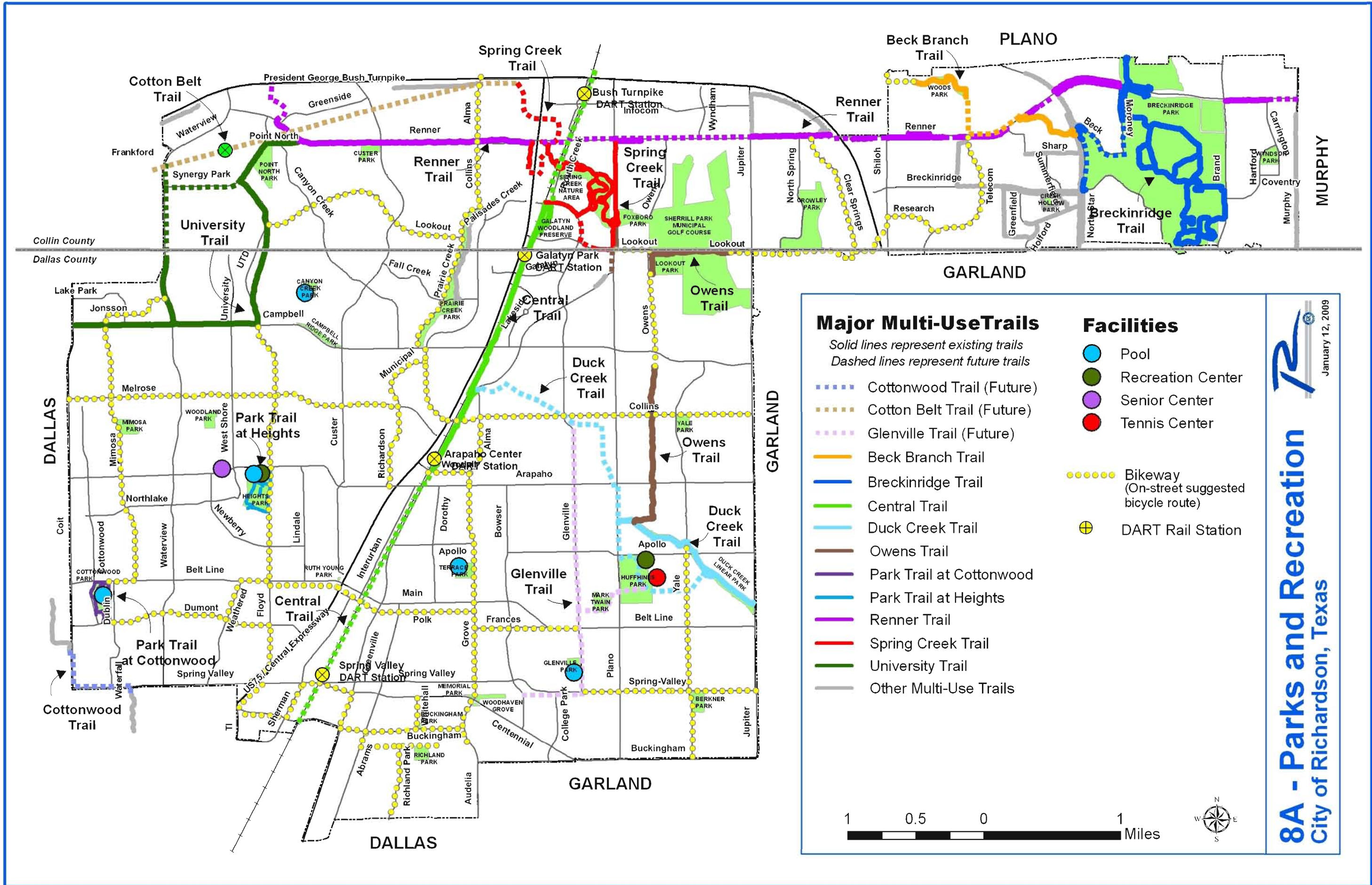


## 8. Parks and Recreation

### Vision Statements

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- Protect the “neighborhood park” environment throughout the City.
- Pursue the acquisition of available land for future park developments as recommended in the Richardson Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- Incorporate appropriate park planning considerations to meet the changing demands of athletic and recreation users.
- Continue to interconnect the City’s trail network for non-motorized transport and recreation as recommended in the Trailway Master Plan.
- Revitalize older, established parks by modernizing facilities with new construction and renovation to better serve existing and future users.
- Continue to present a variety of special events aimed at involving persons of all ages and interests.



# Environment

## Chapter 9



**City of Richardson, Texas**

**2009 Comprehensive Plan**



# Environment

The health of Richardson's environment—both built and natural—is key in creating a livable city. Environmental resources can influence decisions regarding future land use, parks, recreation, open space, community facilities, transportation, and utility plans. Careful consideration should be given to preserving and enhancing the ecological integrity of these resources whenever possible. The quality of Richardson's water and air affect the health of the City's residents and workers. In addition, how waste of all types is managed can affect the City's future generations.



As Richardson has matured, environmental concerns have become a higher priority. The City supports efforts to protect and improve the environment while balancing its other goals, responsibilities, and fiscal priorities. Environmental concerns should be weighed against other needs, including urban growth, housing, economic development, and recreation opportunities.

To create a healthy, sustainable urban environment, Richardson must strive to meet the demands of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Topography

The topography in the Richardson area is typified by generally flat upland terrain for much of the City with relief formations along floodways and creeks. Only one area may be considered a high point within the City—the area west of US 75, east of North Collins Boulevard, and north of Fall Creek Drive. With an elevation of 668', this area in east Richardson is approximately 170' higher than the lowest point in Richardson, located in Rowlett Creek at the southern City limit line.



Generally, slopes of 1% to 10% are found throughout the City; however, areas within the floodway fringe have slopes which usually exceed 10%. If there is a desire to develop these areas, excessive slopes will need to be modified to an acceptable level or a means of filling areas to achieve a lesser slope must be employed. Careful structural engineering is required when modifications to floodplain areas occur and the utmost of care must be taken to prevent excessive soil erosion. An important consideration in the review of all new development which includes or impacts drainageways is its effect on stormwater runoff and erosion. Protective measures should be considered when velocities exceed the point at which erosion of the bank materials begins to occur.

# 9. Environment

## Water Quality

Water is the most important of all renewable resources in that all life depends on it. As the use of water for social, industrial, irrigation, and energy increases, so do the problems associated with securing enough to meet demands.



Richardson's water is supplied by the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), a coalition of thirteen communities in northeast Texas. Some of the other member cities of the NTMWD include Garland, McKinney, Mesquite, Plano, Allen and Frisco. Each of the member communities has representation on the NTMWD Board of Directors.

The NTMWD is authorized to acquire, treat and distribute potable water, and to collect, treat and dispose of wastes, both liquid and solid, in order to reduce water pollution and conserve and enhance the natural resources of Texas. To assure an adequate supply of water for the population of up to 2 million persons expected to live in the north Texas area through the year 2030, the NTMWD has several capital improvements that are proposed, underway or recently completed. These projects will deliver a combined "safe yield" (the lowest amount of water deliverable, given drought and fluctuations in temperature and climate) of 257-301 million gallons per day (MGD).

During recent drought conditions, Richardson adopted a new water conservation ordinance detailing several stages of water restrictions and triggers for each stage. Restrictions range from voluntary reductions at Stage 1 to prohibition of landscape watering at Stage 4.

## Drainage

It is estimated that 30% of the water from precipitation runs into surface waters which supply human needs. Richardson is currently divided into six natural drainage basins. A total of 108 linear miles of stream beds, creeks and channels are located within the City. Storm water collected in Cottonwood Creek and Floyd Branch, which run north to south perpendicular to the south and west edges of the City, makes its way as far south as White Rock Lake and eventually empties into the Trinity River. Spring Creek, Duck Creek, Rowlett Creek and Prairie Creek meander to the east/southeast through Garland, making their way to Lake Ray Hubbard and the East Fork of the Trinity River.



In considering environmental impacts, the fact that some surface waters passing through the City originate many miles to the north must be considered. For this reason, the policies and development standards of adjacent municipalities affect the surface water quality of Richardson. When development occurs, increased run-off due to greater amounts of impermeable surfaces

## 9. Environment

means increased quantities of water. In some situations, on-site detention/retention facilities may be required to delay the run-off from entering the drainage basins and exceeding existing capacities downstream.

Many miles of the City's drainage channels run within existing developed areas. In some of these areas, erosion of the stream banks threatens surrounding property or structures. To respond to the need to protect banks from further erosion, the City has developed a program for sharing the cost of repairs or bank stabilization with property owners. The City has also created a maintenance program to address the need to remove silt and debris from stream channels to preserve the carrying capacity of streams and creeks.

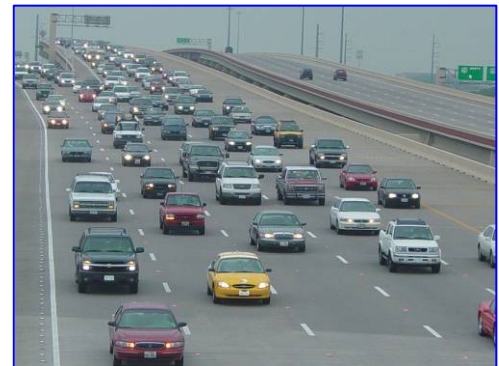
### Air Quality

A basic element of a sustainable environment is clean air. The quality of the air that supports all life is affected by the day-to-day decisions and actions of individuals, business, and government entities. Good air quality in Richardson, and in the Dallas/Fort Worth region as a whole, is fundamentally tied to emissions from a variety of sources.

Federal, state, regional and local agencies all enact and enforce legislation intended to protect air quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established limits on atmospheric pollutant concentrations through enactment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). In 2004, the EPA designated nine north central Texas counties, including Dallas and Collin, as non-attainment zones for the 8-hour ozone standard in accordance with the NAAQS.

In order to reduce ozone and come into compliance with NAAQS, the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) works with federal, state and local partners, including Richardson, to ensure that air quality requirements are met.

In the D/FW region, vehicle emissions are the primary source of air pollution. Richardson is working with the NCTCOG as part of the regional strategy to improve air quality through transportation system improvements, vehicle emissions reductions, and travel demand management strategies.



## 9. Environment

### Noise

Excessive noise can affect public health and welfare, and can generally adversely affect the livability and comfort of neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Noise that originates on residential, commercial or industrial land within the City is regulated through the enforcement of a noise control ordinance.

The City endeavors to protect residential areas from excessive noise. Commercial and industrial land uses tend to create more noise than residential areas, and are generally not as sensitive to exterior noise. While noise standards are not as restrictive for these uses, more rigorous standards apply when they are in close proximity to a noise-sensitive area, such as a neighborhood.

### Waste Management and Recycling

The City of Richardson has a number of programs that direct household and commercial wastes to the appropriate destination, which may be a landfill, recycling center, or composting facility.

In 2006, commercial refuse collections totaled 55,811 tons and households in the City generated 35,428 tons of trash.

In addition, 10,735 tons of brush and bulky items were collected on a request basis. More than 3,500 tons of materials were collected in the residential recycling program and over 934 tons were deposited at the City's drop-off recycling centers.

In December 2004, North Texas Municipal Water District member cities began collecting and chipping yard waste at the City of Plano's Custer Road Transfer Station. In 2006, 6,290 tons of brush were composted in a program operated by the City of Plano, saving the City of Richardson more than \$53,000 in landfill costs. Richardson's Parks Department utilizes some of this material for landscaping and maintenance purposes in City parks.

Richardson is in the process of creating a program that manages the waste from construction and demolition projects and works to recycle materials and fixtures from public projects, where possible.

Through the Household Hazardous Waste Program operated by Dallas County, Richardson residents can take household hazardous waste to the Home Chemical Collection Center on Plano Road located in Dallas, 2 miles south of Richardson's City limits.



## 9. Environment

### Building a Better Future

In recent years, the impacts of building standards have been examined due to their effect on people, the environment, and the earth's physical resources. "Green" building programs, most notably Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), are being used more widely. These programs look at building design, construction, and operations. Site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality are all measures of a successful project.



In 2006, Texas Instruments completed the first-ever LEED-certified wafer fabrication facility. This project, located on Renner Road west of Central Expressway, received a 2007 Celebrating Leadership in Development Excellence (CLIDE) Award and has received much positive publicity for the effort. New public buildings in Richardson are being designed to meet LEED standards. The first two constructed with these environmental features will be the new Huffhines Recreation Center on Plano Road and the rebuilt Fire Station 2 on Waterview Drive.

Additional information on sustainability and design is located in the Urban Design chapter.

### Vision Statements

- Promote sustainable development by incorporating "best practices" technology, design, construction, and management techniques to minimize environmental impacts such as energy consumption, pollution, waste disposal, and water usage.
- Educate the citizenry on the need for, and value of, water conservation.
- Encourage the design and construction of "green" buildings and developments.
- Recognize the regional scope of environmental issues facing the north Texas area and continue to participate with other public agencies in finding workable solutions.
- Seek recognition and certification of efforts within Richardson to create a sustainable, environmentally-friendly community.

# Economic Development

## Chapter 10



**City of Richardson, Texas**

2009 Comprehensive Plan

# *Economic Development*

A vibrant economy is key to a city's growth and stability, especially in terms of employment opportunities and services required by residents and employees. The City of Richardson has a long tradition of being a dynamic, high business-growth community, not just a suburb that provides housing for Dallas' workforce.



More than 5,000 businesses have operations within Richardson's 28 square miles. The City's strategic location and superb accessibility to highly skilled workers make it attractive for the high technology companies within the nationally and internationally known Telecom Corridor® area. The Telecom Corridor® contains one of the highest concentrations of telecommunications companies in the world, as well as high-tech clusters of semiconductor, software and electronics companies. But Richardson is also home to regional and national headquarters of diverse companies ranging from Fossil and Sherwin-Williams to Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

While Richardson began early to promote its significant employment centers, the City now finds itself landlocked, surrounded by other communities, with dwindling vacant land for new development.

## *Economic Development Partnership*

In 1986, the City of Richardson joined forces with the Richardson Chamber of Commerce to form the Economic Development Partnership. The Chamber, organized in 1946 to promote business and meet the economic needs of the community, is the "front door" of the City's economic development efforts as well as the business and information assistance center for Richardson. The Chamber has been recognized nationally and regionally for its achievements in economic development and support of small business.



In recent years, the City and the Chamber have increased their efforts in attracting and retaining retail businesses within Richardson. The Chamber has established a Vice President of Corporate Development position, initiated existing business retention meetings to identify challenges and needs within the retail marketplace, and created a communication system and periodic meeting schedule providing a forum for the discussion of leads, prospects and new projects to leasing agents, brokers, and owners.

# 10. Economic Development

## ***21st Century City***

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The City of Richardson has seen a number of changes in recent years. In 2001, the nation-wide economic downturn resulted in the closing or downsizing of a number of companies, causing higher building vacancies, lower sales tax revenues, and a reduced employment base. Since then, the local economy has been slowly improving, with new companies moving to Richardson and existing businesses expanding their presence within the community.

### ***Office and Industry***

The economic downturn affected office and industrial jobs the most, particularly in the technology sector, with a corresponding increase in office and flex-space vacancies. Recent additions to the business community have broadened the City's economic base, especially in the financial and real estate sectors. The technology sector is improving, but existing flex space (office/light industrial) continues to have high vacancy rates and may need to be considered for other uses.

### ***Retail***

A number of factors have affected the retail climate in Richardson. A reduced daytime population, demographic changes (an aging and diversifying population), and changes in retail marketing affect retention and attraction of businesses. As a first-ring suburb, the City faces competition from retail concentrations in surrounding communities and the age and physical condition of many of Richardson's retail centers makes them less appealing than newer centers in nearby cities.

### ***Moving Forward***

Richardson's recent economic development efforts have taken a number of forms. The "Tri-City Retail Study", conducted in 2002 as a cooperative effort between the cities of Richardson, Plano, and Carrollton, examined the issues related to declining retail areas in first-ring suburbs. In addition to traditional economic incentives, such as tax abatements and fee waivers, Richardson recently approved its first Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to encourage redevelopment primarily in the Central Expressway corridor and along Spring Valley Road. Redevelopment efforts have attracted new development types, including transit-oriented and other mixed-use development. The limited amount of vacant land within Richardson, located primarily along the President George Bush Turnpike, will require careful consideration to ensure quality projects that will be sustainable in the long term.



# 10. Economic Development

## **Economic Incentives**

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Richardson offers a number of economic incentives for companies relocating to the City. The Richardson Economic Development Partnership (REDP), a collaboration between the City and the Chamber of Commerce, provides assistance to relocating and expanding companies by identifying, analyzing, and taking applications for available economic incentives. Each economic incentive application is evaluated on its own merits.

### ***Tax Abatement and Freeport Exemption***

Various tax entities in Richardson grant and/or participate in tax abatements and the Freeport Exemption, depending upon whether the site is in Dallas County/Richardson Independent School District or Collin County/Plano Independent School District.

- **Tax Abatement**—Companies may be considered for local property (ad valorem) tax abatements. According to state law, existing taxes cannot be abated; therefore, only new real estate (not land) and business personal property (fixed assets such as equipment, machinery and computers) taxes added as the result of business relocation or expansion can be considered.
- **Freeport Exemption**—The Freeport Exemption may exempt some or all of a company's inventory (raw materials through finished goods) from property taxes. Freeport goods are generally defined as those which are warehoused in Texas for less than 180 days and then shipped outside the state. While all taxing jurisdictions have the option of granting the Freeport Exemption, once granted, the exemption is irrevocable and applies to all businesses within the jurisdiction.

### ***Infrastructure Participation***

Some expansion and relocation projects require a significant amount of infrastructure construction, including new roads and water and sewer lines. The City of Richardson may assume all or a portion of these construction costs.

### ***Fee Waivers***

At the City's discretion, fees paid for zoning and building permits may be waived.

# 10. Economic Development

## *Tax Exempt Financing*

Tax exempt financing, available through the Richardson Industrial Development Corporation, can save a company approximately one-third of the interest it would normally pay on taxable debt. The project must be primarily manufacturing in nature and there are some limits. For example, a company's total capital expenditures in the county, including the bond debt, may not exceed \$10 million for the six-year period which extends three years prior to and three years after the bond financing. A practical limitation is that on financing under \$1 million additional underwriting fees generally equal or exceed the interest cost savings.

## *No Impact Fees*

Impact fees are collected by many Dallas/Fort Worth area cities to help offset the cost of new or expanded water, wastewater, and roadway facilities. As an additional automatic incentive, the City of Richardson does not assess impact fees.

## *Chapter 380 Incentives*

Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code allows cities to create incentives that are tailored to an individual project based on its impact on the community. This gives the cities a degree of flexibility in designing an incentives package utilizing the economic development agreement methods.

## **Central Corridor TIF Zone**

Tax Increment Financing is an economic development tool available to cities under Chapter 311 of the Texas Tax Code to publicly finance improvements including public buildings, streets, alleys, parks, schools, sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements within a defined area known as a TIF Zone (also referred to as a Tax Increment Reinvestments Zone, or TIRZ). The creation in 2006 of the



900-acre Central Corridor Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Zone provides a new financing mechanism to aid redevelopment in a targeted area of the City—along both sides of the Central Expressway corridor and is an area along Spring Valley Road that is occupied primarily by aging apartments.

## 10. Economic Development

As redevelopment occurs within the zone, the taxable value of real property is projected to increase which, in turn, generates a new increment of property tax revenue.

Richardson will take 100% of the City's new incremental property tax revenue and place it in a fund which then reimburses certain developer costs (land acquisition, building demolition) or pays for public improvements and infrastructure. In addition, Dallas County has entered into

an Interlocal Agreement to support the City's development mission for this TIF by committing 65% of Dallas County's incremental property tax revenue from the TIF area to the City's TIF fund.



TIF is not a new or additional tax and the increment focuses only on changes to real property values, not on business personal property (BPP) increases. TIFs are used to revitalize areas that need public infrastructure and participation to kick-start the redevelopment process or to bring new developments to an area.

A TIF gives a city the ability to motivate a quicker redevelopment cycle. It also provides a separate funding mechanism for rebuilding required infrastructure to encourage redevelopment and offsets some of the extraordinary costs involved in redevelopment. The TIF enables the City to avoid using City debt and City capital funding for certain redevelopment improvements and provides a positive stimulus for redevelopment. Under state law, a TIF district cannot include more than 15% of a city's taxable real property. At the time of adoption in 2006, the appraised taxable real property within the zone was \$421,406,980, or 5.37% of the taxable value for all real property within the overall City (\$7,849,697,779).

The Central Corridor TIF was established for a term of 25 years, with Dallas County participating for up to 20 years. Public agencies have spent millions of dollars for improvements within the corridor—the DART rail line (the Arapaho and Spring Valley stations are within the district); the reconstruction of Central Expressway; the reconstruction of Greenville Avenue; the Spring Valley/US75 interchange. Even so, several obstacles to redevelopment still remain—land acquisition and assembly; aging infrastructure, particularly storm drainage facilities; physical and access barriers. The TIF Zone offers the opportunity to take advantage of an emerging window of opportunity to motivate a quicker redevelopment cycle and to support higher quality development.

### **Transit-Oriented Development**

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Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a land use pattern and development style with unique characteristics resulting from the proximity and relationship of property to a transit facility, such as a light rail station or a bus facility. As mentioned in the Land Use element, special regulations and plans can take advantage of the development potential in the area surrounding a transit facility.

## 10. Economic Development

Four light rail stations are currently operating within Richardson along DART's Red Line corridor—Spring Valley, Arapaho Center, Galatyn Park, and Bush Turnpike. In addition, DART recently added the Cotton Belt Line, which will extend from D/FW Airport to the Bush Turnpike Station, to the agency's 2030 Transit Service Plan. A station at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) is being championed by the City and UTD. The City is partnering with the university to study the land use and development potential for the station area. Each of these stations have unique development challenges and opportunities.

### *TOD Planning Efforts*

The City of Richardson has created a transit-oriented development strategy over several years of study and planning. The process began with visits to transit systems across the country, followed by a panel study by the Urban Land Institute, station area planning and market analysis for the City's southern stations, and most recently with the implementation of the Spring Valley Station District plan through zoning hearings and development approvals.

### *Urban Land Institute (ULI)*

During the summer of 2001, the City retained the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to conduct a panel study of the Richardson's section of the DART light rail corridor. The week-long intensive study brought in real estate, development, transportation, and economic professionals from across the country. At the end of the week, the panel presented their findings to the Richardson City Council and community, and published a report of its findings and recommendations.

### *Station Area Planning Studies*

In 2002, the City of Richardson hired professional consultants to further refine the ULI recommendations and to create station area plans for the City's three southern stations—Spring Valley, Arapaho Center, and a proposed station at Main Street that has since been removed from consideration. In addition, a market analysis was conducted to designate the amount of development each of the stations could support through the year 2020.

# 10. Economic Development

## Richardson's Light Rail Stations

### *Spring Valley*

The area surrounding the Spring Valley Station was rezoned in 2004 with Planned Development zoning to create the Spring Valley Station District. The development regulations for the District were amended in late 2006 for administrative corrections and again in early 2007 to accommodate a redevelopment plan involving the eastern half of the District at the request of the developer of Brick Row.



Brick Row replaces an aging 337-unit apartment complex and 18 single-family dwellings with a mix of 950 residential units (townhomes, apartments, and condominiums) and 44,000 square feet of retail space. The Floyd Branch drainage corridor, which bisects the development site, will be enhanced to accommodate storm water protection and to serve as an amenity, incorporating trails that will connect with Richardson's city-wide network. The historic McKamy Springs will be preserved and a new public open space will provide recreational opportunities for the residents of Brick Row and other parts of the City.

### *Arapaho Center*

Geographically, Arapaho Center is Richardson's middle light rail station. It is located directly west of Greenville Avenue and the Richardson Transit Center, north of Arapaho Road, and east of Central Expressway (US 75). A pedestrian tunnel under Greenville Avenue connects DART's bus transit facility with the station. Originally built as the Richardson Transit Center, the station has parking for approximately 1,200 cars.



Planning efforts for the Arapaho Center Station have included the ULI Report, a station area plan, and a market analysis. A set of Station District regulations was drafted to implement these recommendations; however, the City will probably wait for a development partner to initiate the appropriate rezoning of the Arapaho Center Area.

# 10. Economic Development

## *Galatyn Park*

Galatyn Park is Richardson's first Transit-Oriented Development and is reflective of a very successful public/private partnership. Initially, DART planned for a station at Campbell Road. Through a series of events and discussions, a location further north was chosen. Galatyn Park currently includes a mix of uses that will continue to expand:



- The 336-room Renaissance Hotel, a "Class A" hotel with conference space.
- Offices for Nortel Networks, a major presence within Galatyn Park since its inception, and Countrywide Mortgage/Bank of America, which relocated to Galatyn Park in 2005, expanding and consolidating several local operations. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas began construction in the summer of 2008 of their new main campus in the Galatyn Park area.
- The Eisemann Center, the City's long-awaited arts and corporate presentation facility.
- Galatyn Plaza, the grand entrance from the station to the development and a site for local festivals.
- The Venue, a 279-unit apartment development with 6,000 square feet of ground-floor retail.
- Eight acres of vacant land still available for development.

## *Bush Turnpike*

The Bush Turnpike Station is the last stop before entering Plano. The vacant land surrounding the at-grade station is owned by only two different entities, which should simplify development discussions. Parking for the station is located under the main lanes of the turnpike, which leaves the adjacent land free for development.



# 10. Economic Development

## The Tri-City Retail Study

In order to attract and retain residents and businesses, a city must be able to provide a variety of easily-accessible goods and services; otherwise, the consequences may be have far-reaching as seen in the national trend of stagnating and declining retail centers within first-ring suburbs. In 2002, the cities of Carrollton, Plano and Richardson came together to develop strategies for revitalizing their key commercial areas as each community faced competition from newer outlying suburbs and revitalization efforts within central Dallas. The cities commissioned a study—the Retail Study of Underperforming and Vacant Retail Areas—to help define the problem and determine possible solutions to help reverse the trend of commercial decline. The challenges that faced the cities included:

- Municipal planning practices which led to retail over-zoning
- Rapidly changing retail formats (nationally and regionally)
- Dramatic shifts in demographic characteristics, particularly age and ethnicity
- Limited market opportunities
- “Cannibalization” of retail sales by large format (big box) users
- Eroding market share due to competition from outer suburbs

The report provided a basis for the cities to establish policies, revise codes and ordinances, consider rezoning proposals, and establish incentives to promote appropriate development and/or redevelopment. Based on the identification of best practices and a set of issues associated with prototypical sites in each of the cities, a series of tools and strategies were developed. The tools included a profile of market conditions, criteria for evaluating future sites in order to select an appropriate strategy, and a description of alternative strategies necessary to further their implementation. The report closed with a series of steps for establishing a framework to ready the cities’ environments for the future.

## Retail Initiative

Richardson is located within an increasingly complex and competitive retail environment. Many existing retail properties within the City do not meet current site selection criteria and would be difficult and expensive to develop or redevelop. The City and Chamber retail strategy partnership is working jointly to create an environment conducive to attracting and retaining quality retail and restaurant users.

## 10. Economic Development

The efforts so far have lead to both new development and upgrades to established retail centers. The City/Chamber retail strategy includes components that encompass all areas of development.

### *Financial*

The partnership is working to define appropriate packages of retail incentives based on the character of individual proposals. These incentives range from property tax abatements and economic development grants to public/private partnerships.

### *Regulatory*

City regulations, including zoning, parking, and signage should be studied based on the goal of promoting quality, successful retail development. Emphasis on code enforcement (parking lots, landscaping, building exteriors) will help to maintain the attractiveness of existing centers.

### *Land Preparation*

The partnership is looking for methods to encourage the assembly of land and to prepare sites to meet modern development criteria and standards, including incentives for land acquisition and infrastructure assistance.

### *Policy*

The partnership wants to evaluate expansion and new construction policies that will promote a more positive retail image for the City of Richardson and reflect emerging trends and issues.

### *Marketing*

Marketing materials created for specific retail markets and direct marketing activities to retailers at the local and national level can yield positive results. With assistance from retail center owners, redevelopment proposals for the marketing of specific centers can even be formulated.

### *Communication*

Communication and tracking systems are already in place, including distribution of a regular electronic newsletter to area retailers, brokers, and leasing agents and periodic meetings between City/Chamber staff and the retail broker/management industry. The Chamber maintains a database of contact information for retail center owners, leasing agents, and brokers to facilitate this process. The City's neighborhood associations are also encouraged to urge their members to patronize local shopping and dining.



# 10. Economic Development

## *Business Relations*

The partnership works with the retail advisory group and conducts regular visits with existing retailers to solicit advice on issues and prospects. Participation in local, regional, and national retail industry events establishes contacts and provides further insights into the constantly evolving retail industry.

## **Vision Statements**

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- Maintain the City's image as a high-quality, proactive business environment.
- Pursue a strong and diverse local economic base capable of sustaining the City's quality of life and producing positive financial benefits.
- Strategically utilize economic incentives to rejuvenate older commercial areas when and where market support can be demonstrated.
- Recognize and respond to changing market conditions and the global economy.
- Encourage reinvestment, revitalization, or alternative redevelopment of the City's aging retail centers.