



PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The first phase of engagement for the Comprehensive Plan kicked off in early August 2022 with two days of focus group interviews, a community workshop, pop-ups, online presentation and survey, and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. Engagement activities in this first phase of work focused on informing the public about the Comprehensive Plan process and gaining broad insights about the vision for the next 20 years in Farmers Branch and beyond.

There were several ways for the public to get involved with the process including a community workshop, online engagement and associated surveys as well as focus groups for stakeholders. For each engagement method, there were key questions asked of the public. These questions were designed to solicit answers that will inform the next phase of work. Key questions included:

- What is your Six-Word Story for the future of Farmers Branch?
- What are some opportunities and constraints in Farmers Branch related to mobility, housing, jobs, green space, and design?
- What places and experiences are missing in Farmers Branch right now?
- What areas of Farmers Branch need more investment?
- What areas of Farmers Branch need to be preserved?

The following document summarizes engagement activities and the general feedback received through each method of engagement to-date. The appendix includes the full engagement documentation, including each comment received.

Community Workshop

The consultant team and City staff held a community-wide workshop on August 4th from 6:30-8:30pm at the Mercer Crossing Amenity Center. The event was open-house style and was well-attended by Farmers Branch residents with an estimated 120 participants. The city and consultant team engaged residents on the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan and gathered input through a variety of visioning exercises for the future of the city. There were five activities for participants to engage with at the open house which are described in more detail below. High-level summaries of what we heard are included in this summary, and the full documentation of comments received are included in the appendix.

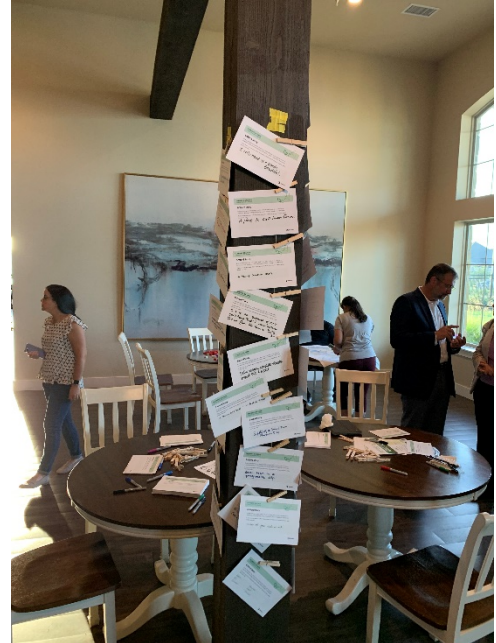




Station 1: Six-Word Story

Description: As an activity in the planning process, the Six-Word Story encourages participants to be creative while providing telling information about the core sentiment of their experience of a place. The Six-Word Story attempts to distill a person's experience or narrative into a short, evocative story.

What we heard: The six-word stories completed by Farmers Branch residents highlighted the safety and small town feel of the city, with large city amenities above all else. Residents want their city to be centered around community, and to be welcoming, exciting, friendly and fun. Other themes embedded in the residents' stories include a focus on its vibrancy, diversity, beauty and a big heart city where people care for their neighbors. There is desire among residents for the city to have a more exciting "front porch" and to offer innovation opportunities within walkable streets connected to accessible parks.



Station 2: Love, More, Less

Description: This station included three boards with broad questions with respondents using sticky notes.

- In Farmers Branch I love . . .
- In Farmers Branch I want more of . . .
- In Farmers Branch I want less of . . .

What we heard: Residents of Farmers Branch love its central location and access to surrounding highways, specifically highlighting its connections, proximity to work, airports and new homes. People love the parks, specifically Rawhide Park, Historical Park and the many dog parks. Residents also expressed love for the city's businesses including The Firehouse Theater, Green Grabber, and restaurants. Finally, residents expressed their happiness with the City's Recreation Center, police, fire, sustainability and school services.

Residents of Farmers Branch want more sit-down restaurant options, more coffee shops and more retail opportunities. Residents on the west side of I-35 would like better access to not only restaurants and coffee shops but also grocery store. These residents would also like access to more parks and connected open space west of I-35. Many residents would like more beautiful gateways to the city as well as a focus on safety; with more law enforcement presence and traffic control. There is a desire for a better strategy to address homelessness and mental health challenges. In the right-of-way, residents would like more trees, bike lanes and less parking in front of apartments and houses. In terms of housing, there is a desire for more mixed-use housing developments in general and more affordable housing specifically. Home improvement programs to incentivize improvements was mentioned as one solution. Finally, there is a desire for community serving amenities such as a central gathering area programmed with events such as concerts and multi-cultural festivals.

In Farmers Branch residents want less crime and homelessness, as well as less run-down and empty businesses. There is also a strong desire for both lower taxes, including lower property taxes, and less political divisiveness. People in Farmers branch would like to see fewer homes in need of repair and



inconsistent code enforcement, as well as less parking conflicts in residential areas. There is a desire for less dense apartment housing and fewer budget hotels.



Station 3: Bucket Exercise – Implementation Trade-Offs

Description: Each participant pretended they were a decision-maker with limited resources to implement the Farmers Branch Comprehensive Plan. How would they prioritize implementation? Each person received five Branch Bucks. They then decide how they want to spend them. They customized a ticket if they didn't see all their priorities represented.

Bucket topics: Wider and Interconnected Sidewalks, Improve Parks and Green Spaces, Preserve Mature Trees, Invest in Public Art and Culture, Address Safety and Crime, Improve Transportation Choices/Options, Enhance Public Spaces and Facilities, More Housing Options, Expand Entertainment Options, Increase Retail Options, Other.

What we heard: The highest priority for Farmers Branch residents is for the City to spend resources addressing crime and safety. This is quickly followed by the desire for increased retail options and improved



parks and green spaces. The “other” category also ranked high and included a desire for more restaurants, an improved Four Corners area and better roads and sidewalks. Other high-ranking priorities include wider and interconnected sidewalks and enhanced public spaces and facilities.

Station 4: Existing Conditions Gaps and STEP Analysis



Description: Participants were asked to identify any gaps in the existing built environment and policy framework. They were provided with both sticky notes and colored dots to provide feedback. Boards included:

- Mobility Needs Board
- Farmers Branch Now Board – What areas of Farmers Branch need more investment or improvements?
- Demographics Board – How is Farmers Branch changing?

What we heard: Mobility needs discussed by residents include enhanced walking and biking connections throughout the city, especially between residential areas, entertainment districts, and parks. Residents would like to see on-street bike lanes and slower traffic, especially on Valley View. Existing sidewalk conditions were also mentioned as an area for improvement. Areas of the city where we heard a need for connections include Mercer Crossing, both to the east into Farmers Branch and to the west into Irving and Campion Trail and between the central area of the city and Addison. This last connection is needed to connect to amenities such as grocery stores in the neighboring city.

There are several areas of the city that residents told us need more investment or improvement. Specifically, residents would like a more beautified entrance to the city along I-35 and 635 with a cohesive look and feel. Areas for redevelopment or further investment include Four Corners and Mustang Station, either of which could serve as a more central gathering place. There is a desire for more amenities on the west side of the city including parks, trails, street lights, restaurants, grocery store and other retail businesses.

Station 5: What do we need to know about Farmers Branch?

Description: This station included a base map of the city with major roads, parks, and major landmarks. The purpose of this station was to engage in conversations between City/Stantec staff and participants about anything they want us to know about the context of Farmers Branch and then record what we can on sticky notes.



What we heard: General comments we heard at the big map for the west side of the city included a need for more walking/bike paths, restaurants, grocery stores and better police presence. There is also a desire for an EV charger requirement in new retail and apartments. Along I-35, residents would like to see improved DART amenities including better shade structures, less crime and service to both airports. Residents would also like to see improvements to the Mustang Station area development including more parking and a pedestrian-only retail area, also more awareness throughout the city of the retail area.

In the central area of the city, residents would like to see an improved Four Corners area with more restaurants and affordable housing. There is a desire for a city-wide sustainability effort, including more trees, better mobility options, rainwater collection and EV chargers.

On the east side of the city, more moderate interventions are desired including better maintained roads, sidewalks and landscaping, and better retail/restaurant options. There is also a desire for less apartments and less density along 635.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is a guiding group for the Comprehensive Process and consists of City department leadership and staff, and representatives from DART. The second meeting of the TAC was



held in early August and the group was given a quick recap and status update on the planning effort. The group engaged in the Love, More, Less engagement activity described above. City staff and leadership love the parks, mature trees, transit, location and small city feel. They also love the engaged citizens and the high level of City services provided. City staff want more walkability and connectivity, better entrances to the Farmers Branch and better City branding. The City staff would also like to see better designed public realm and architecture, an improved Four Corners, and better amenities, especially on the west side of the city. City staff would like to see less older buildings and less underutilized parking lots. There are conflicts on the east side between truck traffic and apartments and there is a concern about the number of police calls generated by residents of the apartment buildings in the city. On the east side there are identified gaps in parks and connectivity, especially to the Spring Valley park area.

Focus Group Meetings

The consultant team hosted four focus group meetings with stakeholders in the city. These groups included business owners, employees, property owners, developers, brokers, institutional leaders and designers. These focus groups are helpful for the City/Stantec staff to further understand the strengths and weaknesses of the city, the development opportunities and constraints within the Farmers Branch, and offer the City/Stantec staff the opportunity to have small-group conversations about how the Comprehensive Plan can help to solve the challenges that the city faces.

Focus Groups 1 & 2

The first two focus groups were comprised of business and employee representatives from the Dallas Stars, Simmons Bank and Elliott Electric Supply company. For these representatives, the biggest selling point for Farmers Branch is its location and its connectivity to the rest of the metroplex. They also recognized Farmers Branch as a safe city with a high standard of living. The biggest challenge they face in Farmers Branch is the lack of restaurants, especially for lunch and larger groups. The city is also challenged by being landlocked on all sides and having a dwindling supply of available land for new housing and businesses. There was also mention that the permitting process can be lengthy, and that enforcement of ordinances is too strict, but there is also an understanding that this is true in most places. The two districts that have the biggest potential according to this group are Four Corners and Mustang Station. There is also opportunity to better connect the west side with the rest of the city after the I-35 construction.

Focus Group 3

The third focus group included a variety of developer, property owner and broker representatives from Bonneau Homes, Rich Young Company LLC, Farmers Insurance, Catalyst Commercial, Centurion American, Prologis and Leeds Real Estate Co. The biggest selling points mentioned by this group included the huge employment base in the city, the small-town feel of Farmers Branch with big-city development opportunities, and the access to surrounding areas. There is also a need for more accessible rooftops to support the desire for more restaurants. The City could potentially address some of the outlined challenges by understanding the city's value proposition and marketing Farmers Branch accordingly. Improving the public realm in growth



areas such as Mercer Crossing and Mustang Station could support the marketing of the city's value proposition. Affordability and keeping employees in the city, especially those that work on the east and west sides of the city, are two key concerns of Group 3.

Focus Group 4

The final focus group included institutions and planners/designers with representatives from the FB and Metrocrest Chambers of Commerce, Freese and Nichols, and a former member of the Farmers Branch planning staff. This group agreed that Farmers Branch is a great place to live and work. It has 90% of what is needed to be a vibrant city, including unique neighborhoods, parks, trails and safety. The missing pieces are retail, restaurants and visual appeal from the entrances on major roadways. The biggest selling points mentioned included location, parks and a sense of community. This group would like to see efforts between the business community and the City more aligned and integrated, to ensure that every effort is made to attract and keep entrepreneurs and employees in Farmers Branch. This group would also like to see the City take a longer view and wait for the highest and best use of key land including at Mustang Station and Four Corners. While the widening of I-35 is a concern for this group, there are opportunities that are on the table to better connect the west side of the city.

DART Station Pop-up

Stantec and K-Strategies conducted a pop-up at the DART station in Farmers Branch on Wednesday, August 3rd during the evening commute time from 4:30-5:30pm. The team asked passersby what they love, want more of, and want less of in the city. The team heard that people at the station love DART transit and the parks in Farmers Branch, and that they want more high-end restaurants, more high paying jobs, more transit to workplaces and restrooms at DART stops. They want support to end homelessness to ensure that there are less homeless people at the DART station

Denton Drive Live

This event was held on for August 13th and attendees were engaged and asked to contribute their six-word stories. The attendees who spoke with us were largely mature individuals and couples Most of the responses echoed input received at the Community Workshop, including wanting more restaurants and retail. Pedestrian oriented development and transit were also mentioned.

Family Night in the Park

This event was held on August 20th and involved engaging attendees in the Love, More, Less activity. Many of the attendees who provided input were families with young





children. Those results are aggregated into the overall Love, More, Less results.

Online Engagement

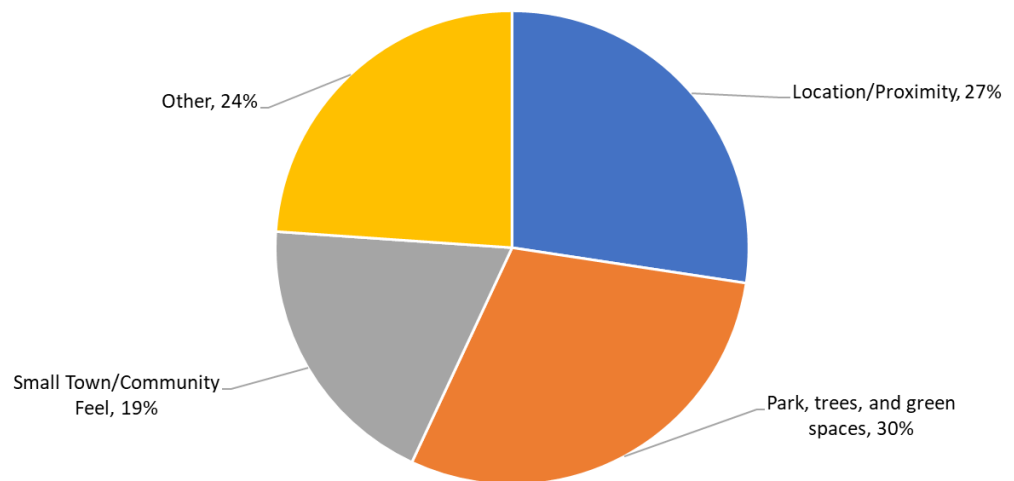
Engagement was facilitated online using a StoryMap website to provide participants with background on demographics, land use, mobility, and parks before asking questions similar to those from in-person engagement. There were 252 responses to the written survey. There were 164 comments left on the map by about 65 contributors. Responses to the Love, More Less questions below have also been integrated into the Love, More Less summary.



What I love about Farmers Branch is...

Responders expressed their satisfaction for three main elements: the strategic location of Farmers Branch within the metroplex area, the availability of Parks and natural spaces, and the small town feel that the city provides.

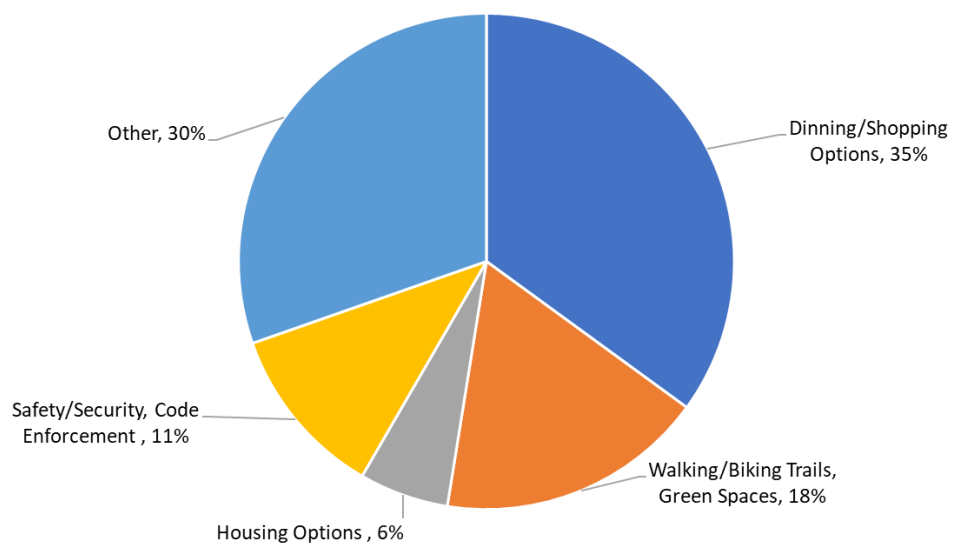
Online "Love" Responses



What I want more of in Farmers Branch is...

The main needs that emerged from all the answers are the following: more shopping and dining options, more housing options, and finally more green and open spaces to encourage biking and walkable activities.

Online "More" Responses

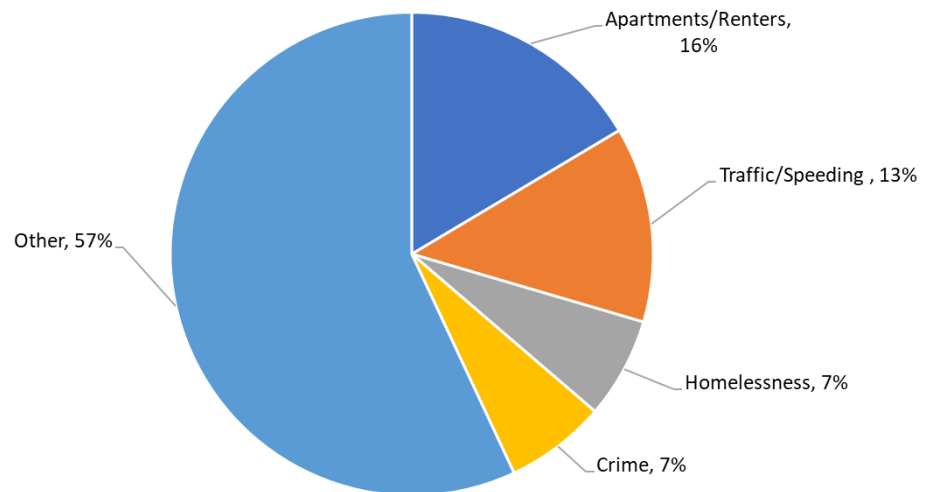




What I want less of in Farmers Branch is...

Many reoccurring answers were related to decreasing crime, homelessness, traffic, and speeding drivers. Some also expressed desire for fewer rental properties, multifamily developments, or poorly maintained/cleaned properties.

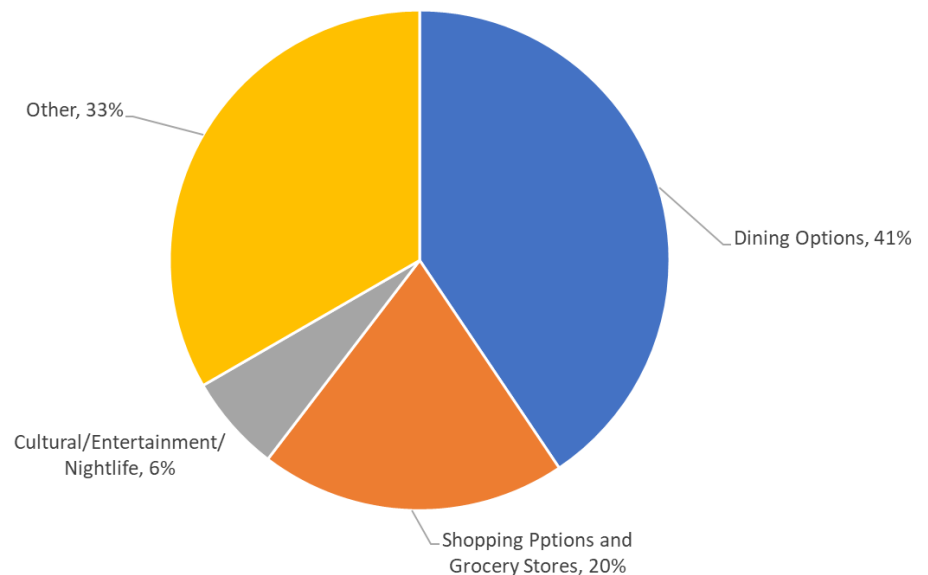
Online "Less" Responses



What places and experiences are missing in Farmers Branch right now?

Many places were on the list such as restaurants, grocery stores, and shopping areas. The responders want to have more shopping options, nightlife, and they want to spend their money locally instead of going to other places.

Missing Places



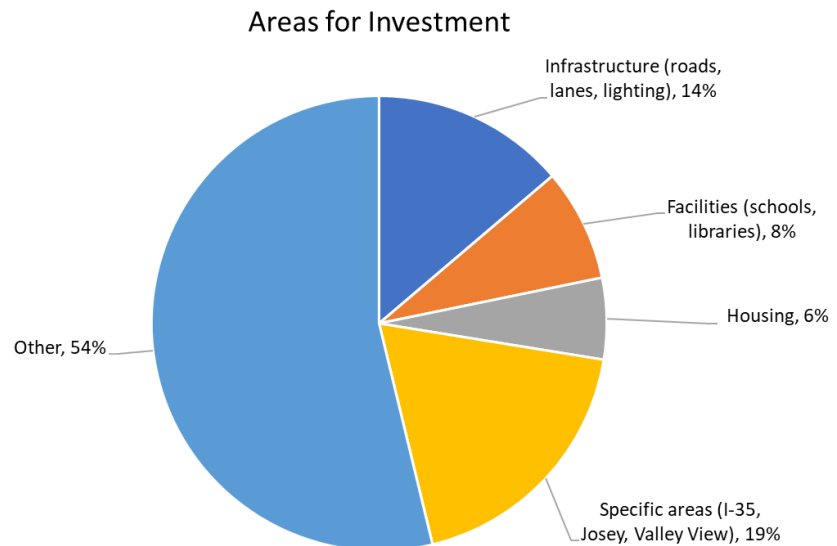
FARMERS BRANCH

Livable, Inclusive, Vibrant



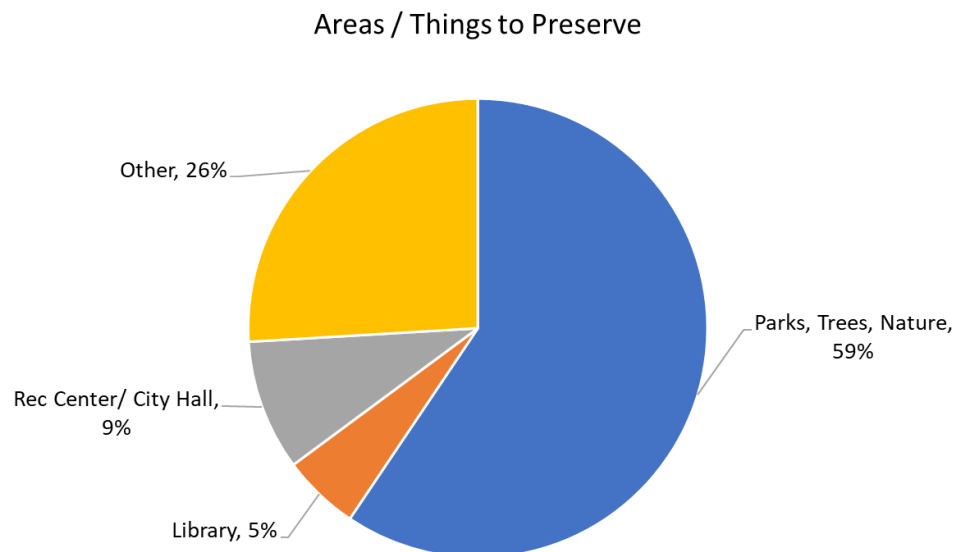
What areas of Farmers Branch need more investment or improvements?

Responders encourage more infrastructure improvements whether the ones related mobility such as roads and sidewalks or facilities such as schools and libraries. There many responses about the need for upgrading I-35 corridor as well as the housing stock in general.



What areas of Farmers Branch need to be preserved as they are?

The main areas that need to be preserved are the parks and natural elements, the library, the city hall and the rec center.



FARMERS BRANCH

Livable, Inclusive, Vibrant



What areas of Farmers Branch need more investment or improvement? Add a point to the map.

Concentrations of comments centered around Four Corners, near LBJ Fwy and Webb Chappel Rd, Mustang Station, around the residential portion of west side, residential center, and east side.

- Four corners: better use with entertainment and retail, improve surface lots with trees or multifamily
- Valley View Ln: bike/ped/transit improvements needed
- LBJ and Webb Chapel/Dennis: address homelessness, unattractive parking lots and hospital
- Mustang Station: more density (residential, retail), need better bike/ped connections
- West side residential: traffic calming, bike/ped connections
- Residential center: housing maintenance (north side), sidewalk and road maintenance, park improvements
- East side: need to address vacancy, connections to parks and rest of city

