



# CORRIDOR VISION STUDY

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Ordinance Number: 3678

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# Acknowledgements

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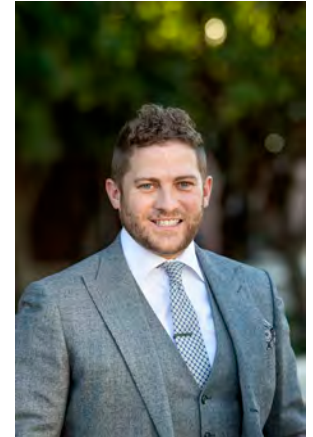
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# Forward

The IH-35E corridor is a significant gateway to the City of Farmers Branch which serves as a “window” into our community. As such, it is important that this corridor reflect the City’s reputation for excellence in order to better position the corridor for the longer term, including continuing to attract and retain new businesses and development within the corridor, as well as providing amenities for our residents. It is also necessary that the City leverage existing assets, thereby increasing property values and promoting investment within the corridor for our community. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is getting ready to embark on their second expansion of IH-35E, having significant implications on some properties and businesses within our community while at the same time, creating new opportunities for the City to capitalize upon. Therefore, the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study provides a roadmap for the future, guiding land use, development and future public investment decisions, while laying the groundwork necessary to achieve the desired vision for the corridor during the next 20 years – to create a front door to Farmers Branch along the IH-35E corridor.



Mayor Robert Dye

The IH-35E Corridor Vision Study was primarily developed during the Covid-19 public health pandemic; this required both the vision study development process and the final vision study to be flexible. During vision study development, early stages of public engagement were accomplished in-person but then quickly changed and carried out on a largely virtual platform. A total of 530 residents, landowners, business owners, and study area employees took part in two online surveys that informed the vision study, evidence of an engaged public. The vision study itself recognizes the uncertainty in the market created by the Covid-19 pandemic and has resulted strategies that are flexible, and allow the City to be responsive to market demand in the recovery from Covid-19.

The vision study provides a comprehensive list of strategies for implementing the corridor vision, as well as detailed information about when and who should implement each strategy. This assists the City as an organization with the information needed to do the necessary budgeting and planning to move the city closer towards the desired vision for the corridor. However, the City cannot implement this vision alone. We look forward to partnering with property owners, businesses, and other interested stakeholders so that together, we can all achieve this new vision for the IH-35E corridor, and establish it as – **a world-class place to live and do business along an attractive gateway.**





# I. BACKGROUND

# Background

## Project Purpose

The City's 2020 Strategic Plan identified the need for the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study to help provide attractive, unique, and connected spaces for community interaction, but also to provide a road map for the future related to land use and economic development opportunities in order to better position the corridor for the longer term. The timing of the study coincides with the Texas Department of Transportation's (TxDOT) phase two widening of IH-35E, offering the opportunity to coordinate with the work of the Mayor's IH-35E Betterments Task Force as well as studies underway for key corridors, including Valley View Lane, Denton Drive, and Bee Street, east of the highway. The vision study will guide development within

the IH-35E corridor over the next 20 years and include recommendations to leverage existing assets and facilitate redevelopment in order to increase property values and allow for higher quality land uses within the corridor.

The IH-35E corridor is an important employment center for Farmers Branch and the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) region. New development within the DART Station Area, such as the Shops at Mustang Station, will continue to be a catalyst to spur additional development within the IH-35E corridor, creating an opportunity to transform this corridor and create an impressive gateway into Farmers Branch.

## Project Area and Context

The study area, shown in Figure 1, includes approximately 463 net acres of land on the east and west sides of the IH-35E right-of-way. The study area is bounded by the City of Dallas to the south; the City of Carrollton to the north; the BNSF/DART-owned railroad (also referred to as the Madill Railroad) on the west; and Denton Drive, Rawhide Creek, Valley View Lane, the rear property line of properties on Nestle Street, Havenhurst Street, and generally the eastern boundary of Bee Street on the east.



DART and Mustang Station



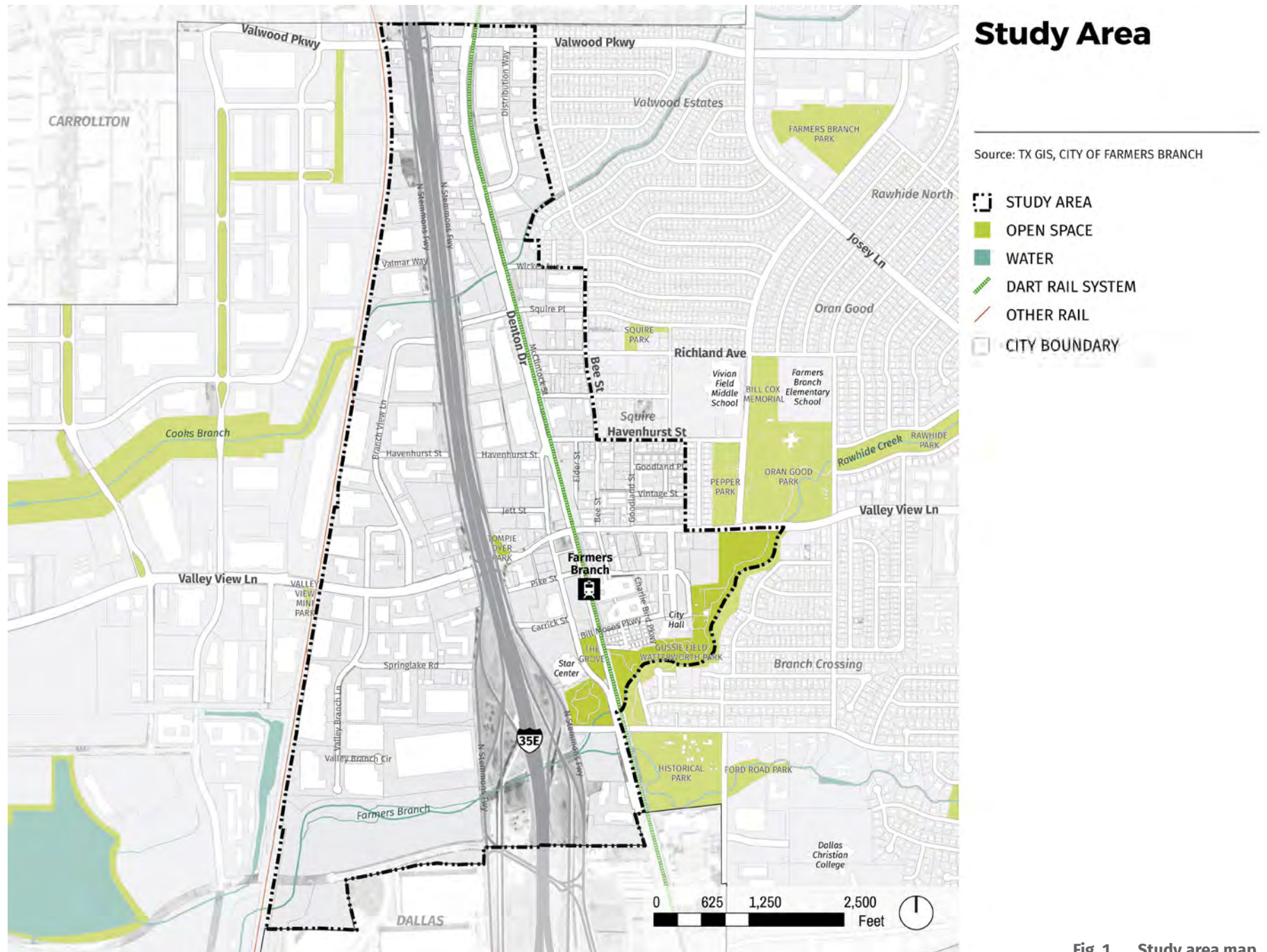
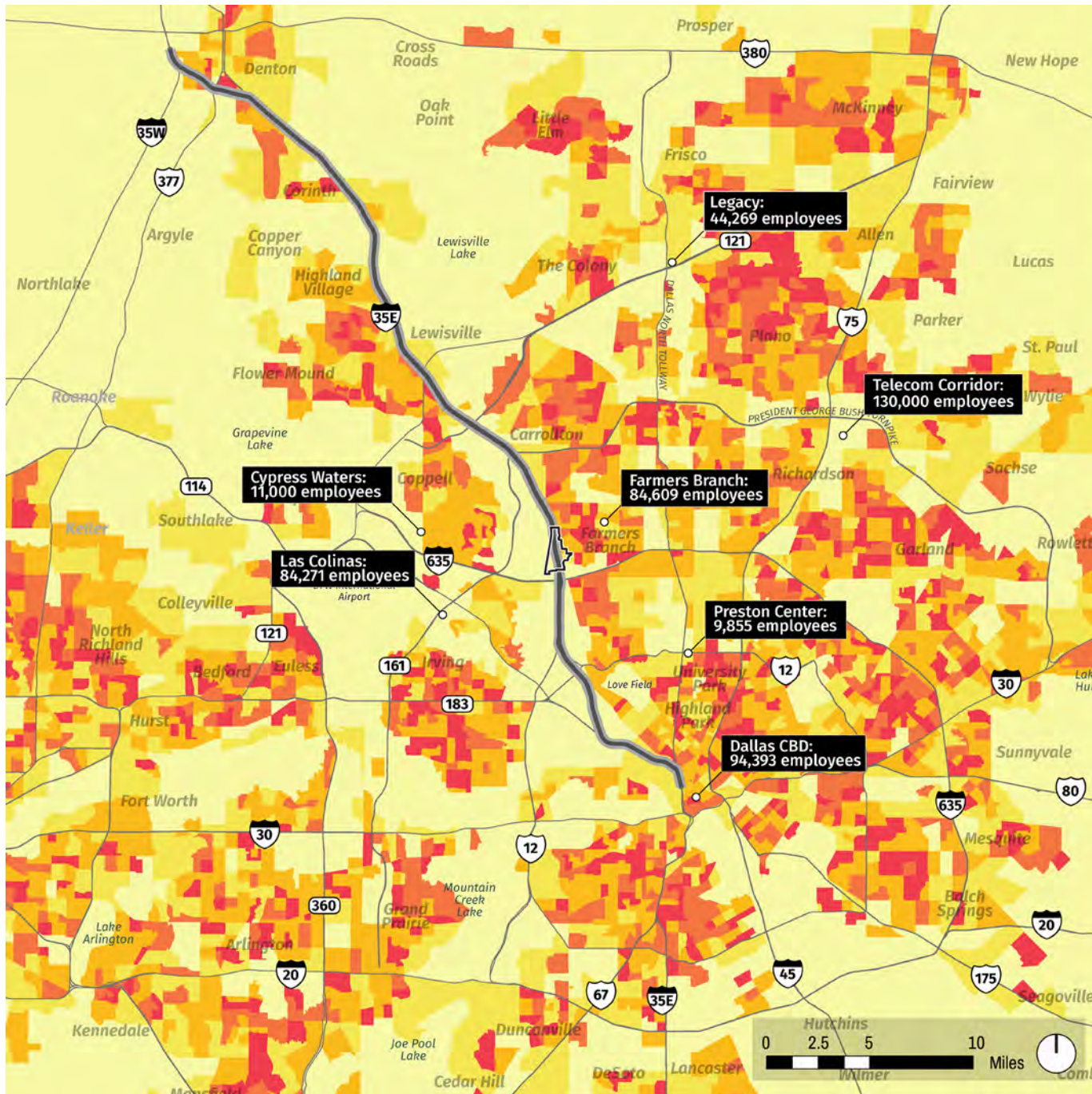


Fig. 1 Study area map





## Population Density 2018 (Per Sq. Mile)

Source: ACS 2018 5-year estimate  
(by census block groups)

□ STUDY AREA

0 - 500

500 - 1,000

1,000 - 5,000

5,000 - 7,500

7,500 - 10,000

10,000+

DFW Employment Districts

Fig. 2 Regional population density map

Regional growth in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex has expanded steadily outward but there is new interest in inner ring cities as traffic and congestion worsen. Farmers Branch is very well positioned within the DFW Metroplex; it is central to major job hubs, has excellent transportation options including easy access to DFW Airport and Dallas Love Field Airport, and is relatively affordable. Farmers Branch enjoys a reputation as one of the best places to live in the Dallas area, ranking third in a 2020 list compiled by *Money Inc.*<sup>1</sup> Between 2010 and 2018, the city experienced an estimated population growth of 40%.<sup>2</sup> During that same period, 80% of new development in the city has been residential.<sup>3</sup>

- 1 Flynn, Liz. "The 20 Best Places to Live in Dallas." *Money Inc.*, 19 Feb. 2020, <https://moneyinc.com/best-places-to-live-dallas/>.
- 2 U.S. Census (2010) and American Community Survey (2018).
- 3 North Central Texas Council of Governments (2019).

Currently, the IH-35E study area is 68% commercial and industrial land uses, underscoring its role as a place of work. The Station Area is evolving as a new mixed-use community and destination for restaurants, retail, and entertainment uses. New residential neighborhoods are growing on both sides of IH-35E, with developments that include Mustang Station, Vintage Place, the Brickyard and Mercer Crossing. Future redevelopment along Valley View Lane provides an opportunity to provide a better connection to the DART Station Area. Another potential driver of change along Valley View Lane is the Irving to Frisco Passenger Rail Corridor Study, a North Central Texas Council of Governments commuter passenger rail study along the BNSF/DART-owned rail line with a time horizon of 2045, if approved. A potential rail station is being considered north of Valley View Lane at the western border of the IH-35E study area.



***"We need to connect our new neighborhoods to the west with our city center in the east."***



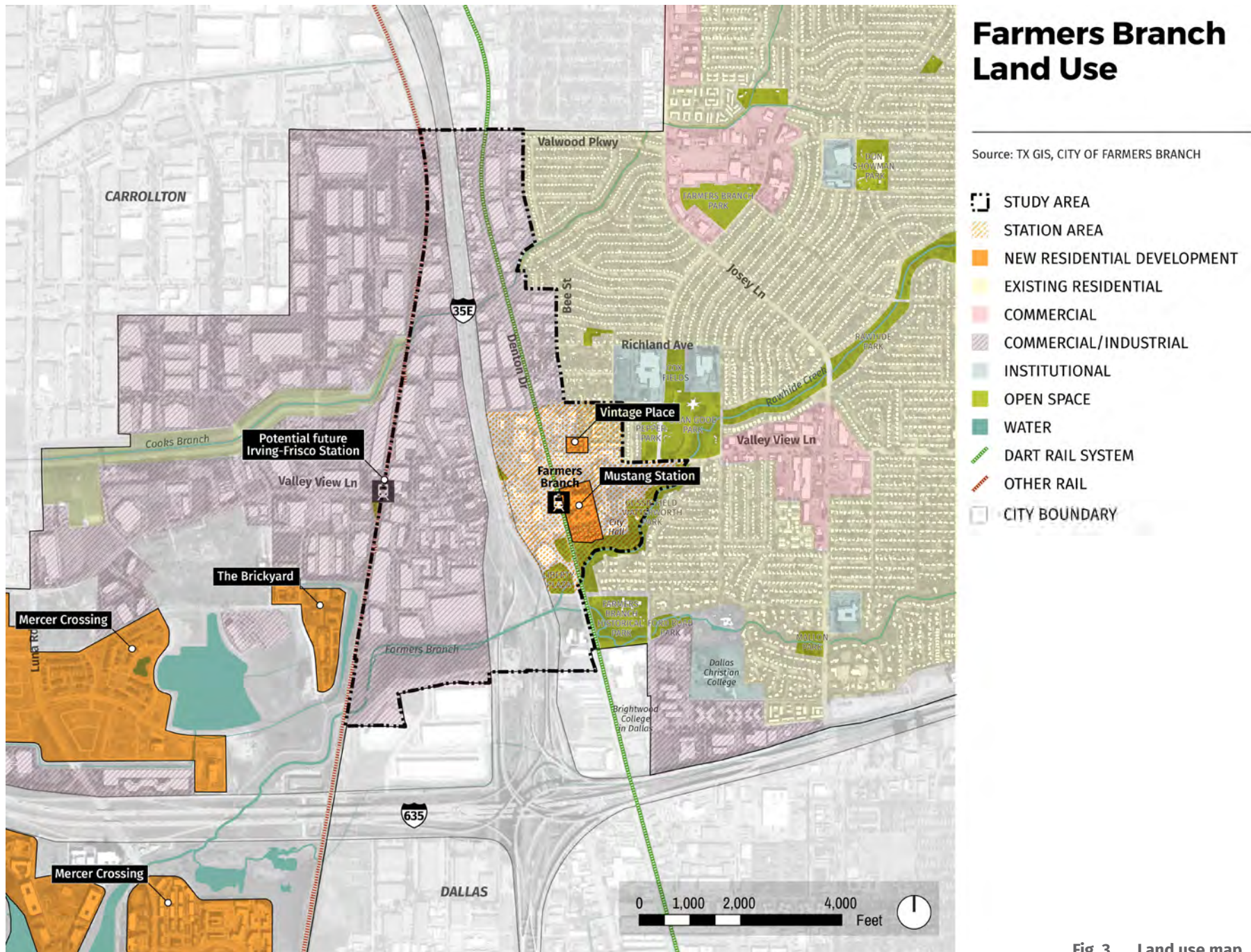


Fig. 3 Land use map



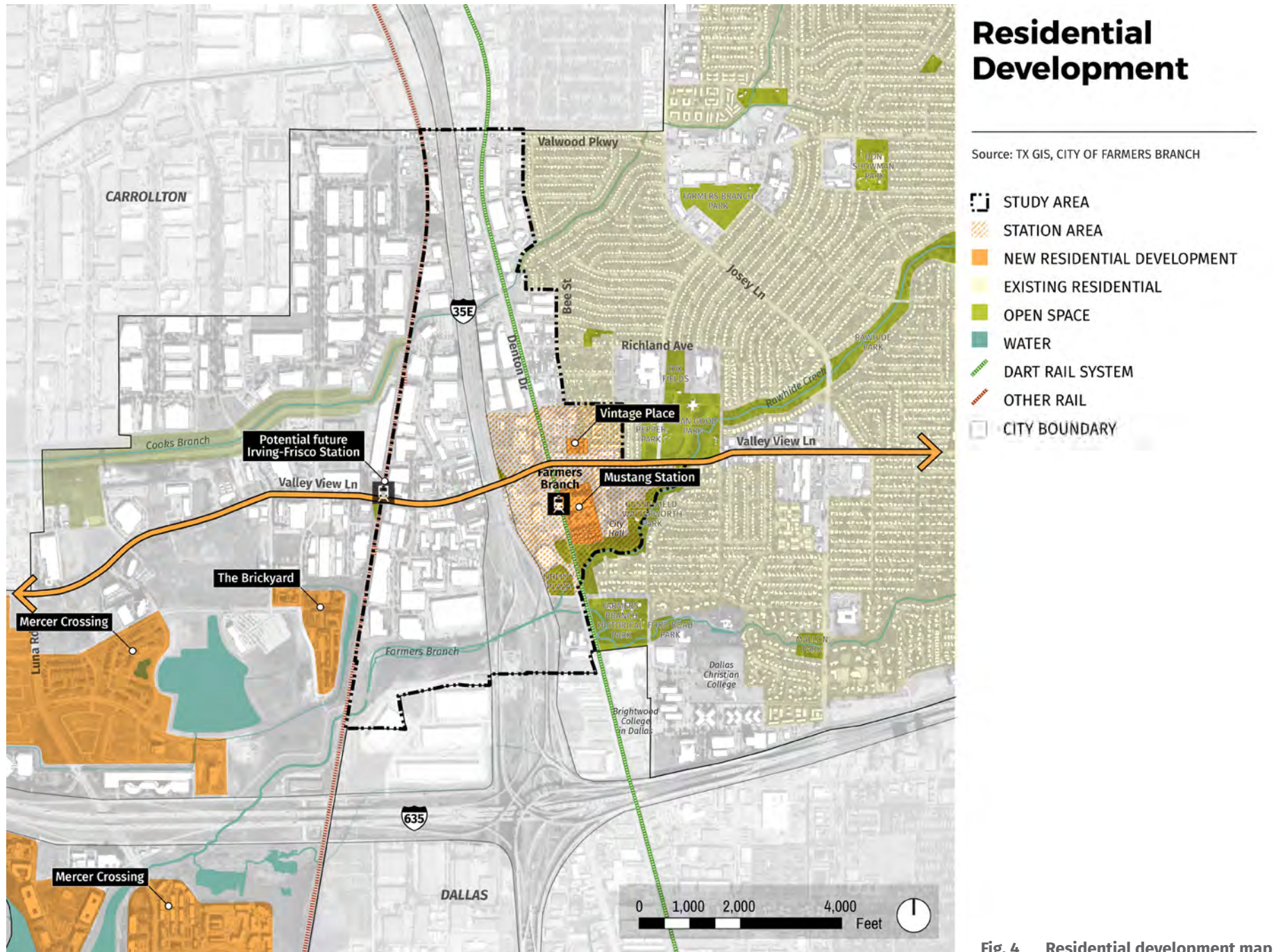


Fig. 4 Residential development map

# Project Process

The vision study process began in December 2019 and lasted for approximately one year, delayed slightly by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic mid-way through the process. Nevertheless, a robust public engagement plan involved City staff, elected officials, landowners, businesses, nearby residents, and other interested members within the community through both in-person and virtual interactions. The public engagement was originally conceived as primarily in-person events and meetings, but the City and consultants pivoted to online

forums to ensure public safety during the pandemic. The new engagement approach included an online COVID-19 impact survey and additional interviews with employers, the creation of an interactive website to share information and receive input, and an online live question and answer forum. Quotes from the public process are included throughout this document and look like this:

*“Example of quotation”*

The public engagement included the following components:

## Steering Committee

The Planning and Zoning Commission served as a steering committee for the project. Meeting five times at key points in the process, they provided background knowledge and feedback to the consultant group on the plan process, vision, goals, and strategies.

Project schedule





## Interviews

In-person, telephone and video interviews were conducted with 17 stakeholders, including elected officials, residents, business owners, employers and developers. Among these, a subset of interviews were conducted with business owners, employers, and developers to gauge the impact of COVID-19.

## Public Events

Two public events were conducted at key milestones in the process. The first, to share information about the corridor and gather initial input on areas to change, was originally planned as an in-person open house event to be held in March. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown measures,

the activities were re-designed and transitioned to an online platform that was launched in June. Additional questions were also formulated to assess the impact of COVID-19 on local businesses. The survey garnered 407 responses.

A second public event was held in September to review preliminary recommendations and provide feedback related to corridor priorities. This round of input included a Live Q&A with representatives from the City and consultants conducted online, and an interactive website where stakeholders could review the recommendations and provide input in a graphic survey. In this second round, 123 participants provided input. [Results from both surveys can be found in the Appendix.]

## Focus Groups

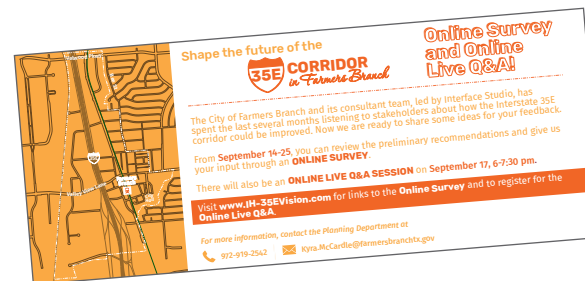
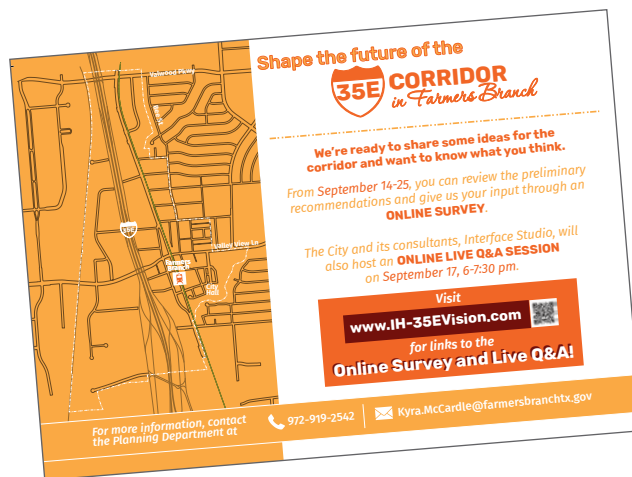
Four focus groups were conducted by video conference to provide feedback on initial ideas: two business groups, a resident group and a transportation group.

## Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing

A public hearing is scheduled for January 11, 2021 to make a recommendation for Council.

## Council Public Hearing

A public hearing is scheduled for February 2, 2021 for Council to adopt the plan.



Marketing materials



Screenshots of interactive website



## Shape the future of the 35E CORRIDOR *in Farmers Branch*

Forme el futuro del corredor de la  
**AUTOPISTA INTERESTATAL 35E**  
*en Farmers Branch*

**WELCOME!**

**FIRST, SIGN IN HERE**

Please participate in the 5 digital exhibits by clicking on the following links.

You can take a break and return to this site at any time, you don't need to sign in again. Your answers are saved once you hit "Submit" after each activity.

**BACKGROUND**  
1

**VISION**  
2

**PUBLIC REALM**  
3

**TARGET AREAS**  
4

**PRIORITIES**  
5

Add a comment to the sticky notes below.

Target Area 3

Well all this is good but wouldn't want the streets to be over crowded. Farmers Branch is a very quiet and calm area. This is a city in a Park, and the city should represent that.

1 1

Add comment

All of this looks nice but I don't want the city buying pro

1 1

Add comment

How many cars will get side swiped down bee street, the side parking at the new complex already sticks out in the road. Traffic is less now with covid but will go back to normal and increase soon especially with new apartment and stores. How is it safe to walk if traffic is not addressed?

1 1

Add comment

Make bee street one way ... It's bonkers traffic

2 3

Add comment

What will you do to stop speeding down the road, bee street is dangerous now.

0 1

Add comment

**Creative District Live-Work**

14 1

2 comments

Anonymous 1 mo This kind of development would benefit from the removal of parking midhouse if the point

**Warehouse District**

11 3

1 comment

Anonymous 1 mo This kind of development would benefit from the removal of parking midhouse if the point

**Bee Street and Squire Improvements**

5 1

4 comments

Do you have thoughts

**IH-35E Gateway**



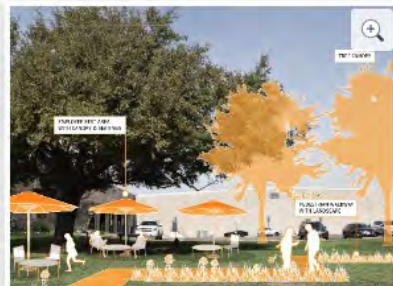
Highway landscaping



Highway underpass improvements



Last mile connection



Incentive for amenities



## JUNE SURVEY:

What ideas for **Connections** would work in the IH-35E corridor?

*"STOP designing this city around cars. Design it for PEOPLE."*



What ideas for **Things to Do** would work in the IH-35E corridor?

*"A place where families want to spend Saturday morning and young people want to spend Saturday night."*



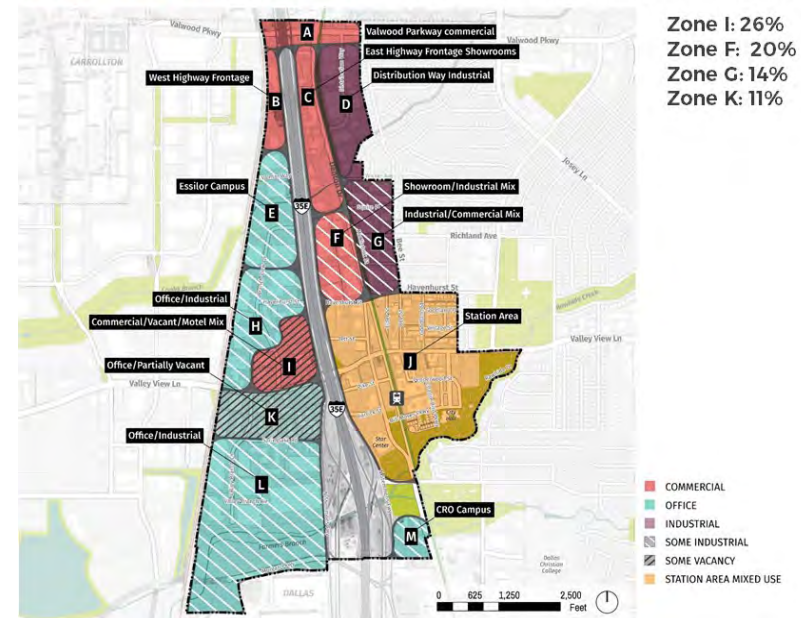
Fig. 5 June survey results

What ideas for **Look and Feel** would work in the IH-35E corridor?

*"From I-35 we look like a City in an Industrial Park and it doesn't really entice people to pull off the highway and spend money here."*



**JUNE SURVEY:** Which zone should be a priority for change?



## Key Takeaways from the Public Engagement

Over the course of the public engagement process, several key themes were reiterated by various stakeholders. These have been summarized as the following key takeaways:

**The IH-35E corridor is a major employment center and an important generator of jobs and tax revenue, and we want to make sure businesses can thrive here.**

*“Businesses are vital to Farmers Branch because of the employment and tax revenue they bring.”*

**The Station Area is the priority for change but there is also an opportunity for the rest of the study area to evolve as a modern urban industrial district with opportunities for mixed-use development and highway-oriented commercial uses.**

*“Finish filling in around the DART station...then grow outward from there.”*

**The corridor is not seen as a cohesive and attractive place. An opportunity exists to create a stronger sense of place and gateway to Farmers Branch. Trees and landscaping are seen as a key component of this effort.**

*“From IH-35E we look like a ‘City in an Industrial Park’ and it doesn’t really entice people to pull off the highway and spend money here.”*

**Getting around is difficult without a car but there is potential to improve connectivity, especially between the east and west sides of IH-35E along Valley View Lane.**

*“STOP designing this city around cars. Design it for PEOPLE.”*



# II. VISION & GOALS

# Vision and Goals

## Vision Statement

The public engagement process elicited input from elected officials, businesses, residents and other interested stakeholders on what they would like to see in the IH-35E corridor study area in the future. Based upon the feedback received, the following vision statement has been established for the corridor in order to guide land use development and public investment within the corridor for the next 20 years.

The IH-35E corridor is the **front door** to Farmers Branch and a **world-class place to live and do business** in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. It offers space and access for a wide range of businesses looking to grow and expand, and a range of housing and amenities for residents. Visually the corridor is an attractive gateway that reflects the City's reputation for excellence.

## Goals

The vision study aims to transform the corridor by focusing on the following goals:

- Create a modern urban industrial district with opportunities for mixed use development and highway-oriented commercial amenities, in order to leverage existing assets and increase property values along the corridor;
- Extend the Station Area mixed use development to the west side of IH-35E in order to form a cohesive new “front door” appearance along Valley View Lane, consisting of dense, compact, walkable development;
- Improve the appearance of the corridor to create a visually enticing experience along IH-35E through property upgrades and attracting new businesses;
- Green the corridor through increased landscaping and establishing corridor-wide initiatives so it better matches the City's reputation as a “City in the Park”; and
- Connect the Farmers Branch community on both sides of IH-35E through improved aesthetics and infrastructure that is accessible to all modes of transportation.



# **III. LAND USE AND TARGET AREAS**



# Land Use and Target Areas

***“Mixed use is absolutely the way of the future and will help attract young people to Farmers Branch.”***

As the corridor evolves over time, it will continue to be a strong employment center and it will also encompass a broader mix of uses. Several areas in the district have been identified for a change in land use. The Station Area is the priority for change and is already becoming a mixed use residential and commercial community. The west side of IH-35E along Valley View Lane is envisioned as an extension of the Station Area, where new compact, walkable development will be a critical component to connecting the new residential neighborhoods west of the study area with the Station Area. The west side of Bee Street, north of the Station Area, is an opportunity to create a better transition between the Station Area and more intensive uses around Squire Place and further north, through mixed use development that prioritizes commercial development but includes live-work spaces. This area is also sensitive to the residential neighborhood to the east of Bee Street. The rest of the corridor study area is anticipated to remain a commercial and industrial employment center, but there are opportunities to modernize the district. The sections that follow describe what is envisioned for the commercial/industrial employment center, the Station Area, and target areas.

## Commercial/Industrial Employment Center

The IH-35E corridor today is primarily an employment center with a mix of commercial and light industrial businesses. While this plan envisions parts of the corridor changing over time, it will also continue to be an important source of jobs and tax revenue. With industrial land diminishing in the Metroplex, the IH-35E corridor offers a critical supply of industrial land and buildings, and excellent proximity and access to multiple highways and airports. The range of businesses housed in the corridor have also proven to be resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a June 2020 COVID-19 Impact Survey of business owners, 89% of respondents reported that their entire workforce was currently working and 67% reported that their business was operating at 100% capacity. The opportunity exists to improve the area as a modern urban industrial district by creating a more active and attractive place with a better connection to the DART Station.

The areas shaded blue on the future land use map (see Fig. 6), referenced as Commercial/Industrial Employment Center, will develop in accordance with the preferred land uses listed here and strategies listed throughout this study. It is anticipated that the areas identified as Industrial (shaded purple) would continue to allow for more intensive light industrial uses, while the areas identified as Commercial

### PREFERRED USES

- Office
- Research and development
- Light industrial/manufacturing
- Warehousing/logistics

### TOOLS

- Public realm investment (see strategy 4.1)
- Infrastructure investment (see strategy 5.3)
- Incentives (see strategies 3.2, 4.4)

***“As much as restaurants and entertainment would be great, we need a solid tax base that light industrial and manufacturing could bring. Putting the two in the area could support each other.”***

(shaded red) are indicative of highway-oriented commercial uses as identified in Target Area 4, which is described in the following pages.

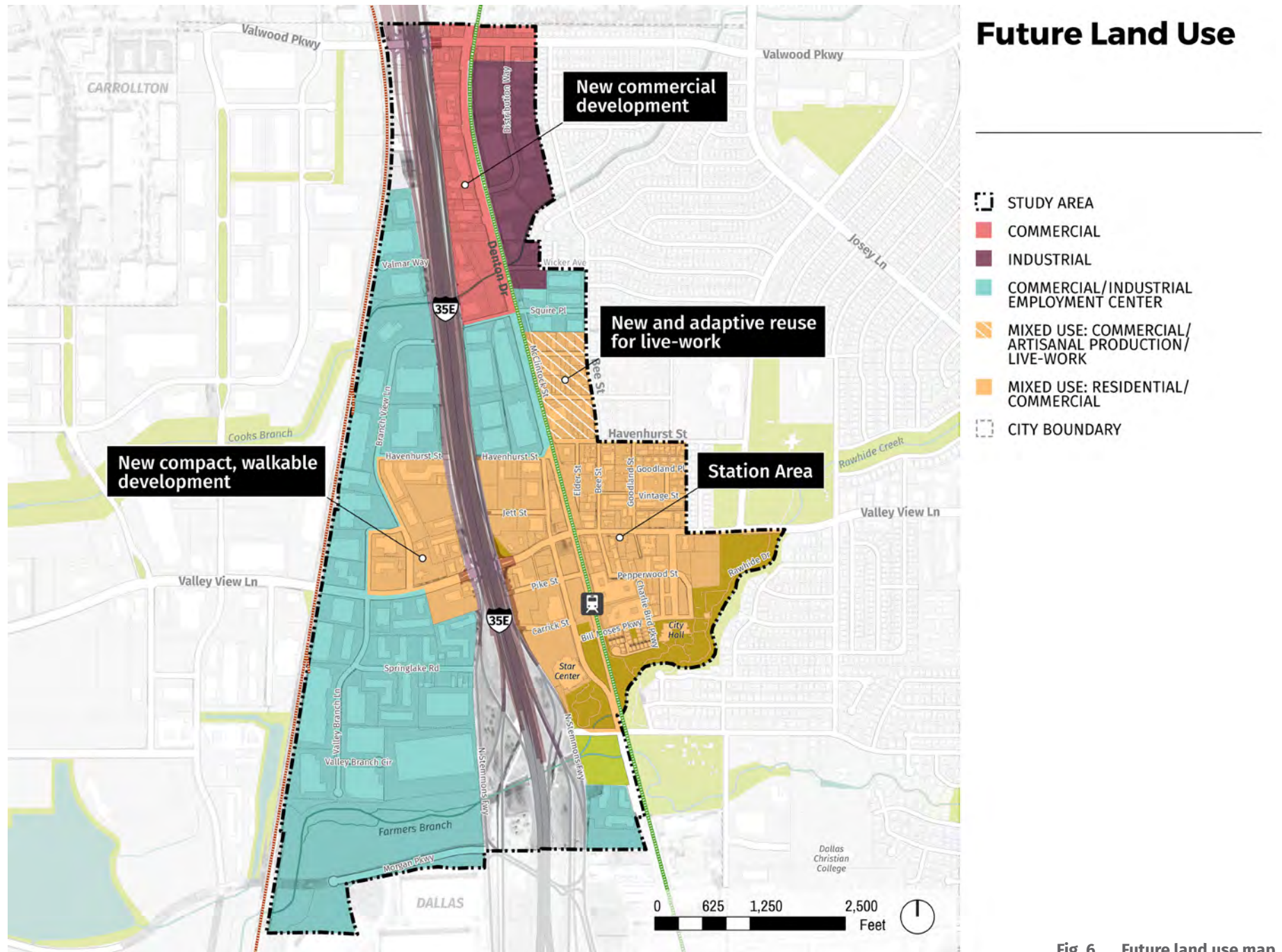


Fig. 6 Future land use map

## Station Area

The Station Area Conceptual Master Plan was completed in 2002 and revised in 2012. It set forth a vision for the Station Area as a town center with a mix of uses, interconnected streets, and a focus on Valley View Lane as a Main Street with retail frontage. The Station Area Form-Based Code (Planned Development No. 86) was developed to regulate development with an emphasis on urban form. Progress in the Station Area has resulted in The Shops at Mustang Station and residential development around the station, The Grove, Firehouse Theater, Vintage Place Townhomes, and Starbucks and Chipotle at the gateway of IH-35E and Valley View Lane. In 2020, Council reaffirmed the vision set forth for the Station Area and a Station Area Request for Qualifications was released for master development services for city-owned land.

The City will push forward the transformation of the Station Area by continuing the process of land banking, facilitating public/private partnerships and development incentives where appropriate. Going forward, the Station

### PREFERRED USES

- Single-family attached, and multi-family residential
- Retail
- Restaurant
- Office
- Hotel
- Entertainment
- Recreation

### TOOLS

- Public realm investment (*see strategies 3.1, 4.1*)
- Infrastructure investment (*see strategies 5.1, 5.2*)
- Land banking (*ongoing*)
- Public/private partnerships (*ongoing*)
- Development incentives (*ongoing*)

Area will continue to be a catalyst for the transformation of the IH-35E corridor and will serve as the prime location for family-friendly town center amenities, serving residents as well as employees.

## Target Areas

Four target areas were identified through the public process and guidance from the City and Steering Committee as places where specific strategies could be deployed to the greatest effect in advancing the corridor vision. Each of these areas has different characteristics and a different role to play but all support the goals of encouraging new development and a broader mix of uses while strengthening the corridor as a good place to do business. While Target Area 1 is an opportunity to extend the mixed use development of the Station Area westward, the other three target areas offer space and logistics for businesses at every scale and stage of their development: businesses benefiting from highway access and visibility in Target Area 4; small and medium-scale businesses including start-up companies in Target Area 3; and large-scale businesses in Target Area 2.

Target Area 1



Target Area 2



Target Area 3



Target Area 4







## Target Areas

Fig. 7 Target areas map

# Target Area 1

## Vision

The frontage along Valley View Lane west of IH-35E is the front door to Farmers Branch's commercial/industrial employment center, a work-centered counterpart to the mixed use Station Area on the east side of IH-35E.

## Constraints

**Land assembly and redevelopment:** The area is currently a mix of commercial uses, with motels and vacant properties in prominent locations along the highway and Valley View Lane. Phase two of TxDOT's IH-35E widening project, anticipated to begin construction between 2022-2024, will be disruptive to the businesses fronting the highway, which may result in additional vacancies. Properties in this target area are suitable for redevelopment, however, land assembly will take a long time given the many property owners in this area.

**Infrastructure and walkability:** Highway infrastructure and roadway design also constrain redevelopment as they impact walkability. The area lacks continuous sidewalks and Valley View Lane and the highway underpass do not currently provide a safe east-west connection to the DART Station Area. The large block size between Valley View Lane and Havenhurst Street also hinders walkability. This side of the highway is still largely a commercial and industrial district and is anticipated to remain so even as Valley View Lane changes, therefore truck access will still be necessary. In order to support mixed use redevelopment, Target Area 1 will need to be more walkable while still accommodating trucks and transit.

## Opportunities

This target area emerged through the public process as the highest priority for change after the Station Area. The goal is to create a mixed use extension of the Station Area that forms a cohesive new front door along Valley View Lane on both sides of the highway.

**Land assembly and redevelopment:** The highway widening project presents an opportunity to begin the land assembly process for redevelopment along Valley View Lane. The new development west of IH-35E should strive to achieve a level of consistency with the redevelopment occurring north and south of Valley View Lane, east of the highway, with a focus more on urban design and form than use. The Frisco to Irving corridor passenger rail, should it be approved and come to fruition, will further support and potentially accelerate the transformation of Target Area 1 into a mixed use extension of the Station Area. The rail project has a timeframe of 2045, putting it within a few years of the 20 year timeframe of this plan. As both plans progress, there should be coordination and review as a new rail station could impact the market conditions and development program for Target Area 1.

As land assembly progresses and parcels are land banked for future development, there is an opportunity to create an interim amenity for area employees, such as a container park for food and programming. In Fig. 9, the amenity is shown on an existing vacant parcel for illustrative purposes, but it can occur on other parcels as land is assembled and held for development.

### PREFERRED USES

- Office
- Retail
- Restaurant
- Multi-family residential

### TOOLS

- Land banking (*see strategies 2.2, 2.3*)
- Updated zoning regulations (*see strategy 1.1*)
- Public realm investment (*see strategies 3.1, 4.1*)
- Infrastructure investment (*see strategies 2.4, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3*)
- Incentives (*see strategy 2.1*)
- Development partnerships (*see strategies 2.2, 2.3*)

**Infrastructure:** Valley View Lane west of IH-35E should be evaluated and redesigned to support redevelopment that is compact and walkable. In the strategies that follow in Chapter IV, the plan proposes a road diet, wide sidewalks, and street trees to create a Main Street experience that mirrors the east side of the highway. The phase two IH-35E widening project also enables improvements to Valley View Lane at the IH-35E underpass and intersection that will enhance walkable connections between the east and west sides of the highway. Given the excess capacity of Valley View Lane, these improvements will not impact truck access to the area or to the highway.



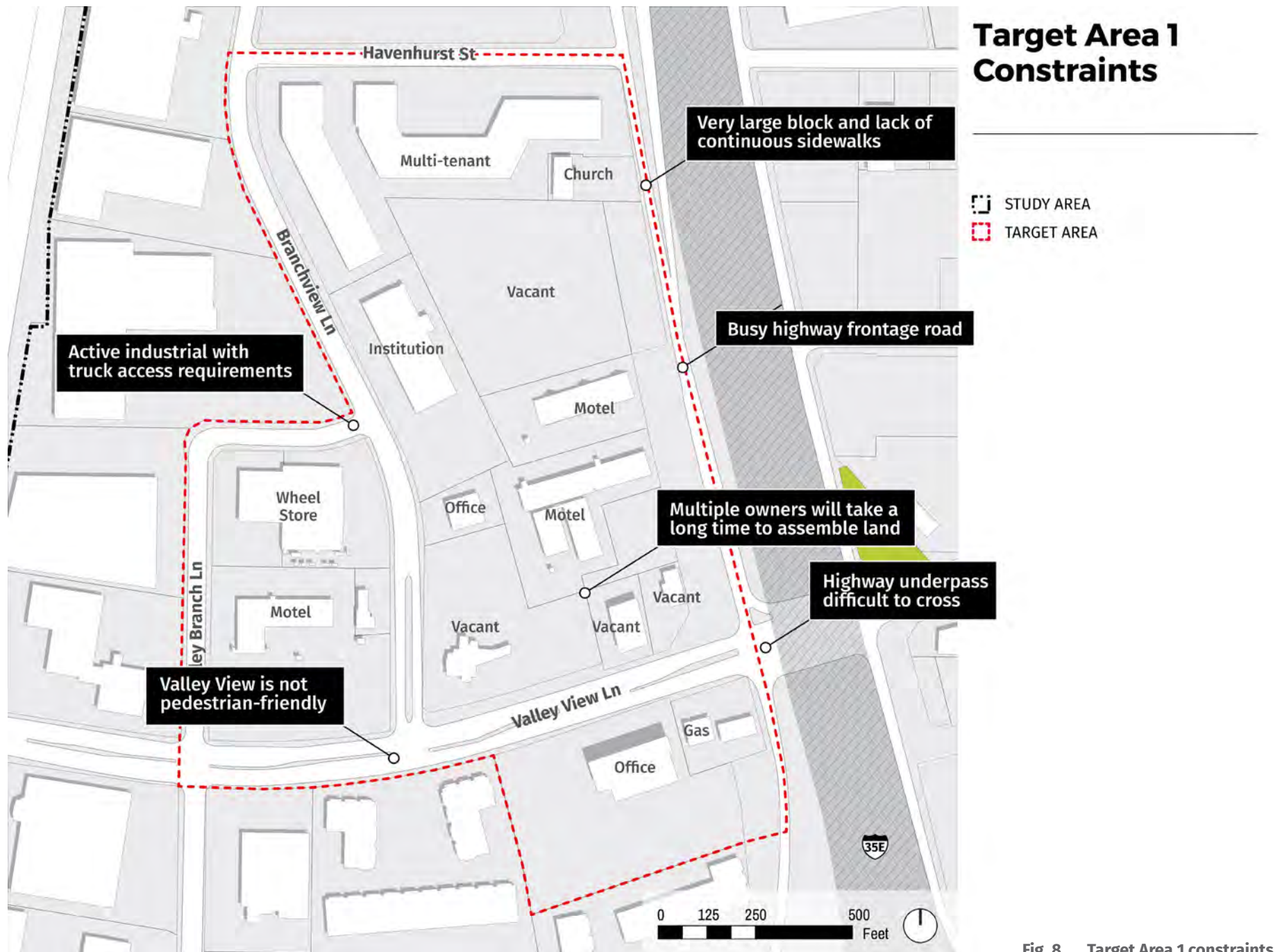
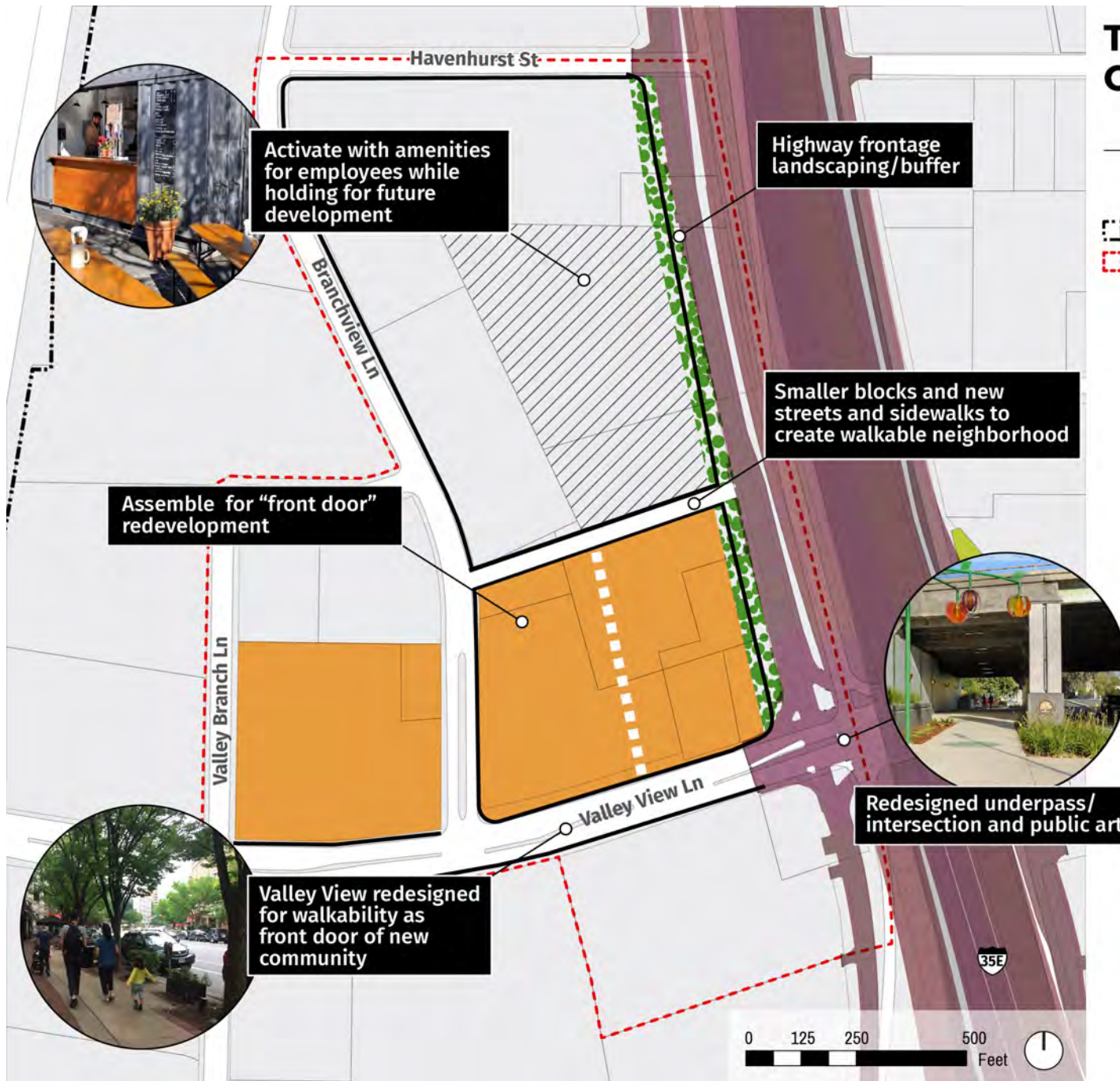


Fig. 8 Target Area 1 constraints





## Target Area 1 Opportunities

STUDY AREA  
TARGET AREA

Fig. 9 Target Area 1 opportunities



## Examples of preferred uses

Retail, residential and office



Retail and residential



Residential



## Target Area 2

### Vision

This target area is positioned to house large-scale businesses that need larger spaces and highway access. Warehousing, e-commerce, event spaces, and creative industries, such as media and design, are a good fit.

### Constraints

**Redevelopment:** Target Area 2 currently consists of showroom/warehouse space along N. Stemmons Freeway and industrial space along Denton Drive. Physical constraints to redevelopment include the high voltage power lines which limit the type of development, limited access for properties on N. Stemmons Freeway due to one-way traffic, and the difficulty of replacing one-story industrial buildings given land values are not high enough to support redevelopment costs. Given these constraints, the viability of existing businesses, and the increasing scarcity of industrial land with highway access in the DFW Metroplex, it is anticipated that the commercial/industrial land uses and buildings are not expected to change over the timeframe of this plan.

### Opportunities

The opportunity in this target area is to upgrade the appearance of properties, particularly along N. Stemmons Freeway, to encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

**Development:** While commercial and industrial uses are expected to continue, the types of uses may shift to better align with the needs of new residents and businesses south of Havenhurst Street as the Station Area is built out. The acceleration of e-commerce has led to a greater need for last mile delivery stations close to customers. Companies are investing in repurposed warehouses with good transportation access to create small delivery hubs, and this target area has advantages in this regard. These warehouse structures are also well suited for a variety of businesses that need large spaces, such as indoor recreation and entertainment uses, and large-scale creative industries (for example businesses related to the visual and performing arts, design, media, crafts, food, and beverage) that would not fit in the Creative District of Target Area 3. A review of the existing zoning should occur to support preferred recommended land uses, as well as public improvements discussed below.

**Private/public realm:** A robust and targeted commercial facade program for properties along N. Stemmons Freeway, as well as tree planting and landscaping for frontages along N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive, will help to improve the appearance of this area.

**Infrastructure:** The City's concurrent project to create a bicycle connection between the cities of Dallas and Carrollton on Denton Drive will also add mobility and landscaping improvements to this area.

### PREFERRED USES

- Warehousing/logistics
- Entertainment
- Indoor recreation
- Creative industries (i.e. large-scale studio and production space for visual and performing arts, design, media, crafts, food, and beverage)

### TOOLS

- Updated zoning regulations (*see strategy 1.5*)
- Public realm investment (*see strategies 1.2, 4.1*)
- Infrastructure investment (*see strategy 5.1*)
- Incentives (*see strategy 3.2, 4.4*)



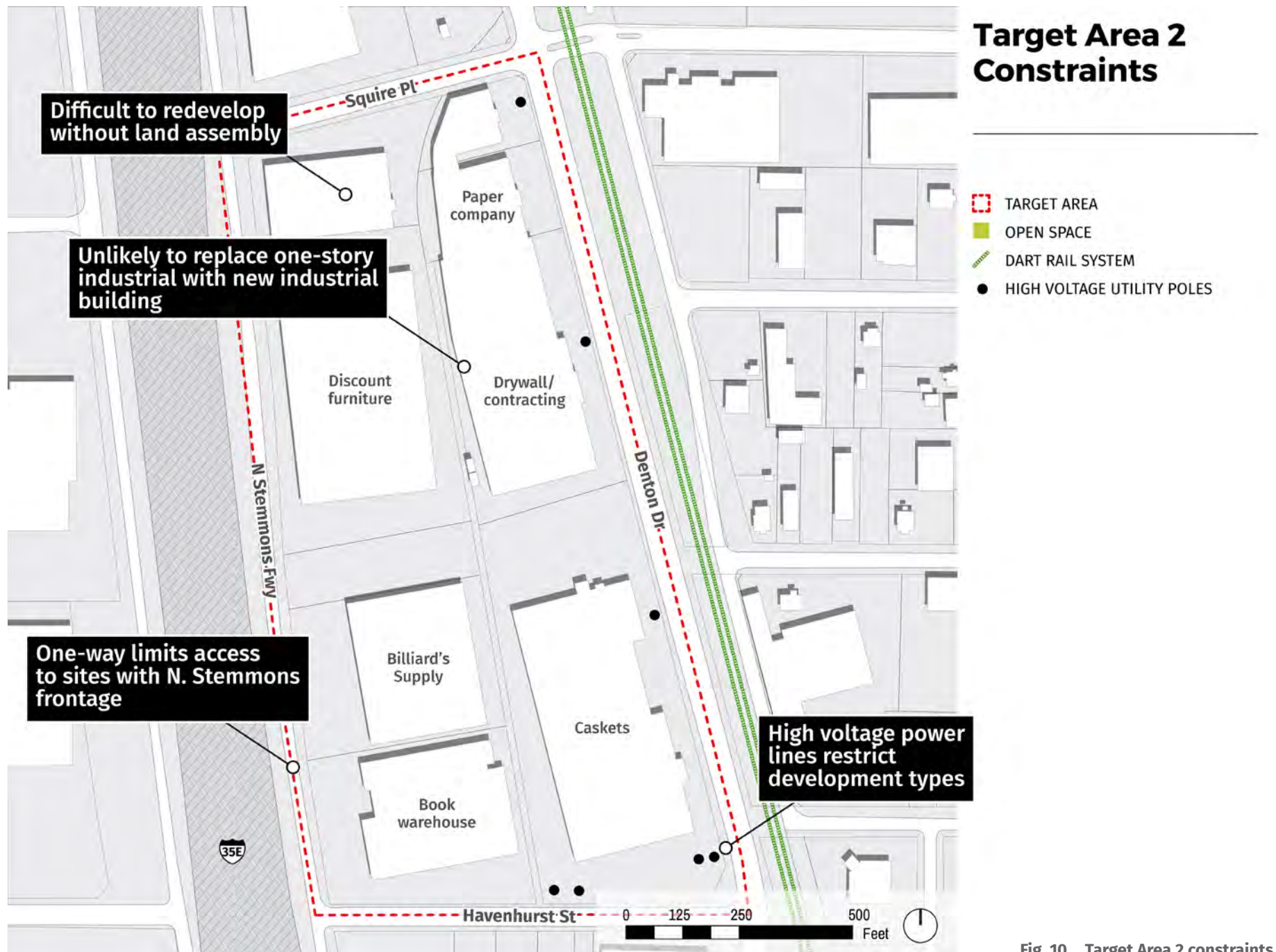


Fig. 10 Target Area 2 constraints

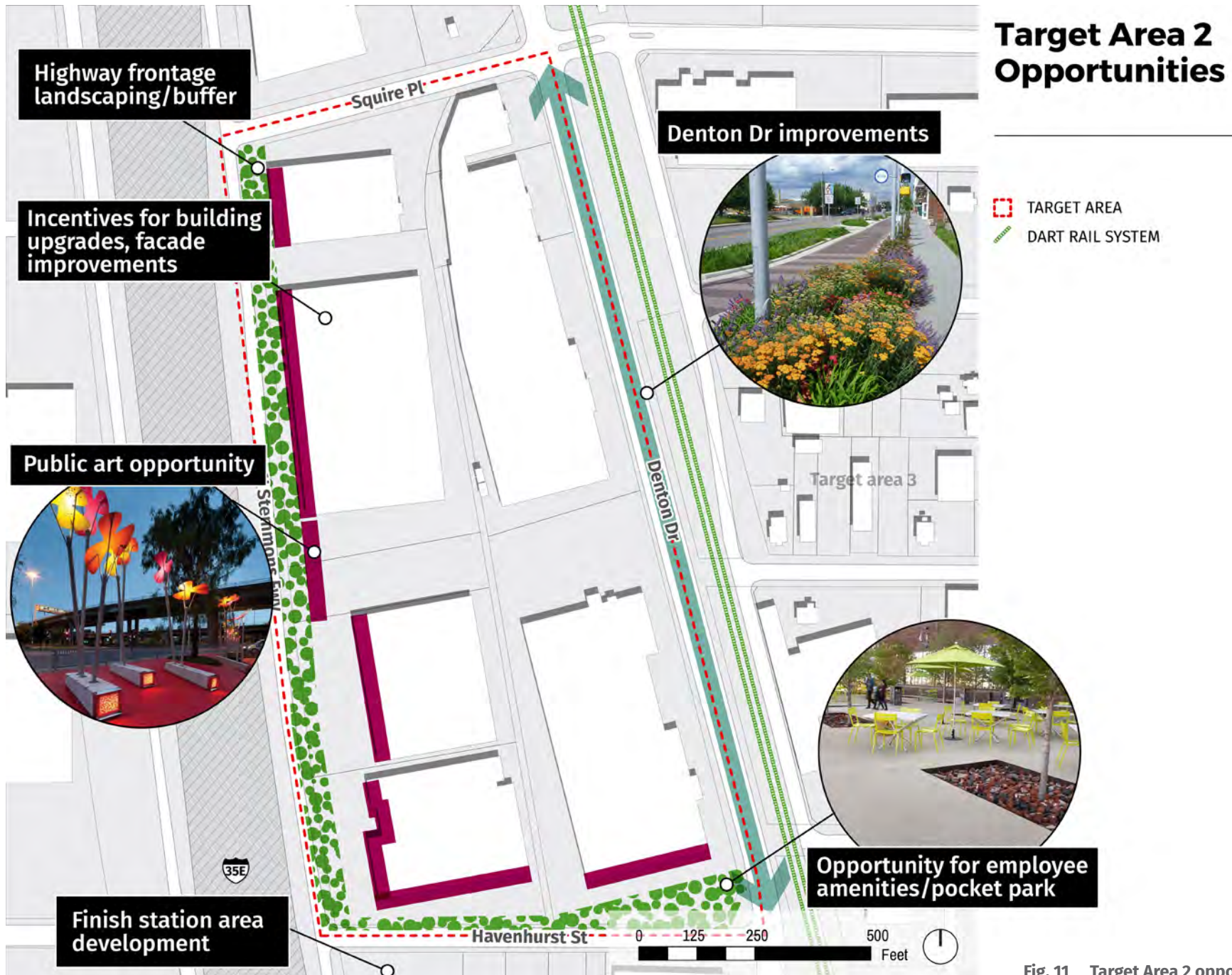


Fig. 11 Target Area 2 opportunities



## Examples of preferred uses

### Creative industries (studio space and production space)



Arcpoint Studios, Fort Worth, TX



Next Fab Collaborative Makerspace, Philadelphia

### Indoor recreation



Lumberyard Bike Park, Portland, OR

### Warehousing/logistics



Last mile facility (rendering), Maple Grove, MN



## Target Area 3

### Vision

This target area is a Creative District that offers medium and small-scale companies a home. It is a walkable area with unique branding and marketing that grows organically from the Station Area.

### Constraints

**Redevelopment and land assembly:** This area is a mix of industrial and commercial uses, including non-conforming uses. There are some industrial uses that are concentrated in larger parcels and on the western side of the target area along the DART rail line. However, small parcel sizes and multiple owners are the main constraints in this target area and would make land assemblage for a large-scale redevelopment project difficult and time-consuming. This makes infill and small-scale redevelopment the more likely path for development.

### Opportunities

This target area houses an eclectic mix of uses, including a restaurant, indoor cricket practice cages, and formerly a brewery. It will likely develop organically in relation to the Station Area.

**Development:** The growth of the arts and cultural components of the Station Area over time will make Target Area 3 a natural place for a Creative District with art-supporting businesses and entertainment-related uses. The Creative District will primarily be a place for small-scale production businesses, especially in creative industries (for example businesses related to the visual and performing arts, design, media, crafts, food, and beverage). Live-work units, defined as incidental residential uses within commercial zones, are also an opportunity to integrate this area more fully with the residential neighborhood east of Bee Street and the Station Area to the south while still maintaining the target area for small-scale commercial businesses.

The Station Area code allows for a range of residential types (single-family detached, single-family attached, and multifamily). As the Station Area is built out, if development conditions change over the next 10 years with higher density development up to Havenhurst Street, it will be important to revisit the land use policies for this target area to ensure they remain valid.

#### PREFERRED USES

- Office
- Restaurant
- Entertainment
- Creative industries (i.e. small-scale studio and production space for visual and performing arts, design, media, crafts, food, and beverage)
- Live-work

#### TOOLS

- Updated zoning regulations (see *strategy 1.3*)
- Infrastructure investment (see *strategies 5.1, 5.2*)

**Infrastructure:** The target area already has a walkable grid that naturally extends to the neighborhood east of Bee Street. The planned improvement of Bee Street as a walkable and attractive neighborhood street will support the transition of this area and create a stronger connection to the Station Area. The planned sidewalk improvements for Squire Place will improve the walkable connection to Squire Park and the surrounding neighborhood.

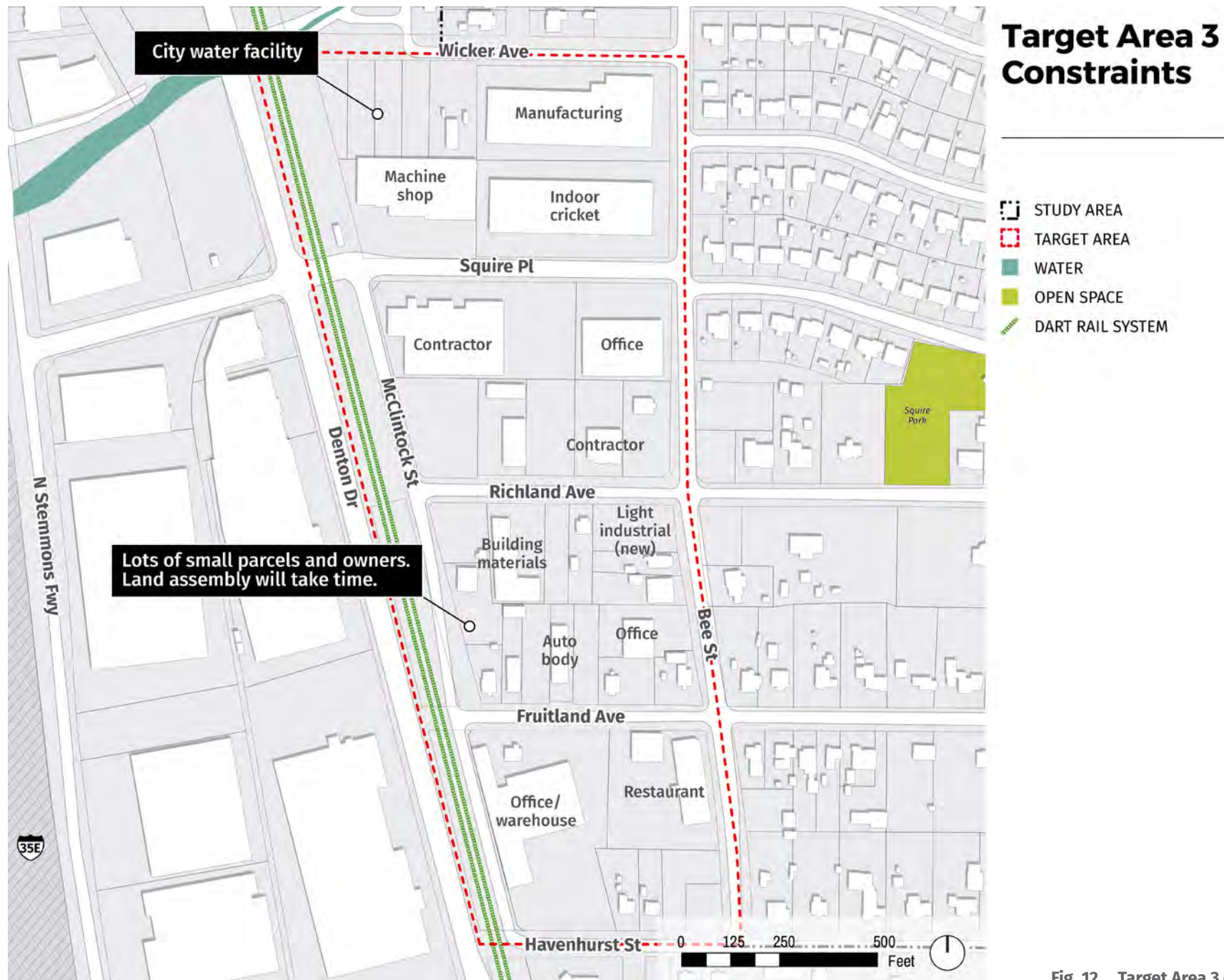


Fig. 12 Target Area 3 constraints





Fig. 13 Target Area 3 opportunities



## Examples of preferred uses

### Live-work (new construction and adaptive reuse)



### Creative industries (studio space and maker-space)



## Target Area 4

### Vision

This target area is a highly visible location for mid-scale commercial activity, such as restaurants and entertainment-related uses. Properties fronting N. Stemmons Freeway should be attractive and inviting.

### Constraints

**Redevelopment and land assembly:** The physical constraints of parcels in this target area and location of the Oncor substation property limit the types of future development that can be considered. Even the deepest parcels do not exceed 400 feet, and the shallowest parcels are less than 300 feet deep. The parcels north of the Oncor substation property have narrow street frontage, are shallow in depth, and most have dual frontage on both N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive. The majority of these properties orient their front building entrances and signage to N. Stemmons Freeway, with only four properties oriented towards Denton Drive. The parcels adjacent to the substation are larger but cannot be assembled with other nearby properties due to high voltage power lines and utility company land ownership. The redevelopment of this target area, particularly the parcels north of the Oncor substation property with narrow street frontage, will be difficult without assembly or incentive.

**Infrastructure:** Like Target Area 2, limited access for properties on N. Stemmons Freeway due to the one-way frontage road is a constraint that is compounded by the long distance between Squire Place and Valwood Parkway. As a result, drivers have created an informal path from N. Stemmons Freeway to Denton Drive between existing multi-tenant buildings (see Fig. 14).

### Opportunities

The opportunity here is similar to that of Target Area 2: upgrade the appearance of properties along N. Stemmons Freeway to improve property values over time; and attract new development.

**Development:** This target area is envisioned as a highway commercial district appropriate for businesses that benefit from the high visibility and access of the highway, and that serve a wider market than the surrounding district. The target area is divided into three zones based on physical characteristics: Zone A which is associated with Valwood Parkway; Zone B which represents the dual frontage parcels; and Zone C which represents the larger parcels (see Fig. 15). Zone B is the most challenging to redevelop. Assembling properties to expand street frontage and make up for the shallow lot depth and/or incentivizing rebuilding would increase development opportunities, particularly in Zone B. Entrances and façade improvements will primarily be on N. Stemmons Freeway, however where the target area depth increases south of Distribution Way, attention should be paid to Denton Drive frontages as well.

**Public realm:** A robust and targeted commercial facade program for properties along N. Stemmons Freeway will help to improve the appearance of this area from the highway. For dual frontage parcels in Zone B, N. Stemmons Freeway will be the focus of facade and landscape improvements. The current zoning (Planned Development No. 70 Freeway Subdistrict) requires 30' setbacks from the highway frontage road which provides ample room for landscaping. Given the shallow depths of the parcels in Zone B, the focus on N. Stemmons will allow for improvements without taking away too much developable land

#### PREFERRED USES

- Retail (Zone A, B, C)
- Restaurant (Zone A, B, C)
- Entertainment (Zone C)

#### TOOLS

- Updated zoning regulations (see strategies 1.2, 1.4)
- Public realm investment (see strategies 4.1, 4.2)
- Infrastructure investment (see strategy 5.1, 5.4)
- Incentives (see strategy 3.2)

area. Nevertheless, there is still room for some landscaping and screening on Denton Drive, even where buildings back onto the street. This effort can be enhanced by reducing curb cuts on both frontages where it is possible to connect adjacent parking lots internally thereby allowing more street frontage for landscaping and tree planting. Cooks Branch, locally known as Cooks Creek, also crosses through this target area and represents an opportunity to enhance landscaping.

**Infrastructure:** The informal “cut through” between N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive at the multi-tenant properties points to a need to break up the long block for better access. A potential new street between N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive could be aligned with Distribution Way which has the added benefit of providing direct access between the N. Stemmons Freeway and the businesses on Distribution Way. The City’s concurrent project to create a bicycle connection between the cities of Dallas and Carrollton on Denton Drive will also add mobility and landscaping improvements to this area.



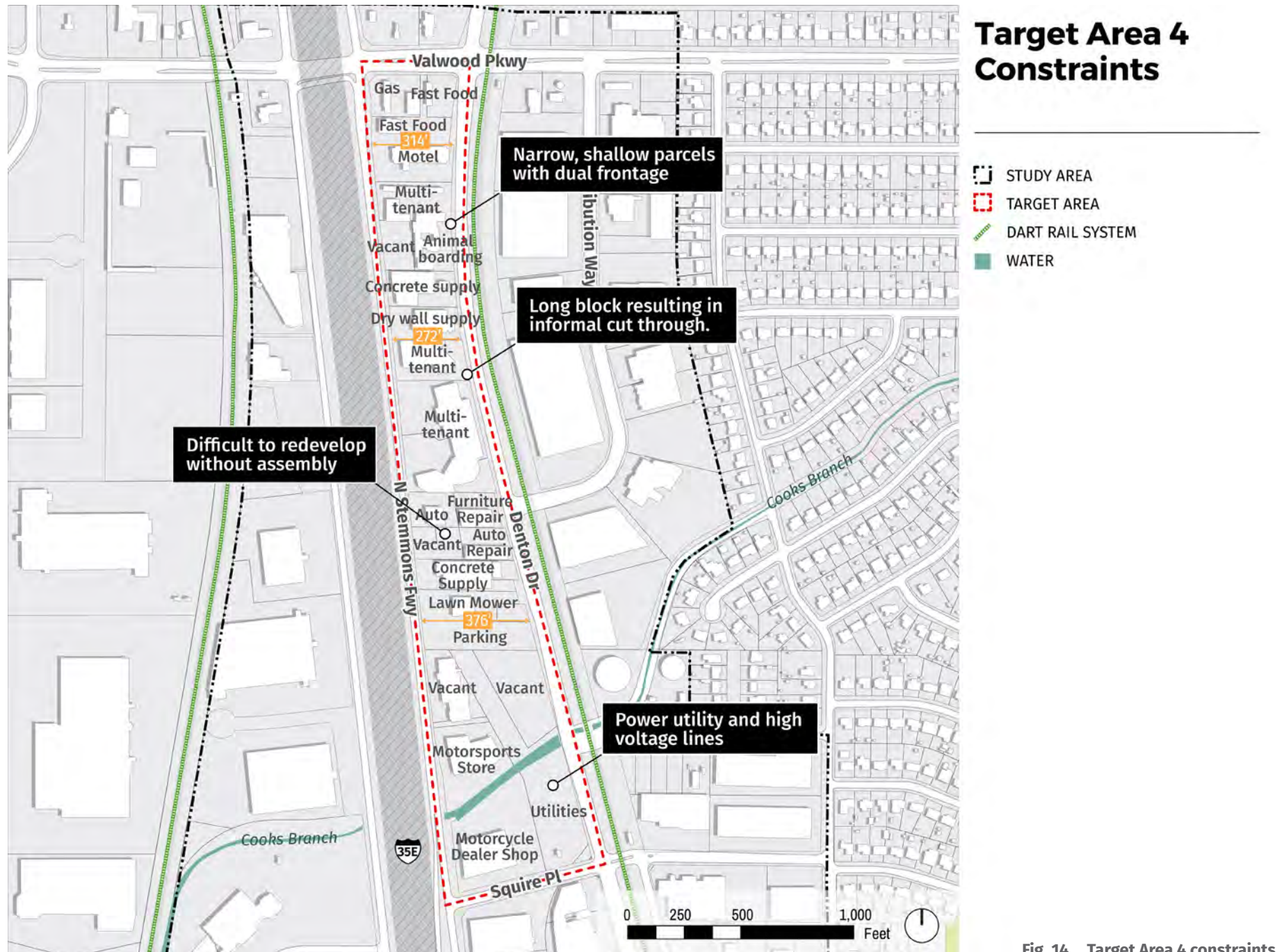


Fig. 14 Target Area 4 constraints



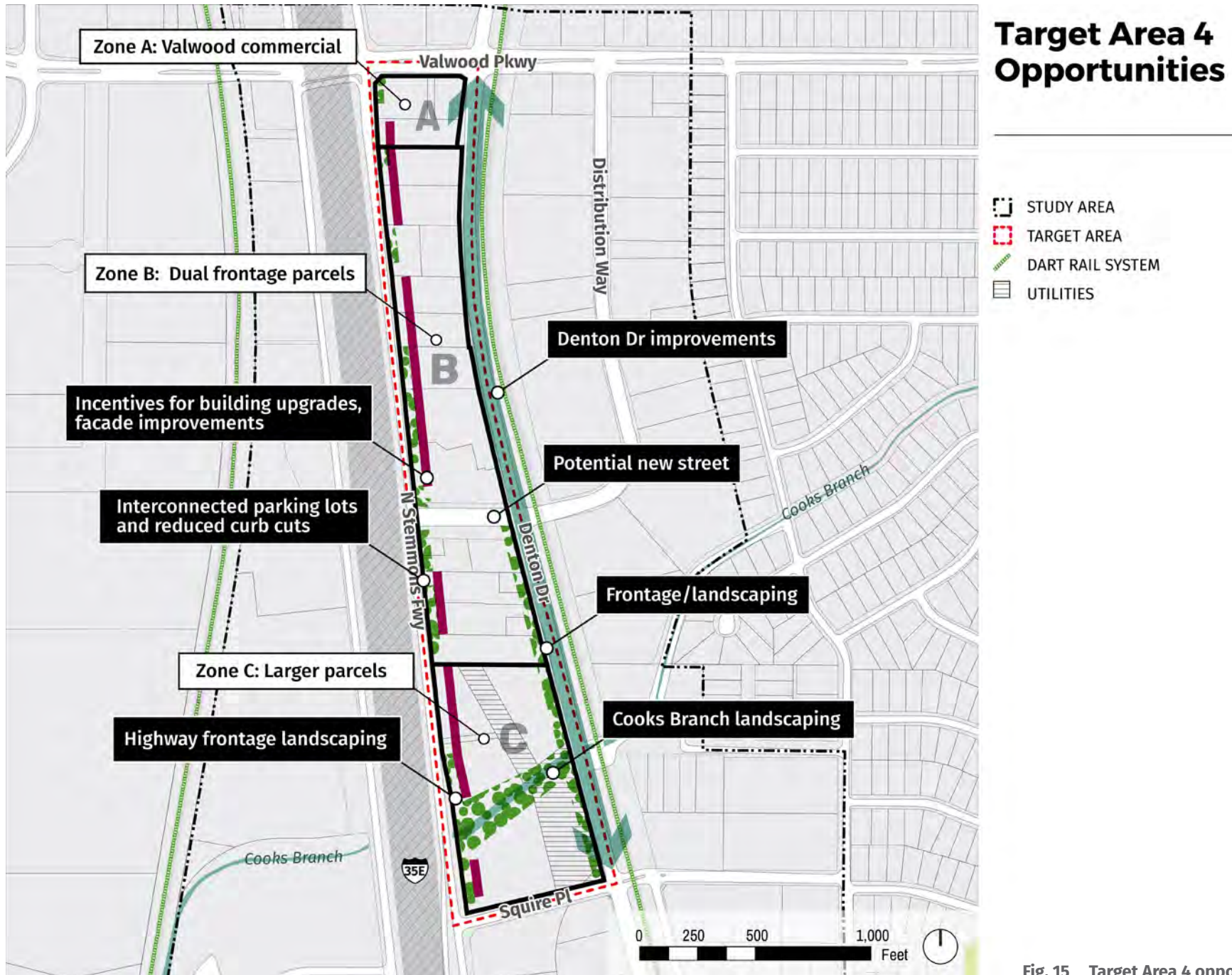


Fig. 15 Target Area 4 opportunities



## Examples of preferred uses

### Restaurant



Ten50 BBQ, Richardson, TX



Pappasito's Cantina, Richardson, TX

### Fitness center



Cross Fit, Atlanta, GA

### Retail



Camp Family Experience Store, Dallas, TX





Mustang Station Apartments



# **IV. STRATEGIES**

The strategies in this chapter expand on the opportunities described for the target areas and also address opportunities throughout the corridor. This chapter works in conjunction with Chapter V. Implementation where information on partners, timeframe, and evaluation can be found.

The strategies are organized under five main themes:

- 1. Address zoning in key target areas**
- 2. Extend the Station Area west of IH-35E**
- 3. Create a visually enticing corridor**
- 4. Green the corridor**
- 5. Connect both sides of the corridor**





# 1 Address zoning in key target areas

As a first step in preparing for the transformation of the IH-35E corridor, the City must make sure the zoning regulations support the vision for the corridor as a whole and the four target areas. Zoning was identified as a Council priority and can be tackled immediately following the adoption of the plan so that appropriate zoning is in place for when the highway expansion is complete.

## 1.1 RE-ZONE TARGET AREA 1 FOR COMPACT, DENSE, WALKABLE DEVELOPMENT

To achieve denser and more walkable development, the City will need to apply new zoning to Target Area 1. It is recommended that a form-based code be used to achieve an urban form that is consistent with the Station Area, especially along Valley View Lane. Public input was varied regarding uses for the area. While many see this area as primarily an opportunity for new office, restaurant, and retail uses, the uncertainty of the post-pandemic office market in the DFW Metroplex, combined with the growth of residential development in the Station Area and Mercer Crossing, suggests an approach that allows both multi-family residential and commercial uses. Therefore, a form based code is the preferred tool since it provides for a predicable built form while at the same time offering flexibility for land uses.

The code should address building heights, minimum residential densities, floor-to-area ratio standards, open space, and building setbacks with active uses and entrances on Valley View Lane. The code should also include sidewalk and landscape requirements for Valley View Lane and N. Stemmons Freeway to

enhance walkability and the appearance of the development from major roadways. Adjusted parking requirements and a shared parking model between complementary residential and commercial/office land uses should be used to allow for consolidated parking rather than dispersed single-purpose parking throughout the site. Shared parking is a good way to limit the space needed for parking lots and garages so it can be used for denser, compact development, and open space.

The proposed site plan in Fig. 17 is an illustrative test fit scenario of multi-family residential and commercial development using a density of 60 dwelling units per acre in keeping with the Station Area zoning. Key elements of urban form include: aligning buildings along Valley View Lane to create a continuous and pedestrian-friendly street presence, consolidating and locating parking at the back of development sites; wider sidewalks; street tree planting to create a welcoming pedestrian experience; and publicly accessible open space.

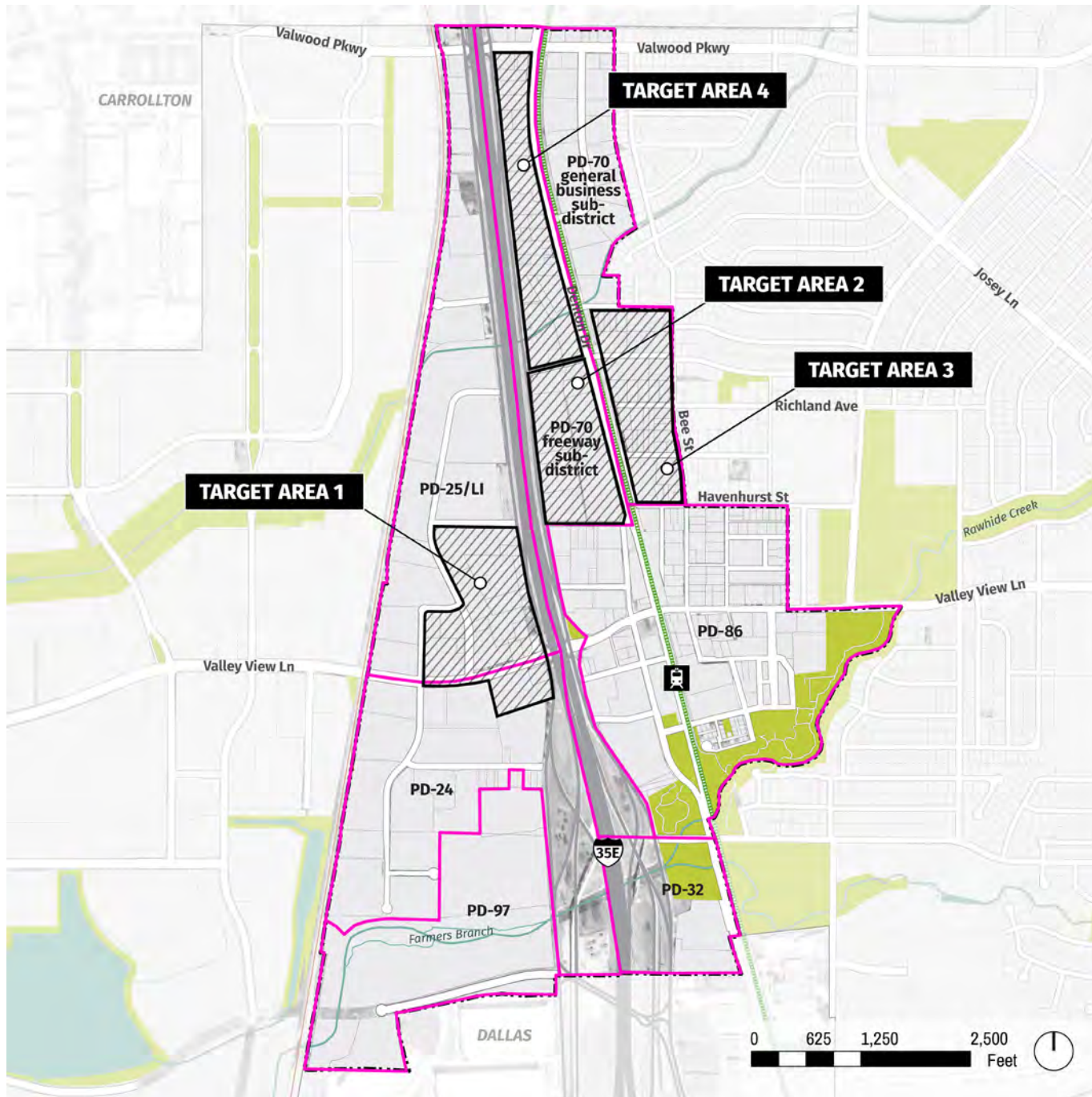


Fig. 16 Zoning changes map



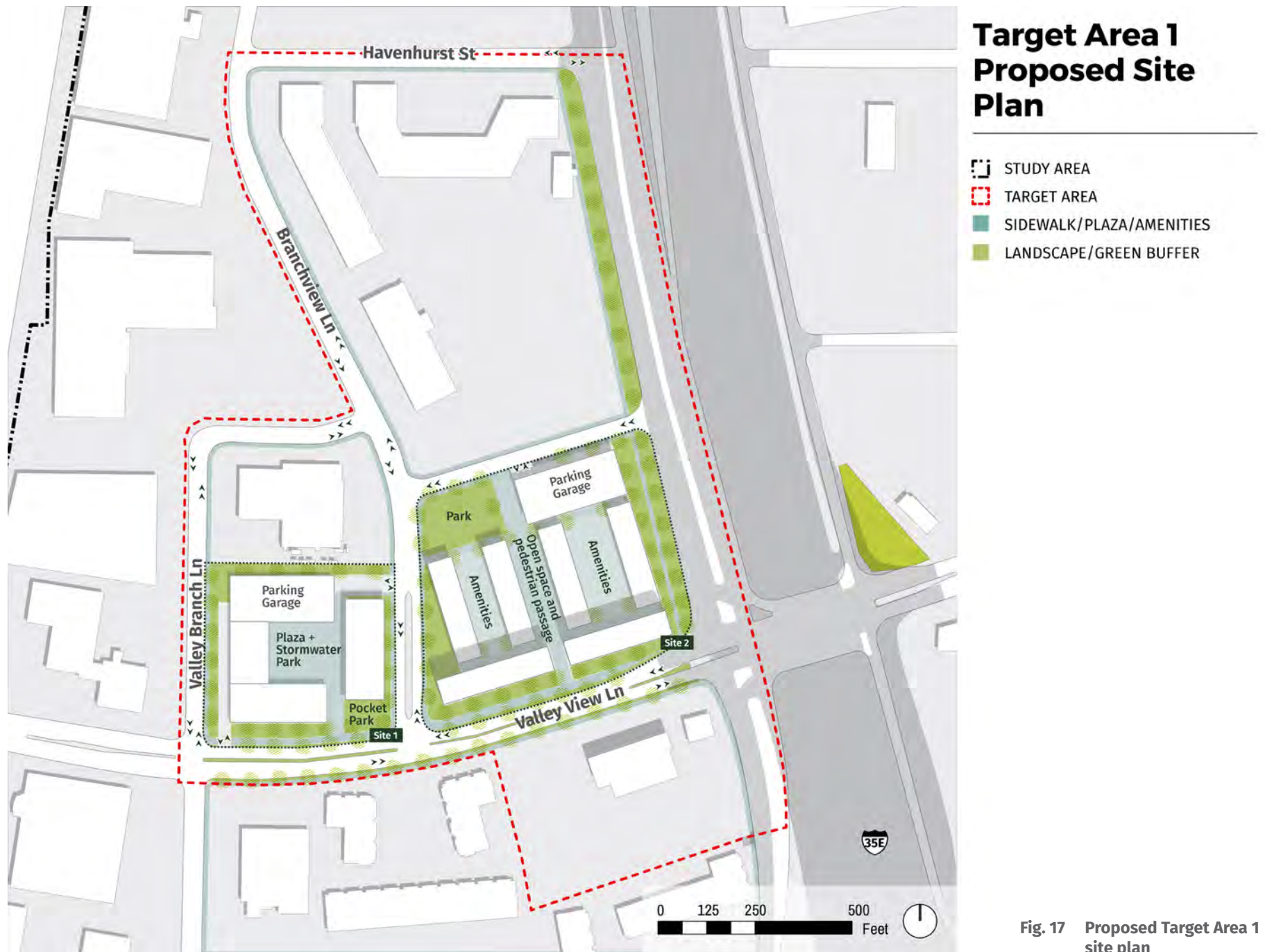


Fig. 17 Proposed Target Area 1 site plan

## 1.2 REDUCE CURB CUTS ALONG N. STEMMONS FREEWAY AND DENTON DRIVE

Most properties on N. Stemmons Freeway have two or more curb cuts, and the parking lots of adjacent parcels do not often connect. On the east side of the highway in particular, this causes confusion and traffic safety concerns as cars pull in and out at numerous points onto the busy frontage road and cannot access adjacent businesses without re-entering traffic. Additionally, the profusion of curb cuts on both N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive diminish the existing tree requirements under the existing zoning by consuming street frontage space. In Target Area 4 where parcel frontage is narrow, curb cuts often take up as much frontage as landscaping. Developing driveway design standards that require interconnected parking lots for adjacent properties and reduced or shared curb cuts will help improve aesthetics by creating more space to meet existing tree/landscape requirements and improve traffic safety by consolidating the inflow and outflow of vehicles.



*Interconnected parking lots and shared driveways.  
Source: General Commercial District - Creating Commercial  
Areas with Character, Montgomery County, PA*



### 1.3 RE-ZONE CREATIVE DISTRICT IN TARGET AREA 3 FOR SMALL SCALE BUSINESS AND LIVE-WORK

The Creative District in Target Area 3 refers to properties between Richland Avenue and Havenhurst Street and includes properties on the north side of Richland Avenue (see Fig. 13). These parcels are currently zoned to allow for light industrial uses, but the parcel sizes are too small for most modern industrial uses. Furthermore, this area is envisioned as a transition area between the industrial district to the north and the Station Area to the south, where small-scale businesses, including maker spaces, are the primary use while also allowing for live-work uses.

To achieve this vision, the zoning should be flexible enough to allow for creative businesses and small-scale production uses while minimizing offsite impacts. One option would be to change the existing zoning for the Creative District from Planned Development No. 70 to a new commercial zoning district which would reinforce some of the zoning changes that have already been made with regard to auto uses and outdoor storage, and would remove more intensive manufacturing and wholesale uses, which are already constricted by the parcel sizes. Alternatively, the existing zoning can be modified to minimize specific offsite impacts, by regulating loading, outdoor storage, parking as a primary use, and the scale of production uses. The zoning would also need to be modified to include the live-work uses.

### 1.4 RE-ZONE TARGET AREA 4 FOR HIGHWAY-ORIENTED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Target area 4 is envisioned as a place for mid-scale commercial activity, such as restaurant and entertainment uses. The parcel sizes here are too small for modern industrial uses. Therefore, it is recommended that this area be zoned to allow highway-oriented commercial uses with development regulations that allow for enhanced landscaping and flexible building placement, in addition to reducing curb cuts and promoting shared access.

### 1.5 EVALUATE/UPDATE TARGET AREA 2 ZONING IN SUPPORT OF PREFERRED LAND USES AND PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS

Target Area 2 is envisioned to continue allowing large-scale businesses that need large spaces and highway access. The existing warehouse structures are well-suited for a variety of businesses that need large spaces such as e-commerce, indoor recreation and entertainment uses, and large scale creative industries (for example businesses related to the visual and performing arts, design, media, crafts, food and beverage), that otherwise may not be accommodated in Target Area 3. Additionally the appearance of the properties within Target Area 2 can be improved with increased landscaping and tree plantings. The existing zoning should be evaluated/updated to support the preferred land uses, as well as public realm improvements.

## 2 Extend the Station Area west of IH-35E

In the June public survey responses received, Target Area 1 was voted as the top priority for change in the corridor after the Station Area, and across every form of public engagement, there was a clear directive to extend the compact and walkable development of the Station Area west of IH-35E. Valley View Lane is seen as changing over time to better connect the Mercer Crossing residential neighborhood to the Station Area. This change is envisioned both in terms of new mixed use development and a redesign of the roadway to make it more walkable and attractive.

This high visibility location is within a ten-minute walk of the DART Station along Valley View Lane, but currently has a number of vacant and underutilized parcels. The largest employers in the study area, including Essilor, Elliot Electric, and Bridgefarmer, are located in and around the target area and have indicated a need for food and amenities, a better connection to the DART Station, and improved look and feel. The IH-35E phase two widening will be a disruption but also an opportunity for change.

***“Compact and walkable is a great idea.”***

***“The west side of 35 and Valley View needs to be cleaned up, revitalized, and landscaped to coordinate with the east side.”***

The long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on development in the DFW region is still unknown, however, short-term impacts on the office market have been severe. The plan recognizes that the market will determine the development program, but that either office/commercial space or multi-family residential or a mix of both is desirable at this location.

### 2.1 EXTEND OR CREATE NEW TIF/TIRZ IN TARGET AREA 1

The City has established a reinvestment zone for tax increment financing (TIF) that covers the DART Station Area and a tax increment reinvestment zone (TIRZ) in Mercer Crossing to finance public infrastructure in support of the redevelopment of the area. It is recommended that a reinvestment zone be created as a financing tool for Target Area 1 to fund needed infrastructure improvements to enable walkable, compact development. The current conditions in Target Area 1 meet the necessary requirements for reinvestment: current vacancies with the highway widening project anticipated to result in parcels that will be unusable without assembly; inadequate street layout and sidewalks for walkability; and public safety concerns. To begin this process, the City will need to conduct an economic feasibility study, then prepare financing and project plans for the area.

### 2.2 ASSEMBLE LAND IN TARGET AREA 1 FOR REDEVELOPMENT

The expansion of IH-35E will disrupt businesses and render some of the properties more difficult to redevelop without assembly. During

this time, the City can work with affected property owners and TxDOT to begin assembling and preparing land for redevelopment with a focus on properties within Target Area 1, and particularly those properties adjacent to or near Valley View Lane. Given the long anticipated timeframe of redevelopment, the City should consider temporary ways to activate the properties or ensure they do not detract from the area while awaiting future development.

### 2.3 ACTIVATE WITH INTERIM AMENITIES IN TARGET AREA 1

One idea for activation is the development of a container park or food truck park as a short-term interim activity that would run for a few years after the highway expansion is complete. A common refrain among employers, business owners, and employees in the public engagement process was the lack of food options west of IH-35E, and many of the district's largest employers are within a 10-minute walk of Target Area 1. There are two main models for developing this type of interim amenity. In the first model, the City takes a lead role. The container park or food truck park could be developed on any parcel where the City either gains site control or can negotiate a lease with the property owner and provide liability insurance. The City would also need to ensure zoning flexibility for temporary programming, provide permitting and negotiate lease agreements with vendor(s) to provide food and beverage as a concession. In the second model, the developer would take the lead role after land is assembled by the City and the developer assumes ownership.



Example of a container park as an interim amenity



San Francisco, CA

Example of an adaptive reuse of auto garage



Princeton, NJ

**Precedent**

Frisco, TX



Frisco Rail Yard is an outdoor park offering food trucks, games, live music, and other seasonal events. It is managed and operated by a private entity on land owned by the City of Frisco and Frisco Community Development Corporation.

**Precedent**

Oklahoma City, OK



The Bleu Garten in Oklahoma City is an outdoor venue with food trucks that offers restrooms, shaded seating, misters and heaters, and entertainment. It is designed as a temporary use on property being held for future long-term development by Midtown Renaissance.

## 2.4 DESIGN FOR WALKABILITY

Although Target Area 1 is technically within a 10-minute walk of the DART Station and major employers, sidewalk gaps and the challenge of crossing under the highway make it unfriendly for pedestrians. As the area redevelops, there are four main public infrastructure improvements recommended for transforming it into a walkable place:

- The highway underpass and intersection at Valley View Lane and IH-35E must be improved as part of the IH-35E phase two widening project (see strategy 5.2 for more detail).
- Following the underpass and intersection improvements, Valley View Lane west of IH-35E should be redesigned to complement these improvements for pedestrian safety and comfort while maintaining truck access to businesses and the highway (see strategy 5.1 for more detail).
- Continuous sidewalks should be prioritized on Valley View Lane, Havenhurst Street, Branchview Lane, Valley Branch Lane, and N. Stemmons Freeway as the area is redeveloped.
- The large block between Valley View Lane and Havenhurst Street should be broken up with a new street that connects N. Stemmons Freeway to Branchview Lane. This street can serve as a service road and access to parking.

## IH-35E at Valley View Lane - Proposed underpass design

### Ultimate Intersection Layout - Enhancements



Valley View Lane & Valwood Parkway Intersection at I-35E Enhancements

Proposed underpass enhancements.

Source: Kimley-Horn



# 3 Create a visually enticing corridor

Over 160,000 vehicles travel daily along IH-35E<sup>1</sup>, making it an important gateway to the City of Farmers Branch. However, throughout the public engagement process, residents, employees, and business owners described the IH-35E corridor as looking run down from major roads and not distinctive. There is strong support for improving the look and feel of the overall corridor, especially along the highway, so that it better represents Farmers Branch. There are two main ways to do this: 1) investing in improvements on public property; and 2) spurring private property owners to upgrade their properties through incentives and regulation.

<sup>1</sup> TxDOT Traffic Count Database System, 2018

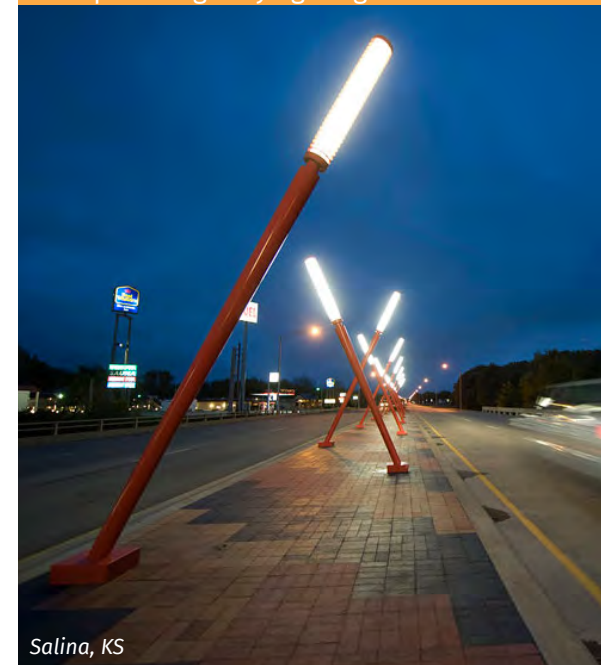
## 3.1 IDENTIFY PUBLIC ART AND SIGNAGE OPPORTUNITIES

The City and its partners should identify key opportunities with high visibility along IH-35E where public art and/or signage can make a positive impact. In June, survey participants ranked public art and underpass design as desired improvements for the corridor to improve the look of the study area and connect the two sides of the highway. Possible locations for public art and signage include:

- Highway underpasses: The Mayor's IH-35E Betterments Task Force has recommendations for art and lighting enhancements that should be implemented as part of the highway widening project to improve the experience of travel beneath the highway (see strategy 5.2 for more detail).
- North IH-35E Gateway: The remnant parcels on the west side of the highway, south of Valwood Parkway, that will result from the highway widening mark the gateway to Farmers Branch for southbound IH-35E traffic. The City has first right of refusal and should gain control of these parcels, through a joint use agreement with TxDOT, for gateway landscaping, art, and signage.
- South IH-35E Gateway: The stretch of City-owned land between Liberty Plaza and Pike Street presents an opportunity for a linear art installation or signage.
- IH-35E: The landscape dividers between the highway and frontage road can also be considered for a linear installation of art or landscape, this would require coordination with TxDOT (see strategy 4.3 for more detail).

***“Create visual interest that catches the eye of those that are on I-35E and the access road. Be artistic, contemporary, and vibrant.”***

Example of highway lighting



### Examples of building upgrades



Filter Life Factory, Taiwan



Holmen Industrial Area, Norway

### Example of industrial greening



San Francisco, CA

*“The low-rise commercial areas... could use some ‘facelifts’ to bring a vibrancy and energy to the area.”*

### 3.2 SUPPORT PROPERTY UPGRADES ALONG N. STEMMONS FREEWAY

The north and south gateways to Farmers Branch bookend IH-35E, and are the best opportunities to create eye-catching improvements on public land. However, it is also important to target the stretch of highway in between these gateways by incentivizing private property owners to make improvements. The City can create an Enhanced Commercial Façade/Property Revitalization Program for properties on N. Stemmons Freeway that takes a targeted approach of public/private partnerships to achieve property improvements. The program could expand on the City’s existing Commercial Facade Revitalization Program by increasing the incentive for those properties within the corridor but also adding non-financial assistance such as design assistance and design guidelines to illustrate how regulations for curb cut reduction (strategy 1.3) and tree planting (strategy 4.1) could be combined with facade improvements.

The City can also consider redevelopment with a program modeled after the existing Demo-Rebuild Program. Such a program could help offset the cost of demolishing underperforming buildings that may not meet the needs of businesses today, paving the way for modern, energy efficient buildings that contribute to revitalizing the area. Even with an incentive program in place, it may be necessary to kickstart the process through a public/private partnership approach working with property owners and designers to commission two high impact improvement projects along IH-35E to encourage other property owners to use the incentive package to upgrade their properties .





Fig. 18 Landscape and facade improvements along N. Stemmons Freeway



## 4 Green the corridor

*“Creating attractively landscaped green space on both the east and west sides of I-35 would have a huge positive impact even if new businesses come a little later.”*

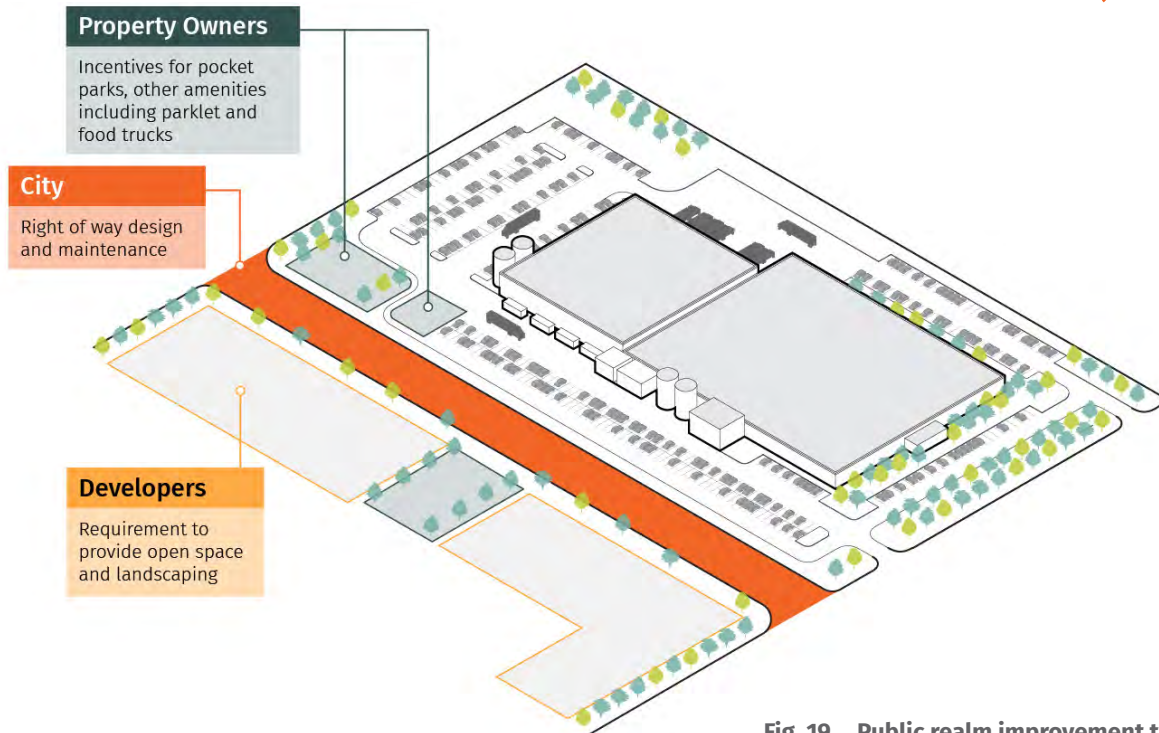
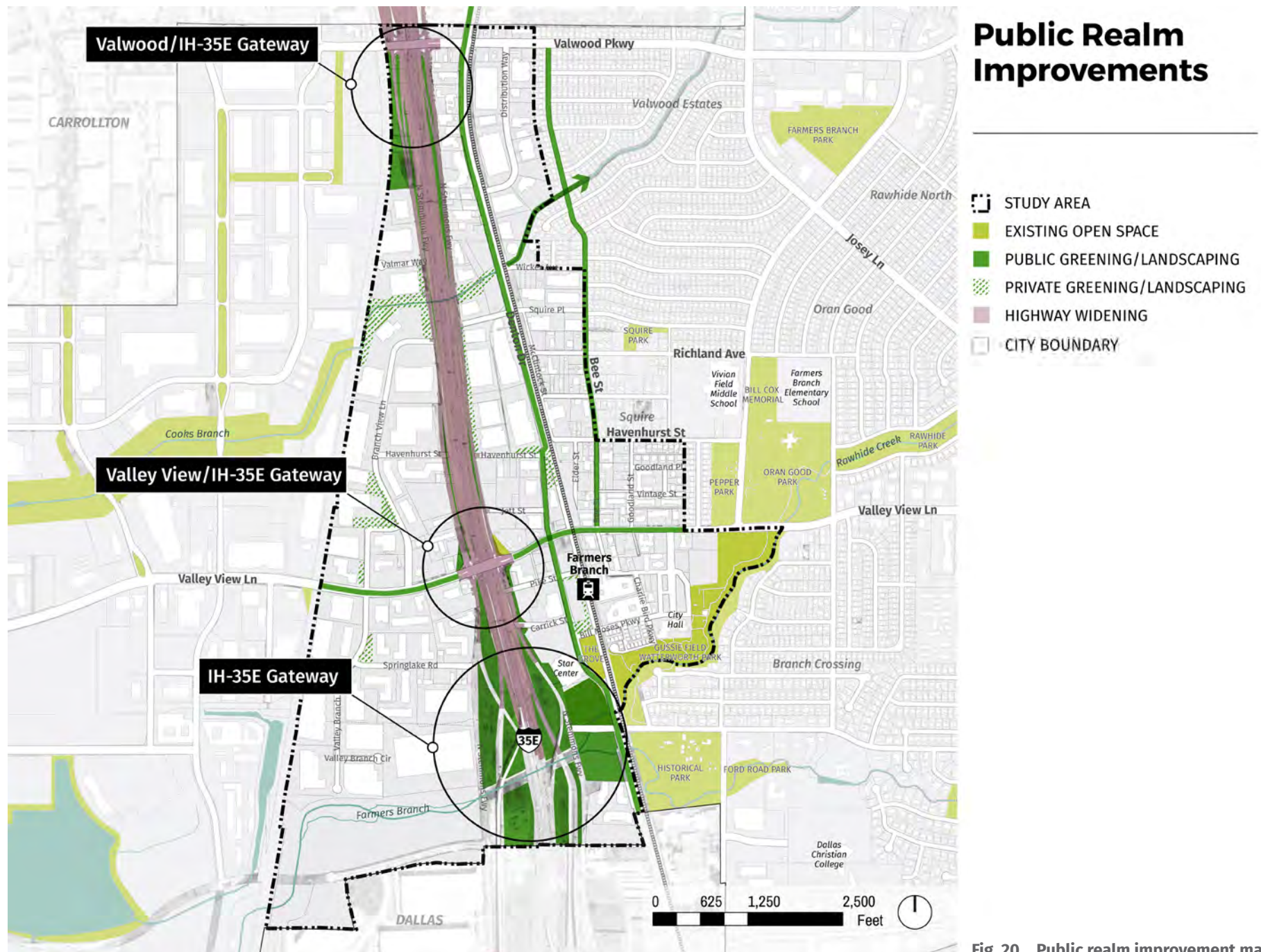


Fig. 19 Public realm improvement types

When stakeholders were asked in the June survey how they would like to see the corridor change in the future to best represent Farmers Branch, the greatest number of comments were related to landscaping and public realm improvements. Tree planting and highway landscaping ranked the highest among ideas for improving the look and feel of the corridor, garnering 36 percent and 21 percent of votes respectively. In September, when the public was asked to weigh in on preliminary recommendations, highway landscaping and tree planting again were top priorities, ranking first and third, respectively, among all the strategies.

Efforts to landscape the corridor will be an important component of transforming the aesthetics of the corridor in the short and medium-term, and complement the development of the Station Area and target areas over the long term. There are three approaches to improving landscaping within the corridor: 1) City-led landscaping installations on public land and rights-of-way; 2) incentivizing property owners to upgrade properties and provide amenities; and 3) using zoning regulations to require developers to provide open space and landscaping on private property. The first two approaches are described on the following pages, while the third, developer-provided open space, is recommended in strategy 1.1 as part of the rezoning of Target Area 1 west of IH-35E.





#### 4.1 LAUNCH AGGRESSIVE TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE

A corridor-wide tree planting initiative is seen as a good step toward softening the corridor and bringing it into alignment with the City's reputation as a "City in a Park." The City can start by setting a planting goal and evaluating public land and rights-of-way for tree planting opportunities. It is recommended that tree planting be included in the improvements recommended for public land in the north and south gateways along the highway and from Liberty Plaza to Pike Street (see strategies 3.1 and 4.2). Additionally, street trees should be included in the designs for key streets identified for pedestrian and bike improvements: Valley View Lane; Denton Drive; and Bee Street (see also strategy 5.1). Targeted tree planting on private property along N. Stemmons Freeway could be included as part of an Enhanced Commercial Facade/Property Program (see strategy 3.2) in combination with curb cut reductions (see strategy 1.2).

#### 4.2 IMPROVE COOKS BRANCH LANDSCAPING

Cooks Branch (also locally known as Cooks Creek) cuts through the corridor, crossing from the water treatment plant on the east side of Denton Drive to the Essilor campus on the west side of IH-35E. East of Denton Drive, Cooks Branch is a concrete lined channel. West of Denton Drive, the creek is more natural and crosses through private property. The City should explore opportunities to improve the landscaping on both sides of the highway to further the goal of improving corridor aesthetics. This may include public/private partnerships to work with property owners along the highway. Additionally, the City should explore naturalization along portions of Cooks Branch where deemed feasible.

#### 4.3 IMPROVE HIGHWAY EXPERIENCE WITH GATEWAY LANDSCAPING

Special attention should be paid to the north and south gateways into Farmers Branch along IH-35E, specifically the highway expansion remnants south of Valwood Parkway along the western side of the highway, and the landscape on both sides of the highway south of Valley View Lane between the ramps. As described in strategy 3.1 regarding public art and signage, these two locations are strategically important opportunities for high impact interventions on public property. The City can complement strategy 3.1 through enhanced landscaping and aesthetics with a focus on native plantings that offer visual interest year-round. For example, wildflowers, which offer a burst of color and peak from early spring to early summer, can be paired with plantings for fall foliage and winter interest, as well as integrated stormwater management as attractive landscape features at Farmers Branch Creek. The City can explore the TxDOT Green Ribbon Program for landscaping within the highway right-of-way.

***"I like the idea of using natural local plants to keep the space 'Texas'...it would be great to keep the cost of landscaping maintenance to a minimum and promote natural Texas beauty."***





Fig. 21 Highway gateway treatment



#### 4.4 DEVELOP POCKET PARK PROGRAM

Currently, the study area presents as a single-use mostly industrial district, except for the Station Area. However, modern urban industrial districts are becoming more mixed use and offer amenities to recruit a more diverse mix of businesses. The existing industrial zoning allows for accessory uses that could provide property owners with additional income from otherwise underutilized space (observed parking capacity in the district exceeds demand on many properties) while contributing to a more active and attractive district. It is recommended that the City encourage interested property owners to provide amenities such as coffee kiosks, food trucks, and well-designed seating areas, by creating a marketing and incentive program that guides property owners through the permitting process and offers incentives to help property owners provide and maintain improved public space for the amenities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a similar program was implemented where private property owners installed outdoor dining areas (also known as parklets).

***“Artists and creatives are okay with locating in industrial districts but having some food, coffee, and public spaces helps to attract that class of tenants.”***

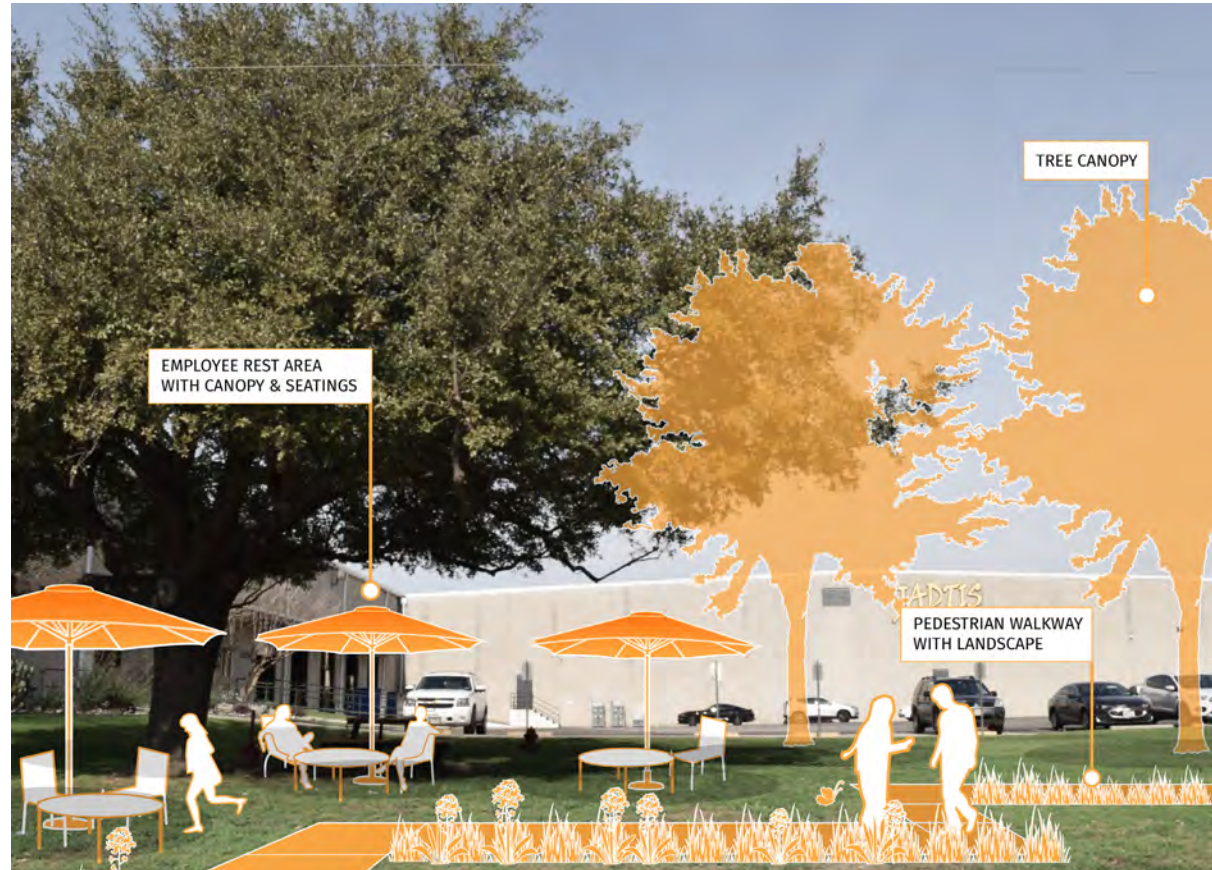


Fig. 22 Pocket park amenities



# 5 Connect both sides of the corridor

Roadways in Farmers Branch are an opportunity to better provide safe facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. In the June public survey, pedestrian improvements were the highest priority to make connections in the IH-35E corridor; 36 percent of respondents indicated the need for more sidewalks, and 30 percent wanted safe intersections. There are currently many gaps in the sidewalk network that could be filled to create direct connections between residential neighborhoods, job centers, and the growing DART Station Area.

Key streets such as Valley View Lane, Bee Street, and Denton Drive have an abundance of vehicle capacity but do not see the vehicle volumes to warrant it, creating an opportunity to repurpose vehicle capacity as bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, or transit lanes. For example, Valley View Lane has three vehicle lanes in each direction, but only 19,000 vehicles travel on that roadway each day (2019). This represents a typical vehicle volume for roadways with only one lane in each direction.

***“STOP designing this city around cars. Design it for PEOPLE.”***



Underpass at IH-35E and Valley View Lane



***“[Improving Valley View Lane] is essential to continue to connect west Farmers Branch residential to east. Also for train users to have safe walkability to/ from their employers on the west side.”***

***“I’d like to see [Valley View Lane] actually look like it’s considered the ‘front door’...I’d love to see the care that’s been applied to the Station Area applied to more areas around I-35.”***



## 5.1 REDESIGN KEY STREETS

Three key streets in the study area have been identified for redesign to improve connections throughout the corridor. Concurrent studies are being undertaken for Valley View Lane east of the highway, Denton Drive, and Bee Street. It is anticipated that these roadways will be modified or reconstructed within the next five years.

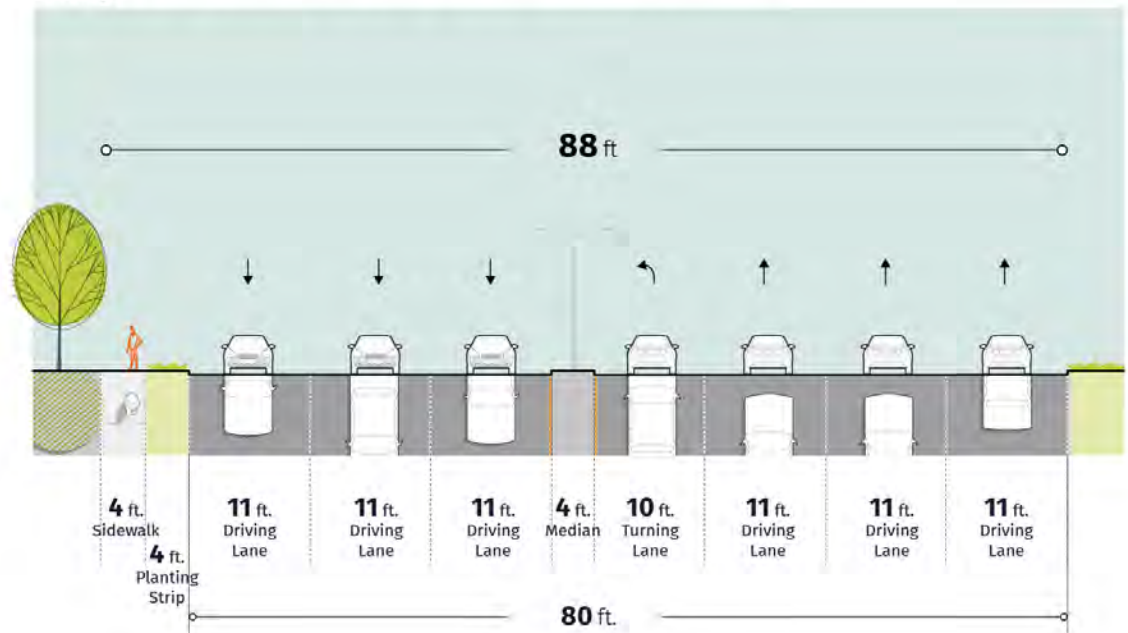
**Valley View Lane west of IH-35E** should be redesigned as a walkable front door to the corridor that supports new development.

It is recommended that the improvements planned for Valley View Lane east of IH-35E extend to the west side of the highway. In the proposed example, converting one travel lane in each direction would provide room for sidewalks on both sides of the street with space for tree plantings to create a comfortable, shaded walking environment while also improving the street's appearance. The median is another opportunity to green the street where there is no turn lane. On the north side of Valley View Lane, where new mixed-use development is anticipated, wider sidewalks are recommended to accommodate higher foot traffic, landscaping/street trees, and street furniture.

Current traffic volume on this street as well as trucks can be accommodated within the proposed right-of-way design. With regard to bike facilities, the planned West Side Art Trail is a good option for adding to the bike network but should not preclude the consideration of bike facilities on Valley View Lane longer term which would best connect the station area to job centers west of IH-35E.

### Valley View Lane (West of I-35E, between Branchview & N Stemmons)

Existing



Proposed

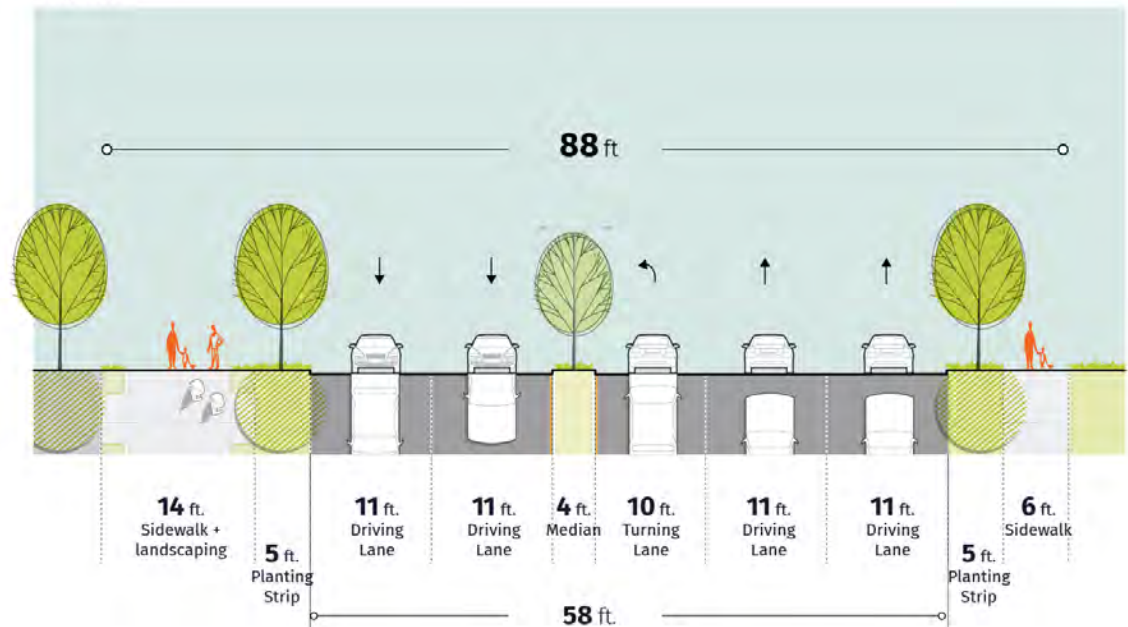


Fig. 23 Existing and proposed cross-sections of Valley View Lane (west of IH-35E)

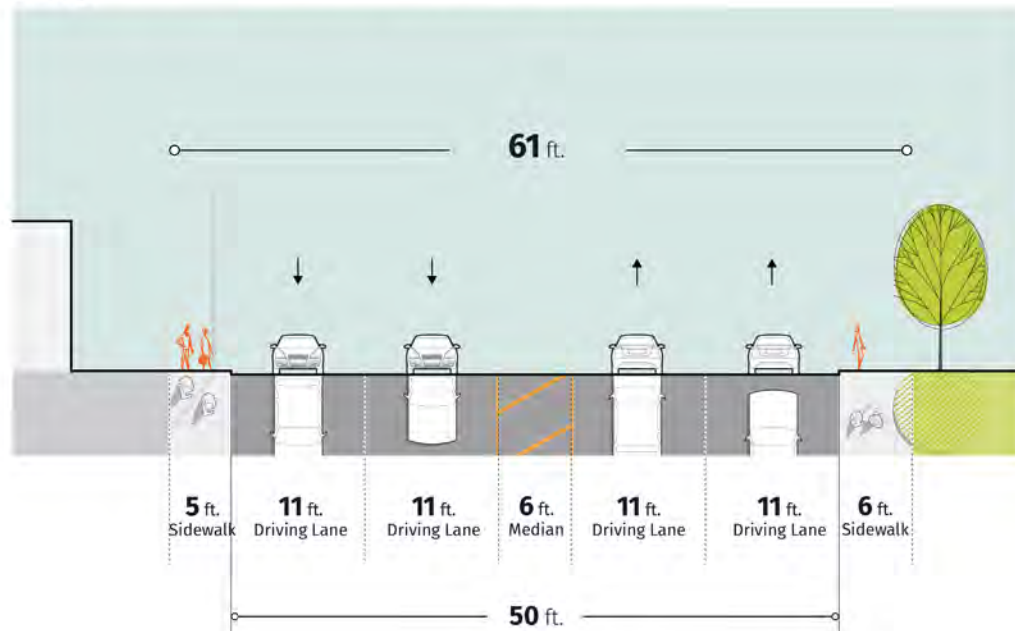
**Denton Drive north of Valley View Lane** is envisioned as a north-south bicycle connection through Farmers Branch.

The current proposal calls for reducing and/or narrowing vehicle lanes to widen sidewalks and construct a two-way cycletrack on the east side of the street (i.e. easternmost northbound lane), in the segment north of Valley View Lane and extending to Rossford Drive. However, the design for the remainder of Denton Drive to the northern city boundary is still in progress. The planned bike facilities on the West Side Art Trail would directly connect to Denton Drive south of the Station Area. Building out bike facilities on Denton Drive would help to create a more complete bicycle network and create a connection between Dallas and Carrollton.

With the proposed improvements to Denton Drive, there is also the opportunity for additional street tree planting for aesthetic and traffic calming effects that will enhance the experience of bicycling through Farmers Branch. In the June public survey, 36 percent of respondents indicated that street trees would improve the look and feel of the IH-35E corridor and was the favorite among all options presented.

***“Great concept! Make the area bike friendly and you’ll get more traffic from Carrollton.”***

### Denton Drive (between Valley View & Jett, looking north) Existing



### Proposed by Kimley Horn: Denton Drive south of Rossford

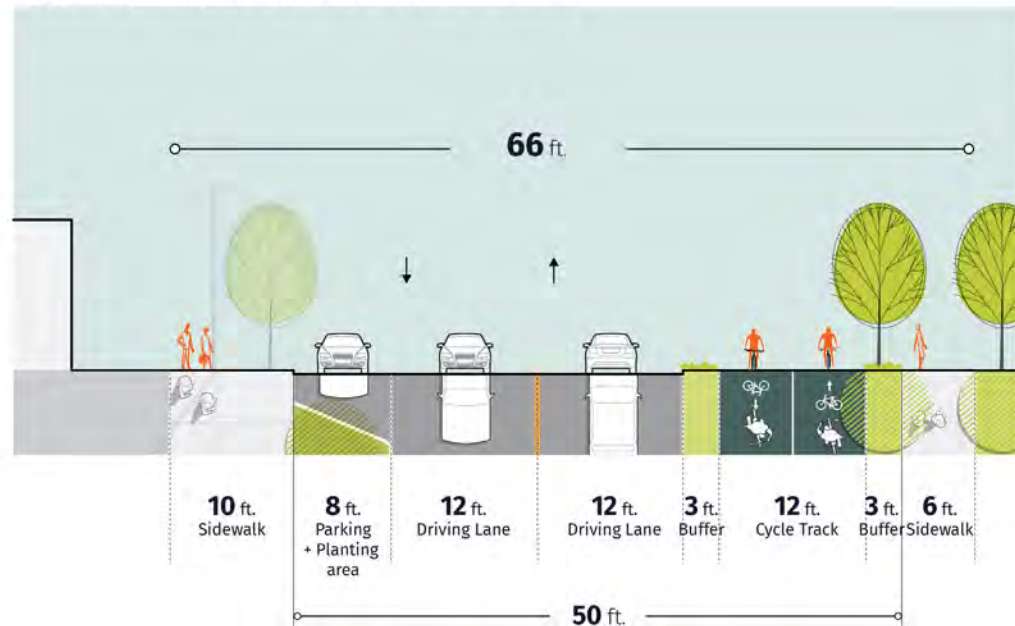


Fig. 24 Existing and proposed cross-sections of Denton Drive (north of Valley View Lane)





Fig. 25 Example of greening opportunity on Denton Drive



**Bee Street north of Valley View Lane** should be a safe, walkable neighborhood street.

The current design of this roadway with wide travel lanes encourages speeding and truck traffic, neither of which support the vision of a walkable street adjacent to a residential neighborhood. The Station Area Code for Bee Street south of Havenhurst Street narrows vehicle lanes to widen the existing sidewalks and provide room for trees to give Bee Street a calm, neighborhood feel at such time when adjacent properties redevelop.

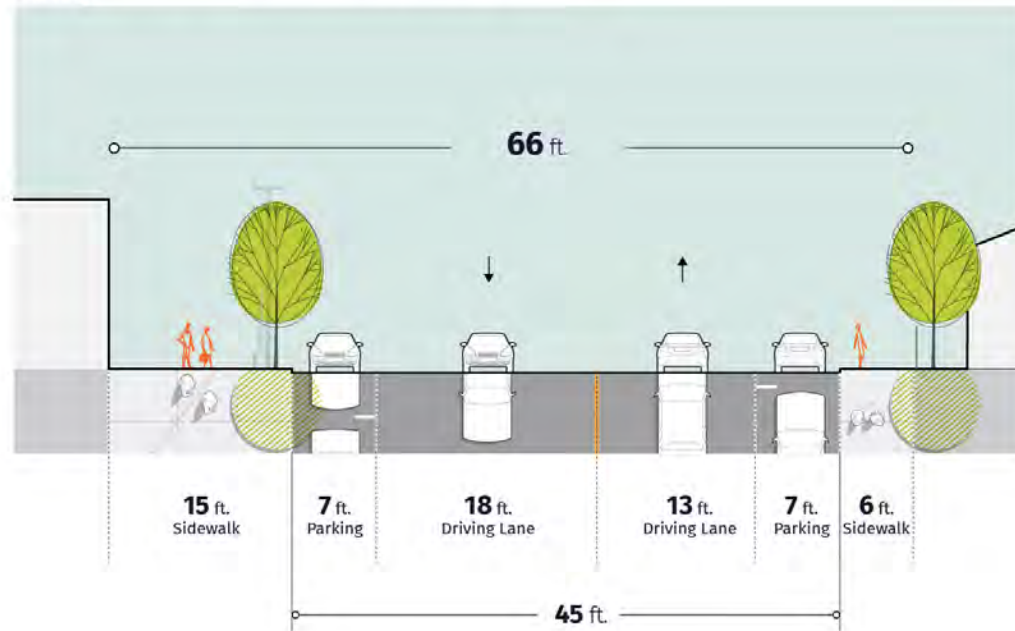
North of Havenhurst Street, conditions on Bee Street vary but filling in sidewalk gaps is key to creating a safe pedestrian environment and should serve as the first step to improve this roadway. Currently, the City is evaluating improving sidewalks on the east side of Bee Street to Valwood Parkway. Sidewalks should also be implemented on the west side of Bee Street from Havenhurst Street to Wicker Avenue as commercial development proceeds.

Narrower travel lanes should continue north of Havenhurst Street to support the goal of minimizing offsite impacts in the Creative District along Bee Street. Narrowing traffic lanes should be a deterrent to trucks, and signage directing trucks to alternate north-south routes such as McClintock Street can also be considered as a method to minimize the amount of truck traffic on Bee Street.

***"I love the idea of making more efficient use of the roadway to get more walking/ biking area without reducing [the number of] lanes and adding congestion."***

## Bee Street (between Havenhurst & Fruitland, looking north)

Existing



Proposed: South of Havenhurst as per Station Area Code

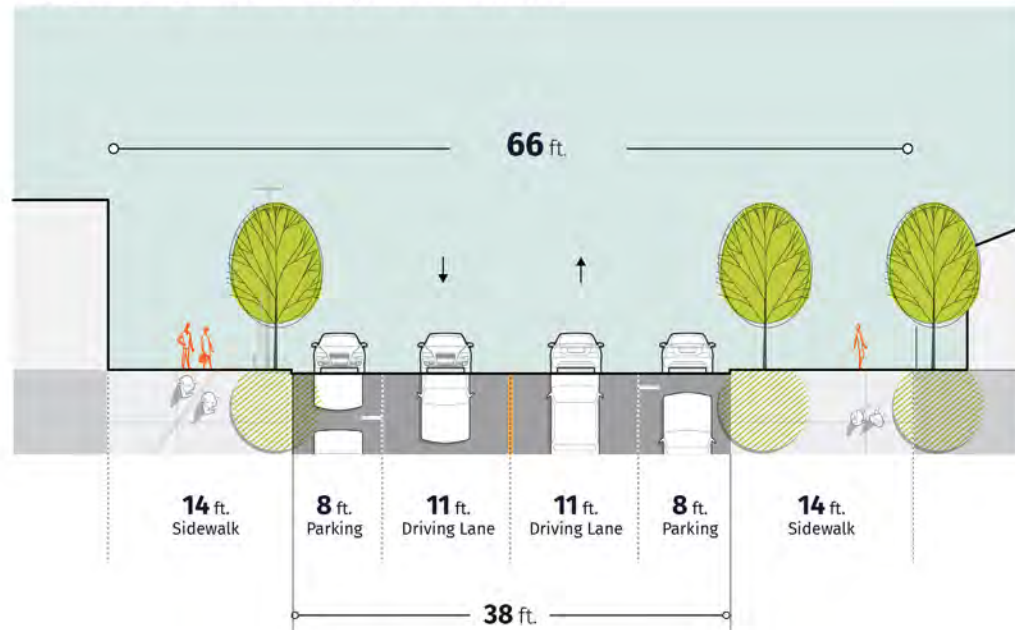


Fig. 26 Existing and proposed cross-sections of Bee Street



## 5.2 CREATE SAFE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN KEY LOCATIONS

Strategically building out infrastructure to benefit pedestrians will create a safer and more walkable Farmers Branch. The priority for a continuous sidewalk network should include Valley View Lane, Squire Place, Bee Street, and streets within the Station Area and Target Area 1 as they are built out. Safe intersections to cross at the highway are also critical to providing a safe east-west pedestrian connection. Highway underpass improvements was the second highest priority in the September stakeholder survey. The Mayor's IH-35E Betterments Task Force recommendations for the Valley View Lane and Valwood Parkway underpasses at IH-35E involve widening sidewalks and providing better lighting and public art to improve the pedestrian experience. As IH-35E is currently a pedestrian barrier between the east and west sides of the highway, improving the Valley View Lane intersection is key as the Station Area begins to build out to the west side of the highway.

## 5.3 PROVIDE LAST MILE CONNECTION BETWEEN DART STATION AND COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER

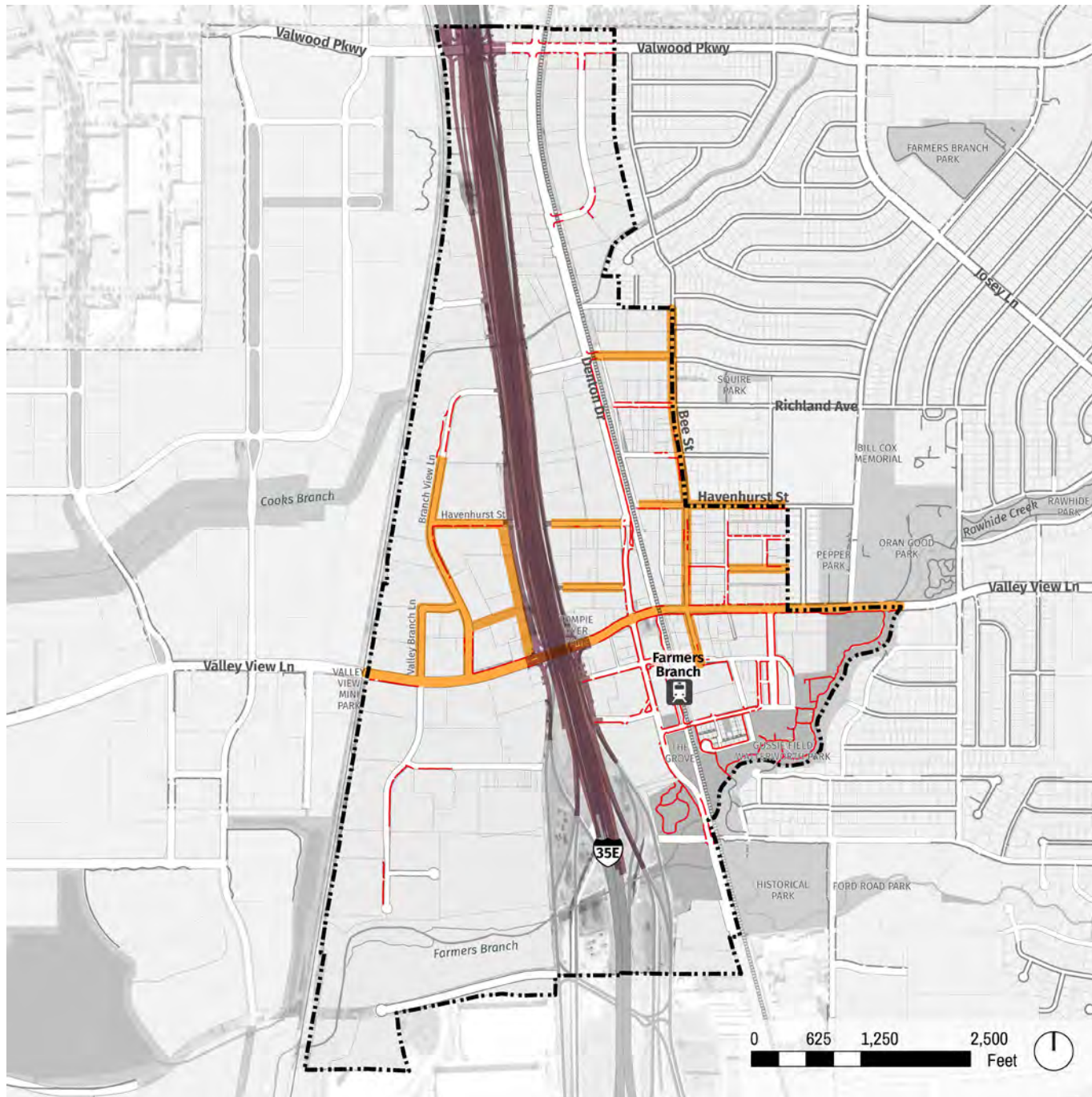
A last mile connection between the DART station and employment centers west of IH-35E and within Target Area 1 is important to increase DART ridership and make transit a quality commuting option for Farmers Branch. The walking distance between the DART station and the employment center west of IH-35E is too long to be comfortable, particularly in the summer months and especially when there is a lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure along Valley View Lane and Branchview Lane.

One last mile service provider is GoLink, which DART provides as an on-demand shuttle service. Expansion of the GoLink zone would be necessary to make this a reality; currently, the west side of the highway is outside of the Farmers Branch service zones. Additionally, wait times can vary, which could make it difficult to rely on this service as a commuting option without service improvements by DART. But by addressing these two points, GoLink could serve as an effective means to connect the DART Station Area to employment centers west of IH-35E.

Should the west side of IH-35E develop into a more robust employment center with the redevelopment of Target Area 1 as a mixed-use community that includes office and commercial uses, there is also the possibility of exploring an employer-backed and/or regional transit funded shuttle. This service could provide regular shuttles between the Station Area and the west side during morning and evening rush hours and could potentially benefit from a funding match whether it be from DART, the North Central Texas Council of Governments or some other entity.

## 5.4 CREATE A NEW STREET WITHIN TARGET AREA 4 BETWEEN N. STEMMONS FREEWAY AND DENTON DRIVE

The need is evident within Target Area 4 that a through street mid-block between Squire Place and Valwood Parkway is desired as a result of motorists cutting through the existing multi-tenant development, from N. Stemmons Freeway frontage road to Denton Drive. A new street between N. Stemmons Freeway frontage road and Denton Drive could be aligned with Distribution Way which has the added benefit of providing improved access to Distribution Way, as well as Denton Drive. As properties redevelop within the area this street could be constructed.



## Proposed Sidewalk Network

- STUDY AREA
- EXISTING SIDEWALKS
- PRIORITY FOR NEW SIDEWALKS
- CITY BOUNDARY

Fig. 27 Proposed sidewalk network map



# V. IMPLEMENTATION

This vision study offers a roadmap for transforming the IH-35E corridor into an attractive gateway with a mix of uses that better represents the City of Farmers Branch over the next 20 years. The implementation of the strategies in this plan will require a range of actions including but not limited to zoning amendments, City-led investments, public improvements, and private sector participation.

Some of the strategies will need to be coordinated with the highway widening and other strategies and will take several years to implement. Other strategies can be started right away. The proposed timeline in Fig. 28 shows which strategies can be initiated in the near term, which strategies will need to begin after the highway expansion anticipated to be completed in five years, and which strategies will need to be implemented over multiple years.

Since market conditions and funding opportunities change, and the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and real estate market is still uncertain, it will be important to review the plan every five years to evaluate progress and update the timeline and implementation matrix.

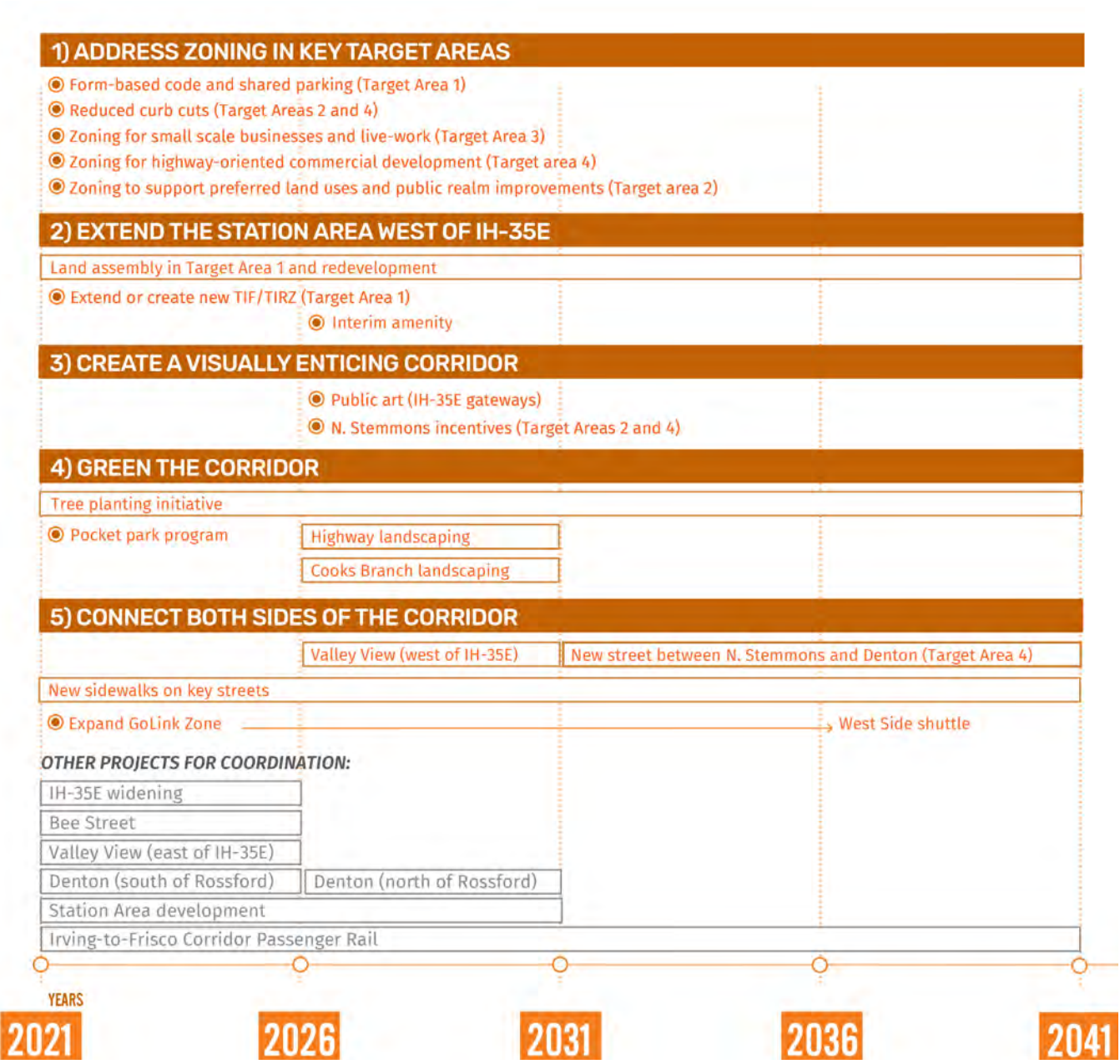


Fig. 28 Implementation time frame



## Priorities

The community identified several priorities when the preliminary strategies were unveiled in September. Strategies that improve the look and feel of the corridor were the highest ranked with highway improvements and landscaping at the top of the list. Improving Valley View Lane and redeveloping Target Area 1 were also consistently cited as priorities throughout the public process, including during meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

It will be important for the City to identify and allocate financial resources for implementing strategies including but not limited to façade grant improvements, property acquisition and infrastructure improvements within the IH-35E corridor. This will help to ensure the vision for the corridor is realized.

## Key tasks for the near term

To kick off the implementation process, several key tasks should be initiated within the near term (one to five years). These include:

- Begin the re-zoning process for the target areas to ensure regulations support the vision;
- Develop incentive programs to support the redevelopment of Target Area 1 (TIF/TIRZ), the improvement of properties along N. Stemmons Freeway, and the development of pocket park amenities;
- Begin land assembly in Target Area 1 in coordination with highway widening; and
- Incorporate tree planting and sidewalks in the redesign of key streets.

## Implementation matrix and evaluation

The following matrix outlines the starting timeframe, partners, action type, and area for each of the strategies in the plan. This matrix is intended to help organize and track progress through the implementation process and should be updated every five years. For this purpose, an editable version of this matrix is also provided among the plan documents to record plan status and metrics. These metrics are intended to measure the impact of the plan over time and should include the following for the study area:

Vacancy

New businesses

New construction permits

New façade upgrades

Tax revenue

New completed development

- Commercial (by square foot)
- Industrial (by square foot)
- Residential (by units)

Amount of private investment

- Development
- Façade upgrades
- Pocket parks

Amount of public investment

- Street improvements
- Greening
- Public art
- Incentives

### 38% of participants prioritize improvements to the highway and its surroundings.



Fig. 29 September public priority results

# Implementation

✕ indicates priorities as identified through the public process, and by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council

| PRIORITY                                    | STRATEGY / ACTION                                                                                                                                                                       | STARTING TIMEFRAME | PARTNERS | ACTION TYPE | AREA              |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|
| <b>1 ADDRESS ZONING IN KEY TARGET AREAS</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |          |             |                   |
| ✕                                           | <b>1.1 Rezone Target Area 1 for compact, dense, walkable development</b>                                                                                                                |                    |          |             |                   |
|                                             | a) Develop form-based code to address building heights, floor-to-area ratio standards, open space, and building setbacks with focus on Valley View frontage                             | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 1     |
|                                             | b) Adjust parking requirements and propose a shared parking model                                                                                                                       | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 1     |
|                                             | c) Develop sidewalk requirements                                                                                                                                                        | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 1     |
|                                             | d) Develop tree and landscape requirements on N. Stemmons and Valley View frontages                                                                                                     | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 1     |
| ✕                                           | <b>1.2 Reduce curb cuts along N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive</b>                                                                                                                  |                    |          |             |                   |
|                                             | a) Develop standards for driveway design and interconnections between parking areas to reduce curb cuts and allow more space for landscaping along N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Areas 2, 4 |
| ✕                                           | <b>1.3 Rezone Creative District in Target Area 3 for small scale business and live-work</b>                                                                                             |                    |          |             |                   |
|                                             | a) Revise zoning in Creative District to allow small scale businesses and production uses that have minimal offsite impacts                                                             | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 3     |
|                                             | b) Develop provisions for live-work units in Creative District                                                                                                                          | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 3     |
| ✕                                           | <b>1.4 Rezone Target Area 4 for highway-oriented commercial development</b>                                                                                                             |                    |          |             |                   |
|                                             | a) Rezone to allow highway-oriented commercial uses with development regulations that allow for enhanced landscaping and flexible building placement                                    | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 4     |
| ✕                                           | <b>1.5 Evaluate/update Target Area 2 zoning in support of preferred land uses and public realm improvements</b>                                                                         |                    |          |             |                   |
|                                             | a) Evaluate and update existing zoning to support the preferred land uses and public realm improvements                                                                                 | 1-5 years          | City     | Regulations | Target Area 2     |



✕ indicates priorities as identified through the public process, and by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council

| PRIORITY                                        | STRATEGY / ACTION                                                                                                                                                                     | STARTING TIMEFRAME | PARTNERS                                      | ACTION TYPE    | AREA          |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>2 EXTEND THE STATION AREA WEST OF IH-35E</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                    |                                               |                |               |
| ✕                                               | <b>2.1 Extend or create new TIF/TIRZ district in Target Area 1</b>                                                                                                                    |                    |                                               |                |               |
|                                                 | a) Conduct economic feasibility study for Target Area 1                                                                                                                               | 1-5 years          | City                                          | Study          | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | b) Prepare financing and project plans for Target Area 1                                                                                                                              | 1-5 years          | City                                          | Regulations    | Target Area 1 |
| ✕                                               | <b>2.2 Assemble land in Target Area 1 for redevelopment</b>                                                                                                                           |                    |                                               |                |               |
|                                                 | a) Negotiate with property owners and coordinate with TxDOT for acquisition of properties, particularly those properties located adjacent to or near Valley View Lane                 | 1-5 years          | City                                          | Land banking   | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | b) Demolition, site preparation, and maintenance in preparation for redevelopment                                                                                                     | 5-10 years         | City                                          | Land banking   | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | <b>2.3 Activate west side of corridor with interim amenities such as a container restaurant park</b>                                                                                  |                    |                                               |                |               |
|                                                 | a) Allow zoning flexibility for permanent and temporary programming, and issue permitting                                                                                             | 5-10 years         | City                                          | Regulations    | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | b) Negotiate lease with property owner (if City does not own site)                                                                                                                    | 5-10 years         | City/developer/<br>property owner             | Partnerships   | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | c) Recruit vendor(s) to provide food and beverage concessions                                                                                                                         | 5-10 years         | City/developer/<br>property owner,<br>vendors | Partnerships   | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | <b>2.4 Design for walkability</b>                                                                                                                                                     |                    |                                               |                |               |
|                                                 | a) Improve highway underpass and intersection with Valley View Lane                                                                                                                   | 1-5 years          | City                                          | Infrastructure | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | b) Redesign Valley View Lane west of IH-35E as a walkable pedestrian-oriented “front door” street (also see 5.1)                                                                      | 5-10 years         | City                                          | Infrastructure | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | c) Break up large block with new street connecting Branchview Lane to N. Stemmons Freeway                                                                                             | 10-20 years        | City                                          | Infrastructure | Target Area 1 |
|                                                 | d) Develop sidewalks on new street(s), Valley View Lane, Havenhurst Street, Branchview Lane, Valley Branch Lane, and N. Stemmons Freeway with street trees/landscaping (see also 5.2) | 10-20 years        | City                                          | Infrastructure | Target Area 1 |

✕ indicates priorities as identified through the public process, and by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council

| PRIORITY                                     | STRATEGY / ACTION                                                                                                                                                                | STARTING TIMEFRAME | PARTNERS              | ACTION TYPE                | AREA              |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>3 CREATE A VISUALLY ENTICING CORRIDOR</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | <b>3.1 Identify public art and signage opportunities</b>                                                                                                                         |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | a) Focus on key public opportunities with high visibility from the highway                                                                                                       | 5-10 years         | City, TxDOT           | Public realm               | IH-35E            |
| ✕                                            | <b>3.2 Support property upgrades along N. Stemmons Freeway</b>                                                                                                                   |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | a) Develop an Enhanced Commercial Façade/Property Revitalization Program for properties on N. Stemmons Freeway that includes incentives, design assistance and design guidelines | 5-10 years         | City, property owners | Incentives                 | Target Areas 2, 4 |
|                                              | b) Develop incentive based on Demolition-Rebuild Program to off-set costs of demolishing underperforming buildings                                                               | 5-10 years         | City, property owners | Incentives                 | Target Areas 2, 4 |
|                                              | c) Work with property owners and commission two high impact improvement projects along N. Stemmons Freeway to kickstart the process                                              | 5-10 years         | City, property owners | Public realm, partnerships | Target Areas 2, 4 |
| <b>4 GREEN THE CORRIDOR</b>                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    |                       |                            |                   |
| ✕                                            | <b>4.1 Launch aggressive tree planting initiative</b>                                                                                                                            |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | a) Set a corridor-wide planting goal                                                                                                                                             | 1-5 years          | City                  | Public realm               | Corridor wide     |
|                                              | b) Focus planting on public land and right-of-ways, with a focus on N. Stemmons Freeway/IH-35E, Valley View Lane, Denton Drive, and Bee Street coordinated with street redesign  | 1-5 years          | City                  | Public realm               | Corridor wide     |
|                                              | c) Develop program to incentivize planting on properties along N. Stemmons Freeway (see also 1.2 and 3.2)                                                                        | 5-10 years         | City, property owners | Incentives                 | Target Areas 2, 4 |
|                                              | <b>4.2 Improve Cooks Branch landscaping</b>                                                                                                                                      |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | a) Explore opportunities to improve creek landscaping along the highway                                                                                                          | 5-10 years         | City, property owners | Public realm               | IH-35E            |
|                                              | b) Explore naturalization of creek east of Denton Drive                                                                                                                          | 5-10 years         | City                  | Public realm               | IH-35E            |
| ✕                                            | <b>4.3 Improve highway experience with gateway landscaping</b>                                                                                                                   |                    |                       |                            |                   |
|                                              | a) Develop enhanced landscaping and aesthetics along highway south of Valwood (west side) and south of Valley View (both sides)                                                  | 5-10 years         | City, TxDOT           | Public realm               | IH-35E            |
|                                              | b) Explore TxDOT's Green Ribbon program for highway right-of-way landscaping                                                                                                     | 1-5 years          | City, TxDOT           | Public realm               | IH-35E            |



✕ indicates priorities as identified through the public process, and by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Council

| PRIORITY                                    | STRATEGY / ACTION                                                                                                                                                       | STARTING TIMEFRAME | PARTNERS              | ACTION TYPE    | AREA                           |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
|                                             | <b>4.4 Develop pocket park program</b>                                                                                                                                  |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | a) Explore incentives to help property owners provide and maintain public open space amenities                                                                          | 1-5 years          | City, property owners | Regulations    | Corridor wide                  |
|                                             | b) Market the program and use public/private partnerships to target property owners and businesses                                                                      | 1-5 years          | City, property owners | Incentives     | Corridor wide                  |
| <b>5 CONNECT BOTH SIDES OF THE CORRIDOR</b> |                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | <b>5.1 Redesign key streets</b>                                                                                                                                         |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | a) Redesign Valley View Lane west of IH-35E as a walkable, pedestrian-oriented front door to support redevelopment                                                      | 5-10 years         | City                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 1                  |
|                                             | • <i>Create pilot demonstration projects to collect data and build support or develop opportunities for grants.</i>                                                     | 5-10 years         | City                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 1                  |
|                                             | b) Implement bicycle connection along Denton Drive from the Station Area to the northern city limit line                                                                | 1-5 years          | City                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 2, 4               |
|                                             | c) Make Bee Street an improved walkable neighborhood street                                                                                                             | 1-5 years          | City                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 3                  |
| ✕                                           | <b>5.2 Create safe pedestrian connections between key locations</b>                                                                                                     |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | a) Implement Mayor's IH-35E Betterments Task Force recommendations for highway underpass and intersection improvements in coordination with highway expansion           | 1-5 years          | City, TxDOT           | Infrastructure | Target Area 1                  |
|                                             | b) Develop new sidewalks to create continuous connections with a focus on Valley View Lane, Bee Street, and in the Station Area and Target Area 1 as they are built out | 1-5 years          | City                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 1, 3, Station Area |
|                                             | <b>5.3 Provide last mile connection between DART Station and commercial/industrial employment center</b>                                                                |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | a) Expand GoLink zone to west side of IH-35E                                                                                                                            | 1-5 years          | DART                  | Infrastructure | Target Area 1                  |
|                                             | b) Explore feasibility of shuttle as west side of IH-35E develops                                                                                                       | 10-20 years        | DART, private sector  | Infrastructure | Target Area 1                  |
|                                             | <b>5.4 Create a new street within Target Area 4 between N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive</b>                                                                        |                    |                       |                |                                |
|                                             | a) Create a new street between N. Stemmons Freeway and Denton Drive to improve access and circulation within Target Area 4, and connection to Distribution Way          | 10-20 years        | Property owners       | Infrastructure | Target Area 4                  |

