



INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor, City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM: Charles S. Cox
City Manager

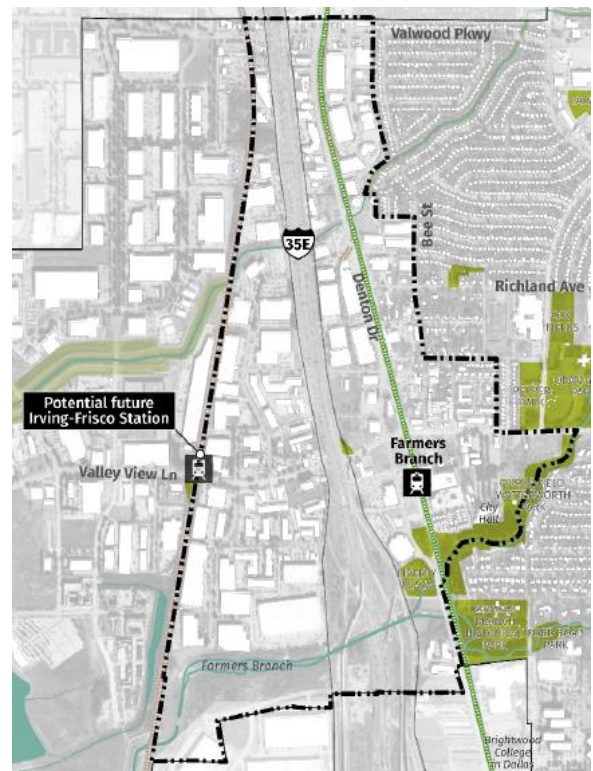
DATE: October 12, 2020

SUBJECT: Discuss the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study including, but not limited to, results of public engagement completed to date, and preliminary recommendations for the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study.

BACKGROUND:

The City's 2020 Strategic Plan identifies the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study as a project to help fulfill C2 of the Strategic Plan: provide attractive, unique and connected spaces for community interaction. The vision study also aligns with City Council's FY19-2020 Critical Business Outcome CBO1 which is implementing a vision for the central corridor. Once completed, the vision study will guide development within the IH-35E corridor for approximately the next 20 years and include recommended action items to leverage existing assets in order to increase property values and allow for higher quality land uses within the corridor. This is an optimal time to conduct the study as the IH-35E highway infrastructure will be widened in the near future, further impacting properties particularly along the west side of the highway.

The corridor study area 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; City of Carrollton to the north; the



Madill Railroad (also referred to as the BNSF Railroad, now owned by DART) on the west; and generally the eastern boundary of PD-70, PD-86, and PD-32.

On November 12, 2019 City Council approved a Professional Services Agreement with Interface Studio LLC for completion of the study. Interface Studio LLC serves as the primary consultant, with Ninigret Partners and WGI acting as sub-consultants.

This is the fourth, and last, anticipated steering committee meeting in support of the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study, and the first update to City Council since the Corridor Vision Study began in December 2019. The Planning and Zoning Commission has served as the steering committee for the study. At the Joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on October 12, 2020 the consultant team will:

- Present the results and analysis of engagement completed to date.
- Present preliminary ideas proposed for the IH-35E corridor public realm.
- Present preliminary direction proposed for four identified target areas within the corridor including: constraints; analysis; and ideas moving forward.
- Outline next steps for the development of the draft IH-35E Corridor Vision Study document and approval process.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an opportunity for the Council and Commission to ask questions, and provide input on the direction and ideas presented. The attached presentation includes the information described in the aforementioned bulleted items listed above. The consultant team and staff will use feedback from this meeting as input moving forward towards the compilation of a draft document for public consumption and formal consideration (including a public hearing process) by the Commission and Council during late 2020/early 2021 respectively.

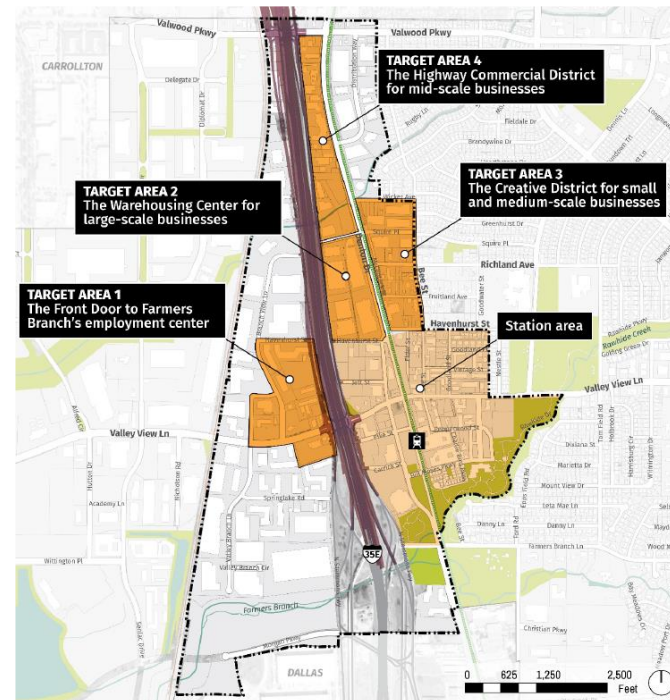
PROPOSED VISION:

Using the results from the public engagement process and land use analysis completed to date as input, the following draft vision for the IH-35E corridor is proposed:

(continued on next page)

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 metroplex. 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.

In addition, four target areas have been identified (see adjacent map). These areas, identified through public engagement and land use analysis conducted by the consultant team, each present unique opportunities to support the vision for the corridor. All four target areas have individual visions as well as detailed direction regarding future opportunities for change over the life of the plan.

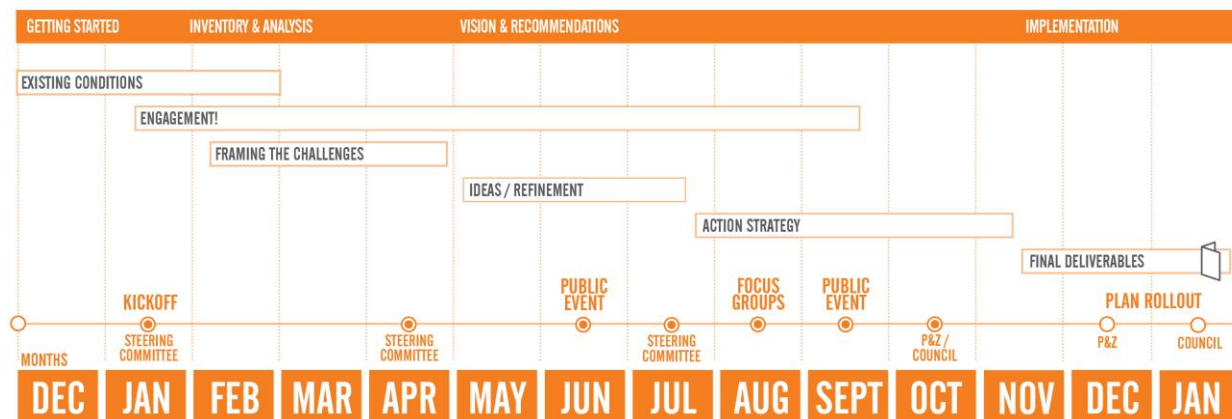


When completed the vision study will provide:

- A cohesive vision for the IH-35E corridor, in addition to target area specific vision statements, developed through consultation with the City, landowners, tenants, and area residents.
- Recommended goals and objectives for guiding future development within the corridor.
- An implementation plan that will outline action items that the City and business community can perform in order to implement the corridor's vision and related goals and objectives. The implementation plan will consider the IH-35E highway infrastructure widening in the timing and sequencing of implementation action items.
- A monitoring plan that will identify metrics that can be measured over time to demonstrate how change is occurring within the corridor.

PROCESS TO DATE:

To date the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study process (see timeline below) has involved extensive public and stakeholder engagement, analysis of current conditions, identification of constraints and opportunities for the corridor, and formulation of ideas and actions moving forward.



During January 2020, the consultant team held a number of interviews with area residents, developers, large and small business owners as well Councilmembers. This process together with extensive site visits provided a baseline of knowledge of existing conditions within the corridor.

Through the plan development process, the steering committee (comprised of the Planning and Zoning Commission) has acted as a sounding board for staff and the consultant team, providing feedback and guidance on work completed to date. Four meetings of the steering committee were planned in support of the IH-35E Corridor Vision Study, and the joint meeting with Council is the fourth and last anticipated meeting.

The first round of public consultation, originally planned for March 19, 2020, was canceled due to the coronavirus public health crisis. In lieu of the public open house, staff and the consultant team conducted an online survey that ran from June 22, 2020 to July 5, 2020, in order to gather feedback from residents, business owners, and employees. The online survey, which had over 400 responses, allowed respondents to review initial corridor analysis and provide an opportunity to answer a series of questions, including identifying priorities for the corridor, and assessing the impact of the Covid-19 health crisis. The responses received informed the draft vision, selection of target areas, and ideas for future development within the corridor.

A second survey was held between September 14, 2020 and September 27, 2020, and a live virtual question and answer session was also hosted on September 17, 2020. The online survey had over 120 responses and allowed respondents to respond to ideas presented for the public realm and three of the target areas. Unfortunately, the live virtual event had minimal attendance.

To gain interest and participation in both surveys, they were advertised and promoted using a number of methods, including: advertisement in the Branch Bulletin and via Farmers Branch social media sites; promotional emails; promotional postcards mailed to corridor landowners and tenants; information included in the water bill; and promotion by the Steering Committee and City Council.

Four focus groups were held in August, 2020. These focus groups were groups of 2 – 8 attendees and represented: mid to large size business groups; small businesses; residents; and representative of transportation agencies. The focus groups provided feedback related to preliminary study recommendations and allowed for more in-depth discussion on the ideas presented as they related to the specific interest group.

Following the Joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on October 12, 2020, the consultant team will use the feedback received from the meeting as input moving forward towards the compilation of a draft document. Once a draft document is complete, it will be brought forth for public consumption and formal consideration (including a public hearing process). It is expected that the Commission will review the proposed document and conduct a public hearing at their December 14, 2020 meeting. Once a recommendation is received from the Commission, the draft document will be brought forward to Council for consideration and adoption (including a public hearing); it is anticipated that this will occur in early 2021.

ACTIONS:

Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission/Steering Committee and Council provide feedback related to the public engagement results and vision study recommendations presented.