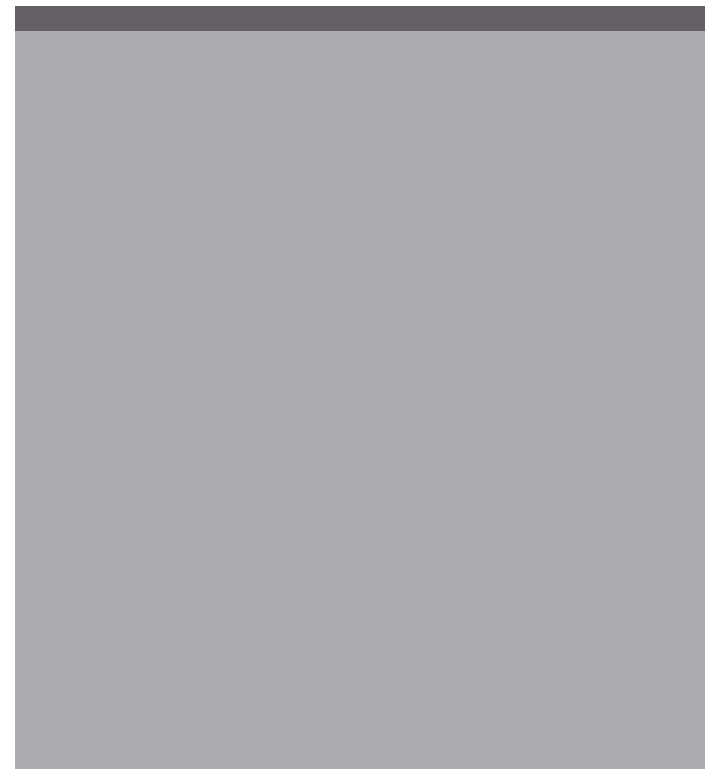




II Vision and Plan Framework



The Vision for Downtown Dallas

The overall Vision sets forth a bold, exciting view of Downtown Dallas's future, illustrating what the area will look like and how it will be experienced in the coming years . . .

Downtown Dallas is a complete urban center composed of distinct yet interconnected districts linked by an accessible transit network, each offering a unique and diverse combination of places to live, refreshing open spaces, bustling street activity, successful business and retail, and dynamic urban experiences for residents, workers and visitors alike.

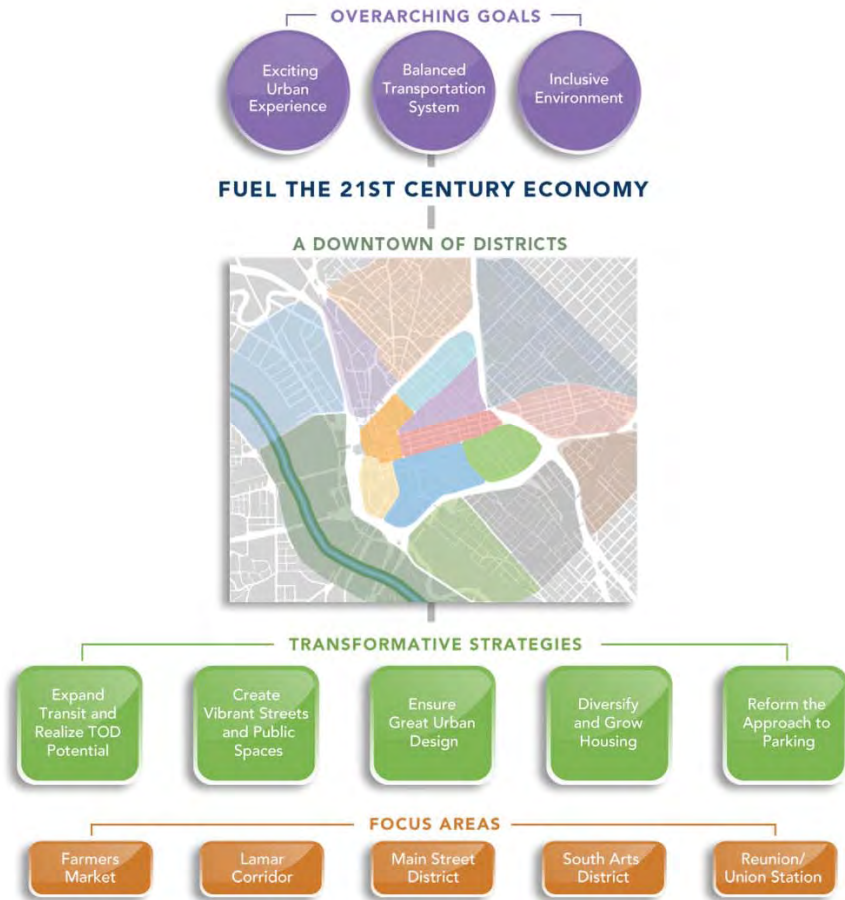
Dallas continues to be the *economic, cultural and entertainment center* for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Downtown Dallas serves as the nucleus of activity and is the primary destination for *conducting business and experiencing an urban lifestyle*, boasting great transportation connections and a diversely skilled workforce.

The city center boasts a strong collection of mutually supportive districts, each with *unique character* and all *easily accessible* via walking, streetcar, light rail, bus, bicycle, or automobile. Downtown's tens of thousands of residents contribute to a diverse, inclusive place where *creativity, innovation, and social interaction are paramount*.

Visitors from the region, the nation and across the globe enrich Dallas's *unique urban experience* through interaction with its entertainment areas, world-class facilities and institutions, and unique-to-the-region shopping and dining opportunities.

Downtown Dallas embraces the future with *excitement and energy*.





Plan Framework

Building on a strong vision, Downtown Dallas 360 is organized by several major concepts. These concepts form the Plan Framework (see figure at left) or “backbone” of the 360 plan. These concepts are summarized in this section and described in detail in subsequent chapters.

OVERARCHING GOALS

For a planning effort such as Downtown Dallas 360, overarching goals help frame the key themes for the plan and create a unifying “mission” for the document. The overarching goals for Downtown Dallas 360 are discussed below.

Exciting Urban Experience

Foster the energy and activity reflective of Dallas’s stature as one of America’s great cities. Downtown should be the most active, vibrant environment and should boast the city’s greatest sense of urban life. Well-designed buildings with street level activity and a renewed focus on pedestrian friendliness are critical to ensuring Downtown’s vibrancy.

Balanced Transportation System

Accelerate the transition toward a balanced, multi-modal transportation system that embraces and equalizes the importance of light rail, streetcar, pedestrian, bicycle and automobile mobility. Downtown’s future as a successful urban place rests on its ability to accommodate multiple modes to allow the spontaneity, freedom and accessibility that only an urban environment can provide.

Inclusive Environment

Encourage diversity in design, housing types and businesses to attract a wide range of residents, workers and visitors to experience Downtown. As the region’s prime urban location, Downtown Dallas must reflect the region and its status as a global gateway. It also must foster an inclusive environment through an identifiable, recognizable image that caters to Dallasites and visitors alike.

FUEL THE 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

The Metroplex – and the world – are facing big, new challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. Concerns regarding energy supplies, greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental considerations are driving some decisions to refocus development and investment in areas already urbanized, rather than continuing to sprawl ever outward. Perhaps even more importantly, quality-of-life considerations are reinvigorating demand for urban development and experiences, as certain households and workers seek environments with more diverse activities, transportation options, stimulation and convenience.

Competitive Advantages

Downtown Dallas is uniquely positioned to fulfill the important role of the Metroplex’s urban center for the coming decades and beyond. In addition to its 100-year history as such, Downtown has many of the attributes recognized as the economic keys to healthy regional urban centers for the future.

Large Concentration of High-Quality Office Space

As the American economy continues to evolve toward information, finance, and professional and technical service industries, more jobs require office space and fewer jobs are in the manufacturing sector. The Dallas Central Business District (CBD) and the Uptown/Turtle Creek office submarkets jointly comprise roughly 37.5 million square feet of leasable office space – nearly 20 percent of all the office space in the Dallas/Fort Worth market area – including approximately 27 million square feet of “Class A” space. These figures greatly surpass the supply of high-quality office space in any other submarket, and reflect Downtown Dallas’s continuing regional prominence as an employment location. Also, while the CBD submarket’s office lease rates are about average for the region, the Uptown/Turtle Creek area achieves the region’s highest lease rates, indicating the very strong market demand for urban employment locations.

Convention and Entertainment Center

The Dallas Convention Center now has more than 1 million square feet of exhibition space, as well as the added benefit of the adjacent 1,000-room Omni Hotel to complement the numerous hotel options already available Downtown. The city center boasts an exceptional number of cultural and entertainment attractions, including art museums, a performing arts center, symphony center, opera house, dance theatre, and arts magnet high school, as well as the arena that hosts the Dallas Mavericks basketball team and the Dallas Stars hockey team. Nightlife entertainment is also available in the numerous restaurants, bars, and night clubs found throughout the Downtown area, including concentrations in the Main Street District, West End Historic District and Deep Ellum. Few urban centers in the country can rival Downtown Dallas’s diverse entertainment options, and its Arts District facilities are truly world-class. The scarcity of financial resources and content programming for such venues will virtually ensure that Downtown Dallas continues to be the region’s primary center for these activities for decades to come.



The Dallas Convention Center boasts the largest column-free exhibit hall in the United States and hosts dozens of events annually, boosting Downtown visits and tourism revenue.



Downtown Dallas is widely known for having abundant high-quality office space.



The American Airlines Center draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Downtown area each year for sporting and other events.



Much of the recent residential development in the CBD and surrounding districts has been focused on high-rise rental units, which have added thousands of residents to the Downtown area.

Diversified Employment Base

The economy of the future will be subject to cycles and adjustments, as it has always been. To adapt to changing circumstances, a diversified portfolio of employers is critical to the ongoing strength and long-term growth of a downtown and a region. Many major employers have national or regional headquarters in Downtown Dallas. These companies, representing the communications, banking, retail, and real estate brokerage and management industries, are indicative of the broad appeal of the Dallas region and Downtown in particular for numerous types of employers and workers. In addition, Downtown has several physical areas with concentrations of specific types of businesses, such as the Arts District, Civic Center (government), the Design District, and the Financial District. Businesses locating in the city core can take advantage of the unique synergies that come with proximity to complementary firms, in addition to Downtown's regionally distinct urban amenities.

Growing Residential Population

From just a few hundred households in the mid-1990s, Downtown has grown to about 5,000 households in the Central Business District in 2010. Another 19,000 households live in adjacent neighborhoods just outside the loop, almost double those areas' population from a decade ago. These added households occupy a wide variety of housing types, ranging from rehabilitation of older commercial and industrial properties to new construction of townhomes, multifamily apartments and high-rise condominiums. The added population has greatly enhanced the 24-hour vibrancy of Downtown Dallas, and created a built-in market for shops, restaurants and services plus a labor market for Downtown's many office-based companies.

Economic Opportunities

Many of the promising assets of Downtown – the first rate performing arts venues, the new increment of housing, the ongoing investment in transit, the first class sports facilities in Victory Park, the “hip” urban culture of Uptown – have taken shape in the last decade or two. They represent a scale of recent public and private investment in urban vibrancy that rivals that of any other city in the country. Other major improvements are underway or planned for the near future, including Belo Garden, The Park (Woodall Rodgers Deck Park), and the Trinity River Corridor. While the current recession has temporarily suspended some of the economic impact of these investments, the city is poised for a dramatic resurgence when economic conditions improve and the residential and commercial development markets continue to respond to these substantial accomplishments. Downtown Dallas offers an abundance of physical opportunities to capture this market-based development potential, including vacant sites and nationally significant rehabilitation, adaptive reuse and public/private development opportunities – a rich mix of potentials to build on the investments that have already been made. In addition, Downtown's vitality and competitiveness in the global economy of the 21st century will likely rest on several key factors.

A Wide Range of Job Opportunities

Downtown's continued prominence will rest, in part, on the ability to recognize the significance of corporate headquarters while competing for additional jobs and businesses that will drive future growth and success. The CBD is home to some 2,500 businesses, including national or regional headquarters for approximately 200 companies. The headquarters businesses are key contributors to Downtown's vitality, as they bring many jobs themselves, plus support other companies that provide goods and services to their workers. Consequently, much effort has gone and should continue to go toward attracting and retaining headquarters. Still, smaller companies are equally important to Downtown Dallas's future. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 97 percent of all businesses in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan Statistical Area have fewer than 100 employees, including 98 percent of “Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services” companies, 97 percent of all “Finance and Insurance” companies, and 94 percent of

“Information” companies that are frequently associated with Downtown office environments. These data clearly demonstrate that smaller businesses represent an enormous segment of the employment market. They also suggest that future economic development initiatives in Downtown Dallas will depend on growth and success in such small firms.

Creativity and Inclusivity

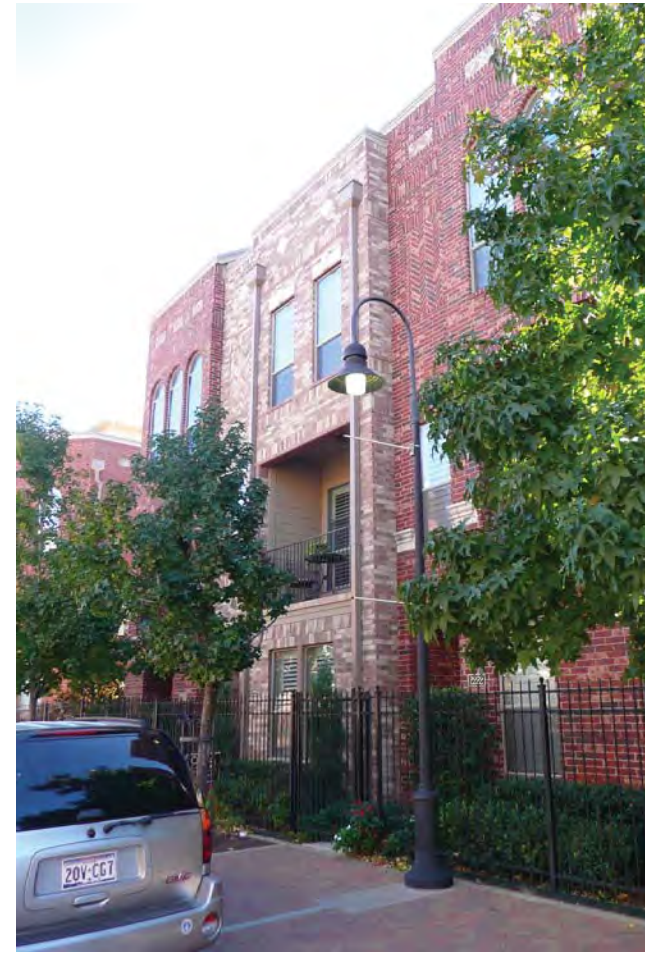
Policies and programs that create an inclusive city where the best and brightest function as the innovators, creators and entrepreneurs who will build the future are critical for Downtown’s success. Much of the housing development in the past decade has focused on the upper-income market, driven in many cases by the costs of land and construction. In the future, a wider spectrum of housing affordability will be critical, to provide convenient and achievable housing for entry-level workers, young families, and entrepreneurs whose incomes are dedicated to growing their businesses. Workspaces for these urban innovators should also be prioritized, and may include a variety of building types – offices and retail shops of many sizes and shapes, plus live/work spaces, studios, and even small manufacturing facilities. In particular, opportunities exist to build synergy with and attract new “creative” firms that emphasize the sharing of ideas and information. By building on Downtown’s inherent strength in communications, interaction and the emerging 24-hour environment, creative uses such as those in technology, design, communications and others can become catalysts for engaging a large segment of the Dallas area workforce while attracting more of the “best and brightest” to Downtown. The area’s numerous districts, including areas with distinct characteristics such as the Design District, Deep Ellum and Cedars, each boast different characteristics and can accommodate a wide variety of workspace types that complement and enhance the existing urban fabric.



Downtown must strive to attract people with diverse backgrounds, ages and interests to ensure a dynamic urban experience.



Design firms and other creative industries are drawn to urban environments and can add jobs while retrofitting existing buildings and stimulating activity in Downtown districts.



Additional middle- and lower-income housing options such as these units in Farmers Market are desired to provide much-needed residences for a wider range of Downtown workers.



A tourist attraction in itself, the Pritzker Prize-winning collection of architectural showpieces in the Dallas Arts District includes the new Wyly Theatre, designed by Rem Koolhaas/OMA.

Multi-Modal Transportation System

One of Downtown's key challenges is its sheer size: the area inside the loop is over two miles long from corner to corner, and the areas outside the loop are separated by both distance and hulking infrastructure. The result of this expansive size is that Downtown's many attributes are spread out, not easily reached by walking from one neighborhood to another. A conventioner in the southwest corner of Downtown may have over a half-hour walk to reach the AT&T Performing Arts Center. Also, the current light rail transit system provides services to only a limited number of Downtown stations, making its use less convenient to riders from outlying areas who need to ultimately arrive at locations more than a few blocks from those existing stations. A more complete public transit network can shorten these travel times and provide connections among Downtown's many assets, without requiring the addition of private vehicles to the roadways. While "rubber tire" systems such as buses and shuttles can be a quick and relatively inexpensive way to provide these connections, the addition of new stations and routes for fixed-rail transit (light rail and streetcars) can create a sense of permanent investment and service, and help to organize future development around such improvements. Pedestrian improvements and bike routes can also significantly enhance the travel experience within Downtown Dallas. Such improvements will directly respond to both the environmental issues and the quality-of-life issues that are refocusing development in urban centers.

Architectural Significance

While Downtown Dallas has a number of architecturally interesting buildings, both new and old, much of the commercial development in Downtown was completed in an era that did not prioritize pedestrian interaction. More recent development has placed greater emphasis on bold architecture, both for civic/institutional buildings such as those in the Arts District and for private developments, exemplified by office and residential buildings in the Uptown area. Whereas architecturally-significant structures can be an important factor in attracting businesses, residents, and visitors to the city core, buildings in the urban core must be designed with high standards to emphasize the importance of interfacing with the public realm. Buildings in great downtowns also serve as a record of local history. Downtown Dallas can benefit greatly if feasible uses can be identified for landmark buildings. However, where such feasible uses cannot be identified after exhaustive efforts, Downtown may benefit more from the replacement of obsolete structures with new, top-quality buildings.

These initiatives must all work together and complement each other. For example, the enhancement of transit service and workforce housing opportunities will make Downtown Dallas a more attractive location for businesses large and small, while the addition of such businesses will enhance transit ridership and provide demand for housing. With a focus on these strategies, Downtown Dallas can ensure its success in a competitive global world in the 21st century.

A DOWNTOWN OF DISTRICTS

As a large urban center, Downtown Dallas has several distinct districts, as well as many others that continue to emerge as integral parts of the greater city center. A key part of the vision for Downtown Dallas is a collection of well-defined, linked districts covering all of the loop and its immediate surroundings that work together to create an urban experience. The 360 plan vision acknowledges existing and emerging identities while providing guidance to ensure that, together, the various districts attract and serve a wide array of employees, residents and visitors. For the purpose of providing vision and direction, the 360 plan assigns districts to one of three tiers or categories:

- **Core Downtown Districts** – located within the CBD, they encompass all of Downtown's key destinations inside the freeway loop
- **Supporting Districts** – often considered part of the greater Downtown experience, these are typically immediately adjacent to the freeway loop
- **Surrounding Districts** – these in-town neighborhoods are linked to the larger urban experience but often function as independent destinations

A broad vision, description of character, and key opportunities for each district are highlighted in Chapter III.

TRANSFORMATIVE STRATEGIES

To focus and further articulate how the vision will be achieved, several Transformative Strategies present the critical path forward that will ensure the type of community that stakeholders, residents, and City leaders desire. Despite the tremendous resources, advantages and successes that contribute to Downtown's status today, achieving the vision as described will take targeted efforts to overcome key challenges and increase its regional, national, and international competitiveness and attractiveness. To this end, the strategies identified for the 360 plan must be truly transformative – shifting the conventional wisdom in Dallas for how to “get things done” – and resulting in a premier Downtown urban environment. Each Transformative Strategy, including its overall concept, key policies and guidelines, and an overview of implementation steps is described in detail in Chapter IV.

FOCUS AREAS

Finally, an initial list of catalytic sites or “Focus Areas” applies the various vision concepts and strategies on the ground. They provide primary focal points for future investment, development, and policy support. Five areas were identified through the planning process because of their ability to address multiple Transformative Strategies, capacity to accommodate significant new development, and ability to demonstrate “quick wins” for both public and private sectors. While some names and geographies overlap with the districts highlighted in Chapter III, recommendations for Focus Areas are outlined in greater detail in Chapter V. The vision, land uses and character of each Focus Area are described, as well as recommended strategic investments, design direction and development patterns.