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From: Tim O'Hare  
To: Qbird1@aol.com  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject: Re: Illegals  
Attachments:  
6/29/2006 10:13 AM

Charlie:

I hope you know I think the world of you. But, I respectfully disagree that Linda has a better insight into this than the rest of us. She doesn't really live here, she has no children in our schools and doesn't care a whole lot about the property value of her townhome, since it is not their primary home. I do not believe, based on my conversations with her, that she sees illegals as a problem - at least not enough of a problem that she plans to do anything about it. I have had a couple of fairly lengthy conversations with her about the topic - by telephone and e-mail.

I'm not opposed to reaching a plan privately, although I believe our citizens deserve to know what is going on, but how do we reach one if we aren't allowed to discuss it as a council? Anytime I bring something up, I hear from Linda, "that's not on the agenda, we can't discuss this." So, I try to get it on the agenda, and it is blocked. Then, we start e-mailing about a topic and we get a privacy law warning.

These next things I want to say to you because I care very much about your opinions, and especially your opinions of me. When I was running (and I never would be here if it wasn't for you and Bill), y'all wanted me to be a team player. Everything I have done has been internal. I have never publicly critiqued a decision made by the council in the past or present, I have never publicly critiqued a decision by the city manager, and I have never publicly called out any staff member saying they were not doing their job. I have suggested a number of things, and believe we need to make some changes to the way we do things around here, but all of these suggestions have been behind closed doors with council members, Linda or the Mayor.

I am not a glory hound, don't want to be viewed as a rebel and want nothing but the best for the City of Farmers Branch. My family has been here since 1956 and almost everyone that I consider family lives here. I don't want us to have to move. I don't want to have to live somewhere else. But, I'm not going to live in Oak Cliff, which is what we are becoming and going to become if we don't make some serious changes and spend some money.

Back to immigration for a couple more thoughts. I personally believe that the type of families and development we want in our city will be encouraged if we took steps to drive out illegals. When I hear of a city doing something, I think of it as a positive. Don't confuse the chief's stupid, racist remarks with taking a stand against people who are breaking the law, paying no taxes and receiving the benefits of city services off of mine and your tax dollars. Doing something about that is not bad or wrong, it is right! It is protecting our citizens who are here legally, paying taxes and doing what they are supposed to do.

I don't blame the illegals for what they are doing. I'd do the same thing if I were one of them. I blame the politicians who don't do anything to protect the people who are here lawfully, paying their taxes, in fear that they will be branded racists or bigots.

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I've said enough and truth be told, I'm tired of hearing myself.

Feel free to write back, call me or none of the above. One thing. I would like to send a copy of this e-mail to Bill. Would that be ok with you?

Thanks for listening. I think you and Bill both are two great guys and I appreciate your friendship.

Sincerely,

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TO00000005

APP00043

2

From: Tim O'Hare  
To: GARY GREER  
Cc:  
Bcc:  
Subject: Re: Fw: Illegal Immigration  
Attachments:  
3/20/2007 2:06 PM

Yes. These things were going to be brought up with the new council, but I see no reason to keep them in the dark.

- 1) We should tow every single vehicle that is pulled over that cannot produce an insurance card.
- 2) We should ticket every car at every apartment complex that is inoperable, does not have an inspection sticker or is parked on the wrong side of the road.
- 3) We should change our code to make sure hand-painted or drawn signs cannot be used for storefront or business signs.
- 4) We should aggressively ticket businesses/landlords in the Four Corners area that are not meeting code. If the run-down places aren't violating codes, we should draft some new ones.
- 5) Less leniency on Code Enforcement for residential areas.

It is so refreshing to see a City Manager actually ask questions like these. I am very impressed. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

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TO 0267

APP00044

3

**BRANCH  
REVITALIZATION  
TASK  
FORCE**



**Final Report & Recommendations**

**Ed Bonneau, Chairman  
Gene Bledsoe  
Jeff Brand  
Ben Cunningham  
Pat Haggerty  
RL Lemke  
Tim Scott**

**December 11, 2006**

D 00451

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## **Executive Summary**

### **OVERVIEW**

In May 2006, the City Council appointed the Branch Revitalization Task Force (BRTF) to assess the City's needs and ways in which the City could become more attractive for retail and residential development and redevelopment. The seven members of the BRTF and their areas of expertise are:

Ed Bonneau, Chairman  
Gene Bledsoe, Real Estate/Marketing  
Jeff Brand, Development  
Ben Cunningham, Banking  
Pat Haggerty, Commercial Real Estate  
RL Lemke, Development  
Tim Scott, Marketing

In addition, the following staff liaisons assisted the BRTF during their tenure:

Linda Groomer, City Manager  
Greg Vick, Assistant City Manager  
Norma Nichols Reed, Director of Economic Development  
Michael Spicer, Director of Community Services  
John Roach, Assistant to the City Manager  
Cindee Peters, City Secretary  
Traci Leach, Management Analyst

Finally, the BRTF would like to recognize the contributions of two outside consultants, Julie Bonneau, and Rainmaker Advertising.

The purpose of the BRTF, as defined by the City Council Resolution No. 2006-052, included five specific areas of study:

1. Examine redevelopment opportunities for residential and commercial properties located within the central area of the City (between I-35 and Midway Road);
2. Assess the City's image and possible marketing strategies;
3. Assess barriers to development and recommendations for removing those barriers;
4. Recommend prioritization for redevelopment projects, locations, and City participation; and
5. Make recommendations on financing options, action plans, and possible incentives.

Early on, the BRTF recognized the impact that improving the residential areas would have on improving the retail opportunities in the City. One of the advantages that the outer suburbs have in attracting quality retail is abundant available land for commercial and residential construction, which contributes to an increasing tax base due to a growing population and its attendant demand for goods and services. These cities are more

attractive to retailers because they offer a purchasing constituency with higher numbers both in potential customers and their incomes. Improving the "rooftops" near areas primed for future retail development, such as the DART light rail station, can only have a positive effect on the types of retail locating in these areas.

Moreover, the BRTF concluded that the existing housing stock in Farmers Branch is incompatible with the desires of today's homebuyer. Many of the homes in Farmers Branch are much too small and do not include amenities to appeal to today's buyers. The average size of new homes constructed in the 1950's was 1,100 square feet and the average house size for a new home constructed today exceeds 2,300 square feet, more than doubling in size. Transforming the existing housing stock is one of the many challenges facing Farmers Branch and many other first ring suburbs.

Based on these observations, the BRTF formulated several programs designed to improve the existing housing stock and to create incentives for homebuyers to purchase new homes constructed in the City. The long-term and short-term action plans for each component of neighborhood revitalization programs will be discussed in the full report.

#### PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations proposed by the BRTF and detailed in this report address the purposes outlined by the resolution. The BRTF report consists of six priority recommendations:

1. Continue Implementation of DART Station Area Vision
2. Develop of a Vision for Four Corners
3. Create a Comprehensive Marketing & Branding Plan
4. Implement a New Home Incentive Program
5. Implement a Home Renovation Program
6. Pursue Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements

##### *Continue Implementation of DART Station Area Vision*

The vision for the Station Area is one of an urban transit village that will become the town center for the City of Farmers Branch. The town center will comprise a mix of retail shops, restaurants, personal and professional services, office and dense residential uses surrounding the DART station itself. The BRTF endorses the Station Area vision for a transit oriented town center and the on-going efforts by the City to assemble land parcels and recruit development partners. Moreover, the BRTF recommends immediate construction of a town home project in the Station Area to serve as a catalyst for additional development, respond to the growing demand for this type of housing, generate interest in the Station Area, and set the standard for the area that the City looks to achieve.

##### *Develop of a Vision for Four Corners*

The Four Corners retail area is located around the intersection of Valley View Lane and Josey Lane and has long served the City of Farmers Branch as the community's principal retail neighborhood in the central core. A number of factors contribute to the existing condition of the retail area, including poor layout, competition from outer ring suburbs,

and national trends moving towards the targeting of specialized markets. The BRTF supports staff recommendations to address this retail situation by contracting with an outside consultant to develop a vision and master plan that also includes the residential areas surrounding the Four Corners.

*Create a Comprehensive Marketing & Branding Plan*

In addition to these programs, the BRTF endorses ideas presented by Rainmaker Advertising on a long-term comprehensive marketing plan for the City. Rainmaker and the BRTF are in agreement that the City's best selling point is its location to all of the amenities the Metroplex has to offer along with the outstanding quality of City services provided. The marketing plan outlined by Rainmaker included a wide range of strategies that included logo consolidation, website enhancements, direct marketing, and brand building.

*Implement a New Home Incentive Program*

This program is designed to encourage new home construction and new home sales throughout the City. The BRTF concluded that the program's primary focus should be the homebuyer, rather than the homebuilder. In the short-term, the target audience is already here- employees of businesses in the City or parents of children attending schools in Farmers Branch. The New Home Incentive Program consists of three parts: Buyer Incentives, Real Estate Agent Rewards, and Marketing Assistance.

The Buyer Incentive has two parts: a Purchase Grant and Complementary Services. When a new home is purchased, the homebuyer is eligible for cash back based on a percentage of the purchase price of the home. In addition, the purchaser of a newly constructed home is eligible to receive one year of complementary services from the City. These could include water and sewer charges (\$2,500 maximum), Recreation Center fitness membership for the entire family, WiFi Internet service through the City's provider, and consultation with the City's horticulturist and a social membership to Brookhaven Country Club.

The Real Estate Agent Rewards Program would reward agents for showing new homes in Farmers Branch. Because agents sell over 85% of all homes sold, they are the perfect vehicle through which to promote new product in the City. Rewards, such as car wash gift certificates, high-end restaurant gift cards, and cruise/vacation gift certificates, would be used to encourage realtors to schedule more showings in Farmers Branch.

The final component of the New Home Buyer Program is marketing assistance to sell the new homes. This program would be a cooperative effort between the City and builders, recognizing that low-volume custom homebuilders cannot market their product the way a large subdivision developer can. The City would be the lead in marketing efforts to promote new homes but would coordinate closely with the homebuilders to meet their needs. In the late 90's, the City placed newspaper ads in the *Dallas Morning News* to advertise open house events for the launch of new home sales in Branch Crossing and developed a marketing campaign. This type of marketing effort could be duplicated for future new home construction projects.

*Implement a Home Renovation Program*

This program is designed to improve the condition of existing homes in the City. The goal is to improve the appraised value of each home renovated and improve neighborhoods. BRTF recognized that not all homeowners could invest tens of thousands of dollars to renovate their homes. As a result, there are two incentive levels outlined in this program.

Major Renovation Rewards Program would focus on major home renovations that have a minimum improvement value of at least \$50,000. The improvements should substantially improve the value of the existing main structure of the home and can include the addition of living space to the home as well as major interior renovations. Half of each permit fee will be waived for a renovation meeting this criteria and the homeowner/investor is eligible for 2% cash based on an improvement value between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Renovations with an improvement value \$100,000 and above are also eligible for one year of complimentary services similar to those offered with the New Home Incentive Program.

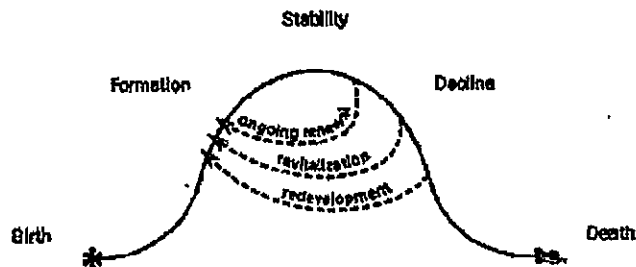
The External Envelope Rewards Program emphasizes smaller cosmetic improvements to the exterior of the home. Examples of potential rewards are furniture gift certificates by partnering with the North Dallas Design District or gift cards for furniture, home improvement stores, or restaurants.

*Pursue Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements*

The BRTF also recommended pursuing various infrastructure and streetscape enhancements that will improve the aesthetics of the neighborhoods themselves. These included items such as landscaping, bridge enhancements, boulevard banners, hardscape improvements to screen utility structures, and benches.

## Introduction

Redevelopment is the process of reinventing existing residential, commercial, industrial, or retail development within the City and transforming it to achieve sustained growth, vitality, and prosperity for the City's residents. All cities, regardless of location, experience the same lifecycle that begins at the initial founding and the formation of infrastructure and new residential and business development. Many of the Metroplex's outer ring suburbs, such as Frisco, Allen, and Southlake are experiencing this phase right now. Others such as Grapevine and Coppell are settling into the next phase, which is stability. The homes are relatively new, the schools are good, and businesses are thriving. To this point, the biggest challenge facing these cities is expanding infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing community. However, at some point, there will be parts of those cities that begin to experience decline. The longer the signs of decline go unaddressed, the more drastic the measures will have to be to return the community to the stability phase.



Many parts of the City need some renewal; others need more extensive work and will need to be redeveloped. The residential and retail areas in the central core of the City need revitalization and redevelopment to return those homes, neighborhoods, and retail areas to long-term viability and stability.

In contrast, the corporate health of the City on the east and west sides is very good. The City is home to 26 Fortune 500 businesses, 65 corporate headquarters, and approximately 2,600 businesses. The daytime population, approximately 85,000, dwarfs the residential population of 27,500. The corporate community comprises approximately 77% of the total tax base and because of this, the amenities that the City can offer to its residents at low or no cost are outstanding.

The BRTF envisions Farmers Branch as a "destination" community, where prospective homebuyers from all parts of the Metroplex seek out homes and come to shop here. Today's buyers not only want a spacious home, but they want an environment that provides entertainment and dining options, recreation facilities, and other amenities. While Farmers Branch certainly satisfies some of these demands, the challenge facing the City is transforming the housing stock built primarily between 1950 and 1970 into an inventory of homes desired by today's buyer. The BRTF believes that if this can be

accomplished, retail and restaurants will follow. Thus, the bulk of the BRTF discussions focused on improving the City's residential core.

However, the BRTF also believes that successful neighborhood revitalization depends on the successful integration of several issues, many of which are complex in their own right. Based on the experience of Branch Crossing, BRTF recognized that redeveloping the homes themselves was just one piece to a complex puzzle. Code enforcement and infrastructure and streetscape improvements also played a central role in transforming Branch Crossing and would continue to play an important role in the revitalization of the residential core as well. Code enforcement has been a focus of the Council and staff has responded with several new initiatives to improve the appearance of the homes in Farmers Branch. The BRTF recognized the City's efforts in these areas of municipal services, infrastructure, and facilities and decided their focus was best addressed on the residential areas of the City.

#### *Existing Conditions*

The BRTF discussed the environment that exists today within the central area of the City and identified the barriers, as they saw them, to redevelopment.

1. **House Size:** The average home size in Farmers Branch is 1,668 square feet. In the June 2006 issue of *Governing* magazine, an article was written analyzing a phenomenon called the "Bungalow Bind." Two researchers evaluated over 2,500 suburban communities across the United States to determine why some communities were experiencing a decline in median family income and why other suburban communities were thriving. The determining factor was the era in which a majority of the community's homes were built. The neighborhoods that were having the most trouble were those in which the houses were built during the 1950's and 60's. Nationwide, the average size of new homes constructed in the 1950's was 1,100 square feet and throughout the 1970's the size essentially remained unchanged (1,375 square feet). By the 1990's, homes averaged over 2,000 square feet; by 2002, it was over 2,100 square feet. Today, the average home size of a new home is over 2,300 square feet. House size turned out to be the primary driver of the "first-ring suburb" dilemma. This report showed that from this one factor flowed several other consequences: first population decline, then loss of retail business, weakened public schools, even crime. Appendix B includes the full article.
2. **Demographics:** Since the 1970's the aggregate population of the City has remained relatively stable, from 27,492 in 1970 vs. 27,508 in 2000. The demographic makeup of that population has changed dramatically during that same period. The population in Farmers Branch is getting older and more diverse, with family incomes remaining relatively flat. The City's median age has increased from 25 years in 1970 to 37.4 years in 2000 and is still rising. Approximately 25% of the City's single-family residents qualify for the over-65 exemption. Paradoxically, education levels have increased but income has fallen slightly. When adjusted for inflation, the median income level for Farmers Branch households dropped by about three percent (3%) between 1970 and 2000. However, during this same period, the educational attainment of individuals aged twenty-five years and older increased significantly.



The City's Hispanic population increased from about 5 percent to 37 percent between 1970 and 2000 and continues to grow at a rate exceeding all other ethnic and racial populations in the City.

3. **Economics of rebuilds:** The economics of a teardown and rebuild project can be challenging in most cases. For example, the industry standard for return on investment is 4:1 for these types of projects. For a builder, the margins are very tight to purchase a home for \$100,000, tear it down and rebuild, and sell it for \$400,000, which is more than what the market will bear in most neighborhoods. The margins are even tighter in neighborhoods that are in states of serious decline.
4. **Retail decline:** Since the 1970's, retail development in the central core of the City has consisted of only two primary retail areas: the Four Corners retail area, located around the intersection of Valley View Lane and Josey Lane, and the shopping center at Josey Lane and Valwood Parkway. Staff completed an evaluation and report on the Four Corners in December 2004. The report is included as Appendix C. In addition, staff will be awarding a consulting contract for the development of a Four Corners Master Plan and Vision Plan.

The following sections of the report outline in greater detail the marketing strategy, the new home program, the home renovation program, and a prioritization of recommended action items. Any program contemplated for neighborhood revitalization would include periodic program evaluations. The programs and strategies identified here may only be a starting point for other permutations once the programs are underway. Moreover, the strategies presented in this report are recommendations only. Council may desire to change, alter, or discard any of the ideas at their discretion.

**RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No 1:  
Continue Implementation of DART Station Area Vision**

In June 2006, the City Council conducted a strategic planning retreat to identify goals and objectives that will guide the City in creating a program to achieve the long-range goals. The highest priority identified by the Council at the retreat was development of the DART Station Area. Staff has shared with the BRTF the vision set forth in the Station Area Conceptual Master Plan and provided an update on its implementation status.

The vision for the Station Area is one of an urban transit village that will become the town center for the City of Farmers Branch. The town center will comprise a mix of retail shops, restaurants, personal and professional services, office and dense residential uses surrounding the DART station itself. Attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces will unify the area and contribute to the creation of a unique place to live, work, shop, and visit.

In order to make the vision a reality, at least three primary implementation components are necessary. The first was accomplished with the adoption of the Station Area Code, which emphasizes building form over land use to create high quality public space and a sense of place. The Station Area Code also simplifies development regulations and streamlines the approval process.

The second component, which is on going, is consolidation of property. Land assembly works hand in hand with the third component, recruitment of a development partner. "Greenfield" projects that have the majority of land under common ownership are very attractive to developers because it streamlines their development time and lowers development costs. Land acquisition around the Station Area has been and continues to be a priority for the City. The BRTF endorses the Station Area vision for a transit oriented town center and the on-going efforts by the City to assemble land parcels and recruit development partners.

While significant development around the DART Station will occur as the arrival date of the light rail becomes closer, the BRTF recommends that the Council *initiate* development in the area. The construction a town home project to add more rooftops in the Station Area will serve as a catalyst for additional residential and retail development. A town home development not only responds to the growing demand for this type of housing, it will also generate interest in the Station Area, and set the standard for the area that the City looks to achieve. The BRTF provided City staff a list of potential town homebuilders suitable for a project of this scale. City staff is currently working to make this project a reality, having already conducted preliminary engineering work and prepared a prospective layout providing for approximately 30 units. Based on the conceptual master plan for the Station Area, over 1,000 units will eventually be built adjacent to and around the DART station.

## **RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No. 2: Development of a Vision for Four Corners**

The Four Corners retail area is located around the intersection of Valley View Lane and Josey Lane. This center has long served the City of Farmers Branch as the community's principal retail neighborhood. Even though some renovations and new structures have been added in the past ten years, almost ninety percent of the retail businesses present today in the four shopping centers occupy buildings that were constructed more than thirty years ago. A 2004 staff report was prepared in response to concerns regarding the declining appearance of the centers and the decline in nationally and regionally recognized tenants located in the centers.

Four primary factors that impact the sustainability of the development were identified.

- The shopping centers are currently leased and operating at revenue levels that are satisfactory to the current ownership, who are not inclined to make major changes based on these two facts.
- The layout of the shopping centers creates visibility issues and unused, wasted space. Space at the southeast corner (in front of the former Albertson's building), the southwest corner (behind Turner Hardware), and at the northwest corner (by Big Lots) are prime examples of high visibility land that is currently unused. The current building configuration and an oversupply of parking for the existing demand contribute to this condition.
- Competition from the outer ring suburbs is drawing not only customers from Farmers Branch but also retailers themselves. With the cache of being in a "hip" location, national and regional retail chains and restaurants are drawn to the outskirts of the Metroplex based on a purchasing constituency with higher numbers both in potential customers and their incomes.
- The retailers in Farmers Branch are following many of the trends exhibited both nationally and regionally. Store formats in all retail categories are changing to embrace a smaller, more specialized market in order to better respond to changing consumer preferences and reduce development risk. In the Metroplex, retailers are responding to demographic change by increasingly marketing to growing ethnic populations, which in turn is giving rise to shopping centers devoted exclusively to ethnic populations, especially Hispanic, African American, and Asian populations.

Within urban retail developments, increasing emphasis is on smaller stores, multi-story buildings with structured parking, street front appeal and connectivity. This is the type of development that is envisioned for the DART Station Area as well as on the City's Westside. Staff has envisioned the redevelopment of the Four Corners to be complementary to, not in competition with, the vision established in the Station Area. In one development scenario, the Four Corners could transition from retail to non-retail uses that complement the DART Station retail area.

BRTF supports staff recommendations to address the retail situation at the Four Corners by contracting with an outside consultant to develop a vision and master plan for the area.

City staff has obtained proposals and interviewed the finalists for the consulting contract, which will be presented for City Council action in January 2007. BRTF recommended strongly that the residential area surrounding the Four Corners retail area and Branch Crossing be included in the visioning process for the Four Corners. The BRTF recognized that the proximity of the Four Corners area, Branch Crossing, the surrounding residential area, and the DART light rail area play a crucial role in determining how these areas affected each other.

### **RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No. 3: Create a Comprehensive Marketing & Branding Plan**

The City contracted with Rainmaker Advertising to present a comprehensive marketing strategy to the BRTF. The BRTF met with Rainmaker to voice their opinions regarding their goals, which shaped the recommendations made in the marketing strategy presented in this report. This strategy will assist the City in reaching the objectives of promoting a positive image for living in Farmers Branch, marketing and encouraging residential redevelopment, and enhancing the City name recognition and brand. As recommended by the BRTF, the overall marketing strategy outlined here is a long-term plan, and also includes many specific strategies that can be implemented in the short- and mid-term. The marketing strategy will work in coordination with other recommendation in this report, as appropriate.

Current marketing efforts, such as the City's website and brochure packets available for pickup, are passive. Most of the materials currently produced by the City depend on the initiative of the end user to pick up that flyer or brochure, rather than taking a pro-active approach to bring materials to the end user. Even the City's web presence is passive. While the economic development information on the City's web page is updated regularly, the City does not have a strong presence on other regional convention and visitors bureaus' websites that tout area attractions for out-of-towners, convention attendees, and homebuyers. Moreover, the City does not have a site specifically for those considering a home purchase in Farmers Branch.

The City needs to go through a process to identify what it is selling to potential buyers and residents. Is it location? Is it city services? Is it jobs? In addition, the target audience should also be identified (commuters, existing residents, apartment dwellers, remodel investors, and employees of businesses currently located in the City). In order to create an effective "brand," solidifying these two targets is crucial so that a repetitive, consistent message is conveyed in all City communications, marketing, and publications. The BRTF and Rainmaker identified that the City's biggest distinctive selling point is location as the geographic center of the Metroplex:

- To corporate jobs- Approximately 2,600 businesses in Farmers Branch
- To light rail transit- DART will arrive in FB in 2010
- To educational opportunities at all levels. There are public and private school options, as well as Brookhaven Community College and Dallas Christian College.
- To major highways and toll roads- FB is bordered by I-35 and I-635 as well as the Dallas North Tollway and President George Bush Turnpike.
- To both DFW Airport and Love Field- both just 15 minutes away
- To retail options- The Galleria is adjacent, and Grapevine Mills Mall, the Gaylord Resort, North Park Mall, and Valley View Mall are only 15 minutes away.
- To downtown Dallas- 15 minutes.

BRTF concluded the primary market should be people who come to or travel through Farmers Branch each day—corporate employees, apartment dwellers, and the school community.

In order to coordinate the comprehensive marketing strategy recommended by Rainmaker, the addition of a staff person whose primary responsibility is marketing the City is essential. Not only would this position be responsible for making contacts with the real estate professionals and other target audiences, but this person would also coordinate all of the marketing activities such as collateral materials, advertising media, home builder marketing assistance, and other activities related to both home programs recommended by the BRTF and detailed in the following sections.

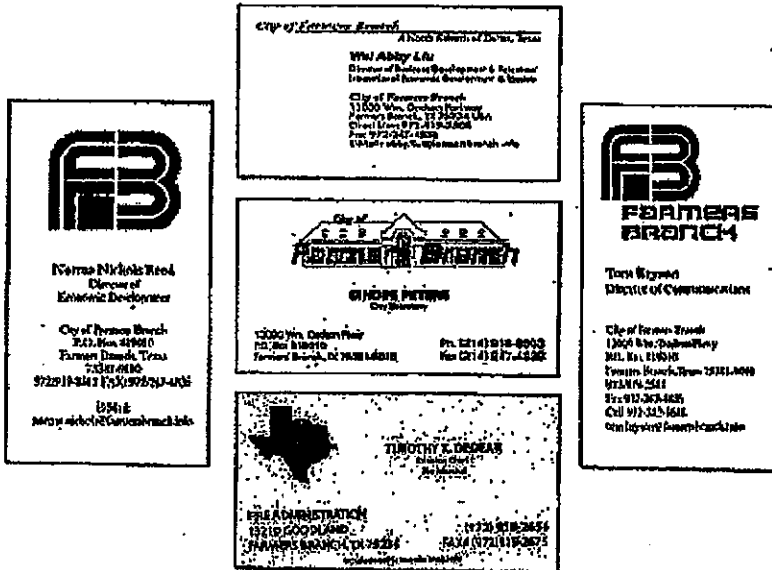
The two-part plan for organizing the marketing efforts will aim to engage the primary audience and maintain "branding" among this group. The initial target audience should be the daytime population- people that work in Farmers Branch and have children in Farmers Branch public and private schools, who endure the commute through traffic to come here daily. Once this has been achieved, expanding the message to a larger and larger audience will be possible. This approach will allow the City time to develop a consistent message, logo and look to all of its marketing efforts prior to broadcasting that message to the larger Metroplex.

*Phase One: Targeted Launch*

The initial phase of the marketing strategy consists of selling the message and getting the logo out to the target audience through a variety of media. Rainmaker had several observations and recommendations regarding this initial phase of the marketing strategy.

The first is unveiling "the" City logo that will be used on all marketing materials regardless of what department of the City it represents. Currently, the City has several different logos and taglines that are published on various department literature. The examples below are from various departments that have taglines and logos and from various business card designs currently in circulation.





The second is developing support collateral such as tri-fold mailers for display and direct marketing purposes, realtor/builder kits, corporate programs, and school programs. These materials would be actively distributed to realtors, corporate citizens, and within the schools. The advertising position recommended would coordinate this marketing effort and maintain relationships with liaisons from each group. Creating a program that fosters on-going relationships building with target markets (realtors, builders, corporate citizens, schools, churches) is crucial. This can be accomplished through regular presentations with these target audiences.

Third, Rainmaker suggested and the BRTF strongly supported developing a "Live in FB" web portal that could be incorporated into the existing website. The portal or "pre" home page would have four separate links that visitors to the site could choose: Economic Development, Potential Home Buyer, Visitors/Tourism, and Residents. Staff is currently working with Rainmaker to re-design the website and incorporate these recommendations.

Fourth, Rainmaker recommended increasing and enhancing signage around the City that promotes the desired message. The City has begun a short-term marketing effort to draw attention to Branch Crossing and increase potential sales traffic to the area. This effort included two separate banner projects: one along Tom Field Road to brand Branch Crossing and another along major thoroughfares to sell Farmers Branch as a desirable residential location. The banners along Tom Field Road that demarcate Branch Crossing were installed in November 2006. The purpose of these banners is to differentiate Branch Crossing from other neighborhoods in the City. The BRTF presented ideas at their interim report to the City Council on ideas for boulevard banners that tout the benefits of living in Farmers Branch and detail some of the proposed home buyer

incentives. These two efforts can work in concert with any other signage enhancements desired by the Council.

Fifth, Rainmaker recommended creating a marketing partnership with the homebuilders similar to what is included in the New Home Incentive Program section of this report. Under one example, the City would purchase the collateral materials and the builder would pay for targeted zip code lists and covers mailing costs.

Rainmaker's final recommended strategy for the Targeted Launch is producing a promotional lifestyles magazine for use in office lobbies, professional offices, and school administrative areas. These magazines communicate city events, highlights city businesses, and features related to living in Farmers Branch. Of the recommendations for the "Targeted Launch," the promotional magazine would require the most extensive planning, coordination, and evaluation of cost.

#### *Phase Two:*

##### *Brand Building*

The second phase of the marketing and branding strategy is a longer-term plan that will include extended planning and coordination by staff. Brand building includes a mass marketing approach to build long-standing brand awareness and desired perceptions of Farmers Branch to the general public. These recommendations typically are higher dollar efforts than those identified in the Targeted Launch phase. The Brand Building strategy assumes that a consistent logo and message have been identified and have been in use for the Targeted Launch effort to lay the groundwork for the larger scale branding effort recommended below.

Initially, Rainmaker recommends that the City coordinate a media relations campaign that focuses on two goals: 1) gaining recognition in publications that rank cities under various positive criteria, such as safety, and 2) pitching success stories regarding first-ring suburb revitalization.

Second, brand advertising, based on cost-benefit analysis, could be used to convey the message to a wider audience. This could include expensive media such as television, radio, newspaper, and general interest magazine ads and as well as less expensive options such as billboards, KERA sponsorship, hotel weather channel sponsorship, cable show advertising ("Hot on Homes" for example).

Finally, Rainmaker recommends that one option for gaining favorable media coverage is to host public relations events such as bicycle tours, runs, a Brookhaven Tennis event or "Extreme Makeover" type event.

The BRTF concurred with the strategies presented by Rainmaker regarding the long-term marketing and branding effort. The full Rainmaker report is included as Appendix D.



## **RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No. 4: Implement a New Home Incentive Program**

The Branch Crossing Neighborhood Renaissance Program provided a blueprint of how a neighborhood redevelopment project could succeed. The momentum generated during the first years of the Renaissance Program, 1998-2000, was enough to produce twenty-two new homes from the eight original lots purchased by the City. The property values have increased at a pace that has exceeded the growth for the City as a whole, and code enforcement efforts in the neighborhood have produced positive results.

Six years removed from the launch of Branch Crossing, the real estate professionals on BRTF emphasize a need to address three issues that affect the success of marketing new homes today in Farmers Branch and specifically in Branch Crossing.

- **Lack of new home inventory.** Prospective homebuyers want to visit areas that have several homes fitting their preferences. Realtors are also drawn to areas that have a lot of product to show. Currently in Branch Crossing, there are only one or two new homes for sale, and citywide, outside of the Courtyards development at Marsh Lane and Valley View Lane, there are very few new single-family home options available to draw a crowd.
- **Lack of sales traffic.** Builders need sales traffic as an incentive to continue building in the neighborhood. The BRTF spent significant time debating the merits of a builder incentive such as cash back for each new home sold. In the end, it was clear that bringing buyers to the area was the greater incentive to the builder. If homebuilders know that buyers are in the area consistently and are buying product, they are more likely to continue to build inventory.
- **Lack of marketing funds.** This issue works hand in hand with generating sales traffic. The homebuilders currently in Branch Crossing are low-volume custom builders rather than the major subdivision builders, and subsequently do not have large advertising budgets. Under this proposal, the City would serve as the lead marketer and coordinate its efforts with appropriate builders.

The goal of the New Home Incentive Program is to encourage new home construction and new home sales in areas of the City where the existing homes do not meet the desires of today's buyer. The initial target audience for this effort is the daytime population-people that work in Farmers Branch or have children in Farmers Branch schools. The program can be implemented in the short term and consists of three separate incentives: 1) Buyer Incentive Program, 2) Real Estate Agent Rewards, and 3) Marketing Assistance. The program addresses each one of the three concerns regarding the "sell-ability" of new home construction in Farmers Branch- inventory, sales traffic, and marketing.

### *Buyer Incentive Program*

Under the recommended Buyer Incentive Program, when a new home is purchased in Farmers Branch, the buyer is eligible for two different types of incentives. The first is a Purchase Grant. Upon close and issuance of a certificate of occupancy for a new home, the buyer would receive cash based on the purchase price of the home. The BRTF

recommends starting the Purchase Grant at 2%. For example, on a typical new home in Branch Crossing sold for \$350,000, the buyer is eligible for cash incentive of \$7,000.

A second incentive the buyer of a new home can receive is complementary services for one year. These services could include:

- Water and sewer service (maximum recommended value of \$2,500)
- WiFi through the City's provider
- Fitness membership for the family at the Recreation Center
- Consultation with the City's horticulturist
- Brookhaven Country Club social membership

#### *Real Estate Agent Rewards Program*

This recommended reward program would provide an additional incentive to realtors to show new homes in Farmers Branch. The City would partner with realtors to receive electronic notices when an appointment to show a new home is made through the electronic booking service that most realtors utilize. When the City received a "notice of show," a reward would automatically be sent to the realtor to say, "Thank you for showing in Farmers Branch!" The rewards could be gift cards for car washes, restaurants, or even vacations/cruises for truly exceptional work. The reward would be mailed in high-end, eye-catching envelopes and delivered via specialty carriers as opposed to regular mail carriers.

Not only does the realtor receive a "Thank You," the City can also include marketing collateral that advertises new programs and incentives for buyers. Providing realtors with additional selling tools for their clients benefits the realtors selling product, the buyers purchasing it, and the homebuilders constructing it. This program also encourages realtors to show Farmers Branch and makes it easier to sell the City.

The BRTF debated the merits of providing a cash incentive to the agent upon sale of a home and decided against this type of incentive, based on ethical and practical reasons.

#### *New Home Marketing Assistance*

The final recommendation to the New Home Buyer Program is marketing assistance to market new homes currently for sale. The low-volume custom homebuilders will benefit the most from this incentive. The City would spearhead the marketing effort and coordinate with homebuilders to generate sales traffic in the City. The type of advertising and marketing has not yet been determined.

The BRTF and Rainmaker evaluated past efforts at marketing new homes in Branch Crossing to determine if a similar effort may work to market and promote the recommended home programs. The initial marketing effort included a two-phased approach. First, a marketing consultant developed an initial marketing study, similar to what Rainmaker presented to the BRTF. This phase resulted in the production of the Branch Crossing promotional brochures and handouts and public display that is still used today in the lobby of City Hall. The BRTF and Rainmaker liked the message conveyed by the Branch Crossing brochure that uses the tagline, "This is Living," and

recommended continued utilization of that message. The second phase consisted of developing newspaper ads for the open house events and placement of ads in other media, such a home magazines.

## **RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No. 5: Implement a Home Renovation Program**

There have been fifty-two new homes constructed in Farmers Branch since 2001. However, in a community that has approximately 8,000 single-family homes, focusing on improving the existing housing stock is essential to improving the condition of the City's neighborhoods. The City has a limited number of residential lots available for new construction, and the City wishes to encourage the redevelopment of neighborhoods and development of a neighborhood pride effort. A majority of the single-family properties in the City are in excess of forty years old and are in need of updating to meet the current interests of persons in the market for new homes. Developing a strategy to encourage new product development and to encourage the redevelopment of existing homes is essential for the economic success and prosperity of the City. Implementing programs designed to improve single-family homes and quality of neighborhoods will position the city for sustained success at attracting homebuyers and retail outlets.

The "Bungalow Bind" article (Appendix B), discussed earlier in the Introduction, provided a stimulus for BRTF discussion of how to improve the City's existing homes. The small size of the homes in the City is undesirable to today's buyers with families, which demand a more spacious home with different amenities than were offered to homebuyers in the 1950's. However, BRTF members recognize that in some areas of the Metroplex, homebuyers are paying a premium for small homes situated in desirable locations. The key in these areas was modernizing these homes to appeal to different buyers. Some of these buyers may be Baby Boomers looking to downsize, single professionals, young families, or empty nesters. By improving and modernizing the interior of the home, even small homes can become a desirable product. These two dynamics provided the impetus for the recommended home renovation strategy.

The BRTF recommends implementing a two-tiered home renovation program that encourages homeowners to improve the appearance and value of their homes, and thereby the neighborhood. The first tier rewards homeowners that invest substantial capital into major renovations that increase the home value. In addition to the major renovations, the BRTF recommends a second tier that rewards homeowners for making smaller cosmetic improvements to the exterior of their home. In order for a homeowner to claim a reward, the property must be in good standing with code enforcement. This strategy can be implemented in the short term.

### *Major Remodel Program*

The goal of the Major Remodel Program is to encourage significant capital investment in home renovations that improve the value of the home. In order to qualify for this incentive, the homeowner must complete renovations with a minimum permit value of \$50,000. The homeowner must obtain a permit from Community Services, even though the fee for the permit is significantly reduced for these renovations. In most cases, the beneficiary of the incentive will be the homeowner. However, for instances where an investor has purchased the home and completed the renovations, the investor would be

eligible for the incentive. The incentive would not be granted until completion of the project and verification by the City inspector.

The incentive amount for major remodels is proposed to be a percentage of the permit value, in addition to waiving 50% of the permit fee. The BRTF recommends 2% cash incentive for improvements between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Once the value of an improvement exceeds \$100,000, the homeowner is eligible for all the complementary services outlined in the New Home Incentive Program in addition to the 2% cash incentive. The chart below is an example of the 2% incentive based on various levels of improvements.

Permit Value	Incentive Amount
\$ 50,000	\$ 1,000
\$ 100,000	\$ 2,000
\$ 150,000	\$ 3,000
\$ 200,000	\$ 4,000
\$ 250,000	\$ 5,000
\$ 300,000	\$ 6,000
\$ 350,000	\$ 7,000
\$ 400,000	\$ 8,000

Additionally, the BRTF recommends including a landscape allowance for qualifying home renovations to further enhance the curb appeal. By co-opting with a local architecture school, the City could compile a booklet of landscape and architectural designs for different budgets and lot sizes. The layouts could be placed on-line in the "Home" section of the website as well. The layout information could be available to all residents, but the landscape allowance would be awarded to those homeowners qualifying for major home renovation incentives.

There are some exemptions to this program that the BRTF recommends. Storage buildings and workshops would not be eligible for the incentives. BRTF recommends that swimming pools, cabanas, and other amenities that create an outdoor living area be eligible for incentives.

#### *External Envelope Program*

The BRTF recognized that not all homeowners desire or have the resources to devote large percentages of their total existing home value on renovations. With this in mind, the External Envelope Program was conceived, which rewards homeowners for smaller dollar, smaller scale improvements to the exterior of their home. In many cases, simple repairs can make a huge difference in the drive-up appeal of a home. Moreover, these types of improvements can be contagious and can motivate surrounding homes to initiate improvements as well. The BRTF plans for this program to be able to encourage all residents to fix up their properties, thereby creating a method to address all of the housing stock in the City.

Once a homeowner completes an improvement, receipts would be submitted to the City. A City building inspector would confirm the renovations and value, the incentive would be paid to the homeowner. An additional incentive could be placed on certain material upgrades of improvements, such as using steel poles for new fencing instead of wooden posts and using Hardiboard or other non-wood materials instead of wood siding. In addition, based on a menu of potential improvements, a homeowner could increase the incentive by increasing the number of improvements completed within a given period. The menu of improvements could include items such as:

- Replacement of entire soffit or fascia with cementitious material (Hardiboard)
- Re-shingle/replace roof with 30-year shingles.
- Replace siding with cementitious material (Hardiboard or equivalent)
- Replace or repair >50% of driveway with concrete to city specifications.
- Replace windows with energy efficient windows
- Replace fence to city specifications that include steel posts and cedar or treated wood fence pickets and rails
- Replace doors (including garage doors)
- Replace patio cover with an architecturally compatible patio cover
- Replace carport with an architecturally compatible carport
- Construct an addition.
- Construct a new garage
- Construct a new front porch

For many of these improvements, the BRTF recommends that the City determine minimums in order to qualify for a reward under this program. For example, how many windows should be replaced in order to qualify for a reward? What percentage of the fence must be replaced or rebuilt in order to qualify?

The types of rewards could include a number of different items, such as:

- Gift cards
  - Furniture (partnership opportunity with the North Dallas Design District)
  - Turner Hardware or another home improvement store
  - Restaurants
- Refund of any permit fees (if required)
- Cash rebates

**RECOMMENDED STRATEGY No. 6:  
Pursue Infrastructure and Streetscape Improvements**

In addition to improving the aesthetic appeal of the homes in Farmers Branch, streetscape and landscape improvements would also enhance the drive by appeal while at the same time, creating a sense of "neighborhood." Branch Crossing was chosen as the first redevelopment neighborhood because it possessed many amenities that often define a neighborhood and create added value, such as nearby parks/ playgrounds, tennis courts, walking/biking paths, and the creek. To create a sense of "neighborhood" in residential areas without these features, other amenities must be utilized. Bridge enhancements, arches, and other hardscape structures provide distinctive gateways into neighborhoods, outline geographic boundaries of specific neighborhoods, and create a sense of pride within a particular neighborhood. Examples might be improvements to the roadway and medians along Valwood Parkway from I-35 to Josey Lane, landscaping along Marsh Lane and Webb Chapel Road, and street and landscape improvements along Tom Field Road.

The BRTF identified many streetscape improvements for neighborhoods around the City. They include:

- Landscaping (color beds, ground cover, trees, hanging baskets, and shrubbery)
- Hardscape improvements such as utility box/transformer appearance modifications (screening that is compatible with other hardscape choices in a particular neighborhood)
- Entryway monuments
- Benches
- Boulevard banners
- Bridge enhancements (at Valley View Lane and Rawhide Creek and at Josey Lane and Rawhide Creek)
- Signage enhancements
  - Traffic signs/poles
  - Sign toppers, such as those found in "distinctive" neighborhoods of the Metroplex
- Screening Walls

## Other Program Ideas

In addition to the formally recommended programs identified in this report, the BRTF explored several additional creative ideas for addressing the issues of existing home renovation and potential financing partnerships. The ideas have not been completely developed and are not presented for implementation as part of this report. However, the BRTF believes the ideas have merit and recommends that the City continue to explore their feasibility, as they may provide the basis for other program ideas.

### *Home Renovation Ideas for Further Evaluation:*

- **Creation of model homes for open house event.** In this program, the City would choose several builders that would build one new home and renovate another. At the conclusion of work, all of the homes would be available for open house events for a determined period of time. The City would provide incentives to the builders in the form of carrying the interest cost for the period during which open house events are conducted (six months, for example). By partnering with the North Dallas Design District (NDDD), the homes could be furnished for the open house events and provide some additional advertising for the NDDD.
- **City Re-Model Plan.** In this plan, the City would purchase several highly visible lots and renovate the homes. These homes would be used as an example of what could be done in specific neighborhoods that have limited space for additional square footage or landscaping. The BRTF cited that seeing tangible examples of home renovation was an important factor in generating momentum and enthusiasm within a neighborhood.
- **Virtual Tours:** This proposal could work in concert with some of the other proposed plans. By taking before and after "virtual tours" of homes renovated, it can provide ideas for homeowners considering doing a renovation themselves. This could also have a link on the "Home" section of the website.

### *Financing Ideas for Further Discussion:*

- **Low interest loans through participating lenders**
- **Negotiating vendor discounts**
- **Fannie Mae programs**



## **SUMMARIZE RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMELINE**

### **Prioritization**

The following lists summarize the recommendations of the BRTF and provide a prioritization for when projects could be implemented.

Recommendations that can be implemented within the next 120 days:

- 1) Design and install banners along major thoroughfares to advertise the new programs and begin process of creating a "brand"
- 2) Develop specific program guidelines for the New Home Buyer Program and Home Renovation Program
- 3) Implement New Home Buyer Program and Home Renovation Program
- 4) Begin renovating the City website
- 5) Begin assessment of how the Marketing Plan should be implemented
- 6) Choose consulting firm for Four Corner Vision Development and Analysis and award contract
- 7) Preliminary engineering for town home project in Station Area

Action items that have a mid-term implementation schedule:

- 1) Town home project construction
- 2) Begin implementation of chosen "Targeted Launch" marketing strategies
- 3) Begin consideration of potential infrastructure/streetscape improvements, as outlined in Recommendation No. 6
- 4) Periodic evaluation of the home programs
- 5) Continue DART Station Area strategy
- 6) Complete Four Corners Vision/Master Plan

Action items that have a long-term implementation schedule:

1. Brand building and continued marketing efforts
2. Implementation of Four Corners Vision Plan
3. Coordination of activities in the areas connecting the DART Station Area, Four Corners, and the Valwood/Joey retail areas
4. Continue DART Station Area strategy
5. Complete comprehensive plan update of central area of the City

## Financing

Based on the current configuration of the capital budget, adequate funds are available now to pursue many of the programs identified in this report. The 2006-07 budget has allocated General Fund and Water and Sewer Fund monies for redevelopment. However, the outlay amount available today is not a recurring revenue source for revitalization. The budget presented in the report can provide information that the Council may use in future budget years to determine what level of funding is required based on the programs in place at the time.

The costs presented below are estimates based on staff approximations of how many homes may qualify for incentives in a given year. These estimates may increase or decrease based on actual submissions for incentives and the success of the programs. In addition, the estimates do not reflect changes that may be proposed by the Council regarding the programs as recommended by the BRTF.

Annual Cost of Home Programs: \$255,000

- New Home Buyer Program Incentives: \$140,000 (based on 10 homes sold per year)
- Home Renovation Program Incentives: \$115,000 (based on between 7 & 35 qualifying major remodel homes and 90 qualifying renovations at \$500 per home)

Annual Marketing & Branding: To fully implement the strategy as outlined by Rainmaker, which is beyond what was recommended by the BRTF, the budget could easily exceed \$300,000 or \$350,000 annually and would require the assistance of an outside marketing firm. The final expenditure amount will depend on how much of the Marketing Strategy the Council would like to pursue. The BRTF is recommending a marketing budget of approximately \$200,000 to produce marketing collateral that will promote the home programs and be distributed to target groups within the City and assist in branding the City.

Additional Marketing Staff: \$70,000-\$85,000 (includes benefits)

Total annual cost for Home Program Incentives, Marketing Strategy Implementation, and Additional Staff: Between \$525,00 and \$540,000

## Conclusion

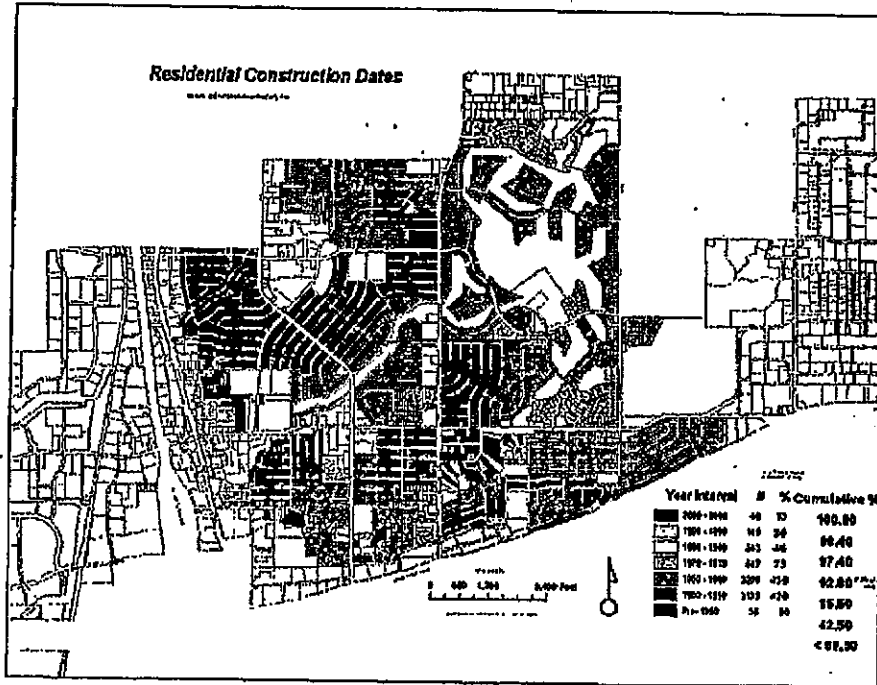
This report to the City Council details the ideas brought forth by the BRTF. The BRTF does not recommend pursuing each and every item presented in this report at this time. Instead, the BRTF focused recommendations on ideas that will be the most effective in terms of achieving stated goals and financial considerations. Some recommendations will require additional evaluation on financing and implementation logistics. All programs will need to be evaluated continually to determine effectiveness and the need for modification.

The DART Station development and the Four Corners vision/master plan development will be critical elements of the retail and commercial revitalization in the City's core. The Home Programs are designed to provide the basis for improving the "rooftops" surrounding these two retail hubs along the Valley View Lane corridor, as well as throughout the City. The Marketing Plan is designed provide the City with a consistent identity, logo, and message that can be used to enhance the perception of Farmers Branch among potential homebuyers, its residents, and others outside Farmers Branch. The infrastructure and streetscape improvements are intended to create visual cues that shape, frame, and identify various neighborhoods within the City. These improvements are also aimed at improving the overall aesthetics of the structures within neighborhoods to create a consistent look.

Since the inception of the BRTF, members have been diligent in their attendance, enthusiasm, and generation of ideas. The members spent many hours deliberating issues and their dedication and insights have resulted in six quality, inter-related recommendations that have elements that can be started immediately.

The BRTF would like to extend their gratitude to the City Council for providing the opportunity to be involved in the process of shaping the future of the community. In addition, the BRTF would also like to extend their appreciation for the assistance received from City staff in generating the report and supporting the BRTF throughout the process.

**APPENDIX A**  
**Age of Homes Map**



**APPENDIX B**  
**Bungalow Bind Article**



From Governing's  
June 2006 issue

**ASSESSMENTS  
ALAN EHRENHALT**

**The Bungalow Bind**

Middle-aged suburbs with a disproportionate number of houses from the 1950s and '60s are in trouble.

**N**orthwest of Richmond, Virginia, in the generally comfortable confines of suburban Henrico County, there's a 15-mile residential corridor along Interstate-64 that posted discouraging numbers in the 2000 Census. Without much warning, it had become economically stagnant. The area had been comparatively prosperous in previous decades, but by 2000, the median family income in this part of the county had shrunk to less than 70 percent of the average for Henrico as a whole.

Those numbers were intriguing to William Lucy and David Phillips, a pair of urban planning professors at the University of Virginia. The easy explanations were all just a bit too easy. The area borders on Richmond's city limits, but its problems didn't seem to be a case of poverty spreading outward from the city, because Richmond itself had actually fared better in the 1990s than in previous decades. It wasn't a simple matter of the housing getting too old, because nearby areas with much older houses had seen their income go up significantly.

Age was part of the answer, though. The more time Lucy and Phillips spent with the numbers, the more one fact stared out at them: The neighborhoods that were having the most trouble were those in which the houses were built during a particular period -- the 1950s and '60s.

As they pored over Census data from other parts of the country, the two scholars found that a similar pattern had developed in dozens of metropolitan areas. Some suburbs were getting richer, and some were getting poorer. But the ones losing ground the fastest had a common characteristic: middle age. They were composed largely of homes built after World War II but before 1980.

By the time they had finished their research, Lucy and Phillips had studied a total of 2,566 suburban communities in every region of the United States. All they needed to know was the decade in which most of the houses were built, and they could pretty much predict what had been happening to income.

Among the newest suburbs -- defined as those with at least 2.5 times as many 1990s houses as the metropolitan average -- 78 percent gained in median family income over the metropolitan average in the 2000 Census. Among suburbs specializing in pre-war houses -- again using the same definition -- 65 percent were outpacing their metro areas in income.



<http://www.governing.com/articles/assess.htm>

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growth. The middle-aged suburbs, those with a disproportionate number of houses from the '50s and '60s, were invariably the weak performers. About 70 percent of them lost relative ground in median family income during the 1990s.

As in Richmond, this was not a simple matter of geography. In general, it was true that many of the struggling middle-aged suburbs were close to a central city. But the correlation was weak. In the Chicago area, Lucy and Phillips found suburbs as far as 40 miles out that had plummeted in relative family income during the 1990s. And they found others right on the border of the city that were thriving. The one factor that seemed to explain it all was middle age. Suburbs born in the '50s or '60s were all but certain to be in trouble in the opening decade of the new century.

**W**hy was that? Well, as they looked at middle-aged suburbs across the nation, Lucy and Phillips found a variety of problems. The schools weren't particularly good; The commercial districts, dominated by aging strip malls with vacant storefronts, were unappealing. But these were almost certainly symptoms of decline, not causes. The real issue was something remarkably simple and easy to measure: the size of the houses themselves.

In 1950, the average size of a new home built in America was a little more than 1,100 square feet. In some of the suburbs sprouting up on farmland just beyond the big cities, it was even smaller. The first houses in Levittown, on Long Island, all built in 1950, had an average size of less than 800 square feet.

Those numbers changed relatively slowly over the next couple of decades. Throughout the 1970s, the average size for new homes was still just 1,375 feet. But then it began to take off. In the 1990s, it passed the 2,000-square-foot milestone. By 2002, it was up to 2,114.

The American middle class simply wants more space. And the suburban landscape is burdened with a huge supply of undersized, middle-aged houses that don't match the lifestyle choices of families in the 21st century. As Lucy and Phillips say in their new book, *Tomorrow's Cities, Tomorrow's Suburbs*, "The more extensive these small-house areas, the more at risk these neighborhoods were to deterioration."

The newest suburbs are attractive right now because the big homes being built there match current living choices. And at the other end of the spectrum, the older, pre-war suburbs hold up reasonably well in the 1990s because the homes in those places, for all their creaks and repair problems, are significantly roomier than those of the '50s and '60s.

So house size turns out to be the primary driver of the middle-aged suburban syndrome. From it flow most of the other consequences: first, population decline, then loss of retail business, weakened public schools, even crime. Lucy and Phillips put it rather succinctly: "Everything is worn — houses, schools, streets and commercial districts. Many residents experience these conditions and leave. Many prospective residents anticipate them getting worse and they don't buy."

**W**hat are middle-aged suburbs supposed to do? How do they go about reinventing themselves?

Well, there's one obvious way. If the houses are too small, you can make them bigger. Almost any 1,200-square-foot house from the 1950s in any suburb in America can be doubled in size with some ingenuity and a sufficient investment of funds. Expanding a middle-aged house isn't cheap, but it's almost always less expensive than buying a new one. Many of the middle-aged suburbs are geographically well-situated, close to jobs and central



city commerce and more attractive from a commuting standpoint than the distant newer ones. If enough two-bedroom bungalows could be turned into two-story houses with four bedrooms, plenty of suburbs that stagnated in the 1990s could come to life again.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Financing can be hard to obtain for expansion of a small house in an aging suburb; sometimes, even home-equity loans don't cover the full cost of the job. It isn't always easy to find a contractor for a project of that sort. Then there's the problem of moving out while the work is being done. Families add those things up and decide it's just less of a hassle to move into a new subdivision on the edge of the metropolitan area.

Beyond those concerns, though, there's a tipping point issue. No homeowner in a neighborhood of 1990s bungalows relishes being the first one to lift the roof and create a fancy new house. If nobody else does it, the neighborhood won't improve, property values won't go up and the investment will have been a waste of money. In order to regain their youthful attractiveness, middle-aged suburbs need momentum. And momentum can be difficult to generate.

It's especially difficult when the local government doesn't appreciate the problem — or refuses to face it. While most struggling middle-aged suburbs understand that they need help, the leaders tend to focus on improving the schools and keeping the retail businesses that generate tax revenue. Not too many of them seem to realize that they have a small-house problem, and that if this could be addressed and middle-class residents induced to move there, the other problems might gradually take care of themselves.

It's easier said than done, of course. But as they looked around the country, Lucy and Phillips found several creative efforts to deal with the small-house problem and the accompanying signs of middle-aged suburban decay.

Some of them are modest and simple, such as distributing guidebooks to show homeowners exactly what they need to do to turn a small house into a bigger one. Some local governments offer lists of contractors and lenders willing to take them on. Others have waived the standard permit fees for the house expansions they particularly want to encourage.

In the Kansas City area, the metropolitan regional council publishes what it calls the First Suburbs Coalition Idea Book, with design ideas for renovation of almost every common middle-aged suburban house, along with practical lending advice. Chicago has its "bungalow initiative," through which small-house owners are given free permit assistance, discounts from vendors, as well as financing assistance.

None of these programs are guaranteed solutions for any middle-aged neighborhood that has begun to decline. But compared to resuscitating a school system or reviving a retail district, they hold out at least the prospect of tangible benefit at modest expense. One thing, at least, is certain: Very few American families who have options will be interested in buying Levittown-size houses in the coming decades. That leaves thousands of middle-aged suburbs with little choice but to redesign themselves if they are going to survive and prosper.

Jack Pardue Illustration

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**APPENDIX C**  
**FOUR CORNERS REPORT**

**THE FOUR CORNERS  
RETAIL CENTERS  
AT VALLEY VIEW LANE & JOSEY LANE**

**- Preliminary Findings and Possible Strategies -  
December 2004**

**Introduction**

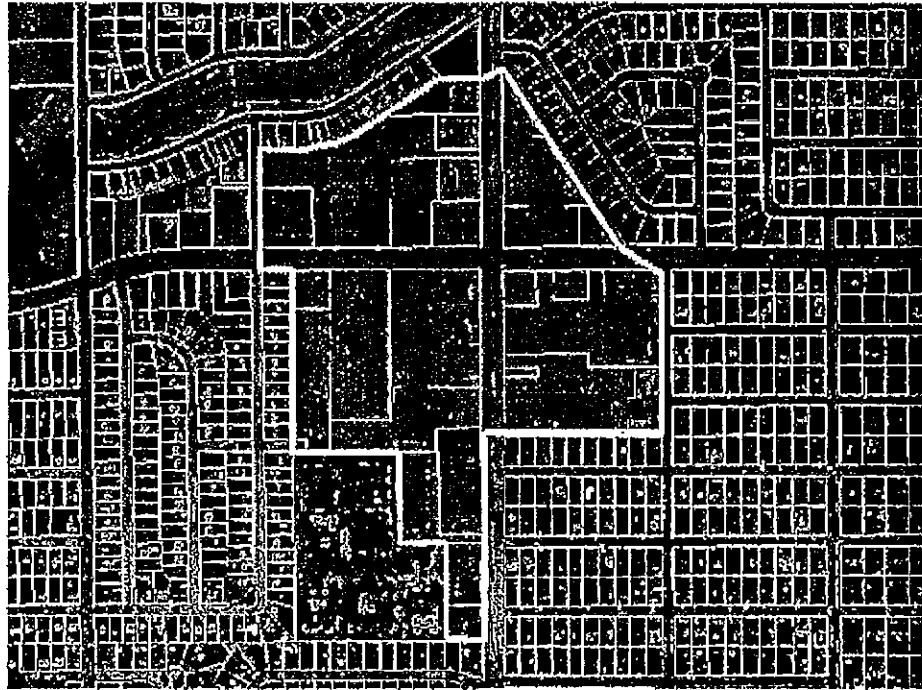
The four shopping centers located around the intersection of Valley View Lane and Josey Lane, referred to in this report as the "Four Corners," have long served the City of Farmers Branch as one of the community's principal retail neighborhoods. Almost ninety percent of the retail businesses present today in the four shopping centers occupy buildings that were constructed more than thirty years ago.

This report provides an overview of the physical and economic health of the retail centers comprising the Four Corners. Based on the information collected related to these properties, possible strategies are proposed to stimulate reinvestment and revitalization of the centers.

**Study Area**

The area addressed by this report includes the retail centers situated at the four corners of the intersection of Josey Lane and Valley View Lane and which are generally bounded by Wilmington Drive to the west; Golfing Green Drive to the north; Veronica Road to the east; and Escada Drive to the south. This area includes approximately forty-eight (48) acres and is more precisely illustrated in *Figure 1*.

The existing buildings in this geographic area contain approximately 384,300 square feet of gross floor area. A survey of the properties in October 2004 revealed that the Four Corners combined enjoy a very good occupancy rate of about ninety-two percent (92%).



*Figure 1. The Four Corners Study Area.*

### **Historical Efforts**

Over the past twenty years, multiple efforts have been undertaken that attempted to define issues, establish goals and offer recommendations to address retail concerns in Farmers Branch and specifically this area. Key elements of those efforts are summarized below.

#### **Forward Farmers Branch Goals, 1984**

In 1984 the City sponsored an effort to survey all Farmers Branch households and businesses in order to establish goals and priorities based on broad public input within the community. The survey and resulting report focused on eight general themes of community interest. Within the Business and Economic Development component of the report the need to focus attention on infusing vitality into the City's retail centers was acknowledged. Key objectives related to:

- Developing a marketing program for restaurants and hotels
- Maintaining modern, well-kept retail centers offering a wide variety of merchandise
- Establishing a farmers market
- Promoting alcohol sales in restaurants and retail stores

### **Farmers Branch Comprehensive Plan, 1989**

The City's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in April 1989, offered several recommendations aimed at sustaining retail throughout the city. Recommendations aimed at achieving this goal included:

- Conduct an in-depth retail study
- Expand Economic Development strategy to include retail
- Maintain the quality of the city's housing stock
- Upgrade the appearance and identity of retail centers

### **Retail Analysis of the Josey Lane Corridor, 1992**

During the summer of 1992, the University of Dallas Graduate School of Management conducted a study intended to serve as a guide to the creation of a long-term strategic plan for the revitalization and retention of retail businesses located along the Josey Lane corridor, including the Four Corners. Key findings and recommendations of this study related to:

- Improving marketing image
- Creation of a merchants association
- Special promotions & events
- Landscaping improvements
- Establishment of special sign regulations
- Capital financing and incentives for reinvestment
- Relaxing alcohol sales restrictions in restaurants

### ***Regulatory Actions***

In response to the Forward Farmers Branch findings, the guidelines and recommendations set forth in the Comprehensive Plan and those identified in the University of Dallas Study, the City initiated several regulatory efforts intended to assist the retail centers at the Four Corners including:

- Retail sign amendments
- Allowing outdoor merchandise display
- Allowing alcohol sales
- Restricting the sale of used merchandise
- Eliminating Specific Use Permit requirements for restaurants

### **Promotions, Special Events & Other Actions**

The City sponsored and coordinated a variety of special promotions and events with the Chamber of Commerce and retail merchants through much of the 1990s to elevate the profile of the four corners shopping centers, attract customers, and

stimulate activity. These efforts included events such as holiday promotions (e.g., Christmas), seasonal events (e.g., Spring Fling), carnivals, auto shows, and local media personality appearances (e.g., Neil Sperry). Although many of these events and promotions were well attended by the public, the merchants involved did not reap sales increases that warranted their continued participation. Primarily for this reason, the interest in and frequency of such events abated.

City staff worked closely with the Greater Dallas Restaurant Association to craft alcohol sales regulations that work well for restaurants and to market the area as a restaurant location (the Nuevo Leon restaurant was a direct result of this effort).

Additionally, the City removed landscaping in proximity to the intersection that obstructed the view of retail businesses and replaced it with landscaping more complementary (in material and design) to a retail environment. Enhanced pavement treatments were also installed at the intersection crosswalks. Reconstruction of Josey Lane not only improved the driving surface and general appearance of the area, traffic flow was also improved through the addition of extra turn lanes at the intersection.

#### **Retail Sustainability**

There are a number of factors that affect the on-going vitality of retail centers. Some of these factors can be influenced by City actions (e.g., regulations and incentives), some principally require substantial involvement of the landlords and merchants (e.g., capital reinvestment and creation of strong associations) and some simply cannot be controlled or influenced by the City nor any of the local stakeholders (e.g., external market forces and competing markets). This section highlights some of the most significant challenges Farmers Branch must keep in mind if an effective strategic plan is to be developed to arrest decline of the shopping centers and stimulate reinvestment in the area.

#### **External Competition**

Market opportunities are limited in part due to competition from other suburban communities. Outer-ring suburbs such as Frisco, Coppell, Lewisville, and to a lesser extent, Carrollton have the advantage of abundant available land for commercial and residential construction, which contribute to an increasing tax base due to a growing population and its attendant demand for goods and services. These cities are more attractive to retailers because they offer a purchasing constituency with higher numbers both in potential customers and their incomes. Many of these outer ring suburbs are also better equipped to offer financial incentives through 4A and 4B economic development programs that are not available to Farmers Branch.

#### **Current Retail Environment**

In 2002 the cities of Carrollton, Plano, and Richardson collectively retained professional assistance to study more than 150 underperforming and vacant retail centers in their communities. As reported in this joint study, the retail environment responds to changes in consumer behavior, which is shaped by demographic composition, technological

advancement and expanding shopping choices. The retail environment influencing development in those three cities and other inner ring suburbs like Farmers Branch, is consistent with the national and regional trends prompting changes in store formats and an increased emphasis on place-making and ethnic marketing.

Store formats in all retail categories are changing to embrace a smaller, more specialized market in order to better respond to changing consumer preferences and reduce development risk (e.g., urban-style grocery stores). Multi-branding and cross branding are becoming more commonplace as retailers endeavor to create synergy and reduce costs by sharing facilities (e.g., Starbucks/Barnes and Noble).

Urban forms emphasizing smaller stores, multi-story buildings with structured parking, street front appeal and connectivity are gaining in interest among retailers. Revitalized downtowns are serving as prototypes for suburbs where public-private partnerships are working to create places based on the main street model of mixed uses, convenience and efficiency.

Big box retailers have also left their mark on many communities. Big boxes have siphoned off customers local retail merchants formerly could rely upon and, in some communities, left behind large-scale, vacant buildings that contribute to commercial decline. However, compatible alternative uses such as civic uses and athletic clubs are now emerging to occupy formerly vacant big box retail stores.

Retailers are also responding to demographic change by increasingly marketing to growing ethnic populations, which in turn is giving rise to shopping centers devoted exclusively to ethnic populations, especially Hispanic, African American, and Asian populations.

#### **Local Demographic Change**

The aggregate population of Farmers Branch has remained virtually the same for the past thirty years or so (i.e., 27,492 in 1970 vs. 27,508 in 2000); however, the demographic mix has changed significantly. In short, the City's population has grown older and more racially and ethnically diverse. The City's Hispanic population increased from about 5 percent to 37 percent between 1970 and 2000 and continues to grow at a rate exceeding all other ethnic and racial populations in the City. The percentage of the City's population comprised of "races other than white" increased from about 1 percent to 21.6 percent during that same period. This segment of the City's population is continuing to grow. Additionally, since 1970 the City's median age has increased from 25 years to 37.4 years and is still rising.

A peculiar paradox has also emerged over the past thirty-plus years; education levels have increased but income has fallen slightly. When adjusted for inflation, the median income level for Farmers Branch households dropped by about three percent (3%) between 1970 and 2000. However, during this same period, the educational attainment of individuals aged twenty-five years and older increased significantly. In 1970 less than

seventy percent of these individuals had high school diplomas or some higher education. In 2000 the percentage had increased to seventy-six percent (76%). Education and income are demographic characteristics that usually track each other in a directly proportionate manner, that is, as education levels rise, income levels rise.

Change being experienced by a community will directly affect the retail services offered in that community. As the population of the market being served by retail centers diversifies, the goods and services demanded by the market logically follows suit. If the market area does not continue to remain economically robust, the retail services being provided to that market will undergo change to reflect the income level and needs of the market. The transition of goods and services offered in the centers at the Four Corners are reflecting the changing make-up of their primary market area; the increasing number of ethnic-oriented businesses and discount merchandise being offered by multiple retailers reflect the ethnic community and household incomes in Farmers Branch.

#### *Local Physical Constraints*

Poor Visibility: The visibility of retail spaces on three of the four corners is significantly limited due to a variety of factors. In the northwest and southwest quadrants, entire buildings are effectively screened from view of Valley View Lane and Josey Lane because other retail or office buildings are situated directly between them and the streets. On the southeast corner, an extremely large setback from Josey Lane greatly diminishes the presence of the center's anchor building (the former Albertsons supermarket). The length and orientation of the primary multi-tenant building in this center, situated perpendicular to Josey Lane, likewise renders those businesses located near its east end virtually unseen from the street. The shopping center on the northeast corner is the only one that does not suffer from poor visibility.

It is no coincidence that more recent development in the area has occurred on the most highly visible sites, including McDonalds (1994) and Walgreens (2000) on the northwest and northeast corners, respectively.

Commercial Voids: Three of the four corners (the northeast corner being the exception) contain large areas of underutilized space in the form of surface parking lots. The arrangement of the building storefronts around expansive surface parking lots creates large voids that compromise the centers' visual continuity, aesthetic appeal and even customer comfort and convenience. Certainly adequate parking must be provided for all businesses in these centers, but it is apparent that the amount of parking provided far exceeds present demand, even though the composite occupancy rate for the Four Corners is ninety-two percent (92%). These underutilized parking lots offer opportunities for new development or amenities.

Including one essentially vacant lot, there appear to be at least seven (7) "voids" that offer good potential for a higher and better use in the Four Corners area. These voids are graphically identified in *Figure 2* and include:



- The former car wash property on the west side of Josey Lane, north of McDonald's (approximately 0.8 acre)
- The parking lot and vacant parcel east of the former Hope Chapel/movie theater, "behind" Kwik Kar (approximately 1.1 acre)
- The adjoining parking lots in front of Big Lots! and Auto Zone (approximately 0.8 acres) on the north side of Valley View Lane
- The parking lot south of Valley View Lane, north of the Chase Bank drive-thru and adjacent to the single family lots fronting Wilmington Drive (approximately 1.2 acre)
- The parking lot situated south of the Salvation Army store, west of Turner Hardware (approximately 0.6 acre)
- The parking lot in front of Turner Hardware on the west side of Josey Lane (approximately 0.6 acre), and
- The adjoining parking lots in front of the former Albertsons supermarket on the east side of Josey Lane (approximately 1.4 acres)

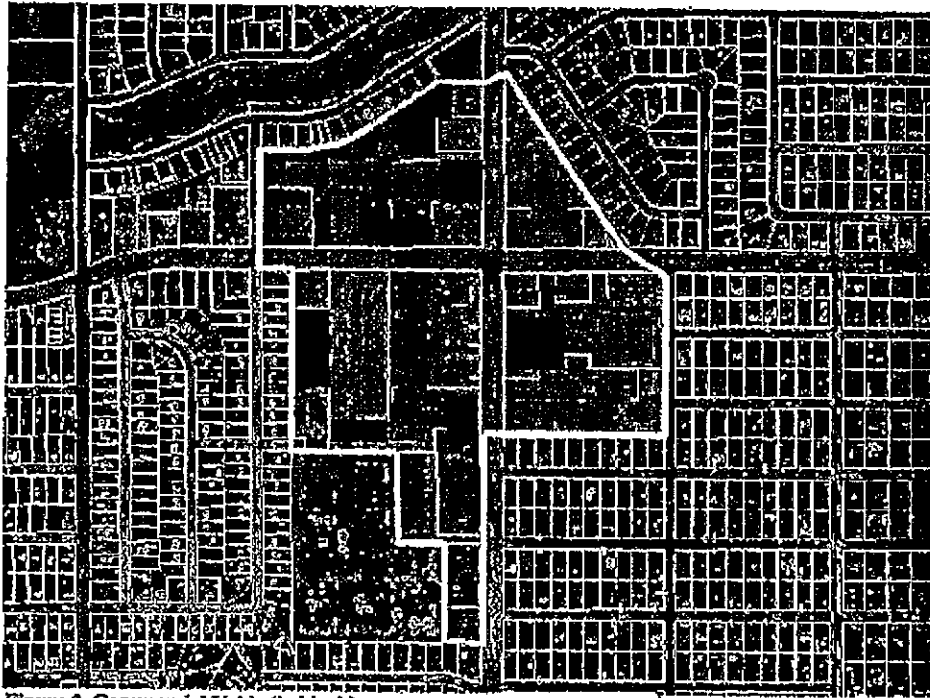


Figure 2. Commercial Voids (in black).

#### Local Operational Constraints

There are twenty-five (25) separate entities that own the properties comprising the shopping centers at the Four Corners. There has not been much change in ownership over the past ten years and the owners have not historically worked well together to

market themselves. Neither have the retail tenants in these centers successfully formed any type of associations to promote their businesses or take the lead in coordinating special events to attract customers.

Even though the shopping centers occupying the Four Corners are three decades old, generally "tired" in appearance, and lack amenities, the occupancy rate is a healthy ninety-two percent (92%). Current lease rates are \$8.00 to \$10.00 per square foot on the southwest corner and \$10.00 to \$12.00 on the other three corners (As a comparison, lease rates at MacArthur & LBJ in Irving are upwards of \$22.00 per square foot). Owners of some of the Four Corners properties have indicated they are satisfied with the lease rates they receive and are willing to keep them comparatively low in order to maintain higher occupancy.

### **Implementation Strategies**

The development of an effective retail revitalization strategic plan will require the cooperation of the City government, the citizens of Farmers Branch and the property owners and merchants themselves. An effective strategy must be multi-faceted in its approach and sensitive to market realities and the resources available to the principal stakeholders. It also demands long-term commitment on the part of all parties involved.

The possible strategies described below are approaches that have proven successful in other locations facing challenges similar to those being experienced in Farmers Branch.

#### **Regulatory Options**

Amend existing zoning regulations to consolidate and simplify the seven different zoning districts presently in place. The full scope of a comprehensive re-zoning of the Four Corners might include: parking requirement reductions; setback reductions to allow development closer to the streets; allowing alternative land uses including residential and non-retail uses; allowing mixed uses; sign regulations tailored specifically for shopping centers; and unique landscaping requirements for shopping centers.

Pursue establishment of a Municipal Management District (MMD) for the Four Corners. MMDs are established by the Texas Legislature. Management Districts have the power to levy taxes and assess property owners for a variety of improvements and services. The primary purpose of an MMD is to promote employment, commerce, economic development and public welfare in commercial areas.

Continue to maintain an aggressive code enforcement program to combat physical decline and encourage reinvestment in the centers.

#### **Incentives**

Establish specialized tax abatement and sales tax rebate programs for retailers. Such programs could be used to attract new retailers or retail development to the area and provide an incentive to existing retailers to encourage new construction and renovation.

#### Operational Considerations

Work with the Chamber of Commerce, property owners and merchants to facilitate the formation of an association of retailers. Such an association can coordinate special events; share in advertising and marketing costs; and work together to generally upgrade the centers through unified façade improvements, complementary signage, landscaping and providing amenities.

#### Market Growth Opportunities

Promote new home construction and reinvestment in existing residential properties and neighborhoods that comprise the primary sales market for the shopping centers located at the Four Corners. Branch Crossing is an excellent example of one way the city can play a role in stimulating reinvestment in a neighborhood that will contribute to sustaining retail centers. Likewise, the development of high quality, high density housing in the DART Station Area will contribute to the support of retail at the four corners. The prudent rezoning of low-density residential areas to allow for higher density residential redevelopment or infill housing in other parts of the city also appears to merit further investigation.

The tier of duplex lots fronting Golfing Green Drive present a potential opportunity for residential redevelopment. Redevelopment of this duplex district as higher quality, owner-occupied townhouses would create more housing units with higher income households. The City already owns the vacant, one-acre tract located at the southwest corner of Golfing Green and Josey Lane that could help "seed" the redevelopment process.

There are forty-two duplex units (i.e., twenty-one, two-unit structures) located along Golfing Green between Tom Field and Josey Lane. At present, thirty-six (86%) of these units are believed to be renter-occupied. Appraised values range between \$85,000 and \$112,000 for individual units. The number of units could be more than doubled, perhaps tripled.

#### Development Opportunities

In aggregate, the seven "voids" identified in this report represent approximately six and one-half (6.5) acres of underutilized commercial land potentially available for a higher and better use. These vacant lots and underutilized surface parking areas offer opportunities for expansion of existing businesses, the installation of amenities to enhance the shopping experience and beautify properties, and provide prospective sites for new development, not necessarily retail. Some of these sites could be developed for multi-family or attached single-family housing or some other "non-retail" office, commercial or institutional use.

The City could play a role akin to that of developer, as it did Branch Crossing to directly induce development on available commercial sites. Alternatively, the City could focus on bringing prospective buyers or retailers to individual property owners to otherwise facilitate reinvestment. Regardless of the role the City might select, there are opportunities for reinvestment in these voids that would result in a more sustainable form of development at the Four Corners.

### **Conclusions**

Overall, the Four Corners presently maintains a strong occupancy rate. Ironically, the high occupancy of the centers may be contributing to their stagnation. Evidently, the economic return that tenants are generating for many of the property owners is adequate to essentially sustain the status quo, but not substantial enough to bring about significant reinvestment in physical improvements or significant marketing efforts. A retail strategy is needed that will create opportunities and make it economically attractive for property owners to reinvest in their properties and not remain content to "milk the cash cow".

Other than the former car wash structure located at 13297 Josey Lane, there are no empty buildings. While it is not uncommon to find aging retail centers in other communities that are largely vacant or effectively abandoned, none of the centers at the Four Corners is or has ever been "boarded up". It is reasonable to conclude that the City's historical efforts (i.e., infrastructure improvements, regulatory actions, and promotions) have contributed to the viability of the Four Corners. However, it is equally reasonable to assume that the City must play an active and continuing role if any significant reinvestment in the Four Corners is to occur.

The changes the Four Corners retail centers have experienced since they were built some thirty years ago are not unique to Farmers Branch. Suburban communities throughout the region and nationally are confronted with the very same issues. As retail markets and demographics continue to change, it is imperative that local stakeholders are equipped to respond; that cannot happen without a sound retail strategy that balances community aspirations with market realities and provides for solid partnerships within a dynamic policy framework.

**APPENDIX D**  
**RAINMAKER MARKETING STRATEGY REPORT**

FARMERS BRANCH  
REVITALIZATION TASK FORCE

Marketing Strategy

rainmakeradvertising

October 17, 2006

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## Marketing Strategy: Branching Out

This marketing communications strategy provides a subjective benchmark of Farmers Branch's current status in marketing its Neighborhood Renaissance and redevelopment plans. In addition, the report identifies Reimaker's recommendations for the following elements of a marketing plan:

- > Product Definition
- > Target Markets
- > Messages
- > Communications Plan

Reimaker believes the city's goals are to:

- > Promote a positive image for living in Farmers Branch,
- > Assist in marketing and encouraging residential redevelopment
- > Enhance the city's name recognition and brand.

### Brief Situational Analysis:

Where are we today? The Neighborhood Renaissance Program began in 1977 as part of a city revitalization effort to update 1950s and 1960s original residential areas. City funds were earmarked for parks, streets, infrastructure and redevelopment of city hall. The focus in residential housing redevelopment started in what was later named Branch Crossing, an area east of city hall. All of these initiatives were communicated to selected builders, realtors, residents and inquirers. Most of the marketing was in the form of targeted communications to builders and realtors and then a six-month mass communications program of newspaper advertising, Open-Houses and press releases to the general public.

Today, communications about the Neighborhood Renaissance Program is passive. A web site link is available on the city of Farmers Branch web site, and a brochure packet is available on display and for request. City publications have also updated the residents as needed. Very little marketing is occurring; however, infrastructure improvements and code enforcement is ongoing. Some of the messages are confusing. The city uses the tagline, Exceeding Expectations, for



Internal service purposes. Other marketing pushes have included: City in the Park and Best Place to Live. In addition, there are many logos and identifying icons throughout city communication: a Neighborhood Renaissance icon, Branch Crossing logo, varying business card logos, icons for Economic Development, West Side, Mercer Crossing, etc... The many looks and campaigns seem to confuse the Farmers Branch brand image and name recognition.

#### Product Definition:

What are we selling? By listing what Farmers Branch has to offer in simple terms, then city staff, Task Force representatives, realtors and builders can promote the Neighborhood Renaissance program clearly and consistently. Farmers Branch's goal is to attract and retain people to live in its city. The Task Force needs to agree that these are the following tangible areas and incentives to be promoted:

- > All Residential Opportunities – 10,229 housing units (2000 Census)
  - o New Single Family residences: Branch Crossing, Brookhaven, Park Avenue
  - o Existing, affordable home areas
  - o Urban apartments/own homes
- > Builder Incentives
  - o Discounted lots purchased by the City
  - o Incentive payments with Certificates of Occupancy
  - o Setback requirement reductions for 6-foot lines
  - o Tax rebate/abatements
  - o Development fee reductions
  - o Low interest or bridge loans
  - o Cooperative advertising program
- > Buyer Incentives
  - o Water/sewer service
  - o Family pool/recreation memberships
  - o Wi-Fi Internet
  - o Trees
  - o Brookhaven membership
  - o Percent cash back at closing
  - o Percent mortgage rate buy downs

- o Moving services
- > Renovation Owner Incentives
  - o Interim rental placement
  - o Design services and guidebooks
  - o Home improvement store discounts
  - o Permit fee waivers
- > City Employee Incentives
  - o Special package of buy/renovation incentives designed for the commuting city worker

**Target Markets:**

Who are we trying to reach? It's important to target your communications by specific audiences and customize your messages to gain your desired perception. Rainmaker suggests two tiers of markets to achieve your objectives:

- > Primary Tier
  - Potential Home Buyers
    - o Commuters: private school, corporate and city workers
    - o Area apartment dwellers
    - o Existing residents (most stay/move/return within the city)
    - o Remodel investors (typically architects, designers, property managers)
  - Realtors (20 percent who sell in the higher-priced market)
  - Small, Custom Home Builders
- > Secondary Tier
  - Sales Supporters
    - o City staff
    - o Churches
    - o Professional offices (e.g. dentists, doctors, etc...)
    - o Other high-trait to small businesses
  - Northern Suburb Homeowners
  - Other Partners

- o Brookhaven Country Club
- o C-FB ISD
- o Area Colleges
- o Hotels

**Messages:**

What do we say about Farmers Branch? Currently, the city of Farmers Branch uses several taglines for promoting various initiatives. Internally, the staff reinforces "Exceeding Expectations." In promoting the Neighborhood Renaissance, materials use "This is Home..." and "This is Living." When talking with Task Force members, they remember statements like "City in the Park" and "Best Place to Live." Today, no single positioning statement or tagline comes to mind.

**Primary Differentiator:**

Based on research and discussions, Rainmaker believes Farmers Branch's primary differentiator from other surrounding cities is: *It's Location.*

*Live in Farmers Branch and you get a central DFW location with safe, beautiful surroundings.*

**Sales Messages:**

Repeatable, consistent messages are critical in building a memorable brand. Therefore, Rainmaker recommends that the Task Force agree upon and reiterate the following key messages in all of its marketing communications and the city's communications. The focus of key messages should be "why should someone want to live in Farmers Branch?" In addition to a simplified positioning statement like the one above, here are Rainmaker's recommendations:

- > Close to everything in Dallas
- > Safe environment
- > Beautiful and numerous parks
- > Great city services
- > Access to DART
- > Numerous employment opportunities
- > Low taxes

**Tagline Examples:**

Rainmaker also recommends that Farmers Branch develop a tagline that simplifies the primary differentiator and sales messages into a catchy, easy-to-remember phrase. The tagline should become

Identifiable to Farmers Branch. The overriding theme that has surfaced seems to be the central location of the city; therefore, some examples would be the following:

- > Great Location for Living.
- > Live here and you're home.
- > Location, Location, Location.
- > The Best Living Place.
- > This is Living (currently in your signature piece)

Reinmaker is currently working with the city's Communications Director to develop a theme and theme for its upcoming annual report. These ideas will be presented soon.

#### Communications Plan:

How will we communicate? Reinmaker recommends the Task Force organize marketing communications into three Phases: Buy-In Promotion to sell the approach to City Council and residents; Targeted Launch to target specific markets to reach redevelopment goals; and Brand Building to create an awareness of city attributes.

These Phases and tactics are in order of the priority we recommend when allocating city funds.

##### Phase I: Buy-In Promotion

This phase focuses on gaining approval by the City Council to move forward on Task Force recommendations. In addition, it builds an underlying support with the residents by communicating to them before any targeted launch communications. It also creates excitement and pride in living within Farmers Branch.

##### Tactics for City Council Approval

1. PowerPoint Presentation: This presentation will include all areas the Task Force has been asked to address as well as the finalized marketing strategy.
2. Research/Report Binder: Reinmaker recommends providing any data/facts to support the Task Forces' decisions.

##### Tactics Once Approved

1. Realtor/Corporate Focus Groups: Reinmaker suggests hosting a focus group and lunch at City Hall during a weekday lunch hour to gather research and test the approved marketing strategy. The main purposes are to communicate to key realtors and corporate human resource managers the directions of the city and to gather feedback and suggestions before the launch. The benefits to the participants are a networking lunch, an inside track to the city and an opportunity to

address any issues. This group of area residents and corporations could also be established as an ongoing, informal source of input.

2. **Neighborhood Renaissance Meeting:** Rainmaker recommends hosting another meeting with the Branch Crossing residents to help them form a volunteer neighborhood association and offer them the same courtesy as the focus groups. The Task Force can also learn what the residents feel have been successful and challenging as the neighborhood changes.

3. **City Communications Coverage:** The marketing launch will be communicated via all city publications to educate current residents about the city's focus to branch out - attract new home buyers, new development and redevelopments. The following publications are recommended:

- > Branch Review
- > City Web Site
- > New link to "Live in Farmers Branch"
- > Annual Report
- > FBTV/Radio 1670 AM
- > Branch Mail
- > Economic Development Sales Kit

#### Phase II: Targeted-Launch

Phase II focuses on a targeted marketing strategy. It entails relationship building with target markets and building brand to primary tier markets through direct communications.

1. **Logo/look/tagline:** Currently, Farmers Branch has many logos, looks and looks. For example, business cards come in three varieties; Economic Development uses a different Farmers Branch look from redevelopment from Neighborhood Renaissance...from all the other redevelopment areas: Metcalf Crossing, Branch Crossing, West Side Plaza, etc... See Appendix A: Logo Varieties. Rainmaker recommends a consistent, umbrella logo for Farmers Branch with consistent colors used on all marketing materials no matter what area of the city it represents.

2. **Sales Support Collateral:** One of the first marketing investments of any business is consistent sales collateral. The collateral is used as information to leave behind when talking with each targeted market. In addition, these materials can be used for direct marketing to potential home buyers. Rainmaker recommends the following collateral to support recommended marketing programs:

- > **Sell-in/retail in-fold for display and direct marketing purposes:** This piece can also allow space for builders to add promotional copy and use as part of a cooperative advertising program.

- **Realtor/Builder Kit.** For cost efficiency, Rainmaker recommends using existing pocket folders and adding the following:
    - Flyer to order 1st/4ths for builder marketing
    - Water quality report
    - Recent *Branch News*
    - City statistical fact sheet
  - **Corporate Program.** A kit also needs to be targeted specifically for Corporate Human Resources Departments. It also includes an order form describing city information available for their new employee orientations, relocation service and employee events/etc.
  - **Schools Program.** Rainmaker envisions sales collateral for area private schools that encourages placement of city communications in the schools' offices and waiting areas, such as counselors' offices.
3. "Live in Farmers Branch" Web Site: Rainmaker recommends a marketing Home page to the city's current web site. A link on the city's site to a standalone site called "Live in Farmers Branch" may offer an interim solution. This site focuses on positive attributes and benefits of living in Farmers Branch. See Appendix B: Web Site Example.
4. Signage: To capture commuter traffic, Farmers Branch may want to consider sophisticated, simple signage along highly traveled Valley View Lane and possible near private school entrances. Signage depends upon code restrictions and the availability of poles to properly hang a visually appealing banner. The design includes the logo/look and tagline.
5. Branch Out Program: This program is one-to-one relationship building meetings with target markets. Volunteers from the Task Force, City Council, staff and other city programs offer to meet with the following key constituents to deliver a targeted packet and introduce the Launch personally.
- Area Realtors (can be addressed in focus group)
  - Current Builders (can be addressed in focus group)
  - Corporate Human Resources (can be addressed in focus group)
  - Office building managers without desk concierge
  - Private school headmasters
  - City staff meetings
  - Church administrators
  - Professional office managers
6. Direct Marketing/Builder Co-op Ad Program: To communicate home buyer/renovation incentives, Farmers Branch can provide targeted mailings to its city employees and residents. City employees

can receive targeted mailings through their paycheck stubs and residents through their water bills.

To expand reach to new home buyers, Farmers Branch can offer a builder cooperative advertising program where the city covers the cost of self-mailer tri-folds and the builder buys specific zip code lists and covers mailing costs. By providing the marketing piece, Farmers Branch ensures consistent marketing messages to build brand. The following target lists have been suggested:

- > Area apartment dwellers
- > Lewisville, Flower Mound, Frito, Frisco, Allen, Seabrook, Murphy and Rowlett
- > Park Avenue homes event list
- > Remodel investors - architects, designers, property managers

The cooperative ad program can also include shared newspaper advertising in the "New Homes" section of the *Dallas Morning News*.

7. Promotional Lifestyles Magazine: Some suburban cities produce a lifestyles publication that communicates city events/businesses and feature residents. One example is the *Plano Profile*. Farmers Branch may want to consider a similar publication produced irregularly - for cost efficiency - that offers custom covers targeted to a specific audience. For example, the magazine titles may be *Private School Leaders*, *Corporate Leaders* or *The Branch Lifestyle*. See Appendix C: *Plano Profile* as an example. These publications will be offered free of charge for use in office lobbies, professional offices, school administrative areas and other high-traffic waiting areas within Farmers Branch and surrounding cities. Advertising sales typically support these city publications.

### Phase III: Brand Building

Phase III encompasses a mass marketing approach to build long-term brand awareness and desired perceptions of Farmers Branch to the general public.

1. Media Relations Campaign. Media relations can be as complex as a detailed media schedule, regular success story interviews, pitching press releases of favorable activities, to press conferences and more. Rainmaker suggests Farmers Branch initially focus media relations on gaining recognition in publications that rank cities under various positive criteria, such as safety. The next focus should be pitching success stories regarding first-ring suburb revitalization.

2. Brand Advertising. With the variety of media available today and the competition to get your message heard, it has become more difficult to measure the cost-to-benefit to purchasing mass media. Television, radio, newspaper and general interest magazine advertising can be very expensive to produce and purchase. Therefore, Rainmaker recommends a tight preliminary approach to brand advertising:

- > Dallas Business Journal magazine ad
- > Local KERA sponsorship
- > Hotel weather channel or main screen ad in area hotels
- > Cable show, i.e. *Hot on Homes* or other Lifestyle show
- > DFW-area billboard

3. Public Relations Events. Several ideas have been discussed that fall under public relations events to gain favorable media coverage. These include:

- > Skyride tour
- > Brookhaven tennis event
- > "Extreme makeover" feature.

These events and/or others may be part of a media relations campaign to gain recognition as a dynamic city reinventing itself. When combined with a charity twist, many of these events gain coverage in major publications with ease. In addition, charitable ties reduce the costs of special events; however, much of the costs in these programs are manpower costs.



## Next Steps

How do we move forward? After reviewing this report and presentation by Rainmaker, we recommend the Revitalization Task Force allocate a working session to reach a committee consensus on the following marketing elements:

- Product Definition – incentives the city can implement effectively
- Messages – primarily the key sales messages and desire for a single liability
- Target Markets by tier
- Communications Plan Priorities

When these elements are finalized and approved by the Task Force, Rainmaker can then provide a revised report, estimates to produce the creative work, and a preliminary implementation schedule.

## Appendices

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Appendix A: Logo Varieties

Appendix B: Web Site Example

Appendix C: Plano Profile

# FARMERS BRANCH



Farmers Branch  
Chamber of Commerce

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Nathan Nichols, Esq.  
Director of  
Executive Development

Confederation Branch  
119 New 4925th  
Avenue, Farmers Branch, Texas  
75041  
972-647-4822 FAX: 972-647-4822



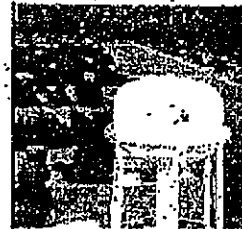
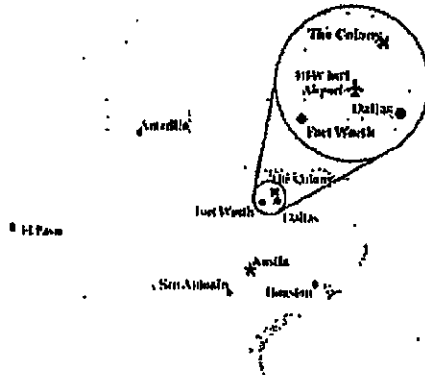


Home Government Departments News/Information Online Services

Attention Residents of Treese and Underwood Streets

Welcome to the City of The Colony's official website. We hope you enjoy your visit and look forward to your feedback.

In The Colony, Texas, it 1:27 PM, Friday, October 11

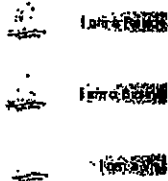


The Colony Water Tower

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Search www.thecolonytx.g Search www

2006 CITIZEN SURVEY




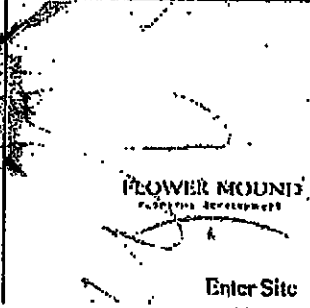


City of The Colony 6800 Main Street The Colony, Texas 75056 (972) 625-1758

http://www.ci.the-colony.tx.us/

10/16/2006

# The Town of Flower Mound Economic Development

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10/16/2006

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- Mark C. Roberts
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- Barbara, Cindy, Lisa
- On Campus
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- Ex Libris
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- Patsy Morris



Finally! V doubles i the perfe thec plac been wal get you a profeso Touch U their exp

#### EVERY MONTH

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- Dining In
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Power of a Positive Mom author Karol Ladd puts the fun into families

"Do I have to?" Many parents wish they could expunge this phrase from their kid's vocabulary. It's right up there with "Can we get..." and "That's not fat!"

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10/16/2006

**APPENDIX E**

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE TASK FORCE**



RESOLUTION NO. 2006-052

CREATING A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE REDEVELOPMENT  
ISSUES; ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE; AND ESTABLISHING  
CRITERIA FOR MEMBERS

- WHEREAS, the City Council shares a vision for the City to be "The Best Living Place" by keeping commercial and residential property values strong, by making Farmers Branch a place where both residents and businesses want to locate; where there are high quality, vibrant shopping, dining, working, playing and living opportunities, where public schools provide superior educational opportunities, and where high quality city facilities and infrastructure are provided and maintained; and
- WHEREAS, to assist in assessing the City's needs and in making the City more attractive to development and redevelopment, the City Council wishes to create a redevelopment task force; and,
- WHEREAS, the purpose of the task force will be:
1. to examine redevelopment opportunities for residential and commercial properties located within the central area of the City between Interstate I-35E and Midway Road, including but not limited to infill housing and retail revitalization;
  2. to assess the City's image and possible marketing strategies;
  3. to assess barriers to development and make recommendations for removing those barriers;
  4. to make recommendations to the City Council on prioritization of redevelopment projects, locations and City participation;
  5. to make recommendations on financing options, action plans, and possible incentives;
  6. to make other recommendations as the task force may deem appropriate;
  7. to provide an interim and a final report to the City Council on the work of the task force and the recommended action plans; and,
- WHEREAS, the task force will be made of seven members, who may or may not be residents of the City of Farmers Branch, who will possess a working knowledge of real estate; housing, commercial and/or retail development; housing, commercial and/or retail construction; economics and markets; finance and/or banking; or other professional fields the City Council may deem beneficial to the work of the task force; and,
- WHEREAS, the work of the task force will be completed within a period of six months following the appointment of its members; the City Council may choose to



extend or decrease the period of the assignment as the Council deems appropriate; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, by majority action of the City Council, may add or remove members of the task force, or may increase the number of the members comprising the task force as the Council may deem appropriate; and,

WHEREAS, the task force will be supported by City staff and administrative support as may be needed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FARMERS BRANCH, TEXAS THAT:

SECTION 1. The City Council hereby creates a task force to address redevelopment issues for the purposes defined and described herein for a period of six months following the appointment of its members.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FARMERS BRANCH, TEXAS, THIS *1<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2006.*

**SIGNED COPY ON FILE**

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindee Peters, City Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Phelps, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

**APPENDIX F**  
**MEETING AGENDAS AND MINUTES**

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting\*  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Tuesday, June 27, 2006  
11:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order by Chairman Ed Bonneau
2. Welcome and Introduction of Members and Staff
3. Purpose of Task Force and Overview -- Linda Groomer, City Manager
4. Current Redevelopment Projects Underway
5. Discussion of Ideas for Moving Forward
6. Set Meeting Date and Time Schedules
7. Adjourn

Posted on the City Hall bulletin board on June 22, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.

(signed)  
Cindee Peters

\*A quorum of the Farmers Branch City Council may be present at this meeting.

D 0051B

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda -  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Tuesday, July 25, 2006  
11:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Bonness
2. Update from City Council Planning Retreat Held July 17, 2006
3. Presentation of DART Station Area Plan - Michael Spöer  
Evaluation and Comments by Committee
4. Discussion of Four Corners Retail Area, if time allows
5. Discussion of Marketing Plan, if time allows
6. Next meeting date - August 8
7. Adjourn

Posted on the City Hall bulletin board on July 21, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
Cindie Peters

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
July 25, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dodson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

<b>Chairman</b>	Ed Bonneau Pat Haggerty Gene Bledsoe Ben Cunningham Tim Scott Jeff Brand R.L. Lemko
-----------------	---

The following members of City Staff were present:

City Manager	Linda Groomer
Assistant City Manager	Greg Vick
Director of Community Services	Michael Spicer
Director of Economic Development	Norman Nichols
Assistant to the City Manager	John Roach
City Secretary	Claude Peters

Chairman Bonneau opened the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Update from City Council Planning retreat held July 17, 2006.

City Manager Linda Groomer gave an update on the recent City Council retreat. She reported that City Council, residents, and businesses agree that the quality of services provided by the City is very high, and Council wishes to maintain that level of service delivery. Beyond providing quality services, City Council's priority focus is redevelopment of the Central City. At their planning work shop Council identified the following goals, all with redevelopment implications: 1) Financial Strength; 2) Favorable Business Climate; 3) Quality City Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure; 4) DART Rail Station; 5) Strategic Reinvestment; 6) High Quality Retail and Restaurants; 7) Professional Leadership and Staff; and 8) Improved Quality of Education and Educational Partnerships.

D 00520

Chairman Bonneau agreed that city services were excellent. In response to a question of Mr. Bledsoe, Ms. Groomer reported that his new police chief would be announced within the next two weeks.

Presentation of DART Station Area Film - Michael Spicer Evaluation and comments.

Assistant City Manager Greg Vick introduced the report.

Mr. Spicer gave a presentation on the DART Station Area. The presentation included a list of new businesses in the area, a history of the process for creating the DART Station Area, slides of what the City envisions in the area, and an explanation of the differences between form based code and conventional planning.

Chairman Bonneau asked what was needed to make this happen.

Mr. Spicer stated that a partnership with developers is critical along with acquiring the land needed. The need for land assembly has been repeated by all the developers that the City has met with, including Harwood and Staubach.

Mr. Bledsoe questioned the true success of Mockingbird Station and Addison Circle. He asked what should be the definition of "success" for the Station area, and what was needed to make the project a success for Farmers Branch. It was observed that significant public dollars had been put into Mockingbird Station, Addison Circle and the Plano DART station.

Mr. Lemke observed that there may be a reluctance among developers to create another Addison Circle. He stated that people need to be living in the area before a developer will want to start a project in the area.

There followed a discussion about the possibility of the City moving forward ahead of a developer to install the needed public infrastructure, removing old structures in the area, readying the site for development, and making pad sites available. The difficulty in that approach is that developers may not agree with what the site layout should be or what the priorities are for the development.

Mr. Haggerty asked if the widening of IH35 would affect this area. Mr. Groomer stated staff has been working closely with the Texas Department of Transportation, and the alignment will primarily affect the west side of the freeway; no right of way acquisition is required from the Station Area. Mr. Haggerty stated that even though there may be no right of way acquisition or construction adjacent to the site, construction on IH35 and LBJ would have a significant impact on the project. He stated that the City needs to be ready for developers and suggested the City not force development. He stated it should not be necessary for the City to subsidize development.

Mr. Lemke stated it was critical to have rooftops or people living in the area before retail could be successful.

Mr. Cunningham stated his bank looked at a branch opening at Valley View and IH35, but there was not significant business in the area to support it.

Mr. Bledsoe asked if creating a destination for Farmers Branch would be helpful.

Mr. Lemke stated a destination for Farmers Branch was not the key; people would just arrive to their function and then leave. He stated that spending money on marketing would be a better use of resources than a festival or event.

Mr. Brand felt the location of the DART Station Area is great because unlike Addison Circle it is easy to find.

Mr. Curnighain agreed that rooftops are needed first from his standpoint.

A discussion took place on where the first apartments, town homes and retail should be located. The task force members also discussed different ideas to create a unique concept for the area such as a Cooper community or energy efficient "green" housing.

Ms. Groomer pointed out that all developers the City has spoken with agree that this area has amenities that other locations do not offer such as location, parks, improved creeks, mature trees, and pathways.

The Task Force concluded that the City should explore moving ahead at this time with a high quality town house development that would set the tone for other housing as well as for the entire development; and the market supports town home development at this time. Mr. Brand offered to provide the City with a list of developers that the City could contact regarding town home development.

#### Next Meeting Date

The Task Force agreed to move the next meeting date to August 17. Chairman Bonneau stated the discussion would be the Four Corners retail area of the City. Ms. Groomer stated that staff would provide the Task Force with additional background information and copies of several studies prior to the next meeting.

#### Adjourn

Chairman Bonneau adjourned the meeting at 2:12 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Secretary

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City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13800 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Thursday, August 17, 2006  
11:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Bonneau
2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of July 25, 2006
3. Presentation and Discussion of "Four Corners" Retail Area by Michael Spioer
4. Discussion of Infill Housing and/or Marketing Plan, if time allows
5. Next meeting date - Thursday, August 31  
Topic - Infill Housing and/or Marketing Plan
6. Adjourn

Posted on the City Hall bulletin board on August 11, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.

Cinde Peters



City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
August 17, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dodson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

Chairman	Ed Bonneau Pat Haggerty Gene Bjedsoe Ben Cunningham Tim Scott Jeff Brand RL Lemke
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The following members of City Staff were present:

City Manager	Linda Groomer
Assistant City Manager	Greg Viok
Director of Community Services	Michael Spicer
Director of Economic Development	Norma Nichols
Assistant to the City Manager	John Roach
City Secretary	Cindee Peters

Chairman Bonneau opened the meeting at 11:45 p.m.

Presentation and Discussion of "Four Corners" Retail Area by Michael Spicer.

Director of Community Services Michael Spicer made a presentation on the Four Corners Retail area at Valley View Lane and Josay Lane. He reported that the City has identified obstacles that include multiple ownership, external competitors, local demographic changes, local operational challenges and the retail environment. The total building space in the Four Corners area is 385,300 square feet. With the recent closure of the Super Saver grocery store representing 46,200 square feet, the current occupancy rate is at 76%. Excluding the grocery store site, the occupancy rate is at 85%. In October 2004, the occupancy rate was 92%.

Mr. Spicer stated that another issue of competition from area cities is that some cities who do not participate in DART have adopted the 4n and 4b sales tax option for

economic development purposes, which provides them with funds to provide various economic development incentives to entice companies to their cities, including cash incentives.

Discussion ensued as to how the 4a/4b tax works. Norma Nichols explained that "4a/4b" is a reference to that section of state law that provides that cities may elect an additional one-cent sales tax option that is dedicated to economic development. Cities who have already elected the one-cent sales tax to belong to DART do not have that option [or other optional local sales tax designations]. Ms. Nichols stated that the Farmers Branch one-cent sales tax toward DART currently represents approximately \$11 million annually.

Mr. Lemke asked what the percentage was of owners who own property in the four corners area that are not local. Mr. Spicer stated he did not have the figures but suspected it was probably half of the owners.

Mr. Brand asked if the current parking lots in this area needed to be as large as they are. Mr. Spicer agreed that the parking requirements for shopping centers in the 1960's was greater, but this could very easily be lowered today. Mr. Bonhoe observed that when the original Skaggs store opened the parking lot was often full. Mr. Spicer observed that at that time, Farmers Branch was the "Frisco" of the day.

Mr. Bledsoe stated at one time the City could use eminent domain for property acquisition and asked what became of that tool. City Manager Linda Groomer explained that a recent Supreme Court ruling upheld cities' rights to use eminent domain for economic development purposes. However, after that Court ruling, the State Legislature in 2005 adopted legislation that now expressly prohibits cities from using eminent domain proceedings for economic development purposes, except for in certain circumstances. Cities may still use eminent domain proceedings to acquire property for public purposes such as streets, utilities, and other infrastructure and public purposes.

Mr. Spicer told of a meeting held in 2004 between the City and the shareholders of the Four Corners area. He explained only six people attended that meeting and none of the shareholders had a vision for their property.

Mr. Scott observed that property owners within the Four Corners are making money on their buildings and have no interest in wanting to change things.

Mr. Spicer reported that the City is currently seeking qualifications of firms experienced in creating a vision, market analysis and how to implement the vision for the area. The deadline for submittals is September 12.

Mr. Haggerty asked if the City should reduce certain areas that are zoned commercial and also rezoned areas of the City. Mr. Spicer agreed that the City should be looking at alternatives to retail, including residential and other commercial uses, within the Four Corners as part of the study.

Mr. Bledsoe recognized the need for more rooftops to stimulate new retail in the area.

Mr. Bonneau summarized the group's discussion of the Four Corners, including the following:

- (1) stakeholders in the four corners have no vision for their property;
- (2) the stakeholders expressed a willingness to work with the City and explore options;
- (3) a consultant is needed to help reinvent the Four Corners; and
- (4) creating a vision could be premature if not embraced by the residents and stakeholders.

Mr. Bonneau and Mr. Cunningham made reference to the article that noted that if housing stock is small, it impacts market/marketability. Mr. Cunningham asked if the houses just to the southwest of the Four Corners, where the house size appeared to be approximately 1100 square feet, might be considered as the next area for redevelopment. [Note: In response to a question of the Task Force, staff subsequently determined that 93 of the 135 single-family properties in the referenced subdivision, or 69%, have homestead exemptions filed, representing that they are owner-occupied.]

Mr. Brand raised the question as to how to revitalize a retail area that services low income.

There followed a discussion concerning alternative street grids through the retail area, alternate uses, surrounding neighborhoods, demographics, and other retail areas in Farmers Branch.

Mr. Brand suggested the City look into turning the vacant Alberston's building into some type of community use. Mr. Groomer advised that relocating the library here was one option that had been previously mentioned; however, the aesthetics of the library's current location makes it a preferred location.

#### Discussion of Infill Housing and/or Marketing Plan

Mr. Bonneau suggested that the group think about and come to the next meeting with an answer to the question, "What can the City, churches, and schools do to cause people who have a choice, to live in Branch Crossing?"

Mr. Bledsoe suggested the City start again to buy houses in Branch Crossing and resale them to builders.

Mr. Lemke suggested that rather than looking at bringing people to Farmers Branch through special events, the group should concentrate on how to change the perception of Farmers Branch.

The Task Force discussed ways for creating incentives for people to live in Farmers Branch and reasons why people who live in Farmers Branch love living here. Those could include such things as:

- Residents and businesses alike feel safe in Farmers Branch, which could set Farmers Branch apart. Police and Fire are the best anywhere.
- Location and short commute, especially important with rising gasoline prices.
- City services such as free twice per week garbage service, beautiful parks and medians are very high quality, but may be difficult to quantify in publications.
- Jobs
- Low taxes, but it was recognized that could also be perceived as a negative.

Good schools are an essential element. However, it was noted that Addison and other areas of North Dallas are in the Dallas ISD. Mr. Scott suggested that the school issues are largely issues of perception, and that most people who live here don't want to move.

Mr. Branch pointed out that people outside the City don't know Farmers Branch. Mr. Lemke suggested that the City consider the creation of a DVD with business owners and residents telling people why they should be living in Farmers Branch. Copies of the DVD could then be given to realtors and to the employees of Farmers Branch businesses.

Ms. Spicer added that according to the 2000 Census, Farmers Branch was identified as having the highest ratio of jobs per capita of any other city its size in the United States. With a residential population of 27,000 and a daytime population of 85,000, there should be a lot of people who work in Farmers Branch who would like to live closer to their jobs.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the City look into the possibility of low interest construction loans to home builders.

Mr. Bidzoo and other members suggested that raising taxes by three cents should be considered, with one cent going towards economic development, one cent dedicated to marketing, and one cent for property acquisition. (Note: Each one cent on the property tax rate is equal to approximately \$350,000 in annual revenue to the City.)

#### Next Meeting

For the meeting scheduled for Thursday, August 31, Chairman Bonneau asked the Task Force members to consider three questions:

- 1) What would cause people who have choices to move here?
- 2) What is the message?
- 3) How do we broadcast it?

Adjoin

Chairman Borneau adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Chairman Ed Borneau

Cindee Peters, City Secretary

**City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Thursday, August 31, 2006  
11:30 a.m.**

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Bountou
2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of July 25 and August 17, 2006
3. City Manager's Report on City Budget Recommendations
4. Continued Discussion of Infill Housing and/or Marketing Plan
5. Discussion of Chairman's Three Questions:
  - a. What can we do to cause people who have options to live here?
  - b. What is the message?
  - c. How do we broadcast?
6. Take any appropriate action on items included on this agenda, as needed
7. Next meeting date - Tuesday, September 19  
Topic - Interim Report to City Council
8. Adjourn

Posted on the City Hall bulletin board on August 25, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.

Cindie Peters, City Secretary

A majority of the City Council may be present at this meeting.

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
August 31, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dodson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

Chairman	Ed Borneau Pat Haggerty Gene Blisdaoe Ben Cunningham Tim Scott Jeff Brand RL Lemke
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The following members of City Staff were present:

City Manager	Linda Groomer
Assistant City Manager	Greg Vick
Director of Community Services	Michael Spicer
City Secretary	Cindea Peters

Other persons present were:

Julie Borneau, 2527 Farmers Branch Lane  
Pat Edmiston, 14215 Tanglewood  
Laurie Moore, Rainmaker Advertising

Staff persons present arriving later in the meeting included Economic Development Director Norma Nichols and Finance Director Charles Cox.

Chairman Borneau opened the meeting at 11:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting of July 25 and August 17, 2006.

Minutes of the meeting of July 25 and August 17, 2006 were approved by acclamation.

City Manager's Report on City Budget Recommendations.

City Manager Linda Croonier gave an update on the budget recommendations stating that an additional \$1 million was recommended to be earmarked in the Water and Sewer Fund for redevelopment projects, in addition to the \$1.5 million previously earmarked for redevelopment in the DART Station Area. In addition, an additional code enforcement officer, an administrative support position for code enforcement, and code enforcement software and laptops to be used by inspectors in the field were included in the proposed budget.

Continued Discussion of Infill Housing and/or Marketing Plan.

Assistant City Manager Greg Vick presented the Task Force With Follow up information on the Farmingdale Addition that the Task Force members requested. This information shows that approximately 68% of the homes in the addition are owner-occupied.

Mr. Vick provided the attached report that outlines possible housing incentives. Mr. Bonneau provided Task Force members binders including additional ideas for incentives such as tax abatements, marketing, waiving fees for developers, possibly hiring a decorator to help with the interior of some of the homes, homeowners associations and a Christmas tour of some of the completed homes.

It was pointed out that some of the incentives were directed more toward builders and others were more directed toward buyers. It was agreed that some of the incentives could be provided to buyers at a very low cost to the city, and would be effective as part of a marketing strategy.

A brief discussion followed regarding the possibility of town homes in the DART Station Area, and Mr. Vick provided an update on the engineering evaluation of the needed infrastructure.

Mr. Ben Cunningham asked how many homes were spec homes versus contract homes. Mr. Gene Bledsoe replied that most of the homes built in Branch Crossing were spec homes, and noted that builder J. Gregory builds approximately 100 houses a year in surrounding areas.

Mr. Jeff Brand raised the question as to how this area could become self-sufficient. Mr. Tim Scott does not think it will ever be self-sufficient.

In response to a question of Mr. Brand, Mr. Bledsoe stated that houses in Branch Crossing were selling for upwards of \$325,000.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the City help builders market and sell their homes, as well as providing incentives to the buyers.



Mr. Bledsoe suggested the redevelopment program should be citywide. He pointed out that areas such as Brookhollow, Sunbeck Circle and Brookhaven required no start up assistance, and suggested possibly looking at giving rebates to builders based on a minimum number of houses completed.

Ms. Groomer stated another possible option would be to establish a minimum value for a new home permit or a minimum square footage to qualify for an incentive.

Mr. Vick stated that perhaps a percentage of revitalization support should be citywide, but a focus should continue in Branch Crossing to make a notable impact.

Mr. Brand suggested that the focus of the redevelopment efforts should be concentrated at the Four Corners west to the train station for the greatest impact.

Mr. Lenke suggested the City could also do something for minimal cost citywide to start the momentum.

Ms. Groomer stated there may be grant funding for home revitalization and rehab in existing neighborhoods.

There was a lengthy discussion on the possible criteria for qualifying for an incentive, attracting builders for remodeling, and the resale value.

Mr. Haggerty stated he had lived in a neighborhood where houses were being razed and new homes rebuilt, and the process is very slow. He stated home values do increase significantly for the entire neighborhood, including the previously existing properties.

Mr. Lenke suggested marketing should take place with large Farmers Branch based corporations such as the Coca Cola Company so their employees can hear why they should live in Farmers Branch.

Mr. Haggerty did not feel that spending money in one area would have the greatest return for the City. Mr. Scott disagreed stating that he does not live in Branch Crossing but success of that area helps get his neighborhood where he wants it to be.

Mr. Cunningham observed that redevelopment of the Four Corners area, including the surrounding neighborhoods, is critical for the revitalization area to succeed.

Discussion ensued on other developments in the Dallas area such as the Shops of Legacy, incentives for developers, and areas surrounding Branch Crossing and how that may affect Branch Crossing.

Discussion of Chairman's Three Questions:

- a. What can we do to cause people who have options to live here?
- b. What is the message?
- c. How do we broadcast?

D 00532

After considerable discussion, it was the consensus of the Task Force that the following items were needed to make revitalization work:

1. Rooftops, including those in Branch Crossing and beyond Branch Crossing, are essential to redevelopment, particularly retail redevelopment.
2. The entire list of 15-20 possible infill housing incentives presented by Task Force members and city staff should be explored, noting there are some incentives that the City can offer "virtually free" to market residential redevelopment.
3. An approach more geared toward marketing the City needs to be taken with the City's web site.
4. The town home development in the DART station area should become an immediate priority, with a 200-unit apartment development close behind. City staff is currently evaluating infrastructure needs for the project.
5. A marketing and sales approach to single-family residential homes should be developed that targets employees of Farmers Branch corporate businesses, private schools and relocation firms.
6. The Four Corners study should be expanded to include surrounding neighborhoods.
7. The marketing program should also address a citywide banner and search engine program that connects to information about Farmers Branch housing opportunities.

Mr. Haggerty stated that Farmers Branch lacks identity and that most people entering Farmers Branch did not know they were in the City or when they left the City.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that pictures of the City be taken of all the parks and trees in the City as part of the marketing plan.

A discussion followed concerning advertising campaigns, including the City's web site, schools, realtors, local businesses, relocation companies, and placing signs around the City.

Mr. Brand asked if next time the Task Force could discuss making improvements to smaller homes along with discussion of infill housing. Mr. Spicer stated that was part of the original plan set forth for Branch Crossing.

Take any appropriate action on items included on this agenda, as needed.

Mr. Bonneau stated no action was necessary at this time.

Next meeting date - Tuesday, September 19 - Topic - Interim Report to City Council.

Ms. Groomer asked the members to be thinking about the interim report that was due from the Task Force to the City Council in October. The October 3 Council meeting was set as the target date for the report.

Mr. Bonneau recapped the meeting's discussion, which included:

1. Rooftops and purchasing power
2. Incentives for both inside and outside the target area
3. Marketing strategies
4. Financing - low interest construction loans
5. Reducing development fees
6. City's web page to include marketing
7. Possible townhouse development in the DART Station Area
8. Selling Farmers Branch to the realtors and local corporations
9. Marketing study

Mr. Lonke asked to hear back at the next meeting on hanging banners in the City.

Adjourn

Chairman Bonneau adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman Ed Bonneau

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindee Peters, City Secretary



**MEMORANDUM**  
Administration

**TO:** Branch Reevaluation/Trip/Faree  
**FROM:** Greg Vitek  
Assistant City Manager  
**DATE:** 1 September 2006  
**RE:** SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL INCENTIVE

Single-family residential (SFR) incentives are a relatively new phenomenon. In Farmers Branch, it has been a success for about 10 years dating to the beginning of the Branch Community Reinvestment Project. Today the market is expanding as more and more people are moving from the suburbs of the metroplex with their parents' around 1970's and 1980's housing stock.

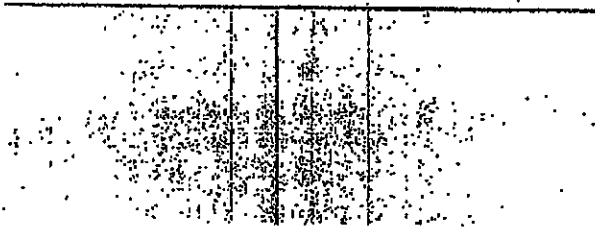
The effort began in Farmers Branch with the selection of this area and the completion of its infrastructure at \$175 million dollars. The city coordinated its incentives by having 3 years and then making them available to SFR builders at a level of 10% below market. Not only for the city but also for the state and 25% of 2001. Today all new homes built are under construction to this 10% level and almost finished.

Nobody seems to have expressed any concern regarding the progress for new home development in this area by the incentives and equity, suggesting further and better of incentives for the area.

Between SFR building permits have been issued since 2000, with the largest number being 4 in 2000 followed by 3, 6, 1 in 2001, 2002, and 2003.

City staff has been exploring incentives that offer a flat fee for building permits, and it is also been exploring a flat fee for the land area. The 6-6 being considered in coordination of the other possible incentives.

Page 1



**City Incentive Options for Energy Codes:**

1. Expand the original Branch Crossing program of buying lots to sell to SFR builders at all potential points. Minimum standards would apply regarding the house size, lot size, etc.
2. Offer incentives to SFR builders to buy lots and build SFR meeting minimum standards.

Alternative of each option is outlined below:

**Option 1.** The City would buy lots at current prices of \$10,000 to \$120,000 (the original \$ lot size purchase of 20 ft square ft around 250,000 each and sold for \$25,000 each). They lot would be sold to SFR builders who agree to build a house meeting minimum standards.

**Option 2.** The City would offer a \$10,000 to \$50,000 incentive to local lot owners to buy lots meeting minimum standards. The incentive payment would be made upon completion of necessary insurance. This option could have other requirements to stretch the budget such as only giving the incentive to the 2nd CO based peak month.

**Other possible SFR incentives:**

1. Encourage higher density by offering, as an example, reduced setback requirements or zero lot lines.
2. Property tax rebates or discounts.
3. Revised development fees.
4. Low interest construction loans or bridge loans provided by the City through the Housing Finance Corporation.
5. City City services (see list below):
  - A. Free Wi-Fi access for 12 months.
  - B. Free Wi-Fi internet equipment for 12 months.
  - C. Free Wi-Fi internet equipment for 12 months.
  - D. Free Wi-Fi.
  - E. Homeowner's Choice Club membership.
  - F. Free out back at closing. 1000
  - G. Free out back at closing. 1000
6. Free out back at closing. 1000
7. Free out back at closing. 1000

Other incentives might include city participation in a residential marketing plan targeting:

- A. SFR Builders
- B. Local Employers
- C. Schools, Public, Private and Colleges

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Tuesday, September 19, 2006  
11:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Beineau
2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of August 31, 2006
3. Preparation of Interim Report to City Council on October 2, 2006
  - A. Refinement of Seven Priorities Discussed August 31
  - B. Prioritization of Housing Incentives
  - C. Other Elements of Interim Report
4. Next Steps by Committee
5. Next meeting date - October 3  
Topic to be determined
6. Adjourn

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
September 19, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dodson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

Chairman	Ed Bonneau
	Pat Haggerty
	Ben Connelighan
	Jeff Brand
	RT, Lenke

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were absent:

Gene Blidson  
Tim Septi

The following members of City Staff were present:

City Manager	Linda Groomer
Assistant City Manager	Greg Vink
Director of Community Services	Michael Spicer
City Secretary	Cindee Peters

Other persons present were:  
Julie Bonneau, 2527 Farmers Branch Lane  
Lawie Moore, Rainmaker Advertising

Chairman Bonneau opened the meeting at 11:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting of August 31, 2006.

Minutes of the meeting of August 31, 2006 were approved by acclamation.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Linda Groomer reported that the City Council approved the 2006-07 budget on September 18, 2006, which includes an additional \$1 million earmarked for redevelopment in the Water and Sewer Fund. This is in addition to the \$1.5 million in the General Fund budget, previously approved by Council for DART Station Area improvements, but which could also be designated for other redevelopment projects as approved by Council. Also, a fifth inspector and administrative support were approved for Code Enforcement, along with funding for technology enhancements to increase efficiency in the division.

Ms. Groomer discussed the October 2 Study Session date that the Council had targeted for the Branch Revitalization Task Force members to present their interim report to Council, and encouraged all Task Force members to be present at that meeting.

On other matters, Ms. Groomer reported that at a recent conference she met with representatives of Fannie Mae, whose regional offices are located in the JP Morgan Chase building in Farmers Branch. She stated there are new Fannie Mae lending programs now available for redevelopment projects and for projects other than low to moderate income. A follow up meeting is being scheduled.

The City Manager also informed the Task Force that a \$10,000 donation was made to the Historical Park to begin a rose garden and demonstration project. This is important to redevelopment in that such demonstration projects have the potential to create tourist and other traffic to Farmers Branch. The project will also be used for median enhancement and other beautification projects throughout the City.

Ms. Groomer gave a brief report from the Community Watch Committee in code enforcement, neighborhood issues and revitalization. Their next meeting is scheduled for September 25. She also updated the Task Force on the planned Code Enforcement Bus Tour of the City in which City Council, Code Enforcement and Police staff, members of Community Watch will observe and discuss what constitutes code violations and discuss what new methods might be incorporated.

Director of Community Services Michael Spicer reported that at the September 18 meeting City Council approved a zoning amendment on the southeast corner of Valley View and Jesse. Mr. Spicer stated the amendment added the requirement for an SUIP for the property including any new construction, consolidation of existing property or existing space converted into a smaller space.

Mr. Spicer also updated the Task Force on the Request For Qualifications for developing a long-term vision for the Four Corners area at Valley View and Jesse. Mr. Spicer stated fifteen companies submitted RFP's, which are now being reviewed by staff.



In response to a question of Mr. Jeff Brand, Mr. Spicer stated that provisions of state law require the City to notify the property owners of zoning amendments as well as the surrounding property owner within 100 feet of the subject property.

Other matters.

Mr. RL Lemke expressed his concerns that the recent media attention to the illegal immigration issue could have an impact on the work that the Task Force is doing as charged by the City Council. As a specific example, Mr. Lemke noted that a pending corporate headquarters lease in one of his properties may not finalize their lease, and stated that corporations may not consider Farmers Branch as a potential corporate site to avoid being associated with negative publicity.

Ms. Groomer stated that the email response to the issue from residents and non-Farmers Branch residents had been overwhelmingly in support of this issue. Ms. Groomer cited the resolution that the City Council approved urging Congress to take action on this issue.

Mr. Pat Haggerty expressed his concerns that the media has reported that Farmers Branch property values are down, the City is unsafe, and the schools are bad when the opposite is true. Mr. Haggerty suggested that the City address this issue as part of a coalition with other cities.

Mr. Brand asked if the City had discussed taking steps to protect the City's image. Ms. Groomer replied that staff would be discussing it with Riskmaker as part of the overall image project.

Mr. Haggerty stated his experience on Council during the city's lawsuit against Dallas Water Utilities and commented on the amount of time and money that can be spent on lawsuits, as well as the negative publicity that can come from high-profile legal cases. Mr. Cunningham added that when faced with the potential of a lawsuit from a business perspective, the cost of the lawsuit must be weighed against the potential of what is at risk to be lost or gained.

Chairman Bonneau stated that Farmers Branch should not be a community that tolerates illegal activity and that residents are looking to the city to address those issues. The Task Force expressed support for the resolution adopted by the City Council on September 5<sup>th</sup> that is to be sent to the President and Congress urging them to take action on the issue.

The Task Force asked the City Manager to convey to the City Council their expressed concerns with regard to the impact of this issue on the work that the Task Force had been tasked to accomplish by the City Council.

Preparation of Interim Report to City Council on October 2, 2006

Mr. Bonneau provided the Task Force members with an outline he had drafted for the October 2 presentation, which is attached and made a part of these minutes. The outline condensed the seven items discussed at the September 5 meeting into four areas:

1. Incentives for Infill Housing
2. Marketing to Our Target Areas - Housing Opportunities
3. Immediate Priority of Town Home Development
4. Four Corners Study

Ms. Groomer stated that now that the Task Force has identified the major priorities, the second half of their appointed time could focus on the details, including marketing and financing possibilities.

Mr. Ben Cunningham asked if the Farmersdale Addition would be included in the RFO for the Four Corners area. Mr. Spletter noted that the RFO included a broad scope of services and that this subdivision was part of that. Mr. Greg Vick added that it would also be a part of the market analysis.

Mr. Bonneau noted that in the last twelve months, no houses in Branch Crossing had sold and asked for ideas from the Task Force to help sell these available homes.

Mr. Pat Haggerty stated the area is so well hidden, most people do not know it is there. Mr. Haggerty suggested the City contact Farmers Branch company Hot On Homes, an agency that advertises homes on television. He explained they are a company that advertises homes on television. He also suggested contacting Texas Lending, also located in Farmers Branch.

Mr. Bonneau suggested there were several ways to market the City for a minimal amount of money. It was recognized that Branch Crossing is in a hidden area and needed marketing assistance. It was agreed that the bigger issue at hand currently is more about finding buyers than providing incentives for builders. It was also acknowledged that the smaller builders do not have the capacity for large-scale marketing programs.

The role of realtors was also discussed, and how the city could make sales and marketing easier for them.

Items suggested included:

- Changeable directional signage and banners on Valley View
- Working with "Hot on Homes"
- Mortgage assistance from Farris Mae and Texas Lending
- Interviews and/or focus groups with realtors and builders
- DVD featuring why Farmers Branch is the Best Living Place
- Web site improvements
- Cable television exposure of Branch Crossing

Mr. Lemke stated there should be things that can be implemented in thirty days such as banners and contacting Hot-On Homes.

Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Brand, and Mr. Lemke emphasized meeting with realtors such as Ebby Holliday, whose main offices are in Farmers Branch, to get feedback and advise as to what the City might do to bring in more potential buyers. Ms. Groomer reviewed the broad based Branch Crossing open house luncheon Gene and Cassie Bledsoe had organized in the spring working in partnership with the City, Brookhaven Country Club, builders, the CFBISD, as well as other realtors. The open houses not only featured homes in Branch Crossing, but also Brookhollow and Brookhaven.

Mr. Bonneau introduced Ms. Laurie Moore with Rafinaker Advertising. Ms. Moore suggested forming focus groups, and to work toward identifying whom to target and what the key selling points should be. With that information, the key messages and the key audience can then be developed.

A discussion followed on what type of message should be conveyed, emphasizing location, safety, City in a Park, Best Living Place, and outstanding services. The Task Force discussed the fact that Farmers Branch currently offers several types of housing, not only in Branch Crossing but also the Park Avenue Courtyards homes under construction, the new mixed-use developments and the new townhomes under construction. Mr. Spicer offered that perhaps the overall marketing includes the variety of homes available.

Mr. Bonneau distributed copies of Mr. Bledsoe's ideas to integrate into the marketing plan. Those are attached and made a part of these minutes.

Another discussion ensued as to how marketing information could be shared with Farmers Branch corporate offices and with private schools. Corporate activities and health fairs were discussed as one possibility.

Next meeting date - Monday, October 2 - Report to City Council.

Ms. Groomer reported that it was Council's preference that the Task Force interim report to the Council be presented during a Study Session meeting, rather than at a separate joint meeting. The date set for the presentation is October 2 at 4:00 p.m. in the Study Session Conference Room where the Task Force regularly meets. Chairman Bonneau will make the presentation to Council, and all members of the Task Force are encouraged to be present.

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Adjourn

Chairman Bonneau adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

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Chairman Ed Bonneau

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Clideo Felts, City Secretary

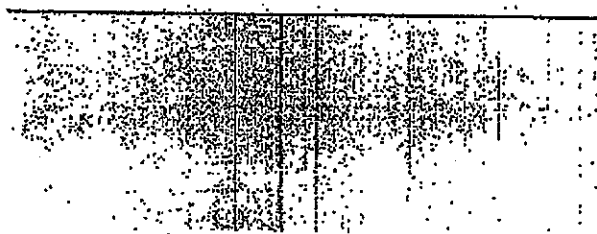
**TO:** Council Reformation Task Force Meeting  
**FROM:** Ed Hennessey  
 Chairman  
**DATE:** September 15, 2006  
**SUBJECT:** Letter to Council, September 12, 2006

In light of our upcoming deadline for submission of a Status Report to the City Council, you would like a list of 25 specific items of City business - three of the items on the original list of 50 which have already been completed.

Please consider these 4 alternatives by adding...

What is the message you wish to send to the City Council regarding the following?

1. Receipt of All In Billings  
 Assign back to funds to which credits should be made family residences (over 20 significantly residences). With the exception of items "a" and "b" some incentives could be applied with a special cost to the City in other ways.
  - a. Payroll cash back in closing
  - b. Transfer mortgage and other benefits
  - c. Offer to build a new parking structure in area lot area
  - d. Transfer all other benefits
  - e. Reduce all other benefits
  - f. Low bid contract for services to be provided by the City to the Police Pension Corporation
  - g. Offer City service incentives package
    - Free Water at \$1.00 per month
    - Family Card and report on car for membership for 22 months
    - 2004 Wi-Fi Internet membership for 12 months
    - Free car
    - Truck driver Card (2004 membership)
    - Family Card approved vehicle characters
    - Allow members to build their own
    - Family Card and report on car for membership and
    - Allow
2. Waive standard annual fees
3. Negotiate vendor discounts with Home Depot, Office Depot, Low's, Wal-Mart Design Center for participation in project with model home.



**2. Measures to Our Town's Traffic and Traffic Circulation**

- Speed limits and traffic modifications
- Signs
- Other recommendations from professional consulting firm
- Can effective ways to bring traffic in Brook County

**3. Improve Priority of Town Road Investments**

**A. Year-Long Study**

After much discussion and deliberation, there are items we have agreed upon and now need to refer to school in the interim report. We will follow this for a study on this to be a better complete one and please see end on first.

Thanks for extending your valuable time and talent to the matter of this community. Looking forward to seeing you Tuesday!

*Thank you to: ... and ... employees of ... and ...*

Notes for Farmer-Bernick Development Committee Meeting  
Subject: Presenting PB  
10/1/08

Target Audience - Who is the committee for?  
• The school board  
• The community  
• The business community  
• The city government  
• The state government  
• The federal government

- FAA to identify - 1/4 of time**
- The school board
  - The community
  - The business community
  - The city government
  - The state government
  - The federal government
- City Services - think, green, grabber, other school, out center, library, wifi, police, fire department**
- Law enforcement - but add in the dept. maybe in perception is good
  - DART - 2010
  - Other solid use developments - what will these mean for the average citizen?

- FA Negotiation - 1/4 of time**
- "I've seen it both in the Chicago area & I've got a girl across the bridge through it"
  - Usually lower income, especially in Chicago
  - Usually lower cost housing
  - Lack of full range of McDonald's shopping
  - Lack of full range of McDonald's restaurants
  - Public school - perception issue
  - "Turn" - The Village at 10000 of Farmers Road, with "The Rowley"

- Media**
- Web site - video, meeting in person
  - CD - I have PD info on this for the group of companies & NGOs
  - Target Audience Profile of all these - Little Business Journal, NEMA
  - The private schools - how? - find others - add in into program
  - Public Schools Company - website, no success yet

**Redevelopment Fund**

Set up a \$2 million redevelopment fund over 3 years. Fund it at \$666,666 per year. Reversal of the money from the water department. One time cost if you like to.

When a holder signs up to build with the Redevelopment Fund plan, the holder will agree to build a certain number of units (and pay for the value of the units) at a price of 1.016 or 10.16% below. The holder will also agree to pay for the construction of the holder the completion of the project in which he is interested. He will pay \$2,250,000 or 2% of the new house sale price. If the holder is a private individual, he will pay \$2.25 million, then when they are finished he gets 2%, when he is finished he gets 4%, when he is finished get the project done.

If the average sales price of a house built here is \$180,000, 25 builders sign up to build each builder will build each year. That means we had 250,000,000 houses built in 1978 for a value of \$45,000,000,000 or \$180,000,000. If the average house replaced had a value of \$120,000 or \$18,000,000, the city is supposed to build 6 houses a month. At 75 rates probably \$170,000 more per year. The \$3 million would be applied in 11 years.



City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Tuesday, October 17, 2006  
11:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Bonneau
2. Old Business
  - a. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of September 19, 2006
  - b. City Manager and Staff Report
  - c. Review Interim Report to City Council on October 2, 2006
3. New Business
  - a. Report on Marketing Priorities
  - b. Taglines
  - c. Signage and Banners
  - d. Target Market
4. Next meeting date ~ October 31  
Upcoming Meeting Dates and Topics to be reviewed
5. Adjourn

Posted this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2006 at 6 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindee Peters, City Secretary

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
October 17, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dodson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

Chairman	Ed Bonneau
	Pat Haggerty
	Ben Cunningham
	Jeff Brand
	RL Lanks
	Gene Blodson

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were absent:

Tim Scott

The following members of City Staff were present:

City Manager	Linda Crooner
Assistant City Manager	Greg Vick
Director of Community Services	Michael Spicer
Economic Development Director	Norma Nichols
Communications Director	Tom Bryson
Management Analyst	Traci Leach
City Secretary	Cindee Peters

Other persons present were:

Jillie Bonneau, 2527 Farmers Branch Lane  
Laurie Moore, Rainmaker Advertising

Chairman Bonneau opened the meeting at 11:50 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting of September 19, 2006.

Minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2006 were approved by acclamation.

City Manager's Report.

Ms. Groomer provided the Task Force with a copy of her October 16 Redevelopment Report to the City Council. She announced that the City Council was very pleased with the Task Force report presented at the October 16 City Council meeting. Ms. Groomer stated the Council meeting included approval of some very exciting upcoming projects, including the announcement of \$50 million in developer commitments to infrastructure improvements on the west side. Ms. Groomer advised that the date for the Task Force to present the marketing recommendations to City Council was set for November 13, 2005, and would probably be an early afternoon meeting.

Ms. Groomer reported that the City Council, along with Code Enforcement, Police, and Administrative staff and members of Community Watch and the public had conducted a successful bus tour of the city on October 10 to review code violations in all neighborhoods and to develop recommendations for improving enforcement and compliance. She also reported that the Community Watch Committee has a full committee with Monday's Council appointments, and that the plans for the new "Citizens on Patrol" program were being finalized.

In response to a suggestion at the September 19 Task Force meeting, Ms. Groomer reported she met with Jeff Weaver of Ebby Halliday to obtain feedback on Branch Crossing and marketing ideas. She reported that Mr. Weaver shared information about a new Ebby Halliday program supporting builders and their advertising efforts. Ms. Groomer stated she had also learned that many builders are now providing additional incentives to realtors on top of their standard commissions when they sell homes in certain areas. Ms. Groomer also stated that a meeting with representatives from Fannie Mae has been scheduled for November 1 to discuss loan programs.

Ms. Groomer informed the Task Force that applicants who submitted RFQ's for the Four Corners study have been narrowed to three firms and that interviews would be scheduled to begin by the end of October.

On other matters, Ms. Groomer reported that at a recent meeting of the School-Community Relations Committee met she had an opportunity to meet with the Headmistress of Parish Episcopal School about the possibility of providing information on Farmers Branch and Farmers Branch housing at the school. Ms. Groomer reported she had received a positive response to that suggestion and believed the school would be open to working with the City in those areas, perhaps in setting up a City kiosk on site.

Report on Marketing Priorities, Taglines, Signage and Banners, and Teraci Market.

Louise Moore with Rainmaker Advertising gave a PowerPoint presentation to the Task Force on creating a marketing strategy for the City of Farmers Branch.

Topics presented by Rainmaker included a discussion of:

- Target Markets
- Marketing Messages
- Communications Plan
  - Buy-in Promotion
  - Targeted Launch
  - Brand Building
- Next Steps

It was agreed that the role of the Task Force at this point was to make recommendations to the City Council as to how to proceed on these recommendations, recognizing there were short-term actions to be taken, but that an effective marketing plan must be a long-term commitment.

Mr. Lemke reiterated that his impression from the City Council at the October 16 meeting was that there was a sense of urgency to start some type of marketing program for the City. He stated the Task Force had discussed several items that could be implemented immediately without much expense. Mr. Blodsoe emphasized the need for an overall marketing plan, and not just an immediate fix.

With regard to target markets, Mr. Haggerty suggested the City might target Farmers Branch residents as the best audience. He also suggested that the City try and purchase 10 to 15 properties in the worst condition in Farmers Branch as a means of showing that the City is serious about doing something.

Chairman Bonneau shared a copy of the brochure that was created when Branch Crossing was first initiated. He felt this was an exceptional brochure and a good start to the marketing plan. He also gave several examples of banners with taglines that the City might want to install around the City.

Mr. Haggerty noted the brochure logo and asked why the City had so many different logos. Mr. Bryson explained that over the years many departments had created their own logos. Ms. Grödnier stated that the City Council had recently pursued the issue of updating the City logo to improve image and as a branding effort. It was recognized that changing the overall logo is an expensive and multi-year task, and that numerous logos or variations are not uncommon. Ms. Moore noted that there are ways to incorporate a version of the City's logo in all marketing efforts to identify or brand a project as a City project.

It was the consensus of the Task Force that the original Branch Crossing brochure was extremely well done and should be continued for Branch Crossing and as a platform for other marketing efforts.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that the Task Force should recommend to the City Council a list of short-term marketing ideas, along with the recommendation that a long-term marketing plan should be adopted. Mr. Haggerty stated the City could test the short-term ideas anywhere from 60 to 120 days.

Mr. Brand raised a point as to whether the short-term ideas needed to be consistent with a long-term plan. Mr. Lemke agreed that ultimately they should, adding that until the long-term plan is finalized the short-term ideas would help promote the City almost immediately.

Chairman Bonneau raised the issue of the area at Valley View and Interstate 35 as being a major, highly visible entryway into the City, and suggested that something spectacular should be considered at that location. He suggested that the City should consider a theme for the area.

Mr. Lemke stated that the City should not tell developers what to build because history has shown that within 15 to 20 years buildings can become dated and no longer desirable. He noted success in other major cities, such as Chicago, when there is a "hodge podge" of different buildings that makes it more interesting.

Mr. Brand agreed and gave the example that Southlake used when they constructed buildings with facades from the 1920's to the 1960's.

Mr. Cunningham asked if the Station Area was going to be named. Mr. Spicer gave a history of what the area has been called in the past, including Old Farmers Branch, and is now referred to as the DART Station Area. Mr. Spicer, Mr. Lemke and Mr. Brand discussed the work that had been done on the rezoning and coding of the area to achieve some of what Mr. Bonneau suggested.

Chairman Bonneau asked the Task Force members to bring back ideas on the development plan for the area at the next meeting.

Mr. Cunningham asked when the City installs the holiday banners, and suggested that the Branch Crossing banners be installed at the same time. Mr. Groover stated the City is looking at streamers that could possibly be complimentary to the Renaissance Area and possibly installing holiday lighting and banners along Tom Field Road to draw attention to Branch Crossing during the annual Holiday Tour of Lights.

Next Meeting Date and Topic

The next meeting date for the Task Force would be Tuesday, October 31st. Chairman Bonneau stated that suggested incentives programs would be the topic and asked Mr. Vick to report on those at the next meeting. In addition, the Task Force will be preparing their next report to City Council to be made at the November 13 City Council meeting.

Adjourn

Chairman Bonneau adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

Chairman Ed Bonneau

Cindee Peters, City Secretary

**City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
Agenda  
City Hall Plaza  
13000 William Dodson Parkway, Farmers Branch, Texas  
Second Floor Study Session Meeting Room  
Tuesday, October 31, 2006  
11:30 a.m.**

1. Call to Order - Chairman Ed Bontreau
  2. Old Business
    - a. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of October 17, 2006
    - b. City Manager and Staff Report
    - c. Follow up, as needed, from October 19 Marketing Report
      1. Immediate
      2. Mid-Term
      3. Long-Term
  3. New Business
    - a. Discuss Infill Housing Incentives
      1. Builders
      2. Buyers
      3. Agents
    - b. Discuss Presentation to City Council on November 13
  4. Next meeting dates--
    - a. November 13 Presentation to City Council
    - b. November 14 - Previously Scheduled
    - c. November 22 - Previously Scheduled
    - d. December 5 - Previously Scheduled
    - e. December 11 - Final Report and Recommendations to City Council
- Topics to be refined
5. Adjourn

Posted this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October 2006 at 6 p.m.

Clideo Peters, City Secretary

City of Farmers Branch  
Branch Revitalization Task Force Meeting  
October 31, 2006  
City Council Study Session Room  
13000 William Dordson Parkway  
Farmers Branch, Texas  
11:30 a.m.

The following members of the Branch Revitalization Task Force were present:

Chairman	Ed Bonneau Pat Haggerty Ben Cunningham Jeff Brand RE Lenke Gene Bledsoe Tim Scott
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The following members of City Staff were present:

Assistant City Manager Director of Community Services Economic Development Director Management Analyst City Secretary	Greg Vick Michael Spicer Norma Nichols Traci Leach Cindee Peters
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The following member of City Staff was absent:

City Manager	Linda Groemer
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Other persons present were:  
Julie Bonneau, 2527 Farmers Branch Lane

Chairman Bonneau opened the meeting at 11:45 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting of October 17, 2006.

Minutes of the meeting of October 17, 2006, were approved by acclamation.



City Manager's Report.

Mr. Greg Vick, Assistant City Manager explained the City is working to update the City's web site and had a meeting with Rainmaker to discuss possible design ideas. Mr. Vick stated some of the code enforcement issues are scheduled for action at the next City Council meeting. Mr. Vick also explained that staff would be interviewing companies who submitted RFQ's for the four corners this week. Mr. Vick stated the Branch Crossing signs have been erected and staff is looking at revising the street signs in Branch Crossing to help identify the area. Mr. Vick explained at his last Task Force meeting it had been mentioned that perhaps some lights might be installed during the holidays in Branch Crossing. Mr. Vick stated that installation would be more expensive than originally thought and staff is still looking at possible alternatives.

Follow up on Marketing Report and Discuss Infill Housing Incentives

At this time Mr. Vick gave a PowerPoint presentation on the incentives for homeowners, builders and real estate brokers. The builder incentives included \$10,000 for completion of one home; \$15,000 for two homes, \$20,000 for three homes that meet the standards, and providing marketing assistance to builders in Branch Crossing.

The buyer incentive program would include a mortgage grant of 1 percent of the mortgage amount, fire services for one year, which includes water, sewer, and garbage, WiFi services, membership to the recreation center, social membership to Brookhaven Country Club and consultation with City horticulturist.

The real estate agent incentives would include \$3,000 for one home, \$5,000 for two homes and \$8,000 for three homes that close within a 12-month period.

Mr. Jeff Brand stated his company's policy is not to buy a cheap piece of property just because it is cheap, but rather buy a more expensive property because of the good location. He suggest that location was very important.

Mr. Lemke felt money into this marketing plan helps the entire City.

Mr. Blodson was not in favor of the real estate agent incentive and felt the City would be paying them for something they already do.

Mr. Haggerty stated he never wants his clients to know he receives a bonus because the client might feel he is being shown this property because of the possible bonus incentive. He also feels that Branch Crossing has been a success and the proposed incentive program should be offered in all areas of the City.

Mr. Vick stated the Task Force should probably decide if the incentive program would be offered in all areas of the City or just Branch Crossing.

Mr. Haggerty stated again that the City should consider buying several deteriorated homes in all areas of Farmers Branch for builders to tear down and build new homes.

Mr. Tim Scott felt that idea might work to brand other areas of the City as a neighborhood like Branch Crossing.

Mr. Lemke stated the program could be modified and would make a success in other areas of the City.

Mr. Ben Cunningham stated the success of Branch Crossing is critical so the development of the four corners can start and then the entire area will become a success.

Mr. Bledsoe felt that Branch Crossing is at a "fork in the road" and the Task Force should report to City Council that redevelopment should be citywide.

Mr. Lemke felt if the City could just get people in the City to look at Branch Crossing the homes would sell. He stated right now the City has to compete with areas such as Frisco.

Chairman Ed Bonneau stated there has not been enough marketing for Branch Crossing.

Mr. Bledsoe stated if the City can get multiple builders with multiple houses it would create its own dynamic and would then produce more traffic to the area.

Mr. Haggerty suggested that there may not be enough products in the area to make it a high traffic area for buyers.

Mr. Lemke suggested the City might offer cash back incentive such as car dealerships offer and work on a marketing plan for new homes all over the City.

Mr. Bledsoe agreed that maybe all that was needed is to have incentives for the buyer.

Mr. Haggerty suggested the City considered only single-family detached homes for the incentive program so it would not include town houses and similar products.

Mr. Scott felt that a high volume of people to Branch Crossing is not needed, that signs directing people to the area would sell itself.

Mr. Bledsoe stated that 87% of the homes sold are sold by agents and that the incentives should not be tied to the house and that the City might try offering cruises and trips to agents versus money for selling homes.

There followed more discussion on different types of incentives that might be considered and offered to real-estate agents, buyers and builders.

Chairman Bonneau reported that it had been discussed that the target audience is the people already living in Farmers Branch.