FORT WORTH:
VICKERY & SOUTH MAIN STUDY
TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT
AUGUST 25TH & 26TH, 2014
CONTENTS

1. ULI AND THE TAP PROCESS 4
   Urban Land Institute (ULI)
   Urban Land Institute – North Texas District Council
   Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)
   Panel Members
   Stakeholders
   TAP Process

2. ASSIGNMENT 8
   Project Assignment:
   Background on Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

3. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS 10

4. OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS 12
   Characteristics of a successful TOD project
   Opportunities
   Challenges

5. RECOMMENDATIONS 14
   Site Context
   Site Plan
   Vehicular Flow
   Open Space/Green Space
   Pedestrian Flow
   Buildings Profile and Level Views
   Design Principles

6. FINANCING 18
   Development Budget
   Income Analysis

7. NEXT STEPS 20

8. INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS 22
   Stakeholders
   Other Interested Parties
1 ULI AND THE TAP PROCESS

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)
The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute now has approximately 33,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines. ULI members work in private enterprise and public service and include developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, economic development professionals and others. The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information and experience among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE – NORTH TEXAS DISTRICT COUNCIL
ULI North Texas was founded more than 10 years ago and is one of more than 50 District Councils operating in the U.S. as part of the national Urban Land Institute. Today, ULI North Texas is an association of more than 850 local members representing a broad spectrum of land use and development disciplines including all of the varied professions reflected in the national ULI membership.

ULI North Texas seeks to implement the ULI mission by providing the region’s public and private sectors with pragmatic land use expertise and education. Our programs highlight the best practices in planning and land use and our public events feature presentations by a wide array of local and national experts. We offer educational and mentoring programs for our Young Leaders group, provide a Speaker’s Bureau through our Women’s Leadership Initiative, work in high school and college classrooms with ULI’s innovative UrbanPlan curriculum and conduct many other civic and educational programs throughout the year.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPS)

Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) are a signature community service and educational program of the Urban Land Institute. Upon request from a municipality, public agency or other public sector or nonprofit sponsor, ULI volunteers come together to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice to resolve complex land use and real estate issues. The volunteer team, or panel, is typically drawn from our seasoned professional membership base and represents a range of expertise, from architecture to real estate finance. A ULI North Texas TAP offers objective and responsible guidance on a variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions.

PANEL MEMBERS

Fort Worth
Vickery and South Main Study

TAP Chair
Donald Gatzke
Dean of Architecture at The University of Texas Arlington (retired)

Michael Bennett, Bennett Benner Partners
Andrew Blake, Presidio Interests
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Printice Gary, Carleton Residential Properties
Mark Meyer, TBG Partners
David Petitt, David Petitt Economic Development
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Amy Brooks, Bennett Benner Partners

Staff
Donna Miller, Miller Consulting, report writer
Pam Stein, ULI North Texas, Executive Director
Jennifer Backower, ULI North Texas, Coordinator

STAKEHOLDERS

Fort Worth Housing Authority
Fort Worth Transportation Authority
City of Fort Worth
Fort Worth South
South Main Property Owners
Other Interested Parties
Downtown Fort Worth, Inc.
T&P Homeowners Association
The Fort Worth: Vickery and Main Study - Transit Oriented Development TAP was held on August 25-26, 2014 at the Amphibian Theater in Fort Worth, Texas. In the morning of the first day of the two-day TAP, Donald Gatzke, chair, gathered the Panel members to review their charge. The following goals and objectives were agreed upon for the Vickery and South Main TOD.

**GOALS**

1. Provide high-quality housing choices for the citizens of Fort Worth
2. Develop an exemplary urban infill project as a model for future development
3. Incorporate best practices for healthy, sustainable and attractive urban places
4. Integrate this project within context, character and plans for future development in the urban area
5. Support the train station and transit with additional parking and enhanced pedestrian access

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand the project and context to expand range of issues to be considered
2. Incorporate best development and design practices for a high-quality result
3. Present conceptual recommendations and alternatives
4. Illustrate planning and architectural strategies for future elaboration
The Panel interviewed a series of stakeholders to gain a better understanding of relevant issues, neighborhood trends and contexts, opportunities and challenges related to the project. The Panel then broke into two teams to begin initial discussions and development of site concepts. These were presented to the stakeholders at a preliminary critique the evening of August 25. The day of August 26 was spent incorporating the feedback from the initial critique and further developing the Panel’s recommendations. The final presentation, open to the general public, was delivered the evening of August 26.
2 ASSIGNMENT

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT:
Transit Oriented Development Located at the Northwest Corner of Vickery & South Main Street, Fort Worth, Texas

The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) and Fort Worth Housing Authority (FWHA) contemplate constructing a mixed-use, mixed-income multifamily rental, retail and structured parking transit-oriented development (TOD) located at the northwest corner of South Main Street and West Vickery Boulevard in Fort Worth. The project is driven by the need to both expand parking at the T&P Station in preparation for the arrival of TEX Rail in 2018 and provide affordable workforce housing closer to the centers of employment in the downtown core and the Near Southside neighborhood of Fort Worth.

Specifically, The T’s mission is to expand and enhance public transportation opportunities of the City of Fort Worth and its other member cities. The T&P Station serves the Trinity Railway Express and will be a terminus for the TEX Rail, the 27-mile commuter rail project for Tarrant County. The FWHA’s mission includes providing safe, decent and affordable housing for low-income families in the City in a mixed-income environment with convenient access to public transportation.

The development site is owned by The T and is presently used for surface parking. The T has offered to enter into a long-term ground lease making the land available to FWHA for the mixed-use TOD project. In cooperation with the City of Fort Worth, The T and FWHA developed the following expectations for this project:

- Mixed-use, mixed-income residential development with a parking facility
- Concrete construction — one or two buildings of a maximum height of 10 stories – within current zoning
- Residential units, 150-250 depending on demand, financing and other factors, mix of one and two bedrooms
- At least 51% of the units will be at 80 percent of AMI or less. A minimum of 51 percent is required for tax-exempt status. In 2013, for the City of Fort Worth 80 percent of AMI for a family of four was $52,650
- Retail space should be designed and constructed to meet current demand or designed and constructed as “flex space” for future retail space
- Parking
  - Parking spaces for park-n-ride: 300
  - Parking spaces for residents and retail customers on a market basis
  - Each of the three parking areas must be secured from the others
- Outdoor space – as much green space as possible
BACKGROUND ON TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

A recent paper by the ULI, “Ten Principles for Successful Development around Transit,” states:

*Development around transit promotes compact development, multiple rather than single uses, a pedestrian orientation, and attention to civic uses. Successful development around transit also demands a new form of community building that not only supports and encourages transit use but also transforms the surrounding area into a place that is so special and irresistible that people will invest there, live there, and visit again and again.*

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) focuses on creating dense, walkable communities connected to a major train station that reduces the dependence on a car. Several conditions of 21st century living are driving the popularity of TOD:

- Increasing traffic congestion
- Growing desire for an urban living experience versus the suburbs
- Growing desire for a more walkable lifestyle less dependent on the car
- Changes in family structures - more singles and empty-nesters who are less dependent on the traditional offerings of the suburbs
3 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Panel devoted the morning of August 25 to interviewing representatives of the various public agencies involved with the property and local neighborhood groups. A full list of the interview participants is included in this report. Among the topics discussed were the following:

This project would represent the City of Fort Worth’s first TOD project, and the stakeholders expressed high interest in seeing it achieve the multiple goals of providing affordable workforce housing, building additional capacity for transportation parking, creating attractive pedestrian options from the downtown core to the Near Southside and stimulating other developments appropriate to the area.

The Fort Worth Housing Authority representatives noted that Fort Worth is in need of affordable workforce housing near its downtown and transit station area. The Housing Authority envisions this site as appropriate for one- and two-bedroom units with rents that would be affordable for households earning 80 percent of the area median income (AMI). In Fort Worth in 2013, that amount for a household of four was $52,650.

The Trinity Railway Express currently runs commuter service between Dallas and Fort Worth on a heavy rail line originating at the T&P station a block north of the project site. A tunnel under Interstate 30 connects the site, with its current parking lot, to the rail station. With the advent of rail service to DFW Airport on a separate line in 2018, the T anticipates considerable additional ridership and parking demand. Buses also use this location and have been making a broad U-shaped turn using a drive that loops through the parking area.

Fort Worth South is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the vibrancy of the Near Southside area of Fort Worth. It has implemented a number of successful streetscape programs and currently plans to add landscaping and other amenities to Main Street, adjoining the project site on the east, and continuing on into the heart of the Near Southside neighborhood. Improving this link as a pedestrian and retail corridor may ultimately help to drive traffic to the project site. At present, Fort Worth South does not have plans to landscape Vickery Boulevard, the street running along the southern boundary of the project site that will be the primary facade of the multiuse building.

Local business owners have been active proponents of growth in the Near Southside area but are protective of the eclectic mix of commercial uses and residents that give the area its vibrancy. Because their area already houses a number of social service agencies, they are reluctant to have new service agencies locate in the neighborhood. They expressed concern that some multifamily structures are not built for long-term use and, as they age, can cause area property values to decline. There was also some initial wariness of the Housing Authority’s proposal for income-related rental limits. However, when one of the local business owners noted that she had lived in income-protected housing at one time in Fort Worth, and that the income levels being discussed for this location were typical of young office workers, teachers and small business owners, concern over the income-protected rents seemed to dissipate. The concern over the quality of construction was addressed by the Panel in its design considerations, below.

The representatives of the T&P Lofts homeowners — a historic building on the north side of Interstate 30 that was converted to condominium use several years ago — supported the idea of creating a greater pedestrian flow through the ground floor of their building and into the tunnel connecting it to the property south of the rail yards and highway. They did express an interest in keeping view corridors open to the south of their building, particularly views toward a prominent church tower in the Near Southside area.

Several area representatives also noted their desire that any new construction be in keeping with the character of the existing warehouses and older commercial buildings of the Near Southside.
After interviewing stakeholders, touring the project site and reviewing additional planning documents from the City of Fort Worth, the Panel identified key characteristics, opportunities and challenges relevant to this project.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL TOD PROJECT**

- Increases transit use
- Spurs other development
- Develops successful workforce housing for downtown core and hospital district
- Reconnects north and south sides of the freeway
- Reduces traffic into the downtown core

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Capture residential workforce housing market to enhance the economic base of the neighborhood
- Connect to regional and local transportation networks
- Create a gateway to/from downtown, reinforce the urban “fabric”
- Create visual icon for this part of Fort Worth
- Act as development catalyst for the neighborhood
- Demonstrate best practices for higher-density urban infill development
- Financially and environmentally successful model for future projects
- Support the train station + transit with additional parking

**CHALLENGES**

- Planning alternatives limited by constricted site shape and dimensions
- Complicated infrastructure challenges: site circulation/noise/substation
- Bus and transit access – either internal to the site or external or on-street
- Freeway barrier and tunnel connector to downtown
- Integration of commercial with residential uses
- Extending the authentic character of the neighborhood
- Sloping site requires level changes and excavation [also an opportunity]
- Quantity of park-n-ride spaces
5 RECOMMENDATIONS

SITE CONTEXT

The Panel acknowledged the restrictions of the site itself — mainly the relatively small size and the location of the Oncor substation on the southeast corner. The Panel also recognized the requirement to add 300 parking spaces, needed by The T in anticipation of TEX Rail’s arrival in 2018. The task to build a TOD accommodating the competing interests of parking, multifamily residential units, ground-floor retail and green space presented an organizational challenge. The limits of financing ruled out the option of substantial underground parking.

However, the conviction of the two main partners, The T and the FWHA, “to do something creative” inspired the Panel. Civically, the project offered the opportunity to not only create a development intricately connected to the transit system, but create an iconic visual bridge between the segregated sides of the Interstate 30 Freeway.

As a public project backed with multiple resources, the project has an opportunity to serve as a truly catalytic element for development in the Near Southside of Fort Worth. In order to accomplish this, the project would have to address several issues of the surrounding neighborhood.

Pedestrian crossings from opposite sides of the freeway are problematic. A pedestrian way along South Main from the north side of the freeway to the south side is not currently intuitive. Pedestrians wanting to directly access the T&P Station from the south side of the freeway must use a tunnel that is not currently attractive, friendly or conducive to lingering. A dedicated pedestrian access way needed to be created.

The Panel also wanted to incorporate preparation for future development and take advantage of improvements already underway including, in particular, the street improvements planned along South Main from Vickery to Magnolia.
Site Context
Site Plan Highlights

- Extends Galveston corridor with improved streetscape character while highlighting terminus view of the old Temple Beth-El building
- Strengthens north/south axis
- Moves bus circulation to Vickery
- Creates green space on the east side of the project
- Creates circulation loop for cars seeking T-parking
- Uses landscaping to camouflage the substation
- Activates the underground T&P Station tunnel with food carts, drop-off dry cleaners, etc.
- Moves the proposed building façade to the street to create a walkable public realm along with a possible mix of uses to help activate the street
- Screens the structured parking from Vickery
Vehicular Flow

The project needed to address a complicated traffic flow of buses, cars, bicycles and pedestrians. Buses serving the T&P station are frequent and numerous.

In this drawing, two-way bus traffic has been moved to Vickery, moving east and west with drop-off and pick-up stops along the street rather than moving the buses into the development. From the bus stops, pedestrians can walk into the development headed from the train, retail, housing or on into the downtown core via the tunnel under the freeway.

Cars could enter from Vickery heading to the parking for the T&P Station or into parking for residents only. T&P parking includes garage parking and reconfigured parking under the freeway. Vehicular traffic through the pedestrian plaza would be slowed through the addition of brick pavers, bollards and a narrowed street section, which also adds more distinctive character to the public realm.

Vehicular Flow Highlights

- Bus traffic moved to Vickery
- Improved car circulation to parking under freeway
- Creation of a pedestrian plaza extending from Vickery and Galveston to the T&P tunnel
- Potential pedestrian access from Main Street aligning with Industrial Avenue
Because of the size and programmatic constrictions of the site itself, the Panel was limited in where it could build green space. However, while a large green space in this urban setting could not be accommodated, the Panel felt the integration of smaller and better distributed open space pockets would well serve the development. The Panel designed a series of urban pocket parks to help create a healthier, activated setting while simultaneously promoting an environmentally friendly outcome.
Vickery Street
Vickery Street is a key part of the overall vision of this development and developing Vickery as a complete street, which includes vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, is essential for the project to be successful. In addition, a strong public realm that includes street trees, wide sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, site furniture and access into retail and residential units from the ground level will help activate the street.

Community Garden/Corner Plaza
To help activate the east side of the plan, the Panel felt a small community garden that engages Main Street would help create better pedestrian access and potentially a stronger connection to downtown. At the northeast corner of the site, a small pedestrian plaza that engages the Vickery and Main Street intersection would help welcome people into this setting, screen the Oncor sub-station and create a strong entry identity for Near Southside.

Rooftop Amenity Deck
Because of the limited size of the site, the Panel felt residents needed some type of private amenity that included a pool and casual gathering areas. With options limited in the ground plane, the Panel identified the top level of the parking garage as a great opportunity to reclaim space. The rooftop amenity deck would provide tremendous views of downtown over the Interstate 30 freeway while also establishing a prominent icon along that freeway, rather than focusing views on the back of the building where motorists would observe the top of a structured parking garage.

As part of the overall site context and the concept of extending Galveston to the T&P station, the Panel felt this location afforded the potential to be closed off and used as a large gathering area for the district or residents to create a festival-type setting. This area would facilitate car flow but ultimately function more as a pedestrian plaza in which retail and uses could spill out onto the street and sidewalks to create a very active space. It is envisioned that a water feature or art piece could terminate the street and represent the old historic station.

Bioswale – Connector Green Space
The Panel also created an educational feature in which rainwater can be collected from the parking garage and funneled into a bioswale/connector green space at the rear of the project that would add to the sense of open space, help mitigate freeway noise and serve as an environmental filter for parking lot run-off. This space would also serve to create a buffer between the existing parking under the freeway and the parking garage and mixed-use development.

Open Space/Green Space Highlights
- Vickery Street
- Community Garden and Corner Plaza
- Amenity Deck above Parking Garage
- Galveston Street Extension
- Green Space/Bioswale at rear of project along freeway
When creating a Transit Oriented Development, providing users with many options is a crucial component that allows them the freedom to make choices and create opportunities to move freely through the site. Providing multiple transit options also helps create better flow as well as faster walk and drive times to the destination. The Panel felt large, usable sidewalks and plazas should be integrated throughout the site. This concept should start with Vickery as a complete street which would serve as the primary walking and bike route to the T&P station and would create a more urban feel. In addition, Galveston Plaza should serve as the main pedestrian spine that gives access to the T&P station from the bus drop-off at Vickery and Galveston.
Pedestrian Highlights

- Intuitive, walkable access throughout the project
- Improved pedestrian access under the freeway to the transit station
- Enhance walkability of South Main and Galveston
- Create stronger connection to downtown through the TPR Building
BUILDINGS FLOORPLANS AND PROFILE

Ground Level

Levels 2 - 5
Three-dimensional Studies
Urban Form

Urban Form is critical in the overall Near Southside, and this project should serve as a model of how to integrate a project into the overall street and grid. Buildings will front onto Vickery and Galveston Plaza to create a strong public realm and a pleasing scale throughout the street. The buildings should be placed between 15 and 20 feet from the curb to create strong pedestrian places while providing access to a future mix of uses. This form also relates to the buildings in downtown and how their height transitions from taller buildings in the city core to this site while still allowing residents and users in Near Southside to view downtown Fort Worth.

Building Highlights
- Ground floor provides flex design for retail, live/work and the leasing and amenity program
- Single-loaded residential corridor with storage units across hall on floors two through five
- Double-loaded residential corridors above the fifth floor
- Residential units above the fifth floor will have views over the freeway
- West building conceived as having loft spaces and small commercial spaces as market driven
- Primarily above-grade parking for economy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Panel also addressed the design principles most conducive to retaining and enhancing the character of the Near Southside, which is generally one- to three-story buildings, usually of red or tan brick. The recommendation is to allow the uses to be revealed – retail/commercial versus residential and assume a predominantly masonry aesthetic.

Design Principles Highlights
- Avoid generic design or “replicative historic” tendencies in the details
- Behave “well” along Vickery; respect a pedestrian experience with a considered build-to line
- Create a contingency for ground floor retail/commercial activation
- Straightforward massing consistent with Near Southside context
- Livable exterior spaces for residents
6 FINANCING

The Panel was asked to develop a preliminary financial model based on the initial conceptual design.

The estimated development budget for the project was approximately $59.6 million. This preliminary budget was determined using cost input provided by multiple panelists and through consultations with other local mixed-use developers and construction companies familiar with the product type being contemplated.

DEVELOPMENT BUDGET

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INCOME ANALYSIS

It is anticipated the project would be financed using a combination of private bank financing, potential contributions of land and equity by the T, the FWHA, City of Fort Worth transit oriented development (TOD) funds allocated from the recent City bond election, HUD (CDBG/HOPE/HOME) funds and a potential Near Southside TIF contribution.

The rental revenue assumptions were based on current market rates for market rate Class A multifamily in and near Downtown Fort Worth. At least 51% of the units of the project would be “Workforce Units.” Essentially, that means that 51% of the units would be rented to those earning 80% of the average median income (AMI) for the Fort Worth area.

Referencing the chart above, a household size of one
would have the maximum income of $36,900 which according to affordability standards no more than 30% of the annual income can go towards rent.

**Household Size: 1**
Maximum rent calculation: $36,900 x .30 = $11,070
For a household of one, that would yield $11,070 annually for rent or $922.50 per month. As the household size increases so does the corresponding maximum rent. For example, a household of two would have the maximum income of $42,150.

**Household Size: 2**
Maximum rent calculation: $42,150 x .30 = $12,640
Therefore, for a household of one that would yield $12,640 annually for rent or $1,053.75 per month.

The assumptions regarding the live/work and ground floor office/retail rental revenues are that the demand for ground floor space in this location is not fully matured but important to the urban character of the area and that the project budget should anticipate very modest rental rates in the near term to attract appropriate tenants to activate the ground floor commercial spaces.

Because the project is providing 51% of its units to individuals earning 80% of the Fort Worth AMI the project would qualify as “tax exempt” and significantly lower the operating expenses for the project.

**Financing Conclusions**
Further detailed analysis and underwriting will be necessary to pull all the pieces of the financing together; however, it is the opinion of the Panel that given the initial analysis above and the various sources of funding available the proposed development can be realized through the appropriate participation of the partners.

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7 NEXT STEPS

The Panel suggests the following next steps to move the Project forward and realize the FWHA’s goal of “having dirt flying within a year.”

- Finalize an agreement between The T and FWHA
- Begin discussions with TxDOT about boundary adjustment to square-off site
- Issue an RFP to the development community
- Investigate streetscape funding sources
- Build a coalition to address funding gap of $15 million
- Consider nearby alternative surface parking to reduce number of structured parking spaces
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

STAKEHOLDERS

Fort Worth Housing Authority
Naomi Burns, president
Brian Dennison, vice president, development & asset management
Terri Attaway, board of commissioners, chairperson
Mark Presswood, board of commissioners, vice chairperson

Fort Worth Transit Authority (The T)
Paul Ballard, president and CEO
Nancy Amos, senior vice president
Jeff Davis, board of directors member
Curvie Hawkins, assistant vice president, planning

City of Fort Worth
Eric Flagader, planning manager
Ann Zadeh, city council member, district 9
Jay Chapa, housing & economic development director
Randle Harwood, planning & development director

Fort Worth South, Inc.
Paul Paine, president
Megan Henderson, director of events and communications
Mike Brennan, planning director

South Main Property Owners
Robbie Werner, owner – Stir Crazy Baked Goods
Dak Hatfield, president, Hatfield Properties
Yvonne Johnson
Jesse Stamper, managing member of Warehouse District Partners I, LLC

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. (DFWI)
Andy Taft – executive director

T&P Lofts Homeowners Association
Donna Young, president
Tawney Smith, T&P Lofts manager