



Dallas-Fort Worth

Center for Leadership Presentation: Seeking Environmental Justice in Echo Heights and Surrounding Areas

PEYTON BOOTH
KIMBERLY DOTY
MARI HENRY
KEVIN YU
LEI XIAO
MATT BODZY

APRIL 24 2024



ECHO HEIGHTS

HISTORY OF ECHO HEIGHTS

- Echo Heights is a neighborhood located in Southeast Fort Worth.
 - Originally developed by P.A. Gaston Construction Company, but construction halted when WWI began.
 - Home to Prairie Dog Park, which dates back to the 1960's. The Park reportedly started when a neighbor's Prairie Dog pet was let out of their gate. In 1970s, the land owner sold the 60 acres and attempted to contain the Prairie Dogs in a designated park. This initiative was later deemed unsuccessful and the Prairie Dogs were relocated by the City.
- Since 2000 Echo Heights has been designated as an Industrial Growth Center by the city of Fort Worth, where approximately 187 Light Industrial businesses operate currently.
 - One of the first large industrial tenants was a Chesapeake Oil and Gas facility who signed a contract with the city in 2007.
 - As concerns over air quality and environmental health continued to grow, the Echo Heights Environmental Coalition was formed in 2021.
 - Since its inception, the group has been an active part in fighting additional industrial application permits and a removing over 100 acres of the city's Industrial Development Zone.

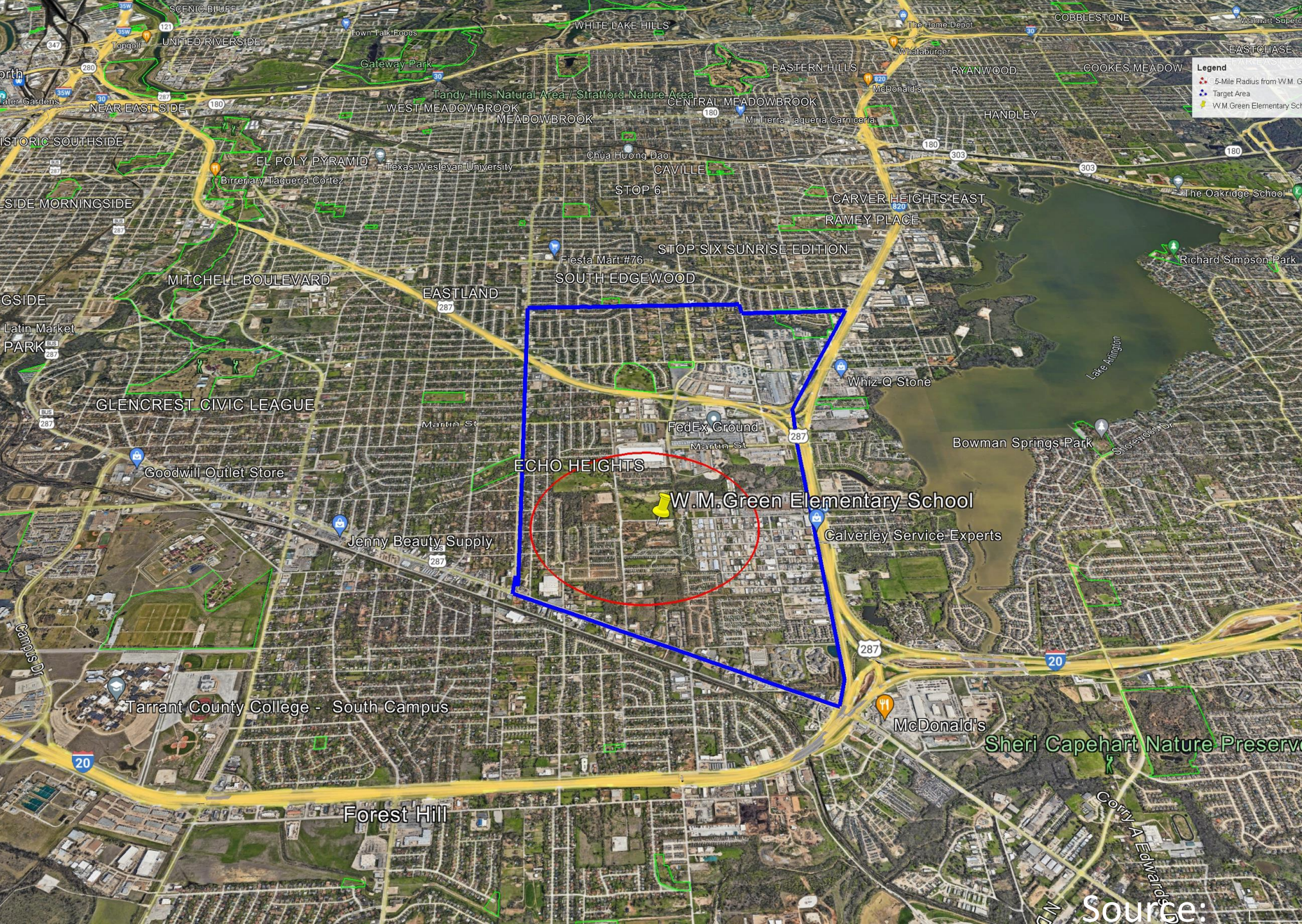
ECHO HEIGHTS DEMOGRAPHICS

- Echo Heights is 3.46 square miles and home to approximately 6,900 people.
 - Population by Race:
 - 51% Black
 - 46% Hispanic
 - 2% White
 - 1% Other
 - Household Makeup:
 - 46% of households contain children
 - 32% of households have a married status
 - 30% are single female head of households
 - 22% are single male head of households
- Socioeconomic demographics:
 - Education
 - 36% of residents have no High School Diploma
 - 53% of residents have a High School Diploma
 - 11% of residents have a post High School Degree
 - Household Income
 - Median household income is \$36,000 annually
 - Median household income for Tarrant County is \$79,000 annually
 - 26% of Echo Heights receives Food Stamps



THE COMMUNITY

ECHO HEIGHTS AND THE SURROUNDING AREA



Echo Heights

Single-Family Residential

Tractor Trailer Storage/Cleaning

Industrial

Single-Family Residential

Distribution Warehouse

'Prairie Dog' Park

Park

- Limited amenities
- Limited pedestrian access from neighborhood to the park

Willow Springs

Mobile Home Park

Gas Drilling

Gas Drilling

© 2023 Google

Image Source: Google Earth

Google Earth

32°41'23.55" N 97°15'41.08" W elev 633 ft eye alt 2108 ft

Single-Family Residential

Distribution Warehouse

Industrial

Mobile Home Park

Gas Drilling

Gas Drilling

Industrial

W.M. Green Elementary School

Mobile Home Park

Industrial

Echo Heights

© 2023 Google

Image Source: Google Earth

Google Earth

32°41'21.77" N 97°15'33.01" W elev 615 ft eye alt 1963 ft

1985

Echo Heights and Village Creek

Village Creek Park

Single-Family Residential

Community Center

Nursing Home

Industrial zoned vacant tract

Tractor Trailer/RV Storage

Industrial Business

Industrial Business

Business Park

Industrial Businesses

Waste Management
Garbage Trucks

Drop off Station

Industrial Business

Google Earth

32°42'19.37" N 97°15'37.88" W elev 639 ft elev alt 2246 ft

Image source: Google Earth

© 2023 Google

1985

Bass Printing Company

Terra-Vaults

Yellow Engine Services

Martin St

Village Creek Rd

Martin Luther King Jr Fwy

Martin Luther King Jr Fwy

Hwy 287

Waste Management

Fort Worth Storm Water Quality

AutoNation Collision Center Fort Worth

Abram Expedited

Short Iron Store Metals & Supply

Metal Supermarkets Fort Worth

Junk King Fort Worth

WillScot Dallas -

Industrial Business

A-Core Concrete Specialties

Immanuels Healthcare

Eugene McGray Community Center

Melinda's Guardian Angels

Industrial zoned vacant tract

Martin Luther King Jr Fwy

287

287

287

287

Google Earth

CHALLENGES



Challenges

Gas Well Drilling Site



Challenges

Industrial Encroachment



Challenges

Industrial Encroachment



Challenges

Prairie Dog Park



Challenges

Vacant 54 Acres



Challenges

Vacant 54 Acres





ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

WHAT IS IT?

- Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:
 - The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and
 - Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Source: www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice



ROAD MAP FOR CHANGE



Dallas-Fort Worth

Game Plan/ Recommendations

- Environmental testing and analysis study for water, soil contaminants, and air quality
 - TCEQ
 - Buffers
- Establish Echo Heights community team to work with all non- profit organizations for affordable housing, potential financial grants and city and county involvement
 - Explore economic incentives with local municipality, state, and private organizations
- Redevelopment of 54 acre undeveloped site in the middle of Echo Heights

Environmental Recommendations

- TCEQ Involvement
- Testing
 - Environmental Tests
 - Potential vendors: Envirophase, Kleinfelder
 - Phase 1 Environmental – Environmental site summary - \$5k-\$15k
 - Inventory of concerns
 - Air issues, groundwater issues, soil contamination issues
 - Verify within TCEQ regulatory levels
 - Air quality testing / air monitoring
 - Soil testing – Samples at every 100-200' at residential - \$800/sample
 - Followed by additional borings if high levels of contaminants found
 - Human health risk assessment. Vapor levels inside homes.
 - Groundwater / water well testing
 - Estimated Costs
 - Remediation
- Truck washing chemicals washing into yards and residential areas
- 54-acre development testing
 - Gas well air quality testing
- 4/30/24 City Council work session item to deploy federal EPA funds to Fort Worth

Vegetative Buffers

Source for Research: Dow Masters Vegetative Buffers- 2018

<https://graham.umich.edu/media/files/dow/Dow-Masters-2018-Vegetative-Buffers-Tree-Canopy.pdf>



Human Health Benefits:

- Reduced lung disease, respiratory illnesses, and cancer
- Improved psychological health



Environmental Benefits:

- Reduced stormwater runoff
- Reduced CO2 and atmospheric particulate matter (e.g., smoke and dust)
- Absorb gaseous pollutants (e.g., nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide)
- Reduced city temperatures (via transpiration)
- Increased oxygen
- Increased biodiversity and wildlife habitats



Economic Benefits:

- Reduced energy costs (heating and cooling of buildings)
- Increased property values and aesthetic appeal
- Profitable post-mortality byproducts (e.g. mulch and lumber)



BUFFER ZONES

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS

Where an industrial zoned property is immediately adjacent to a residential property, school, or park.

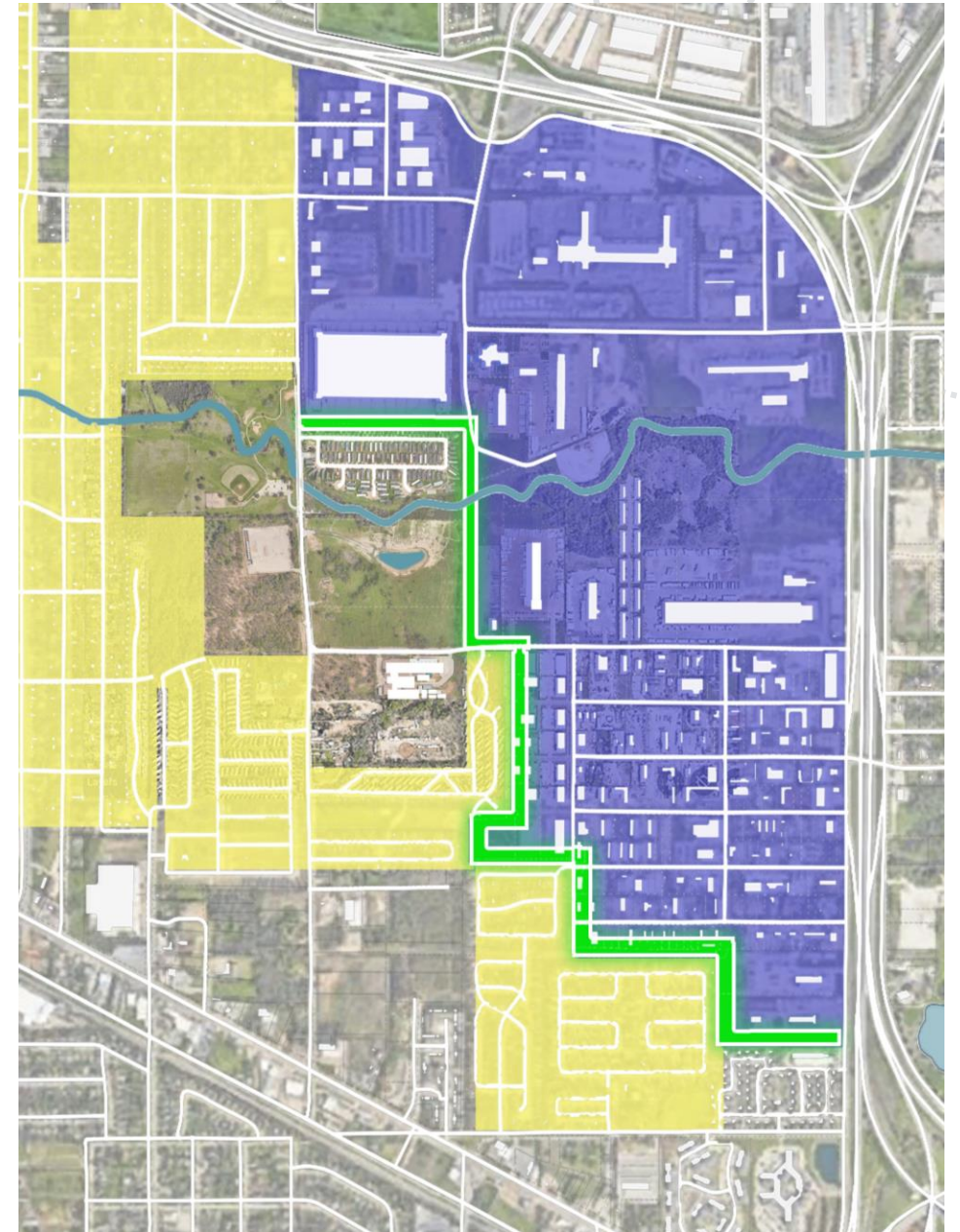
If adopted, one or all of the conditions below would trigger the requirement for landowners of industrial facilities abutting residential parcels to install a vegetative buffer:

New Construction: The new construction of a stand-alone building

Major Improvement: Alteration of any building(s) or structure(s) on a project site which does not expand the building(s) or structure(s), and for which the aggregate value of the alterations within any 24-month period exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of the building(s) and structure(s) on the project site.

Addition: Expansion of any existing building(s) or structure(s) on a project site in which the total aggregate value of work in any 24-month period exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of all buildings and structures on the entire project site.

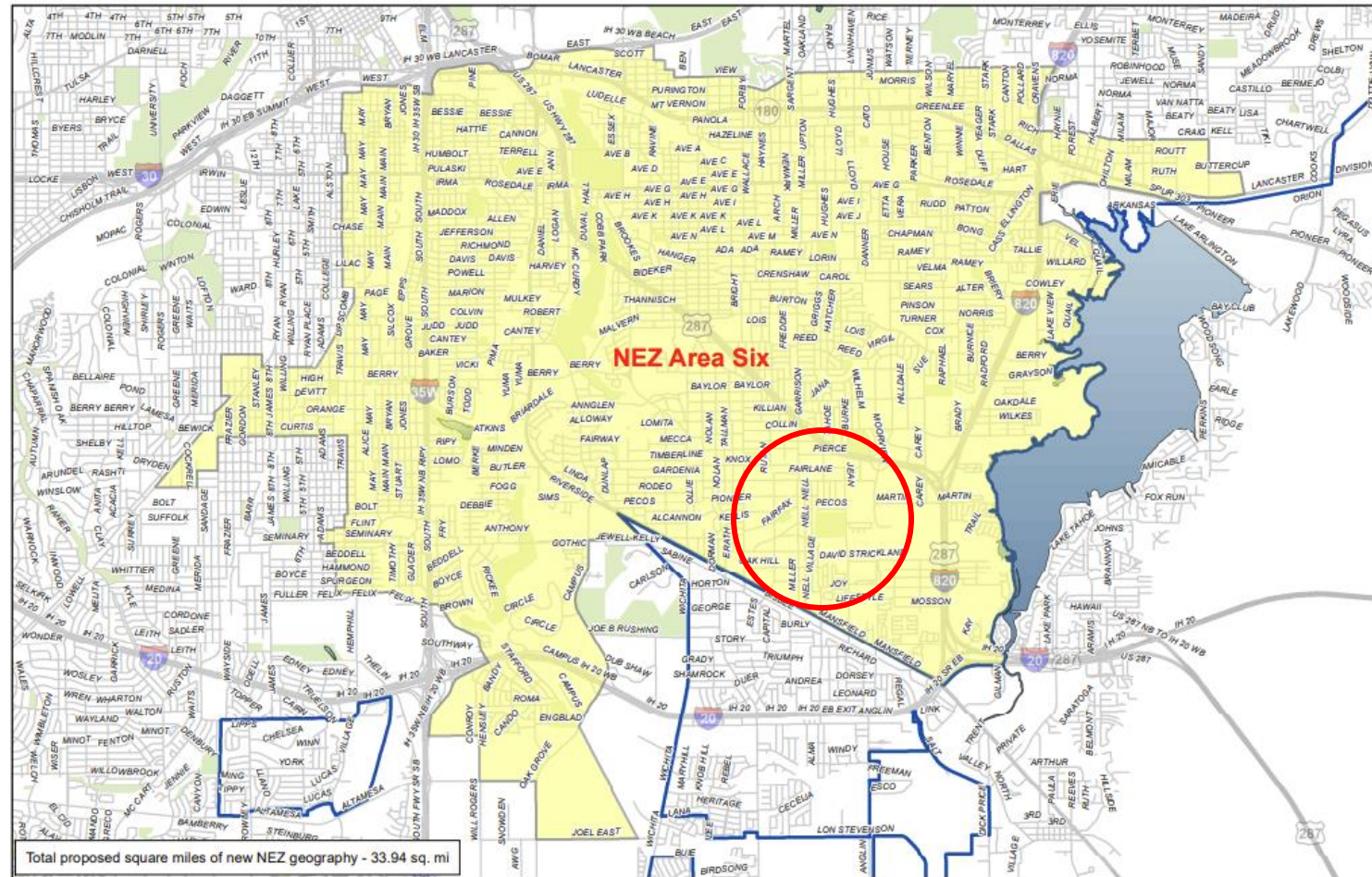
Change of Use: The expansion of or change to a use of a facility.



Engage the Community, City Council, and Stakeholders

- Working with landowners to get buy-in for rezone opportunities to create buffers within the community
- Echo Heights is in Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) area six
 - Impact fees waived
 - Property tax abatement for NEZ projects to drive affordable housing
 - Waiver of development fees
 - Building permit
 - Plat
 - Demolition
 - CFA, zoning, encroachment agreement fees
- Removal of buyout for NEZ affordable housing requirement
 - 20% of development in NEZ must be affordable housing
 - Previously developers can pay \$200 per unit per year, limited to five years, to bypass this requirement
- Additional fee waiver – Low-income housing
 - Homeless Coalition has submitted for City Council Agenda
 - Waive all fees allowed by statute for developments with:
 - At least 51% of development is for low-income housing
 - In areas where income is 80% AMI or below
 - Echo Heights at 45% AMI
 - X Team permit expediting if requirements are met

NEZ Area 6



Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Area Six

- NEZ Area Six
- City Limits



© Copyright 2017 City of Fort Worth. Unauthorized reproduction is a violation of applicable laws. This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only approximate relative location of property boundaries. The City of Fort Worth assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of said data.

Mayor and Council Communication

DATE: 03/19/24

LOG NAME: 19WAIVE FEES, COVER EXPENDITURES AND EXPEDITE PROCESSES

CONSENT: Consent

SUBJECT

(ALL) Waive Certain Fees, Cover Certain Expenditures and Expedite Specific Development Processes for Those Housing Developments that are for Permanent Supportive Housing or are Developments where the Majority of Housing Units are Affordable to Those Making under 80% of Area Median Income

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Waive all fees allowable by statute, cover certain expenditures and expedite specific development processes for those housing developments that are for permanent supportive housing or are developments where the 51% or more of housing units are affordable to those making under 80% of Area Median Income; and include affordable rental and homeownership.
2. Find that the expenditures and waiver or deferral of City fees serves the public purpose of providing decent, safe and affordable housing to permanent supportive housing and very low-income residents in the City and that adequate controls are in place through loan documents to ensure the public purpose is carried out.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this Mayor and Council Communication (M&C) is to formally adopt a policy where all fees allowed by statute are waived or deferred, certain expenditures are covered and specific processes are expedited for permanent supportive housing developments or developments where the majority of housing units are below 80% Area Median Income (80% AMI).

The City Council adopted the Housing Affordability Strategy which cited a gap of 32,000 affordable housing units for those below 80% AMI with the majority of needed units under 60% AMI. One of the items on the "What Needs to Be Done" list in the Housing Affordability Strategy is to "provide targeted incentives and policy/process changes to lower housing development costs (including land disposition), and expand available resources." By waiving certain fees, covering certain expenditures and expediting specific processes, this goal is carried out to make the production of more affordable housing possible.

From the Housing Affordability Strategy, "Before construction starts, developers must design the project and navigate local regulations to get the project approved. The way a project is designed will depend in part on what local regulations allow. The longer or more difficult the development process, the higher the costs for the developers." By expediting certain development processes, the City can lower the costs of affordable housing.

Waived	Including	Not Included
Building Permit Application Fees	Expedited Permit Fees	
Plan Review Fees, 1st, 2nd & 3rd	Expedited plan Review, 4th Plan Review or Additional Plan Review	
Inspection Fees	Same Day Inspection Fees	
Trade Permit Fees		
Plat Application Fees - Concept Plan, Preliminary Plat, Final Plat, Short Form Plat		Recordation Fee paid to County
Demolition Permit Fees		
Structural Moving Fees		
Community Facilities Application Fees	Inspection Fees, Material Testing Fee & Water Lab Fees.	
Zoning Application Fees		
Street and Utility Easement Vacation Application Fees		Recordation Fee paid to County
Ordinance Inspection Fees		
Consent/Encroachment Agreement Application Fees		Recordation Fee and ROW annual fees paid to County
Urban Forestry Application Fees		
Sign Permit Fees		
Maintenance Application Fee		
Transportation Impact Fee Impact Fees		
Water & Wastewater Impact Fees	(if waived, has to be made up)	
For Review Only Fee		
Park Dedications	Requesting deferral for as long as the project serves as permanent supportive housing or affordable housing.	
Technology Fee		
Reactivation Fee		
Paper Processing		
Investigation Fee		

Engage the Community, City Council, and Stakeholders

■ Increase Community Collaboration

- Attend city council meetings as a community to make your voice known, specifically to Councilwoman Martinez
- Work with Development Corporation of Tarrant County www.devcorptc.net
 - Provides a link between local government, public financing and non-profit organizations
- Develop relationship with www.dctctexas.org for affordable housing
 - Charlie Price – Executive Director, charlie@dctc.cc, 817-870-9008
- Formulate private neighborhood meetings and activities to enhance awareness and increase community involvement.

■ The Political Angle

- Voice your opinions from the beginning, before decisions are finalized.
- Be prepared with statistics and data to support your position. Use other Tarrant county redevelopment projects as examples provided by the non-profits above.
- Establish a Neighborhood team of non-profit organizations, environmental planners, non-profit lawyers, community leaders and residents, Neighborhood Services, retail owners, landowners, commercial operators, city and municipal leaders to affect change.
- Stay engaged throughout the process with the City Council, community leaders and nearby neighbors.



PROPOSED LAND USE VISION

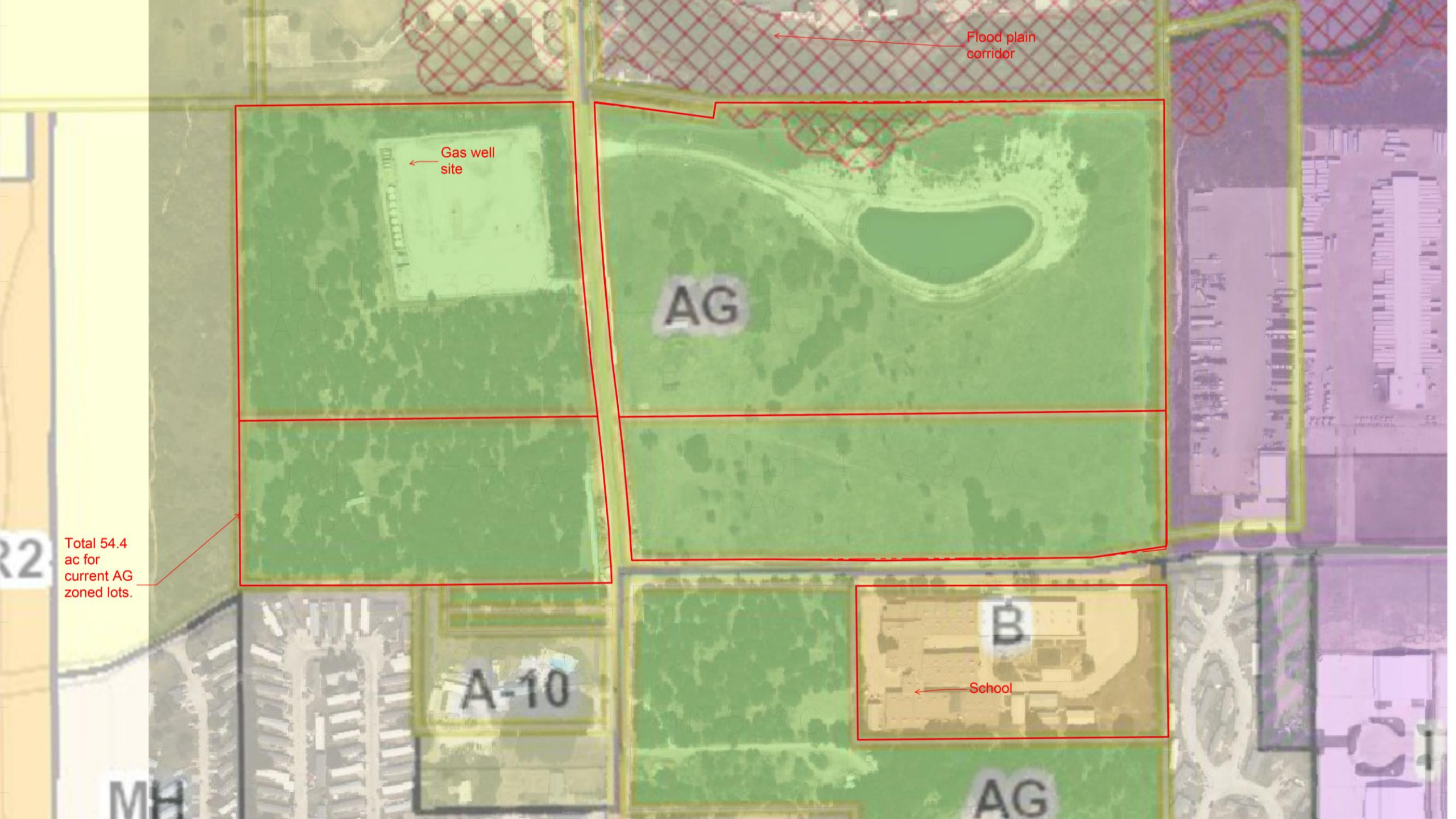
Site Opportunities and Constraints – 54 Acres Site

■ Opportunities

- Recent zoning to agriculture
- Undeveloped green space
- Existing dense forestry to the West of Parker Henderson
- More residential across from elementary school in danger of closing
- Creation of affordable housing
- Implementation of buffer
- Connection to Prairie Dog Park

■ Constraints

- Gas well drilling site
- Unknown environmental conditions
- Floodplain corridor
- Existing retention pond
- Island surrounded by industrial
- Housing must be affordable
- Surrounding income will not attract grocery store
- Prairie Dog Park recreation and playgrounds already exist



Flood plain corridor

Gas well site

AG

Lot 1 13.8 AC

AG

Lot 2 22 AC

AG

Lot 3 7.7 AC

AG

Lot 4 9.9 AC

AG

A-10

B

School

AG

R2

Total 54.4 ac for current AG zoned lots.

MH

A-10. CT
F.L.U. PUBLIC
PARK

M.F.H.

REGULATORY FLOODWAY

A-10

GAS WELL SITE

POND

IND

PARCEL 1.
AG.
213.8 AC
F.L.U. OPEN SPACE

PARCEL 3
AG
22 AC
F.L.U. L.D. Res

PARCEL 2.
AG.
7.7 AC.
F.L.U. OPEN SPACE

PARCEL 4
AG
9.9 AC
F.L.U. ~ LP. Res

PARCELS 5, 6
1 AC
AG
F.L.U. R. S/F

ELEMETRY
SCHOOL.

AG.
16.5 AC.

M.F.H.

A-10

A-10

A-10



PRAIRIE DOG PARK

EXISTING
GAS WELL

PARKER HENDERSON RD

EXISTING
RETENTION

DAVID STRICKLAND RD

WM GREEN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Legend

- ① SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- ② ATTACHED HOMES
- ③ NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN
- ④ NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL
- ⑤ RECREATION CENTER
- ⑥ BASKETBALL COURTS
- ⑦ MULTI-FUNCTION FIELD
- ⑧ PLAYGROUND
- ⑨ GRILL/PICNIC AREA
- ⑩ LANDSCAPE BUFFER
- ⑪ TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- ⑫ CREEK CORRIDOR
- ⑬ CROSSWALK

Renderings – Affordable Housing



Renderings - Walking Trails



Renderings - Playground



Rendering – Recreation Center



Renderings – Neighborhood Business/ Retail





SAMPLE BUDGETS

Sample Budget Range



	Low	High
Earthwork	5,080,000	6,210,000
Site Paving at Landscape Areas	4,610,000	5,630,000
Landscaping	7,730,000	9,440,000
Retail Shell	4,410,000	5,390,000
Recreation Center	2,570,000	3,140,000
Residential Streets and Utilities	11,660,000	14,250,000
Attached Residential – 140 units at \$162k	20,410,000	24,950,000
Single Family Homes – 92 units at \$196k	16,230,000	19,840,000
Total	72,700,000	88,850,000

Q&A

PEYTON BOOTH

KIMBERLY DOTY

MARI HENRY

KEVIN YU

LEI XIAO

MATT BODZY

information.uli.org