

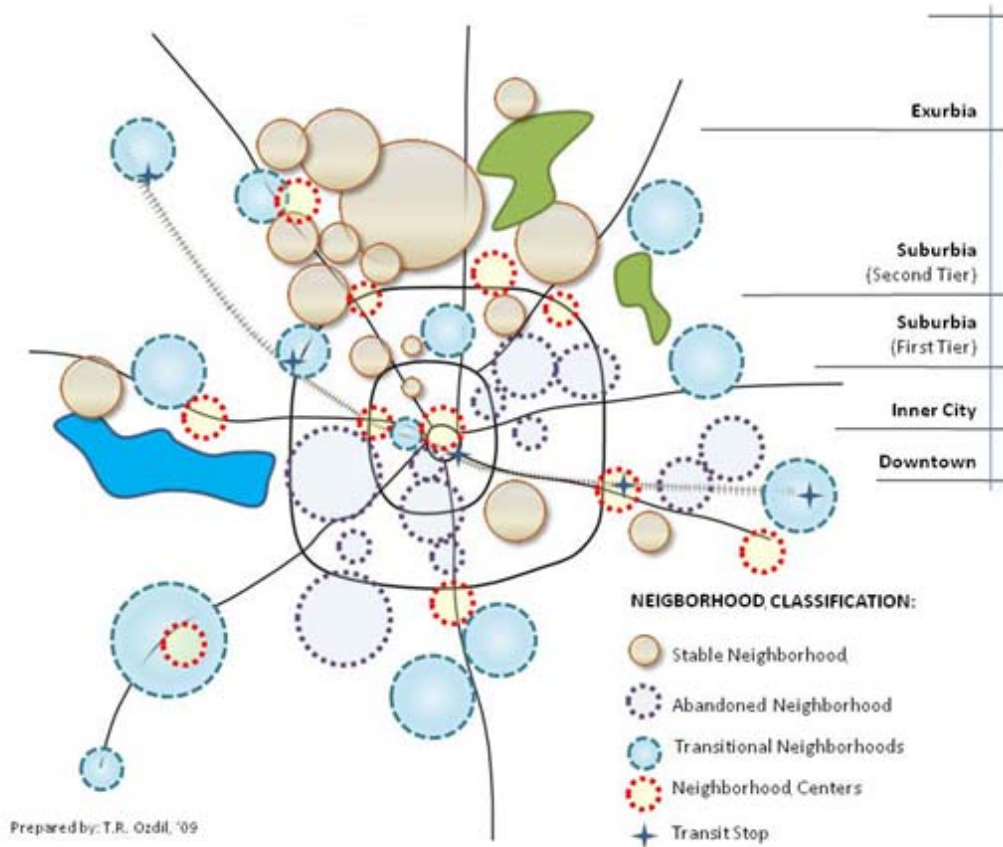
Vision North Texas
NEIGHBORHOODS AND ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

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I. NEIGHBORHOOD DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

A neighborhood in this document is broadly defined as a geographic area officially designated by a city or recognized by the residents that live there as possessing common features. In general, neighborhoods can be classified into four types illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: NEIGHBORHOODS



1. **Stable neighborhoods:** This type of neighborhoods/communities refers to those places with high quality of life such as clean and walkable streets, easy access to various daily activity sites, nice and well-maintained housing and landscape, close proximity to good schools, and safe environment with multiple mobility options. Stable neighborhoods are likely to maintain their attractiveness to old and new home owners and will sustain in a relatively long time period.
2. **Abandoned neighborhoods:** On the contrary, this type of neighborhoods is often characterized with low quality of life that is resulted from deteriorated building conditions, high crime rate, high vacancy rate, poor schools, and high concentration of population below poverty level. These neighborhoods are often clustered in central city and inner tier areas. Some are also located at inexpensive developments in the first or second ring/tier of urban development.
3. **Transitional neighborhoods:** These are areas with older housing stocks but livable conditions at the present; however, their future is uncertain. These neighborhoods are experiencing increases in percentage of rental properties and commercial encroachment. The quality of life in these neighborhoods is declining. They are at the tipping point where growth can take in two different directions. They can either be revitalized to become stable communities or be neglected and turn into abandoned neighborhoods.
4. **Neighborhood centers:** Unlike the previous ones, this type of neighborhoods usually carries with one or more identifier(s) such as historic landmarks, activity centers, concentration of services, highly used public places, mixed-use land development, and intermodal transfer centers. This type of neighborhoods could be ones with positive or negative attributes.

II. CASE STUDIES OF NEIGHBORHOODS

While Stable neighborhoods may be able to sustain their identities, other types of neighborhoods are more volatile from future developments. This section focuses on case studies of the abandoned and transitional neighborhoods as well as neighborhood centers. In addition, it discusses the potential outcomes of proper planning and interventions.

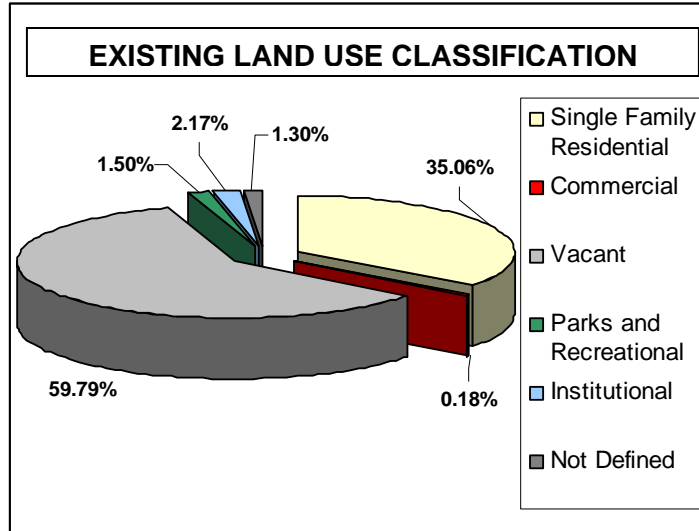
Joppa in Southeast Dallas¹

Throughout the Metroplex are neighborhoods that are characterized by deteriorating property, high vacancy and crime rates, poor schools, and scattered abandoned buildings. Where once these abandoned neighborhoods were found clustered near city centers, the first and second

¹ See Anjamoni, et al., 2003a

tier subdivisions are at the age where they are also marked by substandard housing and a growing volume of abandoned properties. An example of an abandoned neighborhood would be Joppa in Southeast Dallas. As shown in Figure 2, the neighborhood has a high percentage of property that is disserted or under-utilized, a common symptom of abandoned neighborhoods.

Figure 2. Proportion of Land Uses in Abandoned Neighborhood



As abandonment grows, the vitality and quality of life of a neighborhood is depleted and it becomes a burden to communities rather than an asset.

Several of the alternatives will help lift these neighborhoods back up to vital, livable neighborhoods where residents and business owners take pride in their property and are actively engaged in the life of the area. Good planning that will create a timetable of investments in these areas can take advantage of available blocks of properties to create a very different and viable neighborhood (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Existing Conditions and Redevelopment Potential



1) Existing Condition of Houses in Community 2) Remodeled houses in Community



3) Houses constructed in 1980's in Community 4) New Constructed Houses in Community

The Ideal Neighborhood²

The Ideal neighborhood is an example of Transitional neighborhood, which by proper planning and collective efforts from the city, the community and the developer, has been improved over the years.

The Ideal neighborhood is located in south Dallas. It is one of the poorest African American communities in Texas. According to the 2000 Census data, the median income in the neighborhoods was \$7,067. The neighborhood is predominated by rental properties, and low-income and single-parent families. Like many inner cities in America, this neighborhood was fast losing the battle against decay, drug dealers, absentee landlords, and a residential exodus.

Since May 1998, the community has worked with the TR Hoover Community Development Corporation to transform the community. As recent as a few years ago, about thirty new homes have been built and owned by low-income families (Figure 4). Also built is the 5,000 square foot neighborhood center that

² See Anjomani, et al., 2003b

houses a technology center, a small business incubator space, an after-school program and a homebuyers' club (Figure 5). The community has worked with planning students at the University of Texas at Arlington to plan the Bexar Street, a main street of the neighborhood.

Figure 4: Existing and New Houses



Figure 5: The Existing and New Neighborhood Center



Oakland Lancaster³

Neighborhood Centers are typically marked as the activity centers where there is usually a concentration of services and/or historic sites. While neighborhoods are a concentration of residential uses, they are also bordered or surround an area that is utilized by one or neighborhoods for services and public space. As neighborhoods go through transitional periods, the centers can act as a stabilizing force or speed the negative impacts that lead to abandonment. Several of the alternatives can bring about positive reinvestment in neighborhood centers where attention is given to market analysis and urban design. An example of a neighborhood center that has begun a negative transition is Oakland Lancaster intersection near downtown Fort Worth. This area is also bordered by Kenwood Street which

³ See Anjomani, et al. 2003c

has been designated as a historic street. The area is presently noted for big vacant spaces and oversized parking lots.

Neighborhood centers can become pedestrian friendly, services centered areas that bring vitality to a neighborhood. By the use of wide sidewalks, clustering of services around urban park space, and parking to the side or rear of establishments, underutilized space can be transformed into places of activity and interest. For many communities, having viable, active neighborhood centers will only happen with a great deal of planning and commitment.

The City of Fort Worth has begun to use the creation and revitalization of neighborhood centers as a means of revitalizing neighborhoods and returning them to vibrant centers of activity. Below is the intersection of Lancaster and Oakland. The surrounding neighborhoods were aging and basically in a state of transition with an increasing number of properties being abandoned. Strategic creation of urban centers can make a difference. Figure 6 shows existing conditions and Figure 7 shows what the intersection could be.

Figure 6. Existing Conditions in An Underutilized Neighborhood Center



Figure 7. Possibilities for Neighborhood Centers



III. ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: POSSIBLE IMPACTS & IMPLICATIONS

In this section, possible impacts of the five alternative development scenarios on neighborhoods and historic assets are speculated and the implications to the regional development are discussed.

Possible Impacts of Alternative Development Scenarios on Neighborhoods

Business as Usual

Possible impacts of the five alternative development scenarios are depicted in Table 1. Under the business as usual scenario, stable neighborhoods will probably be able to remain the same as these neighborhoods have experienced the same development pressure in the past and have been able to maintain their stability. The negative impacts on abandoned neighborhoods will be the greatest. As new developments continue to shift outward, existing abandoned neighborhoods are likely to continuously deteriorate perhaps at a fast speed. The number of abandoned neighborhoods is likely to increase as more transitional neighborhoods will become new abandoned neighborhoods. New neighborhood centers are likely to appear at the urban periphery areas and more vacancies may be seen in many existing neighborhood centers. While there has been increasing interest in retaining historic buildings, many historic sites and buildings have been lost to sprawl and business as usual would continue this trend.

TABLE 1. POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORHOODS

<i>Neighborhoods/ Communities</i>	<i>Business As Usual</i>	<i>Connected Centers</i>	<i>Return on Investment</i>	<i>Diverse, Distinct Communities</i>	<i>Green Region</i>
Stable Neighborhoods	o	o	+	+	o/+
Abandoned Neighborhoods	-	+	+	+	+
Transitional Neighborhoods	-	+	+	o	-
Neighborhood Centers	-	+	+	+	+
Historic Assets	-	o	o	+	o

o = No Effect

+ = Positive Effect

- = Negative Effect

Connected Centers

The likely impact of connected centers scenario on stable neighborhoods will be the same as the impact of the business as usual alternative. The net impact on abandoned and transitional neighborhoods is mixed. Those within close proximity to the development centers will benefit from the development while others more distant from the connected centers will transition into abandoned neighborhoods. Existing neighborhood centers will be strengthened if they become the focus of the development. Because these existing centers have already saved or demolished historic buildings and sites, there should be no change in historic assets except that aging centers may become historic sites over time.

Return on Investment

With a focus on maximizing the utility of existing infrastructure and sustainable development, the return on investment scenario should have positive impacts on all types of neighborhoods. However, the degree of the impacts on different types of neighborhoods may vary and largely relies on specific implementation actions. The long abandoned core areas will enjoy considerable redevelopment but some of this will come at the cost of losing some old buildings and open space that just may be reaching the age of potential historic designation. Transitional neighborhoods will be able to save moderate to low income housing stock if measures are taken by cities when properties become more valuable due to their location near core areas. The good news is that transitional neighborhoods will be able to stabilize, if not redevelop. Since

many of the transitional neighborhoods and first ring neighborhoods are facing major issues with an aging building stock, the potential for saving some of the better examples of 1950s and 1960s buildings will also add to the future attractiveness of these areas.

Diverse, Distinct Communities

The main objective of the diverse/distinct communities alternative, as indicated in its name, is to create diverse communities with distinct characters by strengthening traditional centers, reinforcing community history and characters, creating places with a mix of uses and more intense development, and providing various mobility choices and sufficient urban services. With a strong focus on downtown and other community centers, as well as on community identities, this option is likely to have positive impacts on stable neighborhoods and neighborhood centers. However, the possible impacts on transitional and abandoned neighborhoods are less clear, as these types of neighborhoods may not have distinct identities and usually require much more effort to transform. If care is taken early in the process to limit sprawl out from these neighborhoods, then transitional neighborhoods will be able to stabilize. This scenario does run the risk of being close to “business as usual” which has resulted in abandoned areas and neighborhoods and placing stress on areas as outward movement gains momentum. Diverse, distinct communities will increase their historic assets as a means of creating an individual and unique identity.

Green Region

The green region alternative focuses on preservation of natural assets and creation of green jobs. In addition, it includes networks for non-auto mobility options and use of alternative energy sources. Stable neighborhoods and neighborhood centers may benefit from such development alternative, as residents and businesses in stable neighborhoods and neighborhood centers can enjoy improved parks and other green assets. Transitional neighborhoods will be the losers since many are some distance from existing greenways and natural amenities that will be the focus of redevelopment. Abandoned neighborhoods will be enhanced since these older areas were typically built at or near natural amenities. As trails and open space improvements are made, these areas will be major targets for redevelopment efforts. Stable neighborhoods have typically remained stable because of exiting amenities are remained and been enhanced over time. Historic assets would be part of the efforts to enhance open space and drainage areas since these areas have historic significance.

Implications for The region

What are the implications of the aforementioned impacts for the region as a whole? Table 2 shows some of the possible impacts. While certain alternatives would stabilize existing conditions and reverse some of the abandonment, none will totally reverse the need for improved housing conditions for some residents of the area. However, several alternatives offer neighborhoods the opportunity to improve and revitalize areas when sprawl is checked. There can and should be greater effort to turn around neighborhoods that are in a transitional phase before we lose valuable infrastructure and social investments.

TABLE 2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION

<i>Impacts of Alternatives</i>	<i>Business As Usual</i>	<i>Connected Centers</i>	<i>Return on Investment</i>	<i>Diverse, Distinct Communities</i>	<i>Green Region</i>
Land use pattern	Scattered, large outward development	denser in centers, outward movement from centers	Denser overall, greatly reduced outward movement	Denser, Diverse, lest outward	Denser in some places, more open space
Share of low income population	Continued abandonment cause increase	Decrease in redeveloped areas	Decrease with low income pushed to margins	Continue existing share	Increase away from amenities
Housing diversity	Decrease	Increase with greater demand	Increase at higher density	Decrease as each strive to create image	Increase as previous abandoned areas utilized
Ability to reduce obesity	Continued increase in obesity	Those near centers will have greater ability to walk to work and services	Increase in ability to walk to work and services with increase in densities	Increase in ability to walk to work and services with increase in densities	While ability to utilize open and green spaces to exercise, areas may not be near residential
Automobile VMT	Continue to increase	Remain same as travel to centers continue	Travel remain stable with decrease for some residents	Travel can increase if choice to live in one and work in another community	Has the ability to add to travel time as distances increase

<i>Impacts of Alternatives</i>	<i>Business As Usual</i>	<i>Connected Centers</i>	<i>Return on Investment</i>	<i>Diverse, Distinct Communities</i>	<i>Green Region</i>
Non-Auto Travel	Remain low	Could increase if public transit used to connect centers	Would increase use of public transit with denser population	Remain low for work to home travel	Increase in recreational use
Access to jobs	Remain same	Improve with concentrated centers	Improve with concentrated populations	Remain same	Greater dispersion
Crime	Continued increase	Decrease with greater concentration of law enforcement efforts	Decrease with greater concentration of law enforcement efforts	Remain same	Remain same
Education	Remain same	Easier access could raise levels	Easier access could raise levels	Remain same	Remain same
Air quality	Remain same	Would get better with greater use of public transit	Would remain same with growing densities	Remain same	Improve
Energy consumption	Increase	Remain same	Remain same	Remain same	Remain same
Highway lanes/miles	Increase	Remain same	Remain same	Remain same	Remain same

o = No Effect

+ = Positive Effect

- = Negative Effect

REFERENCES

- a. Anjomani, A. et al. Development Master Plan for Joppa, For Joppa CDC and the City of Dallas, 2003.
- b. Anjomani, A. et al. *Main Street Development Vision and Plan for Ideal Neighborhood*, For Ideal Neighborhood CDC and the City of Dallas, 2003.
- c. Anjomani, A. et al. *Development Plan for Oakland/Lancaster Village*, For the Oakland Lancaster Community Association and the City of Forth Worth, 2003.