

# Dallas Arts District Strategic Assessment Outline/Process

## Overview

The success of the Arts District has set in motion a dynamic of change that seeks to define the area within the larger Central Business District and the Metroplex. This is becoming more evident in the re-definition of the historic block grid and emergence of a new block scale better suited to large institutions set on grand ground planes.

However, the maturation of the Arts District has not fully integrated the area into the surrounding Central Business District, Downtown, and the public community it was intended to serve.

The Arts District has a role in the larger urban context that has not yet been fully achieved. The emergence of a significant Downtown resident population makes cohesiveness more important than ever and extends the notion of linking the rapidly growing Uptown, Deep Ellum and other residential zones. The strengthening of Downtown as a “hub” with each extension of the DART makes the cohesive urbanization of Downtown a regional necessity. In these redefinitions of Downtown, the Arts District is a significant “form giving” element.

## Issues to be Addressed

The process will address, at a minimum, the following topics:

### Planning Issues

- Issues related to streets and public transportation (DART, Public Works Department, MATA, etc.)
- The effects of the second DART alignment; the extension of the McKinney Avenue Trolley; and the downtown circulator study currently underway
- Connections with other parts of City, including the Victory, Uptown, Deep Ellum, Downtown areas, as well as other DART routes
- Pedestrian amenities to tie the Arts District entities together
- Pedestrian movement at major Flora Street intersections (Harwood, Olive, Pearl, Routh)
- Potential closing of Harwood Street at Woodall Rogers Park
- Trail connections from Katy, through the Arts District and to Fair Park and the Trinity Trails
- The likely and desirable mix of uses envisioned for the district
- The development and management of a lively, safe and clean street and public space environment
- Context Sensitive Street Design concepts for the District’s streets
- The contents of a comprehensive Arts District Area Plan that will provide the foundation for future strategic decision-making

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### **Parking Management Issues**

- Parking demand and supply now and in the near-, mid- and long-term future
- Overall parking strategies for the Arts District, including the likely effect of a “best practices” parking management system, including financial strategies
- The impact of Woodall Rogers Park on the Arts District
- Peak load (events) impact on parking
- A shared parking strategy to allow sharing of peak load among parking facilities

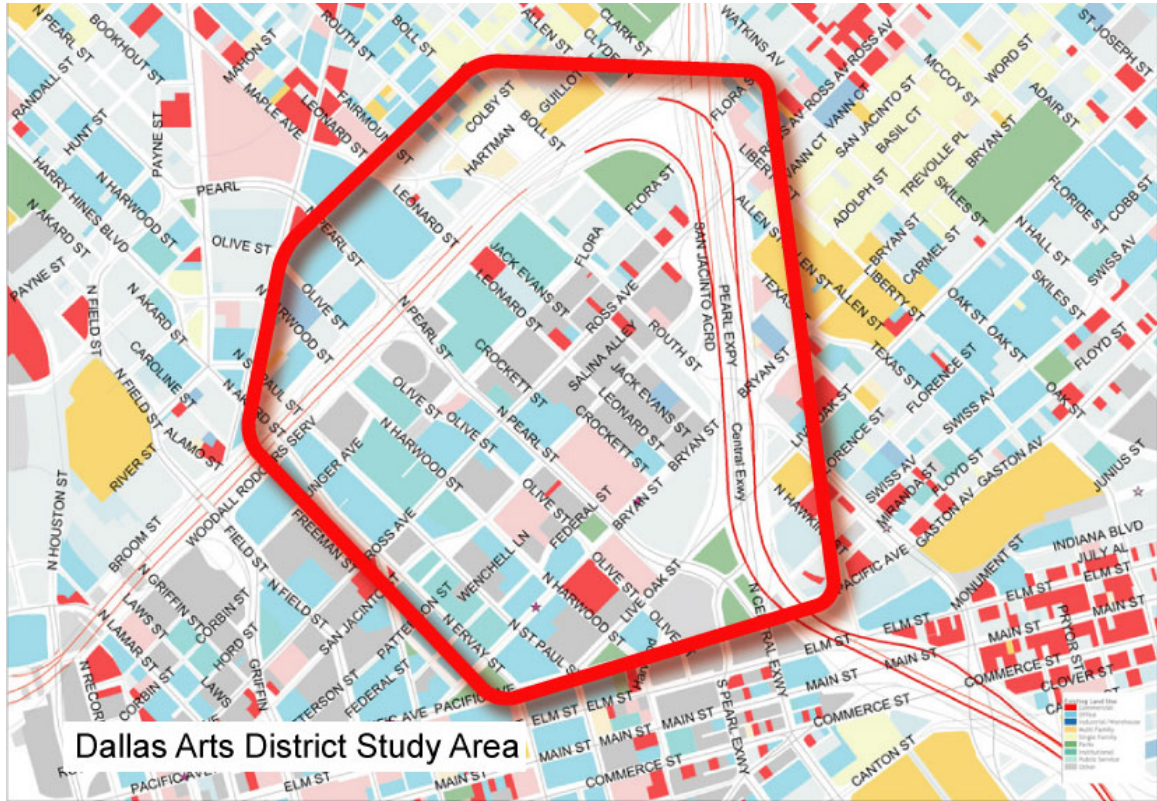
### **Landscape and Urban Design Issues**

- Flora Street guidelines to resolve new project plans with old Sasaki plan requirements
- Landscaping and urban design treatments at major Flora Street intersections (Harwood, Olive, Pearl, Routh)
- Updating current Urban Design guidelines with newer, more effective Design Standards
- Opportunities for improved streetscapes

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## Project Area

In order to include connections and opportunities outside the current Arts District boundaries, the study area will include the area indicated on the attached map. These are flexible boundaries, and may include connectivity issues that are outside this study area – this is simply the area intended for concentrated and detailed examination.



## Project Approach

Given the desired speed of the timeframe for this strategic assessment, we recommend using a classic business tool for strategic plans, the SWOT approach (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). While SWOT was originally designed for firms, rather than areas, we have found that with a few modifications, the SWOT approach can be applied to land use situations with great success. This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of the situation, and provides a comprehensive set of strategies for implementation.

We will be expanding on the SWOT technique, however, adding many elements of urban design and planning to the structure provided by this approach.

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The approach using the SWOT system develops strategies around the comparison of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats).

This approach provides a comprehensive basis for assessment, and also provides four types of strategies that address all contingencies, as follows:

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>S-O</b> strategies pursue opportunities that are a good fit with the District's strengths	<b>W-O</b> strategies overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities, identifying and overcoming roadblocks.
<b>Threats</b>	<b>S-T</b> strategies identify ways that the District can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats	<b>W-T</b> strategies establish a defensive plan to prevent the District weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats

### Project Tasks

#### Phase 1 Tasks

The following tasks are proposed for Phase 1:

**Task 1:** Develop base data for the district today, and assessments of the following:

- a) Current uses, including consolidating existing data on size, employment, peak and average transportation use, housing units, land and improvement values, etc.
- b) Transportation information including counts of vehicular traffic, parking usage, pedestrians, and transit boardings.
- c) Current regulations dealing with the District
- d) Pipeline projects or "sure bets" – the 5-year forecast
- e) Estimates of the 10- and 20-year potential forecast – the consultants will initially complete this with a review conducted in the first workshop.
- f) Data included in a comprehensive GIS database, with a three-

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dimensional model (using Sketchup software) of the District both for current conditions and future conditions (5, 10, and 20-year). This will allow quick assessment of parking and transportation demand as well as visualization of the existing and future conditions.

**Deliverable: A Comprehensive GIS, statistical, and 3-D model of the Arts District sufficient to use as the basis for the study.**

### **Task 2: Urban Form Assessment**

MESA will undertake an assessment of the physical fabric within, adjacent to, and structurally emanating from the Planning Area to determine the elements of physical form in the present development condition and a build-out condition as projected by the FCA/planning team. This physical fabric analysis seeks to identify those physical determinants of “place” that give (and will give) the district its unique identity as well as determine its locational advantage in relation to the larger Central Business District. MESA will identify the attributes of form and assess their type, nature of definition, impact on the cognitive structure of the district, relation to adjacent zones, relevance to the continued success and future influence of the District in its relation to the larger Central Business District. Particular attributes of form (present or projected) include:

- Remnants of the Historic Fabric
- Landmarks
- Edges
- Nodes
- Districts
- Portals
- Focal points
- Connections/Pathways
- Linkages/Corridors
- Resources/Opportunities
- Constraints/Liabilities

#### **Task 2.1: Trend and Patterns Assessment**

MESA will undertake an assessment of the interrelation between built and historic conditions as they create patterns, linkages, and other kinds of form giving conditions that compliment, challenge, enhance, and/ or hinder creation of a coherent district and an integrated component of the larger Downtown core. Form-giving conditions include:

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- Continuities
- Differentiations
- Groupings
- Emerging patterns
- Sequences
- Arrivals
- Transitions

### **Task 2.2: Pedestrian Use Assessment**

MESA will observe pedestrian usage of the district public domain and the role that domain plays in the operations of district Land Uses. Particular attention is paid to:

- Directed movement
- Interface with vehicular movement
- Motorial movement
- Gathering
- Legibility
- Pedestrian pathways

In addition, MESA will observe vehicular patterns to define vehicular pathways. Pathway distinctions include:

- Directed movement
- Waiting and building interface movement
- Movement convergences
- Legibility.

### **Deliverable: The Assessment Report**

MESA will prepares a summary report of the above described assessments that includes annotated maps and diagrams as well analytical comparison of the assessment findings to create a framework for articulation of larger Urban Design issues.

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### **Task 3: Stakeholder Interviews**

Conduct interviews with key stakeholders to assess the participants' vision and goals for the District. This will bring to light the common ideas and unique perspectives of the District's main stakeholders, and also provide guidance for the recommendation of the final product.

**Deliverable: Summary of the interviews and key findings**

### **Task 4: Conduct workshop to assess Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats**

These workshops will include the consultant team, representatives of the Arts District stakeholders, representatives of other key stakeholders such as the City of Dallas and DART. This workshop will review the existing conditions, and brainstorm the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the district. In addition, some strategies would be developed more fully using the maps and computer tools. The workshop would be conducted in a three-hour session.

The day following the workshop, the consultant team would meet in a studio setting to work to finalize the SWOT analysis and begin developing the specific strategies that address each of the issues raised.

### **Task 5: Team/Stakeholder Charrette to finalize key strategies**

The Charrette would begin by allowing the team and stakeholders to build a vision of the district 20 years from now. This would build on the information gathered to date, and use the key strategies to build one or more physical and programmatic descriptions of what the group envisions for the District.

Secondly, each of the key strategies would be presented and the group would critique, improve and add details to the strategies. These strategies would include:

- Land use and development strategies
- Transportation and connectivity strategies
- Urban design, public space and streetscape strategies
- Parking management strategies
- Funding and Management strategies

Strategies would include short-term strategies (e.g. clean up the area under Woodall Rodgers and develop 75 to 100 new parking spaces), as well as

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long-range strategies that would be part of a new master plan (e.g. develop a comprehensive parking management system funded through a common fee structure).

Finally, the process for developing a new Arts District master plan would be presented, critiqued and improved. The form of the final plan would be decided, as well as the tools that would be used (including regulations, investment, and partnership tools)

The Consultant team would meet the following day and finalize the topics for the final report. Each team would then be assigned responsibility for developing the appropriate strategies. The team would meet and present the final report content (orally and in a PowerPoint presentation) to the clients on November 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Task 6:** The team would finalize the strategic report and prepare the final written report and presentation for delivery on or about December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Deliverable: Written and illustrated report containing assessment, recommended action plan, and cost estimates of major actions. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation of the report will be included. All data gathered will be provided in a documented and usable format.

### Timing and Phasing - Summary

While the Sasaki Plan took years to complete, this process is intended to move quickly – at the speed of business. Therefore, we propose using an adapted business planning approach that allows decisions to be made quickly on the best course of action, and to use new tools provided by the comprehensive plan to help develop an effective course of action.

#### **Task 1: Develop base data & assessments for the district today**

**Deliverable:** A comprehensive GIS, Statistical and 3-D model of the Arts District sufficient to use as the basis for the study

- Proposed Delivery Date: December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006

#### **Task 2: Urban Form Assessment**

**Deliverable:** The Assessment Report

- Proposed Delivery Date: December 18<sup>th</sup>



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### **Task 3: Stakeholder Interviews**

**Deliverable:** Summary of the interviews and key findings

- Proposed Delivery Date: December 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Task 4: Conduct Workshop**

Hold workshop to assess Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats within the Arts District Area.

- Proposed Workshop Date: November 29th and 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Task 5: Team/Stakeholder Charette to finalize key strategies**

- Proposed Charette Date: December 19<sup>th</sup>

**Task 6: The team would finalize the strategic report and prepare the final written report and presentation.**

- Proposed FINAL REPORT Presentation: January 15<sup>th</sup>

**Proposed delivery date: On or about January 31st.**