

# Executive Summary

This Master Plan provides the vision for the historic downtown of Frisco. It updates the 1998 plan, establishing a new community vision and companion business plan for implementation.

The Master Plan is comprised of three key elements:

- The Connectivity Plan;
- The Development Character Areas; and
- The Illustrative Building-Scale Plan

Those three plan elements are depicted at the end of this Executive Summary and are explained in more detail in the expanded plan document on the subsequent pages. Together, they provide a framework for Downtown's future as guided by the extensive community input secured throughout the process.

## ADVANCING AN AUTHENTIC DOWNTOWN

Downtown Frisco is thriving. Its vitality is apparent when one is grabbing coffee, sharing dinner and a drink with friends or enjoying a meal from a local food truck. This Master Plan update builds that vitality and on what is already working in Downtown.

Once an agricultural center for North Texas, Frisco has transformed into a community of quality suburban neighborhoods, strong businesses and modern entertainment destinations. Historic downtown could complement that success. In that context, this update allows for the meshing of Frisco Square, Heritage Center and Downtown to operate as a regional destination of walkable, connected and distinct places.

When the original Master Plan was adopted in 1998 companion zoning was established to ensure the plan's implementation. As the local Frisco and regional markets have expanded, and a broad downtown constituency has been established, this updated Master Plan provides a vision of downtown's role, locally and regionally in a more robust way.

Figure 1A: 4th Street Plaza



The Gateway Planning Team was retained to create a comprehensive approach for downtown's future by combining community vision, walkable design, context-sensitive infrastructure, connected public spaces, new business potential and formal management options. The key driver of this approach is bringing together regional identity and local authenticity so that uniqueness is based on market-driven authenticity. The "DNA" for this dynamic will be the Character Areas.

These Character Areas set forth neighborhood development characteristics and the development potential of each unique to that place, and how those places relate to each other. As downtown



life emanates across Main Street and then to the north and to the south, these Character Areas guide the combination of uses, building scale and transition to the surrounding neighborhoods. This strategic approach aligns the marketplace and public policy so that the emerging brand, the Rail District, can advance the strongest community vision for Downtown possible.

## THE ROLE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan, structured by the Character Areas, guides the implementation recommendations and policies to realize the market potential within a community vision. One-on-one and group discussions with the City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Downtown Master Plan Committee, the Staff Team and a range of community stakeholders established a focus for the Master Plan. Three key opportunities emerged for the Master Plan:

- A connected, pedestrian-friendly street network (see Figure 3) is necessary to provide access and mobility throughout Downtown. Thus, this Master Plan establishes a comprehensive connectivity framework including pedestrian-focused linkages to new public spaces and expanded locations for parking that supports downtown as a destination of connected places.
- Many of the buildings on Main Street and Elm Street house successful businesses; but several properties are candidates for redevelopment—thus, this Master Plan provides guidance on the scale of redevelopment and its relationship to improved public spaces through all of Downtown (see Figure 3A).
- Downtown has the potential to be a premier historic center offering regionally significant business, entertainment and boutique living options—thus, this Master Plan details a market analysis and resulting proposed redevelopment program that establishes distinct areas for the aggregation of diverse and interesting places. At the same time, it provides a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for street/ pedestrian/bike infrastructure, public spaces, parking,



Stakeholder Interviews and the Design Workshop Open House and Presentation in February and April 2018 (Source: Gateway Planning)

utility relocation and drainage improvements.

These initial city and stakeholder discussions created informed momentum for the project as the process moved forward. This process resulted in several key implementation strategies:

- Building-scale catalytic plans within the Character Area framework were created (see Figures 4A and 5A), including a proposed Design District that can serve as the transition area between Downtown and Frisco Square;
- Improvement of streets and the creation of gateways within a design hierarchy to absorb growth, sustain neighborhood vitality, and to relate different modes of mobility;
- A strategy for combining the historic Downtown with the greater Frisco brand, including Frisco Square and Heritage Center; and
- A relationship between local business and community organizations and city government that advances decision-making.

# A Plan for Investment

Business plans often advance vision, design and policy direction for regulation. This Master Plan provides additional guidance so that public investment can be combined with desired private investment. The following summarizes both the traditional elements and the business-focused elements to achieve that combination.

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The market analysis undertaken for the Master Plan validates that demand for downtown development is strong. The analysis establishes substantial demand for a range of commercial, retail and entertainment uses. Simply put, tremendous spending power is “leaking” out of Frisco. A significant share of this spending power can be captured in Downtown. The Master Plan and its Character Area framework provides a design and programmatic context to capture that local and regional spending power.

A compelling opportunity to address this leaking spending power is establishing a mixed-use Design District between Heritage Center and the Silos, which would take advantage of spending potential on specialty furniture, art, household specialty items, and other related products. It could also build on the authentic history of the Frisco railroad junction while linking Downtown and Frisco Square through an eclectic series of shops, restaurants, fabrication studios and showrooms anchored by a pedestrian focused promenade.

## CONNECTIVITY, OPEN SPACE AND PARKING

Unlike suburban development, successful downtown redevelopment requires the strategic interaction of multi-modal transportation options with parking that serves a district rather than a single building. Also necessary is a variety of public spaces linked by the street/pedestrian network so that they provide an inviting environment for people to walk around. This walkable context is critical to encourage a “park once” context in downtown. This would encourage people to park and walk to multiple destinations for several blocks. This updated Master

Figure 2A: 4th Street Plaza Catalytic Opportunity



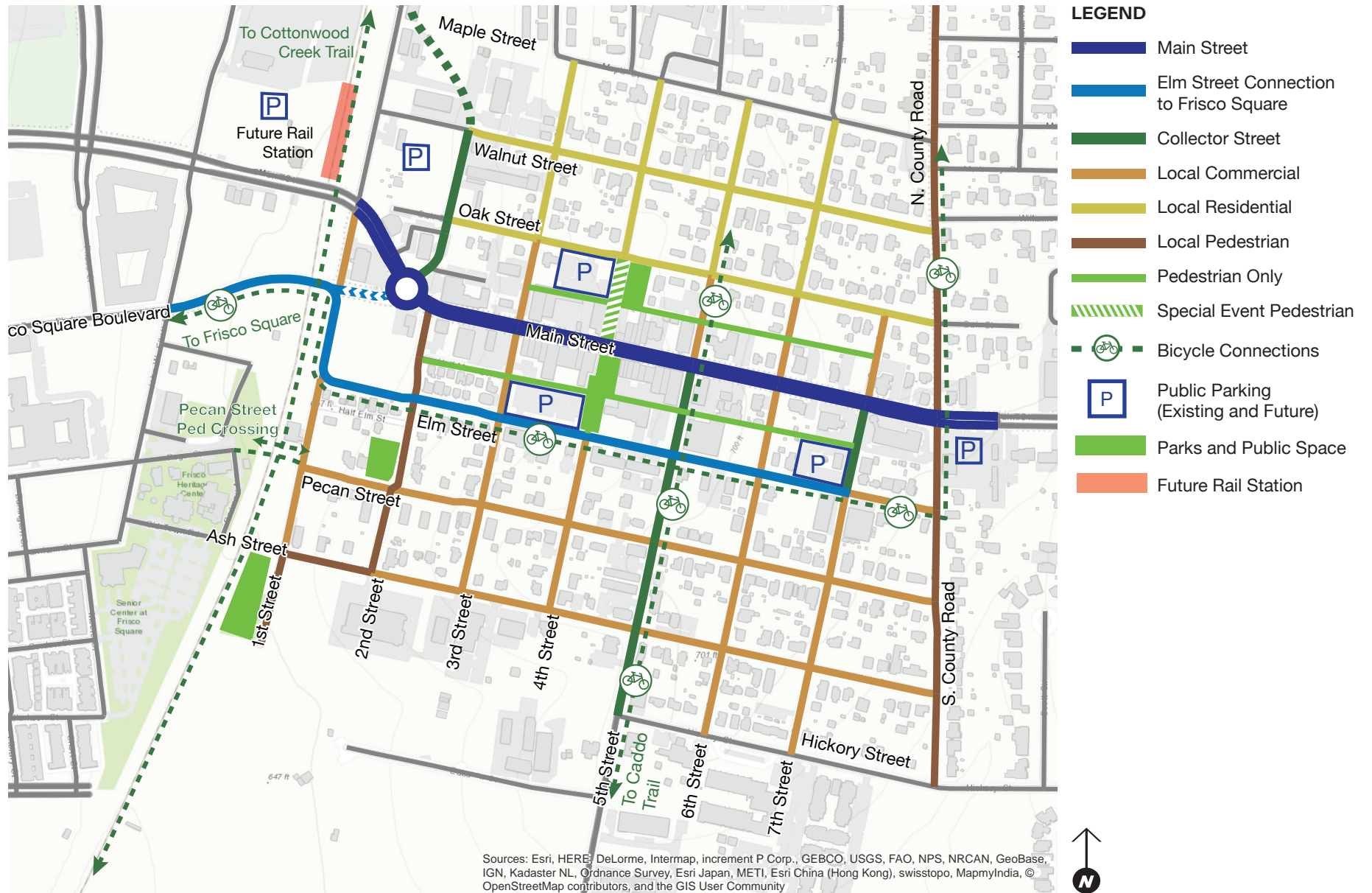
Plan establishes a connected system of streets, public spaces (plazas, parks and open spaces) and parking with Main Street and Elm Street, as a reinvented complete street, acting as the east-west spines.

The area has several existing parks and open spaces nearby, including Frisco Commons Park and Youth Center Park to the northeast, Gallegos Park and First Street Park to the west/south, and Oakbrook Park to the south. These spaces are accessible via the existing network of local streets, sidewalks and trails. In addition, a new 4th Street Plaza (see Figure 2) would encourage people to traverse Main Street and serve as the anchoring public space in the Downtown’s overall connectivity framework. This plaza also is intended to encourage a new gravity of downtown restaurants, spaces for hanging out and appropriately scaled urban living.

Specific improvements are also proposed in this connectivity system to create continuity between traffic operations and pedestrian comfort



Figure 3A: Connectivity Map



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including a roundabout at 2nd Street and modifications to Frisco Square Boulevard, Main Street and Elm Street to improve traffic circulation while expanding opportunities for cycling. Finally, this plan proposes some stronger cycling connections to the north and south to improve cycling access within the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

This connected system links adjacent neighborhoods, destinations, public space and parking through pedestrian-friendly, multimodal streets, resulting in a distinct Downtown that can sustain a design district and public plaza. This unique area will allow for new restaurants and entertainment without threatening the businesses in Downtown today.

## **STREET INFRASTRUCTURE, DRAINAGE AND UTILITIES**

The ability to reinvent portions of the existing street infrastructure, utilities and drainage systems will require an alignment of substantial redevelopment and the community's support for investment in that infrastructure. The Master Plan relates the infrastructure improvements with the redevelopment potential at the building, block and street scales. This approach is like that of a master developer. The difference is that the approach in the Downtown Master Plan enables multiple ownership interests adjacent to one another to invest and redevelop under a common phased infrastructure plan. The Master Plan provides urban design details of a reinvented infrastructure context, including potentially burying utilities at their current location or relocating them to alleys so that private development projects can be achieved while also enhancing public realm aesthetics. It should be underscored, however, one global solution for utility access for redevelopment of a particular site or building may not be workable. Therefore, some unique accommodations may need to be made for unique conditions.

The City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Downtown Master Plan Committee met two times to discuss several critical elements of the Master Plan. Main Street emerged as a major focus as anticipated. In that process the City Council expressed its preference after input from the Commission and Committee for **Option B** as the preferred option. In that option, the median is replaced with a center turn lane to facilitate additional pedestrian zone

width that could accommodate shade trees. Option D has the same road cross section as Option B, but provides expanded sidewalks by eliminating the on-street parking. A combination of Option B and D could be utilized whereby temporary raised cafe space or parklets could be placed in some of the parking areas envisioned in Option B, especially as more off-street parking becomes available in the future. In addition, the travel lanes could be narrowed from 12 feet to 11 feet because emergency vehicles can now utilize the center turn lane for part of the required emergency clear zone.

Finally, Option E, which would eliminate left turn lanes and introduce angled parking, like 15th Street in downtown Plano, also received substantial positive attention because of the opportunity to provide significant parking density for the core blocks, emanating from 4th Street both ways along Main Street. However, its tradeoffs include retaining narrow sidewalks and reducing traffic capacity through Downtown.

## **Implementation**

Several core policy, infrastructure and design elements must be considered for near term implementation for the vision of the Master Plan Update to be realized in a substantial way, including:

- A policy decision that maintaining a pedestrian-focused character in Downtown is more important than widening Main Street to accommodate more pass-through traffic and therefore the purpose of reconstructing Main Street and other side streets is to enhance walkability and improve pedestrian crossings while maintaining traffic efficiency;
- Developing a plaza along 4th Street north and south of Main Street with the south portion permanently closed to vehicular traffic and the addition of a parking structure with ground level retail facing the plaza on Elm Street;
- Mitigating anticipated additional traffic and parking that will infiltrate the surrounding neighborhood streets by implementing an overall parking management system with parking eventually treated so that it is priced according to



its specific function and value, including the addition of one more strategically-located parking structure to serve the future TOD identified in the Comprehensive Plan at the silos and the mixed-use Design District proposed in this Master Plan;

- Developing strategies to utilize some of the alleyways for pedestrian ways; and
- Constructing an alternative street configuration near the railroad at Main and 2nd Street to allow for a roundabout, which would manage traffic flow and be a gateway into Downtown;

The successful relationship of the regionally-focused market potential with the means to capture it in an authentic context is the touchstone of the Master Plan. In addition, the plan's anticipation of specific challenges and how to potentially resolve them will determine whether the success of Downtown can be sustained.

Figure 4A: Character Area Map

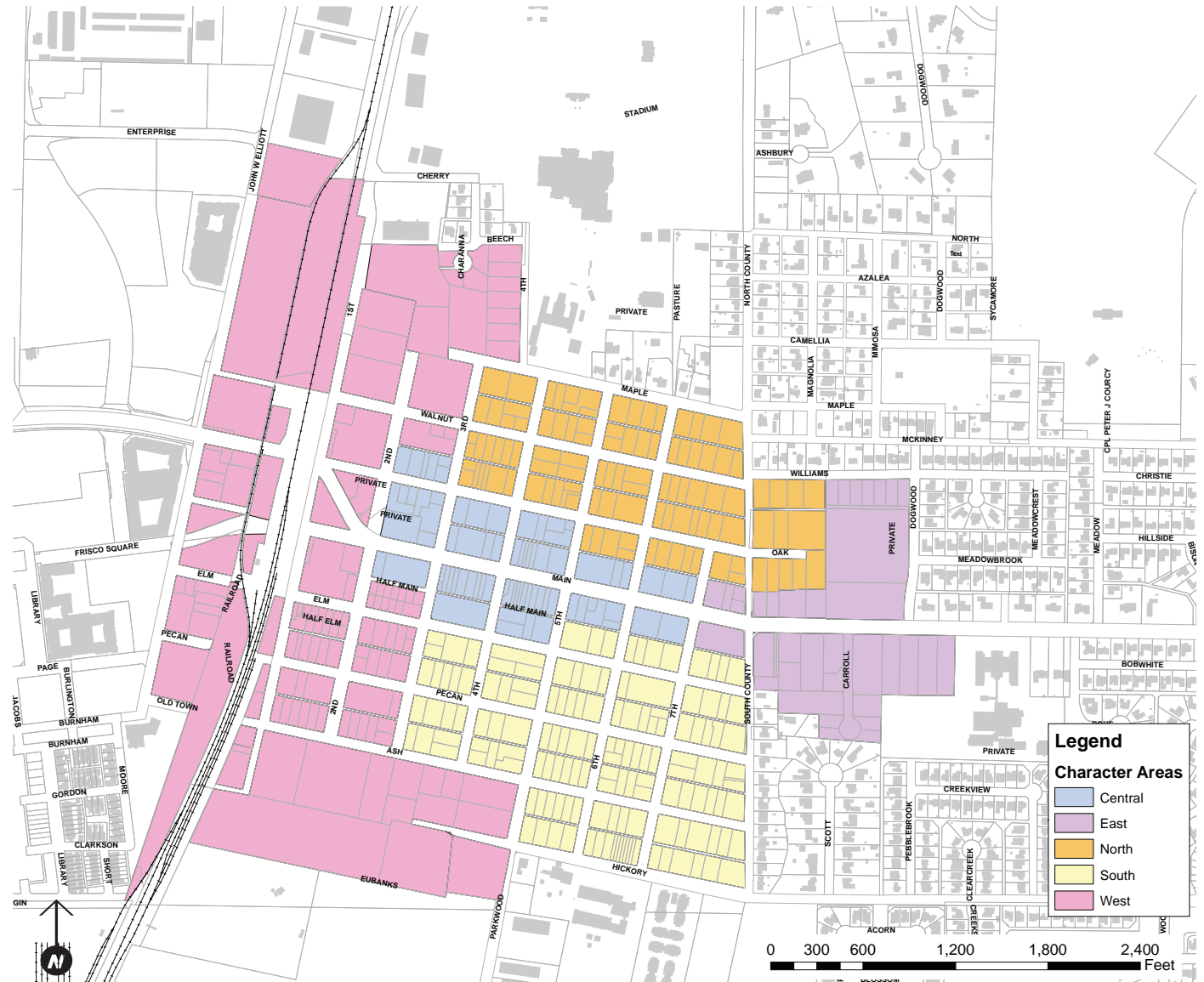


Figure 5A: Illustrative Plan

