

# I. INTRODUCTION

---



A city focusing on its river: A portion of the Charles River Esplanade in Boston.

The future of the Trinity River Corridor will be a major factor in shaping the future of Dallas itself. For that reason, it is one of only six Strategic Initiatives in the city's long-range plan - *The Dallas Plan* - adopted in 1994. In the years since that plan was adopted, extensive community discussion has occurred through the Trinity River Corridor Citizens Committee and various studies have been completed that address the issues it identified - **flood protection, environmental management, recreation, transportation, and community/economic development**. These studies have clarified the challenges associated with the Trinity River Corridor; in proposing solutions, they have also generated debate among community members who value the various components differently.

## Study Objectives

This Trinity Urban Design and Transportation Study was designed to take a fresh look at the potential of the Trinity River Corridor. It began in May 2002, when recently-elected Mayor Laura Miller proposed that an independent study of the Trinity be conducted to review the past projects and recommend an urban design vision that would offer an appropriate balance among the five inter-related issues noted above. It proposes a solution to these issues that achieves an appropriate balance. Its implementation should ensure that the investments Dallas ultimately makes in the Trinity River Corridor are coordinated and successful in strengthening and revitalizing this important part of a major



The Trinity River as it meanders through the Great Trinity Forest.

U.S. city.

## Study Organization

The study's structure is unique. It is privately funded by the individuals, corporations and foundations noted on this page. The clients for the study are Mayor Laura Miller and former

### Study Funders

- AlonUSA
- Anonymous
- Belo Corporation
- Caren Prothro
- Carole and John Ridings Lee
- Centex Corporation
- Crow Holdings
- Dallas Foundation
- Deedie & Rusty Rose
- The Emily Summers Group
- Henry C. Beck III
- Marilyn Augur
- The Marilyn Augur Foundation
- Meadows Foundation
- JP Morgan Chase
- Nancy & Jeff Marcus
- T. Boone Pickens
- Trammell S. Crow
- Trinity Commons
- WalMart GoodWorks Program

Dallas County Judge (current Chancellor of the University of North Texas) Lee Jackson, two highly-regarded leaders who held differing views about the Trinity at the study's outset. A team of three organizations were asked to coordinate the study - The Dallas Plan (which also serves as project manager), the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture and AIADallas; these organizations also began the study with varied ideas about the corridor.

A diverse selection panel, including architects, engineers, City staff and community leaders, reviewed proposals from top national urban design firms and unanimously selected the consultants for this study. Chan Krieger and Associates, an urban design firm based in Cambridge MA, was selected to lead the urban design aspects of the study. Hargreaves and Associates, based in San Francisco CA, provided landscape architecture expertise. Finally, TDA, Inc., based in Seattle WA, was asked to provide transportation planning expertise. In addition to this initial team, Carter & Burgess has provided expertise to address particular engineering issues.

### Public Agency Partners

Public agencies, their staff and consultants have been an important part of this project. When the project began, they met with the consultants to share information and analysis about the Trinity River and the past projects. Staff members continued to provide input as

the vision was developed. Following the preliminary City Council briefing in March 2003, the urban design team and public agency staff worked together to refine the concept and to develop the recommendations contained in this report.

The City of Dallas staff in the Trinity River Corridor Project Office, the City Manager's Office, the Public Works & Transportation Department and the Park and Recreation Department have been active participants in the development of this overall vision and set of recommendations, as has CDM, the City's consultant to the Trinity River Corridor Project Office. Other departments, including the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Office of Development Services, the Streets Department and Dallas Water Utilities, have provided more specialized input. The North Central Texas Council of Governments, the North Texas Tollway Authority, the Texas Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have all participated in discussions related to their areas of responsibility.

### Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the geographic area within the city limits of Dallas that is known as the "Trinity River Corridor". This area includes the Trinity River floodway (the area between the existing levees), the floodplain area downstream from the levees and the neighborhood and business areas adjacent to

the river and extending approximately one mile on either side.

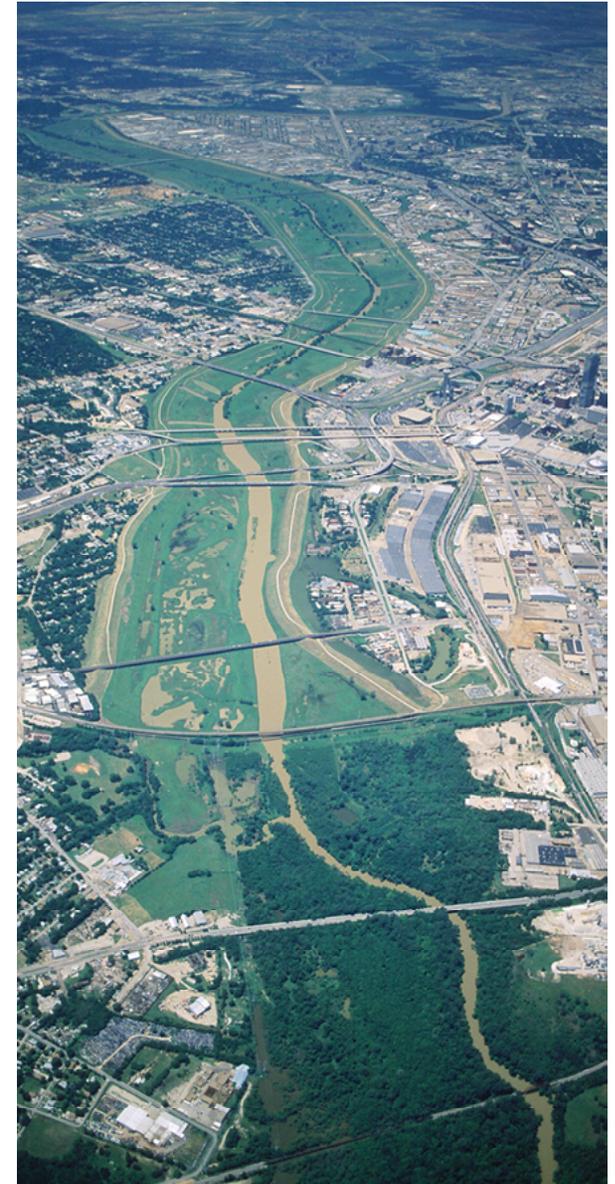
The study has four major phases. The first phase began in September 2002. During this phase, the consultant team reviewed plans, studies and reports dating back to the early 1900's. They met with the staff and consultants responsible for the many recent Trinity River projects. They interviewed leaders from Dallas' business, neighborhood, arts and environmental communities. A community brainstorming session was held in late September, allowing interested citizens to share their visions of the Trinity's future with the consultant team.

In the second phase, the consultants and the three cooperating entities (The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, AIADallas and The Dallas Plan), with the involvement of City staff and partner agency representatives, began to define a vision for the corridor that would provide an appropriate balance. The second phase involved analysis of technical issues and computer modeling of traffic patterns as well as creation of urban design, environmental and recreation concepts. This phase resulted in a preliminary vision for the Corridor that was presented to the Dallas City Council in March 2003. The Council was enthusiastic about the overall vision but asked that the team continue to work with City staff and other public agencies to refine technical aspects of the proposal and seek to develop a refined concept that would

be supported by those agencies as well as the urban design team.

The third study phase followed the March briefing; it focused on efforts to reach an agreement on a refined vision plan. This phase involved many meetings and discussions with the urban design team, City staff and representatives from other agencies. Additional computer modeling was completed, transportation system refinements were studied, further discussion refined the conceptual design of lakes and wetlands, and work on estimating capital, operations and maintenance costs began. At the end of this phase, the urban design team and transportation partners agreed to add a sixth build alternative to the ongoing Environmental Impact Study for the Trinity Parkway. A second City Council briefing, in June 2003, presented the refined vision and the new build alternative. Community input has been a part of this third phase, as discussed below.

The fourth and final phase of this study has involved a close partnership between the City of Dallas and the urban design team. It has completed refinements to the vision plan that respond to technical, community and operational concerns. In addition, cost and revenue estimates have been developed for the project. Lastly, this final report has been produced jointly by the City of Dallas and the urban design team. Its recommendations - for this vision of the Trinity's future and for action



View of the Trinity River from the Southeast. The Trinity Forest begins in the foreground.

to achieve it - are supported by the urban design team and the City staff.

### Community Input and Involvement

A great deal of public involvement and discussion about the Trinity River Corridor has occurred through the many studies conducted over the past 10 years. When this study began, its objective was to review the results of those studies and recommend a balanced vision for the Trinity. It was not structured to include a significant public outreach effort; instead, it sought to build on those previous efforts by reviewing the community input they received and then using small-group interviews with key community leaders to supplement and update past information.

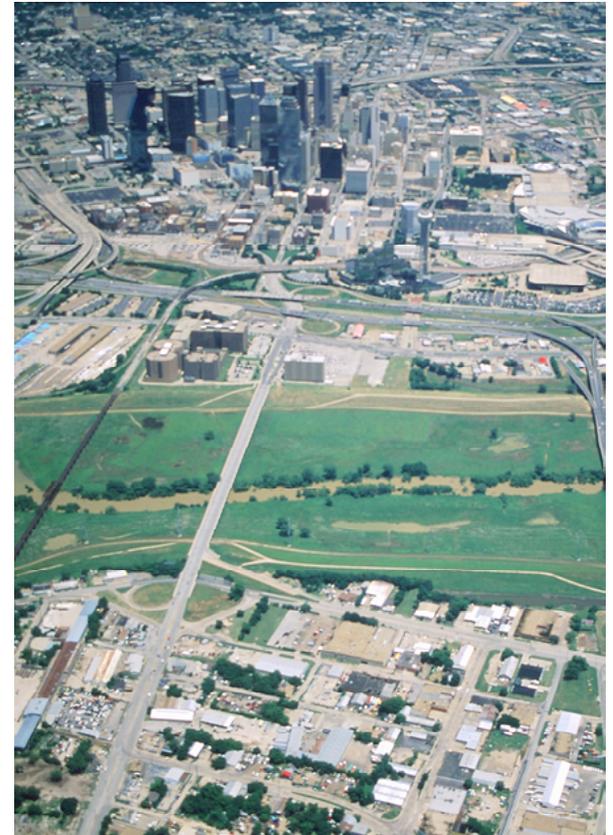
In September 2002, a series of interviews was conducted with representatives from organizations representing community, environmental, business and arts interests. A community visioning session was also held, as was a session with media representatives. From October 2002 through May 2003, individuals and organizations were contacted as needed to follow up on comments received initially.

The City Council briefing in June 2003 presented a refined vision for the Trinity Corridor. Immediately following that briefing, three community workshops were held to share this vision with the community and seek feedback.

Those meetings were very well attended, with over 300 individuals participating. Other comments were received through email, letters, questionnaires and presentations to organizations. These comments reflected a diverse range of opinions, ranging from support for the overall concept to questions about costs and operations (information that was not available at the time of these meetings). Comments about the parkway included some that criticized the proposal because it did not provide enough transportation capacity or sufficient access to downtown and Oak Cliff; other comments opposed inclusion of any sort of major roadway in the corridor.

In addition to the general community workshops held in June and July, four workshops which focused on the lake and recreational concepts were held in August 2003. These workshops provided an update on functionality issues with the Dallas Floodway and how all the components work together. They also educated and updated the community on the status of these studies and provided an opportunity to receive public input. More information on the public comments received this summer can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Public support for a vision of the Trinity will be essential if the project is to become a major new asset for the Dallas community. The comments received during this study have been valuable to the team's understanding of the various perspectives and opinions in Dallas. Public comments and suggestions have also been important in shaping this concept and its implementation recommendations.



Downtown Dallas in relationship to Trinity River Corridor.