

COMO/SUNSET HEIGHTS

NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT ZONE
STRATEGIC PLAN



Como/Sunset Heights
Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Strategic Plan

Prepared by the
City of Fort Worth
Planning and Development Department

For more information, contact
the Planning and Development Department at
817-392-8000

A Resolution

NO. 4847-09-2017

ADOPTING THE COMO/SUNSET HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT ZONE STRATEGIC PLAN AND INCORPORATING THE PLAN BY REFERENCE INTO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

WHEREAS, on April 25, 2000 (M&C G-12897), the City Council approved a Policy Statement on the Creation of Local Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZ) in accordance with Chapter 378 of the Texas Local Government Code; and

WHEREAS, on October 3, 2000 (M&C G-13030), the City Council approved Fort Worth's NEZ Administrative Procedures, which include criteria to determine eligible areas, the development of a basic incentives package, and elements to include in NEZ Plans in order to promote 1) the creation or rehabilitation of affordable housing, 2) an increase in economic development, and 3) an increase in the quality of social services, education, or public safety provided to residents of designated NEZs; and

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2001 (M&C G-13208R), the City Council approved basic incentives that include municipal property tax abatement, development fee waivers, impact fee waivers, and release of City liens for qualified properties or projects in designated NEZs; and

WHEREAS, on May 16, 2017 (M&C G-19010, Resolution 4782), the City Council approved amendments to the NEZ Tax Abatement Policy and Administrative Procedures for qualified properties or projects in designated NEZs; and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2017 (Resolution 4769), the City Council approved re-designating and revising the boundary and name of the Ridglea Village/Como NEZ to the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Texas Property and Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act, Tax Code, Chapter 312, which enables Fort Worth NEZs to be eligible for residential, commercial, and industrial tax abatement agreements, on April 11, 2017, the City Council approved the re-designated and revised boundary and name (Como/Sunset Heights NEZ) as FWNERZ No. 2 (Ordinance 22671); and

WHEREAS, since late 2014, Como stakeholders have participated in a planning process that included two workshops, seven public meetings, surveys and polling, and 18 advisory committee meetings; and

WHEREAS, a public meeting was held on August 3, 2017 to receive feedback on the updated draft Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan and the plan subsequently was placed on the City's website for public review; and



WHEREAS, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan proposes a comprehensive, holistic approach intended to revitalize the Como neighborhood and includes the following information: demographic and economic conditions, commercial and residential real estate data, community unsupported project types, goals and strategies, and design guidelines for residential, commercial, and industrial land uses; and

WHEREAS, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan will provide guidance to stakeholders and development project proponents seeking NEZ incentives; and

WHEREAS, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Design Guidelines are an appendix to the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan which will be reviewed with Como stakeholders and presented at a subsequent City Council meeting for an action to adopt the guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the City Plan Commission held a public hearing on August 23, 2017 to receive feedback on the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan and unanimously recommended that the City Council adopt the Plan by reference into the Comprehensive Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS:

1. The Como/Sunset Heights Neighborhood Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan, attached as Exhibit "A", is adopted and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference.

Adopted this 19th day of September, 2017.

ATTEST:

By: _____

Mary J. Kayser, City Secretary



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Fort Worth Elected and Appointed Officials and Community Advisory Committee

City Council

Betsy Price, Mayor
Carlos Flores, District 2
Brian Byrd, District 3
Cary Moon, District 4
Gyna Bivens, District 5
Jungus Jordan, District 6
Dennis Shingleton, District 7
Kelly Allen Gray, District 8
Ann Zadeh, District 9

City Plan Commission

Donald Boren, Chair
Stephen Barrett
Mike Brennan
Mark Brast
Sloan Harris
Robert Horton
Robert Kelly
Stephanie Spann
Vicky Schoch
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Contributing Departments

City Manager's Office, Community Engagement
Code Compliance Department
Economic Development Department
Library Department
Neighborhood Services Department
Park and Recreation Department
Police Department
Transportation/Public Works Department
Water Department

Contributing Agencies and Organizations

Arts Council of Fort Worth & Tarrant County

Martha Peters, Public Art Director
Anitra Blayton, Artist,
Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan

Habitat for Humanity

Gage Yager, Executive Director
Angela Bills
Michelle Kennedy
Darius Tse, AmeriCorps National

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Note: The photos in the plan are from City staff field visits unless otherwise noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Como neighborhood was once a thriving working class neighborhood with several small “mom and pop” businesses to serve the nearby households. However, over the past several decades, minimal new investment has occurred in the Como neighborhood, due in part to a high poverty level and related challenges that have contributed to a diminished quality of life in Como.

Today, the Como neighborhood is poised for revitalization. The Como neighborhood has several attributes that can contribute to its revitalization, including its close proximity to major employment centers and cultural attractions, numerous vacant lots that are suitable for quality affordable and market rate infill housing and new commercial development, and an active and engaged neighborhood association. These attributes will help position the Como neighborhood to capitalize on the growing Fort Worth economy to bring new investment and renewal to Como.

Planning Process

Since late 2014, Como stakeholders have participated in a planning process that included two workshops, seven public meetings, surveys and polling, and over 12 advisory committee meetings. An advisory committee comprised of Como residents helped identify and refine the goals and recommendations of the plan. The Como community desires revitalization that protects and enhances the character and cultural heritage of Como. Because the Como neighborhood is located in a designated Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ), the plan was developed under the City’s NEZ program.

The Plan

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan proposes a comprehensive, holistic approach intended to revitalize the Como neighborhood. The plan builds on existing assets and strengths in the Como neighborhood and outlines a vision, goals, plan framework, and implementation strategies to achieve the aspirations of residents and stakeholders of the Como neighborhood. Additionally, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan is intended to serve as a guiding document that provides general direction to Como stakeholders, developers, and investors.

Implementation of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan will be guided by benchmarks and measures to track the progress and effectiveness of the proposed strategies. An implementation matrix is provided as a scheduling and tracking tool.



Goals and Strategies

The five goals and associated strategies below provide a framework intended to achieve revitalization of the Como neighborhood.

Development

Goal: Amend the City's Future Land Use map to apply the recommended designations in order to guide future development. Adopt and apply NEZ Design Guidelines (Appendix A) to ensure that NEZ benefits support projects that improve the community.

Strategies:

- Apply the *Urban Residential Future Land Use* designation in target locations to facilitate walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed density residential development that provides a range of housing choices.
- Expand the *Mixed-Use Future Land Use* designation to facilitate higher density, mixed-use development along the northern section of Horne Street.
- Expand the *Neighborhood Commercial Future Land Use* designation to accommodate additional neighborhood-serving retail and commercial businesses along the northern to mid-section of Horne Street.
- Apply design guidelines for new development and substantial redevelopment projects that address the following categories:
 - * Setbacks and yards
 - * Building massing and scale
 - * Site design and landscaping
 - * Driveways and garages
 - * Roofs and windows
 - * Porches and entries

Housing

Goal: Improve the housing stock in the Como neighborhood by developing quality new affordable and market rate single-family infill housing, as well as limited higher density mixed-income housing in target locations; stabilize and rehabilitate the existing housing stock.

Strategies:

- Build quality new affordable and market rate single-family infill housing on vacant lots.
- Provide housing choice opportunities with higher density well-designed townhomes, apartments, and condominiums in target locations.
- Provide housing support (rehabilitation and foreclosure prevention) to existing homeowners.
- Establish public/private partnerships to achieve housing production and intervention targets over the next twenty years.

Neighborhood-Focused Economic Development

Goal: Develop Horne Street into a vibrant business district with new neighborhood-serving retail and commercial businesses, and strengthen existing businesses.

Strategies:

- Redevelop and revitalize the Horne Street corridor by implementing infrastructure improvements within the public right-of-way and stimulating land use changes and building redevelopment.
- Develop a small business recruitment and support program.
- Develop an entrepreneurial development and support program.
- Establish a business/merchant association.

Livability Enhancements

Goal: Establish comprehensive programs and initiatives for livability enhancements in the Como neighborhood.

Strategies:

- Enhance public parkland.
- Promote transportation connectivity, safety, and mobility choice.
- Undertake public infrastructure investments in a timely manner.
- Utilize research-based public safety prevention strategies to reduce crime and code violations.
- Establish an adult job training and workforce development program.
- Establish a coalition of appropriate organizations/agencies to focus on poverty reduction.
- Undertake programs and initiatives to protect, capture, and showcase the heritage of the Como neighborhood.

Capacity Building

Goal: The Como community will have the capacity to be an engaged and effective partner in its revitalization, which shall be supported and guided by benchmarks, measures, and an implementation schedule.

Strategies:

- Expand the committee structure of the Como NAC to work directly on revitalization goals.
- Develop public/private partnerships between the Como NAC and public and private organizations to assist with selected revitalization strategies.
- Establish a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Community-Based Organization (CBO) to undertake fund raising, etc. for revitalization projects and programs.



Lake Como Park east view.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



Over the past several decades, minimal new investment has occurred in the Como neighborhood, due in part to a high poverty level and related challenges that have contributed to a diminished quality of life in Como.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan proposes a comprehensive, holistic approach intended to revitalize the Como neighborhood. The plan builds on existing assets and strengths in the Como neighborhood and outlines a road map for the revitalization of Como. The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan outlines a vision, goals, plan framework, and implementation strategies to achieve the aspirations of residents and stakeholders of the Como neighborhood.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan recognizes that it will take a concerted and collaborative effort and the alignment of resources to attain the revitalization vision. A strong and consistent partnership between the City of Fort Worth, other appropriate governmental entities, institutional stakeholders, residents, businesses, and property owners is required to revitalize the Como neighborhood.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan begins with a thorough analysis of existing conditions in the neighborhood, describing key challenges and identifying opportunities. The plan outlines a series of short and longer-term recommendations intended to bring about the community's desired future as an economically vital and highly livable neighborhood.

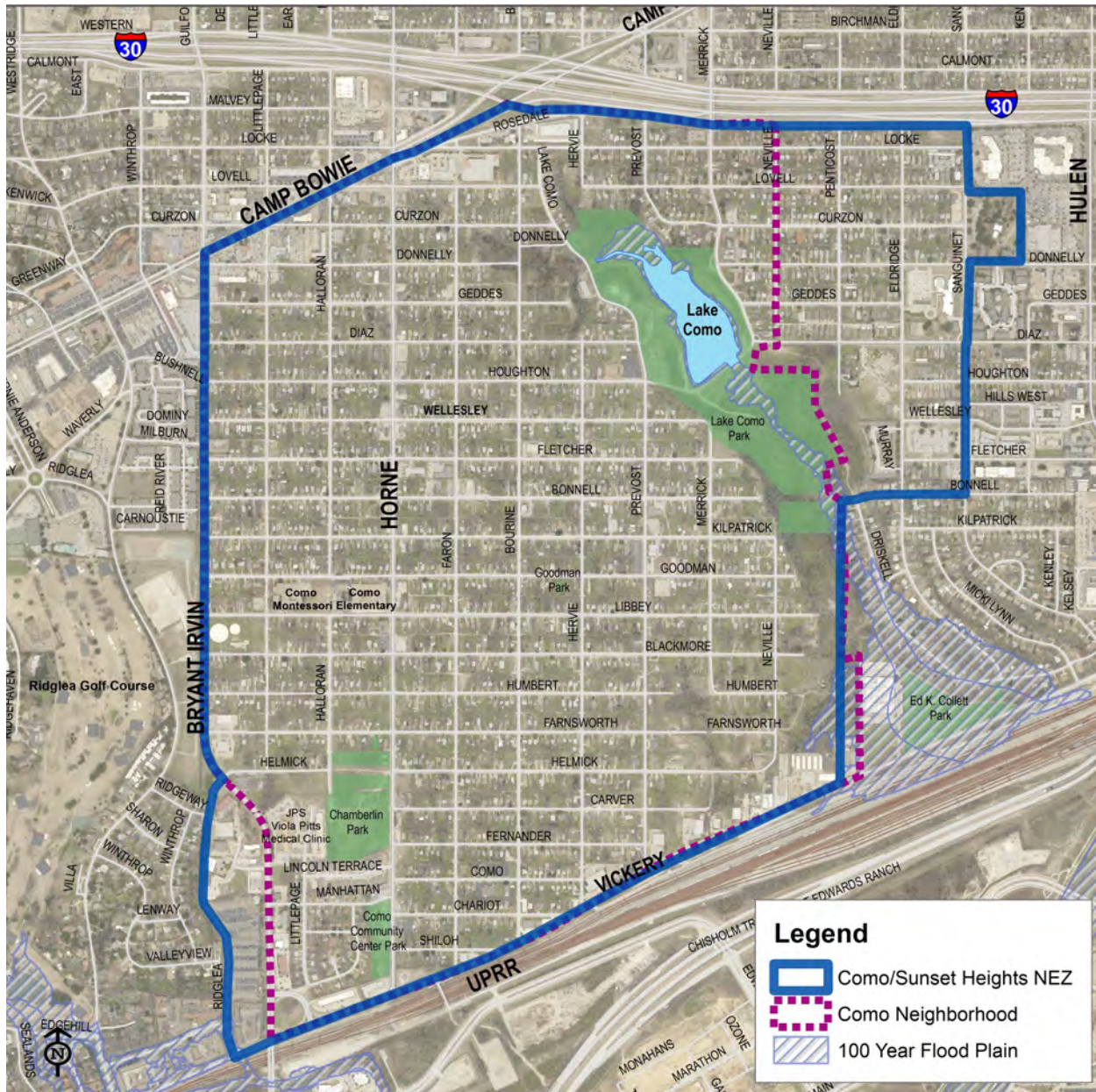
Dedicated and well-informed stakeholders are essential for achieving long-term and sustainable neighborhood revitalization.

An implementation plan is included that describes specific actions needed to help achieve the community’s objectives, with timeframes, and responsible parties identified. The implementation plan is presented as a graphic matrix to simplify the recognition and tracking of key implementation tasks by all parties.

SNAPSHOT: Como Neighborhood

Size:	738.82 Acres 1.32 Sq. Miles	Aggregate Appraised Value	
% City Land Area:	0.37%	Total Value:	\$181,895,686 100.0%
% City Population:	0.48%	Improvements:	\$121,347,888 66.7%
		Land Only:	\$59,547,713 32.7%
Households:	1,254		
Median Age:	33.9		
Median Family Income:	\$18,725		

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016, and Census Bureau, 2010.



Map 1: Como/Sunset Heights NEZ

The Como neighborhood is located in Fort Worth between Interstate Highway 30 on the north, Vickery Boulevard on the south, Bryant Irvin on the west. Its eastern boundary runs along Neville Street and incorporates Lake Como Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT ZONES

The City of Fort Worth recognizes the importance of protecting the integrity of its neighborhoods, while encouraging appropriate revitalization when needed. This is especially true of older neighborhoods that are located in Fort Worth's Central City (primarily within Loop 820). Common characteristics of older lower income neighborhoods include an older housing stock, minimal private sector investment, older and sometimes obsolete infrastructure, high poverty levels, high crime levels, and other challenges, all of which contribute to a perception of community neglect and reduced quality of life for its residents.

In response to the need to revitalize the city's older Central City neighborhoods, the Fort Worth City Council established a Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) program in 2001.

The intent of the NEZ program, as outlined in Chapter 378 of the Texas Local Govern-

ment Code (LGC), is the following:

- Promote the creation or rehabilitation of affordable housing in the zone;
- Promote economic development in the zone; and
- Improve the quality of social services, education, or public safety for residents in the zone.

The City of Fort Worth's NEZ program adheres to the precepts of the Texas LGC Chapter 378, and includes a set of incentives (tax abatements, fee waivers, etc.) intended to help facilitate—along with other tools and strategies—the revitalization of older neighborhoods, especially ones experiencing high unemployment, poverty, and other distress factors.

In addition to incentives, the City's NEZ program offers neighborhoods an opportunity to create a strategic plan that outlines recommendations and strategies to facilitate revitalization. Through a community-driven planning process, residents and stakeholders

CITY OF FORT WORTH NEZ INCENTIVES

Municipal Property Tax Abatements

(up to 5 years on City ad valorem taxes)

- Owner-occupied property
- Investor-owned single-family property
- Multifamily development project
- Commercial, industrial or community facilities development project
- Mixed-use development project

Fee Waivers

- Building Permit
- Plat application
- Board of Adjustment
- Demolition
- Structural moving
- Community Facility Agreement application
- Zoning application

- Street and utility easement vacation application
- Impact fee
- Ordinance inspection
- Consent/encroachment agreement application
- Transportation impact
- Urban forestry application
- Sign permit

Release of City Liens

(up to \$30,000)

- Weed liens
- Demolition liens
- Board-up/open structure liens
- Paving liens

For additional information visit <http://fortworthtexas.gov/neighborhoods/NEZ/>

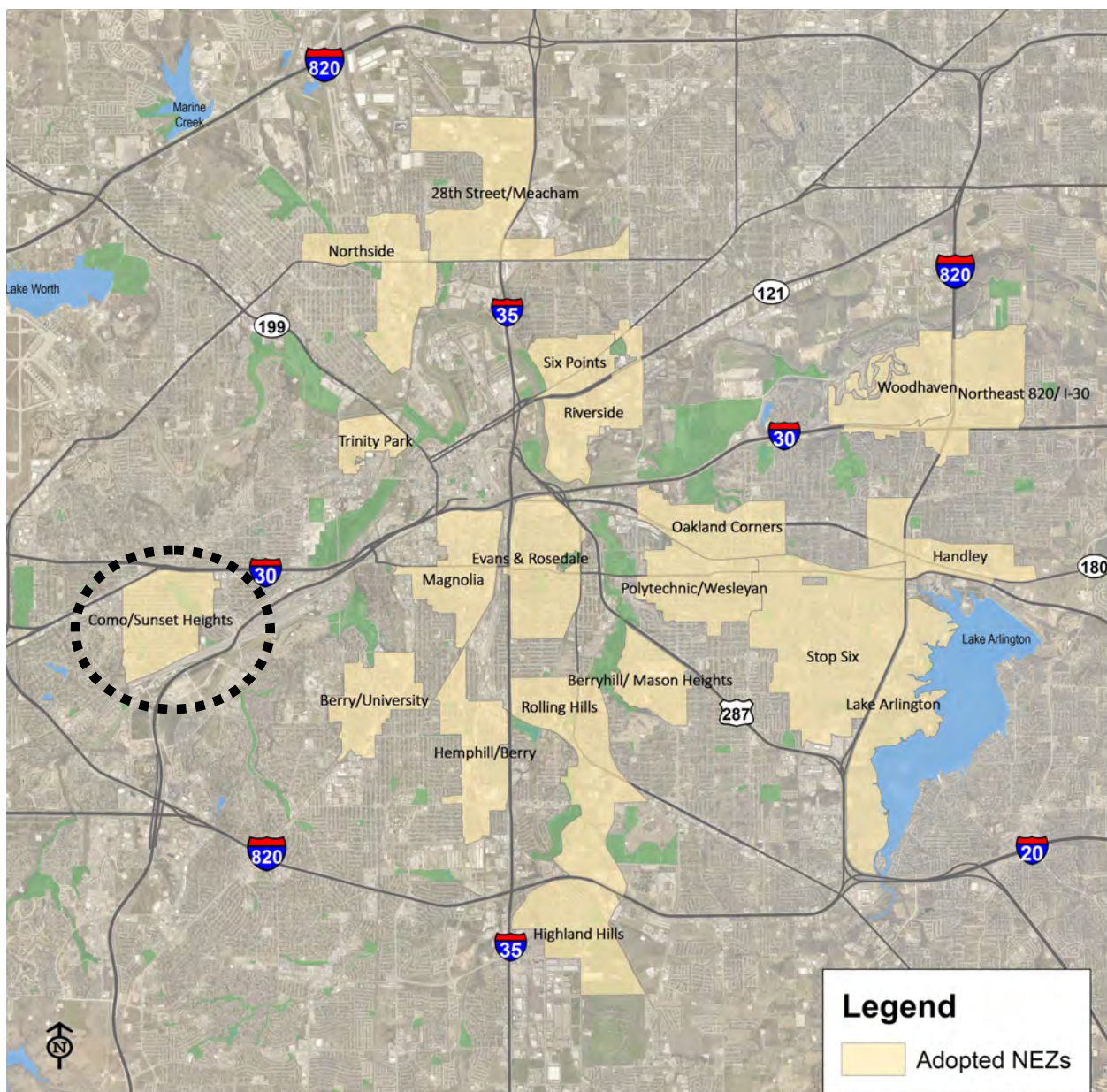
have a central role in crafting the plan.

As of December 2016, twenty NEZs were designated in Fort Worth, primarily within Loop 820. Each NEZ meets one or more of the following criteria:

- At least 75% of the NEZ is located in CDBG-eligible areas.
- Contained within clearly defined boundaries (streets, railroads, creeks, or other logical boundaries).

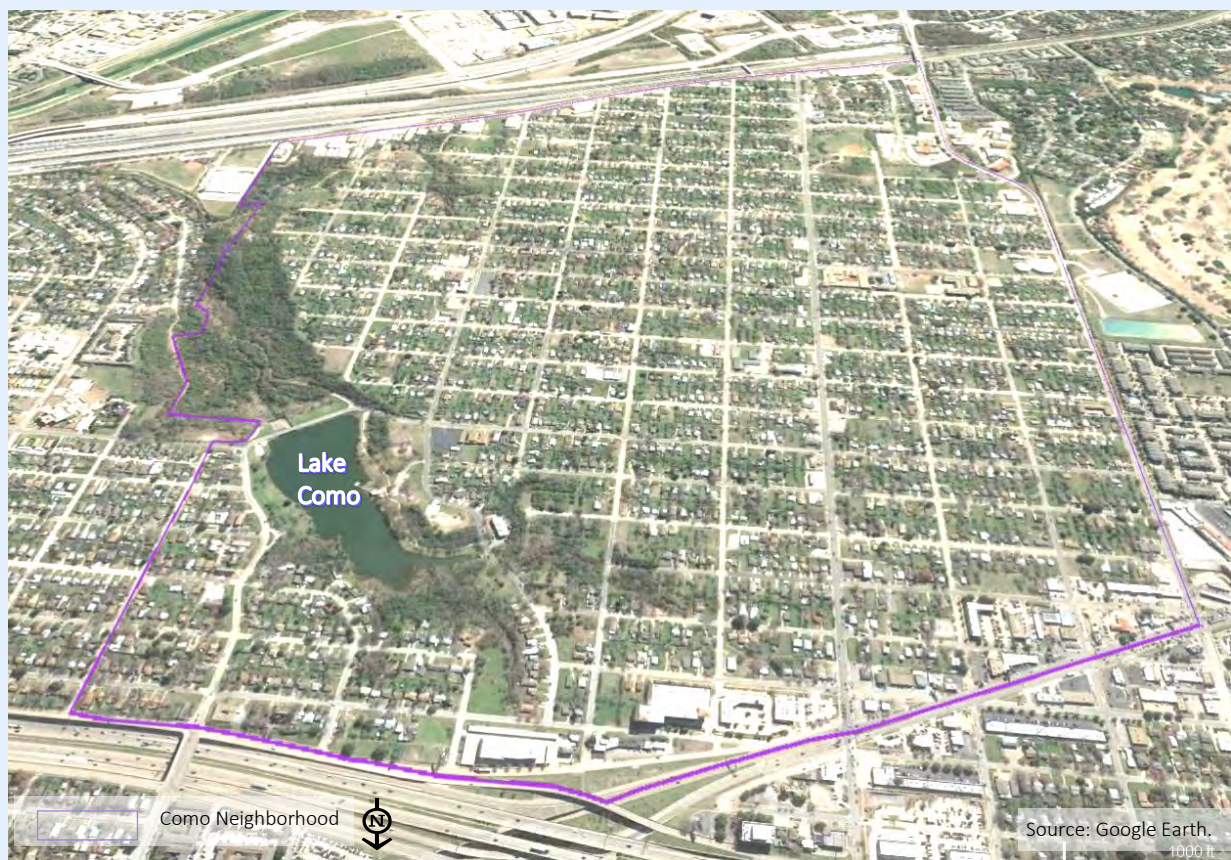
- Population of no more than 6,000 people at the time of designation. If more than 6,000 people, the geographic area cannot be larger than 1.5 square miles.
- Meets criteria for a Reinvestment Zone.

If a proposed NEZ boundary includes an urban village as defined in the adopted Comprehensive Plan, a logical, defensible area of the urban village, as determined by the City of Fort Worth, must be zoned mixed-use.



Map 2: Adopted Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZs)

SECTION 2: NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS



In order to better understand the Como neighborhood’s existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities—and its potential for revitalization—an analysis of the community covering topics below was undertaken and is presented on the following pages.

- History and Current Context
- Physical Conditions
- Transportation and Transit
- Land Use and Zoning
- Development Patterns
- Housing
- Demographics
- Public Safety
- Challenges and Opportunities

Neighborhood Analysis is a critical step in a neighborhood revitalization process. The **data collected provides insight** into the neighborhood’s past, its evolution, strengths, and challenges. The Neighborhood Analysis lays the foundation upon which to build a road map to **achieve the collective vision of its residents**.

HISTORY AND CURRENT CONTEXT

Early Years

The Como neighborhood is connected geographically and historically to the lake that forms its eastern edge. The lake was created in the late 1800s by a Denver, Colorado real estate developer, Humphrey B. Chamberlin. Chamberlin, a real estate magnate known throughout the U.S., impounded the confluence of four streambeds to create a small lake. Chamberlin named the lake “Lake Como” after the Alpine lake that spanned Switzerland and Italy. The name of the lake was intended to be a selling tool to attract households that desired to live in an area with natural open space, amenities, and distance from the busy Fort Worth city.¹ The land was platted and the Chamberlin Arlington Heights (CAH) subdivision was created.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Lake Como became an entertainment center that included a recreation resort with pavilion, casino, and amusement rides. The Lake Como resort was a major attraction of its day. However, by 1919, the Lake Como resort was closed, in part due to financial hardships and the arrival of the new impressive Lake Worth with its more modern recreation and entertainment features.² The demise of the Lake Como resort lessened the attractiveness of the area and the land west of the lake attracted speculative investments that over time did not produce financial returns due to unstable market conditions. As a result, the lots began to be sold at a very low cost beginning around 1907 to 1909.³ The buyers of the lots were overwhelmingly African Americans. As the population increased in this section of the CAH subdivision (west



Source: Tarrant County Historical Resources Survey, 1988.

Lake Como resort, circa 1913.

1. *Fort Worth's Huge Deal*, Jim Atkinson and Judy Wood, 2010.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*

of Lake Como), that area took on the name of the lake and became known as the “Lake Como” neighborhood (over time, “Como” became the commonly used moniker). Residents of the new Lake Como neighborhood were primarily African Americans, but a small number of Anglo citizens also resided there.

The explanation often heard about why African Americans in the early 1900s began locating to Como is associated with employment. African American domestic servants (mostly women) that were employed in the affluent adjacent households and the men that worked on the nearby rail line desired to be closer to their employment. However, other explanations attribute the relocations to more than employment purposes and include the attraction of a newly established college for African Americans (Fort Worth Industrial and Mechanical (I&M) College), natural open space areas that provided op-

portunities to hunt and fish at the lake, less flood-prone land compared to other residential areas that were available to African Americans during that era (e.g., the Bottoms residential enclave adjacent to the Trinity River). Additionally, the west side of Lake Como provided more autonomy from the broader society that treated African Americans as second-class citizens.⁴

These early African American settlers forged ahead and as the population increased they achieved a level of self-sufficiency, with their own grocer and established churches and civic organizations to meet their spiritual and social needs. They turned the undeveloped land on the west side of Lake Como into a caring community and refuge for themselves and future generations.

Growth Years

Homeownership in Como increased in the 1930s, partly due to the National Housing



Source: Tarrant County Historical Resources Survey, 1988.

4. Ibid.

Fort Worth I&M College president’s residence.

EARLY YEARS - HIGHLIGHTS

1909 (circa) - A group of African American Baptist ministers purchased land south of Humbert Street in the 5300 block to 5500 block extending south to Helmick to establish the Fort Worth Industrial and Mechanical (I&M) College to provide higher education opportunities for African Americans in Fort Worth and the surrounding area, which at that time would have been the only institution of higher learning for African Americans in Fort Worth. The Fort Worth I&M College eventually closed due to financial hardships.

1922 - The Lake Como and Arlington Heights neighborhoods are annexed into the city of Fort Worth.

1925 - The Lake Como cemetery was founded by Zion Baptist Church to serve the Como community.

Act of 1934, which made housing and home mortgages more affordable. By 1940, the Como neighborhood spanned from Camp Bowie Boulevard on the north to Helmick Street on the south. During the mid-1940s the land south of Helmick was developed for residential use in the Harlem Hills Addition subdivision. According to data from the U.S. Census, Como's 1940 population was 2,617 which represented 1.5 percent of the overall city population.

During its heyday years between 1940 to 1960, the residents of Como included doctors, lawyers, teachers, clergy, entrepreneurs, and working class individuals. The Como community was known as a tight-knit self-sufficient neighborhood. Neighbors

knew each other and took care of each others' needs. Their children attended segregated schools that community churches helped maintain. A hospital existed on Bonnell Street and new housing development doubled on some streets.⁵ Although the time period from the 1940s to 1960s is considered by some to be Como's best years, the neighborhood was not without major challenges and issues. Unlike its adjacent affluent neighborhoods, Como residents were forced to tolerate unpaved streets and some houses lacked indoor plumbing. Although some streets in Como were paved by the City by the mid-1940s, several remained gravel roads. In an effort to address the unpaved streets, Como leaders established a street paving program in the early 1950s

"No community the size of Como at this time [early 1950s] had worse streets...the individual street block plan was used in the paving program which made each block responsible for its own paving costs. The plan worked with ease, and the plan worked well for two years."

Fort Worth Como Weekly,
24th Anniversary Supplement, 1964.

5. Ibid.



Source: Tarrant County Historical Resources Survey, 1988.

Map 3: Lake Como Historic Subdivision Map

GROWTH YEARS - HIGHLIGHTS

1940 - The Como Weekly is launched by William Wilburn, Sr. and his wife Travis. On November 30, 1940, more than 500 copies were distributed free to residents of Lake Como. The Como Weekly ceased operation sometime in the 1980s.

1950 - Newspaper magnate Amon Carter, Sr. buys 70 acres of property in Lake Como including the lake and the undeveloped land south of the lake, donating the latter two areas to the City of Fort Worth to develop as a "Negro park".

1954 - Como elementary school opens at 4000 Horne Street, its current location.

that asked homeowners to contribute funds that were given to the City to cover the street paving costs. The funds raised were in addition to the taxes paid by these Como homeowners, most of whom had modest incomes.

By 1960, the population in Como reached 7,063 (representing 2.0 percent of the overall city population), its highest recorded level based on data from the U.S. Census. However, the population of Como may have been much higher, according to the Fort Worth Como Weekly newspaper, which in 1964 reported Como's population as 12,500.⁶ Como's racial composition in 1960 was almost 100 percent (97.8 percent) African

American according to data from the U.S. Census. By 1964, over sixty neighborhood serving businesses were located in Como, mainly on Horne Street and Bonnell Street.⁷ These neighborhood serving businesses offered goods and services for the Como neighborhood and some, like the Blue Bird Nite Club, brought outsiders to the neighborhood.

During its heyday years, despite external and internal challenges, Como was viewed by many of its residents as a vibrant, cohesive neighborhood with a strong heritage and a promising future.

"Como remains as a very unique community in many respects. The proud old lake and the many new public and private building programs, at once serve to remind the citizens of its historic past and its present vitality."

Fort Worth Como Weekly, 24th Anniversary Supplement, 1964.



Former Como business.

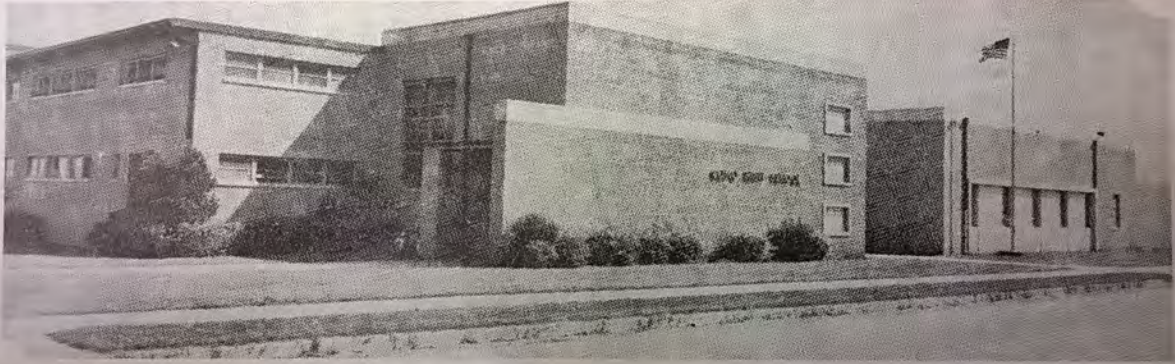
Photo: Courtesy of Fort Worth Library Archives.

6. Fort Worth Como Weekly, 24th Anniversary Supplement, 1964.

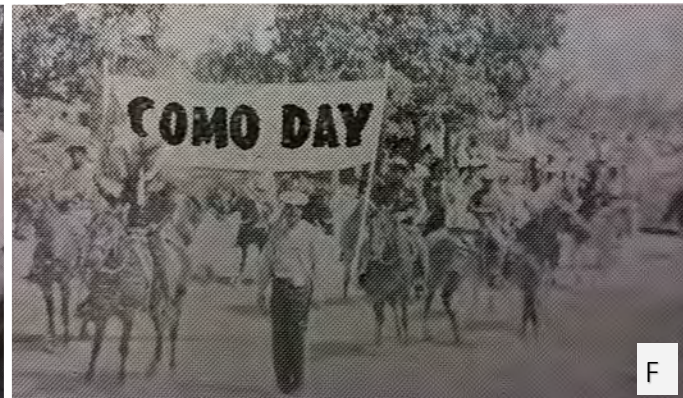
7. Ibid.

COMO JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL—A SYMBOL OF GROWTH

A



Not only has the physical structure grown, but also the general atmosphere and cultural achievements have advanced, for it has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Certainly the span of years between 1914 and 1964 shows the progress of the school and the community. Photo was taken in 1964.



The above photos reflect Como's cultural and social environment during its heyday years (1940s - 1960s). **A.** Former Como Junior/Senior High School (currently Como Montessori School). **B.** Como High School football and cheerleader squads. **C.** Camp Fire Girls. **D.** Boys Scouts. **E.** Progressive Men's Club. **F.** Como Day parade.

Source: Fort Worth Como Weekly, 24th Anniversary Supplement, 1964.

Emergence of Decline Years

Between 1960 and 1970, the Como neighborhood entered into a new phase in its evolution that signaled the beginning of a population out-migration and a neighborhood decline associated in part with a smaller populace that would span the next fifty years. The cause of the out-migration/decline can be attributed to several factors including the unintended consequences of new federal laws, enacted in the 1950s and 1960s, that dismantled the nation's "separate but equal" segregation laws that existed in many facets of everyday living, including housing and public schools. The new federal laws enabled African Americans to reside in neighborhoods that they were previously barred from. Mortgage and insurance redlining practices increased in neighborhood's like Como, which dampened the appeal of the neighborhood. Additionally, the rise in criminal activity, (actual and perceived), especially illegal drug activity further exacerbated the Como neighborhood's decline.

Between 1960 and 1970, the Como population declined by 6.2 percent from its peak of

7,063 to 6,626 (Figure 1). Over the next twenty years (1970 - 1990) Como's population declined by 40.7 percent, a period of dramatic population decline for the Como neighborhood. By the year 2010, fifty years after its peak population in 1960, the population decline measured close to 50 percent (49.8 percent), whereas citywide population during this same time period increased by 108 percent (Figure 2).

One unfortunate consequence of the out-migration and population decline was the eventual closure of many of the sixty-four small businesses that had been previously reported by the Como Weekly. The business closures left a void in basic neighborhood retail services for the Como neighborhood, and reduced nearby job opportunities and entrepreneur role models for the youth of Como.

Como's population decline, lack of new housing development, low public infrastructure installation and maintenance, and seemingly intractable code and safety issues were clear indicators of a neighborhood in distress.



Photo: Internet, public domain.

EMERGENCE OF DECLINE - HIGHLIGHTS

1972 - Como High School closes due to the desegregation of Fort Worth public schools.

1972 - Como Community Center opens and is the first multi-purpose center built in Fort Worth.

During the dramatic population decline years between 1970 and 1990, Como is described in the City's 1983 Arlington Heights Sector Plan as a neighborhood with some new investment but also with indicators of decline. The Sector Plan description is as follows:

In the early 1980s, Como was still primarily a residential area with approximately 86 percent of the housing units listed as single-family. Vacant parcels were prevalent throughout the neighborhood. Some undeveloped tracts had drainage problems such as at Bourine and Donnelly and Farnsworth and Merrick. Other parcels remained vacant because of steep slopes, such as those east of Neville Street. Reinvestment was seen in Como, but the new construction was widely scattered, losing its beneficial effect. The few concentrations of new housing were in several blocks near Guilford [currently Bryant Irvin Road], Helmick Avenue, and Horne Street. Many streets were in need of curb and gutter, pavement repair, or replacement. The southeast section of the Como neighborhood was inaccessible, which hindered its development. Better access to Merrick and Neville could create development opportunities in that area.

Unimproved drainage ditches at several locations, including at Bourine and Geddes Streets, affected several blocks and contributed to the vacant lots in that area. In addition, litter and dumping were common on several sites, including the open drainage ways, Lake Como Park, and scattered residential lots.⁸

In 1970 the Como neighborhood had a housing density of 7.1 dwelling units per residential acre, a level categorized as low density. Approximately 6.4 percent of the housing units were vacant and 15.4 percent of the occupied dwelling units were identified as overcrowded.⁹

During the time period between 1970 and 1980, Como residents worked with the City of Fort Worth to identify strategies to improve their neighborhood. Four planning reports were completed for Como. Two of the planning reports focused on the entire Como neighborhood and two on smaller geographies in Como. Also, Como residents worked with the City on a new multipurpose community center that opened in 1972, which at that time was the first multipurpose center in Fort Worth.¹⁰



Dilapidated house in Como.

8. City of Fort Worth, Arlington Heights Sector Plan, June 1983.

9. Ibid.

10. *Black Community Control: A Study of Transition in a Texas Ghetto*, Dr. Joyce Williams, 1973.

Current Context

The Como neighborhood continues to be primarily a single-family neighborhood. Many vacant lots still exist in the neighborhood, similar to the preceding 1980s description. Most of the formerly vacant lots located on the north-edge of the Como neighborhood are now occupied by commercial uses, including a large self-storage facility that is appropriate for the I-30 frontage road, but not complementary to the single-family homes on Lovell Street.

Within the Como neighborhood, a limited amount of new single-family housing development occurred within the past thirty years. The most recent substantial infill housing has been developed by Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is building affordable single-family homes in the southeast quadrant of the Como neighborhood. Regarding multifamily housing, the most recent project is the 72-unit Villas on the Hill, built in 2010 by the former Fort Worth Housing Authority (now Fort Worth Housing Solutions). The Villas on the Hill multifamily project replaced an aged obsolete multifamily complex that was riddled with crime problems. Major non-residential developments include the 33,270 square foot John Peter Smith (JPS) Viola Pitts Health Clinic that opened in 2000. A new Como Neighborhood Center is planned to be located at Chamberlin Park (ball field), which is adjacent to the JPS Viola Pitts Health Clinic. Upon completion of the new center, the current center on Horne Street is slated for demolition.

Based on data from the U.S. Census, the racial and ethnic composition of the Como neighborhood has become more diverse over the years with a substantial decline of African Americans from its high 1960 and 1970 percentages, 97.8 percent and 97.9 percent, respectively. According to the 2010 Census, the racial and ethnic composition of

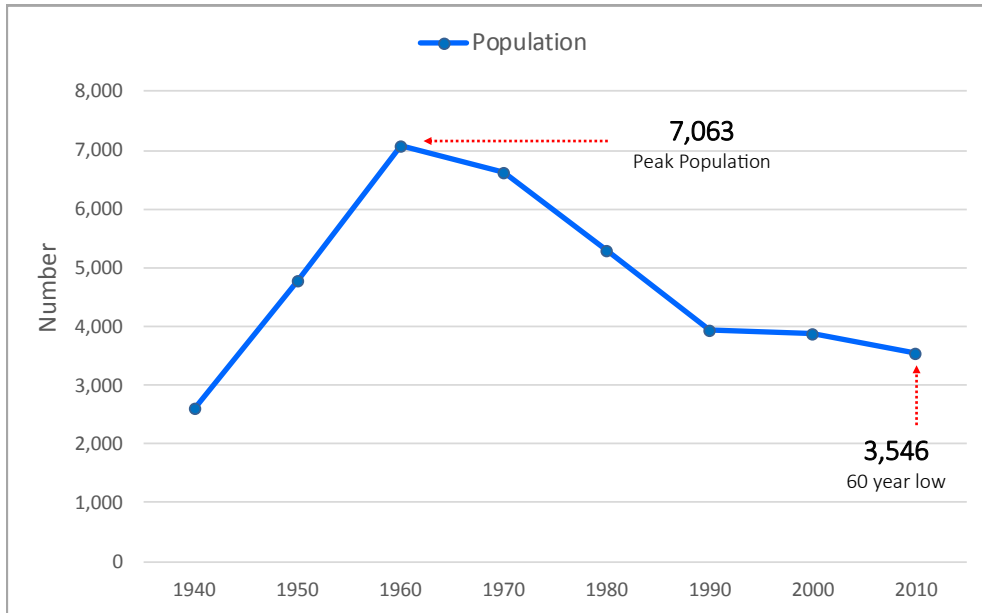
Como is 68.9 percent African American and 26.1 percent Hispanic or Latino, with the remaining 5.0 percent comprised of Anglo and other races.

Additional data from the 2010 Census indicates a high percentage of Como residents live in poverty (48.9 percent). In addition, many Como residents have low education attainment, which contributes to high unemployment levels, resulting in a large percentage of residents in Como struggling to meet everyday needs and responsibilities. Although being poor is not synonymous with criminal behavior, numerous studies link high poverty neighborhoods with high crime levels, which severely diminish the quality of life of a neighborhood.

Despite the current economic and social problems that exist in Como, the neighborhood has many attributes that position it for revitalization. These attributes include Como's close proximity to major employment centers, including the downtown area and hospital district. This proximity, coupled with a good transportation network, make Como attractive for redevelopment to serve the segment of the market seeking to reside in a central city location. Additionally, the Como neighborhood continues to have a strong sense of community, an attribute not found in all neighborhoods. An example is the annual July 4th parade, which began in 1950 and continues today with many current and former Como residents participating.

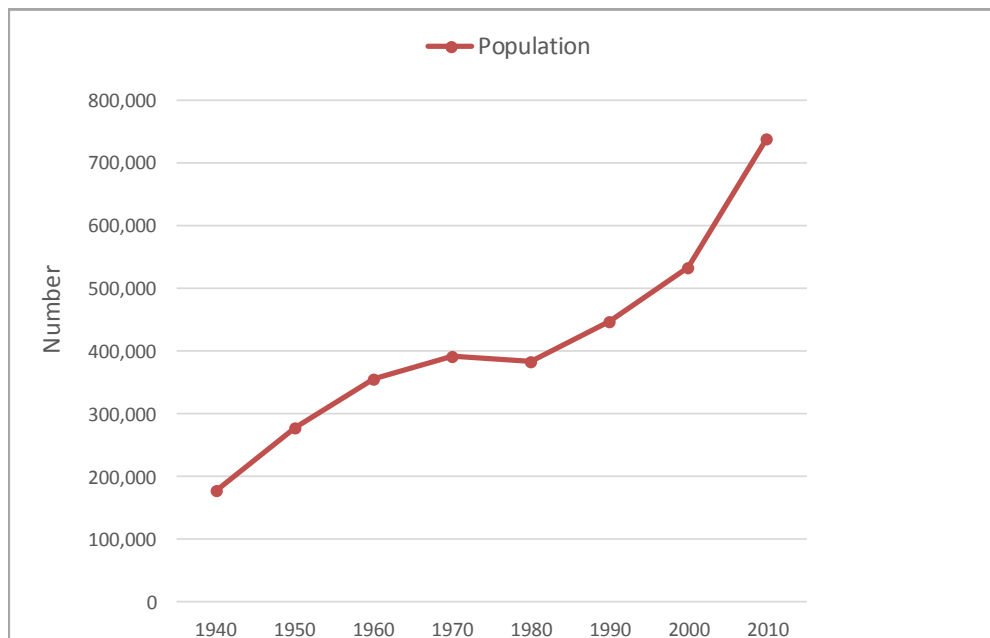
The multiple churches in the neighborhood draw outsiders including former residents to the neighborhood. Several outreach organizations exist that provide assistance to residents in need. It is the strong sense of community and other factors that have motivated some former Como residents to return to the neighborhood.

Figure 1: Como Population Trend, 1940-2010



The population graphs display population trends between 1940 and 2010 for the Como neighborhood and Fort Worth. Between 1940 and 1960, Como experienced a 169.9 percent population upsurge, a pattern that trended in the same direction as the overall city population but at a much higher rate. However, after 1960 the population trend in Como reversed and began to steadily decline. By 2010, the population in Como had declined by close to fifty percent (49.8 percent) to 3,546, a stark contrast to the overall city’s population trend, which steadily increased between 1960 to 2010 by 317.2 percent.

Figure 2: Fort Worth Population Trend, 1940-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



The above photos reflect locations, institutions, and activities that currently exist in the Como neighborhood. **A.** Historic marker that outlines the early history of the Zion Missionary Baptist Church, a major religious institution in Como. **B.** Drug and Weapon Free Zone signs are posted throughout the neighborhood, an indication of the community’s efforts to eradicate unlawful activity and promote peace in the Como neighborhood. **C.** Chamberlin Park (ball field) is located on elevated terrain with clear views in the southwest quadrant of the Como neighborhood. Chamberlin Park was recently expanded to accommodate the new Como Neighborhood Center. **D.** The historic Lake Como cemetery is also located in the southwest quadrant of the Como neighborhood and is overseen by an association affiliated with the Zion Missionary Baptist Church. **E.** Signage for one of a handful of retail stores located on Horne Street. **F.** Youth working at a neighborhood community garden. **G.** Como’s annual Fourth of July parade is a source of pride in the neighborhood. **H.** Como Lions youth football team.

Photos: F, G, H, Courtesy of Donald Mooney.

Revitalization Potential

A revitalized Como neighborhood is achievable with strong, focused, and committed neighborhood leadership working in tandem with consistent intervention from committed public and private partners (i.e., the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, federal agencies, nonprofits, developers, etc.).

Intervention with sufficient resources could help reverse the aforementioned distress indicators and transform the Como neighborhood into a more vibrant, stable, and healthy neighborhood.



JPS Viola Pitts/ Como Health Clinic opened in 2000 and serves the Como and adjacent neighborhoods with medical, dental, and pharmacy services.

CURRENT CONTEXT - HIGHLIGHTS

2004 - City of Fort Worth 2004 Bond program includes \$1.7 million for park, street, and stormwater improvements in the Como neighborhood.

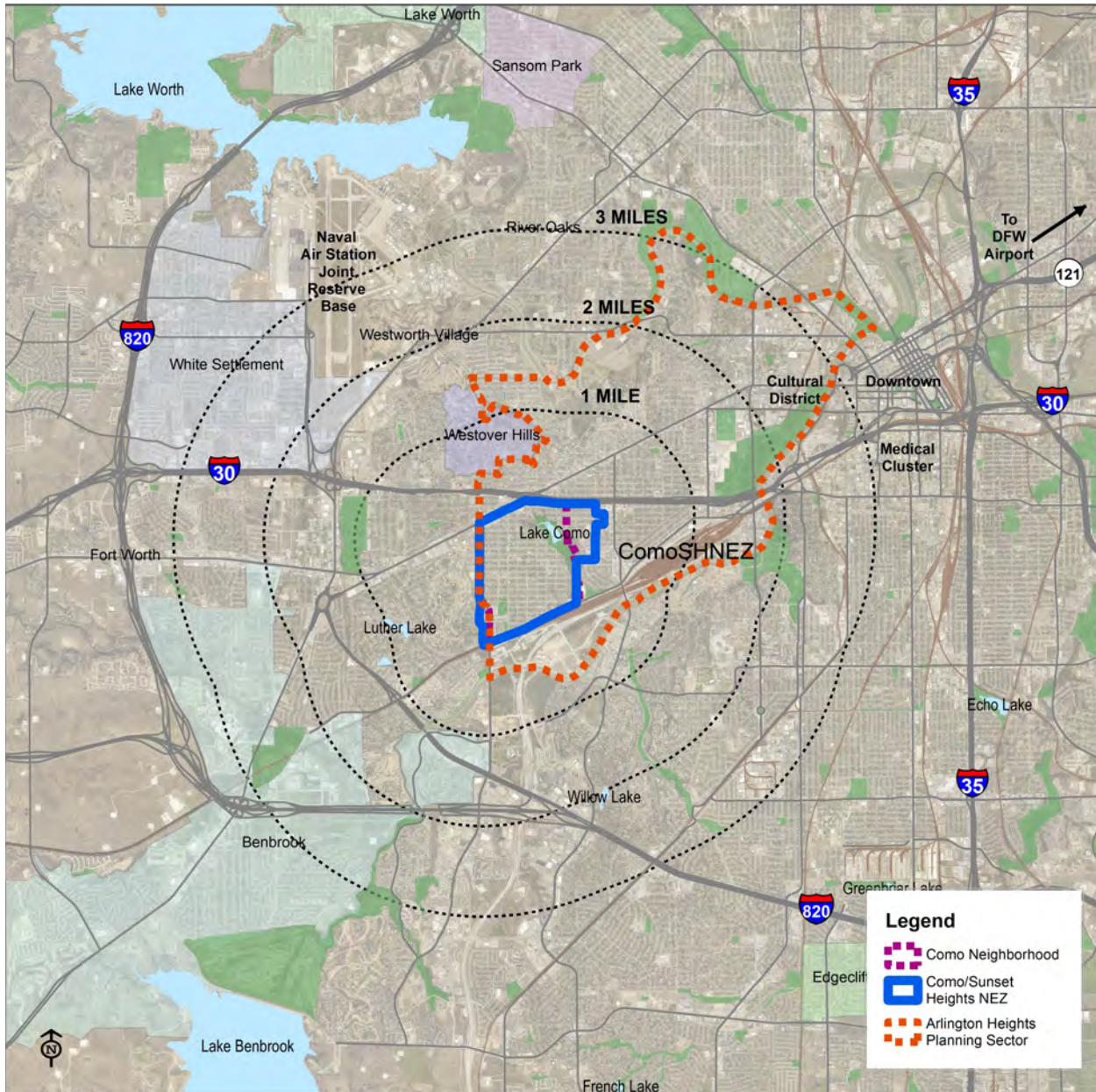
2004 - At the request of Como leaders, the Como neighborhood single-family residential areas are rezoned from “B” two-family zoning to “A-5” single-family zoning.

2006 - Lake Como Planning Committee partners with the Fort Worth Arts Council and the City to develop the Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan.

2014 - City of Fort Worth 2014 Bond program includes street improvements and a new neighborhood center for the Como neighborhood.

2014 - Lake Como Park pool is one of five pools throughout the city that closed due to budget constraints that precluded necessary repairs.

2016 - City Council approves the allocation of CDBG funds (\$915,000) to install sidewalk and pedestrian lights around Lake Como Park.



Map 4: Broader Context

The Como neighborhood is close to major employment centers and cultural attractions, including downtown Fort Worth, the Naval Air Station/Joint Reserve Base, the Medical District, and the Cultural District.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Environment and Natural Features

Rolling terrain is prevalent in the Como neighborhood, contributing to the natural beauty of the area. The slope changes are gradual throughout the area (Map 5). The elevated area around Chamberlin Park offers good views to the east and south. The land located south of Lake Como Park is primarily suitable for open space, due to its being in the 100-year floodplain or having very steep slopes.

The Como area is drained by natural tributaries and storm drains that discharge into Lake Como, Lower Como Creek downstream of the lake, and the West Vickery storm drain pipes and ditches along the southern edge of the NEZ. In the Como area, there are currently 65 buildings located within the boundary of the regulatory floodplain. Four buildings are in the floodplain north of the lake, while the other 61 buildings are in the Lower Como Creek floodplain south of the lake on the eastside of the Como neighborhood. The City and FEMA are working to update the regulatory floodplain boundaries in the Como area.

Planning evaluations have identified undersized drainage culverts (structures that carry water under a road) at Faron Street, Bourine Street, Lake Como Drive, and West Vickery Blvd. Assessment of the areas draining to the West Vickery storm drain pipes and ditches showed that East Como Creek has severely undersized culverts at Goodman, Blackmore, and Libbey. Humbert and Farnsworth Avenue at the East Como Creek crossings have been closed to traffic due to safety concerns and damages associated with road flooding in this area.

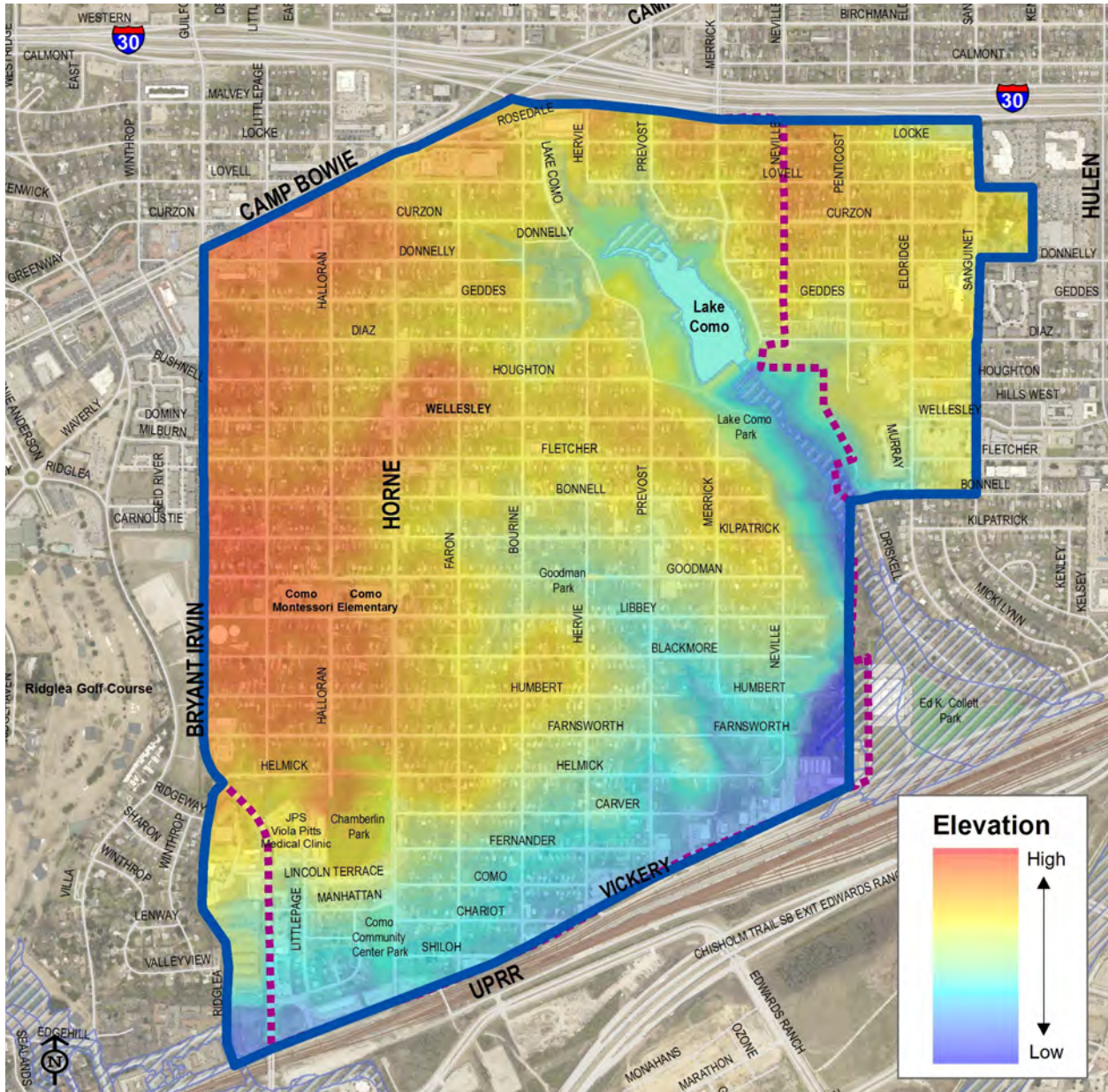
In addition to the regulatory floodplain, the City has identified areas within the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ that have the potential



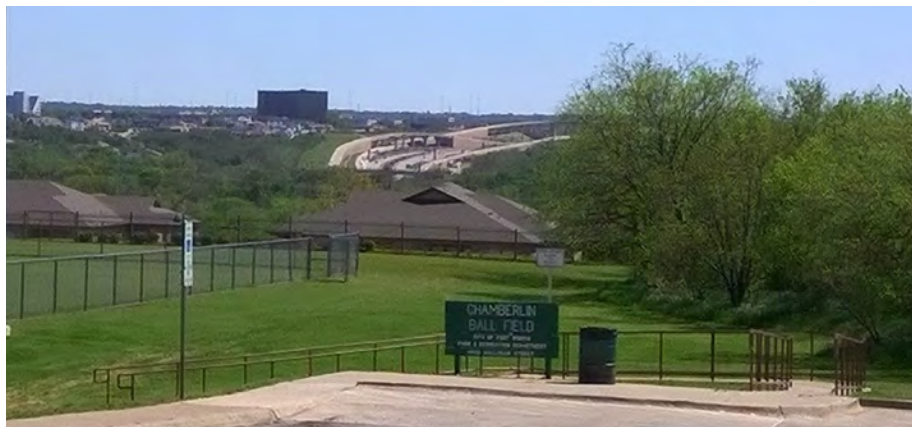
West view of Lake Como.

for high water. These areas are potentially floodprone due to the limited size of the tributaries and storm drain pipe systems. Many of the undersized storm drain pipes are the result of the historical channel being converted into pipe systems as the area developed in the past. The undersized storm drain system has caused past home flooding in the area of Libbey and Prevost and vehicular and street flooding in the northwest area of the NEZ.

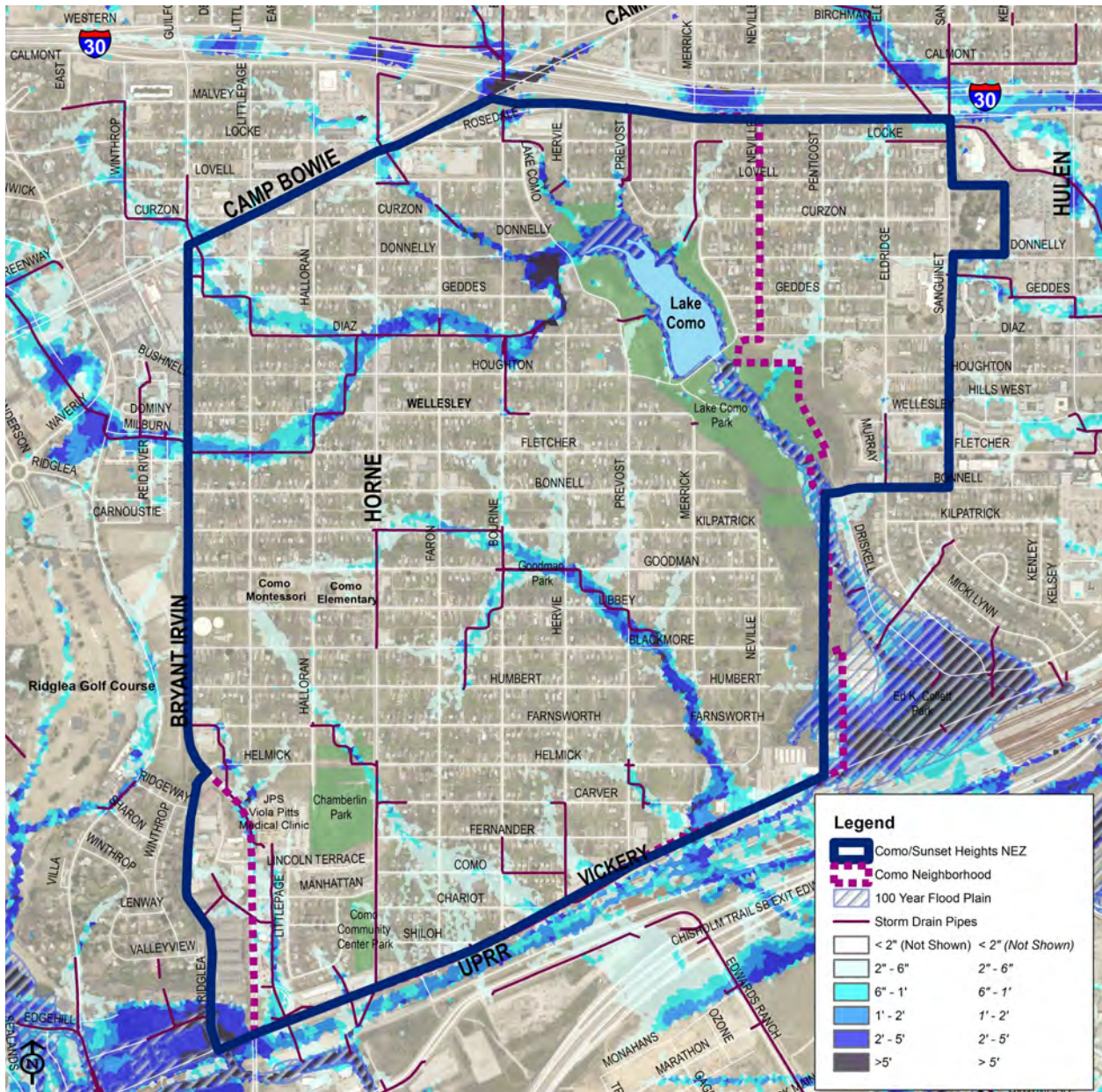
The most feasible alternative to reduce flooding damage identified during planning evaluations was buy-out of flood-prone homes. However, at this time no stormwater projects for the Como area are included within the City's five year capital project program. Future planning assessments and projects are subject to the availability of funding and the prioritization of Citywide stormwater needs.



Map 5: Topography



The area around Chamberlin Park is elevated terrain with clear southeasterly views.



Map 6: Flood-Prone Locations

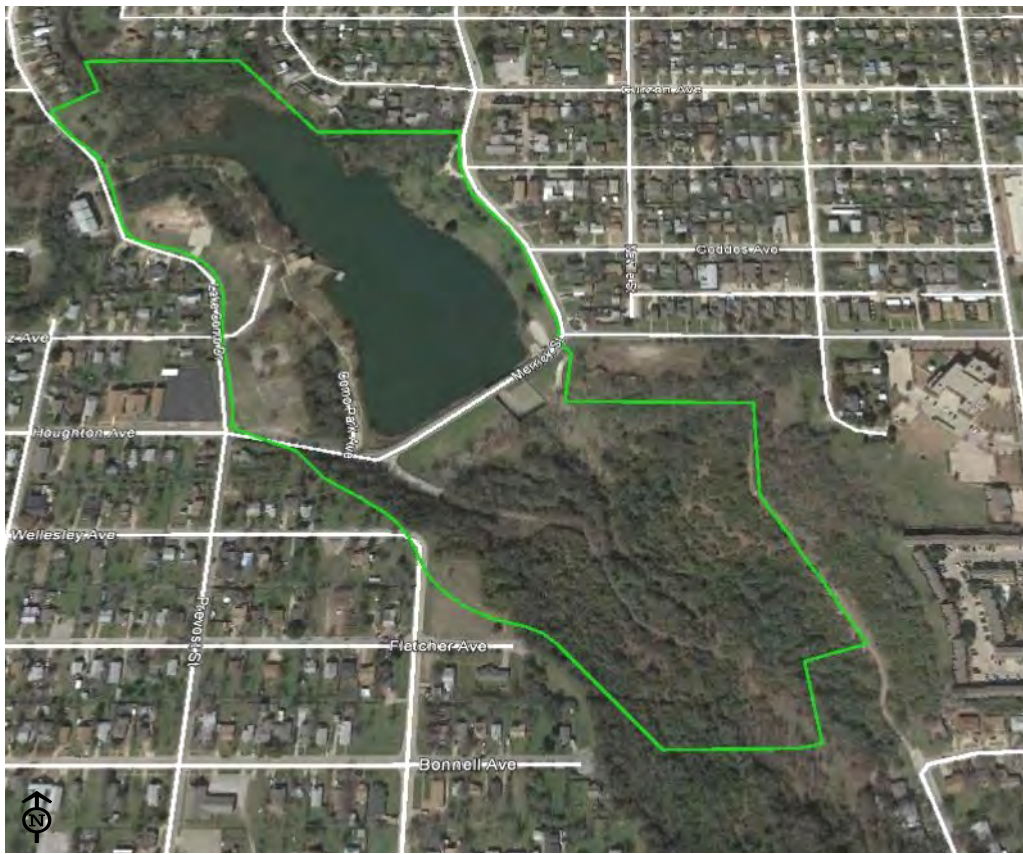


A segment of Farnsworth Street is closed due to recurrent flooding that exceeded the underground storm drain's capacity, resulting in a caved in street.

Public Parkland

Four public parks are located in the Como neighborhood and one is located just outside the neighborhood on the southeast. Dedicated in 1950, Lake Como Park is the largest public park in Como at approximately 59 acres. A dam splits the north section of the park from the south. The north section of the park is accessible to the public and includes a shelter, tennis courts, and seating. The Lake Como Park swimming pool closed in 2014 along with four other pools citywide

due to City budget constraints and excessive repair costs. The parkland south of the dam is not accessible to the public due to major overgrowth but is recommended for improvements that include nature and heritage trails as outlined in the Lake Como Public Art Master Plan. South of Lake Como Park is a large open space area that spans from the south end of Lake Como Park to just north of Vickery Street.



Lake Como Park

Source: City of Fort Worth and Google Earth, 2016.

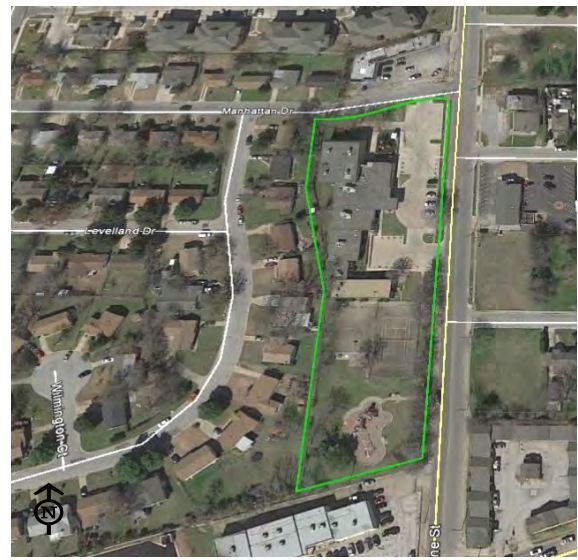


Lake Como Park south of the dam.

Collectively, the five public parks in and adjacent to the Como neighborhood exceed the National Recreation and Park Association standards of 21.25 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons.



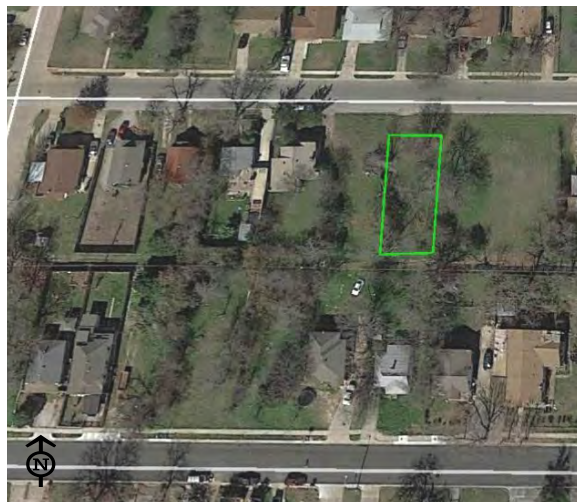
Chamberlin Park (ball field) includes a baseball field that is not regularly used. Chamberlin Park was recently expanded to accommodate the new Como Neighborhood Center. Dedicated: 1962/ Acres: 9.6



Como Community Center Park is located adjacent to the current Como Neighborhood Center off Horne Street. The park includes a tennis court and children's play equipment. Upon completion of the new neighborhood center, the existing center is proposed for demolition. The parkland may remain in place. Dedicated: 1975/ Acres: 1.2

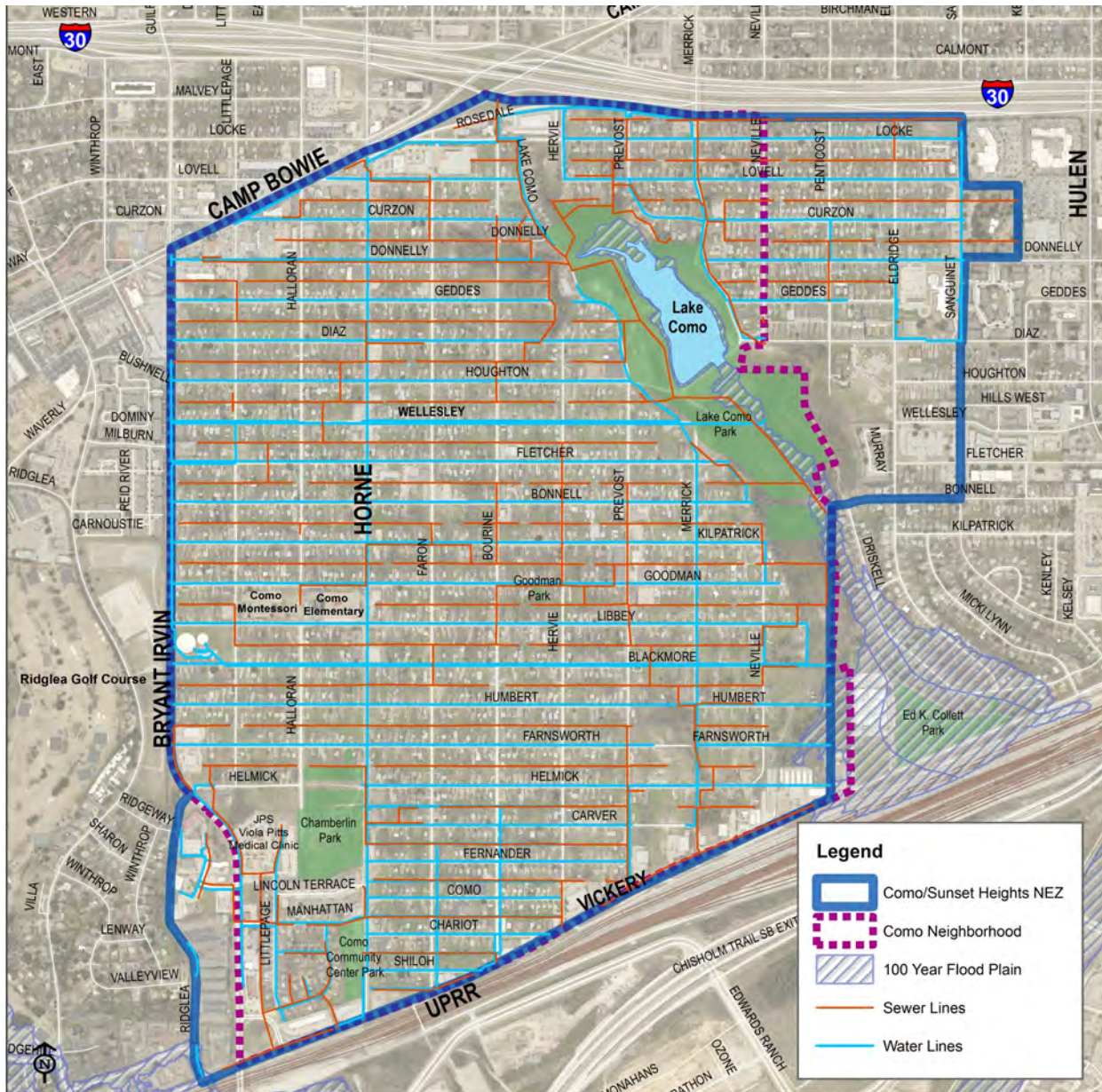


Ed K. Collett Park is located just outside the Como neighborhood on the southeast. The park includes a ball field. Dedicated: 1971/ Acres: 7.6



Goodman Park is a small pocket park located in a residential district. At the request of Como residents, the previous park amenities were removed due to undesired and unlawful activity occurring in the park. Installing park amenities and possibly expanding the park to include an adjacent City surplus property is recommended. Dedicated: 1967/ Acres: 0.1

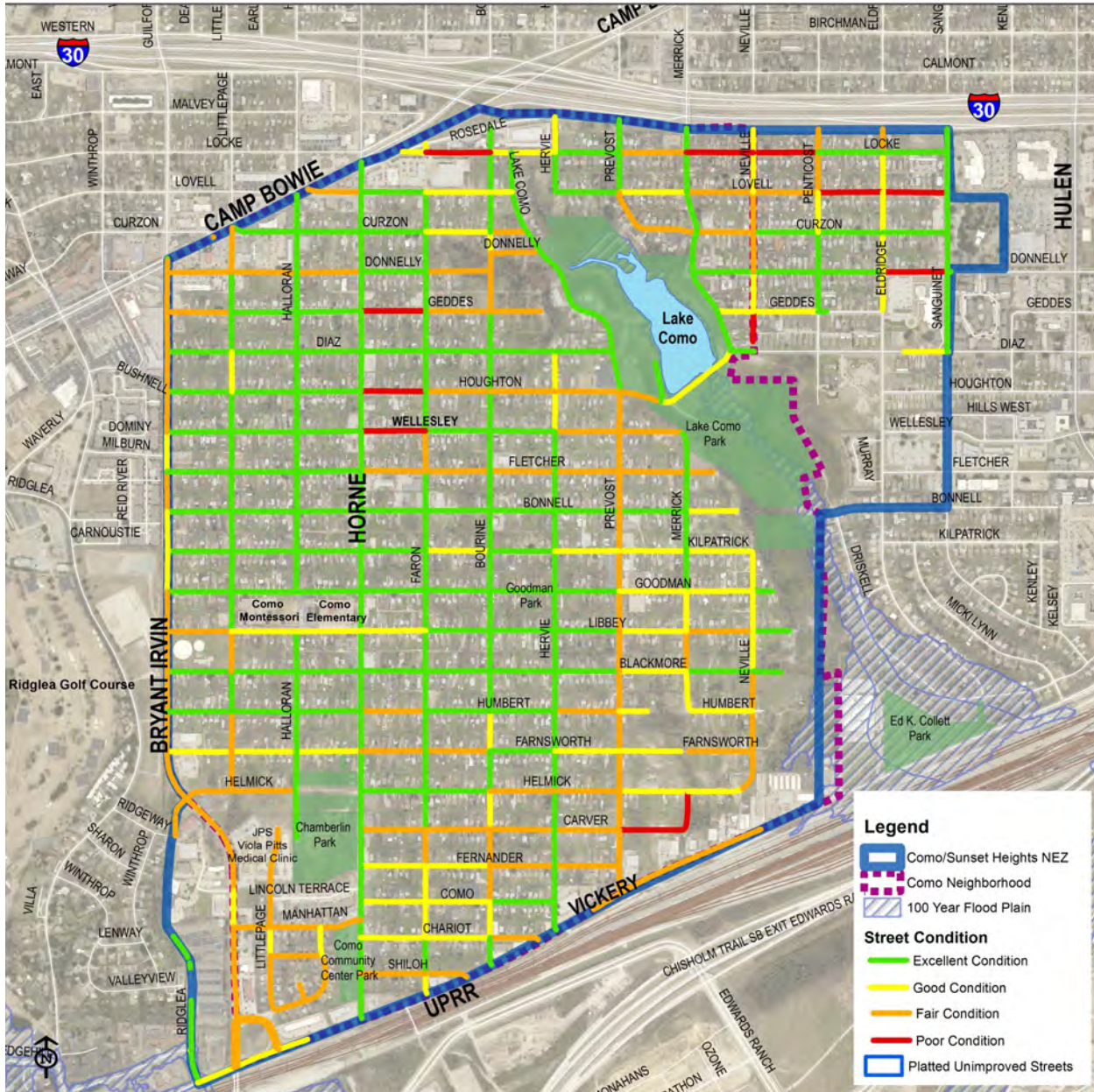
Source: City of Fort Worth and Google Earth, 2016.



Map 7: Water and Sewer Lines

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The Como neighborhood is served by an extensive system of water and sewer lines maintained and served by the City of Fort Worth. The existing water and sewer infrastructure is sufficient for current use and future low intensity redevelopment.



Map 8: Street Conditions

Street Condition

Overall street quality is listed as either in excellent or good condition. However, short segments of some streets are listed in poor condition. Several streets west and south of Lake Como Park are platted but unimproved. Eleven streets are scheduled for asphalt replacement under the City’s 2014 Bond Program capital improvement projects.



Unimproved poor condition street in Como.

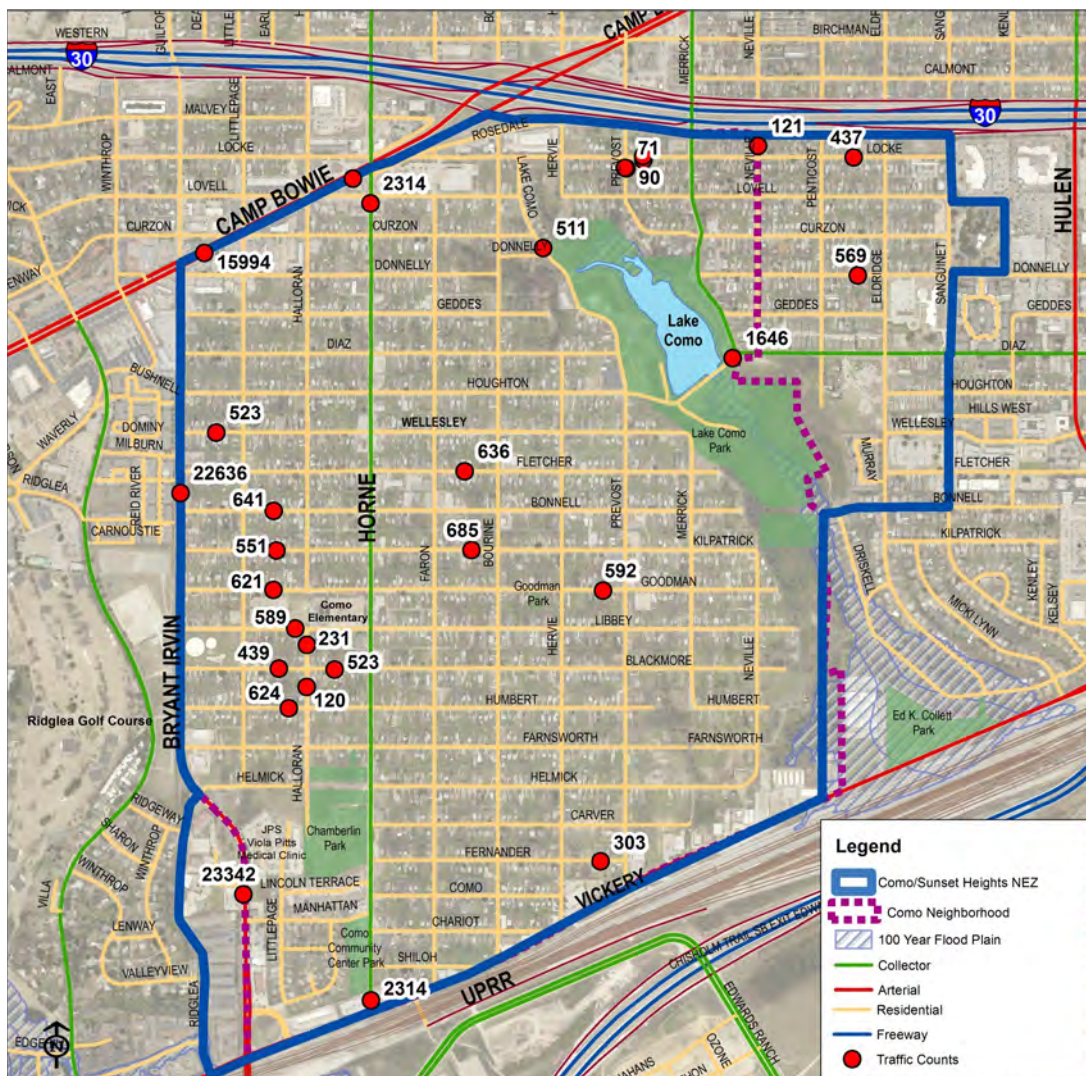
TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT Circulation

The Como neighborhood is well-served by a major roadway network consisting of two freeways in close proximity: Interstate-30 on the north and the Chisolm Trail Parkway toll road on the south. Three arterial roads are located in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ, including Camp Bowie Boulevard on the north, Bryant Irvin on the west, and West Vickery Boulevard on the south (Map 9). Additionally, another arterial (Hulen Street) is a short distance east of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ. The local street system is comprised of a compact grid, which contributes to excellent internal street connectivity and

the ability to efficiently travel to various locations within the neighborhood and connect to the nearby arterial roads and to the Interstate 30 Freeway (Map 9).

Within the Como neighborhood, Horne and Merrick streets experience a modest amount of cut-through traffic, based on empirical observation.

Traffic counts conducted by the City and the Texas Department of Transportation indicate that higher volume vehicular travel occurs on the arterial streets of Bryant Irvin Street, Camp Bowie Boulevard, and Vickery Boulevard. For typical arterial streets, the



Map 9: Transportation Network and Traffic Counts

average vehicles per day (VPD) ranges from 4,000 to 45,000 (Map 9). Traffic counts on Bryant Irvin and Vickery are in the middle of that typical range.

Within the Como neighborhood, the average daily travel is less than 1,000 vehicles per day, which is recommended for local or residential streets. Two exceptions are seen on the east side of the lake at Merrick (1,646 VPD) and on the north and south end of Horne Street (2,314 VPD) (Map 9). The higher traffic volumes at Merrick and Horne Street could be indicative of some cut-through traffic, but they are typical for collector streets.

Bike/Pedestrian Facilities

Currently, there are no existing bike facilities in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ. However, the City’s Bicycle Transportation Plan recommends proposed on-street bike lanes, proposed signed on-street bike routes, and a proposed off-street bike route (Map 10). Once built, the bike facilities would connect (southward on Bryant Irvin Road) to the paved trail located adjacent to the Clearfork segment of the Trinity River.

Pedestrian facilities or sidewalks are sporadically located in the Com/Sunset Heights NEZ (Map 10).

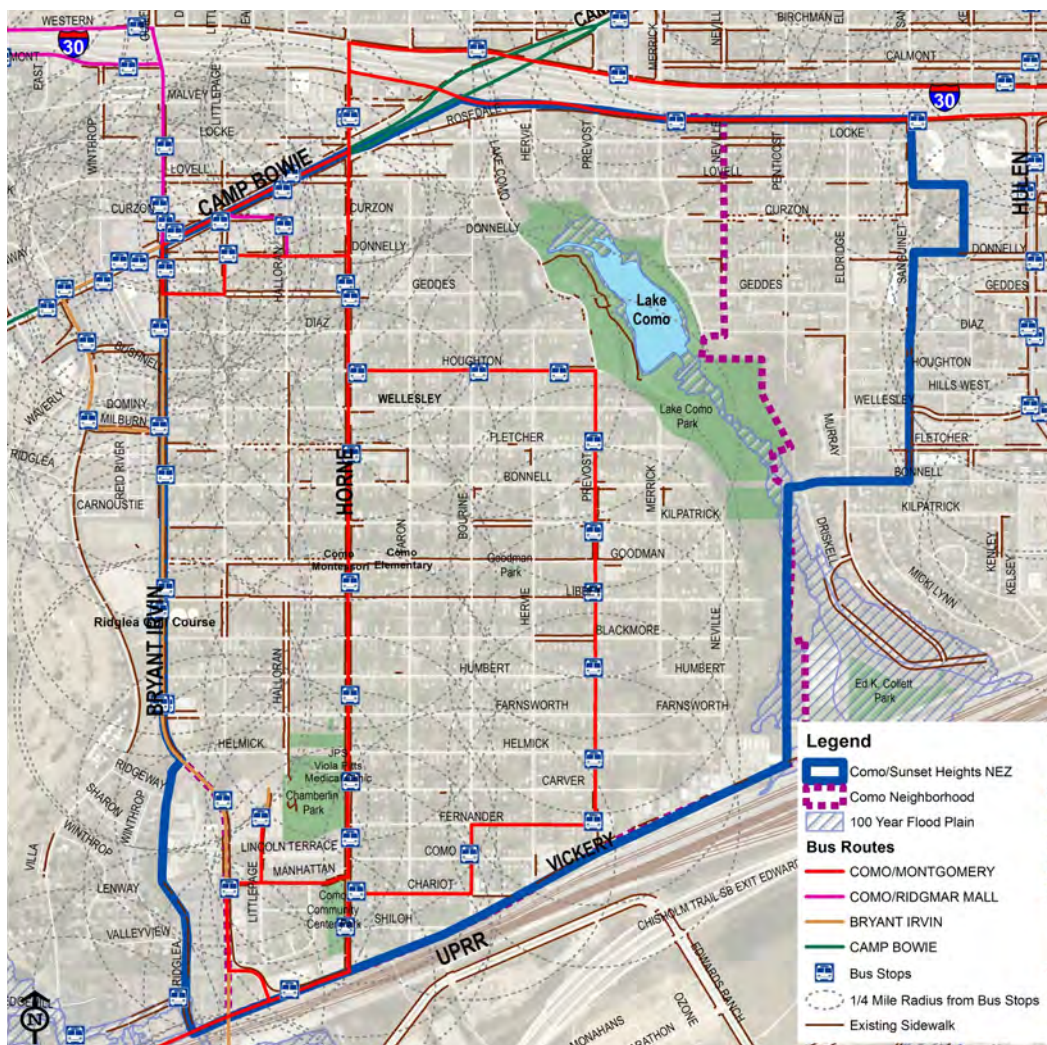


Map 10: Bicycle Facilities

Transit

The Como neighborhood has many bus stops that are mostly concentrated along Horne and Prevost streets (Map 11). Only one bus stop has a shelter and a few have a seating bench. Although most residents live less than a quarter-mile from a bus stop, many of the streets lack sidewalks forcing pedestrians to walk in the street, which is a potential hazard especially for persons utilizing a wheel chair.

Photo: One of the few bus stop locations with a seating bench in the Como neighborhood.



Map 11: Transit and Sidewalk Locations

LAND USE AND ZONING

Land use refers to how land is currently used and how it is planned to be used in the future. Population and economic trends help predict future needs for various land uses. The City of Fort Worth guides land use, through the Comprehensive Plan, to ensure that land resources appropriately encourage economic development, promote a variety of housing choices, preserve natural and historic resources, and accommodate transportation routes and public facilities, in order to protect and improve Fort Worth's quality of life.

The land use (current and future) and zoning categories are illustrated by color as displayed on Map 12, Map 13, and Map 14, respectively.

Current Land Use

Based on Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) data, the existing land use pattern of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ is a mix of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, parkland, and vacant land.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ is comprised of approximately 3,249 parcels that together contain 826 acres. Single-family residential is the predominant land use at 62.2 percent of the land area. Due primarily to a decline in population and the lack of substantial new residential investment, a substantial number of vacant lots exist in the Como neighborhood.

Within the Como neighborhood, commercial land is mostly located on Horne Street and along the northern section of the Como neighborhood (Map 12).

Existing Land Uses



Drew's restaurant located along the northern section of Horne Street.



Villas on the Hill Apartments located on Horne Street



Como First Missionary Baptist Church located on Goodman Drive.

Future Land Use

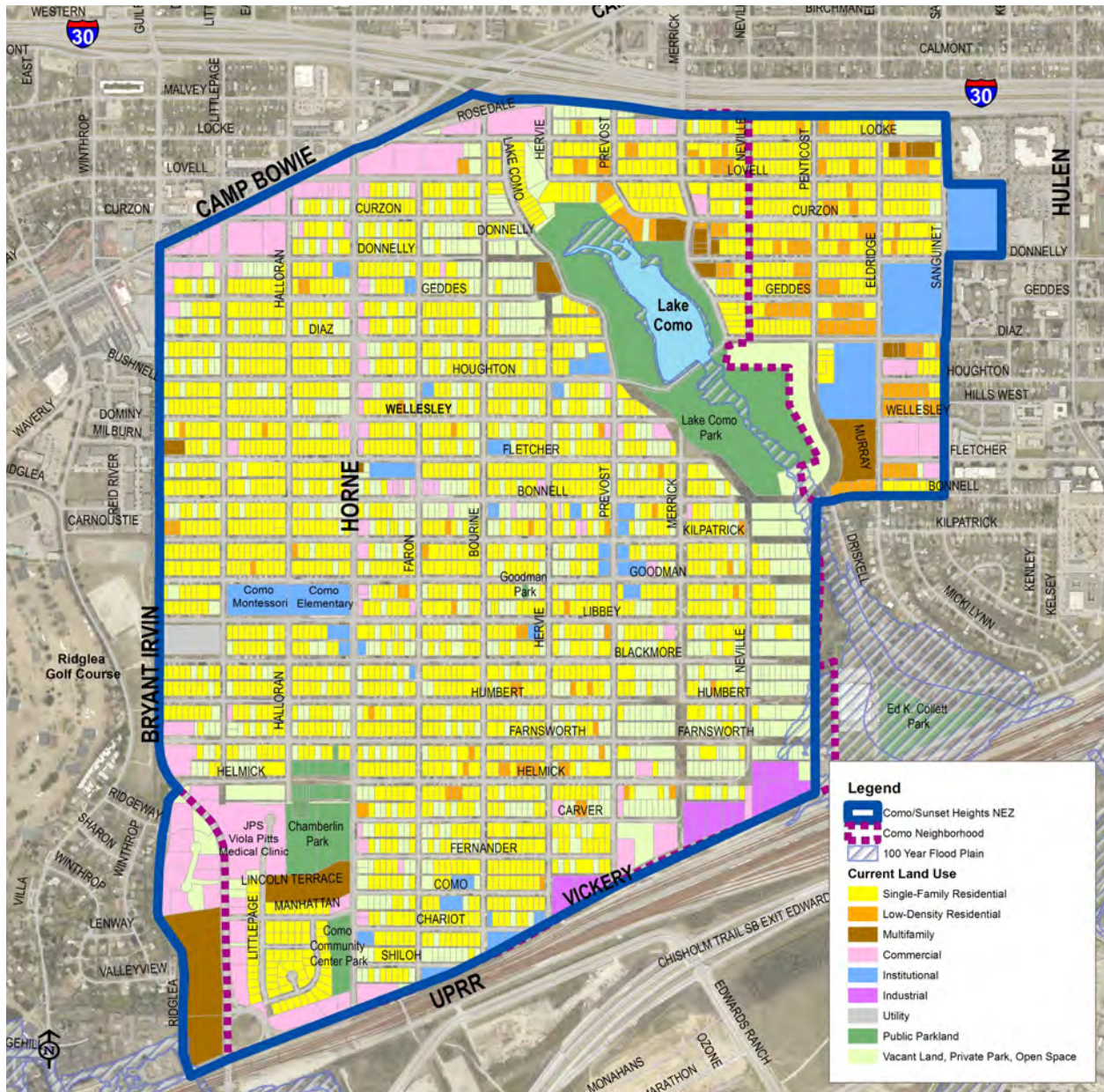
The City's Comprehensive Plan includes Future Land Use maps that depict the desired locations of future development, redevelopment, and land uses. Unlike zoning, the City's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use maps are not a mandate and do not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries. The Future Land Use maps are intended to provide guidance for making decisions on proposed developments.

The adopted 2017 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use designations (Map 13) mirror the existing zoning in many respects. Single-Family Residential is recommended for existing residential areas in Como. Low Density Residential and Medium Density are the recommended Future Land Use designations for existing duplex and apartment locations. Mixed-Use is the recommended Future Land Use along the northern section of Horne Street where the current Camp Bowie Boulevard form-based zoning exists.

Zoning

The City promotes orderly growth and land use while protecting existing property owners by grouping together compatible development—a practice known as zoning. Zoning is the city's tool to implement the Future Land Use component of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Through the use of district classifications, zoning helps to regulate land use, promote orderly growth, and protect existing property owners by ensuring a convenient, attractive and functional community. The City Council along with several City boards and commissions, especially the Zoning Commission, make decisions on land uses, compatibility, and other zoning matters.

As illustrated on Map 14, most of the current zoning in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ closely reflects the existing current land use. Within the Como residential areas, the zoning is mostly "A-5" (single-family), the result of a 2004 Council-initiated rezoning that rezoned most of the residential area from "B" two-family to "A-5" at the request of Como leaders. Multifamily zoning is located in a few locations in the Como neighborhood. Commercial zoning is found along parts of Horne Street, on small parcels throughout Como, and along the Interstate 30 frontage road for the small retail shops. The Camp Bowie District form-based code zoning is located along the north section of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ between Neville Street and Bryant Irvin Road. The Camp Bowie District form-based code facilitates higher density mixed-use development with a pedestrian focus. Industrial zoning is primarily located along West Vickery Boulevard east of Hervie Street. However, industrial zoned parcels are located along Bonnell Avenue between Faron Street and Bourine Street adjacent to residential uses. Land uses allowed in industrial zones may not be compatible with surrounding residential properties.

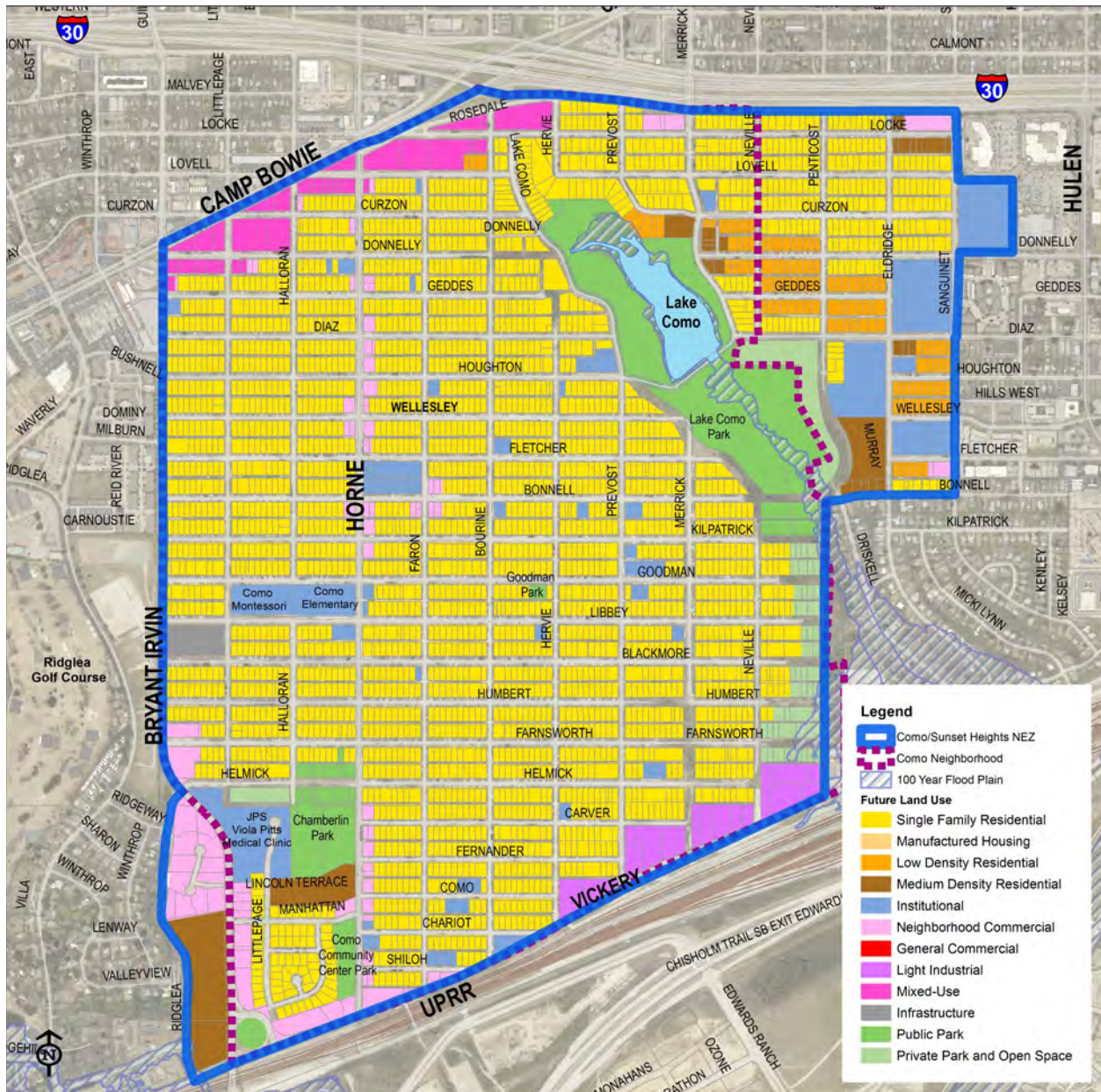


Map 12: Current Land Use

Table 1: Current Land Use

Current Land Use	Percent	Acres	Current Land Use	Percent	Acres
Single-Family Residential	40.3%	333	Industrial	1.2%	10
Low-Density Residential	3.7%	31	Utility	0.4%	3
Multifamily	16.9%	140	Public Parkland	7.8%	65
Commercial	7.6%	63	Vacant Land, Private Park, Open Space	17.5%	145
Institutional	4.6%	38			

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016.

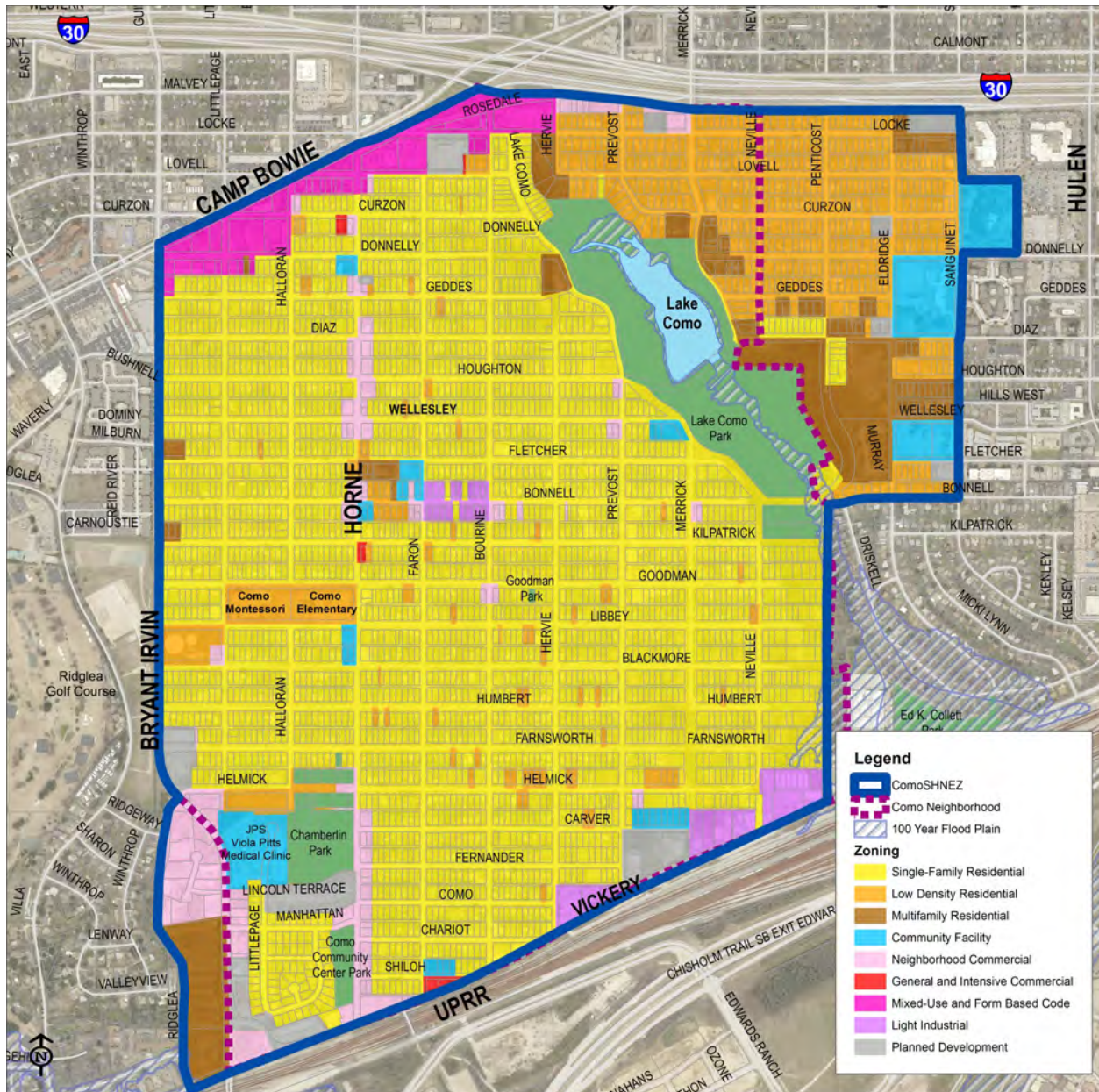


Map 13: Existing Future Land Use

Table 2: Existing Future Land Use

Future Land Use	Percent	Acres	Future Land Use	Percent	Acres
Single-Family Residential	62.5%	422.4	Infrastructure	0.4%	2.9
Low-Density Residential	4.1%	27.6	Light Industrial	2.1%	14.1
Medium-Density Residential	3.6%	24.2	Public Park	8.5%	57.4
Institutional	6.8%	46.1	Private Park	2.7%	18.5
Neighborhood Commercial	4.5%	30.3	Water	2.1%	14.0
Mixed-Use	2.7%	18.6			

Source: City of Fort Worth.



Map 14: Zoning

Table 3: Zoning

Zoning Category	Percent	Acres	Zoning Category	Percent	Acres
Single-Family Residential	63.8%	628.7	General and Intensive Commercial	0.2%	1.7
Low-Density Residential	14.2%	139.6	Mixed-Use and Form-Based Code	3.1%	30.5
Multifamily Residential	5.9%	58.4	Industrial	1.8%	17.6
Institutional	3.6%	35.9	Planned Development	2.7%	26.8
Neighborhood Commercial	4.8%	46.9			

Source: City of Fort Worth.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Permits

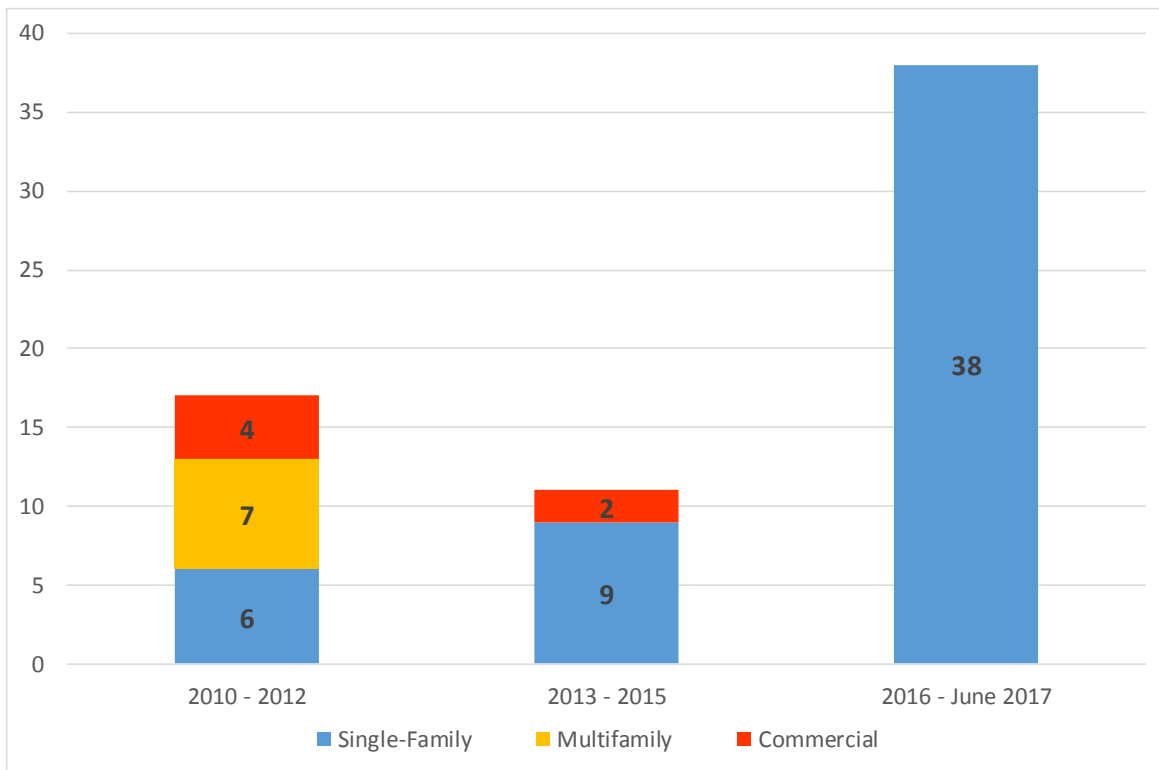
Sixty-six permits for new structures were issued in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ between 2010 and June 2017.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ experienced an uptick in new single-family residential between 2016 and June 2017 (Figure 3), an indication of an increased market demand since 2010. The seven permits for the new multifamily development is the Villas on the Hill apartment complex that was built in 2011. New commercial development includes the office and medical facilities that are located in the southwest quadrant of the

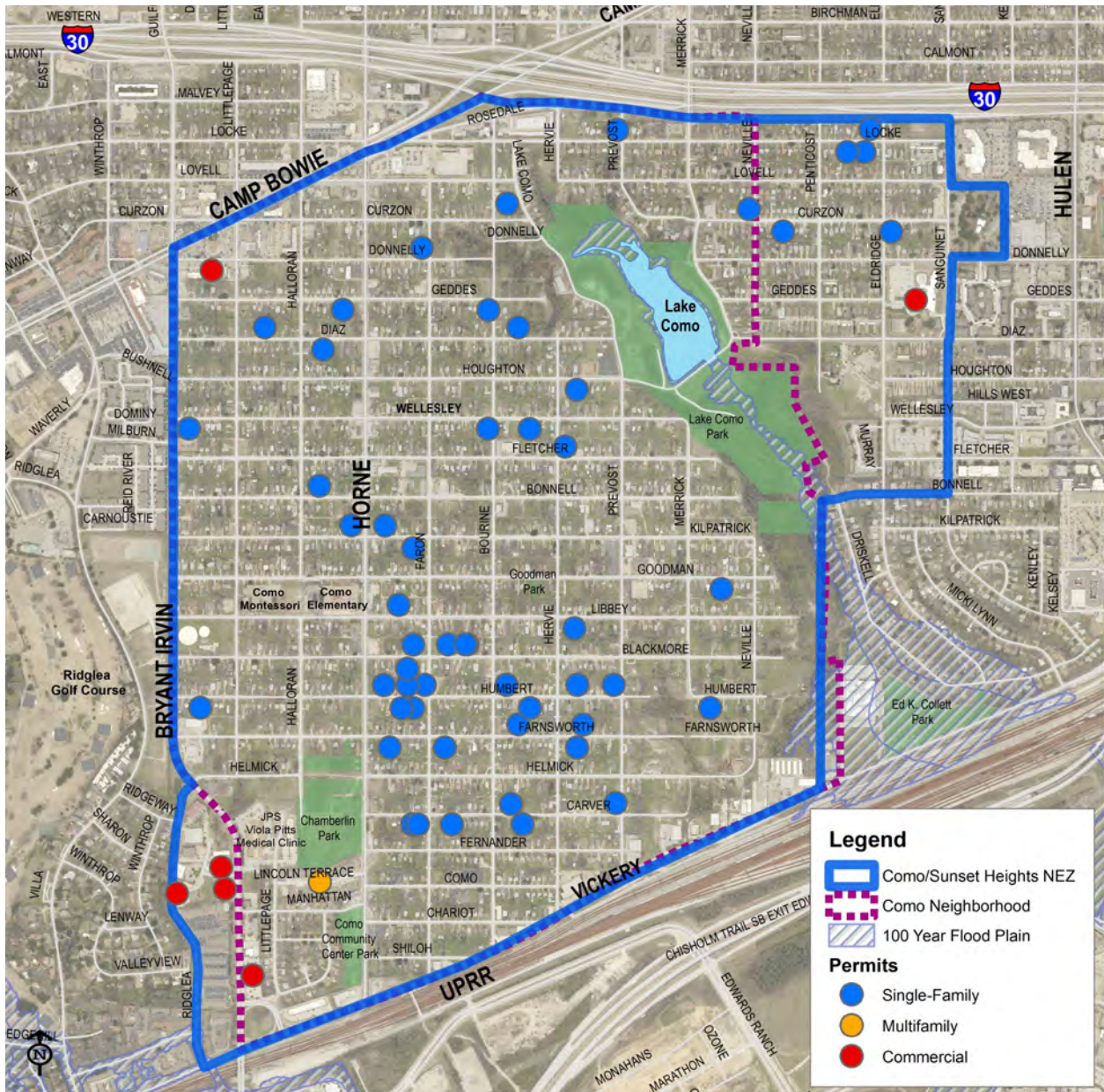
NEZ, a small strip shopping center off Donnelly Avenue, and the Lena Pope Home Learning Center off Sanguinet Street. During this time period, no new commercial development occurred on Horne Street (Map 15).

Although the Como neighborhood has not received a substantial level of new investment, the area presents numerous opportunities for redevelopment based on the number of vacant parcels and low land values, which together make redevelopment projects relatively affordable, especially when compared to surrounding areas.

Figure 3: Permits (2010—June 2017)



Source: City of Fort Worth.



Map 15: Permits (2010–June 2017)

Between 2016 and June 2017, the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ experienced an uptick in new single-family houses.

Vacant Parcels

Based on Tarrant Appraisal District data, 809 parcels in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ are vacant residential lots, which represents a comparatively high 24.9 percent of the total parcels in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ.

Regarding the ownership of the vacant residential lots, 78.4 percent of the owners are Fort Worth residents, 17.7 percent reside outside Fort Worth, and 4.0 percent reside in other states.

The large number of vacant and under-utilized parcels in the Como neighborhood contributes to a perception of neighborhood decline. However, the significant amount of undeveloped land may ultimately become

Como's most important asset for community revitalization.

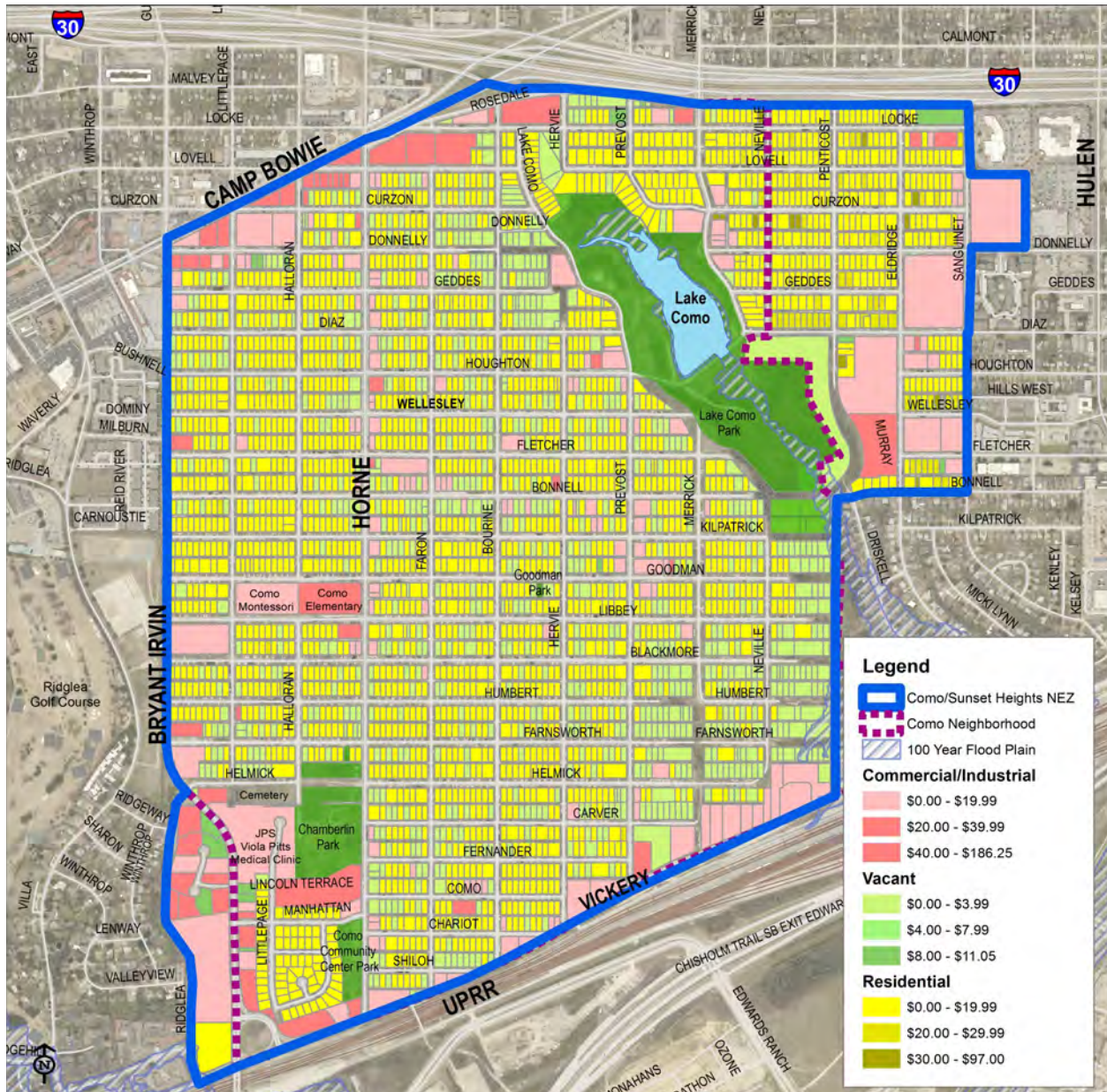
City-Owned Parcels

The City of Fort Worth owns 143 parcels in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ, which represents 4.4 percent of all parcels in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ. These parcels include parks and public facilities (i.e., Como Center, fire station, water tower) and properties acquired from tax foreclosures.

The number of vacant parcels and ownership patterns are constantly in flux. The above information is current as of 2016.



Above are examples of the numerous vacant lots in the Como neighborhood.



Map 16: Appraised Per Square-Foot Value by Land Use

Table 4: Appraised Per Square-Foot Value by Land Use

Land Use	Area (Square Feet)	Percent Land Use	Total Appraised Value	Avg. Appraised Value Per Square Foot
Vacant	5,993,509	18.2%	\$7,599,764	\$1.27
Residential*	20,978,361	63.7%	\$113,847,447	\$5.43
Commercial/Industrial^	5,960,709	18.1%	\$100,832,203	\$16.92

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016.

*Single-Family and Low-Density Residential

^Includes Multifamily Apartments and Institutions

HOUSING

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the Como neighborhood has a higher percentage of persons residing in owner occupied housing, at 62.9 percent, compared to 59.2 percent for the city as a whole. The percentage of persons residing in rental occupied housing is lower in Como, at 37.1 percent, compared to the citywide figure of 40.8 percent (Figure 4). Approximately 81.7 percent of the housing structures are occupied in Como, a lower percentage than the citywide level (90.2 percent). The percentage of housing structures that are vacant is higher in Como, at 18.3 percent, compared to 9.8 percent citywide (Figure 5).

(\$36,957) is substantially lower than the median housing value at the citywide level (\$144,360) (Figure 6). Como has an older housing stock with a median year built of 1950, compared to the citywide median year built of 1984 (Figure 6). Approximately 80 percent of the housing stock in the Como neighborhood was built prior to 1960 (Figure 7). Due to the age and comparatively low value of the houses located in the Como neighborhood, many could have code and safety issues (e.g., insufficient insulation, electrical problems, low energy efficiency, lead paint, and asbestos) and lack amenities that exist in newer houses, resulting in reduced market attractiveness. Effective revitalization strategies will require programs to address the older housing stock in the Como neighborhood.

Based on Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) data, the median housing value in Como

Figure 4: Housing Tenure



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Figure 5: Housing Occupancy



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Figure 6: Median House Value and Year Built

Como Neighborhood



Median Value (2016): **\$36,957**
Median Year Built: **1950**

Fort Worth

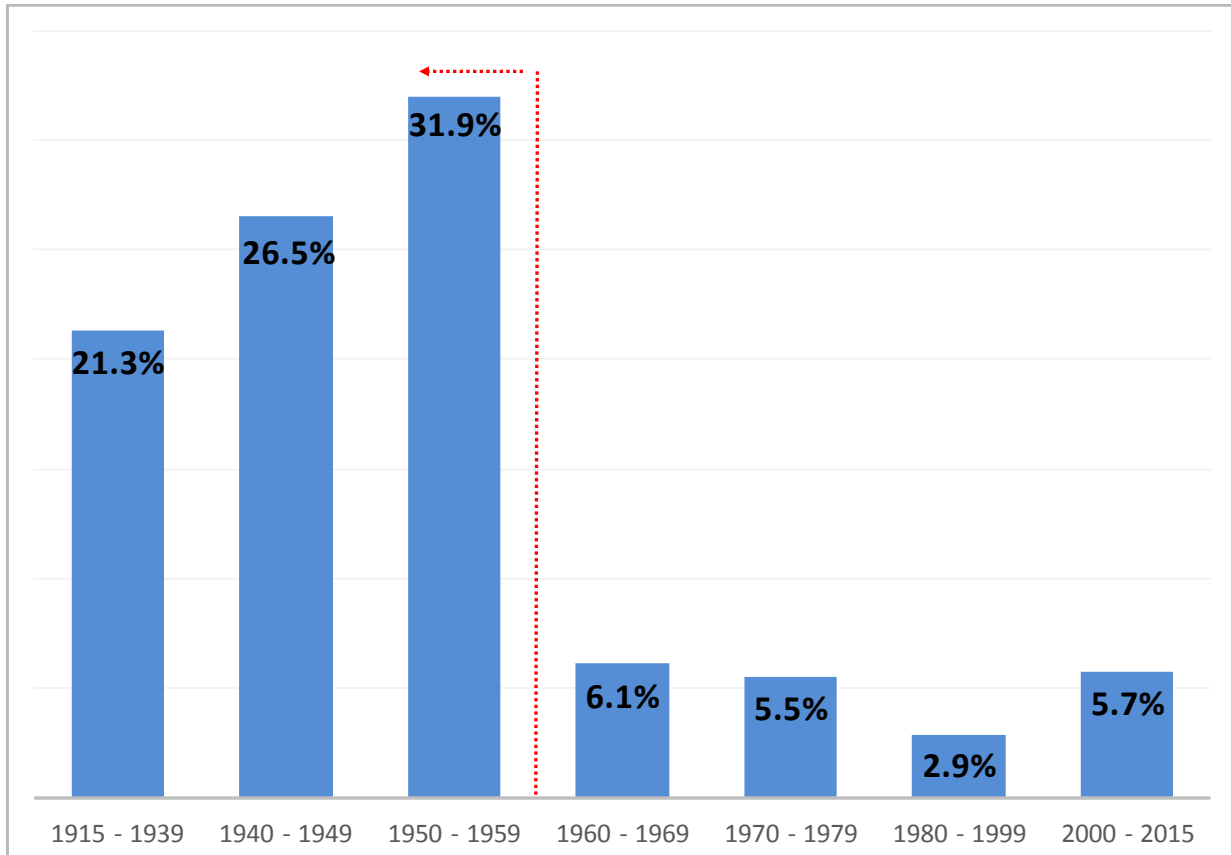


Median Value (2016): **\$144,360**
Median Year Built: **1984**

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016.

79.7% of the housing stock in the Como neighborhood was built prior to 1960.

Figure 7: Housing Year Built Range (Como)



Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016.

The Como neighborhood has a diverse housing stock.



Older wood façade houses.



Modern wood façade houses.



Brick façade houses.



Recently built Habitat for Humanity house.

In addition to housing diversity, there are several vacant and boarded-up houses throughout the Como neighborhood. Salvageable houses can be rehabilitated and placed on the market, while unsalvageable houses should be demolished due to their unsafe structures and blighting influence on the neighborhood.



Housing Market Information

The 2016 median sales price for a single-family house was \$79,350 for the Como neighborhood and \$187,158 citywide. The average size of new homes in Como is 1,293 square feet compared to the average citywide size of 1,975 square feet (Table 5).

Based on information listed on the housing market website Zillow.com during the month of January 2017, sixty-one houses in the Como neighborhood were listed as foreclosed or pre-foreclosed (auction). The negative impacts of high levels of residential foreclosures on a neighborhood are two-fold. The first is the impact to the family that is losing their home. Some families vacate their homes early in the foreclosure process and others are evicted after losing their homes in sheriff's sales. The second negative impact is the collateral damage to the neighborhood. Neighborhoods that have a pattern of high foreclosures see block after block of vacant and

abandoned homes. Long term vacant and abandoned properties potentially become blighting influences on a neighborhood by being magnets that attract squatters and criminal activity, which in turn increase fire, safety, and health risks. Additionally, the property values of neighboring occupied homes also declines. In order to mitigate the foreclosure trend in the Como neighborhood, effective foreclosure prevention programs will be essential to the revitalization initiative.

There are many vacant parcels in the Como neighborhood that provide an opportunity for quality infill housing. Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit home builder, is addressing the need for affordable housing with its plans to build 75 single-family houses (in phases) in the Como neighborhood. As of December 2016, Habitat for Humanity has built 21 houses that are now occupied and the organization has 13 houses under construction.

Table 5: Housing Market Data (2016)

Location	Average Sales Price	Median Sales Price	Average Square Footage	Average Sales Price Per Sq. Ft.	Ratio of Sales Price to List Price	Average Days on the Market
Como	\$94,160	\$79,350	1,293	\$72.82	99.5%	51
Fort Worth	\$214,349	\$187,158	1,975	\$108.20	99.8%	45

Source: North Texas Real Estate Information Systems, Inc. and Texas A&M University, Real Estate Center, 2016.

Housing Affordability

As mentioned above, a pattern of mortgage and tax foreclosures exists in the Como neighborhood (Map 17 and Table 7). The reasons why a household is unable to pay their mortgage and/or property taxes is unique to each household. However, the common denominator in the majority of cases is inadequate income.

To determine the most effective strategies to address housing needs in the Como neighborhood, it is important to understand housing affordability within the Como neighborhood. Housing affordability is traditionally defined as no more than 30 percent of a household income being required to pay housing expenses (i.e., mortgage, home insurance, taxes, etc.). A household that spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing is considered an income-

burdened household that may not have adequate funds to pay for other expenses (e.g., transportation, groceries, health care, clothing, etc.) or contribute to savings. Often, income-burdened households prioritize necessities like groceries, clothes, child care, etc. at the expense of housing costs, which leads to mortgage and tax delinquencies that, if not corrected, eventually result in foreclosure proceedings.

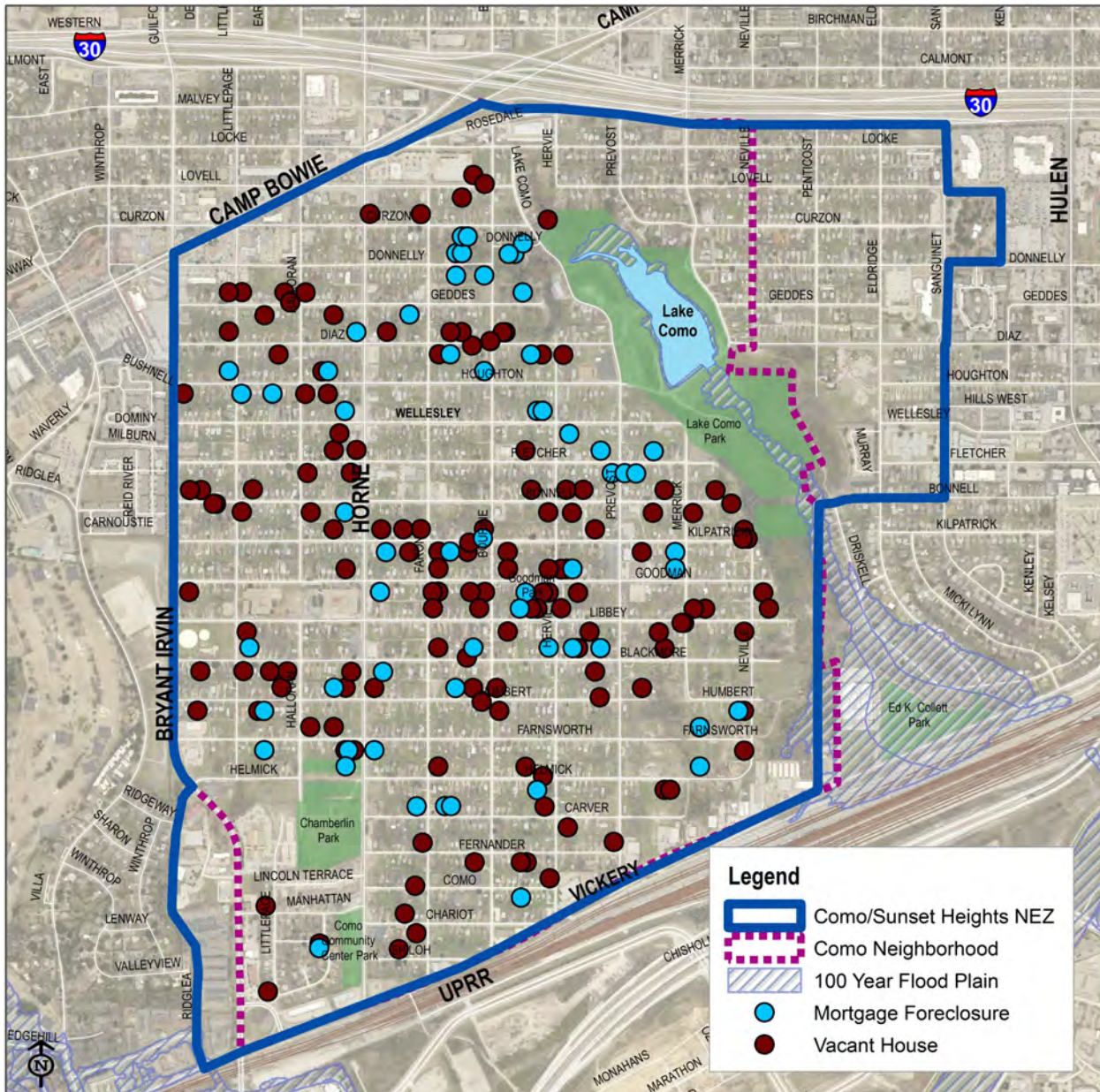
Based on the 2015 Census estimate, the median household income for the Como neighborhood is \$18,725, which is 26.6 percent of the Tarrant County Area Median Income (AMI) figure (\$70,500) and falls within the extremely low income category (Table 6). AMI is calculated annually by HUD to establish income eligibility levels (based on family size) for public assistance.

Based on income levels in the Como neighborhood, most households would require some level of subsidy to meet housing and other expenses.

Table 6: Median Income (2015)

Tarrant County Area Median Income (AMI)	\$70,500
80% AMI <i>Low Income</i>	\$39,050 to \$55,750
50% AMI <i>Very Low Income</i>	\$24,400 to \$34,850
Below 35% AMI <i>Extremely Low Income</i>	\$14,650 to \$24,250
Fort Worth <i>(2015 median income est. *)</i>	\$53,214
Como Neighborhood <i>(2015 median income est. *)</i>	\$18,725

Source: HUD 2015 Income Limits for 1-4 person family sizes. *Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2015.



Map 17: Residential Mortgage Foreclosures and Vacant Houses

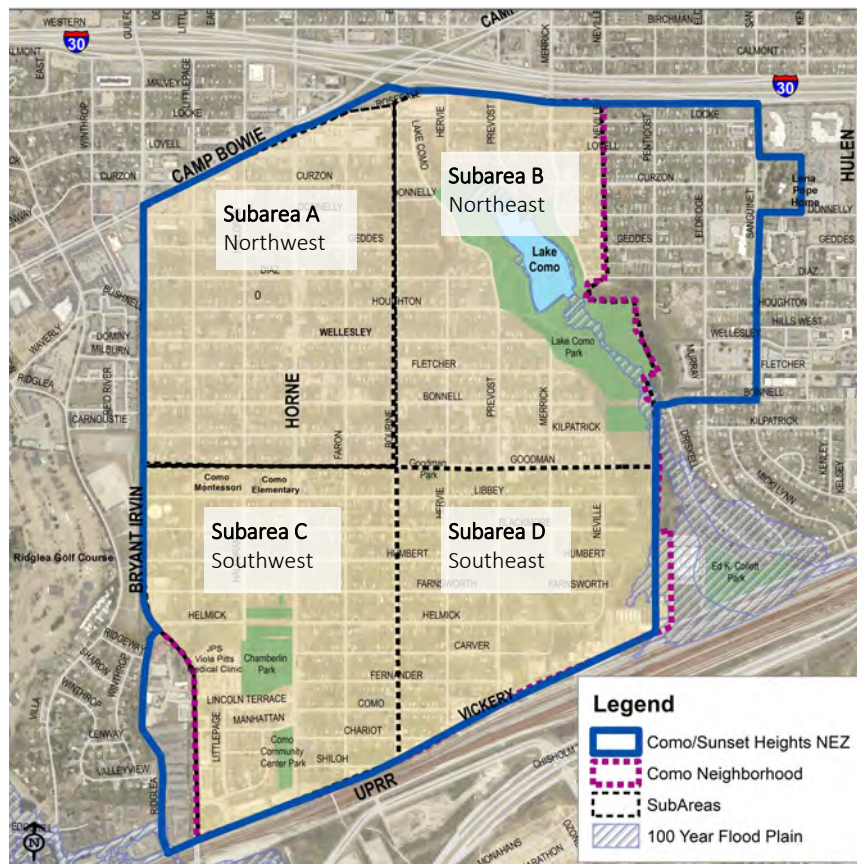
As illustrated on the above map and Table 7 following, the large number of mortgage foreclosures and vacant houses highlight the magnitude of the work that will be required to stabilize the housing market in the Como neighborhood.

Source: Mortgage Foreclosures, Zillow.com, 2015. Vacant Houses, Como stakeholders' neighborhood canvass, December 26-27, 2016.

Table 7: Selected Housing Data (Como)

Sub Area	Single-Family Housing Built Prior to 1960* (#/%)	Vacant Lots* (Estimate)	Vacant Residential Houses† (Estimate)	Residential Foreclosures^ (As of Jan. 2017)	New Single-Family Construction‡ (Closed Permits 2013—2016)
A	517/85.9%	216	48	20	2
B	321/86.5	182	29	16	4
C	343/72.4%	170	39	15	12
D	219/71.8%	243	37	10	4
TOTAL:	1,462/79.7%	811	153	61	22

Sources: *Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016, †Como stakeholders neighborhood canvass, Dec. 2016, ^Zillow.com, 2017, ‡City of Fort Worth, Permit Data, 2016.



Map 18: Como Neighborhood Subareas

DEMOGRAPHICS

A critical component of understanding a neighborhood is knowing who lives there and understanding their socio-economic situation. This can be achieved by gathering quantitative data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Once the data is compiled and analyzed, it can be used to make recommendations for the neighborhood.

The Como neighborhood is primarily located in Census Tract 1025 which closely approximates the boundary of the Como neighborhood except for small areas on the north, northeast, and southwest.

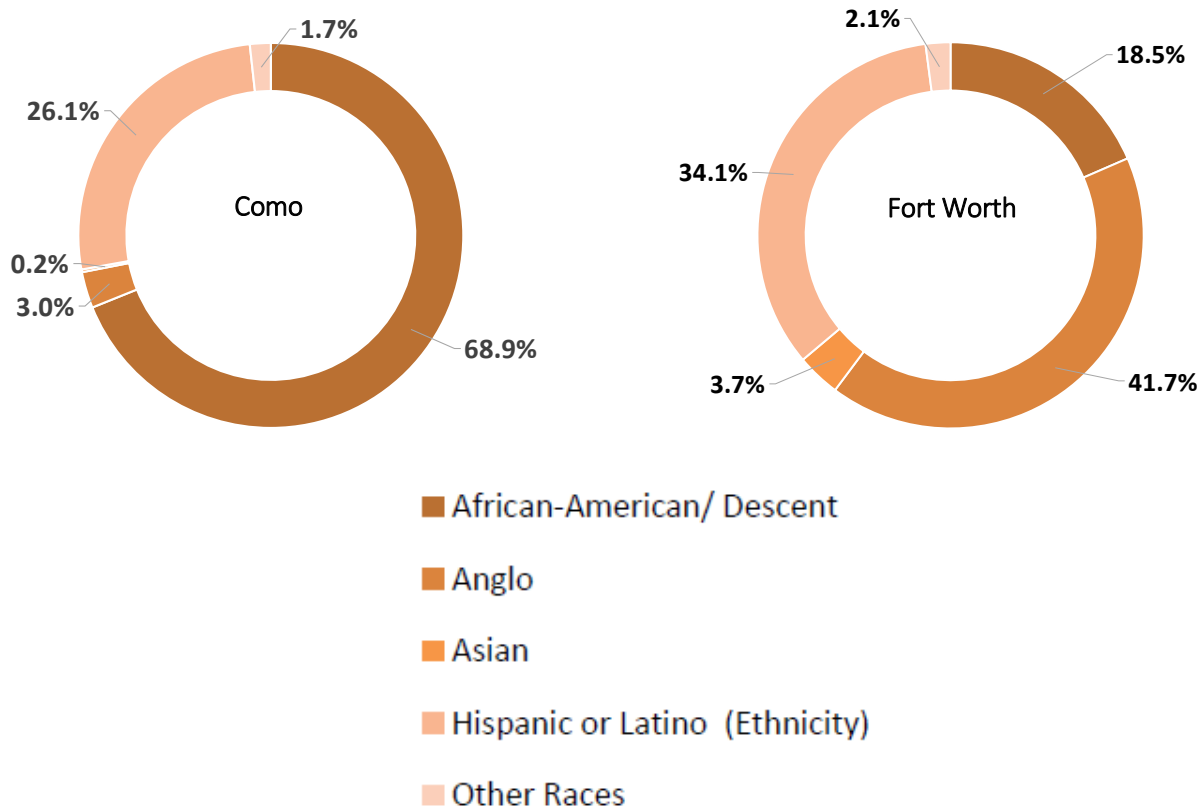
Based on the 2010 Census, the Como neighborhood, is home to approximately 3,546 people. The average population density is six persons per acre. The Census data pre-

sented in the following charts and graphs cover Census Tract 1025, along with the city of Fort Worth for comparison purposes.

Race and Ethnicity

When compared to the race and ethnic percentages for Fort Worth, Como has a much higher percentage of African Americans (over three-fold), about eight percentage points less for Hispanics, and a significantly lower percentage of Anglos (Figure 8). The racial and ethnic composition of the Como neighborhood is reflective of past history and emerging trends. The Como neighborhood originated as an African American residential enclave and was one of a handful of locations in Fort Worth that were open to African Americans during the era of Jim Crow and segregation. The increase in the Hispanic population is due to migration and

Figure 8: Race and Ethnicity.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

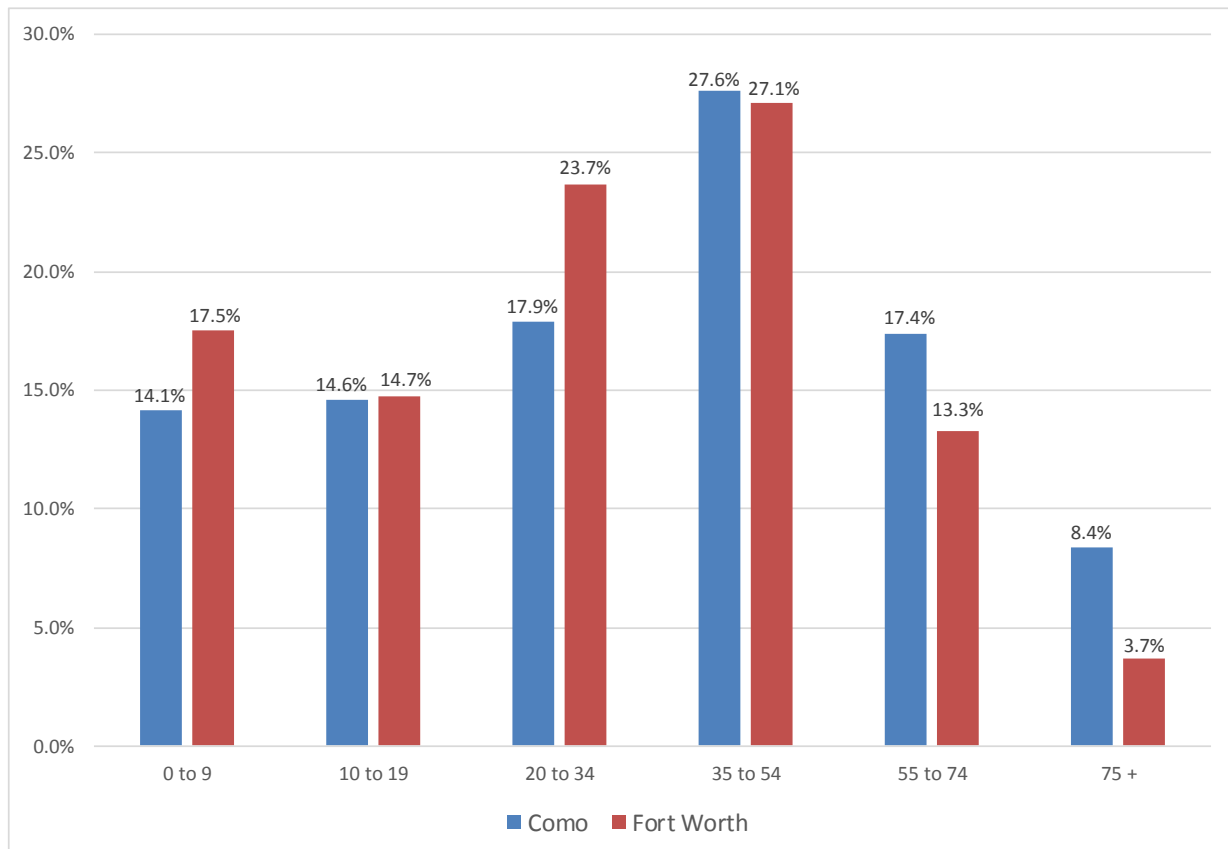
natural increase, reflecting local, state, and national trends.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of the Como neighborhood is primarily minority, with 68.9 percent African American and 26.1 percent Hispanic. This is a significant change from Como's racial and ethnic make-up during the 1960s and 1970s. In those earlier years, African Americans comprised close to 100 percent of the population in Como (97.8 percent in 1960 and 97.9 percent in 1970). Between 1970 and 2000, the percentage of African American population decreased by 9.4 percent to 88.5 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population in Como increased by 11 percent from 15.1 percent to 26.1 percent, respectively (Figure 8).

Age Distribution

Within Como, the 35 to 54 age bracket has the highest percentage at 27.6 percent which is comparable to the citywide figure of 27.1 percent (Figure 9). Persons 19 and under make up 28.7 percent of the population, which is lower than the citywide figure of 32.2 percent. By contrast, Como has a higher percentage of population aged 75 years or more (8.4 percent) than the citywide level (3.7 percent), and a smaller population of young children up to age 9 (14.1 percent) than the citywide level at 17.5 percent.

Figure 9: Age Distribution

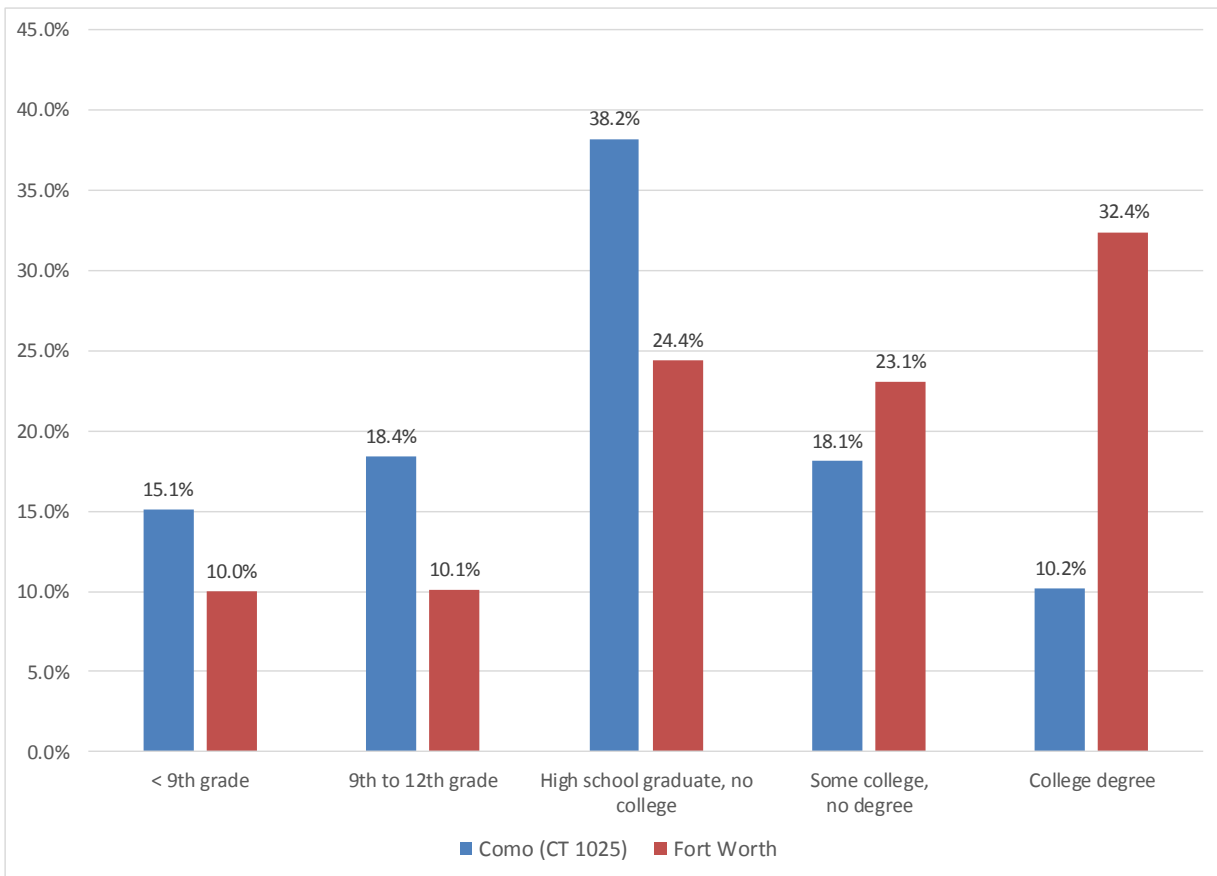


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

Education

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, educational attainment is lower in Como than in the city as a whole (Figure 10). Como has a higher percentage of persons with a high school diploma but no college (38.2 percent) and a 12th grade education or less (33.5 percent) than the city as a whole, (24.4 percent and 21.1 percent, respectively). Only 10.2 percent of Como residents have a college degree compared to 32.4 percent for the city overall.

Figure 10: Education Attainment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2015.

Household Income

Lower income levels in Como are attributable to low education levels. Based on the U.S. Census 2015 estimate, the median household income levels by age in Como are substantially lower than the citywide (Figure 11).

In order to impact the low education and job skill levels in Como, it is important to establish programs and services to address these issues.

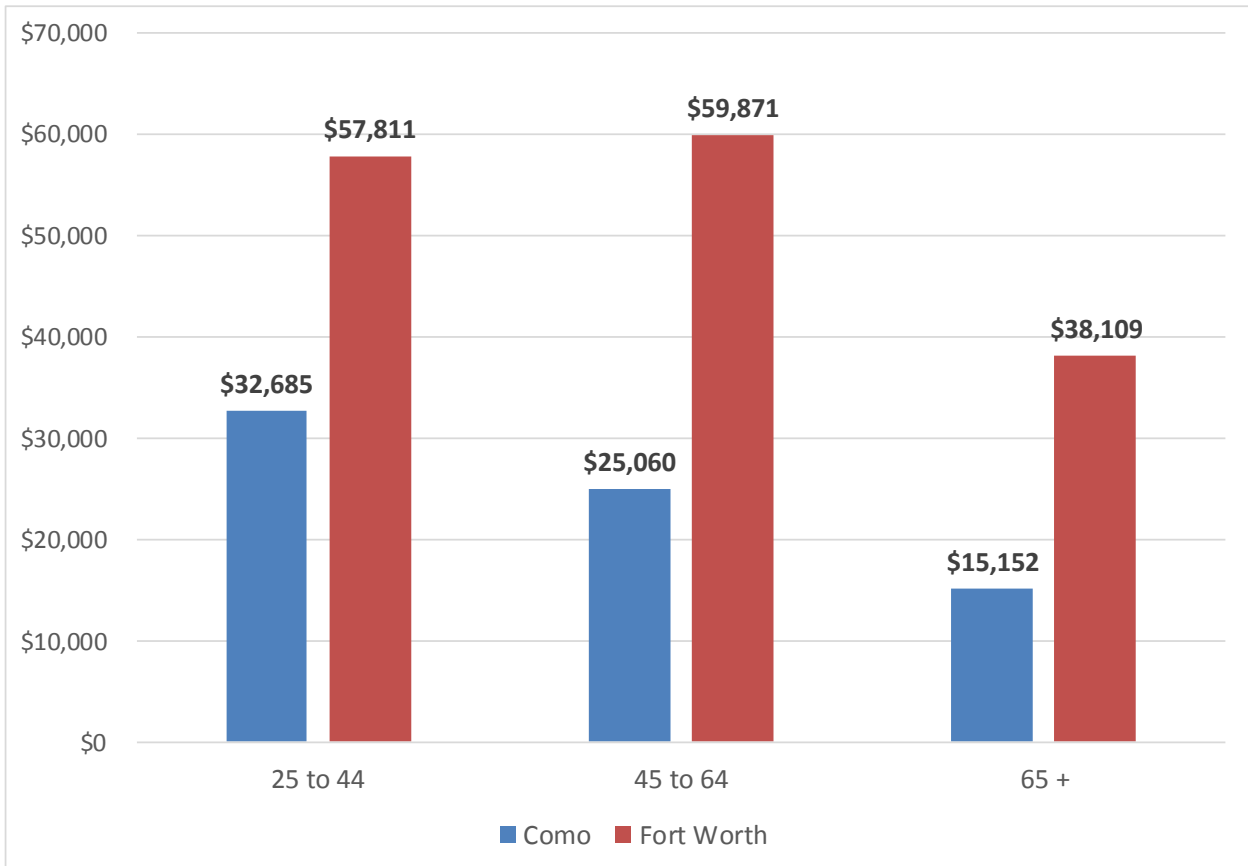
Concentrated Poverty

Concentrated poverty is defined as a poverty level of 40 percent or above according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development.

The poverty rate in Como has steadily increased since 1990 (Figure 12). Based on the most current Census estimate (2015), the poverty rate in Como is 53 percent, which is significantly higher than the citywide figure of 19.2 percent (Figure 13). As the population decreased during the 25 year period between 1990 and 2015 the poverty rate increased. This inverse relationship is an indication of several factors in the Como neighborhood, including out migration of middle class households due in part to limited housing choice options, influx of lower income households, and long standing low education and job skill levels.

Figure 11: Median Household Income by Age

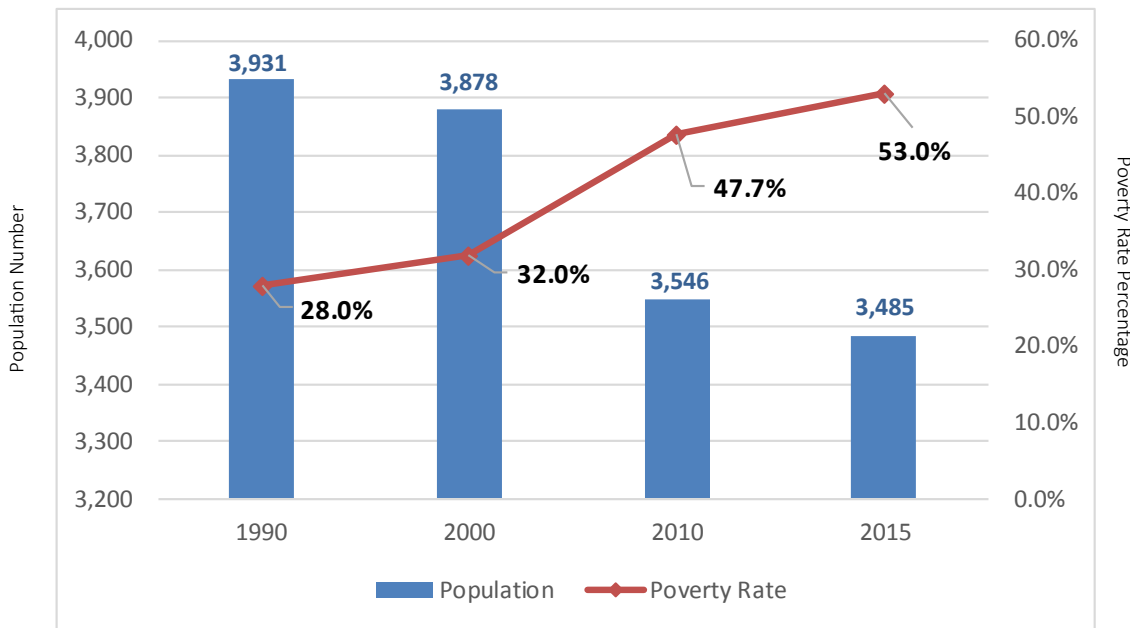


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2015.

Proposed revitalization strategies for the Como neighborhood will require not only intervention in the built environment, but programs to address the various social, educational, and economic issues that have trapped many Como households in a cycle of poverty.

Concentrated poverty magnifies the problems associated with poverty in general, e.g., high unemployment levels, drug activity and other crimes, family breakups, poor school performance, etc.

Figure 12: Population and Poverty Relationship (Como)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2015.

Figure 13: Poverty Level



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS, 2015 and Decennial Census, 2010.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Crime

Most of the crime in and around the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ is property-related crimes such as burglary, larceny/theft, vandalism, etc. From 2010 to 2016, all crime increased slightly by 2.7 percent from 1,386 to 1,424 reported incidents (Figure 14).

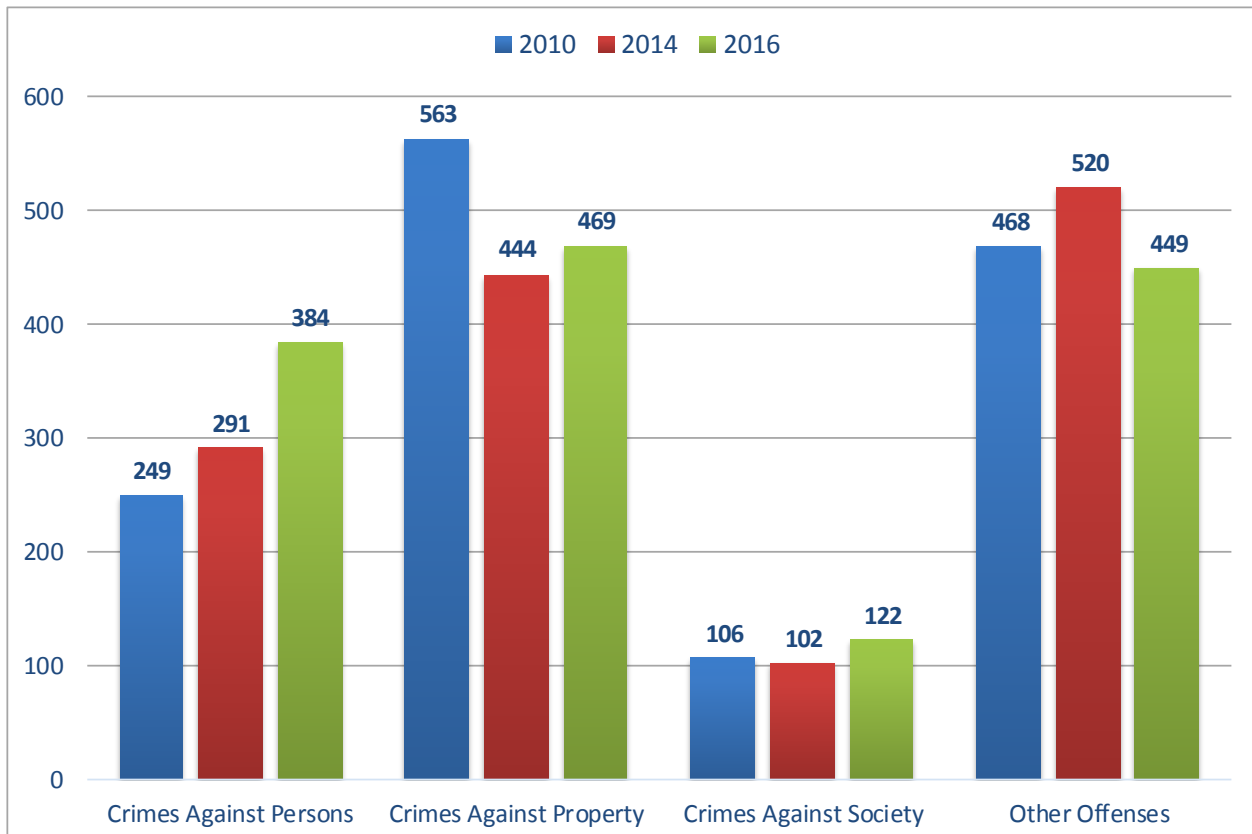
Property crimes are widespread throughout the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ, with a higher concentration per acre along Camp Bowie Boulevard. This pattern may reflect crimes of opportunity (shoplifting, vehicle theft, etc.) that often occur near retail establishments.

Code Violations

Numerous code violations exist in the Como neighborhood (Map 18). In 2014, the top three code violations were high grass (36.2 percent), property maintenance (15.6 percent), and solid waste (primarily illegal dumping and improper Bulk Waste piles/set-out) (12.5 percent).

Common locations of illegal dumping include the western edge of Como park, the floodplain area south of the park, and on some of the vacant residential lots. The illegal dumping activity is detrimental to the neighborhood and contributes to the appearance of blight in some locations of the Como neighborhood.

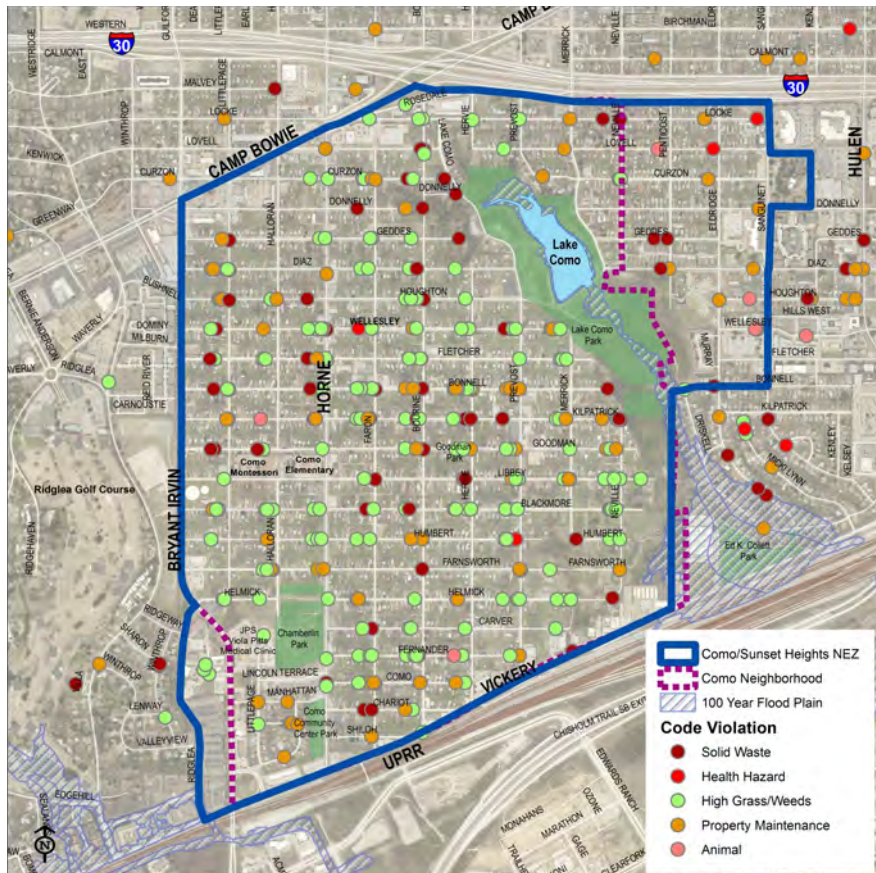
Figure 14: Crime Statistics



Source: Fort Worth Police Department.



Most of the illegal dumping and litter sites in the Como neighborhood are on isolated vacant lots and locations. New development on vacant lots can reduce the occurrence of illegal dumping.



Map 19: Code Violations (selected)

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Although Como has many positive attributes, its numerous challenges have contributed to a lessened quality of life in the Como neighborhood. Below is a select number of challenges and corresponding opportunity statements that, if collectively implemented, could potentially lead to renewal and revitalization in Como.

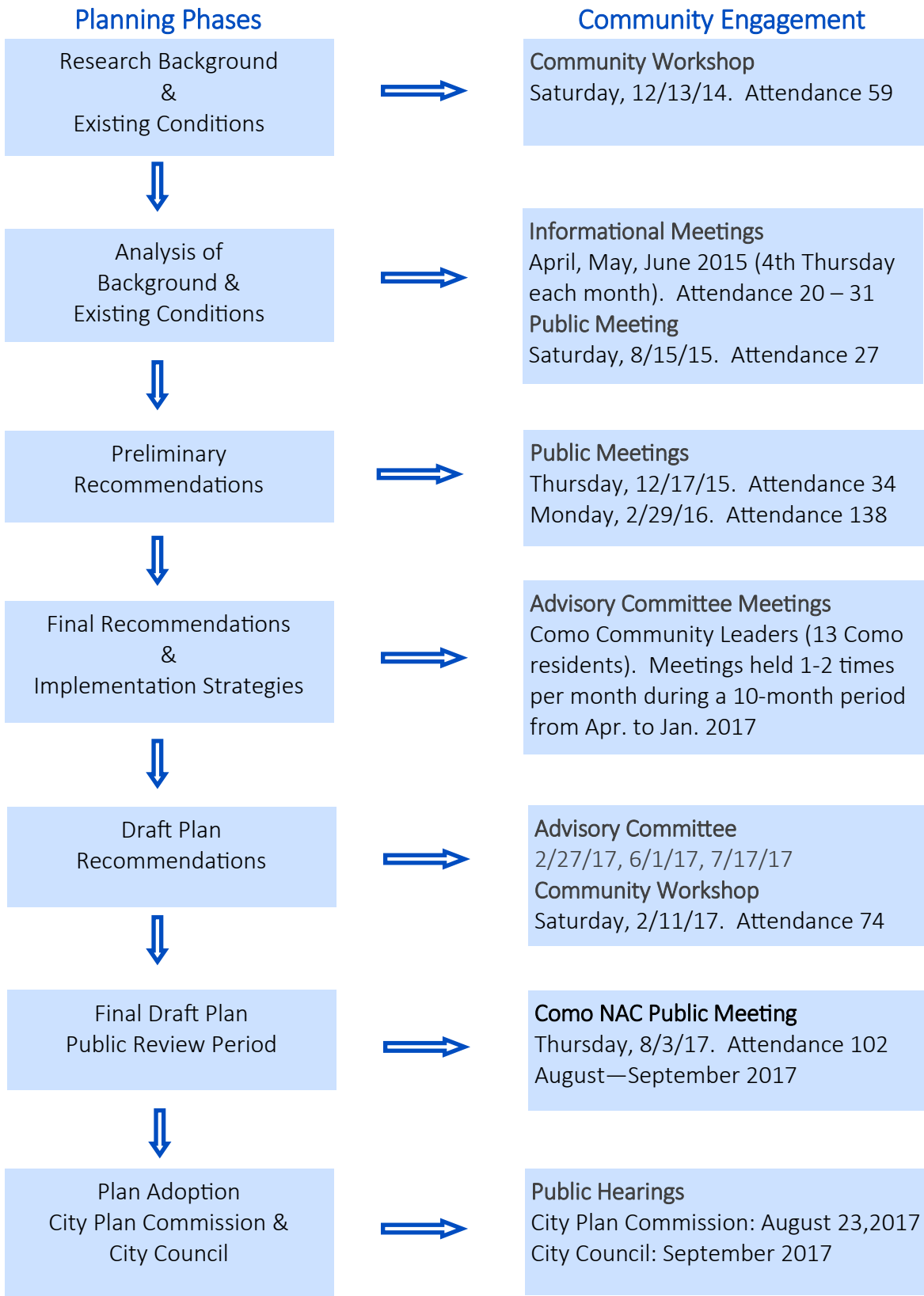
Existing Challenge	Potential Opportunity
Steady population decline since 1960.	Create more housing options to attract a diverse population to Como.
Abundance of vacant land dispersed throughout the neighborhood.	Acquire and market vacant land for housing and commercial infill projects.
Numerous aged and unmaintained houses.	Establish a neighborhood home improvement program.
Limited neighborhood retail and commercial uses.	Establish a small business development program focused on business recruitment and development.
The estimated poverty level is over 50 percent.	Establish an adult job training and education program to help improve job skills.
Pockets of blight (vacant structures, trash, illegal dumping, etc.) and real and perceived high crime.	Outline a strategy to address blight and crime.

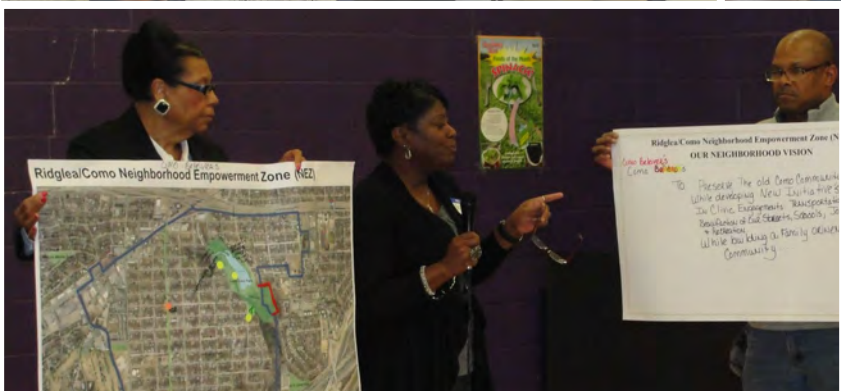
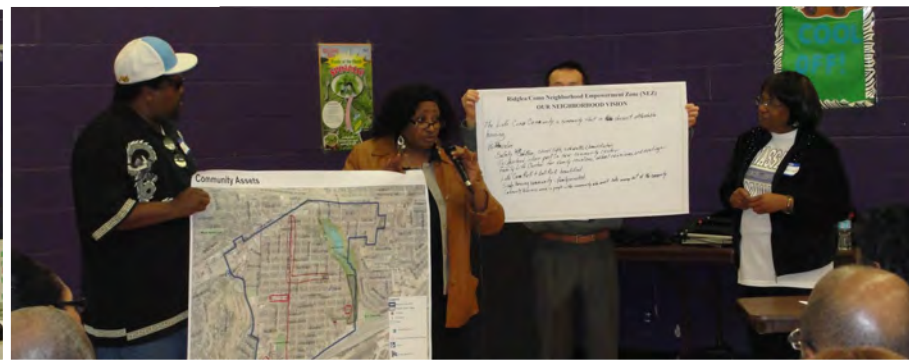
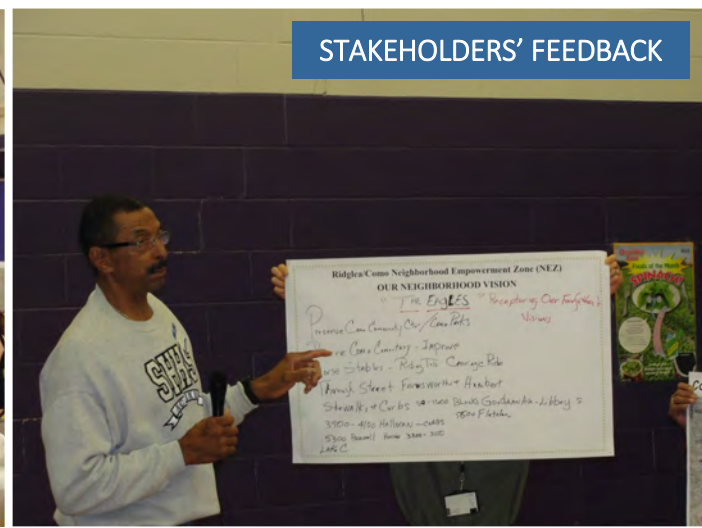
SECTION 3: PLANNING PROCESS



The planning process for the Como NEZ Strategic Plan included the primary phases outlined on the next page. Community engagement was an important component of the process and is reflected in each phase. The first public meeting, held in December 2014, was a community workshop where City staff listened to residents and stakeholders of the Como neighborhood and engaged attendees in a map and vision exercise to identify community goals and aspirations for the Como neighborhood. The public meetings were held at the Como Community Center and were open to residents, property and business owners, and other interested stakeholders. The advisory committee meetings were held at a local church in the Como neighborhood.

Planning is a deliberate process that includes addressing **current community issues and needs** and **looking into the future**, predicting how many people are expected to live in the community and identifying where they will live, work, and play. Planning allows us to **design the future we want to see.**



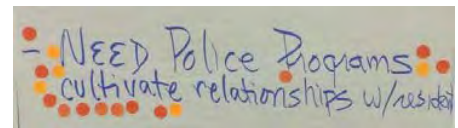


Photos: Planning Workshop, December 13, 2014.

Table 8: Como Stakeholders' Top Five Priorities

Priorities	Feedback*
Lake Como Park (preserve, improve, and value history)	47
Small business district on Horne Street	44
Reinstate youth "Coming Up" program/ Cultivate police and citizen relationship	43
Add street lights throughout neighborhood	25
Trash removal/ Stop illegal dumping	17

*Feedback from dotmocracy and map exercise.



Additional Stakeholders' Feedback

During the planning process, Como stakeholders provided a vast amount of feedback on a variety of topics and issues affecting the Como neighborhood. While all stakeholders did not agree on every issue, they appear to have a consensus that improvements are needed in the Como neighborhood. Below are the major categories that were given by Como stakeholders during the planning process.

Preservation

Most of the feedback received centered on preservation and included heritage (maintaining the history and pride of Como), community assets (maintaining schools, recreation facilities, etc.), residents (improvements without displacing current residents or businesses), and natural features (maintain Lake Como Park and the wildlife habitat at the park).

Single-Family Affordable Housing

Stakeholders would like Como to remain an affordable single-family residential neighborhood.

More Retail and Jobs

Many residents identified the need for new neighborhood-serving retail and commercial businesses to provide goods and services along with job creation opportunities in the Como neighborhood.

Infrastructure Investments

Comments centered on the need for sidewalks and street lighting throughout the Como neighborhood and other public improvements (i.e. connecting streets that dead end, installing sheltered bus stops, enhanced crosswalks and safety features adjacent to the two elementary schools).

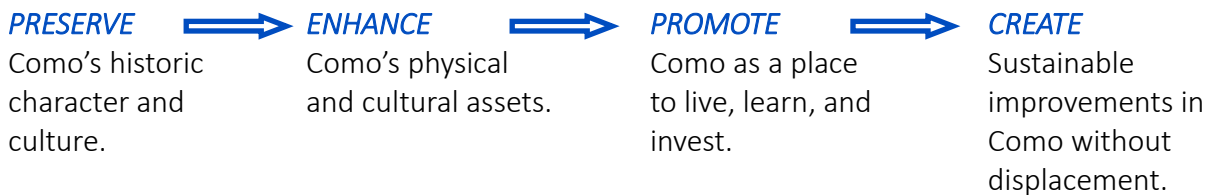
Overall Physical Improvements

Comments included beautification projects on Horne Street with new landscaping and lighting, steps to address illegal dumping sites and trash on vacant lots, especially along Horne Street.

Grassroots/ Neighborhood-Driven Revitalization

Many Como residents want to participate in the revitalization of the Como neighborhood.

Como's values are described with the following value statements:



COMO'S Vision



Source: Como NAC Planning Report, 2011.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION BEST PRACTICES

The following three neighborhood revitalization best practices (New Urbanism, Purpose Built Communities, and Placemaking) are highlighted in this plan for their approaches and concepts that have merit in facilitating revitalization in the Como neighborhood. Many of the concepts and approaches contained in these practices are endorsed by federal agencies including HUD and are utilized by many neighborhoods across the nation that seek sustainable revitalization.

New Urbanism

New Urbanism is a development model, developed by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), that is aimed at creating more diverse, walkable neighborhoods and is yielding positive results in a variety of redevelopment and revitalization settings that include reversing declining downtowns and small town Main Streets to neighborhood revitalization. Some of the components of New Urbanism that are most applicable to neighborhood revitalization include:

- A neighborhood should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use;
- Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, and interconnected streets should be designed to encourage walking and reduce the number and length of car trips;
- A broad range of housing types and price levels should bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction;
- Greater building densities and more intense land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops;
- Civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be concentrated and embedded in each neighborhood. Schools should be located so that children can walk or bicycle to them;
- Parks should be distributed within the neighborhood, and conservation areas and open space should be used to define and connect different neighborhoods.

Source: www.cnu.org/resources



The image above illustrates a compact, pedestrian-friendly street.

Source: AARP, The Imagining Livability Design Collection, Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, 2015, www.AARP.org/livable.

Purpose Built Communities — Holistic Approach to Neighborhood Revitalization

Defined Neighborhood: Focus on defined neighborhoods where transformative programs and infrastructure can be established.

Community Quarterback: Usually a newly-created nonprofit, it leads the revitalization by engaging community members, building partnerships, securing funding, and ensuring implementation of the housing, education, and wellness components of the model as part of the community’s vision.

Mixed-Income Housing: An environment with high-quality construction and practical amenities surrounded by safe walkways and streets, transforming the way residents view themselves and their neighborhood.

Cradle to College Education: Establish an arena for student growth, learning, and achievement at every level starting at birth, and implement a rigorous and relevant curriculum to help ensure successful futures through college and beyond.

Community Wellness: Provide a community-specific mix of facilities, programs, and services that honor local history, reflect the priorities of residents, promote healthy lifestyles, create jobs, and reduce crime.

Source: www.purposebuiltcommunities.org



Placemaking

Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, Placemaking refers to a collaborative process that can shape a public realm in order to maximize shared values. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. With community-based participation at its center, an effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people’s health, happiness, and well-being.

“It takes a place to create a community and a community to create a place”

The Place Diagram to the right is one of the tools the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) developed to help communities evaluate places.



Source: www.pps.org

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SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS



Illustration: Murray Miller, Historic Preservation Officer, City of Fort Worth.

The Recommendations Section outlines goals and strategies intended to capitalize on existing assets and opportunities in the Como neighborhood that could support sustained revitalization.

The Recommendations Section provides a framework for how the Como community in partnership with the City and other public and private organizations can achieve its revitalization goals and objectives.

The recommendations derive from Como stakeholders' feedback received at public workshops and meetings, the Como Community Leadership (CCL) Advisory Committee, and neighborhood revitalization best practice principles. The Recommendations Section addresses anticipated questions such as the following:

- Do the proposed strategies align with the priorities of the Como neighborhood?
- What are the benefits to the Como neighborhood?
- What would be the look, feel, and function of a revitalized Como neighborhood?
- What measurements would be used to gauge the effectiveness of the strategies?

To transform a neighborhood of distress into a neighborhood of opportunity, **high-quality interventions must be linked** to address interrelated problems.

Building Neighborhoods of Opportunity, White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative Report, 2011.

Scope of Recommendations

The recommendations described in this section were identified and supported by Como community leaders for their ability to leverage community assets to guide long-term sustained revitalization. The recommendations align with the priorities of Como stakeholders and neighborhood revitalization best practices strategies. Table 9 graphically summarizes this alignment. Recommendations address the following key opportunity areas:

1. Development Controls
2. Housing Improvements
3. Neighborhood-Focused Economic Development
4. Livability Enhancements

For each of the recommendation headings above, a goal statement, strategies, and neighborhood benefits (as described below) is presented. Additionally, model examples (Precedents) are included throughout to illustrate successful neighborhood revitalization programs that can provide program ideas, etc. for the Como neighborhood.

Goal:

A goal statement is included that outlines desired outcomes.

Strategy:

One or more strategies outline approaches, steps, or actions to help achieve the goal.

Neighborhood Benefits:

An explanation is provided of how the goal and strategies could benefit the Como neighborhood.

Table 9: Aligning Recommendations with Como Priorities and Neighborhood Revitalization Best Practices

Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan Recommendations

Como Neighborhood Priorities	Development		Housing			Neighborhood-Focused Economic Development				Livability Enhancements						Capacity Building			
	Land Use	Design Guidelines	Affordable Housing	Housing Choice	Homeowner Support	Horne Street Revitalization	Small Business Recruitment and Development	Entrepreneurial Development and Support	Business District Organization	Adult Job Training	Poverty Reduction	Preservation, Heritage and Culture	Enhance Public Parkland	Transportation Connectivity	Infrastructure Investments	Public Safety	Como Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC)	Partnerships	Nonprofit Community-Based Organization
Lake Como Park (preserve, improve, and value)	●										●	●		●					
Horne Street Small Business District	●	●				●	●	●	●		●				●	●			
Youth and Police Programs that Cultivate Relationships					●			●		●	●	●			●				
Street Lights and Infrastructure Investments												●			●				
Stop Illegal Dumping/ Trash Removal/ Overall Beautification						●						●			●				
Preserve Heritage and Culture						●					●	●							
Quality Affordable Housing	●	●	●							●	●	●							
Grassroots Leadership																	●	●	●

Table 9: Aligning Recommendations with Como Priorities and Neighborhood Revitalization Best Practices, continued

Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan Recommendations

	Development		Housing			Neighborhood-Focused Economic Development				Livability Enhancements						Capacity Building			
	Land Use	Design Guidelines	Affordable Housing	Housing Choice	Homeowner Support	Horne Street Revitalization	Small Business Recruitment and Development	Entrepreneurial Development and Support	Business District Organization	Adult Job Training	Poverty Reduction	Preservation, Heritage and Culture	Enhance Public Parkland	Transportation Connectivity	Infrastructure Investments	Public Safety	Como Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC)	Partnerships	Nonprofit Community-Based Organization
Como Neighborhood Priorities																			
Mixed-Income Housing	●	●		●						●				●					
Mixed-Use Development	●	●		●		●													
Mobility Choice/ Walkability														●	●				
Job Training/ Poverty Reduction					●			●	●	●		●							
Neighborhood Capacity/ Leadership Development																●	●	●	

1. DEVELOPMENT (FUTURE LAND USE AND DESIGN GUIDELINES)

Development Goal

Ensure that new development and redevelopment projects create visible enhancements to the community while protecting and extending the best attributes of the Como neighborhood.

Development Strategy

Work with City Council and staff to amend the Future Land Use Plan component of the City's Comprehensive Plan to reflect the community aspirations expressed during the development of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan.

Residential

Como stakeholders prefer that the Como neighborhood remain primarily single-family residential with a few target locations for mixed-income, higher density residential.

Single-Family Residential

Retain the Single-Family land use designation in residentially zoned locations to encourage affordable single-family infill on the many vacant lots located throughout the Como neighborhood.

Urban Residential

Add the Urban Residential land use designation in target locations to facilitate the development of well-designed, mixed-density housing options to meet consumer preferences and needs. Como leaders identified three preferred locations for higher density residential, however, these locations may not meet market or consumer preferences. A market feasibility analysis is recommended, along with flexibility on the part of Como stakeholders to consider other locations within the Como neighborhood that may be shown to be more appropriate—from a market standpoint—for higher density residential.

Commercial

Como leaders and stakeholders envision Horne Street as a thriving business district to serve many of the retail needs of the Como neighborhood. Currently, the land uses along Horne Street are a mix of small retail, restaurants, churches and nonprofits, single-family and multi-family residential, vacant properties, and open space parkland. In order to facilitate more neighborhood-serving businesses on Horne Street, an expansion (as outlined below) of the Mixed-Use and Neighborhood Commercial Future Land Use designations is recommended.

Mixed-Use

Extend the Mixed-Use designation—which currently exists between Camp Bowie Boulevard and Lovell Street—south to the alley between Curzon and Donnelly streets to facilitate the development of a compact, higher density, pedestrian-oriented (more walkable) development along the north entrance of Horne Street. Mixed—use development along Horne Street at this location will allow for a high quality gateway development at the north of Horne Street.

Neighborhood Commercial

Expand the Neighborhood Commercial designation south of the Curzon Street alley to Kilpatrick Street in order to reactivate the currently empty commercial buildings, build new retail and

commercial uses on vacant parcels, and replace or convert boarded-up houses to a commercial use.

The existing occupied residential houses that front Horne Street would retain the Single-Family Land Use designation. Additionally, expand the Neighborhood Commercial designation on vacant lots that are located north of the motel (at Horne Street and Vickery Boulevard) to Shiloh Street.

The Future Land Use map will serve as a guide for the Como neighborhood's future land use pattern. It is important to note that the Future Land Use map is not a zoning map, and therefore it does not have legal authority. Rather, it is intended to be used as a tool to guide land use decisions. Additionally, Future Land Use designations can be updated during the annual update to the Comprehensive Plan to reflect adopted zoning changes, market trends, new community values, etc.

How Does This Benefit the Como Neighborhood?

Future Land Use

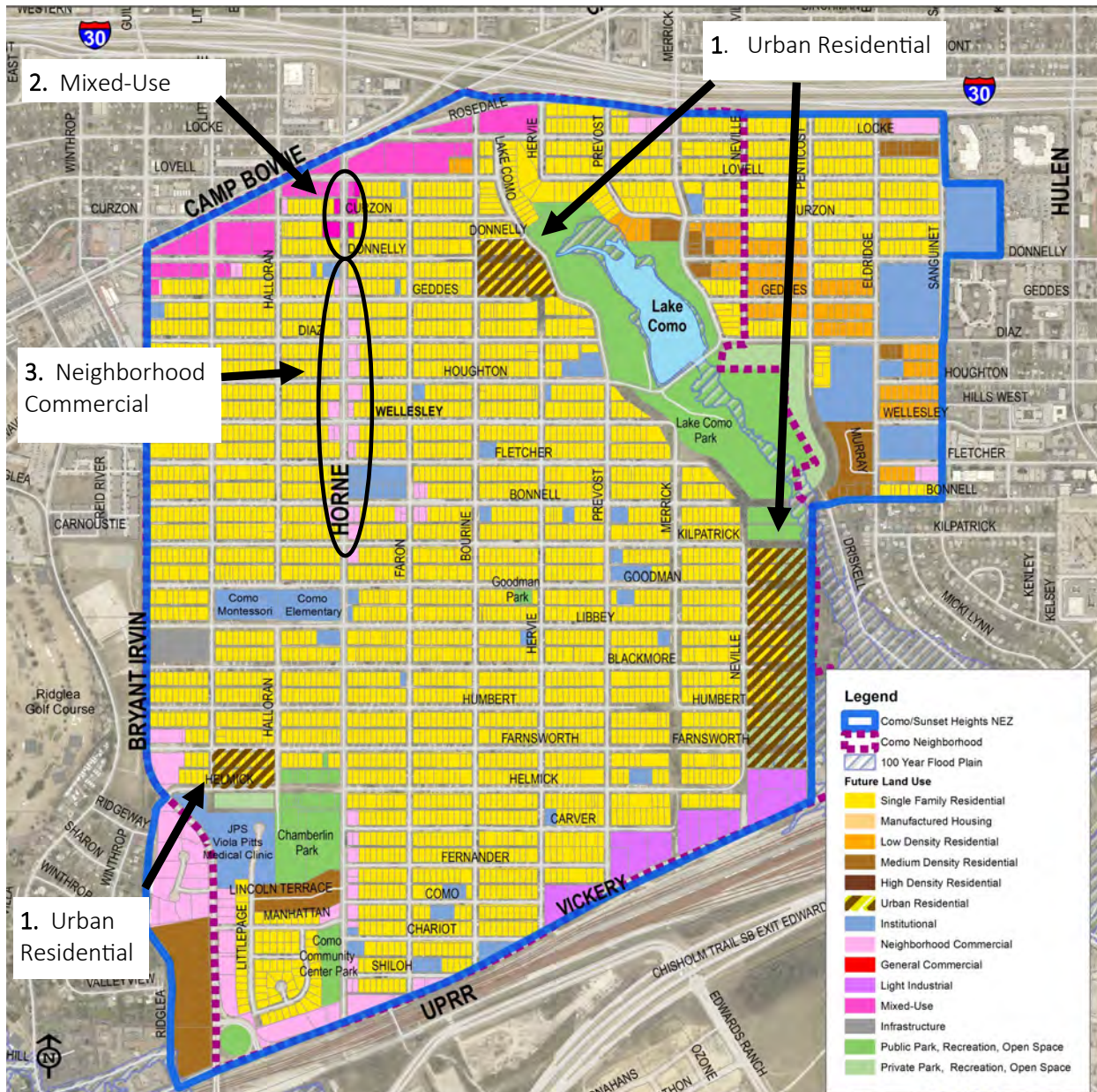
The Future Land Use map reflects the collective voice of the Como neighborhood regarding its preferred future land use pattern and serves as an informative tool that conveys the desired future land use in the Como neighborhood. Prospective development projects seeking a zoning change are reviewed against the Future Land Use map to determine if the zoning change request is compliant with the adopted Future Land Use map. That determination is part of the information considered by the Zoning Commission and City Council for zoning changes.

From the housing perspective, the retention of the single-family residential land use designation aligns with Como stakeholders' preference for the Como neighborhood to remain primarily single-family. The introduction of higher density mixed-income residential in target locations and the construction of infill single-family homes will increase population in the neighborhood, which would help stabilize the community and generate additional buying power to bolster quality neighborhood retail businesses.

From the commercial and retail perspective, the expansion of mixed-use and neighborhood commercial land use designations will help facilitate new retail and commercial uses in the Como neighborhood, which potentially can bring much needed retail and commercial services along with providing job opportunities for Como residents.

The retention of the existing industrial land use designations support the industrial uses that are primarily clustered along the southern edge of the Como neighborhood near Vickery Boulevard. A limitation on industrial uses is recommended to ensure that new industrial uses do not encroach further north into the neighborhood.

The following pages contain additional information about proposed Future Land Use designations, including corresponding zoning, example land use types, and selected development standards (e.g., height, building footprint on the parcel, etc.). The sidebar color on each table corresponds to the Future Land Use map color (Map 19). Photos are included to provide an example or illustrate the land use type and is not indicative of a planned or proposed project.



Map 20: Proposed Future Land Use

The proposed Future Land Use plan (Map 20) amendments respect Como stakeholders' preference to retain the predominantly single-family residential nature of the Como neighborhood, while supporting compatible new development within the NEZ boundary that is consistent with the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ plan.

1. Apply the **Urban Residential** land use designation in target locations to facilitate walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed density residential development that provides a range of housing choices.
2. Expand the **Mixed-Use** land use designation to facilitate higher density, mixed-use development in the northern section of Horne Street.
3. Expand the **Neighborhood Commercial** land use designation to facilitate additional neighborhood serving retail and commercial businesses along the northern to mid-section of Horne Street.

Residential Land Use Categories

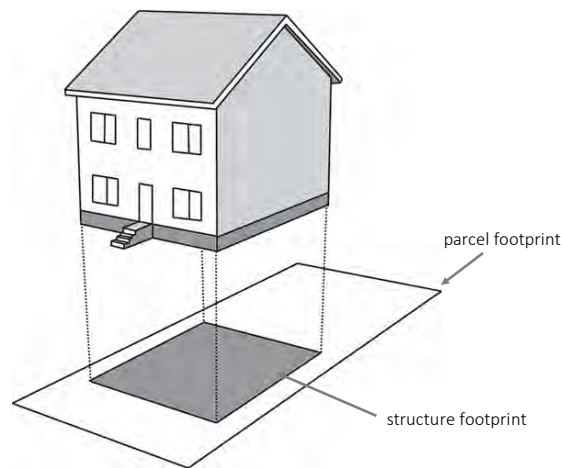
The Single-Family Residential land use category is the predominant land use category in the Como neighborhood. Urban Residential and Medium Density Residential designations occupy a much smaller percentage of the land area.

Single-Family

Intended Land Uses: A single-family detached house is any free-standing house that is structurally separated from its neighboring houses, usually by open land (e.g., a yard). This residential development type is the staple of the Como neighborhood and necessary to draw the traditional family units that the neighborhood hopes to attract and who come to expect this type of offering. New houses with quality design features are recommended to reflect and improve the neighborhood.

Zoning: The primary residential zoning in the Como neighborhood is A-5 (single-family)
Height Limit: 35 feet maximum

Lot Size: Minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet
Density: ~ 4.6 units per acre



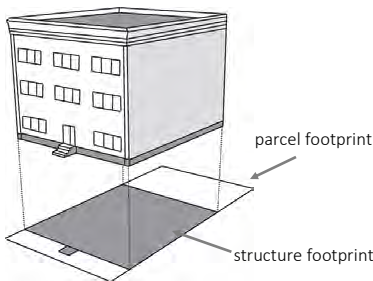
Photos: Internet, public domain.

Urban Residential

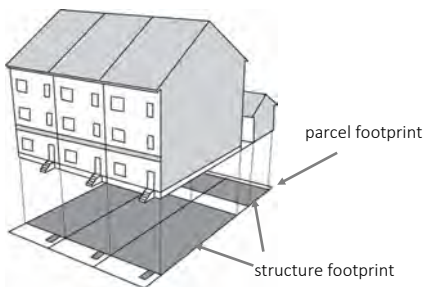
Intended Land Uses: Urban Residential is a design-focused residential classification intended to encourage development or redevelopment of a highly walkable, mixed-density urban neighborhood of compatible uses and high quality housing products. Housing products may include single-family homes, duplexes, manor houses, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments. All residential products are expected to support a pedestrian-oriented urban streetscape. Additionally, higher density Urban Residential products (apartments, etc.) can serve as a buffer between commercial uses and single-family residential districts. Although duplexes are an allowable housing product in the Urban Residential category, Como stakeholders would prefer no additional duplexes in the Como neighborhood.

Zoning: UR (Urban Residential)
 Height Limit: Minimum 17 feet/ maximum 35 feet

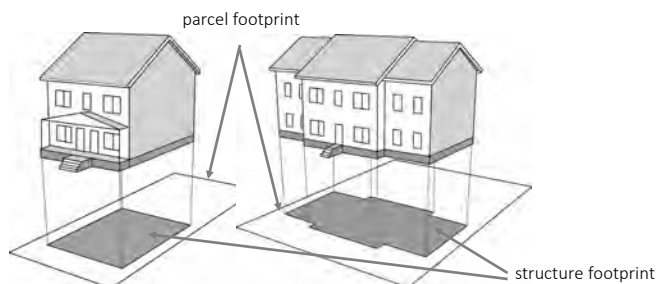
Lot Size: Varies based on product
 Density: No requirements for maximum units per acre



Apartment/ Condominium



Townhome



Manor House



Photos: Internet, public domain.

Medium Density Residential

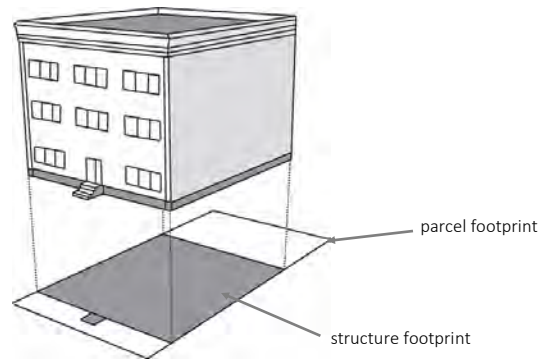
Intended Land Uses: Multifamily apartments.

Zoning: CR (Low Density Multifamily) and C (Medium Density Multifamily)

Height Limits: 32 feet maximum

Lot Size: Varies by product

Density: 24 units/acre maximum



Apartment



Photo: Internet, public domain.

Commercial Land Use Categories

The proposed Commercial Future Land Use designations are Neighborhood Commercial and Mixed-Use, both of which are targeted for Horne Street in order to achieve a vibrant business district along key segments of Horne Street.

Neighborhood Commercial

Intended Land Uses: Neighborhood-serving retail, services, offices, and mixed uses serving the daily needs for a local market area.

Zoning: ER (Neighborhood Commercial Restricted (*alcohol prohibited*)), E (Neighborhood Commercial (*alcohol allowed*)). Additional zoning categories including residential zoning districts, however, Como stakeholders are seeking neighborhood serving small businesses along segments of Horne Street.

Height Limit: 3 stories or 45 feet maximum

Building Size: E zoning district allows retail stores of 60,000 square feet or less.



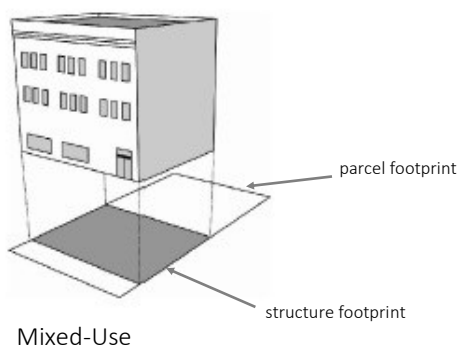
Mixed-Use

Intended Land Uses: Retail, services, offices, entertainment, mixed uses, and multifamily residential. For the Como neighborhood, stakeholders are seeking primarily commercial uses in the areas with a Mixed-Use land use designation.

Zoning: MU-1 zoning districts corresponds to several residential, commercial, and office product types, whether single-use or mixed-use. The Camp Bowie Form-Based Code district is the current zoning for the northern most section of Horne Street.

Height Limit: Three stories maximum, or five stories if requisite uses and gross floor area exist.

Building Size: Depends on the mixed-use project type.



Bottom Photo: Internet, public domain.

Institutional and Open Space

The Institutional Future Land Use designation accommodates the two elementary schools, public facilities, and churches in the Como neighborhood. The Open Space Future Land Use designation accommodates the public parkland and other open space areas.

Institutional

Intended Land Uses: Schools, churches, government, human services, utilities, community centers, day care centers, or other uses established in response to the health, safety, educational, and welfare needs of a neighborhood.

Zoning: CF (Community Facilities)

Height Limit: Based on the most restrictive adjacent district.

Building Size: Dependent on various factors including parking and drainage requirements.



Open Space

Intended Land Uses: Public or private recreation and passive land.

Zoning: All zoning districts.

Height Limits: N/A

Building Size: N/A



Light Industrial

The Light Industrial Future Land Use designation accommodates the existing light industrial land uses along Vickery Boulevard.

Light Industrial

Intended Land Uses: Warehousing, transportation, light assembly, outside storage, and other uses intended to serve the entire community.
Zoning: I (Light Industrial)
Height Limit: Three stories or 45 feet maximum, except stealth telecommunication towers are permitted to a height of 75 feet.
Building Size: No maximum size.



Como Stakeholders' Unsupported Projects

The list of business types below (Table 10) would not be supported by Como stakeholders to receive Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) incentives. These projects could be built if permitted under the property's zoning but would be recommended to not receive NEZ incentives.

Table 10: Stakeholders' Unsupported Project Types

Residential Uses	
Duplexes	Section 8 apartments
Public and Civic Uses	
Blood bank	
Commercial Uses	
Automotive related uses (detail, tire shops, car washes)	Liquor or package store
Mobile or industrial home sales offices	Pawn shop, cash or payday advance stores
Gun stores	Gaming shops
Vehicle sales (automobiles)	Storage facilities
Industrial or Other Uses	
Chemical oriented business	Taxi stands

Future Land Use Key Actions

1.1. Incorporate the proposed Future Land Use map recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

As part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update, update the City's Future Land Use map to reflect the proposed future land use changes in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ plan.

1.2. Review the future land use map annually to determine if updates are required to reflect approved zoning changes, current market trends, and/or community values.

Annually, City staff will review approved zoning changes in the Como neighborhood and amend the Future Land Use map to ensure consistency. In addition, staff will consult with Como leaders to determine if other future land use map changes are needed for the Como neighborhood.

1A. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines are an appropriate tool to facilitate a neighborhood’s revitalization vision, goals, projects and programs. Design guidelines work in tandem with zoning and building regulations. They are statements of intent focused on achieving an unique set of quality and compatible design features for a neighborhood. Design guidelines primarily focus on structures (e.g., houses, apartments, commercial buildings, etc.) but also can be applied to open space areas, streets, landscaping, etc.

The City’s current NEZ Strategic Plan policy provides for design guidelines to ensure that public incentives are provided to projects that have a quality design and support neighborhood revitalization.

For the Como neighborhood, the importance of design guidelines is twofold. First, the long-term success and sustainability of the Como neighborhood will depend upon new investment that complements the best historic features of the Como neighborhood. Encouraging a compatible and complementary character of new development will provide sustained marketability and, ultimately, economic health. Second, these guidelines will help to improve the appeal and livability of the Como neighborhood for existing and new residents.

It should be noted that these guidelines are not intended to create strict restrictions or economic hardships. Rather, they are meant to provide a useful tool for developers, homeowners and decision-makers in the effort to encourage development that is compatible with the best historic features of the Como neighborhood. In some instances these guidelines may not be practical or feasible due to limited financial resources by some existing homeowners, existing conditions, or extenuating circumstances. For the few locations covered by this plan that are currently zoned CB (Camp Bowie Form-Based Code) the design guidelines in this plan will not apply, due to the separate design criteria provided in CB zoning.

Overarching Principles

- All new and substantially renovated housing should reinforce the best aspects of the Como neighborhood’s existing housing.
- New building types should be compatible and/or complementary to the predominant character of the existing housing on a street block.
- Create buffer zones where industrial areas abut residential areas.
- Open space, topography, and landscape treatment should be a consideration when evaluating design proposals.

Design Guidelines Key Actions

1.3. Adopt and apply the NEZ Design Guidelines (contained in Appendix A) to ensure that development improves the community.

City staff will apply the adopted NEZ design guidelines for new projects and significant redevelopment projects that seek NEZ incentives.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Design Guidelines are organized by the categories below and are in Appendix A.



Setbacks and Yards

The character of a neighborhood is shaped by the location of buildings on the lots. The general feel and walkability of the neighborhood is partly determined by how close homes are to the street and to other buildings.



Building Massing and Scale

The term mass refers to the overall appearance of a building and its apparent size and bulk. Scale refers to the level of articulation of a building and the suggestion of mass by the inclusion or exclusion of various details and components. Scale is closely related to mass, but its components can have a mitigating effect on the perception of building size.



Site Plan and Landscaping

Landscaping has implications for neighborhood compatibility. Since many residents spend time outdoors, the impacts of neighboring residences and landscaping can become important contributions to the quality and attractions of the neighborhood.



Driveways and Garages

The location of garages is also a defining factor in site accessibility. New garages and garage additions should be consistent with the best pattern seen in the neighborhood.



Roofs and Windows

Roofs and windows can be some of the most notable and formative elements in defining neighborhood character. Numerous architectural styles include combinations of sheds and gables, sheds and hips and sloping and flat roofs.



Porches and Entries

Porches of usable size serve the functional needs of entry and exit, while also creating an outdoor room. When actively used, porches foster a sense of security by serving as the eyes of the neighborhood. They also generate a sense that the houses and the neighborhood are actively engaged. In many cases they are the places in which we see and communicate with our neighbors most often.

2. HOUSING

Housing Goal

Improve the housing stock in the Como neighborhood with quality affordable and market rate single-family infill housing; higher density mixed-income housing in targeted locations; and stabilization and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock.

The above goal and the following strategies align with the following housing values of the Como stakeholders:

- New infill housing should be well designed and compatible with the neighborhood.
- Affordable and workforce housing is desired to meet current market needs.
- New housing development should not displace existing residents.
- Higher density mixed-income residential that provides housing choice options is acceptable in target locations.

Housing Strategies

The Housing Revitalization Strategy for the Como neighborhood recommends intervention in the following areas that address the unique aspects of the current housing market in the Como neighborhood.

- Affordable and Market Rate Single-Family Infill Housing
- Housing Choice Opportunities
- Homeowner Support (rehabilitation and foreclosure prevention)

The above strategies are recommended initially adjacent to neighborhood assets, expanding outward thereafter on a street block by block basis. This approach will help achieve a visual impact adjacent to neighborhood assets along with spurring overall neighborhood revitalization.

How Does This Benefit the Como Neighborhood?

Currently, the Como neighborhood has many vacant lots throughout its residential area, a saturation of low-income housing, limited higher density housing to offer housing choice and options to its current and prospective residents, an ongoing pattern of residential mortgage and tax foreclosures, and a high number of unrepaired housing units. The above issues have contributed to an unstable and weak housing market in the Como neighborhood. The recommended strategies attempt to reverse these negative trends which can lead to a stable and sustainable housing market in the Como neighborhood.

On the following pages, the above strategies are presented in more detail.

Affordable and Market Rate Single-Family Infill Housing

Development of quality affordable and market rate single-family infill housing is recommended on vacant residential parcels in order to fill in the gaps along residential streets in the Como neighborhood. The Como neighborhood has a large number of vacant residential parcels (Map 21) on which to build quality single-family infill housing. New infill housing should complement the context and style of the other houses on the street block but when this is not feasible flexibility is recommended to allow new architectural features seen in modern affordable housing in order to promote housing and income diversity in the Como neighborhood.

Key Actions

2.1. Apply Adopted Design Guidelines

Apply the recommended design guidelines to all new residential infill projects in order to ensure that single-family infill housing is well-designed and compatible with the neighborhood.

2.2. Capitalize on Neighborhood Assets

Target new affordable and market rate infill housing on blocks that are adjacent to neighborhood assets, such as Chamberlin Park, Lake Comp Park, and Horne Street. This approach will enhance the marketability of the new housing units and facilitate revitalization adjacent to neighborhood assets. Additional target locations for new infill housing should expand outward from the initial improved blocks to focus public resources and private investment on highly visible improvements in strategic locations.

2.3. Seek Partnerships with Housing Developers

Continue existing partnership with Habitat for Humanity and seek new partnerships with other non-profit housing developers, (e.g., Tarrant County Housing Partnership). In addition, seek partnerships with for-profit developers to build quality infill housing in the Como neighborhood.



Housing infill partnership between the Como neighborhood and Trinity Habitat for Humanity.

Photo: Courtesy of Trinity Habitat for Humanity.

2.4. Establish a Housing Coalition

Seek reputable housing professionals (e.g., mortgage bankers, developers, real estate professionals, government representatives, etc.) to serve on a Housing Coalition for the Como neighborhood. The Housing Coalition should identify best practice approaches and provide assistance to Como leaders on various housing market issues in the Como neighborhood including the following:

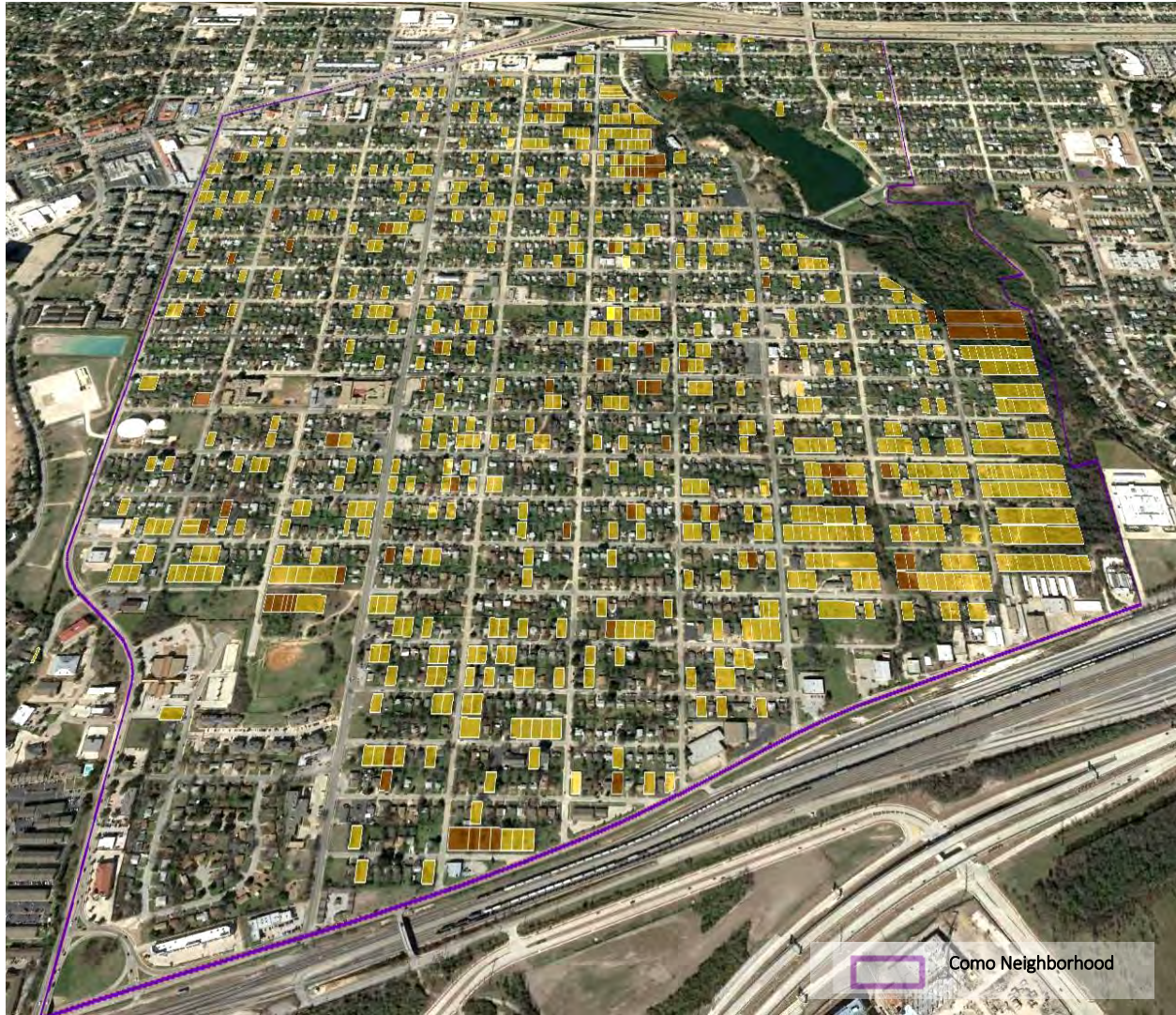
- Identify appropriate mortgage lending products for potential homebuyers of varying income levels and credit scores.
- Determine feasibility and desirability of establishing additional land use regulatory measures to facilitate affordable housing in the Como neighborhood (e.g., Conservation District, Historic Overlay District, or Homestead Preservation District).
- Identify private and governmental funding sources to achieve housing goals.
- Resolve property title issues of abandoned houses.
- Educate Como residents about property title issues.

2.5. Market the Como Neighborhood

- Survey former residents to determine reasons for their departure and what neighborhood attributes and assets would appeal to them.
- Develop a “Come Back To Como” campaign to market new infill housing opportunities to successful former residents of the Como neighborhood.
- Utilize a neighborhood website, newsletter, church alliances, social media, and other avenues to market the Como neighborhood.
- Convene an annual housing workshop/tour for existing and prospective homebuyers. The workshop/tour event would include topics on homeownership issues (e.g., mortgage finance, budgeting, insurance, maintenance, housing assistance programs, etc.) and offer prospective homebuyers an opportunity to view new homes in the neighborhood.
- Develop marketing material on new housing (floor plans, etc.) and market to prospective buyers.

2.6. Assemble Land and Seek Appropriate Zoning Changes

- Utilize a land bank or other vehicle to assemble vacant land (especially tax foreclosed property) for the purpose of developing new affordable housing units.
- Engage with the property owners of the vacant lots on Bonnell Street (between Faron and Bourine streets) to determine the owners’ interest in changing the zoning from light industrial to single-family, A-5 zoning.



Map 21: Vacant Parcels (Como)

88% **100.6 Acres**

Privately Owned Vacant Parcels

12% **13.7 Acres**

Publicly Owned Vacant Parcels

The vast amount of vacant land in the Como neighborhood is an asset to capitalize upon to help stabilize the neighborhood's housing market.

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) 2014, and Google Earth.

Note: Some of the vacant sites may have redeveloped since 2014.

Housing Choice Opportunities

A full neighborhood spectrum of housing products includes higher density mixed-income residential (townhomes, apartments, and condominiums) to promote housing choice, providing in-neighborhood options for residents of all ages with different housing needs and income levels. The addition of some new housing choice options would complement the existing single-family homes and minimize or reverse the outmigration of middle class households from the Como neighborhood. Additionally, higher density residential would bring additional population to support quality neighborhood serving retail and other commercial businesses in the Como neighborhood. Without a sufficient number of residential rooftops and higher household income levels, the Como neighborhood will continue to lag in business viability and commercial development.

Key Actions

2.7. Conduct a Housing Market and Feasibility Study

Determine the market potential for higher density mixed-income housing and senior housing in the Como neighborhood.

2.8. Use Urban Residential (UR) Development Standards in Target Locations

Require new multifamily development to rezone to the Urban Residential (UR) zoning district in order to activate the UR zoning development standards that include higher quality design features and a focus on building a walkable neighborhood. Receipt of NEZ incentives or other public assistance for any new multifamily projects should be contingent upon rezoning to UR.

2.9. Seek Permanent Affordable Multifamily Units

- With guidance from the Housing Coalition, seek best practice solutions to structure a requisite number of permanent affordable units in new multifamily mixed-income projects.
- Identify appropriate local, state, and federal funding sources to achieve the affordability goal (e.g., Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, etc.).

2.10. Land Assembly

Based on the results of the housing market and feasibility study, outline a strategy to assemble land in target locations.



Example multifamily residential development. Photo: Internet, public domain.

Homeowner Support (Rehabilitation and Foreclosure Prevention)

Rehabilitation

Approximately 79 percent of the existing houses in the Como neighborhood were built prior to 1960 (Figure 7). Houses built prior to 1960 that had minimal maintenance likely have a variety of issues, including insufficient insulation, electrical problems, etc. and are good candidates for rehabilitation.

Housing stock rehabilitation should be based on the available financial resources and other limitations of Como property owners. Ultimately, the intent behind rehabilitation projects is to make housing units more structurally sound and safe, provide protection from weather extremes, and enhance the overall appearance of the home. Rehabilitation projects include a wide range of activities such as:

- Painting the exterior walls, trim, and other details
- Repairing or replacing roofs, siding, trim, and rain gutters
- Repairing or replacing glass panes or entire windows
- Repairing porches, doors, and front entrance features
- Replacing or repairing damaged or missing architectural details
- Repairing walkways and steps leading to the structure
- Cleaning up the property and maintaining the vegetation
- Installing insulation to improve the home's comfort and energy efficiency
- Accessibility improvements for disabled residents

Key Actions

2.11. Establish a Housing Repair Referral Network and Neighborhood Rehabilitation Program by the Como neighborhood.

- Create a referral network for major housing repair and rehabilitation projects. Include the City's Priority Repair programs on the network list.
- Establish a Neighborhood Housing Repair and Maintenance Program (NHR&MP) for minor housing repairs (e.g., lawn work, fence repair, etc.). The NHR&MP could employ Como young adults and teenagers (under the supervision of a qualified adult) to provide them an opportunity to acquire technical and soft skills (e.g., responsibility, communication skills, etc.), earn money, and help engender pride in the Como neighborhood. A NHR&MP grass-roots program would benefit elderly and physically challenged homeowners that have limited income and/or physical ability.
- Seek sponsors and funding for the NHR&MP from government sources, grants, foundations, and private companies (e.g., local big box home improvement stores).
- Advertise and market the NHR&MP to residents and property owners in the Como neighborhood by utilizing multiple avenues (neighborhood website, newsletters, church alliances, neighborhood schools, etc.).

Rehabilitation Key Actions, continued

2.12. Establish a Green Construction Workforce Development Program by the Como neighborhood.

- In consultation with local workforce development professionals, develop an on-the-job training (OJT) program focused on the rehabilitation of foreclosed and vacant houses within Como and other neighborhoods in the city of Fort Worth. The workforce program should include certification for participants.
- Utilize a deconstruction approach for unsalvageable structures (dismantling a building while preserving good materials for reuse in new construction or rehabilitation projects).
- Provide awareness of “green” construction and energy efficiency measures, e.g., solar panels, etc. to residents of the Como neighborhood.

2.13. Assess Existing Multifamily and Duplex Properties

- Conduct an assessment of existing multifamily and duplex properties in the Como neighborhood to determine the market potential for major rehabilitation or replacement with a new residential product.
- Require new and substantially redeveloped duplex projects located on a single-family housing block to comply with applicable NEZ design guidelines.



Photo: Internet, public domain.

City of Fort Worth Housing Repair Programs

Priority Repair

The Priority Repair Program helps income-eligible Fort Worth homeowners in need of emergency or mechanical system home repairs with up to \$5,000 in repair work. Priority Repair Technicians will perform a home inspection to determine if an applicant is in need of emergency repairs (priority 1) or non-emergency mechanical system repairs (priority 2).

Priority 1 Emergency Repairs

An emergency is a situation or condition that occurred recently without warning, and is considered detrimental or one that poses a threat to life and/or the health safety of occupants and requires immediate action. Repairs are limited to :

- Sewer line breaks (visible raw sewage)
- Fresh water line breaks (high water bill and or visible water leak),
- Gas line breaks/leaks
- Water heaters (inoperable or unsafe units)
- Unsafe or inoperable heating systems from October to March

Priority 2 Mechanical System Failures

Conditions of deterioration that, if left unattended, will

threaten the health or safety of the occupants.

Repairs are limited to:

- Electrical System Failures
- Roof Repairs
- Unsafe or inoperable air conditioning systems from June to September
- Unstable, sagging or rotten bathroom subflooring,
- Ceilings exposing occupants to natural elements

Lead-Safe Program (LSP)

The LSP program is committed to creating a lead-safe environment for the children and residents of Fort Worth. The program helps income-eligible residents protect children (under age six) from lead when they live or spend extended periods of time in a home with lead. Services include free lead-based paint home inspections, lead-based paint hazard reduction services and community education.

For additional information on the above and other City of Fort Worth housing programs, visit www.fortworthtexas.gov/neighborhoods/.

Foreclosure Prevention

Effective foreclosure prevention programs are recommended in order to help homeowners remain in their homes and minimize the occurrence of residential mortgage and tax foreclosures in the Como neighborhood.

Key Actions

2.14. Determine underlying factors that contribute to the high foreclosure rate in the Como neighborhood and devise effective prevention initiatives.

- Undertake a study to determine underlying causes of the foreclosure problem in the Como neighborhood and outline effective solutions.
- Determine the loans types offered and financial institutions active in the Como neighborhood by researching the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data.
- Establish a referral network of reputable mortgage foreclosure counseling agencies.
- Partner with Banks Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) divisions to develop workshops and literature on foreclosure prevention and less risky home mortgages.
- Periodically check mortgage and tax foreclosure data to determine the effectiveness of the prevention programs.

Mortgage Foreclosure Information

Options to Keep the Home

Special Forbearance: Some lenders provide for a temporary reduction or suspension of mortgage payments to allow the homeowner time to overcome the problem that reduced the household's income. A payment plan is developed to pay back the missed payments a little at a time until the homeowner is caught up. An extended forbearance period may be provided to unemployed borrowers who are actively seeking employment.

Mortgage Modification: A modification is a permanent change to the mortgage loan through which the overdue payments may be added to the loan balance, the interest rate may be changed or the number of years to pay off the loan may be extended.

Partial Claim: In a Partial Claim, a borrower receives a second loan in an amount necessary to bring the delinquent loan current. The loan is interest free and does not need to be repaid until the first mortgage is paid or the house is sold. This option is only available to borrowers with FHA-insured loans. However, some banks that offer conventional loans may have a similar program.

FHA—Home Affordable Modification Program (FHA-HAMP): This option combines an enhanced partial claim with a loan modification. Under the FHA-HAMP, the partial claim loan will not only include any amounts necessary to bring the mortgage current but may also include an amount to reduce existing loaned

balance by up to 30 percent. The reduced loan balance will then be modified to lower the monthly mortgage payment to an affordable level. The partial claim must be repaid when the first mortgage is paid or the house is sold.

Options for Homeowner Unable to Keep the Home

If a homeowner's income or expenses have changed so much that prevent them from paying the mortgage even under a workout plan the following are options to consider.

Pre-foreclosure Sale: With approval from the lender a homeowner can offer to sale the house and sell it at fair market value even if the amount received from the sale is less than the amount owed. Under certain conditions, a homeowner may be eligible to receive relocation expenses.

Deed-in-lieu of Foreclosure: As a last resort a homeowner can voluntarily give the property back to the lender. If the property is left clean and undamaged the homeowner may be eligible for relocation expenses.

Source: <https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=2008-5fha.pdf>

Note: *The above information from the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is for informational purposes only. Homeowners that are faced with a possibility of foreclosure should consult with their lender and seek advise from a tax advisor.*

Housing Production and Intervention

Table 11 below outlines housing production and intervention targets to achieve in phases over the next 15 years in order to help facilitate housing market stability in the Como neighborhood. During the last phase (9 to 15 years) market forces are anticipated to facilitate the increase of new infill housing and major housing rehabilitation activity, especially if progress is seen on other neighborhood indicators (i.e., population increase, decrease in the poverty level, decrease in housing foreclosures, safety and physical improvements, etc.).

Key Actions

2.15. Establish Public/Private Partnerships to achieve housing production and intervention targets.

- Establish a Community-Based Organization to partner with the City to land bank vacant parcels for redevelopment.
- Utilize knowledge and expertise of the recommended Housing Coalition to develop programs to address the target housing goals listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Housing Production and Intervention Targets

HOUSING PRODUCTION/ INTERVENTION	TOTAL NO. LOTS/ UNITS*	PHASES			TOTAL NO. LOTS/UNITS BY CATEGORY	PERCENT OF TOTAL LOTS/ UNITS
		PHASE 1 0– 4 YEARS	PHASE 2 5– 8 YEARS	PHASE 3 9– 15 YEARS		
Vacant Lot Acquisition	811	40	60	80	180	22.2%
New S/F Infill Housing Construction	180	20	80	100	180	100.0%
Occupied S/F Housing Rehabilitation (minor and major repairs)	1,462	146	146	219	511	34.9%
Vacant S/F Housing Rehabilitation	138	38	50	50	138	100.0%
Unsalvageable Vacant Houses (identified for demolition)	15 (estimate)	5	4	6	15	100.0%
Foreclosure Prevention (mortgage and tax)	61	20	20	21	61	100.0%

Source: * Tarrant Appraisal District, 2016, Como stakeholders neighborhood canvass, Dec. 2016

Repopulation is a key factor to the revitalization of the Como neighborhood. The benefits of a larger population base in the Como neighborhood include more amenities and investment, support for local businesses, less illegal dumping on vacant lots, potentially less crime, etc.

The primary driver of repopulation is new residential development. The Como neighborhood has approximately 114 acres of vacant land most of which is zoned residential.

With new single-family and multifamily residential development, rehabilitation of the existing housing stock, and marketing to prospective new residents, the population of the Como neighborhood could potentially increase by 800 to 1,122 new residents over the next ten to twenty years.*

An effective marketing campaign is vital to revitalizing the Como neighborhood and stimulating new investment and development, which will attract prospective new residents. Based on feedback received during the planning phase and housing market trends, marketing to and supporting the household market segments in Table 12 below could facilitate the repopulation of the Como neighborhood.

*This outcome is based on a scenario of 180 new single-family houses with 2.5 persons per household, and two multifamily apartments with 168 units each (1 or 2 persons per unit).

Table 12: Household Market Segments

Former Como Residents	Traditional Family Households	Urban Pioneers	Emerging Family Households
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This segment has historic ties to the Como neighborhood and may have relatives (parents, etc.) that still reside in Como. May attend one of the Como churches or other civic events (e.g., Como Alumni, Annual July 4th Parade, etc.). Seeks to help revitalize and rebuild Como but would need assurance that investment would pay off. Ongoing marketing is required to attract this segment. Marketing material should include neighborhood revitalization plans and success stories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families with school-age children seeking to reside in an affordable neighborhood. Seeks quality schools for children. Places a premium on adequate housing square footage for a growing family. Single-parent households seek supportive services (e.g., household assistance, day-care, after school and other youth programs, etc.). Ongoing marketing is required to reach and attract this segment, especially higher income households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This segment desires to reside in a central city location to be closer to employment, cultural, and neighborhood amenities, e.g., restaurants, social gathering places, museums, parks and trails, etc. Typically younger, well-educated, civically involved, and higher income households. This segment also includes older households seeking to downsize from a single-family house. Housing choice opportunities will attract this segment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This segment represents the burgeoning Hispanic population in Fort Worth. Family households are at times larger due to the presence of extended family members. Some households are new to the U.S. and require education and supportive services. Entrepreneurship is a trend with this segment. This segment is attracted to affordable housing opportunities.

Real Estate Market Pressures

Real estate market pressures have steadily increased in west Fort Worth, including locations that are adjacent to the Como neighborhood on the east (Arlington Heights) and the south (Clearfork). These real estate market pressures have resulted in the production of new higher density upscale housing, retail and commercial uses on West 7th Street, Hulen Street (south of Interstate 30), and in the new retail and residential development located at the Shops at Clearfork, south of the Como neighborhood. As a result, concerns of Como residents about possible gentrification of the Como neighborhood have increased. During the planning phase, some Como stakeholders expressed an interest in exploring the use of a historic preservation district (zoning ordinance term: historic overlay district) as a way to protect the Como neighborhood, presumably from gentrification, and facilitate their goal of more affordable single-family housing in the Como neighborhood.

Although the term gentrification has many interpretations, the public's common understanding of the term is: The influx of affluent households to a low-income neighborhood that results in building renovations and other improvements, but that also can ultimately displace the neighborhood's existing residents, especially its lower income households.

The synopses below are intended to acquaint the Como neighborhood with basic information about the following tools: historic overlay district, conservation overlay district, homestead preservation district, and community land trusts. At a future date, comprehensive information should be presented to the Como community about each tool that includes what the tool can accomplish and cannot accomplish, the degree (if any) to which the tool can facilitate the development and preservation of affordable single-family housing and minimize undesired housing market changes in the Como neighborhood. The additional information is intended to assist the Como community in determining what tool they would want to pursue, if any.

Historic Overlay District

A Historic Overlay District possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. The majority of the resources within the district must retain their historic integrity. This means that they still possess those character-defining features that were present at the time of construction or during a specific point in time. Documentation is required to designate a district and includes a narrative history of the proposed district that provides a context for the significance of the district as it relates to the city's development. Additionally, information on the date of construction and a brief physical description is required on each property within the district. Owners of 66 2/3 percent of the property within the district must provide their written consent for the designation which is presented to the City's Historic and Cultural Landmarks Commission and Council for approval.

Conservation Overlay District

A Conservation District provides for the establishment of regulations concerning the conservation of existing buildings and new construction and their settings in designated places of architectural or cultural importance and significance. It is recognized that there are areas in the city where the application of conservation district zoning could contribute to the stability or stabilization of these areas.

An application for the designation of an area as a conservation district is initiated by petition that accompanies a Zoning Application. Upon receipt of a completed application, the Planning and Development Department develops a conservation plan for the area. All property owners within the proposed area are afforded an opportunity to participate in the drafting of the conservation plan. The application is heard at a public hearing by the Zoning Commission who then makes a recommendation to City Council.

Homestead Preservation District

A Homestead Preservation District is authorized by the Texas Local Government Code and promotes the following:

- Increase in home ownership, provide affordable housing, and prevent the involuntary loss of homesteads by existing low-income and moderate-income homeowners living in disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- Protect a municipality's interest in improving economic and social conditions within disadvantaged communities by enhancing the viability of home ownership among low-income and moderate-income residents in areas experiencing economic pressures; and
- Provide municipalities with a means to expand and protect the homestead interests of low-income and moderate-income families.

Fort Worth has no Homestead Preservation Districts. In accordance with state statute, designation of a Homestead Preservation District requires a municipality have a population of more than 750,000 based on the most recent U.S. Census. Fort Worth's 2010 U.S. Census population figure was 741,206 and its current population estimate is over 800,000, an indication that Fort Worth's 2020 U.S. Census population figure is projected to exceed 800,000, which would make Fort worth eligible to implement this tool under the Texas Local Government Code.

Community Land Trust

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is generally a nonprofit organization that owns and manages the land on which affordable homes are built. These homes are sold to low-and moderate-income families, and the CLT maintains ownership of the land, which is then leased to the homeowner through a ground lease agreement. The house but not the land is sold to the buyer at a lower rate.

Source: City of Fort Worth Zoning Ordinance; Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 373A, Homestead Preservation Districts and Reinvestment Zones; and the National Community Land Trust Network.

PRECEDENT: Inner-City Neighborhood Community Land Trust

In the late 1980s, the Dudley neighborhood in Boston had a high level of disinvestment with approximately 1,300 parcels of abandoned land that had come to characterize the neighborhood. Twenty-five years later, more than 30 acres of formerly vacant blighted land has been transformed into 225 new affordable homes, a 10,000 square foot community greenhouse, urban farm, and other amenities. The improvements were due largely to the work of the **Dudley Neighbors, Inc. (DNI)**, which is structured as a **Community Land Trust (CLT)**, that promotes the development and preservation of affordable housing and other improvements in the Dudley neighborhood.

Affordable housing is created by DNI leasing land initially to developers during construction, and subsequently to individual homeowners, cooperative housing corporations and other forms of limited partnerships. Homeowners have a 99-year lease with DNI. DNI has the right to buy the home back before the homeowner sells it. Homes are resold to a qualified low to moderate income (under 80% of the Area Median Income) buyers at or below the maximum resale price according to a equity calculation.

Source: www.dudleyneighbors.org/background.



Photo: Youth job training housing building program, Dudley neighborhood. Internet, public domain.

3. NEIGHBORHOOD-FOCUSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Goal

Develop Horne Street into a vibrant business district with new neighborhood serving retail and other commercial uses, while strengthening existing businesses.

Economic Development Strategies

The strategies below are intended to facilitate rebuilding the economic base of the Como neighborhood by fostering the creation of new retail, and other small businesses along with strengthening existing neighborhood retail businesses on Horne Street.

- Horne Street Commercial Revitalization
 - Public right-of-way improvements
 - Land use and building redevelopment
- Small Business Recruitment and Development
- Entrepreneurial Development and Support
- Business District Organization

How Does this Benefit the Como Neighborhood?

Capitalizing on Horne Street’s unique qualities and potential economic opportunities will strengthen its role as Como’s Main Street. A variety of neighborhood retail, commercial, civic, and social uses with potential new job opportunities could be accommodated on Horne Street, renewing the economic life and social fabric of the community. Additionally, a revitalized Horne Street would be a strong visible indicator that the Como neighborhood is improving and could serve as a catalyst to stabilize Como’s residential base and foster new housing development in the Como neighborhood.

Note: The photos and images in this section are intended to convey potential improvements and are not an indication of an approved or funded project for Horne Street or the Como neighborhood.

Horne Street Commercial Revitalization — Public Right-of-Way Improvements

Commercial Revitalization of Horne Street will focus on physical improvements in the public right-of-way (public realm) along Horne Street. The physical improvements are intended to create a street with a unique sense of place that brings people together to enjoy the shops, services, and social interaction of Horne Street.



Coupling physical improvements in the public realm with new commercial building placement and orientation promotes pedestrian activity. A strong business support program will help support small businesses while communicating a stable environment for reinvestment—setting the stage for long-term sustainable revitalization of Horne Street.

During the planning phase Como stakeholders endorsed the Complete Streets concept and streetscape improvements as an approach to facilitate revitalization of Horne Street. Below is a synopsis of the City’s Complete Streets policy.

City of Fort Worth Complete Streets Policy

Definition: Complete Streets means transportation infrastructure within public access ways that is designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, accessible, comfortable, and convenient access for all people and travel modes. This includes people traveling as pedestrians, by bicycle, by transit, and by motor vehicle (including commercial vehicles and emergency responders) such that people of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a street.

Vision: Provide a safe, accessible, complete, connected, comfortable, efficient, and community-oriented transportation system for all people that supports mobility options, healthy living, and economic benefit.

The three focus areas below will facilitate the revitalization of Horne Street.

Pedestrian

The Pedestrian focus aims to create a more safe and pedestrian-friendly Horne Street. Recommended improvements include:

- Wider sidewalks
- ADA ramps
- Crosswalks
- Curb bulb-outs
- Pedestrian-scaled street lights
- Street trees
- Street furniture
- Pocket parks or plazas in appropriate locations

Transportation

The Transportation focus aims to ensure that Horne Street performs well for all modes of transportation, including adding bikeways, improving visibility and use of bus stops, calming vehicular traffic, and adding parking management tools. Recommended improvements include:

- Bike lanes and bike racks
- Sheltered bus stops
- On-street parking in appropriate locations

Aesthetics/Business Support

Aesthetics/Business Support encourages a stronger corridor identity (branding), adaptive reuse of buildings, and façade and landscaping improvements. Recommended improvements include:

- Corridor identity signage
- Green infrastructure
- Gateways
- Vacant buildings reuse

Pedestrian Focus

WIDER SIDEWALKS/ ADA CURB RAMPS

Sidewalks are “pedestrian lanes” that provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way that is physically separated from roadway vehicles. A well connected sidewalk network is associated with significant reductions in motor vehicle collisions with pedestrians. A strong sidewalk network improves mobility for pedestrians of all ages, allowing safe travel to and from home, work, parks, schools, shopping areas, transit stops, etc.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant curb ramps provide access between the sidewalk and roadway for people using wheelchairs, strollers, walkers, etc. and for pedestrians with mobility impairments who have trouble stepping up and down high curbs. Curb ramps are required to be installed at intersections and midblock locations where pedestrian crossings exist by federal regulations (1973 Rehabilitation Act and ADA 1990). Marked crosswalks indicate preferred locations for pedestrians to cross the street and help to alert motorists be prepared to yield to pedestrians.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Obsolete, cracked, and narrow sidewalks. Most intersections on Horne Street have obsolete or no ADA curb ramps and no crosswalks except for the worn and barely visible crosswalks adjacent to Como Elementary School.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Photo: Internet, public domain.

Wider sidewalks encourage pedestrian activity. ADA curb ramps and prominent crosswalks add pedestrian safety features to a street.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA-SA-04-003), PEDSAFE Report, 2004.

Pedestrian Focus

CURB BULB-OUTS

Curb extensions—also known as bulb-outs—significantly improve pedestrian crossings by reducing the pedestrian crossing distance, visually and physically narrowing the roadway, improving the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other, and reducing the time that pedestrians need to cross the street.

Curb extensions placed at an intersection prevent motorists from parking in or too close to a crosswalk or from blocking a curb ramp or crosswalk. Motor vehicles parked too close to corners present a threat to pedestrian safety, since they block sightlines, obscure visibility of pedestrians and other vehicles, and make turning difficult for emergency vehicles and trucks.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Horne Street has no traffic calming features or enhanced pedestrian crossing elements.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Example illustration and photo of mid-block curb bulb-outs.

Photo: Internet, public domain.

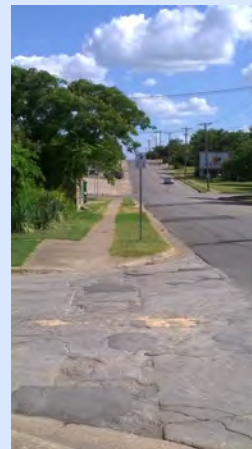
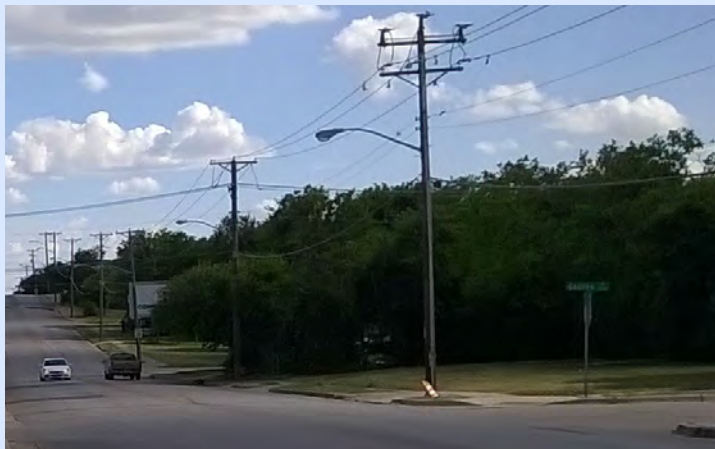
Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA-SA-04-003), PEDSAFE Report, 2004.

Pedestrian Focus

PEDESTRIAN LIGHTS and STREET TREES

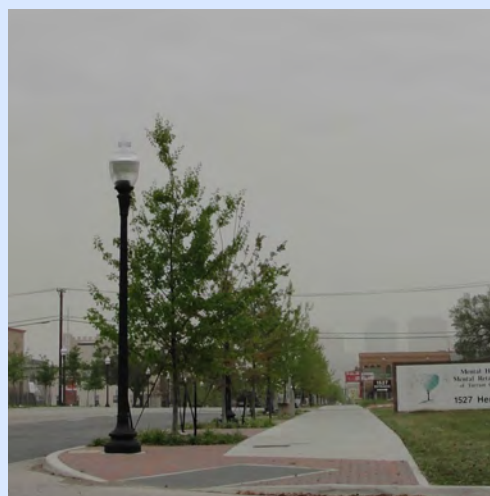
Pedestrian-scaled lighting (shorter than roadway “cobra head” lights) are placed over the sidewalk to improve pedestrian comfort, security, and safety. Pedestrian lights can contribute to creating a unique atmosphere (“sense of place”) when used in combination with pedestrian light banners and other streetscape elements. Street trees within the public right-of-way add an aesthetic uniform appearance to a commercial corridor as well as providing welcomed shade during summer months. Additionally, street trees create a vertical wall close to the vehicle lanes that helps lower vehicle speeds. Finally, street trees help to manage stormwater and improve the environment by absorbing stormwater and vehicle emissions.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Existing Horne Street roadway lights are affixed to utility poles. Horne Street has no pedestrian-scaled lighting or street trees. In sporadic locations the canopy of trees that are located on private property covers the sidewalk.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Pedestrian lights with attractive banners help to create a unique sense of place. Street trees provide an attractive physical barrier between pedestrians and cars, while dramatically improving the aesthetic appeal of the corridor.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA-SA-04-003), PEDSAFE Report, 2004.

Pedestrian Focus

STREET FURNITURE and POCKET PARKS

Street furniture contributes to a well-designed pedestrian environment and helps to enliven commercial districts by fostering community life. Transforming vacant lots and other open spaces in commercial districts into pocket parks and plazas creates lively places for people to gather, celebrate, and enjoy being together. Investment in streets and other public spaces brings added value to adjacent commercial buildings and nearby residential areas.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Several vacant lots are located along Horne Street that could potentially be transformed into pocket parks (permanent or temporary) to enliven the street and minimize the blight and abandoned appearance that is associated with vacant lots.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Photo: Internet, public domain.

Street furniture is welcoming and helps enliven a streetscape. A pocket micro park as seen above can transform a vacant lot into an attractive and productive use, even if the park is only temporary.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA-SA-04-003), PEDSAFE Report, 2004.

Transportation Focus

BIKE LANES, SHELTERED BUS STOPS, and ON-STREET PARKING

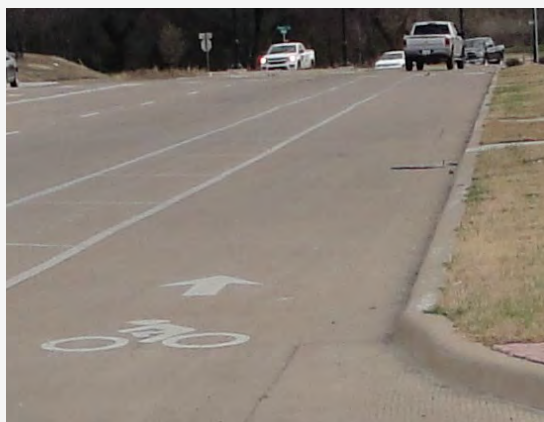
Bike lanes indicate a preferential or exclusive space for bicycle travel along an arterial street. Bicycle lanes also provide a buffer between motor vehicle traffic and pedestrians when sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the curb. Bus stops with a covered shelter and seating provide protection from the elements and improve comfort for bus riders, especially elderly and physically challenged persons. Also, bus shelters and seating provide an opportunity for public art to be part of the shelter/seating design.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



No bike lanes are located on Horne Street or in the Como neighborhood. Two bus benches—but no bus shelters—are located on Horne Street. Horne Street is a conventional auto-focused collector street with no on-street parking.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Bike lanes improve mobility options within a corridor. Public art-enhanced bus shelters contribute to the uniqueness of a corridor, helping to create a recognizable sense of place.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, (FHWA-SA-04-003), PEDSAFE Report, 2004.

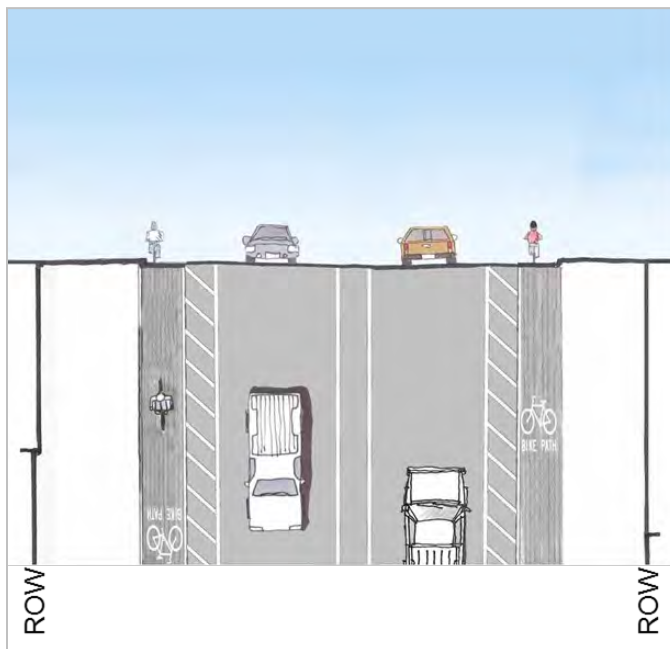
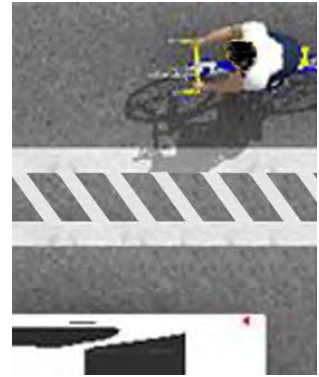
Horne Street Public Right-of-Way Improvements

Below and on the following pages are recommended improvements (via phasing) in the public right-of-way (ROW) on Horne Street.

Phase 1 – Paint Only

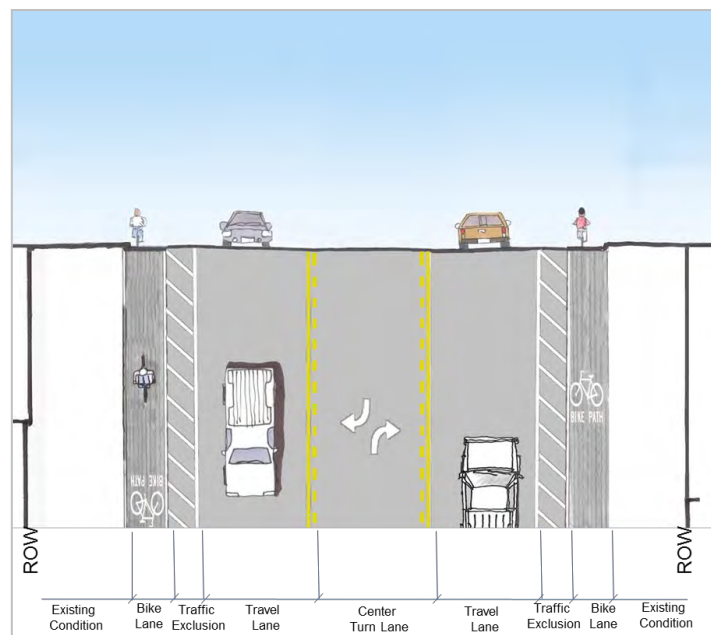
- Stripe narrower travel lanes to reduce vehicle speeds
- Add bike lanes
- Adding turn lane
- Add crosswalks
- Add buffer to separate bike lane from travel lanes

Note: Options available will be affected by existing right-of-way (ROW) width, which varies throughout the corridor.



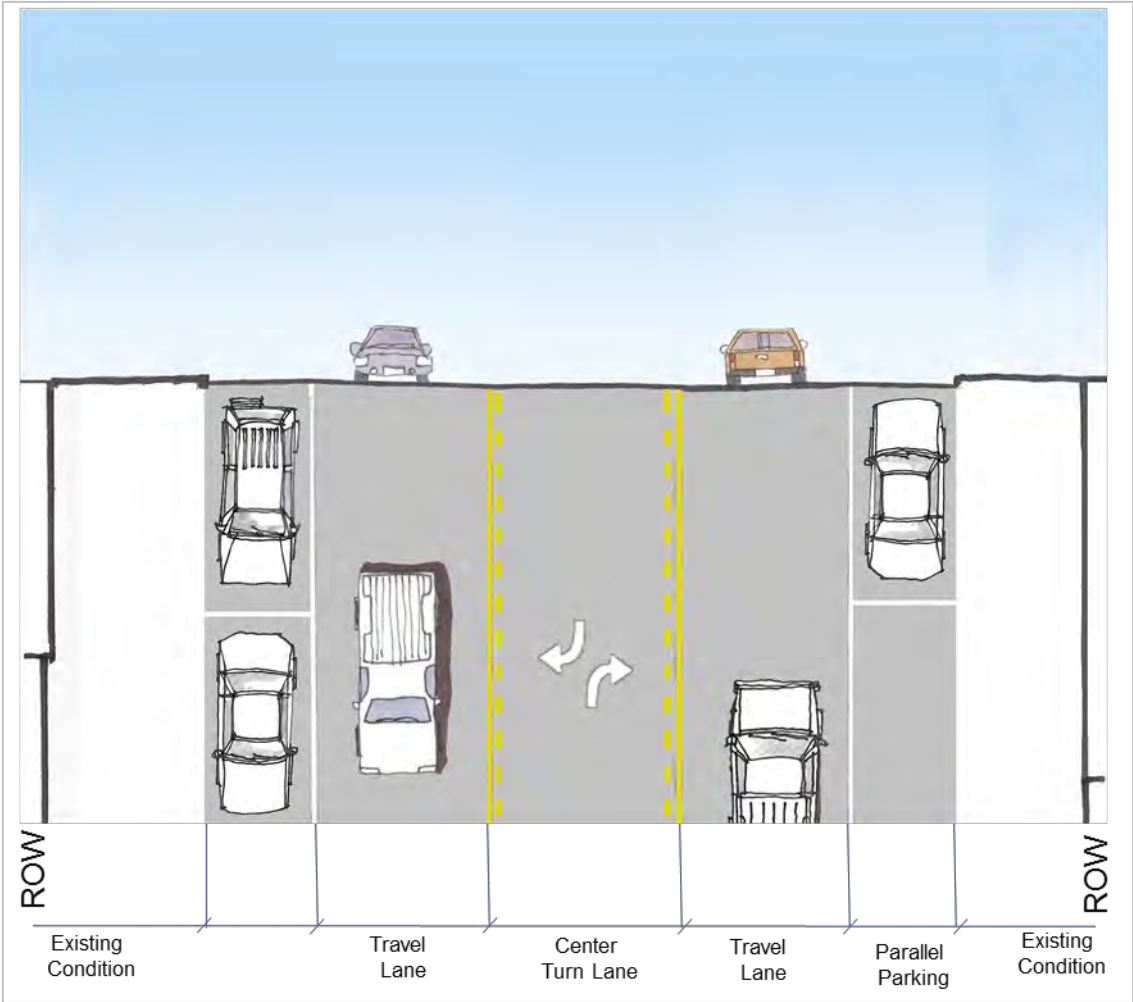
Narrow Street ROW concept

Wider street ROW concept



Phase 1 – Paint Only, continued

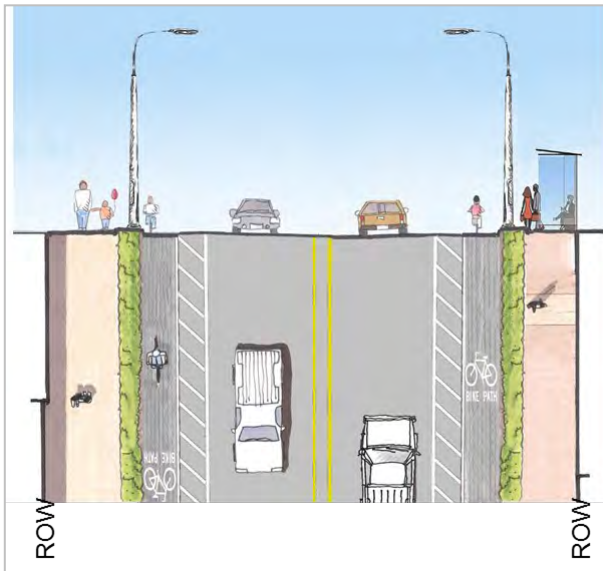
On-street parking option. The example below provides a center turn lane and replaces the dedicated bike lanes with on-street parking to support retail and restaurants in the recommended mixed-use target area on the north end of Horne Street.



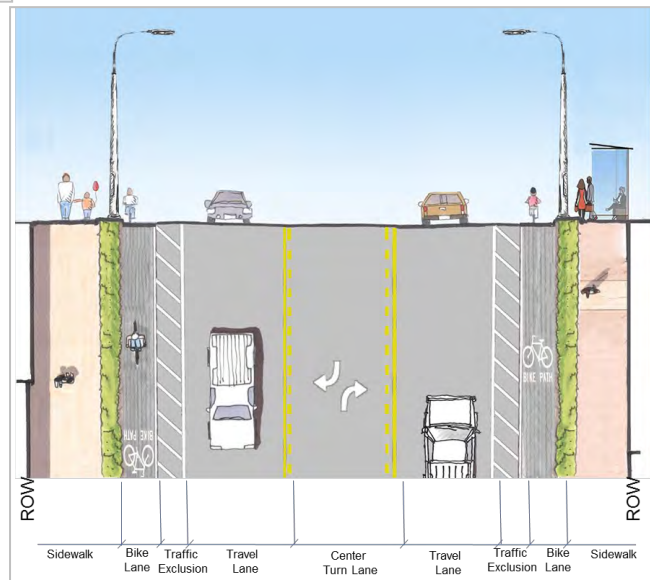
Phase 2 – Sidewalk Construction

- Widen sidewalks to improve pedestrian experience
- Add enhanced crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety
- Add roadway lights
- Add bus shelters

Note: Options available will be affected by existing right-of-way (ROW) width, which varies throughout the corridor.



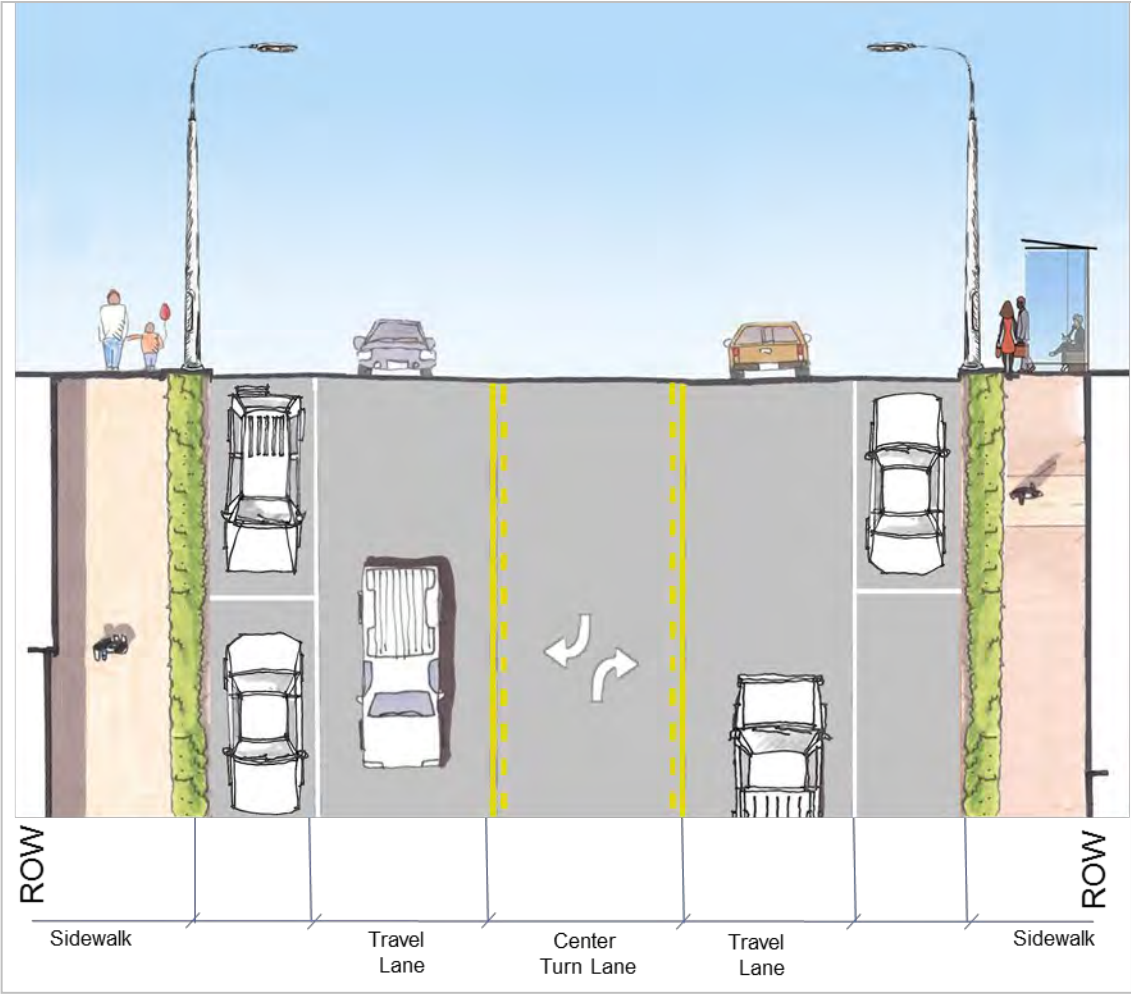
Narrow Street ROW concept



Wider street ROW concept

Phase 2 – Sidewalk Construction, continued

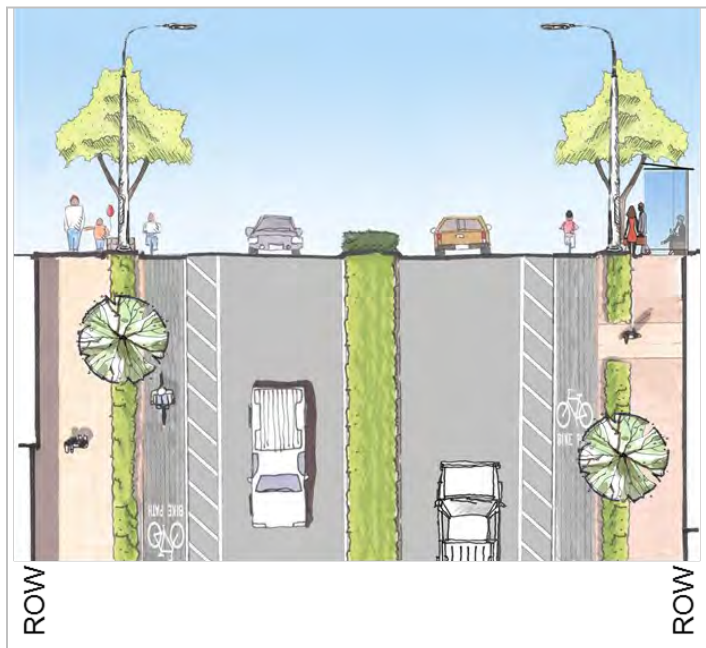
On-street parking option. The example below provides a center turn lane and replaces the dedicated bike lanes with on-street parking to support retail and restaurants in the recommended mixed-use target area on the north end of Horne Street.



Phase 3 – Enhanced Design

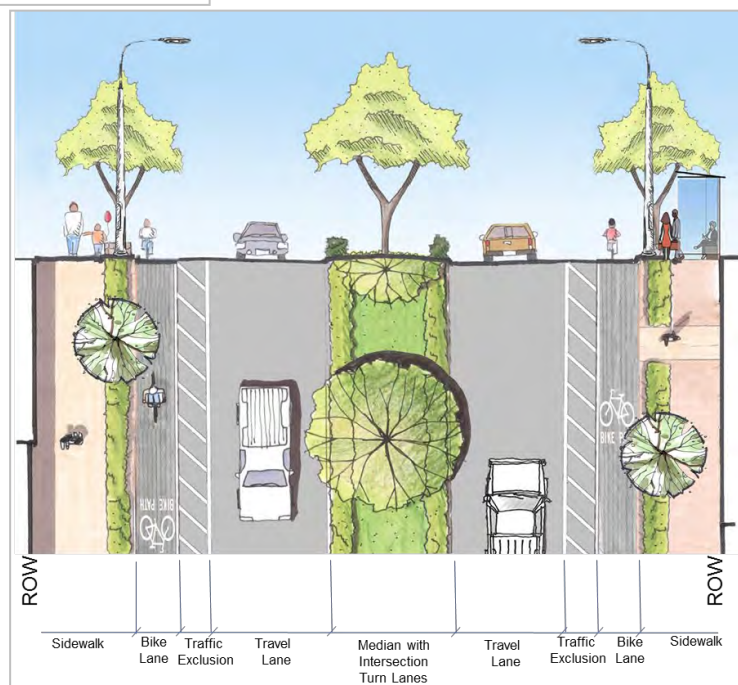
- Add street trees to create a physical barrier between pedestrians and moving vehicles. Street trees provide a safer, more comfortable, and more appealing walking environment.
- Strategically placed median crossing islands to reduce traffic speeds and create a safer and more appealing environment.
- Add pedestrian refuge islands to shorten crossing distance.

Note: Options available will be affected by existing right-of-way (ROW) width, which varies throughout the corridor.



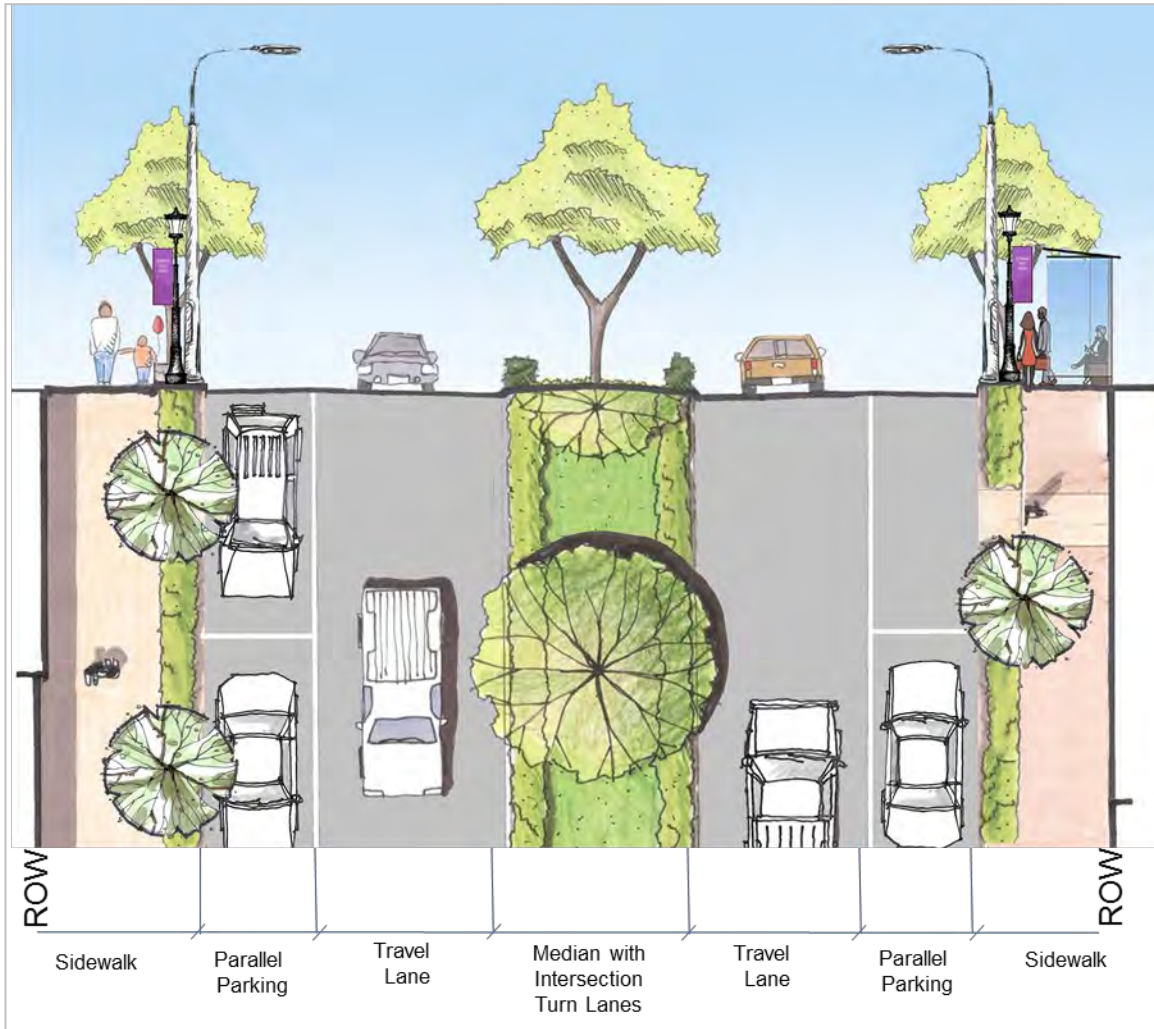
Narrow Street ROW concept

Wider street ROW concept



Phase 3 – Enhanced Design, continued

On-street parking option. The example below provides a center turn lane and replaces the dedicated bike lanes with on-street parking to support retail and restaurants in the recommended mixed-use target area on the north end of Horne Street.



Horne Street School Zone

Como residents and the principal of Como Elementary school have raised concerns about vehicle speeds along Horne Street adjacent to Como Elementary School. Appropriate traffic calming devices (e.g., school flashers and speed signs) should be installed to slow motorists driving in the school zone. Additionally, mini-roundabouts are recommended to control vehicle speeds on Horne Street adjacent to the school.

In conjunction with enhanced traffic calming features, the Safe Routes to School Program should be considered for the two elementary schools.



Photos: *Above*, school-age children crossing Horne Street with the assistance of a school crossing guard; *Right*, the example school zone flasher and speed traffic sign is proposed for Horne Street.



Safe Routes To School

For communities concerned about unsafe walking conditions for school-age children and other traffic issues, the Safe Routes To School (SRTS) Program can be an effective starting point for addressing these issues.

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is designed to:

- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.
- Educate and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school.
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative.

For more information, visit www.saferoutestx.com.

Horne Street School Zone – Existing Conditions



Horne Street School Zone – Potential Improvements



Mini-Roundabout Benefits

Compact size – A mini-roundabout can often be developed to fit within existing right-of-way constraints.

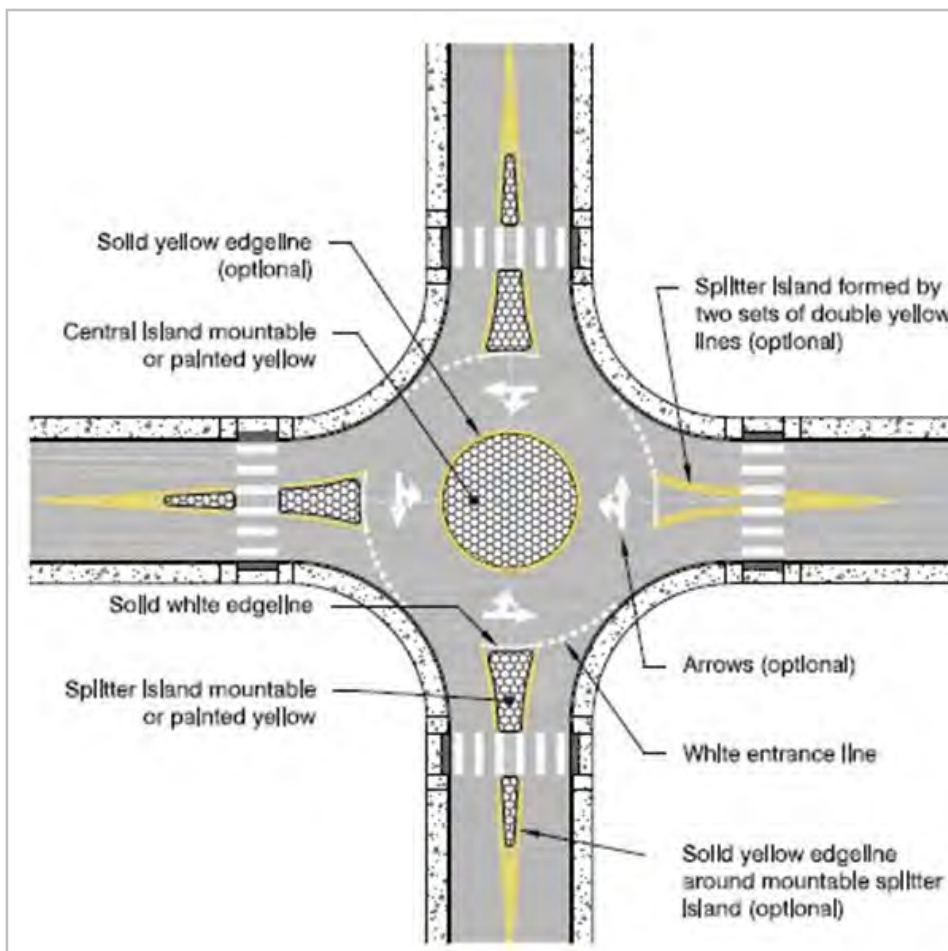
Operational Efficiency – A mini-roundabout may provide less delay for a critical movement or for an overall intersection in comparison to other intersection alternatives.

Traffic Safety – Mini-roundabouts have been used successfully to improve safety at intersections with known crash problems, with reported crash rate reductions of approximately 30 percent as compared to signalized intersections.

Traffic Calming – Mini-roundabouts reduce speeds and can be implemented as part of a broader traffic calming scheme. The low-speed environment also enhances the safety of the intersection for non-motorized users.

Access Management – A mini-roundabout can be used to provide efficient access to a new or existing development.

Mini-Roundabout Illustration



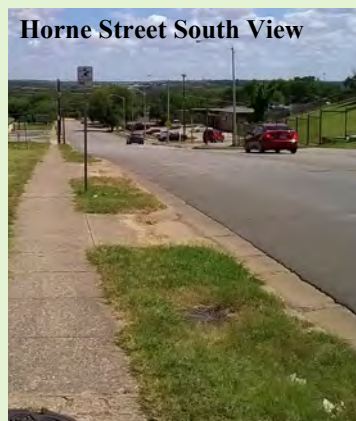
Source: U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

Aesthetics / Business Support

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

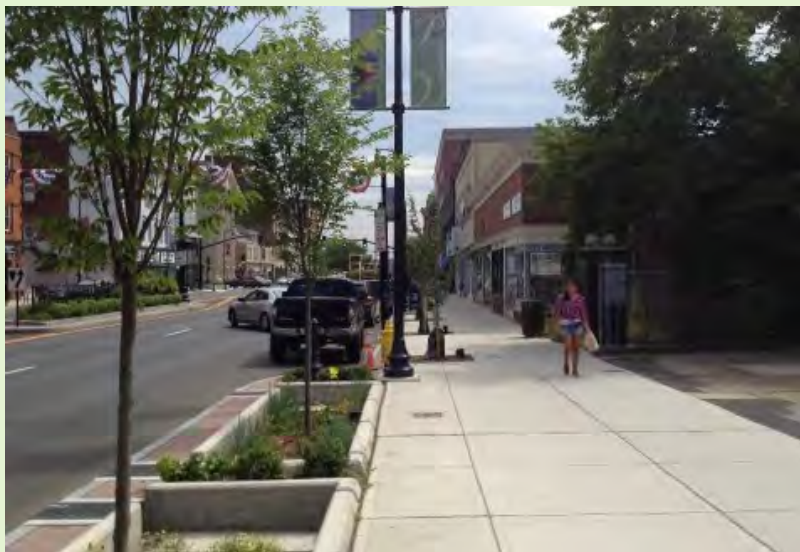
Enhanced landscaping in the form of rain gardens, planter boxes, or bioswales are green infrastructure stormwater management systems for smaller spaces, including the public right-of-way on a commercial corridor. These green infrastructure elements provide aesthetic appeal as well as environmental, social, and economic benefits as part of a comprehensive corridor streetscape project. Green infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source by using vegetation, soils, and other elements and practices to restore some of the natural processes required to manage stormwater and create healthier urban environments.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Landscaping on Horne Street is minimal and mostly includes sporadic grass strip areas between the curb and sidewalk.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS



Planter boxes are incorporated in the streetscape of the above examples. Planter boxes are urban rain gardens with vertical walls that collect and absorb runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets. Planter boxes are appropriate for space-limited sites along a commercial corridor as a streetscaping element.

Bottom photos: Environmental Protection Agency report (EPA 842-R-15-002), *Green Infrastructure Opportunities that Arise During Municipal Operations*, January 2015.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report, *City Green: Innovative Green Infrastructure Solutions for Downtowns and Infill Locations*, (EPA 230R16001), May 2016.

Aesthetics / Land Use and Building Redevelopment Focus

VACANT BUILDINGS REUSE

Vacant commercial buildings that are salvageable have the potential to be rehabilitated and returned to a viable commercial use. Business support is important for existing and future businesses located along Horne Street and other locations in the Como neighborhood. Façade improvements and other business support as described in the Business Organization section is recommended.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ON HORNE STREET



Several vacant but salvageable commercial buildings line Horne Street and are recommended for rehabilitation as part of the Horne Street revitalization.



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

After



These photos (above and to the right) illustrate the transformation of once-vacant unused retail storefronts that were a blight to this segment of East Rosedale Street. The renovated storefronts served as a catalyst for additional revitalization along this segment of East Rosedale Street, which is within the Polytechnic/Wesleyan Urban Village.

Before



Horne Street Commercial Revitalization — Land Use and Building Redevelopment

The existing vacant land (26.4%) and unique features of Horne Street offer opportunities for revitalizing the corridor. The recommendations on the following pages are based on the unique aspects of the various segments of Horne Street. The recommended redevelopment (land use development densities, building design) of each segment is presented on the following pages. Additionally, within each corridor segment (except the Education Segment) a catalyst site is identified for its potential to stimulate additional redevelopment of adjacent vacant parcels and underutilized retail and commercial structures.



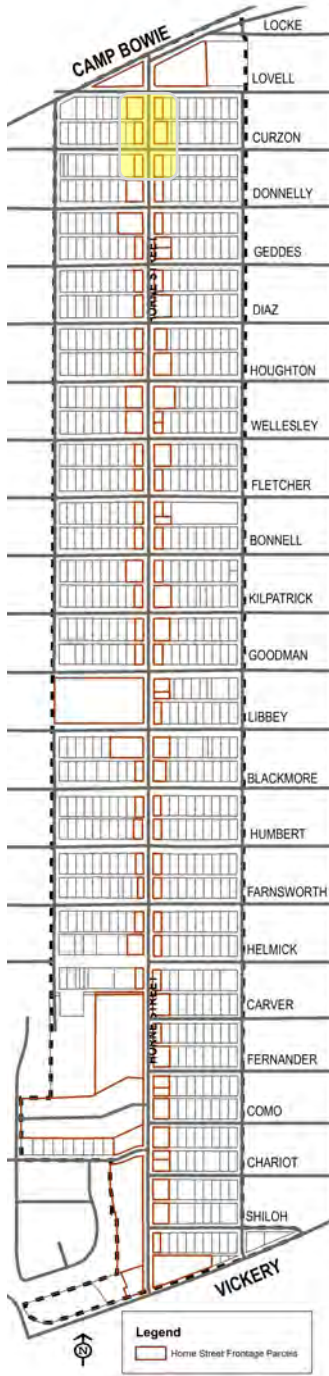
Table 13: Horne Street Land Use

Land Use Category	Number of Lots	Percent Lots	Appraised Value
Commercial	31	35.6%	\$5,554,828
Vacant	23	26.4%	\$191,325
Single-Family	19	21.8%	\$481,500
Institutions and Civic	7	8.1%	\$4,752,722
Public Parkland	4	4.6%	\$0
Multifamily	3	3.5%	\$7,566,114
TOTAL	87	100%	\$18,546,489

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2014.

Existing Land Use

- Commercial
- Vacant
- Single-Family
- Institutions & Civic
- Public Parkland
- Multifamily



North Gateway Segment—Lovell to Curzon/Donnelly Streets Alley

The North Gateway Segment includes a block and half (highlighted area on map image to the left). The recommended new development would transform the north entrance into the Como neighborhood from its current low density and rundown appearance to a higher density, well-designed development that would offer neighborhood-serving uses along with job creation opportunities for Como residents. Public art and enhanced landscaping would create a positive appearance in this area. Additionally, the recommended development type would eliminate the stark physical contrast while aesthetically and functionally connecting the development on the north and south sides of Lovell Street.

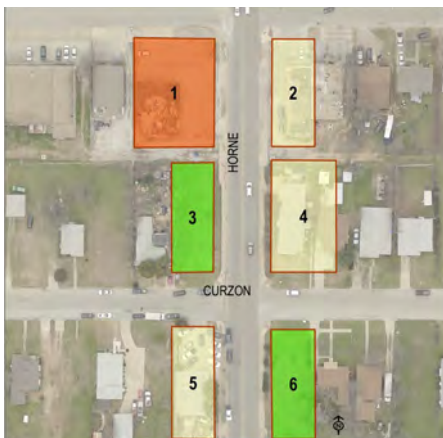
Existing Land Uses and Zoning

The land uses in the North Gateway Segment include a vacant commercial building (former Edmondson’s restaurant), a fledging retail complex in an older structure, two vacant lots, a two-story house, and a successful restaurant (Drew’s). Drew’s restaurant is a positive draw to this segment of Horne Street by attracting persons from inside and outside the Como neighborhood. The fledging retail complex located on the southeast corner of Horne and Lovell offers minimal low quality goods resulting in limited consumer draw. The vacant Edmondson’s restaurant is in poor and blighted condition, which creates a negative impression as one enters the Como neighborhood.

The current zoning in the North Gateway Segment is the Camp Bowie Form-Based Code (CB), neighborhood commercial, general commercial restricted, and residential.

Redevelopment Potential

The vacant former Edmondson’s building (Lot 1) and vacant lot 3 represent the highest redevelopment potential in this segment and can serve as a catalyst project to spur additional activity and economic development. The Edmondson’s site and lot 3 is recommended to be redeveloped into a mixed-use, two or three-story development. A suggested use for the redeveloped site is a food service business with a culinary training program.



Map #	Vacant and Underutilized Sites	Square Feet	Land Value	Improvement Value
1	Vacant former Edmondson’s fast food restaurant	10,000	\$60,000	\$165,000
3	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
6	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2014

- Catalyst Site
- Vacant Lot
- Occupied

The suggested food service business could potentially utilize any remaining commercial kitchen hardware that may be in the Edmondson building. A social entrepreneur would be a good candidate for this type of business venture.

As development pressure increases in this area, the fledging retail complex (lot #2) could be replaced by a new, well-designed development similar to the one recommended for the Edmondson's site. The Camp Bowie Form-Based Code (CB) zoning will be instrumental in facilitating well-designed, higher density redevelopment projects. The CB zoning requires reduced building setbacks that place a building close to the property line. Unnecessary curb openings are closed which supports pedestrian activity and other modes of travel besides the automobile. Although the CB zoning building height allows five stories, Como stakeholders prefer heights not exceed three stories. Currently, the CB zoning extends from Camp Bowie Boulevard to the Lovell Street alley. As redevelopment occurs in this segment, it is recommended to determine the benefits of extending the CB zoning south to the alley between Lovell and Curzon Streets.



The vacant former Edmondson's restaurant is recommended for redevelopment as a mixed-use development that adheres to the Camp Bowie Form-Based Code (CB) zoning.

Illustrations of potential improvements to the north segment of Horne Street are shown on the following pages. The mixed-use buildings are sited close to the property line, as required by the CB zoning district, resulting in a significantly improved pedestrian experience fostered by streetscape elements that include wider sidewalks, crosswalks, median, pedestrian lights, and landscaping. Parking is placed either in the rear or the side of the building and includes on-street parking. The streetscape improvements depicted could potentially be grant-funded, but likely only with a mixed-use, multi-story development.

Note: The images on the following pages are for illustration purposes only and do not represent improvements that are planned and/or funded.

Horne Street and Lovell Street Intersection – Potential Improvements

Existing Conditions: Vacant building, aged infrastructure, fledging retail at southeast corner.



Potential improvements (Phase 1): Redevelopment featuring a 2 to 3-story mixed-use building to replace the vacant building, with wider sidewalks, ADA handicap ramps, enhanced crosswalk.

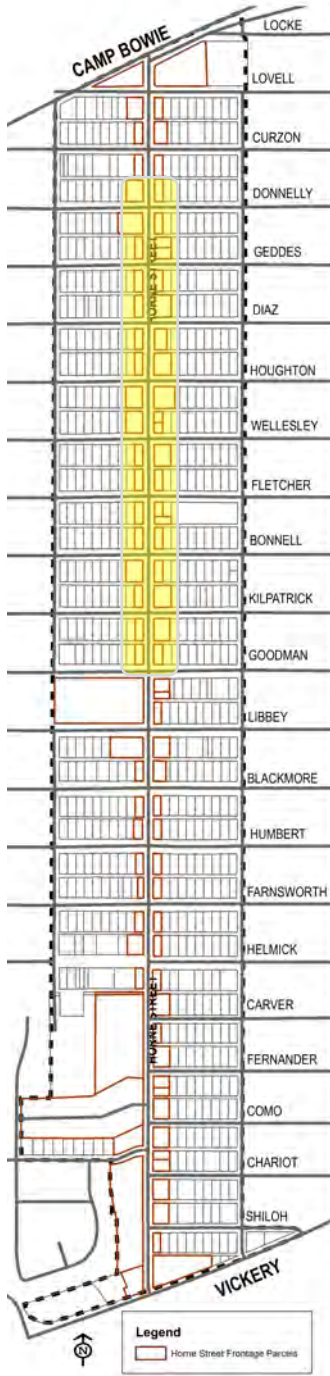


Potential improvements (Phase 2): Add on-street parking, landscaping, median, street trees, and pedestrian lighting with public art banners.



Potential improvements (Phase 3): A strong market could result in an additional 2-story mixed-use building to replace the existing fledgling retail, resulting in a transformed Horne Street north entrance into a vibrant pedestrian-oriented environment that offers quality retail and commercial uses for the Como neighborhood and visitors. The streetscape improvements pictured are representative of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Sustainable Development Program, which has funded similar improvements in conjunction with mixed-use, higher density development projects.





Heritage and Cultural Segment—Curzon/Donnelly Alley to Goodman Street

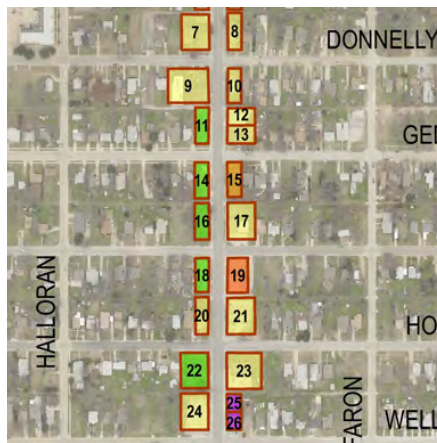
The Heritage and Cultural Segment covers 8 1/2 blocks that include thirty-seven lots (highlighted area on map image to the left). The lot sizes range from small lots of 3,125 square feet to the largest lot at 15,625 square feet. This segment of Horne Street is characterized by small businesses, non-profits, historic churches, and vacant historic buildings (e.g., the former Blue Bird Nite Club). Redevelopment and renovation opportunities along this segment could yield a revitalized mix of retail and service uses that could help to attract people to the corridor. An active pedestrian environment is encouraged for this segment.

Existing Land Uses and Zoning

The existing land use is mostly of commercial (45.9 percent) that are inter-mixed with residential properties (29.7 percent) and vacant lots (21.6 percent). Neighborhood commercial zoning is the primary zoning in this area. The other zoning categories include community facilities, single-family residential, two-family, multifamily, neighborhood and general commercial restricted.



Nonprofit job training and meeting facility.



- Catalyst Site
- Vacant Lot
- Vacant/Boarded House
- Vacant/Boarded Bldg.
- Occupied

Redevelopment Potential

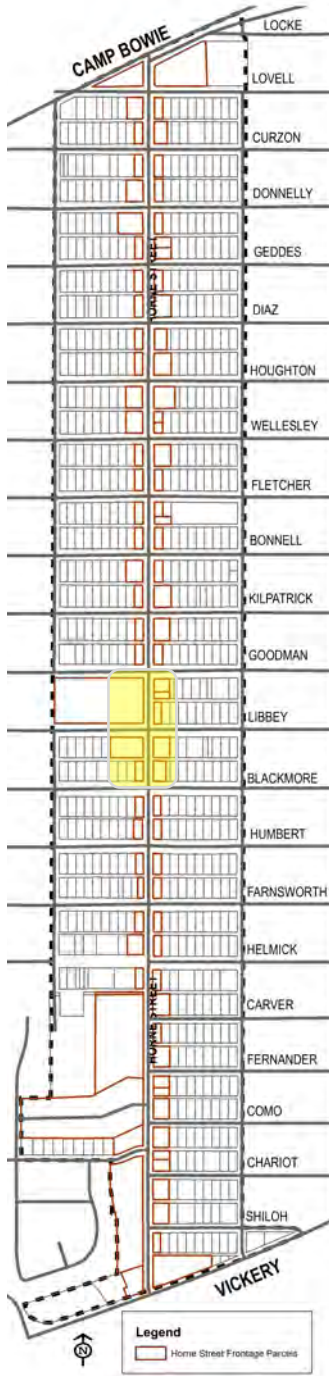
There are numerous vacant lots and boarded up structures in the Heritage and Cultural Segment that have redevelopment potential. One potential catalyst project could include redevelopment of the abandoned Car Wash that is located at the southeast corner of Horne and Diaz. The highest concentration of active land uses in this segment is between Geddes and Fletcher streets, which has active retail and restaurant establishments, in addition to nonprofits (i.e., a women’s job training center, and a youth leadership program). Three lots (14, 16, and 19), including the abandoned Car Wash, are tax foreclosed and under the oversight of the City of Fort Worth. Redevelopment initiatives could begin in this area and focus on strengthening existing businesses, while identifying potential uses for the vacant buildings and lots.

Map #	Vacant and Underutilized Sites	Land Square Feet	Land Value	Improvement Value
11	Vacant lot	6,250	\$6,250	\$0
14	Vacant lot City tax foreclosed property	6,250	\$6,250	\$0
15	House (boarded-up)	12,500	\$12,500	\$0
16	Vacant lot City tax foreclosed property	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
18	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
19	Car Wash (abandoned) City tax foreclosed property	9,375	\$9,375	\$82,063
22	Vacant lot	12,500	\$4,300	\$0
25	Commercial building (boarded-up)	3,125	\$3,125	\$31,486
26	Commercial building (boarded-up) Former Blue Bird Nite Club	3,125	\$3,125	\$50,529
29	House (boarded-up)	6,250	\$7,200	\$12,500
31	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
35	Vacant lot	6,250	\$6,250	\$0
36	Vacant lot	12,500	\$12,500	\$0

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2014.



The above abandoned car wash site is recommended for redevelopment. Until a permanent redevelopment project materializes, the site (with some modification) could be used as a Farmers Market on an interim basis. Photo right: Internet, public domain.



Education Segment—Goodman Street to Blackmore Street

The Education Segment includes two blocks and eight lots (highlighted area on map image to the left). The primary theme in this segment of Horne Street is education with two public schools (Como Elementary School, which faces Horne Street, and Como Montessori School directly west of Como Elementary—parcel 44 on the inset map below). During the school year this area generates a substantial amount of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

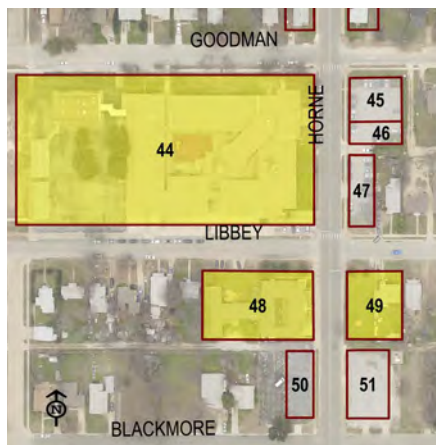
Existing Land Uses and Zoning

Aside from the schools, Mount Zion Baptist Church (Parcels 48, 50, and 51) is the largest land use in this segment. Five of the eight parcels in this area are parking lots for either the school or the church. One occupied house is located in this area at the southeast corner of Horne and Libbey streets. There are no vacant or boarded-up structures in this segment.

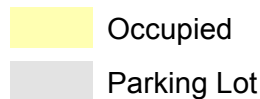
Redevelopment Potential

No redevelopment catalyst site is identified in this segment. However, the following recommendations pertain to the surface parking and two residential parcels. The Fort Worth ISD surfaced parking (Parcels 45, 46, and 47) are fenced and include lighting. However, the surfaced parking (Parcels 50 and 51) that are part of the church have no fencing or landscaping adjacent to the single-family district. For all parking lots, an improved parking buffer adjacent to the adjacent residential land use is recommended. The addition of shade trees and landscaping would make the parking lots more appealing, while improving stormwater management and providing much needed shade. In addition, the fences should be no higher than four feet and should be made of wrought iron or other decorative material.

Two residential parcels offer redevelopment potential and should be considered if the properties are sold for redevelopment. The vacant section of Parcel 49 could be transformed into a pocket park or plaza to create a Placemaking site that includes an education theme. A quality pocket park



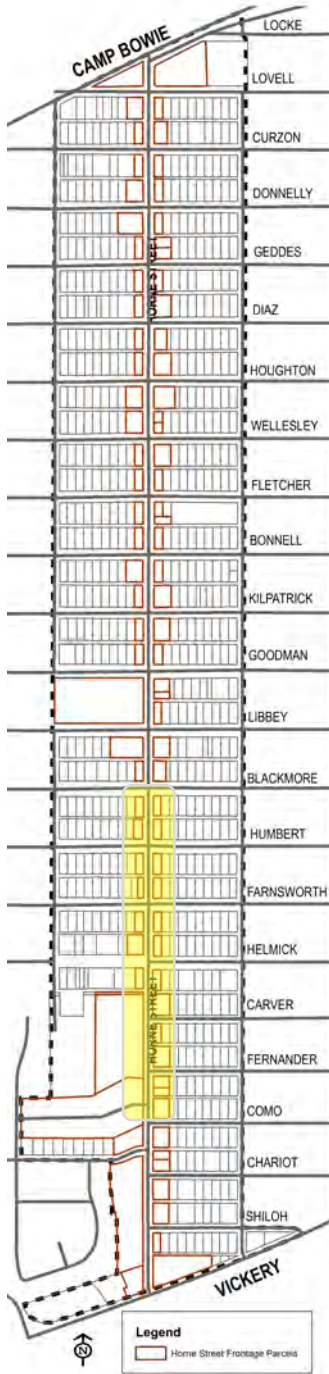
Como Elementary School, a major anchor site in the Education Segment.



or plaza at this location would enhance the area by providing a small green space and seating area to break-up the concrete/asphalt parking lot views and offer a social place for visiting. If offered for sale, the residential parcel directly east of Parcel 47 could be combined with Parcels 45, 46, and 47 to create one larger parking lot with entrances off Goodman and Libbey streets, thereby reducing the parking lot's traffic ingress and egress from Horne Street and the associated turning movements that complicate traffic circulation at the school. Improved pedestrian crossing features are recommended to improve safety for the school age children that cross Horne Street.



School-age children of the Como neighborhood.



Recreation and Residential Segment—Blackmore to Como Streets

The Recreation and Residential Segment covers six blocks and includes nineteen lots (highlighted area on map image to the left). Most of the lots are small at 6,250 square feet or less. One lot is 12,500 square feet and the Villas on the Hill Apartment Complex is 179,836 square feet. Two themes resonate in this segment. The first theme is recreation due to Chamberlin Park, a 9.6-acre park that has a frontage on Horne Street that spans approximately 658 feet—which is over four times the average parcel block length on Horne Street. The second theme is residential due to existing and former residential land uses that front Horne Street.

Existing Land Uses and Zoning

Forty-seven percent of the parcels are vacant in this segment. The remaining land use types include residential and commercial uses. The primary zoning in this segment is A-5 single-family residential and E neighborhood commercial.

Map #	Vacant and Underutilized Sites	Land Square Feet	Land Value	Improvement Value
52	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
53	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
55	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
56	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
57	Vacant lot	6,250	\$7,200	\$0
58	Vacant lot	4,625	\$7,200	\$0
68	Vacant lot	5,000	\$5,000	\$0
69	Vacant lot	12,500	\$12,500	\$0

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2014.



- Catalyst Site/ Planned New Como Center
- Vacant Lot
- Occupied

Redevelopment Potential

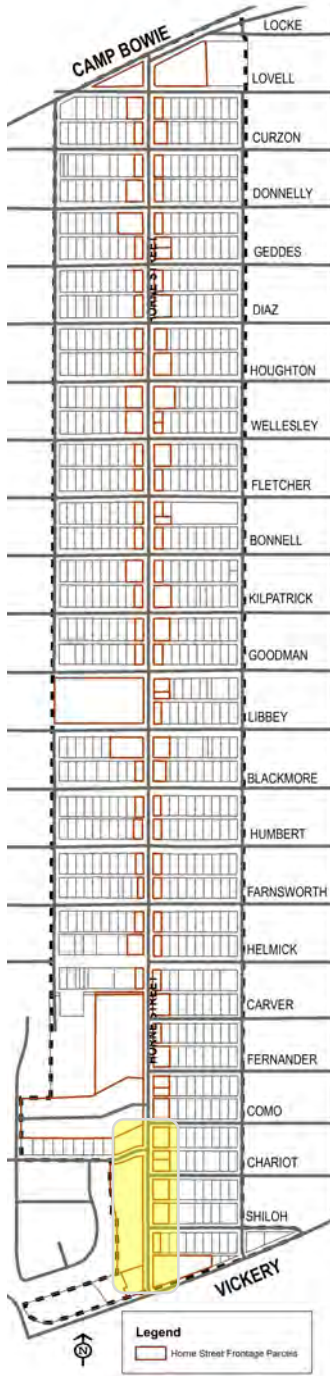
The activity level at Chamberlin Park will dramatically increase when the new Como Neighborhood Center is built and can serve as a catalyst for additional development to occur on adjacent lots, including the lots that front Horne Street.

Housing diversity is recommended on the vacant lots west of Horne Street. The recommended housing type is townhomes and condominiums, which will help increase the population and generate positive activity in this area that will reduce the unlawful illegal dumping, and other negative activities by adding “more eyes on the street.”

In order to increase the market potential for higher quality housing, it is recommended that new residential in this area occur after the completion of the planned new Como Neighborhood Center.



West view of Chamberlin Park from Horne Street. Chamberlin Park is the location of the planned new Como Neighborhood Center.



South Gateway Segment—Como Street to Vickery Boulevard

The South Gateway Segment covers three blocks and ten lots (highlighted area on map image to the left). Within this segment, the redevelopment potential is high due to the future transition of the current Como Neighborhood Center, the underutilized motel site, and the proximity to a major arterial road (Vickery Boulevard).

Existing Land Uses and Zoning

Commercial and civic uses (churches, Como Center) are located in this segment. No residential uses are located in this segment. The largest land use in this segment is the Como Neighborhood Center and Park. Other uses include a fledgling retail use (Parcel 71), three churches, three vacant lots, and a low-end motel that has some historic significance. Outside of the Como center, the size of most of the lots vary with the smaller lots 6,250 square feet or less, two lots are 12,500 square feet. All lots are zoned E neighborhood commercial.

Map #	Vacant and Underutilized Sites	Land Square Feet	Land Value	Improvement Value
72	Vacant lot	12,500	\$12,500	\$0
73	Commercial building unoccupied	5,000	\$5,000	\$61,277
76	Vacant lot	12,500	\$6,250	\$0
77	Vacant lot	6,250	\$6,250	\$0

Source: Tarrant Appraisal District, 2014.

Redevelopment Potential

As the primary southern entrance to the Como neighborhood, and with its close proximity to Vickery Boulevard, the recommendation for the South Gateway Segment is to position the area for new commercial uses that would benefit from the Vickery Boulevard traffic.

The existing Como Neighborhood Center site offers the opportunity for a redevelopment catalyst project. When the planned new Como Neighborhood Center is built at Chamberlin Park, the current center will be vacated and eventually demolished, creating an opportunity for a new land use.

The gross floor area of the existing center’s two structures (primary building that includes the gymnasium and a smaller building used as a senior center) totals 29,388 square feet. The recommended list of uses for this site should be thoroughly evaluated and include variables that would positively contribute to the redevelopment and revitalization of the Como neighborhood.



A suggested future land use recommendation for the Como Center site is a job training and entrepreneurial development facility. Job training and entrepreneurial development programs would provide an important service to the Como neighborhood to help unemployed and underemployed residents acquire skills to increase their employment prospects and income levels. Entrepreneurial training would contribute to rebuilding the economic base of the Como neighborhood.

As development pressure increases in the South Gateway segment, the motel site on Vickery Boulevard could be redeveloped with a use that could capitalize on this location's comparatively high traffic volumes. A redeveloped motel site should acknowledge the past role of this motel for being listed in the "Negro Motorist Green-Book" during the nation's segregation era (pre-1970s) with a historic marker or other appropriate signage.



Motel site at Horne Street and Vickery Boulevard.

Neighborhood Focused Economic Development [Key Actions](#)

[Horne Street Revitalization](#)

3.1. Redevelop and Revitalize Horne Street

(public right-of-way improvements and corridor redevelopment)

- Engage City's Transportation and Public Works Department to perform a preliminary assessment of Horne Street for a complete streets pilot project.
- Seek funding from local (e.g., the North Central Texas Council of Governments Sustainable Development Program), state, and federal sources for a complete streets pilot project.
- Install mini-roundabouts in the Horne Street school zone.
- Initiate a Safe Routes To School program for the two elementary schools.
- Initiate a façade improvement program.

Small Business Recruitment and Development

This plan recommends the recruitment and development of retail and commercial businesses to help rebuild the economic base of the Como neighborhood. Although new small businesses can locate on commercial or industrial zoned property in the Como neighborhood, this recommendation primarily targets Horne Street in order to create a vibrant retail and commercial district on Horne Street. New retail, commercial, and other small businesses would generate employment opportunities within the Como neighborhood, which could help to reduce the need to leave Como to find employment (see Map 22), and potentially contribute to lowering of the neighborhood’s high unemployment rate (Figure 15).

Retail and Commercial Recruitment

Many vacant and underutilized sites along Horne Street appear to be viable locations for quality retail and commercial businesses. However, the saturation of existing retail and commercial businesses that are located adjacent to the Como neighborhood, primarily along Camp Bowie Boulevard, presents a challenge for determining what type of retail and commercial would be profitable on Horne Street. In addition, the many vacant parcels in Como—and its resulting low population—means that the Como neighborhood does not currently have the rooftops to support much additional commercial activity, unless new businesses can draw significant numbers of customers from surrounding neighborhoods. Table 13 lists industry standards for three retail types that are commonly present in a neighborhood setting. Based on the square footage standards below, all but a neighborhood retail center could potentially be located on one or more existing vacant parcels on Horne Street.

Table 14: Retail Stores, Industry Threshold Standards

Type	Gross Retail Area (sf)	Minimum Households to Support Retail	Average Trade Area
Corner Store	1,500-3,000	1,000	Neighborhood (5-minute walk)
Convenience Center	10,000-30,000	2,000	Up to 1.5-mile radius
Neighborhood Center	60,000-80,000	6-8,000	1- to 2-mile radius

Source: Better Cities and Towns Online Journal, A Primer on Retail Types and Urban Centers, Gibbs, Robert, 9/1/2007.

Corner Store

The smallest and most useful retail type that offers convenience over selection and value. Corner stores offer beverages, food and sundries that are needed on a regular basis by most households, workers, and travelers. Beer, bread, cigarettes, prepared food, sundries, and snacks represent the bulk of their sales.

Convenience Center

Convenience centers offer an array of goods and services geared towards the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhood. The tenants of convenience centers offer a limited balance of food, personal services, and local offices. Typical tenants include a bakery,

bank, coffee shop, dry cleaner, financial services, florists, food market, laundry center, package liquor store, personal services, pharmacy, real estate office, or tailor.

Neighborhood Center

Generally anchored with a supermarket, pharmacy, or other store, neighborhood centers offer a full depth of goods and services not available at smaller centers. The major anchor is a grocery store and supports most of the other smaller adjacent retail establishments.

Source: Better Cities and Towns Online Journal, A Primer on Retail Types and Urban Centers, Gibbs, Robert, 9/1/2007.

Neighborhood Corner Stores

Façade improvements, product offering enhancements, etc. are recommended for existing corner stores located in the Como neighborhood. Improved physical appearance and product offerings could potentially attract more customers and better serve the Como neighborhood.

PRECEDENT: Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Encouraging and supporting corner or convenience stores to stock and sell healthier food and beverage items has become an important goal of many public health agencies and community stakeholders.

Research shows that corner stores are more prevalent in low income communities and many do not support healthy eating habits. Below are common trends of corner stores:

- Corner stores tend to sell little fresh produce, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.
- Teenagers who live near convenience stores have higher body mass indexes (BMIs) and consume more sugar-sweetened beverages than those who live farther away.
- Proximity to convenience stores within a neighborhood is associated with higher rates of obesity and diabetes.

Healthy corner store interventions have the power to positively impact the health of community members. Successful programs have shown that:

- Store interventions increase sales of healthy foods as well as customer knowledge about healthy products.
- The amount of shelf space dedicated to fruits and vegetables at corner stores is positively associated with increased produce consumption among nearby residents.

Fort Worth Model

Ramey Market, a local corner store in the Stop Six neighborhood, is a healthy corner store pilot project. The Stop Six community partnered with Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration, the Fort Worth Blue Zones Project, and other organizations to launch the project. Dunbar High School art students painted a mural on one side of the building to showcase community pride. The owner of the Ramey Market has committed to stocking healthy produce as part of its product offerings.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Healthy Corner Stores Guide, June 2016, Tarrant County Collaboration, Fort Worth Blue Zones Project.



Door hangers (above) were distributed in the Stop Six neighborhood. Image: Courtesy of Healthways (Fort Worth Office, Blue Zones Project).

A neighborhood retail center that is 60,000 square feet or above could potentially be located along the southern segment of Horne Street at the site of the current Como Neighborhood Center (which is 60,000 square feet) upon its proposed demolition or the motel site (which is 50,300 square feet). In order for either site to be feasible for a neighborhood center, land assembly of adjacent parcels would be required to reach the minimum 60,000 square foot building standard along with its parking, circulation, and store servicing requirements. Additionally, national and regional chains require that a requisite number of households and income levels be met before locating to a site. One source indicates that convenience markets surrounding a commercial corridor need a minimum density of 5,000 households per square mile.¹⁰ For the Como neighborhood this challenge can be minimized with an increase in population and households (especially higher income households) within the Como neighborhood.

Recruitment efforts solely to national and regional chain stores may not prove productive for the Como neighborhood in light of the existing surplus quality chain retail stores and restaurants that surround the Como neighborhood, the retail stores square footage requirements described above, and current market shortcomings (low population and minimal buying power) of the Como neighborhood. Instead, it is recommended that marketing efforts primarily focus on niche small retail and service businesses that could potentially be profitable on Horne Street. A supply chain business and retail and service businesses appropriate for a heritage/cultural district are two niche areas that could potentially be successful in the Como neighborhood.

Small Business Development—Supply Chain Business

The Como neighborhood's proximity to major institutions and restaurant clusters (e.g., the hospital district and restaurant clusters that are located on nearby corridors like Camp Bowie Boulevard and West Seventh Street) make its location a good candidate for a supply chain small business venture.

Fort Worth's healthcare industry is thriving and is one of the primary economic drivers in Fort Worth. The procurement needs (e.g., medical billing, laundry services, etc.) of the major hospitals may present an opportunity for a supply chain business in the Como neighborhood. A healthcare supply chain business in the Como neighborhood would offer a location that is in close proximity to the hospital cluster in the Near Southside and a surplus of eligible workers that reside in the Como neighborhood.

Fort Worth's hospitality sector (restaurant, conventions, and major community events like the annual Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo) may offer an opportunity for the Como neighborhood's community garden to partner with the hospitality sector by selling its surplus produce to nearby restaurants. The current Como community garden is small but could be expanded in order to produce surplus produce that could be sold to the hospitality sector and even to large institutions (e.g., hospitals, school district, universities). Additionally, a well developed Como community garden program could be a partner in a neighborhood culinary job training program. Formal training in community gardening is recommended.

10. "Revitalizing Commercial Corridors: Lessons from LISC MetroEdge", Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Summer 2015.

PRECEDENT: Supply Chain Business

The **Evergreen Cooperatives** is simultaneously helping marginalized communities in Cleveland create wealth and local jobs while providing sustainable products and services to meet the needs of local institutions (identified as anchor institutions). Evergreen Cooperatives follow the three strategies below:

1. Leverage the purchasing needs of anchor institutions (hospitals, universities, etc.).
2. Develop a network of community-based cooperatives owned and run by Cleveland residents located in target low-income neighborhoods geared towards meeting the procurement needs of anchor institutions.
3. Take advantage of the strategic opportunities emerging in the green economy space, given the sustainability commitments of the anchor institutions.



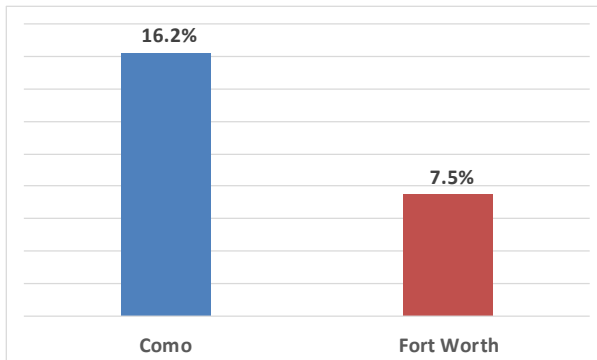
Photo: Evergreen Green City Growers. Internet, public domain.

Evergreen currently supports three worker-owned cooperatives:

- **Evergreen Cooperative Laundry** is a mid-sized commercial laundry serving primarily health-care institutions,
- **Evergreen Energy Solutions** installs solar panels and provides LED retrofitting and other construction services, and
- **Green City Growers** is a hydroponic greenhouse producing lettuce, herbs, and microgreens that are sold to area restaurants, etc.

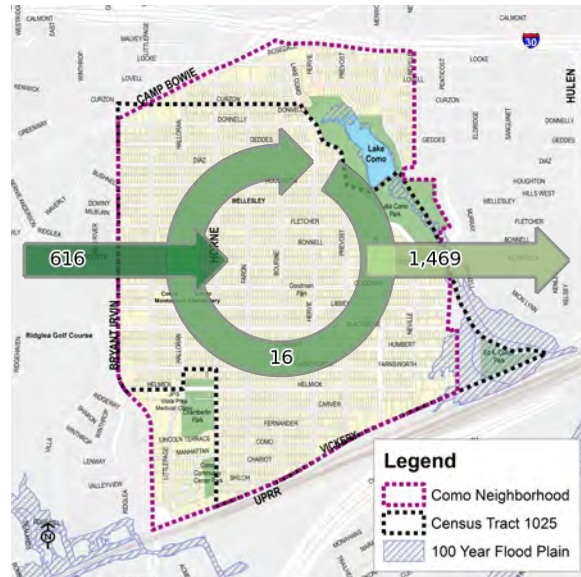
Source: <http://www.evgo.com/>

Figure 15: Unemployment Rates, 2015.



Source: Census Bureau, 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimate.

Map 22: Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2014.



Source: Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, OnTheMap, *Census Tract 1025, 2014.

616

Employed in the Como neighborhood* but resides outside.

16

Resides and employed in the Como neighborhood.*

1,469

Resides in the Como neighborhood* but employed outside.

Heritage/Cultural Focus

Horne Street's attraction level for new traditional retail businesses is challenged by several factors, including a surplus of quality retail establishments (including the nearby discount retailer Walmart) located within a 1-2 mile radius of the Como neighborhood, and numerous small parcels within Como that are scattered, not contiguous, and therefore difficult to assemble to create a viable development site.

A viable alternative for Horne Street is to seek and establish heritage and cultural venues to create a niche shopping and entertainment environment. Como's rich past provides an opportunity to showcase its heritage and culture to create a mini heritage and cultural tourism district along a segment of Horne Street. The segment of Horne Street between Curzon and Goodman holds the most promise for a heritage and cultural focus. Within this segment some of the old buildings could be renovated to support unique heritage and cultural shops and venues. An example is the former Blue Bird Nite Club, which could be renovated or rebuilt as a cultural venue that showcases the many jazz and blues celebrity artists that performed at the club. Many of the old buildings located in this segment of Horne Street are sited close to the street, which contributes to a pedestrian-friendly environment, an essential element of a vibrant corridor cultural tourism district.

PRECEDENT: Heritage/Cultural Commercial District

Many minority neighborhoods across the nation are transforming their older commercial corridors into cultural/heritage venues that serve neighborhood residents and attract visitors. The **Bronzeville neighborhood in Chicago** is one example. Bronzeville, once the center of Chicago's African American population, declined in part due to an outmigration of its population after the removal of housing segregation laws. Bronzeville stakeholders mobilized and began to showcase its history as part of its revitalization initiative. Today, Bronzeville is full of sculptures and markers celebrating famous jazz and other performers that lived or performed there. A community partnership called the Bronzeville Initiative works to expand retail offerings along its corridor. The opening of the Bronzeville Coffee and Tea shop is cited as the turning point in the district's revitalization by creating a node and gathering place which spawned other new retail businesses.

Other example cultural/heritage commercial districts include:

- **Leimert Park Village, Los Angeles, CA**, <http://www.leimertparkvillage.org/>
- **Anacostia, Washington D.C.**, <https://washington.org/dc-neighborhoods/anacostia>
- **18th & Vine Jazz District, Kansas City, Kansas**, <http://www.kcjazzdistrict.org/about/history/>

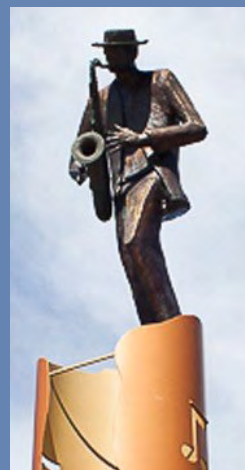


Photo: Bronzeville public art jazz statue. Internet, public domain.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council Report, *Developing Vibrant Retail in Bronzeville*, 2012.

Entrepreneurial Development

The Como neighborhood is a good candidate for entrepreneurial development to help foster small business creation by the residents of Como. The benefits of entrepreneurial development include:

- Businesses that fill retail and service gaps that exist in the neighborhood.
- Contributes to building a business network that can help keep scarce dollars within the neighborhood, which in turn contributes to job creation.
- Business income contributes to wealth creation that can help increase family income levels.
- Business ownership within the Como neighborhood would serve as role models for other neighborhood residents (including young adults) that have entrepreneurial aspirations.

An entrepreneurial development program in a low-income neighborhood requires resources directed toward entrepreneurial training and access to capital. In order to be successful, prospective entrepreneurs will need to acquire business knowledge on how to run a business and necessary capital to sustain the business. Traditional capital resources (i.e., a loan from a bank or Small Business Administration) for prospective entrepreneurs that have the requisite credentials should be promoted. However, many residents of low-income neighborhoods have few assets, little positive credit history, limited employment history, and limited to no entrepreneurial exposure will lack the required credentials for a traditional loan. Alternative capital and training resources (micro-loans and micro-enterprise programs) should be explored.

Micro-enterprise Programs

A micro-enterprise or business is a very small business, generally with fewer than five employees. Often the proprietor is the sole employee. Unlike a small business development program, a micro-enterprise program targets prospective entrepreneurs that have minimal to no assets with which to start a small business venture. Micro-enterprise programs generally offer small loans (e.g., \$500 to a few thousand dollars) and can include peer lending and support for its participants. Micro-enterprises can potentially provide neighborhood revitalization benefits while building resident skill sets and pride in the community.



Drew's Place Café, located on the north end of Horne Street, is a successful small business in the Como neighborhood.

Youth Entrepreneurship

In addition to entrepreneurship programs for adults, engaging youth in entrepreneurship opportunities and programs is beneficial not only for the youth participants but it also can contribute to neighborhood revitalization. Benefits of a youth entrepreneurship program include but are not limited to:

- Impart entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to youth that can be used in other areas of their life.
- Helps build confidence in youth.
- Helps build neighborhood pride.
- Provides youth with legal income.
- Reduces juvenile crime and indiscretions.
- Creates role models for younger children and pre-teen youth in the neighborhood.

PRECEDENT: Youth Entrepreneurial Program

The **Sweet Potato Project** began as a pilot project in Saint Louis, Missouri to serve as an alternative to the easily accessible but deadly world of illegal drugs and other criminal activities. The program was developed to provide at-risk youth with self-sustaining, entrepreneurial, small business, sales and marketing skills that can be applied in their own inner-city neighborhoods and throughout their lives. Additionally, with training, discipline, dedication and hard work they realize that they too can become active and productive members of society. The **Sweet Potato Project** was modeled in part from the Girl Scout Cookie campaign where purchases of products support worthy causes. **Sweet Potato Project** participants market their products to area churches, small businesses and through door-to-door sales in their neighborhoods. The Sweet Potato Project partners with the Saint Louis University's (SLU) Department of Nutrition and Dietetics in the packaging of their products. SLU also trains the students in the art of culinary entrepreneurship.



Source: <https://nacda.wordpress.com>. North Area Community Development Corporation, St. Louis, 2016 and St. Louis American, 2013.

Business District Organization

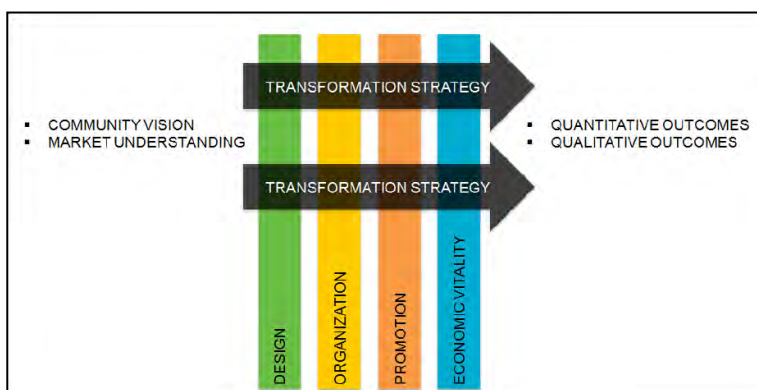
Business and property owners collectively organizing around key issues, programs, projects, and events can produce long-term benefits to the commercial district and the surrounding neighborhood. Horne Street can benefit from property owners and businesses establishing a merchants or business association. The following two strategies should be investigated further and potentially considered for Horne Street.

- Main Street Approach
- Public Improvement District

Main Street Approach

The Main Street Approach is most effective in places where business, property owners, and community residents have a strong emotional, social, and civic connection and are motivated to get involved and make a difference. It encourages communities to take steps to enact long-term change, while also implementing short-term, inexpensive and place-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm and momentum about their community. Main Street-style transformation is a combination of art and science: communities first need to learn about the local economy, its primary drivers, and its regional context (the science), but they also need to convey that special sense of place through storytelling, preserving the older and historic structures that set it apart, broad and inclusive civic engagement, and marketing (the art). A Main Street Approach includes the following four key areas:

- **Economic Vitality** — revitalizing a neighborhood commercial district requires focusing on the underlying economic vitality of the district by making the most of a community’s unique sense of place and existing historic assets, harnessing local economic opportunity and creating a supportive business environment for small business owners, growing scores of entrepreneurs, and innovators alike.
- **Design** — Enhancement of the physical elements of the corridor while capitalizing on the corridor’s unique assets. Attention to public space through the creation of pedestrian-friendly streets, inclusion of public art, visual merchandising, adaptive reuse of older and historic buildings, etc. appeal to residents and visitors alike.
- **Promotion** — Many forms can be used to promote a commercial corridor but the ultimate goal is to position the district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics.
- **Organization** — A strong organizational foundation is key for a sustainable Main Street revitalization effort.



Source: www.preservationnation.org/main-street/

The diagram to the left illustrates Main Street’s three integrated components:

1. Community vision and market understanding (the inputs)
2. Transformation strategy (implemented using the four points)
3. Impact and measurement (the outcomes)

Public Improvement District

A public improvement district (PID) should be investigated and potentially considered for Horne Street in order to provide a dedicated funding source to support supplemental services targeted to Horne Street. The type of eligible activities for PID funds includes: clean-up and maintenance (e.g., maintaining a litter free environment), marketing and promotion activities (e.g., light pole banners, partnership on events, etc.), enhanced safety (e.g., security patrols in addition to regular police presence), and administrative/oversight staff expenses.

A PID is created by a petition from property owners to impose a fee (or special assessment) on the assessed value of their property. The special assessment is in addition to property taxes and would pay for services and improvements that are agreed to by the property owners. The special assessment amount is generally around \$0.10 cents per \$100 in assessed value and would apply to each property's assessed valuation. The assessment is paid at the time the property taxes are paid. Unlike paid property taxes that are distributed to the various taxing entities, the PID special assessment is placed in a special account for use in the PID target area. A feasibility study is recommended prior to the petition work. The petition is submitted to the City and the creation of a PID requires City Council approval.

If established, a PID could focus on commercial properties that front Horne Street between Lovell Street and Vickery Boulevard. The commercial properties—and not residential properties—would likely pay the special assessment. The special assessment amount should be based on a feasibility study to determine potential funding amounts that could be generated from the commercial properties. It is recommended that a minimal assessment amount be employed in order to undertake key basic supplemental services (e.g., clean-up and marketing) along Horne Street and to minimize the financial impact on the small businesses. As more businesses arrive on Horne Street, the special assessment amount could be adjusted to generate more funds that could expand existing services and start new ones.

For more information on public improvement districts, contact the City's Economic Development Department, or visit www.fortworthtexas.gov/PID/.

Small Business Recruitment

3.2. Develop a Small Business Recruitment and Support Program

- Survey business and commercial property owners to determine business support needs, etc. and seek resources to support them, such as the City of Fort Worth Business Assistance Center small business programs, etc.
- Seek pro bono assistance from a local college or university to conduct a market analysis of the Como neighborhood with a focus on Horne Street to determine market demand and market gaps for neighborhood serving retail goods and services, tenant mix, and cultural/heritage niche businesses and venues, etc.
- Based on the results of the market analysis, determine if existing businesses could optimize their product offerings or expand to meet market gaps.
- Pursue a Healthy Corner Store Program in partnership with existing neighborhood convenience stores, Tarrant County Health (Healthy Tarrant County Collaboration program), and the Fort Worth Blue Zones Project.
- Build relationships with owners of Horne Street vacant and underutilized sites (i.e., former Edmondson’s Fast Food site, former Blue Bird Nite club site, motel site, etc.) and present the Horne Street revitalization vision to them.
- Convene focus group meetings with major local institutions to discuss their procurement needs and potential opportunities to outsource one or more procurement services to a supply chain business in the Como neighborhood. Follow-up focus group meetings with a report on this topic that covers feasibility, capital funding, launch and sustain plans, best practice models, etc.
- Develop a marketing and recruitment plan to attract reputable small businesses to Horne Street.

Entrepreneurial Development

3.3. Develop a Micro-Enterprise Program

- Survey Como residents and stakeholders to determine level of interest in participating in a micro-enterprise program.
- Seek assistance from local organizations (City of Fort Worth, local colleges and universities, financial institutions, foundations, etc.) to develop a neighborhood based micro-enterprise program.

Business District Organization

3.4. Establish a business or merchant association.

- Engage Horne Street business owners in the development of a neighborhood business/merchant association.
- Petition the City to expand its Façade Improvement Program to include CDBG eligible areas outside an urban village that have a corridor revitalization strategy adopted by the City Council.
- Enliven Horne Street with increased family-oriented events, e.g., annual Fourth of July parade, weekend farmers market, live music/poetry events, open street events, Horne Street projects, temporary improvements (i.e., Better Blocks).

4. LIVABILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Livability Enhancements Goal

Enhance livability in the Como neighborhood.

Livability Enhancements Strategies

Improvements and advancement on the following issues would improve the quality of life in the Como neighborhood. Program and project initiatives in these areas should be undertaken in conjunction with other revitalization strategies in the Como neighborhood.

- Adult Job Training
- Poverty Reduction
- Heritage and Culture
- Enhance Public Parkland
- Transportation Connectivity and Safety, and Mobility Choice
- Infrastructure Investments
- Public Safety (crime and illegal dumping)

How Would This Benefit Como?

During the planning phase, Como residents identified the above issues as important areas needing improvement. Improvements to these areas would contribute to sustaining the recommended housing and economic development initiatives as well as improve the overall quality of life of residents of the Como neighborhood.

Job Training/ Workforce Development Initiatives

Due to the existing high unemployment and poverty levels in the Como neighborhood, job training and workforce development programs are essential to a comprehensive revitalization program for the Como neighborhood. Providing job training and workforce development services can help residents improve job skill levels, which can translate to higher paying employment opportunities resulting in increased household income. Example workforce development programs could focus on building trades, manufacturing, green construction, culinary arts, and health care, while offering participants skills and tools to cultivate their careers. The job training and workforce development program would be open to all residents, but a concerted outreach should be made to working age adults that are unemployed or underemployed in the Como neighborhood.



Photo: Internet, public domain.

Key Actions

4.1. Establish a job training/workforce development program in the Como neighborhood.

- Establish a partnership with the local workforce development board, Tarrant County College (TCC), etc. to create a job training and workforce development program for the Como neighborhood.
 - * Base program design on effective neighborhood-level job training/workforce development program best practices.
 - * Provide a transportation program for Como residents to the Tarrant County Opportunity Center (TCOC) in southeast Fort Worth. TCOC offers a variety of community and industry education classes designed to improve job skills and employment opportunities.
 - * Work with TCC to establish an adult job training and learning center in the Como neighborhood.
- Partner with appropriate agencies to hold periodic expunction events for persons seeking to clear their record of crimes that qualify for expunction under Texas law in order to improve employment prospects.

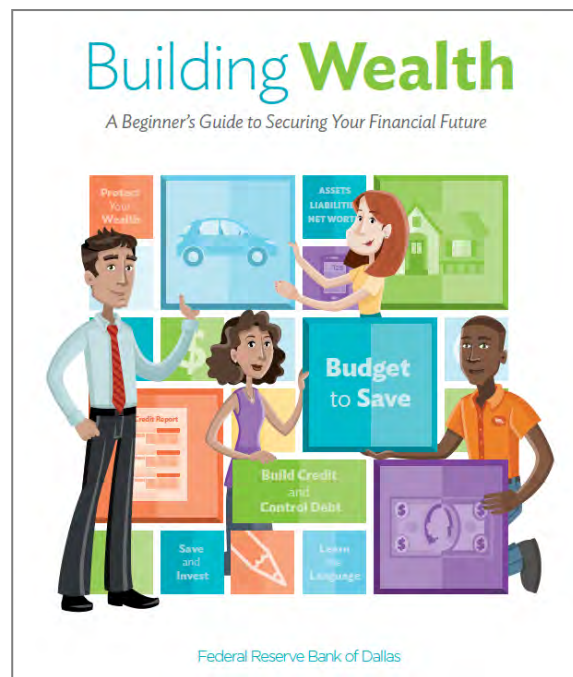
Poverty Reduction

Based on the latest U.S. Census estimate, the poverty level in the Como neighborhood is at 53 percent, a level that is characterized as concentrated poverty. Minimal job skills and education are factors that contribute to poverty levels. In addition to offering public assistance to meet the immediate needs of impoverished households, working age adults of those households should engage in job skills training programs to acquire job skills needed for a living wage job.

Key Actions

4.2. Establish a coalition to focus on poverty reduction in the Como neighborhood.

- Create a coalition of service providers, neighborhood nonprofits, and stakeholders to comprehensively address poverty in the Como neighborhood. Example initiatives include:
 - * Promote the Earned Income Tax Credit program to families with school-age children.
 - * Establish an Individual Development Account (IDA) program to help families save for education expenses.
 - * Utilize the supportive service programs offered by the City of Fort Worth Neighborhood Services Department (particularly the Community Action Partners, <http://fortworthtexas.gov/cap/>).
- Establish and support wealth-building programs that include financial literacy for all age levels.
 - * Utilize the *Building Wealth* resources (publications, online courses, etc.) from the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas to teach financial literacy.



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas,
www.dallasfed.org.

4.3. Establish life-long learning initiatives for all age groups in order to break the cycle of family poverty.

- Review strategies from best practice models, e.g., the Purpose Built Community holistic program (<http://purposebuiltcommunities.org>), the Harlem Children’s Zone (www.hcz.org), etc.
- Partner with the Fort Worth Literacy Partnership (www.readfortworth.org).
- Continue the Como Reading Night program during the summer months and recruit additional volunteers.

Other life-long learning youth initiatives include:

- Youth math and chess clubs (e.g., www.besomeone.org)
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education programs
- Youth summer college tours (in lieu of in person tours, virtual tours in partnership with local and out of state colleges would be cost effective and potentially result in more youth participation)
- College, vocational training, and military service preparatory programs
- Grassroots Literacy Projects (Barbershop Books Initiatives)
- Grassroots Bike Repair Programs (see examples below)

PRECEDENT: Youth Bike Programs

The Oasis Bike Shop Earn-a-Bike Program, Memphis TN
<http://www.oasis-of-hope.com/oasis-bike-shop.htm>

Express Bike Shop & Youth Express, Saint Paul, MN
<http://www.keystoneservices.org/our-services/youth-express>

Back Alley Bikes, Youth Programs, Detroit, MI
<http://thehubofdetroit.org/youth-earn-a-bike/>

Phoenix Bikes, Phoenix, AZ
<http://www.phoenixbikes.org/>



Photo: Washington Post, “At Phoenix, building bikes, confidence and tech skills”, April 23, 2014.

Heritage and Culture

Como residents and stakeholders value their heritage, culture, and history. The Como neighborhood's existence spans approximately 110 years and includes a rich history that can be captured and displayed in various forms and utilized in appropriate locations and projects as part of the neighborhood revitalization initiative.

Objectives of a heritage and cultural focus:

- Preserve and restore historic structures and places.
- Memorialize and educate the public about places, events, and people.
- Explore creating a heritage destination along a segment of Horne Street.

Incorporating heritage and culture in projects can create value and competitive advantage, while educating residents and visitors about key past events and people from the Como neighborhood. An example is the Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan that recommends incorporating history and cultural elements in selected public improvements in Lake Como Park. The following are example ideas that the Como neighborhood could pursue to celebrate its heritage and culture and protect heritage assets.

Key Actions

4.4. Undertake programs and initiatives to protect, capture, and showcase the heritage of the Como neighborhood.

- Identify historic and culturally significant structures and places for potential local historic designation.
- Renovate and adaptively reuse structures where appropriate.
- Raise funds to improve the historic Como cemetery. Potential funding sources include contributions, grants, and foundations.
- Seek a Texas Historical Commission Historic Texas Cemetery designation for the Como cemetery.
- Explore creating a heritage destination on a segment of Horne Street between Geddes and Fletcher as part of the Horne Street revitalization.
- Create an oral history project that documents the stories of Como by interviewing neighborhood elders, etc.



This church, located at 5537 Houghton Street, was built in 1940 and is distinctive in character as a structure associated with Como's ethnic, religious, social, and cultural history and development as well as representing a resource, which contributes to the character of the Como neighborhood.

Enhance Public Parkland

The following four public parks are located in the Como neighborhood. The four public parks and nearby E. Collet Park provide basic recreation for the Como neighborhood. However, park amenities are desired to enhance the public parks.

- Lake Como Park
- Chamberlin Ball field
- Goodman Park
- Como Neighborhood Center Park

Lake Como Park

Sidewalk and Lighting Project

The planned Lake Como Park Sidewalk and Lighting Project will improve access to Lake Como park for users; create a safe pedestrian mode of travel around the park (Map 23); and increase recreational opportunities. Increased park usage, especially active recreation (walking, jogging, bicycling, etc.), can improve public health by providing opportunities for physical activity and contact with nature, which can enhance well-being and increase social interaction to foster a greater sense of community. The public health and wellness benefits of the Lake Como Park Sidewalk and Lighting project also support the City's efforts to improve livability through participation in the Fort Worth Blue Zones Project and AARP Age-Friendly Communities Project.



Lake Como Park Sidewalk and Lighting project, light fixture.



Map 23: Lake Como Park Sidewalk Conceptual Alignment

Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan

The intent of the Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan is to provide artists with unique opportunities to work within the Como historical neighborhood over an extended period of 20 to 30 years. The Como community and artists will partner to revitalize Lake Como Park as a high functioning commemorative Cultural Park and Urban Wetlands that will provide cultural and educational enrichment.

Below are the recommendations from the Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan:

- Provide full access around and through the entire park perimeter; design a generous, circular trail and several feeder trails (to include one land bridge and one boardwalk).
- Identify various opportunities for commemoration.
- Improve environmental quality that includes removing trash and sediment and introducing aquatic plants.
- Establish a forum with business owners in the commercial district of the north quadrant on initiatives and mitigation.
- Establish standards and protocol for ecological management.
- Restore confidence in safety of the park.
- Build a new amphitheater and plaza.
- Establish an educational component.
- Restore the existing pavilion.
- Design a pedestrian bridge.

Implementation of the Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan will occur when public improvement projects are approved for the park. At that time, a determination will be made on whether a public art component is feasible for the project. The first public art component is planned to occur in conjunction with the Lake Como Park Sidewalk and Lighting Project.

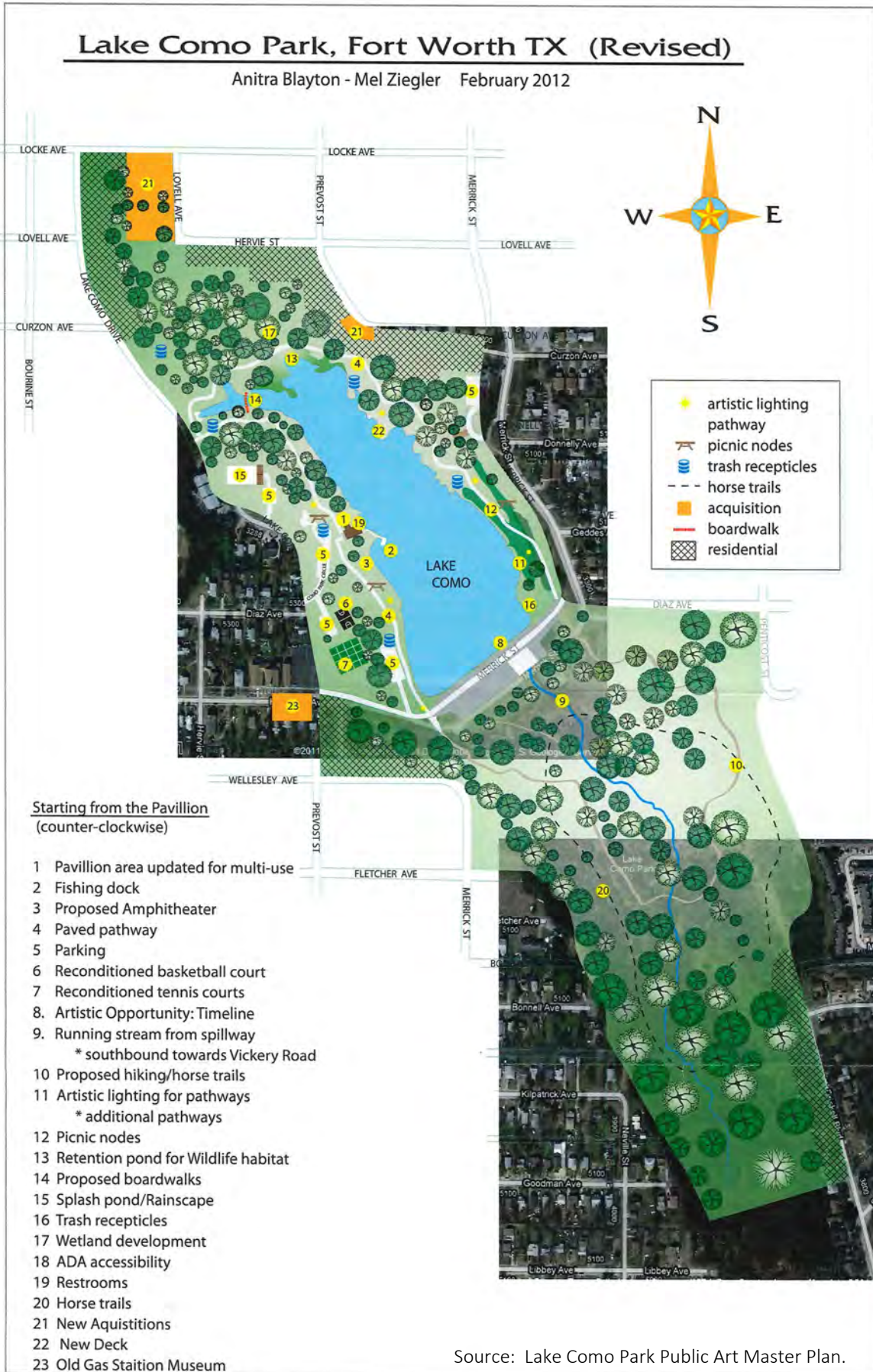
To view the entire Lake Como Public Art Master Plan, visit the Fort Worth Public Art program website at: http://www.fwpublicart.org/nu_site/page.php/id/comomasterplan.

Source: Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan.



Photo: Courtesy of Healthways (Fort Worth Office), Blue Zones Project.

Map 24: Lake Como Park Public Art Master Plan Conceptual Improvements



Chamberlin Park Improvements

The planned new Como Neighborhood Center will transform Chamberlin Park into a public multipurpose recreation complex. The complex is proposed for construction in the three phases listed below.

Note: The potential full project scope is contingent upon significant fundraising.

Phase I

- Community Center facility (23,500 square feet)
- Parking
- Earthwork
- Flatwork
- Pad site for gymnasium with temporary outdoor double basketball court

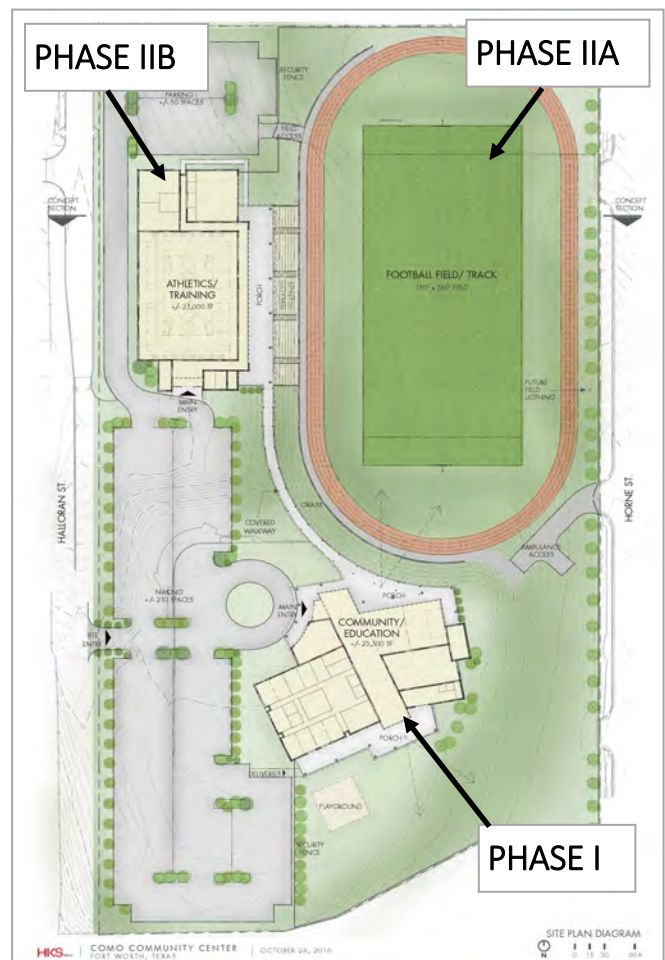
Phase IIA

- Football field and track
- Seating and lighting

Phase IIB

Gymnasium (25,000 square feet) for athletics training

Figure: 16: Conceptual Site Plan
(Planned Como Neighborhood Center)



Source: HKS Consultants, 2016.

Enhance Public Parkland in the Como neighborhood.

Key Actions

- 4.5. Complete Lake Como Park sidewalk construction.
- 4.6. Complete Lake Como Park lighting installation.
- 4.7. Complete Lake Como Park artwork installation.
- 4.8. Complete new Chamberlin Park Neighborhood Center project (Phase 1)
- 4.9. Complete new Chamberlin Park Neighborhood Center project (Phase 2)
- 4.10. Maintain partnerships with City of Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department and Fort Worth Public Arts Council to enhance public parkland.
- 4.11. In partnership with the City's Park and Recreation Department, identify appropriate park amenities for Goodman Park; the feasibility of retaining the parkland adjacent to the Como Neighborhood Center once it is closed; and the feasibility of reopening and maintaining the parkland located south of the dam at Lake Como Park.



Lake Como Park, west view.

Transportation Connectivity and Mobility Choice

Transportation Connectivity

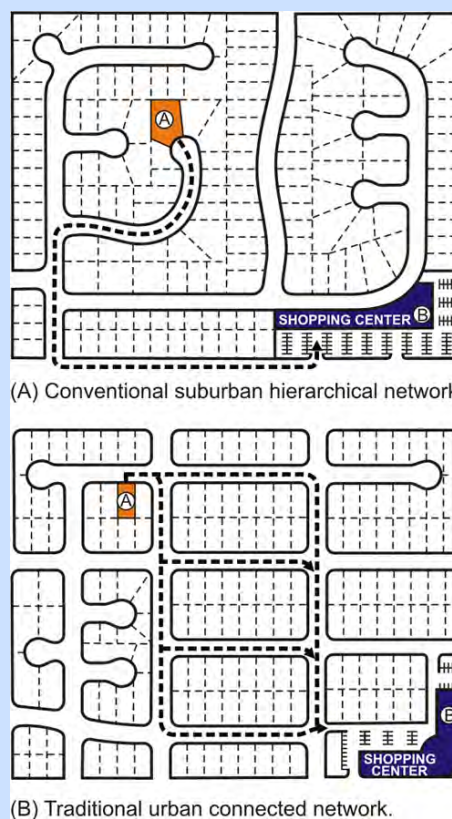
A transportation network helps define the character of a neighborhood. The street grid pattern in the Como neighborhood provides good connectivity within the neighborhood by offering travelers flexibility in route choices. However, due to the age of the streets and other infrastructure issues, some streets in the Como neighborhood are listed in poor condition and a few streets are closed due to structural issues, thereby impeding street connectivity in those areas. Additionally, some platted streets adjacent to Lake Como Park on the northwest and the open space area south of the park were never built, likely due to the significant undeveloped vacant land and topographical /floodplain constraints in those areas.

The Como neighborhood's street connectivity to areas outside the neighborhood is relatively good on the north with several streets connecting to Camp Bowie Boulevard or West Rosedale Street, to Vickery Boulevard on the south, and to Bryant Irvin on the west. Street connectivity on the east is limited due to Lake Como Park and the lake, and the open space area south of the park.

Benefits of Street Connectivity

- Disperses traffic
- Reduces impacts on collector streets
- Provides multiple direct routes, which benefits emergency responders
- Lowers vehicle miles of travel
- Encourages walking and biking
- Transit-friendly
- Block structure provides development flexibility
- Minimizes channeling traffic to a limited number of collector or arterial streets, which can cause traffic congestion

The illustration to the right displays the difference in street connectivity between conventional suburban and urban street networks. The urban connected network provides multiple route options (via vehicle, bike, or walking) to the shopping center.



Source: *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach*, Institute of Transportation Engineers and The Congress for the New Urbanism, 2010.

Mobility Choice—Bicycle Lanes

Bike lanes with bold striping and markings remind motorists that bicyclists are likely to be on the street, and that space is specifically provided for bike lanes to be there. Bike lanes bring many benefits to a neighborhood and offer mobility choice to its residents.

The benefits of bike lanes include the following:

- Provides a safer place for cyclists of all ages.
- Separates cyclists from moving vehicles by giving each their own lane.
- Encourages people to ride bikes, which improves health and reduces traffic.
- Provides a fun way to get around.
- Contributes to safer streets by slowing vehicle speeds and calming traffic.
- Reduces width of the road, which signals to motorists to drive more slowly and carefully.
- Reduces distance pedestrians must travel to cross a street.
- Creates a safer sidewalk experience for pedestrians by moving bicyclists to the street.
- Contributes to neighborhood social interaction.

Bike lanes on selected streets would offer more mobility choices in the Como neighborhood, along with the benefits noted above. Within the Como neighborhood, the streets most appropriate for bike lanes are streets that are adjacent to or connect to the public parks, schools, and the existing off-street bike trails.

Bike lanes in the Como neighborhood would contribute to youth and adults spending more time outdoors, engaged in physical activity and enjoying its consequent health benefits. Additionally, increased biking in the Como neighborhood could facilitate the creation of a neighborhood bike repair/ bike education program that could employ Como youth and/or provide them with bike repair and maintenance skills, proper bicycling and safety skills, responsibility and experience working in a team environment, etc.

Bike lanes contribute to creating a complete street. For more information on complete streets including the City policy, see page 91 or visit <http://fortworthtexas.gov/complete-streets/>.



Above: Bike lane striping on a residential street. Photo Internet, public domain.

Mobility Choice – Walkability

A walkable neighborhood facilitates other attributes that contribute to an improved neighborhood quality of life.

Walkability describes how comfortable an area is for walking, based on the following four criteria:

1. *How Accessible* – Accessibility is the degree to which the built environment allows and encourages all users.
2. *How Welcoming* – The built environment can be placed on a continuum of whether it is supportive of walkability or hostile to pedestrians.
3. *How Convenient* – evaluates the built environment by assessing land use, connectivity, and transit.
4. *How Safe* – evaluates how a community feels by addressing those elements that increase safety: activity, visibility, investment, etc.

The Como neighborhood is known as a place where residents walk for transportation, exercise, and leisure to nearby retail stores, the neighborhood recreation center, churches, parks, etc. Overall, the excellent street connectivity within the Como neighborhood offers pedestrians multiple routes to any destination. However, due to the lack of sidewalks on most residential streets, residents including school-age children and wheelchair users are forced to use the street along with motorists. New sidewalks would remove pedestrians and wheelchair users from the street and offer several benefits including:

- Connect neighborhood destinations, i.e., parks, neighborhood recreation center, retail areas, etc.
- Provide safe routes for children to walk to and from school.
- Encourage more foot traffic along the Horne Street business district.
- Promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging recreational walking and jogging.
- Foster a sense of connection and community among residents.
- Provide an overall sense of place and belonging that helps make a neighborhood livable for all ages and life stages.
- Decrease motor vehicle traffic, especially for short trips.
- Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to a decrease in motor vehicle usage.



Source: Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, www.walklive.org.

Creating an environment where there is a balance between all modes of travel (automobile, public transportation, bicyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users) can offer solutions to undesired transportation issues in the Como neighborhood.

Key Actions

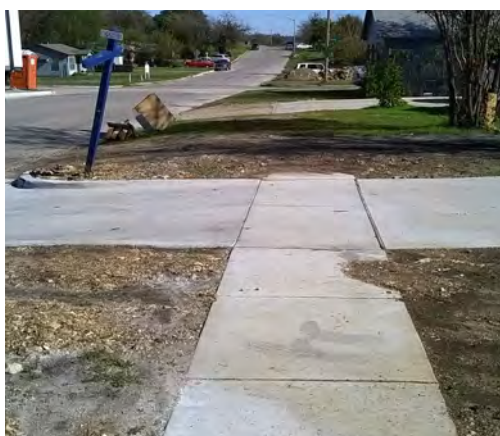
4.12. Promote projects and initiatives that enhance connectivity, safety, and mobility choice in the Como neighborhood.

Connectivity

- Undertake a transportation study of the Como neighborhood that includes:
 - * Feasibility of connecting the east and west segments of Bonnell street (across the open space area) to improve connectivity to the east.
 - * Assess traffic flow and management along the northern section of Horne Street, including the Lovell Street intersection.
 - * Determine appropriate traffic calming measures along streets adjacent to Lake Como Park (Houghton at Lake Como Drive and Prevost, Merrick along the dam, and Merrick on the east side of Lake Como Park).
- Assess proposed new projects for their impact on street connectivity. Proposed projects that improve street connectivity should be encouraged and conversely those that limit street connectivity with little to no benefits should be avoided.
- Create connectivity (from a functional and aesthetic standpoint) between the new planned Como neighborhood center, the JPS Viola Pitts Clinic, and the Como cemetery.

Mobility Choice

- Determine appropriate locations for bike lanes, including an assessment of the recommended bike lanes in the Fort Worth Bike Plan.
- Undertake a Walking Audit to help improve neighborhood walkability.
- Develop a phased sidewalk installation plan including the following priority locations:
 - * Horne Street
 - * Streets that have a Fort Worth Transportation Authority bus stop
 - * Streets used to access public parkland destinations
 - * Safe Routes to Como Elementary and Como Montessori schools
 - * Streets with sidewalk gaps, especially streets with new infill housing.



Above: One of several sidewalk gaps in the Como neighborhood.

Infrastructure Investments

Public infrastructure investments are necessary to improve and maintain public streets, water and sewer lines, stormwater drainage, and public facilities. Infrastructure investments can attract private investment, support new development, and improve a neighborhood's quality.

As the Como neighborhood begins to revitalize, it is important that the City address major infrastructure needs in a timely manner. Given the competing demands for infrastructure investments in the city, Como leaders and stakeholders should work closely with their Council District representative and the City's Transportation and Public Works Department to identify major infrastructure needs, including actively participating in City bond programs.

Lists of major capital projects that are recently completed (Table 15), programmed or under construction (Table 16), and recommended through this plan (Table 17) are provided below.

Table 15: Recently Completed Major Capital Projects (2011-2016)

	Project	Type	Approx. Costs	Year	Funding Source (s)
1	Donnelly Avenue from Faron Street to Horne Street	Street Rehab	\$127,000	2015	2014 Bond Program
2	Goodman Avenue from Faron Street to Horne Street	Street Rehab	\$95,000	2015	2014 Bond Program
3	Kilpatrick Avenue from Halloran Street to Bryant Irvin Road (north)	Street Rehab	\$270,000	2015	2014 Bond Program
4	Donnelly Avenue from Sanguinet Street to Eldridge Street	Street Rehab	\$170,000	2016	2014 Bond Program
5	Wellesley 2008 CIP Contract 7B (Stormwater inlets and storm drain line)	Stormwater	\$13,540	2012	Stormwater Utility Funds

Total Investments: \$675,540

Table 16: Programmed or Under Construction Major Capital Projects

	Project	Type	Approx. Costs	Est. Year	Funding Source (s)
1	Farnsworth Avenue from Faron Street to Horne Street	Street Rehab	\$170,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
2	Fletcher Avenue from Hervie Street to Faron Street	Street Rehab	\$330,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
3	Geddes Avenue from Bourine Street to Horne Street	Street Rehab	\$290,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
4	Goodman Avenue from east dead end to Prevost Street	Street Rehab	\$375,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
5	Houghton Avenue from Bourine Street to Horne Street	Street Rehab	\$320,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
6	Houghton Avenue from Como Park Drive to Hervie Street	Street Rehab	\$240,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
7	Lower Como Creek Erosion Control Improvements	Storm-water	\$1,500,000	Summer 2017 (estimate)	Stormwater Utility Funds
8	Como Roadway Lights (Horne Street from Camp Bowie Boulevard to Vickery Boulevard)	Lights	\$450,000	2017	2014 Bond Program
9	Lake Como Park Sidewalk and Lighting Project	Sidewalk and Lights	\$231,000	Fall 2017 (estimate)	Specially Funded Projects Fund (CDBG)
10	Wellesley Avenue from Merrick to Prevost	Street Rehab	\$110,800	2017	2014 Bond Program

Total Investments: \$4,016,800

Table 17: Recommended New Infrastructure Investments

Project	Type	Approx. Costs	Est. Year	Funding Source (s)
1 Neighborhood Gateway Features (North and South Horne Street)	Gateways	TBD	TBD	TBD
2 Wayfinding Signage for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Como Park • Planned Como Neighborhood Center • JPS V. Pitts Clinic 	Traffic Signs	TBD	TBD	TBD
3 Lake Como Park Public Art Elements (as part of selected CIP projects)	Public Art	TBD	TBD	Public Art Funds City CIP Funds TBD
4 Street Lights Throughout Como Neighborhood	Street Lights	TBD	TBD	City Funds TBD
5 Mini-Roundabouts at Horne Street School Zone	Traffic	TBD	TBD	City Funds TBD

Total Investments (estimate): \$TBD

Neighborhood gateways are recommended on the north and south end of Horne Street. Gateways that include signage, landscaping, public art elements, and other improvements would serve to signal entrance into the Como neighborhood and add aesthetic features to reinforce neighborhood identity.

Wayfinding signage is recommended at key locations to direct visitors to major facilities that include: Lake Como Park, the planned new Como Neighborhood Center, and the JPS Viola Pitts clinic.

Infrastructure Investments

Key Actions

4.13. Complete Horne Street’s street light replacement project.

4.14. Continue to work with the City of Fort Worth on infrastructure needs in the Como neighborhood.

- Report infrastructure needs to the City in a timely manner.
- Increase neighborhood leadership and citizen participation in local government bond programs.



Map 25: Infrastructure Investments

Stormwater

There is a history and risk of flooding in the Como area as discussed in Section 2. While stormwater improvements would need planning and evaluation, there are several concepts that could be considered to provide the area with a higher level of flood protection.

The current storm drain pipe system could potentially be removed to “daylight” storm water runoff conveyance to “natural” stream conditions that were historically in the area. In conjunction with the daylighting, the existing East Como Creek could also be modified to hold and convey more stormwater. In addition to flood mitigation, the restoration to an open channel creates opportunities for multi-use functions of Stormwater facilities such as linear greenspace and trail systems, storm water quality treatment, and enhancing the aesthetics and recreational opportunities in the community.

Stream restoration in conjunction with a mitigation credit system can be used to mitigate environmental impacts of other city projects. This could in turn bring about a unique type of employment opportunity for the Como community whereby training and jobs for construction and maintenance could be tied to the local labor force. Mitigation areas could also be used as a form of environmental education for the community.

Another measure that could potentially reduce flooding would be to relocate and enlarge the existing storm drain system that sometimes runs under private property so that it runs under the public streets instead. This would need to be done in conjunction with street improvements and would need to include stormwater detention to minimize downstream flooding impacts and provide improved conveyance to an adequate outfall creating no adverse impacts to ensure flood risk is not transferred downstream to other residents. If future street improvements are considered, the Street and Stormwater Programs should coordinate early on to evaluate these opportunities in more detail.



Above: Natural stream restoration, Bluestem Park, Fort Worth.

Lastly, the creation of public linear greenspaces, public open spaces, and parks could be considered in areas that are more prone to flooding. Leaving these areas open could provide the community with more greenspace amenities and recreational opportunities without the cost of a large scale, stormwater infrastructure project.

Depending on the availability of funding, and considering other citywide stormwater priorities, the Stormwater Division could work with the Como community to consider implementing the above measures as opportunities arise.



Above photos: Natural stream restoration, Bluestem Park, Fort Worth.

Public Safety

Public safety is an essential component to the revitalization of the Como neighborhood. Crime (real and perceived), illegal dumping and litter are recurring and seemingly intransigent safety issues in the Como neighborhood. These safety issues are impediments to creating a quality livable Como neighborhood.

Crime occurs in practically all neighborhoods at varying levels and degrees. However, when crime activity increases (both recurrence and severity) its impact is widespread and detrimental to a neighborhood's quality of life. Recurring crime negatively impacts a neighborhood's reputation, which influences relocation choices and investment decisions. Additionally, recurrent crime activity can reduce property values in a neighborhood and result in higher homeowner insurance rates.

Illegal dumping and widespread litter is unsightly, unsafe, and a blighting influence on a neighborhood. As with crime, illegal dumping and recurring litter negatively impact a neighborhood's reputation and results in many of the undesired consequences above.

For the Como neighborhood, a comprehensive strategy to address crime, illegal dumping, and litter is recommended. The following best practice information is intended to facilitate a future discussion and development of a comprehensive public safety strategy for the Como neighborhood.

Crime

Comprehensive crime prevention strategies generally focus on Place and People.

Place-focused crime prevention strategies include the following:

- Control physical deterioration and disorder. Controlling the physical deterioration in a neighborhood by limiting graffiti, trash accumulation and other signs of distress in public areas and on private property can influence a potential offender's perception of an area's vulnerability to crime and its residents' fear of crime.
- Target "Hot Spots" by focusing on locations that have higher levels of criminal or nuisance-related behavior.
- Proper design of buildings and the landscape can deter offenders from committing crime. This strategy is known as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

People-focused crime prevention strategies focus on strengthening neighborhoods and the residents that live there. Residents that work effectively together can help deter criminal activity.

People-focused crime prevention strategies include:

- Development of social capital within the neighborhood. Social capital is the glue that holds neighborhoods together. Strengthening social capital includes developing positive relationships that build mutual trust that enables residents to work together for the betterment of the community. An example crime prevention initiative is a neighborhood crime watch program to facilitate social cohesion, help residents learn how to identify and resist crime, and maintain the neighborhood's physical environment.

- Strengthen the families and individuals that reside in neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are as strong as the residents who live in them. Assisting families with child care, constructive family dispute resolution, employment, mental health, and substance abuse services builds human infrastructure and is essential to maintaining a strong neighborhood.

The SafeGrowth model is a comprehensive crime prevention approach that could potentially yield positive results in reducing the frequency and degree of crime in the Como neighborhood.

SafeGrowth is an integrated and holistic community planning and capacity building model for administering public safety initiatives in neighborhoods and cities. The SafeGrowth philosophy is based on the premise that crime is best tackled within neighborhoods by harnessing the creative energy of functioning neighborhood groups, by employing the latest crime prevention methods, and by adopting an annual SafeGrowth Plan to control and mitigate crime.

Unlike programs like CPTED, which are typically run by crime prevention practitioners or the police *for* a community, the SafeGrowth method seeks to embed the skills and tactics of CPTED, among others, within the community by working directly with neighborhood associations and civic groups. In many cases the community implements the SafeGrowth initiatives. This approach ensures higher levels of neighborhood social cohesion which in turn helps sustain community-building and crime prevention strategies in the long term. The methods of SafeGrowth include training programs, establishing local non-profits, and enhancements to existing networks between city services like police and neighborhood groups using various social and electronic networking tools.

Neighborhood crime prevention strategies that have proven effective incorporate the best research-based crime prevention strategies coupled with a strong partnership with a community-based organization committed to improving residents' quality of life.

Source: Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, *Preventing Neighborhood Crime: Geography Matters*, by Ronald E. Wilson, Timothy H. Brown, and Beth Schuster, Issue No. 263.

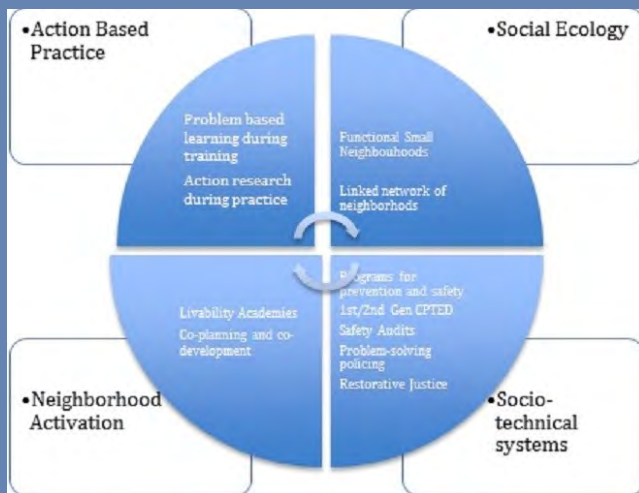
PRECEDENT: SafeGrowth Initiative

The Hollygrove neighborhood in New Orleans had a poor neighborhood image and high homicide rates (15-24 annually) during the 2000s pre- and post-hurricane Katrina (2005).

In 2009, **SafeGrowth** training was provided to the residents of the Hollygrove neighborhood to empower them to rebuild their neighborhood. Situational and social approaches were implemented including street clean-up, Night Out Against Crime Program, walking groups, community events, creating a community garden, etc. Residents repaired homes, rebuilt a bus shelter out of recycled material, and helped improve a children's play area, while increasing their overall social contact with each other. Over time, crime declined by 78%, including a reduction in the number of homicides (4 in 2013).



Photo: Hollygrove neighborhood. Internet, public domain.



Four tenets of SafeGrowth

1. Action Based Practice
2. Social Ecology
3. Neighborhood Activation
4. Socio-technical Systems

Source: <http://www.safegrowth.org/>



Como neighborhood National Night Out event. Photo: Courtesy of Lake Como Connect Facebook.

Illegal Dumping and Bulk Waste Piles

Illegal dumping is disposal of waste in an unauthorized area. It is also referred to as “open dumping,” “fly dumping,” and “midnight dumping” because materials are often dumped in open areas, from vehicles along roadsides, and late at night. Material is primarily dumped to avoid either disposal fees or the time and effort required for proper disposal. Illegally dumped material typically includes:

- Construction and demolition waste such as drywall, roofing shingles, lumber, bricks, concrete, and siding
- Abandoned auto parts, scrap tires and even automobiles
- Appliances and furniture
- Yard waste, household trash, medical waste

The health risks associated with illegal dumping are significant. Areas used for illegal dumping may be easily accessible to people, especially children, who are vulnerable to the physical (protruding nails or sharp edges) and chemical (harmful fluids or dust) hazards posed by wastes. Rodents, insects, and other vermin attracted to dump sites pose health risks. Dump sites with scrap tires provide an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes, which can multiply 100 times faster than normal in warm, stagnant water standing in scrap tire casings. Runoff from dump sites containing chemicals have a negative impact on plants and wildlife. If not addressed, illegal dump sites serve as magnets for additional dumping and other criminal activity, and often lower a neighborhood’s property values.

Litter

Like illegal dumping, litter is a blight to a neighborhood and costly to clean up, impacting a neighborhood’s quality of life and economic development potential. Often, litter ends up in stormwater drainage systems and pollutes nearby waterways.

According to national studies, one of the strongest contributors to littering is the prevalence of existing litter. Studies have consistently shown that litter begets litter. These findings strongly support the need for ongoing clean-up and beautification efforts to keep areas free of litter, which can potentially reduce subsequent littering.

National studies also indicate the primary source of litter is people who make the decision to litter. Additionally, younger individuals are more likely to litter than older individuals. Focused messaging to younger persons is a proven strategy along with active involvement of youth in clean-up and beautification activities to reduce litter. Littering behavior can also be reduced through education, enforcement of ordinances, and social or “peer” pressure.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Illegal Dumping Prevention Guidebook*, EPA 905-B-97-01, 1998.

As presented in the background section, crime, illegal dumping and litter are long-term issues in the Como neighborhood. City resources employed over the years have impacted these issues to some degree. The Como neighborhood, in partnership with the Police and Code Compliance Departments, should continue to implement best practice strategies with proven results to achieve greater gains in combatting crime, illegal dumping, bulk waste piles, and litter.

Key Actions

4.15. Continue to implement best practices strategies to achieve greater gains toward combatting crime, illegal dumping, bulk waste piles, and litter in the Como neighborhood. Undertake appropriate strategies based on potential effectiveness and available resources.

4.16. Develop metrics to track progress in public safety initiatives.

Crime

- Research and employ one or more best practice strategies, e.g., SafeGrowth model, safety audits, CPTED training, etc.
- Recruit more neighborhood volunteers to participate in the existing Como Code Blue and National Night Out crime prevention initiatives.
- Seek grants (federal, state, local, etc.) to undertake crime prevention activities.

Illegal Dumping, Bulk Waste Piles, and Litter

- Develop an illegal dumping/litter prevention plan for the Como neighborhood. Incorporate the plan into school and neighborhood activities and events where students could have a role in supporting the event through recycling and proper waste management.
- Implement a neighborhood education campaign to increase awareness of Solid Waste Services that focus on appropriate bulk waste collections, residential solid waste service guidelines, set-out week and top five rules, benefits of using a Drop Off Station, cost of improper waste disposal (i.e., cost of clean-up from tax dollars, impact on environment, public health impact, lower property values, etc.).
- Promote the “Reverse Litter, Ten on Tuesday” campaign, www.reverselitter.com.
- Implement Neighborhood Safety Teams to watch and report illegal dumping activities to report to the Police.
- Install cameras at sites with high incidence of illegal dumping.
- Use social media for creative strategies, e.g., “flash mob” cleanup for recent small illegal dumps on neighborhood streets and vacant lots.
- Institute an “Adopt-A-Lot” program by the Como neighborhood. Consult with the City to determine legal issues associated with vacant properties in private ownership.
- Develop an inventory of vacant parcels and work with property owners to maintain the properties.
- Convert empty large barrels into trash receptacles for Horne Street. Seek a grant from area businesses (e.g., Lowes, Home Depot, etc.) to acquire paint and other materials to paint the barrels. Utilize youth and neighborhood civic organizations to participate in the event. Additionally, seek partnership/ agreement with the City to pick-up trash from trash bins.
- Publicize and celebrate positive results and success stories related to litter clean-up and eradication of illegal dump sites.

A City Stormwater “no dumping” inlet marker that is located on Horne Street serves as a reminder to not place litter in the storm drain system.



5. CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building Goal

The Como community will have sufficient capacity to be an engaged and effective partner in the revitalization of Como.

Capacity Building Strategies

- Build Como’s capacity by undertaking the following:
 - * Establish committees under the Como Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) that align with the revitalization strategies.
 - * Develop partnerships with public and private organizations to assist with selected revitalization strategies.
 - * Establish a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Community-Based Organization (CBO) to increase the capacity of the Como community to seek funding, etc.

How Will This Benefit Como?

Active engagement of the Como community in its revitalization will bring skills and resources—from within the Como community—to advance Como’s revitalization. Capacity building will equip the Como NAC and the community to lead its revitalization programs and initiatives effectively by increasing knowledge and skills, building partnerships that potentially connect Como to resources to achieve its revitalization.

Capacity Building: Como Neighborhood Advisory Council

The primary advocacy organization in Como is the Como Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), which was established several decades ago. According to its bylaws, the purpose of the Como NAC is:

- Promote better communication between [Como] citizens and City officials.
- Encourage neighborhood unity.
- Promote civic spirit.
- Establish good will among [Como] residents.
- Promote the improvement of public facilities and services.
- Cooperate with the City of Fort Worth, other governmental agencies, and civic or public organizations for the general welfare of the [Como] residents.
- Work with and solicit cooperation with governmental agencies in dealing with problems in the neighborhood that may be alleviated through the use of public and private funds.

The current structure of the Como NAC is limited to an Executive Committee comprised of seven officers. Establishing additional committees that align with the revitalization strategies will advance the Como community’s revitalization goals and objectives and create opportunities for new leadership to emerge. The new committees will serve as go-to bodies for specific focus areas, building local knowledge and capacity in those areas and developing relationships with pertinent City departments and other organizations to advance Como’s revitalization goals and objectives. The Executive Committee will oversee the more complex revitalization strategies that include: real estate development, housing, economic development, workforce development, and infrastructure improvements. Each committee will provide updates, etc. to the broader Como community at Como NAC meetings.

Below is the recommended Como NAC committee structure (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Recommended Como NAC Committee Structure



Capacity Building: Partnerships

Due to limited resources within the Como community, partnerships with local public and private organizations are essential to advance Como's goals and objectives. The partnerships should focus on selected revitalization strategies that are complex and influenced by multiple factors (e.g., real estate development, housing, economic development, workforce development, etc.). Additionally, these partnerships would offer benefits to Como that include:

- Focusing limited public and private resources strategically on selected revitalization strategies.
- Building relationships with local public and private organizations that can be leveraged to secure resources for Como's revitalization.
- Improving relationships between the Como community and public agencies to help solve persistent problems.
- Securing resources to disseminate accurate information to Como residents and stakeholders.
- Facilitating capacity-building of the Como NAC in advance of establishing a nonprofit CBO.

The recommended partnerships are not intended to replace existing Como organizations that are involved in community building, but to bring subject area expertise from public and private organizations to assist the Como NAC in advancing the community's revitalization goals and objectives. Existing Como organizations (e.g., Como Planning Committee, Como Alumni, Como Lions Club, neighborhood churches, etc.) should be included in these new partnerships that pertain to their respective mission and outreach.



Como Citizens on Patrol, 2017. Photo: Courtesy of Como NAC.

Capacity Building: 501 (c)(3) Nonprofit Community-Based Organization

General Information

A 501 (c)(3) nonprofit community-based organization (CBO) is widely used in many community revitalization programs across the nation. A nonprofit CBO can facilitate a variety of neighborhood revitalization programs that include housing, economic development, job training, etc. Additionally, a nonprofit CBO—based on its tax-exempt status—is useful for fundraising to support community revitalization programs.

Neighborhood nonprofit CBOs with positive revitalization outcomes have achieved a level of knowledge and skills in several areas that include:

- Knowledge and understanding of the myriad issues and factors that influence neighborhood revitalization that lead to creating strategies and programs that are comprehensive and data-driven.
- Ability to work constructively and effectively with public and private organizations to produce long-term partnerships that secure resources (expertise and funding) to advance revitalization goals and objectives.
- Ongoing training and a commitment to proper management and oversight of a nonprofit organization.

Nonprofit CBO Proposal for Como

A nonprofit CBO is recommended to be an extension of the Como NAC to help increase the capacity of the Como NAC to stimulate and direct Como’s revitalization. The Como NAC’s long advocacy role in Como, knowledge of Como, and ties to Como’s residents, stakeholders, institutions (churches, schools, etc.), and businesses place it in a unique position to be an effective lead organization in Como’s revitalization. Upon gaining sufficient capacity, the Como NAC should consider establishing a nonprofit CBO to help advance its revitalization goals and objectives.

Once established, the nonprofit CBO would focus on areas that are more complex in nature or that benefit from partnerships with public and private organizations to assist in Como’s revitalization. The priority or focus areas are listed below:

Real Estate Development

Acquisition and control of key vacant parcels in Como would allow more efficient planning and development in the future. Priority would be placed on acquiring parcels that have the greatest redevelopment potential (e.g., vacant Horne Street parcels next to community assets). Income generated by the sale or lease of these parcels would be placed in a fund to support future land acquisitions and for required grant match funds in combination with other funding sources.

Housing

Since it is more efficient and effective for reputable private and nonprofit housing developers to undertake infill housing construction, it is not recommended that the CBO undertake infill housing development. Instead the CBO would work with prospective for-profit and nonprofit developers in constructing new infill housing in Como, and partner with public and private agencies to provide educational workshops and materials on home mortgage products, home repair and maintenance, household budgeting, foreclosure intervention, etc. to support new

and existing homeowners. Additionally, the CBO would oversee the proposed housing coalition.

Economic Development

Economic development activities include overseeing the proposed Horne Street Main Street program, the proposed public improvement district (PID) for Horne Street, and business recruitment and development activities.

Workforce Development and Training

Oversee the proposed workforce development coalition.

The above programs should be launched when sufficient resources are secured to manage the programs. Potential funding for the above programs include: government programs and grants, private sector resources, philanthropic organizations, and nonprofit agencies.

Figure 18: Proposed Como NAC Community-Based Organization



PRECEDENT: Neighborhood Nonprofit Community-Based Organization

The **Belair-Edison Neighborhoods, Inc. (BENI)** is a nonprofit community-based organization located in northeast Baltimore. BENI works to foster an environment in which residents, business owners, and stakeholders feel confident to invest their time, energy, and money in Belair-Edison neighborhoods. BENI offers a variety of neighborhood services including:

- Community organizing and outreach
- Pre-purchase education and homeownership counseling to potential homeowners
- Foreclosure intervention services through default resolution counseling
- Connects residents to resources to build stronger neighborhood blocks
- Supports businesses and property owners in the Belair-Edison commercial corridor
- Promotes Belair-Edison as a community of choice



A quality website and Facebook Page facilitate communication with residents of Belair-Edison neighborhoods and the broader Baltimore community.

- <http://www.belair-edison.org/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/BelairEdison>

Capacity Building

Key Actions

Increase the capacity of the Como NAC

- 5.1. Establish additional Como NAC committees
- 5.2. Build partnerships between the Como NAC and public and private agencies
- 5.3. Establish a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Community Based Organization

Utilize Benchmarks and Measures to track revitalization outcomes

- 5.4. Select baseline benchmarks to measure

Establish and update a Revitalization Implementation Schedule

- 5.5. Utilize the adopted implementation schedule and update on an annual basis, if needed.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Goals

- The Como community will actively support, advocate for, and work toward the successful implementation of each recommendation described in this plan.
- The revitalization of Como will be supported and guided by benchmarks, measures, and an implementation schedule.

Implementation Strategies

- Utilize benchmarks and measures to track the outcomes of the revitalization strategies.
- Establish and update an implementation schedule to guide the revitalization strategies.

How Will This Benefit Como?

Measures and benchmarks provide quantitative data to track the outcomes of strategies. Strategies that produce positive outcomes should be maintained and funded. Strategies that are not producing positive outcomes should be reviewed and adjusted to be more effective in generating positive outcomes.

An implementation schedule will serve as a guide to the revitalization strategies. The schedule will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect current partners, funding sources, and adjustments to strategy statements, if needed.

Implementation

Actions Completed

6.1. NEZ Boundary Adjustment

6.2. Como Community Workshop

6.3. Chamberlin Park Expansion

COMPLETED PROJECTS

The following projects and activities were completed during the planning phase.

NEZ Boundary Adjustment

The City presented to the Como community a proposed boundary adjustment to the Ridglea/Como NEZ. The boundary adjustment would remove the Ridglea Urban Village from the NEZ due to its robust economic growth, an indication that public incentives intended to spur economic activity are no longer warranted in that specific location. The Como community endorsed the boundary adjustment. Also, community leaders requested that the NEZ name be changed to list Como's name first, which some indicated was presented to them when the NEZ was established in 2002. The new NEZ boundary and name (see map below) was approved by the City Council on April 11, 2017.

Como Community Workshop

The Como community worked with the City's Neighborhood Services Department, Community Engagement Office, and Planning & Development Department on a community workshop that covered the following topics: property information (foreclosure prevention, understanding property taxes, acquiring City surplus properties), financial wellness (effective ways to improve credit and financial health), and the proposed NEZ Strategic Plan. The workshop, held on Saturday, February 11, 2017, was attended by over 70 Como residents and stakeholders. Based on comments received, many attendees indicated a desire for future workshops on additional topics.

Chamberlin Park Expansion Project

At the request of Como stakeholders, Chamberlin Park was selected as the site of the new Como Neighborhood Center. To accommodate the size of the proposed new center, Chamberlin Park was expanded northward in order to accommodate the new planned center.



Como/Sunset Heights NEZ



BENCHMARKS AND MEASURES

The following benchmarks and measures are intended to evaluate outcomes and the effectiveness of each recommendation in achieving Como’s revitalization goals and objectives. A baseline assessment of the benchmarks listed below will be prepared. A complete assessment of the measures should be updated every three to five years.

Table 18: Benchmarks and Measures

RECOMMENDATION CATEGORY	BENCHMARK	MEASURES
<p>Development</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved land utilization • Increase tax base • Increase property values • Private sector investments • Central City comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Vacant land • Tax revenue generated • Total appraised value • # Building permits by type • Total value of permits
<p>Housing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase quality infill housing • Increase market attractiveness • Develop new higher density housing in target locations • Increase housing rehabilitations • Decrease tax and mortgage foreclosures • Reduce number of vacant and abandoned houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and value of residential building permits • # New residential projects that adhere to the adopted design guidelines • # Real estate sales and days on the market • % MLS owner-occupied sales • # Mortgage lending closures • % Reduction in housing code violations • # Foreclosure prevention workshops held annually and attendance • % Reduction of tax and mortgage foreclosures • # Demolition permits issued for unsalvageable vacant and abandoned houses • % Owner-occupied units
<p>Neighborhood-Focused Economic Development</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase new business start-ups on Horne Street • Restore vacant commercial buildings with active uses • Increase storefront façade improvements • Increase micro-enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Certificate of occupancies • Retail sales volume and sales tax generated • Business merchants collaboration and organization • # Participants enrolled in entrepreneurial training programs

Table 18: Benchmarks and Measures, continued

RECOMMENDATION CATEGORY	BENCHMARK	MEASURES
<p>Livability Enhancements</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employment • Decrease underemployment • Reduce poverty • Increase life long learning opportunities • Increase household wealth • Document and celebrate heritage and culture • Reduce deficiencies in public infrastructure and facilities • Increase transportation mobility choices • Improve public safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Unemployment • # Participants enrolled in workforce/ job training programs • % Increase in education attainment (college degrees and apprenticeships) • % In Poverty • % School subsidized meals • Literacy and school test scores • % Increase in household income • % Increase in historic designations • # Heritage and culture events • % Reduction in substandard roads • % Decrease flood-prone properties • % Increase of installed linear feet of sidewalks and bike lanes • % Reduction in criminal activity • % Reduction in juvenile arrests • % Decrease in code violations
<p>Capacity Building</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Como NAC's capacity • Establish a 501 (c)(3) non-profit Community Based Organization • Increase partnerships between the Como community and public and private organizations • Increase voter participation in local elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Neighborhood revitalization and nonprofit management training sessions • Quantity and variety of neighborhood communication methods • # Partnerships with public and private organizations • % Voter turnout in precinct • Funding secured for revitalization projects

Neighborhood revitalization outcomes are improved by data driven solutions and constructive community feedback.

Implementation Matrix and Schedule

DEVELOPMENT GOAL: Amend the City’s Future Land Use map to apply the recommended designations in order to guide future development in accordance with the community’s stated goals. Adopt and apply NEZ Design Guidelines to ensure that NEZ benefits support projects that improve the community

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
<p>Adopt Como/Sunset Heights amendments to the City’s Future Land Use Map</p> <p>1.1. Incorporate the proposed Future Land Use map recommendations into the Comprehensive Plan As part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan update, update the City’s Future Land Use Map to reflect the proposed future land use changes in the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ plan.</p> <p>1.2. Review the future land use map annually to determine if updates are required to reflect approved zoning changes, current market trends and/or community values. Annually, City staff will review zoning changes in the Como neighborhood and consult with Como leaders to determine future land use map changes for the Como neighborhood.</p> <p>1.3. Adopt and apply NEZ Design Guidelines (contained in Appendix A) to ensure that development improves the community. City staff will apply the adopted NEZ design guidelines for new projects and significant redevelopment projects that seek NEZ incentives.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) Executive Committee * Planning & Development Department 	●		
			●		
			●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

HOUSING GOAL: Improve the housing stock in the Como neighborhood by developing new quality affordable single-family infill housing, and limited higher density mixed-income housing in targeted locations and stabilize and rehabilitate the existing housing stock.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
<p>Affordable and Market Rate Single-Family Infill Housing</p> <p>2.1. Apply adopted design guidelines</p> <p>2.2. Target new infill adjacent to neighborhood assets</p> <p>2.3. Partnerships with housing developers</p> <p>2.4. Establish a housing coalition</p> <p>2.5. Market Como neighborhood</p> <p>2.6. Land assembly</p>		<p><i>Housing Coalition</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Banks/Mortgage lenders * Real Estate Professionals * Fort Worth Housing Solutions <p>City of Fort Worth Departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Neighborhood Services * Planning & Development * Property Management 	●		
<p>Housing Choice Opportunities</p> <p>2.7. Housing market and feasibility analysis</p> <p>2.8. Use Urban Residential (UR) development standards in target locations</p> <p>2.9. Permanent affordable multifamily units</p> <p>2.10. Land assembly</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Housing Coalition above * Local university (2.7) 		●	
<p>Housing Support</p> <p>2.11. Rehabilitation referral network</p> <p>2.12. Green construction workforce</p> <p>2.13. Assess existing multifamily/ duplex properties</p> <p>2.14. Foreclosure prevention</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Housing Coalition above * Local workforce board (2.12) * Tarrant County College (2.12) * Local Banks Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) division (2.14) 		●	
<p>Housing Production and Intervention</p> <p>2.15. Public/Private Partnerships</p>		Housing Coalition above	●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUSED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL: Develop Horne Street into a vibrant business district with new neighborhood-serving retail and commercial businesses, and strengthen existing businesses.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
Horne Street Commercial Revitalization 3.1. Redevelop and revitalize Horne Street (public right-of-way improvements and land use and building redevelopment)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * City of Fort Worth Departments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Neighborhood Services • Planning & Development • Transportation & Public Works 	●		
Small Business Recruitment and Development 3.2. Develop a Small Business Recruitment and Support Program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Economic Development Department * Local university * Local business loan programs * Chambers of Commerce 		●	
Entrepreneurial Development and Support 3.3. Develop a Micro-Enterprise Program		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Como business owners * Economic Development Department * Local university * Local business loan programs * Chambers of Commerce 		●	
Horne Street Business District 3.4. Establish a business/merchant association		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Como business owners * Economic Development Department * Local business programs * Chambers of Commerce 		●	

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

LIVABILITY ENHANCEMENTS GOAL: Establish comprehensive programs and initiatives for livability enhancements in the Como neighborhood.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
<p>Adult Job Training 4.1. Establish a job training and workforce development coalition.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Economic Development Department * Neighborhood Services Department * Local Workforce Development Board * Tarrant County College 		●	
<p>Poverty Reduction 4.2. Create a coalition of service providers to address immediate household needs and steps to achieve self-sufficiency. 4.3. Life-long learning to break the cycle of family poverty</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC and nonprofits * Neighborhood Services Department * Community Action Partners * United Way of Tarrant County * Tarrant County Public Health 	●		
<p>Heritage and Culture 4.4. Protect, capture, and showcase the heritage of the Como neighborhood.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC and Como civic organizations * Library History Division * Planning & Development Department * Local historic and heritage societies, e.g., Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society, etc. 	●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

LIVABILITY ENHANCEMENTS GOAL: Establish comprehensive programs and initiatives for livability enhancements in the Como neighborhood.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2020–2022	2023–2031
<p>Enhance Public Parkland</p> <p>4.5. Complete Lake Como Park sidewalk construction.</p> <p>4.6. Complete Lake Como Park lighting installation.</p> <p>4.7. Complete Lake Como Park artwork installation.</p> <p>4.8. Complete new Chamberlin Park Neighborhood Center project (Phase 1)</p> <p>4.9. Complete new Chamberlin Park Neighborhood Center project (Phase 2)</p> <p>4.10. Maintain partnerships with City of Fort Worth Park and Recreation Department and Fort Worth Public Arts Council to enhance public parkland.</p> <p>4.11. In partnership with the City’s Park and Recreation Department, identify appropriate park amenities for Goodman Park; the feasibility of retaining the parkland adjacent to the Como Neighborhood Center once it is closed; and the feasibility of reopening and maintaining the parkland located south of the dam at Lake Como Park.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC * Parks and Recreation Department * Fort Worth Public Art * Local foundations 	●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

LIVABILITY ENHANCEMENTS GOAL: Establish comprehensive programs and initiatives for livability enhancements in the Como neighborhood.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
<p>Transportation Connectivity and Safety, and Mobility Choice</p> <p>4.12. Promote projects and initiatives that enhance connectivity, safety, and mobility choice in the Como neighborhood.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC City of Fort Worth Departments: * Planning & Development * Transportation & Public Works 	●		
<p>Infrastructure Investments</p> <p>4.13. Complete Horne Street’s street light replacement project.</p> <p>4.14. Undertake other needed infrastructure projects in a timely manner.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC * Transportation & Public Works Department 	●		
<p>Public Safety</p> <p>4.15. Research and utilize best practice strategies to achieve greater gains toward combating crime, illegal dumping, etc.</p> <p>4.16. Develop metrics to track progress in public safety.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC * Como business owners * Code Compliance Department * Police Department 	●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

CAPACITY BUILDING GOAL: The Como community will have the capacity to be an engaged and effective partner in its revitalization which shall be supported and guided by benchmarks, measures, and an implementation schedule.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
<p>Increase the capacity of the Como NAC</p> <p>5.1. Establish additional Como NAC committees</p> <p>5.2. Build partnerships between the Como NAC and public and private agencies</p> <p>5.3. Establish a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Community Based Organization</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Como nonprofits * Community Engagement Office * Economic Development Department * Neighborhood Services Department * Planning & Development Department * United Way of Tarrant County 	●		
<p>Utilize Benchmarks and Measures to track revitalization outcomes</p> <p>5.4. Select baseline benchmarks to measure</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Economic Development Department * Neighborhood Services Department * Planning & Development Department 	●		
<p>Establish and update a Revitalization Implementation Schedule</p> <p>5.5. Utilize the adopted implementation schedule and update on an annual basis, if needed.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Planning & Development Department 	●		

Implementation Matrix and Schedule, continued

IMPLEMENTATION GOAL: The Como community will actively support, advocate for, and work toward the successful implementation of each recommendation described in this plan.

RECOMMENDED REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND KEY ACTIONS	Completed	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME		
			Near-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
			2017 – 2019	2019–2022	2023–2031
6.1. NEZ Boundary Adjustment	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Neighborhood Services Department * Planning & Development Department 	●		
6.2. Como Community Workshop	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como NAC Executive Committee * Neighborhood Services Department * Planning & Development Department * Community Engagement Office 	●		
6.3. Chamberlin Park Expansion	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Como community * City Manager’s Office * Park & Recreation Department * Property Management 	●		

Appendix A: Design Guidelines

The Como/Sunset Heights Design Guidelines were adopted by the City Council on January 14, 2020 to support the implementation of the Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Strategic Plan. The design guidelines reflect the community's desire for new development that supports revitalization of the neighborhood, while retaining the best design features of the neighborhood in new development projects.

The Como/Sunset Heights NEZ Design Guidelines document can be downloaded here: [Design Guidelines](#). For ease of use, the document contains an introductory section followed by separate design guidelines sections and checklists for each of the following:

- New single-family homes
- Multifamily projects
- Commercial, institutional, and mixed-use projects
- Industrial buildings

Appendix B: Funding Sources and Programs

Appendix B: Funding Sources and Programs

Business Loans and Programs

The following programs are directed to small business development and can be useful for small businesses interested in locating to Horne Street and other locations in the Como neighborhood. Additional program information including eligibility criteria can be found on the links below.

Alliance Lending Corporation is a non-profit, Certified Development Company authorized by the U.S. Small Business Administration to partner with private lenders in a co-lending product. Loan proceeds are used to purchase long term, fixed assets; such as real estate and equipment.

For additional information, visit: <http://alliancecdc.com/>

Façade Improvement Program helps local businesses in eligible areas improve their curb appeal with the storefront/façade improvement program. Private investment is required to access the public funds. Currently the Façade Improvement Program is offered in the City's designated urban village locations that are within a CDBG location.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/facadeimprovement/>

Fort Worth Business Assistance Center (BAC) is a one-stop shop for small businesses. The BAC is dedicated to providing small business owners with the tools they need to be successful and offer assistance on a range of topics including free one-on-one business counseling, how to start a business, writing a business plan to becoming minority certified.

For additional information, visit: <http://fwbac.com/>

PeopleFund creates economic opportunity and financial stability for underserved people by providing access to capital, education and resources to build healthy small businesses.

For additional information, visit: <https://peoplefund.org/>

Texas Mezzanine Fund, Inc. (TMF) is a for-profit community development corporation certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a Community Development Entity. TMF was capitalized by a consortium of financial institutions. TMF targets its financing assistance to distressed and underserved communities throughout the State of Texas.

For additional information about the TMF Program, visit: <http://www.tmfund.com>.

William Mann Jr. Community Development Corporation (CDC) provides economic development financing to growth-oriented, small businesses, including minority-owned and women-owned businesses (MWBE) that may not entirely qualify for loans through traditional lending institutions. Eligible businesses must contribute to economic development by creating or retaining jobs.

For additional information, visit: <http://wmcdc.com/>

Financial Incentives

The following financial incentive programs can be useful for new and existing commercial and residential development in the Como neighborhood. Except for the Chapter 380 Economic Development Program Grants, the programs below offer the following: forego development fees and ad valorem taxes, or offer federal tax credits. Additional program information including eligibility criteria can be found on the links below.

Chapter 380 Economic Development Program

Grants are made in accordance with Texas Local Government Code 380. The purpose of these local grants is to reimburse private developers for the range of expenses that may contribute to a financing gap that yields a project to be financially infeasible. To this end, the city will also be sensitive to the taxable implications these grants may have for the developer and where possible, use transfer mechanisms (i.e., soft loans, accrual notes, etc.) which result in a favorable financial impact. This incentive may only be used as a gap financing tool of last resort.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/EcoDev/chapter-380/>

Historic Site Tax Exemption (HSTE) is a ten year freeze on the taxable values for the City portion of a property owners taxes. A property owner must spend an amount equal to or greater than 30 percent of the improvements/building (not land) value of the property. HSTE requires approval by the Landmarks Commission and the City Council before the project is started, and final verification by the Landmarks Commission and the City Council upon completion of the project. The tax exemption will go into effect Jan. 1 of the year following City Council verification.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/planninganddevelopment/historic-preservation/tax-exemption/>

Neighborhood Empowerment Zones (NEZs) are intended to promote housing, economic development and quality services in Fort

Worth's Central City. Municipal property tax abatements, fee waivers and release of city liens are available to property owners who build or rehabilitate property within a NEZ. NEZ incentives are designed to promote affordable housing, economic development and expanded services.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/neighborhoods/NEZ/>

New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program

aims to break the cycle of disinvestment in low-income communities by attracting the private investment necessary to reinvigorate struggling local economies. The NMTC Program attracts private capital to low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their federal income tax in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial intermediaries called Community Development Entities (CDEs). The NMTC Program has supported a wide range of businesses including manufacturing, food, retail, housing, etc. Communities benefit from the jobs associated with these investments, as well as greater access to community facilities and commercial goods and services.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.cdfifund.gov>.

Revitalization Programs

The programs below have the potential for broad neighborhood improvements when used in conjunction with other neighborhood revitalization strategies. Additional program information including criteria can be found on the links below.

Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Program encourages the redevelopment of economically distressed areas in Fort Worth through the integration of environmental assessment, remediation and education. Brownfield sites are properties where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by potential or known hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/env/brownfields/>

EPA's Urban Water Program funds projects that address urban runoff pollution through diverse partnerships that produce multiple community benefits, with emphasis on underserved communities. This funding could support a green infrastructure workforce training program.

For additional information, visit: www.epa.gov/urbanwaters

HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program provides grants to every state, certain communities, and other organizations to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes.

For additional information, visit: www.hudexchange.info/programs/nsp

HUD's Community Development Block Grant Program provides funds to municipalities and other units of government to develop viable urban communities by providing affordable, decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportu-

nities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. Although local units of government develop their own programs and funding priorities, all activities must be consistent with one or more of the HUD national objectives.

For additional information, visit: portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

North Central Texas Council of Governments Sustainable Development Program encourages public/private partnerships that positively enhance existing transportation system capacity, provide increased rail access, address air quality concerns, and result in mixed-use developments. NCTCOG Sustainable Development Program is designed to encourage planning and implementation and fosters growth and development in and around historic downtowns and Main Streets, infill areas, and along passenger rail lines and at stations.

For additional information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/fundingprogram.asp>

Public Improvement Districts (PID) is a defined geographical area established to provide specific types of improvements or maintenance which are financed by assessments against the property owners within the area. PIDs provide a development tool that allocates costs according to the benefits received. A PID can provide a means to fund supplemental services (marketing, clean-up/maintenance of public right-of-way, enhanced security, and administration) and improvements to meet community needs which could not otherwise be constructed or

provided. PIDs are created by petition of property owners within a geographical area proposed for the PID boundary.

For additional information, visit: <http://fortworthtexas.gov/PID/>

U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs supports development in economically distressed areas of the United States by fostering job creation and attracting private investment. EDA makes construction, non-construction, and revolving loan fund investments under its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs.

For additional information, visit: <https://www.eda.gov/funding-opportunities/>

Appendix C: Glossary

Appendix C: Glossary

Abatement - Full or partial exemption from ad valorem taxes of certain real property and/or tangible personal property in a reinvestment zone.

Acre - 43,560 square feet (slightly smaller than a football field).

Affordable Housing - For purposes of housing assistance with federal funds, such as Community Development Block Grant and HOME:

- **Rental**-Housing cost (rent plus utilities) are no more than 30 percent of a household's income.
- **Owner Occupied**-Housing costs (defined as PITI or principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) are not more than 30 percent of a household's income.
- **Affordable to Extremely Low Income Households**-Housing costs are no more than 30 percent of an income of 35 percent of median income in the Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Area.
- **Affordable to Very Low Income Households**-Housing costs are no more than 30 percent of an income of 50 percent of the median income in the Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Area.
- **Affordable to Low Income Households**-Housing costs are no more than 30 percent of an income of 80 percent of median income in the Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Area.

American Community Survey (ACS) - A nationwide survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau that is designed to provide communities with a fresh look at how they are changing. The ACS collects information such as age, race, income, commute time to work, home value, veteran status, and other important data from U.S. households.

Area Median Income (AMI) - Median income divides the income distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median income and one-half above the median. HUD uses the median income for families to calculate income limits for eligibility in a variety of housing programs. HUD estimates the median family income for an area in the current year and

adjusts that amount for different family sizes so that family incomes may be expressed as a percentage of the area median income. For example, a family's income may equal 80 percent of the area median income, a common maximum income level for participation in HUD programs.

Blighted Structure - A structure is blighted when it exhibits objectively determinable signs of deterioration sufficient to constitute a threat to human health, safety, and public welfare.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) - The tool through which locally funded public facilities, such as sewers, local roads, storm drains, schools, libraries, parks, etc., can be scheduled and built.

Catalyst Project - A project that can potentially stimulate redevelopment of adjacent underdeveloped properties or major rehabilitation of adjacent underutilized buildings.

Census Tract - A small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county or statistically equivalent entity, delineated for data presentation purposes by a local group of Census data users or the geographic staff of a Regional Census Center in accordance with U.S. Census Bureau guidelines.

Central City - The area within Fort Worth's Loop 820 consisting of the following: all CDBG-eligible census block groups, all State-designated enterprise zones, and all census block groups that are contiguous by 75 percent or more of their perimeter to CDBG-eligible block groups or enterprise zones.

Commercial Building - Any building other than a residential or institutional building, including any building constructed for industrial, retail, business, or public purposes.

Community Development Block Grant - The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Started in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest

continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to general units of local government and States.

Complete Streets - Roads that are designed for everyone, including people of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets are accessible, comfortable for walking and biking, and include sidewalks, street trees, and other amenities that make them feel “complete”. (For more information, visit www.completestreets.org).

Concentrated Poverty - A census tract with 40 percent or more of its households having incomes at or below the federal poverty line.

Decennial Census - The Decennial Census, undertaken by the U.S. Census Bureau, occurs every 10 years, in years ending in zero, to count the population and housing units for the entire United States. Its primary purpose is to provide the population counts that determine how seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are apportioned.

Density - The average number of dwelling units or persons per acre of land, usually expressed in units per acre, excluding any area of a street bordering the outside perimeter of a development site.

Dilapidated Housing - A housing unit that does not provide safe and adequate shelter, and in its present condition endangers the health, safety or well-being of the occupants. Such a housing unit has one or more critical defects, or a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or extent to require considerable repair or rebuilding. Such defects may involve original construction, or they may result from continued neglect or lack of repair or from serious damage to the structure.

Ethnicity - Categories of people based upon common ancestral culture, customs, or language.

Façade Improvement Program - Façade Improvement programs are typically incentive programs to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts in order to promote com-

mercial revitalization and economic development.

Floodplain - Areas adjacent to a river or stream subject to inundation by flood waters.

Foreclosures - The action of taking possession of a mortgaged property when the mortgagor fails to keep up their mortgage or property tax payments.

Green Infrastructure - Green infrastructure uses plants, soils, and natural processes to manage stormwater and create healthier urban environments. Green infrastructure practices can reduce the need for more expensive gray infrastructure—pipes, storage facilities, and treatment systems. Green infrastructure is designed to reduce and treat stormwater at its source, which helps to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

HOME (Home Investment Partnership Program) - Provides formula grants (HUD program) to states and localities that communities use—often in partnership with local nonprofit groups—to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership, or to provide direct rental assistance to low-income people.

Household - A single occupied housing unit and all of its occupants. A household may be comprised of one or more families, one or more unrelated individuals, or a combination of families and unrelated individuals.

Household Income - Combined gross money income of all persons who occupy a single housing unit. The household income can be comprised of the gross money income earned by one or more families, one or more unrelated individuals, or a combination of families and unrelated individuals who occupy a single housing unit.

Housing Unit - A house, apartment, mobile home, or other unit, occupied or vacant, but intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

Housing Stock - The number of existing housing units based on data compiled by the United States Bureau of the Census and referable to the

same point or period in time.

Infill Housing - Housing that is constructed on vacant lots within an existing neighborhood. These vacant lots usually contained houses at one time, but demolition of older housing stock has taken place. Rebuilding houses on these existing lots can provide affordable housing for citizens and revitalize central city neighborhoods.

Infrastructure - Facilities necessary to provide city services, usually referring to physical assets such as roads, pipes, city buildings, etc.

Land Bank - A governmental or nongovernmental nonprofit entity established, at least in part, to assemble, temporarily manage, and dispose of vacant land for the purpose of stabilizing neighborhoods and encouraging re-use or redevelopment of urban property.

Land Development - The process of making, installing, or constructing improvements on land.

Land Use - Designations of how land is being used or is planned to be used in the future e.g., single family, commercial, industrial, etc.

Livability - In the context of community, livability refers to the factors that add up to quality of life, including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, culture, entertainment, and recreation possibilities. (For more information, visit www.livable.org).

Market Area - The geographic area from which a business or project owner could reasonably expect to draw applicants or customers, based on the services and amenities offered by the development and the needs of the community.

Market Demand - The desire and ability to purchase or lease goods and services.

Market Value - The most probable price that a property should bring in a competitive and open market, provided that all conditions requisite to a fair sale are present, the buyer and seller are knowledgeable and acting prudently, and the price is not affected by any undue stimulus.

Micro-Enterprise - A commercial enterprise that has five or fewer employees, one or more of who owns the enterprise.

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) - NCTCOG is the regional planning agency for the Dallas/Fort Worth area. NCTCOG assists local governments in the 16-county region in coordinating sound regional development, encouraging cooperation for mutual benefit, and planning for common needs.

Race - Categories of people based upon traits that may be inherited or passed through a gene pool.

Rehabilitation - The labor, materials, tools, and other costs of improving buildings, other than minor or routine repairs that does not exceed 75 percent of the value of the building.

Reinvestment Zone - A geographical zone or area designated by the governing body of a municipality by ordinance for the purpose of executing tax abatement agreements in the zone in accordance with Chapter 312 of the Texas Tax Code.

Renovation - Rehabilitation that involves costs of 75 percent or less of the value of the building before rehabilitation. Renovation often involves improvements to the quality and/or function of the building beyond simply replacing damaged or worn out components.

Revitalization - A comprehensive approach to addressing economic, housing, and social needs in a neighborhood.

Rezone - An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to affect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Right-of-Way - Width of land available to incorporate all elements of a roadway, including traffic lanes, turn lanes, frontage roads, shoulders, medians, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and landscaping. A right-of-way may also contain certain public utilities.

Safe Routes to School - A national program to improve safety and encourage more children, including children with disabilities, to walk, bike and roll to school. The program focuses on improvements through the five E's: engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation. (For more information, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org).

Sidewalk - A strip of pavement within the streetscape that is dedicated exclusively to pedestrian activity.

Streetscape - All the elements that make up the physical environment of a street and define its character. This can include a combination of planters, sidewalks, street trees, street signs, street furniture, and street lights.

Sweat Equity - Using labor to build or improve a property as part of the down payment.

Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) - TAD is responsible for local property tax appraisal and exemption administration for seventy-three jurisdictions or taxing units in the county. Each taxing unit, such as the county, a city, school district, municipal utility district, etc., sets its own tax rate to generate revenue to pay for such things as police and fire protection, public schools, road and street maintenance, courts, water and sewer systems, and other public services. Property appraisals are determined by the appraisal district and used by the taxing units to calculate and allocate the annual tax burden. TAD also administers and determines eligibility for various types of property tax exemptions that are authorized by state and local governments, such as those for homeowners, the elderly, disabled persons, disabled veterans, and charitable or religious organizations.

Traffic Calming - The practice of using physical devices or roadway design techniques to reduce automobile speeds, usually in residential neighborhoods and parking facilities. Calming measures include 85% low speed limits, speed humps, narrow lanes, curb bulb-outs, roundabouts, and on-street parking, etc.

Tax Abatements (see abatement).

Underemployment - Individuals working in jobs requiring a lower skill than their training or abilities permit.

U.S. Census Bureau - Serves as the leading source of quality data about our nation's people and economy.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Department (HUD) - Established in 1965, HUD's mission is to increase homeownership, support community development, and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

Vacant Unit - A dwelling unit that has been vacant for not less than nine consecutive months.

Vision - A mental image of a possible and desirable future state. It succinctly conveys and reinforces a shared long-term view of where a community wants to be, and serves as the basis for developing goals, objectives, policies, and strategies.

Walking Audit - Also called a "walking workshop", this is a review of walking conditions along specified streets conducted with a diverse group of community members. Participants experience firsthand the conditions that either support or create barriers to walking and biking. (For more information, visit www.walklive.org).

Zoning - Division of land into districts based on the allowable use of the land and the design of buildings. These districts have uniform zoning regulations including those on land use, height, setbacks, lot size, density, and coverage.

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