

## THE TRINITY RIVER CORRIDOR AS CATALYST:

### Summing up the Project's Urban Design Ambitions and Long-term Impact on the Dallas Region

It has taken many years and many people's efforts to reach the point when the conversion of the Trinity River into a great public amenity is no longer merely a long-term desire but an actual project ready to commence. It is an enterprise that will span across a generation, with consequences affecting the quality of life in Dallas for generations to come. Therefore, and because city-building undertakings of this magnitude occur only once or twice a century, every aspect of the Trinity River Corridor Project should support additional civic benefits and enable further investment in the neighborhoods of Central Dallas.

Throughout this report an overarching theme has been the idea of a balanced vision for the future of the Trinity Corridor, a vision that considers and responds equally well to at least five broad mandates, as elaborated in Section II. It is equally important to expect that the project itself, as it progresses, catalyzes further achievement in each of these five areas. The long-term benefits of this project will be substantial.

### *The Trinity Project can be a Catalyst for Improved Watershed Management:*

As a major park and recreational environment takes shape within the Trinity Corridor, and is embraced by the citizens of Dallas, the public's desire for continued improvement to water quality will steadily increase.

Very few support the soiling or careless management of a front yard - much less a treasured city-wide amenity. The expectation that the City of Dallas will have to better manage its storm run-off and other water pollutants will inevitably spread to communities upstream along the entire Trinity watershed. There are examples of such citizen-initiated advocacy throughout the country, but it does not begin spontaneously. It begins with the determination to protect something valuable. A stronger environmental ethic will surely mark 21<sup>st</sup> century America. In Dallas the turning point will be the redesign of the Trinity River Corridor.

### *The Trinity Project can be a Catalyst for Improved Environmental Quality:*

There should be no settling for mediocre results. Greater environmental awareness goes hand in hand with higher standards of quality in the other major components of the project. A beautifully designed park and recreational setting will set the standard for all subsequent parks and open spaces in the region. A beautifully designed road will mean that all subsequent road-building projects will also be expected to strive for context sensitivity, dislodging the attitude that producing more capacity is the singular variable in transportation planning. Taking advantage of the need for levee raising and levee extensions to produce better (not less convenient) connections between city and river will overcome the perception that flood control is inevitably a single-issue enterprise that is indifferent to other city enhancing goals. A first-rate environment must be goal of every aspect of the Trinity Project.

***The Trinity Project can be a Catalyst for the Creation of a **Regional Recreational Area** of National Significance:***

As ambitious as the balanced vision presented in this report is, it must be considered but a part of the conversion of the entire Trinity watershed within the Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex into a regional open space.

Fort Worth is advancing its own ambitious plans for its portion of the Trinity. The Trinity Forest initiative is virtually without parallel as a stewardship of four-to-six thousand acres of forest all within the boundaries of one city. Coordinated over time, these kindred ambitions will produce the most astonishing open space / indigenous landscape / habitat enhancing environment / conservation corridor in urban America. Wouldn't that be the best rebuttal to all those who assume that Texas urbanization advances at the expense of, and only to the detriment of, its natural settings?

***The Trinity Project can be an Early Indicator of a **Paradigm Shift in Transportation Planning**:***

It is important to change the way we think about transportation planning for this corridor with these points in mind:

- In building a Trinity Parkway that is smaller than some would wish but better integrated into a recreational setting.
- In emphasizing context sensitive design standards for the parkway.
- In 'deputizing' Industrial Boulevard to better distribute access from the parkway to the downtown.
- In supporting more street grid connections over only limited access high-speed roads.
- In creating dozens of miles of trails and access roads that may offer some alternative means of commuting along or across the corridor (such as cycling and walking).
- In enabling the use of segments of the levees for additional circulation and development opportunities.
- In advocating the long-term reuse of the railroad tracks adjacent to the levee along the Stemmons Corridor for a future transit line.

In all of these and other ways the Trinity initiative may herald a more diverse, less highway dominated, approach to mobility and traffic management.

***The Trinity Project can be a Catalyst for **Economic Development**:***

The redevelopment of urban waterfronts as an engine of economic development is a world-wide phenomenon. It is easy to understand why.

People engaged in emerging economies increasingly choose where to work and live on the basis of "life-style" amenities offered by a locale. Surveys tracking locational choices among high-skilled workers consistently show that in addition to broad choices in particular job markets found in an urban area, the presence of culture and arts, a healthy environment, natural amenities, opportunities to pursue active lifestyles, a strong "sense of place," and socially diverse and progressive-minded populations are all important factors. In short, the various ingredients providing opportunities for blending work and leisure prove influential, and waterfronts are a ready accommodator of such environments. There is little doubt that over a generation land values and, therefore, reinvestment initiatives, all along the Trinity Corridor will flourish.