



## MAIN STREET/CENTRAL EXPRESSWAY CORRIDOR PROPERTY & BUSINESS OWNER INTERVIEWS #1



On March 2 and 3, 2016, interviews with property and business owners within the four southern sub-districts of the Main Street/Central Expressway Corridor – Gateway Commercial, Trailside, McKamy Spring and Creative Corporate – were conducted. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain feedback from the owners to understand any current or future plans the owners may have for their properties and/or businesses, their ideas for the surrounding area, and to hear any interests or concerns they may have related to the City of Richardson’s rezoning initiative for the project area.

Additionally, interviews with property and business owners within the centrally located sub-districts of the Corridor – Interurban, Central Place, Chinatown and Main Street – were also conducted in order to receive feedback from owners that have been making improvements to their properties in accordance with the Main Street/Central Expressway Form Based Code (adopted January 2015), as well as hear any interests or concerns they may have regarding potential amendments/refinements to the Code.

Below, are the questions asked by the City of Richardson’s consultant team during the interview sessions followed by the responses received. The responses received reflect the comments made by individuals who attended the meetings, and do not reflect any official position or general consensus.

### Gateway Commercial & Trailside Sub-districts

*[Session 1 3/2/16 – 8:00 am (1 Attendee) & Session 7 3/3/16 – 1:00 pm (8 Attendees)]*

1. What (if any) barriers have prevented you from making investments in your property or business?
  - *None have arisen at this point regarding redevelopment or attracting tenants. Currently have traditional office (insurance, small mom and pop businesses, home health care, accountants, phone / computer related retail).*
  - *The only issue was the pet boarding place that took away the parking / drive lane.*
  - *The businesses at Phillips and US 75 are auto related uses, and tenants want to make sure this opportunity remains.*
  - *An auto leasing business is planning on developing a new building (two stories) that covers the entire site so it will be able to store and display all its autos indoors.*
  - *A motor vehicle repair business has older building, but wants to remain in the area.*
  - *The owner of the night club had individuals wanting to buy his property for auto related uses and for an extension of the motel property behind him.*
  - *Concern with the future of the corridor if existing auto related uses are eliminated.*



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2. Are there uses in these Sub-districts today that are problematic and that you'd like to see replaced by other uses?
  - *Does not like the way Spring Valley is attracting people to the club just south of this property and the motel close by.*
  - *Doesn't like the club (not "kosher") or the small hotel in vicinity.*
  - *Most businesses look old and dated on Spring Valley Road and Central Expressway.*
  
3. What sort of development and investment do you think will be most successful in these Sub-districts in the next five to ten years?
  - *Is unhappy with the process of notifying tenants about the potential rezoning because it causes them to feel that their leases are not stable. If tenants showed up, manager might not have been as open to discuss.*
  - *Owners of managed property are interested in ideas and could be interested in future redevelopment or reinvestment – but not sure what the long term vision for area should be. Local ownership preferable.*
  - *The catalyst drawings in vision plan resonate positively.*
  - *Continue area "as is".*
  - *People need to get their cars repaired in Richardson – these uses need to be accommodated somewhere in the city.*
  - *There is nowhere else for automotive uses to go in Richardson.*
  - *The luxury auto sales site does not cause issues with the image of the City.*
  - *Happy that restaurant park has gone in to support service business employees in the area.*
  - *Need to have community supporting uses (including automotive) between IH 635 and President George Bush Tollway (PGBT) so people can stay in Richardson for supporting services.*
  - *Some stakeholders felt that the Spring Valley Station PD is more like the Gateway Commercial area than the McKamy Spring area.*
  - *The area east of the DART station (existing mixed use development) is looking good and changing the image of the older southern districts.*
  - *City should re-pave the alley behind Nottingham (residential street) and put a wall behind the businesses.*
  - *Would like to see more height and lot coverage permitted on the properties along the west side of Central to accommodate potential redevelopment in the future.*
  
4. What uses or amenities would establish this area as a distinct 'address' – making it apparent to northbound drivers on Central Expressway that they are now in a different city? Is this important?
  - *The vision that was created with the community is solid – appreciated Richardson's infrastructure and ability to think towards the future.*



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- *For this little building and its tenants, the identity of the area is not at all important but may be good for overall City.*
  - *Identity must happen organically and not be forced.*
5. Should these two Sub-districts develop with distinct characteristics, or are they similar enough to combine into a single Sub-district?
- *These districts are very different and distinct, and should be separate.*
  - *The Trailside district relates to the existing mixed use development near the Spring Valley Station or Interurban area more than Central Expressway.*
6. What do you think about introducing residential uses within these sub-districts?
- *Including residential uses in this area would be ok*
7. How important is connectivity to nearby residential neighborhoods to your business?
- *Would not want a lot of apartments around her business – existing mixed use development near Spring Valley Station seems empty.*
8. Has it been problematic – or beneficial – for you to be next to a residential neighborhood? What would improve or strengthen the positive situation, or remedy the negative situation?
- *Residential is not a good use in this district (Gateway Commercial). Focus on office, retail, hotel, entertainment, performing arts venue.*
  - *Crime comes from residential areas.*
9. Where do you think are the best locations for additional public open spaces within these Sub-districts?
- *Due to the heat coming off of US 75, open space should be located further from US 75.*
  - *On the east side of Gateway Commercial – food truck park, dog park and park to complement the DART stop would be nice.*
10. Do you have questions, comments or feedback on the proposed approach for regulating uses and development projects in these Sub-districts?
- *Be fair to property owners – don't make it more difficult to retain tenants. We don't want to lose current viable uses or tenants.*
  - *Do not reduce the types of permitted uses today like happened with Spring Valley PD years ago.*
  - *Increase heights and lot coverage and increase density. Give more height to allow for parking underneath buildings.*
  - *High density residential is appropriate around DART station. Include mixed use and entertainment.*



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### McKamy Spring Sub-district

*[Session 2 3/2/16 – 10:00 am (4 Attendees; Note – All participants were from Spring Valley Station PD area) & Session 8 3/3/16 – 3:00 pm (6 Attendees)]*

1. What (if any) barriers have prevented you from making investments in your property or business?
  - *The existing PD has been restrictive in being able to expand an existing vibrant business. Cannot add office space on property (use). Business is grandfathered, but cannot grow to be vibrant.*
  - *Successful and thriving businesses cannot grow – so they are forced to move. Cannot expand or grow into adjacent buildings or property.*
  - *Second owner has had no barriers, but has not tried to do anything different from what they have been doing.*
  - *Building may be configured as a warehouse, but can only be legally used as an office now under current PD. This business employs 100 families, this is a good location for commercial service businesses to be able to serve the community – but can't grow despite great location.*
  - *Current zoning has created a "no man's land" in this area. The vision would happen more quickly if you allowed co-existence – i.e., the City should allow the existing industrial uses to remain as of right and not as non-conforming use - within the district.*
  - *Property owner leases to an auto related use – are probably a non-conforming use today.*
  - *Industrial uses in the old Spring Valley PD are industrial and the Interurban District is the right direction for this area.*
  - *There is no demand on west side of Spring Valley Station for any development other than industrial.*
  - *Want to get out of a non-conforming use status.*
  - *This area will take a long time to redevelop. The DART Station is the jewel.*
  - *Good commercial businesses exist right now – don't run them out of Richardson.*
  - *Most of our company's workers live in Richardson.*
  - *No more constraints – be more flexible. Give options. Worried to invest in business and property.*
  - *Residential east of DART is good, but possibly not west of DART as the areas are not the same.*
  - *Retail is struggling on east side of DART within the existing mixed use development.*



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2. Are there uses in this Sub-district today that are problematic and that you'd like to see replaced by other uses?
  - *There were issues with homeless people using vacant building next door (buildings on Lingco) since it was vacant (vacancies due to restrictions in zoning). This makes people feel unsafe in the area.*
  - *Both businesses have had to increase security on their sites and secure their equipment.*
  
3. What sort of development and investment do you think will be most successful in this Sub-district in the next five to ten years?
  - *The City should develop a rubber tire trolley through the area connecting to Interurban and other sub-districts.*
  - *Crime is also an issue due to the educational uses (located south of Spring Valley). Need Code Enforcement and police to stop activities of students in the area.*
  
4. What changes would encourage further transit-oriented development near the DART station?
  - *There are not a lot of opportunities envisioned for this area.*
  - *Indifferent to providing mixed use with residential.*
  - *Spring Valley tunnel – causes traffic issues, accidents, it is unsafe, dangerous. Poor design – crossing lanes that merge at Lingco. Wish we could get rid of it.*
  - *Tunnel at Spring Valley killed businesses.*
  - *Proximity of DART station is better opportunity for residential/mixed use as organic growth.*
  - *Property owners here feel that the northern part of the Spring Valley area (north of Spring Valley Road and west of the DART line) share more of a similarity with the Gateway Commercial Sub-district than original McKamy Spring Sub-district or existing mixed use development to the east. DART parking lots could go mixed use/residential.*
  - *DART activity and walking trail are better utilized north of this area.*
  - *Consider running trolley loop from Arapaho to Spring Valley.*
  
5. Where do you think are the best locations for public parking lots or garages within these Sub-districts?
  - *There is not adequate parking for some of the businesses in the area. There are a lot of trucks parking on the street and blocking other owner's lots (waste water infrastructure company trucks). Deliveries in these areas are typically made on-street. This is a big issue in some areas.*
  - *Parking is an issue – waste water infrastructure company on Lingco parks in street and other parking lots.*



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6. What activities and features are most desirable for open space in or near this Sub-district?
  - *Daylighting Floyd Branch would be an amenity.*
  
7. Do you have questions, comments or feedback on the proposed approach for regulating uses and development projects in this Sub-district?
  - *Like the idea of flexibility – it is a commercial area.*
  - *Any variance requests are due to the strict regulations of the Spring Valley PD.*
  - *Vision may be good long term, but market just isn't there right now and won't be for many years.*
  - *Can boundaries change – e.g. can Gateway Commercial expand into our area of McKamy Spring (Lingco Drive).*
  - *Concern that City is forcing out automotive uses – our tenant is a 7-8 year tenant. Will lose this client if we rehab or try to expand. Will not be able to attract similar client if current tenant leaves.*
  - *This area is light industrial – keep it as such.*
  - *Want industrial uses back as of right. This area has been non-conforming for last 13 years and it has been bad for business.*
  - *This area is like Interurban – designed at same time. It is not like Gateway Commercial or McKamy Spring.*
  - *Due to zoning, cannot sell building at highest market value. No redevelopment has occurred in this area. Make light industrial conforming again.*
  - *Combine with Trailside Sub-district (northern part of this Sub-district only). Promote adaptive reuse like Interurban.*
  - *Area is like the Design District in Dallas – let us evolve as such.*
  
8. How should the City address any issues of non-conforming uses and structures that might result from this rezoning?
  - *See responses above - tenants/owners would like to eliminate non-conforming use issues by allowing industrial uses by right, and automotive uses to be permitted (whether principally or with special permit).*
  
9. What new investments would you like to see (by public or private owners) in this Sub-district?
  - *Don't believe that Lingco was designed for DART buses. There are a lot of potholes / road failures. These are probably because of the buses and the 18-wheeler trucks making deliveries.*
  - *Sherman Street also needs maintenance.*
  - *Too many property owners – difficult to assemble properties.*



10. What do you think about introducing residential uses within this sub-district?
- *The area within the Spring Valley Station PD, really would fit better within the Gateway Commercial Sub-district in that they are existing commercial properties. Opening up the area for residential and mixed use is probably fine to accommodate future markets that may want to be here someday, but commercial should not be excluded for the near-term future.*
11. Do you ever notice odors coming from the water treatment facility, located in the southern portion of the sub-district, particularly during the warmer months?
- *The odor coming from this facility at times is horrible. It is worse when there is a drought. The smell likely goes all the way to the nearby mixed use development.*
  - *Sewage treatment plant smells bad in summer – detrimental to area.*
12. How important is having direct access from Sherman St. to Central Expressway?
- *It could be helpful for the area because of the issues turning left on Sherman and Lingco from eastbound Spring Valley (have to cut across traffic coming out of tunnel to turn left).*

### **Creative Corporate Sub-district**

***[Session 3 3/2/16 – 1:00 pm (No attendees at this session) & Session 6 3/3/16 – 10:00 am (3 Attendees)]***

13. What (if any) barriers have prevented you from making investments in your property or business?
- *None; we've completed major renovations to create the place that is the heart and soul of our company.*
14. Are there uses in your Sub-district today that are problematic and that you'd like to see replaced by other uses?
- *The apartments to the south are a big concern.*
  - *Access off of Spring Valley is a problem. Need to look for creative solutions to traffic circulation.*
  - *A connection to the Central Trail would be beneficial – employees now run across Spring Valley to get from the DART station to our site. It would be good to have a better connection.*
  - *The entire corporate office site is preferred to be in the Creative Corporate Sub-district, but with entitlements of the Gateway Commercial Sub-district on the corner.*



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- *Legacy West (around JC Penney) and State Farm are good models for how the site could work.*
15. What sort of development and investment do you think will be most successful in this Sub-district in the next five to ten years?
- *Can the multi-family to the south be dealt with in an expedient manner? Corporate, mixed use or better multi-family are acceptable, but not in current state.*
  - *2 to 3 similar corporations to the south and east would be great for this area.*
  - *Desire as much flexibility as possible and include in one sub-district.*
  - *Walkable amenities desired – existing corporate office use would take down security fencing and gates as redevelopment occurs.*
  - *Would like a trail connection from DART/Central Trail to corporate office/Creative Corporate Sub-district – down Prestonwood?*
  - *Access to Creative Corporate Sub-district to and from Central is issue – and it will become more difficult with more density.*
16. What uses or amenities will strengthen the Creative Corporate Sub-district as a desirable location for creative, innovative corporations?
- *Would love for the ability of employees to live closer to corporate office campus.*
  - *More building height is OK.*
17. How important is connectivity to nearby residential areas (neighborhoods and apartment complexes) to your business?
- *See also responses above.*
18. Has it been problematic – or beneficial – for you to be next to residential uses? What would improve or strengthen the positive situation, or remedy the negative situation?
- *Surrounding neighborhood to south needs to be rehabbed or torn down – want to be able to take down fence around corporate office campus.*
  - *Multi-family would be OK in that area, but it must be better quality. Good quality residential as part of mixed use would be fine. Our employees would live there if it were good quality multi-family.*
19. Where do you think are the best locations for additional public open spaces within this Sub-district?
- *Depending on future development pattern, a central open space could be created between existing buildings on our property (might or might not be public space).*





20. What activities and features are most desirable for open space in or near the Creative Corporate Sub-district?

- *Our employees want outdoor spaces and trails.*

### **Central Sub-districts (Main Street, Interurban, Chinatown & Central Place)**

*[Session 4 3/2/16 – 3:00 pm (32 Attendees) & Session 5 3/3/16 – 8:00 am (8 Attendees)]*

1. Have you made investments to property in these Sub-districts since the approval of the Form Based Code last year (i.e., buying property, improving existing buildings, building new ones, attracting new tenants)? If so, what has been your experience?
  - *Office /Retail/Service Contractor – Rehabilitation of existing building - process went smoothly; dumpster placement is an issue.*
  - *Chinatown Sub-district – Planning major supermarket.*
  - *Purchased building on Interurban – Wants to utilize property for showroom.*
  - *Developing new townhome units on Greenville – The Code is what attracted him to the property.*
  - *Townhome developer wants to be able to provide a date to tell townhome buyers when street improvements will be made. Public right of way needs maintenance.*
  - *Owner of vacant property on Interurban can now have opportunity to develop due to new build-to lines.*
  - *Food Truck Park – Established since development of Code.*
2. Has this change in zoning made you more likely to consider new development or revitalization of your existing development?
  - *Rezoning was completed in 2015 – Code is working fairly well – more opportunity and smaller setbacks are helping.*
3. Are you experiencing issues (for your own projects or with development by your neighborhoods) relating to fencing and/or the location of dumpsters?
  - *Look at allowing dumpsters in side yards.*
  - *No surprises in Code. Dumpster placement is problematic with current Code setback requirements because his property has limited space on-site to accommodate a dumpster. Can't place dumpster with screen.*
  - *City should allow property owners to share dumpsters – Need to see if there are requirements for dumpsters on every property in other ordinances since it is not a requirement of the current Code.*
  - *Many properties do not have locations that will accommodate dumpsters.*
  - *There is nothing available for recycling in commercial areas – owner is hauling recyclables home for recycling.*



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- *We want to be able to encourage recycling.*
  - *Do we have to fence/screen dumpsters? If in the alley, why? Screening makes it difficult to service the dumpster.*
  - *Food truck park had issues with dumpster placement requirements (including turning radius).*
  - *Need to clarify policy about shared dumpsters, and if shared, address dumpster use during construction to require an additional dumpster.*
  - *One property owner was told that he had to have two dumpsters on-site because he had two tenants.*
  - *Does Health code have different standards for dumpsters? Need to check this.*
  - *Screening walls for dumpsters have also been difficult for owners.*
  - *Also, would like to recycle on commercial properties, but is difficult on tight sites.*
  - *Food truck park had to utilize the special development plan approval process to establish fences on their property.*
  - *We should permit fences on all sides of property to prevent criminal activity.*
  - *Property needs a fence and current Code does not address fencing. Several owners have similar issues.*
  - *Vision for Interurban area is “edgy” – edgy would include allowing fencing to protect properties.*
  - *Like idea of addressing fencing differently in the individual sub-districts due to the different sub-districts’ visions.*
4. Outdoor seating, patios and open space were among the features people wanted to encourage in these areas. Are you seeing new investment in there? Are you seeing barriers to their creation?
- *Outdoor seating / patios – temporary (seasonal) enclosures need to be addressed. Some property owners are using leftover building materials to create enclosures.*
  - *Look at materials permitted for screening around outdoor seating areas. One property on Main uses corrugated plastic to enclose patio – looks like “shantytown”. Needs to be regulated as it is an image issue.*
  - *There is interest in doing more outdoor seating/patios.*
  - *Agree with idea that patios should not require additional parking.*
5. What amendments or refinements would improve the current Code?
- *For the development of the food truck park, there were no issues with working through the Code – did have to create a special development plan for the food truck park related to the dumpster location, architectural requirements and building frontage.*
  - *On premise alcohol beverage consumption – currently requires area of 5 acres minimum. This hurts businesses. Exempt all.*
  - *Is it necessary to have the two separate processes for alcohol – the TABC and City?*



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6. How effective has the process been for dealing with uses and structures that became non-conforming as a result of from last year's rezoning?
  - *Existing convenience store with fuel sales representative concerned that they are legally non-conforming use.*
7. What new investments would you like to see (by public or private owners) in these Sub-districts?
  - *Acquisition of property by the City for public parking – vacant properties on east side of Interurban, north of Jackson.*
  - *One property owner concerned about City acquiring the DART property behind the row buildings on Interurban; not sure if the property would work well for public parking due to the trucks coming/going from the businesses, as well as loading/unloading operations associated with the existing businesses.*
8. What one or two actions by the City would do the most to improve these Sub-districts?
  - *Rayflex is in poor shape. Needs to be maintained – curb and streets in serious need of repair.*
  - *Utility lines are visually unappealing – some droop so bad that they partially block my business sign's visibility.*
  - *Better design for on street parking in Interurban is needed. Look at angled parking or provide public parking on DART right of way.*
  - *Paid public parking may be good idea to raise revenue for City and turnover in parking lot.*
  - *Form based code is good, but it doesn't always align with other City codes or ordinances. The building code (and others) should be aligned with the form based code.*
  - *Spring Valley Station near the Central Trail needs to be cleaned up - trash, graffiti and evidence of homeless people.*
9. Are you experiencing issues related to the sign regulations in the new Code?
  - *It would be good to have wayfinding signs to this area so that people driving on US 75 will know the district is there.*
10. Are you experiencing issues related to the architectural design requirements and material choices in the new Code?
  - *No comments regarding design requirements.*
  - *Concern regarding temporary patio enclosures and types of materials being used; would like for materials to be regulated.*



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### Other Comments Received:

- *Concerns expressed by motor vehicle repair owner related to future use of property.*
- *Concern expressed by collision repair shop on Main Street related to future use of property.*
- *Interurban owner concerned that the new Code is making it difficult to continue retirement income from property.*
- *Asked about tax abatements for commercial properties – City program is currently available to residential properties, but not commercial.*
- *What is City's role in implementing changes / improvements to the streets in the sub-districts? In many cases, tenants of renovated or new developments ask owners when streets will be re-built or improved. It would be very helpful if the City would start to identify anticipated timing / program for these improvements. This could build excitement in the area.*
- *Unfair that parking on Main Street is on the north side of Main Street (i.e. the public parking lot behind the buildings) and there is no public parking on the south side of Main Street. Also, there are no crosswalks allowing businesses on the south to utilize parking on the north.*
- *Property owner stated that she does not want the City to acquire her property on the south side of Main Street for widening Main Street.*
- *Turning and going east on Rayflex (from Central), the street is in very bad shape, broken concrete and curbs; McKinney Street (north of Main Street) is very bad as well. Question was raised as to whether there is a program in place for street rehabilitation/repair – did Rayflex fall through the cracks, or is it part of the program?*
- *Utilities are unsightly – should be placed underground.*
- *Parking along Interurban is an issue, especially as the area continues to grow in popularity with more retail, restaurants, etc.*
- *Paid parking lots could be of benefit to the area.*
- *Form based code is very thorough, but does not necessarily fit the City's Code of Ordinances which still creates challenges with building code requirements.*
- *The Central Trail has been beneficial to the area, need to keep an eye on graffiti and homelessness, especially as you get closer to the Spring Valley Station.*
- *While leaning power poles are an issue with Oncor, the City should lead discussions with Oncor and Atmos about franchise utility issues, property owners should not be responsible for this.*