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## NEWS

# Grapevine Officials Begin Focusing on Transit Station Development

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How do you plan for \$50 million in development around a facility that is yet to be designed?

And, how do you make a building in a modern, regional transit system mesh with existing structures in a carefully preserved historic district?

Such questions stumped Grapevine officials last week during a lively work session to contemplate land uses near the future rail station at Main Street and Dallas Road.

Presentation of a map depicting a proposed planning zone touched off a volley of opinions on topics ranging from zone boundaries to possible amenities of the station.

Such a zone would implement uniform development regulations.

Most City Council members agreed the rectangular zone's large size -- roughly 1.25 miles from Ball Street to Texan Trail and a half-mile from Nash Street to Worth Street -- would make achieving a cohesive appearance difficult.

"We need to start small next to the rail site, then go out," Mayor William D. Tate said. "Scatter it out, and then it won't look like anything."

A focused approach presents another dilemma: how to reconcile what officials describe as an "industrial flavor" of some adjacent areas with nearby older homes and newer condos.

"The goal is to transition from light industrial, and that's hard to do," Tate said.

Traditional transit-oriented developments do it through a dense mix of small homes, shops, restaurants and offices, an arrangement that's "just not like Grapevine," Councilwoman Sharron Spencer said.

The city prides itself on its historical district, a quaint downtown area largely made up of buildings that date back to the town's agrarian days. The rail station site is 4.34 acres near the historic district's southern boundary.

To others, the contrasts mean opportunity. Suburban stations typically influence development a quarter- to a half-mile away, transit experts say. Several council members said the station could spur commercial growth along a sleepy Dallas Road.

And the station design is flexible, which allows the city to add unique features or customize a transit center instead of merely building a rail stop.

With restaurants, shops and the like, transit centers become travel destinations rather than just conduits, Councilwoman Darlene Freed said.

"We have an opportunity to do something really special and unique to Grapevine," she said.

Cost, however, may be a drawback. The Fort Worth Transportation Authority, known as the T, has planned simple stations along the old Cotton Belt route, as the rail line through Grapevine is known. Upgrades and amenities will be left up to the city, which in June sunk \$2.7 million into the land at 815 S. Main St.

The city also sends proceeds from a three-eighths-cent sales tax to the T, a requirement to participate in the rail system.

City officials have likened their concepts for Grapevine's station to the Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center, a pricey transportation hub designed to blend with older buildings in downtown Fort Worth.

Commuter rail service from southwest Fort Worth to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport is expected to begin in 2013. Facilities and track improvements along the 40-mile line are estimated to cost \$470 million.

The service is expected to generate at least \$50 million in renovation and new construction near the Grapevine station, according to a 2006 city-commissioned study.

*This article contains*

*information from archived*

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