

Farmers Market



Background and Context

Tucked within the Loop in the CBD's southeast corner and anchored by the name-sake facility south of Marilla Street, the Farmers Market Focus Area occupies a multi-block area between Harwood Street and Cesar Chavez Boulevard between Jackson Street and the R.L. Thornton Freeway (I-30). The Farmers Market facility serves a city-wide audience with its fresh food, seasonal goods and other vendor offerings, while acting as an anchor for the southern portion of Downtown. Numerous historic landmarks line Harwood Street and echo the prominence of this institutional corridor, with facilities such as the Scottish Rite and Masonic temples and First Presbyterian Church. Although not yet connected by transit, the proposed D2 light rail alignment would provide the area with at least one station, while a proposed Harwood Street streetcar line would link the area with Main Street and the McKinney Avenue Trolley extension.

The Opportunity

Establish an Urban Neighborhood for All Income Levels

With adjacent uses including the vacant former Statler Hilton hotel, the Bridge homeless service center, and a large residential complex, the area within the Farmers Market Focus Area has had limited success in establishing a distinct niche or identity. Much of the land within the core of the area is vacant or used for seasonal or overflow parking, sale of goods, or storage for the nearby Farmers Market. Some new residential development has occurred but with limited long-term success. However, with its many historic structures and attractions, ample lower-cost vacant land, possible future transit service, and close proximity to the core, the Farmers Market Focus Area has the potential to become Downtown's true urban neighborhood.

Unlike other parts of Downtown that have higher land costs and larger-scale development, Farmers Market can become a hub for low-scale "neighborhood" housing. Specifically, entry-level and family-oriented housing, two markets currently severely underserved within the CBD, have great potential for success due to the proximity to job centers and similar low-rise neighborhoods to the south and east. New development is envisioned to consist primarily of a mix of townhouses and low-rise apartments and condominiums, and limited ground-floor



retail and services. The Farmers Market area's lower land costs and the fact that lower-density development types are less costly to construct than are higher-density buildings suggest that contextually appropriate housing in the Farmers Market can be offered at prices more affordable to middle-income households and families. Mid-rise residential and mixed-use buildings also may be appropriate at select locations such as adjacent to transit stations and major intersections, where value premiums may be achievable and where the urban form would welcome a diversified building form. Developments should incorporate a strong pedestrian orientation, with stoops and porches for townhouses and multiple entries for larger buildings. In addition to the landmarks along Harwood Street, several historic commercial structures on Cadiz Street could be adaptively re-used to accommodate new retail, service or live-work uses.

Improved crosswalks and sidewalks are also critical to ensure that traffic along streets like Harwood Street and Cesar Chavez Boulevard is calmed to support new adjacent residences.

A key feature of the new neighborhood would be a central gathering space and shared-use promenade along the current right-of-way for Pearl Street between Young and Marilla. With the opportunity to provide a direct, dedicated and comfortable connection to the Farmers Market facility, this new promenade could also support additional vendors or special events that could extend into the neighborhood. Similarly, Marilla would be improved to ensure a strong connection to Harwood where a formal gateway and future streetcar stop would be located. In addition, small informal open spaces currently used for Farmers Market storage could be retained and/or repurposed as tot lots or small gathering spaces for residents.

As new development proves its success in establishing a critical mass of new residents and activity, additional residential and mixed-use development could fill in gaps to the north, connecting the Farmers Market and Main Street focus areas with an active spine along Harwood.



Pedestrian passages, pocket parks and the central promenade should be organizing features for residential buildings, becoming "front yards" while enhancing the safety and livability of Farmers Market.



The new Pearl Street promenade with small retail kiosks, special streetscape design, and traffic calming would link residences and the potential light rail station near Canton to the Farmers Market entrance.



Traditional rowhouse elements of raised stoops, visible yet private ground floors, and well-tended landscaping are effective ways of ensuring a safe, attractive sidewalk presence.



Farmers Market Focus Area

- Existing Building
- Proposed Building
- Recommended DART Alignment
- Alternative DART Alignment
- Potential Streetcar and Station
- Existing Park or Open Space
- Existing or Proposed Plaza
- Enhanced Street Paving
- Enhanced Crosswalks



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