

Reunion/Union Station



Background and Context

Located at the confluence of the Stemmons, Tom Landry and R.L. Thornton freeways at the southwest corner of the CBD, the Reunion/Union Station Focus Area is located south of Union Station and encompasses the former Reunion Arena site. The district is widely known for its three primary landmarks: Union Station, Reunion Tower and the Hyatt Regency Dallas hotel. The district contains the largest contiguous amount of vacant land within the CBD and boasts unparalleled visibility and access to all points in the region. In addition to freeway access, the site is well-situated adjacent to Union Station. Serving as an important transit hub, the facility accommodates the Trinity River Express (TRE) commuter rail and DART light rail Red and Blue lines. In addition to the activity at Union Station and the Reunion Tower/ Hyatt hotel complex, the Reunion district is regarded as an extension of the convention center district. With the demolition of Reunion Arena, the area can be repositioned for new, complementary uses that will enhance the western entrance to the city.

The Opportunity

Establish a Landmark Mixed-Use Office and Residential District that Connects the Trinity River Corridor to the Downtown Core

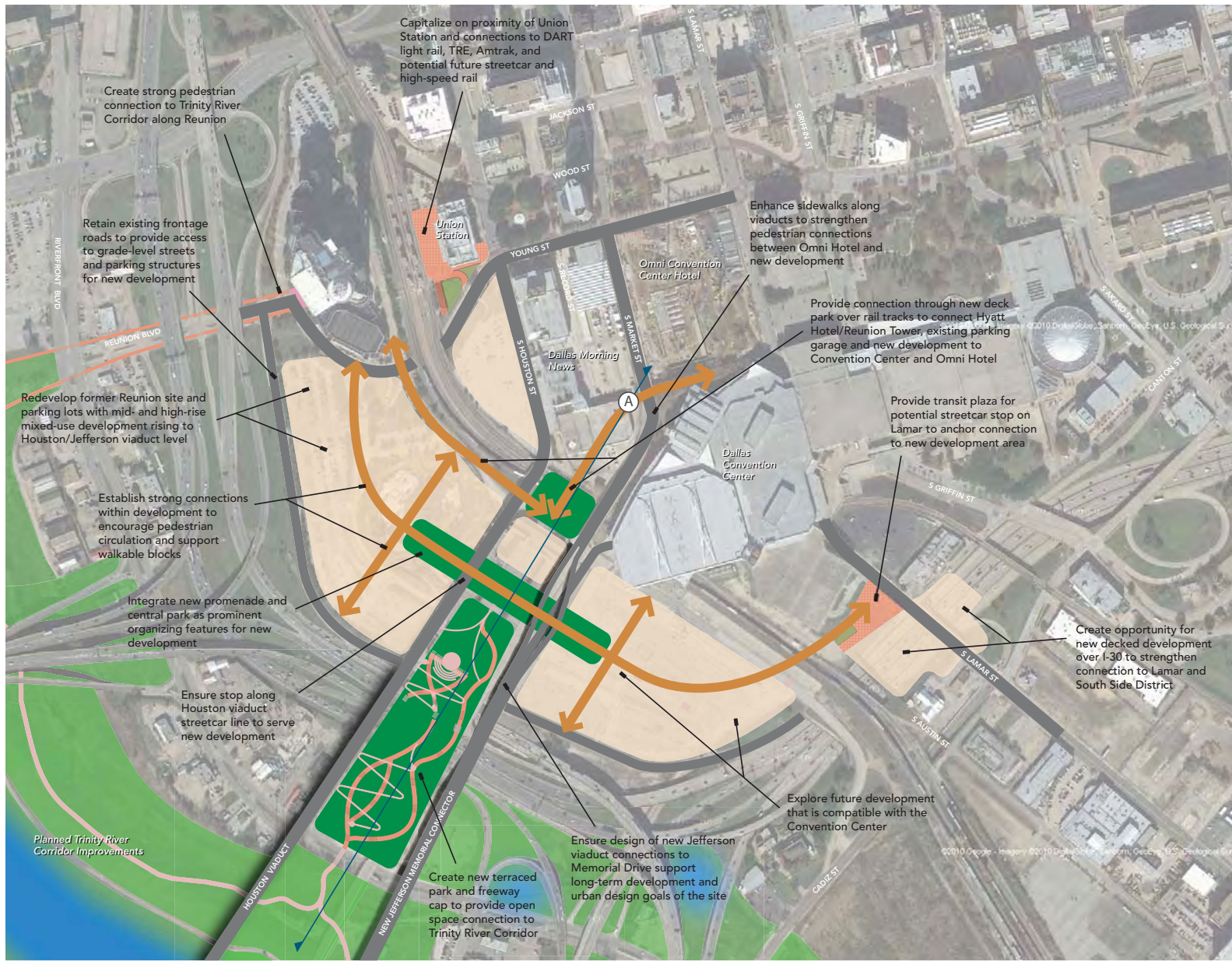
Although it has many acres of developable land, the Reunion/Union Station Focus Area is challenged with topographic changes, two viaducts, and a freeway interchange that prohibit the site from functioning as a contiguous district. The DART tracks, in particular, disconnect the area from the rest of Downtown. Due to the district's lack of significant historical development, infrastructure is likely inadequate to support a major increase in intensity and will need to be improved to make the site competitive for development. Particular challenges will include installing new water loop lines, connections to the wastewater system, new electrical and gas supplies, and constructing a new stormwater detention structure.

Despite these challenges, the Reunion/Union Station Focus Area holds tremendous potential to create a signature regional destination. The area is envisioned to be redeveloped into a dynamic regional center for office, residential and visitor-serving uses. The area should be seen as a new location for corporate headquarters



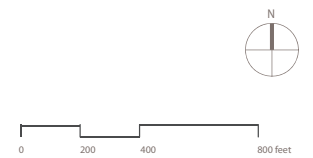
to allow the CBD to compete for future relocations from suburbs or other cities. The large development sites, high visibility, and access to transportation make the site particularly attractive to high-rise corporate and residential towers (which could have dramatic, iconic architecture at this key entry to Downtown). As the region's only true multi-modal transit hub, Union Station would retain its DART, TRE and Amtrak service while accommodating a station for the future DART "D2" line. It is also the logical location for Dallas's primary stop on the state's proposed high-speed rail line, solidifying the site's prominence and transit accessibility in the future.

The existing vacant land and parking lots provide a blank slate from which to construct a new development pattern that would tie into the Downtown core and ensure that the area is not an "island". While several potential build out scenarios could take shape, the 360 plan envisions a significant development opportunity that would come to fruition over many years and would strengthen the prospects for a future high-speed rail station on the site by capitalizing on its position as the primary regional transit hub.



Reunion/Union Station Focus Area

- Future Development Site
- Existing DART Light-Rail and Station
- Potential DART Light-Rail
- Potential Streetcar and Station
- Park or Open Space
- Transit Plaza
- Key Connection
- Major Street
- Minor Street
- See cross-section on page 98



In this scenario parking garages, access streets and service/loading areas would be built on the vacant land and form the foundations for new buildings at the level of the existing Houston and Jefferson viaducts. Atop the parking garages and service/access facilities, new buildings, parks, and pedestrian connections would be integrated with the viaducts and the primary development level of Downtown, where the Belo properties, Union Station, and Convention Center are built. New development parcels would ideally be “carved out” as small urban blocks to discourage large, superblock development patterns that could turn their backs to the rest of Downtown. Building footprints should similarly reflect the smaller block sizes and should respond to the views available, with high-rises located farther west, taking advantage of Trinity River and Downtown views. Lower-rise buildings should provide a transition and protect views to the north.

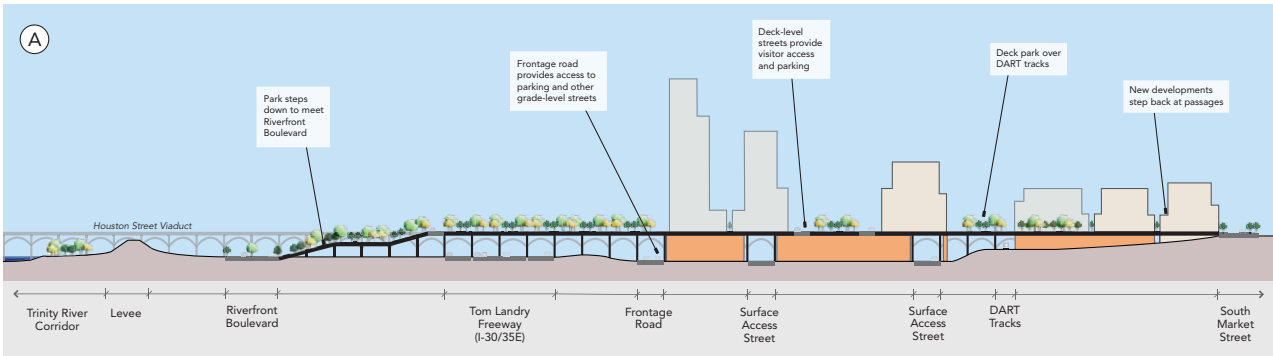
A pedestrian promenade would follow alongside a new street that would connect Lamar on the east to Reunion Boulevard on the north, rising over the DART tracks and serving as the primary circulation feature on top of the parking decks. A new central park would be an organizing feature, around which the new street would provide comfortable pedestrian and limited vehicular access for new developments.

While the new deck-level street would have on-street parking, entrances to parking garages should be minimized to encourage daily users to utilize surface-level access streets which connect to the freeway frontage roads. Buildings that front onto the viaducts or new streets, parks or pedestrian passages should have primary public entrances and active ground floors with retail and restaurants. Passages should be landscaped and animated with transparent windows, art, pocket retail or kiosks, and additional building entrances.

A core feature of the concept is its ability to bridge the divide between Downtown and the Trinity River Corridor. Between the Jefferson and Houston viaducts, a new deck park would traverse the Tom Landry Freeway, stepping down to meet Riverfront Boulevard, where enhanced connections into the levees would provide access to the Trinity River. Key sources of funding for these costly improvements will include the valuable development rights and tax increment associated with the commercial and residential development program, which may need to focus on higher-end, luxury housing to maximize the land’s value and funding capacity. While an ambitious plan, opportunities exist to shape the redevelopment of this area due to current land ownership. However, to achieve implementation, the sale or other transfer of the former Reunion Arena site to the private development community is critical.



New development, level with the Houston and Jefferson viaducts, should be built atop service roadways and parking structures like in Denver’s new Union Station redevelopment.



A cross-section shows how a deck park would rise from Riverfront Boulevard over I-30 to meet the Houston viaduct level, where new buildings built over parking structures would create a new destination.