

Dallas North Estates Neighborhood Action Plan



**Proudly presented by the residents of the Dallas North Estates Neighborhood
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Acknowledgements

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	2-3
Vision Statement	4
Neighborhood Description	5-7
Neighborhood Identity	8-9
Transportation	10-14
Preservation of Neighborhood Trees	15
Parks	16-17
Implementation Matrix	18-21
Appendix A: Dallas North Estates Survey Results	22-28
Appendix B: S.W.O.T. Analysis results	29-30
Appendix C: Map of property owned by St. Marks Church	31

Executive Summary

The Dallas North Estates Neighborhood was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Program because of the challenges facing the area and a demonstrated interest on the part of the residents to improve their neighborhood. In a series of meetings, the Neighborhood Planning Team identified needs and desires of residents with regard to their neighborhood. The team then developed goals and supporting objectives that they hope will help to define the future for Dallas North Estates. The goals contained in the Dallas North Estates Action Plan are:

1. Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of existing residential properties.
2. Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.
3. Preserve neighborhood trees as a part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.
4. Maintain and enhance existing park facilities.

To help achieve these goals, this plan establishes objectives that offer specific courses of action identify the parties responsible for implementation and examine funding and availability. Expected costs to implement this plan are approximately \$7000 from existing budgets and \$55,000 from future bond elections.

Background

Purpose

The Dallas North Estates Neighborhood Action Plan was developed by members of the Dallas North Estates Neighborhood working in conjunction with the City of Plano Neighborhood Planning Program. The purpose of this plan is to define a vision for the future of the neighborhood and to establish goals and objectives for working towards that vision. The Plan utilizes a strategic planning methodology to accomplish this vision through direct revitalization efforts and targeted action plans. The plan is based on the City of Plano Neighborhood Planning program initiated in 1998.

The Planning Process

The Dallas North Estates Neighborhood was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Program because of the challenges facing the area and a demonstrated interest by the residents to improve their neighborhood. The planning effort began in March 2003 and meetings were held biweekly through July 2003 to identify community issues and review the plan's progress.

Community outreach was very important to the planning process; efforts included direct mailings, an e-mail distribution list, hand distribution of flyers and a neighborhood opinion survey. Meeting notices were mailed to lot owners and targeted stakeholders. Neighborhood surveys (please see Appendix A), in both English and Spanish, were distributed to every home, school and church in the neighborhood.

Background
(Continued)

In a series of meetings the Dallas North Estates Neighborhood Planning team met with representatives from City departments to formulate action strategies. Information gathered in these meetings, through the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis (please see Appendix B) and through the survey, was used to help formulate the goals and the proposed strategies contained in this plan.

Vision

Residents of Dallas North Estates neighborhood envision a neighborhood that is **safe, beautiful and clean**. They see a neighborhood that is inviting for families, with good schools and vibrant parks.

Residents want to have a close knit community that **embraces its diversity**.

The vision for Dallas North Estates includes **neat and tidy homes**. Streets are **tree lined** and there is no evidence of trash or graffiti. Traffic travels through the neighborhood in a **safe and respectful** manner.

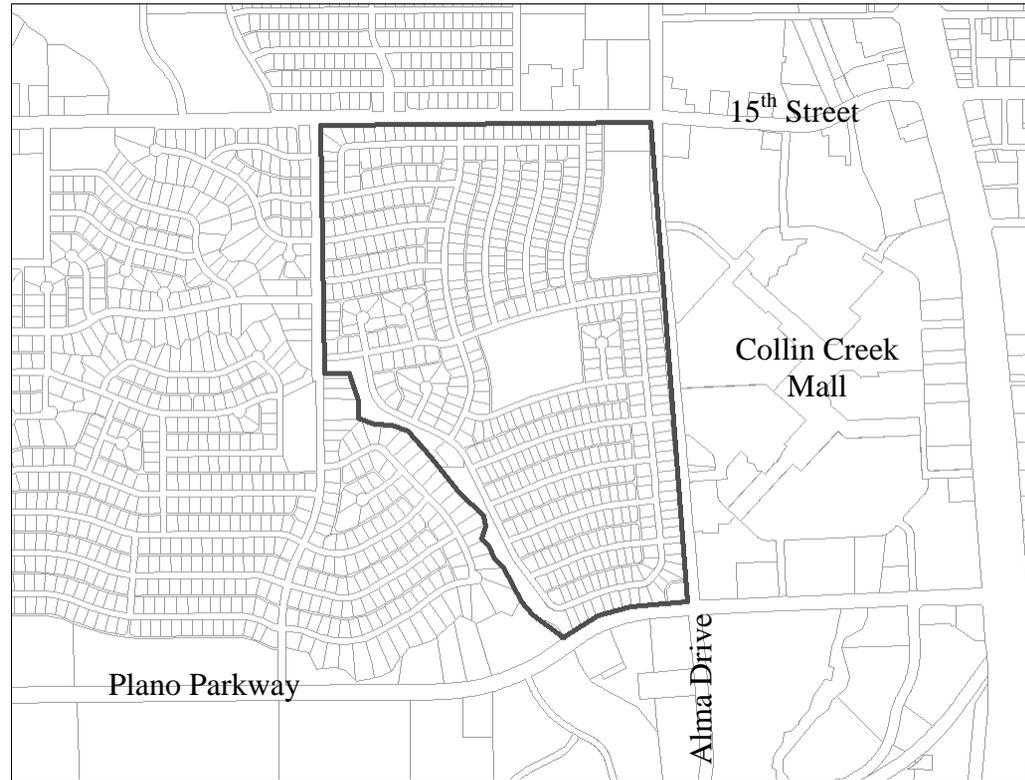
The **parks are clean and safe**, and children can walk safely to them. Kids have sufficient recreational activities and their energies are directed in a positive way.

The vision for Dallas North Estates is one of a **close-knit community** where neighbors help neighbors with an active neighborhood association, and where people volunteer their time and resources to help improve the neighborhood. Members are informed and active in local issues, they help each other out because they know and care for each other, and they are committed to their community.

***Neighborhood
Description***

Land Use and Zoning

The Dallas North Estates Neighborhood is located just west of Collin Creek Mall. The neighborhood is bounded on the north by 15th street, on the south by Plano Parkway, on the west by Westwood Drive and Overland Trail and on the east by Alma Drive (please



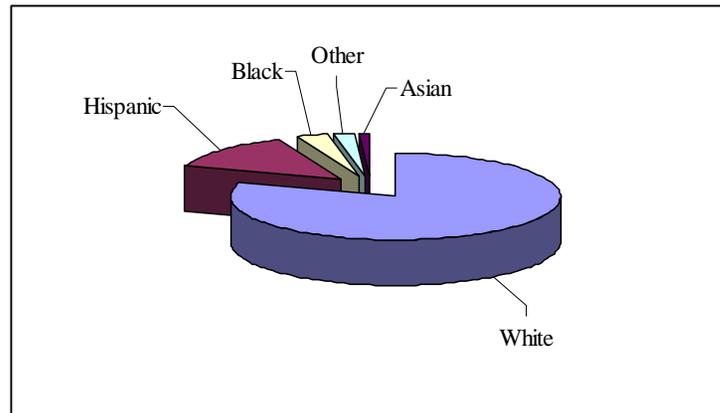
see location map to the right). The neighborhood includes over 570 homes as well as St. Mark's Catholic Church, the Texas Pool and Sigler Elementary School. With the exception of the far northeast corner, which is zoned for General Office (O-2), the Dallas North Estates neighborhood is zoned for single-family residential use (SF-7).

***Neighborhood
Description
(Continued)***

Demographics

Census data for the Dallas North Estates neighborhood reveal some interesting changes occurring in the area. While the number of people living in the neighborhood has remained relatively constant at around 1400, the age structure of the neighborhood has changed significantly. The population of this area, mirroring national trends, is growing older. There are many fewer children in the neighborhood than there were ten and twenty years ago and more people 55 and over.

Homeownership data from the 2000 census shows that 84% of the homes in the neighborhood are owner occupied with the remaining 16% being rental property; this compares favorably with citywide percentages (69% owner occupied, 31% renter occupied). Housing occupancy rates in the neighborhood (97% in the 2000 U.S. Census) have remained higher than the city-wide average of 94%, likely reflecting the growing demand for affordable and entry level housing in Plano.



The neighborhood is home to a more diverse population than ever before (figure 1). There are a greater number of people from different races and ethnicities; today the neighborhood is 80% white, 14% Hispanic, 3% black, 1% Asian and 2% other.

Figure 1: Neighborhood residents represent a wide range of races and ethnicities.

***Neighborhood
Description
(Continued)***

Also remarkable is a \$15,000 drop in median household income from \$68,036 in 1990 to \$53,597 in 2000 (these figures are in 1999 dollars). This change is being driven by two main factors. The first is an increasing number of retirees living in the neighborhood. According to the U.S. Census, between 1990 and 2000 the number of households without wage salary income grew from 8.8% to 12.7%; there was a corresponding increase in the number of household receiving retirement income, from 13.8% to 17.3%. The second is a marked increase in the number of people in the neighborhood living in poverty; the U.S. Census shows that these numbers more than doubled from 2.1% in 1990 to 5.2% in 2000.



Figure 2: Between 1990 and 2000 neighborhood median household income dropped significantly.

Neighborhood Identity

The physical condition of a neighborhood makes a statement about how well the area is cared for; any area that is allowed to fall into disrepair sends a message that that no one cares. Apathy encourages littering, poorly maintained yards, graffiti and eventually more serious crimes. A proactive approach is essential as small problems can quickly grow.

Homes in Dallas North Estates were mostly built during the 1960s and early 1970s and many have been well maintained. However, there are some scattered problems with trash and poorly maintained yards. More stringent code enforcement would encourage better compliance.



Figure 3: Trash and open storage litter a resident's front yard

Other changes in the neighborhood that concern residents include the acquisition of ten houses along Brentwood Drive by St. Mark's Church (please see Appendix C for a map). Any changes in the use of these sites could impact the character of the neighborhood. The neighborhood planning team did contact St. Marks and was informed that the properties are currently being used for a variety of purposes, including ministries, a nunnery, rental homes and for storage. Residents would like to be apprised of any land use changes and be included in the design stages of any construction.

Goal: Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of the existing residential properties.

***Neighborhood
Identity
(Continued)***

Objective: Reduce the number of code violations in the neighborhood by educating residents concerning the most common code violations and advocating strict enforcement of city codes.

Objectives: Enhance code compliance by posting signs to remind residents of bulk trash collection day.

Objective: Deter neighborhood crime by forming a crime watch group.

Objective: Manage change in the neighborhood by maintaining an open dialogue between representatives of St. Mark's Church and residents with regard to any changes/plans to church owned properties on Brentwood Drive.

Objective: Improve recognition of the Dallas North Estates Neighborhood and its boundaries by installing street sign toppers.

Transportation

Transportation is an important element in the health of a neighborhood, adding significantly to the overall livability of the area.

Auto Related

There are a few areas in the Dallas North Estates neighborhood where roads are in poor condition; this is especially true of Janwood Drive which carries a large proportion of the neighborhood traffic. Repaving of this road, which is scheduled in the 2004-2005 CIP budget, will improve automobile travel in the neighborhood.

Additionally, along Springbrook Drive just to the north of the Texas Pool drainage problems regularly result in the formation of a 60' puddle following heavy rain storms, threatening driver safety and causing concern over human health threats from the West Nile Virus which is transmitted by mosquitoes. Other drainage problems exist along Drexel Drive near the intersection with Janwood Drive.

Other traffic related problems in the neighborhood include speeding and people running stop signs. Also, the bushes along Alma and landscaping at 15th and Alma limit visibility when turning.

***Transportation
(Continued)***

The large number of cars parked by the Texas Pool is an ongoing source of conflict in the neighborhood. The pool was built by Hunt Properties in conjunction with the development of the neighborhood approximately 40 years ago. It was originally intended to serve residents of Dallas North Estates and very little vehicle traffic was anticipated. However, neighborhood membership at the pool waned and families from outside the neighborhood were invited to join; as a result vehicle traffic grew tremendously. With no designated parking available people park their cars along Springbrook Drive as well as on the side streets. These vehicles obstruct neighborhood roads and driveways and limit visibility, creating a hazardous environment for pedestrians and children.



Figure 4: Parking congestion around the Texas Pool.

To address resident concerns and try to improve conditions, a meeting was arranged between residents, Texas Pool board members, City of Plano Traffic Engineering, City of Plano Police Department and City of Plano Neighborhood Planning. The meeting was held on June 3, 2003.

Transportation
(Continued)

Because the Texas Pool is surrounded on three sides by Overland Park and on the fourth by Springbrook Drive and homes, there is no room for additional parking. Despite the fact there was no clear cut solution, the stakeholders were able to arrive at an agreement. To summarize:

1. The Texas Pool will post signs encouraging members to comply with Texas traffic laws restricting parking near intersections and stop signs. They will also encourage members to be “good neighbors”.
2. The Neighborhood Police Officer will strictly enforce parking violations in the area.
3. Residents immediately across from the pool may request that the City create a “no parking” zone in front of their homes.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

Some of the many benefits of a pedestrian friendly environment include a feeling of community and connection to the neighborhood, less automobile traffic, and safer streets. Children should be able to walk or ride their bikes safely to and from schools and parks, elderly people should be able to walk to and from mass transit and families should be able to walk comfortably around their neighborhood.

Goal: Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.

***Transportation
(Continued)***

Objective: Ensure streets are well maintained and unobstructed by surveying existing conditions and working with City of Plano Engineering and Public Works to address these concerns.

Objective: Evaluate the landscaping at 15th Street and Alma Drive for sight distance. Ensure the bushes along Alma Drive between 15th Street and Plano Parkway are trimmed to comply with standards established in the City ordinance.



Figure 5: The sidewalk along the southern section of Overland Trail is paved (above left) but the northern section of the trail (above right) is in need of a paved sidewalk.

Objective: Protect the stability and residential character of the neighborhood by working with the City of Plano Safe Streets Program to minimize speed and volume of cut-through traffic.

Objective: Meet with board members of the Texas Pool to mediate a solution to the parking conflicts around the Texas Pool.

Objective: Reduce traffic conflicts along Alma Drive by installing a no U-turn sign along Alma Drive, across from the intersection with Janwood Drive.

Transportation
(Continued)

Objective: Make street identification easier by installing advance street notification signs for Janowood Drive and MeadowCrest Drive.

Objective: Oakhill drive and Northridge Drive are dimly lit. Ensure that street lighting meets minimum City standards.

***Preservation of
Neighborhood
Trees***

Just as streets, sidewalks, public buildings and recreational facilities are a part of a community's infrastructure, so are neighborhood trees. Trees -- and, collectively, the urban forest -- are important capital assets that require care and maintenance just as other property does.

Goal: Preserve neighborhood trees as a part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.



Figure 6: One of the many tree-lined streets in the neighborhood.

Objective: Consult with the City of Plano Urban Forester. Educate residents on tree preservation by inviting the Urban Forester to present strategies for tree maintenance and preservation.

Objective: Several trees in the center median along Westwood Drive between Janwood Drive and Carmel Drive have died and/or fallen. Assess the health of the remaining trees and consider replacing them with a more suitable species.

Objective: Maintain the existing tree canopy by replacing dead or dying trees. Obtain funding to offset the cost of buying trees by participating in the Keep Plano Beautiful Beautification Matching Grant Program or Plano Parks Foundation Matching Grant Program.

Parks

The neighborhood is close to both Overland Trail and Westwood Park. These parks are well utilized and highly valued by the residents. The trail running from Plano Parkway through the park stops and does not continue north of the Texas Pool; continuation of the paved surface would improve usability of the trail. Further, the neighborhood would benefit from a better connection to the rest of Plano's system of hike and bike trails. Currently, this access is limited by poor connections across 15th street and Alma Drive. Finally, the provision of additional lighting along Overland Park would create a greater sense of security during evening hours.

Goal: Maintain and enhance existing park facilities.

Objective: Ensure that the path through Overland Trail is well lighted; install additional lighting where necessary.

Objective: Ensure that residents have a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection to the City of Plano Hike and Bike trails by improving the pedestrian crossings at Alma Drive and 15th Street and completing the pathway along the west side of Springbrook Drive between the Texas Pool and 15th Street.



Figure 7: Overland Trail (top) and Westwood Park (bottom)

Parks

(Continued)

Objective: Enhance use of Overland Trail with the provision of picnic tables and trash bins. Remove the old grill to the south of the Texas Pool.

Objective: Encourage compliance with the City ordinance requiring the collection of dog debris by posting signs along Overland Trail.

Objective: Support the planned addition of facilities geared towards teenagers to the City of Plano Parks system, even if these facilities are in another neighborhood.



Figure 8: The addition of picnic benches to Overland Trail has enhanced the neighborhood.

Dallas North Estates Neighborhood Action Plan: Implementation Matrix

Neighborhood Identity	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of the existing residential properties.		
Objective: Reduce the number of code violations in the neighborhood by educating residents concerning the most common code violations and advocating strict enforcement of city codes.	Residents/City of Plano Property Standards and Police Departments	Staff Time
Objective: Enhance code compliance by posting signs to remind residents of bulk trash collection day.	Residents/City of Plano Neighborhood Planning	Approximately \$30/sign
Objective: Deter neighborhood crime by forming a neighborhood watch group.	Residents/City of Plano Police Department	Staff Time
Objective: Manage change in the neighborhood by maintaining an open dialogue between representatives of St. Mark’s Church and residents about any changes to properties on Brentwood Drive.	Residents/St. Mark’s representatives	None
Objective: Improve recognition of the Dallas North Estates Neighborhood and its boundaries by installing street sign toppers.	City of Plano Neighborhood Services	Signs toppers–approximately \$1600 from existing Neighborhood Planning budget

Transportation	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.		
Objective: Ensure that streets are well maintained and unobstructed by surveying existing conditions and working with City of Plano Engineering and Public Works Departments to address these concerns.	Residents/City of Plano Engineering/City of Plano Public Works	Existing Budgets
Objective: Evaluate the landscaping at 15 th Street and Alma for sight distance. Ensure that the bushes along Alma between 15 th street and Plano Parkway are trimmed to comply with standards established in the City ordinance.	City of Plano Traffic Engineering	Staff time
Objective: Protect the stability and residential character of the neighborhood by working with the City of Plano Safe Streets program to minimize the speed and volume of cut-through traffic.	City of Plano Transportation Engineering	Staff Time
Objective: Meet with board members of the Texas Pool to mediate a solution to the parking conflicts around the Texas Pool	Residents/City of Plano Traffic Engineering/City of Plano Police Department/City of Plano Neighborhood Planning	Staff Time
Objective: Reduce traffic conflicts along Alma Drive by installing a no U-turn sign along Alma, across from the intersection with Janwood Drive.	City of Plano Traffic Engineering	Existing Budgets
Objective: Make street identification easier by installing advance street notification signs for Janowood Drive and MeadowCrest Drive.	City of Plano Traffic Engineering	Existing Budgets
Objective: Oakhill drive and Northridge Drive are dimly lit. Ensure that street lighting meets minimum City standards.	City of Plano Engineering	Staff time/\$1715 per light

Preservation of Neighborhood Trees	Responsible Parties	Cost
<p>Goal: To preserve neighborhood trees as part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.</p>		
<p>Objective: Consult with the City of Plano Urban Forester. Educate residents on tree preservation by inviting the City of Plano Urban Forester to present strategies for tree maintenance and preservation.</p>	Residents/City of Plano Parks Department	Staff Time
<p>Objective: Several trees in the center median along Westwood Drive between Janwood Drive and Carmel Drive have died and/or fallen. Assess the health of the remaining trees and consider replacing them with a more suitable plant.</p>	Residents/City of Plano Parks Department	Staff Time
<p>Objective: Maintain the existing tree canopy by replacing dead or dying trees. Obtain funding to offset the cost of buying trees by participating in the Keep Plano Beautiful Beautification Matching Grant Program or Plano Parks Foundation Matching Grant Program.</p>	Residents	Existing Budgets

Area Parks	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Maintain and enhance existing park facilities.		
Objective: Ensure that the path through Overland Trail is well lighted; install additional lighting where necessary.	Residents/ City of Plano Parks Maintenance	Approximately \$20,000 (Future bond election)
Objective: Ensure that residents have a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection to the City of Plano Hike and Bike trails by improving the crossings at Alma Drive and 15 th Street and completing the pathway along the west side of Springbrook Drive between the Texas Pool and 15 th Street.	Residents/ City of Plano Parks Department/City of Plano Traffic Engineering	Approximately \$35,000 (Future bond election)
Objective: Enhance use of Overland Trail with the provision of picnic tables, and trash bins. Remove the old grill to the south of the Texas Pool.	City of Plano Parks Department	Approximately \$5,000 (Existing budget)
Objective: Encourage compliance with the City ordinance requiring the collection of dog debris by posting signs along Overland Trail.	City of Plano Parks Department	Existing budget
Objective: Support the planned addition of facilities geared towards teenagers to the City of Plano Parks system, even if these facilities are in another neighborhood	City of Plano Parks Department	N/A

Appendix A

The following survey was sent to every home in the Dallas North Estates study area. One hundred and ninety one surveys were received in back, a response rate of 34%. The results are summarized below:

1. How do you travel?

Auto- 98%

Bicycle – 14%

DART Light Rail – 9%

Bus / mass transit – 2%

Walk – 29%

2. Are there transportation or traffic problems in your neighborhood?

Yes – 64%

No – 36%

If so, what are the problems?

Speeding

need street lights

Parking on both sides of the street

red light runners

Need bike trails

loud cars

Need traffic lights

people making u-turns on Janwood Drive

Appendix A
(Continued)

3. What would increase your desire to walk/cycle?

Improved lighting – 59%

Pedestrian/bicycle paths – 34%

Speed bumps – 15%

Sidewalks – 16%

Pedestrian Crosswalks – 13%

3. Mark the appropriate box:

A. It is convenient for me to get around on DART

Strongly Agree – 5%

Agree – 37%

Disagree – 22%

Strongly Disagree – 12%

No answer – 24%

B. Crime is a serious problem in my neighborhood:

Strongly Agree – 14%

Agree – 25%

Disagree – 44%

Strongly Disagree – 8%

No answer – 9%

Appendix A
(Continued)

C. The Neighborhood Police Officer has been an asset to our neighborhood:

Strongly Agree – 15%

Agree – 37%

Disagree – 9%

Strongly Disagree – 8%

No answer – 32%

D. City government is responsive to our needs as a neighborhood:

Strongly Agree – 8%

Agree – 51%

Disagree – 16%

Strongly Disagree – 6%

No answer – 19%

E. Overall my neighborhood is clean:

Strongly Agree – 6%

Agree – 78%

Disagree – 9%

Strongly Disagree – 6%

No answer – 1%

Appendix A
(Continued)

5. Do parks in your area meet your recreational needs?

Yes – 71%

No – 20%

No answer - 9%

6. On average, how often do you visit a park?

Daily – 13%

Weekly – 30%

Once/month – 11%

Few times/year – 33%

Never – 9%

Other – 2%

No answer – 2%

Appendix A
(Continued)

7. What do you like best about your neighborhood?

Friends/neighbors	Close to shopping
Quiet	Lived here all my life
Cleanliness	Good Streets
Nature	Close to schools
Safe	Established

8. What three improvements would you most like to see in your neighborhood?

Better lighting
Home improvements
More police
Cleaner
Speed bumps
Sidewalks
Reduce loud vehicles

Appendix A
(Continued)

9. In Plano, some home occupations, such as construction, auto repair, and landscape services are prohibited. Have you noticed any of these businesses operating out of peoples homes?

Yes – 22%

No – 75%

No answer – 3%

10. What types of crime concern you in your neighborhood?

Auto theft – 29%

Burglary – 65%

Drugs – 29%

Juvenile crime – 48%

Prostitution – 3%

Rape – 9%

Vandalism – 46%

Appendix A
(Continued)

11. How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

Less than one year – 5%

One to five years – 19%

Six to ten years – 10%

More than ten years -65%

Don't know – 0%

No answer – 1%

12. What is your present housing situation?

Own – 97%

Rent – 3%

13. How many wage earners are there in your household?

Full-time – 67%

Part-time – 15%

Retired – 12%

None – 5%

No answer – 1%

Appendix B

On March 25, 2003 over 40 residents met with Neighborhood Planning staff to complete a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis for the Dallas North Estates neighborhood. The results are below:

Strengths

Longevity/Maturity
Good schools and parks
Trees
Pride of ownership
Limited growth
Good location
Close to shopping and restaurants
Access to highways

Weaknesses

Lack of code enforcement
Poor lighting
Lack of neighborhood pride
Bad landlords who don't maintain their property
No neighborhood news letter
Vacant stores
Alleys need to be cleaned up
Us/Them mentality
Speeding
Deterioration/blight
Streets need repair / Fix sidewalks
More places for children to play

***Appendix B
(Continued)***

Opportunities

Getting to know all the neighbors

Block party

Good schools

Better paved streets

Bus running to the light rail station

Threats

Diversity

Crime

Multiple families living in one house

Lower incomes vs. higher taxes and ownership costs

Homes being converted to rental property

Appendix C

