



» PART ONE OF A TWO-PART SERIES

RENAISSANCE

IN ITS EARLIEST DAYS, FORT WORTH'S VERY EXISTENCE DEPENDED ON IT. THEN, THROUGH THE YEARS, THE CITY GRADUALLY TURNED ITS COLLECTIVE BACK ON THE NATURAL RESOURCE FROM WHICH IT HAD SPRUNG. AFTER THE FLOODS OF 1949 SHOWED US THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF A RIVER UNABATED, A SYSTEM OF LEVEES WERE BUILT TO PROTECT US FROM IT—AND ALL BUT CLOSED THE DOOR TO ANY REAL RELATIONSHIP.

STORY BY MELINDA KAITCER

In the past 30 years, the Trinity River and its tributaries became just something to be crossed over to get somewhere. Now, with a complex master plan known as the Trinity River Vision, Fort Worth has joined hands to bring its river back to its rightful place — at the center of Fort Worth's heart—to create an exciting new opportunity for the city's diverse population and its visitors to live, work and play in new ways. Showcasing

our richest natural amenity, the many developments that have sprung from the Trinity River Vision will connect the people and places of Fort Worth as never before.

"When I talk to people about this project, I say it is the kind of thing that transforms a city," said U.S. Congresswoman and former Fort Worth Mayor Kay Granger. "People come from all over the nation to see what we have done

with our downtown and what a tremendous difference it has made. This river project will be of that magnitude, if not bigger."

"What began as a tiny seed of an idea gradually grew into a mighty tree with many branches that blossomed and grew in amazing ways," said George Shannon, president of the board of directors, Tarrant Water District. "Everyone who got involved became excited about a



OF A RIVER

whole new set of possibilities.”

As these possibilities took root and grew into reality, downtown development and redevelopment blossomed into corporate campuses of former Tandy siblings Pier 1 Imports and RadioShack. These plans led the way for development on the impending 50-acre Town Lake, a new Central City development featuring a waterfront area that extends from 7th Street to Main for retail, recreation, and other mixed public use; The Tower, a new, uptown residential high-rise created from the former BankOne building; and the redevelopment of the 7th Street Montgomery Wards into Montgomery Plaza, which will bring groceries, retail and necessary

conveniences within easy reach of downtown residents.

Meanwhile, according to Tarrant Regional Water District General Manager Jim Oliver, the Water District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Streams and Valleys have been hard at work on the river details that will bring the Trinity River Vision to reality. In addition to construction of the dam that will create the town lake, the plan includes open space beautification and restoration of nearly 5,000 acres of green space and neighborhood linkages that will effectively connect all quadrants of the city to the river — and to each other. This, Oliver said, will include doubling the Trinity Trail System to 60 miles and increasing

the trailheads to 32. A number of other recreational amenities include canoe chutes, a whitewater course and pedestrian bridges.

“Fort Worth is about to receive a facelift that will make it one of Texas’ most attractive places to live, work and play,” said Wendy Shabay, AICP, project manager of planning/urban design at Gideon Toal, the Fort Worth-based architectural firm coordinating the implementation of the Trinity River Vision master plan.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Granger said when she read that the Water District and Streams and Valleys were working on this master plan with the Corps of

Engineers and were asking for public input, she talked to them about a vision she had had when she was mayor—to widen and deepen the river and connect downtown with the Stockyards.

“We were only looking at the flood control issues at first,” said Oliver. “The levees had been in place for 30 years or so, and we wanted to make sure they were still the best flood control measure. We had also been quietly working with Streams and Valleys to build a trail system for recreational use, and adding some landscaping and benches and other amenities to create easier access to the river easier and make its natural green spaces more attractive. During these public meetings we were surprised to

realize how many people actually used the river for recreation — runners, walkers, cyclists, equestrians, rowers, skiers, kayakers, fishermen and nature enthusiasts of all kinds. During meetings with these groups we realized our opportunity to draw together the neighborhoods of the city using the river as a recreational focal point.”

» When I talk to people about this project, I say it is the kind of thing that transforms a city. People come from all over the nation to see what we have done with our downtown and what a tremendous difference it has made. This river project will be of that magnitude, if not bigger.

U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN KAY GRANGER

The ensuing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Study, technically called the Upper Trinity River Feasibility Study, was ordered. This study's purpose was to evaluate the levee system as a floodwater control measure and to determine the feasibility of digging a bypass channel that would eliminate the need for the levees, building a dam to create a town lake and maintain optimum river flow and water levels, creation of an 8-mile “to the water's edge” waterfront, and construction of a bridge and street realignment to provide the infrastructure to accommodate this comprehensive urban redesign.

From this study and input gathered in the public meetings, the Trinity River Master Planning Process began in 2001. The master plan encompassed 88 miles of river and its tributaries, Clear Fork, West Fork, Mary's Creek, Marine Creek and Sycamore Creek — natural connection of all four quadrants of the city. Expert consultants on waterfront developments from all over the nation were brought in, and conceptual plans were presented in another series of public meetings in January 2002.

“The public support for this project was enormous from the very beginning,” said Granger. “I think that is partially because people in Fort Worth have long recognized that the river has great possibilities. They love the idea because water is a huge attraction that creates a great quality of life. Another key to the public support is that it's not that complicated — it's easy to see and understand the benefits. All the work that has been done on the river up to now has been for flood control. They

built those giant levees on either side that keep us from really relating to the river. The elimination of those levees will provide us with a relationship with that body of water we have never before had.”

Although the projected time span for completion is 20 years, results are already visible on the RadioShack and Pier One campuses, work well underway on The Tower and a variety of other residential and mixed-use developments, rezoning approved for Montgomery Plaza's mixed use development that projects a Super Target opening date of summer 2005, and the first of the Class I trailheads complete on White Settlement Road.

RADIOSHACK AND PIER 1 ON THE WATER'S EDGE

The new corporate home of Pier 1 Imports is situated on the site of the former Calvary Cathedral demolished in the city's 2000 tornado. Rising from the razed site is a new broad-shouldered landmark of glass and gray granite. Tracking completion with its sprawling former sister company just across the way, the decision by these two local corporate power houses to build their new homes at the water's edge was a deciding factor in funding and rapid forward progress of the Trinity River Vision.

NEW PIER ON THE TRINITY

“What is happening is a rare instance of many visions coming together at once,” said Jim Noack, director of architecture and project manager for the new Pier 1 headquarters. “No other city in the country can claim this kind of expansion, a singular project that incorporates what is, in the long run, a great opportunity for the city, the private sector, downtown, urban living, the cultural district and our Trinity River. The Pier 1 and RadioShack projects are the first big steps in creating a link between downtown and the other key parts of the city like the arts district and the parks, not to mention what it does to expand the downtown core.”



» PIER 1
The building's internal illumination will create a soft, ethereal glow that complements the skyline even as it makes its own statement of innovation and change.

» Trinity River Master Plan

In addition to reclaiming one of Fort Worth's most under-appreciated amenities, the Trinity River Vision seeks to reinvent the area through a series of landmark projects. The proposed waterfront will cover at least eight miles – wider in some areas – as compared to the three miles of river walk in San Antonio.



To Stockyards District

Mercado

Marine Creek

Samuels Avenue

Northside Drive

TRWD

Oakwood Cemetery

Samuels Ave. Neighborhood

LaGrave Field

North Main Street

White Settlement Extension

North Fork Bypass Channel

Trinity Bluffs

Urban Lake

Henderson Street

RadioShack

Downtown

South of 7th

Pier 1

7th Street

Trinity Park



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Pier 1 broke ground for its new home in January 2003, and construction is scheduled for completion in fall 2004. The resulting 460,000-square-foot, \$90 million structure would optimize its 15-acre riverfront site with a series of layered jackets of tempered glass rising 20 stories to create an imposing yet elegant landmark at the new western edge of downtown.

“We have created a building that takes advantage of all of the spectacular views that Fort Worth has to offer views,” Noack said.

Marvin Girouard, chairman and chief executive officer of Pier 1 Imports, said, “The new corporate headquarters will be a landmark structure for the city of Fort Worth

» Showcasing our richest natural amenity, the many developments that have sprung from the Trinity River Vision will connect the people and places of Fort Worth as never before.

and home to one of the nation’s largest specialty retailers,” he says.

WITH A NEW ‘SHACK RIGHT NEXT DOOR

“It’s oddly appropriate that Pier 1 and RadioShack, both old Tandy companies, would be here together in this time at this place to help drive the momentum of this huge redevelopment project by opening brand new corporate campuses side by side on this great river,” said Girouard. “As a city we have turned our back on this wonderful amenity for so long, it is very exciting that it will be at the center of the redevelopment vision — and that we can be part of helping move that along.”

RadioShack broke ground in its new corporate campus in April 2003. Since then, activity has been non-stop, both on the construction site and internally, to ready themselves for this change that promises to enhance what they do extremely

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well. "Right now we're in two 30-year-old buildings and a 13-year-old tech center separated by a mall, built for a completely different purpose and a completely different time," said Nina Petty, RadioShack vice president of



VIRTUAL REALITY / The planning for RadioShack Corporation's new corporate headquarters included a functioning prototype of the new spaces whereby teams could temporarily "office" in order to offer feedback that helped to refine space programming, work styles, furniture solutions, and environment.

corporate real estate.

Petty said that although RadioShack has been very successful in spite of the physical limitations of their workspaces, the new campus will provide a much more functional environment. "Our business depends upon teamwork, collaboration and communication," she said, "and our new environment will make us more nimble — with faster decisions, greater 'plug-and-play' flexibility,

and enhanced overall teamwork and awareness so that we can provide even better support for our merchandisers, field operations and more than 7,000 retail stores."

To facilitate an easier transition and to help with programming spaces for optimum productivity, RadioShack created an idea lab — a functioning prototype of the new office environment.

Various team members were recruited to temporarily work in the space to offer feedback that helped refine space programming, work styles, furniture solutions and environment. "Every home office team member will have had an opportunity to visit and interact with the new office environment of the Idea Lab before we move to the new campus," said Bill Knotts, RadioShack senior director of corporate real estate.

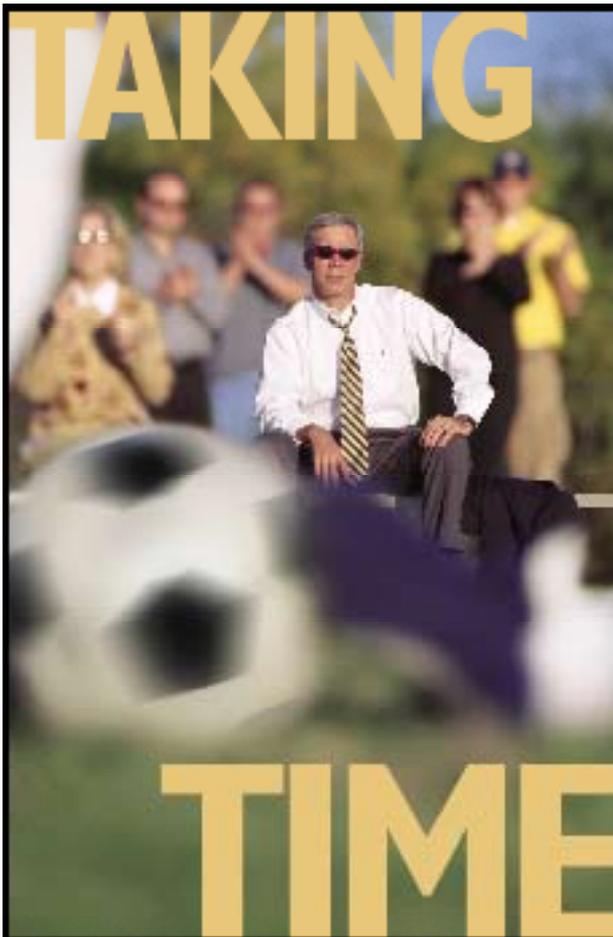
"We are committed to a campus that brings departments closer together to create a natural work flow," said Len Roberts, chairman and chief executive officer of RadioShack

Corporation. "Our new campus is an integral part of our business strategy. In fact, I'd say it *is* strategy, because more than being our new home office, it's going to be home to a new work culture that is singularly focused on Thinking Customers First."

Whereas the old RadioShack facility had 14 different

» What is happening here in Fort Worth is a rare instance of many visions coming together at once.

JIM NOACK, DIRECTOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE NEW PIER 1 HEADQUARTERS.



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entrances and little opportunity for casual interaction, the new campus will be more centralized and open, geared throughout for collaboration and communication, Petty said. "The new campus design, driven by Len Roberts' vision of 'bringing my family together,' has just two doors — a door to downtown and a door to the river. When you enter you walk down 'main street' to get to the offices. There will be greater daily interaction between people who now never even see each other."

Design of the new campus is also in strict accordance with the LEEDS program, said Knotts. This is an environmental designation that

» They built those giant levees on either side that keep us from really relating to the river. The elimination of those levees will provide us with a relationship with that body of water we have never before had."

addresses air quality, lighting, energy and conservation of natural resources. "Taking care of the environment is just a matter of being a good corporate citizen," Knotts said.

LANDMARK REDEVELOPMENT

With zoning approved to change the old Montgomery Ward's site from industrial to a mixed-use development, the plans moved us a giant step closer to being the first city in the state to bring a major grocery store — SuperTarget, no less — into a downtown setting, said David Pettit, senior vice president and director of urban development for GideonToal. "This exciting new development will also bring a home improvement store, additional retail space, offices and apartments to the area," Pettit said.

The plan calls for cutting a roadway through the façade at the front of the old Montgomery Ward's store, Pettit explained. The old facility is two separate buildings connected by a 40-foot façade, and the drive-through will meet SuperTarget's



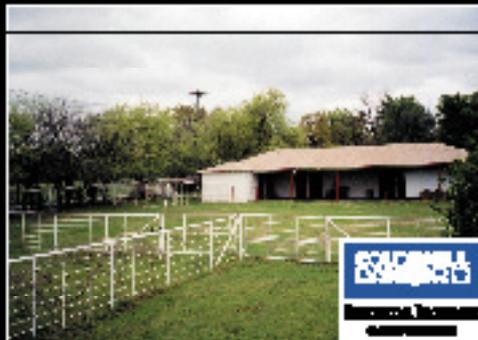
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» Pettit said he estimates the retail portion of the Montgomery Plaza development will bring at least 1,000 new jobs to the underemployed central city area.

requirements for street visibility and access. If things go as planned, developers say the SuperTarget will open in July 2005 and the rest of the stores will open in November 2005.

“John Weber [project designer] is very excited at this opportunity to be a pioneer to bring a SuperTarget into an urban area in the southwest,” Pettit said. “Because of density and cost of land that is usually not even possible. We have worked hard with the city to make this happen as part of the overall economic development package—bringing affordable goods to support downtown living and creating jobs for the Central City area.”

“By partnering with Central City developers and helping move these deals forward, we will continually revitalize the area between Sundance Square and the Cultural District,” said Fort Worth City Councilmember Wendy Davis in her address to an October 2003 meeting of the Affiliated Business of the Cultural District (ABCD). “These things don’t happen by themselves — they take a lot of work and a lot of vision.”

A development challenge in its complexity as well as its historical significance, the Montgomery Ward’s property, many theorize, was just waiting for the right person to bring the deal together. Last year the city approved the amendment of a two-year-old request to the federal government for a \$2 million Brownfield grant to address the environmental concerns at the site and to seek a \$13 million low-interest U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development economic redevelopment loan.

Davis said Weber was concerned at first about the site, trying to do a “big box” design in the middle of Central City. “But he listened and he came back with a plan that was conservative and creative and allowed us to save a wonderful old building — and to create a mixed-use development with retail that fits within the historic preservation context of the site.”

By cutting the archway through the façade, Pettit said, it opens up six sides of the building for retail storefronts, bringing more than 100,000 square feet of retail space to the development. Pettit said he estimates the retail portion of the Montgomery Plaza development will bring at least 1,000 new jobs to the underemployed central city area.

“John Weber understands that this 45 acres is a very special piece of land that is very important to the people of this city for all kinds of reasons,” Pettit said. “In striving to create an urban village, he knows it must be high mixed-use and, above all, be a very special place that honors the historic significance of the site.”

COMING NEXT MONTH:

A river walk to rival San Antonio, 50-acre urban lake and a waterway to connect the Stockyards, downtown, and the Cultural District. ■