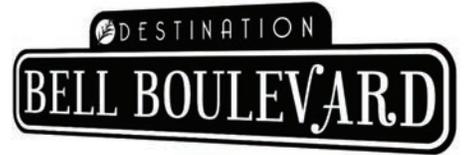
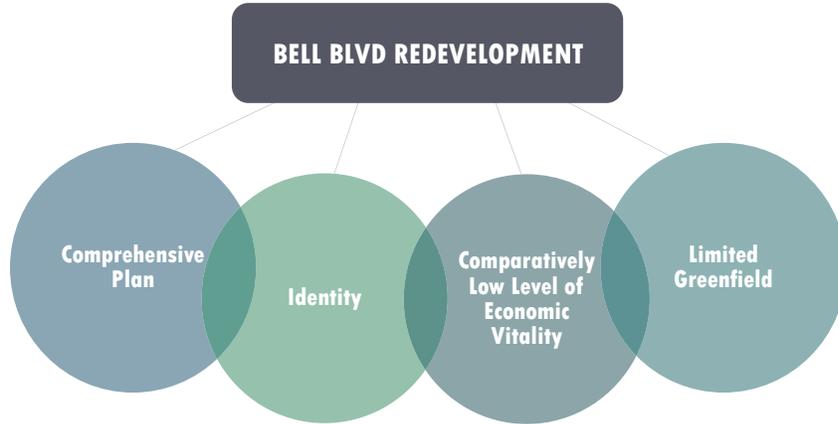


# Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Study



## WHY REDEVELOP?



## WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

### WHO IS INVOLVED?



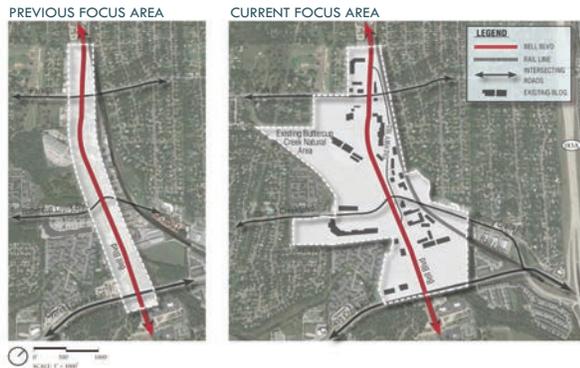
## WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

### GOALS



**Austin Title**

Where Austin Closes



INCREASES  
PROPERTY  
VALUES



INCREASES  
RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT



ENHANCES  
QUALITY  
OF LIFE

## Bell Blvd. Improvement Survey Draws Feedback

by Stephen Burnett March 18, 2015

### Planners mull various ways to redevelop corridor

Drivers on Bell Boulevard south of Whitestone Boulevard often encounter heavy traffic. But business owners say poor visibility and limited road access keeps the same commuters from finding them. But in November, Cedar Park leaders and hired consultants began promoting the Destination: Bell Boulevard redevelopment study. Organizers are using a series of public meetings, social media, letters and a new website—[www.destinationbellblvd.com](http://www.destinationbellblvd.com)—to ask the community about the challenges on Bell and to assess the Bell corridor's viability as a potential destination district in Cedar Park. The study could find ways for Bell to be a district that better reflects Cedar Park's identity, said Katherine Caffrey, Cedar Park director of community affairs.

"People drive through Bell; they don't go there for a purpose," Caffrey said. "How do you balance this desire to have an area of the community that is a destination—a place you want to go eat dinner, a place you go to work, a place you want to shop—with the [driver] mobility? ... We are working to find that balance between mobility and accessibility while still allowing that development to be a vibrant community."

### Starting a conversation

The Destination: Bell Boulevard study is not the first analysis of the corridor's challenges. The city's previous Bell Boulevard studies emphasized ways the corridor could be beautified. In April 2013 a consultant firm performed a study and proposed new development standards and traffic-calming measures on Bell. But Cedar Park City Council took no action on the proposal.

Caffrey said the concept of reimagining Bell returned to city planners' attention because of the updated city comprehensive plan, which City Council approved in November. She said discussion about the plan—which outlines the city's long-term development goals and potential zoning for Cedar Park—includes residents' desire for a community meeting place. "Community members really wanted to see something unique about Cedar Park," she said. "We heard, 'Bell Boulevard is old Cedar Park, which is great, but it doesn't look as fresh and [as] revitalized as other areas.' Then we just merged those [suggestions]."

In November, City Council approved a new committee, the Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Project Working Group, which is tasked with supervising the new study. The previous Bell studies were limited to the corridor and did not include nearby areas. Caffrey said the current study is more comprehensive because it focuses on an area located mostly between Park Street and Cypress Creek Road, and includes a wider focus on nearby

sites such as the undeveloped Buttercup Creek Nature Preserve.

But before finalizing plans city planners want to include community input at the beginning, middle and end of a potential redevelopment process, Caffrey said. A Jan. 28 public workshop to seek community input drew about 200 participants. The city will host a second meeting at 6 p.m. April 7, at the former Ace Hardware at 200 S. Bell Blvd., Ste. D, to share redevelopment options.

City planners hired consulting firm Design Workshop to assist with the project. At the Jan. 28 meeting, consultant Rebecca Leonard asked attendees about their perceptions of Bell. The city also sent letters to about 750 Bell property owners and businesses. "We wanted to make sure we had good representation," Leonard said.

### Corridor priorities

Workshop attendees voiced their top priorities for any changes to Bell, such as promoting existing shops and adding new businesses, improving access to businesses from the roadway and making better use of nearby green space. Some speakers said they wanted a road that is less of a business hodgepodge and more of a unique introduction to Cedar Park for the approximately 40,000 vehicles that drive on Bell daily, according to the city.

Resident Albert Lowenstein said he is more concerned about improving Bell as a traffic corridor than developing the area as a Cedar Park attraction. As a city newcomer who moved to Cedar Park mainly for a less expensive home, Lowenstein said he cannot identify with the city's image and history the way longer-term residents can.

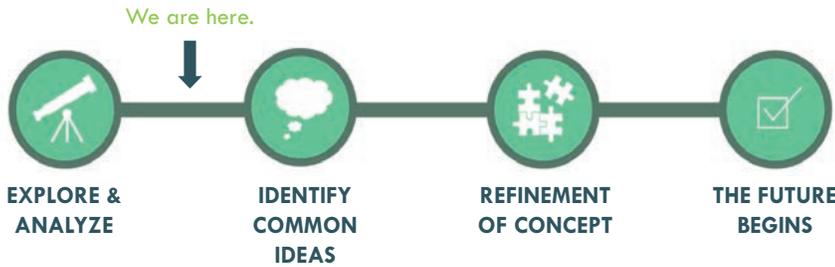
Lowenstein said he commutes to Austin and finds Bell over-congested, especially during rush hour. But after the meeting he said he felt more open to the concept of promoting Bell as a unique Cedar Park destination. "I also came in here anticipating a lot of preconceived notions about making Bell a destination," Lowenstein said. "Despite the protestations that there aren't any [notions], there are."

Business owner Paul Fuller said he attended the Jan. 28 workshop because he wants to help Bell businesses. Poor locations and restricted entrances cause some startup restaurants and shops to close, Fuller said. "I would make [Bell] more of a Fredericksburg or Gruene type of feel," he said. "Then [add] parks and [places] to walk around the creek."

Jackie Washington, co-owner of The Sweet Shack, located at 200 S. Bell Blvd., Ste. F2, said she would like to see Bell become a destination attraction that appeals to more visitors. "Forty thousand cars are going by my business," she said. "Just a fraction of those [stopping by] would be wonderful."

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

# TIMELINE



## Redevelopment options

At the April 7 meeting city planners and consultants will present three early versions of possible ways Bell could be reconfigured.

Caffrey said the city could leave Bell similar to as it is, with an assortment of crowded businesses. Another option would move the roadway further east from businesses, yielding more space to the west for redevelopment that could include smaller side roads and increase accessibility to businesses. A third option would split Bell into two one-way streets.

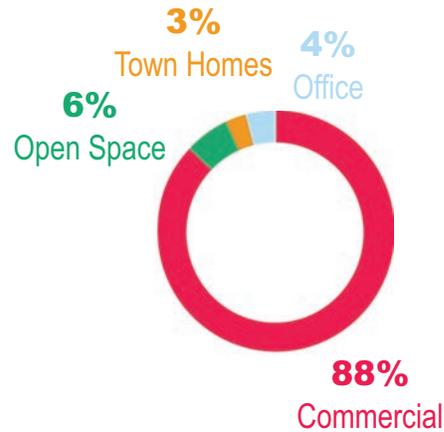
Planners will then explore possible methods to fund improvements, Caffrey said. Any funding from a general obligation bond would be decided by a City Council-appointed bond task force committee. Improvements could also be funded by tax increment reinvestment zones—which use tax revenue increases from a property to pay for the redevelopment—or new partnerships with private investors.

The idea of city redevelopment can spur controversy, she said, but most people have expressed curiosity about the study and possible redevelopment.

“Redeveloping Bell Boulevard and investing in that area will actually improve conditions for the whole community,” Caffrey said. “We’ve pulled together a process that is comprehensive [and] that attempts to gather input and feedback from people in a variety of ways.”

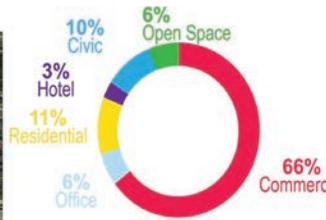
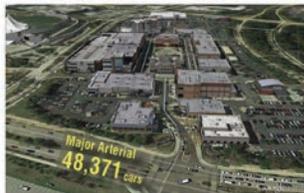
WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

EXISTING LAND USE



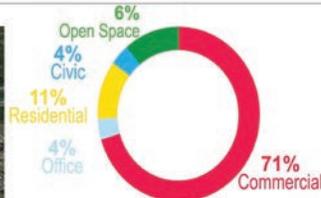
WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The Woodlands, Texas



Source: The Woodlands Development Company

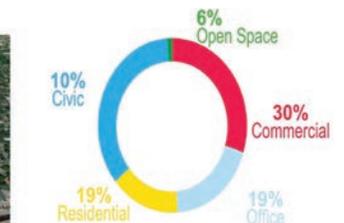
Hill Country Galleria - Bee Cave, Texas



Source: Google Earth

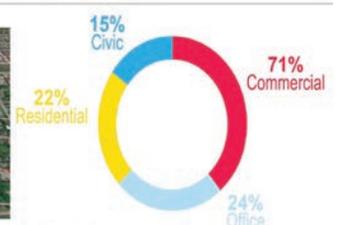
WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Georgetown, Texas



Source: Williamson County Tax Assessor Data

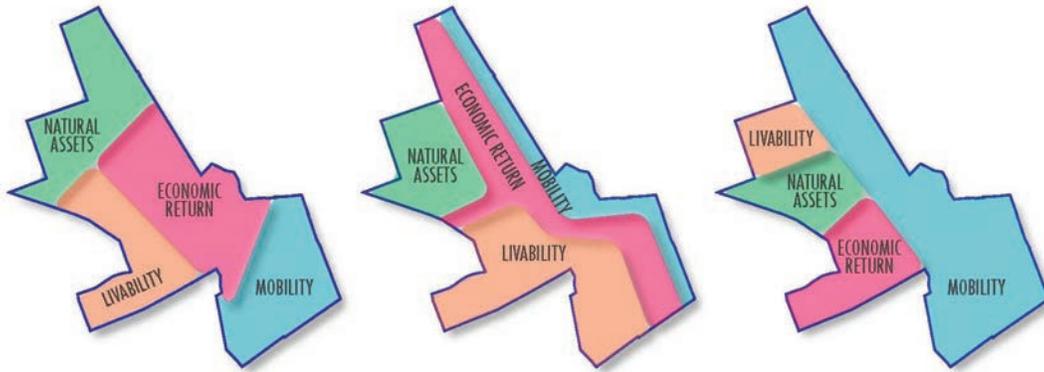
Grapevine, Texas



Source: Tarrant County Tax Assessor Data, Google Earth

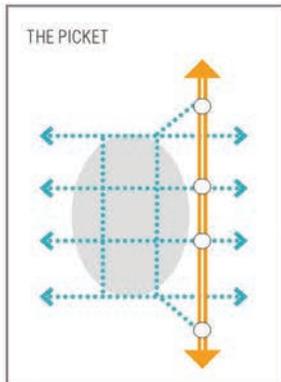
## WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

# BALANCING THE GOALS IN THE CONTEXT OF BELL BLVD.

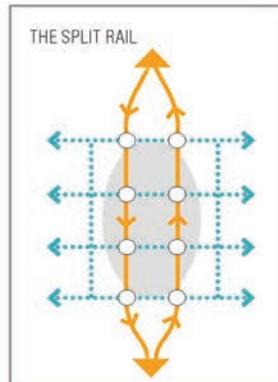


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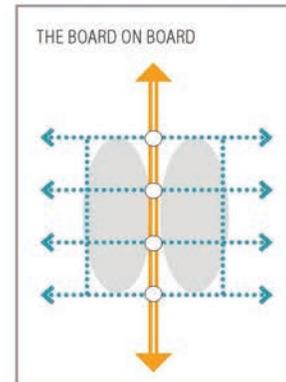
# ALTERNATIVES



Transparent Buffer



Intertwined Affordable



Single Purpose Barrier



Information provided by KATHERINE CAFFREY



DESTINATION BELL BOULEVARD  
Bell Boulevard Redevelopment Study

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