

Perspectives

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The Best Business Address in North Texas

North Texas has evolved over the last 50 years from a mid-size metropolitan area known for the Dallas Cowboys, oil, banking, and limited business diversity, into a dynamic, world-renowned, and diverse global business center. With a growing population of nearly seven million people, urban sprawl has been rampant, covering an area of 9,000 square miles in the 12-county area, which is home to approximately 150 cities. There are many reasons for the sprawl, but schools, cheap land, and the desire for a specific community have been the major drivers. The emergence of our various cultures and communities are perhaps the greatest change in North Texas. Mass transit (DART) is now key to Transit-Oriented Development or "TOD," which is the fast-growing trend of compact, walkable communities centered on high-quality train systems and are a major driver of mixed-use developments. This burgeoning trend makes it possible to live without complete dependence on a car for mobility and survival.

As companies and their employees have immigrated from all over the world, we see new cultures cropping up all over. Urban infill is now competing with urban sprawl. Drive times are just too long, and many are choosing to move closer to the workplace.

Nearly all corporations have a specific brand and culture they look for while aligning business and real estate strategies with forward-thinking initiatives. Employee attraction and retention are huge drivers for entities as they look for communities within North Texas that are consistent with their corporate brand and culture. There are now four generations in the workplace to take into consideration. Previously addressed in our white paper on Generations, the workplace will have to blend function and connection to address the needs of the Silent Generation, Boomers, Generation X'er's and Generation Y'er's.

Uptown, Las Colinas, Fort Worth, Upper Tollway, and many other communities have a unique culture and brand. Buildings new, old, and everything in between have their own identity and reflect their own brand and culture. Although cost and operational considerations will always be very important, they are often second to the brand/culture strategy a company looks for to help them attract and retain human resources.

The cost to build a new 15-story office building is about the same, whether you build it in Legacy, Las Colinas, or Richardson, however, the land cost and supportive infrastructure is reflected in total cost. The cost to build downtown is more expensive because of logistical issues and the obvious land costs. Current construction costs are at an all-time high and as infill occurs, land costs will continue to rise, and thus the cost for new mixed-use developments will increase as well.

Mixed-use developments are very compelling to the corporate user. People can work, live and play in the same neighborhood community and stay off the road. Generally speaking, people are tired of spending two hours a day commuting to and from work, let alone spending an hour and a half to drive somewhere to eat lunch.

As you can tell, the decision process of the corporate user is more complex than it has ever been, but it is more about attracting people and increasing productivity. So what is the best address for business? State Farm says Richardson, Toyota, and FedEx say Plano, INVESCO says Uptown, and 7-Eleven says Irving.

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