



**“Why Residents Live in Lake Highlands,
Changes They Have Noticed,
and Aspects of a Great Community”**

**A Brainstorming Session
Executive Summary**

July 2003

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Background

LHAIA Mission Statement

To develop and implement action plans to protect and enhance the quality of life in our community.

Established June 18, 2001, the Lake Highlands Area Improvement Association is a neighborhood alliance formed from Homeowner and Crime Watch Associations (Members) within or adjacent to the Lake Highlands High School attendance boundaries.

The primary goals of the Association shall be to protect and promote the concepts of home ownership and neighborhood self-determination, enhance the quality of life for all citizens, practice resource management and responsible representation. We envision a master plan for economic development.

Information in this report summarizes the views expressed by a sample of residents. The report is intended to provide direction, however the findings are not statistically significant.

For further information about this report, please contact:

Terri Woods, President
LHAIA
P. O. Box 741763
Dallas, TX 75374-1763

twoods@lhaia.org
www.lhaia.org
972.337.0470

Methodology

A brainstorming session among approximately 65 Lake Highland's area residents was moderated on July 21, 2003. The purpose of the session was to:

- Understand the influences of purchasing a home in the Lake Highlands area
- Determine aspects of the neighborhood that have changed over time
- Define the concepts of creating an "ideal neighborhood"

The attendees were broken up into seven teams and were posed three questions:

1. List the reasons you chose to purchase your home in the Lake Highlands area and the reasons you've decided to remain in the area.
2. I have noticed _____ changes in the community since I purchased my home.
3. To me, a great community includes _____.

The individual team members were asked to provide their own perspective to each question, then discuss as a group, and present a summary of the discussion to the entire group. The session was dynamic and prolific.

The information will be used as a basis to:

- Set direction for LHAIA initiatives and marketing strategies
- Represent the voice of District 10 constituency
- Provide City Councilman Blaydes with input for Land Use Planning Studies

Executive Summary

Why Residents Live in Lake Highlands

Lake Highland's residents, both North and South of LBJ, are passionate about their neighborhood. There are five primary factors that attract people to the area:

1. Established Neighborhoods with Affordable Homes
2. Convenient Location
3. Community Spirit
4. Good School System
5. Scenic Beauty
6. Quality of Living and Available Resources

Lake Highlands is an established, mature neighborhood with good home values. The location is geographically convenient and provides easy access to all points of the city; Downtown Dallas, White Rock Lake, Greenville Avenue, McKinney Avenue, DFW Airport, suburbs, public transportation, shopping malls, and restaurants. In addition, there are significant resources when considering the church community, business opportunities, and recreation. As another resource, the RISD school system has a significant impact on people's decision to live in the area.

What might be called the intangible aspects of living in Lake Highlands are its scenic beauty and community spirit. With its rolling terrain, hills, and abundance of trees, Lake Highlands has a natural setting and in some areas a feeling of "living outside the big city." People in this area tend to care for one another, are friendly, diverse, and have a strong sense of community. Lake Highlands is a close, interactive neighborhood where residents are each other's friends.

What's changed since purchasing a home in Lake Highlands?

Although "change" typically evokes a negative connotation, it may also be seen as opportunity. However, the changes noticed most by Lake Highland's residents are both positive and negative. The positive changes include:

1. Community involvement is increasing
2. Increased property values and upkeep of homes/properties
3. Residential profile is more diverse with an influx of younger families
4. Improvements such as Audelia Road Library, YMCA, and Moss Park
5. Area churches remain strong

The negative changes include:

1. Less desirable retail
2. Decline in RISD school quality
3. Increased crime
4. Deterioration and density of apartments
5. Poor upkeep of roads, medians, and roadside trash
6. Decline in city services such as code enforcement

What makes a “great community?”

Receiving a significant number of the mentions, a great community consists of:

1. A balance of retail, entertainment, residential, and food service
2. Personal safety and security
3. City Services and Involvement i.e. code enforcement, crime control, road maintenance, beautification, and trash upkeep
4. Community Pride and Spirit
5. Quality schools kept in good condition
6. Reasonable home-to-apartment ratio

Residents want **better retail** in the Lake Highlands area. There’s an interest in having a central shopping area or “**town center**” that is multi-purpose to include entertainment, retail, recreation, and food service.

A primary concern is the need to feel **safe and secure**. Residents want an environment where it’s safe for kids to play in the neighborhood, walk to school, etc. Increased police and security patrols are needed to reduce the crime. In addition, better **city services** are wanted to ensure code violations are abated, roads remain in good condition, and medians are trash-free and landscaped appropriately.

In addition, a strong **sense of community** is necessary. Residents want to work together for the common good of the neighborhood, be friendly and helpful toward one another. Quite simply, residents want a diverse group of neighbors, who are proud of their community, and enjoy helping one another.

Detailed Findings: Verbatim Comments

List the reasons you chose to purchase your home in the Lake Highlands area and the reasons you've decided to remain in the area.

HOMES / NEIGHBORHOODS

House price
Affordability of homes
Affordable housing
Nice, older homes
Established neighborhoods
Price of home
Good property values
Nice homes
Established neighborhoods
Great neighborhood and neighbors
Committed, strong neighborhood / community organizations
I found the ideal house for me at a reasonable price
Affordable, nice housing
Safe, convenient neighborhood
Value – what paid for what received
Comfortable street neighborhood
Property values
Affordability
Amount of house you can afford to buy
Affordable
Bought 35 years ago because it was the best bargain we could find (heavily treed)
Affordable housing
Investment
Established neighborhoods
Cost of home – more for your money
Affordable back in the '60s
Homes increase well in value
Affordable
Rising home values
Stable, established neighborhoods
Amount of house/space for the price
Established neighborhoods
Age/style of homes
Good neighborhoods
General condition (good) of neighborhood
Attractive neighborhoods
Rising property values

Mix of new & old, old & young people
Real estate agent lived across street

LOCATION

Central location
Easy access
Inside LBJ
Transportation
Close to work
Proximity to White Rock Lake, Greenville Avenue and downtown
Location
DART rail
Within 635
Close to downtown
DART
Proximity to downtown
Location
DART rail
Close to all the basic needs – stores, hospitals, shopping centers
Close to hospitals, medical professionals
Close to downtown
Easy to reach downtown, shopping, churches, etc.
DART
Access to downtown
White Rock Lake and hike and bike trail
DART rail
Live near 635 and some shopping as well as restaurants
Close to downtown
Inside LBJ
Proximity to downtown / Greenville Avenue
Close to malls
Proximity to CBD, highways, East Texas
Proximity to CBD
Location to Greenville, McKinney Avenue, downtown, DFW
Close to downtown
Close to downtown
Location
Location
Location – easy access
Close proximity to in town entertainment and restaurants
Public transportation
Location to downtown
Inside LBJ, close to city amenities
Convenience
Not too far from anything, but just far enough away
Convenience to main arteries
Location

Location

SCHOOLS

Schools and library
Schools
Schools / RISD
School district
RISD
RISD
RISD
Live here because of the school system
RISD schools
Richardson schools
Schools
RISD schools
Schools
Good schools
RISD
Good schools
Good schools
Good schools
School district
Schools
Schools
School system
Schools
RISD schools
RISD
Schools
Schools
RISD schools
Schools
RISD was among the best in the area in 1969
Schools
School system
RISD schools
Schools
Schools
School system
School
Schools

RESOURCES

White Rock Lake
Neighborhood resources
I live in Town Creek and enjoy the creek walkways

Quality of living in the area
Recreation Center
Good rec center
Church community
Quality of life
Business opportunity

SCENERY

Rolling terrain, hills, trees
Neighborhoods with trees
Scenic / trees
Beautiful trees
Neighbors
Scenic area
Beautiful homes and neighborhoods
Beautiful trees and nature
Trees
Hills
Rolling terrain, beauty of residence
Trees, hills
Hills
Trees
Trees
Natural beauty
Natural beauty – trees
Landscaping
Beauty of area – trees
Trees
Trees
Trees
Rolling hills
Beauty of trees and landscaping in area
Mature landscaping
Mature landscaping
Beauty of area
Nice, pretty area

COMMUNITY

Community spirit, people care about each other
Community spirit
A community
Sense of community
Friendly community
Liked feel and look of community
Close, interactive neighborhood
Reputation for community spirit – high school football games, etc.

Feels like a small town inside city
Residents with a sense of ownership not only in their homes but in their community as a whole
Diversity
Small town feel
Size of area
Community “family” feel
Growing community
Young community (1964)
Neighbors that care about the area
Small town atmosphere
People involved in community
Small community feel
Tradition - community
Good reputation, long established
Grew up in Lake Highlands
Neighborhood feel / community
Unique qualities of Lake Highlands
Children live near area
Sense of feeling relatively safe
Family is located here
Developed friendships
Family here
Character
Good churches

Why do you remain in Lake Highlands?

All of the above, and:

POSSIBILITIES

Desire to see return
Potential for area to be great

LOCATION

Location
Location, close to work and downtown, mass transportation
Proximity to business/retail
Convenient to retail outlets
Location
Ease to get to anywhere
Convenience
Ease of access to freeway
Location
Access to recreational activities (White Rock Lake)
Downtown access
Proximity to shopping, town, airport, activities
Convenience of being almost any location I need within 15-20 minutes
Location
Close in location
Convenience to shopping malls and grocery shopping
Easy access to different parts of town and major thoroughfares
Perceived central location
Location in city
Close to shopping, transportation

COMMUNITY

Community
Community spirit
Beauty
Still like the area
Lived in Dallas 47 years and the area is the most desirable

LONG TIME RESIDENTS

Remain because house is paid for
House is paid for
Home
Retired
Quality of homes

Home value
Home values

NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhood (immediate)
Neighborhood is well maintained and people are nice
Established area – diversity of neighborhoods
Area, trees and pretty neighborhoods
Like neighborhood
Mature, established neighborhoods
Home style
Neighborhood
Neighborhood
Established neighborhoods
Still attractive area

SCHOOLS

Like schools
Schools

VALUE

Value – best square foot for your money
Value – square foot / price
Convenient to all – downtown out to Collin County
Value
Increasing property value
Price

FAMILY / FRIENDS

Family and friends are nearby
Friendships
Friends are here
Friendly residents
2nd generation here

I have noticed _____ changes in the community since I purchased my home.

RESIDENTS

Huge growth in population
More young families moving in
Younger families moving in
Young families moving in
Mix of older and younger residents

RETAIL

Change in retail community
Decline in desirable retail
Deterioration of shopping centers
Retail decline
Retail decline with empty buildings standing too long
Retail
Retail changes
Declining retail
Store closings
Small commercial establishments gone
Decline in retail
Loss of handy support facilities – grocery stores, filling stations
Run down retail
Closing of retail
Declining/departing retail
Retail flight
Less desirable retail
Slow decline of businesses
Retail leaving
Shopping centers not maintained and leased
More dying retail centers since I moved here
Dollar Stores and Cash you Paycheck stores popping up everywhere
Lower end retail
Empty retail space
Lack of retail
Several changes in grocery stores
Mixed retail – Good – SuperTarget, Home Depot, Atlanta Bread – Bad – Check cashing, Dollar Stores, Carnival
Decline in retail
Retail moving out
Desirable retail (SuperTarget, Home Depot) as well as not desirable (Dollar Stores, Check cashing) trends
Loss of quality retail
Loss in retail

Declining retail
Retail leaving
Loss of retail establishments
Retail business closing
Fleeing retail
Lost our one cafeteria
Improved transportation
Better public transportation
Improved public transportation
Businesses close

TAXES

Increased taxes
Increased taxes
Substantially increased taxes

CITY INVOLVEMENT

Decreased city services

SCHOOLS

Deterioration of schools
Concern over RISD's quality
Schools trying to maintain quality
Good schools to keep property up
Freshman Center
Freshman Center
Freshman Center
Neighborhood kids attending private schools
Overcrowding of schools
Schools declining
School demographic
Decline of elementary schools

RENTAL HOMES

Increase in homes being sold and becoming rental property
More rental houses
Increased turnover in houses
Real estate buying homes and renting them out

CRIME

Increase in crime
Increase in crime/fear factor
Increase in crime
More crime

Crime
Increase in crime
Crime worse
Increased crime
Increased crime
Increased crime
More police sirens and helicopters
Increase in crime and aimless wandering through areas
Increased crime
Transient people
Fewer “working” people
Higher crime
Feeling less secure/safe
Higher crime
More foot traffic
More transient people
Increased crime
Crime
Criminal activity
Crime
Increase in crime
Crime
Unable to take walks safely

APARTMENTS

Increase in number of apartments and residents in terms of ethnic composition
Deterioration of apartments
Section 8 apartments
Apartments drag the area down
All of the apartments
Apartments
HUD homes
Apartments mushroomed
Deterioration of apartment complexes
Increased apartments
Density of apartment changes – Section 8
Increase in apartment problems
Rundown apartments
Change of occupancy in apartments
Low income apartments
Influx of lower-economic residents and Section 8 into multi-family buildings
Apartments worsening
Deterioration of apartments
Increase of lower income families in the area
Rental property not well managed
More people renting vs. purchasing townhomes
Free rent signs

More free rent apartment signs
Increase of apartments
More apartments
Influx of minorities
Low income renting in sub-standard apartments
Negative apartment activity
Deterioration of apartments
Increase in number of apartments

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Positive involvement of residents
More community
Good reputation
Increased homeowners groups
Changing neighborhood make-up
A few good neighbors
Community rallying
Increased neighborhood association activity

PROPERTY UPKEEP

Need rezoning/code enforcement
Property code upkeep
Lack of code enforcement
Lack of code enforcement
Code enforcement
Good property values
Best houses within the loop
Revitalized older homes
Homeowners keeping homes and yards looking very nice
Excellent maintenance of homes
Increased property values
Increased home values
Increasing property value
Increase in home price
Home values up

MISCELLANEOUS

Increase of youth activities
Loss of employment and layoffs
The trees grew up and blocked our view

TRANSPORTATION

New DART station

DEMOLITION

Demolition of historic homes/places

IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements of Greenville and Abrams
Improved landscape

TRAFFIC

More traffic and noise
Increased traffic
More traffic accidents
Increased traffic
Loud music
Foot traffic on Skillman
Increased noise level from LBJ

AMENITIES

Great jogging and hiking trails
Moss Park improvements
McCree Pool has gone from good to bad
Churches have remained strong
Redoing Audelia library
New YMCA

ROADS/MEDIANS

Poor conditions of medians
Trashier looking streets/medians etc.
Fewer people that take pride in where they live
Road improvements (Audelia was full of potholes)
Increased disinvestment
Deterioration of road (potholes)
Trash on curbs
Loss of cleanliness on streets, more visible trash thrown from cars on neighborhood streets
Trash on streets, bottles, etc.

To me, a great community includes

CITY INVOLVEMENT

Code enforcement
Better code enforcement
Code enforcement
Code enforcement
Code enforcement
Code enforcement
Code enforcement

TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation
Good public transportation
Good public transportation

APARTMENTS

Limited number of multi-family units
Reuse apartment and retail zoning into townhouse
Multi-family association that focuses on community involvement
Demolition of empty apartments and those with code violations
More townhomes
No apartments
More pride in HUD homes
Freedom from apartment problems
Very select condos
Better screening of Section 8 rentals
Convert apartments to highrise condos with retail areas (i.e. Uptown)
Reasonable home to apartment ratio – 10 to 1 home to apartment
Fewer apartments
No apartments
No rental property
No condos
Less renters
Less renters
No townhouses

HOUSING

New homes with diverse housing options
Great homes
Housing

STREETS / LANDSCAPING

Clean, landscaped street medians
Pretty landscaping
People who care for their property, houses, lawns, pick up trash, etc.
Clean streets and neighborhoods
Beautiful public landscaping
Less trash on streets
Well maintained property- residential and retail

RETAIL

Strong neighborhood shopping
Variety of retail options
Additional quality retail
Smart retail
Beautify and develop local shopping centers
Better retail
Retail
Retail
Retail
Retail in the hood we now have to travel outside for
Balance of community – homes and retail
Well maintained property – residential and retail
A recognized central commercial gathering space
Central park where folks meet and greet
Places for organizations to meet
A “town center”
Entertainment areas/complexes
A town square, multi-purpose in the heart of Lake Highlands (Audelia/Kingsley)
Great recreational facilities (soccer, jogging, baseball, etc.)
Public square
More publicizing of retail
Conveniently located national retailers
Good retail stores
Good family-oriented retail, such as bookstores, clothing stores,
Desirable retail
Restaurants and entertainment easily accessible
Central shopping
Nice restaurants
Good retail
Neighborhood shopping (quality)
Thriving retail (upscale restaurants, family restaurants, boutiques)
Family oriented restaurants and retail
Good retail
Good drugstore
Retail establishments
Entertainment areas

Family restaurants
Good mix of retail choices (food, clothing, gas, hobbies, etc.)
Retail which supports the neighborhood
Mixed use retail with green space
Opportunities to window shop
Places to shop and dine
Quality retail and restaurants
Boutique/unique retail
Book store
Fewer liquor stores
Better stores and restaurants, boutiques, etc.
Retail store diversity
Retail worth having
Neighborhood stores, restaurants, parks, etc. that bring people together
Residential areas and commercial/retailers complimenting each other
Maintenance of businesses and homes

POLICE INVOLVEMENT

More police/security patrols
Sense of security
Better security
Free of crime
Secure and safe neighborhoods
Low crime
Safety, safety, safety
Increased security
Feeling of personal security (ability to walk to neighborhood retail without worrying about crime)
Ability to allow children to play in yards unsupervised
Crime control system and prevention
An environment where it's safe for kids to play in the neighborhood, walk to school, etc.
Low crime or no crime
Freedom from crime
Safety
No crime
No crime
Reduction in crime
Extremely low crime
Low crime
No crime
Safe streets to walk on
Low crime
Safe neighborhoods
Increased police presence
Crime watch
Constant security patrols

Police presence
Secure and safe neighborhoods

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Neighbors working together for the common good
Friendly, helpful neighbors
Highly involved resident population
Neighbors communicating and making a difference
Good neighbors
A balance between classes of people
Homeowners involved in the community
Strong sense of community – neighbors helping neighbors
Friendly people
People who are concerned about their neighbors
Everyone – old, young, homeowner, apartment dweller, public school, private school
Organized homeowner groups
Young families
Diversity
Involved citizens
Good neighborhood spirit
Neighborhood activities and interaction of neighbors
Community activities
Community feel
High percentage of homeowners
Balanced mix of demographic economics
Widespread pride and sense of ownership

SCHOOLS

Great neighborhood schools
Higher education and income base per person so standards and requirements will be more
– will activate civic opportunities
Great schools
Kids going to neighborhood schools
Quality schools kept in good condition
Great schools
Great school system
Schools with enough room for all students
Great schools
Good schools
Good schools
Schools
Great high school football team again

CHURCHES

Great churches

Active churches
Active churches
Churches

AMENITIES

Great parks
Beautiful parks and recreation areas
Public parks/recreation centers
Great parks/landscaping
Sidewalks

ROADS

Roads in good condition
Good street upkeep
No potholes
Maintaining itself
Medians with landscaping that unifies Lake Highlands
Great landscaping of common areas
Good roads
Speed bumps
Good roads
Neat alleys

INFRASTRUCTURE

Caring and effective city infrastructure
Maintenance of infrastructure
Better city services
Urban renewal
DSL access

MISCELLANEOUS

Curfews for teens
Access to the city
Increased home value
Home ownership
Ever increasing home values
Rising property values
Planned Development 80/20 rule
Effectively utilizing the many resources that are unique to Lake Highlands
Market research to survey organizations – what neighborhood wants
Easy access among neighborhoods via sidewalks, bike trails, etc.
Coffee ready at 7:00 a.m.
No church bells before 8:00 a.m. on Sunday
“Boom box” abatement