



D Magazine Editor Tim Rogers moderates a panel between professor Christopher Leinberger, Downtown Dallas Inc. President Kourtney Garrett, and urban planner and DART board member Patrick Kennedy on July 11 at the Dallas Museum of Art. (Photo Credit: Matt Shelley)

URBANISM

Takeaways From Our Urbanism Symposium at the Dallas Museum of Art

Affordable housing. Walkability. Displacement. Culture. A sold-out auditorium got a glimpse at Dallas' future, possibilities and challenges alike.

BY MATT GOODMAN | PUBLISHED IN FRONTBURNER | JULY 16, 2018 | 8:02 AM

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the entire region.”

“Garland may not suffer if DeSoto has a downturn, and conversely DeSoto may not suffer if Garland has a downturn,” said Jenkins, whose purview includes both of those cities. “But nobody functions well without a thriving heart.”

And then we were off, about 400 people listening rapt for half a day to a carousel of very smart men and women who, at the end of it, left the attendants with a picture of a city that has some very difficult questions to ask itself. There was discussion of parks and walkability and mixed use developments, but there was also a lot of tough conversations about segregation, neighborhood destruction, displacement, and cultural erasure.

Our urbanism special edition explored what needs to happen to meet the demands of the type of growth that’s expected to come to North Texas: 4.5 million people over the next 20 years. But it’s important that the development that comes here to meet those needs does not tear apart communities the way this city and state have done in the past. State Rep. Rafael Anchia, D-Dallas, brought up the tension that exists here—the lingering nerves from the destruction of Little Mexico and the Spence neighborhoods, of the blocks and blocks of the Cedars and Deep Ellum that were destroyed to make way for a freeway. All in the name of “progress,” which set us back more than anything else has ever done.

“The future can be intentional,” said Wick Allison, our founder and CEO. “We can take charge of the future ... and be just as intentional in restoring our communities as they were

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So—we’ll be publishing podcasts of the sessions later this week, but first let’s go through some choice quotes about all these topics from the symposium.



The crowd at our urbanism symposium on July 11 at the Dallas Museum of Art. (Photo: Matt Shelley)

The History of the City

And not just Dallas. Wick started the symposium by referencing Athena in the ancient Greek classic “Oresteia,” who ordered the namesake to form what would become the modern city.

Allison: “She wants a city because ... a city will be a place where justice will be done. ... We took the modernist idea and proposed these highways that broke through the city. We

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justice that allows people to have their own place and participate in the life of the city.”

Patrick Kennedy, urban planner and DART Board member:

“We’re moving from a place of gold plating the 20th century to building the 21st century city, which is inclusive and about creating value and empowering the greatest amount of people as possible.”

Kourtny Garrett, president of Downtown Dallas Inc.: “We now have 40 partner organizations involved in this plan. The community interest, the activism the partnerships, some new vision at City Hall both at the council and management and staff level—what we’ve seen just in the last 12 months in terms of new thinking and shifting the whole thought and culture around planning in Dallas has been just remarkable. It’s not just a few of us singing these songs anymore.”

Walkability:

Christopher Leinberger, land strategist and George Washington University’s chair for the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis: “One of the things we know through looking at Atlanta and D.C. and Seattle, this walkable urban stuff gets huge price premiums. You’re getting them here. ... that’s the way of the market saying build more of this stuff.”

Leinberger: “This trend for walkable urbanism is funded by shifting your household spending from driving to walking or biking or taking transit, not using your car as much, and dropping at least one car out of your household. People who

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Elizabeth Wattle, director of Strategic Initiatives at CitySquare: “Right now, I would say we don’t have that. We would like that for South Dallas to be that. We’re on our way to it. The boom and entertainment you want in your neighborhood ... I don’t want to say it doesn’t exist but I certainly don’t want you to think we’ve achieved where we need to be in that space.”

Mike Hoque, developer and restaurateur: “We’re creating our culture. We’re still learning about ourselves. Think about Bishop Arts when they started opening those small restaurants ... that wasn’t available there before ... when get a creative tax base, you get people to come in and spend money in the neighborhood.”

Wattle: “But you have to be intentional in making sure that history (of a community) stands. Nobody wants their culture and history erased, everyone identifies with where they come from so identifying these spaces is important. ... Put that onus on the developers coming in. Those are the people making the decisions and bringing money in. You want like-minded people who are going to embrace the history of the area.”

Hoque: “I’m doing the southern district stuff, and I want to do everything that I can do for everyone, for a black American, a Mexican American, a white American; anyone who is trying to live close to where they work and eat at a restaurant in their own neighborhood.

I am trying to create a face that’s the gate to Fair Park. I believe we have to take one brick at a time, but create a

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Why should we be poor Benghali or poor Hispanic? I think we should all have a way of living in the places we want to live.”

Affordable Housing:

Chad West, attorney and North Oak Cliff’s city planning commissioner: “One of the major points and concerns (residents have) is gentrification. But what does that mean? I found out it means something different to everybody. It’s not an easy word that has one definition. The folks who have been living in the neighborhood for years and years getting pushed out of their homes is a real problem and I hear it all the time. I also hear from similar folks who say, don’t try to tell me I can’t sell my house. I want to make \$200,000 on it, \$300,000 on it and I want to move to where I want to move to. Those are people who look like me and others who don’t. It’s the challenge we face in our district specifically, because you’ve got a lot of varying interest. That’s been the surprise since I’ve been there. How do you address gentrification and people getting pushed out of their homes?”

It’s providing more affordable housing stock. Housing prices are going up and that’s not a bad thing at all. But we have to provide more affordable housing stock. I think incentive zoning, I think granny flats, if they’re done right, are ways to accomplish that.”

Raquel Favela, assistant city manager: “We need to figure out ways at City Hall to expedite the development process. It is taking too long to get units on the ground. That’s part of the reason why we have a housing shortage.

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scared away the immigrant population and ... we can't recruit enough people to come and work in 120-degree weather. It's the reality."

Parks:

Leinberger: "Normally speaking in this country, downtown revives first then the downtown-adjacent places revive. You're doing it backwards, but you're getting there. The thing you've done that is the world class, walkable urban thing that you've got to be proud of is Klyde Warren Park. We are all learning from that. It's a fabulous project that knits together downtown and Uptown. There are many more Klyde Warren Parks to be built, linking your neighborhoods together.

Tillie Borchers, Civitas Capital Group's director of investments: "I'm very glad we're not building a parking garage as an extension to Klyde Warren. That makes me happy. What is wonderful is there is a lot of ability for people to get all their needs met in a small amount of space and it allows people to earn a living and get to jobs. It's a different use of space."

Kourtny Garrett: "I think we are far behind what we should be in terms of per capita greenspace. I don't think we're looking at parks as the silver bullet to revitalize neighborhoods. There is remarkable progress that comes with parks. You look at Main Street Garden, that was a catalyst for the Statler to turn on, it was a very important component for the Mercantile. We have UNT Systems and the UNT School of Law around the parks. ... we need to look at each of these parks whether it's the four coming into downtown or the deck parks

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more than anything. We need to look at the neighborhood needs and the adjacent use that the space should be.”

Revitalization:

Garrett: “The reinvestment in downtown didn’t start until the late 90s when we started the first TIF; the second came in 2005. We know this is an evolution. As a city we’re young, and as a revitalized city we’re even younger. When you look at the seeds of those investments going on 10, 15 almost 20 years ago, we’re just now seeing those develop. The rise in the values you’re seeing now is the result of what’s been going on for a couple decades. Price per square foot in every inch of downtown is rising quickly, and I think we’re going to see that trajectory bump up faster as we go through the next couple of years.”

Leinberger: “Getting over to the west side is your new frontier. You have a lot of assets in place to get you there, there’s a lot of dirt you can build very walkable, sustainable urban places on the west side. Build upon it, and hopefully you can get there safely without getting blown off the bridge.”

Kennedy: “Along the Trinity River, where it’s old warehouses, that’s a lot of logistics and low-density warehouse stuff along Stemmons. That’s adding more congestion in that area, meanwhile there’s 100,000 jobs right across the highway (in the Medical District). Maybe there’s a way to incentivize those jobs to move south, and that way we can redevelop that land with multi-use near those jobs.”

Hoque: “Our approach is going to be smart development that

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You need the small, big and big corporate. You have to align yourself for smart development.”

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Did you invite any Latinos to speak? (Anchia is Hispanic, it's different) We're only going to be 60% of Dallas County by 2040, not important or anything...

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