

## MESSAGE TO OUR CONSTITUENTS

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

*-Margaret Mead*

This is the second full year of operation for the West Fort Bend Management District. The primary objective for the Board of Directors was to develop the strategic milestones that will translate the challenges of growth in West Fort Bend into quality development.

West Fort Bend was fortunate in that it continued to have strong commercial and residential growth even as it slowed in other parts of the country. Growth creates challenges. As well as increasing complexity and costs, there is also the risk that the growth will destroy the very thing that attracted it in the first place – the uniqueness of West Fort Bend.

The Board recognizes a pervasive sense of community support for actions that will retain the unity, beauty and integrity of the District while streamlining the complexity of developing within our boundaries. To that end we have used this year to set the foundations for the future growth of and within the District.

We are particularly grateful for the support of the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg and the financial support of their Economic Development Councils. We continue to work closely with them and are proud to announce that in January, 2007 the Cities ratified the first set of development standards for the corridors within the District. These set the framework for future development and are the result of the work of a dedicated group of volunteers who make up our Standards Committee.

The Board believes that no other single action will have more impact in influencing the future face of the District.

Another milestone was translating our Focus Group findings into a landscape master plan concept for the District. The master plan will create our unique signature and will play an important role for attracting investors into the District. We are grateful for the support of the George Foundation and individual District patrons who have helped fund this key development.

As a consequence of creating standards, the District also began providing its first service to our constituents – reviewing and monitoring development applications to ensure they meet the minimum standards. Local Government Services Inc. was retained to provide this service.

In line with our undertaking not to increase government complexity, the District is now working to consolidate and streamline development standards between the District and the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg.

In further cooperation with the cities, the Board addressed the District's very cumbersome and costly annexation process. With the invaluable support of our legislators the result was SB1439, enacted in May of this year that expanded the Cities powers to allow for a more streamlined annexation process into the District.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board Members. They have given their time and expertise generously, placing the District in an excellent position to address the challenges ahead.

*Lane Ward  
Chairman*

## BACKGROUND

Management districts are an economic development tool used by commercial property owners to create a positive environment for growth and investment by making improvements and providing services in their districts. They address needs that are not met by the existing city, county or state governments. The powers of a management district pertain to commercial property and do not extend to residential property. Because they are self-funded, a district's success is directly determined by the support of its constituents, as it is ultimately the property and business owners who will decide its relevance and success.

## THE WEST FORT BEND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

### **HISTORY**

The District is in its second year of operation after being created as a political subdivision by an act of legislation – SB1820 - during the 79<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Texas Legislature in 2005. The creation of the West Fort Bend Management District (“WFBMD” or “the District”) was the culmination of the efforts of the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg, together with the support and foresight of the George Foundation to address the issues that come with the continued and accelerating development in West Fort Bend.

### **OPERATION**

From its inception, the West Fort Bend Management District has shaped itself as a grass-roots organization that listens closely to the needs of its constituents and to the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg. By legislation, the cities each appoint two Directors and jointly choose another. By operation, the Board has utilized committees capitalizing on the strong history of volunteerism in West Fort Bend to develop the organization’s operations and strategies. In philosophy, the Board has committed to complement, coordinate and - where possible – streamline rather than duplicate existing city and county services.

### **PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to continue to attract and increase investment into the District while maintaining and improving the quality of life experience for residents, business owners and visitors. The objective is to use the roadways – the corridors that transect the District – as a way to unite rather than fragment and divide the area and to create a “signature” landscape and streetscape that uniquely defines West Fort Bend and drives the view of the District as a premier investment choice.

### **POWERS**

This District - a Corridor District - is unique and uses 3 powers to meet its objectives:-

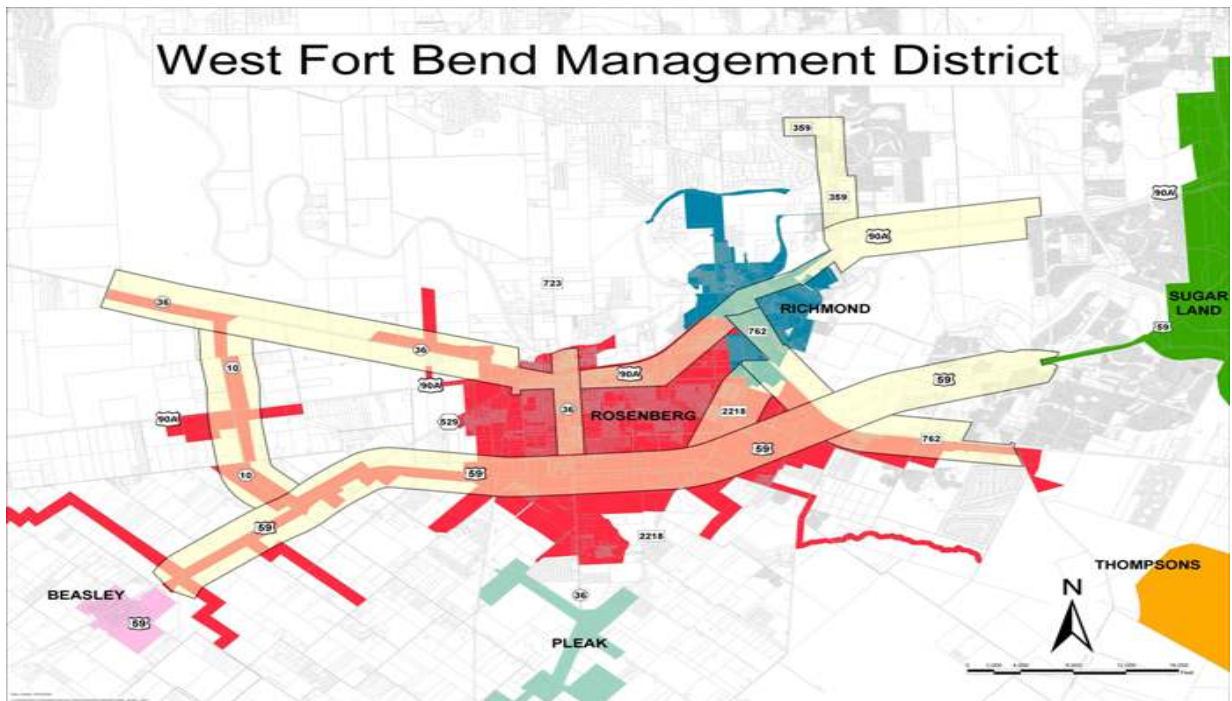
- **The power to provide Services:** Services are determined by the constituents and may include things like improved maintenance, security, beautification programs and transportation and tourism initiatives.
- **The power to create Standards:** The District may establish architectural and landscaping standards for use within its boundaries. The Standards can only be approved through the written consent of both the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg.
- **The power to make Improvements:** Generally are made through developing projects for landscaping, design and improvement of historic and redevelopment areas, and other activities that will improve the economic value of an area.

### **ORGANIZATION**

The WFBMD contracts with Local Government Services to provide support for operations and activities. It currently employs no staff, and has been generously supported by the Economic Development Councils of the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg. \* See Appendix 1

## GEOGRAPHY

West Fort Bend Management District is a corridor district that spans the freeways and roadways into and through the Cities of Richmond and Rosenberg. The area is defined by the white overlay outlined in grey below:-



**US90A: 41,000 LF 7.8 miles•FM359: 15,500 LF 2.9 miles•FM723: 3,000 LF 0.6 miles•FM2218: 11,000 LF 2.1 miles• FM762: 26,500 LF 5.0 miles• US59: 2,500 LF13.7 miles• Spur 10: 22,000 LF 4.2 miles• Hwy36: 45,500 LF 8.6 miles**

- Over 42,000 people
- Over \$1.4billion Property Value\* Fort Bend Appraisal District 2006

## YEAR IN REVIEW – CREATING THE VISION

The 2006/2007 year was one of developing the strategic framework to facilitate quality growth for West Fort Bend. The priorities, which were developed last year, were to develop the signature landscape framework for the District, to begin the first set of services through project work and to streamline the annexation process for the District which was burdensome and would be very costly to the cities in the future.

The District also worked to consolidate its administration to bring a greater level of effectiveness to its operations and developed the first stages of a marketing program to address the growing need to communicate with our constituents.

The tremendous progress in developing standards and other programs were a direct result of the generous time and expertise donated by members of our volunteer committees, <sup>\*Appendix 2</sup> and the continuing support of the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg.

### **STANDARDS**

The single most critical element that will affect the future growth of the area is the implementation of the Landscaping and Architectural Standards for commercial development along the corridors transecting the District.

The Standards Committee have created a set of minimum standards that capitalize on the natural beauty of West Fort Bend and will develop a consistent look and feel for the District. These Standards will preclude the type of undesirable commercial development that results in visual blight and becomes a disincentive to investment.

The Committee identified six areas in which to develop a minimum set of Standards. These have the most impact from the roadways and are able to be consistently applied throughout the landscape: -

- Building and Parking Setbacks
- Building Materials
- Landscape Requirements
- Sign Criteria
- Lighting Standards and
- Screening.

The minimum standards were first developed for US Highway 59 then modified and extended to the other roadways. In general these include parts of the Spur 10 Corridor, Highway 36, US90A, FM762, FM2218, and FM359. The exact boundaries, which extend 1000 feet each side of the center line of the roadways are described in the District's maps as well as by their exact metes and bounds within the legislation. Both the complete set of Standards and the District's maps can be viewed on our website at <http://www.wfbmd.org>.

The District recognizes the complexity of redeveloping in historic areas and areas that are currently heavily developed – particularly along Highways 90A and 36. Over the next year the District will be consulting with a broad range of groups to craft redevelopment standards for these areas.

The Cities of Richmond and Rosenberg have approved the Standards for implementation and since then the District has been reviewing development applications. Local Government Services (LGS) has been retained to manage this process.

The District will work continuously to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our own internal review process and has pursued a practice of openness to feedback. Both the District and LGS have been pleased by the cooperation from our constituents in working through the application review process and providing invaluable insights on their experiences.

In keeping with its philosophy of streamlining government, The District is working to bring together a committee to review the differences in development standards of all 3 entities in the District – those of the City of Richmond, the City of Rosenberg and the District. Over the next year their goal will be to simplify and unify the development process whenever this possible, making it an easier choice for commercial investors to develop in the District.

## **PROJECTS**

Following the development of Standards, the District also had the opportunity to become a partner in three individual landscape projects that will have a significant visual impact in the District.

The first is the SH 59/FM 762 entryway into the City of Rosenberg. The Rosenberg Development Council has invited the District to coordinate this project which overlaps the boundaries of both Cities. The second project is to landscape the Highway 36 overpass. The final project is the landscaping of the railway overpass to be built on FM90A near OakBend Hospital.

The projects will be the first opportunity to bring together a range of different organizations and individuals, including TxDOT, the cities, and individual patrons to plan and execute the work. They will also act as a catalyst for investment – constituents can transition into patrons of the District by donating funds or other contributions to bring the projects to completion.

The projects also presented a key opportunity to translate a primary recommendation of the Focus Group – the beautification of the area through implementing a signature landscape design - into action.

## **FOCUS GROUP & MASTER PLAN**

The Focus Group was made up of business and property owners from along the corridors of the District. It met in 2006 and made recommendations to Board on their vision for the District and its operation. One of their key findings was to create a strong, sophisticated unifying identity that reflects the uniqueness of the area and recognizes its historical value, in a way that increases the property value of the District and attracts investment.

The method they recommended was to create a signature “Master Plan” for the corridors. Their full report including this recommendation was adopted by the Board during the year.

The demand for the projects made the creation of the Master Plan even more critical and will ensure the most judicious use of available funds. Both the projects and the plan provide a bridge to our constituents to encourage direct investment in the improvement of their community.

In September 2007 the George Foundation reviewed the Districts’ submission for the development of a Master Plan and provided the seed funding for its completion. The remainder of the funds were donated by patrons of the District. The contract for developing the plan was awarded to Asakura Robinson, a specialist land planner who brings experience in large scale commercial planning as well as lifestyle enhancement projects in urban and suburban environments.

The project will start early in the 2007/2008 year and will use the feedback from key contributors and organizations within the District – including the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg – to help shape its final recommendations.

The result will be a signature master landscape plan for the corridors. The landscapes will be the uniting template for the District that creates a unique “Brand” for West Fort Bend. The master landscape forms a template for development and will be a useful reference point for current and future investors in determining the extent of their investment within the District.

**ORGANIZATION**

In addition to developing a future vision for the District the Board consolidated its own operations.

It has contracted with Local Government Services Inc. for both its operational administration and for the Standards approval and review services. Because of the ongoing nature of the Standards process the District will continue to focus its infrastructure to support a customer-centric program: The first step will be to streamline the appeal process by transferring it from Board function to an independent and expert Board of Appeal.

Also, over the last year the Directors on the Board worked to developed focus and expertise in specific areas of the organization's operations, including finance, project management, fundraising and marketing. In addition to the Focus Group and Standards Committee, a third volunteer committee – the Marketing Steering Committee was formed.\*See Appendix 2. Its objective is to provide guidance to the Board on the organization's branding and marketing strategies.

**IDENTITY AND MARKETING**

The first priority was to create an organizational signature for the District through developing our logo. Using feedback from our Standards group and the creativity of the Marketing Steering Committee, three founding elements of the District were used in its final design.

These elements are the two cities of Richmond and Rosenberg represented by the overlapping stars and the Brazos River, which historically gave rise to economic growth of the region.

A website has also been created for public access and will be developed as a more interactive and interesting site over the next year.

Finally, the year also saw the development of an outreach program for the District through public presentations and news releases.



<http://www.wfbmd.org/>

**ANTICIPATING CHANGE**

A significant change to the powers of the cities- which was supported by Richmond and Rosenberg –was the passing of SB 1439 in May of 2007. This piece of legislation addressed the issue of the very cumbersome and expensive annexation process included in the original operating law of the District.



SB 1439 allows for a more streamlined process for annexing within the limits of the ETJs of the city of Rosenberg or the city of Richmond.

As with all other areas of the Management District powers, the power does not extend to single-family residences which are excluded from the annexation process.

SB 1439 allows for the cities to drive the process of annexation. The city asking for the annexation must present a resolution to the Board for consideration. The documentation must precisely describe the proposed territory to be annexed and meet all the other requirements of the legislation. The Board will then make a determination on the feasibility and practicality of the annexation request.

This will allow for a more streamlined and city-driven process.

**FINANCIALS**

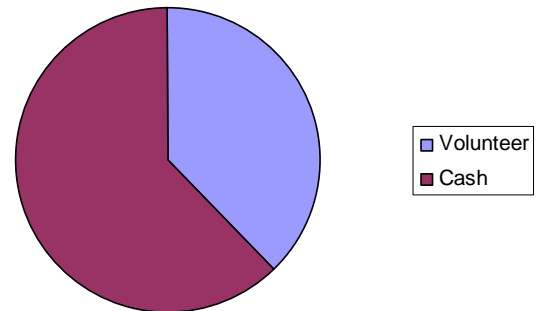
**OVERVIEW**

Income for the District was provided primarily by the Economic Development Councils of Rosenberg and Richmond. Total income was \$83,178.

**TOTAL VALUE**

What is remarkable is how much has been achieved on this “shoestring” of a budget. That is thanks to the hundreds of volunteer hours provided by members of our Board, the committees and consultants. All of them share a common belief in the exciting potential of West Fort Bend to develop as a model for positive investment and development in the region.

**Volunteer vs. Cash Contributions**

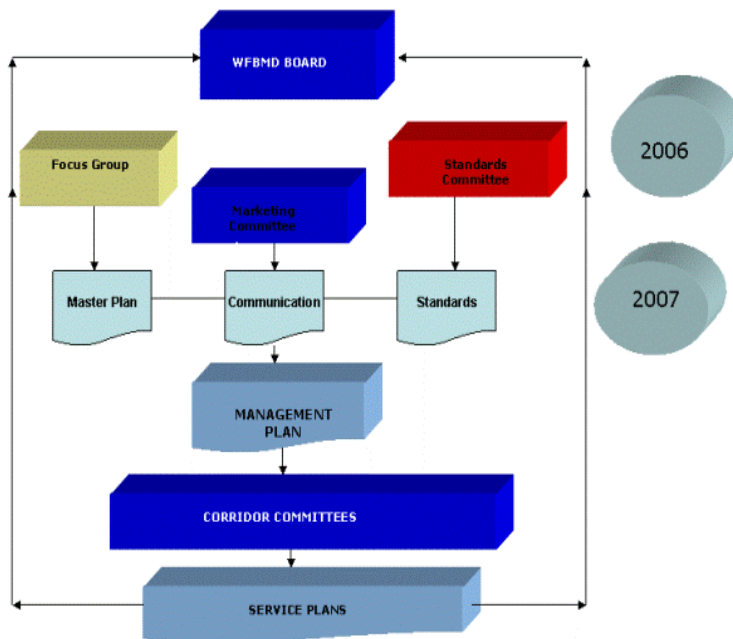


**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

Classification	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Budget
<b>*REVENUE &amp; EXPENDITURE SUMMARY*</b>		
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Contributions from other entities	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
Contributions-Other	-	20,000
Plat Review Fees	1,450	30,000
Interest on Investments	1,728	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 83,178</b>	<b>\$ 130,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>		
Supplies	\$ 550	\$ 1,500
Professional Services	\$ 97,348	\$ 145,470
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 97,898</b>	<b>146,970</b>
Capital Outlay	\$ -	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 97,898</b>	<b>\$ 146,970</b>

## MOVING FORWARD

The District is a work in progress: we have come a long way since 2005 through the help of many dedicated people. The major milestones of transitioning into an operational organization and developing a strategy and vision for moving forward have been met. And while support of our activities has been strong, the demand for the District to do more is increasing.



As demands for services continue, the extent of the District's activities and their success will be in a large part determined by its ability to find new and additional ways to fund programs.

Activities for 2007/2008 are largely set and are:-

- (a) To continue to develop landscape and architectural standards that specifically address the unique challenges of the historic districts and redevelopment areas, including Highways 90A & 36.
- (b) To develop the District's signature landscape master plan to continue to seek out individuals who are willing to partner in projects to bring the vision to fruition.
- (c) To provide a positive service to District investors through streamlining the standards implementation process in cooperation with the Cities.
- (d) To continue to implement services - this will largely be driven by the patrons of the District.



West Fort Bend possesses a unique group of thoughtful and committed citizens who are dedicated to its improvement. It is the belief of the members of the Board that with their help, the District will evolve into a major positive influence in the development of the area, to the benefit of us all.

[APPENDIX 1](#)

WEST FORT BEND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

**BOARD**

President	Lane Ward
Directors	Joey Dupuis Cliff Terrell Glenn Howard Vincent Morales
Advisory Director	Michael O'Connell

**OPERATIONS  
&  
STANDARDS**

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APPENDIX 2

WEST FORT BEND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

<i>Committee Chair – Bill Jameson</i>	<i>WJ Interests</i>
<i>Robert DeForest</i>	<i>KGA DeForest Design</i>
<i>Dean Carpenter</i>	<i>Houston Landscapes Unlimited</i>
<i>Chris Hotze</i>	<i>Wellington Development</i>
<i>Glenn Howard</i>	<i>Planned Community Developers</i>
<i>Lenert Kurtz</i>	<i>City of Richmond</i>
<i>Vincent Morales</i>	<i>Greenscape Associates</i>
<i>James Ngu</i>	<i>New Quest Properties</i>
<i>Melissa Pena</i>	<i>City of Rosenberg</i>
<i>John Perry</i>	<i>LJA Engineering</i>
<i>Jesus M. Verdin &amp; Rachel Steele</i>	<i>Kerry R. Gilbert &amp; Associates</i>

WEST FORT BEND MARKETING STEERING COMMITTEE

<i>Committee Chair – Joey Dupuis</i>	<i>Lexus of Clearlake</i>
<i>Marvin Marcell</i>	<i>Group One Automotive</i>
<i>Gail Parker</i>	<i>Rose-Rich Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>Mark Magee</i>	<i>Amegy Bank</i>