

I. OVERVIEW

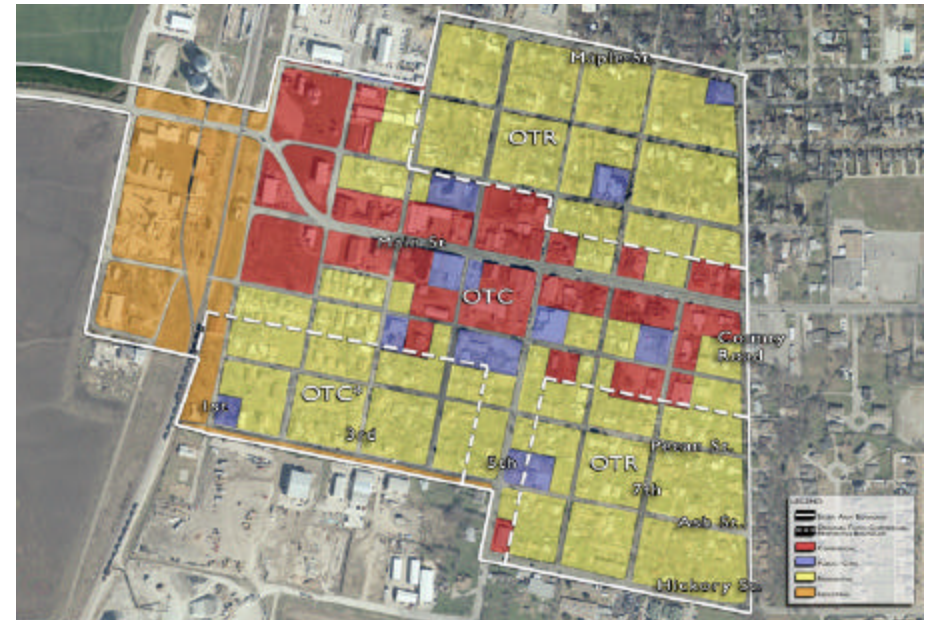
The Original Town Commercial (OTC) and Original Town Residential (OTR) Districts extend from just west of the Burlington Northern Railroad (BNR) tracks east to County Road, and from Maple Street on the north to the southern boundary of Ash Street. They were designated by the City of Frisco as special zoning districts in 2000 with the intent of establishing an early 20th century architectural vernacular.

The OTC District was established to preserve the historic areas of commercial character within the downtown. Due to the historic nature of this area, the district seeks to enhance and protect the commercial core of the downtown while providing infill opportunities and limiting "heavier" industrial and commercial uses. In addition, the relationship of the OTC District to the new Frisco Square development to the west is critical to the success of the City's downtown commercial core. Recognizing this fact, these design standards seek to unify the overall downtown commercial areas, while preserving and enhancing the unique character of the original commercial district.

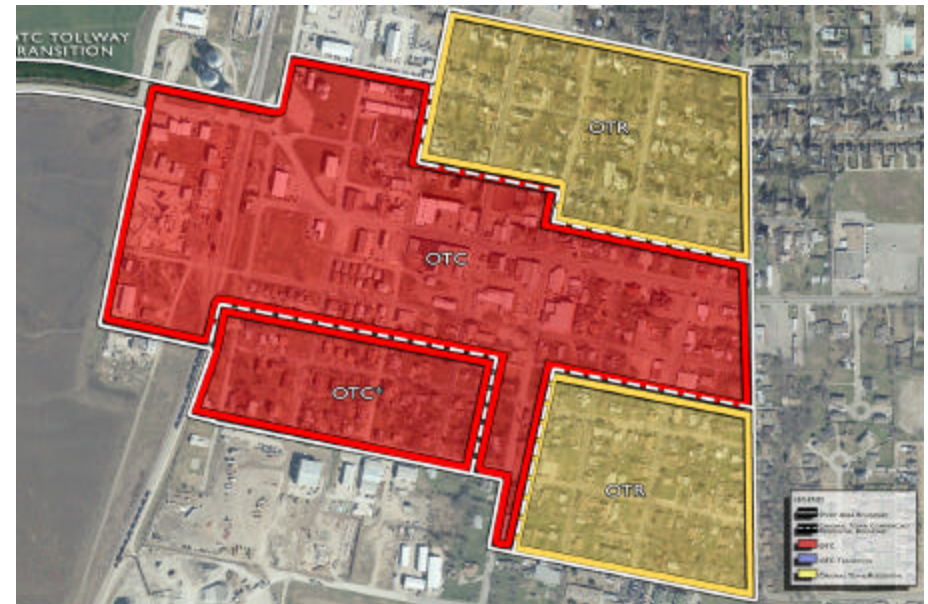
The OTR District was similarly established to preserve those areas of primarily residential character within the downtown. Due to the historic nature of these areas, the district seeks to enhance and protect the residential core of the downtown while providing mutually beneficial infill opportunities and encouraging renovation of existing structures. The result of a consensus based community planning effort these design standards are not intended to limit the creativity of the builders in their design or construction. They are intended to provide a basis for design concepts, forms and materials to create a historically compatible living environment.

For the purpose of these guidelines, the land use patterns of the study area were studied and recorded, and districts were established to prescribe appropriate standards. These districts are shown below:

1. OTR - Original Town Residential
2. OTC - Original Town Commercial
3. Tollway Transition Zone



Existing Land Use



Original Downtown Subdistricts

II. HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN DISTRICT

1. RAILROAD INFLUENCE

In March of 1849, the Pacific Railroad Company of Missouri (PRCM) was granted a charter by the Missouri Legislature to allow expansion of the railroad system into other states. The PRCM began laying tracks throughout Texas, constructing the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroads in North Central Texas. When surveying potential track routes through Western Collin County, the decision was made to place the route on the west side of what was known then and now as the Preston Ridge.

The Ridge itself is a geological formation that contains the highest point in Collin County and runs north-south through the heart of Frisco's current City boundaries. The western boundary of the ridge includes a sharp change in elevation that levels out onto flat, agricultural land. Because of the drop in elevation, storm water runoff could easily be captured at the foot of the ridge and channeled into a lake. At that time, the Preston Ridge provided enough water runoff to fill "Lake Frisco," a now non-existent lake that would have been located southwest of the existing downtown. Since steam engines require water, the train stops and depots were located near lakes to utilize this power source.

2. YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT PROSPERITY

Shortly after the completion of the railroad tracks in 1901, Frisco became a regular stop for trains taking advantage of Lake Frisco and the city's central location between Dallas and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Frank Witt of Little Elm opened Frisco's first general store in the summer of 1901. Later A.G. McAdams and the Conway Leeper Company opened lumberyards. Eventually Frisco was settled in 1902 under the name of Emerson, Texas. However, due to the similarity in name of Emerson and the town of Emberson, Texas in Lamar County, the town name was changed to Frisco City and later to Frisco in honor of the railroad. Originally incorporated in 1908, tracts in the Old Donation were subdivided into lots 25 feet wide and auctioned to the highest bidder at rates of \$20 to \$50 per lot. These lots and the majority of the buildings on them were sited with their lengths parallel to the railroad tracks, creating a gridiron pattern. This historic gridiron town layout, being a railroad oriented plan, typically was focused on the passenger depot location for the alignment of Main Street, which became the central business corridor. During this time Frisco's Main Street housed a post office, The Journal newspaper, a gin and flour mill, a livery stable, churches, a grain company, and a schoolhouse. Merchants and their families who moved from nearby areas to take advantage of the new rail trade brought by the direct link between Dallas/Fort Worth and Tulsa, Oklahoma (with some trade going as far north as Kansas City) soon inhabited Frisco. As



Early 1900s



Frisco Main Street 1913



Main Street 1920

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Frisco developed and then stabilized in this form, the historic townscape was essentially fixed, reflecting the first half of the twentieth century.

Frisco lies on the fringes of the "Grand Prairie", one of the most fertile farming areas in the Central United States. The fertile soil and underlying hardpan, which retained water, proved ideal for an agriculture community. Frisco as part of the Grand Prairie soon became a major center of grain and cotton production. In addition, great quantities of livestock, poultry and farm products were shipped annually through the town. From early settlement until well into the 1900s, cotton was the principal cash crop in Frisco and throughout north Texas. Old historic photographs show hundreds of bales of cotton, ready for shipment, lined up by the depot awaiting delivery.

The activity in the downtown area concentrated between the railroad tracks and North County Road where Main Street dead-ended. This area was a transportation center for the downtown because of the railroad. The depot, built at the turn of the century when the railroad came through town, was the focal point for all transportation and shipping. The blocks between 2nd and 5th Streets became the core retail business area with buildings fronted on Main Street on both sides. As the agricultural prosperity flourished in Frisco, local traders began to beat a common path between Dallas and Frisco. These trips were a full day by buggy and soon hotels were constructed to meet this business and travel demand. In 1921, spurred by continued commercial activity, Frisco began constructing more permanent roads. The Dallas Pike, completed in 1922, was a road with nine one-way bridges and six right angle turns that served Frisco as a link to Dallas. With this development Frisco became a hub of activity on the map.

3. DOWNTURN OF EVENTS

Overall in Frisco, the years from 1900, when Frisco was first settled to 1922, proved to be by far the most significant period of prosperity for both merchants and citizens. It was a great time of abundance and thriving community development. Unfortunately, this time of prosperity came to an abrupt end in 1922 when a devastating fire destroyed all non-masonry buildings within the downtown area. A fire that started in the back of a building on the south side of Main Street between 4th and 5th Streets destroyed almost all of the downtown businesses, leaving only the brick shells of buildings to stand as a reminder of the past. Although development was quick to rebuild the downtown core, the town never reached the prosperous stage it had held prior to the fire.

A few years after the 1922 fire, when the town had just reestablished itself, the 1929 Depression hit Frisco. No crops or livestock were sold and a town, which once thrived off agricultural trade, was now faced with keeping all its agricultural



Cotton Yard 1916



School 1912



1st Bank, circa 1902



Frisco Journal Office 1915

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commodities for its own self-sustainability. When the Depression eventually wore off with President Roosevelt's new programs, Frisco began rocking its streets, installing a sewer system and constructing a new high school. By 1935, Frisco was somewhat stabilized again and on the road to complete recovery. However as luck would have it, Frisco experienced one more fire in the 1940s that destroyed the original lumberyard, a home and the Methodist church, slowing the climb back to prosperity. The town never really began to prosper again until roads were improved in 1956. This was the year when the State constructed Highway 24, a paved road to McKinney, giving Frisco and the surrounding area a boost in agricultural trade, which had for so long been the sustaining force for the town.

Frisco has remained a rural farming community until very recently when the construction industry began to boom in the area. Whereas Frisco was originally settled because of the proximity to the railroad, now citizens are drawn to Frisco because of its proximity to major thoroughfares such as the Dallas North Tollway, Preston Road and State Highway 121. Trains still transport materials and trade through the town, however passenger trains have not traveled through the town since the late 1960s.

The City of Frisco has evolved into the fastest growing city in Texas (North Texas Council of Governments) and is the second fastest growing city in the country (among cities with populations between 10 – 50,000 - US Census). The current population of the city is 48,673 people as of January 1, 2002 (Frisco Planning Department), while in 1990, the population was 6,138 – that's nearly 400% growth rate over twelve years.



1923 Frisco Fire Truck



Ruins from the Big Fire of 1922



the Foncine Store east of Frisco



Frisco now

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