

*2021 was another year of significant progress for east Fort Worth.
Here is a brief recap of some of the positive things that took place.*

Education

Two of east Fort Worth's three public high schools completed renovations and additions that will better position the schools for the decades to come, with the third high school still in progress.

Eastern Hills High School completed a \$48 million addition and renovation, which includes a new front entrance, new library and science lab/classroom space, plus renovations for fine arts, a media center, career and technical education, and collaborative spaces at various hallway intersections.

Dunbar High School's \$35 million makeover featured a new front entrance and renovations to improve classroom learning and create spaces for student interaction and collaboration. The field house received a renovation and was expanded by 4,000 square feet.

Polytechnic High School is receiving \$52 million in renovations to provide for more

career and technical education and a new science wing. Work is anticipated to be complete by April 2022.

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Uplift Crescendo Charter School opened its new campus on Cooks Lane for the fall semester. The 60,000 square foot facility provides another education option for kids in Pre-K to 5th grade. Uplift Education is a free charter school with 21 campuses operating in the DFW area. For more information, see <https://www.upliftparent.org/crescendo>.

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Trinity Basin Preparatory School opened its new 45,000 square foot facility for the fall semester, greatly expanding the ability to serve more students. The new building nearly triples the available space and allows the charter school to serve up to 920 students in Pre-K through eighth grade. Trinity Basin is a free charter school providing education for Pre-K to 8th grade students. See <https://www.trinitybasin.com/>.

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Key Center for Learning Differences opened in a 20,000 square foot building on John T White Road, after working out of far smaller and often temporary quarters for many years. The building was formerly the home of an oil and gas company, and now as a school provides education for children with reading and language difficulties, and also trains educators in this important field.

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Texas Wesleyan University broke ground on The Rosedale, a new \$10.5 million building with 56 one-and two-bedroom units to serve 101 students on their campus. Completion is set for Fall 2022. See <https://fortworthbusiness.com/real-estate/new-texas-wesleyan-student-housing/> for additional information.

The university also received a \$5 million lead gift in their quest to build a football stadium on the campus. The TWU Rams restarted their football program in 2017 after a 76-year hiatus. The stadium will be on the western edge of the campus.

East Lancaster Avenue Progress

2021 was a pivotal year for the East Lancaster Public Improvement District (PID), which launched early in 2020. Here is a brief recap of some of the progress:

About a dozen new businesses opened along the corridor in 2021, including a 10,000 square foot health clinic, Lady and the Pit Barbeque (with its cult following), and a new hardware store. Other properties are receiving fresh coats of paint, renovations, and façade improvements as owners feel a sense of optimism about the future.

Private security patrols continue to be effective and are maintaining a great record of reducing issues with vagrants. The numbers of weekly encounters have dropped over 85% from their highs when the patrols began last year. There is a strong level of cooperation between the security officers and officers and management of the Fort Worth Police Department.

In addition to security patrols, the PID is also funding Flock license plate cameras, which are tied to the Fort Worth Police Department's Real-Time Crime Center.

These are deployed in eight locations along the corridor. The police can enter license plate numbers and if there is a match, the Real-Time Crime Center is alerted. The cameras have helped locate stolen cars, missing persons, those with felony warrants—even a serial bank robber. About 800,000 license plates are scanned along East Lancaster Avenue every month.

The East Lancaster Avenue Public Improvement District is funded by the taxable property owners on East Lancaster Avenue between Riverside Drive and East Loop 820. More information can be found here <https://www.pid20.org/>.

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Trinity Metro and the city of Fort Worth continued an effort started late last year to produce a transit-oriented design (TOD) plan for the street. Much of the research is completed, which included two rounds of public input, and a final report is due soon. It is hoped and expected that this TOD plan will act as a template for redevelopment along the corridor, centered around new mass transit options, which will hopefully be

coming in the years ahead. See more at <https://www.advancingeastlancaster.com/>.

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The Vineyard on Lancaster, a 101-unit affordable housing development operated by the Union Gospel Mission, won a Social Impact Award from the Urban Land Institute in October. The awards are given to projects that shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities. The Vineyard on Lancaster opened in early 2020, and is filling a critical housing need.

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In August, the Reby Cary Youth Library held its grand opening—the only children's library in north Texas. In addition to the book collection and fun things for children to do, the building features public art in the form of a ceiling mounted mobile with color-changing LEDs that chase around the space. Kids can change the patterns by finding interactive buttons hidden among the bookshelves. This local report tells more <https://dfw.cbslocal.com/2021/10/07/discover-dfw-reby-cary-youth-library/>.

Community

Artist John Yancey designed a vibrant mosaic mural for Stop Six's Rosedale Plaza Park. It is called "Legacy," and uses colors representing African-American quilts and West African masquerades called "Igongo." The mosaic is installed on three free-standing walls on a concrete plaza in the shape of the Stop Six neighborhood, and includes a reference to the Interurban streetcars (which gave Stop Six its name) as well as twenty plaques celebrating various "community gems" that are important places in the neighborhood's history.

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Grow Southeast, an urban farm initiative addressing food and economic inequities in east and southeast Fort Worth, currently works with four urban farms. See <https://growsoutheastfw.wixsite.com/texas>. Here is a recap of 2021 activity:

Opal's Farm, a long-time dream of community leader Opal Lee, began in 2019 on leased bottom land next to the Trinity River. Despite a disastrous cold snap and other weather issues, Opal's Farm produced over 8,000 pounds of produce in 2021.

Mind Your Garden, owned by Steven and Ursula Nuñez, operates on a three and one-

half-acre homestead with the goal of not only growing produce for the community but helping to educate other gardeners for success. In September, the couple won second place in the inaugural Latinx Business Pitch competition, sponsored by the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. With the support of Challenge of Tarrant County and the prize money, they will be installing an outdoor kitchen, classroom, patio, and other fixtures needed to support a "Healthy Hours" program.

Opal's Farm and Mind Your Garden helped divert thousands of pounds of culled produce from landfills by picking it up for composting from three area G.E. Foodland grocery stores. Opal's Farm hopes to be in a position to generate all of the compost they need annually on site by next year.

Tabor Farm had a water well drilled and is in the final stages of readying the pump for the irrigation. Twenty pounds of elephant garlic cloves were planted in late October with the help of fifty TCU students, representing their first crop. Blue Zones contributed 24 fruit trees for Tabor to meet city of Fort Worth tree canopy requirements, and sponsored some of the irrigation work.

Black Wall Street Farm is the newest urban farm and is located behind Alethia Temple. The farm started with a 25' x 25' production area, with potential to expand in the future. Blue Zones sponsored 2 fruit trees and irrigation drip lines for this newest in the Grow Southeast Urban Farm network.

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Many neighborhood traditions returned in 2021, after a 2020 hiatus due to COVID. West Meadowbrook hosted a picnic and a kid's bike rodeo sponsored by the FWPD bike patrol unit in May. White Lake Hills and Woodhaven hosted 4th of July Parades, and Eastern Hills and Brentwood-Oak Hills hosted a July 4th parade and picnic as well. In Handley, a very successful street festival and car show took place in October, followed by a craft fair several weeks later.

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The East Fort Worth Business Association's Community Awards and Scholarship Banquet was held in November. Five \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to high school seniors at Nolan, Eastern Hills, and Polytechnic High Schools. EFWBA's strong commitment to education also includes money for books for east side school libraries throughout the year.

Parks, Housing, and Infrastructure

The original East First Street bridge near Gateway Park received a long-awaited makeover as a pedestrian/bike bridge along the Trinity Trails. When the street was rebuilt a few years ago, the narrow 1930s-era bridge was left for part of the Trinity Trails system. However, not much was done to it at that time, so it was a rough patch along an otherwise newer system of trails. The work consisted of cleaning, repairing and painting of the bridge, removal of the asphalt roadway, and installation of twelve thousand square feet of new concrete trail. Much of the river east of downtown remains in its natural state, and the views from the bridge are some of the best.

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In January, Sunset at Fash Place opened to its first residents. The 66-unit affordable luxury apartment complex, which honors the original large house on the site in name and architectural style, provides mixed-income housing for ages 55 and older. It is a great example of a developer willing to collaborate with a neighborhood. See <https://www.sunsetatfashplace.com/>.

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In September, Stop Six residents, Fort Worth city leaders, and developers broke ground for the \$35.3 million Cowan Place Senior Living, a 174-unit mixed-income community. Named for Alonzo and Sarah Cowan, two of the early land owners in the Stop Six community, Cowan Place launches the first of six planned phases of new residential housing in the Stop Six Choice Neighborhood Initiative. Its contemporary design is notable for its lighted “lantern” that signals a bright, modern future for one of Fort Worth’s historic communities. Leasing will begin in 2023. For more information on this transformative redevelopment, see <https://stopsixcni.org/>.

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East Fort Worth’s newest park is located at 3851 E Lancaster Avenue, on the north end of the Reby Cary Youth Library site—and is also named for Reby Cary. Reby Cary Park contains a pavilion with a picnic area and covered playground. A portion of the park’s improvements were donated by the West Meadowbrook Neighborhood Association.

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In November, the city council approved a resolution to further celebrate Reby Cary’s life by designating three and one-half miles of East Rosedale Street (Miller Street to the Arlington border) in Cary’s honor.

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Eastside Blossoms continued its volunteer project of planting flowering trees along major thoroughfares in east Fort Worth. Plantings at local libraries (called Libraries Blossom) and several school facilities took place, including the Fort Worth ISD Training Center on Bridgewood Drive. See <https://www.eastsideblossoms.org/>

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Access to the metroplex is one of our best assets, and that includes East Loop 820. Substantial progress was made in widening the freeway between Randol Mill Road and Hurst, including a new, safer interchange with State Highway 121. Meanwhile, preliminary work on the new Southeast Connector project has begun, which will rebuild the last remaining four-lane section of the loop around the city, beginning at Meadowbrook Drive, south to Interstate 20.