The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the page, framing the central text. The overall aesthetic is modern and clean.

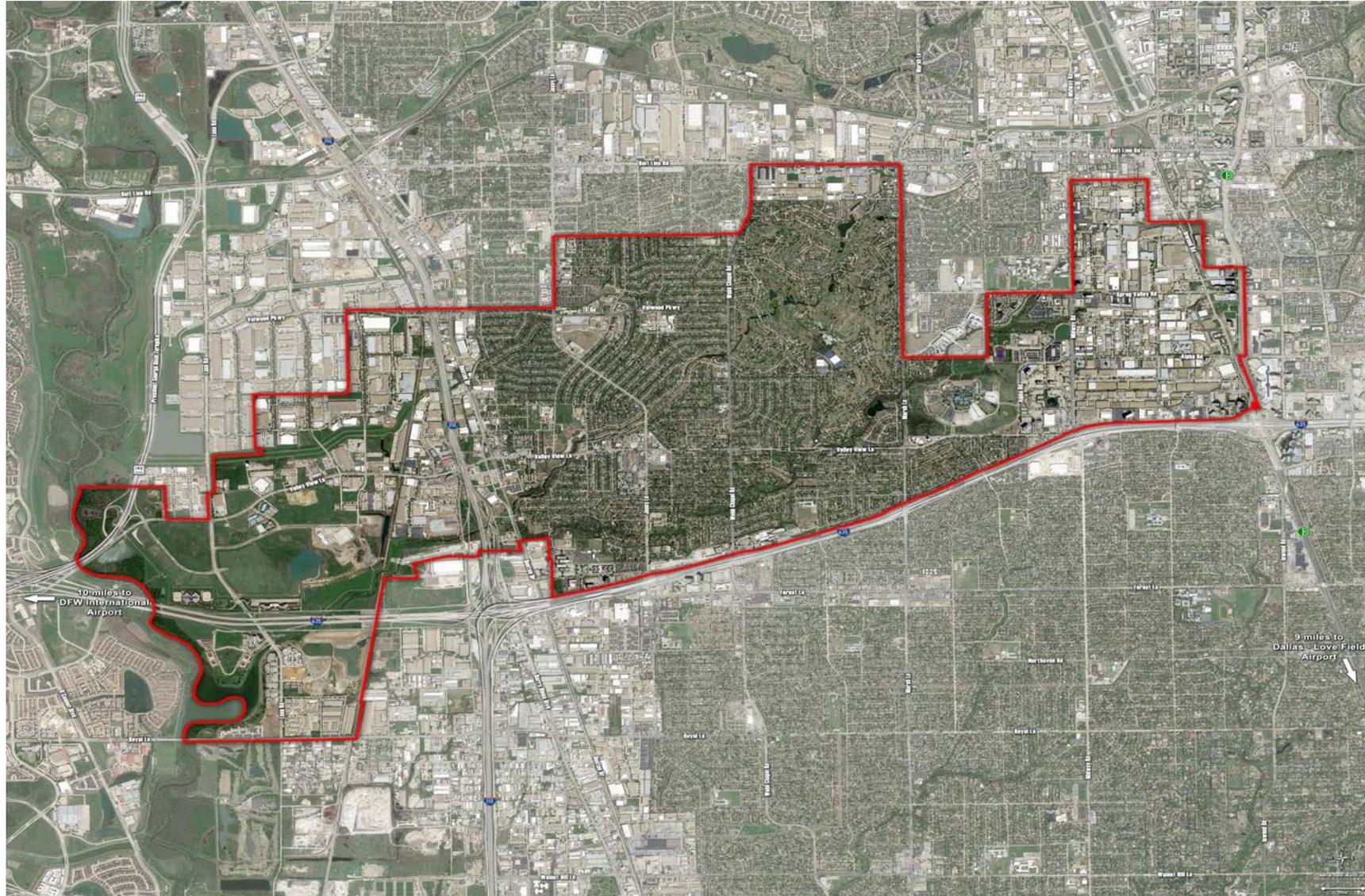
# Suburban Cities: Confronting Decline and Charting a Path to Renewal

First Tier Suburbs Council  
National League of Cities

# Agenda for Today:

- ▶ What is a First Tier Suburb?
  - Historical Context
- ▶ What Issues Do We Face?
  - Housing Value Decline
  - Economic Decline
  - Changing Demographics
- ▶ What Do We Do About It?
  - Enforcement/Policing
  - Development and Affordable Housing Issues
  - State and Federal Assistance
- ▶ Discussion
  - Roundtable Discussion on Focused Issues

# FTS: Growing Topic



# What is a First Tier Suburb?

## ▶ Also Called:

- Inner Ring Suburbs, Inner Suburbs, First Ring Suburbs
- Old, Older or Mature Suburbs
- Or “Neglected, Declining, Unfavored, Struggling...”

## ▶ Typical Commonalities

- Post WWII growth, 1945-1970 boomtowns
- Began as attractive communities, middle income
- Rapid suburban development, cookie cutter houses, with limited local access to jobs or services

Fact:  
About 20%  
Of  
Americans  
Live in a  
First Tier  
Suburb

# How Did We Get to this Point?

- ▶ Suburbs originated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when some mostly wealthy residents moved from urban centers (Suburban Elitism)
- ▶ Post WWII, suburbs grew exponentially, focused by the economics of the homebuilding industry
- ▶ Automobiles were more affordable and large roadbuilding programs were implemented
- ▶ Low density/longer commutes without mass transit or many local services became the norm for suburbia - *The planners took over*
- ▶ Suburban life becomes synonymous with The American Dream

# What are the Problems We Face?

- ▶ Across the nation, Post WWII suburbs dominated by single family homes aren't aging well.

*Infrastructure failing, tax revenues falling, service demands increasing, property values falling, retail failing, school test scores dropping, etc*

- ▶ Since the 1980's, about 50% of suburbs have seen income declines greater than the central cities they surround
- ▶ Particularly the case in older suburban communities where large swaths of inexpensive single family homes were developed in a short period of time

# Risk Factors for Suburbs:

- ▶ **Rapid Growth 1945-1980**
  - The faster, the greater risk
  - Generational waves and service demands
- ▶ **Large Swaths of Similar Homes**
  - Not much variation in housing values
  - Housing that ages out at the same time
- ▶ **Moderate Home Values**
  - Limited income diversity - locked in to certain level
- ▶ **Lacking a Sense of Place or Major Attractor**
  - Historical Asset, Major employer

# Why Suburbs Decline

## Homeowners Have Real Options:

### ▶ Reinvest in Their Home

- If neighbors do the same, may recover
- If neighbors don't, lose investment

### ▶ Stay But Don't Reinvest

- Hope the neighborhood improves as your property declines

### ▶ Leave the Community - Move to Newer Suburb

- Sell to lower income buyer
- Rent to lower income resident (worst impact)

# Resulting Fiscal Stress

- ▶ **Property, Sales and Income taxes make up 86% of local revenues for suburbs**
  - As median income, housing values and local sales tax revenues fall, local government revenues also fall
- ▶ **Much Suburban Infrastructure is in Need of Repair**
  - Transportation, community facilities and utilities need constant maintenance and eventual replacement
  - Poor infrastructure condition limits economic development
- ▶ **Inter-governmental Aid is Directed Elsewhere**
  - Limited resources disproportionately consumed by edge communities and central cities - falling political capital
- ▶ **Suburban cities may not have the tax or economic capacity to heal themselves**

# Public Schools

- ▶ School test scores are consistently lower in inner ring suburbs compared to outer ring scores
- ▶ School performance is inextricably tied to poverty and language
- ▶ School enrollment falls as the population ages, adding fiscal stress and possible school closures
- ▶ School facilities age with other infrastructure

**FACT:** Per pupil spending is lowest in FTS, compared to new suburbs and urban centers

## Bottom Line:

- ▶ The quality of their housing stock, infrastructure, schools and local economies make them non-competitive with newer suburbs or central cities
- ▶ The rise of suburban poverty in the suburbs and the needs of a more impoverished population for government services deepens the challenge for local government at the same time that revenues are declining with property values, median income, and local economic activity

# Agenda for Today

- ▶ What Do We Do About It?
  - Enforcement/Policing
  - Development and Affordable Housing Issues
  - State and Federal Assistance

# What Can Be Done About It?

## ▶ Policing, Enforcement & Image Approaches

- Code Enforcement
- Broken Window Theory
- Image Enhancement

## ▶ Development as a Solution

- Assumes profitable investment is possible
- Schools, Economic Development
- Housing Rehab, Affordable, Redevelopment

## ▶ Regional or State Solutions

- Growth controls

## ▶ National Solutions

- Limited federal funding for neighborhood stabilization and renewal

# How Do People Decide Where to Live?

1. Crime
2. Schools
3. Poverty/Economics
4. Housing Quality
5. Growth
6. Transportation Accessibility
7. Aesthetics and Recreation

# Citizen Engagement

- ▶ Flattened government with active citizens is the new normal, engages as:
  - Volunteers
  - Planners and Visionaries
  - Community Partners - Turning citizen customers into citizen partners
- ▶ Lots of Bang for the Buck

# Policing and Enforcement

- ▶ **Theory: Where Community Standards Have Fallen, They can be Raised to:**
  - Enhance property values
  - Improve quality of life
  - Involve residents in the renewal and establishment of higher property maintenance standards
  - Fits in with Broken Window Theory
- ▶ **Police**
  - Community Oriented Policing
  - Targeted special actions on chronic problems
  - Neighborhood Watch/Business Watch
- ▶ **Code Enforcement**
  - Proactive, multi-department approaches

# Example: Blight Busters

- ▶ Cleaning Up Dodge
- ▶ Proactive Sweeps of Entire City
- ▶ Coordinated Actions Using a Large Multi-department, Multi-agency, Multidisciplinary team
- ▶ Goal - help residents identify and correct problems of blight that impact property values and safety

# Blight Busters Team

- ▶ Code Enforcement
- ▶ Police Department
- ▶ Probation Agency
- ▶ Child Protection Agency
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Building Inspection
- ▶ Fire Department
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Animal Control
- ▶ Police Department Volunteers
- ▶ Neighborhood Services Volunteers
- ▶ Neighborhood Watch / Weed and Seed

# Policing and Enforcement

Can apply enforcement to many unique situations, using on hand resources

- ▶ Apartment Inspections
- ▶ Commercial Corridor Enhancements
- ▶ Rental Home Inspections
- ▶ Transient Enforcement
- ▶ Probation Sweeps
- ▶ Light Rail Fare Sweeps
- ▶ Specific Areas of Enforcement
- ▶ GIS Created Hotspots

# Image Enhancements

- ▶ Efforts to make your community more attractive to homebuyers and investors
  - Branding
  - Events
  - The Arts, Embrace cultural diversity
  - Caution: These have to be substantial and real honest efforts have good effect
- ▶ Working with faith-based and other non profit partners can have great benefits and are likely essential to these efforts

# Development as a Solution

- ▶ Theory: Use cutting edge planning and development assistance to reinvigorate old commercial zones and corridors
  - Challenge: This has to pencil out and be economic
- ▶ Create Opportunity for Densification and Infill by Using Better Planning
  - Special planning zones, overlays, etc.
- ▶ New Urbanism
  - Retrofit suburbia with more place making development, TODs, creating a diversity of housing and walkable sustainable neighborhoods
- ▶ Enhance Development Using Public Resources

# Other Development Options

- ▶ Create a Downtown or Public Space to Create a Sense of Place
  - Most suburbs lack these features
- ▶ Historic Preservation Can be a Major Boon to Reinvestment
- ▶ Economic Development Programs
  - Become what you can be
  - Play to your strengths
  - Grow what you have

# School Enhancements

## Major Issue

- ▶ This is the SECOND most important issue for homebuyers in choosing a location
- ▶ School Reform Measures Advancing Nationwide
- ▶ Cities Can Partner with School Districts to Support Education Activities
- ▶ Involve Non - Profits and Local For - Profit Partners to Stretch Resources

# Housing Rehabilitation

- ▶ Suburbs fail when people choose to move elsewhere, usually to newer housing
  - Mature suburbs need to compete
- ▶ Find ways to ease the major and minor remodeling projects homeowners undertake
  - Loan Programs
  - Master Architectural Plans for common types of homes - effective cookie cutter neighborhoods

# National Policy - Challenges

- ▶ CDBG - Community Development Block Grants: available to cities with 50k or more residents. Can be used for low and moderate income projects, but with significant rules and overhead costs
- ▶ Hope VI Grants - Redevelopment of public housing. Little public housing exists in mature suburbs, and a recent ULI study suggests that expanding affordable housing increases the decline of suburbs

# City of Farmers Branch Demographics per ESRI

	2015	2020
▶ Median Household Income	\$56,316	\$63,992
▶ Average Household Income	\$76,452	\$85,367
▶ Per Capita Income	\$29,070	\$32,582
▶ <i>ESRI uses US Census Bureau 2010 and forecasts for 2015 and 2020.</i>		

Because per-capita income is the overall income of a population divided by the number of people included in the population, it does not always give an accurate representation of the quality of life due to the function's inability to account for skewed data.

For instance, if there is an area where 50 people are making \$1 million per year and 1,000 people making \$100 per year the per capita income is \$47,714, but that does not give a true picture of the living conditions of the entire population.

# City of Dallas Demographics per ESRI

	2015	2020
▶ Median Household Income	\$61,302	\$72,696
▶ Average Household Income	\$84,725	\$95,635
▶ Per Capita Income	\$30,706	\$34,585
▶ <i>ESRI uses US Census Bureau 2010 and forecasts for 2015 and 2020.</i>		

# Topics for Discussion

Let's talk about what you want to talk about....

- ▶ Round Table Discussions
- ▶ Maintaining Property Values
- ▶ Public Safety Enhancements
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Image Improvement
- ▶ Community Engagement
- ▶ Other