

The Epicurean District

**Citizens' Advisory Committee Report
for the Town of Addison City Council**

June 11, 2007

Addison!

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The Epicurean District

Citizens' Advisory Committee Report for the Town of Addison City Council

Charge from the City Council

The primary focus of the culinary committee will be to evaluate the possibility of establishing an epicurean district. Other options the committee may consider as part of the district include providing cooking classes, specialty retail stores and food services training.¹

"A Recipe for Success"

Response to the charge

We recommend that the Town of Addison create an Epicurean District. This recommendation is based on our evaluation of the long-term potentials and inherent risks. Such an epicurean experience might be in conjunction with culinary classes, a showcase for chefs and an incubator for new culinary businesses. These will all strengthen Addison's reputation as a complete epicurean destination.

Committee Vision

This committee perceives a district that provides a distinctive and enriching epicurean experience appealing to all the senses.

Why we make this recommendation

1. Our Vision offers *economic renewal and revitalization* for an aging and visible area of Addison.
2. This Epicurean District will *complement the Addison Dining District* and aid in the redevelopment of Belt Line Road.
3. This district will *contribute to restoring the allure of Addison* by overcoming the appeal of surrounding communities who have newer, fresher culinary attractions.
4. Provides the impetus for Addison to *become a major destination* bringing visitors who come, not only because of our epicurean inspiration and fine restaurants, but also for the availability of quality foods, culinary education, equipment, accoutrements and assistance in food preparation.
5. Brands *Addison as an complete epicurean magnet*.
6. Complements and enhances Addison's *reputation of a healthy and fun lifestyle*.

Steps necessary for achieving this Vision

1. This committee, aware of inherent risks of this Vision, recommends the first step be a market research/feasibility² study commissioned to confirm the financial viability of the Vision. We recommend this be undertaken and studied before further resources are committed to this project.
 - Determine if the target customers to support an Epicurean District are within our demographics.
 - Is it possible to attract our desired merchants and customers? Identify potential merchants.



¹ Addison Town Council Resolution No. R06-070, August 22, 2006.

² Buxton Company, Ft. Worth or the University of North Texas could conduct the survey.

- The costs of this study could be partially defrayed by also reviewing the Belt Line Renovation Vision and including survey questions that benefit the interests of other citizen advisory committees.
 - If the study is positive and the Council agrees, engage a planning entity such as RTKL Associates to conceptualize the district in accordance with the Belt Line Redevelopment Vision and this committee's Vision.
2. If the Council elects to proceed, we recommend appointment of an overall Project Manager.
 3. With the data from the study and plans from the planning organization, develop and execute a Request for Proposals (RFP). Simultaneously, begin searching for an anchor tenant (if that concept is recommended) such as World Delicacies, Trader Joe's, Market Street, etc., and other targeted merchants identified in the professional study.
 4. Market this District on national, state and local levels.

Background and Amplification

This committee consulted several professionals and explored in depth what would constitute an “Epicurean District” and its risks. From this research we developed this Vision for an Addison Epicurean District which complements its neighbor, the proposed Addison Dining District. Together they will become a “destination” area attracting more visitors to Addison. This combination will help retain those who work in Addison by providing an area for epicurean inspiration and night-time entertainment. The Vision includes a diversified collection of culinary business owners. They will handle unique, high-quality produce and be experts in the preparation of their product(s). The focus of this district is on quality—quality of food, quality of product, quality of information—all in an inviting, pleasant environment. It will appeal to all the senses—sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch—being truly “Epicurean”.

As it grows, the Addison Epicurean District will revitalize a visible area of Belt Line Road, which has lost much of its “Main Street” allure over time and now suffers from “franchise fatigue.” Surrounding communities have developed newer culinary venues that provide more panache and are drawing customers away from Addison. At least one merchant has told us he had fewer customers in 2006 after consecutive years of increases.³ We need to regain the attention of our target customers and the committee believes this Vision provides a plan to accomplish that.⁴

To regain the attention of those targeted customers, the proposed Epicurean District includes a central venue for: culinary education; cooking classes and collegiate culinary training; a new business incubator; television broadcasting and recording; a new product introduction site; a small library and a culinary museum⁵; along with a great collection of epicurean merchants.

This Vision is set in a pedestrian-friendly “green” environment with completely shaded walkways and few cars, pleasant water features promoting water conservation, casual

³ Mr. Glen Agritelley, Mercy Wine Bar, April 30, 2007.

⁴ Support will be required from the Public Relations Committee.

⁵ Interaction with the Museums Committee and the Education Committee required.



gardens for socializing and a central gathering space. It has a unique look about it—Old World or perhaps a warehouse style (industrial district), or a look reminiscent of the old Addison schoolhouse (now the Magic Time Machine), or an early western town (Texas cowboy-style)—any style to make it memorable for visitors and different from the splashy, slick developments about North Texas. It would feature periodic walking tours of Addison’s special epicurean and culinary features.⁶

With any bold, untried action there is inherent risk associated. Such is the case with this Vision. Professionals have advised the committee that without an anchor tenant, attracting developers will be difficult. They say the lower-volume, smaller retailers, which we envision, often lack financial responsibility resulting in being high turnover tenants. This Vision will require strong management and a talented, determined leasing agent. There also must exist a “critical mass” of merchants to lure shoppers (i.e., several merchants of a similar product—multiple bakers, butchers, florists). Finding these merchants may be a challenge but not impossible. We will attempt to be unique—not in competition with everyone.

In spite of such risks we are encouraged to find a growing trend of consumers desiring fresh, local products, and gourmet cooking at home. It seems as if the more high-tech consumers become the more personal, “high-touch” service they desire.

There exist enormous benefits of this development for the Town, as it is a major part of the plan for redeveloping Belt Line Road. So, despite the risks involved, there is a preponderance of reasons that we recommend the Council proceed with the Addison Epicurean District as shared within our Vision.

Interim Course of Action

The committee felt it should be brought to the Council’s attention that some members expressed a desire for a more conservative course of action. This course would have the Town first designate and publish the location of a future Epicurean District, then experiment on a smaller scale, letting the Vision develop on its own over time. It could be promoted each time a developer is undertaking a project in Addison or perhaps promoted by partnering it with other events such as Taste Addison. Or take advantage of those food merchants already in Addison by conducting tours/walks/crawls of a “Virtual Epicurean District” in conjunction with an epicurean map of the present locations of those merchants. These concepts would be instituted while the idea gathers steam and some of these merchants, and others, choose to relocate to the designated Epicurean District.

“...the more high-tech consumers become the more personal, ‘high-touch’ service they desire.”



⁶ Support from the Environmental Design Committee requested.

Addenda



Vision, *reiterated*

Definitions

Conceptualization from “blue sky” ideas

Speakers • Developments • References

Committee members



Committee Vision

This committee perceives a district that provides a distinctive and enriching epicurean experience appealing to all the senses.

The committee chose to use the term “Epicurean” as it is all-encompassing and relates more directly to the senses.

Epicurean: A person dedicated to sensual enjoyment, especially that derived from fine food and drink.

Culinary: Of, or for cooking.

Epicurean District “Blue Sky” Ideas and Conceptualization

Note: Initials after certain ideas indicate which presenter shared that idea/concept with the committee. All presenters and their initials are listed at the end of this idea section.

Overall District Ideas

- Opt for quality, not quantity. We do not wish to compete with everyone elseGA
- Appeal to all the senses—a visit to the district will be an “experience”GA
- Merchandise mix will be a balance of retail and servicesDW
- Grow into a tourist destination. It should be environmentally “green” and pedestrian friendly..... SVM
- Should have a definable atmosphere—festival feel, natural space, safe, welcoming.
- Appropriate use of the Addison-Blue color.....AR
- Include venues other than just food; music, art, Angelika movie theater to draw people at night⁷.....AR
- Shops should be open seven (7) days a week. Use technology to attract people: Wi-Fi, outdoor monitors, Addison Access TV channel.....GA
- Not critical to have Belt Line frontage SVM
- District must complement and support our existing restaurants, airport and hotels P&Z
- Security should be of primary value.....AR
- Must be self sustaining not requiring financial support from the Town P&Z

Target Audiences

Consumers

- North Dallas to South Plano residents
- Mid- to high-end market within 15-minute drive time
- Identify our customer within these demographics. Demographics don’t always tell the truthTK
- Use psychographics to determine how these customers spend their money TK

Merchants

- Merchants *who*:
- are great people committed to their craftsRC
 - are sensitive to customer’s needs and concerns.....RC
 - make the customer’s visit an adventureRC
 - possess great personalitiesRC
 - sell great quality in their products; hand-made breads, hand-dipped chocolates, etc.RC
 - sell fresh, unique products; ethnic foods, organic foods, farmers market produceRC
 - Customers should be able to put a face with a placeRC
 - There should be few franchises in the district RC, SVM
 - Incorporate present Addison merchants: liquor stores, bakers, coffee roasters, chocolatiers..... TK
 - Many retailers are not aware of their opportunities in certain areas..... TK

⁷ Coordinate with the Performing and Visual Arts Committee.

Exterior Areas of the District

A distinctive feature should define the entrances to the district

- Distinctive signage should mark the entrances and be used throughout the districtAR
- A large, visible, blue clock (or sundial).....AR

Parking should be convenient

- The majority of the parking should be behind the shops.
- Maybe underground parking
- May require cooperation of Addison with a parking district economic incentive.

The buildings should have a defining architectural style

- Different from the typical North Texas slick style, *a la* Shops of Legacy
- The exteriors could have an Old World look, or a cowboy style, or warehouse-industrial style ...GA
- The buildings should be placed sensitive to the sun and take advantage of shade.....GA

The district should be a pedestrian friendly, walk-able area all year round

- The walkways should be wide and totally shaded, to encourage walking rather than driving
- Could have a Hollywood-type “Walk of Fame” featuring chefs/cooking notables
- Internal streets could be closed, when appropriate, for occasions such as street fairs, food fairs, etc.

Water conservation awareness be demonstrated with water features

- Working cistern as the centerpiece
- Large water features around seating areas—integrate streams and fountains into the walkways

A central outside gathering plaza

- One major plaza-park-gathering area with the shops around it—similar to Addison Circle.
- Instead of ordinary furniture use ledges or low walls for sitting.
- Outdoor monitors around the plaza display happenings inside shops and studios.
- The district should be heavily shaded by trees.
- The plaza area should be landscaped with indigenous plantings, colorful annuals.
- Herb gardens for sensory stimulation; lavender, rosemary, basil, etc.; gardens for children to play in
- Vineyard or grapevines in appropriate spaces
- Multiple gardens and greenery should be planted throughout the district.
- Existing restaurants should be encouraged to plant gardens on their premises.
- Pet areas should be available.
- The district should be bicycle friendly, but no skateboards.
- On designated nights, special tours could be offered with different themes each time.
- Plaza area would be conducive for entertainment; live music, buskers, or street artists.
- There could be an elevated viewing area of the flight operations out of Addison Airport, perhaps on a pedestrian overpass over Inwood Road connecting with shopping venues to the eastAR

Landscape the railroad right-of-way

Programming/Uses of the District

A Culinary Stage to showcase chef’s talents

- An elevated stage with a commercial kitchen and stadium-style seating
- Convince a kitchen equipment manufacturer (Viking Kitchens) to donate a kitchen for schools that is also suitable for television needs.
- While chefs are conducting schools, television can be broadcasting and recording for later availability.
- Broadcast on Addison Access TV Channel.
- These recordings and other culinary information displayed around on the walls for purchase.
- A library of epicurean books available for lending, selling, or reference only
- Managed by a manager to oversee it and promote the programs and classes.
- Keep it small enough so as not to lose control and people get a close, friendly feeling.

Schools and training⁸

- Cooking/culinary education programs in cooperation with a high school, junior college, or a major regional university.
- Also train front-of-restaurant personnel; wait staff
- Addison is a great place to do an internship in one of our many restaurants.
- Also provide non-credit educational events for the consumer; adult education

Culinary Business Incubator

- Incubator kitchens built in the same culinary stage area would be available for neophyte culinary businesses that do not yet possess proper kitchen facilities. Grow our future chefs.

“...and it must be unique.”



⁸ Coordinate with the Education Committee.

Programming/Uses of the District, cont.

- Guidance available from visiting chefs who are conducting cooking schools
- Establish a rating committee of current chefs to rate these new businesses..... SC
- Establish contacts with Small Business Association to aid new entrepreneurs..... SC
- Prepare your own dishes to go (Super Suppers)

New Product Introduction Center

- The Culinary Stage would be a place for new epicurean product launches.
- New kitchen and culinary products introduction center
- Introduce new vintages of wines, distilled spirits, etc.
- Book signings by the chefs who author cookbooks

Wine tasting/food pairings opportunities

- Classes on how to pair wines/beers and foods
- Wine tasting festivals—same for beers and other alcoholic beverages
- Grape stomping events—celebrate new vintages
- Dallas Morning News* Wine Festival

Television Studio

- The stage would be a location for a television studio
- We recommend a production studio for cooking classes with limited filming abilities..... SVM
- Media friendly TV studios *Broadcast cooking shows on Addison Access Channel*
- Thoughts on upgrading to a network level TV studio
- The number of culinary television viewers quadruples every year SVM
- It may attract regional and international celebrity chefs and “foodies”—FoodTV will be promoting local chefs soon SVM
- Addison’s airport and hotels allow quick-in, quick-out visits.
- A network caliber studio could cost up to \$7 million, not recommended. Do just a local studio SVM

Merchants we should attract (need several of each type to create a “critical mass”..... DW)

- An anchor tenant, i.e., *Trader Joe’s, Market Street, Whole Foods, Central Market, Draeger’s, World Delicacies*
- Our location may be an asset as we are not close to another anchor tenant..... SVM
- Butcher/specialty meats: *Gary Hirsch Meats*
- Cheese merchants: *Mozzarella Company*
- Farmers’ market, two (2) days a week: *fresh fruits and vegetables, local or organic grown*
- International food shops: *Penzeys Spices, Dean and DeLuca,*
- Bakeries: *La Spiga, Constantine’s, Delicious Cakes, Celebrity Bakery*
- Wedding cakes or a one-stop wedding store
- Chocolatiers: *Ghirardelli, Neuhaus, J. Dorian*
- Dairy/ice cream shop: *Henry’s Ice Cream, Carvel, Paciugo*
- Coffee and specialty teas: *Cultured Cup, Dunn Bros, Addison Coffee Roasters*
- Wine and beer retailers: *Centennial, Majestic*
- Caterers: *Dallas Addison Catering, Catering Art of Texas, Vivant*
- Culinary tour business: *Food Roots, LLC*
- Restaurant supply store: *Ace Mart Restaurant Supply*
- Seafood markets
- Brewpubs
- Ethnic food shops
- Florists/flower shops
- A one-stop store for party planning/entertaining, including rentals, glasses, tables, etc.
- Williams Sonoma and/or Sur la Table
- Tuesday Morning style “kitchen and dining only” retail shop
- Pet shop, i.e., *Bone Appetite*

Gallery

- Art gallery and/or culinary museum.⁹
- Exhibit facility for food shows and food fair—*Artfest, Italia Addison.*

Existing restaurants

- The district would strive to supplement and support the existing network of Addison restaurants.



⁹ Coordinate with the Museum Committee.

Connectivity/Transportation

Visitors to the District should be enticed to other parts of town.
How can we attract traffic from across town to the District?
Connect the Epicurean District with the Galleria which draws international tourists.
Use public transportation: buses, light rail, monorail, etc.
Promote the proximity of Addison Airport

Trends Discovered

Fewer people are cooking at home, instead they are eating out more; convenience factor, however, there is a growth of gourmet, high-end culinary entertaining in the home.....DW
Indicators in the current market place: high-end food stores (i.e., Central Market, Whole Foods) are doing well as also are low-end retailers (Wal-Mart); whereas, mid-level food stores (i.e., Albertson’s, Kroger) are struggling.....DW
There are culinary areas developing about Dallas and the U.S. SVM
Consumers have an increasing preference for organic and locally produced foods..... SVM
Assuring the safety of our food supply is of increasing concern.....MK
The more high tech we become, the more help and high “touch” service we desire DW

Risks

Our Vision may be a labor of loveDW
This Vision will require superior managementDW
Small merchants are notably a financial risk and high turnover tenantsDW
Developers wish to attract large, national chains with financial stabilityDW
Neighboring communities are going “wet”AR
Where will we find the merchants we desire?.....DW
If the district does not have a national retailer it will be much harder to promote..... TK
The more customers, the fewer problems TK
Trader Joe’s is the answer..... SVM
The Town of Addison may have to provide some economic development incentives to initiate the district.



Speakers who addressed this committee

AR	Adam Remington, Owner	Remington's Seafood Restaurant
AW	Alan Wood, Chair, Planning & Zoning Committee.....	Town of Addison
CM	Carmen Moran, Dir. Dev. Services/City Secretary	Town of Addison
DW	Dick Wilke, Developer and Sr. Vice President	The Retail Connection
GA	Glen Agritelley.....	Mercy Wine Bar
MH	Marc Haines.....	Sysco Food Distributors
MK	Mary Kimbrough, Owner, Food Roots, LLC	Friends of Dallas Farmer's Market
P&Z	Planning and Zoning Committee	Town of Addison
RC	Richard Chamberlain, Owner/Chef	Chamberlain's Restaurants
SB	Sandy Breuss	Sysco Food Distributors
SC	Stacy Caldwell, President	Friends of the Dallas Farmer's Market
SVM	Sharon Van Meter, World Master Chef.....	FoodTV Network
TK	Tim Keith, Territory Business Manager	Buxton Co., Ft. Worth, TX

Epicurean/Culinary developments with some features of our Vision

Andronicos, Berkeley, CA,.....	www.andronicos.com
Chelsea Market, New York, NY	www.chelseamarket.com
Copia, Napa Valley, CA.....	www.copia.org
Farmer's Market, Austin, TX.....	www.austinfarmersmarket.org
Ferry Building Marketplace, San Francisco, CA.....	www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com
Juniper Hill Farms, Llano, TX.....	www.juniperhillsfarm.com
Grand Central Terminal, New York, NY	www.grandcentralterminal.com
Lexington Market, Baltimore, MD.....	www.lexingtonmarket.com
Lunardi's, San Francisco, CA.....	www.lunardis.com
Pike Place Market, Seattle, WA.....	www.pikeplacemarket.org
Reading Terminal Market, Philadelphia, PA.....	www.readingterminalmarket.org
St. Lawrence Market, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.....	www.stlawrencemarket.com
The Cellars Market, Rockwall, TX.....	www.thecellarsmarket.com

References

- *The Addison 2030 Vision Project*
- *"The Blueprint" Belt Line Redevelopment Vision* (RTKL Associates, Inc.)
- *Incentive Policy & Guidelines for Qualifying Projects*, Town of Addison, Texas
- *History of Addison: Addison Robertson, Addison Schoolhouse* (Magic Time Machine)
- *The Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida
- *The Art of Possibility* by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander



Process used by committee to respond to the charge

- *Established* the committee and rules for our procedure.
- *Reviewed* the Council’s Charge to the committee and determined our purpose.
- *Reviewed* the 2030 Vision and “The Blueprint” — Belt Line Redevelopment Vision
- *Inspired* the committee members to express their “blue-sky” ideas through the Nominal Group Technique (NGT).
- *Toured* the proposed district and visited with two merchants.
- *Hosted* professionals who all shared their experiences, visions and recommendations.
- *Explored* the internet for ideas relating to epicurean development.
- *Conducted* site visits throughout the U.S. as various committee members traveled for business and pleasure.



This report is respectfully submitted by the following:

Citizen Advisory Committee • Epicurean District

Citizen Members

Virgil Burkhardt, Facilitator

Retired Sales Executive

“I only like two desserts: hot or cold.”

Kitty Goddard, Assistant Facilitator

Founding Editor, *Richardson Living*; Consultant—Marketing and PR

“We should look for someone to eat and drink with before looking for something to eat and drink.” —Epicurus

Jeanette Jones

Wife, mother, grandmother, retired secretary and homemaker

“My favorite part of the new Epicurean District will be driving by and being proud.”

Carol Rennesund

Addison Homeowner, Commercial Real Estate Finance Paralegal

“I’m a devoted foodie, and live where I can indulge my weakness for great steak, sushi and all things chocolate!”

Lynne Stokes

Professor of Statistics, SMU

“I belong to three different gourmet cooking groups, so the Epicurean District will save me lots of driving to Central Market!”

Glynda Turner

Past Council Member, Attorney

Favorite recipe: “Making reservations.”

Planning & Zoning Commission Representatives

Todd Meier • Alan Wood

City Council Members

Greg Hirsch • Diane Mallory

Town Staff

Tim Hastings • Carmen Moran • Gordon Robbins • Chris Terry

“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”

—James Beard

