

Narrative

Gus Thomasson (GT) Rd enters Mesquite in the Northwest area by La Prada Event Center and Country Club Estates. It travels Southeast (parallel to I-635 and N Galloway Ave East off I-635) crossing I-30 and ends at I-80. To provide an idea of use, traffic counts between Karla and Moon Drives were 21,000 in 2013.

The GT Rd area of Mesquite dates to the mid-1950s, when the City named the major connector road to the Reinhardt community (now part of Dallas), after civic leader Gus W. Thomasson. During the City's building boom in 1954, the road was extended when the City annexed land up to the Casa View neighborhood and east to the Dallas Athletic Country Club. Ben Tisinger, for whom an elementary school is named, is credited with building the sewer trunk line to the Casa View/GT area in 1955 at no cost to the City – he depended on the developers to repay him. This kickstarted development in *north* Mesquite. The Texas Business Review reported that Mesquite led all other Texas cities in building permits per capita (June 1955).



1952



1962

Getting an education in north Mesquite was difficult as schools were few and far between. To serve some of the elementary aged students, MISD leased four brick houses near the intersection of GT and La Prada Drive for an annual fee of \$1 from the Centex Corporation. The school thus became known as The Centex School and housed up to 235 students. In 1958 the City let two contracts for the erection of a 1-million-gallon water storage tank and tower at Oates and Sarazen Drives to accommodate the growth. Building permits soared to \$14,365,34 with Garland finishing a distant second.

In September, construction got underway for Mirabeau B. Lamar Elementary School, which came to be Vanston Middle School during the 1964-65 school year. With schools underway, the area began to grow to fit other needs of the residents. The City awarded an \$86,677 contract for the construction of Fire Station #2 at Sarazen and Oates Drives. In May 1960, Cary Beth Israel opened on North GT, as did Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. For shopping, Broadway Square Center opened that same year.

In 2007, the City adopted the Casa View Heights Neighborhood Plan which outlined goals and strategies to revitalize the neighborhood and reconnect residents to the GT corridor.

GUS THOMASSON CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION CODE

*Adopted by Ordinance No. 4022 on December 15, 2008
First Amended by Ordinance No. 4187 on November 7, 2011*

In 2008, the City adopted the Gus Thomasson Corridor Revitalization Code. The Form Based Code established new development standards for properties along the GT Corridor north of I-30.

In 2010, the City was awarded a North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) grant to kick start the Thomasson Square Project and construction began in 2013.

In a 2015 survey of the citizenry, 84% said revitalization of older retail areas should be a priority for City Council. Eighty-seven percent said they would consider the area of GT between I-30 and Karla Road as an area that needs revitalization. Seventy-three percent of respondents said the primary reason for visiting this area of GT Rd is business related.



One of the NCTCOG grant requirements was to attract a private mixed-use development. In 2014, the \$23 million Villas at Vanston Park project broke ground and a ribbon cutting took place in 2017. The catalyst project is a three-story mixed-use development that offers a work-live environment.

In order to fund further revitalization, the City created a Tax Increment

Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) in 2015 called Number 8/Gus Thomasson Road. The TIRZ was amended in 2017 to include the IH-30 expansion area.

In 2019, the Gus Thomasson Rd Project began and in 2020, the City welcomed Lock Supply Co. to the Oats Park Shopping Center. Construction on both the Gus Thomasson Rd and Thomasson Square Projects are 95% complete.



Over the next four years, TxDOT is reconstructing IH-635 including the interchange with IH-30. This construction will turn the GT Rd overpass to an underpass at I-30, causing an approximate nine-month closure. Construction is dependent on Galloway Ave construction and is targeted for the end of 2021.