



Dallas Area
Habitat
for Humanity®

build louder

Los Arboles de Santa Maria *The Trees of Saint Mary's*

Dallas Area Habitat and Vecinos Unidos Unveil Neighborhood Plan

Patience and Persistence

Over ten years ago nonprofit housing developer Vecinos Unidos (Neighbors United) began working on a plan to revitalize a small neighborhood nestled next to [St. Mary of Carmel Catholic Church and School](#). Vecinos' early vision and commitment led to the October 2nd unveiling of a plan for over \$10 million in investment to transform Los Arboles de Santa Maria. Rosa Lopez, Executive Director of Vecinos Unidos, attributes her organization's patience and persistence to the community's strong desire for homeownership in West Dallas.

Located south of Singleton Road along narrow Vilbig Road, the neighborhood is small. Only about 60 single family houses dot the neighborhood; however, there are enough vacant residential lots to easily double the number of homes -- more with row house, duplex, or other higher density homeownership designs. While the neighborhood may appear a place left behind to outsiders, the anchor of St. Mary of Carmel and a core of long-standing residents gives the area the potential to be a West Dallas gem. An example of the spirit of the neighborhood is [Randy Gilbert](#), a longtime resident profiled in *The Dallas Morning News* for building a park for his grandkids -- a testament both to Mr. Gilbert and to the neighborhood's need for green space!

St. Mary's students sing at 2012 West Dallas home dedication

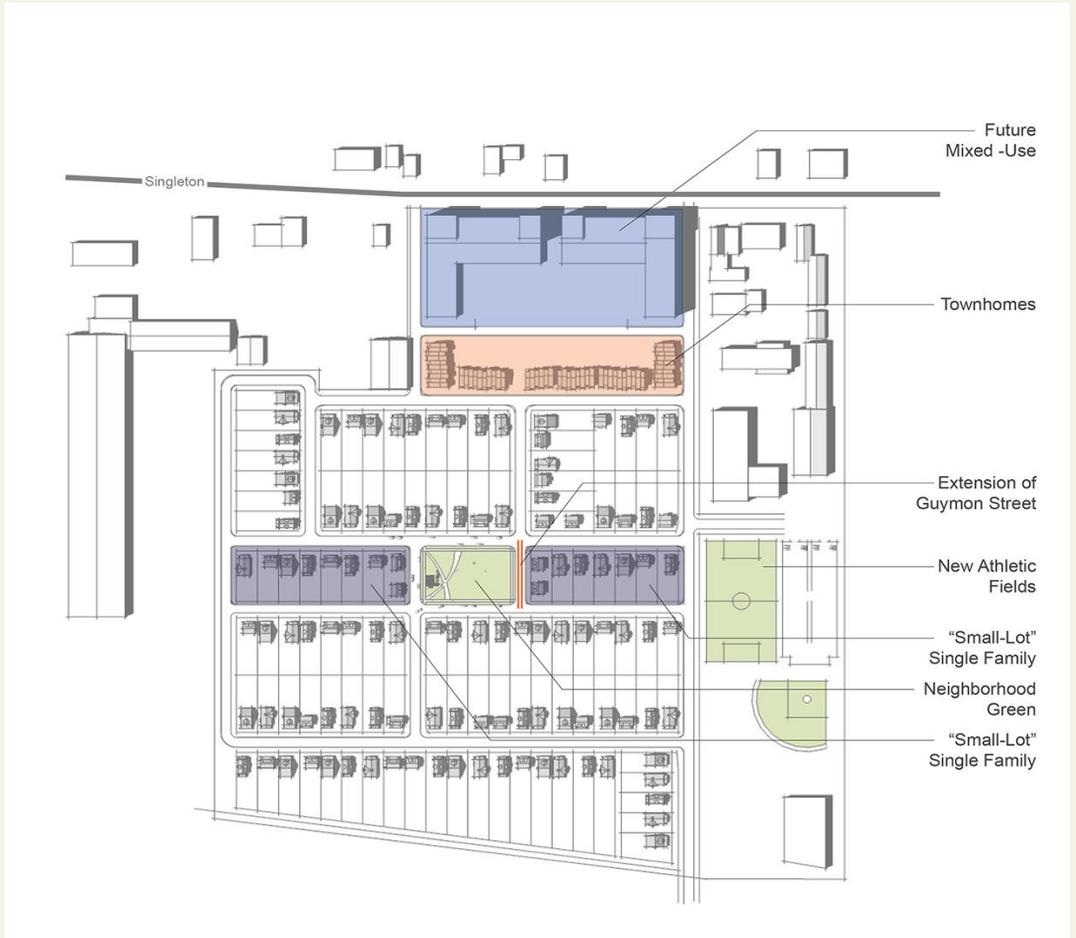


Dallas Habitat and Vecinos Unidos Join Forces

While Los Arboles is a great opportunity for neighborhood revitalization, it also presents

some significant challenges. The Los Arboles neighborhood is part of an old West Dallas traditionally home to low wage workers and their families. Because the area was settled long before the City annexed it in 1952, the current plat (the cadastral map) does not reflect what is actually on the ground. In addition, the City owns right-of-way for a section of Bayonne Street that was never paved. And in general, Los Arboles needs sidewalks, a revised drainage plan, green space, and street improvements.

Recognizing the significant investment required, Dallas Habitat and Vecinos Unidos decided to join forces in 2011. Our goal is not only to revitalize the neighborhood, but to create a community meeting the standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) – a walkable, green community offering affordable homeownership opportunities. With financial support from the Enterprise Foundation and input from the community, The BECK Group created a Master Plan for the LEED ND project.



What's Next?

The community master plan reintroduces Bayonne Street, provides for construction of new homes, creation of green space, and repair of existing owner occupied homes. Partners are already stepping up to be part of Los Arboles' great future. In September, the Mary Kay Foundation along with 154 great Mary Kay volunteers did exterior repairs on four homes, painted house numbers on curbs, and helped their children plant flower boxes for residents.

Our goal is to have the new Bayonne Street engineered and built as early as 2015, with new home construction beginning shortly thereafter. While additional funds are needed for land

acquisition, road construction, home construction, and development of green space, we are on our way to turning what was once a forgotten corner of West Dallas into a thriving community. Dallas Habitat shares the vision of Vecinos Unidos that one day soon the community that planted the seed for homeownership will welcome their new neighbors to a beautiful, thriving Los Arboles de Santa Maria.



Current Los Arboles Partners

Enterprise Community Partners

Highland Park United Methodist Church

Mary Kay Foundation

Mike and Mary Terry Foundation

The Simmons Foundation

Thank you for helping us Build Louder. Together, with patience and persistence, we can make a difference.

Sincerely,