

Metro

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REAL ESTATE

City nudges development near DART stations

Effort aims to spur projects that fit character of 5 areas

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Mockingbird Station has often been held up as a shining example of "transit-oriented development," desirable real estate investment that follows the course of transit lines and, more specifically, the placement of transit stations.

But Dallas residents learned long ago that light-rail stations don't automatically attract chic retail stores,

trendy restaurants, pricey apartments and art film houses. Indeed, DART's Mockingbird Station and its Cityplace/Uptown Station, in the booming West Village area, have been anomalies rather than the norm.

However, a new effort is expected in 2013 to try jump-starting development near the many stations that haven't lived up to planners' dreams. A key to any such effort, urban experts say, will be the formation of successful partnerships between the private sector and local government entities.

"If we just sit and wait for these things to happen entirely through private development activity, we're probably going to have to wait much longer. And it might not happen at all," said Peer Chacko, assistant director of development services for the city of Dallas.

This year, the city has used part of a \$2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop plans for stimulating investment near Dallas Area Rapid Transit stations. The city's efforts focused on stations serving five areas, mostly in the southern

part of Dallas.

The Dallas Plan Commission could vote in January on a proposal put together by Fregonese Associates, a prominent land-use planning company from Portland, Ore. If approved by the Plan Commission, the Fregonese plan could go to the City Council for a vote in February.

After that, the next step would be to begin pursuing a handful of public-private partnerships that could serve as catalysts for change. Each of the five selected areas has its own

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SOCIAL SERVICES

A push for Muslim foster parents

Tarrant clinic asks families to step up, fill glaring need

By SARAH MERVOSH
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A lack of Muslim foster parents in North Texas means local Muslim children are almost always placed with families of other faiths, putting them in an unfamiliar cultural and religious environment and making a difficult process even harder.

A Richland Hills clinic doesn't want foster children to face added stresses, like being served bacon when their religion forbids pork, or saying prayers in a bedroom with a cross on the wall. That's why the Muslim Community Center for Human Services is offering up a challenge to local Muslims: Step up. Become a foster parent.

"It's a service to humanity," said Dr. Basheer Ahmed, who founded the clinic. "There's definitely a bad need in the community."

About 6,000 North Texas children are in foster care each year, according to Child Protective Services. In recent years, local community leaders say, there have been a handful of times when a Muslim foster home was needed but not available, including twice in the past few months.

A local spokesperson for Child Protective Services confirmed there are far fewer Muslim foster families in North Texas than families of other religions, or of no religion. Experts say this mirrors a na-

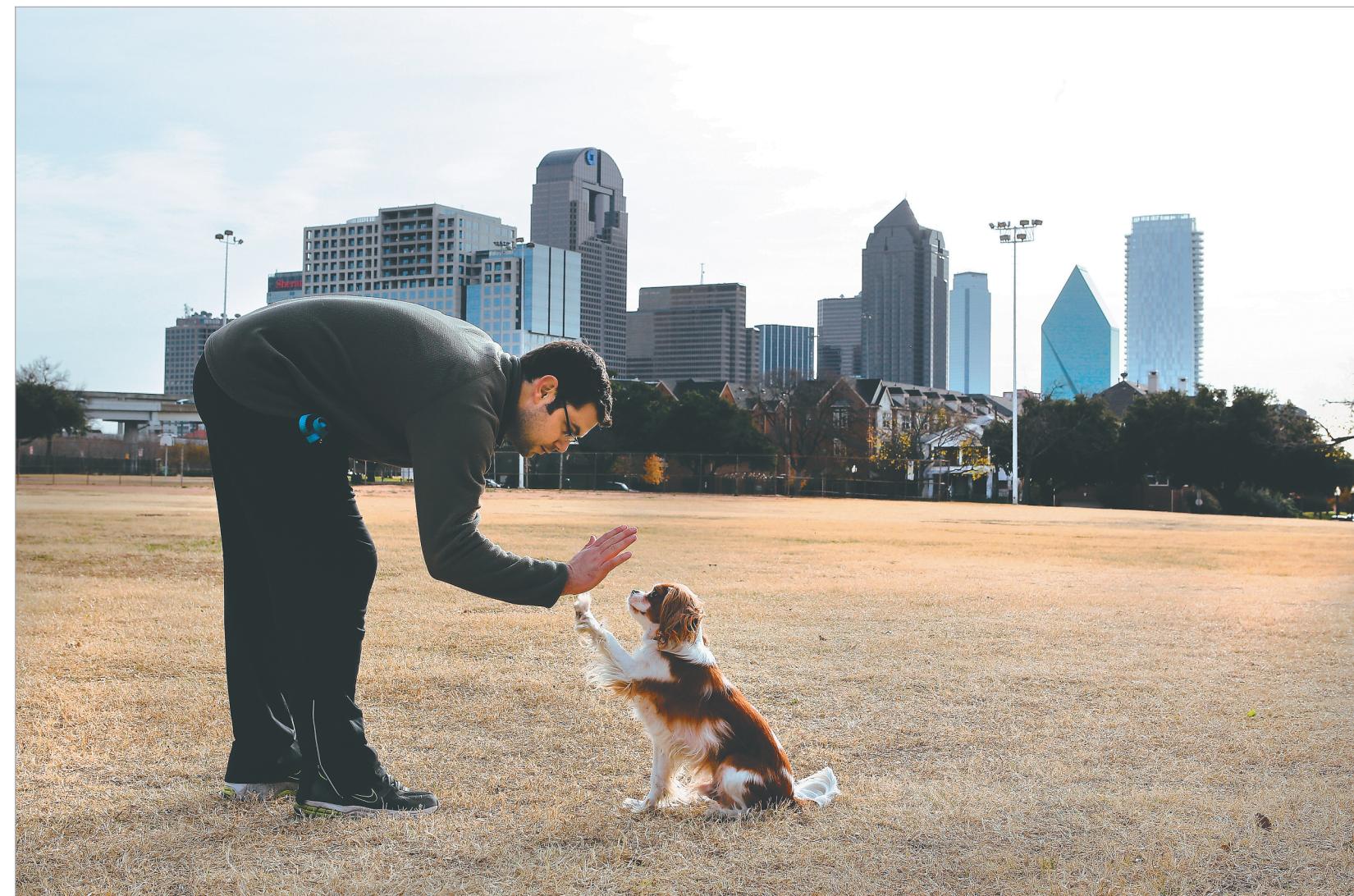
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UPTOWN

A leisurely scene to honor leader



The Rev. Allen R. Griggs



Stan Olszewski/Staff Photographer

Nathan Butler gives his dog, Louie, a high-five after a game of fetch at Griggs Park in Uptown Dallas. If all goes as planned, Griggs Park will soon feature new walkways, trees, seating and a tribute to Griggs, a leading black educator, minister and caregiver until his death in 1922.

Rooted in city's black history, Griggs Park is headed for a revival that recognizes hero

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Dogs and their people have the run of the place these days.

Gone are the ballgames and teams. The fences, lights and goal posts will follow soon.

If all works as planned, Griggs Park, just north of downtown, will be a more leisurely scene come summer, with new walkways, trees, seating — and with a monument, a recognition after all these years.

In 1915, the city bought 3 acres near Hall Street and the Houston and Texas Cen-

tral Railway tracks for one of its first parks for black residents. Nine years later, the Hall Street Negro Park was renamed for the Rev. Allen R. Griggs, a leading black educator, minister and caregiver until his death in 1922.

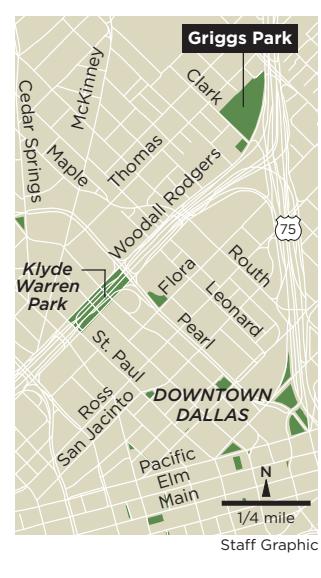
The park was a social center for the city's black residents, with its swimming pool and bathhouse, movies and concerts, carnivals and plays.

"This was one of the few places you could swing. And we had seesaws," said Robert Prince, during a recent return to his neighborhood stomping ground in the 1930s and '40s.

The retired doctor, now 82, talked of getting "my first taste of segregation" when told he couldn't use the swings at an East Dallas park. He recalled how his elementary school, B.F. Darrell, across the Central tracks.

He recalled park carnivals with a "small Ferris wheel and the aromas of food filling the neighborhood." He spoke of his friend who would go on to baseball stardom with the Chicago Cubs: "Ernie Banks honed his skills right here."

He recalled the park pool and how "black people came from all over the county" to swim. He talked about the water fountain near the pool, and how the park grounds were usually "hard as clay" and how the Purple V gang would "terrorize" the place and how "you'd walk your



the Miss Bronze Dallas contest in July 1938 and of the Negro Commercial Softball League championships in August 1952.

The News reported in 1944 that the city had 60 acres of parks for its 60,000 black residents and 5,000 acres for its 320,000 white residents. It reported that the Dallas Biracial Committee wanted to upgrade parks to help "improve the delinquency record among Negroes."

With its neighborhood's black population increasing, Griggs Park was enlarged after World War II, a project reportedly requiring the purchase of 60 properties and the relocation of 100 families. Additions included lighted baseball diamonds, playground equipment,

girl across the park and steal a kiss."

In 1935, *The Dallas Morning News* wrote about a circulating toy library coming to the park. It wrote of the Federal Players troupe performing the farce *Triple Trouble* there in July 1936, of

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Revel in new year, good news

It was a bad year for Twinkies and Lance Armstrong, for Rangers fans and American Airlines passengers.

But maybe we didn't pay enough attention to all the good news that came along in 2012. So let's end the year on a high note, taking stock of some things that went right.

Some big local accomplishments were hard to miss — the soaring Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge, downtown's lively Belo Garden and Clyde Warren deck park, the snazzy Perot Museum of Nature and Science and, of course, Melissa Rycroft's win on *Dancing With the Stars*.

But other good things happened here with less fanfare. North Texas was one of only three areas in the country recently declared as fully recovered from the Great Recession. Pittsburgh and Knoxville, Tenn., were the other two.

Those of us who supported the controversial convention center hotel are breathing a sigh of relief. The city-owned Omni Dallas Hotel just finished its first year of operation well ahead of projections in earnings and room occupancy.

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