



Buzz about bridge helps to fuel Oak Cliff real estate activity

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Chas Fitzgerald had been waiting to put a For Sale sign in front of the Kessler Park home he owns with his partner Jack Hammack. It's one of several homes in the area designed by well-known architect Charles Dilbeck. With rising prices and heightened traffic in [Oak Cliff](#) and the Calatrava Bridge starting to take shape over the Trinity River, Fitzgerald feels that the time is now right to list his home for nearly \$800,000. "I think there is a rebound in confidence," he says. Realtors are seeing quite a lot of movement in sales of homes in the \$300s. There are a lot of new listings in the last month, he says.

Fitzgerald is not alone in his growing confidence about Oak Cliff. Kathy Hewitt with Dave Perry-Miller & Associates says, "North Oak Cliff is amazing." The new bridge is "Absolutely making a difference. Everyone is talking about it. Everyone is feeling comfortable."

With new restaurants, the Bishop Arts area and the Belmont Hotel, "We are having so much fun. We don't have to cross the river anymore to have a good meal," Hewitt says.

The Trinity Townhomes, which Realtor Beth Borman describes as "the first real visible result of the Trinity River bridge," are selling fast. Five of the six homes built by Blaine and [Kent Ladymon](#) are sold. And the Ladymons have secured permits to build six additional townhomes once they lock up financing, Kent Ladymon says.

Much of the appeal of these townhomes across the Trinity River from downtown is that they are gated and have rooftop decks enabling residents to enjoy "the classic view" of Dallas, Kent Ladymon says.

The townhomes are not selling like they did four years ago in phase one when some of the first 23 were sold before they were built, Borman says. But the townhomes, priced in the \$300s, are competing well with comparable townhomes with lower prices in Uptown and [Oak Lawn](#), Ladymon says.

Realtor Clay Stapp says people are recognizing that properties on the Oak Cliff side of the river are good investment opportunities. They can buy a home now for \$350,000 and may sell it in a few years when the bridge is finished for a \$100,000 to a \$150,000 gain, he says.

"People are really excited about it [the bridge]," he says.

The \$117 million bridge, designed by [Santiago Calatrava](#) and named for Dallas philanthropist Margaret Hunt Hill, was topped out this summer and is to be completed by the end of 2011.

Hewitt and other Oak Cliff real estate specialists say mid-priced homes are selling quickly, but there are also houses with much higher prices on the market. One house is priced at \$500,000; another is available for more than \$900,000. Another Dilbeck-designed home is for sale at \$635,000.

For all the signs of a turnaround for Oak Cliff, Borman cautions that it will take decades for the Trinity River Corridor to fulfill its potential. Hewitt agrees: "The next step is to get more retail in Oak Cliff. We really need a grocery store. And that takes higher density."

But the Realtors hope that the bridge will also not change the Oak Cliff charm. Hewitt says, "I cross the river and my blood pressure goes down."

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