

## Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Updated: Wednesday, Sep. 30, 1998 at 01:47 CDT

# Fort Worth, Perot agreement settles Westlake dispute

**By Kristin N. Sullivan**  
**Star-Telegram Staff Writer**

FORT WORTH -- Developer Ross Perot Jr. cut a \$22 million deal with the City Council yesterday, settling Fort Worth's land dispute with Westlake and securing a 314-acre Fidelity Investments campus for Northeast Tarrant County.

Fort Worth council members unanimously adopted a resolution dropping territorial claims to Perot's 2,500-acre Circle T Ranch and bowing out of litigation stemming from the breakup of Westlake in May 1997.

The vote cleared the major hurdle that had stalled plans for the mutual fund company to move from Las Colinas to a site straddling the border between the Circle T and adjacent land in Westlake.

Boston-based Fidelity plans to begin construction on its headquarters early next year and finish in the second half of 2000, said Doug Reed, vice president and general manager for the Fidelity's Southwest operations.

The company will employ 2,700 people at the Westlake site during the project's first phase.

"This month is Fidelity's 15th anniversary here in Texas," Reed said. "This is a great way to really look forward to the next 15 and the years beyond."

In exchange for Fort Worth relinquishing its claim to the Circle T, Perot pledged to give the city 3 acres worth \$280,000 for a fire station near Alliance Airport, up to \$3.7 million for a job Opportunity Center in southeast Fort Worth, and \$18.1 million over 30 years to cover costs associated with providing water to Westlake.

Perot also agreed to reimburse Fort Worth for attorneys' fees and other costs the city incurred during the Westlake dispute. The city has paid more than \$131,000 in related legal bills, city attorneys said.

Missing from the final settlement was an 8.8-acre tract on Alliance Airport worth about \$2 million that Perot had offered the city for a potential Bell Helicopter Textron delivery center. Assistant City Manager Mike Groomer said that Bell officials considered discussions regarding a possible Alliance operation to be premature.

Fort Worth Mayor Kenneth Barr downplayed the tug-of-war that existed in recent weeks between Perot's Hillwood Development Corp. and city officials. Barr said he met with Perot twice on Monday.

"Sometimes there are rough spots in any ongoing relationship," Barr said. "They are major investors in this community. They will continue to do developments. And we will continue to work with them because these developments are important to the future of our city."

Fort Worth's vote effectively reassembled most of Westlake, a tiny town east of Alliance Airport that was splintered amid fights over Perot's plans for the Circle T.

Westlake Mayor Scott Bradley said he was pleased by the Fort Worth vote, which he called "progress on restoring the town to its original borders." The town is still entangled in border disputes with neighbors Southlake and Roanoke.

"We're determined to continue our effort until we put the whole thing back together," said Bradley, who is

expected to earn about \$10 million from selling his Paigebrook Farm to Fidelity.

Hillwood is expected to earn about \$25 million from Fidelity's purchase.

Fort Worth became enmeshed in the Westlake turmoil after former Westlake aldermen temporarily ousted Bradley as mayor and voted to disannex major portions of the town, including the Circle T. At Perot's request, Fort Worth claimed the ranch for future development.

But when Fidelity identified part of the ranch and part of Bradley's land for a campus, the company insisted that the site be placed back under the control of Westlake, which assesses no property tax.

Fort Worth officials refused to budge, however, until Hillwood Development offered a "revenue stream" to compensate the city for being involved in the dispute and for the anticipated costs of supplying water to Westlake.

Yesterday's agreement does not include the cost that Westlake or Hillwood will have to pay to install meters, pipes or other equipment to carry water to the town, officials said.

Although water had been the focus of recent negotiations, Barr emphasized yesterday that the Opportunity Center may have the most obvious effect on Fort Worth residents.

"For a long term, we at the City Council have been criticized for doing incentive deals that helped the northern part of the city," Barr said. "This is an example of something that is going to have a very positive impact on the central city over years to come."

Hillwood did not set goals for how many people will be trained at the center. But the company committed to spend about \$1.4 million acquiring and renovating the former Anderson Laboratories building at 5900 Fitzhugh Ave., to hire an executive director for the center and to contribute \$1.3 million over five years for the center's annual operating budget.

Hillwood also set a \$5 million goal for an endowment fund to help operate the center. The company pledged at least \$100,000 toward the fund and up to \$1 million if it is unable to raise a \$5 million endowment in five years.

Freshman Councilman Frank Moss, elected to represent southeast Fort Worth just as talks heated up last month, said that the center is a "beginning to turning that southeast Fort Worth area around and getting people into jobs."

Staff writers Miles Moffeit and Ginger D. Richardson contributed to this report.

Kristin Sullivan, (817) 390-7610

Send your comments to [kristinsul@star-telegram.com](mailto:kristinsul@star-telegram.com)

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