# YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

swa RFB&A ROBERTA F. BURROUGHS & ASSOCIATES TEI

# FINAL REPORT

MUSEUM PARK LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY

2016

## PROJECT TEAM

**SWA**
Open Space, Sustainability, Wayfinding, Branding, Public Engagement

Contact: Natalia Beard

**Roberta F. Burroughs & Associates**
Housing, Economic Development, Public Engagement

Contact: Roberta F. Burroughs

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERS, INC.**
Transportation

Contact: Geoff Carleton

**Pen + Paper**
Art Strategy

Contact: Ian Cion

## CLIENT GROUP

**Houston-Galveston Area Council**
Contact: Meredith Dang, Chief Regional Planner

**Museum Park Super Neighborhood**
Contact: Kathleen O'Reilly, President

**Houston Southeast (Greater Southeast Management District)**
Contact: Hina Musa, Executive Director

swa

1245 W 18th St.

Houston TX 77008

T: +1.713.868.1676

© SWA 2016

The preparation of this document has been financed in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f) of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 05

II. INTRODUCTION 09

III. CONCEPTUAL PLAN 27

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 105

V. APPENDIX A: CONTEXT MAPS 147

VI. APPENDIX B: AIR QUALITY 157

VII. APPENDIX C: NEEDS ASSESSMENT MEMO 161

VIII. APPENDIX D: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 255

IX. APPENDIX E: PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES 271

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# "YOUR MUSEUM PARK"- MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD A LIVABLE CENTER

The Livable Centers Program is funded through the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) with the goal to propose implementable ideas that create or further enhance communities people perceive as safe, convenient and desirable, while addressing projected growth for the Houston-Galveston Region. Primary points of consideration which compose a "livable" center include:

- **Increase in options for alternative modes of transportation**
- **Improved environmental quality**
- **Stronger sense of community**
- **Continued economic development**

The subject of this Livable Centers Study is Museum Park Super Neighborhood #66. It is an area mesuring a little over one half of a square mile in central Houston, bounded by Main St. to the west, Almeda Rd. to the east, US 59 to the north, and Hermann Park to the south. The Super Neighborhood brings together multiple organizations that operate within its boundaries: Houston Southeast, OST/Almeda TIRZ, Midtown TIRZ, Hermann Park Conservancy, Museum District Association, South Main Alliance, hospitals, schools, places of worship, business and neighborhood residents' organizations, such as the Museum Park Neighborhood Association.

Over the course of a year from June 2015 to June 2016 a team of planning and design consultants led by SWA and composed of Roberta F. Burroughs and Associates, TEI Engineers Inc., and Pen+Paper, conducted Needs Assessment analysis, developed Conceptual Plan recommendations, and an Implementation Plan for Conceptual Plan recommendations, all while interacting with the project stakeholders and the Museum Park community through a robust "YouR Museum Park" public engagement campaign.

A number of goals for the Study were developed early in the process with the community's input. They were as follows:

1. **Promote a healthy urban lifestyle by easing access to recreation and cultural education opportunities.**
2. **Ensure the community is actively involved in shaping the future of its neighborhood.**
3. **Promote environmental resiliency in the design of urban systems.**
4. **Prioritize environmental comfort in the experience of the area.**
5. **Design for ecological benefit in the urban natural systems.**
6. **Promote a diversity of housing choices in the area.**
7. **Support transportation choices with infrastructure that provides easy access to driving-mode alternatives.**
8. **Promote local and authentic businesses in the area by supporting their commercial success.**
9. **Support regional significance of the area as a visitor's destination while preserving the scale and comfort of local living.**

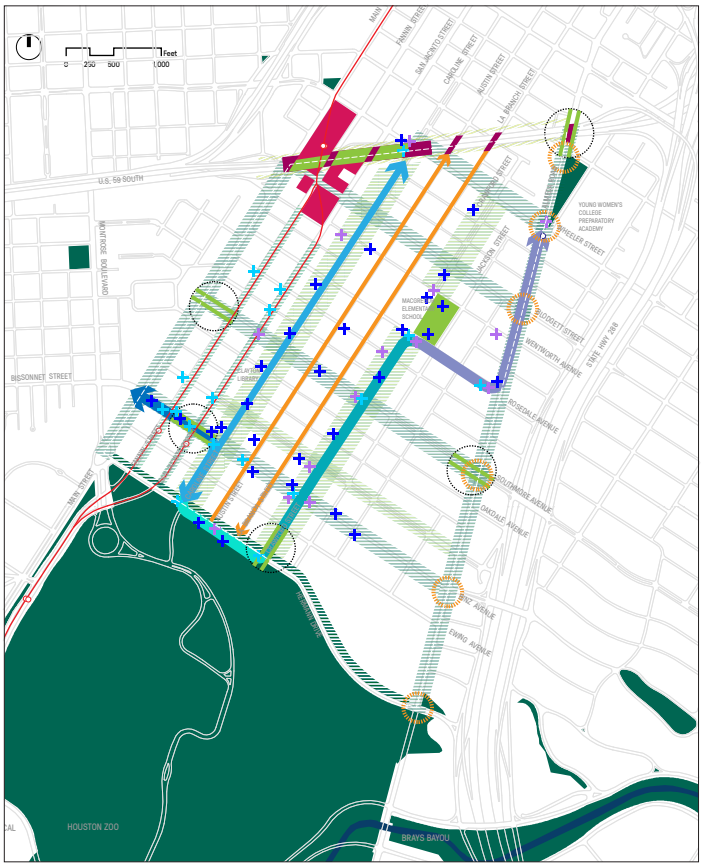
## LEGEND

PROPOSED:

- Art as Infrastructure
- Art as Wayfinding
- Art as Furniture

(Conceptual Locations)

- Gateway Passage Improvements
- Austin/La Branch BikeTrail
- Caroline Promenade
- Culture Trail
- Green Corridor Streetscape Improvements
- Green Corridor by Designation
- Beneficial Landscape Esplanade Corridor
- Landscape Buffer Corridor
- Beneficial Landscape Green Wall Corridor
- Parks and Open Space
- Metro-Owned Property, Potential TOD Development Site
- Economic Development Node




SUMMARY MAP OF STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The organizing elements for the Conceptual Plan framework include five subject areas: Transportation, Economic Development, Housing Choice, Placemaking/Branding/Wayfinding, Sustainability/Open Space; three scales of sites to which particular project recommendations apply: Neighborhood, Corridors, and Nodes; and six livability principles as defined by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Each component of the plan fits within this framework as well as reflects the specific goals of the Study. The fourteen Conceptual Plan Recommendations were ranked by the community and endorsed as future projects that could enhance the character of Museum Park neighborhood and contribute to general livability of the area.

Listed below the Study recommendations as developed by the Design Team and prioritized by the Museum Park community (the numbers were initially assigned to recommendations based on the scale of application criterion):

## STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 06 GREEN GRID
Develop area landscapes as a robust green network that extends the park character and benefits into the city.

### 07 CULTURE TRAIL
Designate an east-west walking/biking trail that connects the Museum of Fine Arts campus with Hermann Park and Almeda Corridor via Museum Park neighborhood.

### 09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
Connect educational, cultural institutions, and places of worship from HCC to Hermann Park with enhanced pedestrian realm, beneficial landscaping and unique placemaking via north/south promenade on Caroline Street.

### 10 T.O.D. AND CAP PARK
Develop plans for the Wheeler Transit Center node as a T.O.D. site, with a cover, or cap, over the US 59 future depressed freeway section extending from Main past Caroline. Program is to include high density mixed-use, residential, and a park amenity on the cap.

### 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS
Focus a regulatory environment to support the development of buildings and community amenities that are context appropriate and conform to community desires and building best practices.

### 11 CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE
Negotiate MacGregor Elementary School site's role as a potential community park with the needs of the school. This may provide for better integration of the school into the neighborhood and a new social heart for its residents.

### 13 PARKING MANAGEMENT
Put into place parking requirements and management strategies that incrementally balance parking choice. Considerations for aesthetic values and non-automotive trips are highly encouraged.

### 08 AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK
Develop a comprehensive bicycle trail network based on the COH Bike Plan, with particular focus on regional connectivity, prioritizing north-south regional connections to Buffalo Bayou via Downtown and HCC campus.

### 13 SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES
Create enhanced entries into the neighborhood at Southmore Boulevard and Almeda Road, and at Southmore and Main.

### 12 ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE
Beautify and improve safety of the US 59 underpass at the important intersection with Almeda Road commercial spine, creating a greater gateway to historic Third Ward from Midtown.

### 01 HOUSING CHOICE
Collaborate with METRO to develop a T.O.D. mixed-use site on METRO-owned property that includes mixed-income housing, senior housing, commercial, and retail development. Facilitate aging in place.

### 04 "ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM
Develop a custom placemaking program with functional art that highlights pedestrian loops/routes through the neighborhood.

### 02 T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Encourage and support mixed-use and transit-oriented development on mixed-use corridors and potential transit-oriented development corridors, with the goal of increasing retail options.

### 05 MARKETING/BRANDING CAMPAIGN
Develop advocacy, marketing, and communications strategies by building on Marketing and Communications plan by Houston Southeast, to promote neighborhood awareness, participation, and fundraising.

This Study's recommendations seek to clearly articulate Museum Park community's vision and its component projects in order to help leverage the investments in the area by potential partners. Partnerships and funding sources are explored in the Implementation Plan section of this report.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# INTRODUCTION

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Livable Centers Program, funded through the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), is designed to address projected growth for the Houston-Galveston region, and the related urban planning issues associated with population increase. The goal of a Livable Center Study is to propose implementable ideas that create or further enhance communities people perceive as safe, convenient and desirable.

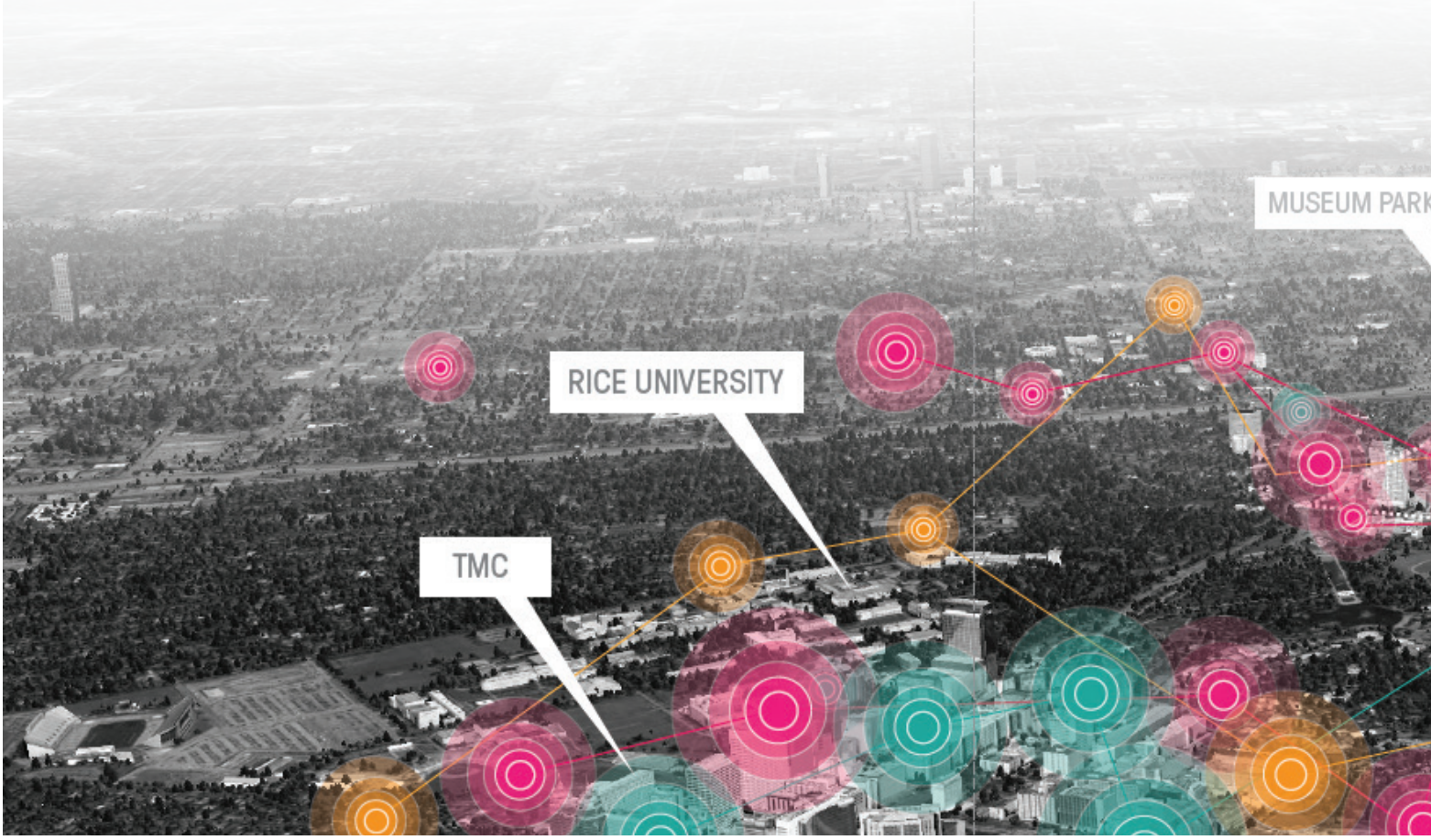
Population growth in the Houston-Galveston area is expected to add 3.5 million people by 2035. Both new and current residents will need desirable communities to live in and low cost transportation to move them around. Currently, the Houston-Galveston area depends heavily on automobiles for mobility, and much of that is in single occupancy vehicles. By creating communities in which people can happily live and work, with easy access to public transportation, the strain on urban resources created by population growth can be better managed.

For this reason, a major point of focus within the livable center ideals is providing options for mobility that get people out of their cars. The ideal livable center works to curb traffic congestion by reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), single-occupant vehicle trips and offering attractive alternatives through promoting multimodal and public transportation. Other points of consideration which compose a "livable" center include:

- **Improved environmental quality**
- **Stronger sense of community**
- **Continued economic development**

Each community that is part of a Livable Center Study possess its own mix of opportunities and issues, and each one requires their own tailored plan to become a livable center. The checklist for policies and standards for a livable center includes:

- **Encourage mixed but complementary uses.**
- **Promote physical integration of urban development, either vertically or horizontally.**
- **Encourage appropriate levels of density depending on district size and context.**
- **Allow people to move between destinations**



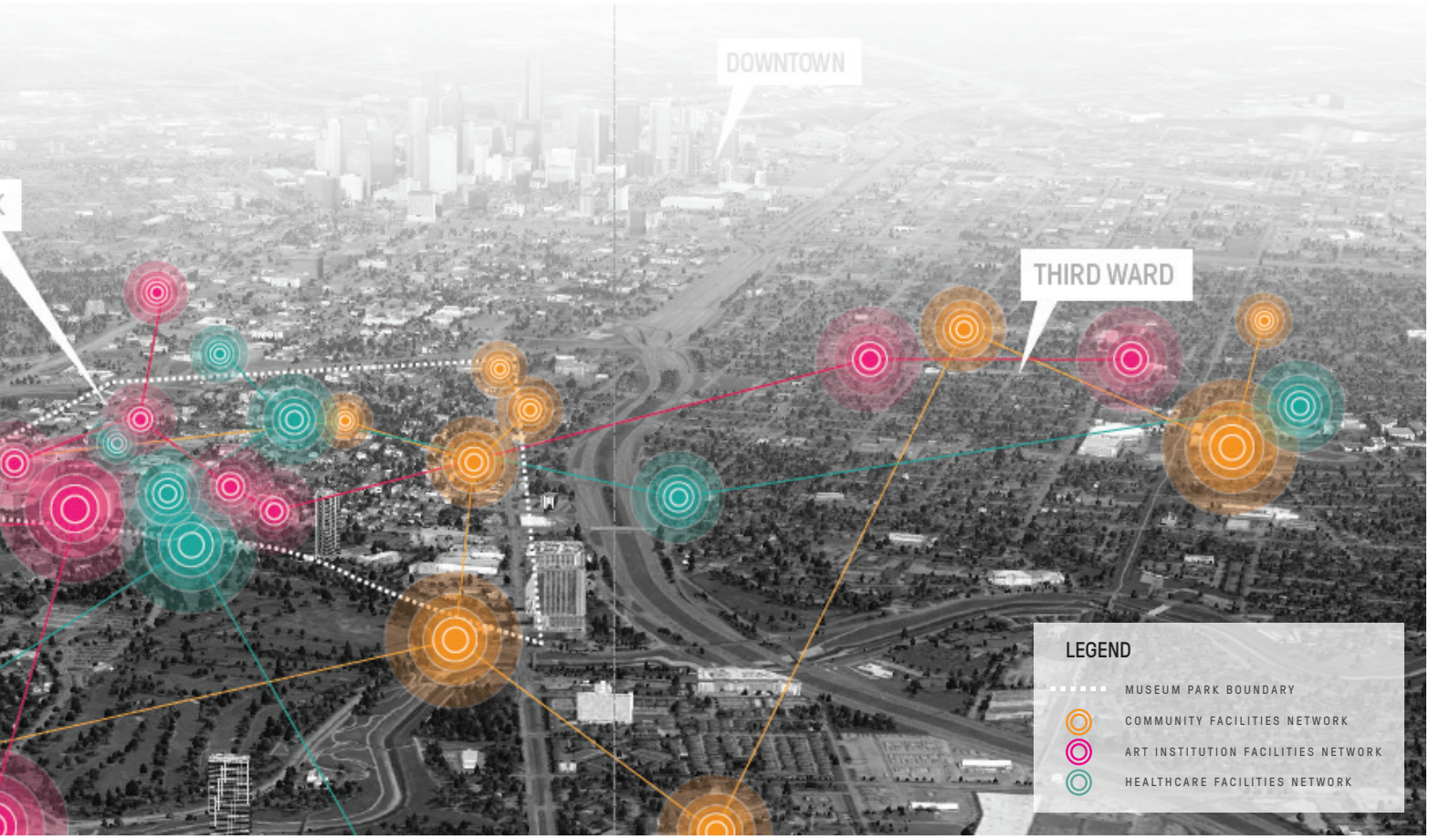
**without having to use vehicles.**
- **Provide multi-modal transportation options.**
- **Provide adequate parking without creating oversupply.**
- **Promote activity throughout the day, creating balanced transit ridership.**

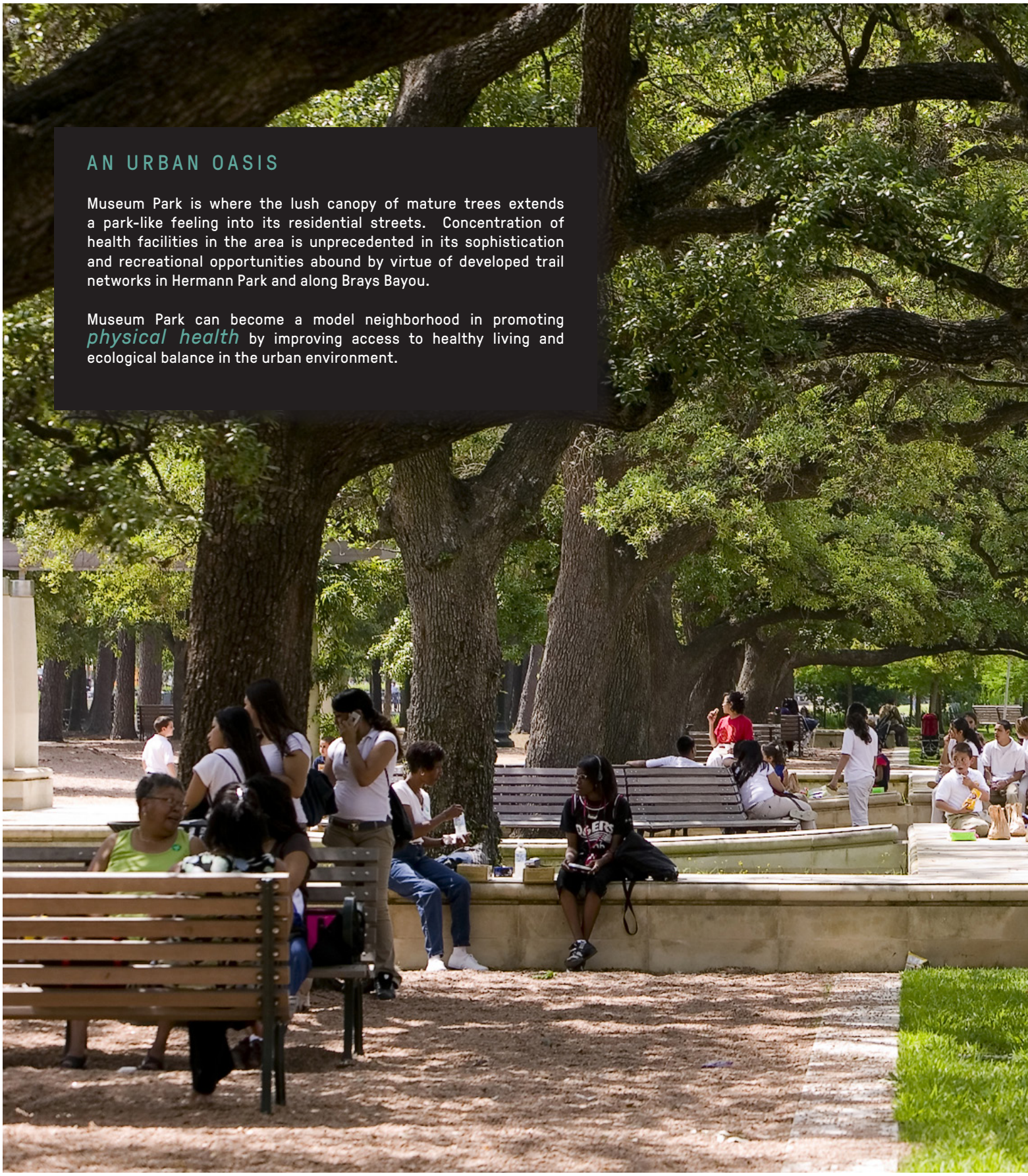
The study area's existing assets suggest that the level of livabilty here is quite high. By many accounts, Museum Park is already a thriving district, an iconic destination, and a cultural and economic heart of Houston where major institutional campuses, parklands and landmark residential areas come together. It is experiencing rapid growth and densification, and already has access to transit. Maintaining its vibrancy will depend on new development supporting and enhancing the urban character of the area. Despite its interconnected grid of streets, its public realm feels increasingly fragmented and unsupportive of the District's diverse destinations and community activities that center around culture, food, education, and recreation.

Even though Museum Park is rather compact, its identity is not always consistent. The adjacencies to very significant regional destinations along its edges inevitably redefine its boundaries as a particular place with multivariant relationships. The cohesiveness of the neighborhood has to be maintained within a highly permeable border formed by Almeda Road, Hermann Park Drive, Main Street, and the US 59 highway.

As a result, livability for an area like this needs to be addressed from the perspectives of its regional significance as a destination and its local ability to support a cohesive residential community. The task at hand is to find the right balance between these two important characteristics without diminishing either one.

The rich assets and visibility of Museum Park have potential to bear a significant influence on the rest of the City. The goal for envisioning its future is to set higher benchmarks and ask how a better Museum Park can inspire and influence a more holistic future for Houston as a whole.





## AN URBAN OASIS

Museum Park is where the lush canopy of mature trees extends a park-like feeling into its residential streets. Concentration of health facilities in the area is unprecedented in its sophistication and recreational opportunities abound by virtue of developed trail networks in Hermann Park and along Brays Bayou.

Museum Park can become a model neighborhood in promoting *physical health* by improving access to healthy living and ecological balance in the urban environment.

## AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Museum Park is where premier educational institutions bear influence on the path of learning for students of all ages. It is a setting for numerous pre-schools and an elemetary public school, in close proximity to the prestigious Rice University and medical training facilities of the Texas Medical Center under the UT and Baylor University systems, among others.

Museum park can become a model neighborhood in promoting *intellectual health* by extending the idea of a learning environment to its public realm.

Binz ST
1500
PUBLIC PARKING
BNN-4326

## THE JEWEL OF INNER CITY

Museum Park is where Houston Culture is magnified like nowhere else in the City,- in the historic streets and building architecture, world-class art institutions, the largest concentration of museums in the region, beautiful churches, a grand outdoor public performance venue, and simply an unmistakably iconic setting of hundred-year-old oak-lined streets.

Museum Park can become a model neighborhood where access to *spiritual health* through beauty and the arts is extended for all.

## A COMFORTABLE PLACE TO LIVE

Museum Park is a destination for a world-wide audience and a delightful place to live at a human scale, with great places to enjoy diverse samplings of food, unique shopping experiences, street festivals, and just family time.

Museum park can become a model neighborhood in promoting *community health* by supporting local businesses, and improving the conditions of the shared street and community gathering spaces in its public realm.

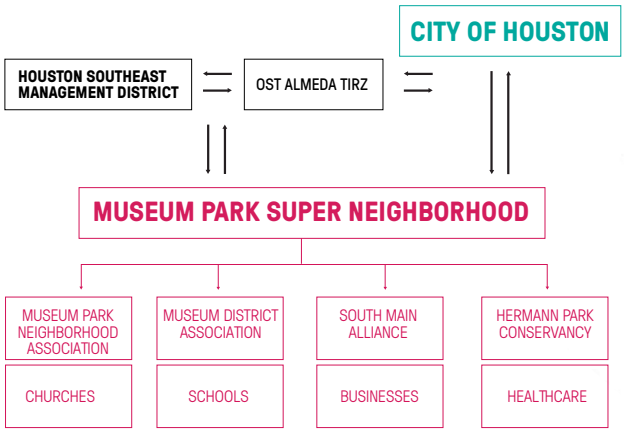
# PROJECT SITE

## SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD # 66

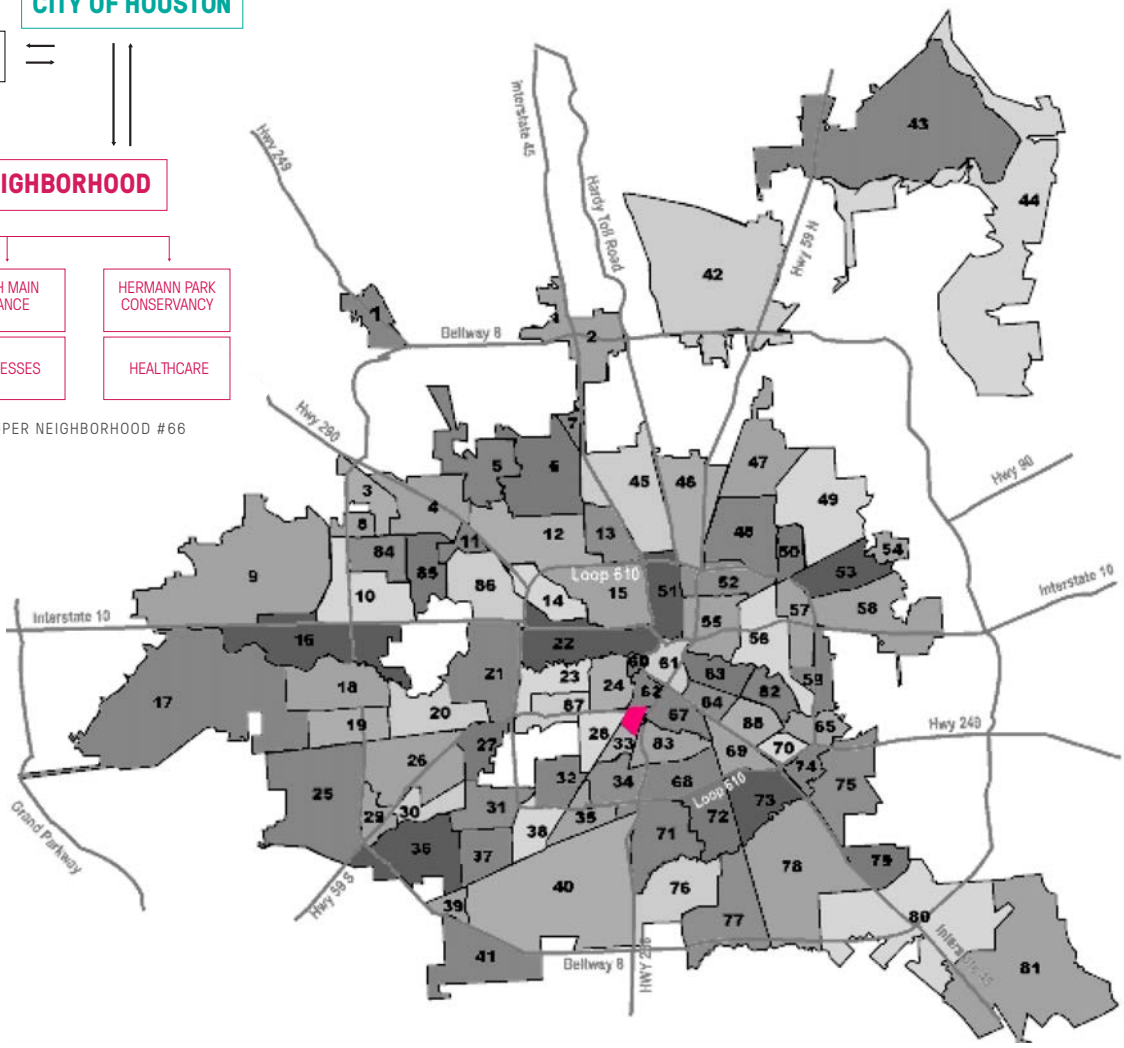
Livable Centers Study area boundaries coincide with Super Neighborhood #66. Museum Park Super Neighborhood is within the state-designated Houston Southeast (Greater Southeast Management District). The District is bounded by Interstate 45 and US 59, Main Street, and North MacGregor and Griggs Roads. The District was legislated in 2001 with the intention to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and public welfare for the area. Houston Southeast is the Livable Centers Study project sponsor.

A Super Neighborhood is a geographically designated area by the City of Houston where residents, civic organizations, institutions and businesses work together to identify, plan, and set priorities to address the needs and concerns of their community. The boundaries of each super neighborhood rely on Houston's major physical features (bayous, freeways, etc.) to group together contiguous communities that share common physical characteristics, identity or infrastructure.

The Museum Park Super Neighborhood #66 (MPSN) is the Livable Centers project partner. It is an organization bridging communication and projects between the many entities that serve the neighborhood: Houston Southeast, OST/Almeda TIRZ, Hermann Park Conservancy, Museum District Association, South Main Alliance, hospitals, schools, churches, business and neighborhood residents' organizations (the Museum Park Neighborhood Association's boundary coincides with that of the Super Neighborhood). The area is bounded by Main St. to the west, Almeda Rd. to the east, US. 59 to the north, and Hermann Park to the south.




ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD #66

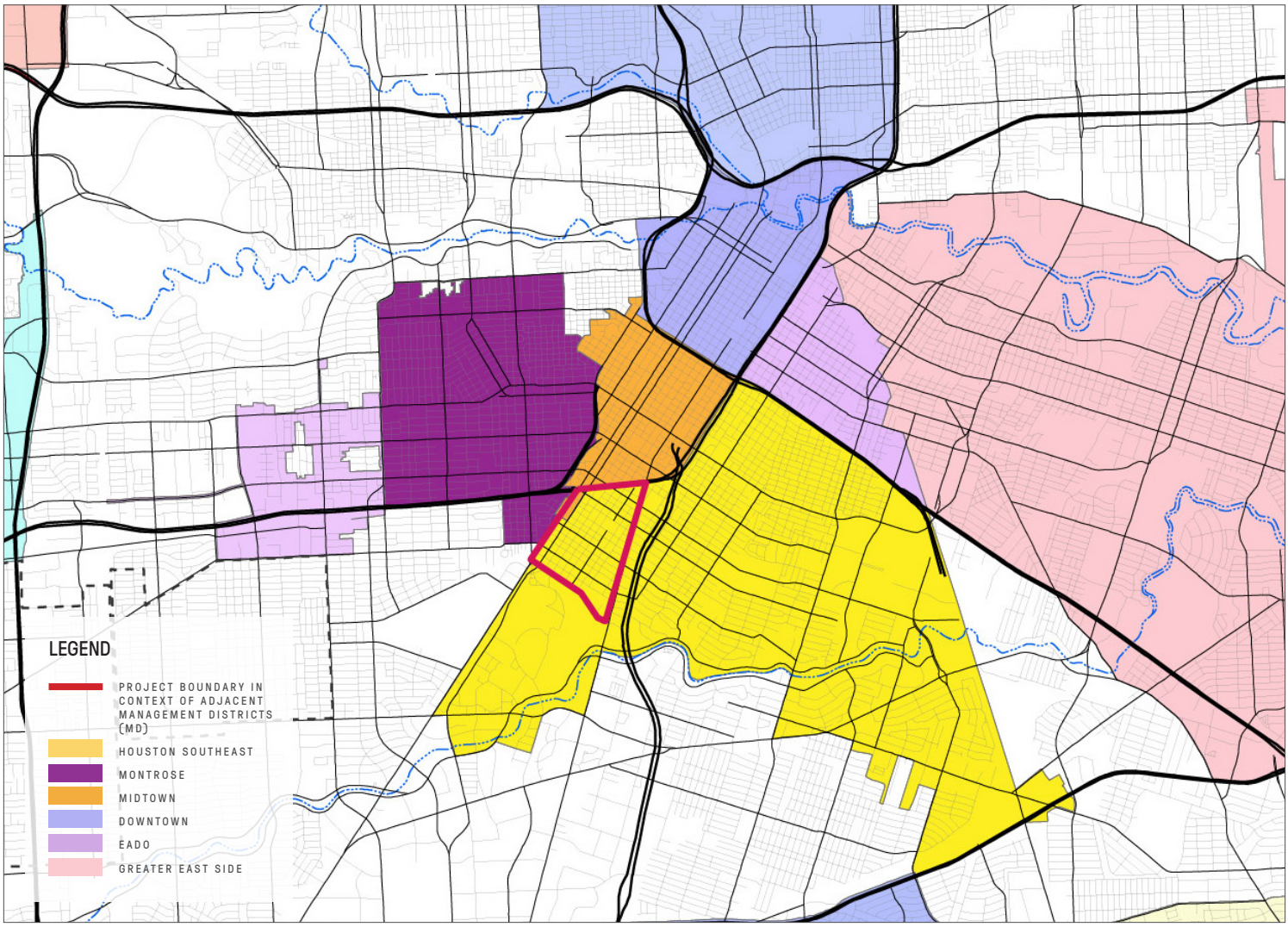



MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD #66 HIGHLIGHTED ON THE COH SUPER NEIGHBORHOODS MAP

The mission of MPSN includes:

- Establishing the Museum District as a top cultural destination with a strong sense of neighborhood identity.
- Collaborating strategically with all entities in Museum Park to develop a beautiful and recognizable premier cultural, educational, and mixed use district that is the most pedestrian friendly district in the City of Houston.
- Furthering education through beneficial use of public lands and natural resources in collaboration with the City, State, and cultural institutions.
- Improving health and health education through development of a measurably transformed and healthier urban environment using infrastructure and landscaping, a living laboratory, that can be easily implemented in other settings.
- Promotion of safety, security, and well-being within the Neighborhood.

Museum Park has a very unusual composition as a neighborhood because it is a mix. It is not just residential, commercial, recreational, or cultural. It is not any one thing. It is everything. A lack of water and sewer infrastructure until the 1990's and the lapsing of the deed restrictions created a 60-year hiatus of development that froze most construction. Museum Park is finally waking from that sleep. Its location between Downtown and the Texas Medical Center with excellent access to public transport positions the area as one of Houston's premier residential neighborhoods, which explains its current explosive growth.




PROJECT BOUNDARY IN CONTEXT OF ADJACENT MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS

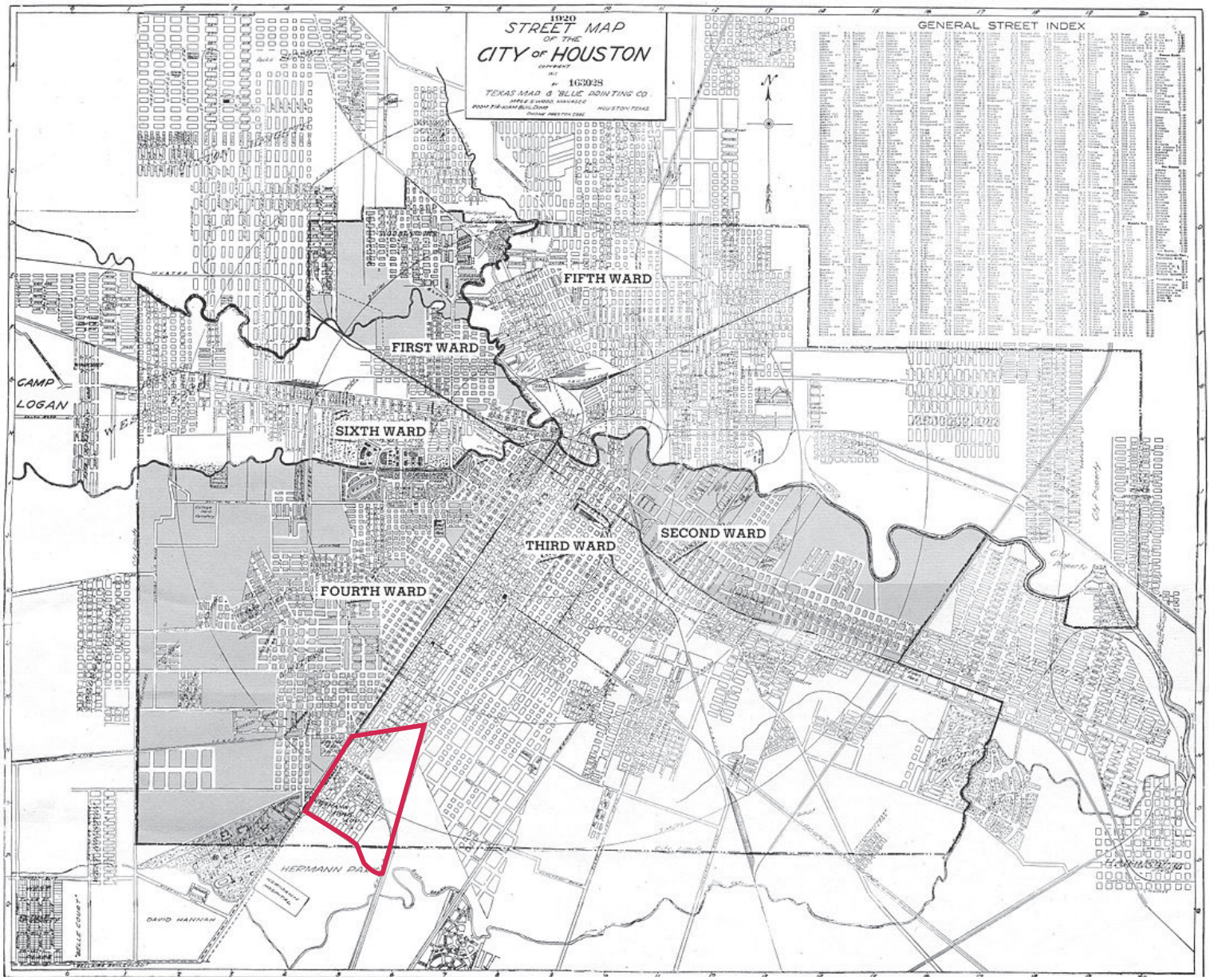
## HISTORICAL MILESTONES

Before Museum Park, Binz was the name of Third Ward's western most neighborhood fronting Montrose and Midtown.

"From 1839 until 1905 the wards were the city council districts of Houston... After 1905, use of the term "ward" persisted to describe neighborhoods that once lay within one of Houston's six political wards..Persistent of the term "ward" in Houston tended to highlight differences not only in race and ethnicity, but also in social class and economic status. These neighborhoods within the wards are sectors of Houston, that, during the 20th century, conserved patterns of urbanization dating back to the nineteenth century." (S. Fox, *ForWARDS: Ten Driving Tours Through Houston's Original Wards*, 2015, p.3)

The neighborhood was re-named in 2010. "Museum Park" name and brand captured the cultural influence of the great galleries and institutions in proximity to the neighborhood, as well as the importance of Hermann Park setting for the area's aspirations.

Throughout its history from the early 20th century, a few catalytic events redefined development patterns in Museum Park:



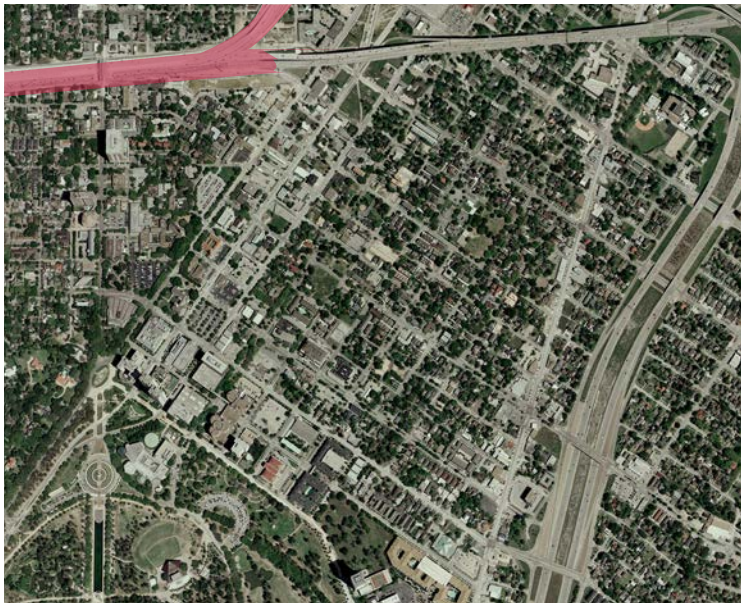

1920 HOUSTON STREET MAP *(Source: https://houstorian.files.wordpress.com/2007/01/houstonwards1920.jpg)*

- Hermann Park established itself as one of Houston's most iconic infrastructure projects with its opening in 1914. As seen in the 1920 Houston map on the previous page, much of the park was connected to open spaces in the neighborhood.
- The street grid of the 1950's would strongly resemble the present neighborhood fabric. During this period, Almeda Road served as a primary route to Downtown. It thrived as a commercial corridor from high daily traffic.
- The construction of SH 288 in the 1970s dramatically altered Third Ward by severing street connections and removing continuous grid of city blocks. Besides the physically apparent east/west disconnect, north/south commuters would now bypass the area with limited ways to enter.
- At the start of the new millennium, the depression of US 59 in Montrose and the installation of the first light rail line in Houston transformed neighborhood traffic patterns and access. US 59 remained a permeable but definitive northern boundary for Museum Park. Light rail spurred a new development context with a ready connection to greater Houston.
- Forwarding to 2015, the opening of McGovern Centennial Gardens renewed the importance of Hermann Park amenities to Museum Park residents by creating a coveted green space readily accessible at the southern edge of the neighborhood.

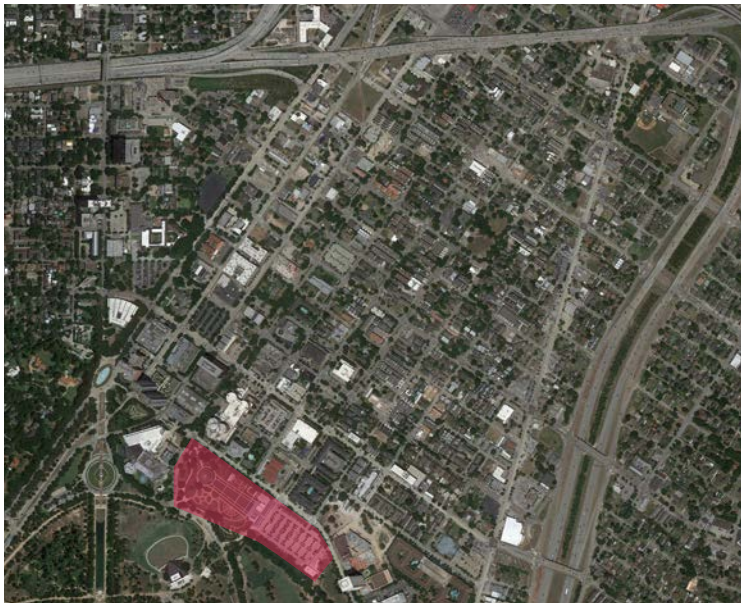
*Aerial Imagery Source: Google Earth*

1978 - CONSTRUCTION OF SH 288

2004- CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT RAIL RED LINE



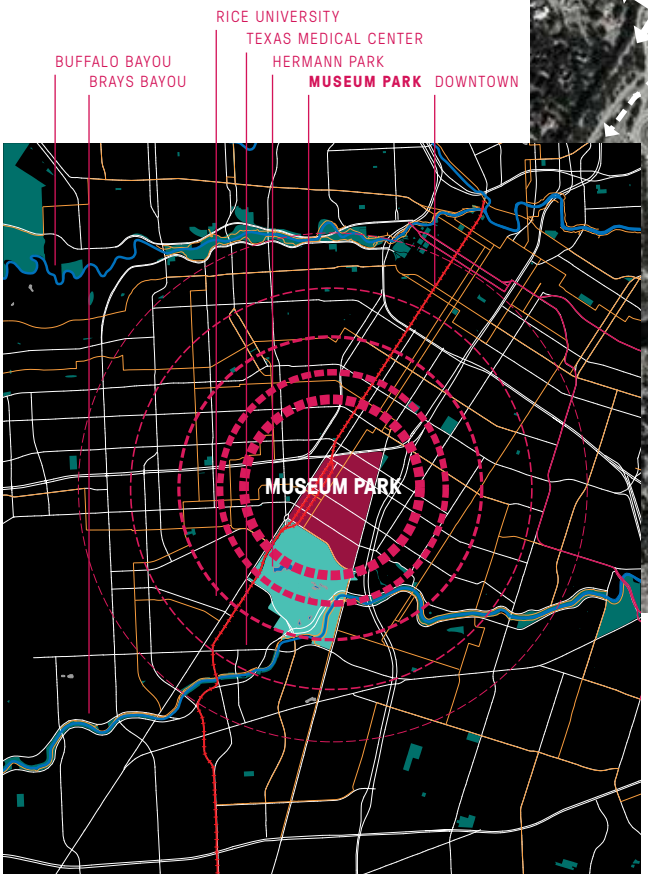
2002 - US 59 DEPRESSION IN MONTROSE

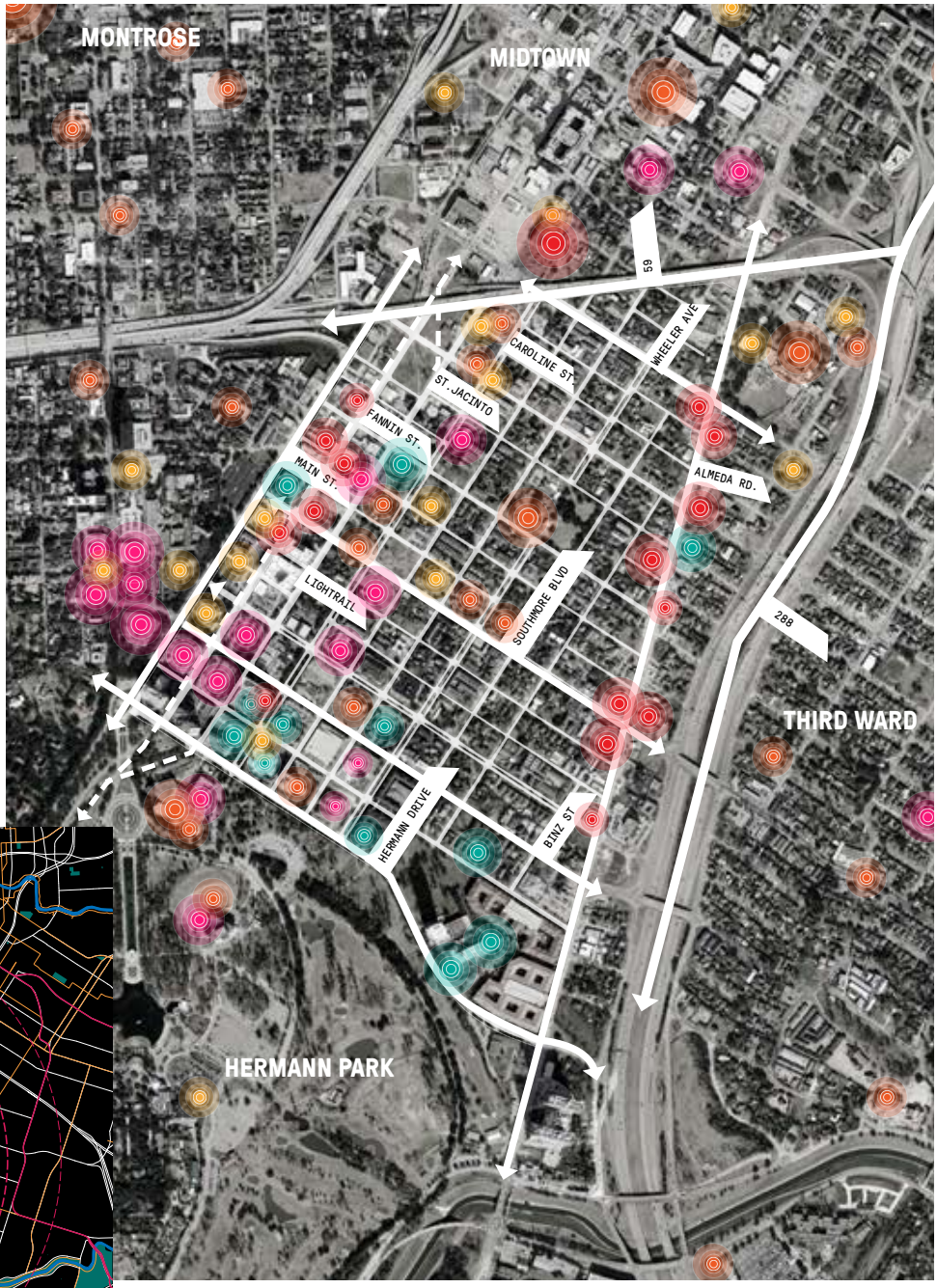


2015 - OPENING OF HERMANN PARK MCGOVERN CENTENNIAL GARDENS

## A LANDMARK OF CULTURAL HISTORY

The neighborhood bears remnants of the original fancy Houston suburb before River Oaks came into its own. That history is left in the Clayton House, and a few other original houses of the grand Houston boulevards. The neighborhoods's block pattern and its tight grid of streets continues the downtown grid to Hermann Park. The adjacency to Hermann Park, a regional park with varied cultural and recreational amenities, is perhaps the neighborhood's largest asset. Neighboring 90% of the museums of Houston, Museum Park is a regional destination where cultural institutions are integrated along historical residential streets. These landmark streets and architecture are synonymous with the postcard image of cultural Houston. Campuses of Rice University and Houston Community College provide additional iconic urban context.




LEGEND

- MUSEUM PARK AREA
- BIKE NETWORK
- LIGHT RAIL MAIN LINE
- LIGHT RAIL PURPLE LINE
- PARKS
- BAYOUS

LEGEND

- COMMUNITY FACILITIES NETWORK: GATHERING, WORSHIP
- COMMUNITY FACILITIES NETWORK: SCHOOLS
- COMMERCE
- ART INSTITUTION FACILITIES NETWORK
- HEALTHCARE FACILITIES NETWORK

## A MODEL DISTRICT FOR WELLNESS AND HEALTH

The concept of health and wellness is central to building better cities. A happier, more sustainable and equitable city is a sum-total of personal, ecological, social, and economic health of its residents. In that sense, a city's physical infrastructure is only one of many layers when it comes to defining quality of life and happiness.

Great access to healthcare and recreation in Museum Park, as well as the presence of landscapes mitigating environmental discomfort are important livability factors already imbedded in the physical place and social infrastructure. Museum Park is uniquely positioned to further expand definition of health in the City by creating a healthy response to dynamic economic and demographic factors that are reshaping its social and physical reality. Museum Park is at the intersection of diverse edges where multiple communities meet, yielding an intricate zone of transition. In that sense, it is an ultimate urban ecotone, an interface among zones of high diversity: the historic Third Ward, the largest medical campus in the world, a world-renowned arts district, a major university campus, and a regional park. A successful resolution of the friction that comes with such diversity under pressures of rapid redevelopment and densification can make Museum Park into an urban model for the rest of the City.

Economic, environmental and community spheres are linked in creating a healthy Museum Park. Economic success, community vitality, and environmental health were identified as the broader goals of the Study early in the project, and as a general approach the value of Conceptual Plan recommendations was measured against high-level health benchmarks in all three spheres.

In the process of achieving these benchmarks Museum Park will realize its latent potential to affect transition towards a helthier urban environment beyond its neighborhood boundaries.

DESIRED PROJECT OUTCOMES CENTER AROUND THE INTEGRATED IDEA OF HEALTH

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# CONCEPTUAL PLAN

# CONCEPTUAL PLAN FRAMEWORK

The organizing elements for Conceptual Plan framework include five subject areas, three scales of project recommendations, and six livability principles as defined by H.U.D. Also included in finer texture are community-defined project goals. Each component of the plan fits within this framework and its value is measured against the livability principles and project goals criteria.

## SUBJECT AREAS

### TRANSPORTATION

Recommendations relating to multi-modal transportation: automobility, bicycling, pedestrian facilities, transit and roadways.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations relating to businesses, economic development and management entities.

### HOUSING CHOICE

Recommendations relating to housing and built form.

### PLACEMAKING, BRANDING AND WAYFINDING

Recommendations relating to community branding, cultural amenities and identity.

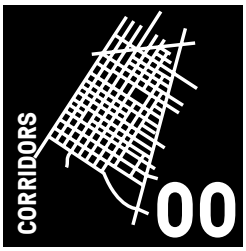
### SUSTAINABILITY AND OPEN SPACE

Recommendations relating to open space, parks, environmental issues and sustainability.

## SCALE

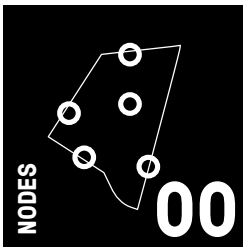
### NEIGHBORHOOD

Neighborhood-focused recommendations present holistic strategies that aim at preserving the area's integrity and distictiveness in context of the city as a whole.




### CORRIDORS

Corridor-focused recommendations reinforce the characteristic urban street grid structure of the area, by strengthening its character and infrastructural agility.




### NODES

Nodal recommendations zoom into specific areas to identify catalytic projects that will have significant impact on the future of the neighborhood beyond their immediate, geographic reach.

## LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES

AS DEFINED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

1. Provide more transportation choices;
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing;
3. Enhance economic competitiveness;
4. Support existing communities;
5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment; and,
6. Value communities and neighborhoods.

# PROJECT GOALS

## PEOPLE

1. Promote a healthy urban lifestyle by easing access to recreation and cultural education opportunities.
2. Ensure the community is actively involved in shaping the future of its neighborhood.

## ENVIRONMENT

3. Promote environmental resiliency in the design of urban systems.
4. Prioritize environmental comfort in the experience of the area.
5. Design for ecological benefit in the urban natural systems.

## ECONOMY

6. Promote a diversity of housing choices in the area.
7. Support transportation choices with infrastructure that provides easy access to driving-mode alternatives.
8. Promote local and authentic businesses in the area by supporting their commercial success.
9. Support regional significance of the area as a visitor's destination while preserving the scale and comfort of local living.

# CONCEPTUAL PLAN SUMMARY

The following fourteen recommendations were developed with community input over the course of the Study. They cover three urban scales: neighborhood, corridors, and nodes. Each recommendation suggests several actionable items (described in further detail on individual project pages). The recommendations are not numbered in the order of significance or community preference. The community may prioritize recommendations as partnerships and funding opportunities for plan implementation become available.

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:

### NEIGHBORHOOD

**01** HOUSING CHOICE

**02** T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**03** PARKING MANAGEMENT

**04** THE 'ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM

**05** MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

### CORRIDORS

**06** GREEN GRID

**07** CULTURE TRAIL

**08** AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK

**09** CAROLINE PROMENADE

### NODES

**10** METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK

**11** CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE

**12** ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE

**13** SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES

### NEIGHBORHOOD

**14** COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

CONCEPTUAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY MAP

# PARTNERSHIPS ABBREVIATIONS TABLE

Each project recommendation presented in the Conceptual Plan touches on implementation by listing out "Partners", "Funding", and "Implementer". Table of abbreviations below references programs and organizations that will be ultimately responsible for seeing components of the plan become a reality. These are described further in the Implementation Plan chapter of the report.

| | |
|---|---|
| CIP | CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN |
| COH | CITY OF HOUSTON |
| COH PMD | CITY OF HOUSTON PARKING MANAGEMENT DIVISION |
| HAHC | HOUSTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL COMMISSION |
| HCC | HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| HCDD | CITY OF HOUSTON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT |
| HFC | HOUSTON FIRST CORPORATION |
| HH | HISTORIC HOUSTON |
| HISD | HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT |
| HPARD | HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT |
| HPC | HERMANN PARK CONSERVANCY |
| HPDD | HOUSTON PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT |
| HPWED | HOUSTON PUBLIC WORKS AND ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT |
| HSE | HOUSTON SOUTHEAST |
| MD | MIDTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT |
| MDA | MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION |
| METRO | THE METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AGENCY OF HARRIS COUNTY |
| MMD | MONTROSE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT |
| MPNA | MUSEUM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION |
| MPSN | MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD |
| PBD | PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT |
| PD | PRIVATE DEVELOPERS |
| PH | PRESERVATION HOUSTON |
| PO | PRIVATE OWNERS |
| PT | PRESERVATION TEXAS |
| RICE U | RICE UNIVERSITY |
| SH | SCENIC HOUSTON |
| SPARK | HOUSTON SPARK SCHOOL PARK PROGRAM |
| SPMC | ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH |
| THC | TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION |
| TIRZ 2 | MIDTOWN TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE #2 |
| TIRZ 7 | OST/ALMEDA TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE #7 |
| TMC | TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER |
| TOD | TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT |
| TXDOT | TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION |

NEIGHBORHOOD 01

# HOUSING CHOICE

Collaborate with METRO to develop a T.O.D. mixed use site on METRO-owned property that includes mixed income housing, senior housing and commercial, retail development. Collaborate with community-based organizations on public policy in support of tax relief and funding for owner-occupied housing improvements.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, METRO, PO

FUNDING*: SUBSIDIES, LOW-INTEREST LOANS, AND GRANTS

IMPLEMENTER*: METRO, MD, COH, PO

*FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

Museum Park is experiencing exponential residential growth and dramatic rises in housing values, due to its prime location proximate to Downtown Houston, the City's premier cultural institutions, and a large regional parks and open space amenity - Hermann Park. Rising housing values are apparent from a review of Harris County Appraisal District valuations, which show substantial increases between 2010 and 2016 for residential properties of all vintages.

In addition, the median housing value reported in the U. S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2010-2014 is substantially higher in Museum Park than is the case citywide. More recent data from sources such as *realtor.com* indicate that the average home price in the reporting area that encompasses Museum Park is $539,900, compared to $279,858 for Houston. Signs at sites where new construction will occur, such as the Mondrian at the Museums site, post prices as high as $1 million-plus.

Town home development has proliferated, changing the character of the neighborhood, which in the past was characterized by stately pre-War homes and more modest single family detached homes with brick facades. Virtually every block face in the neighborhood's interior is experiencing or has experienced new town home development within the last decade.

Multi-family development has traditionally located on the neighborhood's edges, near Hermann Park and that has not changed. There is a new high-rise under construction overlooking the park; there are apartments on both sides of Almeda Road; and there is a condominium development planned nearby the park. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there appears to be an emerging trend to also locate new multi-family development in the vicinity of the MetroRail RedLine alignment. For example, there is a high-rise multi-family development under construction along the rail corridor and another high-rise residential development planned as part of an upcoming mixed use project.

Rents have followed the same trajectory as housing values. The median gross rent as per the 2010-2014 American Community Survey for the census tract where Museum Park is located is $1,653, a 13 percent increase over the $1,469 figure reported in the 2009-2013 American Community Survey. The comparable citywide figure is much lower.

Not surprisingly, the highest rents are commanded by high-rise properties, which tend to be newer and/or to exhibit the aforementioned locational advantages. Rents will assuredly elevate in the next few years — this prediction is based on the high end nature of the multi-family development that is currently under construction.

In this context, expanding housing choice to include moderately priced housing presents as a challenge. The value of privately owned land forestalls the construction of affordable and workforce (mixed income) housing on privately owned land in Museum Park, much of which is held by limited liability corporations. This situation can be mitigated by the formation of a public-private partnership to provide mixed income housing on land owned by a public entity. Possibilities include but are not limited to: land provided at low- or no-cost or made available via a long-term ground lease; underwritten infrastructure costs; direct payments to homebuyers; the use of tax credits; or some combination of all of these mechanisms.

As well, the ability to continue to house a diverse range of age groups expands housing choice. Presently, there are housing units owned by "baby boomers" who are facing the prospect of aging in homes that are larger than their needs might require in the future. Therefore, alternatives that enable these household to "age in place" are important. These alternatives include retrofitting older units, subdividing larger units, and including senior specially designed housing units in proposed mixed use developments.

# 01.1

## CONSTRUCT MIXED INCOME HOUSING AT MIXED USE T.O.D.DEVELOPMENT SITE

It has been stated that Museum Park land values makes expanding housing choice a challenge. However, a means of reducing the cost of development that serves a beneficial public purpose is for a public sector entity to enter into a public-private partnership where the entity contributes land, leases land to a developer on a long term basis (typically 99 years), or makes it available at a reduced cost.

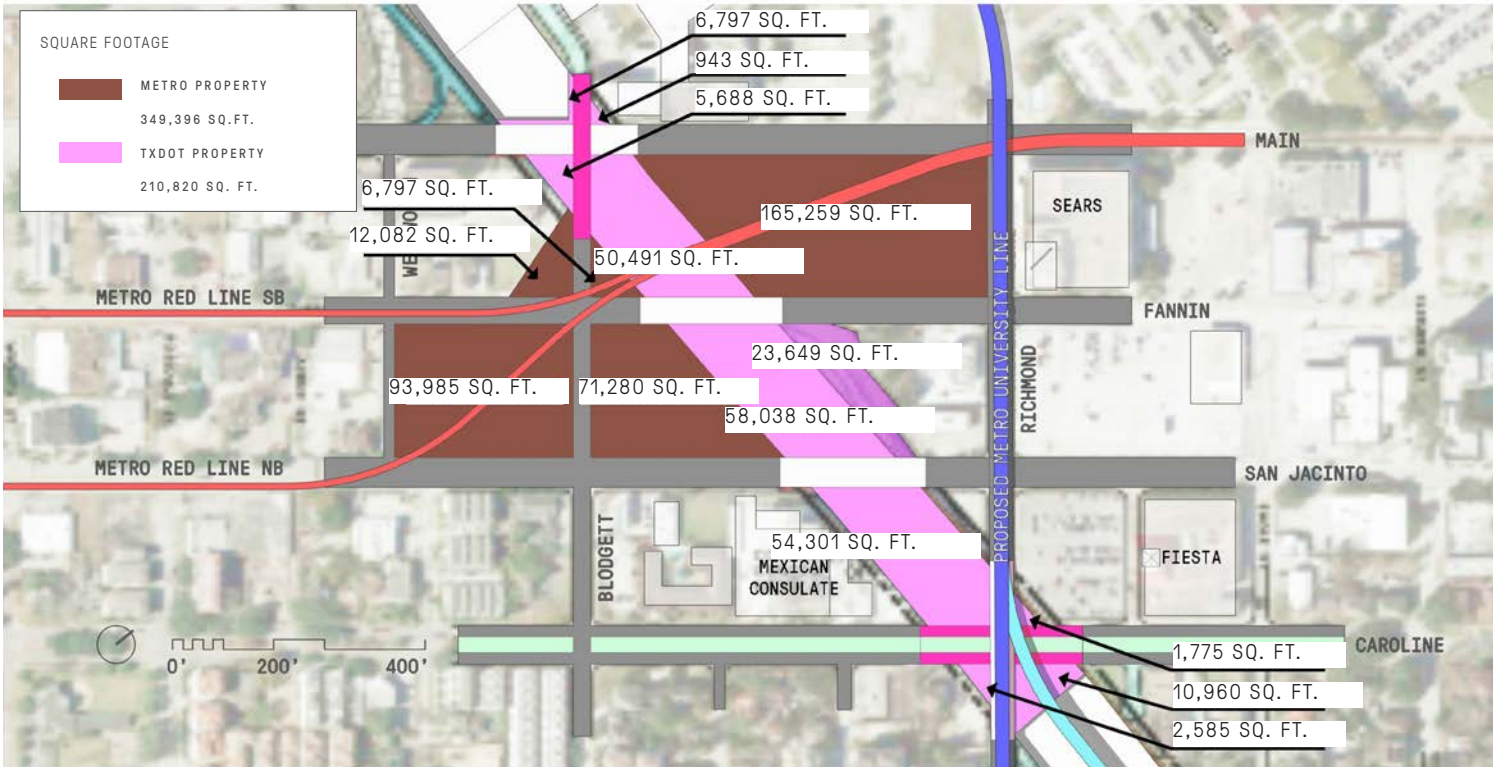
The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) owns nearly 287,000 square feet of land in and adjacent to Museum Park. (See "Metro Land Ownership" figure below). It is proposed that METRO make this land available for a public-private partnership that results in a mixed use transit-oriented development (TOD) being placed on the site. The mixed use development would include affordable, workforce, and senior housing, along with commercial and retail uses. The site that is proposed for this use would be ideal for the proposed uses, since it is adjacent to the Main Street Transit Center, where light rail transit and bus transit provide connections to the Texas Medical Center and to services in other parts of the city. The site is also proximate to an existing Sears department store and a grocery store.

METRO could sell the land outright, with covenants stipulating how it will be used, enter into a long-term ground lease with a developer, or make the land available in exchange for an equity position. Other components of the transaction could include:

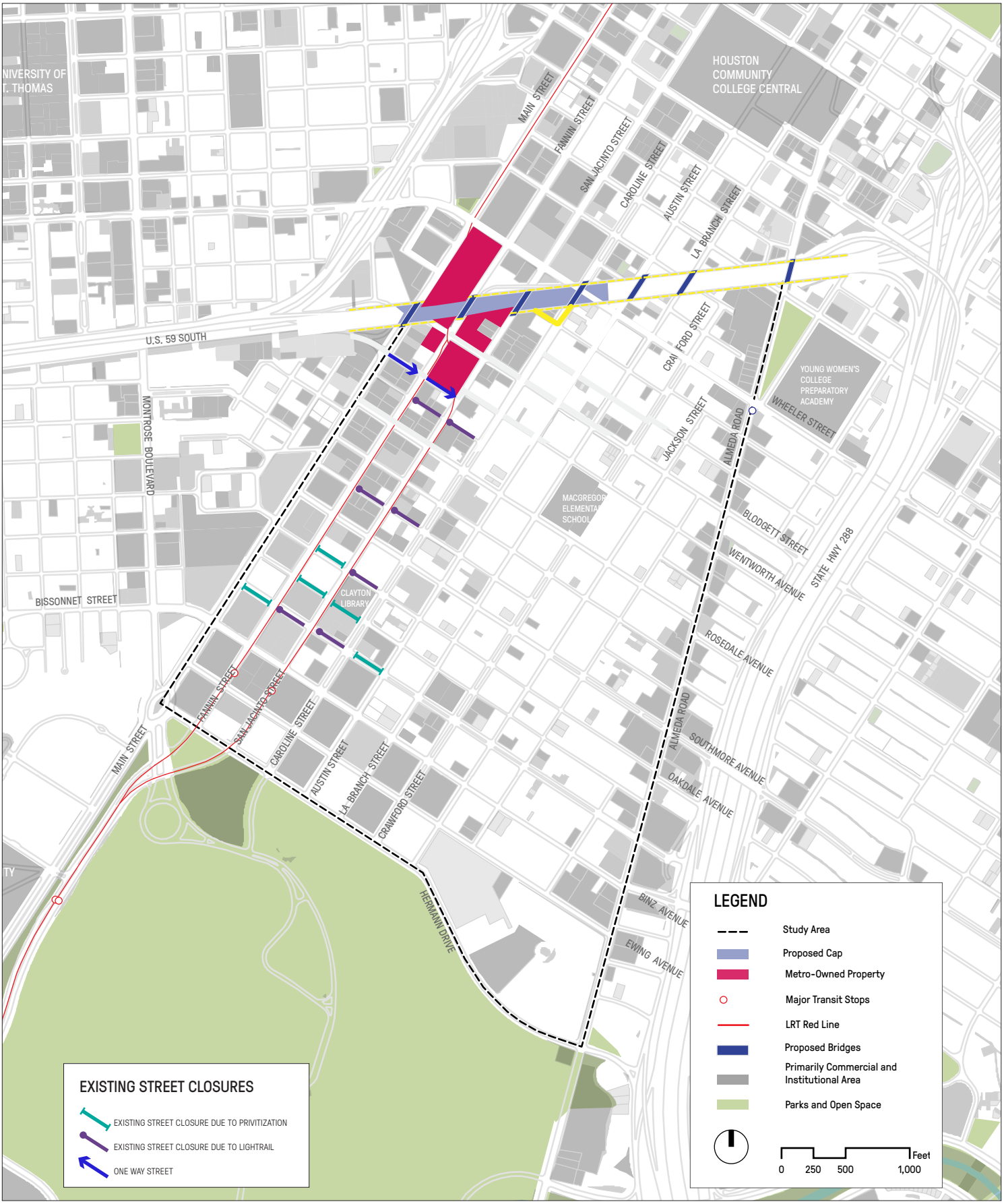
- **City Of Houston Section 380 Subsidies**
- **Down Payment Assistance From The Houston Department Of Housing And Community Development For For-Sale Housing**
- **Support From The Midtown Tax Increment Redevelopment Authority For Infrastructure Costs**
- **Low Income Housing Tax Credits**
- **Community Development Block Grant Funds**
- **Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program**
- **Home Investment Partnerships Funds**
- **City Of Houston Housing Trust Fund (Prospective)**
- **Private Financing**

This type of mixed financing model (which could be expanded to include participation from other entities) could place the mixed income housing that residents and other stakeholders desire within reach. Multiple layers of financing could enable rents and/or purchase prices that are accessible to households that are eligible for affordable or workforce housing.

A Community Benefits Agreement could be executed with the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council that establishes a consensus around the type of housing and other services that would be desirable at the site.




METRO LAND OWNERSHIP AT WHEELER TRANSIT STOP




MAP OF OF MIXED-INCOME HOUSING LOCATION AT THE POTENTIAL T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE

## BEST PRACTICES

There are numerous examples of the kinds of public-private partnerships alluded to. These include the Columbus Center Hotel and Housing Complex in Boston and The Ellington, a project of the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority. Also, METRO is proposing to participate in a mixed use project at the Southeast Transit Center in Houston.

### Columbus Hotel and Housing Complex

This mixed use development project is one that involves multiple layers of financing and includes a 220-room hotel, along with street level retail, a parking garage, and 239 housing units. Approximately half of the units will be affordable for middle income renters and the remainder will be affordable for households with lower incomes. The similarities with the project proposed on this section are that it is located near a light rail station; it is being built on vacant publicly-owned land; it features mixed income housing; there are multiple layers of financing and a variety of partners; and there was consultation with the surrounding community.

*http://www.cbtarchitects.com/architecture/mixed-use/index.php?id=182*

### The Ellington

The Washington Area Municipal Transit Association (WMATA) engages in joint ventures with developers through its Joint Development Program. One such venture is The Ellington, a 290-unit, eight story apartment building across the street from the U Street/African American Civil War Memorial/Cardozo Metro stop in Washington, D.C. It was built on vacant land and includes first floor storefronts, with rentals targeted to community and minority businesses.

Partners include WMATA, the Fannie Mae American Community Fund, and the Washington, D.C. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

Similarities with the project proposed herein are that it is a mixed financing development built on public sector land; there are multiple layers of financing; and rents are targeted to moderate and middle income households.

*https://www.walkscore.com/score/ellington-apartments-washington-d-c*

### Southeast Transit Center TOD

Closer to home, METRO is proposing a transit-oriented development at the Southeast Transit Center. METRO released a solicitation in January 2016 calling for transit oriented development on unutilized property surrounding the transit facility at the Southeast Transit Center. The solicitation at https://www.ridemetroapp.org/Procurement/documents/RP1600005%20TOD.pdf indicates that METRO is seeking an experienced developer to plan, finance, construct and operate the project and meet the stated goals of:

- Increasing transit ridership
- Enhancing increased ridership on the METRO system
- Positively affecting neighborhood cohesiveness and multimodal use
- Supporting surrounding neighborhoods and area residents
- Achieving transit, land use, economic development and urban planning goals
- Providing transportation related services and conveniences
- Providing pedestrian-oriented development
- Including a mix of uses that will support the continued growth and meet identified needs of the neighborhood which could include residential, retail, restaurants and supportive parking
- Achieving the highest levels of quality in terms of urban and architectural design
- Generating economic development benefits through the creation of jobs and fiscal revenues to the local area and Houston

Similarities with the proposed project include METRO's ownership of the land, the fact that what is proposed is a transit-oriented development, and the fact that the project will be a mixed use development.

# 01.2

## EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES FOR FACILITATING AGING IN PLACE

The Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council should collaborate with community-based organizations that represent similar communities to influence public policy related to tax relief and funding for physical modifications to owner-occupied homes.

### 01.2.1 Tax Relief

Under review by Mayor Sylvester Turner's administration is a Transition Team recommendation to "prevent the involuntary displacement of current homeowners due to market pressures in neighborhoods that are experiencing growth and new investments, including by exploring strategies to freeze ad valorem property taxes for certain categories of homeowners." (Transition Team Report, April 1, 2016)

This is in line with national best practices. For example, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) cites this as a best practice for similar communities and states that this tool prevents increases in the amount taxpayers residing in these communities will have to pay in the future. According to AARP, this mechanism also "protects homeowners from escalating taxes due to circumstances like gentrification when increases in the value of a person's property result from the property's location and not improvements in its condition." (www.aarp.org)

### 01.2.2 Physical Enhancements And Modifications

A Fall 2013 HUDUSER report pertaining to aging in place states that a home environment that does not meet physical needs is a barrier to aging in place. Various modifications can make it easier for aging residents to navigate through and live in their homes, including brighter lighting, handrails, stair lifts, and accessible workspaces. This is embodied in the concept of universal design, which defined by the Center for Universal Design as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." Within a residential setting, examples of universal design features include a blended step-free entrance route, multiple countertop heights, wide doorways, lever faucets, and a curbless shower with handheld adjustable shower head. (The Center for Universal Design, North Carolina State University, 1997) Universal design features are intended to have general utility and market appeal versus only applying to older persons and disabled persons, but this concept is highly applicable to the idea of retrofitting homes to enhance prospects for aging in place.

Deferred payment, low interest loans that can be used for retrofitting homes so that they adhere to principles of universal design is a recommended strategy. Deferred Payment Loans (DPL) would be a valuable resource to seniors in Museum Park who lack resources to pay for home modifications or maintenance. A low interest rate and deferral of payment until the end of the loan's term would make this a feasible option for many Museum Park seniors. Borrowers could be subject to a means test so that Community Development Block Grant funds could be used for such an initiative.

According to *visitability.org*, "visitability" refers to single-family or owner-occupied housing designed in such a way that it can be lived in or visited by people who have trouble with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers. This practice can inhibit social isolation, by making homes accessible for disabled persons (who are sometimes older persons themselves). Houston has a visitability ordinance, but as is typically the case, the local ordinance limits funding to new construction. The Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council could collaborate with community-based organizations in other mature neighborhoods to expand the current visitability program to include existing construction.

Also, it could be required that, at a minimum, subsidized senior units in the proposed mixed use development be required to meet standards of visitability. This would not be without precedent; some cities require visitability in all publicly funded homes. (*www.aarp.org*)

Dividing larger homes into two or more smaller living units is also a viable option. Smaller units are less expensive to maintain and opportunities for communality are enhanced.

### BEST PRACTICES

Some cities provide tax credits to incentivize making homes visitable. An example is Pittsburgh, where the tax credit is designed to provide visitable housing to all individuals, with or without disabilities, by offering a tax credit to encourage the inclusion of the visitability features that enhance both visitability and usability for visitors and residents. (*http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/ada/visitability*)

According to AARP, several states and localities have implemented successful Deferred Payment Loan programs for physical modifications. These include Minnesota and Pennsylvania, Marinette, Wisconsin, and Norman, Oklahoma. (*www.aarp.org*)

The Virginia Livable Home Tax Credit (LHTC) program seeks to enhance accessibility and universal visitability by providing state tax credits for the purchase of new units or the retrofitting of existing housing units. A homeowner can receive up to $5,000 for the purchase or construction of a new accessible residence and up to $5,000 for the cost of retrofitting an existing residence. (*www.dhcd.virginia.gov/index.php/housing-programs-and-assistance/tax-credit-programs/livable-homes-tax-credit.html*)

Seattle allows accessory apartments to be built inside existing units and also allows flex housing. This housing accommodates more than one household in a single structure, including more than one generation. (*www.smartgrowthseattle.org/zoning-housing-types*)

Other features that enhance seniors' ability to age in place are access to transportation and walkability. The proposed mixed income site is proximate to transportation. Walkability strategies are addressed elsewhere in this study.

NEIGHBORHOOD 02

# T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Encourage and support mixed-use and transit-oriented development on mixed-use corridors and potential transit-oriented development corridors, with the goal of increasing retail

PROJECT GOALS: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, METRO, HSE, MD, MPSN, MPNA, PO

FUNDING*: SUBSIDIES, LOW-INTEREST LOANS, AND GRANTS

IMPLEMENTER*: COH, METRO, MD, PO

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overall economic conditions in Museum Park are favorable. The 2010-2014 American Community Survey results indicate that median income in Museum Park is substantially higher than the citywide median income. The figure reported for Museum Park is $102,899 and the citywide figure was $45,728. As is true of median housing value, this figure may not reflect the status quo, but it demonstrates how much higher incomes are compared to the city as a whole. Given the asking prices for new and upcoming residential units, it is safe to assume that incomes will rise in the coming years, since high levels of income will be required to purchase and rent the new high end units.

### Employment And Occupational Categories

The unemployment rate in the Study Area was only one percent at the time of the American Community Survey. This compares to a citywide figure of 8.9 percent. This is highly likely to continue to be the trend, due to the upward trend in home sale prices and rents.

There are approximately 666 employers in Museum Park, as per data supplied by Nielson Claritas. Employers include museums, places of worship, and nonprofit organizations, as well as for-profit businesses. Park Plaza Hospital and Hotel ZaZa are the largest employers in Museum Park.

The population is largely "white collar." More than two-thirds of employed persons are employed in management, professional and related fields (68.9%). This compares to 13.5 percent citywide.

Most of the businesses located in Museum Park have a single location, as opposed to multiple branches or franchises. The vast majority employ less than 25 persons.

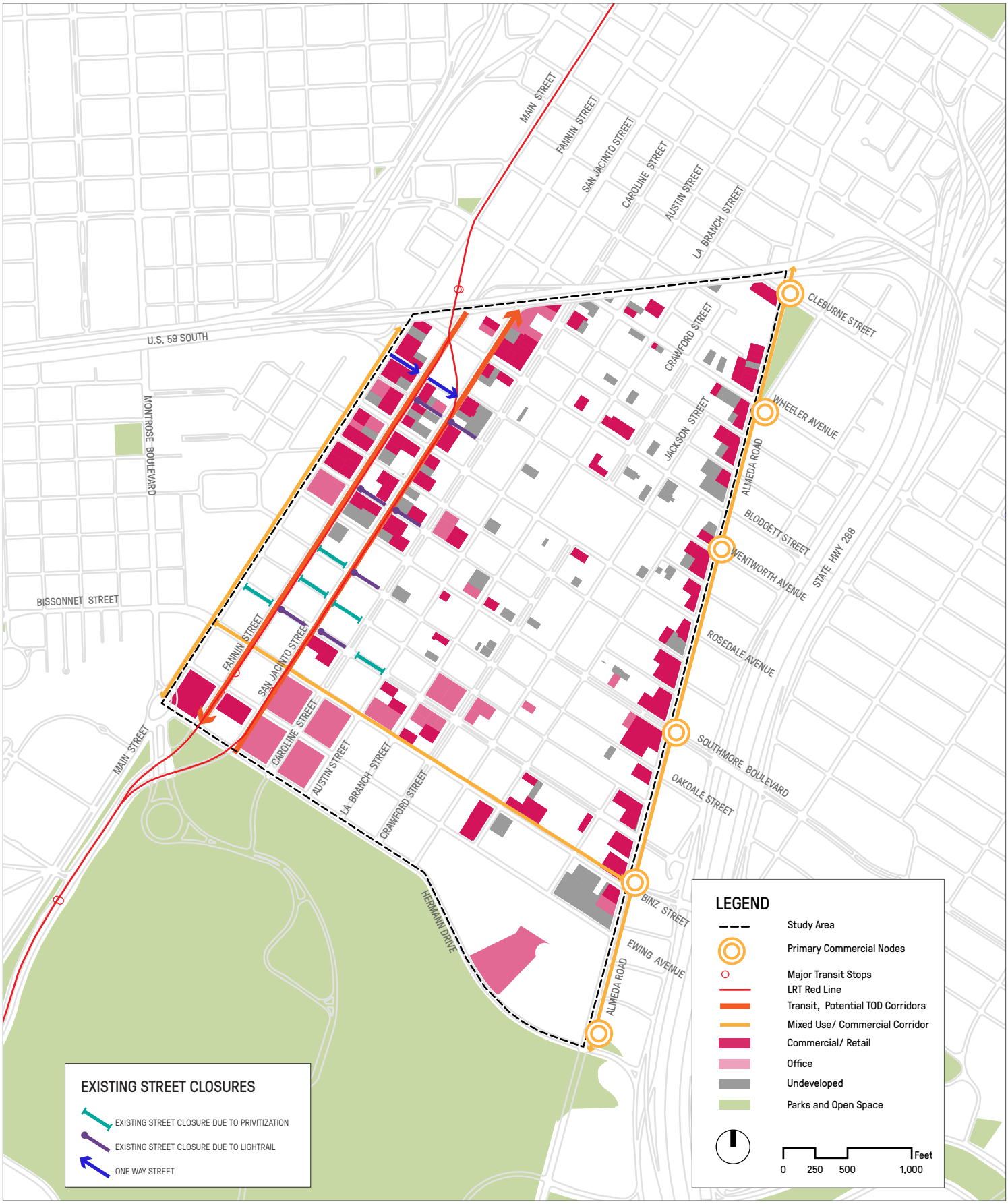
### Economic Impact Of Cultural Institutions

The museums located in and around Museum Park already make a substantial contribution to the local economy and the potential exists for them to enhance their contribution. A study conducted for the Houston Museum District Association documented a substantial $371,704,803 economic impact from seven million museum visits in 2014. Moreover, in a focus group session held to obtain museum representatives' input to this study, plans for the adoption of extended hours and innovative events were shared. These innovations are expected to attract additional visitors, who can be expected to patronize existing restaurants and create demand for new restaurants and other retail facilities.

This is compatible with the desire of current residents and other stakeholders for additional retail, especially restaurants to locate in Museum Park. There is also strong desire on the part of the neighborhood to see boutique businesses and small professional service firms in underutilized properties on the various historic property lists or eligible for historic designation. Although it is evident that the primary focus of developers is residential development at this juncture, this is changing as developers look to take advantage of the dynamic pace of high end residential growth.

### Resident And Stakeholder Input

Almeda Road, a major thoroughfare that traverses the eastern edge of the neighborhood, has frequently been cited as a logical place for increased retail development to occur. This development would join existing retail uses, including bars, dry cleaning establishments, boutiques, cosmetology establishments, and restaurants. There is also potential for new retail development to manifest as transit-oriented mixed use development along the METRO light rail alignment. Fannin Street is a location where there are underdeveloped sites that could be redeveloped to higher uses. Lastly, there are other locations where redevelopment of underutilized or derelict sites could occur. With respect to non-retail commercial development, Museum Park residents and other stakeholders have expressed that they would like to see such development take the form of professional services offices, such as architecture firms. This would be in keeping with the current pattern.




EXISTING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY AND CORRIDORS, PROPOSED PRIMARY COMMERCIAL NODES ON ALMEDA MAP

## 02.1

## DESIGNATE ALMEDA ROAD AS A TARGETED COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Residents and other Museum Park stakeholders have identified Almeda Road as a key commercial corridor for the community, while also expressing the view that it is not currently living up to its potential.

Presently, the corridor is home to an assortment of retail businesses, most of which employ fewer than 10 persons and are independently owned. Restaurants, beauty and barber shops, and bars, are joined by an auto repair shop, health and fitness establishments, and an assortment of retail stores, including clothing stores and a scuba gear store. There are also commercial establishments, including a radio station, two banquet facilities, a commercial real estate office, and an insurance office.

While some of these businesses occupy newer and/or physically inviting facilities, others are in need of upgrading. Moreover, the corridor does not impart a "sense of place." Therefore, it is proposed that the City of Houston designate Almeda Road as a "targeted commercial corridor," on the model of commercial corridor initiatives adopted in other cities, such as Fort Worth and New Orleans (see "Best Practices" on the next page).

As a "targeted commercial corridor," Almeda Road would receive special consideration for façade improvement loans, working capital and equipment loans, and improvements that enhance walkability and access to businesses. Support would be focused on the entire corridor, with wayfinding improvements placed at primary commercial nodes, shown on the project map. These nodes are as follows:

Almeda Road at –
- Hermann Drive
- Binz Street
- Southmore Boulevard
- Wentworth Street
- Wheeler Avenue
- Cleburne Street

These through streets intersect with Almeda Road on the eastern edge of the neighborhood and most intersect with Main Street on the western edge. They are called out because they provide ease of pedestrian and vehicular access from one side of the neighborhood to the other; they have transit stops (except in one instance); and there are business establishments on at least two of the four corners of the intersection.

The prospects for a targeted commercial corridor designation for Almeda Road are heightened by the fact that the administration of Mayor Sylvester Turner has accepted a Transition Team recommendation to systematically focus economic development funding on marginalized communities and neighborhoods. As shown below, other cities have created programs designed to revitalize commercial corridors and targeted mature commercial corridors in various sections of these localities for special attention. The municipality is typically an instigator and lead partner and various funding sources are utilized to remove blight through infrastructure improvements, façade improvement loans, and capital loans.

Houston Southeast, a sponsor of the Museum Park Livable Centers Study and the sponsor of another plan that incorporates Almeda Road, could serve as the lead partner if the City of Houston opts not to initiate such a program, and Houston Southeast could also be a funding resource. The district assesses commercial properties to support a range of enhancement activities and it is eager to find new ways to support the businesses located within the district. A commercial corridor revitalization initiative for Almeda Road very much aligns with its goals.

The proposed program would feature façade improvement loans, placemaking initiatives financed by Houston Southeast and the Community Development Block grant, technical assistance provided by local business technical assistance providers, tax abatement, and low-interest loans earmarked for Almeda Road businesses that need assistance with removal of blight.

The City of Houston and Houston Southeast would be partners in this enterprise, given their respective roles and responsibilities. They are the appropriate collaborators in the creation and implementation and administration of the program, which could be part of a citywide initiative. Other potential partners include Houston Business Development Inc, banks, foundations, and corporations, among others.

As shown above and later in the "Potential Funding" section of the Implementation Plan, numerous local resources are available to address the revitalization of the Almeda commercial corridor. (In the Fort Worth example, even bond proceeds were tapped.)

## 02.2

## CONSTRUCT A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ON METRO-OWNED PROPERTY

Conditions in Museum Park are favorable for the development of retail, commercial, and housing on land that is owned by the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO). These contiguous parcels of land are located on the northern boundary of the study area and just north of the study area.

What is meant by favorable conditions is that incomes are higher than city and regional norms and new housing construction is proceeding at a healthy pace. Museum Park residents and other stakeholders have expressed strong support for the concept of a mixed use development on parcels of land owned by METRO. These parcels comprise nearly 287,000 square feet (roughly 6.5 acres) of land and have excellent access to transit, since they are located nearby the Wheeler/Main Transit Center. It is proposed that a mixed income development be constructed at the site of the METRO-owned property. As described in "Recommendation #10" of the Study, the development would include retail and commercial uses, mixed income housing, and a parking structure.

A community benefits agreement could be executed with the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council to address which commercial and retail uses are desired. (Of course, a market study would also be conducted to determine which uses could be supported at the site.)

## BEST PRACTICES

Two exemplary initiatives were identified from a survey of nationwide commercial revitalization programs. These are the Fort Worth Urban Villages program and two programs administered by the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority.

### Fort Worth

The award-winning Fort Worth Urban Villages program directs resources to older commercial districts that contain similar land uses as those located on the Almeda corridor, such as a mixture of commercial and residential uses. Sixteen corridors have been selected for this program, which is a partnership of the City of Fort Worth, developers, business groups, and community-based organizations. The program goal is to "revitalize key commercial corridors where residents can live, work, and play in a mass-transit-friendly environment" and the program is part of an overall central city revitalization strategy (***www.fortworthtx.gov***).
Focused resources include capital improvements and economic incentives. These include streetscape improvements, utility improvements, and façade improvements for ten eligible areas. Eligible uses for the façade reimbursement loan are:

- signage attached to the façade
- painting
- siding
- brick/stone/masonry
- glass
- windows
- doors
- trim
- awnings
- structural improvements to façade
- exterior lighting attached to the façade

A design review committee ensures that approved applications meet design standards adopted by the City of Forth Worth. (www.fortworthtx.gov)
Funding sources for the program include bond proceeds, Community Development Block Grant funds (where applicable), and private investment.

### New Orleans

Recognizing the critical importance of commercial revitalization for many older communities, the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA) administers a Commercial Gap Financing Program and Façade Renew. The Commercial Gap Financing Program supports catalyst projects on key commercial corridor. NORA has invested $11 million in key corridors, leveraging $10 in private investment for every $1 of NORA investment. Façade RENEW features a three-to-one match for façade improvements that NORA approves. This program targets select commercial corridors that are in need of blight removal and as a zoned city, it also addresses non-conforming design standards. Grant funding is also made available for placemaking projects, defined as projects that take "a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces" (***www.noraworks.org***).

*http://fortworthtexas.gov/west-seventh-urban-village/*

*http://www.noraworks.org/about/projects*

NEIGHBORHOOD 03

# PARKING MANAGEMENT

Put into place parking requirements and management strategies that incrementally balance parking choice. Considerations for aesthetic values and non-automotive trips are highly encouraged.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, METRO, MD, HSE, MPNA, MDA, HPC, RICE U, PBD

FUNDING*: PBD

IMPLEMENTER*: PBD, HSE, COH

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

While many of the recommendations of the Livable Centers plan will support multimodal trips for visitors and residents, parking will remain a critical issues given the increased level of development and the numerous destinations in the study area. Parking in Museum Park must provide a balance of availability for both residents and visitors to the many world class museums, Hermann Park, and office and medical facilities. While the corridor recommendations overall maintain a consistent level of parking, some corridor recommendations reduce on-street parking and others would create expanded space for on-street parking. While the majority of on-street parking in the area is free, metered parking is available on Hermann Drive and Caroline Street, with additional blocks metered around the museums and other major points of interest on Ewing, Austin, La Branch, Crawford, and Calumet Streets. Parking prohibitions exist on some streets at all times and some have restrictions during peak travel periods. To maintain a balance of parking that allows a diverse range of visitors to enjoy the amenities and destinations in the neighborhood without negatively impacting residents, the following strategies and recommendations have been developed and are informed from previous parking studies, best practices, and field observations. The following strategies, when coupled with improved walkability, expanded bicycle parking at destinations, and improved signage and wayfinding, identify approaches to better manage parking impacts to the neighborhood residents, while encouraging visitors to enjoy the vast amenities in the neighborhood. The map on the following page identifies overall on-street parking conditions in the study area that should serve as a baseline for consideration of the potential recommendations.

### 03.1

### COORDINATE & COMMUNICATE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKING AVAILABILITY

Surface and structured parking available in Museum Park is inconsistently utilized and discussions with area stakeholders indicates that people are not aware of all of the available parking opportunities. Increasing awareness of available lots and on-street parking can encourage visitors to use those options for various destinations, and communication through improved wayfinding signage to visitors identifying available parking options will make better use of existing parking. Understanding peak parking demand periods and how parking use can be optimized across the district will benefit residents as well as local institutions. The Museum Park area should also develop a tool similar to the Downtown District's interactive parking map which provides locations and costs for various parking options. It is also recommended that a detailed parking map with information about available parking be developed and distributed on websites and brochures available at key destinations. This information can also identify regional parking locations with easy access to METRO LRT stations, bus routes and trails which serve the Museum Park area to support people's ability to visit the area without necessarily needing to park. A future opportunity may be to partner with the potential development near the Wheeler Transit Center as identified in Recommendation 10 of this study to utilize available parking. This may also allow new funding opportunities, partnerships or grants to be leveraged to expand available parking opportunities.

### 03.2

### COORDINATE BUS PARKING

Bus parking overflow from Hermann Park and the area museums, including tour and school buses, has a significant impact on available parking availability and traffic operations. Handling this parking should be coordinated with potential partners to leverage underutilized space outside of the neighborhood that could provide an effective remote lot that does not adversely affect another neighborhood. Buses could drop off at Museum Park destinations and be called when needed for group pickup. Potential areas to consider for the remote lot include, but should not be limited to, the Main Street bus lanes south of the Mecom Fountain during off-peak hours, the area under US 59 north of Museum Park, and the Rice Stadium parking lot.

### 03.3

### EVALUATE PAID PARKING FEE STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The cost of an available parking option has an impact on its utilization. This is evident in field observations in the study area which show people parking in the more residential area in the north and eastern parts of the study area to avoid having to pay at the on-street meters, lots or parking garages near the museums, the Park

Plaza Hospital and along Hermann Drive. A significant percentage of traffic and the related congestion in the Museum Park and the Hermann Park areas during high demand times is from people circling to find free or low cost parking options. The fee structure of existing parking meters allows parking for up to three hours with increased costs for each additional 15-minute increment of time. It is recommended that this "one-size fits all" approach be tailored to support some of the parking outcomes expressed as goals by stakeholders for the Livable Centers plan.

Strategies for tailoring metered parking in Museum Park might include allowing for short time period trips, encouraging parking turnover and availability, but at the same time allowing for visitors to stay for the day and encouraging visitors to spend time at multiple destinations in the area. Providing creative pricing solutions can provide for more equitable opportunities for all communities to have access to the amazing destination in the Museum Park study area.
The following represent considerations and potential ideas for pricing strategies that should be explored as part of instituting future parking strategies. Due to the highly dynamic nature of the Museum Park area's growth and consequent pressure on providing parking, whatever strategies and measures are implemented at any one time will require frequent reassessment and retuning to maintain an effective response.

- While metered parking can be a very cost-effective method of parking management, the District's museums are in close proximity to underserved communities. Cost and affordability should be balanced.
- Any paid parking strategy and the addition of any future parking meters should carefully consider the appropriate extent of implementation in the area. Stakeholders supported a gradual rate of implementation with steps to review recommendations and determine whether they were meeting the desired goals. For example, it is important to evaluate how access to health and education opportunities is extended to people from all walks of life in Museum Park.
- By providing more tailored pricing options, the existing parking meters, and potential added meters, would be better able to accommodate a broad range of visitors and support the neighborhoods goals for better parking management.
- Coordination with a mobile parking app could also aid in effective usage of metered parking and minimize the need to install a significant number of new meters.
- Stakeholders reported that some employees of the Texas Medical Center or downtown park in free locations in Museum Park to avoid parking fees in those activity centers and then utilize the rail to reach their jobs. Charging a higher rate for long term, non-resident parking, for example parking over four to eight hours, would discourage long term parking or monetize people using that parking area to create funds for other improvements.
- Parking rates could vary by distance with spots closer to destinations set at a premium and those with a longer walk set at lower rates.
- Establishing partnering programs with Museum Park's member institutions to coordinate Museum Park's parking resources will have significant benefits both to the general population, institution patrons and to underserved communities. This might include shared parking, free or reduced parking rates on free museum days to ensure parking does not serve as a barrier to access and / or a parking validation program on a needs basis.
- As demand continues to increase, install a dynamic pricing system that can vary price based on demand in near real-time to ensure that some spaces are always available. This can reduce the amount of circling to find an available parking space.

The addition of expanded on-street paid parking areas should also be considered as demand warrants. Stakeholders expressed strong concern that these new meters not be located and priced to create a barrier to low income people having access to Hermann Park and museums in the area. Free parking periods and other strategies should be considered as part of the overall parking plan.

If additional meters are installed and generated meter revenue is sufficient to support improvements, a Parking Benefit District (PBD) should be considered. A PBD is both a funding tool and parking management strategy. A PBD is a defined area in which, once operating and management costs are covered, a portion of the meter revenue is returned to the district to finance improvements that enhance the area. A PBD can implement improvements focused on quality of life enhancements aligned with the MPLC study goals. This can include improved sidewalks, accessibility improvements, enhanced transit stops, new bike share stations, beneficial landscape, and lighting enhancements. Potential funds could also be allocated to support parking coordination and information programs as defined in 3.1 and support programs that increase access to cultural institutions for economically disadvantaged citizens. This should be considered in the prioritization of the projects programed for the funds generated by the PMD by an advisory board. PBDs are usually set up with an advisory board appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council to help prioritize how revenue is invested and the makeup of this board should reflect the broad set of stakeholder perspectives in the Museum Park area.

## 03.4

## EXAMINE PERMIT PARKING FOR RESIDENTS

To ensure residents of Museum Park are not overburdened by visitor parking, the neighborhood should examine and coordinate with the City of Houston to develop a residential parking permit area in key locations. This would ensure that some parking for residents remain available and incentivize visitors to park in appropriate locations. Potential strategies for residential parking include resident parking only zones or expanded metered parking zones that allow free resident parking by permit. Permits could be valid for evening periods when museums are closed and competition diminishes for on-street parking on many streets. Similar programs could support parking for schools and daycares in the neighborhood, potentially through exemptions or special permits for parents, caregivers, and employees.

(For reference see Existing Parking Map in Appendix C, p. 215,
also see related section in Appendix E, page 271)

NEIGHBORHIOOD 04

# "THE ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM

Develop a custom placemaking program with functional art that highlights pedestrian loops/routes through the neighborhood.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: HSE, MD, MMD, MPSN, MDA, PO FUNDING*: PARTNERS, GRANTS IMPLEMENTER*: HSE, MD, MMD, MPSN, MDA, PO

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## BRANDING STRATEGY IN SUPPORT OF ART EDUCATION AND WALKABILITY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Museum Park Super Neighborhood is home to locally notable and internationally renowned cultural institutions with superior art collections and curatorial practices. Having the influence of art extend beyond the gallery walls would realize the area's full potential for promoting cultural education, diversity of expression, elevated aesthetic sensibility, and expectation for beauty in the urban environment. World-class architecture and high art influences set a precedent for the style and the quality of art expression suitable for the area's brand. Timeless elegance, subtle form, substantial materiality, and whimsical beauty are inherent in the neighborhood. Introduced art shall imbue these ideals.

Rather than build an arts strategy around a series of "plop and drop" works of art, or a lavish or hyper-color mural plan, a unified and continuous art concept inspired by the neighborhood itself works best. Legible and consistent, it appears throughout the neighborhood as "functional art" and not art for display alone. Functional art appears as infrastructure, way finding, and furniture, all in support of higher quality pedestrian realm, that encourages walking with excitement, curiosity and delight.

## 04.1

### FUNCTIONAL ART AS INFRASTRUCTURE

Functional art as infrastructure draws on the idea of daily life as it happens in the neighborhood as a work of art, framed by an ongoing civic project.

Inspired by the overscaled framing devices in the work of Christo and Jean-Claude, the scale of the intervention can encompass key areas in the neighborhood and extend beyond. The oaks, the grasses, the sky, and the neighbors, as they meet with one another on the street, are framed by a continuous running "frame" that at times serves as a garden rail, at times a shade canopy, at times a swing set, and at times as a threshold or gateway. (see "Precedent Toolkit" on p.46)

Pedestrian crossings are sites of opportunity for this approach, previously exemplified by the installation of artful crosswalks by Carlos Cruz-Diez at the MFAH.

ARTFUL CROSSWALK INSTALLATION AT THE MFAH BY CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ, 2011
*Source: http://www.houstonpress.com/slideshow/the-carlos-cruz-diez-installation-at-mfah-6274635*

## 04.2

### FUNCTIONAL ART AS WAYFINDING

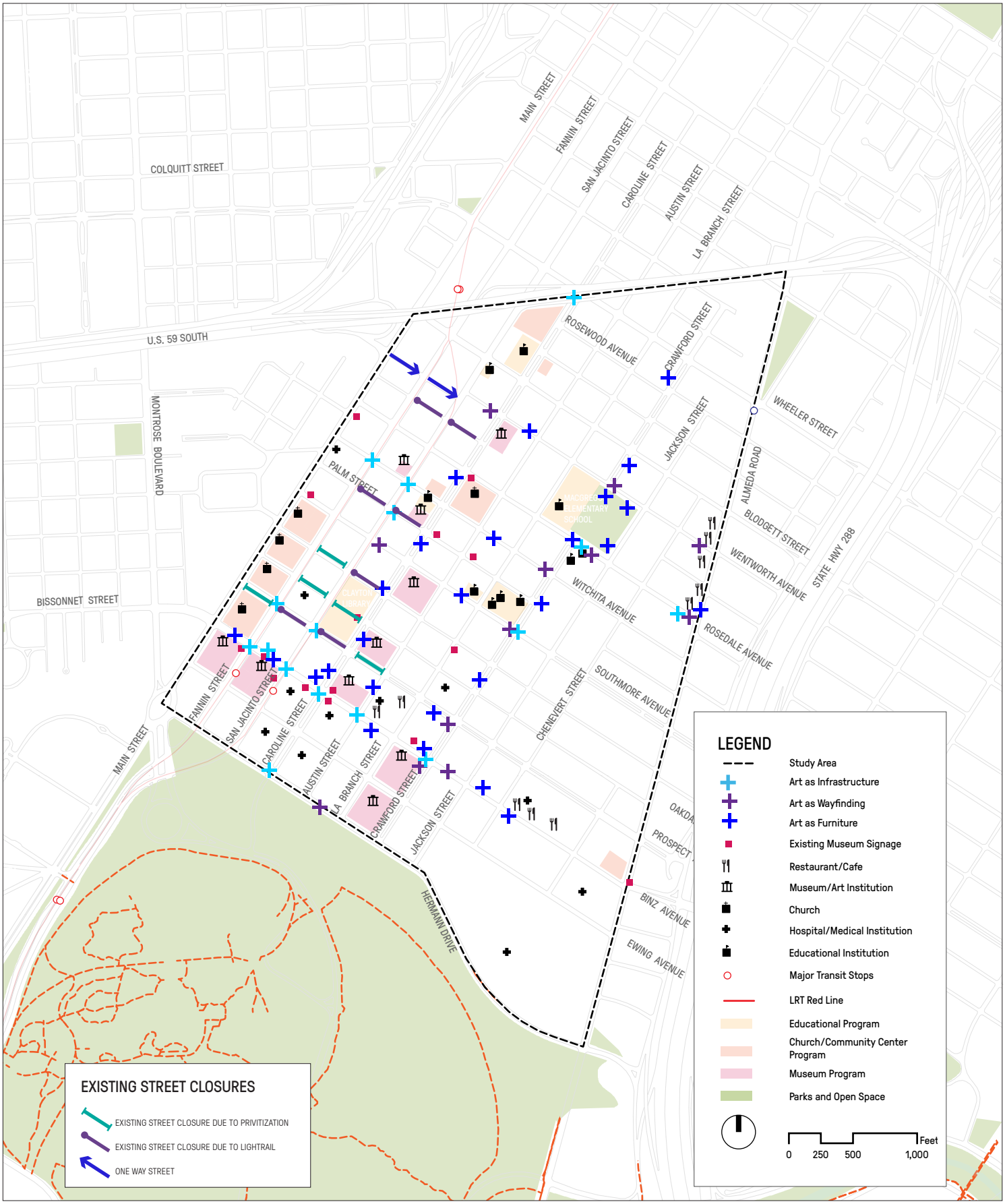
Currently, wayfinding is abundant in the neighborhood as it directs visitors to the museums, the park, and transit. Generally it takes form of vertical signage distributed at key locations. A variety of street signage contributes to visual clutter and doesn't always reflect the refined institutional influences of the area's museums, historic architecture and landmark places in the neighborhood that have defined the visual character of this part of Houston over the years.

Alternative wayfinding installations can occur in a horizontal plane and can use the routing of the Culture Trail (Plan Recommendation #7) to guide its distribution. (See studies on the following pages)

## 04.3

### FUNCTIONAL ART AS URBAN FURNITURE

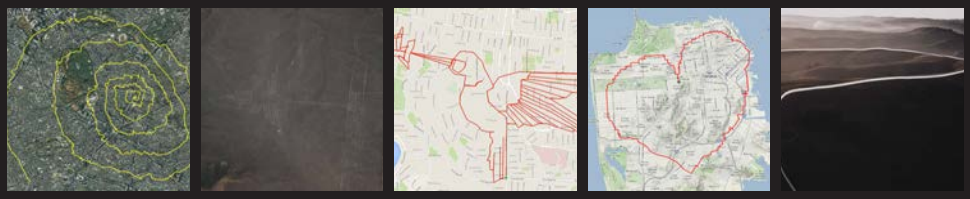
Drawing on the idea of a continuous, running frame, the artwork can serve to incorporate areas and various forms of respite along multi-use paths that weave through the grid of the neighborhood. The art will provide shade, places to sit, water fountains, light, mist, habitats, and context through a continuous work of art strategy that draws on a sophisticated material palette in harmony with the existing neighborhood aesthetic character.



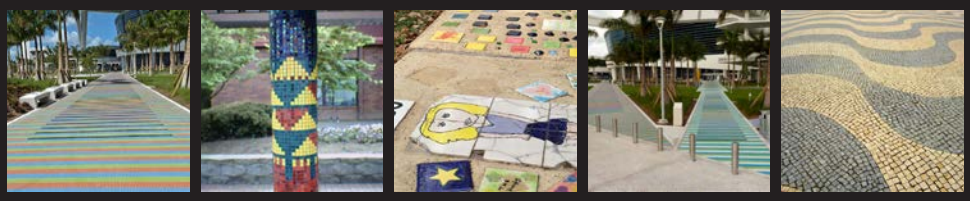

POTENTIAL DISTRIBUTION OF FUNCTIONAL ART INTERVENTIONS MAP

# "THE ART OF WALKING"
# THEMATIC COMPONENTS PRECEDENT TOOLKIT

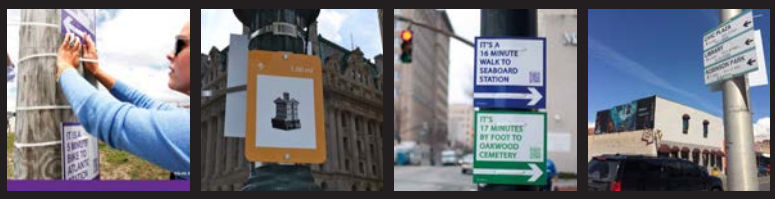
LOOP ART



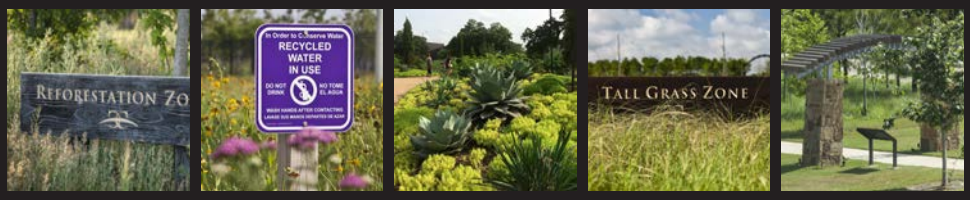
MOSAIC POETRY



ELASTIC WAYFINDING




BOTANICAL SIGNAGE



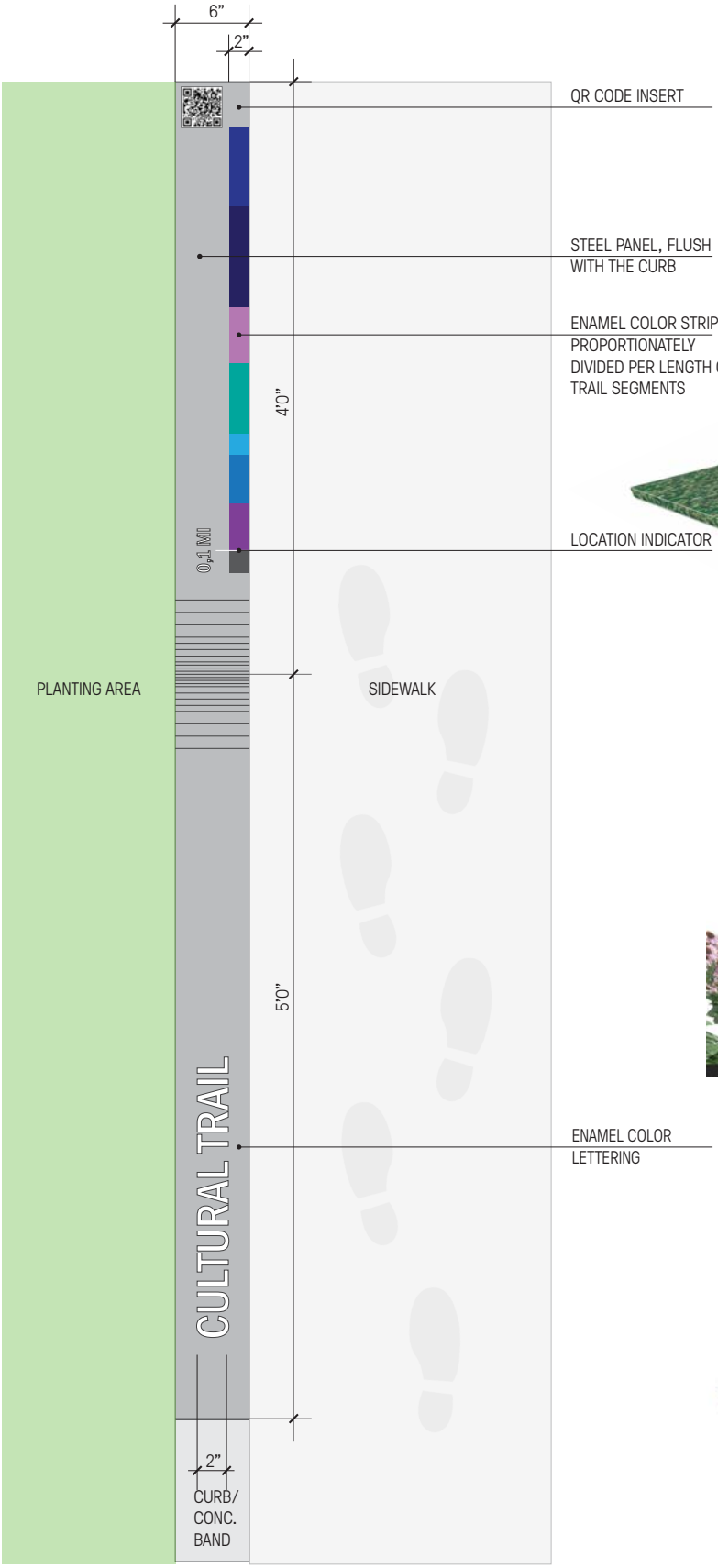

INFRASTRUCTURE REIMAGINED

ANIMAL ARCHITECTURE

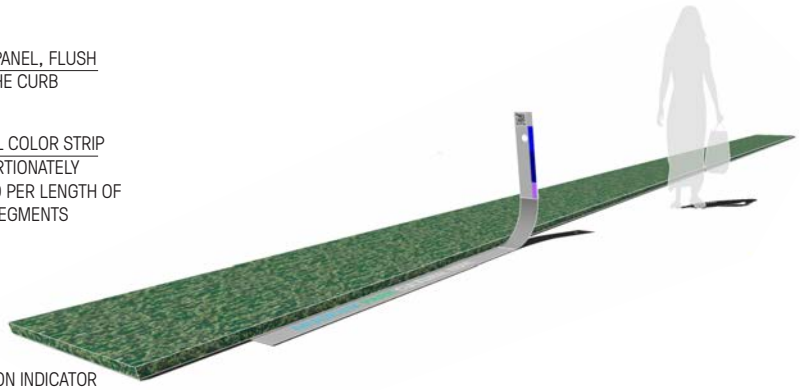
SITE FURNISHINGS

SIDEWALK IMBEDDED WAYFINDING

## IMBEDDED WAYFINDING AND "THE ART OF WALKING" OBJECT STUDIES




SIDEWALK-IMBEDDED SIGNAGE



BIKE RACK

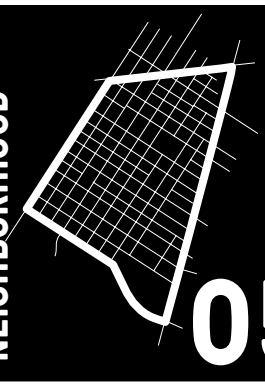
BENCH

GARDEN RAIL

"THE ART OF WALKING" PROGRAM ENVISIONED AT THE INTERSECTION OF BINZ AND FANNIN STREETS

HOUSTON
Parking
Parking
Parking
agiom

NEIGHBORHOOD



05

# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Develop advocacy, marketing, and communications strategies by building on Marketing and Communications plan by Houston Southeast, to promote neighborhood awareness, participation, and fundraising.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MD, MPSN, MDA, PBD

FUNDING*: GRANTS, PBD

IMPLEMENTER*: HSE, MPSN, PBD

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCACY ROLE

The Museum Park Super Neighborhood has functioned well as an advocate, champion and clearing house to opportunistically grow and enhance the community. It is vital that this role be formalized and its mission refined to reflect a broader role and signaling a platform for action to begin implementing short and long term recommendation from the Livable Center Study.

## 05.1

### PARKING WAYFINDING APP COLLABORATION

Promoting communications relative to available parking with a wayfinding app can ease parking-related tensions in the neighborhood. New technologies can assist drivers with finding a spot and even reserving a space for an allocated amount of time. Moving to primarily mobile parking solutions is efficient and can reduce street clutter, diminishing the overall necessity of physical meters. An alternative to the mobile option should continue to be offered so as not to exclude any potential users.

## 05.2

### CREATION OF 501(C)(3)

Being capable of receiving contributions and preparing / submitting grant requests is essential to Museum Park's long term success. A not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) should be created as a first step towards implementation of the Study recommendations and securing an economically sustainable future. Whether launching capital campaigns, leveraging partnership with other organizations on joint capital/ maintenance projects or undertaking capital projects themselves, Museum Park must possess resources of its own as well as access to funding sources on an on-going basis.

## 05.3

### AREA PROGRAMMING APP COLLABORATION

Educational sessions, premier exhibitions, and cultural events are offered every day in the community. An app with a weekly schedule of happenings would be a beneficial collaboration and advertising tool for organizations within the neighborhood. Sharing such information on a combined platform can reach expanded audiences, increasing possible visitorship and participation across the greater community.

## 05.4

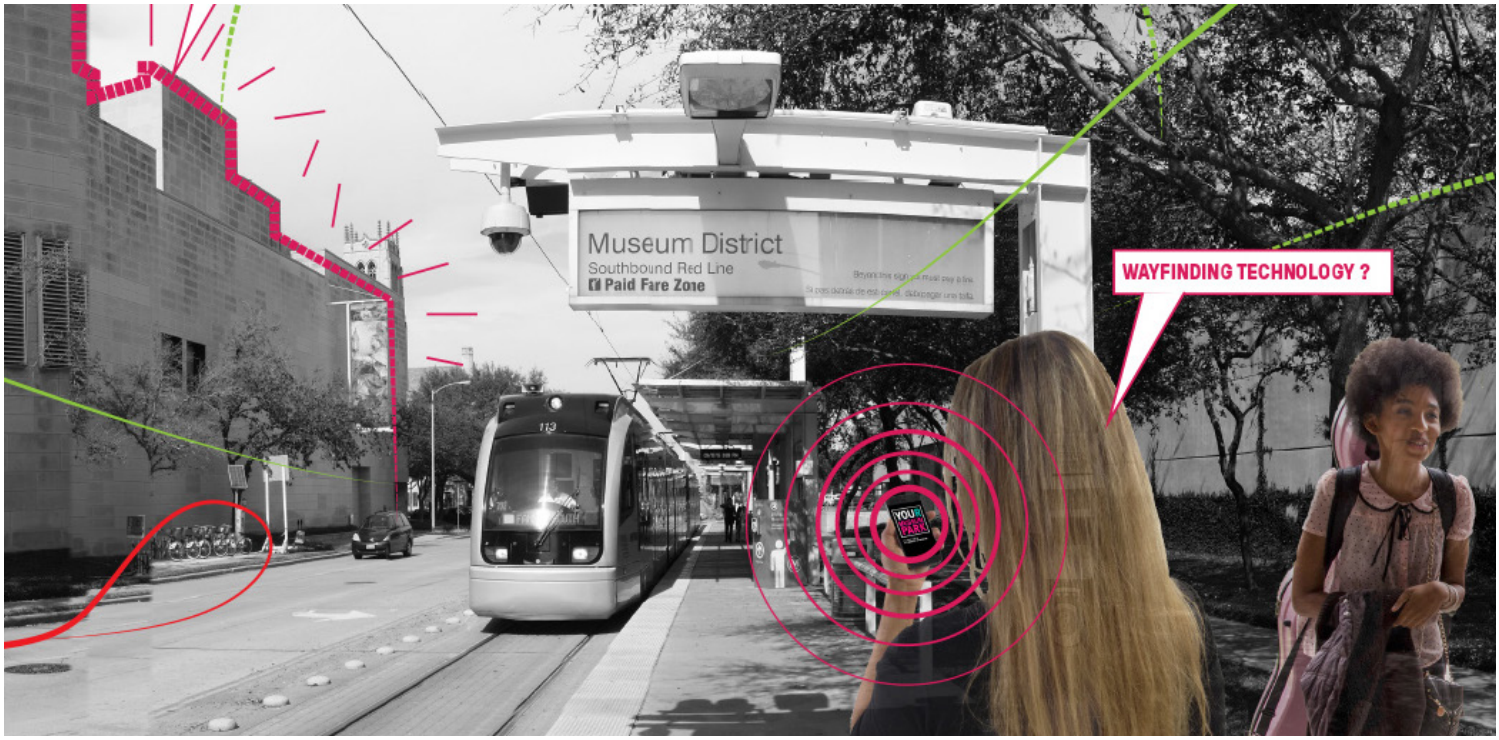
### "WALKING GUIDE (MAP) TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD" INITIATIVE

Marketing the neighborhood with print collateral in a form of a map/ pocket-size guidebook can help support other initiatives proposed in the plan, such as the Culture Trail in particular. Documenting neighborhood landmarks and tying them together with suggested routes, encourages discovery beyond a visitors intended destination. Highlighting history, architecture, and cultural flair affirms this neighborhood's commitment to artful and healthy living.

## 05.5

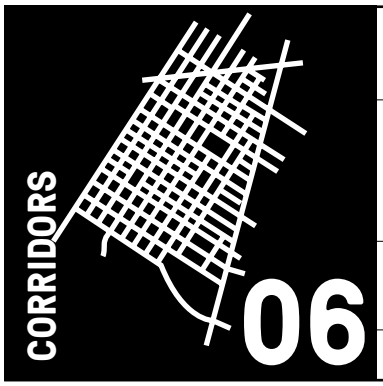
### SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE DESIGN

Museum Park has both a Super Neighborhood site and a Neighborhood Association Site. Gaining more web-users and more association members is a target. More interactive elements, especially those which could promote face-to-face meetings, should be introduced for this purpose. To date, media outlets like "Nextdoor", a social network defined by geography, allows neighbors to talk to one another. Museum Park's discussion via the platform is active, however the conversation is not robust. Learning from this template, elements can be incorporated into Museum Parks web presence for higher traffic and community contribution.




WAYFINDING APP/ VIRTUAL GUIDE TO THE AREA OPPORTUNITY ILLUSTRATION

MARKETING PRINT COLLATERAL EXAMPLE




# GREEN GRID

Develop area landscapes as a robust green network that extends the park character and benefits into the city.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, TXDOT, METRO, HSE, MD, MPSN, MPNA, MDA, PO

FUNDING*: HSE, TXDOT, HPARD

IMPLEMENTER*: COH, TXDOT, METRO, HSE, MD, MPSN, PO

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## MUSEUM PARK A GREEN DISTRICT

By far, the most notable feature of the neighborhood is its proximity to Hermann Park and "park extensions" into the neighborhood via wide landscaped esplanades. Making the transition from neighborhood to park even more seamless and extending the benefits of urban nature deeper into the city, the Study proposes a comprehensive greening plan for the neighborhood streets. Public infrastructure is integrated with habitat for improved urban bio-diversity. Interconnected, these green corridors form an entire network of beneficial landscapes to create a premier green urban district.

## 06.1

### NEIGHBORHOOD GREEN CORRIDOR DESIGNATION: IMMEDIATE DESIGNATION FOR MAIN, ALMEDA, FUTURE DESIGNATION FOR SOUTHMORE, BLODGETT, WHEELER, BINZ

Major street corridors connect Museum Park to its neighbors in all cardinal directions. The Green Grid strategy promotes the idea of a connected system of urban streetscapes utilizing the City of Houston's existing Green Corridor Ordinance by building partnerships with organizations like Midtown and Houston Southeast Districts, Trees for Houston, private property owners, and community groups. Starting with the two Study Area streets that are eligible under the current ordinance - Main Street and Almeda Road - gaining Green Corridor status will provide a partnering platform to infill and plant new street trees, preserve street trees on private property (in building setback areas) from removal and leverage the cachet of "being on the Green Corridor" to build special identity and value. Extending the Green Corridors to other, east/west streets such as Wheeler, Blodgett, Southmore, and Binz - will require changes to the current ordinance, which will provide the means to create a green tapestry of urban streets up to a mile or more in length and re-affirm the vitality of connected and continuous communities.

## 06.2

### BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES IN ESPLANADES ON CRAWFORD, CAROLINE, CALUMET, AND SOUTHMORE

Urban environments are disrupted ecologies which often require intensive resources to sustain themselves. Museum Park's esplanades provide an excellent canvas to demonstrate the visual, social, environmental, and economic returns available from beneficial landscape practices. While protecting the existing trees, it is recommended to infill the medians with native plants (that will thrive in tough conditions, provide food/habitat, conserve water use, and filter and absorb stormwater run-off). Use of turf should be reduced to the outer edges of the medians. This technique reduces energy consumed from maintenance yet provides a clean offset that prevents plants from spilling into the roadway. (Refer to the beneficial landscapes toolkit and plant palette for concept combinations on p.54-p.57)

## 06.3

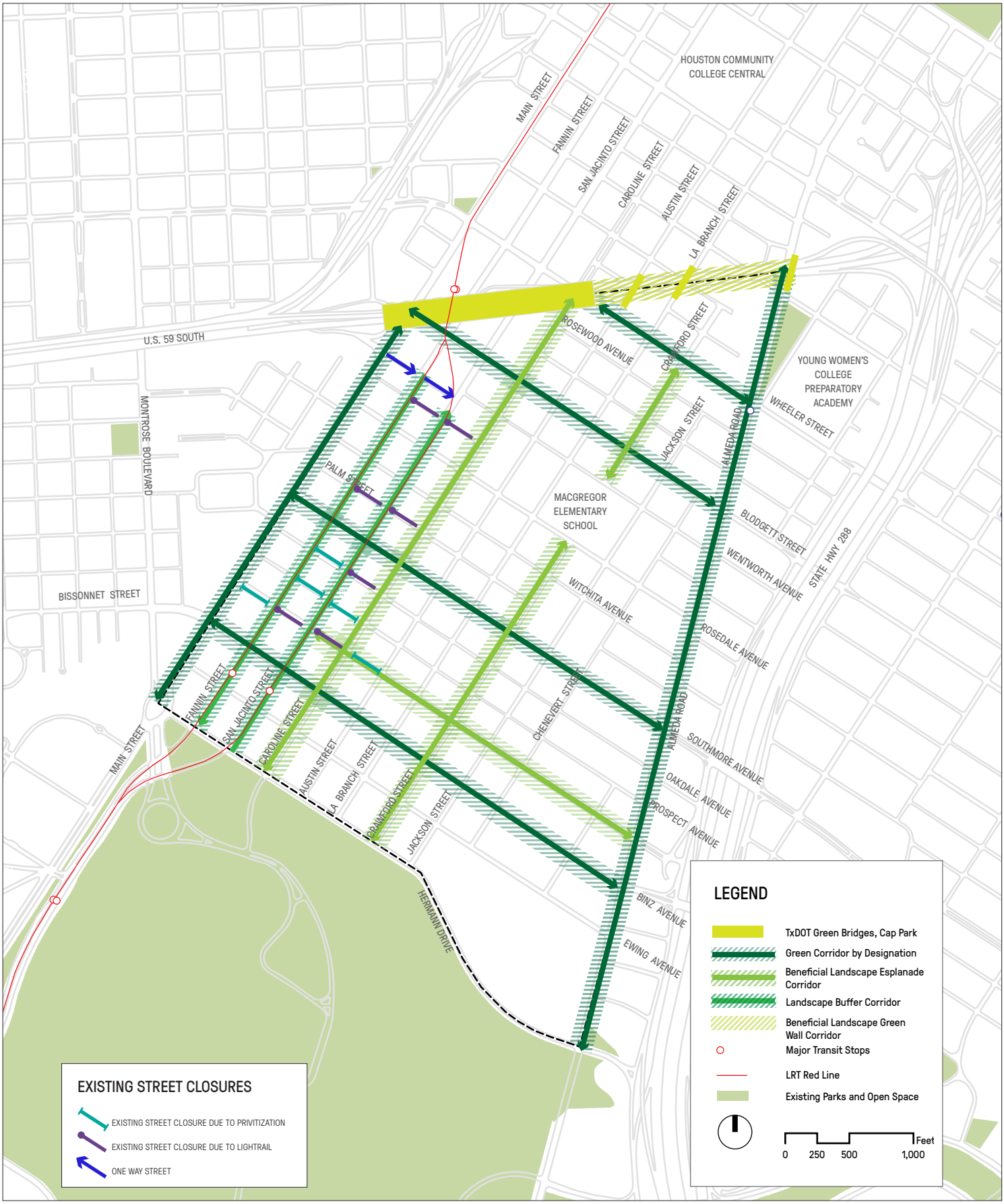
### GREEN BUFFER ISLANDS ON SAN JACINTO AND FANNIN

This Study's proposal to establish narrow buffers between light rail and vehicular lanes on Fannin and San Jacinto Streets brings with it an opportunity to extend the successful landscape beautification program on Main Street. Houston Southeast, Museum Park Neighborhood Association, and St. Paul's Methodist Church collaborated on 'Main Street Blooms', a well-received initiative that brought resilient Drift roses to the corridor's esplanade via City's "Adopt-an-Esplanade Program". Based on the continued success of the program, similar plantings are recommended for San Jacinto and Fannin Streets. Conditions on these corridors are comparable to Main Street. High exposure to sunlight, narrow planting areas, traffic volumes, and driver speed are all design considerations. Landscaping along these transit corridors will announce the character of a world-class arts district in a beautiful park setting, and create a worthy gateway into the cultural heart of the City.

## 06.4

### US-59 BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES ALONG GREEN BRIDGES AND VERTICAL WALL PLANTING

Beneficial Landscapes were directed through a 1994 Memo from President Clinton for the heads of Executive Departments and Agencies. TxDOT's improvement plan at US 59 can align with this imperative by providing hardy vines and perennials alongside freeway barriers, as well as planter boxes across pedestrian bridges that specifically cater to pollinators. If suitably engineered, insets for substantial trees on bridges can also provide shade cover and refuge. It is a preference of the community that the new bridges across US 59 become "green gateways" into Museum Park.




GREEN NETWORK STRATEGIES MAP

# BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES TOOLKIT

As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, beneficial landscaping enables us to avoid or lessen negative effects of urbanization while meeting our needs for function, beauty, and many other benefits. This includes:

- **Environmental benefits** - The health of our air, water, and land are protected through pollution prevention; solid waste reduction; energy conservation; water conservation; ecological restoration; and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement.
- **Economic benefits** - We save time and money for more enjoyable pursuits when we prevent pollution, use less landfill space, conserve energy and water, maintain and restore ecological integrity, and reduce the need to purchase fossil fuels, lawn chemicals, and power maintenance equipment.
- **Aesthetic benefits** - Our native flora is naturally beautiful and pleasing to the senses, and our native wildlife species are adapted to and dependent upon it for food, cover, and shelter. This means we enjoy more wildlife near our homes and workplaces.

Beneficial landscaping, sometimes referred to as "natural" or "native landscaping" (though it is more than that), contains a number of principles that focus on meeting our needs and sense of beauty while maintaining or restoring healthy natural ecosystems.

Some of these principles include:

- Select regionally native plants to form the foundation of the landscape.
- Reduce the use of turf. Instead, install woodland, meadow or other natural plantings.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides. Practice organic gardening or integrated pest management. Cooperative extension agents can help with natural alternatives to pesticides.
- Compost and mulch onsite to eliminate solid waste, control weeds, restore nutrients and organic matter to your soil, and reduce or eliminate the need for fertilizer and herbicide applications.
- Practice soil and water conservation. If irrigation is used, use drip irrigation or other water conserving techniques, and water in the early morning or evening hours.
- Create additional wildlife habitat to help compensate for land lost to urban/suburban development.

Beneficial landscapes, as proposed in this Study, can be edible, shade providing, drought tolerant, pollinator promoting, avian habitat supporting, wetland friendly, while bringing seasonal beauty at the same time. The diagram below illustrates how esplanades can maximize each benefit through plant material and its arrangement. Benefits can be combined and strategies can differ by corridor. Consistency will be achieved through a curated list of plant selections.

## BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPE TYPES

Fruiting trees, edible leaves, herbs, and even vegetables can be grown in the streetscape and medians. Every plant on this list is edible.

**EDIBLE**

Rich with oaks, elms, pecans, and pines. The canopy cover yields ideal growing conditions for Yaupons, Wax Myrtle, and Viburnums with an understory tolerating shaded conditions. Can be ideal for a variety of urban wildlife.

**SHADE**

Plants of this typology require little water once established. Most plants will require full sun, similar to the native prairies this typology mimics.

**DROUGHT TOLERANT**

This garden emphasizes variety of pollen-heavy perennials and host plants.

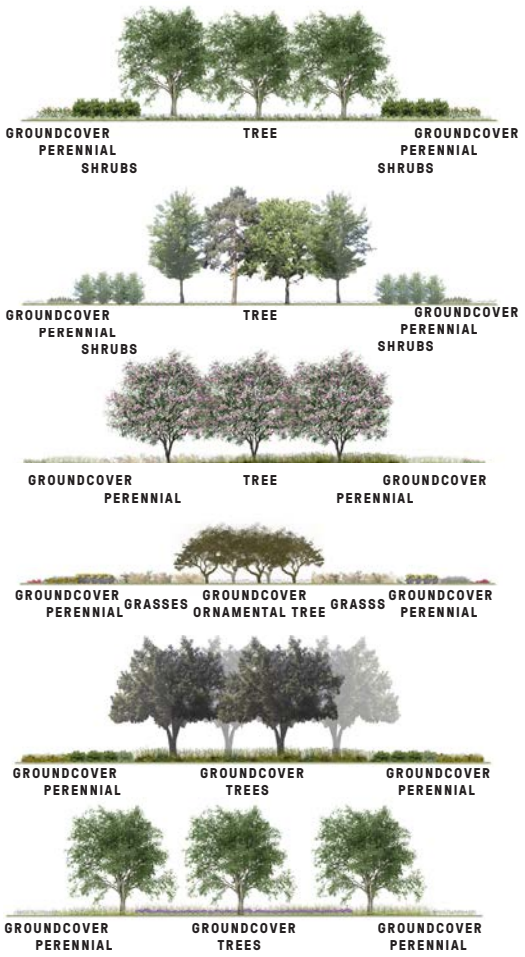
**POLLINATOR**

Promotes plants that attract birds and other wildlife. The recommended natives provide food and habitat. Plant arrangement should be staggered, mimicking conditions in nature that allow for perching, nesting, and feeding.

**AVIAN**

Plants native to the Gulf Coast region are desirable in the neighborhood. These trees are tolerant of wet conditions and often mitigate, or clean, storm-water.

**WETLAND**



## PLANT SELECTION

Using either specific or combined models of Beneficial Landscape Types (defined in the diagram on p.54), a plant palette can be assembled for each of the esplanades. The chart on this page identifies plant species, by their trophic levels, that could work well in the Study Area. Each color ring around the plant image categorizes the species by their ecological benefits; edible, shade, drought tolerant, pollinators, avian and wetland (i.e. Pecans are edible, shade loving/providing, avian supporting, and wetland tolerant).

## ESPLANADE DESIGN

As stated by the Adopt-An-Esplanade Beautification and Planting Guide, the Adopt-An-Esplanade program is designed to bring Houston neighborhoods together in committed, collaborative partnerships to improve and maintain city esplanades. Houston Parks and Recreation Department administers the program and Keep Houston Beautiful provides voluneer coordination, community education, training, planning assistance, and loans tools and equipments for beautification and cleanup projects.

Before planting, Adopt-An-Esplanade advises that the organization determine the cost and feasibility of an irrigation system or consider an alternate watering method. Irrigation installation costs are the responsibility of the sponsoring organization. The City of Houston will pay for water usage of approved, automatic irrigation systems.

### "Adopt-An-Esplanade" Program Process

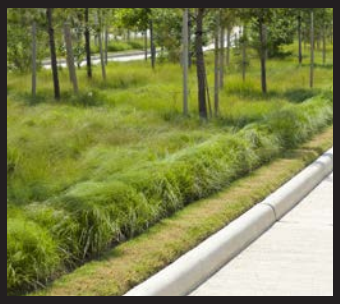
1. Select Planning Committee
2. Select Site
3. Request / Review Adopt-An-Esplanade Guide
4. Make Application to Adopt-An-Esplanade
5. Meet with an Adopt-An-Esplanade Coordinator
6. Recruit Sponsors and Community Partners
7. Create a Project Timeline
8. Obtain Engineered Street Drawings
9. Consult a Landscape Architect
10. Prepare a Budget
11. Produce Landscape and Irrigation Plan Drawings
12. Submit Plan Drawings and Application for Donating an Irrigation System Form for Review and Approval
13. Make Application for Water Meter
14. Apply for Permits
15. Locate Underground Utilities
16. Install Water Meter and Backflow Preventer
17. Install Irrigation
18. Set Dates to Prepare Beds and Plant Esplanade
19. Mobilize Volunteers
20. Select Plants and Schedule Delivery
21. Plant Esplanade
22. Final Inspection
23. Final Acceptance of Project
24. Maintain It

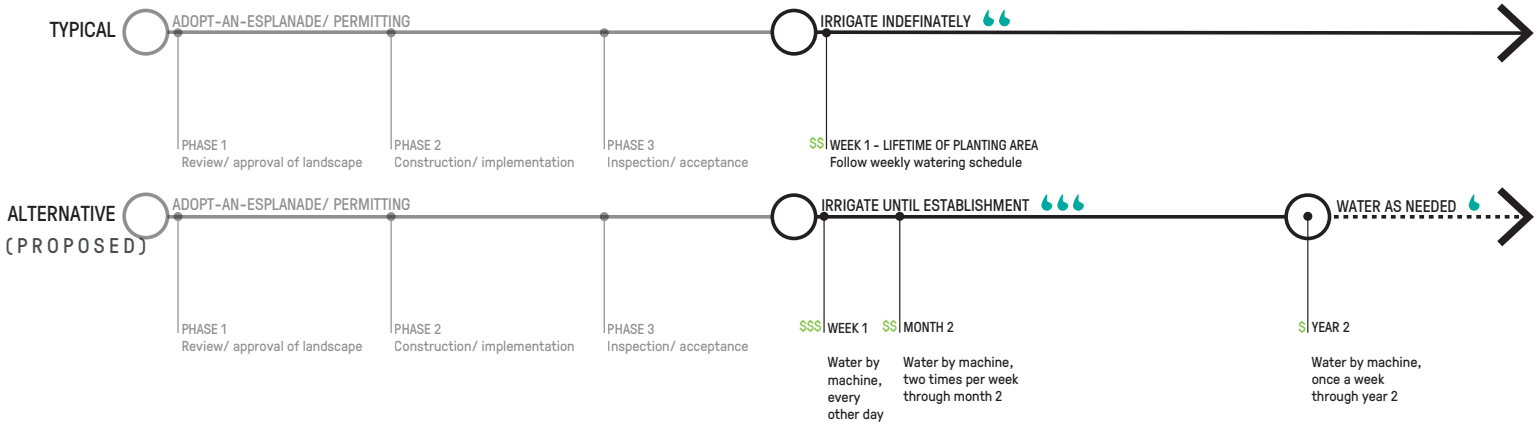
## BEST PRACTICES

A maintenance example from a successful landscape design project in suburban Houston, explained below, may serve as an acceptable model of how to handle transitioning to a new landscape type.

*After the establishment period, it will take three to five years before each esplanade can self-sustain. At that point, occasional maintenance is required, as outlined below.*

- *Each median design is to be maintained with a bermuda mow strip at back of curb*
- *Ongoing eradication and manual removal of undesirable species (typically anything larger than 30" tall)*
- *Tall grass seed mix should be managed for maximum foliage and seed production*
- *Non-natives and invasive plants should be removed by hand or killed with highly controlled weed wick (no spraying allowed)*
- *Tall grasses shall be fertilized once a year with liquid applied compost tea*
- *Mowing should occur in late winter to avoid wild flower damage, with twice a year mowing (up to four times per year)*






ADOPT-AN-ESPLANADE TYPICAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM AND PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

## Esplanade Maintenance

Adoption of beneficial landscape practices in Museum Park will require non-standard maintenance regimes at the esplanades. Successful end-cap gardens planted by the neighborhood volunteers demonstrate feasibility of such landscapes in the absence of installed irrigation. While long-term irrigation is contradictory to goals of beneficial landscaping, new landscaping on a substantial scale will require a period of irrigation to support its successful establishment. After that initial period, watering can occur on a much more infrequent basis. Based on the new landscaping planned extent, irrigation strategies will be studied to accommodate the design.

## Plant Distribution

Swaths of native grass/wildflower areas and natural tree zones with understory are recommended for Museum Park. Three to seven species/mixes are recommended per median depending on the length and width of the planting areas. Perennial, groundcover, grass, and annual groupings should be generous and no less than 50 square feet for maximum aesthetic impact. Native grasses should be planted at a fifteen foot minimum width. Plant species should graduate heights from smallest at the edges to tallest in the center of the median.

## Seasonality

Variety throughout the year creates a dynamic and intriguing landscape. Profuse seasonal blooms of wildflowers are usually associated with tall grasses. The shift in seasons will bring on a color change from greens and tans to yellows and browns. In winter windblown grasses still provide a striking appearance and texture in the landscape. Shrubs like the Yaupon Holly provide food for song and game birds. The showy red berries are prominent in the winter.

An example of the possible plant list for Museum Park provided in this recommendation should be vetted with the community during a detailed design of the esplanades. The recommended plants for Museum Park should aim to maximize landscape benefits while contributing positively to the overall neighborhood character.

Bloom/berry/leaf color

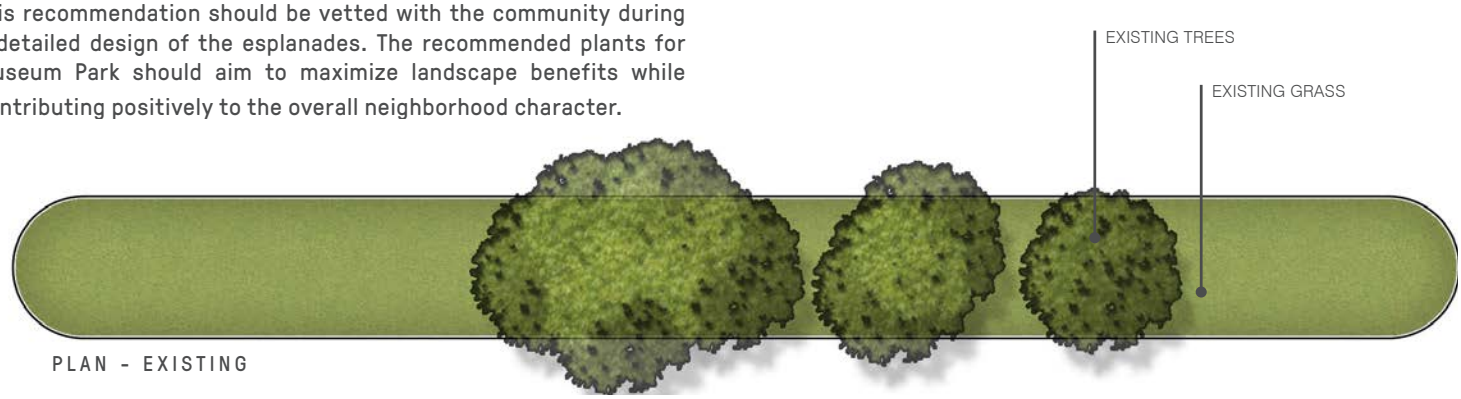
GROUNDCOVER
- ASIAN JASMINE
- LANTANA
- SALVIA

PERENNIALS
- BLACKEYED SUSAN
- IRIS
- PURPLE CONEFLOWER
- ROSEMARY
- TURKSCAP

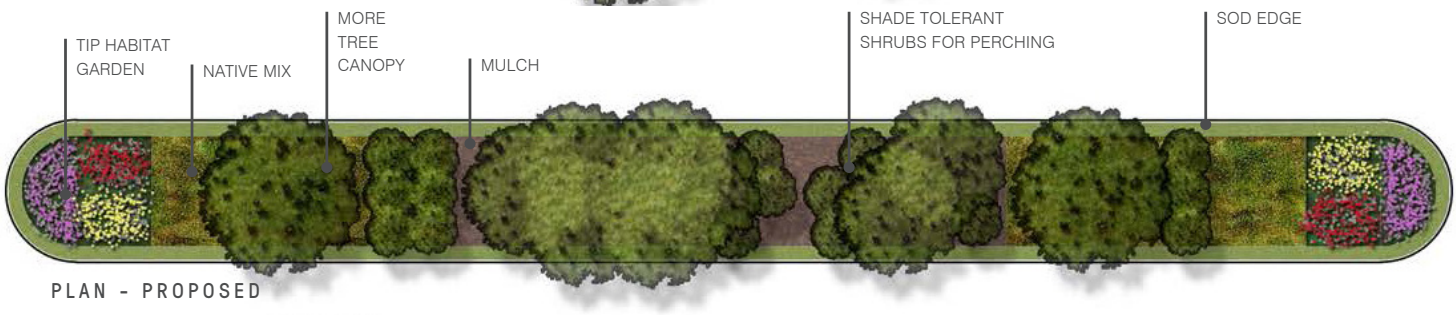
SHRUBS
- BAY LAUREL
- CORALBERRY
- KNOCKOUT ROSES

ORNAMENTAL TREES
- POSSUMHAW
- RED BUD

TREES
- POND CYPRESS
- RED MAPLE
- SWEETGUM




PLAN - EXISTING




PLAN - PROPOSED

# CULTURE TRAIL

Designate an east-west walking/biking trail that connects the Museum of Fine Arts campus with Hermann Park and Almeda Corridor via Museum Park neighborhood.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS: COH, METRO, HSE, MD, MMD, MPSN, MDA, HPC,PO

FUNDING: PARTNERS, GRANTS

IMPLEMENTER: COH, HSE, MD, MMD, HPC, PBD

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## CONNECTING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY WITH A TRAIL

The idea of a Culture Trail is an organic response to the way cultural institutions, community facilities and parks are distributed in the area. The clear need to string them together on a path has been expressed by the community and is important from the standpoint of the City capitalizing on this great set of cultural and community assets, as twin strategies for multi-modal mobility and economic development in the area.

The idea behind the Trail is to connect parks-to-parks, museums-to-museums, and museums-to-parks, making Museum Park Neighborhood play a central role in connecting Houston culture and Houston urban nature, and extending the values of a healthy urban lifestyle and preservation of history, culture, and habitat towards its neighbors. In addition to being a very logical strategy of linking successful destinations, by making an important East-West gesture, the Trail strengthens connectivity among different communities.

Museum District facilities on one end of the trail will be better connected to the core campus around the MFAH, and the commercial success of many eateries along the trail will be supported by establishing a mental connection between the Binz Street restaurant row and Almeda Corridor's strings of restaurants and cafes.

The Trail route also connects several sites of labyrinth installations at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Hermann Park Centenninal Gardens, Covenant Baptist Church, and potentially at St. Thomas University. These destinations for worship, community activities and contemplative walking add another layer of significance to the Trail as it weaves an important idea of walkability in the city by elevating the act of walking into a transformative experience.

The Trail is comprised of several distinct Walks, as it crosses various campuses and jurisdictions: MFAH/St. Paul's Walk, Caroline Promenade, Hermann Park Centennial Garden Walk, Crawford Street Outdoor Classroom Walk, and Rosedale/Almeda Walk. While instituting a continuous trail would require a planning effort outside the scope of this Study, the Trail segments within the boundaries of Museum Park play a significant role in forging internal connections among the cultural institutions, commercial corridors and parks vital to the neighborhood's well-being.

## 07.1

### MFAH/ST.PAUL'S WALK AND GATEWAY PASSAGE

Coordinate with the MFAH's new campus expansion over 2017-2019 to bring the Trail through the heart of the institution. Trail may include custom imbedded way finding, upgraded lighting, sidewalks and furnishings. The gateway passage area may add custow crosswalks in addition to the above mentioned improvements.

## 07.2

### HERMANN PARK CENTENNIAL WALK AND HERMANN DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

Create an east-west spine along the edge of the park that accommodates both pedestrians and bicyclists and connects to the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Trail may include dedicated bicycle lane markings, custom imbedded wayfinding, upgraded lighting, sidewalks and furnishings. The gateway passage area may add custow crosswalks in addition to the above mentioned improvements.

## 07.3

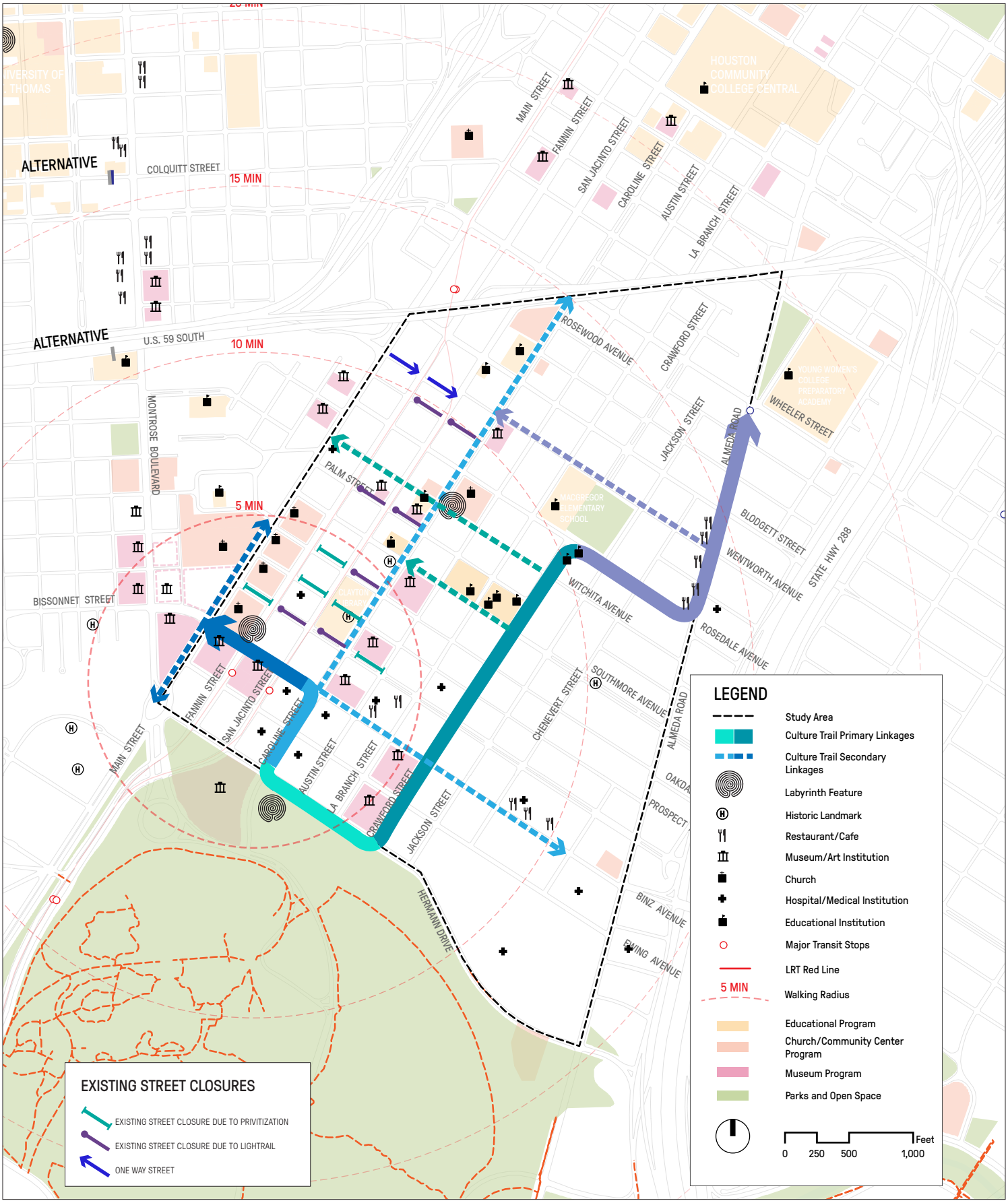
### CRAWFORD OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WALK

Use the Trail to provide comfortable access between Hermann Park and the Museum Park neighborhood connecting to the Health and Children's Museums. Trail may include custom imbedded wayfinding, upgraded lighting, sidewalks and furnishings.

## 07.4

### ROSEDALE ALMEDA WALK

Connect to the growing commercial activity along Almeda, linking it to the neighborhood. Trail may include custom imbedded wayfinding, upgraded lighting, sidewalks and furnishings.

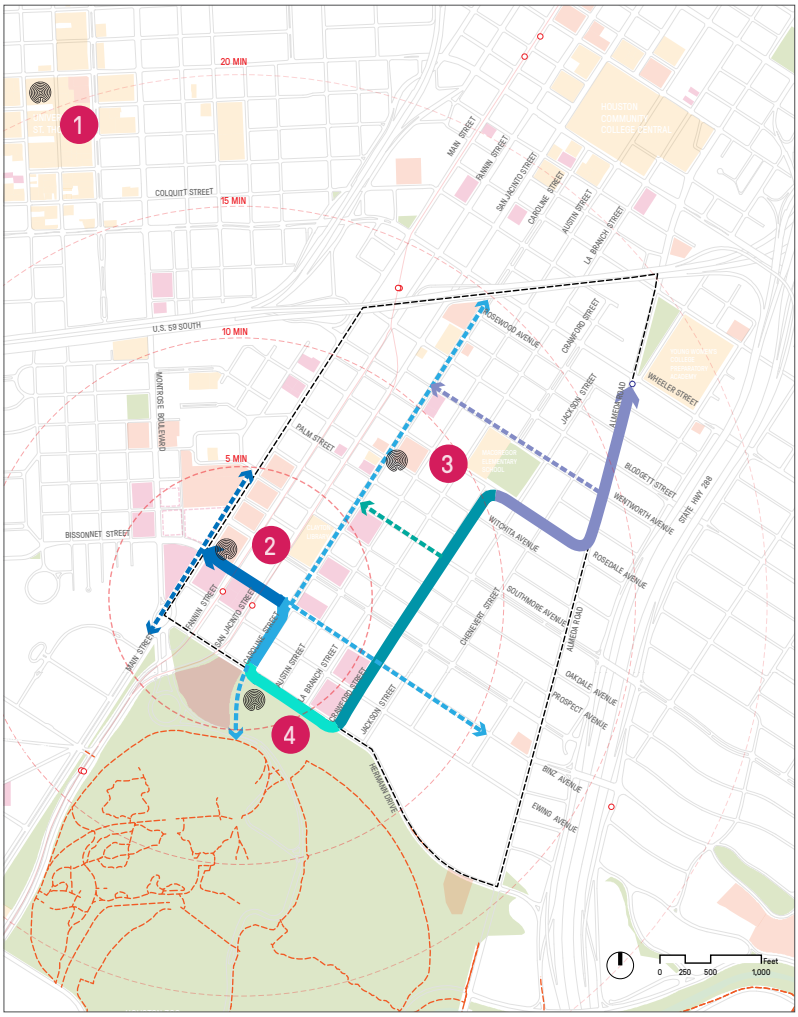



CULTURE TRAIL MAP

## CULTURE TRAIL AS A LABYRINTH EXPERIENCE AT THE SCALE OF A CITY

The area in and around Museum Park has a surprising quantity of labyrinth installations. Labyrinths represent the wholeness and completeness of existence by providing a singular path for meditative reflection; this single path represents the linearity of the universal path of life, and by traversing its steps, the visitor can reflect upon their own life's path. The four labyrinths at St. Thomas University (1), St. Paul's Methodist Church (2), Covenant Baptist Church (3), and McGovern Centennial Gardens spiral hill (4) (not technically a labyrinth but reminiscent of one), provide unique experiences within their distinct contexts, but with a similar spirit. Like a walk through a museum, a garden, or a park, a walk through a labyrinth is an act of transformation, and if the concept of a labyrinth is brought to the scale of the neighborhood, the act of walking through a city can become a transformative experience in its own right, and walkability as a planning goal would acquire a whole new meaning.

In addition to the labyrinths, Museum Park Super Neighborhood is home to other transformative and iconic Houston walks, found in its parks and art institutions. The idea of extending the experience of transformative walking into the very streets of Museum Park corresponds with community's desire to create an interconnected and beautiful public realm that fully utilizes the cultural resources available here at such a high level. If the neighborhood as a whole is viewed as a gallery, a garden, a museum, and a park, it will provide a structure and a foundation for the kind of walkability that goes beyond attaining goals of physical health. A walk through the neighborhood will become an experience of a spiritual and intellectual retreat, fulfilling Museum Park's latent potential.



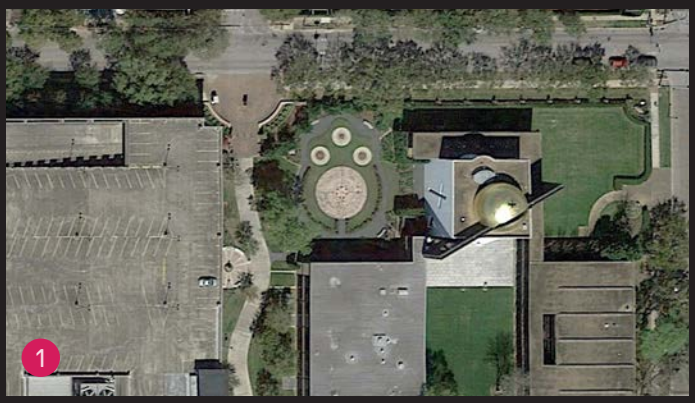

LABYRINTH INSTALLATIONS IN AND AROUND MUSEUM PARK

## LABYRINTHS AROUND MUSEUM PARK

### Labyrinth Of Retreat

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Tucked away within the walls of St. Thomas University at the Chapel of St. Basel, the visitor will find a garden and labyrinth in the context of education.




### Civic Labyrinth

ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH

At the intersection of Main Street and Binz Street, the congregation of St. Paul's gifted the City with a labyrinth in a park-like setting, inviting gathering and introspection.

### Neighborhood Labyrinth

COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH

Nestled away amongst the treetops of Caroline Street, the covenant labyrinth provides a contemplative space for meditation.

### Spiral Mound

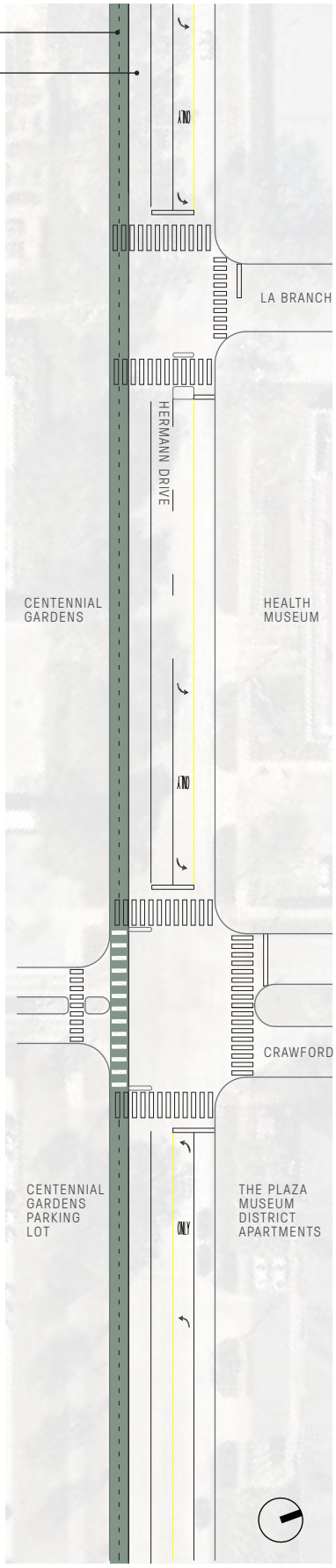
HERMANN PARK MCGOVERN CENTENNIAL GARDENS

As the exclamation point of Centennial Gardens, the Spiral Mound provides visitors with panoramic views, exercise, and new perspective on the city.

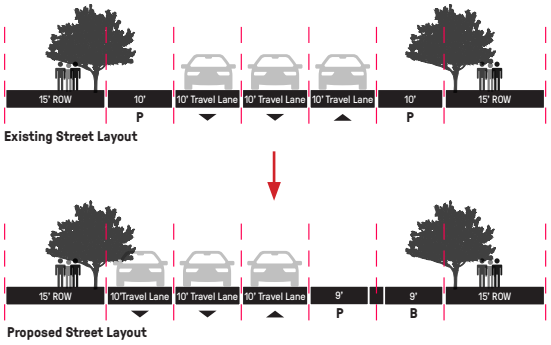
# 07.2

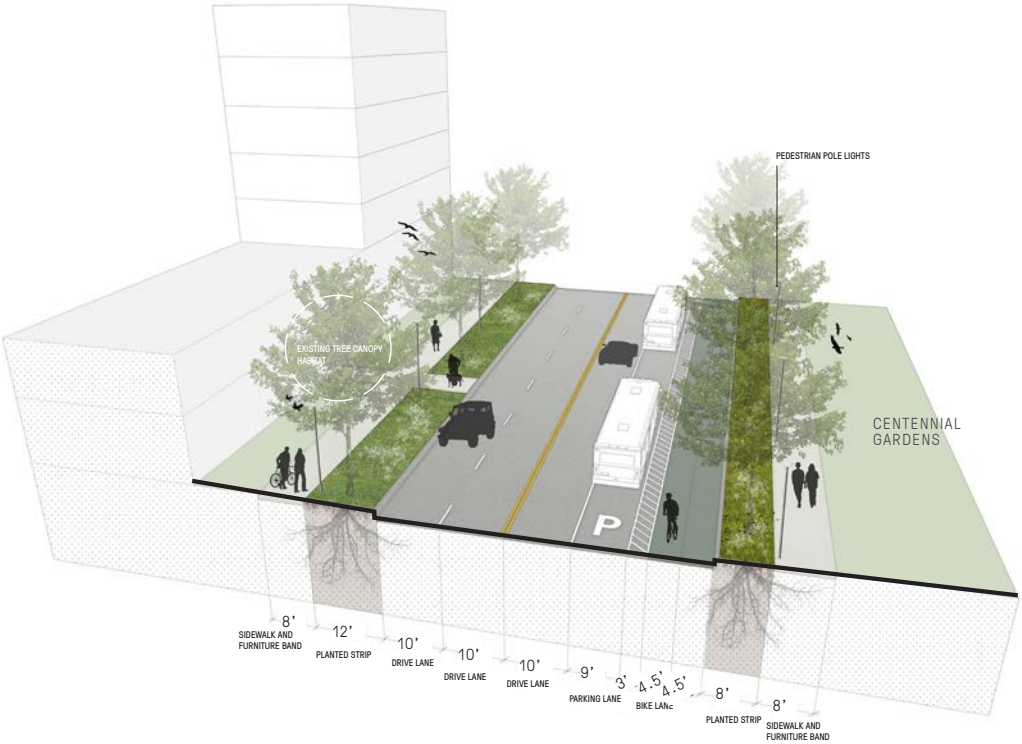
## HERMANN PARK CENTENNIAL WALK AND HERMANN DRIVE IMPROVEMENTS

The proposal creates an east-west spine along the edge of the park that accommodates both pedestrians and bicyclists and connects to the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Two-way bicycle facility is buffered by a parking lane along the southern side of Hermann Drive. The number of driving lanes can be reduced from 4 to 2 with left-turn lanes for access to Hermann Park and museums at key intersections such as Caroline, La Branch, and Crawford Streets. Parking for buses could be prioritized on Hermann between Caroline and Main Street. During events, street capacity would be extended to accommodate heavier vehicular traffic.




### HERMANN DRIVE




PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE ENHANCEMENTS ALONG HERMANN DRIVE

## PRECEDENTS

### Prospect Park

A 2-way bike path installed along Prospect Park West provides a designated space for bicyclists. The bike path is along the park-side of the street, is buffered from vehicle traffic by a parking lane and a striped buffer, and provides pedestrian refuge islands. Since implementation, weekday biking has nearly tripled, weekend biking has doubled, and overall safety has improved with decreased speeding and fewer crashes while accommodating an increase in the number of bikes and vehicles using the corridor.

PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, NY

### The Indianapolis Cultural Trail

The trail is an 8-mile bike and pedestrian path that connects neighborhoods, cultural districts, and entertainment amenities. The trail was intended to provide a connection between people, culture, art, and healthy living and also serves as a linear park with several public art features throughout the trail. The Cultural Trail was funded through a public-private partnership and has been a stimulus for private investment in the downtown area. The trail is separated from vehicle traffic, includes bike share stations, and receives significant daily usage from people biking and walking.

INDIANAPOLIS CULTURAL TRAIL, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

INDIANAPOLIS CULTURAL TRAIL, INDIANAPOLIS, IN

IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AT HERMANN DRIVE AND CRAWFORD

CORRIDORS

08

# AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL, BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK

Develop a comprehensive bicycle trail network based on COH Bike Plan, with particular focus on regional connectivity, prioritizing north-south regional connection to Buffalo Bayou via Downtown and HCC campus.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MD, MPSN, MDA, PBD
FUNDING*: TRANSPORTATION GRANTS, PARTNERS
IMPLEMENTER*: COH, METRO, HSE, MD, MPSN, HPC

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

Bicycling is a healthy and affordable opportunity for commuting, traveling and recreation, and is something that is important to the residents of Museum Park and the region as a whole. Houston has low rates of commuting by bicycle, high crash rates and an incomplete network of bicycle infrastructure. These concerns have led City officials to set into motion the Houston Bike Plan, a comprehensive long-term strategy to address bicycle infrastructure, programming and policy. Among other things, the Plan has set out to improve safety, provide access to more people, increase ridership and build a more robust bicycle network.

Museum Park has an incredibly limited bicycle network, consisting of only three short bikeways, despite the fact that the area is dense, home to many destinations, is adjacent to Hermann Park and residents commute to work by bike at a rate three times higher than the city as a whole. The recommendations for the Study Area build upon the limited bicycle infrastructure currently in place, input from the community and stakeholders, and recommendations from other studies, including the Houston Bike Plan. The map on the following page shows the proposed bicycle numbered network and is described below.

## NORTH-SOUTH TRAILS

### 08.1
### LA BRANCH CONNECTION TO MIDTOWN

La Branch Street is located along the center of Museum Park and is an undivided roadway that currently has one travel lane and parking lane in each direction. A relatively low-cost opportunity is to restripe one of the two parking lanes on the street as a high-comfort bike lane. The La Branch bike lane would be southbound, completing the north-south spine of the bikeway network when coupled with Austin.

### 08.2
### AUSTIN CONNECTION TO BAYOU

Very similar to La Branch Street, Austin Street may also be restriped to have a high comfort bike lane. The Austin bike lane would be northbound, reaching Midtown, and ultimately headed towards Downtown and Buffalo Bayou.

## EAST-WEST TRAILS

### 08.3
### BLODGETT CORRIDOR

Blodgett Street is a low-volume street that is recommended to be treated as a neighborhood bikeway. The route would reach eastward towards TSU and UH, connecting the universities, Third Ward and Museum Park to Wheeler Station Transit Center.

### 08.4
### SOUTHMORE CORRIDOR

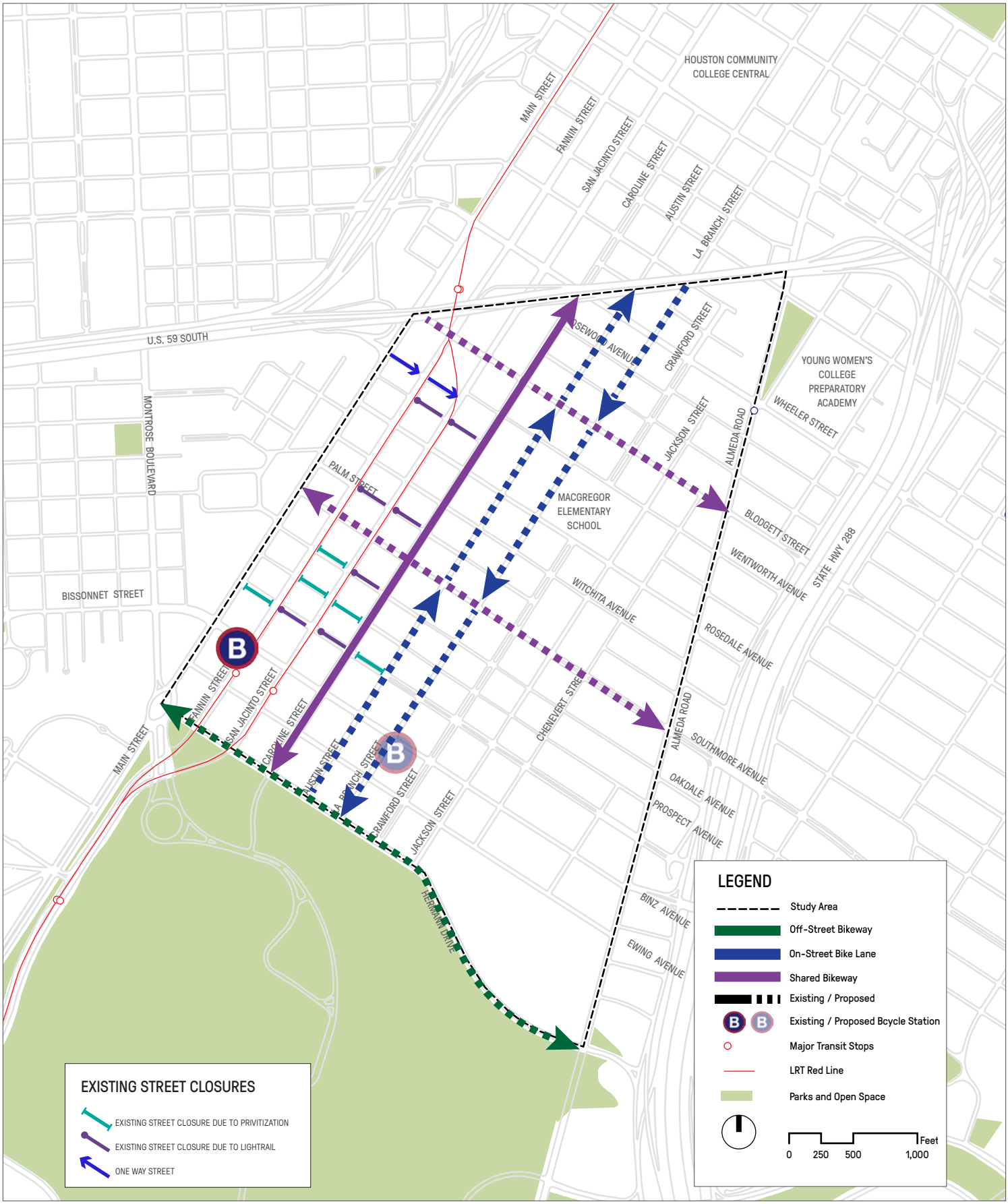
Southmore Boulevard is centrally located in the study area and one of only four streets that crosses State Highway 288. A neighborhood bike route is recommended to cross the study area along Southmore Boulevard, connecting Third Ward to routes that extend towards Montrose and Rice Village.

### 08.5
### BIKESHARE NETWORK

As the Houston "B-cycle" system expands from the current 31 stations, to 100 stations, and beyond, there are opportunities to expand the bike share network to better serve residents and destinations.

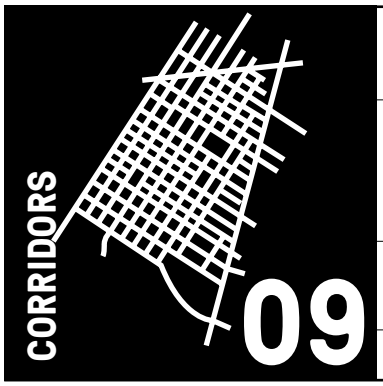
### 08.6
### BIKE PARKING POLICY

Bicycle parking should be made available at as many destination as possible, including museums, restaraunts, retail, apartment complexes and transit stops. A regional map should be created to inform visitors where bicycle parking is located.




BICYCLE FACILITIES NETWORK MAP

BICYCLE LANE AT FUTURE BRIDGE CROSSING INTO MIDTOWN AT AUSTIN




# CAROLINE PROMENADE

The north-south promenade will connect educational, cultural institutions, and places of worship from HCC to Hermann Park with enhanced pedestrian realm, beneficial landscaping and unique placemaking.

PROJECT GOALS: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MD, MPSN, MDA, PBD FUNDING*: PARTNERS, COMMUNITY GRANTS IMPLEMENTER*: COH, HSE, MD, MPSN, PBD

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

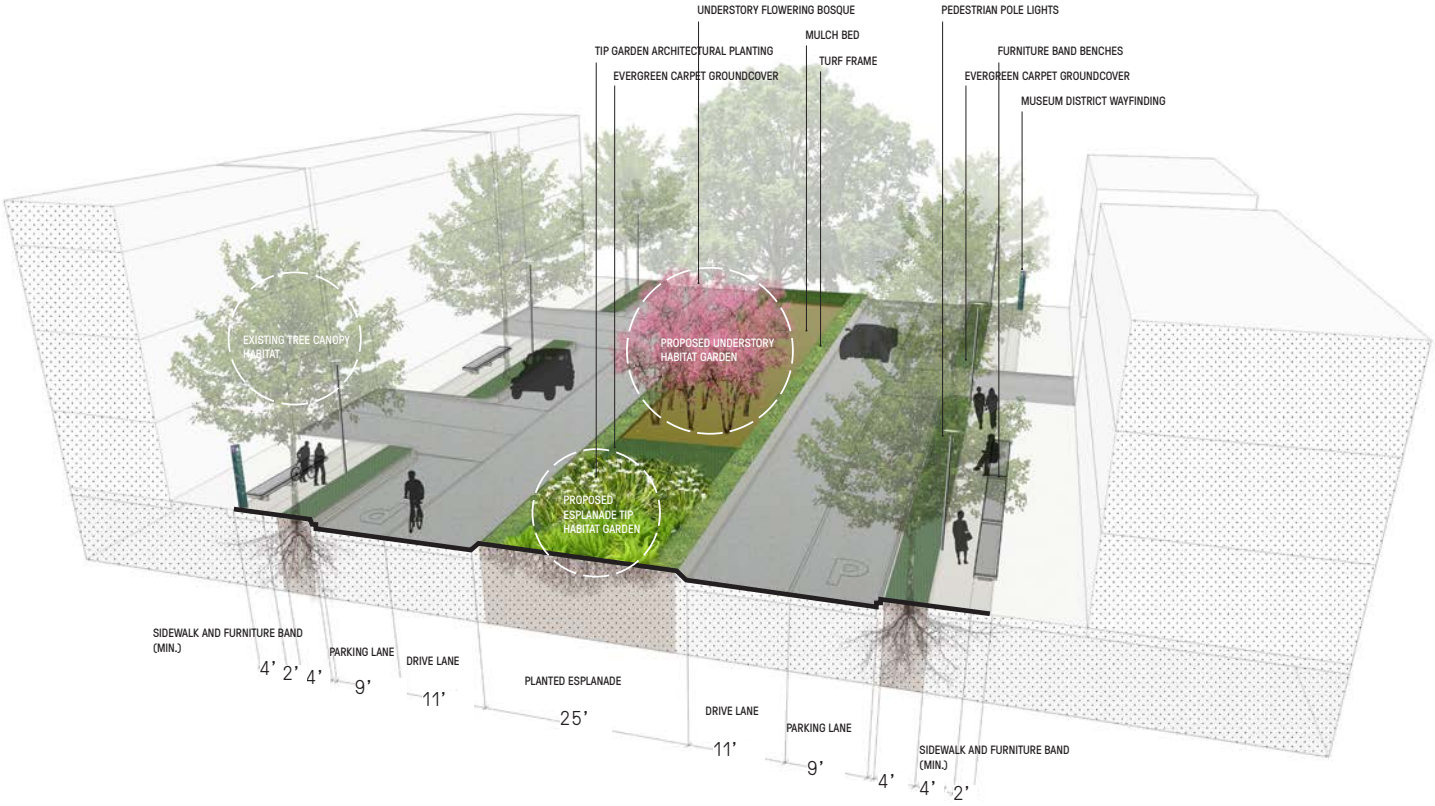
## CAROLINE STREET AS A CULTURAL SPINE

Caroline Street is a signature pedestrian boulevard for the neighborhood, stringing Hermann Park's Centennial Gardens, world-class museums, churches, and an HCC campus along a shaded walk among historic residences. This unique street is central to the Museum District experience, and as such, to the unique Houston experience. It is recommended that improvements to this cultural spine address relocation of overhead utilities, enhanced lighting, improved sidewalks, and an addition of shade, artful wayfinding and pedestrian amenities.

### A Showcase for Beneficial Landscape Practices

Caroline Street's two notable landscape characteristics are the wide esplanade and the mature canopy of trees. As part of the "Green Grid" recommendation of the plan, Caroline can pilot and showcase the introduction of beneficial landscape principles into the City's right-of-way. Such efforts will increase livability for urban inhabitants (including wildlife) by providing refuge, forage, stormwater management, air filtration, and sun protection. Abundant oaks on Caroline (and throughout the neighborhood) are beneficial for birds. As a host to numerous insects, as well being a producer of acorns, this source is attractive to birds for food and nesting. To strengthen these qualities, typologies from the beneficial landscape toolkit can be joined to attract birds and wildlife. Using an example of a 'Shade' and 'Avian Garden' toolkits, plant materials should be arranged to provide the widest variety of perching places, nest sites, and food types. Secluded areas of shrubs, conifers, and mixed plantings are particularly attractive to birds. Spent limbs and trees can remain where they are (unless they're dangerous to people or property). Pollinator-friendly plant material extends landscape habitat benefits further.

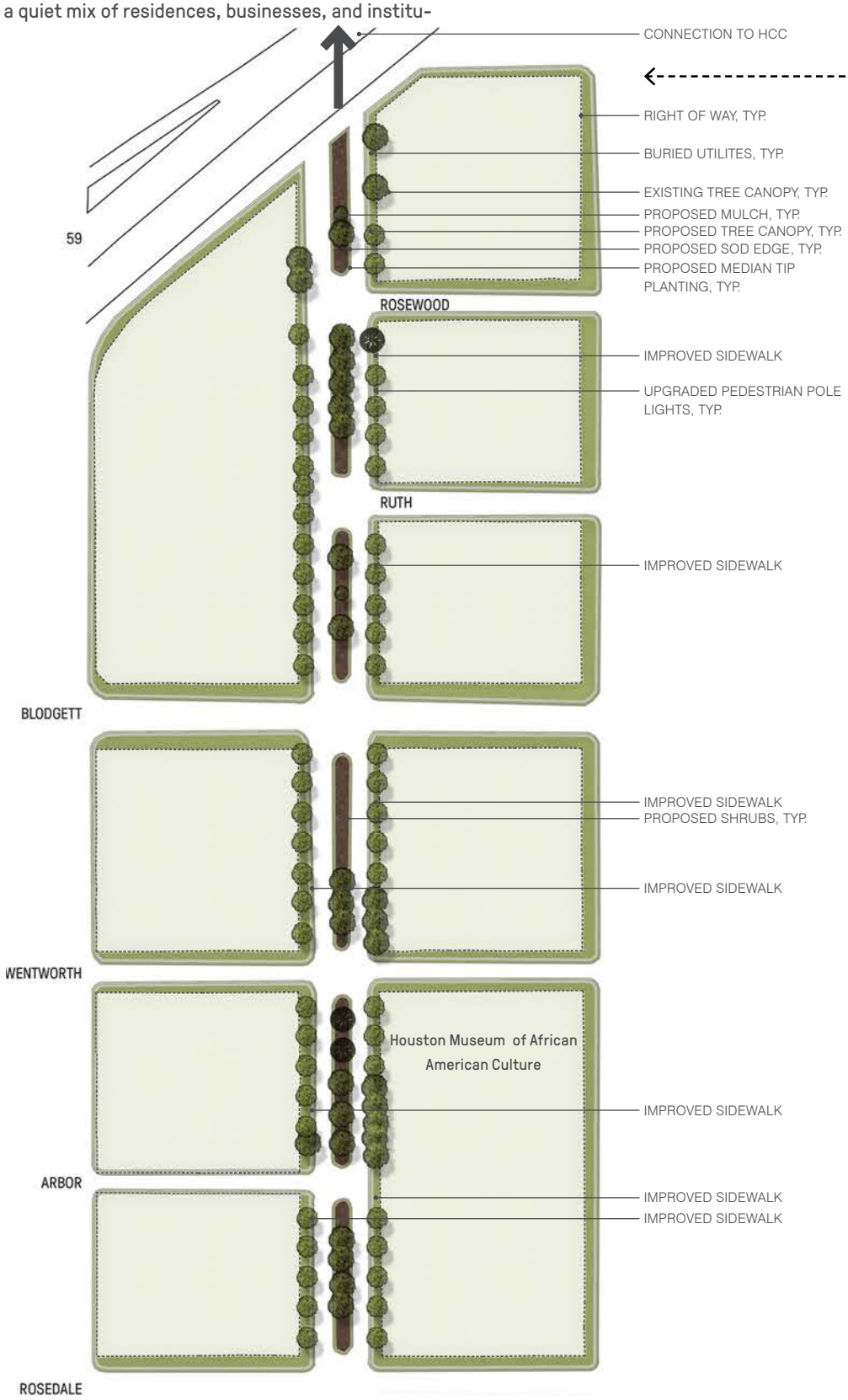
Implementation of beneficial landscapes and pedestrian realm improvements on Caroline Street will rely on public and private investment. Public landscape enhancements will be limited to the right-of-way, primarily through the adopt-an-esplanade program. However, beneficial landscapes may extend into the private sector. The extensive institutional ownership on Caroline provides opportunity for a multitude of partnerships.

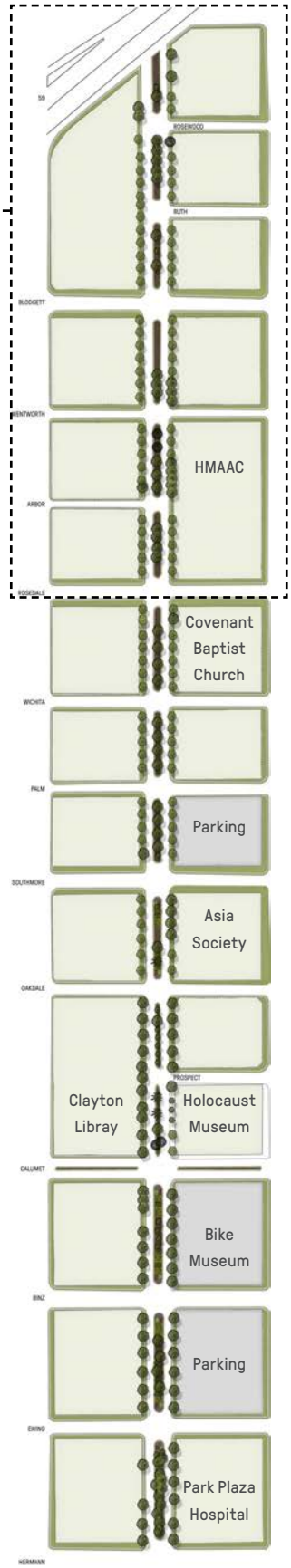


# 09.1

## CAROLINE - A: US 59 to Rosedale

Segment A serves as a gateway to the neighborhood from HCC with a quiet mix of residences, businesses, and institutions.

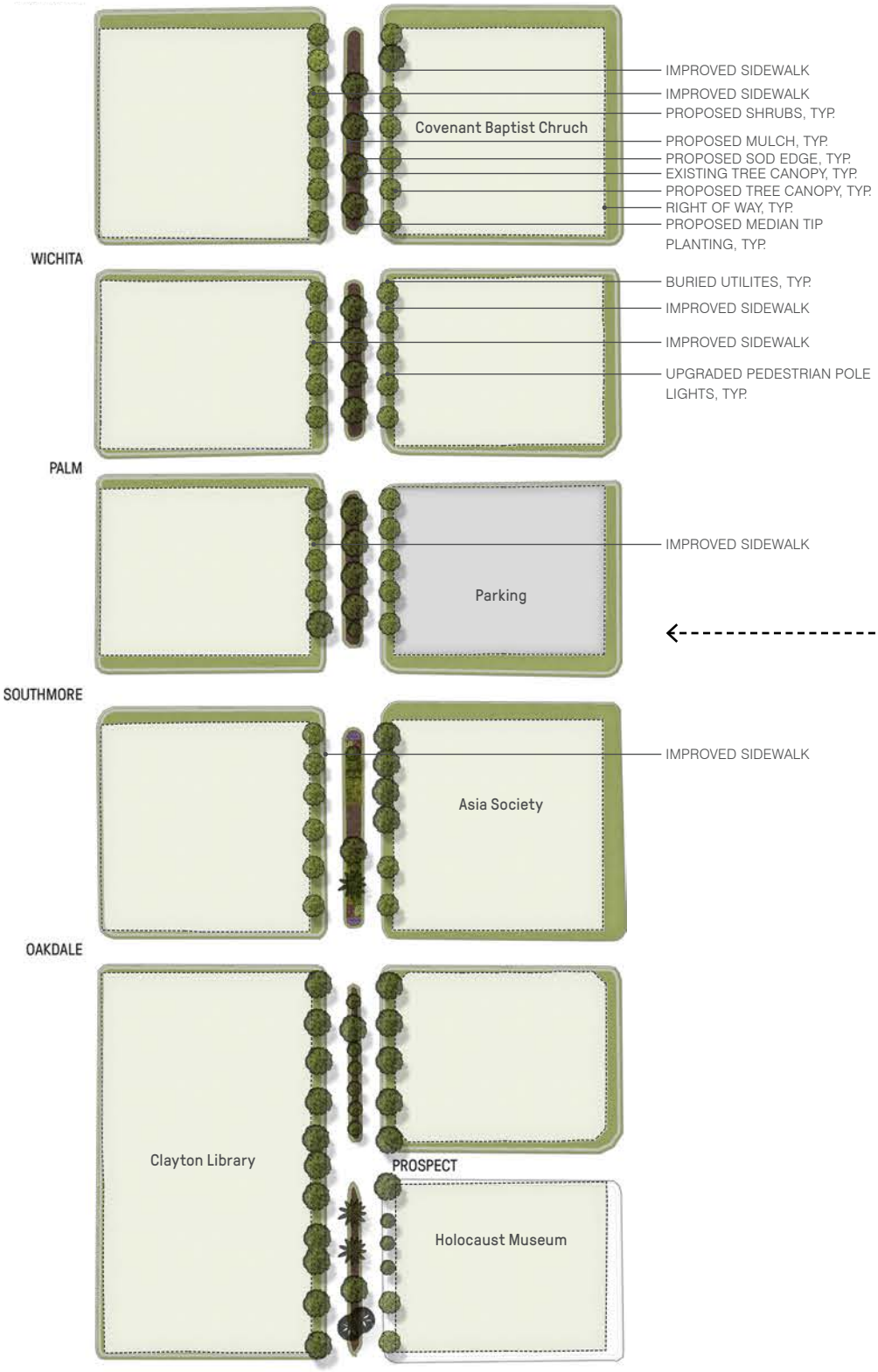


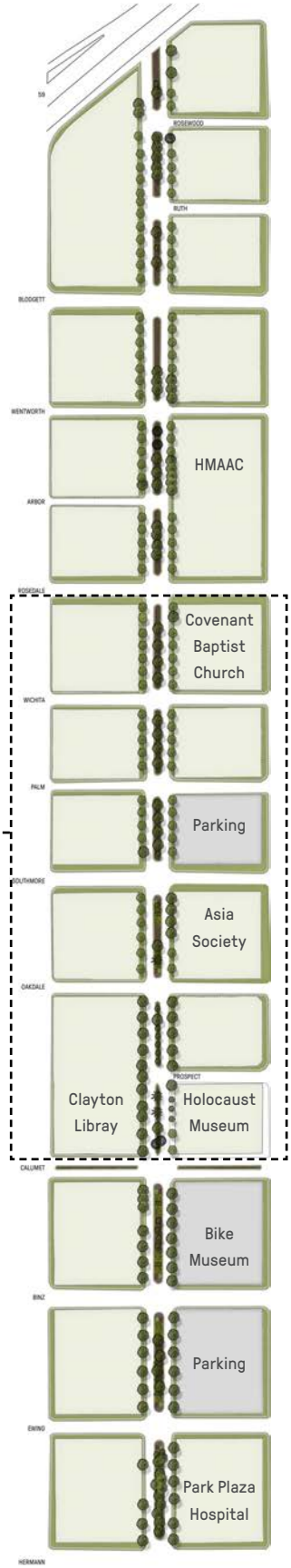



# 09.2

## CAROLINE - B: Rosedale to Calumet

Several large institutions mixed within the residential fabric may serve as opportunities to incorporate low-impact design principles with benefical landscapes.

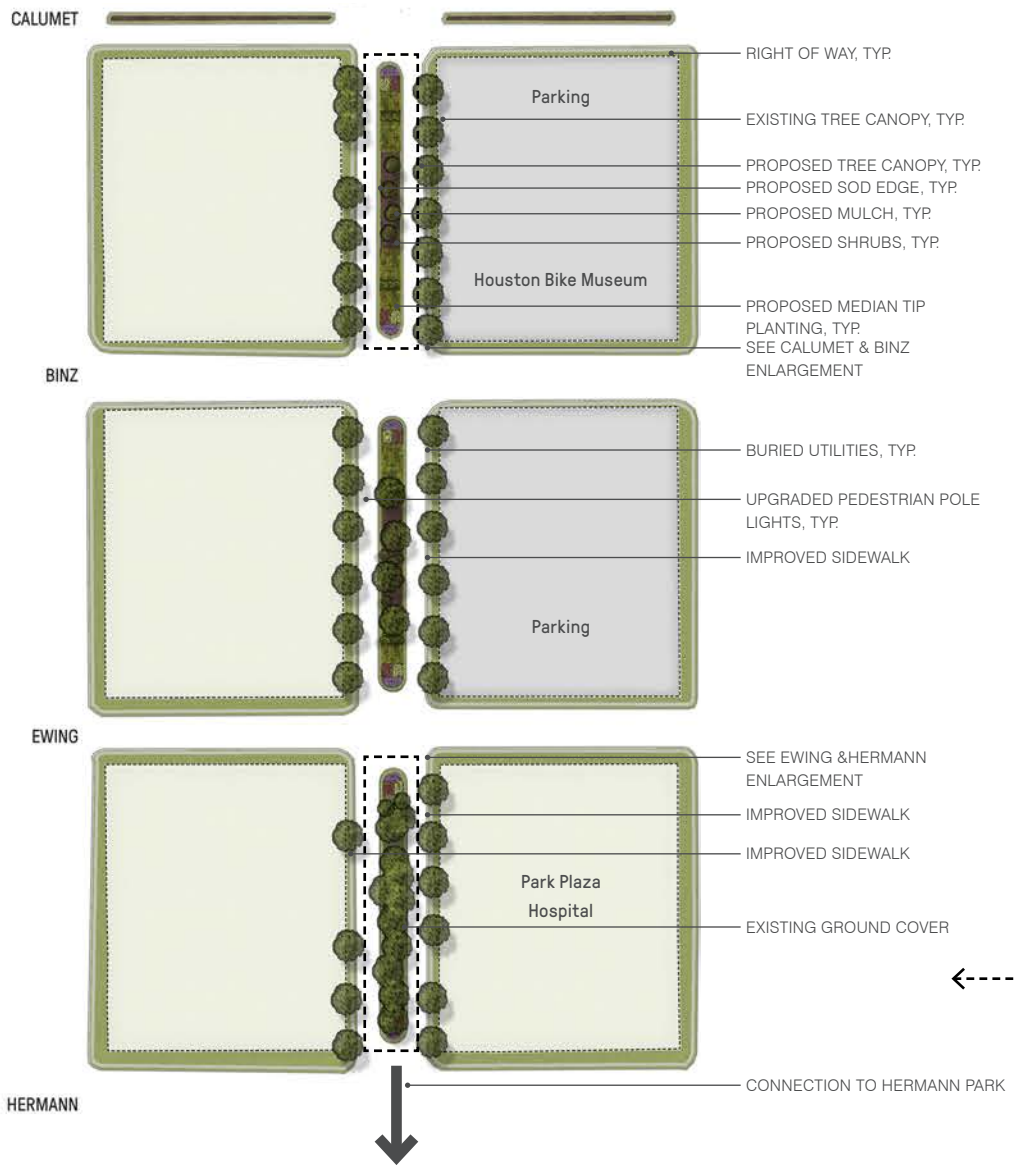


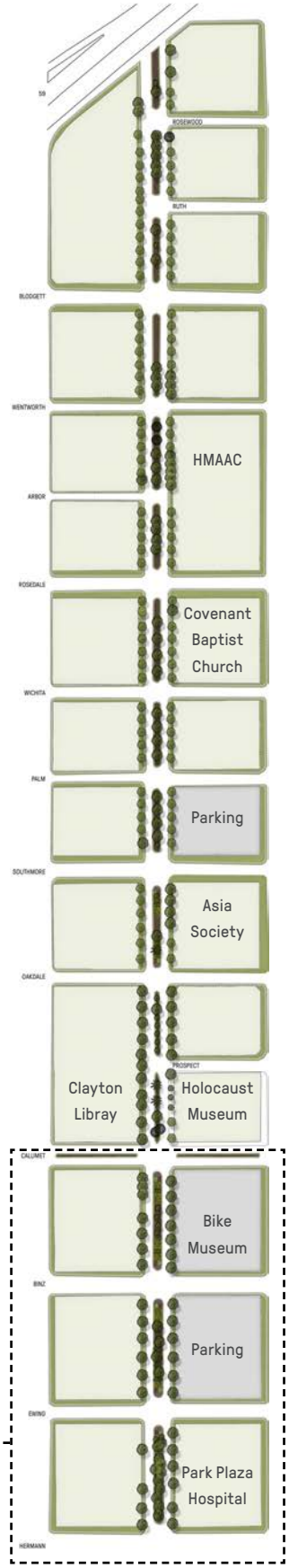



# 09.3

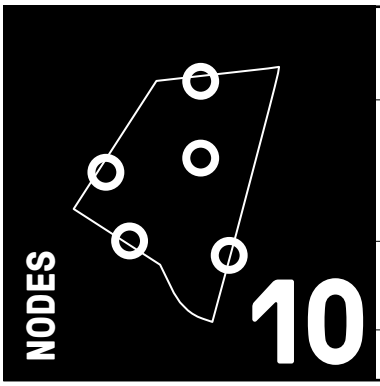
## CAROLINE - C: Calumet to Binz

Already active with pedestrians, this segment is widely travelled to get to Hermann Park and the Houston Museum of Natural Science.



BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES ALONG CAROLINE PROMENADE




# METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT AND CAP PARK

Develop plans for the Wheeler Transit Center node as a T.O.D. site, with a cover, or cap, over the US-59 future depressed freeway section extending from Main past Caroline. Program is to include high density mixed-use, residential, and a park amenity on the cap.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, TXDOT, METRO, MD, MPSN, PO

FUNDING*: METRO, TXDOT, PD

IMPLEMENTER*: COH, TXDOT, METRO, MD, PO

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## US 59 DESIGN COORDINATION & CAP

TxDOT-led North Highway Improvement Project is currently in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement phase, and in a few years is expected to break ground. Segment 3 of the Project encompasses Downtown and extends south along US 59 freeway to include the northern boundary of the Museum Park neighborhood. The plan to depress US 59 along Museum Park's northern edge will significantly transform the area, and potentially unlock great development opportunities. Since the start of the Museum Park Livable Centers Study, local community has engaged TxDOT in a conversation and steered the proposed vision for freeway reconstruction to include the initially severed connections along the important streets of Caroline and Austin. Connectivity to Midtown via bridges, however, does not realize the full potential of the North Highway Improvement Project to contribute to the future levels of connectivity and livability in the area.

It is recommended to coordinate with TxDOT and advocate for a cap over US 59 from west of Main Street to east of Caroline Street. Caps are engineered structures that allow landscapes or buildings to be safely placed over a freeway. A cap would allow for greater connectivity for Museum Park as well as provide multi-use of valuable public land. Without a cap, the street network would become disconnected and access would be restricted to only streets with bridges. Additionally, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access would be more limited than they are today. The cap allows improved roadway connectivity between Museum Park and Midtown as well as access to the METRO Rail station at Wheeler Transit Center. Coordinated direction and a focus on connectivity in this area could also serve as a catalyst for T.O.D. at Wheeler Station. Cities around the nation are combining gray and green infrastructure with "cap park" projects atop of freeways, bringing development value to their precincts. A park above the depressed US 59 will not only introduce much needed geen space to the northern part of the neighborhood, it will ensure desirability of the area for development and its success.

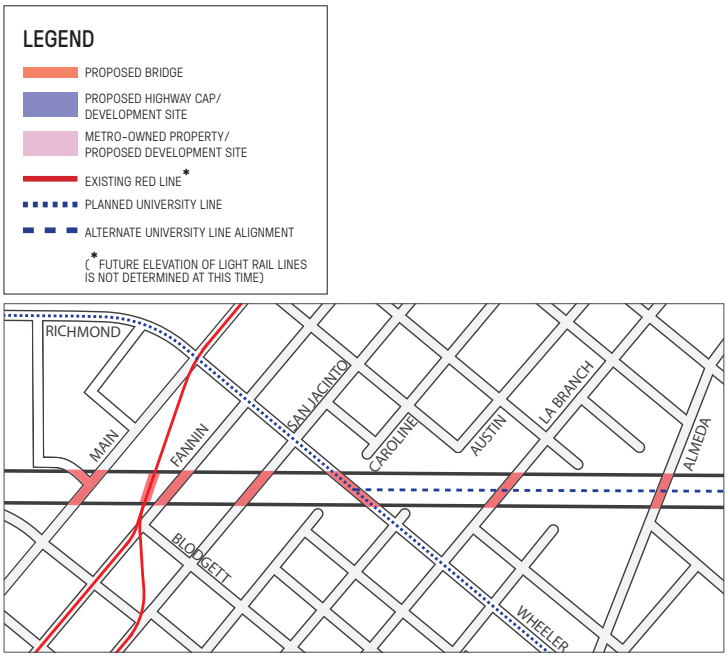
Thoughtful development plans and coordination with METRO on the future of the University Line could transform the station area into a significant urban node. It would also increase the desirability of northern section of the study area with an increase in a range of mixed-used including retail/business opportunities, housing options, and overall safety improvements.

The figures on this page show the proposed connectivity with the US 59 cap, potential T.O.D. sites, and a METRO University Corridor alignment alternative.

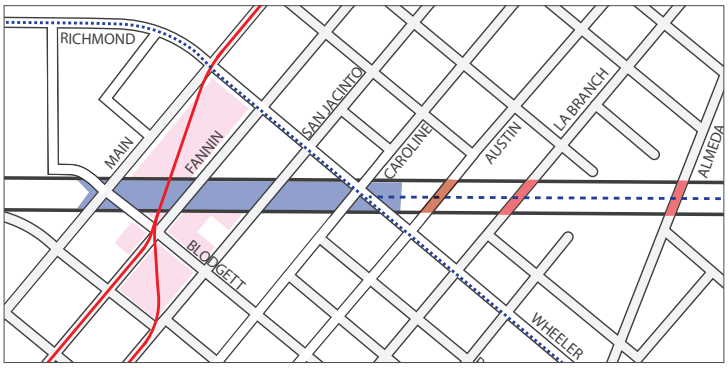
## 10.1

### CONDUCT T.O.D ECONOMIC ANALYSIS STUDY

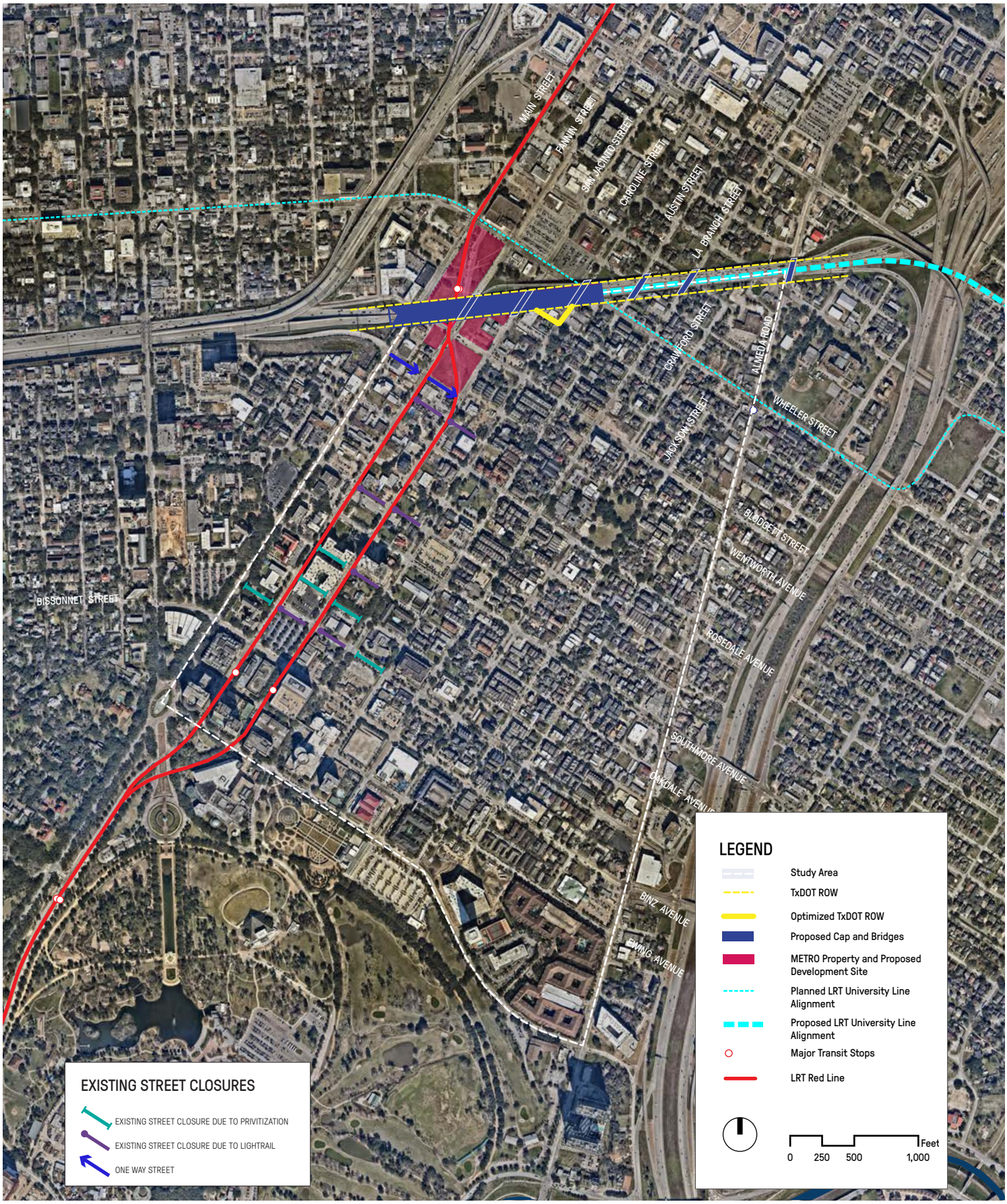
Conducting an Economic Analysis and Design Study for future T.O.D. site is recommended as TxDOT is engaged in optimizing the design for US 59 in anticipation of the T.O.D. opportunity, METRO in planning for potential property redevelopment, and the COH and Development Community in implementation of T.O.D and Cap Park.




TxDOT ORIGINAL PROPOSAL (SEPTEMBER 2015)




PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE




METRO DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK MAP

# 10.2

## CONSTRUCT T.O.D. AND CAP PARK

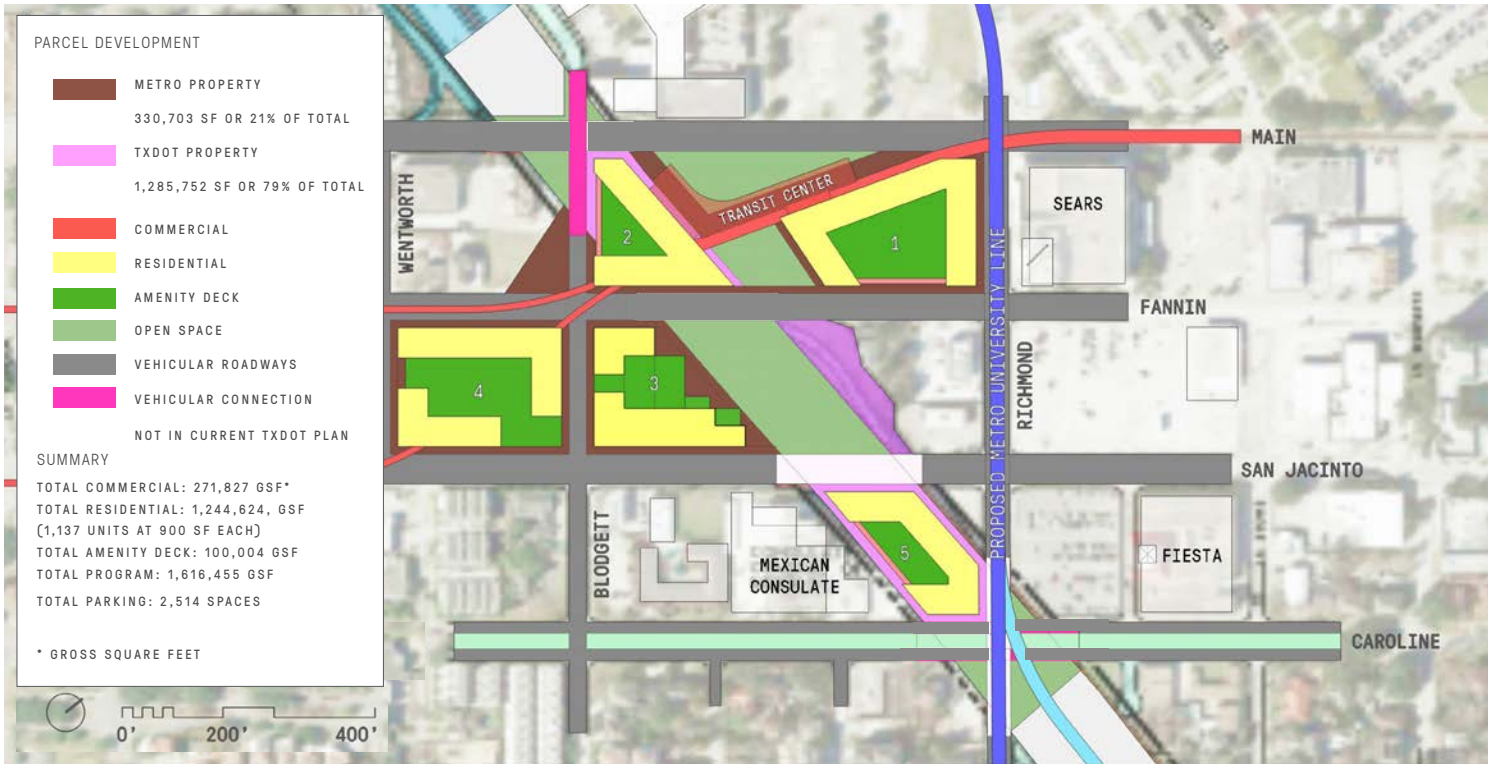
The envisioned development would include retail and commercial uses, mixed-income housing, integrated structured parking and a park amenity. Proposed development scenarios on the following page address potential outcomes with multi-story development on the freeway cap in scenario 1, and in scenario 2, the cap is utilized for the park amenity, road connectivity, and does not receive large structures. Market studies and extensive interactions with METRO, TxDOT, and other partnering agencies would help determine how a preferred development path will set forth timely technical provisions in the design of the infrastructure.

The illustration below depicts a cap park as a "green gateway" into the neighborhood from the north. Already known for its beautiful shade canopy and connection to Hermann Park, Museum Park will use this unique development opportunity to differentiate itself as a place with park equity, housing choice, and an unprecedented collection of cultural amenities, fulfilling its role as a model of livability in the City through high standards of access to physical, spiritual, intellectual, and community health.

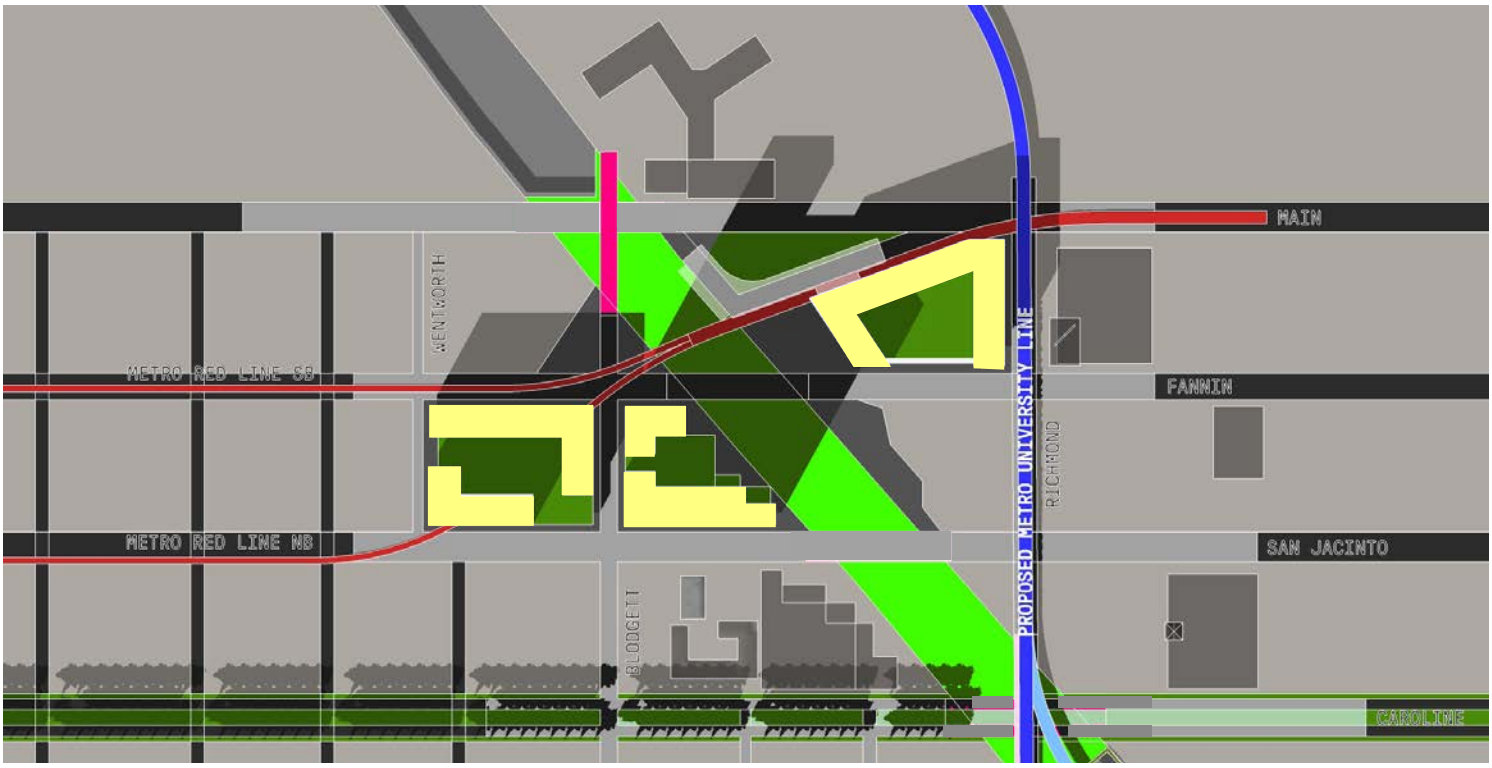
The cap park would be integrated into the green network of neighborhood streets and fill the gap of park deficiency in this part of town. Adjacent properties not owned by METRO to the north of the cap in Midtown will greatly benefit by this new amenity in terms of their own development prospects. Caroline Promenade, a central spine of Museum District connecting to HCC to the north,

Realizing a vision for METRO properties TOD development and cap park will require extensive coordination in the planning and design stages by multiple agencies. Funding and implementation strategies for a project of this magnitude and significance is further described in this Study's Recommendations #1 and #2.

US 59 CAP PARK AND CAROLINE PROMENADE LOOKING SOUTH




POTENTIAL FREEWAY CAP DEVELOPMENT, SCENARIO 1




POTENTIAL FREEWAY CAP DEVELOPMENT, SCENARIO 2

US 59 CAP PARK - GROUND-LEVEL VIEW LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS MIDTOWN AND DOWNTOWN

NODES 11

# CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE

Negotiating MacGregor Elementary School site's role as a potential community park with the needs of the school may provide for better integration of the school into the neighborhood and a new social heart for its residents.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: HSE, MPSN, MPNA, PO, SPARK, HISD

FUNDING*: PARTNERS

IMPLEMENTER*: HSE, MPSN, SPARK

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## CRAWFORD STREET AS A COMMUNITY GATHERING SITE

As it currently stands, Crawford Street and its esplanade serve an important function as a community gathering site. Throughout the year, various street festivals and Museum Park community events, such as National Night Out, are held over a couple blocks from Southmore Boulevard to Wichita Street. The community has expressed a keen desire for a more expansive and permanent community gathering space.

The site of MacGregor Elementary School is located at the heart of low-rise residential community (identified in this study's Community Design Character Standards Recommendation as "Sub-Area 3") and is ideally suited as the center of community life. The east side of the school, already an open space site and measuring a generous 3.5 acres, does not require a lot of steps to help it transition to become a vital park space that benefits everyone in the neighborhood. Importantly, the City of Houston's recent Parks Master Plan Update identified the general area as severely deficient in available park space.

There are several integration scenarios that would realize a park on the MacGregor site as part of the network of public spaces in the community. If MacGregor continues indefinitely to operate as a school, a Spark Park or some form of shared open space / park use with the community can be established. The design of the perimeter fence can be modified to be more welcoming, and gates can be introduced to allow pedestrian access into the park. In the event that the use of this property were to change in the future, the land should remain public property and be secured as a public park so as to cure the open space deficiency called out in the Parks Master Plan Update. A park in this location will be a transformational development for the Museum Park community.

POSSIBLE ENHANCEMENTS TO CHAIN LINK FENCE

## 11.1 CREATE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE PARK

Minding elementary school's security needs, the perimeter fence may be maintained, but gates with locks can be added to provide access to families on the weekends and during school's off hours. Houston's Spark School Park Program may aid in developing this concept further. Adorning chain link with artful patterns can soften its look and become an art project for students in the school, community organizations, with potential partnership with cultural institutions.

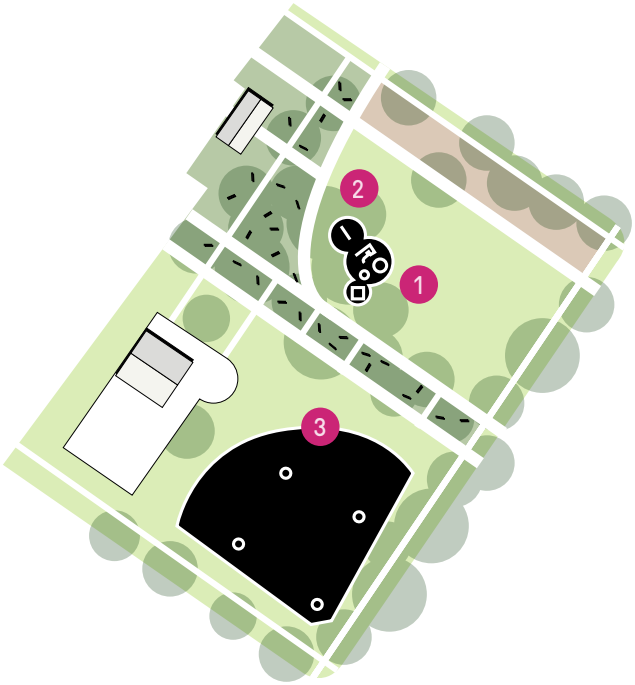
## 11.2 ACTIVATE THE PARK

Were the park to be developed fully, its design may consider programming for community events throughout the year. Addition of trails, play equipment, picnic furniture are light touches that can enhance usability of the park. Flexible lawns ought to be maintained to accommodate for night movies, performances, markets, and festivals. The popular Menil Park in the neighboring Montrose community is a great precedent of how a space of similar size, integrated into residential fabric, can successfully serve local residents and visitors alike. In a similar fashion, MacGregor site can become the social heart of the Museum Park neighborhood.

WALKING DISTANCES TO CRAWFORD OPEN SPACE

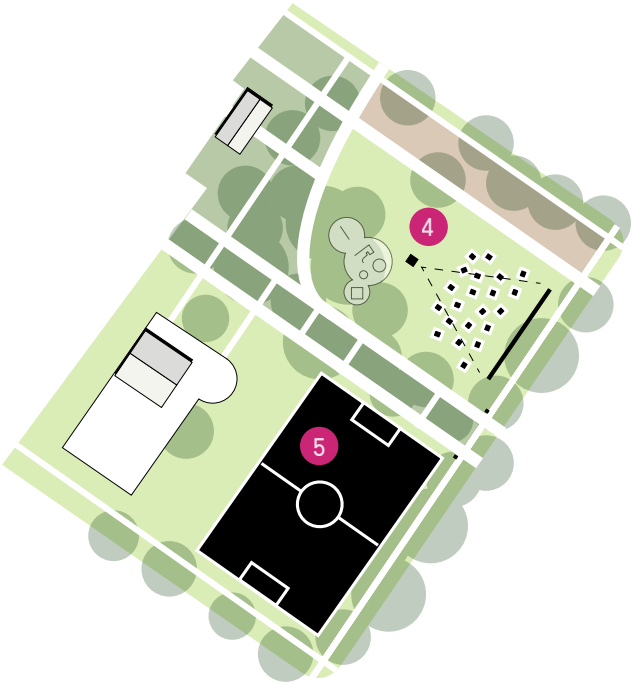
## SPRING

(1) SWINGS (2) PLAY (3) SPORTS



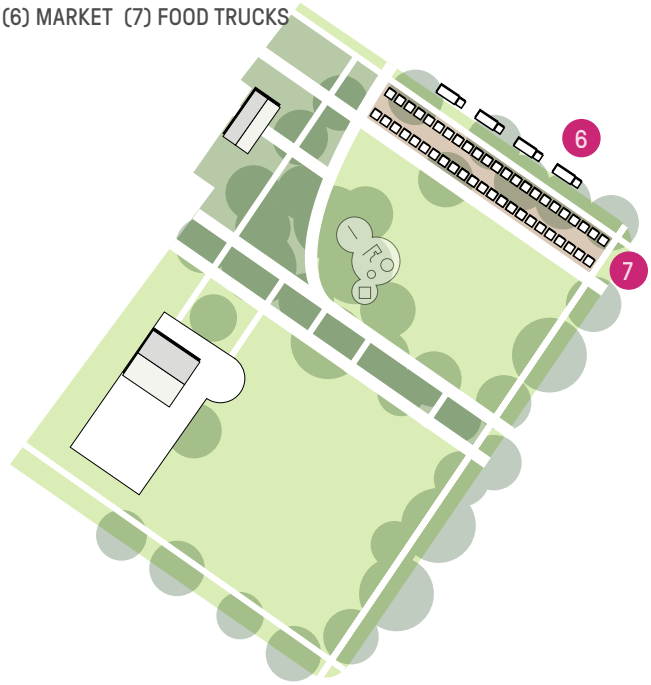

## SUMMER

(4) MOVIE NIGHT
(5) PICK UP SOCCER



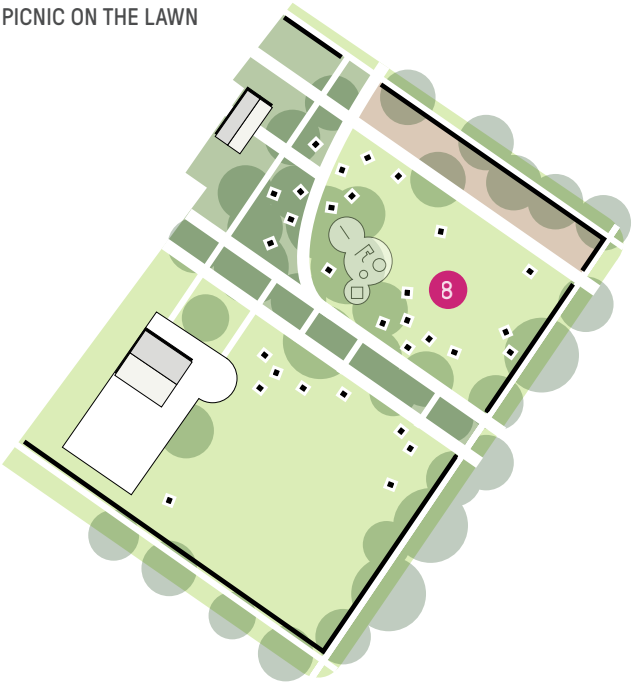

## FALL

(6) MARKET (7) FOOD TRUCKS

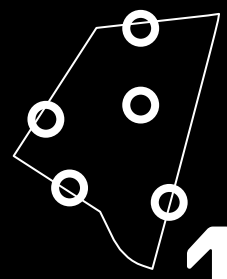



## WINTER

(8) PICNIC ON THE LAWN



CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE



NODES 12

# ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE

Almeda is an important commercial spine for the area. Beautification and improvements to safety at the US 59 underpass will create a greater gateway to historic Third Ward from Midtown.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MPSN, MPNA, PO

FUNDING*: HSE

IMPLEMENTER*: HSE, MPSN

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

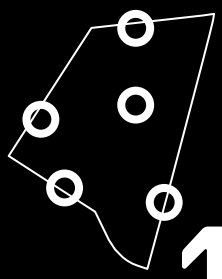
US 59 / ALMEDA UNDERPASS GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

## 12.1

## ENHANCEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIAN REALM AT US 59/ALMEDA UNDERPASS

Almeda Road serves a vital role in the community of Third Ward as a historic and commercial center. Popular businesses and local restaurants attract customers throughout the day, and are also popular as a night-time destination. In order to support the vibrancy of Almeda as a commercial and dining destination both to the north and the south of US 59, enhancements to overall safety and aesthetic experience are recommended. Knowing that any improvements will be temporary pending US 59 reconstruction by TxDOT, light touch interventions may include lighting and landscaping. Coordination with Houston Southeast may reveal opportunities for graphic treatment of freeway columns, in alignment with the District's current branding and marketing program that addresses important gateways at its perimeter.

NODES



13

# SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES

Southmore Boulevard is Museum Park's greatest connection to the Historic Third Ward. To celebrate this history, create an entry that welcomes visitors at Southmore and Almeda. At Main and Southmore, improve landscaping to create a notable gateway experience into the neighborhood.

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MPSN, MPNA, PO

FUNDING*: HSE

IMPLEMENTER*: HSE, MPSN

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

SOUTHMORE/ALMEDA GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS

## 13.1

### LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AT ALMEDA

Southmore Boulevard is a regional gateway to the area via SH 288, as well as a vital east-west link across SH 288 for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Installation of dedicated bike lanes along with landscape improvements in the esplanade will create a safer and more appealing gateway to Museum Park.

## 13.2

### LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AT MAIN

Conversely, Southmore Boulevard serves as a gateway to the neighborhood on approach from Houston Downtown and Midtown. Enhanced landscaping in the streetscape at Main will announce the arrival to green sanctuary neighborhood of the inner city.

NEIGHBORHOOD 14

# COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

Focus a regulatory environment to support the development of buildings and community amenities that are context appropriate and conform to community desires and building best practices

PROJECT GOALS:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES:
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

PARTNERS*: COH, HSE, MPSN

FUNDING*: SUBSIDIES, LOW-INTEREST LOANS, AND GRANTS

IMPLEMENTER*: COH, HSE, MD, PO

* FOR LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS SEE P.32

## PRESERVING THE LANDMARK QUALITY OF MUSEUM PARK

The neighborhood is a desirable location that is experiencing robust growth. Property values have increased considerably in recent years and are higher than is the case in Houston overall. Under heavy development pressures, the characteristic street connectivity and signature architectural quality of historical low-rise building stock has been eroding in Museum Park. Street grid is interrupted along multiple blocks, while medium-to-high-rise development enters the low density context without clear provisions for accommodating increasing traffic volumes, the need for parking, and continuous and comfortable public realm.

This section of the recommendations has a singular purpose: to benchmark Museum Park's key landmark attributes as a method to evaluate propositions for change – both public and private - as either contributing or not contributing to the quality of the built environment of the neighborhood today and in the future. The intent is for minimum development and construction standards to be exceeded in practice. The are two scales to the approach, the one that sets standards for the neighborhood as a whole and the second one that looks at protecting individual architectural landmarks as the important carriers of the place's identity.

## 14.1

## ESTABLISH DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS TO GUIDE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MUSEUM PARK

Over the past thirty years, Museum Park has evolved from a predominantly residential area to a vibrant community composed of several distinct neighborhood zones. The plan diagram reflects these areas:

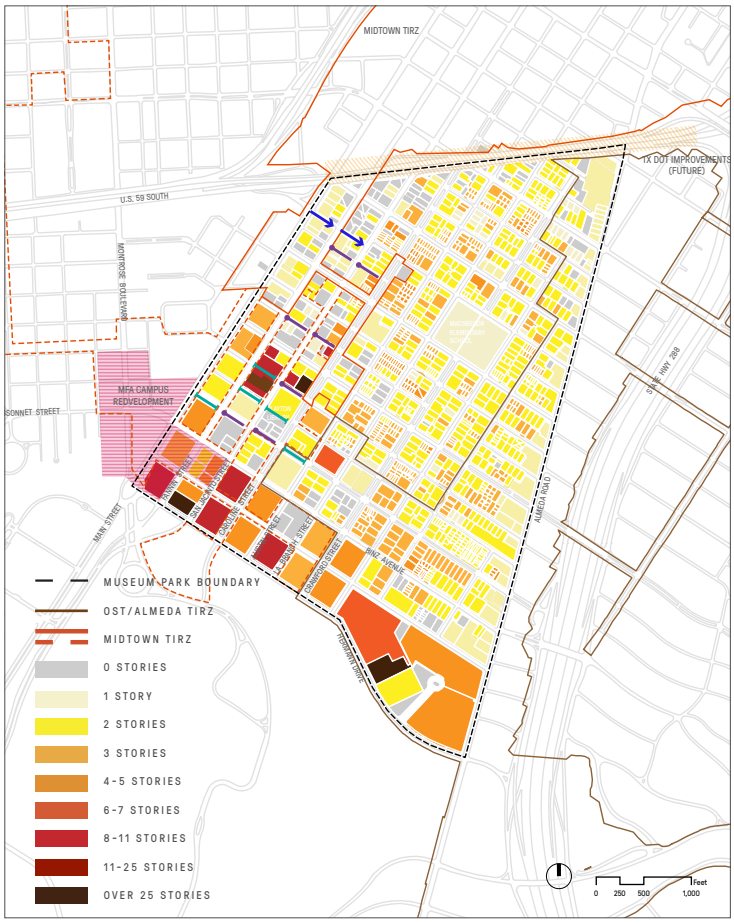
- **Sub-Area 1**
- **Sub-Area 2**
- **Sub-Area 3**
- **Sub-Area 4**

As Museum Park continues to evolve as a culturally distinct district of the city, there are key, trending attributes that define its various neighborhood areas and that should be both preserved and enhanced. These attributes are being shaped by a rich inter-play between the public and private realms, and reflect the interaction of market factors and local regulations.

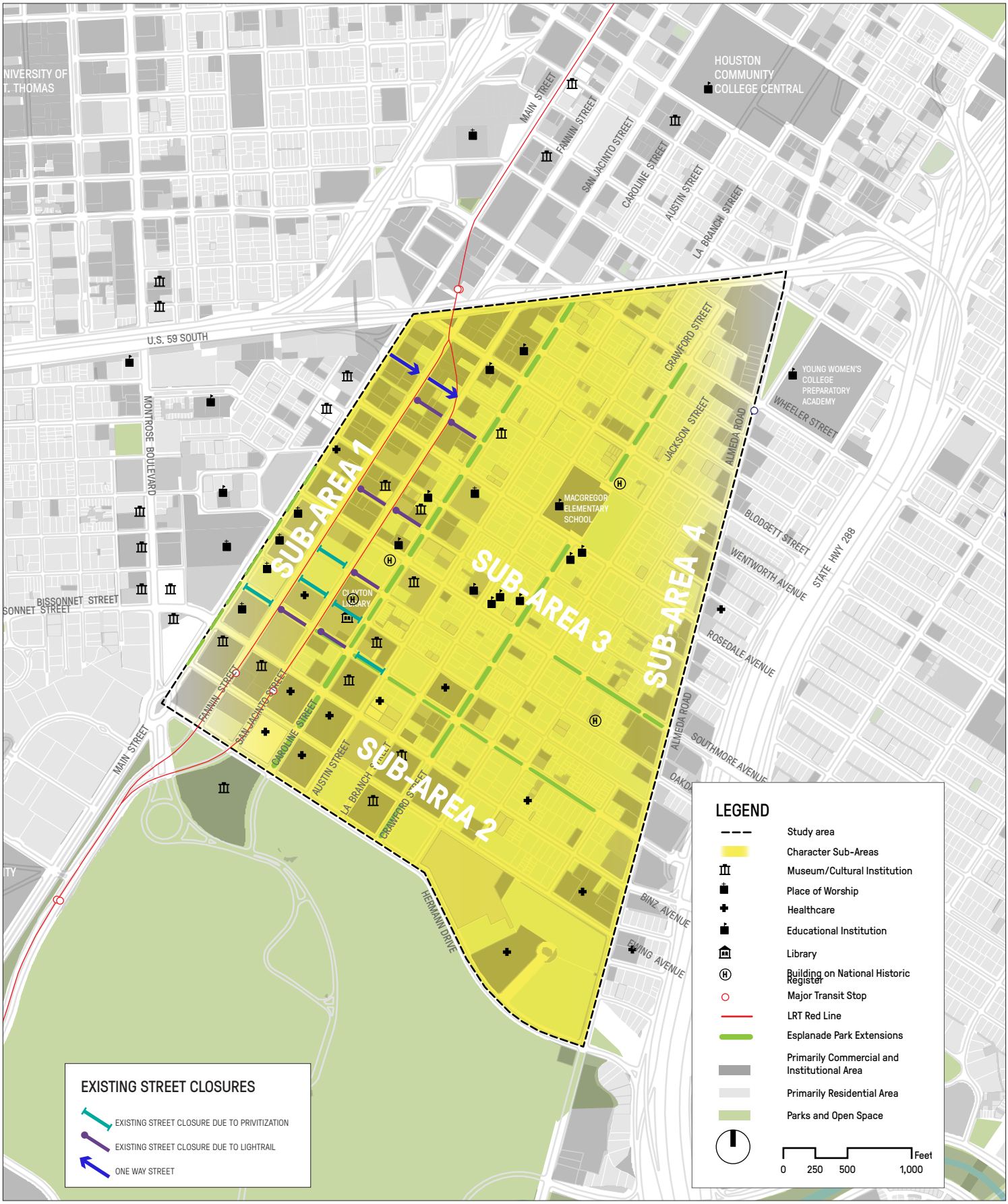
Listed below are Museum Park's key attributes:

1. **Connected**
2. **Contextual**
3. **Walkable**
4. **Convenient**
5. **Green**
6. **Dynamic**
7. **Urban Sanctuary**

These attributes can be elaborated and expressed as performance criteria for each of the distinct areas of Museum Park. Bullet-lists and illustrations that follow describe the application of these performance criteria to each of the four distinct areas.




EXISTING BUILDING DENSITY




PROPOSED DESIGN CHARACTER ZONES

# SUB-AREA 1
## (LOW-MID-RISE, MIXED-USE)

This area contains a mixture of uses that develops in a symbiotic relationship with the light rail transit line, at the same time accommodating the increasing volumes of all modes of traffic associated with higher density development. Commercial/retail and public/institutional uses coexist with the residential use by establishing a premier walkable mixed-use cultural district in the city.

---

**1. CONNECTED**

- Multi-modal options are expanded to enhance local and regional accessibility
- Street ROW grid is preserved in the district to keep it porous and route choices uninterrupted

---

**2. CONTEXTUAL**

- Application of Transit Corridor Ordinance to designated Transit Corridors of San Jacinto and Fannin Streets is critically examined to help preserve lower density, park-like neighborhood setting south of Blodgett Street
- On Main Street, from US-59 to Mecom Fountain, view corridor is to be protected by maintaining deep building setbacks in future development, consistent with existing cultural institutions on Main Street
- Strong brand association with the evolving MFAH campus is reflected in more physical connections
- Evolving architectural styles creates landmark-quality design environment
- Historical landmarks are protected and new historic designations are sought for landmark buildings in the area
- Private development on lower levels is transparent and welcoming
- Upper levels of buildings step back so as not to crowd adjacent properties and to maximize sun exposure and preserve sight lines
- Art and the public realm are seamless

---

**3. WALKABLE**

- The pedestrian scale and uninterrupted street grid encourage walking
- Shaded walkways provide comfort
- Wider sidewalks exceed the regulatory minimum
- New street trees fill the gaps to create an uninterrupted street canopy

---

**4. CONVENIENT**

- Local destinations for services, entertainment and employment are abundant
- Off-street parking in garages predominates
- Public on-street parking provided wherever possible
- Private driveways are grouped to maximize on-street parking

---

**5. GREEN**

- Main Street designated as a “Green Corridor”
- Landscaping is used to mitigate flooding and urban heat island
- Parking Benefits District supports and maintains enhanced streetscapes
- Open space is provided on private property to enhance mix of uses that attract customers and between the private public divide
- Overhead power is relocated / buried to reduce sidewalk obstructions, street clutter and allow wider choice for street trees

---

**6. DYNAMIC**

- New development combines a variety and not one single use
- Mixed-use on ground level prevails

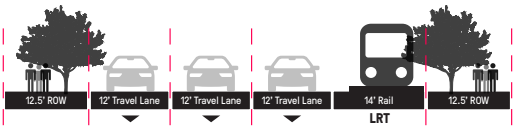
---

**7. URBAN SANCTUARY**

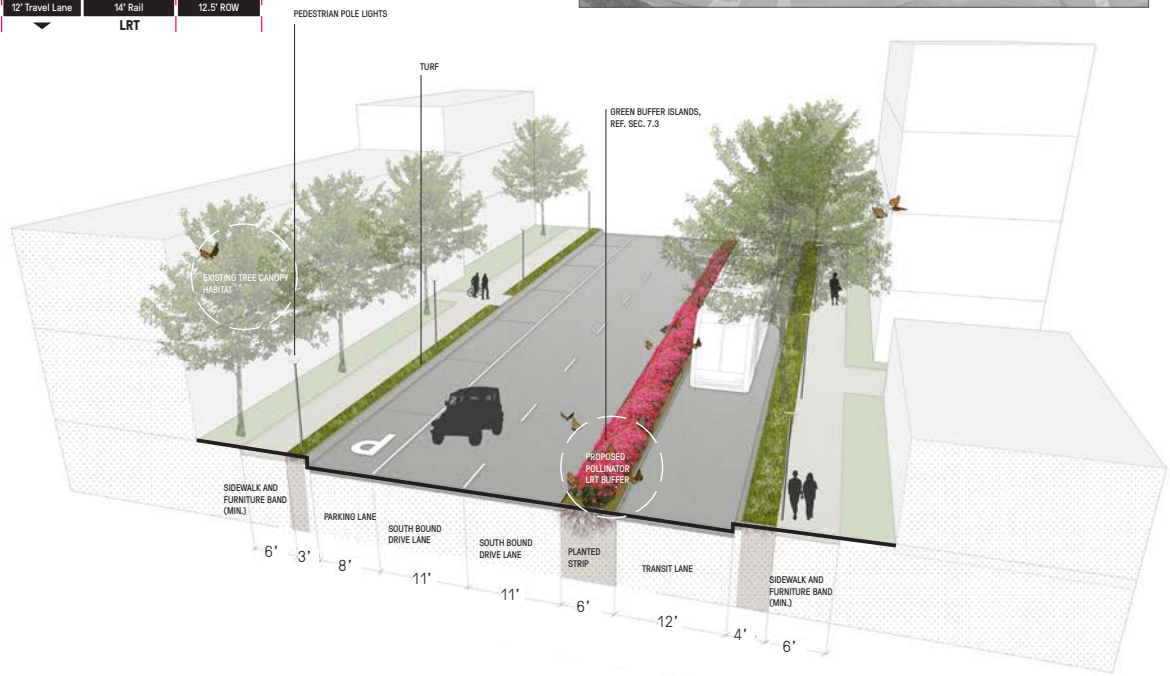
- District is a diverse community of residents, workers, visitors

---

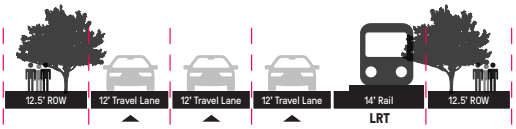
## FANNIN STREET



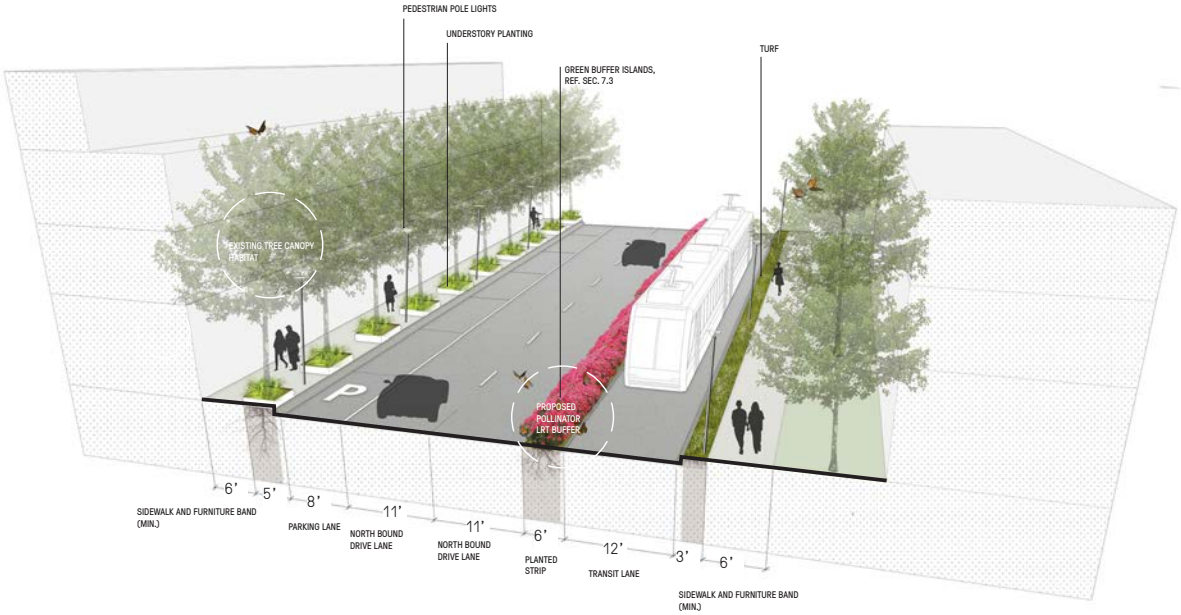

**Existing Street Layout**




## SAN JACINTO STREET




**Existing Street Layout**



## SUB-AREA 2
## (MID-HIGH RISE, MIXED-USE)

In this area south of Binz, primarily multi-family residences are intermixed with commercial/retail, public/institutional, and office uses, negotiating the balance of form among them towards mid-to-high-rise structures. Living and working accommodations are seamlessly intertwined with dining/entertainment/culture destinations.

---

**1. CONNECTED**

- Multi-modal options are expanded to enhance local and regional accessibility, with emphasis on bicycle connectivity
- Street ROW grid is preserved to keep it porous and route choices uninterrupted

---

**2. CONTEXTUAL**

- A mix of development maintains a primarily mid-rise profile and mid-density throughout, and mid-to-high-rise profile and high density on the southern edge where it meets Hermann Park
- Evolving architectural styles create high-quality design environment
- Historical landmarks are protected and new historic designations are sought for landmark buildings in the area
- Private development has welcoming gesture to the street
- Art and the public realm are seamless

---

**3. WALKABLE**

- The pedestrian scale and uninterrupted street grid encourage walking
- Shaded walkways provide comfort
- Wider sidewalks exceed the regulatory minimum
- New street trees fill the gaps to create an uninterrupted street canopy

---

**4. CONVENIENT**

- Local destinations for services, entertainment and employment are well integrated within private residential neighborhood
- Public on-street parking predominates
- Management of private institutional parking aids in accommodating increasing public parking demands
- Private driveways are grouped to maximize on-street parking

---

**5. GREEN**

- Wheeler, Blodgett and Binz Streets designated as “Green Corridors” under amended ordinance
- Beneficial Parking District supports and maintains enhanced streetscapes
- Open space is provided on private property to enhance mix of uses that attract customers and blur the public private divide
- Overhead power is relocated / buried to reduce sidewalk obstructions, street clutter and allow wider choice for street trees

---

**6. DYNAMIC**

- New development while primarily residential also provides and supports for neighborhood services and cultural destinations

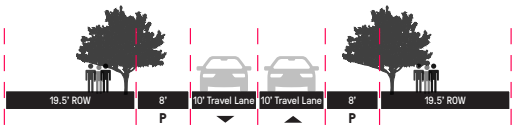
---

**7. URBAN SANCTUARY**

- District is a diverse community of residents, workers, visitors
- District is community-focused, inviting and safe day and night

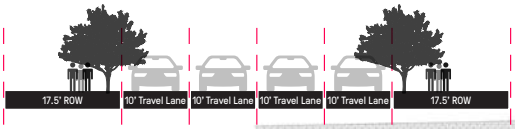
---

## AUSTIN STREET

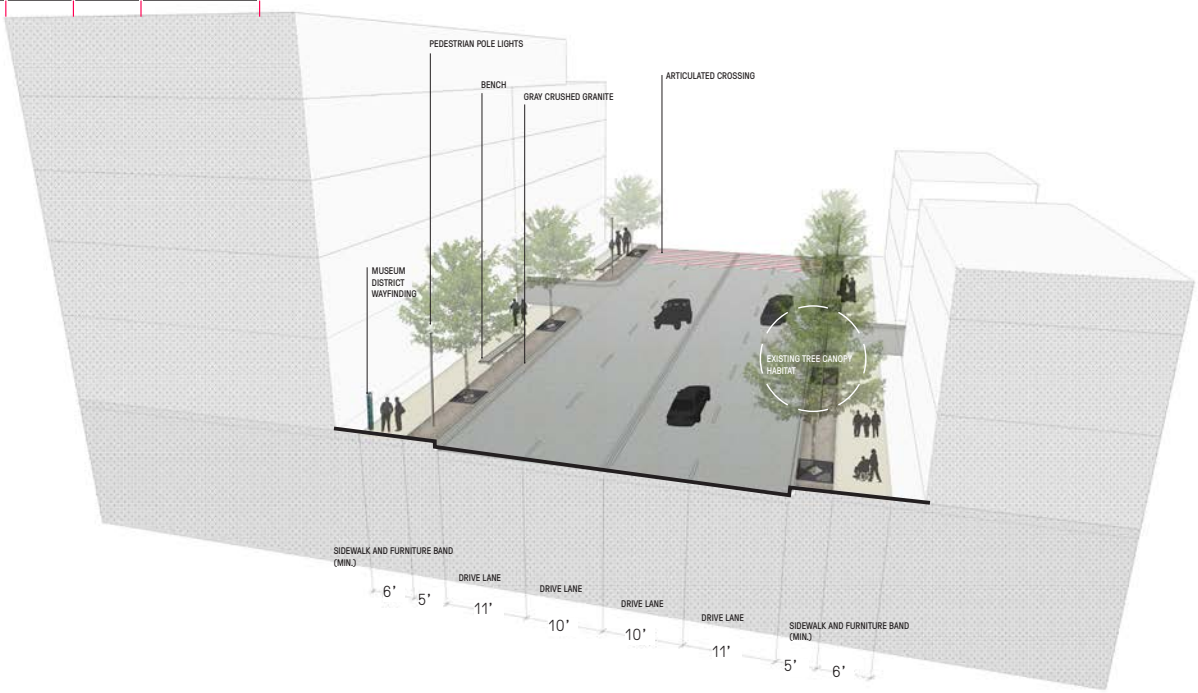



**Existing Street Layout**

## BINZ AVENUE




**Existing Street Layout**



## SUB-AREA 3
## (LOW-RISE, MIXED-USE)

This zone is the residential heart of Museum Park, where quiet shaded streets create a sense of a comfortable and healthy living amidst a busy metropolitan area, and where local families have easy access to great open space amenities. A mix of town homes and single-family residences is the main building stock with interspersed local professional businesses, and the character of the neighborhood is that of a green urban refuge.

---

**1. CONNECTED**

- Multi-modal options enhance local accessibility, with emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity
- Street ROW grid is preserved to keep it porous and route choices uninterrupted

---

**2. CONTEXTUAL**

- Residential development maintains a low-rise, low-density profile
- Evolving architectural styles create high-quality design environment, new development strives to gain landmark architectural status that highlights local design talent and adds to historical architectural heritage of the area, residential building typologies elevate new development standards to support continuity of public realm in the neighborhood
- Historical landmarks are protected and new historic designations are sought for landmark buildings in the area
- Private development embraces and welcomes the street

---

**3. WALKABLE**

- The pedestrian scale and uninterrupted street grid encourage walking
- Shaded walkways provide comfort
- New street trees fill the gaps to create an uninterrupted street canopy

---

**4. CONVENIENT**

- Local destinations for services and employment are seamlessly integrated within private residential neighborhood
- Public on-street parking predominates
- Private driveways are grouped to maximize on-street parking

---

**5. GREEN**

- Southmore is designated as “Green Corridor” under amended ordinance
- Beneficial Landscape Program enhances ecological value of planting in the esplanades
- Available open space is fully developed and utilized as community parks
- Overhead power is relocated / buried to reduce sidewalk obstructions, street clutter and allow wider choice for street trees

---

**6. DYNAMIC**

- Streets, green esplanades, and park spaces are designed to become meeting spaces for the residents and accommodate lively community events on regular bases

---

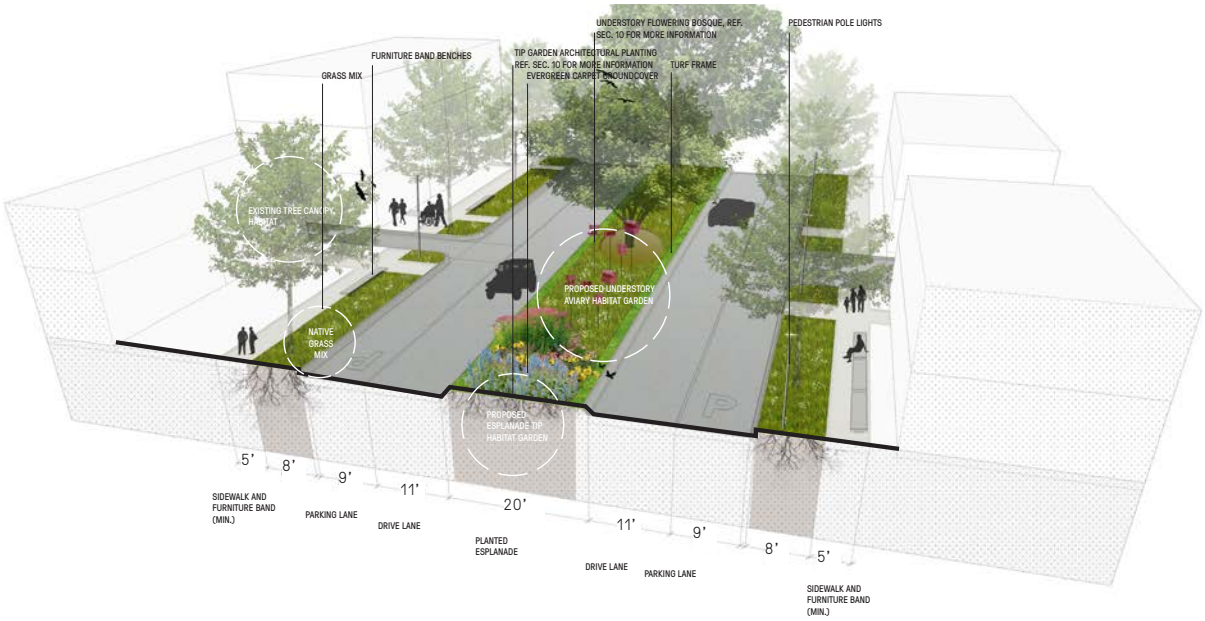
**7. URBAN SANCTUARY**

- Area is a diverse community of residents, workers, visitors
- Area is community-focused, inviting and safe day and night

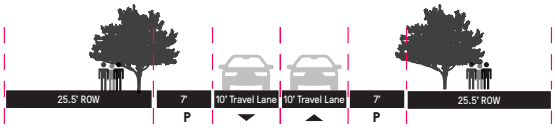
---

## CRAWFORD STREET

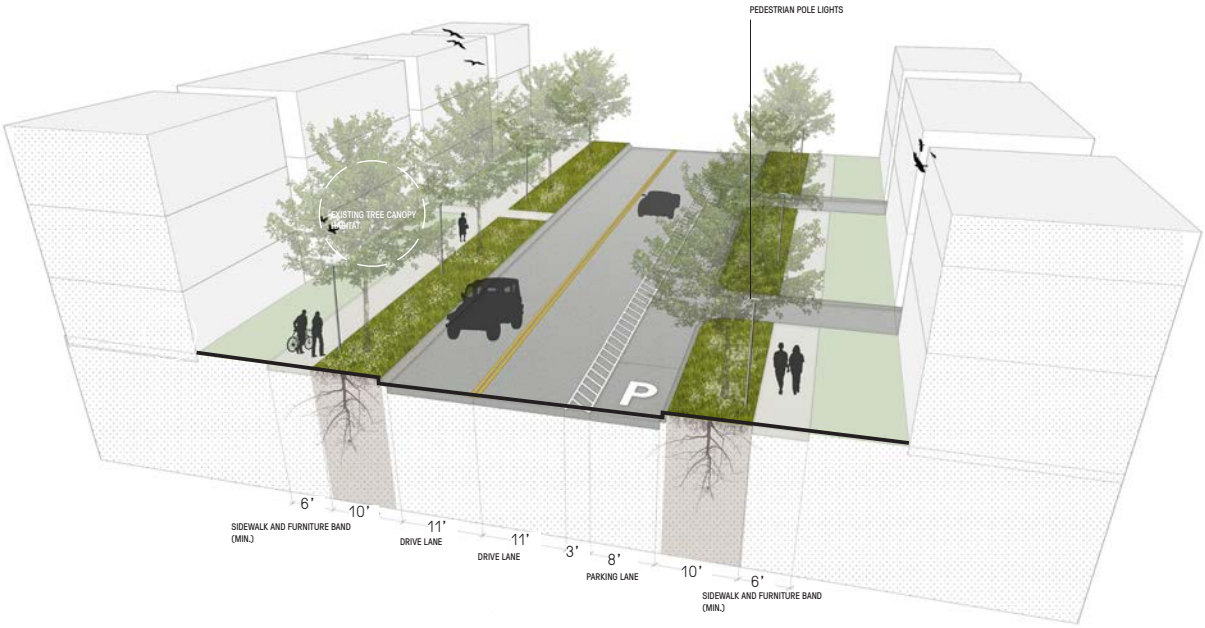
**Existing Street Layout**




## BLODGETT STREET




**Existing Street Layout**



## SUB-AREA 4
## (LOW-MID-RISE, MIXED-USE)

In this zone, commercial/retail, public/institutional, and office uses are grouped in a commercial spine along Almeda Road. As a significant center for community life in Third Ward, the corridor is a low-rise "Main Street" and a commercial center for a generally low-rise neighborhood that surrounds it.

---

**1. CONNECTED***

- Commercial Corridor designation helps further enhance the area's character and aids economic development
- Multi-modal options are expanded to enhance local and regional accessibility, with emphasis on bicycle and transit connectivity

---

**2. CONTEXTUAL**

- A mix of development maintains a primarily low-rise profile and low density with occasional low-to-mid-rise profile when accommodating a mix of commercial and residential uses
- Evolving architectural styles create high-quality design environment
- Historical landmarks are protected and new historic designations are sought for landmark buildings in the area
- Private development is welcoming to the street
- Public art and the public realm are seamless

---

**3. WALKABLE***

- The pedestrian scale supports the feel of the area as a  center of a "Walkable Village"
- Shaded walkways provide comfort
- Wider sidewalks exceed the regulatory minimum
- New street trees fill the gaps to create an uninterrupted shade canopy

---

**4. CONVENIENT***

- Local destinations for services, entertainment and employment are easily accessible through the abundance of public on-street parking
- Private driveways are grouped to maximize on-street parking

---

**5. GREEN**

- Almeda Road designated as "Green Corridor"
- Open space is provided on private property to enhance mix of uses that attract customers
- Overhead power is relocated / buried to reduce sidewalk obstructions, street clutter and allow wider choice for street trees

---

**6. DYNAMIC**

- New development combines a variety and not one single use
- Mixed-use on ground level prevails

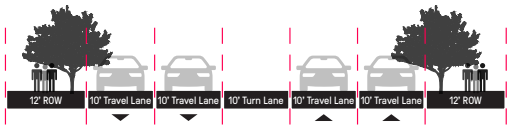
---

**7. URBAN SANCTUARY**

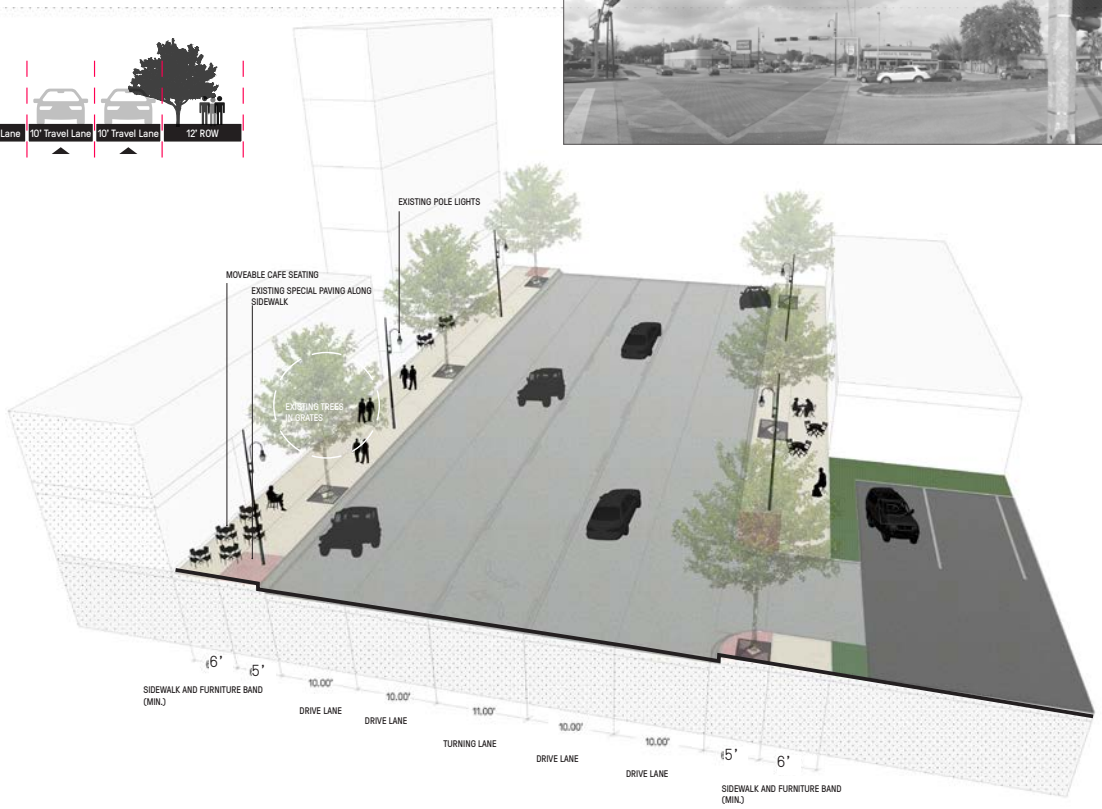
- Area is a diverse community of residents, workers, visitors
- Area is community-focused, inviting and safe day and night

---

## ALMEDA ROAD




**Existing Street Layout**




** Almeda Road corridor has potential to be a more human-scaled commercial spine, a "Main Street" for the neighborhood. Conceptually, the street can be modified to expand pedestrian and bicycle facilities, while addressing the evolving parking needs (See Appendix C: Transportation). To prove out the possibilities, a detailed transportation study would need to be conducted in order to assess the potential balance between future multi-modal transportation facilities and needs for parking.*

## BEST PRACTICES

### NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER PRESERVATION STRATEGIES*

#### Community Benefits Agreements

Windshield surveys reveal that in recent years, residential development has occurred at a robust pace and is continuing to occur at this pace. Inasmuch as this development is inconsistent with traditional development patterns, a strategy of embracing tools that are designed to decelerate the ongoing degradation of community character is in order. Accordingly, Community Benefits Agreements are a best practice that can be adopted to address development that is planned, but not yet under construction. These agreements enable communities to enter into agreements with developers that set forth mutually agreeable parameters for development.

#### Conservation Easements

Preserving community character by creating a historic district is not feasible in Museum Park because virtually every blockface that contains a historic property also contains a contemporary town home development. Under these conditions, conservation easements are a more practical approach. These easements enable landowners to retain and use their property, permanently removing development rights in exchange for tax benefits. A land trust would have to be created to manage the easements.

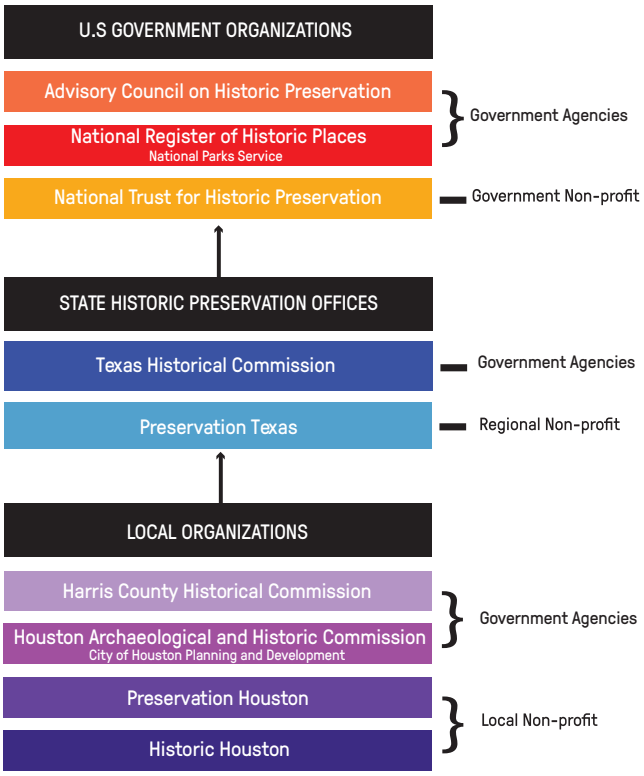
** Both strategies require additional study in their application to specific existing developed sites and future development projects in Museum Park.*

# 14.2

## IDENTIFY PROPERTIES OF HISTORICAL AND LANDMARK VALUE, PROMOTE PRESERVATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Living history is an essential part of the rich character and fabric of Museum Park. There are several properties that are registered as national historic places, or designated as state or city-level landmarks, subject to historic preservation or protected by the city of Houston. There are also properties that are potentially eligible for various levels of historic designation. While designation of the heighborhood as a whole as historic is not attainable, it is a recommendation of this Study that Museum Park Super Neighborhood would provide necessary guidance to property owners to seek appropriate designations and understand redevelopment strategies that rely on preservation and adaptive reuse of their properties. Engaging through advocacy with different government agencies and not-for-profit groups that help survey, educate about, advocate for, and preserve historic properties of buildings, districts, and neighborhoods will help preserve neighborhood's landmark image and historic character.

The hierarchy of the historic preservation organizations is shown below:




50 properties in Museum Park have a landmark status. They are categorized according to various systems of designation, explained below.

### Architectural Value

Properties or sites are architecturally significant and recognized by *AIA Houston Architectural Guide Third Edition* (Fox 2012) - a tour guide to Houston and an architectural reference source.

### Historical Value

Properties or sites are historically significant and recognized by *Houston Deco: Modernistic Architecture of the Texas Coast* (Parsons and Bush 2008)- a book that documents Art Deco and Art Modern buildings across southeast Texas between the end of World War I and the beginning of World War II.

### City of Houston Designated Landmarks

Properties are designated by the City of Houston Planning and Development Department.

### City of Houston Designated Protected Landmarks

Properties that are protected from being demolished by meeting the Houston Preservation Ordinance Criteria.

### Texas Historical Commission Listed Landmarks

Properties that are listed as state historic markers by Texas Historical Commission (THC) - a state agency for historic preservation of architectural, archaeological, and cultural landmarks in Texas.

### Texas Historical Commission Surveyed Landmark Site

Properties that are surveyed and inventoried by THC as historic resource and potentially can be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

### National Register of Historic Places

Properties or districts nationally significant historic places that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### Eligible To Be Listed As Landmark

Properties currently not being designated or protected by the City, but potentially eligible for various levels of designation in the future.

LANDMARK PROPERTIES MAP

01 Oakdale Modern Dwelling (2009)

02 Patio Shops (1931))

03 Third Church of Christ, Science (1928)

04 Glassman Shoemaker Maldonado (2007)

05 Children's Museum (1992)

06 Holocaust Museum Houston (1996)

07 Clayton House (Clayton library Center) (1917)

08 Winslow Court (1929) (Demolished)

09 Blayney House (Macatee House)(1914)

10 Asia Society Texas center (2011)

11 Live-work Studio (2006)

12 Covenant Church (2001)

13 Sullivan House (1923)

14 First Unitarian Church (1952)

15 Bank of Houston (Origin Bank) (1967)

16 Weldon's Café (OmniPlus Pharmacy) (1949)

17 Lawndale Art Center (1931) (2006 Restored)

18 The Playhouse (1951)

19 First Congregation Church (1927)

20 First Presbyterian Church (1949)

21 St. Paul United Methodist Church (1930)

22 Fine Art Museum (1924)

23 The Warwick Towers (1983)

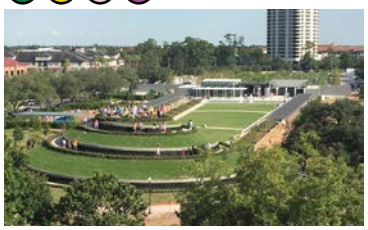
24 Hotel Za Za (1952)

25 Mecom Fountain (1964)

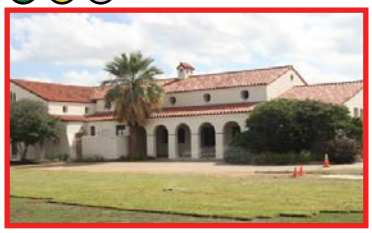
26 Hermann Park (Sam Statue) (1925)

27 Houston Museum of Natural Science (1964)

28 Miller TheaterStudio (1968)

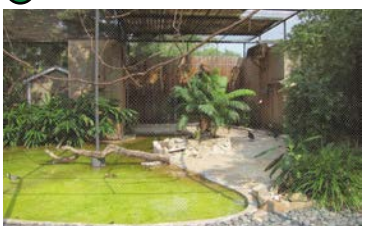


29 McGovern Centennial Gardens (2014)



30 Hermann Park Club House (1933)

31 Lake Plaza (2004)



32 Houston Zoo (Aviary Flamingo Habitat) (1950)

33 Roberson House (2007)

34 Andrey Jones Beck Building (2000)

35 Almeda Court Apartment (1939) (2001 Restored)

36 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1941)

37 5507 San Jacinto Apartment (1947)

38 1901 Binz (1950)

39 Sears (1939) (2006 Restored)

40 Daughters of Republic of Texas (1936) (1996 Rededicated)

41 Married Ladies Society (Founded 1902) (2007 Restored)

42 4717 Crawford (1930)

43 Macgregor Elementary (1922)

44 Houston Turn-Verein (1929) (now CVS)

45 Wray House (1939)

46 Peden D.D. House (1924)

47 Pemberton Residents (1931)

48 3301 & 3317 San Jacinto (1925)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

# PLANNING CONTEXT

## JURISDICTIONAL INFLUENCE

Museum Park's boundaries overlap with various management authorities with most of Museum Park area located within Houston Southeast and just a few blocks in Midtown, at its north-western corner. In 2015, Midtown TIRZ#2's boundary was extended further south into Museum Park, encompassing six to eight blocks of Main, Fannin, San Jacinto and Caroline Streets in the Museum District. OST/Almeda TIRZ#7 contains a substantial part of Museum Park's east side within its boundary. The implementation of planning initiatives in Museum Park will be largely dependent on these entities in terms of partnerships and potential funding. In context of the City as a whole, the area is strategically positioned along vital transit corridors. It is crucial that Museum Park partners with the City in order to influence future development trends with an approach that is mindful of the community's desire to preserve and enhance the existing character of the neighborhood. Hermann Park's role in influencing a range of features from landscape character to transportation in Museum Park cannot be overstated. Hermann Park Consevancy is potentially a vital partner through its ongoing efforts to enhance the Park's operations. Texas Medical Center impacts on Museum Park are also significant and will only grow in importance, especially from the standpoint of traffic and transportation factors.

## RELEVANT STUDIES

Near term and long term horizons are fluid in Museum Park. There are a number of plans that have been completed or in progress that have the potential to affect Museum Park over the next 20 years. These include:

- OST/Almeda TIRZ Project Plan
- Houston Southeast Service Plan
- Midtown Management District Service Plan
- Houston General Plan
- Houston Bike Plan
- Hermann Park Master Plan
- Museum of Fine Arts Houston Master Plan
- 2012 Urban Houston Framework

### 01. OST/Almeda TIRZ Project Plan

The OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority administers the Project Plan and Financing Plan with the intention to finance $151.5 million in public improvements. Several redevelopment projects have occurred within Museum Park including Almeda Corridor Improvements.

### 02. Houston Southeast Service Plan

Approved in 2007, the 10 year Service and Improvement Plan focuses on public safety, visual quality, mobility, business/economic development, marketing/image, and direct administration. An overall landscape master plan for street corridors, parks, and open space is also included. Funding has been set aside for improvements and maintenance. This includes medians, lighting, branding, and connectivit y.

### 03. Midtown Service Plan

Midtown Management District 2015-2024 Service Plan describes the services and improvements in the categories of public safety, urban planning, services and maintenance, cultural arts and entertainment, marketing and economic development, capital reserve for infrastructure replacement, and district administration. The types of projects undertaken will provide residential and commercial property owners with widespread benefits that are beyond the ability of individual property owners.

### 04. Houston General Plan

Approved in 2015, core strategies of the plan include: spend money wisely, grow responsibly, sustain quality infrastructure, nurture safe and healthy neighborhoods, connect people and places, support our global economy, champion learning, foster an af fordable city, protect and conserve resources, communicate clearly and with transparency, partner with others (public and private), and celebrate what is uniquely Houston.

### 05. Houston Bike Plan

The 2015-2016 Houston Bike Plan is a year-long planning effort developed with the Houston community and many partners. The plan sets out a clear Vision to be a Gold-level Bicycle Friendly City by 2026. The plan establishes a framework for how to achieve that vision by building on the many successful efforts underway.

### 06. Hermann Park Master Plan

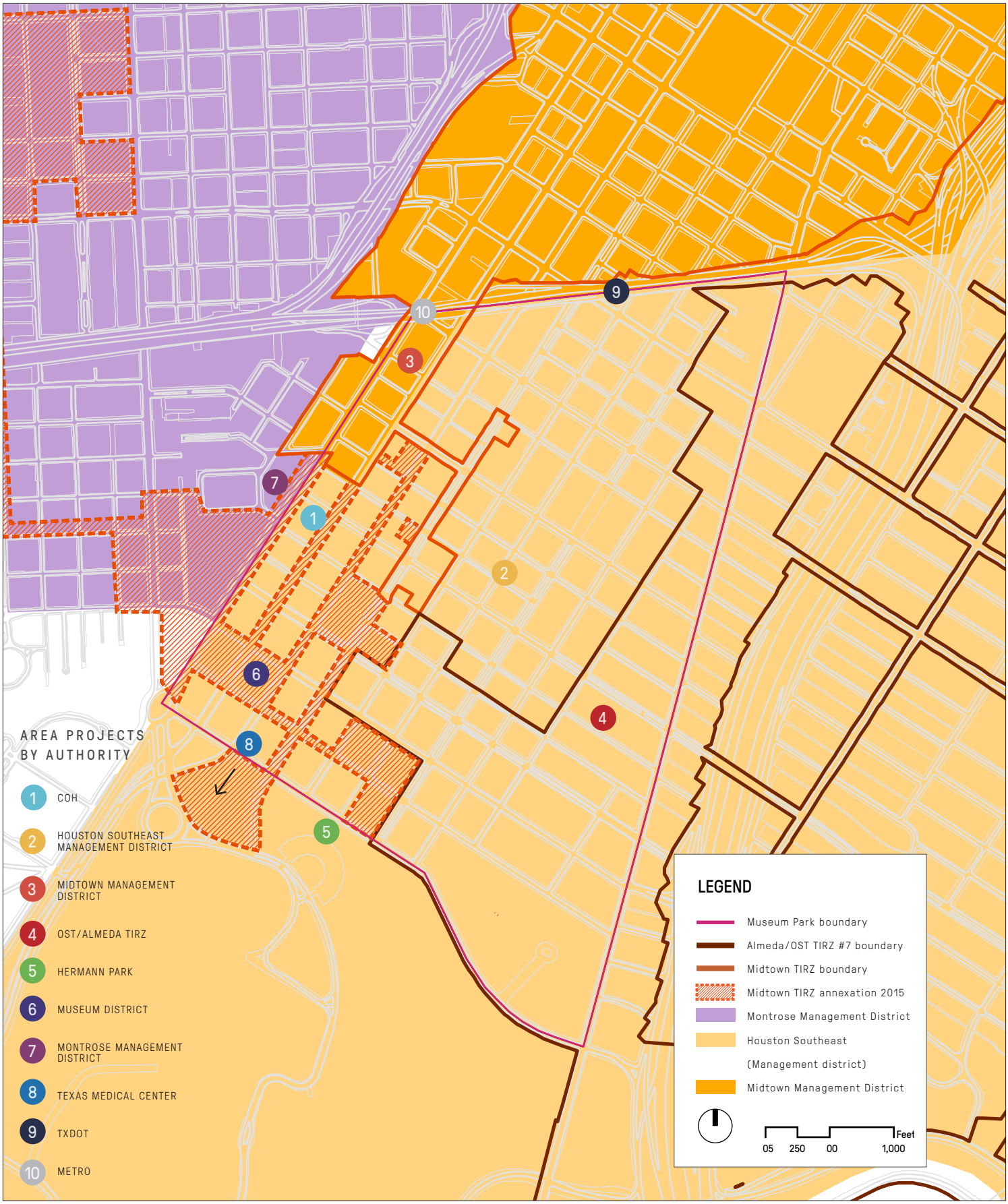
2016-2017 Hermann Park's Master Plan update looks to holistically revitalize and improve the Park's 445 acres with major focus on parking and traffic management, pedestrian, bike and METRORail access, new social spaces, ecological experiences of Brays Bayou and natural habitats within the Park, integration of historic Park landmarks, connectivity to and through the entirety of the Park. Livable Centers Study recommendations will be considered in the context of the plan.

### 07. Museum Of Fine Arts Houston Master Plan

Encompassing 14 acres in the heart of Houston's Museum District, the 2017-2019 MFAH campus redevelopment project is a major contribution to the City's efforts to improve the pedestrian experience of Houston. With an array of public plazas, reflecting pools, and gardens, as well as improved sidewalks, street lighting, and way-finding, the Fayez S. Sarofim Campus provides an active setting for three significant new structures, and a new regional destination on the southwestern edge of Museum Park.

### 08. 2012 Urban Houston Framework

This study was set to develop a comprehensive set of regulatory incentives that the City of Houston, as well as its regional partners, can use to selectively encourage dense, sustainable neighborhoods in appropriate locations, while protecting the character of existing, stable residential communities. Museum Park, under the umbrella of the Museum District, is a suggested partner for infrastructure and transportation service in Urban Centers and infrastructure accommodations for a growing number of visitors to the arts district. Lessons learned from this study may yield new opportunities and provide positive benefits for Museum Park.




AREA GOVERNING JURISDICTIONS MAP

## PLANNING MILESTONES

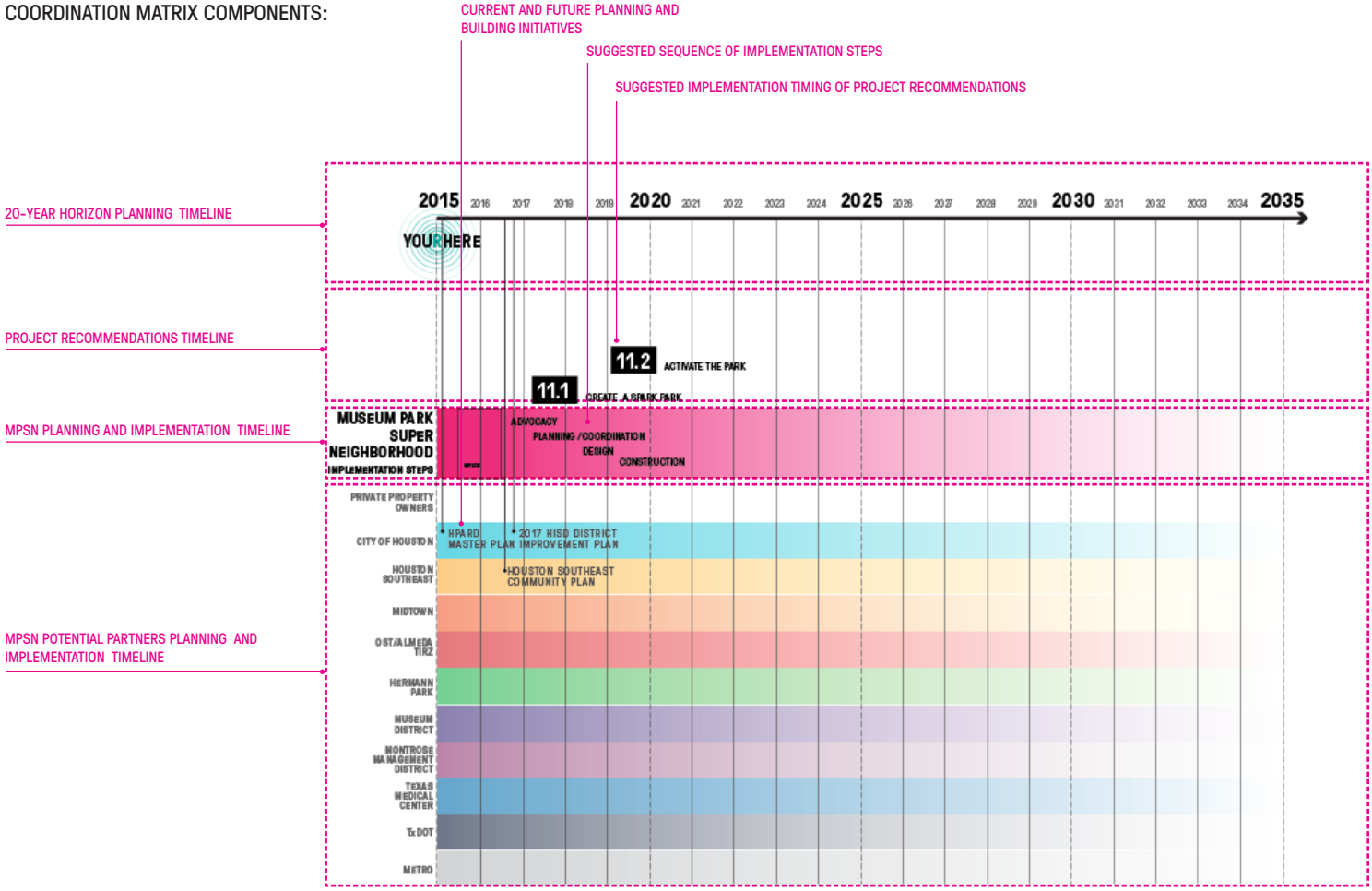
The future of development in Museum Park is largely dependent on external dynamics and the timelines of large capital projects. Substantial investment is being made in cultural institutions notably MFAH's new campus due to be finished in 2019. The 2015 expansion of the Midtown TIRZ encompasses the majority of Museum District and extends its influence into Museum Park. TxDOT's multi-billion dollar reconstruction of the US 59/I-45 freeway on the northern boundary tentatively scheduled to break ground in the early 2020s will have a transformative impact on the area, and offers opportunities to leverage the benefit of this investment in transportation and general quality of life initiatives in the area. Changes are coming rapidly to Museum Park, and the future for the Study Area by leveraging the investment opportunities depends on timely partnerships. A coordinated approach to implementing its vision is imperative. This Study's recommendations seek to clearly articulate that vision and its component projects in order to help the community leverage the investments in the area by other potential partners.

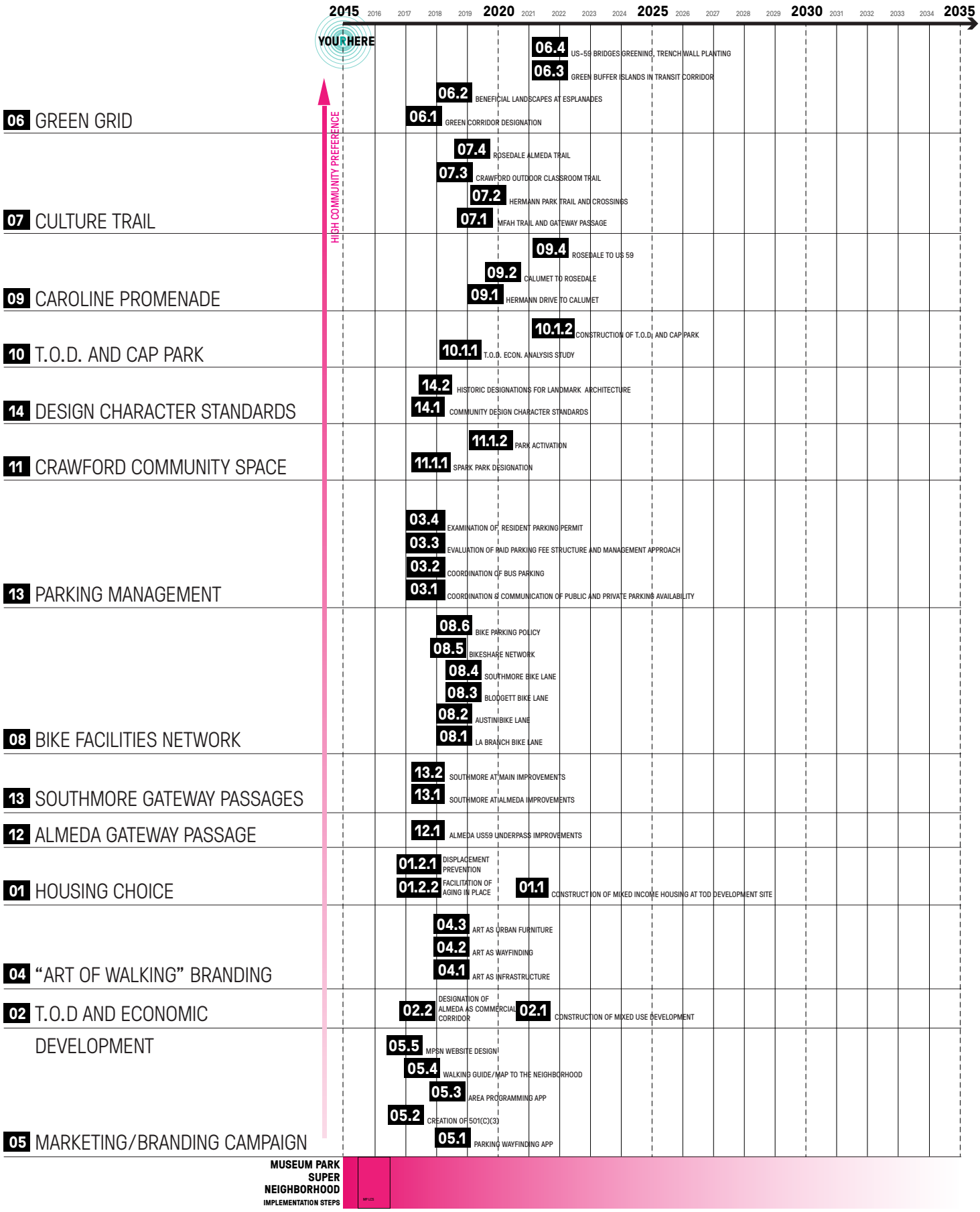
The outcomes of these transformational community projects will further the Livable Centers goals and go far in promoting the social, natural, and economic health of Museum Park.

Implementation strategies have been identified based on a timeline of planning milestones reflected in the Coordination Matrix. The Coordination Matrix is a visual tool that helps to cross-reference components of Museum Park's complex planning context and to propose potential phasing and sequencing of the Conceptual Plan recommendations. As planning and design efforts get underway, the timeline of future projects in the area needs to be updated for better coordination and leveraging of resources.

During the Study's final public meeting, the Conceptual Plan projects recommendations were ranked by the community. The summary table on the following page visualizes the order of preference from highest project preference at the top and lowest at the bottom.

COORDINATION MATRIX COMPONENTS:




2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035
YOU HERE
HIGH COMMUNITY PREFERENCE
06 GREEN GRID
06.4 US-59 BRIDGES GREENING, TRENCH WALL PLANTING
06.3 GREEN BUFFER ISLANDS IN TRANSIT CORRIDOR
06.2 BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES AT ESPLANADES
06.1 GREEN CORRIDOR DESIGNATION
07 CULTURE TRAIL
07.4 ROSEDALE ALMEDA TRAIL
07.3 CRAWFORD OUTDOOR CLASSROOM TRAIL
07.2 HERMANN PARK TRAIL AND CROSSINGS
07.1 MFAH TRAIL AND GATEWAY PASSAGE
09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
09.4 ROSEDALE TO US 59
09.2 CALUMET TO ROSEDALE
09.1 HERMANN DRIVE TO CALUMET
10 T.O.D. AND CAP PARK
10.1.2 CONSTRUCTION OF T.O.D. AND CAP PARK
10.1.1 T.O.D. ECON. ANALYSIS STUDY
14 DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS
14.2 HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS FOR LANDMARK ARCHITECTURE
14.1 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS
11 CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE
11.1.2 PARK ACTIVATION
11.1.1 SPARK PARK DESIGNATION
13 PARKING MANAGEMENT
03.4 EXAMINATION OF RESIDENT PARKING PERMIT
03.3 EVALUATION OF PAID PARKING FEE STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH
03.2 COORDINATION OF BUS PARKING
03.1 COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKING AVAILABILITY
08 BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK
08.6 BIKE PARKING POLICY
08.5 BIKESHARE NETWORK
08.4 SOUTHMORE BIKE LANE
08.3 BLODGETT BIKE LANE
08.2 AUSTIN BIKE LANE
08.1 LA BRANCH BIKE LANE
13 SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES
13.2 SOUTHMORE AT MAIN IMPROVEMENTS
13.1 SOUTHMORE AT ALMEDA IMPROVEMENTS
12 ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE
12.1 ALMEDA US59 UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS
01 HOUSING CHOICE
01.2.1 DISPLACEMENT PREVENTION
01.2.2 FACILITATION OF AGING IN PLACE
01.1 CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED INCOME HOUSING AT TOD DEVELOPMENT SITE
04 "ART OF WALKING" BRANDING
04.3 ART AS URBAN FURNITURE
04.2 ART AS WAYFINDING
04.1 ART AS INFRASTRUCTURE
02 T.O.D AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
02.2 DESIGNATION OF ALMEDA AS COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
02.1 CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT
05 MARKETING/BRANDING CAMPAIGN
05.5 MPSN WEBSITE DESIGN
05.4 WALKING GUIDE/MAP TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
05.3 AREA PROGRAMMING APP
05.2 CREATION OF 501(C)(3)
05.1 PARKING WAYFINDING APP
MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

# PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

## HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**01.1** CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED INCOME HOUSING AT TOD DEVELOPMENT SITE

### Metropolitan Transit Authority Of Harris County (METRO)

METRO owns land in and adjacent to the Museum Park Livable Centers Study project area that could potentially be the site of a mixed income development that includes mixed income housing and housing for seniors. METRO making the property available at no or low-cost would reduce the cost of providing housing and thus, provide an opportunity for expanding housing choice. METRO could also act as a partner in the project.

### Developer(s)

The property could be developed by combination of private, nonprofit, public sector, and quasi-public development entities.

### Low Income Housing Tax Credits

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, which was created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, allows an investor to claim a federal tax credit equal to a percentage of the cost incurred for development of the low-income units in a rental housing project. The tax credit is calculated as a percentage of costs incurred in developing the affordable housing property, and is claimed annually over a 10-year period. Tax credits are syndicated to raise capital for housing development projects. To qualify for the credit, a project must meet the requirements of a qualified low-income project. Project sponsors are required to set aside at least 40 percent of the units for renters earning no more than 60 percent of the area's median income or 20 percent of the units for renters earning 50 percent or less of the area's median income. (http://www.occ.gov/topics/community-affairs/publications/insights/insights-low-income-housing-tax-credits.pdf)

In Texas, this program is administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. Tax credits provide a source of equity financing for the development of affordable housing. The two types of tax credits that are awarded are 4% tax credits, which are non-competitive and 9% tax credits, which are competitive.

### HUD Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly

In support of senior housing, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides "capital advances to finance the construction, rehabilitation or acquisition with or without rehabilitation of structures that will serve as supportive housing for very low-income elderly persons, including the frail elderly, and provides rent subsidies for the projects to help make them affordable" (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal). Eligible sponsors are private nonprofit organizations and nonprofit consumer cooperatives that meet certain threshold requirements, so in order for this program to be used for senior housing in the proposed mixed use development, a collaboration with an eligible entity would have to be formed

### Midtown Redevelopment Authority

The Midtown Redevelopment Authority was created to aid, assist, and act on behalf of the City in the performance of the City's governmental functions to promote the common good and general welfare of the Midtown Area and to provide an operating and financing vehicle for implementing the Midtown TIRZ Project and Financing Plan. It has the ability to provide financing for projects located within its jurisdiction, which includes a portion of the study area. Redevelopment authorities can direct funding to capital costs, including the actual costs of the acquisition and construction of new buildings, structures, and fixtures the actual costs of the acquisition of land and equipment and the clearing and grading of land; financing costs, including all interest paid to holders of evidences of indebtedness or other obligations issued to pay for project costs and any premium paid over the principal amount of the obligations because of the redemption of the obligations before maturity; real property assembly costs; and professional service costs, including those incurred for architectural, planning, engineering, and legal advice and services; among other expenses. (Texas State Code, Chapter 311, Tax Increment Financing Act.)

### Community Development Block Grant

The City of Houston receives Community Development Block Grant funds that can be used for a variety of purposes that benefit low-moderate income households. These include improvements to the housing stock, infrastructure, clearance/acquisition, and social services. At least 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG funds can be leveraged with other Federal, state, local or private funds.

### Section 108 Loan Guarantee

The Section 108 Program allows for the CDBG funds to be used as a pledge against the payment of loans for housing rehabilitation, public facilities, economic development, and large-scale development projects. Repayment terms can be flexible, interest rates can be set below market, and project costs can be spread over time. The funds can be loaned to a private developer or used by the City to engage in development.

### HOME Investment Partnerships Program

The City of Houston receives these flexible HUD funds which are awarded to jurisdictions on a formula basis. HOME funds can be used to build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or to provide direct rental assistance to low-income people. HOME funds could subsidize rents or purchase prices, allowing for a mix of incomes in the housing portion of the proposed mixed use development.

### City of Houston 380 Agreements

Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code enables municipalities

to provide funds, city services, and city staff to encourage economic development. Under this provision of the code, among other uses, the city of Houston has provided subsidies to developers of Downtown housing to stimulate residential development in this part of the city. This mechanism has the potential for use in the proposed mixed use development in Museum Park.

**City of Houston Housing Trust Fund**
Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner has accepted a Mayor's Transition Team recommendation for the creation of a Housing Trust Fund. This represents an innovation for Houston and has the potential to expand housing choice at the proposed development site.

**Private Capital**
Private sources of capital from banks, pension funds, and other forms of private capital.

## 01.2 DISPLACEMENT PREVENTION FACILITATION OF AGING IN PLACE

**City of Houston**
The City of Houston has a Voluntary Visitability Program that addresses new construction. The program guidelines allow for small subsidies to make it possible for homes to be designed in such a way that people who have difficulty with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers can have ease of access. (www.visitability.org). If the ordinance were modified to include existing homes, it would potentially benefit eligible Museum Park residents.

**Community Development Block Grant**
Community Development Block Grant funds, described earlier, could potentially be used for physical modifications to the homes of eligible seniors.

**City of Houston Down Payment Assistance Programs**
Administered by the Housing and Community Development Department, this program "provides direct financial assistance at the closing to pay a portion of the required downpayment, closing cost, and other approved settlement charges." To be eligible, a property must be located within a designated revitalization area as determined by Houston's Mayor. (www.houstontx.gov/housing/workforce.html) The department also administers a Homebuyer Assistance Program for low and moderate income households. Funds may be used for down payment assistance or closing costs. This assistance could be directed to households desiring to purchase a unit in the mixed use development.

**State of Texas**
The Department of Housing and Community Affairs administers the Texas Housing Trust Fund, of which the Amy Young Barrier Removal Program is a component part. This program provides one-time grants to disabled low-income households, defined as households with income not exceeding 80 percent of the median income to make their homes more accessible. Grants of up to $20,000 are available to construct reasonable accommodations for renters and homeowners. This program could enhance the opportunity for eligible Museum Park seniors to age in place.

**AARP**
The Association of Retired Persons and the National Association of Home Builders have created a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist program that trains and certifies housing professionals in aging-friendly design. The Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council could collaborate with the Greater Houston Builders Association, the City of Houston, housing professionals, and other community-based organizations to provide this training locally.

**Community-Based Organizations**
The Museum Park Neighborhood Association can collaborate with community-based organizations in other mature communities, such as University Place and MacGregor to promote a change in policy regarding visitability and to advocate for tax relief and funding for retrofitting homes.

## Potential Funding Sources Description

**Community Development Block Grant**
The City of Houston (COH) receives Community Development Block Grant funds that can be used for a variety of purposes, including improvements to the housing stock, infrastructure, clearance/acquisition, and social services. At least 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG funds can be leveraged with other Federal, state, local or private funds and could provide a portion of the financing needed for the mixed income housing proposed for the mixed use development.

**HOME Investment Partnerships Program**
This program, described previously, has the flexibility to be used for structural modifications for eligible senior homeowners residing in single family detached units in Museum Park.

## 02.1 DESIGNATION OF ALMEDA AS COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

### Texas Enterprise Zone Program

The purpose of the Texas Enterprise Zone Program (EZ) is to encourage job creation and capital investment in areas of economic distress by removing governmental regulatory barriers to economic growth and to provide tax incentives and economic development benefits. The state identifies an EZ as any census block group in which the poverty level is 20% or higher as identified by the most recent United States census. Census tract 3126, block group 1 is included in the list of eligible block groups for this program.

### City Of Houston Tax Abatement

The City can offer tax abatements for the relocation, expansion or retention of businesses, if the incentives are critical to the loction decidion of an applicant. Moreover, the City considers tax abatements that include some level of State economic development assistance.
If the project site is located within a State Enterprise Zone, minimum requirements are reduced. Eligibility extends to new or expanding businesses (for example, retail, industrial, commercial) in neighborhood areas targeted for revitalization i.e., in neglected parts of the City) and transit-oriented development within 1,500 feet of transportation corridors, such as existing and planned Metro rail stops, multi-modal centers, and bus transfer stations.
*(www.houstontx.gov/ecdev)*

As stated previously, Census block group 1, census tract 3126 within Museum Park is on the State Enterprise Zone eligibility list. If the University Corridor Light Rail Transit line proceeds to construction and transit stops remain the same, a transit stop is planned for the intersection of Almeda Road and Wheeler Street, or there is opt-in and approval of Almeda Road as a designated transit street, businesses on Almeda Road would be eligible for tax abatements.

### Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #7

The City of Houston designates local tax increment reinvestment zones and Almeda Road lies within the boundaries of the OST/ Almeda Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #7. This TIRZ has already extensively financed infrastructure improvements to Almeda Road, but could potentially provide other forms of assistance to businesses in the Almeda Road targeted corridor.

### City Of Houston 380 Agreements

The intent of these agreements, which are authorized under the Local Government Code, is to promote economic development activities, such as commercial and retail projects. One such previous use was support for a retailer desiring to locate in a neighborhood underserved by retail establishments; a similar use of this mechanism could benefit Museum Park.

### Transition Team Report Related To Economic Development

As stated previously, Mayor Sylvester Turner's Transition Team recommended that economic development funding be systematically focused on marginalized communities and neighborhoods. This could result in a City-sponsored program that focuses commercial revitalization resources on commercial corridors that are similar to Almeda Road and include Almeda Road.

### Houston Business Development Inc. (HBDI)

HBDi provides loans and technical assistance to small businesses and micro enterprises. Loans have flexible terms and lower interest rates. One of its loan programs is for startup businesses that have not yet generated cash flow. These programs can be applied to businesses and prospective businesses on the Almeda corridor.

### Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Annually, Houston receives CDBG funds from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These funds can be expended for activities that benefit low-moderate income persons and low-moderate income persons, as well as low-moderate income housing. The City of Houston's Consolidated Plan that describes activities in which the city will engage with CDBG funds includes economic development.

### Gulf Coast Economic Development District (GCEDD)

GCEDD administers a business loan program on behalf of the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Businesses that have been unable to obtain a loan from a private lender are eligible to apply. There is a requirement that one job be generated for each $65,000 in loan funding. The program targets both existing businesses and start-ups. The interest rate is below market and the loan term is up to ten years. Loan proceeds may be used for working capital, purchase of assets, and closing costs. At least half of the loan must be used to purchase assets.*(http://www.h-gac.com/community/gcedd/business-loan-fund.aspx)*

### Houston Southeast

Houston Southeast is a management district that encompasses Museum Park. Almeda Road is the eastern boundary of Museum Park and is located within this management district, which was formed to "promote, develop, encourage and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, recreation, arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and the public welfare in the Southeast area." *(www.hse.org)*.

A business survey commissioned by Houston Southeast to identify the needs of businesses within its jurisdiction was completed in the spring of 2016. It identifies parking and security as primary issues facing these businesses. Houston Southeast is in a position to provide services that would enhance the Almeda corridor, as part of a package of targeted services.

**02.2** CONSTRUCTION OF MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

**Metropolitan Transit Authority Of Harris County (METRO)**
As discussed in Recommendations #1 and #2, METRO owns land in and adjacent to the Museum Park Livable Centers Study project area that could potentially be the site of commercial and retail services.

**Developer(s)**
The property could be developed by combination of private, nonprofit, public sector, and quasi-public development entities. METRO's participation could take a number of forms, as alluded to previously.

**Midtown Redevelopment Authority**
The Midtown Redevelopment Authority can finance projects located within its jurisdiction, which includes a portion of the study area. Eligible expenditures include: capital costs, including the actual costs of the acquisition and construction of new buildings, structures, and fixtures; the actual costs of the acquisition of land and equipment and the clearing and grading of land; financing costs, including loan interest; real property assembly costs; and professional service costs, including those incurred for architectural, planning, engineering, and legal advice and services; among other expenses. (Texas State Code, Chapter 311, Tax Increment Financing Act.) The authority could potentially participate as a funding partner in the proposed mixed income development.

**The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program**
The City of Houston receives Community Development Block Grant funds that can be used for a variety of purposes that benefit low-moderate income households. These include improvements to the housing stock, infrastructure, clearance/acquisition, and social services. At least 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons. CDBG funds can be leveraged with other Federal, state, local or private funds.

**Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program**
The Section 108 Program allows for the CDBG funds to be used as a pledge against the payment of loans for housing rehabilitation, public facilities, economic development, and large-scale development projects. Repayment terms can be flexible, interest rates can be set below market, and project costs can be spread over time. The funds can be loaned to a private developer or used by the City to engage in development.

**City Of Houston 380 Agreements**
Chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code enables municipalities to provide funds, city services, and city staff to encourage economic development. The City of Houston has provided subsidies to developers of retail uses to stimulate economic development in a mature, transitioning neighborhood like Museum Park, thus this mechanism has the potential for use in the proposed mixed use development in Museum Park.

**Private Capital**
Private sources of capital from banks, pension funds, and other forms of private capital.

## TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

**07** **08** **10** **14**
CULTURE TRAIL
BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK
T.O.D. AND CAP PARK
DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

Public investment in the public realm and transportation network can spur additional investment from the private sector. Public investments can come from a variety of sources including local sources, grants, and partnerships. It will be important to utilize a variety of funding sources and leverage grants and private funding to maximize local resources. The information below provides a variety of funding sources that could be utilized or pursued for implementation of the plan.

### Local Funding Sources

**Municipal Management Districts (MMDs)**
Municipal Management Districts are special districts created by the Texas legislature. Houston Southeast encompasses the Museum Park neighborhood and is empowered to promote transportation and economic development, along with several other functions within their boundaries. This includes funding for sidewalks, neighborhoods, streets, and more to make transportation facilities safer and more vibrant. Beyond infrastructure investment, MMDs also provide maintenance activities for transportation facilities and can implement programs.

**Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs)**
Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones are special zones created by City Council in efforts to attract new investment in an area. Taxes from new improvements are set aside in a fund designed to finance public improvements within the boundaries of the TIRZ. Public improvements can include bicycle facilities and amenities. Many TIRZ boundaries overlap with MMDs as well, providing even greater opportunities to support implementation and maintenance of the Livable Centers Plan. Within Museum Park, the Midtown TIRZ and OST/Almeda TIRZ both operate. Coordinating and leveraging funding with the MMD and TIRZs is an important strategy to identify funding for improvements, and leverage funding from other sources.

Coordination with the City of Houston also provides opportunity to leverage funding that may be spent on maintenance or reconstruction projects within the Museum Park neighborhood.

## Federal Grant Opportunities

**Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)**
STBGP funds are perhaps the most flexible federal funding available and may be used for nearly all transportation project types, including construction of a wide variety of sidewalk and bicycle facilities and non-construction projects such as maps, data collection and monitoring, bike share, and more. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) allocates this federal funding for the Houston region and holds a competitive process for distributing funds typically every other year, coordinating with approval of the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Within the STBGP program there is a set-aside specifically for bicycle and pedestrian. Eligible activities include infrastructure facilities, safety and educational activities, and Safe Routes to School programs. These funds are subject to the same competitive process and allocation as the overarching STBGP funds.

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program**
Funds from CMAQ program may be used to construct sidewalk and bicycle facilities if they demonstrate an air quality improvement. CMAQ funds are also allocated through a competitive process by the H-GAC, and typically match the same call-for-projects timing as STBGP funds.

**The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program**
The program provides annual grants on a formula basis to cities and counties. These grants are intended to revitalize neighborhoods, improve economic development, and provide improved community facilities and services. Eligible activities include construction of public facilities improvements, including sidewalks and bikeways. Coordination with the City of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department would be required.

**H-GAC's Downtown Public Spaces Improvements Program**
The program is designed to help enhance public spaces such as gateways, parks, and business districts. Eligible enhancements must be part of a plan or strategy to improve the area to stimulate reinvestment and commercial activity, to restore and preserve the historic character of the community and to improve the appearance of downtown and gateway areas. Potential projects include improving streetscapes, replacing sidewalks, installing signage, creating public spaces, and more. Funds are awarded two times per year.

## Innovative Partnerships

Partnerships with city departments, outside agencies, and others within the community are key to funding transportation facilities and improvements and leveraging resources efficiently. As sidewalks and bikeways provide healthy, affordable, and fun transportation options to a community, they also add significant value. These projects can attract investment interest from developers, businesses, hospitals, philanthropic organizations, and non-profits. The following list identifies means to better leverage resources from these entities.

**Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO)**
As Museum Park is connected to multiple transit services, METRO can also be an important partner. Federal Transit Authority (FTA) formula funding allocated to METRO is available to be spent on access to transit facilities, providing parking, improving signage, and even maintaining those facilities, provided there is a link to transit. Better connections to the METRORail Red Line, Wheeler Station, and bus stops would improve the livability of Museum Park, as well as benefit METRO.

**Businesses and Developers**
Businesses and developers can be partners to developing better infrastructure and providing amenities for people walking and biking in Museum Park. Financial assistance in connecting people on foot or on bike to their business or providing parking, other amenities, and promotion of walking and bicycling in the neighborhood bicycling are just a few ways that businesses may be partners in implementing recommendations in this plan.

**Hospitals and Other Health Service Providers**
Health service providers are natural places of concern for community health and can be a partner for improving active transportation facilities. For example, the Seattle Children's Hospital committed to making bicycle and pedestrian improvements in its Major Institution Master Plan. Through that, they are improving nearby connections, including bike lanes, to the hospital and investing $2 million in a Bicycle and Pedestrian Fund to build infrastructure to help employers and visitors access the hospital safely. Working with hospitals in the Texas Medical Center, is an additional strategy that could help provide increased activity to and within the Museum Park neighborhood.

**Philanthropic Entities and Non-Profits**
Partnerships with non-profit organizations can demonstrate support for projects and programs beyond government entities, which can be crucial to obtaining federal funds or leveraging new local funding. The Kinder Foundation, the Houston Endowment and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are potential resources that have supported bicycle, pedestrian, and environmental projects. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation particularly looks for projects if they can be tied to research or promotion of health and physical activity.

**Parking Benefit District**
A Parking Benefit Districts can serve as a financing tool to support improvements in employment and activity centers. Within a parking benefit district, public parking spaces (on and off-street) are charged hourly rates designed to keep a particular percentage of parking spaces vacant at all times. Funds collected from parking charges go directly to improvements within the district, such as bike facilities and amenities. According to case studies in Austin, Texas and Washington, D.C., the Federal Highway Administration has found that the application of parking benefit districts has been shown to reduce the need for surface parking and improve traffic congestion while funding local improvements, such as bicycle facilities within the district.

## PLACEMAKING AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 04 | 06 | 07 |
| 09 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 |

ART OF WALKING BRANDING PROGRAM
GREEN GRID
CULTURE TRAIL
CAROLINE PROMENADE
T.O.D. AND CAP PARK
CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE
ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE
SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGE
DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

In addition to the local partnerships and funding opportunities that would ordinarily be considered for placemaking and sustainability project implementation, such as the Management Districts, TIRZs, City of Houston, there is a number of funding opportunities identified by the Goodman Corporation (that has been working closely with Houston Southeast) for projects focused on mobility and transportation, but also parks, community agriculture, placemaking, and cultural resources. A few programs from that list may be supportive of the placemaking and sustainability goals identified in the the Conceptual Plan recommendations for Museum Park.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
**Farm to School Grant Program**
Food and Nutrition Services of the USDA administers funds under this grant to improve access to local foods and expand educational activities in agriculture and gardening for students in kindergarten to 12th grade. Grants can be used for planning, training and technical assistance, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, building partnerships, implementing farm to school programs, and supporting operations. Eligible recipients include state and local agencies and non-profit groups. The grant can be used for projects that increase the purchase and consumption of locally produced fresh food and implementing nutrition education and garden-based curriculum. The development of Museum Park landscapes as an "outdoor classroom" and collaboration with educational institutions in the neighborhood to support projects in that vein may fit well with the educational requirements outlined in the program.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
**Environmental Education (EE) Grants**
The EPA awards approximately $2 million to $3 million annually through its EE program. These grants "support environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues and provide them with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment." Beneficial landscapes initiative in the "Green Grid" recommendation part of the plan may be fully in line with the EPA grant requirements.

**The Houston Endowment**
The foundation provides grants to support initiatives focused on arts and culture, education, the environment, health, and human services. Grants are awarded for general operating support, project support, capital improvements, capacity building, innovative approaches, public policy and engagement, and research. The foundation accepts applications and awards grants throughout the year with no hard deadlines. No local matching funds are required.

**The Cockrell Foundation**
The foundation provides financial assistance to 501(c)(3) organizations primarily in the Houston area to support education, youth activities, health care, medical research, and cultural institutions. Grants are given to support annual campaigns, capital campaigns, endowments, building funds, matching funds, special projects, and general purposes.

**The Kresge Foundation**
Funding is provided to government entities and non-profits with projects focusing on arts and culture, education, environment, health, and human services. Most grants are awarded on an on-going basis. Both single- and multi-year grants are given for operating support, project support, and program-related investments.

**City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods**
**Neighborhood Matching Grant Program**
This grant helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from $500 to $5,000. The program is designed to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism to help neighborhood-based organizations learn the art of planning and community building through neighborhood projects.

**ArtPlace National Grants Program**
This grant is designed to invest in creative placemaking projects that involve cross sector partners committed to strengthening the social, physical, and economic fabric oftheir communities. ArtPlace provides support for projects led by the arts/artists that are integrated with a community's economic development and revitalization strategies, and have the potential to attract additional support. Non-profit organizations, local and tribal governing bodies, individual artists/designers, and for-profit organizations are eligible, and awards range between $50,000 and $500,000.

**Texas Historical Commission (THC)**
**Certified Local Government (CLG) Grants**
Certified-local-government CLG grants provide funding to participating city and county governments to develop and sustain an effective local preservation program critical to maintaining local historic resources. Activities eligible for CLG grants funding must be tied to the statewide comprehensive preservation planning process. Rehabilitation or restoration of properties individually-listed in the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register historic district qualify are eligible activities.

# IMPLEMENTATION TABLES

# PROJECTS TOTAL

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | COST |
|---|---|
| HOUSING CHOICE | N/A |
| T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | $22,391 |
| PARKING MANAGEMENT | TBD |
| THE "WALK OF ART" BRANDING PROGRAM | $255,998 |
| MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES | $7,464 |
| GREEN GRID | $21,855,069 |
| CULTURE TRAIL | $5,367,749 |
| AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK | $397,506 |
| CAROLINE PROMENADE | $10,394,416 |
| METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK | $151,317,861 |
| CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE | $1,388,211 |
| ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE | $235,847 |
| SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES | $174,633 |
| COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS | $72,688 |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$191,489,831** |

NEIGHBORHOOD 01

# HOUSING CHOICE

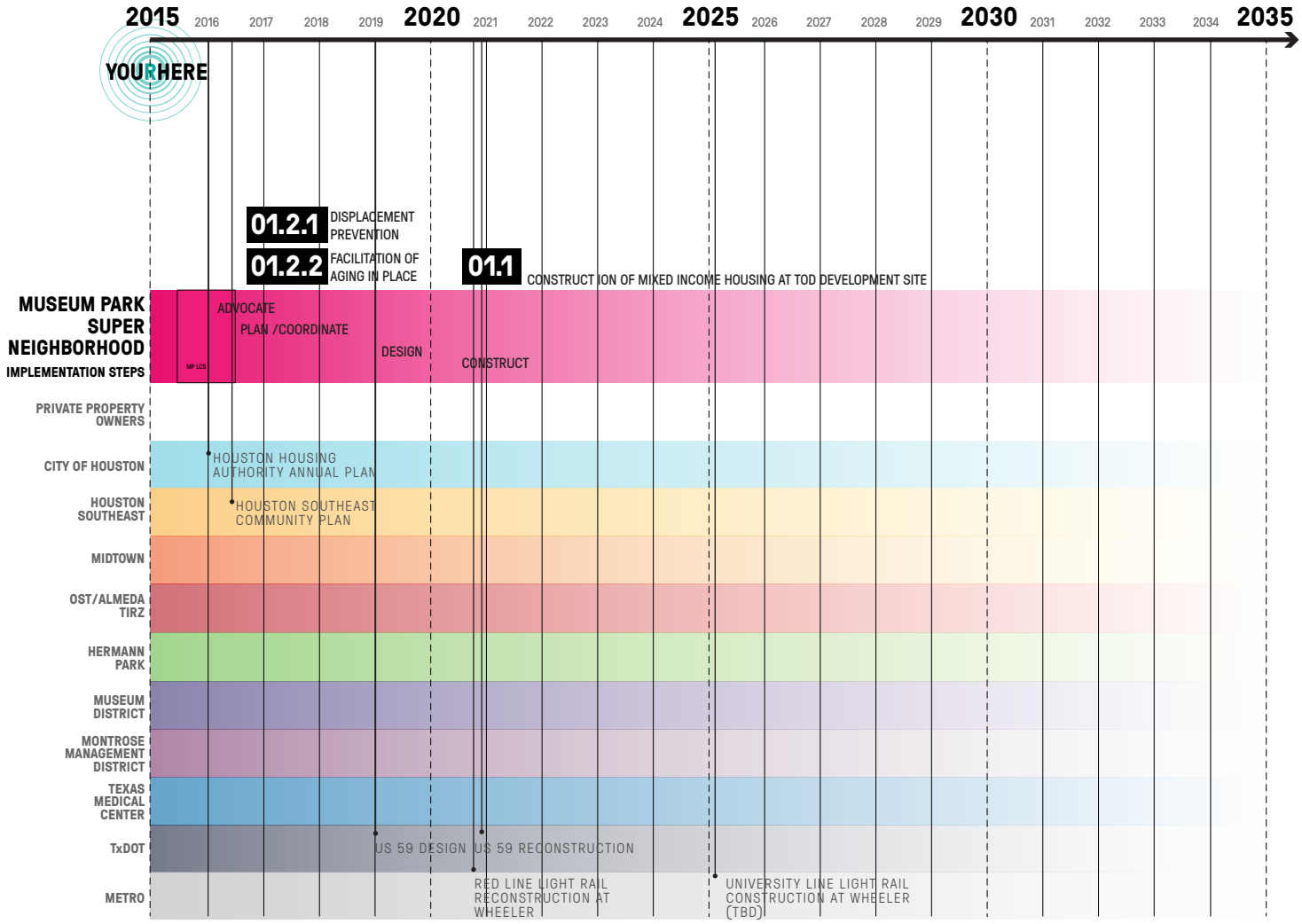
Collaborate with METRO to develop a T.O.D. mixed use site on METRO-owned property that includes mixed income housing, senior housing and commercial, retail development. Collaborate with community-based organizations on public policy in support of tax relief and funding for owner-occupied housing improvements.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 02 T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 10 METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTER: | KEY DATES | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>METRO;<br>PO | SUBSIDIES;<br>LOW-INTEREST LOANS;<br>GRANTS | METRO;<br>MD;<br>PO | 2017- TXDOT PUBLIC REVIEW OF US 59 DEIS<br><br>2019-TXDOT US 59 DEATIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US 59 RECONSTRUCTION | Engage TxDOT in optimizing the design for US 59 in anticipation of the housing development opportunity.<br><br>Engage METRO in planning for potential property redevelopment.<br><br>Engage the COH in developing strategies for facilitating aging in place city-wide and in Museum Park. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NEIGHBORHOOD 01

# HOUSING CHOICE

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.0 HOUSING CHOICE | 1 | MIXED USE T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT | EA | $300,000[1] | N/A | N/A |
| | 2 | DISPLACEMENT PREVENTION THOUGH TAX RELIEF | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | 3 | HOMEOWNERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR AGING IN PLACE | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Total** | **$0.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting, Etc. 18%** | **$0.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | **$0.00** |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | **$0.00** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$0** |

**Notes:**

**Development program for targeted housing will be determined through market and financial studies**

***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

**[1] $300,000 per unit cost**

NEIGHBORHOOD 02

# T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

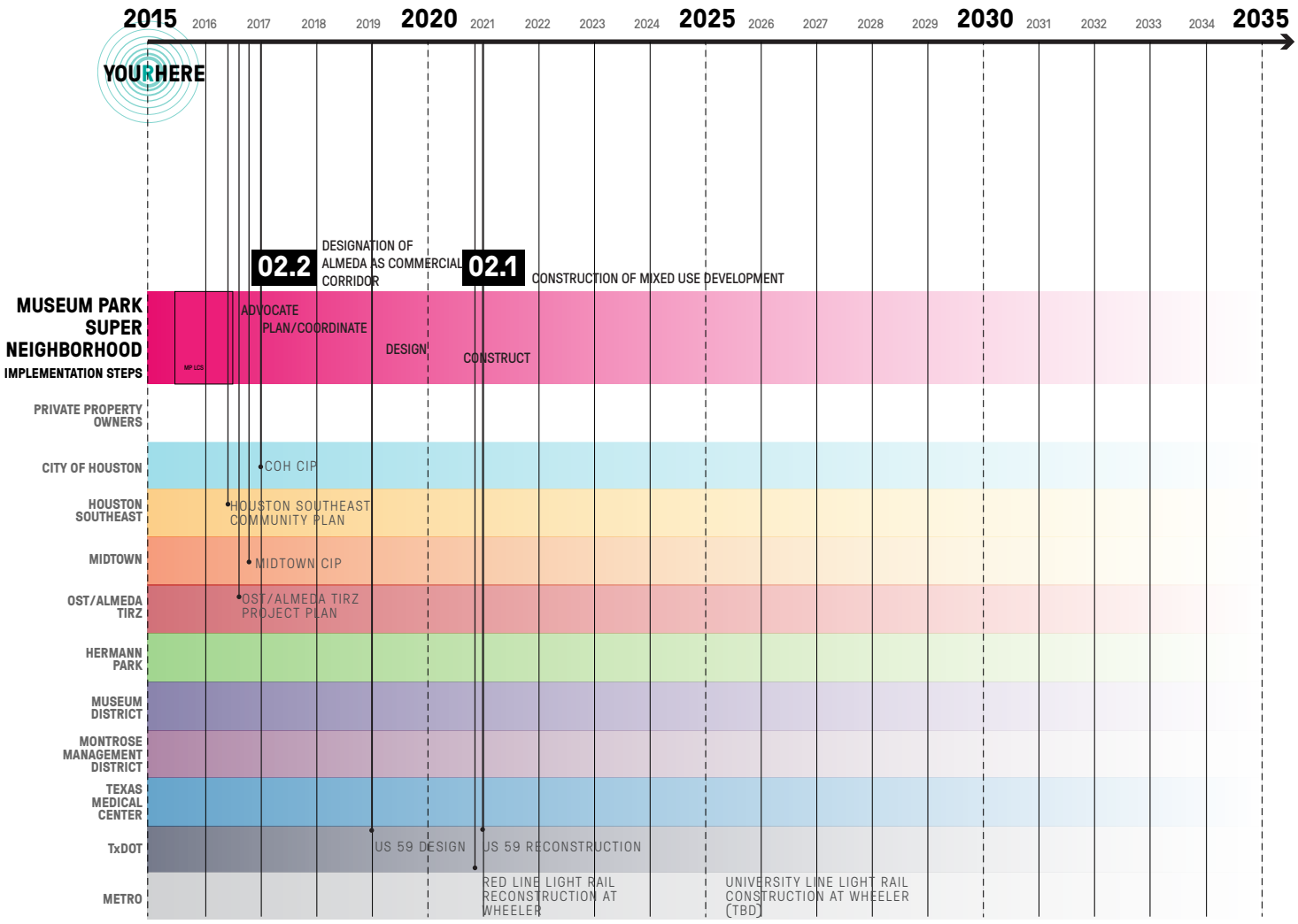
Encourage and support mixed-use and transit-oriented development on mixed-use corridors and potential transit-oriented development corridors, with the goal of increasing retail options

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 01 HOUSING CHOICE
- 10 METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MPNA;<br>PO | SUBSIDIES;<br>LOW-INTEREST;<br>LOANS;<br>GRANTS | METRO;<br>MD;<br>PO;<br>OTHERS | 2017- TXDOT PUBLIC REVIEW OF US 59 DEIS<br><br>2019-TXDOT US 59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US 59 RECONSTRUCTION | Engage HSE and the COH in designating Almeda Rd. as a commercial corridor.<br><br>Engage TxDOT in optimizing the design for US 59 in anticipation of the T.O.D development opportunity.<br><br>Engage METRO in planning for potential property redevelopment. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NEIGHBORHOOD 02

# T.O.D AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.0 T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | 1 | MIXED USE T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT | EA | $300,000[1] | N/A | N/A |
| | 2 | COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DESIGNATION | EA | $15,000[2] | 1 | $15,000 |
| | 3 | PRIMARY COMMERCIAL NODES | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$15,000.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting, Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$2,700.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$2,655.00** |
| **General Conditions, Bonds, Etc. 10%** | | | | | | **$2,035.50** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$22,391** |

**Notes:**

**Development program for targeted housing will be determined through market and financial studies**

***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

**[1] $300,000 per unit cost**

**[2]Allowance for commercial corridor designation application consultant**

NEIGHBORHOOD 03

# PARKING MANAGEMENT

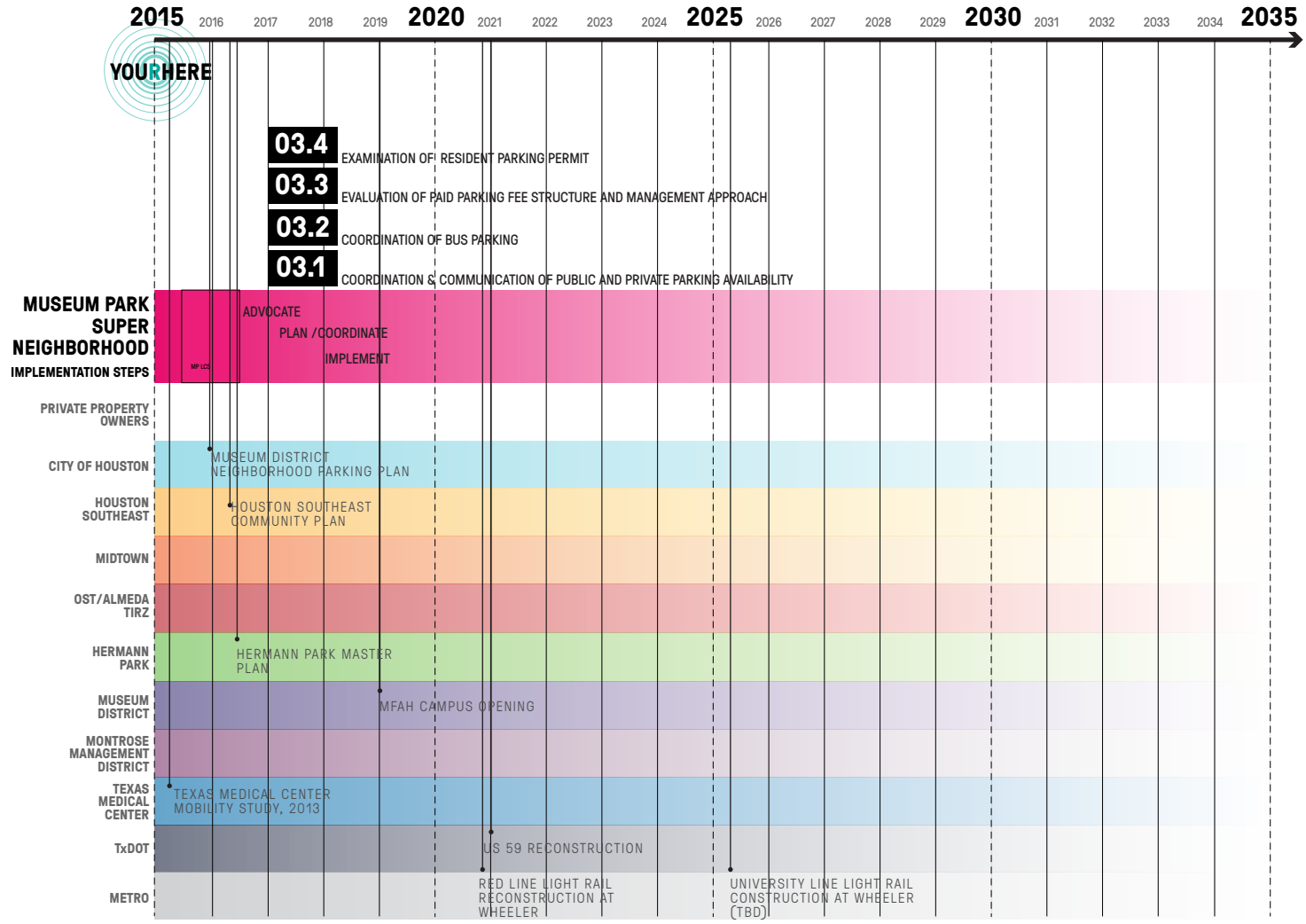
Identify parking requirements and management strategies that incrementally balance parking choice. Considerations for aesthetic values and alternative, non-automotive trips are highly encouraged.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 08 LA BRANCH/AUSTIN TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTER: | KEY DATES | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>METRO;<br>MD;<br>MPNA;<br>MDA;<br>PARK PLAZA;<br>TMC;<br>HPC,<br>RICE U;<br>PBD | PBD<br>COH | PBD;<br>PARTNERS | 2017- HERMANN PARK MASTER PLAN COMPLETION<br>2017- TXDOT PUBLIC REVIEW OF US 59 DEIS<br>2019-MFAH CAMPUS OPENING<br>2019-TXDOT US 59 DEATIL DESIGN<br>2020-2022 US 59 RECONSTRUCTION | Conduct a study on the value of establishing Parking Benefits District.<br><br>Engage partners in use of underutilized space outside of the neighborhood for bus parking.<br><br>Engage partners in coordinating information about parking availability. Improve means of communicating information about parking availability.<br><br>Engage COH in evaluating paid metered and resident permit parking. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NEIGHBORHOOD 03

# PARKING MANAGEMENT

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.0 PARKING MANAGEMENT | 1 | CREATE A PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT[1] | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| | 2 | COORDINATE ADDITIONAL BUS PARKING | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| | 3 | COORDINATE AVAILABLE SURFACE PARKING | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| | 4 | REVISE PAID PARKING FEE STRUCTURE | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| | 5 | EXAMINE PERMIT PARKING FOR RESIDENTS | TBD | TBD | TBD | TBD |
| Total | | | | | | $0.00 |
| Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18% | | | | | | $0.00 |
| Construction Contingency 15% | | | | | | $0.00 |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc. 10% | | | | | | $0.00 |
| GRAND TOTAL: | | | | | | $0 |

Notes:

*Allowance in 2016 dollars

[1] Initial costs will be determined with COH. Costs will depend on scale and coverage of the PBD for equipment, installation and management. Implementation is likely advanced by city. Early revenues will be returned to city to cover initial costs. Revenue thereafter will go into the district for additional projects.

NEIGHBORHOOD 04

# THE "ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM

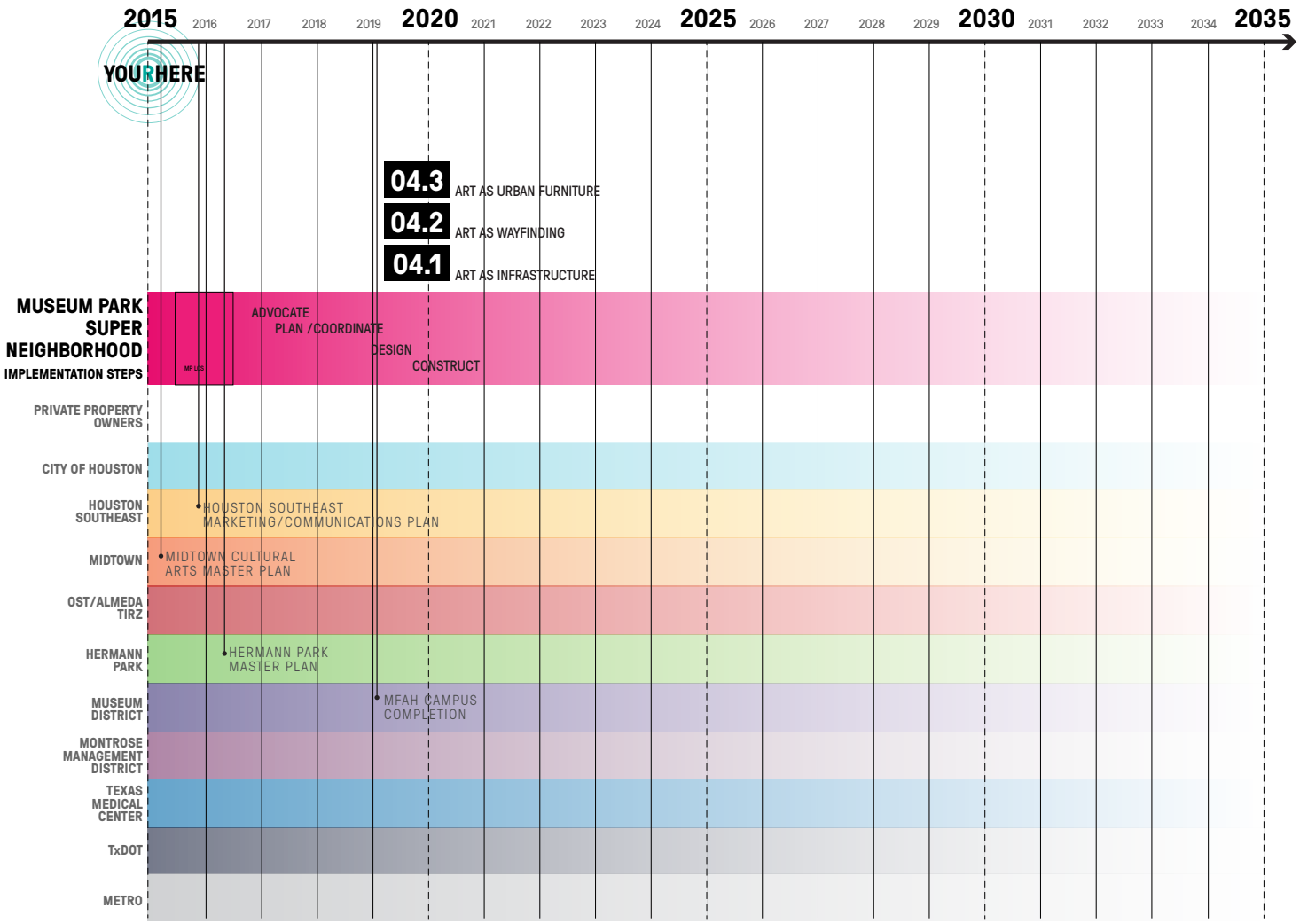
Develop a custom placemaking program with functional art that highlights pedestrian loops/routes through the neighborhood

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSE;<br>MDA;<br>MPSN;<br>MMD;<br>PO | PARTNERS;<br>GRANTS;<br>PRIVATE FUNDING | HSE;<br>MDA;<br>MMD;<br>MPSN | 2019- MFAH CAMPUS COMPLETION | Engage partners in developing a public realm arts program.<br><br>Coordinate with MFAH and other arts institutions existing public realm design.<br><br>Engage artists/designers in developing the "art of walking" objects.<br><br>Install "art of walking" objects in Museum Park.<br><br>Seek media coverage to draw attention to the idea of improving walkability through the arts. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NEIGHBORHOOD 04

# THE "ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.0 THE 'ART OF WALKING' BRANDING PROGRAM | 1 | ART AS INFRASTRUCTURE | EA | $3,000 | 17 | $51,000 |
| | 2 | ART AS WAYFINDING | EA | $2,500 | 13 | $32,500 |
| | 3 | ART AS URBAN FURNITURE | EA | $4,000 | 22 | $88,000 |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$171,500.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$30,870.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$30,355.50** |
| **General Conditions, Bonds, Etc. 10%** | | | | | | **$23,272.55** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$255,998** |

**Notes:**
***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

NEIGHBORHOOD 05

# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

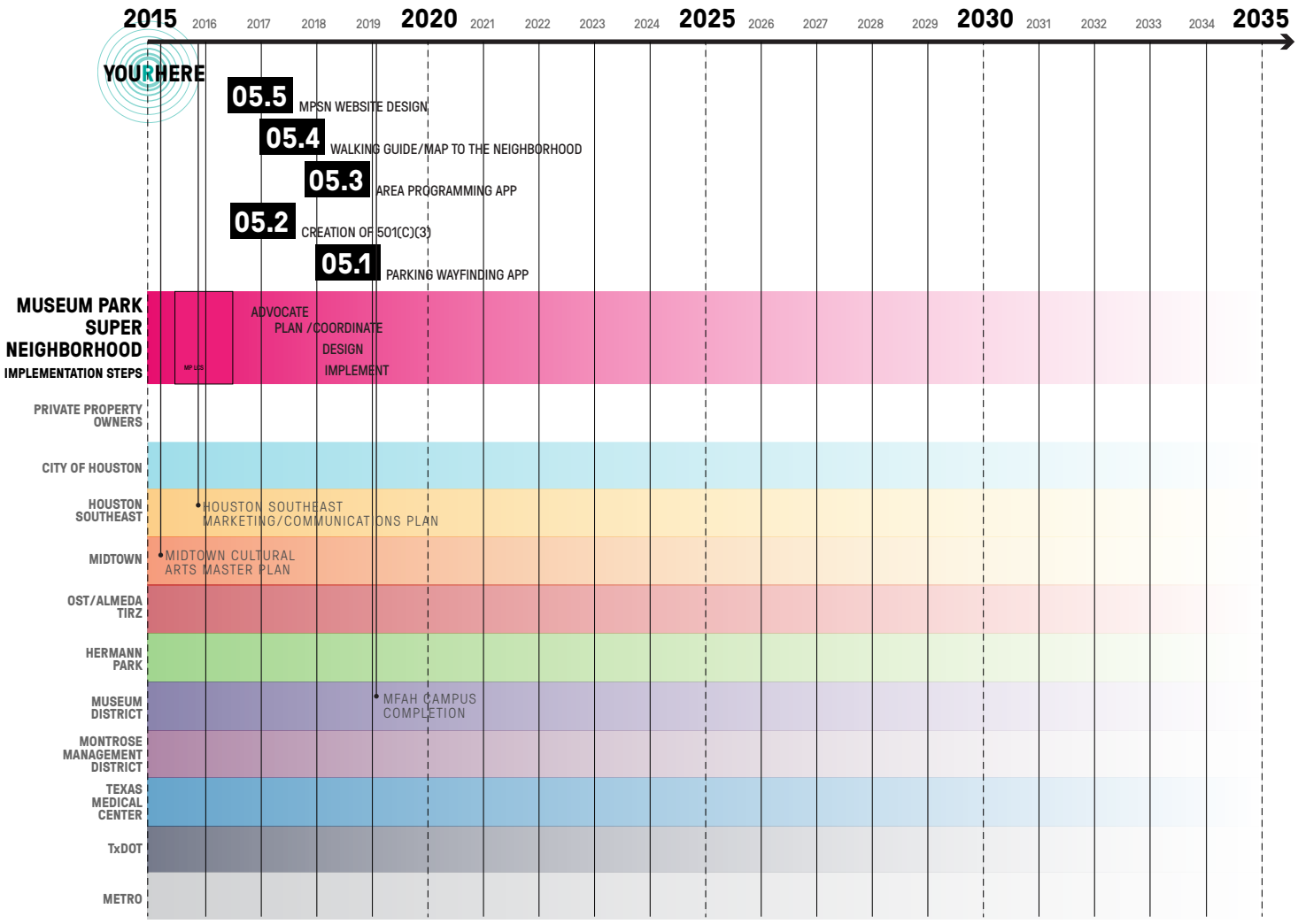
Develop advocacy, marketing, and communications strategies by building on Marketing and Communications Plan by Houston Southeast, to promote neighborhood awareness, participation, and fundraising.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSE;<br>MDA;<br>PBD; | GRANTS,<br>PBD,<br>HSE | HSE;<br>MPSN | 2019- MFAH CAMPUS COMPLETION | Create Museum Park Not-for-Profit Organization.<br><br>Upgrade MPSN website.<br><br>Coordinate with HSE on developing print and we collateral for MP in context of HSE overall marketing/econ. development goals.<br><br>Collaborate with partners on creating a coordinated parking wayfinding and events/programming app. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5.0 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES | 1 | PARKING WAYFINDING APP COLLABORATION | LS | N/A | 1 | N/A |
| | 2 | CREATION OF A 501(C)(3) | EA | $5,000 | 1 | $5,000 |
| | 3 | AREA PROGRAMMING APP COLLABORATION | LS | N/A | 1 | N/A |
| | 4 | "WALKING GUIDE TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD" INITIATIVE | LS | N/A | 1 | N/A |
| | 5 | SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD WEB DESIGN | LS | N/A | 1 | N/A |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$5,000.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$900.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$885.00** |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | | | | | | **$678.50** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$7,464** |

**Notes:**
***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

CORRIDORS 06

# GREEN GRID

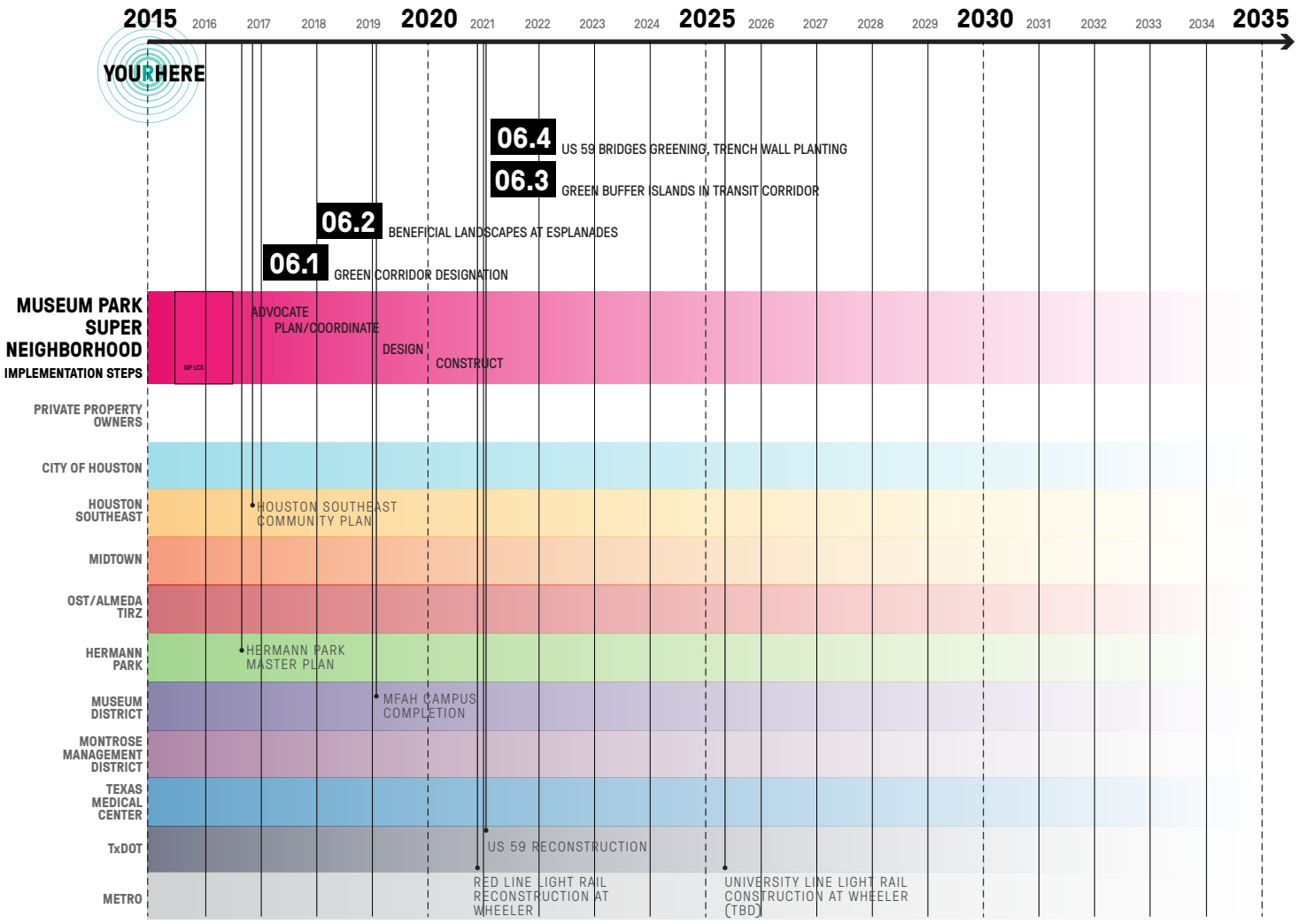
Develop area landscapes as a robust green network that extends the park character and benefits into the city.

**ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
- 10 METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK
- 11 CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>TXDOT;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MPNA;<br>MDA;<br>MD;<br>TIRZ 2;<br>SH;<br>PO;<br>HPC | HSE;<br>TXDOT;<br>HPARD<br>GRANTS | COH;<br>TXDOT;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MPNA;<br>MPSN;<br>PO | 2017- HERMANN PARK MASTER PLAN COMPLETION<br><br>2019-MFAH CAMPUS COMPLETION<br><br>2019-TXDOT US 59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US 59 RECONSTRUCTION<br><br>2020-2022 METRO RED LINE/US 59 CROSSING RE-CONSTRUCTION AT WHEELER | Advocate and partner with local representatives to promote Green Corridor designation in MP.<br><br>Seek funding and solicit landscape design for the esplanades.<br><br>Engage relevant partnerships for US 59 greening.<br><br>Promote addition of landscape buffers at transit corridors of Fannin and San Jacinto Streets with METRO and COH. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



CORRIDORS 06

# GREEN GRID

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6.0 GREEN GRID | 1 | GREEN CORRIDORS DESIGNATION | LS | $15,000 | 1 | $15,000 |
| | 2 | BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS SOFTSCAPE AND IRRIGATION[1] | LF | $115 | 8,500 | $977,500 |
| | 3 | HERMANN PARK CORRIDOR | LF | $57 | 4,200 | $239,400 |
| | 4 | BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPE CORRIDORS R.O.W. IMPROVEMENTS | LF | $1,467 | 8,500 | $12,469,500 |
| | 5 | GREEN BUFFER ISLANDS | LF | $59 | 7,100 | $418,900 |
| | 6 | MEDIAN DEMO AND RECONSTRUCTION | LF | $40 | 7,100 | $284,000 |
| | 7 | BRIDGE GREENING | EA | $25,000 | 6 | $150,000 |
| | 8 | US-59 BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPE GREEN WALL PLANTING[2] | LF | $29 | 3,000 | $87,000 |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$14,641,300.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$2,635,434.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$2,591,510.10** |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | | | | | | **$1,986,824.41** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$21,855,069** |

**Notes:**
***Allowance in 2016 dollars**
**[1] Excludes Caroline, refer to project 9**
**[2]Excludes cost of wall**

CORRIDORS 07

# CULTURE TRAIL

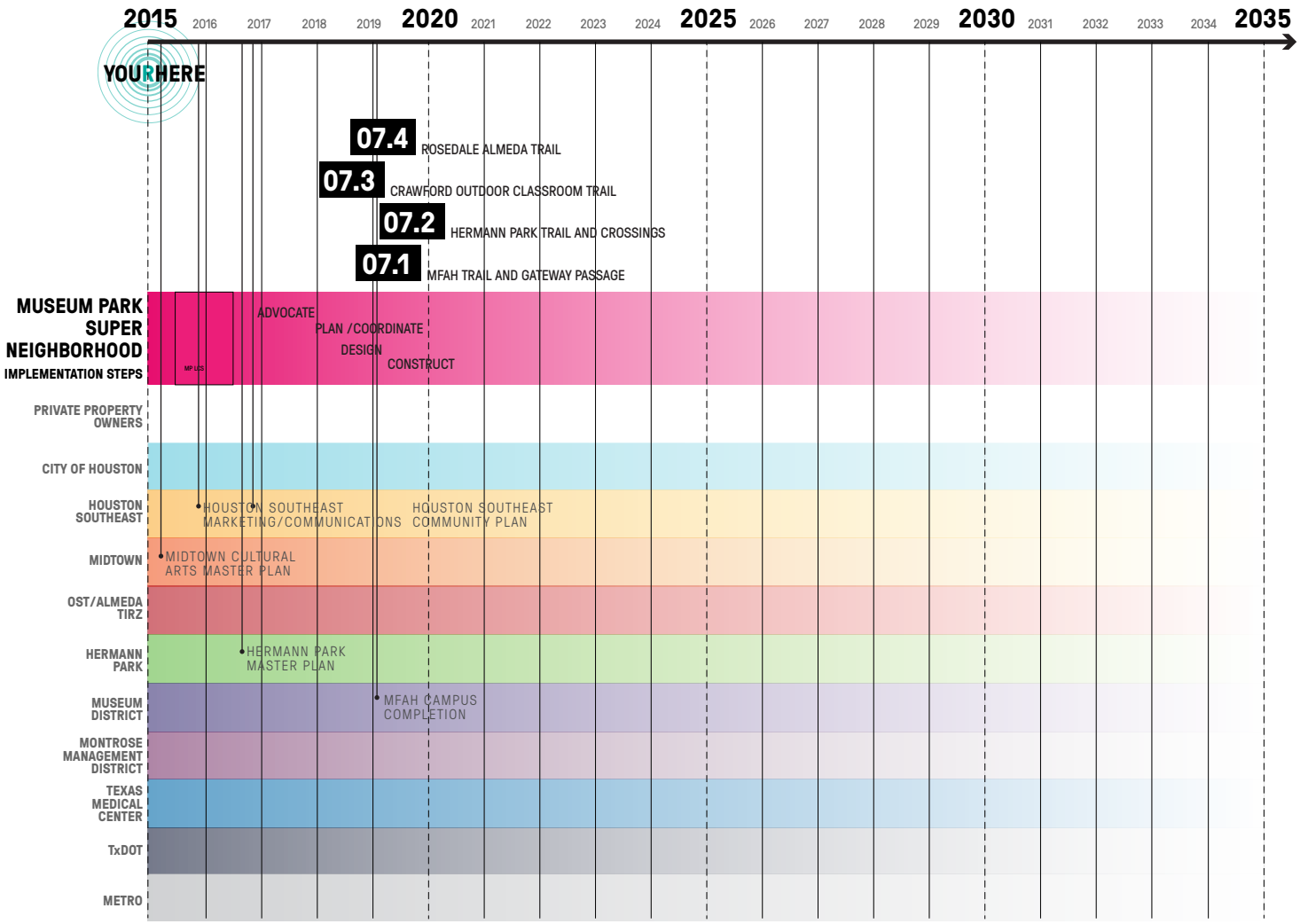
Designate an east-west walking/biking trail that connects the MFAH Campus with Hermann Park and Almeda Corridor via Museum Park neighborhood.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 04 THE 'ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM
- 06 GREEN GRID
- 09 CAROLINE PROMENADE
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MPNA;<br>MDA;<br>MMD;<br>SPMC;<br>TIRZ 2;<br>TIRZ 7;<br>SH,<br>HFC;<br>PO;<br>HPC | HSE;<br>GRANTS;<br>PRIVATE FUNDING | COH;<br>HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>PBD | 2017- HERMANN PARK MASTER PLAN COMPLETION<br><br>2019-MFAH CAMPUS COMPLETION | Create partnership to promote Culture Trail designation and start fundraising.<br><br>Partner with MFAH /HSE / St. Paul's Methodist Church to promote an extension of streetscape upgrades along Binz Street from Fannin to Caroline Streets.<br><br>Partner with HPC to promote improvements at street intersections along Hermann Drive.<br><br>Solicit design services and implement construction. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



CORRIDORS 07

# CULTURE TRAIL

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7.0 CULTURE TRAIL | 1 | MFAH CULTURE TRAIL | LF | $200 | 950 | $190,000 |
| | 2 | MFAH CULTURE TRAIL LINKAGES | LF | $200 | 1,850 | $370,000 |
| | 3 | MFAH GATEWAY | LS | $100,000 | 1 | $100,000 |
| | 4 | HERMANN PARK CENTENNIAL CULTURE TRAIL | LF | $200 | 1,750 | $350,000 |
| | 5 | CAROLINE CULTURE TRAIL LINKAGES[1] | LF | $200 | 1,880 | $376,000 |
| | 6 | HERMANN PARK CENTENNIAL GATEWAY | LS | $100,000 | 1 | $100,000 |
| | 7 | CRAWFORD OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CULTURE TRAIL | LF | $200 | 2,775 | $555,000 |
| | 8 | CRAWFORD OUTDOOR CLASSROOM CULTURE TRAIL LINKAGES | LF | $200 | 2,900 | $580,000 |
| | 9 | ROSEDALE ALMEDA CULTURE TRAIL | LF | $200 | 2,900 | $580,000 |
| | 10 | ROSEDALE ALMEDA CULTURE TRAIL LINKAGES | LF | $200 | 1,975 | $395,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Total** | **$3,596,000.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | **$647,280.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | **$636,492.00** |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | **$487,977.20** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$5,367,749** |

**Notes:**

***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

**[1] Excludes Trail Along Caroline, refer to project 9**

CORRIDORS 08

# AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK

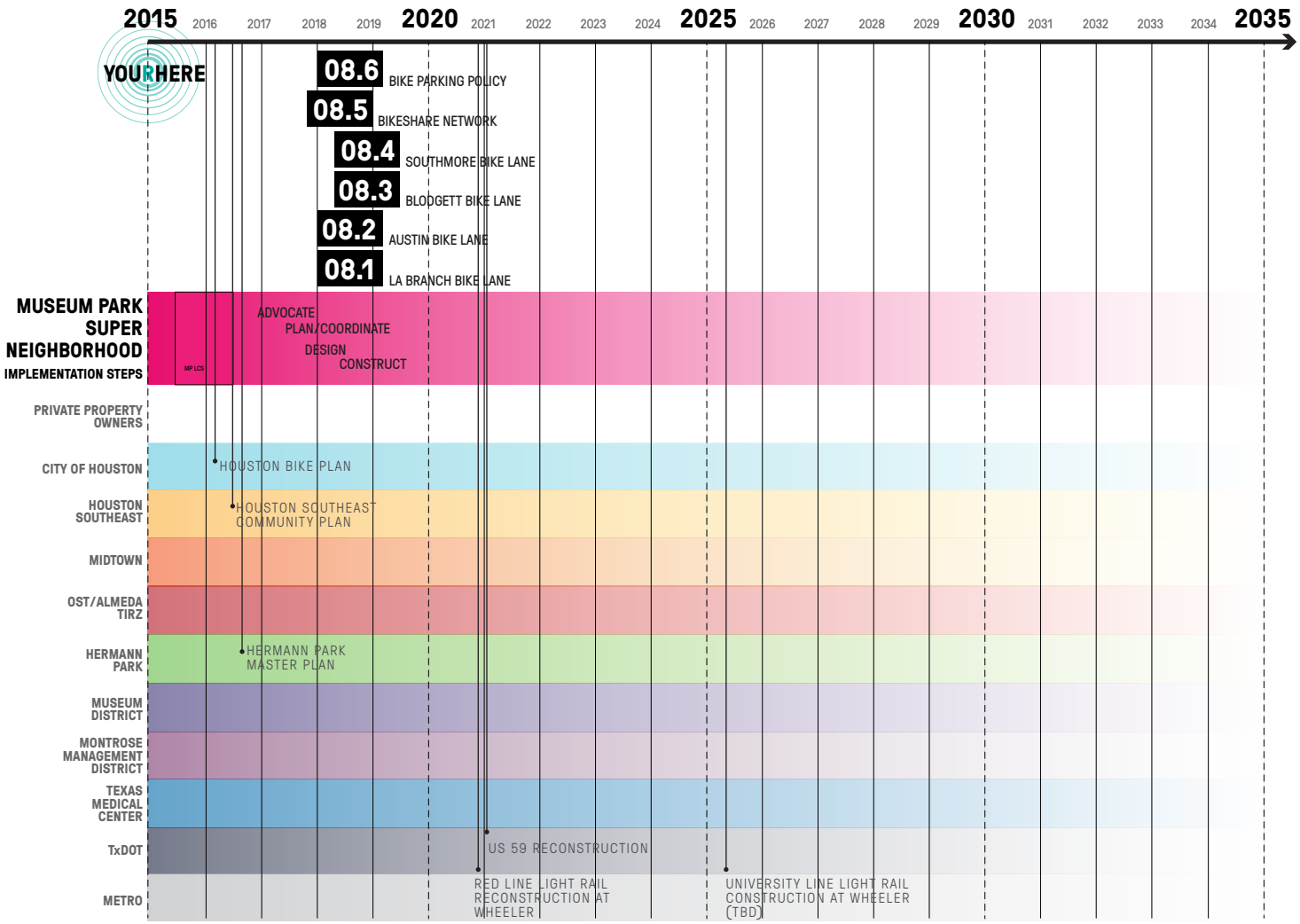
Develop a comprehensive bicycle trail network based on COH Bike Plan, with particular focus on regional connectivity, prioritizing north-south regional connection to Buffalo Bayou via Downtown and HCC.

## ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 03 PARKING MANAGEMENT
- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 13 SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>MDA;<br>TMC;<br>HPC | TRANSPORTATION GRANTS,<br>PARTNERS,<br>PBD | COH;<br>METRO;<br>MPSN;<br>HSE;<br>PBD;<br>HPC | 2017- HERMANN PARK MASTER PLAN COMPLETION<br><br>2019-TXDOT US-59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US-59 RECONSTRUCTION<br><br>2020-2022 METRO RED LINE/US-59 CROSSING RE-CONSTRUCTION AT WHEELER | Create partnerships to promote implementation of COH Bike Plan recommendations, consistent with MPLCS.<br><br>Solicit design services and implement construction of high priority projects. |

## COORDINATION MATRIX



CORRIDORS 08

# AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QUANT | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.0 AUSTIN/LA BRANCH TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK | 1 | LA BRANCH BIKE LANE | LF | $10 | 4,850 | $48,500 |
| | 2 | AUSTIN BIKE LANE | LF | $10 | 4,600 | $46,000 |
| | 3 | BLODGETT BIKE LANE[1] | LF | $2 | 2,800 | $5,600 |
| | 4 | SOUTHMORE[1] | LF | $2 | 5,600 | $11,200 |
| | | MEDIAN RECONSTRUCTION AT SOUTHMORE | LF | $155 | 1000 | $155,000 |
| | 5 | BIKESHARE NETWORK | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| | 6 | BIKE PARKING POLICY | NA | NA | NA | NA |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total | $266,300.00 |
| Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18% | $47,934.00 |
| Construction Contingency 15% | $47,135.10 |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | $36,136.91 |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$397,506** |

**Notes:**

*Allowance in 2016 dollars

[1] Signage only

CORRIDORS 09

# CAROLINE PROMENADE

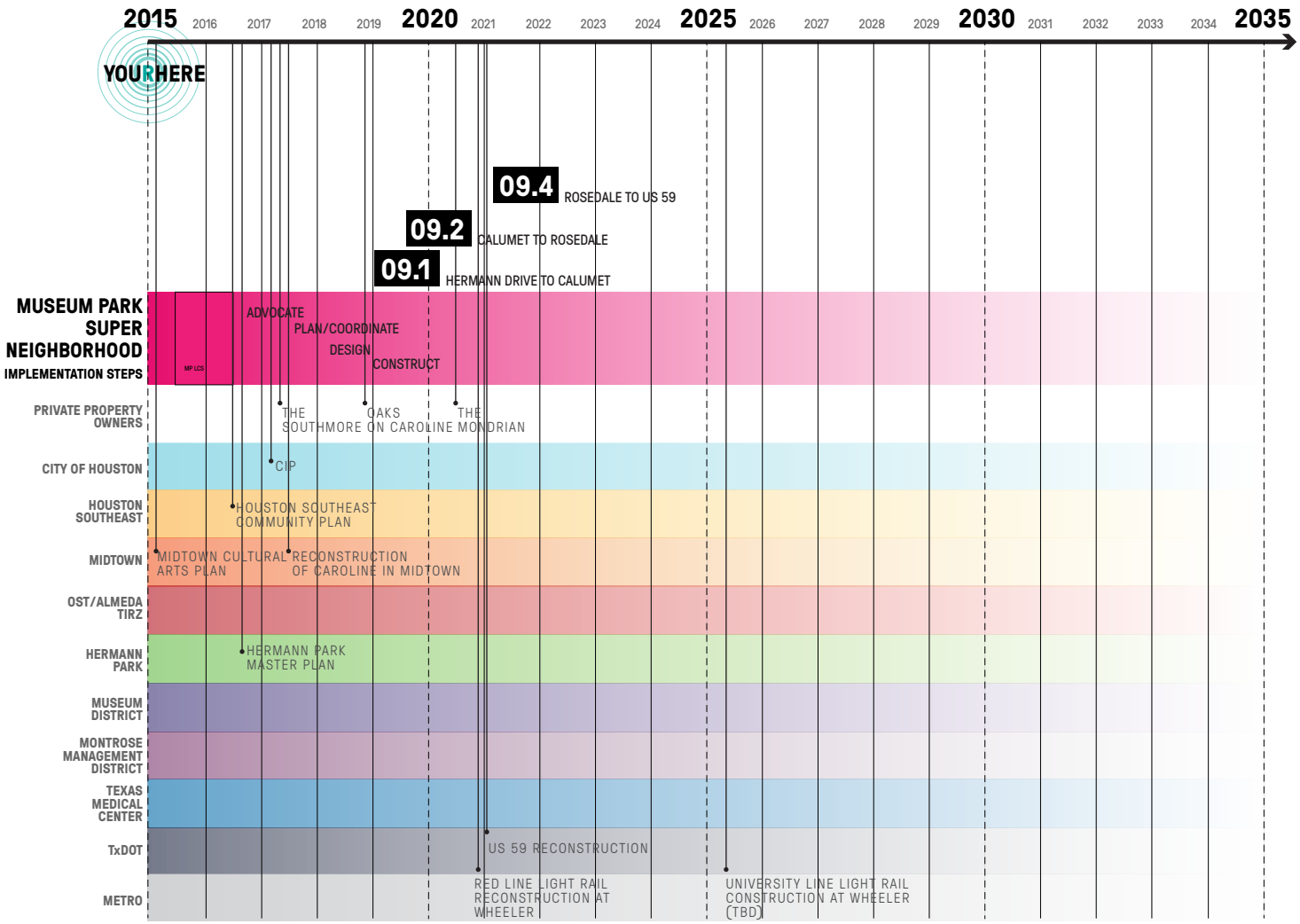
Tie north-south places of worship, educational and cultural institutions from HCC to Hermann Park with enhanced pedestrian realm, beneficial landscaping and unique placemaking.

**ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 04 THE 'ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM
- 06 GREEN GRID
- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>MD;<br>TIRZ#2;<br>MDA, | PARTNERS,<br>GRANTS | COH;<br>MPSN;<br>HSE;<br>PBD | 2017- HERMANN PARK MASTER PLAN COMPLETION<br><br>2019-MFAH CAMPUS COMPLETION<br><br>2019-TXDOT US-59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US-59 RECONSTRUCTION<br><br>2020-2022 METRO RED LINE/US-59 CROSSING RE-CONSTRUCTION AT WHEELER<br><br>OPENING DATES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT ON CAROLINE | Create partnership to promote Caroline Promenade as a vital pedestrian spine within the Museum District.<br><br>Leverage current and future investments in the area such as the new MFAH campus, Hermann Park improvements, US-59 Reconstruction and private development along Caroline to improve its pedestrian realm. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



CORRIDORS 09

# CAROLINE PROMENADE

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9.0 CAROLINE PROMENADE | 1 | BURIED UTILITIES | LF | $1,000 | 4,400 | $4,400,000 |
| | 2 | UPGRADED FIXTURES | EA | $8,000 | 50 | $400,000 |
| | 3 | SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS[1] | BLOCK | $85,000 | 19.5 | $1,657,500 |
| | 4 | SOFTSCAPE | LF | $115 | 4,400 | $506,000 |
| Total | | | | | | $6,963,500.00 |
| Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18% | | | | | | $1,253,430.00 |
| Construction Contingency 15% | | | | | | $1,232,539.50 |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | | | | | | $944,946.95 |
| GRAND TOTAL: | | | | | | $10,394,416 |

Notes:
*Allowance in 2016 dollars
[1] Assumes 75% of sidewalks are below standard and/or need replacing.
Block unit is each blockface

NODES 10

# METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK

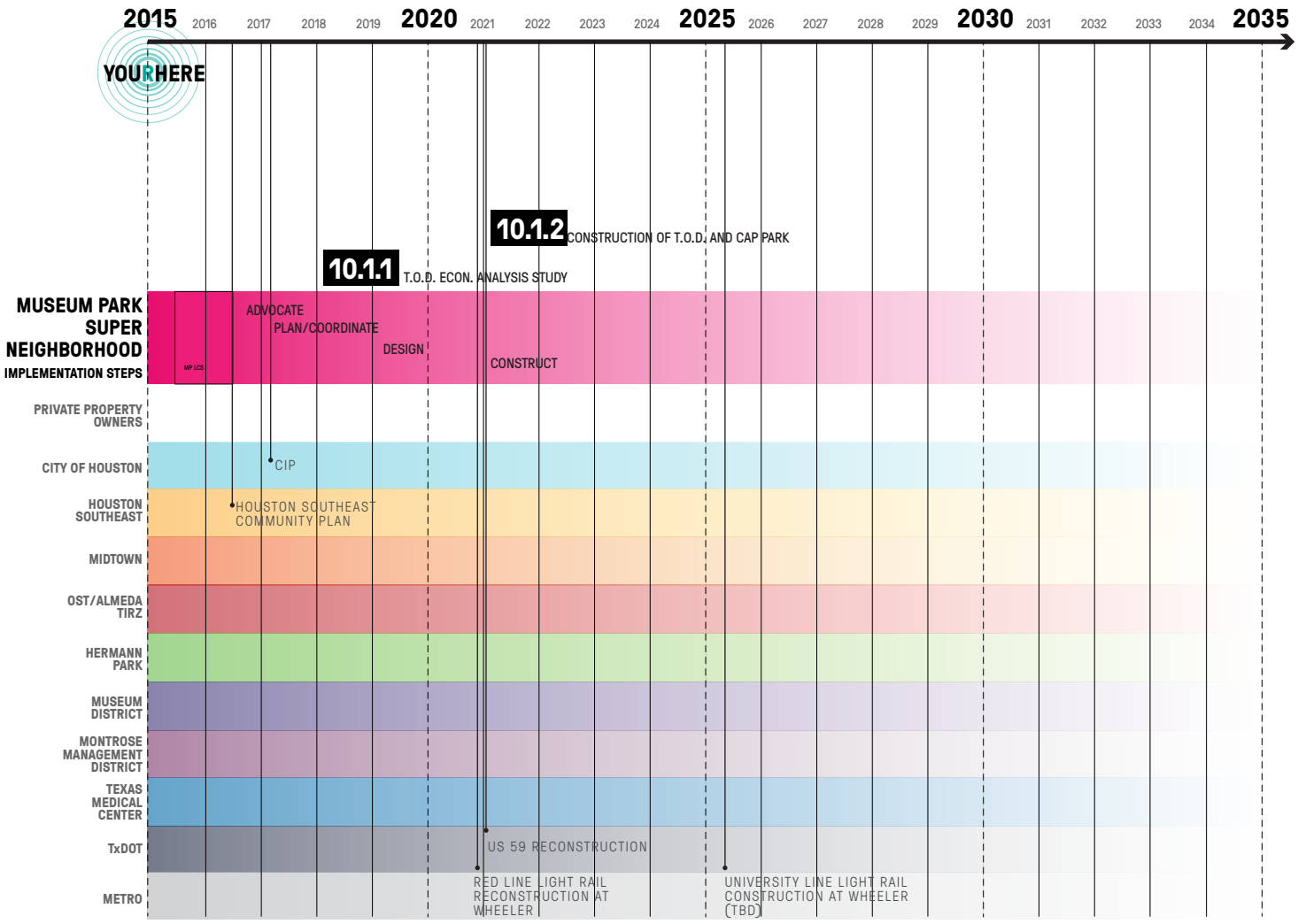
Develop plans for the Wheeler Transit Center node as a T.O.D. site, with a cap, over the US-59 depressed freeway section extending from Main Street past Caroline Street and programs to include mixed-use, residential and a park amenity on the cap.

## ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 01 HOUSING CHOICE
- 02 T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>TXDOT;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>MD;<br>TIRZ#2<br>PO | METRO;<br>TXDOT;<br>COH;<br>PD | COH;<br>TXDOT;<br>METRO;<br>HSE;<br>MD;<br>PO | 2019-TXDOT US-59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US-59 RECONSTRUCTION<br><br>2020-2022 METRO RED LINE/US-59 CROSSING RE-CONSTRUCTION AT WHEELER | Engage TxDOT in optimizing the design for US59 in anticipation of the T.O.D. opportunity.<br><br>Engage METRO in planning for potential property redevelopment.<br><br>Conduct an Economic Analysis and Design Study for future T.O.D.<br><br>Engage COH and Development Community in implementation of T.O.D and Cap Park.<br><br>Construct T.O.D. and Cap Park. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NODES 10

# METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT SITE AND CAP PARK

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10.0 METRO T.O.D. DEVELOPMENT AND CAP PARK | 1 | CAP PARK[1] | SF | $471 | 215,227 | $101,371,917 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total | $101,371,917.00 |
| Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18% | $18,246,945.06 |
| Construction Contingency 15% | $17,942,829.31 |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | $13,756,169.14 |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$151,317,861** |

Notes:
*Allowance in 2016 dollars
[1]Cost per square foot based on assumptions from Klyde Warren Park

NODES 11

# CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE

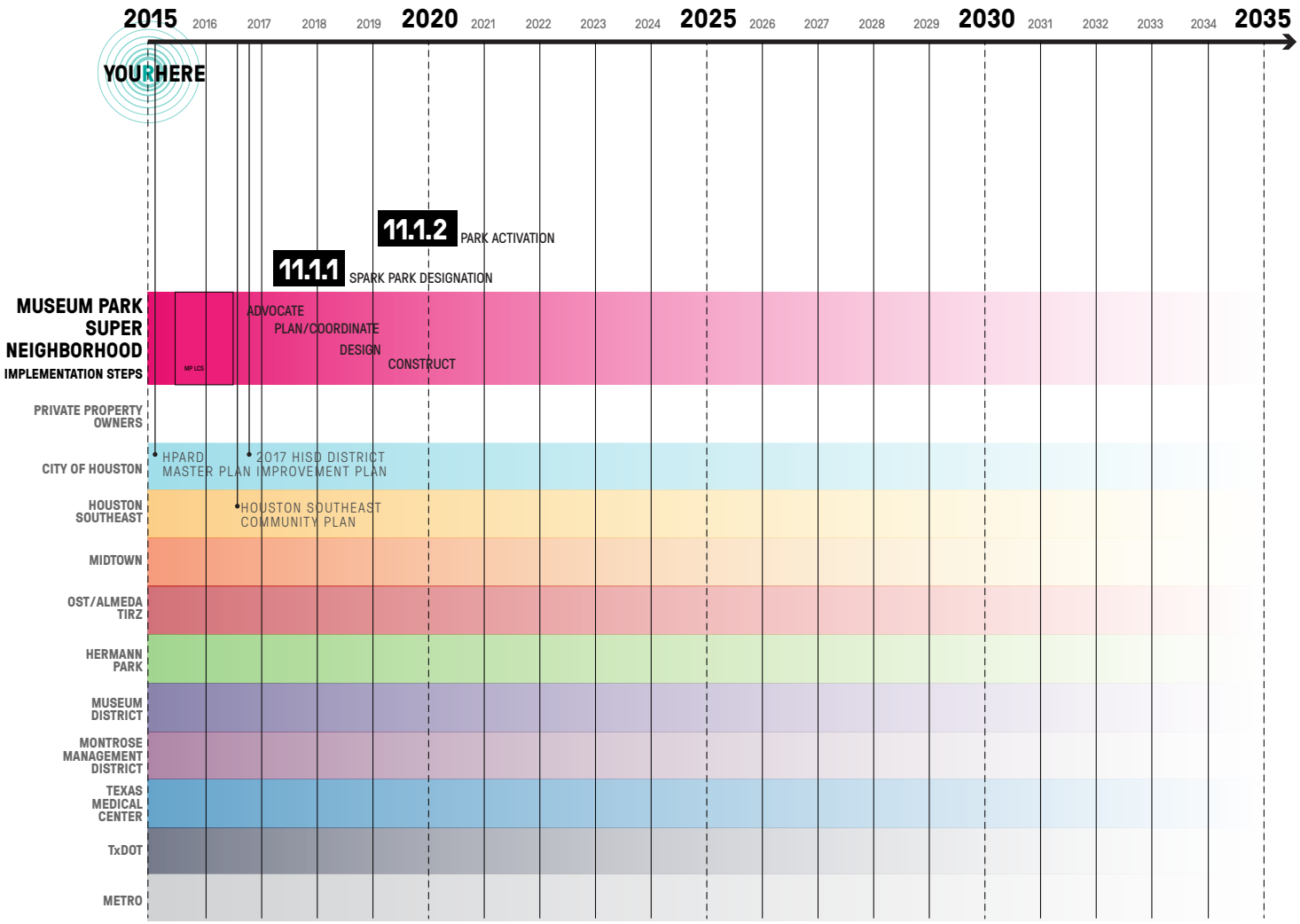
Negotiating MacGregor Elementary School site's role as a potential community park with the shared needs of the school may provide for joint use and better integration of the school into the neighborhood and a new social heart for surrounding residents.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 06 GREEN GRID
- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>MPNA;<br>PO;<br>SPARK;<br>HISD | PARTNERS | HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>SPARK | 2017- HISD DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT PLAN | Engage HISD in establishing a SPARK Park at McGregor Elementary open space.<br><br>Fundraise to activate the park with additional amenities.<br><br>Construct park improvements. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NODES 11

# CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11.0 CRAWFORD COMMUNITY SPACE | 1 | PARK SPACE | SF | $6 | 155,000 | $930,000 |
| | 2 | GATEWAY DOORS WITH LOCK | EA | $6,600 | 2 | $13,200 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Total | $930,000.00 |
| Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18% | $167,400.00 |
| Construction Contingency 15% | $164,610.00 |
| General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10% | $126,201.00 |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$1,388,211** |

**Notes:**
*Allowance in 2016 dollars

NODES 12

# ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE

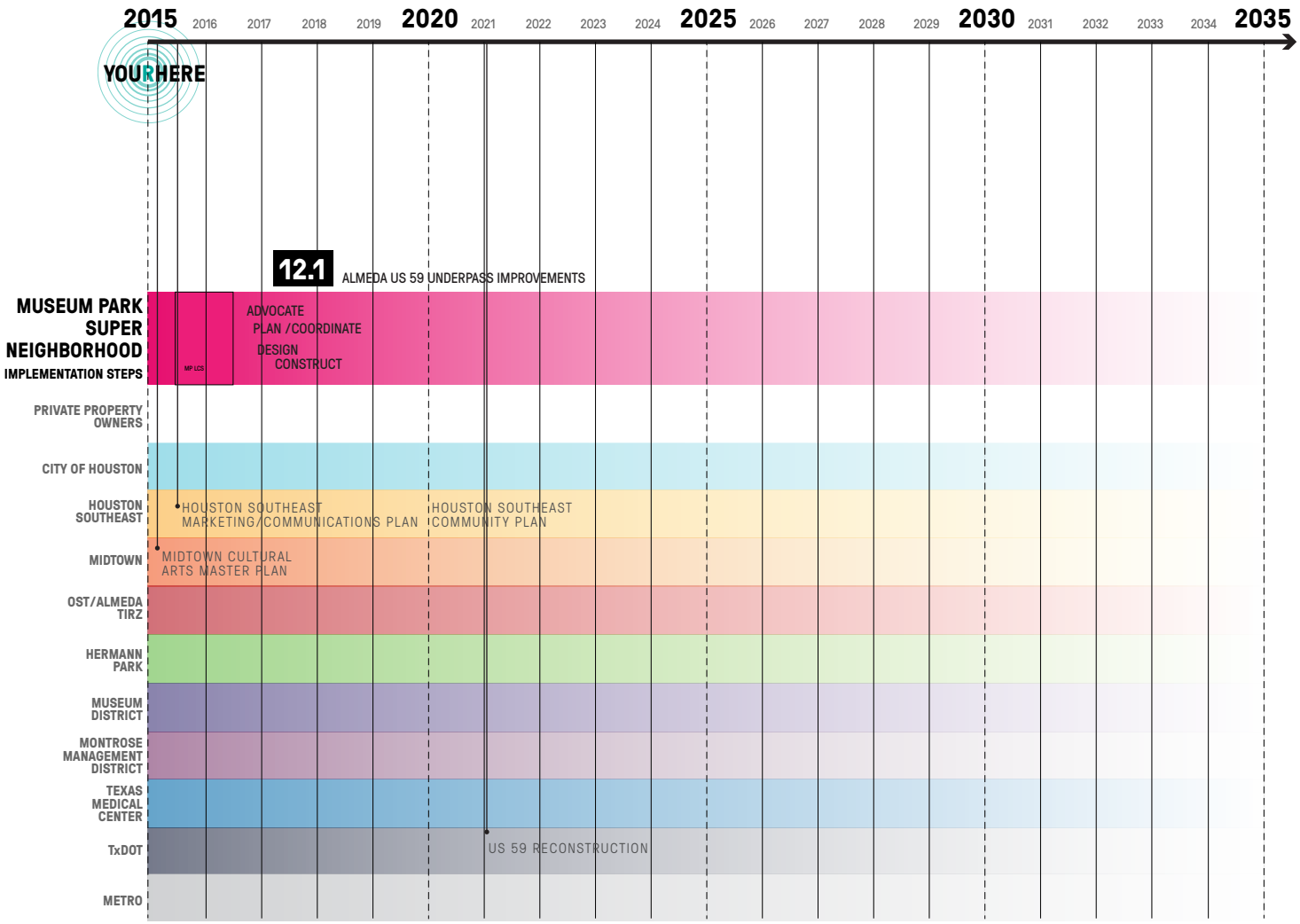
Almeda is an important commercial spine for the area. Beautification and safety improvements at the US 59 underpass will create an attractive gateway to Houston Southeast from Midtown and support commercial activity.

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 02 T.O.D. AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 06 GREEN GRID
- 14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH;<br>TXDOT;<br>HSE;<br>MPSN;<br>MPNA;<br>MD | PARTNERS | HSE;<br>MPSN | 2019-TXDOT US 59 DETAIL DESIGN<br><br>2020-2022 US 59 RECONSTRUCTION<br><br>2020-2022 METRO RED LINE/US 59 CROSSING RE-CONSTRUCTION AT WHEELER | Engage Partners in developing a strategy for improving gateway transition from Midtown to Houston Southeast in the interim period before US 59 reconstruction.<br><br>Evaluate what installation is feasible in the 5-7 years before freeway reconstruction.<br><br>Solicit design and implementation of the installation. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NODES 12

# ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| | PROJECT # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12.0 ALMEDA GATEWAY PASSAGE | 1 | UNDER BRIDGE LIGHTING | LS | $60,000 | 1 | $60,000 |
| | 2 | SOFTSCAPE | LS | $80,000 | 1 | $80,000 |
| | 3 | PAINTED COLUMNS | EA | $3,000 | 6 | $18,000 |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$158,000.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$28,440.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$27,966.00** |
| **General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10%** | | | | | | **$21,440.60** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$235,847** |

**Notes:**

***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

NODES 13

# SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES

Southmore Boulevard is Museum Park's greatest connection to the Historic Third Ward. To celebrate this history, create an entry that welcomes visitors at Southmore and Almeda. At Main and Southmore, improve landscaping to create a notable gateway experience into the neighborhood.

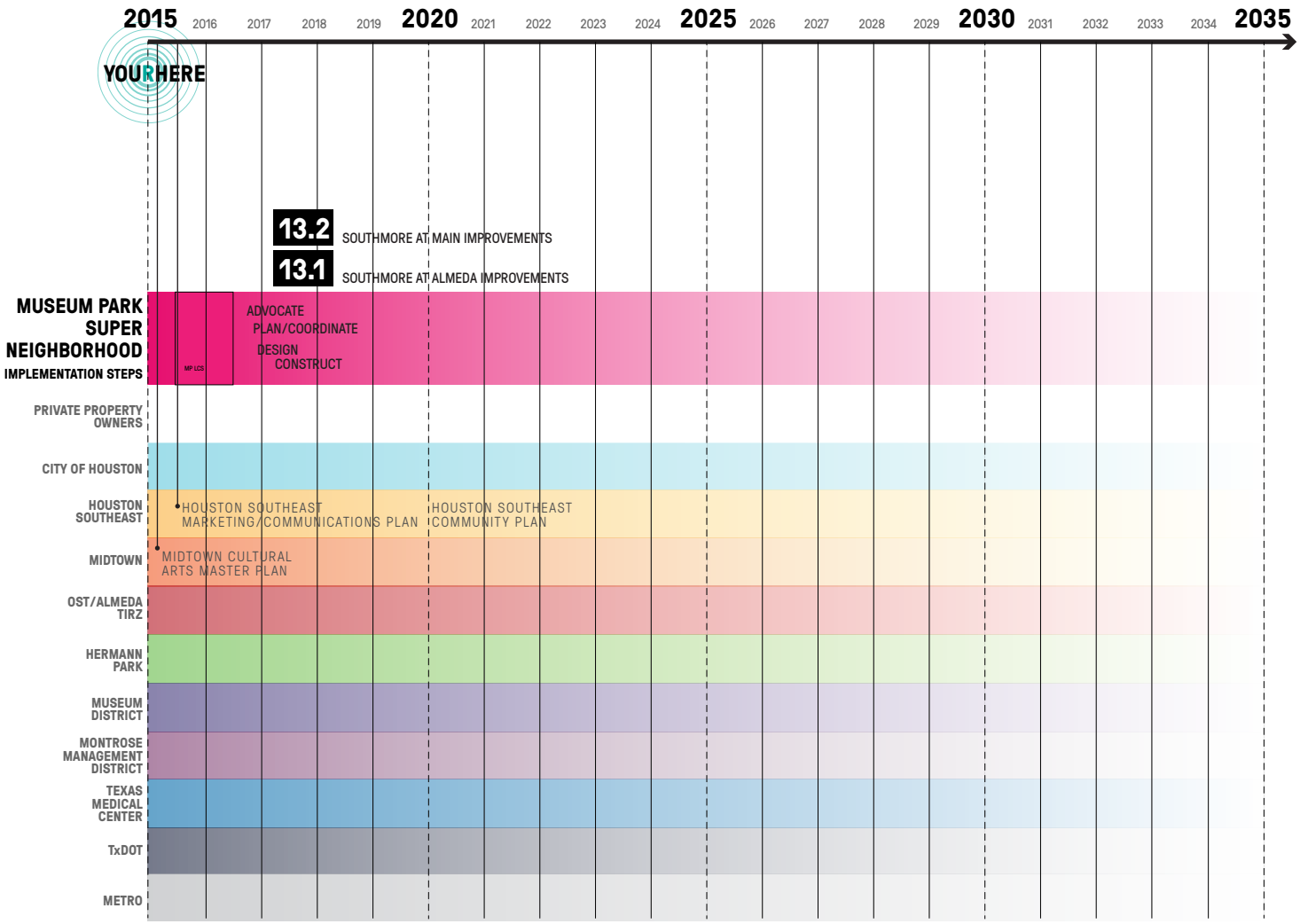
ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

06 GREEN GRID

14 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH; HSE; MPSN; MPNA; MD | HSE | HSE; MPSN | HSE GATEWAY PROGRAM DESIGN AND INSTALLATION | Engage Partners in developing a strategy for improving gateway experience through landscaping and street upgrades at Southmore intersection with Almeda Road and Main Street.<br><br>Solicit design and implementation of landscape and hardscape improvements. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NODES 13

# SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGES

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13.0 SOUTHMORE GATEWAY PASSAGE | 1 | SOUTHMORE AT ALMEDA LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS | LF | $115 | 175 | $20,125 |
| | 2 | SOUTHMORE AT MAIN IMPROVEMENTS | LS | $100,000 | 1 | $100,000 |
| **Total** | | | | | | **$120,125.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | | | | | | **$21,622.50** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | | | | | | **$17,009.70** |
| **General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10%** | | | | | | **$15,875.72** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | | | | | | **$174,633** |

**Notes:**

***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

NEIGHBORHOOD 14

# COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

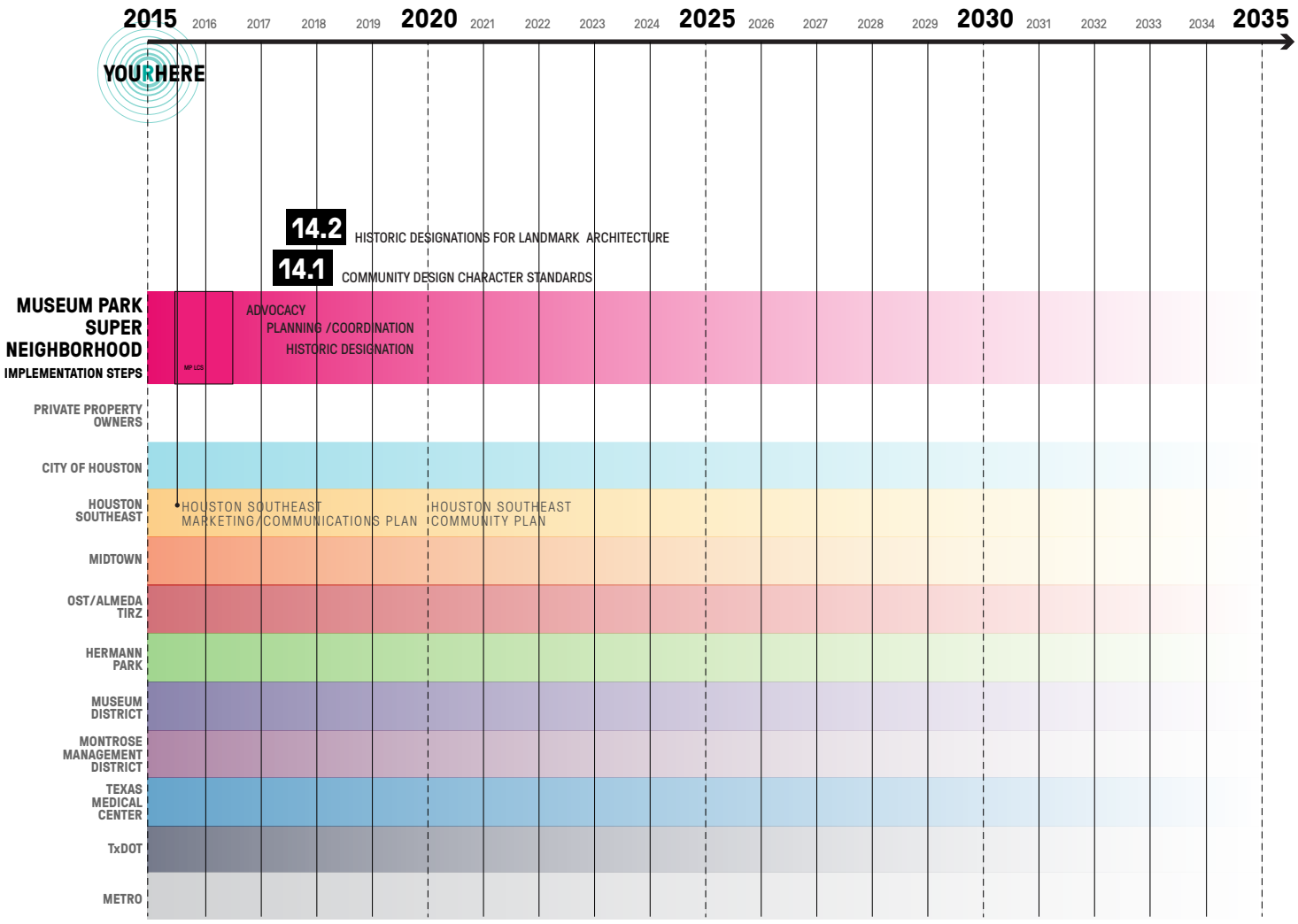
Inform a regulatory regime in support of the development of buildings and community amenities that are context appropriate and conform to community desires and building best practices

ASSOCIATED MPLCS RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 03 PARKING MANAGEMENT
- 06 GREEN GRID
- 07 CULTURE TRAIL
- 08 BAYOU TRAIL AND BIKE FACILITIES NETWORK

| PARTNERS: | FUNDING: | IMPLEMENTERS: | KEY DATES: | TASKS AND MILESTONES: |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COH,<br>HAHC,<br>PH,<br>HSE,<br>MPSN | SUBSIDIES,<br>LOW-INTEREST LOANS,<br>GRANTS | COH,<br>HSE,<br>MPSN | DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AT COH PDD | Engage COH in establishing development parameters in Museum Park based on community preferences expressed in Community Design Charatcer standards.<br><br>Seek designation of various levels of historic preservation for architectural landmarks found in Museum Park.<br><br>Promote brand identity of Museum Park as a cultural landmark community in the COH. |

COORDINATION MATRIX



NEIGHBORHOOD 14

# COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS

## OPINION OF POTENTIAL COST

| PROJECT | # | DESCRIPTION | UNIT | PRICE* | QTY | SUBTOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **14.0 COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARACTER STANDARDS** | 1 | PLANNING AND DESIGN SERVICES | EA | $50,000 | 1 | $50,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Total** | **$50,000.00** |
| **Design Consultation, Survey, Testing, Fees, Permitting,Etc. 18%** | **$9,000.00** |
| **Construction Contingency 15%** | **$7,080.00** |
| **General Conditions, Bonds, Etc... 10%** | **$6,608.00** |
| **GRAND TOTAL:** | **$72,688** |

**Notes:**
***Allowance in 2016 dollars**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

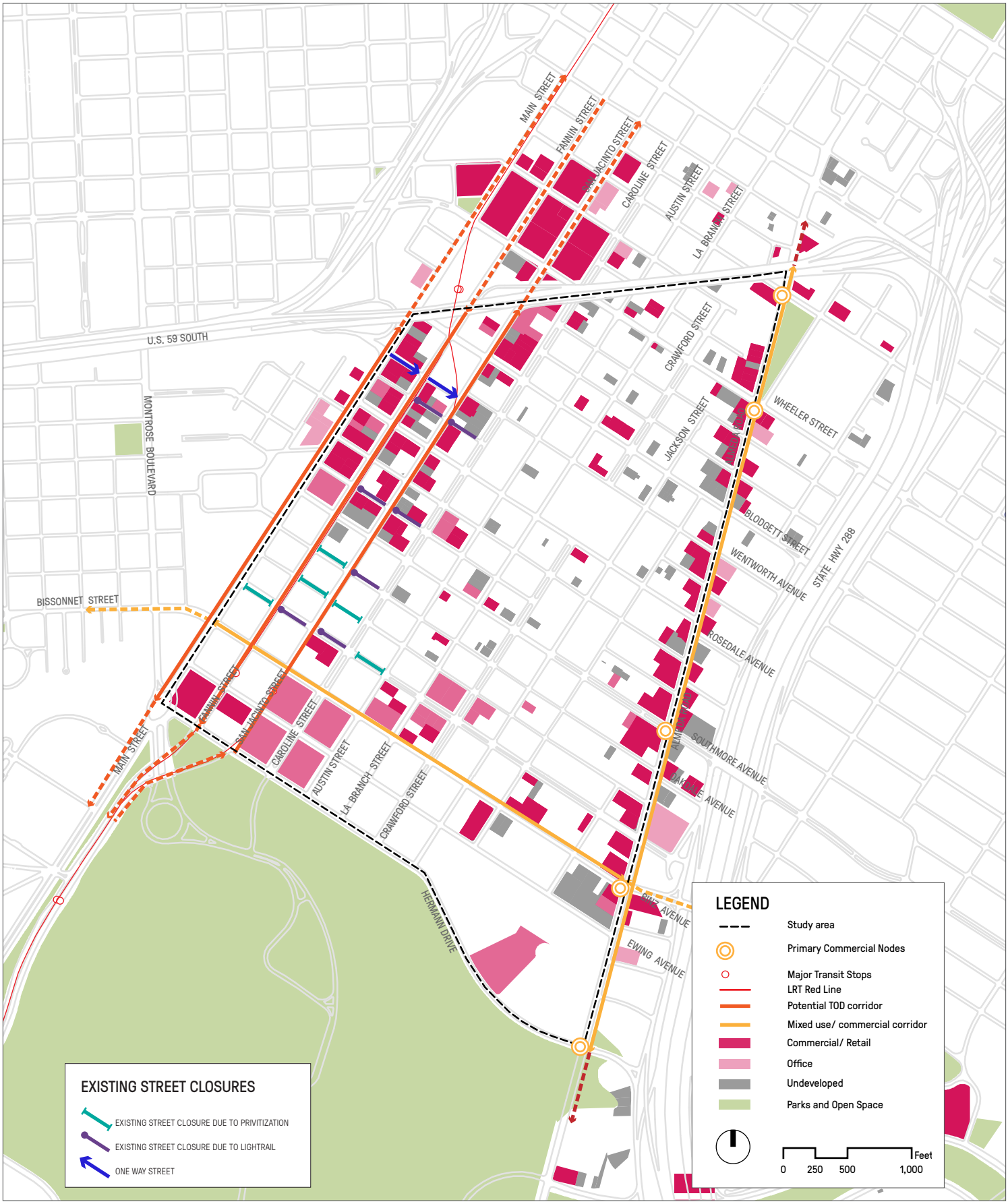
MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# APPENDIX A:
CONTEXT MAPS

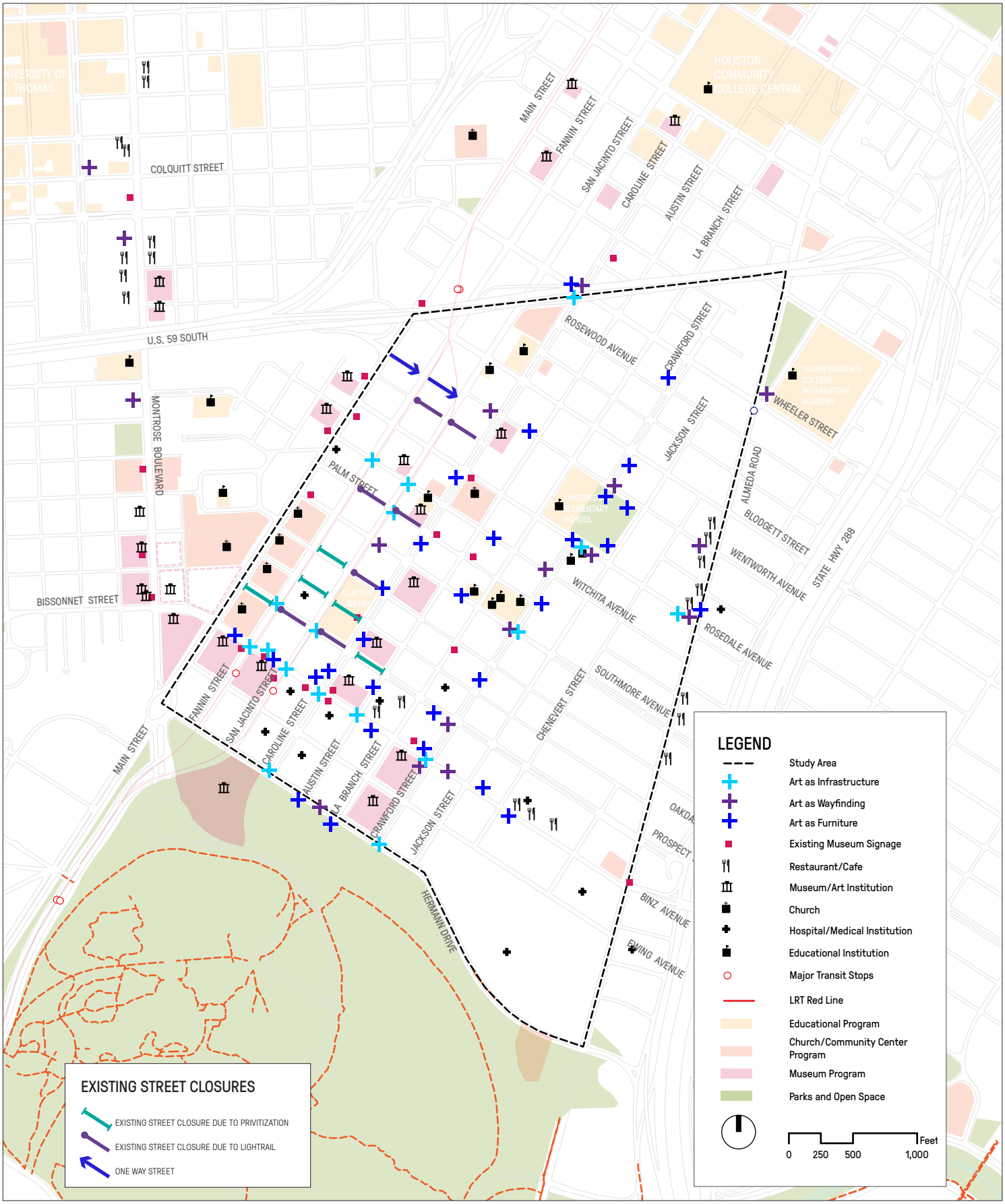
# CONCEPTUAL PLAN CONTEXT MAPS

The Livable Centers Study Conceptual Plan recommendations address the needs and aspirations of the community geographically defined by the Museum Park Super Neighborhood boundary. However, the dynamics of future development in Museum Park are to a great extent influenced by its periphery, adjacencies and both administrative and infrastructural larger city context.

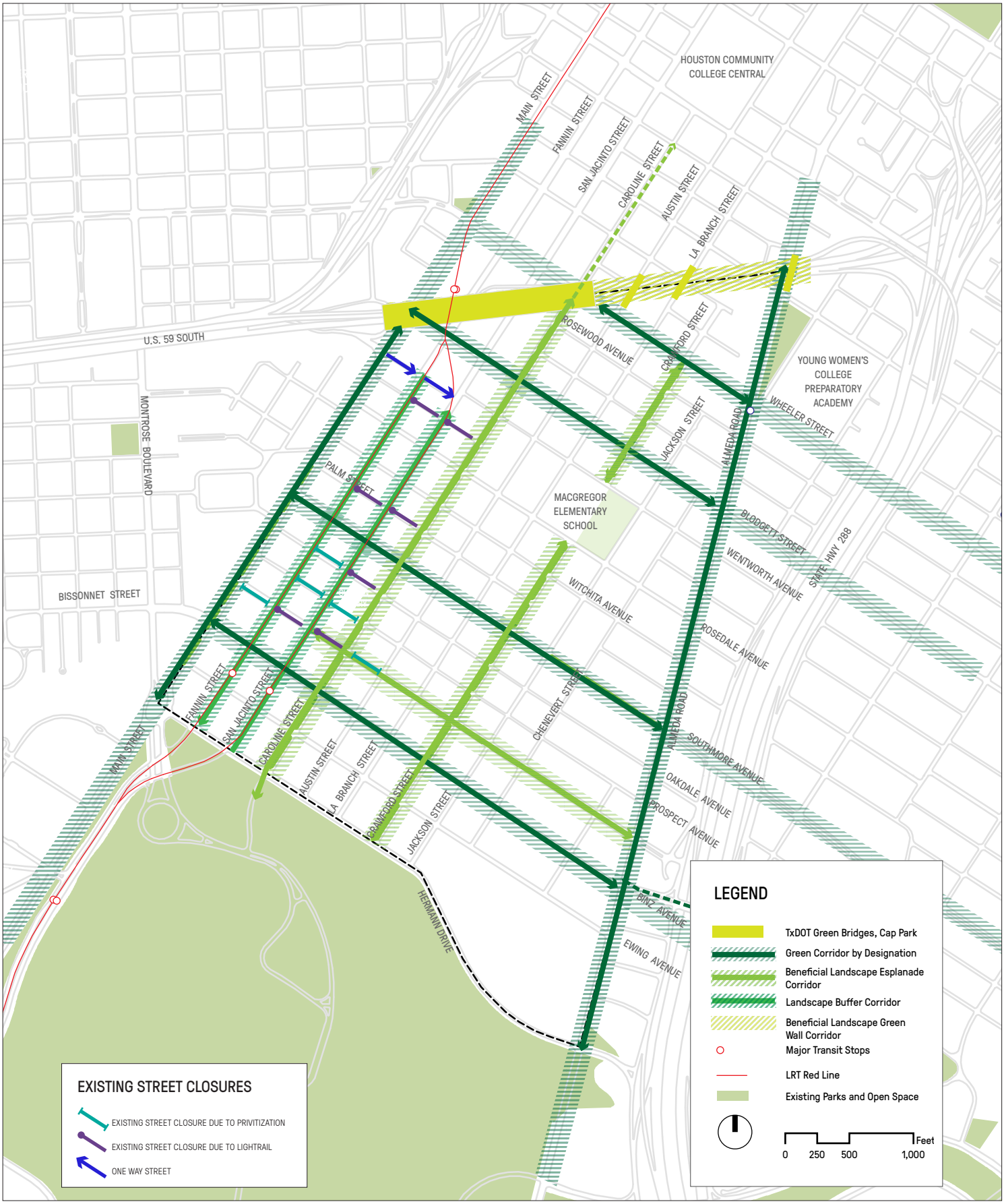
As stated in the Implementation Plan section of this report, the future of Museum Park depends on timely partnerships, and a coordinated approach to implementing its vision will require conversations with multiple area stakeholders. In this section, several plan recommendation exhibits address that larger context in an effort to highlight potential opportunities to adjacent entities and form partnerships by starting a conversation about regional connections in the area. These maps are identical to the ones in the main body of the report, with the exception of added context beyond the Super Neighborhood boundary.



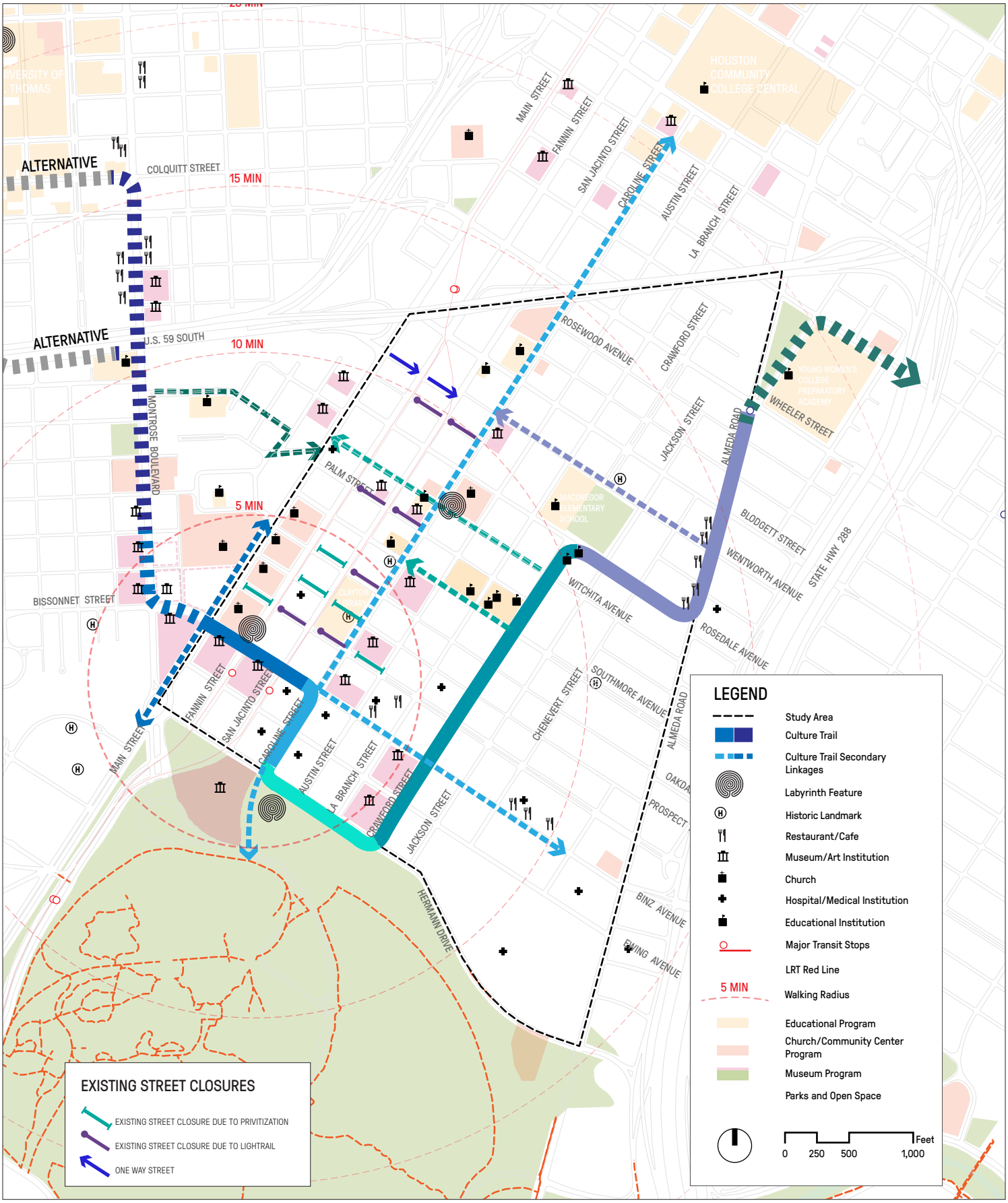

URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MAP



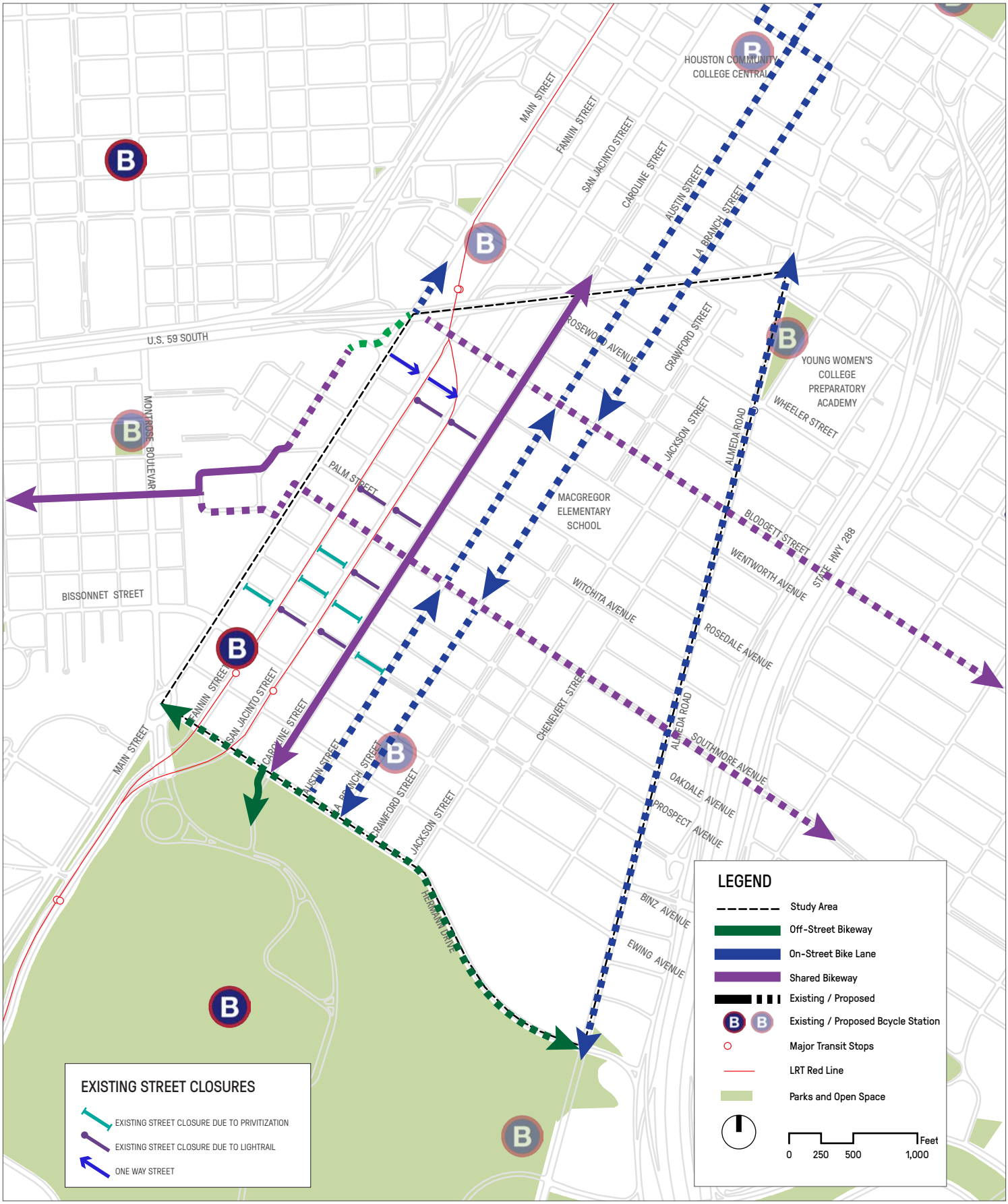

"ART OF WALKING" BRANDING PROGRAM MAP



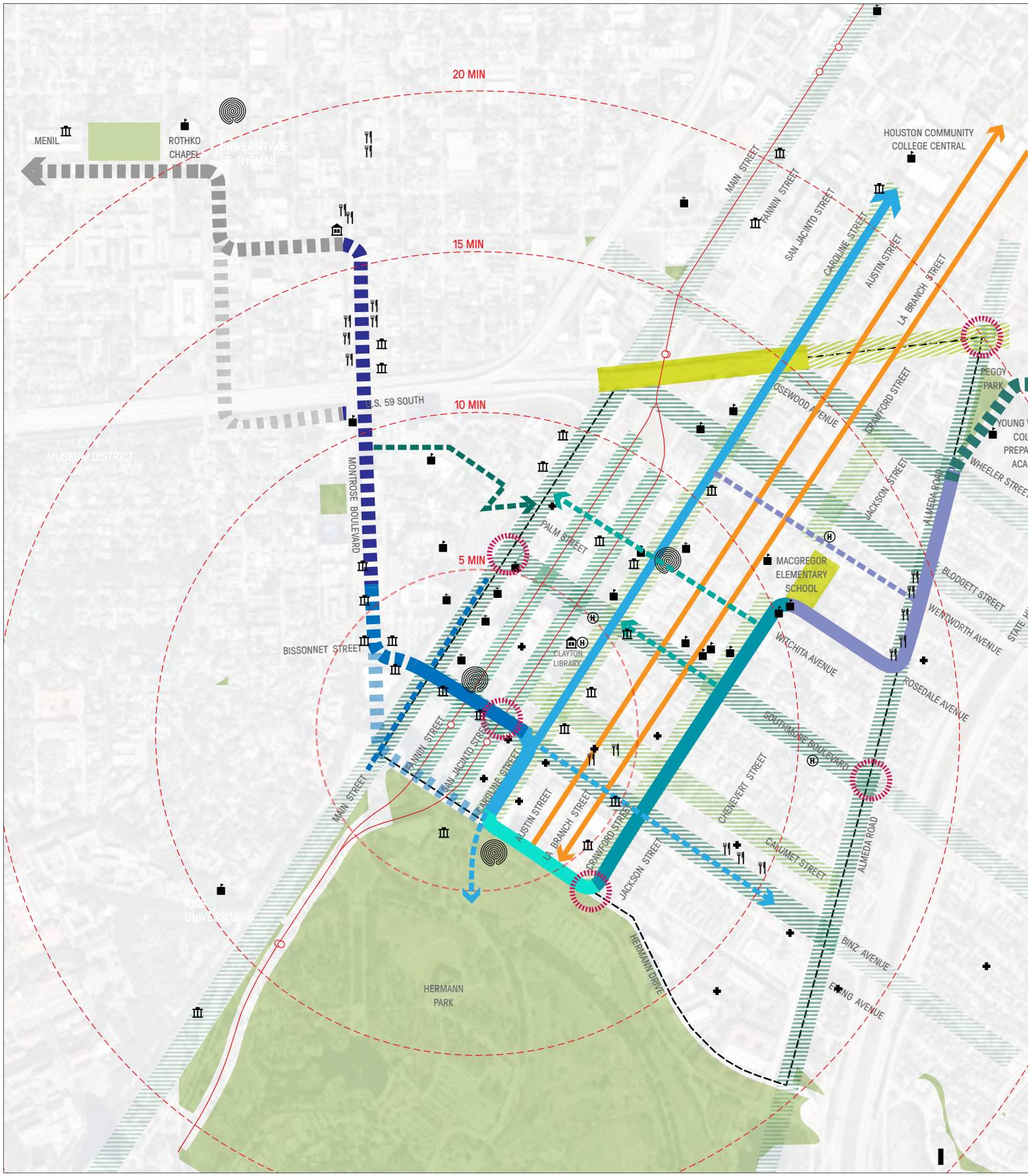

GREEN GRID MAP



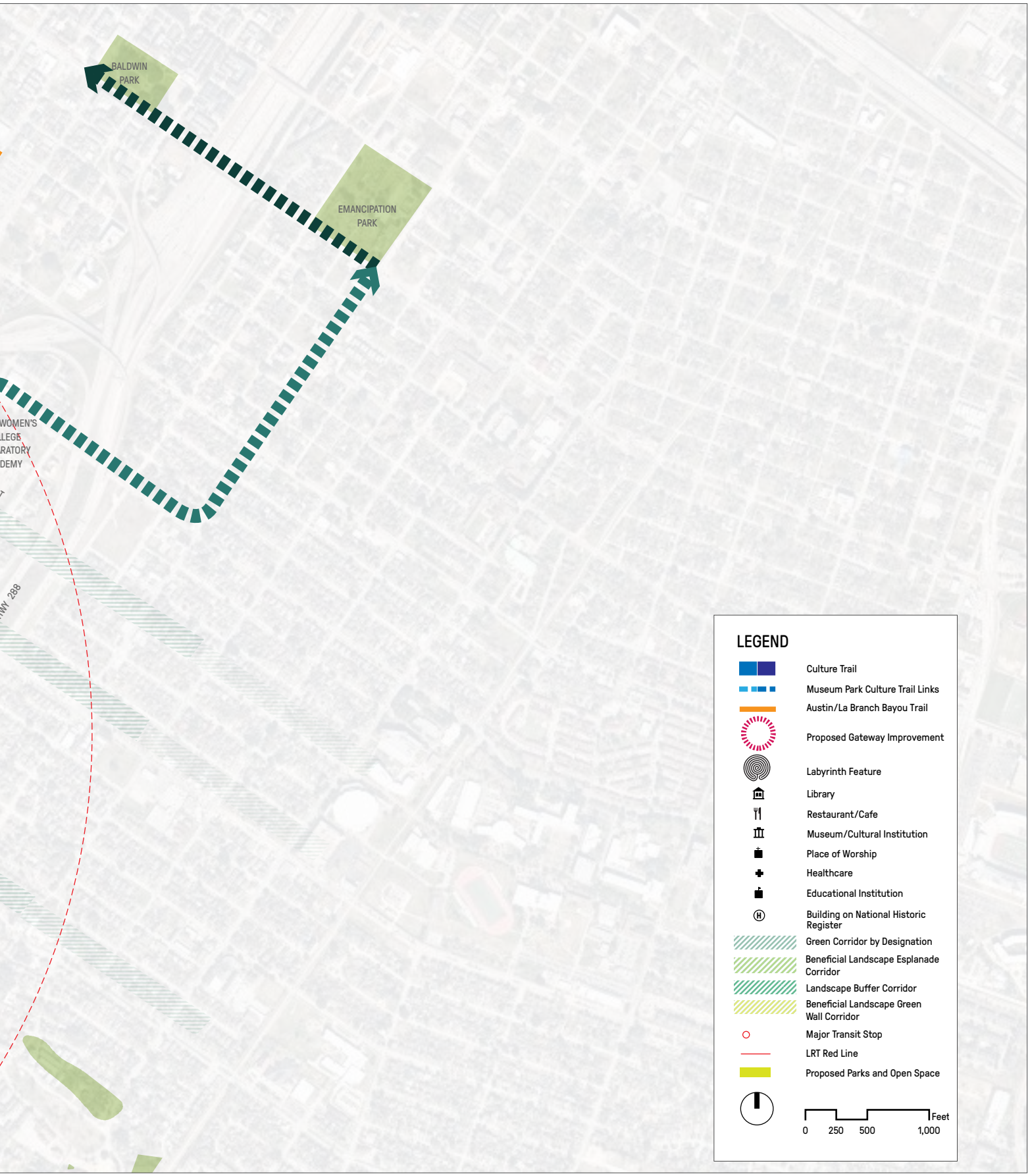

CULTURE TRAIL MAP




BICYCLE FACILITIES NETWORK MAP




OVERALL PLAN


BALDWIN PARK
EMANCIPATION PARK
WOMEN'S
LEGE
RATORY
DEMY
NY 288
LEGEND
Culture Trail
Museum Park Culture Trail Links
Austin/La Branch Bayou Trail
Proposed Gateway Improvement
Labyrinth Feature
Library
Restaurant/Cafe
Museum/Cultural Institution
Place of Worship
Healthcare
Educational Institution
Building on National Historic Register
Green Corridor by Designation
Beneficial Landscape Esplanade Corridor
Landscape Buffer Corridor
Beneficial Landscape Green Wall Corridor
Major Transit Stop
LRT Red Line
Proposed Parks and Open Space
Feet
0 250 500 1,000

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# APPENDIX B:
# AIR QUALITY

# AIR QUALITY ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The air quality benefits derived from implementation of the recommended improvements for the Museum Park Study Area were estimated based on the following methodology:

### Catchment Area

The Museum Park Study Area was defined as the catchment area to determine the number of trips that would potentially be affected by the recommended improvements.

### Trips Generated

The following regional trip generation rates based on data from H-GAC were used to estimate the total trips produced in the catchment area:

- 6.54 trips per household
- 2.53 trips per job

**Table A1**

**Air Quality Benefit Summary**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Annual Emissions Reduction | Nox | 5,316.16 | kg/year |
| | VOC | 7,088.21 | kg/year |
| | CO | 82,621.93 | kg/year |

**Table A2**

**Mode (Bike/Ped/Transit) Share Shift**

| Calculation Step | Equation | | Quantity | Units |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Museum Park Trip Generators | a | Households | 3,435 | homes |
| | b | Employment | 1,339 | jobs |
| Trip Rates | c | Households | 6.54 | trips/day/job |
| | d | Employment | 2.53 | trips/day/home |
| Total Trips | e=(a*c)+(b*d) | | 25,853 | trips/day |
| Mode Shift Rate | f | | 20% | percent trips |
| Trips Replaced | g=e*f | | 5,170.51 | trips |
| Miles per Trip Replaced | h | | 9.72 | miles/trip |
| Vehicle Miles Travel Replaced | j=g*h | | 50,257.40 | miles |
| Emissions Factors | k | NOx | 0.24 | gm/mile |
| | l | VOC | 0.32 | gm/mile |
| | m | CO | 3.73 | gm/mile |
| Total Emissions Reduced | n=j*k | NOx | 12,061.78 | gm |
| | o=j*l | VOC | 16,082.37 | gm |
| | p=j*m | CO | 187,460.09 | gm |
| Assumed Annual Days | q | | 260 | days/year |
| Metric Conversion Factor | r | | 1,000 | gm/kg |
| Annual Emissions Reduction | s=n*q*r | NOx | 3,136.06 | kg/year |
| | t=o*q*r | VOC | 4,181.42 | kg/year |
| | u=p*q*r | CO | 48,739.62 | kg/year |

### Demand

An assumed 20% of the household and employment trips generated in the catchment area will switch from vehicular trips to bicycle and pedestrian trips. The trip length of an estimated 20% of the trips generated by households in the catchment area were assumed to be reduced by 60 percent.

### VMT Reduction

The total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) were calculated utilizing the average trip length from the National Household Travel Survey (9.72 miles/trip) and multiplying by the computed demand.

### Air Quality Benefits

The MOSERS 11.1 methodology was used to estimate emissions reductions. The estimates for the emissions per mile were used for the following air quality factors:

- NOx – 0.239 grams per mile
- VOC – 0.315 grams per mile
- CO – 3.732 grams per mile

Total emissions were annualized to determine the reduction in annual kilograms (kg) resulting from implementation of Museum Park projects that will result in a shift in mode share from vehicular trips to bike, pedestrian, and transit trips (Table A2) and from trip length reductions (Table A3). Total estimated air quality benefits are provided in Table A1.

## Table A3

## Trip Length Reduction

| Calculation Step | Equation | | Quantity | Units |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Museum Park Trip Generators | a | Households | 3,435 | homes |
| Trip Rates | c | Households | 6.54 | trips/day/job |
| Total Trips | e=(a*c) | | 22,465 | trips/day |
| Mode Shift Rate | f | | 20% | percent trips |
| Trips Replaced | g=e*f | | 4,492.98 | trips |
| Miles per Trip Replaced | h | | 7.78 | miles/trip |
| Vehicle Miles Travel Replaced | j=g*h | | 34,937.41 | miles |
| Emissions Factors | k | NOx | 0.24 | gm/mile |
| | l | VOC | 0.32 | gm/mile |
| | m | CO | 3.73 | gm/mile |
| Total Emissions Reduced | n=j*k | NOx | 8,384.98 | gm |
| | o=j*l | VOC | 11,179.97 | gm |
| | p=j*m | CO | 130,316.55 | gm |
| Assumed Annual Days | q | | 260 | days/year |
| Metric Conversion Factor | r | | 1,000 | gm/kg |
| Annual Emissions Reduction | s=n*q*r | NOx | 2,180.09 | kg/year |
| | t=o*q*r | VOC | 2,906.79 | kg/year |
| | u=p*q*r | CO | 33,882.30 | kg/year |

| Percent Reduction of Trip | Average Trip Length |
|---|---|
| 0.6 | 9.72 |

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# APPENDIX C:
## NEEDS ASSESSMENT MEMO

# URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Museum Park is a residential neighborhood, as well as a cultural destination. It enjoys convenient access to Downtown Houston and it is adjacent to a regional park and zoo (Hermann Park and Zoo) and proximate to the Texas Medical Center. The majority of the city's museums, including the largest of the city's museums (Museum of Fine Arts-Houston) are located within its boundaries.

Museum Park is City of Houston Super Neighborhood #66. The neighborhood encompasses 0.56 square miles. Museum Park's original development dates to the era prior to World War II and its nearness to Rice University was a factor in its growth and development. Some of the neighborhood's housing stock reflects this heritage. However, ongoing redevelopment and new development that has occurred in the last decade, is changing the urban character of the neighborhood, inasmuch as this new development is occurring at higher residential densities than was the case at the neighborhood's inception.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Museum Park is a vibrant urban that houses 5,396 persons, according to the latest U. S. Census. There are 2,691 households residing in the neighborhood. Caucasians comprise the majority ethnic/racial group in the neighborhood (49.7 percent), followed by Latinos (21.0 percent). The comparable percentage for Houston is 25.5 percent, a substantially lower figure.

Persons 65 years of age and older represent a smaller proportion of the neighborhood's population than is reflected in the citywide population – 9.1 percent versus 9.5 percent.

The level of educational attainment far exceeds the city-wide figure for this demographic category.

## CRIME STATISTICS

Crime statistics are relevant because actual rates of crime and perceived rates of crime are not always in alignment. Moreover, crime rates and crime perceptions affect locational decisions. The pace at which new households are moving into the neighborhood suggests that there is a perception on the part of new residents that crime rates are at acceptable levels.

Public input reflects differing perceptions of crime in Museum Park. Some stakeholders perceive the neighborhood as safe, partly due to increased police patrols and others stated that it is not safe to walk in the neighborhood during the nighttime hours.

The actuality is reflected in crime statistics for the neighborhood. These statistics are displayed on Crime Statistics Table below.

A total of 409 offenses were committed during the 12-month period from August 2014-September 2015. Property crimes, such as auto theft, burglary, and theft are the most frequently occurring types of offenses committed in Museum Park during the 12-month period beginning August 2014 and ending July 2015. Crimes unrelated to

| Type of Offense | 12-MONTH PERIOD | | | | | | | | | | | | 12 Month Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Aug 2014 | Sept 2014 | Oct 2014 | Nov 2014 | Dec. 2014 | Jan 2015 | Feb 2015 | Mar 2015 | Apr 2015 | May 2015 | Jun 2015 | July 2015 | |
| Aggravated Assault | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 24<br>5.9% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Auto Theft | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 22<br>5.4% |
| Burglary | 8 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 65<br>15.9% |
| Murder | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1<br>0.2% |
| Robbery | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 18<br>4.4% |
| Theft | 17 | 20 | 19 | 32 | 32 | 31 | 10 | 27 | 23 | 17 | 28 | 23 | 279<br>68.2 |
| **Totals** | **29** | **31** | **32** | **45** | **38** | **38** | **23** | **38** | **36** | **26** | **36** | **37** | **409**<br>**100.0%** |

MUSEUM PARK CRIME STATISTICS - 12 MONTH PERIOD
*Source: http://mycity.houstontx.gov/crime/optionpage.aspx#*

| Category | Museum Park | | Houston | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Percent | Total | Percent |
| **Population** | 5,396 | 100.0% | 2,167,988 | 100.0% |
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | | | |
| White | 2,684 | 49.7% | 553,310 | 25.5% |
| Black/African American | 560 | 10.4% | 494,900 | 22.8% |
| Asian | 900 | 16.7% | 135,506 | 6.3% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,135 | 21.0% | 951,493 | 43.9% |
| Other | 117 | 2.2% | 32,779 | 1.5% |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 2,506 | 46.4% | 1,085,874 | 50.1% |
| Female | 2,890 | 53.6% | 1,082,114 | 49.9% |
| **Age** | | | | |
| Under 5 years old | 575 | 10.7% | 169,748 | 7.8% |
| 5 to 17 years old | 275 | 5.1% | 378,515 | 17.5% |
| 18 to 24 years old | 489 | 9.1% | 231,996 | 10.7% |
| 25 to 64 years old | 3,564 | 66.0% | 1,182,439 | 54.5% |
| 65 and over | 493 | 9.1% | 205,290 | 9.5% |
| **Employment** | | | | |
| Civilian Population In Labor Force 16 Years And Over: | 3,628 | 100.0% | 1,139,906 | 100.0% |
| Unemployed persons 16 years old and over | 36 | 1.0% | 101,556 | 8.9% |
| **Marital Status** | | | | |
| Population 15 Years and over: | 4,653 | 100.0% | 1,701,943 | 100.0% |
| Not Married | 2,330 | 50.1% | 994,650 | 58.4% |
| Married | 2,323 | 49.9% | 707,293 | 41.6% |
| **Educational Attainment** | | | | |
| Population 25 Years and over: | 4,057 | 100.0% | 1,387,729 | 100.0% |
| Less than high school | 312 | 7.7% | 334,838 | 24.1% |
| High school graduate | 277 | 6.8% | 311,011 | 22.4% |
| Some college or Associate's degree | 526 | 13.0% | 328,302 | 23.7% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 2,942 | 72.5% | 413,578 | 29.8% |
| **Number of Household** | | | | |
| Households | 2,691 | | 792,763 | |
| **Owner Occupancy** | | | | |
| Occupied Housing Units: | 2,691 | 100.0% | 792,763 | 100.0% |
| Owner occupied | 681 | 25.3% | 353,069 | 44.5% |
| Renter occupied | 2,010 | 74.7% | 439,694 | 55.5% |
| **Income** | | | | |
| Median Household Income | $102,899 | | $45,728 | |

MUSEUM PARK DEMOGRAPHICS

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 5 - Year American Community Survey*

| 12-MONTH PERIOD, AUGUST 2014 – JULY 2015 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Offense | Museum Park | | University Place | |
| Aggravated Assault | 24 | 5.9% | 27 | 6.5% |
| Auto Theft | 22 | 5.4% | 22 | 5.3% |
| Burglary | 65 | 15.9% | 78 | 18.7% |
| Murder 1 | 1 | 0.2% | 1 | 0.2% |
| Robbery | 18 | 4.4% | 17 | 4.1% |
| Theft | 279 | 68.2% | 273 | 65.3% |
| Totals | 409 | 100.0% | 418 | 100.0% |

MUSEUM PARK & UNIVERSITY PLACE CRIME STATISTICS COMPARISON – 12 MONTH PERIOD
*Source: http://mycity.houstontx.gov/crime/optionpage.aspx#*

property were one murder and 24 instances of aggravated assault. As shown on Crime Statistic Table above, crime statistics for University Place, a comparable neighborhood, follow a similar pattern. Thefts and burglaries are the most commonly occurring crime and as is true of Museum Park, there was one murder in University Place during the 12-month period for which data has been aggregated.

## LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Land uses have been mapped to illustrate development patterns in Museum Park. Data from the Harris County Appraisal District, the Houston Planning and Development Department, and windshield surveys supported the identification of existing and future land uses. For these purposes, projects that are under construction are treated as if they are complete. Land uses are classified in conformance with the City of Houston Geographic Information System (COHGIS) classifications.

### Residential Development

Residential development is the predominant land use in Museum Park and it is dispersed throughout. Roughly one-third of the land mass is devoted to single-family land uses and roughly one-third is devoted to multi-family land uses. Single family detached structures and duplexes are classified as single-family and in Museum Park these include units built prior to World War II, as well as contemporary detached town homes and duplexes. For the most part, new residential development has occurred on sites that were previously developed as single family detached housing.

Slightly more than one-fifth of land uses are classified as multi-family. These uses include mid- and high-rise apartment complexes, apartment complexes with eight or fewer units, and attached townhomes.

### Public And Institutional Uses

Public and institutional uses include: 10 museums, the largest of which is the Museum of Fine Arts-Houston; the one-of-a-kind Clayton Genealogical Library; places of worship, most of which have a long history in the neighborhood; a post office branch; MacGregor Elementary School, and nonprofit organizations like the Mexican Consulate, the Mexican Institute, and the Nehemiah Neighborhood Center. These uses cover 16 percent of the land mass.

### Commercial And Retail Uses

Uses classified as "office" include the offices of professional service providers, such as attorneys, counseling and management consultancies, architects and designers, and health care practitioners. Office uses are found mostly in low and mid-rise buildings and cover eight percent of the land mass. Office uses occur primarily in the southern and western sectors of the neighborhood. Health care facilities are some of the largest office uses in the neighborhood and include Park Plaza Hospital, Houston Surgical Hospital, and Mann Eye Clinic.

### Undeveloped Land

There are approximately 15 acres of undeveloped land. Individual parcels of undeveloped land range from small to medium sized. A review of ownership patterns indicates that investors and land developers own much of this land.

### Transportation And Utilities

Transportation and utilities uses include rights-of-way associated with the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County's Red Line light rail transit, which traverses the northwestern section of the neighborhood. Private streets also fall in this category. Less than two percent of the neighborhood's land mass is given over to transportation and utility uses.

### Parks And Open Space

There are no parks in Museum Park proper. MacGregor Way park is a small vest pocket park that on the east side of Almeda Road and Hermann Park is adjacent. However, retention ponds are classified as open space and there is a retention pond for a multi-family development. It covers less than one percent of the land mass.

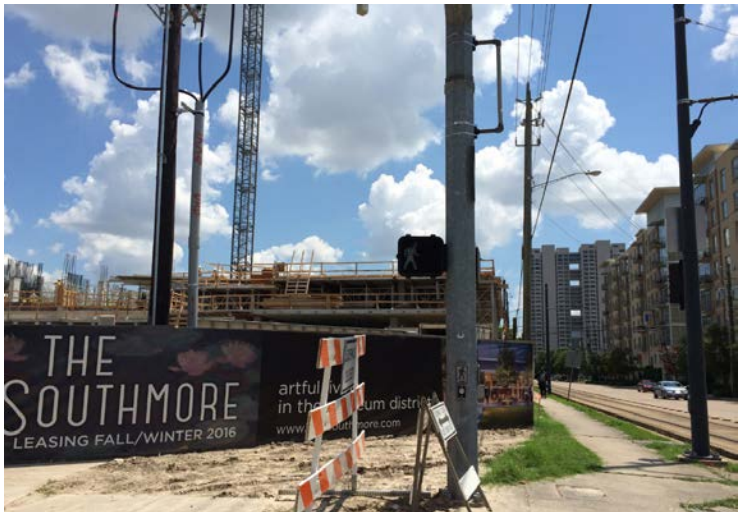
## HOUSING

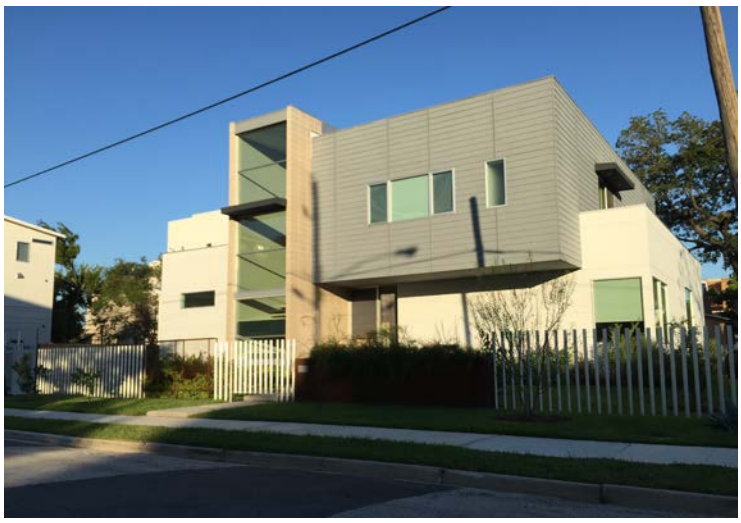
Museum Park is an asset-rich, close-in neighborhood where housing values have increased exponentially in recent years. Harris County Appraisal District valuations show substantial increases between 2010 and 2015 for residential properties of all vintages.

Moreover, the median housing value reported in the U. S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2010-2014 is $322,265 in Museum Park. The comparable citywide median housing value reported in the ACS is 125,400. Though these figures are likely outdated, given pace of recent residential activity, the numbers demonstrate that Museum Park values are much higher than citywide.

More recent data from sources such as realtor.com indicate that the average home price in the reporting area that encompasses Museum Park is $539,900, compared to $279,858 for Houston. These figures probably better illustrate the current situation. Signs at sites where new construction will occur, such as the site of the Mondrian at the Museums and another site on Caroline, post prices as high as $1 million-plus.

Rents have followed the same trajectory. The median gross rent presented in the 2010-2014 American Community Survey for the census tract where Museum Park is located was $1,653. The comparable citywide figure, which is $862, was much lower. Since rents are trending upward, these figures are probably outdated. Moreover, rents forecast for new multi-family developments will elevate the median rent figure for Museum Park in the next few years. Unsurprisingly, the highest rents are commanded by high-rise properties which tend to be newer and/or to exhibit locational advantages, such as proximity to Hermann Park. (Rents at The Southmore, which is adjacent to light rail transit have not been announced, but will certainly exceed the city median, given the description of the property that is on the





RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MUSEUM PARK

developer's website.) However, there are still older small scale multi-family complexes where rents are unlikely to approach four figures, although these rents are likely to increase over time. It is also possible that these complexes will ultimately be replaced by new development, given land values and the momentum for high end high density development.

### Housing Development Trends

While many of the stately, historic homes remain, the pre-World War II housing stock is steadily being depleted. town homes and condominiums. This is a source of concern for some Museum Park stakeholders.

More than one hundred 100 town home units are either platted or under construction. Whereas the first wave of town home development featured two-story units, units that are either planned or recently constructed are rising to three and four stories. The building of ever taller residential structures, including the multifamily construction described above, reflects the escalation of land values in the neighborhood. This trend will result in higher housing and population densities than has been the case in the past.

Following is a description of new multi-family residential developments that are either recently completed or under construction:

#### • The Hampsted at Museum District

This is a four-story, 36-unit apartment development located at 1508 Blodgett Street. Construction began in 2014 and it is now occupied.

#### • The Southmore

The tallest of the new and upcoming multi-family developments, The Southmore, is a 24-story, 255-unit apartment development at 2220 Southmore Boulevard. It is expected to be begin accepting tenants in September 2016 and completion of the entire development is slated for March 2017. This development faces the METRORail Red Line, that originated in Downtown Houston and passes the Texas Medical Center to terminate in the vicinity of the NRG complex.

#### • Oaks on Caroline

This is part of a three-development project that is located on Caroline Street between Arbor Place and Wentworth Street. Slated to be completed in January 2016, this is a 28-unit condominium development located at 4820 Caroline. The middle development is The Park; construction is expected to begin in December 2016, but the unit count has not been finalized. The third development, to be located at the corner of Caroline and Wentworth streets, has not been named and no groundbreaking date has been set.

#### • One Hermann Place

This seven-story, 224-unit apartment development faces Hermann Park and is adjacent to the Parklane Apartments, another high-rise apartment development. In May 2016, the Houston Business Journal reported that the development company responsible for One Hermann Place is planning two adjacent high-rise residential towers..

#### • The Mondrian at the Museums

This is an eight-story, 20-unit condominium development located at 5104 Caroline Street at Palm Street. Units are currently being sold and the development is expected to be completed in 2017.

The dynamic pace of new housing construction is resulting in an extraordinary transformation of the Museum Park neighborhood. Housing is diverse with respect to architectural styles and building materials and newer units are interspersed with older units. In many instances, entire block faces contain new town homes

### Housing Condition

Unsurprisingly, given the number of units that are newly constructed, the majority of housing units are in sound condition. Observations from a windshield survey conducted in October 2015 and a review of HCAD data indicate that the majority of older units are also in sound condition, with a substantial number having been remodeled since their original construction date.

### Housing Choice

Some of the neighborhood's stakeholders have expressed concern that escalating housing prices impair housing choice and forestall economic diversity. High land values limit prospects for the expansion of housing choice to include affordable and workforce housing. There are undeveloped land parcels owned by public, quasi-public, and nonprofit entities that might support affordable housing in some manner and this prospect will be explored.

AGE OF STRUCTURES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic conditions in Museum Park are favorable. The U. S. Census Bureau's 2010-2014 American Community Survey results show that median income in Museum Park is substantially higher than the citywide median income. The figure reported for Museum Park is $102,899 and the reported citywide figure is $45,728. As is true of median housing value, this figure probably does not reflect the status quo, but it demonstrates how much higher incomes are compared to the city as a whole. Incomes have probably risen since the census was taken and in light of the asking prices for new and upcoming residential units, median income is likely to continue to rise in the coming years, since high levels of income will be required to purchase and rent the new high end units.

### Employment

The unemployment rate was a minuscule 1 percent when the American Community Survey was conducted. This compares to a citywide figure of 8.9 percent. This is highly likely to continue to be the trend.

There are approximately 666 employers in Museum Park, as per data aggregated by Nielson Claritas. Employers include museums, places of worship, and nonprofit organizations, as well as businesses. Park Plaza Hospital and Hotel ZaZa are the largest employers in Museum Park.

Most Museum Park employers have a single location as opposed to multiple branches or franchises. The vast majority employ less than 25 persons.

### Local Economy

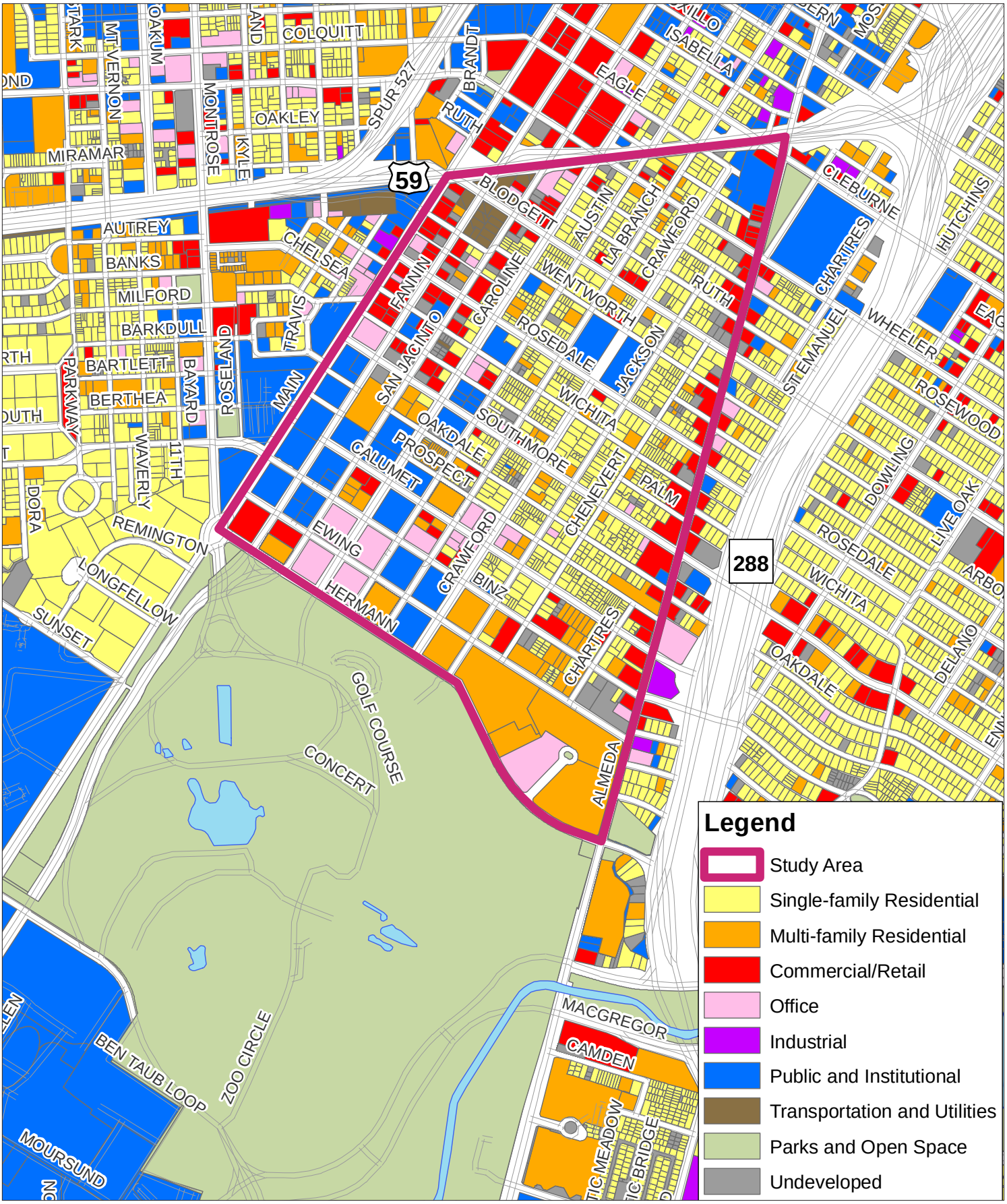
In a focus group session held to obtain input from museum representatives, plans were revealed by some of the participants to adopt extended hours and implement events that are designed to attract more visitors. More visitors can be expected to increase patronize existing restaurants and create demand for new restaurants and other retail facilities. Also, although the evident focus of developers is residential development at this juncture, it is certain that the focus will expand to include retail development as developers seek to take advantage of the exponential pace of high end residential growth. These dynamics align with the interests of residents and other Museum Park stakeholders for an increase in retail options, especially restaurants.

With respect to non-retail commercial development, stakeholders have expressed that they would like to see such development take the form of professional services offices, such as architecture firms. This would be in keeping with the current existence of such development. Almeda Road, a major thoroughfare on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, has been cited as a logical place for increased retail development to occur. This development would join an existing concentration of retail uses, including a wine bar, dry cleaning establishments, boutiques, bars, and restaurants. There is also potential for new retail development to manifest as transit-oriented mixed use development along the METRO light rail alignment. Fannin Street is a location where there are underdeveloped sites that could be redeveloped to higher uses. Lastly, there are other locations where redevelopment of underutilized or derelict sites could occur.

### Economic Development Tools

There are economic development tools available to Museum Park that could potentially support economic development activities via the mechanism of tax increment financing. There are two tax increment reinvestment zones that extend into Museum Park. OST/Almeda Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #7 extends into the eastern edge of Museum Park and the newly-extended Midtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #2 extends across US 59 into Museum Park largely capturing the area around the museums. These authorities are quasi-governmental entities that are empowered to finance development and redevelopment activities inside the TIRZ boundaries.

Management districts also support economic development activities by funding graffiti removal, security, and pedestrian and streetscape projects. These projects are supported by assessments levied on non-single family residential property owners within district boundaries. Houston Southeast, formerly known as the Greater Southeast Management District, is a management district that covers the majority of Museum Park, while the rest of the study area lies within the boundary of Midtown Management District.


Legend
Study Area
Single-family Residential
Multi-family Residential
Commercial/Retail
Office
Industrial
Public and Institutional
Transportation and Utilities
Parks and Open Space
Undeveloped
59
288
COLQUITT
BRANDT
ISABELLA
EAGLE
SPUR 527
RUTH
OAKLEY
MIRAMAR
MTVERNON
MONTROSE
KYLE
AUTREY
BANKS
MILFORD
BARKDULL
BARTLETT
BERTHEA
PARKWAY
BAYARD
ROSELAND
TRAVIS
CHELSEA
MAIN
WAVERLY
11TH
DORA
REMINGTON
LONGFELLOW
SUNSET
BLODGETT
AUSTIN
LA BRANCH
CRAWFORD
CLEBURNE
CHARTRES
HUTCHINS
FANNIN
CAROLINE
WENTWORTH
ROSEDALE
JACKSON
SAN JACINTO
WICHITA
SOUTHMORE
OAKDALE
PROSPECT
CALUMET
CHENEVERT
PALM
EWING
HERMANN
BINZ
ST EMANUEL
WHEELER
ROSEWOOD
DOWLING
LIVE OAK
DELANO
GOLF COURSE
CONCERT
ALMEDA
MACGREGOR
CAMDEN
ZOO CIRCLE
BEN TAUB LOOP
MOURSUND

# URBAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING STRATEGIES

Museum Park is a moderate to upper income community that was settled prior to World War II. Much of the neighborhood's architecture reflects this provenance; however, ongoing and recent development is altering the look and feel of the neighborhood. This new development is occurring at higher residential densities than was the case at the neighborhood's inception and it exemplifies contemporary architectural styles.

The neighborhood is a desirable location, as reflected in year over year property values. These values have increased considerably in recent years and as a result, are higher than is the case in Houston overall.

## LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Museum Park is predominantly residential in the interior, with commercial uses occurring primarily along major thoroughfares. There are also some public/institutional uses on the edges and in the interior. The proposed strategies for land use are based on analysis of land uses within and immediately surrounding the study area; a review of new and planned development, and the input of Museum Park residents and other community stakeholders.

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives to support a model healthy community with desirable and compatible land uses are as follows:

- Protect community character
- Attract and retain land uses that support community needs and aspirations

### STRATEGIES

Protect Community Character:

**1. Employ Community Benefits Agreements**
Windshield surveys reveal that in recent years, residential development has occurred at a robust pace and is continuing to occur at this pace. Inasmuch as this development is inconsistent with traditional development patterns, a strategy of embracing tools that are designed to decelerate the ongoing degradation of community character is in order. Accordingly, Community Benefits Agreements are a best practice that can be adopted to address development that is planned, but not yet under construction. These agreements enable communities to enter into agreements with developers that set forth mutually agreeable parameters for development.

**2. Institute Conservation Easements**
Preserving community character by creating a historic district is not feasible because virtually every blockface that contains a historic property also contains a contemporary town home development. Under these conditions, conservation easements are a more practical approach. These easements enable landowners to retain and use their property, permanently removing development rights in exchange for tax benefits. A land trust would have to be created to manage the easements.

Attract and retain development that supports community needs and aspirations:

**1. Encourage And Support Mixed-Use And Transit-Oriented Development**
Residents and other Museum Park stakeholders have expressed interest in attracting commercial development to the community. The METRORail Light Rail Transit (LRT) line that traverses the edge of Museum Park has the potential to attract transit-oriented development that features commercial/retail (and residential) uses. Already, there are plans for this type of development in proximity to the LRT. This presents an opportunity for the community leadership to influence the types of commercial/retail uses that are incorporated into the development. The above-referenced community benefits agreement mechanism could be deployed in this instance.

**2. Implement Urban Design And CPTED Strategies That Support Development**
Commercial/retail uses are attracted to well-landscaped, well-lit, environments that have effective wayfinding mechanisms. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles may affect strategic use of vegetation and building form, to prevent criminal activity and keep "eyes on the street". Implementation of CPTED methods within a high-quality urban environment will support future commercial/retail development in the neighborhood.

**3.Earmark Public Loan Funds For Façade Improvements And Capital Lending.**
Employing a best practice adopted by the City of Fort Worth, City of Houston designates the Almeda Corridor as a key commercial corridor and targets a bundle of incentives and amenities using CDBG, TIRZ, HSE, HBDi, and other funds to for façade improvement loans, enhanced lighting, capital lending programs, streetscape improvements, and safer street crossings, to the corridor.

## HOUSING

Expanded housing choice is a value held by residents and other stakeholders, with the goal of ensuring demographic diversity. High land values make this a challenging goal; however, mixed financing and collaborative partnerships could place this goal within reach.

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives to facilitate expanded housing choice include:

- Leverage land owned by public, quasi-public, and nonprofit entities, both inside and outside of the community
- Encourage set asides of workforce housing units in transit-oriented and mixed use residential development

### STRATEGIES

Leverage land owned by public, quasi-public, and nonprofit entities, both inside and outside of the community

**1. Build Partnerships Among Public, Quasi-Public, And Nonprofit Entities To Lower The Purchase Price Of Workforce Housing In And Around The Museum Park Community.**
Public and quasi-public entities that own land in and around Museum Park could make it available at reduced cost, while COH-administered affordable housing funds and Section 380 subsidies could be used to further lower the cost of development. Non-profit developers would be encouraged to partner with for-profit developers to construct the units.

**2. Encourage Set Asides Of Workforce Housing Units In Transit-Oriented And Mixed Use Development**
It is conceivable that mixed use developments could incorporate housing that is affordable for individuals in the moderate income range. Incentives such as the use of expanded-subsidy Section 380 agreements and the allocation of COH-administered affordable housing funds could make this more economically feasible. (This is most feasible for developments that utilize tax credits and require community support.)

**3. Prioritize Aging In Place**
Strategies that result in enabling elderly households to "age in place" can support housing diversity goals and neighborhood preservation goals to the extent that elderly households occupy older housing in Museum Park.

- Rehabilitation loans made to elderly household with special conditions
- New senior HUD 202 development
- Assisted living development
- Encourage for-profit developer; best practice example is Galleria area senior housing

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Conditions are favorable for neighborhood economic development. Museums located in and around Museum Park make a substantial contribution to the local economy and there is potential for enhancement, i.e. innovations planned by the museums are expected to attract additional visitors, create demand for restaurants and other retail experiences. This aligns with the desire of residents and other stakeholders for additional retail, especially restaurants. Most Museum Park retail establishments have a single location as opposed to multiple branches or franchises. The vast majority employ less than 25 persons. These establishments benefit from the neighborhood's favorable location and have the potential to attract patrons from the Texas Medical Center, the nearby museums, and Museum Park.

### OBJECTIVES

Objectives to preserve and enhance neighborhood economic conditions are as follows:

- Employ business retention and attraction strategies
- Incentivize transit-oriented development and mixed-use development
- Enhance access between surrounding activity centers and local businesses
- Increase awareness of the existence of local businesses.
- Address parking issues of local businesses

### STRATEGIES

**1. Employ Business Retention And Attraction Strategies**
Use results of the marketing plan and business survey that Houston Southeast have engaged to guide business attraction and retention strategies.

**2. Implement Urban Design And CPTED Strategies.**

**3. Earmark Public Loan Funds For Façade Improvements And Capital Lending.**
Employing a best practice adopted by the City of Fort Worth, City of Houston designates the Almeda Corridor as a key commercial corridor and targets a bundle of incentives and amenities using CDBG, TIRZ, HSE, HBDi, and other funds to for façade improvement loans, enhanced lighting, capital lending programs, streetscape improvements, and safer street crossings, to the corridor.

**4. Incentivize Transit-Oriented Development And Mixed-Use Development**

The City of Houston Transit Corridors Ordinance enables developers to maximize the development potential of properties in Light Rail Transit corridors. METRO can encourage transit-oriented development, which is typically mixed use, by crafting and releasing bid solicitations that incentive transit-oriented development that meets Museum Park community goals.

Mixed use development away from transit corridors can be encouraged by the City of Houston pursuant to the crafting of a package of incentives that attract mixed uses that support community goals.

**5. Enhance Access Between Surrounding Activity Centers And Local Businesses**

Patronage of local businesses would likely increase if museum patrons and Texas Medical Center visitors and employees were aware of the existence of businesses on Almeda Road and other locations in the community. A form of motor transport that would circulate, enhancing access between the TMC and business clusters and museums could be explored.

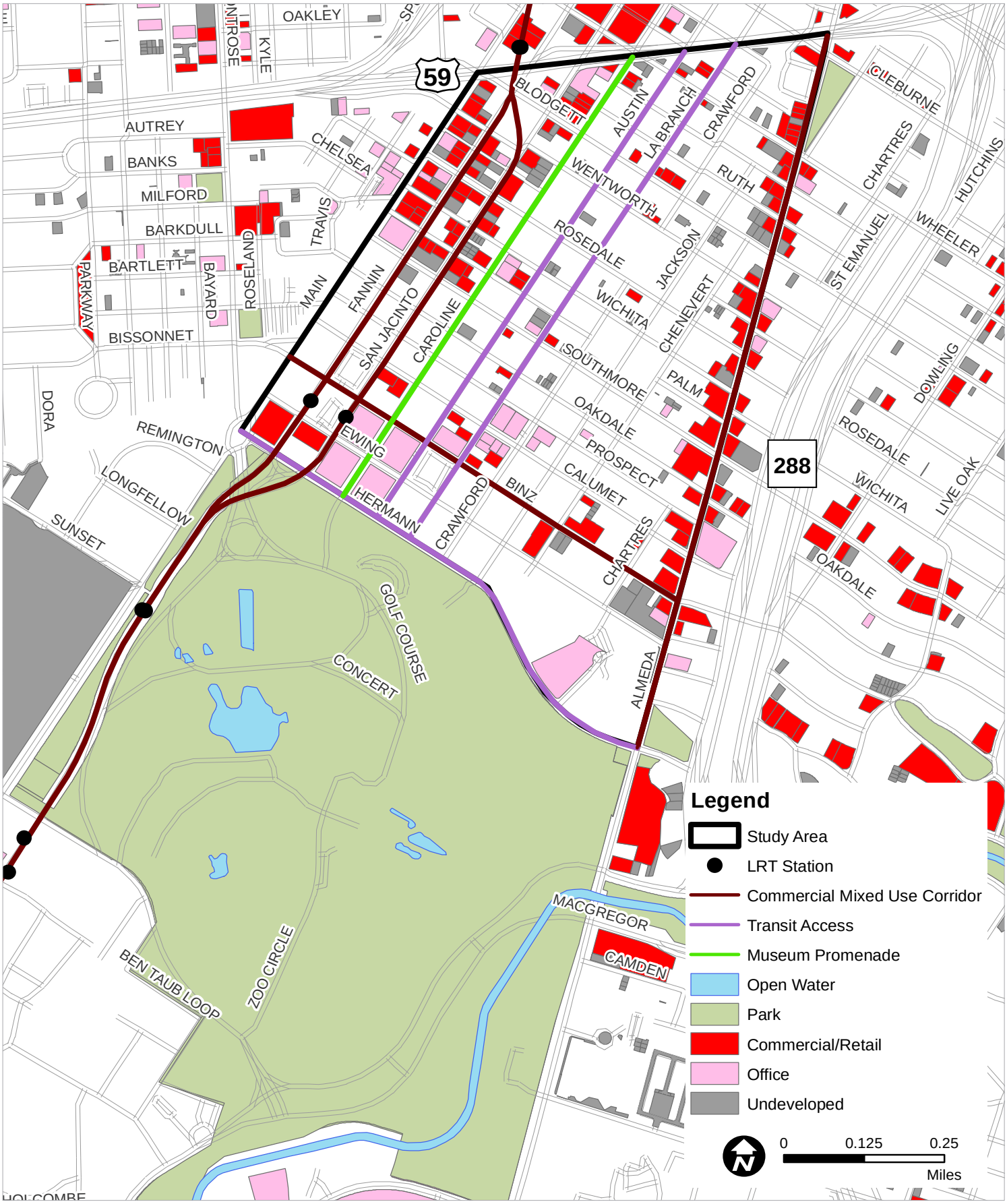
**6. Increase Awareness Of The Existence Of Local Businesses.**

Wayfinding signs funded by Houston Southeast would make known the existence and location of local businesses, leading to an increase in patronage. These signs would direct museum patrons and TMC visitors to local businesses.

**7. Address Parking Issues Of Local Businesses**

A form of motor transport or circulator would ease parking issues experienced by local businesses. However, Houston Southeast could provide signs that point the way to parking facilities such as those provided by the OST/Almeda Redevelopment Authority on Almeda Road, mitigating parking issues.

*Key commercial corridors identified for the transportation/connectivity component of the study have been overlaid onto a map of non-residential land uses to facilitate an analysis of the relationships among land use and urban development, transportation, and economic development.*




COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY AREAS

# MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS

## TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

Museum Park is located near the center of the Houston metropolitan area and the core of the transportation network. Due to the neighborhood's connection to Hermann Park and the Museum District, mobility and connectivity within the neighborhood are vital to residents and visitors. With many destinations in close proximity to the neighborhood, multi-modal transportation options are essential and include transit, sidewalks, bikeways, parking areas, and roadways. These multiple modes must function together to provide residents and visitors a balance of options that are safe and enhance the neighborhood.

The Museum Park neighborhood has a good grid network of streets and sidewalks that provide significant opportunities for mobility through multiple modes. However, barriers exist, such as dead-end streets, poor sidewalk conditions, a highway crossing to access light rail, and few marked bikeways. Additionally, the location of the Museum Park neighborhood creates mobility issues. As the neighborhood contains and borders regional destinations, such as many museums, and Hermann Park, and is in close proximity to the Texas Medical Center, the neighborhood receives a significant volume of visitors. These visitors place added pressure on the street network by increasing traffic volumes and parking demand on neighborhood streets.

This section explores in greater detail existing conditions of the roadway, transit, bike, and pedestrian networks within the Museum Park neighborhood.

***"Museum Park can be a model district for great access to downtown or the Medical Center with the feel of a neighborhood."***

***- Public meeting participant***

PUBLIC MEETING PARTICIPANTS COMMENTING ON MOBILITY ISSUES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

MULTIPLE MODES OF TRANSIT THROUGHOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD

ALMEDA AT SOUTHMORE

MAIN AT MECOM FOUNTAIN

## ROADWAY NETWORK

The Museum Park neighborhood's grid network contains roadways of varying widths and lanes that handle a variety of traffic volumes. The roadway network is shown on the following page in the summary of characteristics for all roadways. Generally, higher traffic volumes are seen on roadways near the outer sections of the study area, coordinating with where traffic signals and area destinations exist. The grid network creates opportunities to facilitate alternative routes for neighborhood travel, bicycle route options, and pedestrian connectivity.

Examination of the types of traffic signals at intersections, coupled with the level of traffic volumes on the roadways shows that certain corridors begin to emerge as more heavily utilized and essential to travel within and through Museum Park. These corridors may in some cases present barriers to mobility options for residents within the community due to traffic volumes and pedestrian crossing availability. Another barrier to mobility for Museum Park is the US-59 elevated highway structure at the northern boundary of the study area. This structure creates a harsh environment for pedestrians, cyclists, and even vehicles.

# KEY CORRIDORS

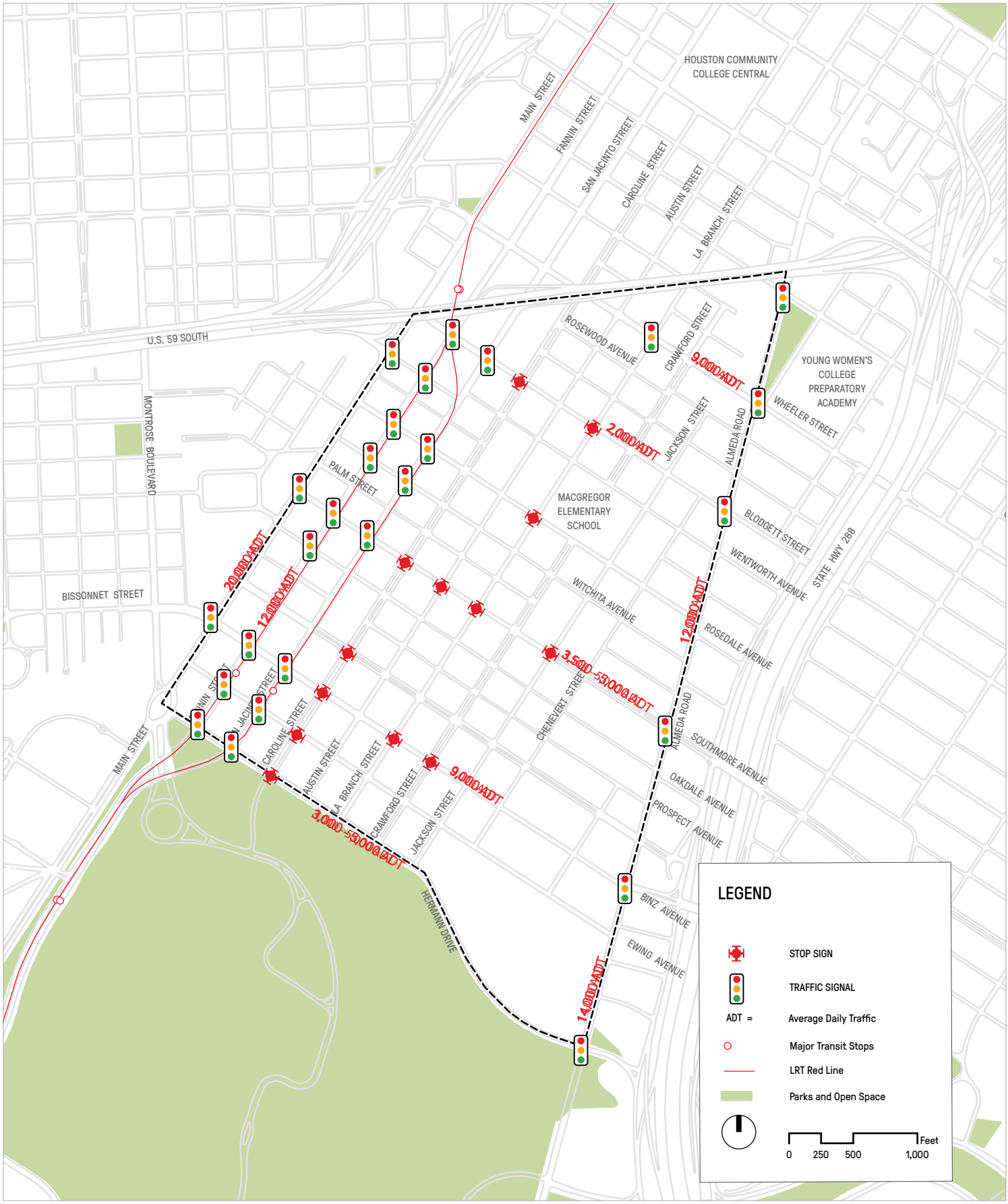
Key corridors are identified as roadways that are classified as major collectors or thoroughfares, carry a significant level of neighborhood travel volumes, or provide important multimodal connections to key destinations. Examination of key corridors provides information that identifies where current constraints and future opportunities exist. This information includes roadway width, traffic volumes, signalization, medians, and more. The following corridors were identified as key corridors to evaluate due to their usage, potential, and importance to Museum Park:

- Almeda Road
- Main Street
- Fannin Street
- San Jacinto Street
- Caroline Street
- Crawford Street
- Hermann Drive
- Binz Street
- Southmore Boulevard
- Blodgett Street
- Wheeler Avenue

Summary characteristics for all roadways in Museum Park are in the table to the right. Information contained in this table includes the roadway classification according to the City of Houston, the current number of lanes, and median width if applicable. Additionally, the existing right-of-way (ROW) is shown along with the existing pavement width of the roadway itself. Examination of the ROW in conjunction with the pavement width helps identify where potential improvement opportunities for sidewalks and roadways may be viable.

| Street | Direction | Extent1 | Extent2 | Road Class | ROW | Pavement Width | Lanes | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cleburn | E-W | Crawford | Almeda | L | 75 | 34 | 2 | No |
| Eagle | E-W | La Branch | Crawford | L | 60 | 18 | 2 | No |
| Barbee | E-W | La Branch | Crawford | L | 53 | 18 | 2 | No |
| Wheeler | E-W | Caroline | Crawford | T | 70 | 44 | 4 | No |
| Wheeler | E-W | Crawford | Almeda | T | 75 | 44 | 4 | No |
| Rosewood | E-W | Caroline | Crawford | L | 53 | 16-24 | 2 | No |
| Rosewood | E-W | Crawford | Almeda | L | 63 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Ruth | E-W | Caroline | Crawford | L | 53 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Ruth | E-W | Crawford | Almeda | L | 63 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Blodgett | E-W | Main | Almeda | T | 85 | 34 | 2 | No |
| Wentworth | E-W | Main | Almeda | L | 55 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Arbor | E-W | Main | Caroline | L | 27 | 15 | 2 | No |
| Arbor | E-W | Chenevert | Almeda | L | 55 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Rosedale | E-W | Main | Almeda | L | 85 | 34 | 2 | No |
| Wichita | E-W | Main | Almeda | L | 55 | 22-32 | 2 | No |
| Palm | E-W | Main | Crawford | L | 55 | 26-36 | 2 | No |
| Palm | E-W | Chenevert | Almeda | L | 50 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Southmore | E-W | Main | Jackson | MJ | 70 | 34 | 2 | No |
| Southmore | E-W | Jackson | Almeda | MJ | 80 | 20/20 | 2 | 20' |
| Oakdale | E-W | Main | Fannin | L | 55 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Oakdale | E-W | Main | Fannin | Private | | | 0 | No |
| Oakdale | E-W | San Jacinto | Almeda | L | 55 | 16-24 | 2 | No |
| Prospect | E-W | Main | Fannin | L | 55 | 24 | 2 | No |
| Prospect | E-W | Caroline | Almeda | L | 55 | 16-24 | 2 | No |
| Calumet | E-W | Main | Fannin | Private | | | 0 | No |
| Calumet | E-W | Fannin | Austin | Parking | 85 | | Varies | Vaires |
| Calumet | E-W | Austin | Chartres | L | 85 | 20/20 | 2 | 15' |
| Calumet | E-W | Chartres | Almeda | L | 85 | 56 | 2 | No |
| Binz | E-W | Main | Almeda | MJ | 70 | 42-50 | 4 | No |
| Ewing | E-W | Main | Almeda | L | 75 | 34 | 2 | No |
| Hermann | E-W | Main | Jackson | T | 90 | 50 | 4 | No |
| Hermann | E-W | Jackson | Almeda | T | 80 | 40 | 4 | No |
| Main | N-S | IH-69 | Hermann | T | 110 | 65 | 6 | No |
| Fannin | SB | IH-69 | Hermann | P | 80 | 32 | 3 | No |
| San Jacinto | NB | IH-69 | Wentworth | L | 75 | 52 | 5 | No |
| San Jacinto | NB | Wentworth | Hermann | L | 76 | 32 | 3 | No |
| Caroline | N-S | IH-69 | Hermann | L | 105 | 20/20 | 2 | 25' |
| Austin | N-S | IH-69 | Hermann | L | 75 | 34 | 2 | No |
| La Branch | N-S | IH-69 | Hermann | L | 75 | 24-34 | 2 | No |
| Crawford | N-S | Eagle | Wheeler | L | 105 | 32 | 2 | No |
| Crawford | N-S | Wheeler | Wentworth | L | 105 | 20/20 | 2 | 20' |
| Crawford | N-S | Rosedale | Hermann | L | 105 | 20/20 | 2 | 20' |
| Jackson | N-S | Rosewood | Hermann | L | 75 | 22-34 | 2 | No |
| Chenevert | N-S | Blodgett | Ewing | L | 55 | 20-24 | 2 | No |
| Chartres | N-S | Prospect | Ewing | L | 65 | 22-30 | 2 | No |
| Almeda | N-S | IH-69 | Hermann | T | 74 | 52 | 5 | No |

SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS FOR ALL ROADWAYS



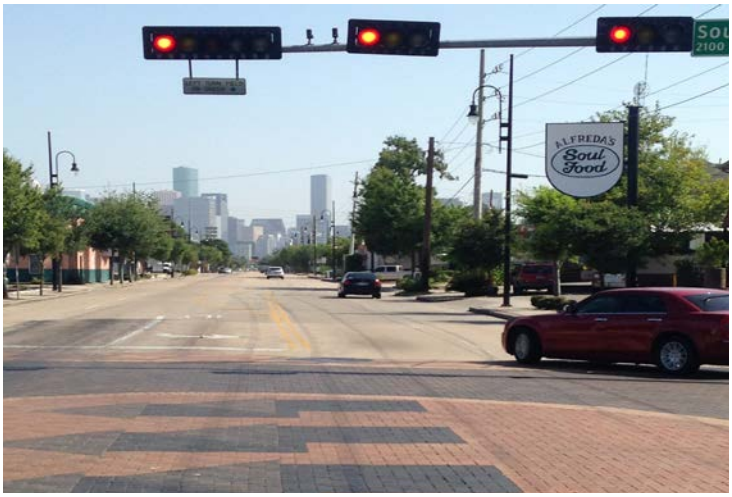

ROADWAY NETWORK WITH TRAFFIC VOLUMES

## ALMEDA ROAD

Almeda Road is a north-south road, and the eastern boundary of the Museum Park study area. It extends from Midtown, where it becomes Crawford Street, to south of the metropolitan area as FM 521. Within the study area, Almeda Road is designated as a thoroughfare, and is one of the few streets that are continuous from Midtown past Hermann Park. There are 74 feet of right of way for the undivided, five-lane roadway. With two 10-foot travels lanes in each direction, and a 12-foot center turn lane, there is 11 feet for the pedestrian realm on each side of the road. There are six signalized intersections on Almeda in Museum Park located at Hermann Drive, Calumet Street, Southmore Boulevard, Blodgett Street, Wheeler Street, and Cleburne Street. Each day there are approximately 11,000 vehicles that travel on Almeda Road near US Highway 59, 12,000 between Blodgett Street and Southmore Boulevard, and nearly 14,000 South of Binz Street. Almeda Road has many destinations, including most of the retail in Museum Park and multi-family residential.

## MAIN STREET

Main Street is widest and busiest street in Museum Park, with 6 lanes and 65 feet wide with approximately 20,000 daily vehicles. The thoroughfare continues north to Downtown, and extends well south of the study area. There are only three traffic signals on Main Street within the study area, providing pedestrians with very few safe crossings. There is a modified traffic circle containing the Mecom Fountain at the intersection of Main Street, Montrose Boulevard and Hermann Park Drive. The corridor has museums, churches and retail space, and is served by the 65 Bissonnet and 5 Southmore METRO routes.




ALEMEDA ROAD SERVES AS A THOROUGHFARE THAT CONNECTS TO DOWNTOWN.

MECOM FOUNTAIN WITHIN THE ROUNDABOUT AT THE INTERSECTION OF MAIN STREET, MONTROSE BOULEVARD AND HERMANN DRIVE

MUCH OF THE RETAIL IN MUSEUM PARK IS ALONG ALMEDA ROAD.

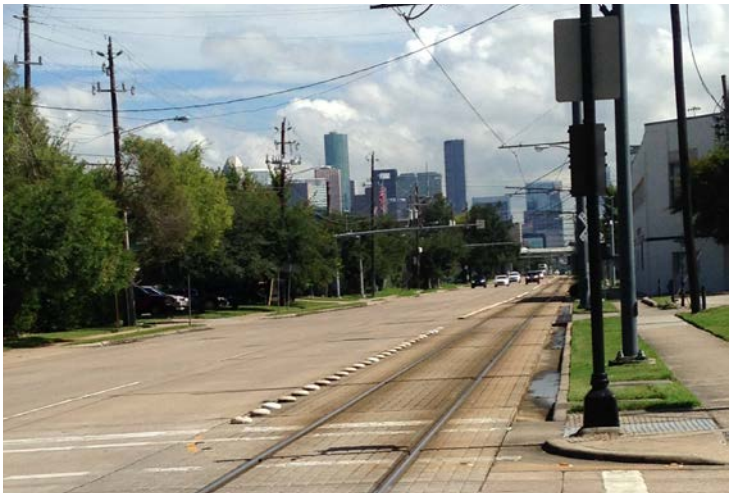
MAIN STREET SERVES AS A THOROUGHFARE CONNECTING MUSEUM PARK TO DOWNTOWN AND THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER.

## FANNIN STREET

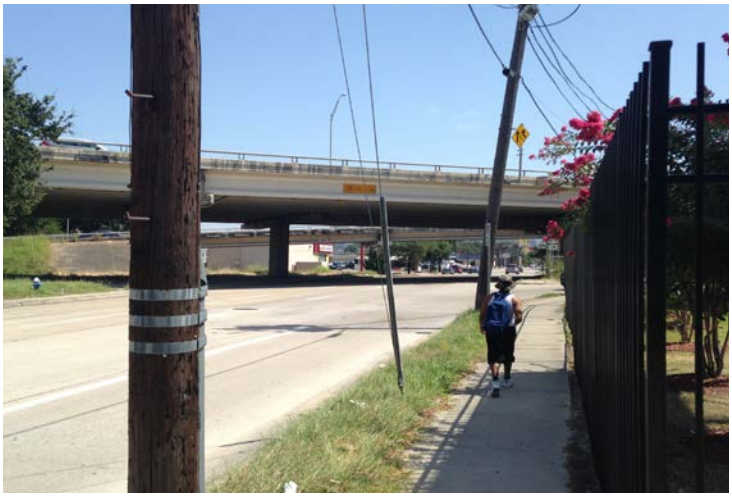
Fannin Street is a southbound roadway with three travel lanes and the METRORail Red Line light rail. Along Fannin Street there is multi-family residential, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Hotel ZaZa, churches, and an assortment of small retail establishments. Fannin Street extends north and south of the study area and carries about 12,000 cars daily in the center of the Museum Park.

## SAN JACINTO STREET

San Jacinto Street is a northbound roadway that mimics Fannin Street with three lanes and light rail. There is a posted 30 mile per hour speed limit on the corridor, which has medical institutions, large multi-family developments and mix of retail. The METRORail Red Line light rail and the 5 Southmore bus route run on this section of San Jacinto Street.



FANNIN STREET IS A TRANSIT CORRIDOR THAT CONNECTS DOWNTOWN TO MUSEUM PARK.



SAN JACINTO STREET IS A WIDE LOCAL ROAD THAT PROVIDES ACCESS TO US 59 AND DOWNTOWN.

FANNIN STREET IS A BUSY CORRIDOR WITH FEW SAFE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS.

SAN JACINTO STREET IS A TRANSIT CORRIDOR, LINED WITH MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL.

## CAROLINE STREET

Caroline Street is a north-south boulevard. Through the entirety of Museum Park, Caroline Street has 20 feet of roadway on either side of a 25-foot median. Caroline Street has been designated a bike route, as it is the only street without traffic signals that is continuous from Hermann Park to Midtown.

## CRAWFORD STREET

Crawford Street has two discontinuous boulevard segments within Museum Park. There is one lane in each direction and a 20-foot median within the 105-foot right of way. Crawford Street extends from Hermann Park to MacGregor Elementary School at Rosedale Street, and north of the school from Wentworth Street to US Highway 59.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS LINE CAROLINE STREET NEAR HERMANN PARK.

CRAWFORD STREET IS A MOSTLY RESIDENTIAL BOULEVARD WITH WIDE, LANDSCAPED MEDIANS.

THE LANDSCAPED MEDIAN CONTINUES ALONG CAROLINE STREET THROUGH RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

CRAWFORD STREET SERVES AS A ROUTE TO MACGREGOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

## HERMANN DRIVE

Herman Drive is the southern boundary that separates the Museum Park study area from Hermann Park. It is a wide thoroughfare with many mid- and high-rise buildings, including a hotel, museums, medical buildings, and multi-family residential. Hermann Drive is a four-lane road with a parking lane on the south side of the street and 90 feet of right of way between San Jacinto Street and Jackson Street. Between Jackson Street and Almeda Road there is one travel and one parking lane in each direction within an 80-foot right of way. Because of its proximity to the park and low average daily traffic volumes, which range from 3,000 to 5,000 along the corridor, Hermann Drive is a designated bike route and has several key pedestrian crossings that provide access to Hermann Park.

## BINZ STREET

Binz Street is an east-west road lined with a variety of land uses, including museums, medical buildings, restaurants, multi-family and single-family residential. Between San Jacinto and Almeda Road, traffic is controlled entirely by two- and four-way stop signs. The four-lane roadway has 70 feet of right of way. At the intersections with Almeda Road, San Jacinto Street, Fannin Street and Main Street there are additional left-turn lanes. There are approximately 9,000 vehicles a day traveling on Binz Street near the middle of Museum Park. The 5 Southmore bus route runs on Binz through the study area.

HERMANN PARK IS LOCATED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF HERMANN DRIVE

HERMANN DRIVE IS A WIDE FOUR-LANE ROADWAY SEPARATING MUSEUM PARK FROM HERMANN PARK.

AT THE INTERSECTION WITH ALMEDA, BINZ STREET HAS A MIX OF RESIDENTIAL AND RETAIL.

## SOUTHMORE BOULEVARD

Southmore Boulevard is an east-west boulevard connecting Third Ward to Main Street. It is designated as a major collector and has one travel lane in each direction carrying a total of 3,500 to 5,000 vehicles per day. West of Jackson Street, Southmore Boulevard is an undivided, 34-foot, two-lane roadway, with parallel parking on each side of the street. East of Jackson Street there is 20 feet of pavement, including a travel lane and parallel parking, on each side of a 20-foot median. The street is mostly residential, with large multi-family developments built or under construction near San Jacinto Street.

## BLODGETT STREET

Blodgett Street is a two-lane, undivided, east-west road. The thoroughfare extends from Main Street east across State Highway 288, passing through a mix of mostly residential properties, and carrying approximately 2,000 cars per day. The 34 feet of pavement leaves plenty of space for pedestrian facilities and amenities inside of the 85-foot right of way.

THERE ARE A MIXTURE OF OLDER SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES AND NEWER MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT ON SOUTHMORE BOULEVARD

BLODGETT STREET IS A THOROUGHFARE THAT CONTINUES EAST OF MUSEUM PARK, CROSSING STATE HIGHWAY 288.

SOUTHMORE BOULEVARD HAS A LANDSCAPED MEDIAN ON THE EAST SIDE OF MUSEUM PARK.

BLODGETT STREET IS 34 FEET WIDE, HOWEVER THERE ARE 85 FEET OF RIGH OF WAY.

## WHEELER AVENUE

Wheeler Avenue is an east-west thoroughfare near the northern boundary of Museum Park. The four block segment within the study area has upwards of 9,000 vehicles per day and has METRO service on the 25 Richmond route. There are two travel lanes in each direction comprising 44 feet of pavement within a minimum of 70 feet of right of way. This portion of Wheeler Avenue has both retail and single-family detached housing. The Wheeler Transit Center on the west end of Wheeler at Main Street is a METRORail Red Line light rail station and hub for five METRO bus routes.

WHEELER STREET IS AN IMPORTANT CONNECTION EAST TO NEIGHBORING THIRD WARD.

THERE IS FREQUENT BUS SERVICE ON WHEELER STREET THAT CONTINUES WEST OF WHEELER STATION ALONG RICHMOND AVENUE.

# CORRIDOR OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The Museum Park neighborhood has an amazing asset base to build upon including many one-of-a-kind destinations and strong residential housing stock within the neighborhood's footprint. However, based on community feedback and team assessment of Museum Park, the neighborhood can feel fragmented, and defines itself by adjacencies (e.g., the Museums and Hermann Park) rather than its internal character. The existing infrastructure provides inconsistent and at times uncomfortable experiences for residents and visitors.

Mobility enhancements to the strong existing grid of streets can connect unique and inviting experiences along corridors and at key destinations to strengthen the neighborhood. Prioritizing walkability can help create a connected, healthy and vibrant community. By focusing on the walking experience first, while considering the role other mobility options play in the community, Museum Park can be a neighborhood where residents and visitors can easily access various museums, safely utilize the attractive transit options, explore shops and businesses, or take a stroll to nearby parks. This can be done while maintaining acceptable service level for through traffic. By focusing on the following objectives, a connected transportation network, supportive of a vibrant neighborhood, can develop:

- Prioritize walkability
- Leverage high quality, existing assets and the existing street grid
- Connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods and destinations
- Support transit oriented development and walkable, mixed-use development

Transportation networks and strategies can be an effective way to influence and support desired changes in all areas of the livable centers context. Specifically, the strategies below will advance the above-mentioned objectives and address the needs of the neighborhood. These strategies focus on developing a comprehensive transportation and mobility network that considers walking as a priority for major street corridors to help prioritize and guide investments in infrastructure improvements. Street improvements related to transit, bicycles, and automobiles should also be considered as appropriate for the context of the roadway and surrounding uses.

Focusing on sidewalk infrastructure, particularly on priority corridors, could provide a walkable grid that enhances the existing neighborhood, businesses, museums and transit access. Creating a network of comfortable bike facilities the neighborhood would enhance connections and safe biking, and encourage biking to destinations outside of Museum Park. Redesigning streets to allocate appropriate space to walking, biking, on-street parking, while still maintaining vehicle and transit access can have a great benefit to the surrounding uses of the street as well as the neighborhood. Enhancing transit access and service can improve connections to the large, adjacent employment centers of Downtown and the Texas Medical Center. Enhancements should reflect the character of the neighborhood and be comfortable for people to access.

## CORRIDOR DESIGNATION & MODE PRIORITY

When people discuss how they move around and through Museum Park, they typically talk about corridors. Many of the corridors have specific contexts with people as they describe how they experience place in the study area. For example, Almeda is a commercial corridor, and Hermann Drive is a barrier between the neighborhood and the park. Following the three above-mentioned strategies, and examining the surrounding land uses and existing street context, a corridor designation table was developed and mapped with key corridors in the study area. These corridor designations will feed into identification of modal priorities of people walking, biking, using transit, and driving for each respective corridor. This prioritization supports the role that corridor plays in regional and local mobility and the surrounding land use context and economic development goals. The information and maps on the following pages details ideas for corridor designation, mode priority, and opportunities for overall corridor improvements*.

**Note: This is a preliminary set of ideas for the area corridors from the transportation standpoint. These concepts were vetted with the community and the area stakeholders. Those that got endorsed in the public process, are reflected in the Livable Centers plan project recommendations in the main body of the report.*

**COMMERCIAL/MIXED-USE CORRIDOR**

- Main Street
- Transit Street
- Mixed-Use Street

**NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR**

- Residential Boulevard
- Museum Promenade
- Bikeway
- Transit Access
- Local Street

# ALMEDA ROAD

### Corridor Designation
Main Street

### Current MTFP Designation
T-4-74: Wheeler St. - Binz St.
T-4-80: south of Binz St.

### Current Context

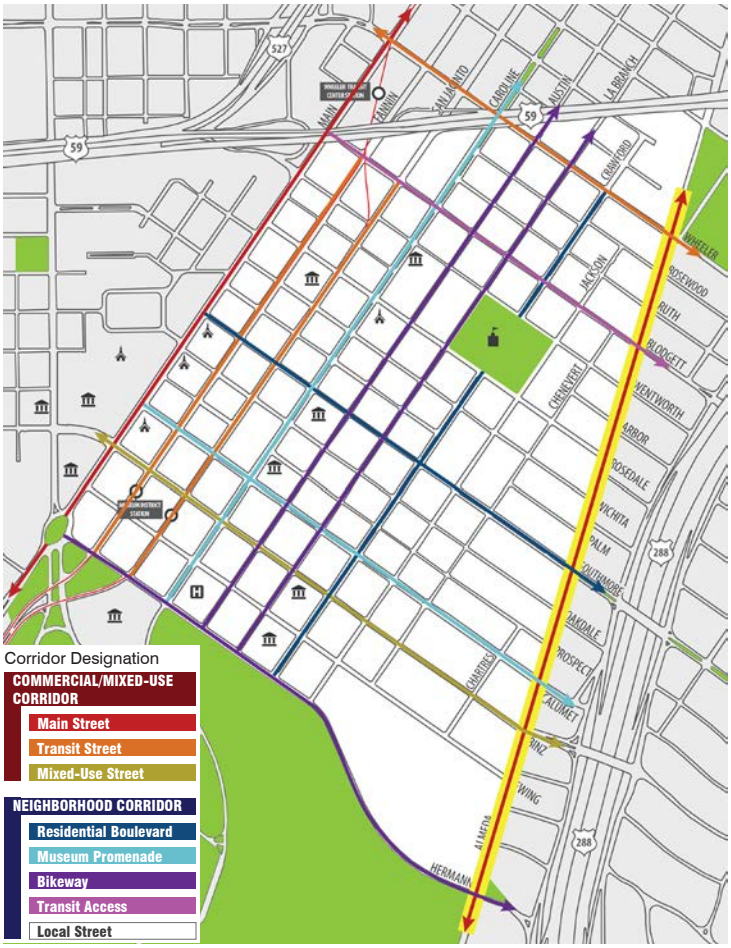
Almeda Road is a north-south thoroughfare, and carries between 11,000-14,000 vehicles per day. The corridor is served by the 11 Almeda/Lyons METRO route. For a majority of the corridor, there is 74 feet of right-of-way for the undivided, five-lane roadway with two 10-foot travels lanes in each direction, and a 12-foot center turn lane, there is 11 feet for the pedestrian realm on each side of the road. North of the study area, Almeda Road transitions to a 3-lane, northbound, one-way roadway and becomes Crawford Street that continues north through Downtown. This places natural limits on the amount of traffic traveling through the study area, particularly in the southbound direction. Parking is not currently permitted along Almeda Road within the study area.

The primary land use along Almeda Road is retail, with some multi-family residential as well. Almeda Road houses most of the retail available in Museum Park. Almeda is seen as the "connection to the 3rd Ward."

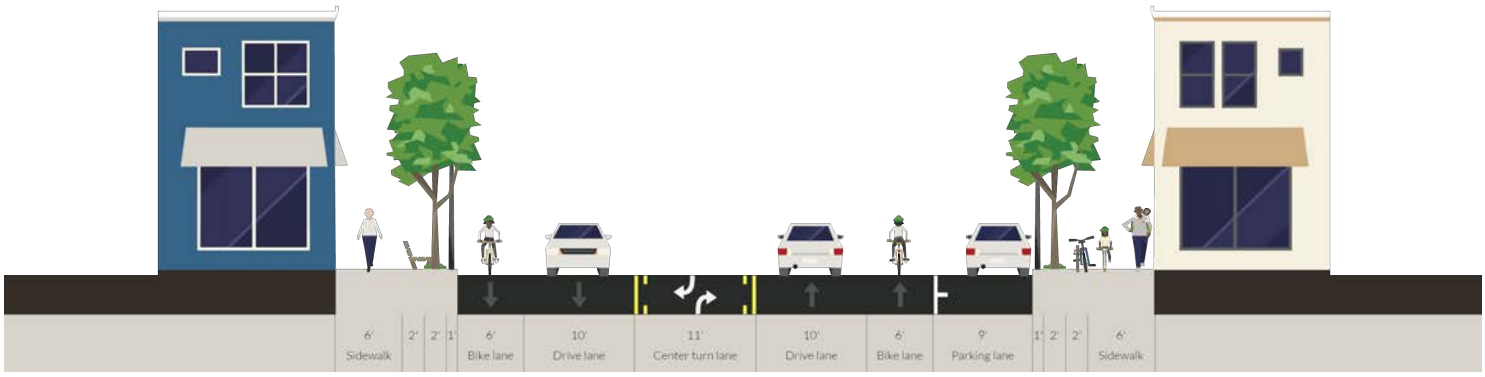
### Opportunity

Convert the current 5 travel lanes to 3 lanes (two through lanes with one center turn lane) and include parallel parking, bike lanes and wider sidewalks. The design is intended to enhance walking, maintain vehicle and transit access, and support increase in neighborhood retail and services. Pedestrian lighting and furniture, bicycle parking, comfortable transit stops and safe pedestrian street crossings are also key improvements.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# MAIN STREET

### Corridor Designation
Main Street

### Current MTFP Designation
P-6-110

### Current Context

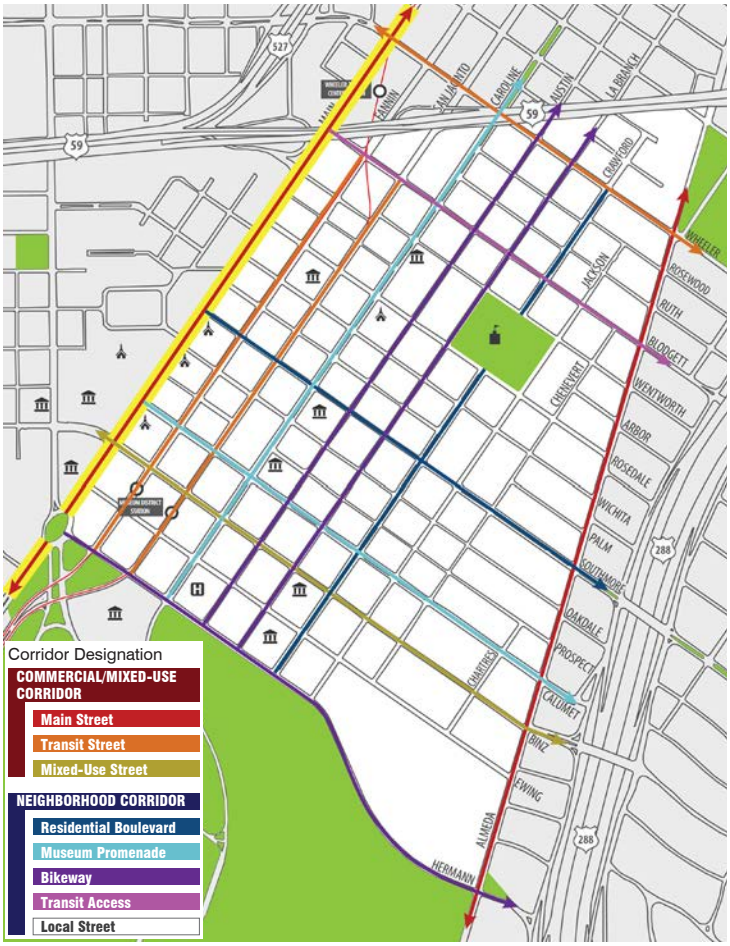
Main Street is the widest and busiest street in Museum Park. It is 6 lanes and 65 feet wide within the curb, and carries approximately 18,800 vehicles per day. The thoroughfare continues north to Downtown, and extends well south of the study area. North of the study area, Main Street is one travel lane in each direction along the METRORail Red Line. The roadway widens to 3 travel lanes in each direction at Blodgett Street. There is currently no parking allowed on Main Street except for Sundays.

There are only three traffic signals on Main Street within the study area, providing pedestrians with very few safe crossings. There is a modified traffic circle containing the Mecom Fountain at the intersection of Main Street, Montrose Boulevard and Hermann Park Drive. The corridor provides access to a variety of uses, activities and uses, including museums, churches, and retail space. The corridor is also served by the 65 Bissonnet and 5 Southmore METRO routes.

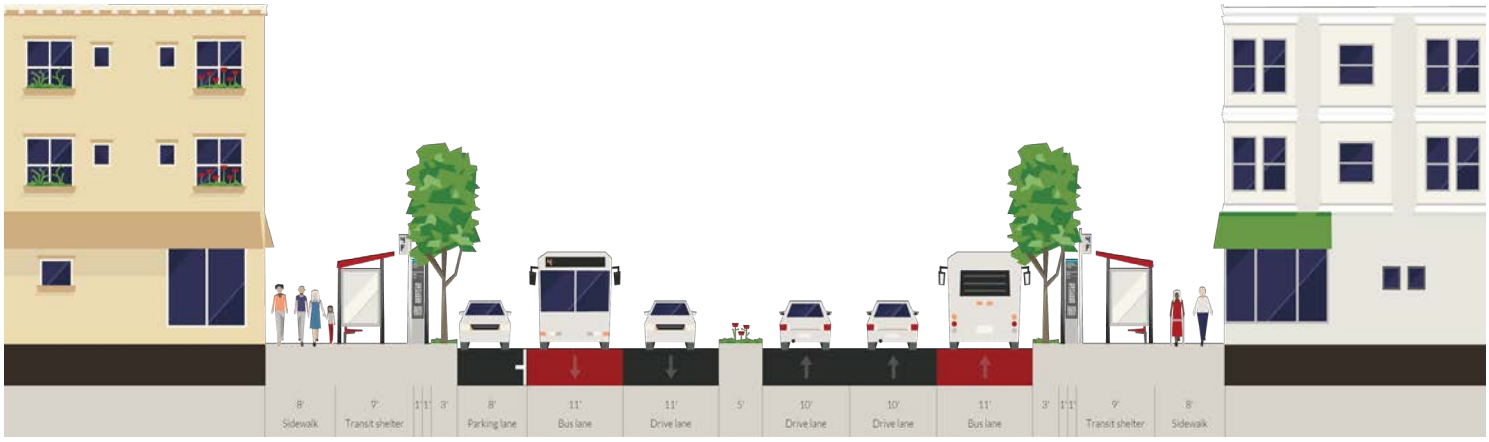
### Opportunity

Convert one lane in each direction for bus and ambulance only traffic. In order to provide additional parking capacity in close proximity to the museums, churches, and other destinations, one southbound lane is recommended to be converted to on-street parking. Coordinate transit route stops for the 65 and 5 bus routes to provide easy access to the Museum District LRT Stations and other frequent transit routes, by enhancing wayfinding and bus stop amenities. Design to enhance walking and provide safe pedestrian street crossings, including a linkage across Main Street to MFAH at Calumet Street.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# FANNIN STREET

### Corridor Designation
Transit Street

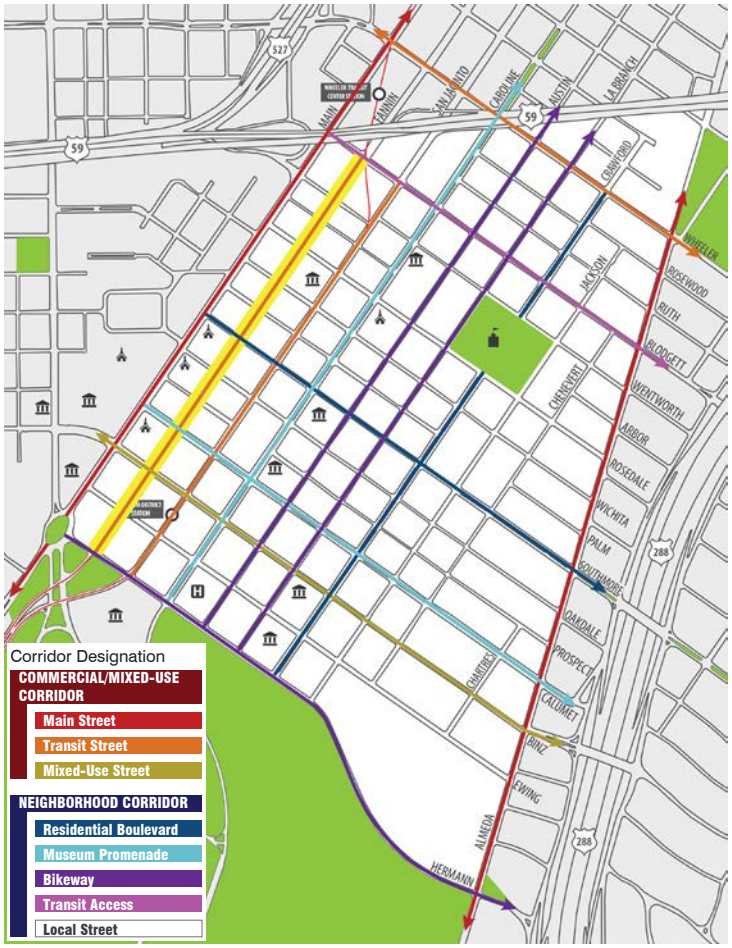
### Current MTFP Designation
P-6-80

### Current Context
Fannin Street is a southbound roadway 36 feet wide within the curb, providing three travel lanes and is adjacent to the METRORail Red Line light rail through most of the study area. Currently parking is not allowed on the roadway throughout the study area. At Ewing Street, the roadway narrows to two lanes and continues southbound into Hermann Park. This provides a natural limit on capacity. Fannin Street carries approximately 12,000 cars per day within the study area.

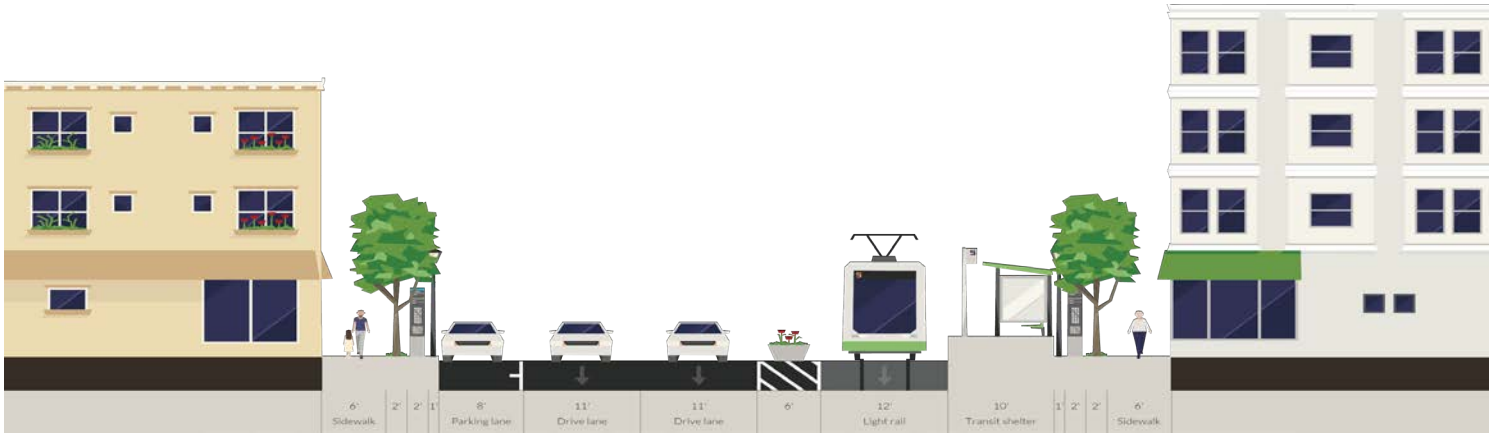
Along Fannin Street there is a wide variety of uses including multi-family residential, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houton, Hotel ZaZa, churches, and an assortment of small retail establishments.

### Opportunity
Convert the existing 3 travel lanes to 2 travel lanes and 1 parking lane. The curb-side lane would be converted to a parking lane to serve the variety of uses along the corridor. The 65 Bissonnet route stops should be coordinated with the 5 Southmore stops along Fannin to facilitate easier bus turning movements and greater system continuity. At intersections and bus stops, bulb-outs would replace the parking lane. This design would provide traffic calming, safer pedestrian crossings, and additional parking that would not impact the residential streets.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# SAN JACINTO STREET

### Corridor Designation
Transit Street

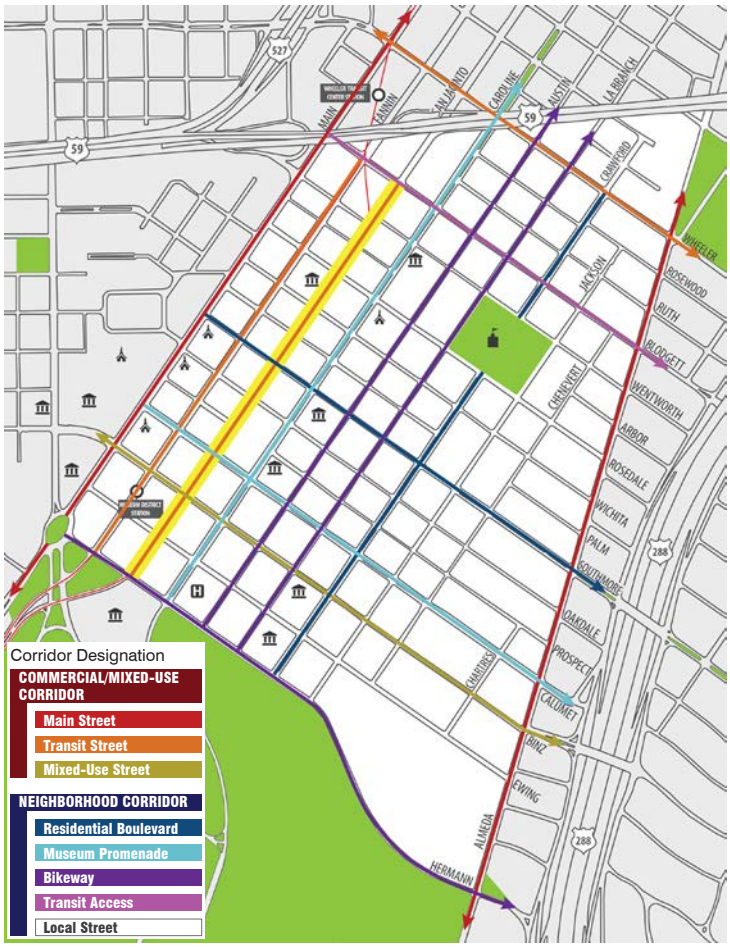
### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
San Jacinto Street is a northbound roadway that mimics Fannin Street with three travel lanes and light rail, and a width of 36 feet. On the southern side of the study area, San Jacinto is only two travel lanes and increases to three lanes at Calumet Street. Beyond Wetworth Street, where the METRORail leaves San Jacinto Street, the roadway further increases to five travel lanes through the remainder of the study area. The two lane configuration at the southern end of the study area provides a natural limit in capacity. While traffic counts were not available on San Jacinto, field observations indicate similarities to traffic volumes on Fannin Street with excess capacity observed through the study area, particularly where the travel lanes increase from two to three, and more. Parking is currently not allowed on San Jacinto Street.

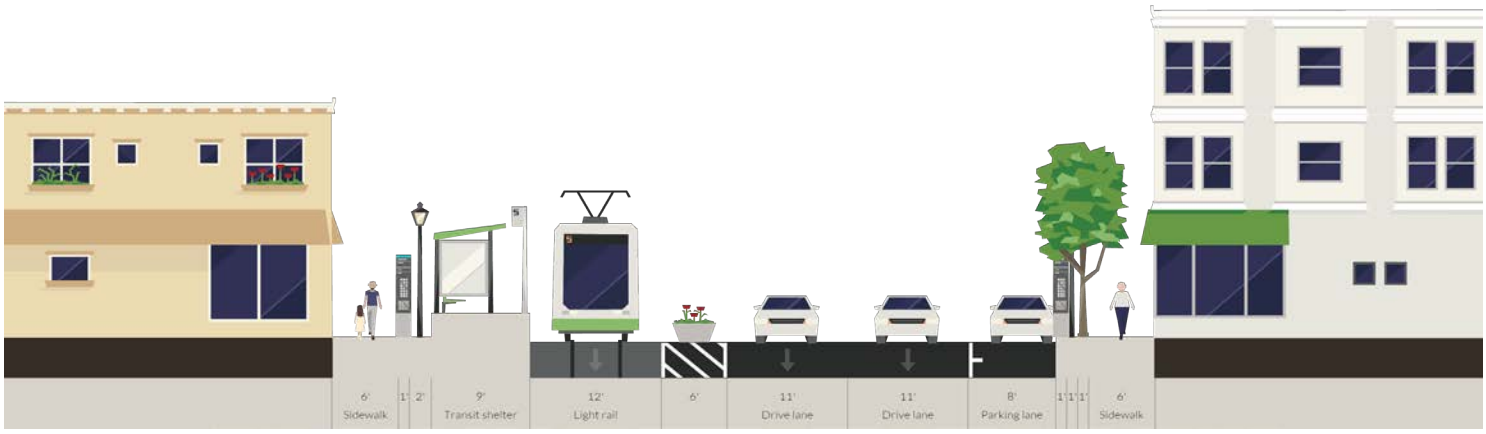
There is a posted 30 mile per hour speed limit on the corridor, which has medical institutions, large multi-family developments and a mix of retail. The METRORail Red Line ligt rail and the 5 Southmore bus route run on this section of San Jacinto Street.

### Opportunity
Convert the existing 3 travel lanes adjacent to the LRT to 2 travel lanes and 1 parking lane. The curb-side lane would be converted to a parking lane to serve the variety of uses along the corridor. At intersections and bus stops, bulb-outs would replace the parking lane. This design would provide traffic calming, safer pedestrian crossings, and additional parking that would not impact the residential streets.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# CAROLINE STREET

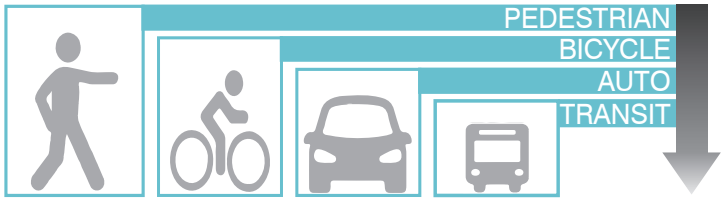
### Corridor Designation
Museum Promenade

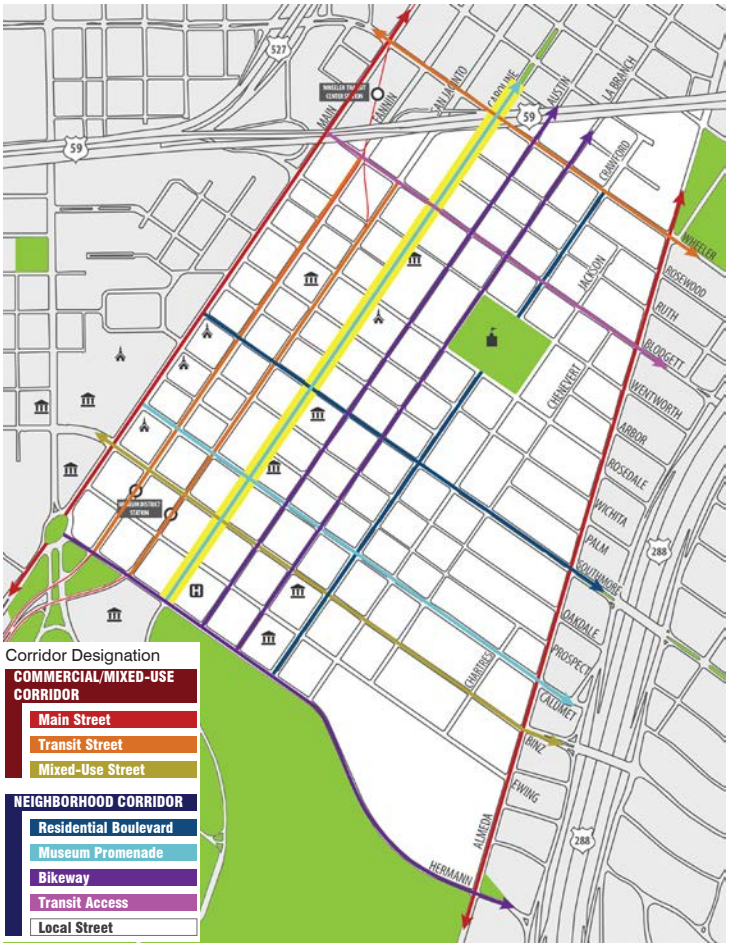
### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
Caroline Street is a north-south boulevard. Through the entirety of Museum Park, Caroline Street has 20 feet of roadway on either side of a 25-foot median. Caroline Street has been designated a bike route, as it is the only street without traffic signals that is continuous from Hermann Park to Midtown. Multiple museums are located along Caroline, as well as single and multi-family housing.

### Opportunity
Embrace the boulevard and access to museums by creating a "museum promenade" that would encourage visits to multiple locations within Museum Park. This would include a comfortable pedestrian amenities, wayfinding, and streetscape treatments that encourage walking. The medians and sidewalks could be utilized for public art, and cultural activities. Intersections should be improved at key locations like Hermann Drive and Binz Street.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section

# CRAWFORD STREET

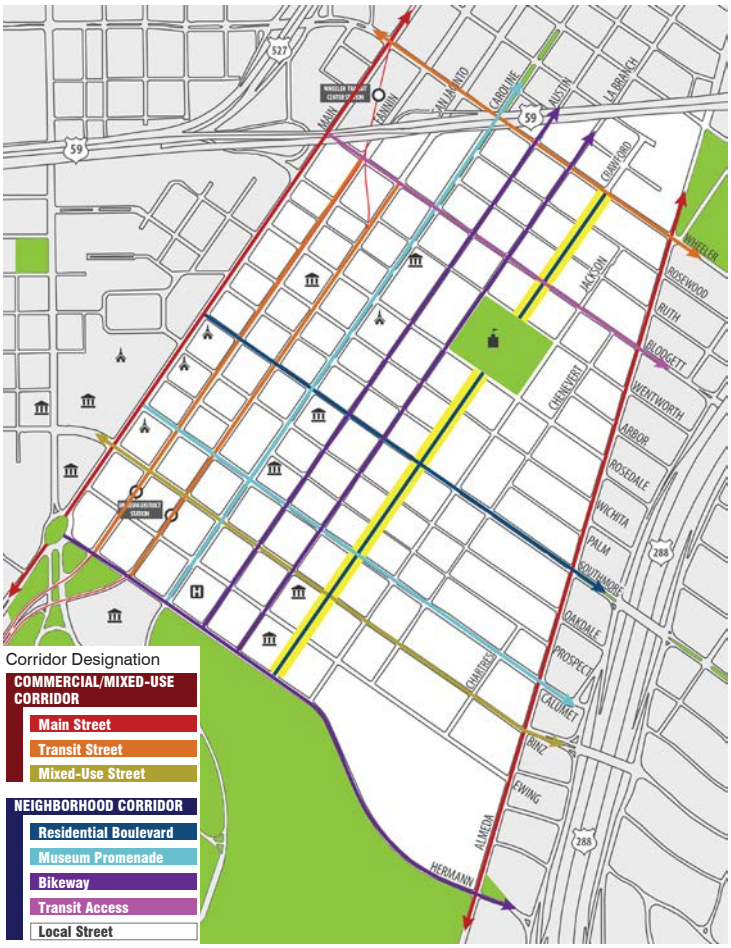
### Corridor Designation
Residential Boulevard

### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
Crawford Street has two discontinuous boulevard segments within Museum Park. There is one travel lane, 20 feet wide in each direction, and a 20-foot median within a total 105-foot right of way. Crawford Street extends from Hermann Park to MacGregor Elementary School at Rosedale Street, and north of the school from Wentworth Street to US Highway 59.

### Opportunity
Enhance the existing boulevard by leveraging opportunities for functional and sustainable green space within the medians. Improve sidewalks and street crossings to be comfortable and safe for pedestrians. The roadway should maintain bicycle and automobile accessibility through the comfortable boulevard style that currently exists. Intersections at Hermann Drive and MacGregor Elementary should be enhanced.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section

# AUSTIN STREET

### Corridor Designation
Bikeway

### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
Austin Street is a north-south roadway that is 34 feet wide with one lane in each direction. Austin Street extends from Hermann Park across US 59 to Midtown. The corridor is largely residential, but provides access to museums, Plaza Park Hospital, and some business.

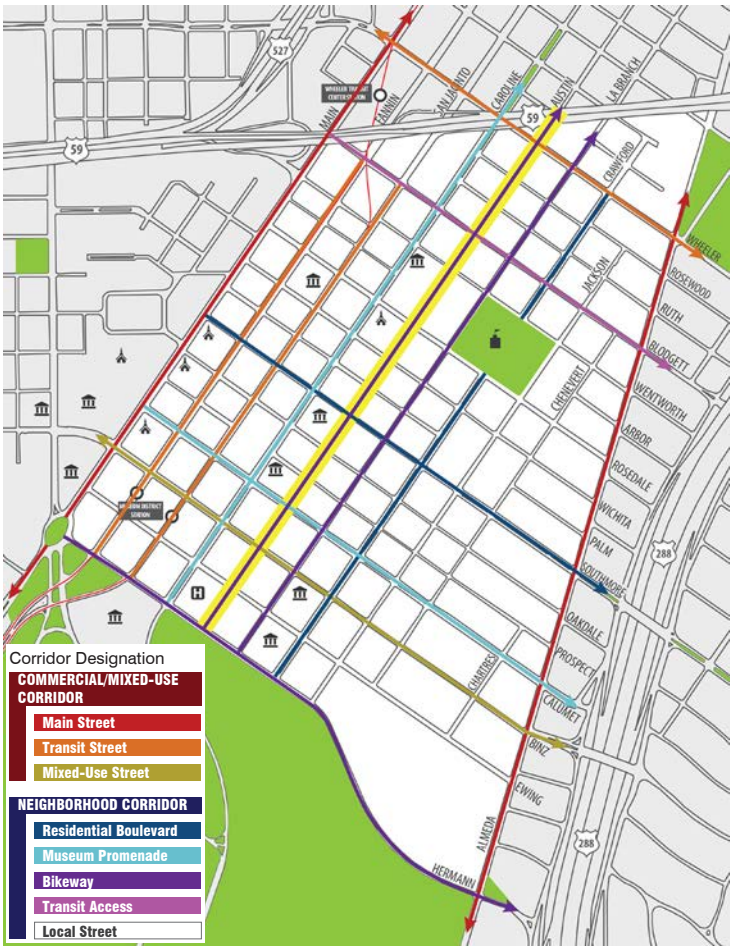
### Opportunity
(Coordinated with La Branch Street options)

*Option 1* - Create a bi-directional bicycle greenway consisting of alternating 1-way blocks that allow through movement for bicyclists in both north and south directions, but not vehicles. On-street parking and vehicle access would be maintained, and sidewalks improved. Additional information is provided within the bicycle-specific recommendations.

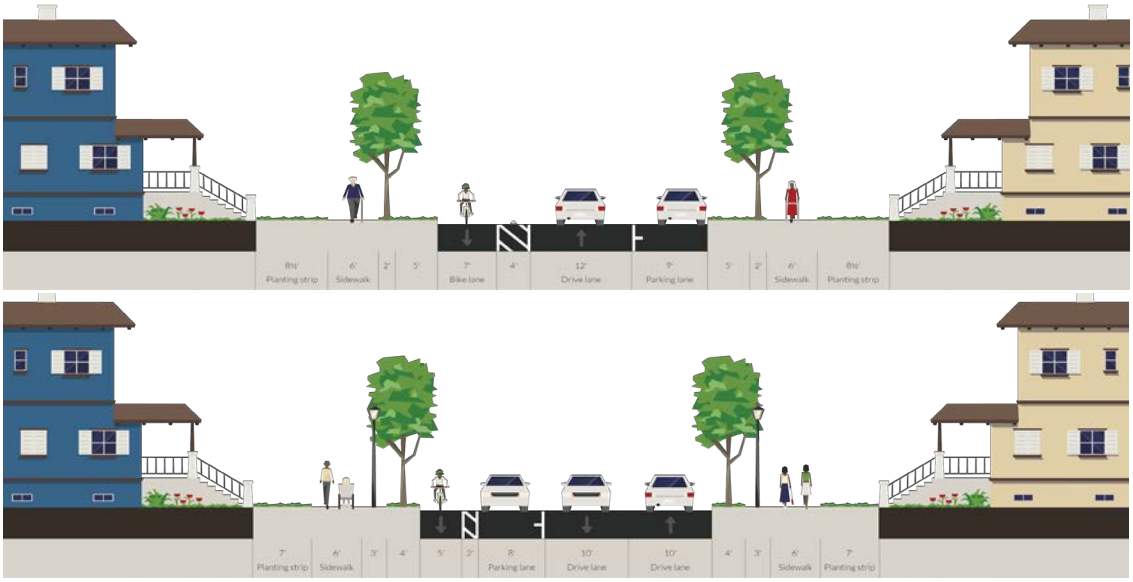
*Option 2*- Create a southbound bicycle lane and maintain through vehicle access and parking, sidewalks would be improved.

Both recommendations are rooted in maintaining connectivity across US-59/I-69 into Midtown and would require improved intersection crossings at Hermann Drive. Additionally, intersections around the Children's Museum and parking garage should be assessed for 4-way stops to create a walkable and bikeable area that provides a consistent

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section
Top is Option 1, Bottom is Option 2



# LA BRANCH STREET

### Corridor Designation
Bikeway

### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
La Branch Street is a north-south roadway that ranges from 24 to 34 feet wide with one lane in each direction. La Branch Street extends from Hermann Park across US-59 to Midtown. The corridor is primarily residential, but provides access to museums, and MacGregor Elementary School.

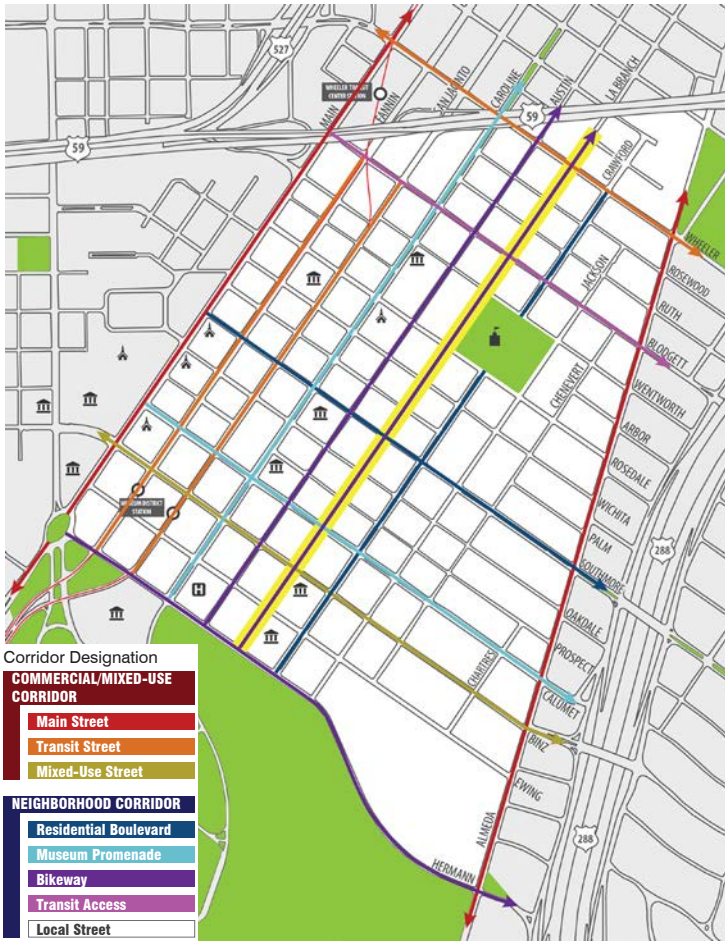
### Opportunity
(Coordinated with Austin Street options)

*Option 1* - Enhance pedestrian access and maintain current automobile access and parking. If Austin street has high quality, bi-directional bicycle access, there is not a need to add bicycle facilities on La Branch Street.

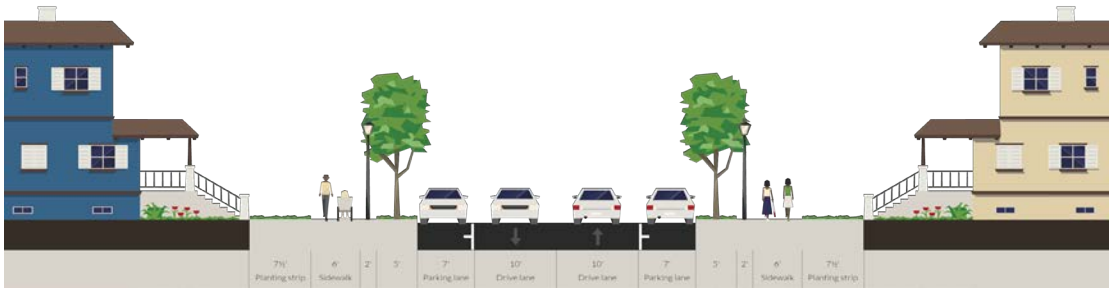
*Option 2* - Create a northbound bicycle lane and maintain through vehicle access and parking, sidewalks would be improved. This recommendation requires maintaining connectivity across US-59/I-69 into Midtown and improved intersection crossings at Hermann Drive.

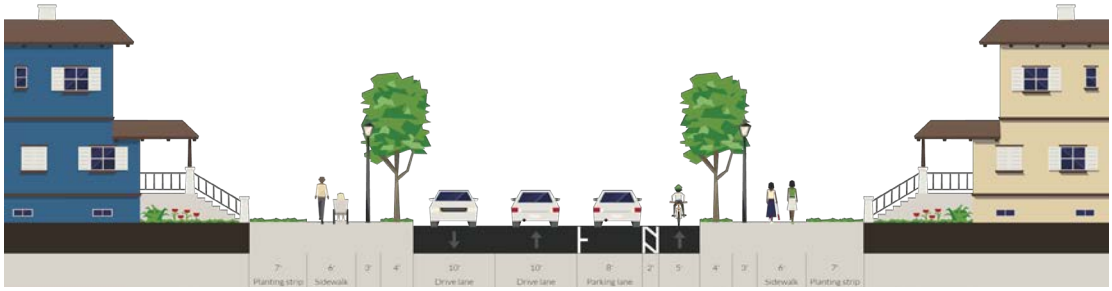
Additionally, with either option, intersections around the Children's Museum and parking garage should be assessed for 4-way stops to create a walkable and bikeable area that provides a consistent experience for all users.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section
Top is Option 1, Bottom is Option 2





# HERMANN DRIVE

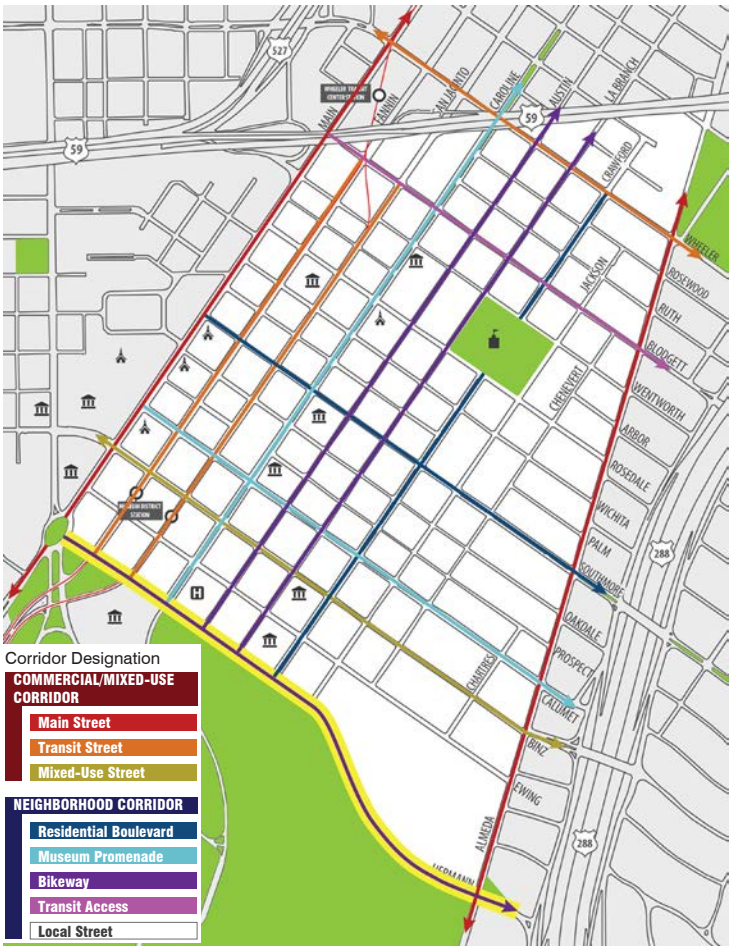
### Corridor Designation
Bikeway

### Current MTFP Designation
MN-2-80/90

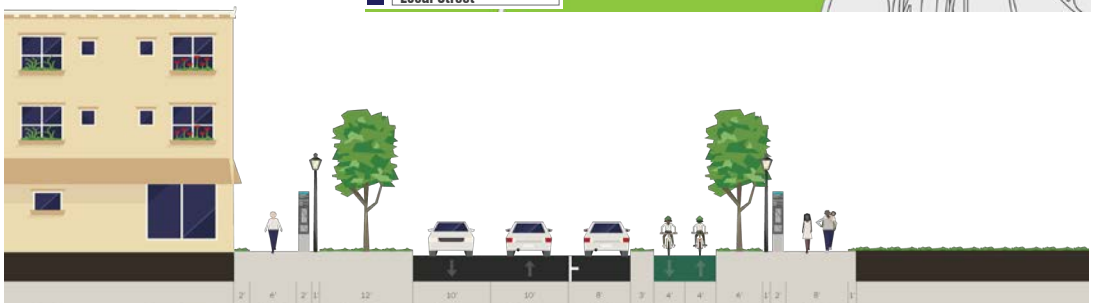
### Current Context
Herman Drive is the southern boundary that separates the Museum Park study area from Hermann Park. It is a wide thoroughfare with many mid- and high-rise buildings, including a hotel, museums, medical buildings, and multi-family residential. Hermann Drive is a four-lane road with a parking lane on the both sides of the street and 90 feet of right of way between San Jacinto Street and Jackson Street. Between Jackson Street and Almeda Road the right-of-way narrows to 80 feet and allows metered parking on the southern side. Hermann Drive has low average daily traffic volumes, which range from 3,000 to 5,000 along the corridor, and has several key pedestrian crossings that provide access to Hermann Park.

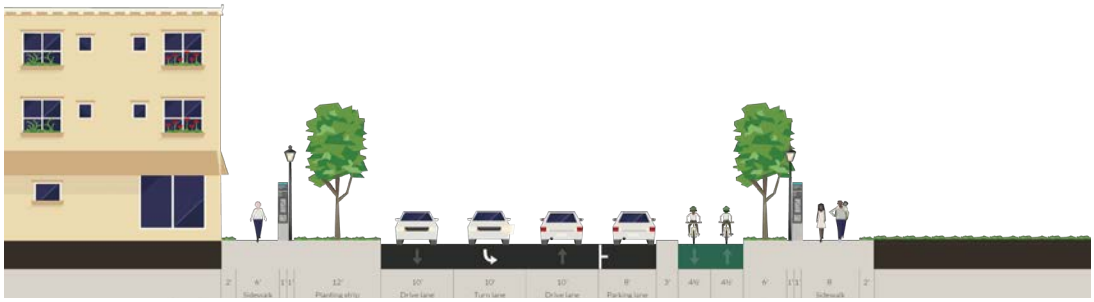
### Opportunity
Provide two-way bicycle facility buffered by parking along the southern side of Hermann Drive. Reduce the number of lanes from 4 to 2 with left-turn lanes for access to Hermann Park and museums at key intersections such as Caroline, La Branch, and Crawford Streets. Parking for buses could be prioritized on Hermann between Caroline and Main Street.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section
Top is 80' ROW, Bottom is 90' ROW





# BINZ STREET

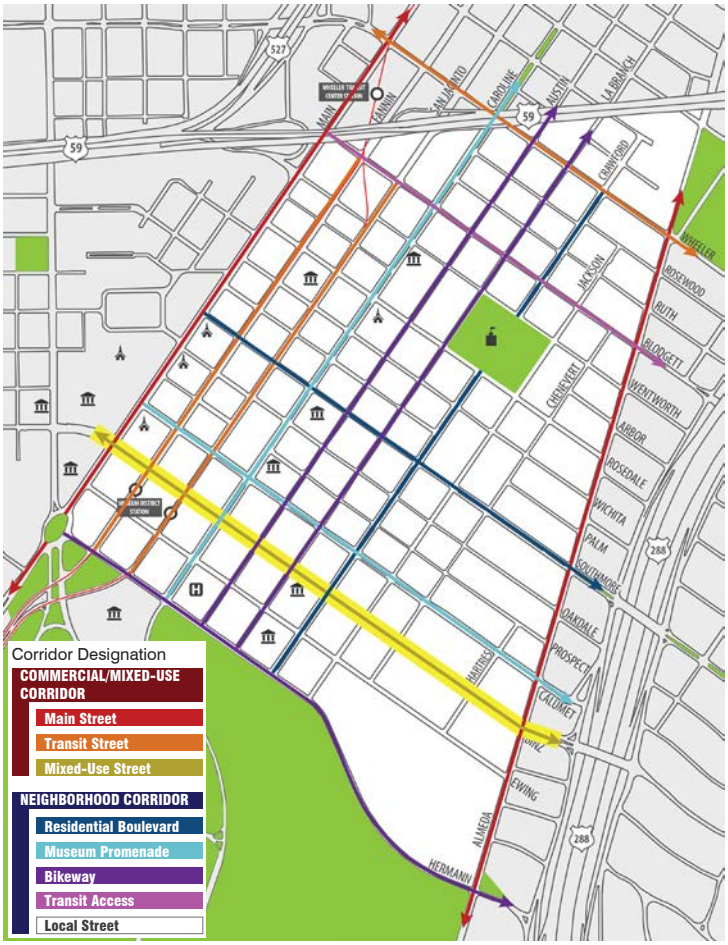
### Corridor Designation
Mixed-Use Street

### Current MTFP Designation
MJ-4-70

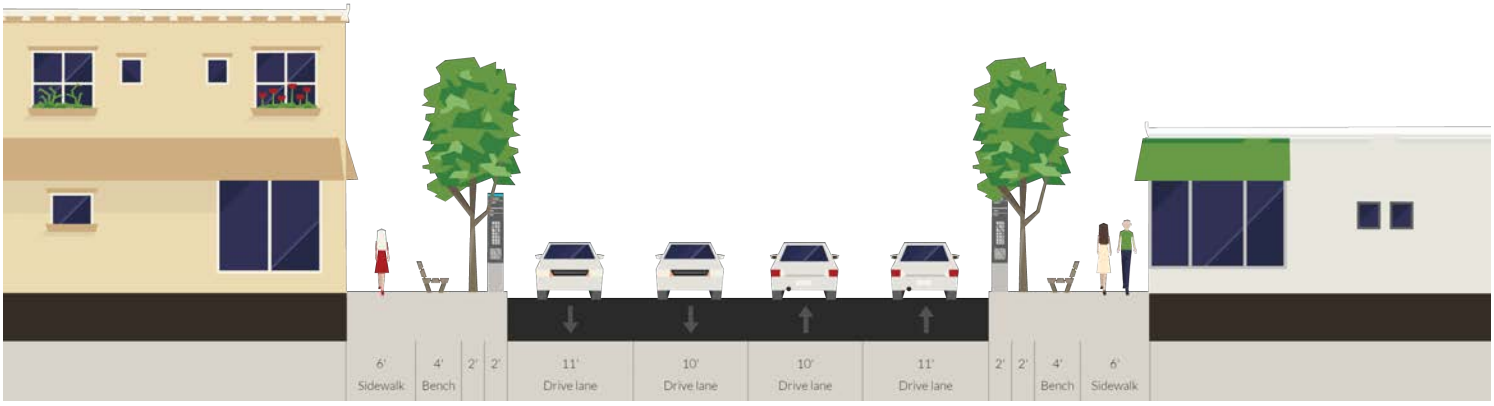
### Current Context
Binz Street is an east-west street lined with a variety of surrounding land uses, including museums, medical buildings, restaurants, multi-family and single-family residential. Between San Jacinto and Almeda Road, traffic is controlled entirely by two- and four-way stop signs. The four-lane roadway has 70 feet of right of way. At the intersections with Almeda Road, San Jacinto Street, Fannin Street and Main Street there are additional left-turn lanes. There are approximately 9,000 vehicles a day traveling on Binz Street near the middle of Museum Park. The 5 Southmore bus route runs on Binz through the study area.

### Opportunity
Enhance the pedestrian realm with high-quality sidewalks, improved intersection crossings, lighting, and other pedestrian amenities such as benches and landscaping. Ensure vehicle and transit access is maintained and bus stops are improved. Include wayfinding for pedestrians and vehicles for destinations and parking. Intersections around the Children's Museum and parking garage should be assessed for 4-way stops to create a walkable and bikeable area that provides a consistent experience for all users.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# CALUMET STREET

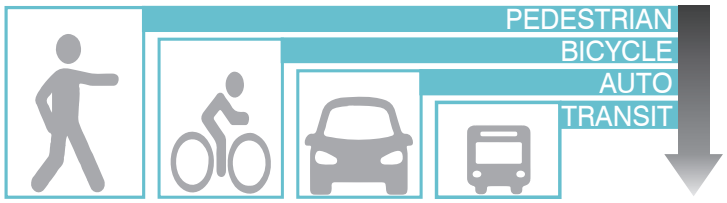
### Corridor Designation
Museum Promenade

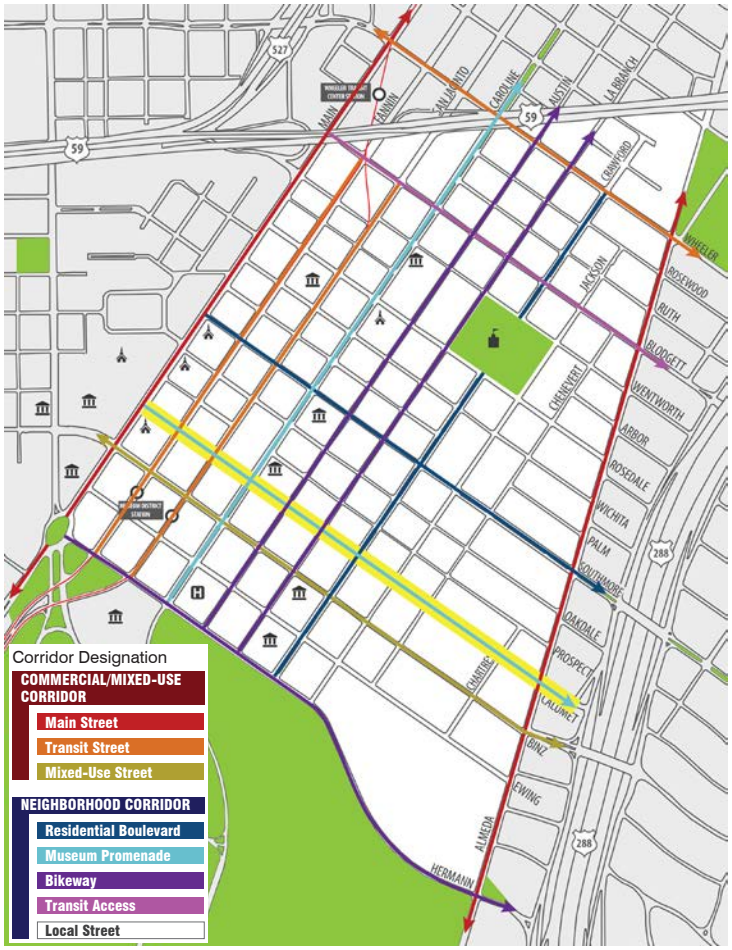
### Current MTFP Designation
N/A

### Current Context
Calumet Street is an east-west boulevard with one lane in each direction that spans from Almeda Road to Main Street at MFAH. Calumet Street is primarily residential and provides access to museums. Calumet Street is gated at Austin Street and becomes a private roadway preventing through vehicle movement to Main Street, but provides access for pedestrians.

### Opportunity
Enhance the existing boulevard by leveraging opportunities for functional and sustainable green space within the medians. Coordinate with the "museum promenade" along Caroline Street. Improve sidewalks and street crossings to be comfortable and safe for pedestrians. Between Austin Street and Main Street focus on increasing pedestrian space and amenities. The roadway should maintain bicycle and automobile accessibility through the comfortable boulevard style that currently exists.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section

# SOUTHMORE BOULEVARD

### Corridor Designation
Residential Boulevard

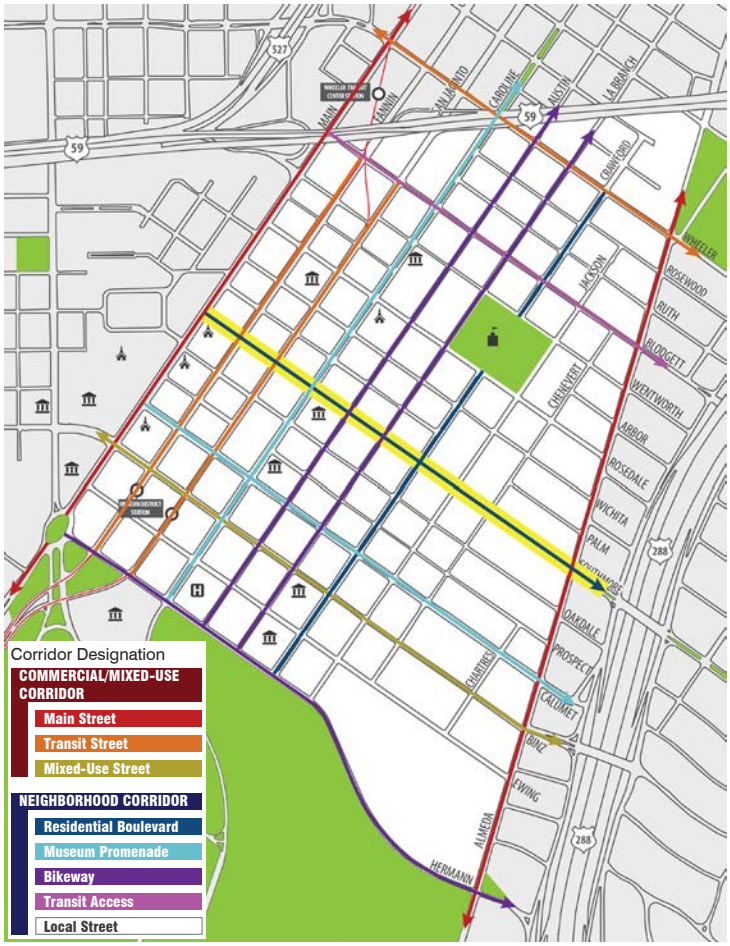
### Current MTFP Designation
MJ-4-70 (Main St-Jackson St)
MJ-4-80 (Jackson St-Almeda Rd)

### Current Context
Southmore Boulevard is an east-west boulevard connecting Third Ward to Main Street. It is designated as a major collector and has one travel lane in each direction carrying a total of 3,500 to 5,000 vehicles per day. West of Jackson Street, Southmore Boulevard is an undivided, 34-foot, two-lane roadway, with parallel parking on each side of the street. East of Jackson Street there is 20 feet of pavement, including a travel lane and parallel parking, on each side of a 20-foot median. The street is mostly residential, with large multi-family developments built or under construction near San Jacinto Street.

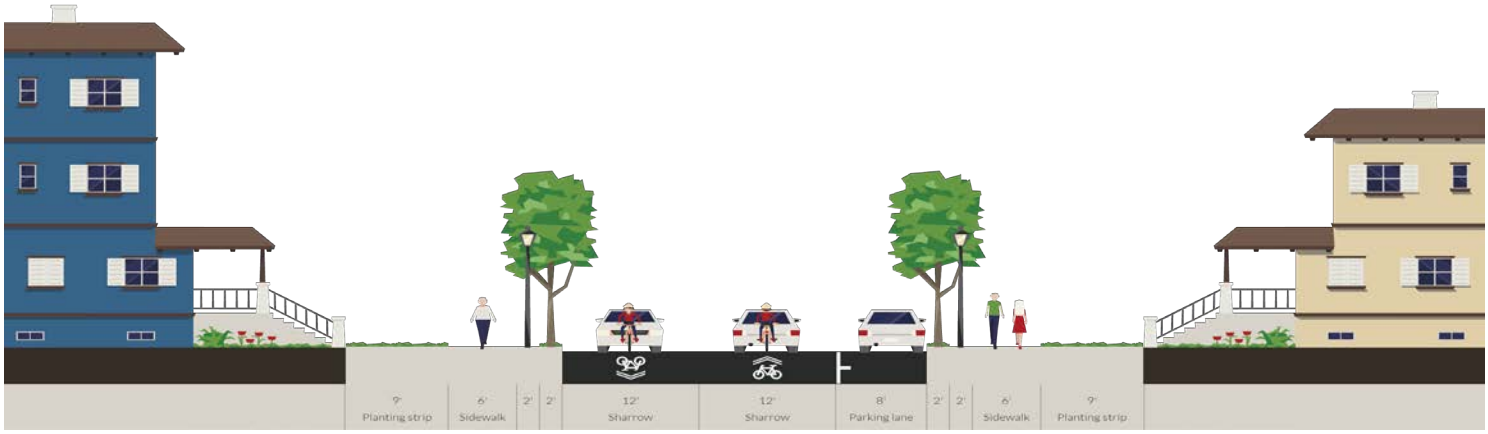
### Opportunity
Provide bicycle facilities that provide a significant bicycle connection through the neighborhood, enhance pedestrian access and crossings, and maintain the boulevard feel and vehicle access. For the non-boulevard section of Southmore Boulevard, west of Jackson Street, the roadway should be maintained to provide comfortable bicycling within the travel lanes.

For the boulevard section of Southmore Boulevard, east of Jackson Street, the roadway should be maintained to provide comfortable bicycling within the travel lanes in the short term. In the long term, the median width should be adjusted to provide adequate space for a bicycle lane in each direction.

### Mode Priority



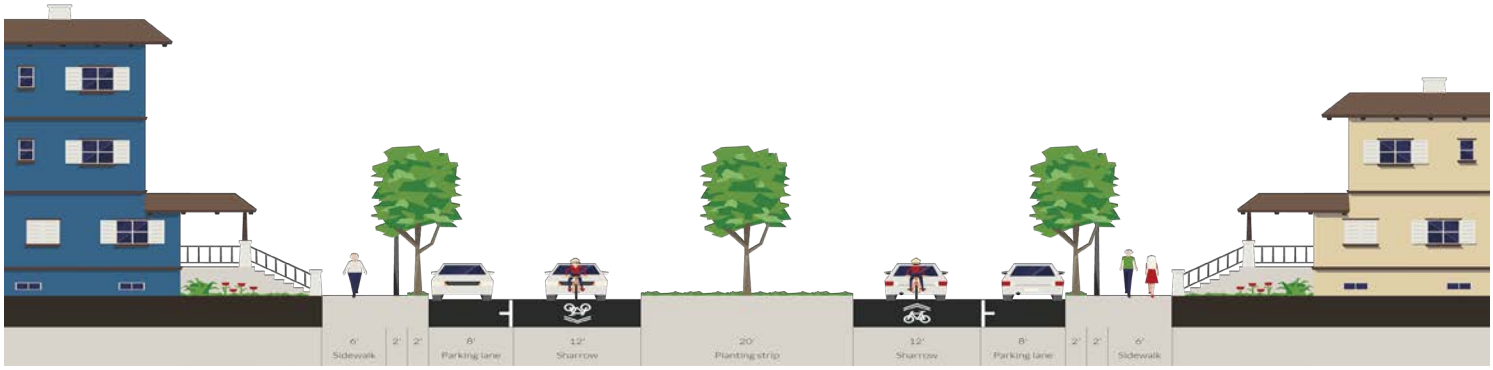

### Potential Typical Cross Section
Non-boulevard, west of Jackson Street



# SOUTHMORE BOULEVARD

## Potential Typical Cross Section

Boulevard section, east of Jackson Street
Top is short-term, Bottom is long-term



# BLODGETT STREET

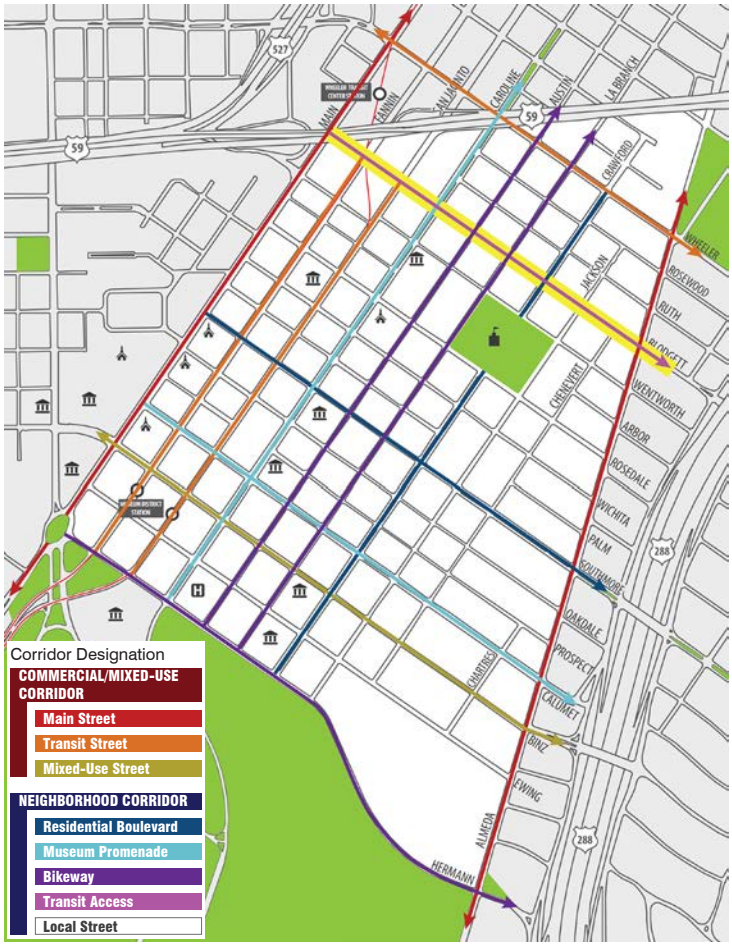
### Corridor Designation
Transit Access

### Current MTFP Designation
T-4-80

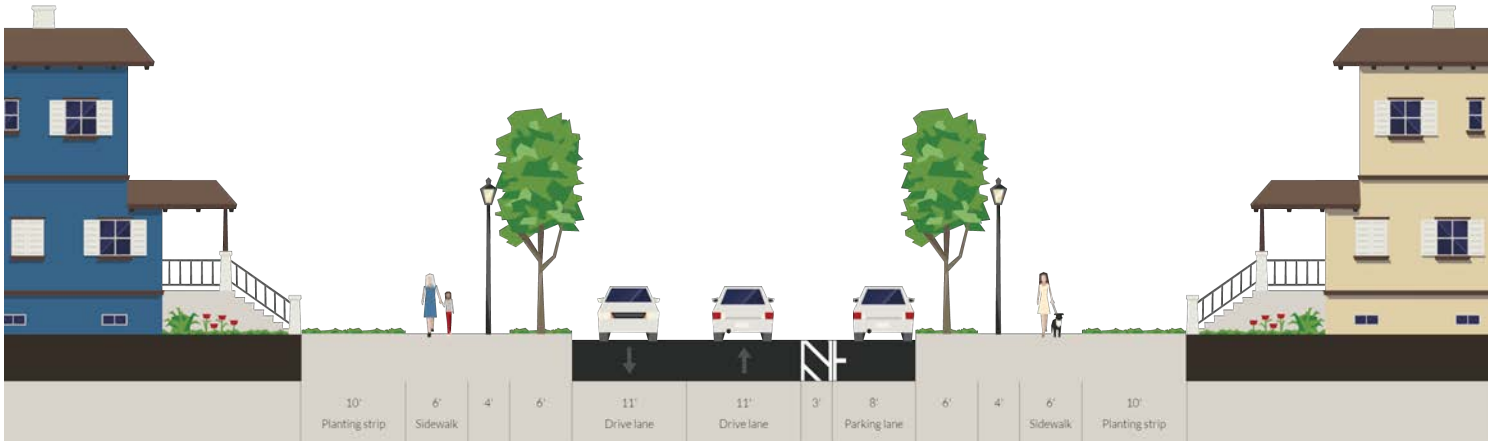
### Current Context
Blodgett Street is a two-lane, undivided, east-west road. The thoroughfare extends from Main Street east across State Highway 288, passing through a mix of mostly residential properties, and carrying approximately 2,000 cars per day. The 34 feet of pavement leaves sufficient space for pedestrian facilities and amenities inside of the 85-foot right of way.

### Opportunity
Enhance access to transit and the Wheeler Station area for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles with sidewalks, wayfinding, and pedestrian amenities.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# WHEELER AVENUE

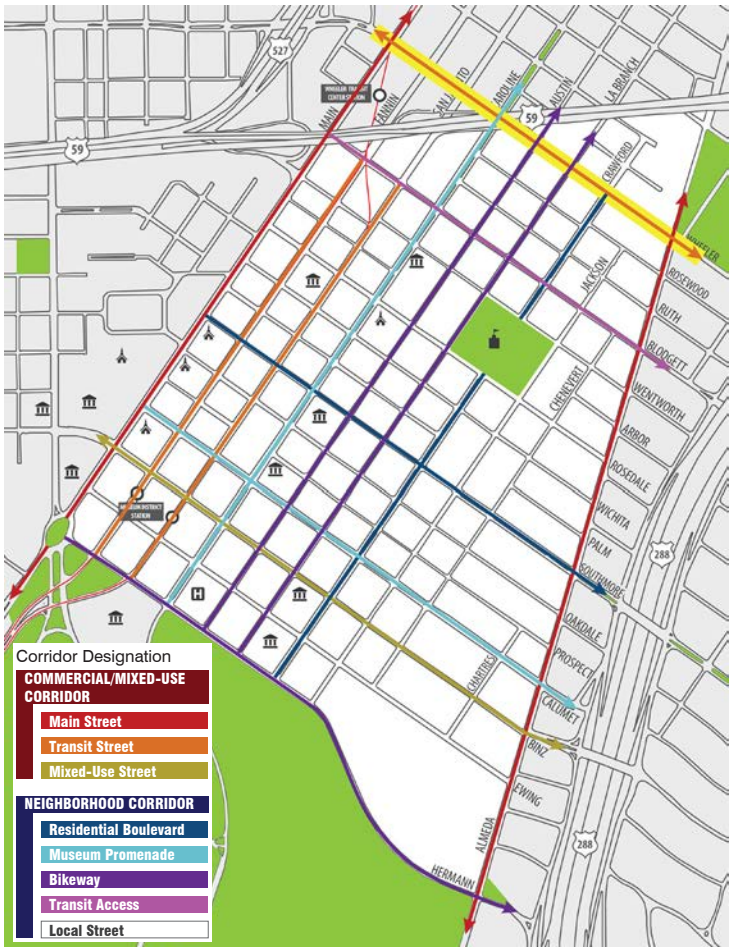
### Corridor Designation
Transit Street

### Current MTFP Designation
T-4-60

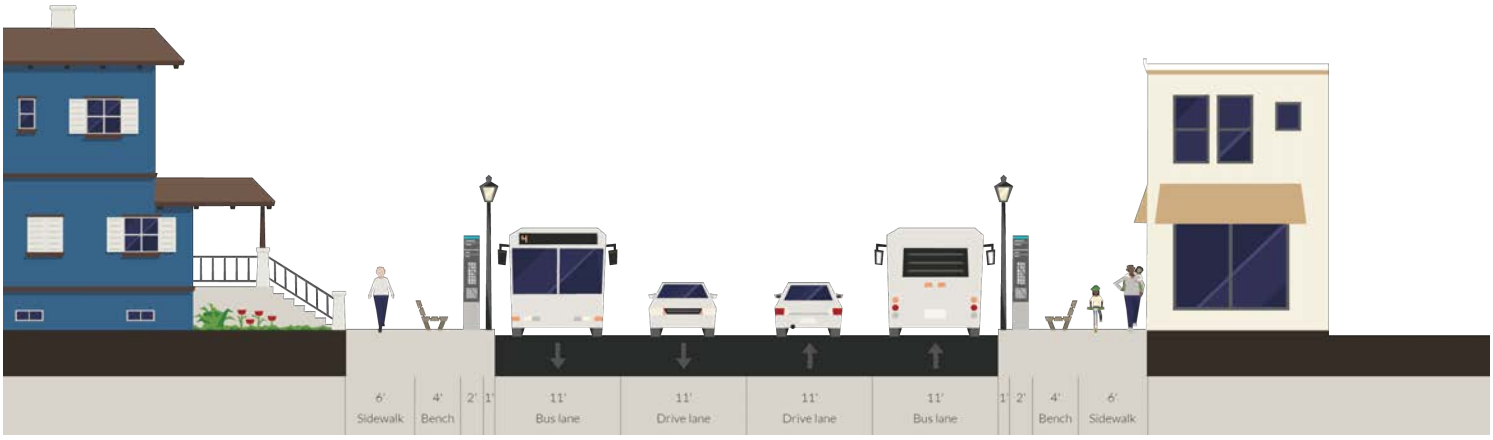
### Current Context
Wheeler Avenue is an east-west thoroughfare near the northern boundary of Museum Park. The four block segment within the study area has upwards of 9,000 vehicles per day and has METRO service on the 25 Richmond route. There are two travel lanes in each direction comprising 44 feet of pavement within a minimum of 70 feet of right of way. This portion of Wheeler Avenue has both retail and single-family detached housing. The Wheeler Transit Center on the west end of Wheeler at Main Street is a METRORail Red Line light rail station and hub for five METRO bus routes.

### Opportunity
Prioritize access to Wheeler Station for transit and pedestrians with wayfinding, high-quality sidewalks and pedestrian amenities, while maintaining access for automobiles.

### Mode Priority




### Potential Typical Cross Section



# OTHER ROADWAYS

### Corridor Designation
Local Street

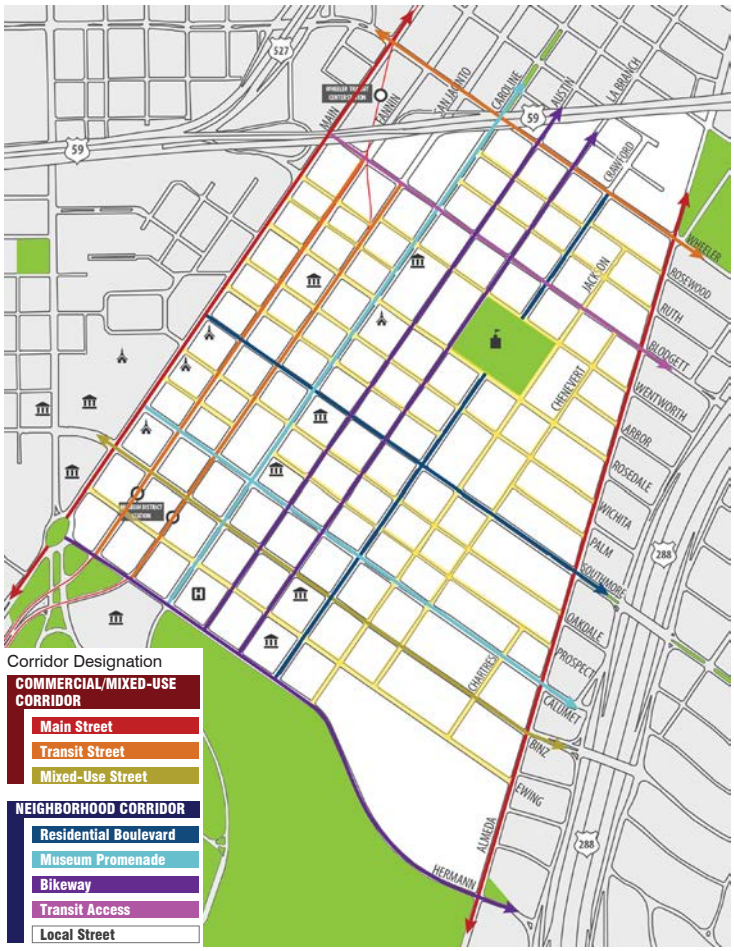
### Current MTFP Designation

### Current Context
N/A

The other roadways within the study area, vary in pavement width, but are largely two lane roadways that are largely residential. Looking at these roadways together with the other corridors, a grid pattern emerges, which provides the first essential key to connectivity and walkability for the neighborhood.

### Opportunity
On each corridor in the study area, walkability should be a top priority. Improving the sidewalk infrastructure throughout the neighborhood should be a key goal in the long term. As improvements are made throughout the neighborhood, sidewalks and ramps should be constructed or updated to meet current City of Houston standard of a minimum 5 feet, with 6 feet preferred where possible. Existing residential parking and street widths that promote slow travel speeds should be maintained.

### Mode Priority

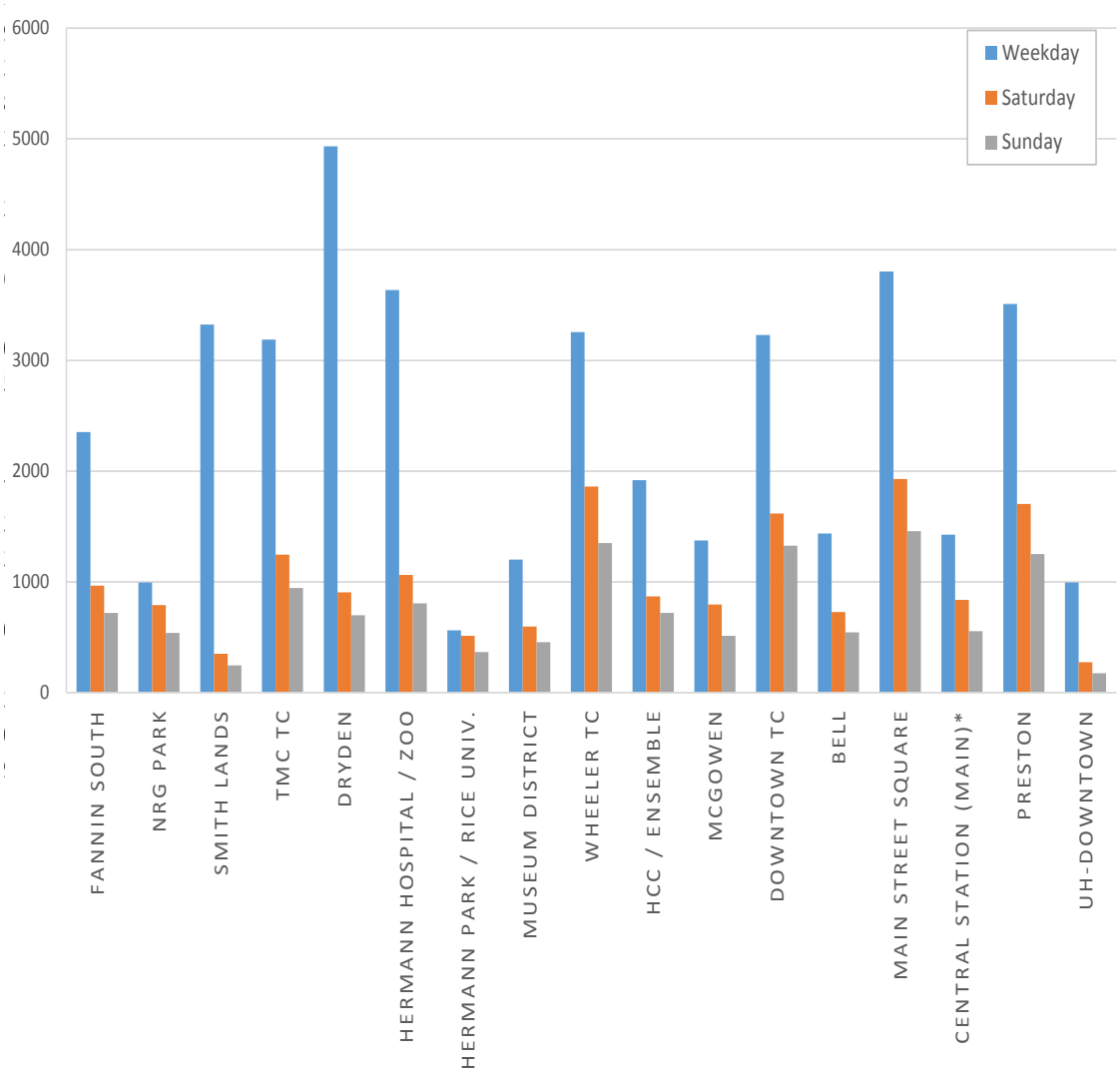


## TRANSIT SERVICE

Museum Park's location near many of Houston's major job centers means it is also in the heart of the transit network. The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) operates transit service within the study area that includes METRORail and local METRO buses providing connections to nearby activity centers and other bus and rail routes that reach the furthest extents of the METRO service area. The transit network is identified in the figure below.

### Metro Rail Service

Since 2004, when METRO began light rail operations, Museum Park has had access to frequent rail service. The Red Line, which runs northbound along San Jacinto Street and southbound on Fannin Street, passes through the study area as it connects some of the region's busiest activity centers and destinations. Between its endpoints, Northline Transit Center/HCC and Fannin South Station, the rail line connects Downtown, Midtown, Hermann Park, the Texas Medical Center and NRG Park. The Red Line, which operates as frequently as every six minutes, provides connections to 48 local bus routes and the Green and Purple METRORail Lines.




AVERAGE METRORAIL BOARDINGS BY STATION

YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH AUGUST 2015;
*ORIGINAL RED LINE STATIONS ARE SHOWN, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CENTRAL STATION, ADDED IN FEBRUARY 2015

Residents, employees and visitors using METRORail within Museum Park use two stations. Museum District Station is the station serving the southern portion of the study area, located in the southwest corner of the study area near HMNS, MFAH and other attractions just north of Hermann Park. The platforms, which are located between Binz Street and Ewing Street on San Jacinto Street (Northbound) and Fannin Street (Southbound), are surrounded by mostly wide, ADA accessible sidewalks. The Museum District station is one of the lowest daily boardings of the original METRORail Red Line stops in the system, as shown in Transit System Figure on the next page. There is nearly two-thirds of mile between Museum District Station and the next stop to the north, Wheeler Transit Center Station. Reaching Wheeler Station, which is just outside of Museum Park, requires crossing under an elevated portion of US 59. The land surrounding the transit center has some retail, many vacant properties. Wheeler Transit Center is served by five routes on the local bus network. Its role as a transit center where many frequent routes meet the rail system mean boardings at Wheeler are over 3,000 per day.

### Local METRO Bus Service

METRO operates six local bus routes within the study area. Those routes provide direct service to several key activity and employment centers, as well as connections to other routes that service the larger City of Houston area and beyond. These local routes are identified below. The 5 Southmore route runs from Wheeler Transit Center along Main Street/ Fannin Street to Binz Street in Museum Park, continuing to the east to provide service to Southeast Transit Center and South Houston. The 11 Almeda is a north-south route that connects Hiram Clarke and Fannin South Transit Centers to Downtown Transit Center while providing service along its namesake road, and the eastern boundary of Museum Park. A frequent route, the 25 Richmond spans from Mission Bend Transit Center on the west side of town along its namesake street, passing through Wheeler Transit Center, and continuing on Wheeler Avenue and Blodgett Street to Eastwood Transit Center. Another key piece of the frequent local bus network, the 65 Bissonnet is a route running from Wheeler Station west past Beltway 8, with service to Bellaire Transit Center and connections to many other frequent routes.

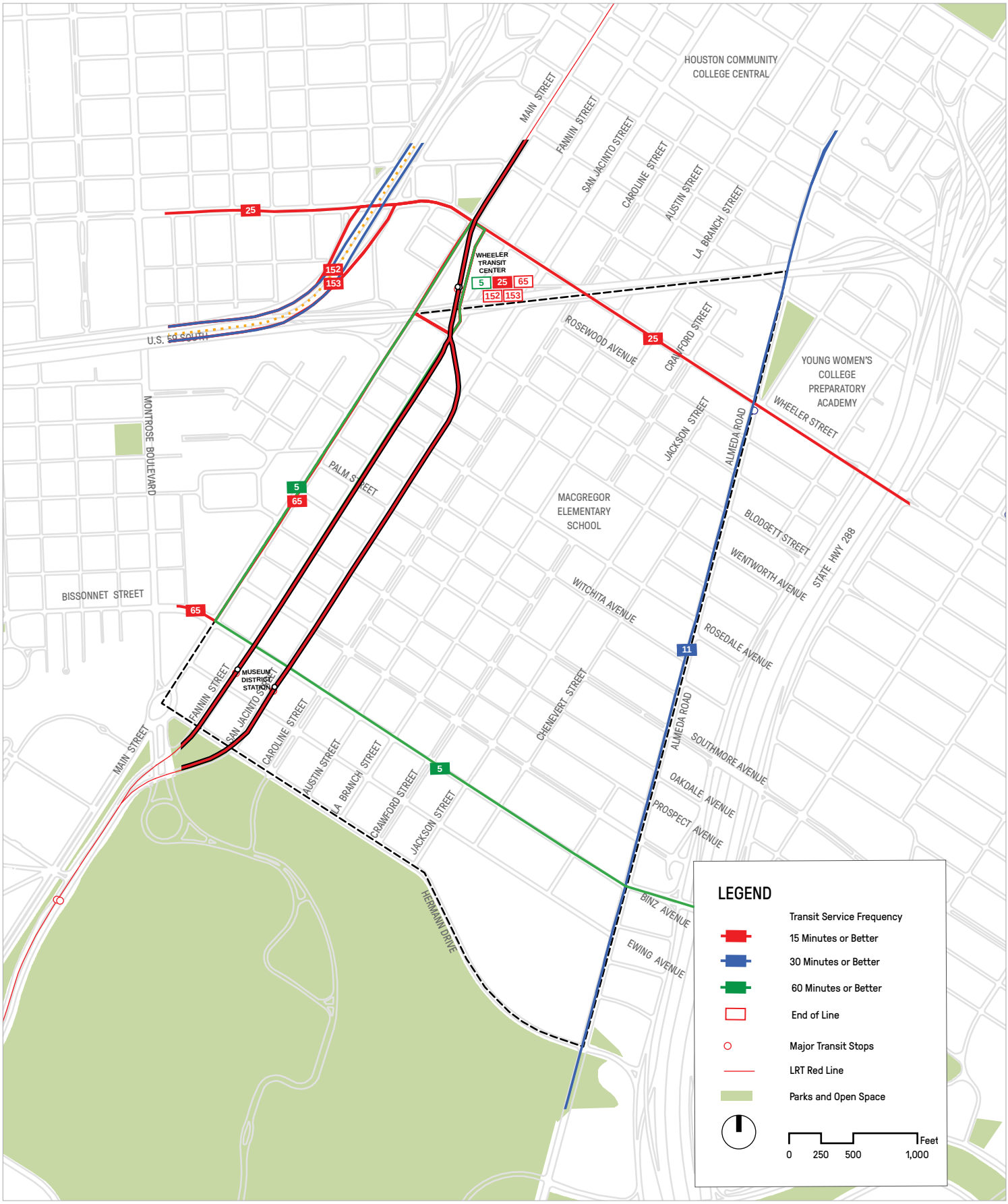
The 152 and 153 Harwin Express are a pair of routes providing limited-stop service on US 59. The two routes have staggered schedules to provide frequent service from Wheeler Station west to Hillcroft Transit Center, before the 152 branches to southwest towards Westwood Park and Ride, and the 153 to the northwest.

### Walkability at Light Rail Stations and Potential for Transit-Oriented Development

The strong transit connectivity along the Red Line, coupled with additional local bus route service, provides great opportunity for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and housing near Museum Park light rail stations. There are multi-family housing developments near both stations that have been built in recent years, or are currently under construction, demonstrating market demand. Utilizing vacant and under-utilized parcels with access to transit presents an opportunity to provide the community with desirable housing and transportation. Sidewalk Quality Assessment figure on p. 207 shows sidewalk conditions in the study area and near the existing Red Line stations, highlighting the area of potential TOD.

WHEELER STATION IS SURROUNDED BY A MIXTURE OF LAND USES, INCLUDING LARGE PARCELS OF VACANT AND UNDER-UTILIZED LAND.

THERE ARE SEVERAL LARGE LAND PARCELS NEAR RAIL STATIONS THAT ARE PRIME CANDIDATES FOR TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT.




EXISTING TRANSIT SYSTEM

## SAFETY: CRASHES

H-GAC provided information about crashes in the study area for the years 2010 to 2014. Over a five year period there were a total of 787 crashes. 240 crashes involved injuries. With up to six injuries per collisions there were a total of 380 injuries.

There was one fatality in 2014, when a driver veered across the center line on Binz Street. There was a mid-block head-on collision that resulted in the death of the driver that failed to stay in their lane.

14 pedestrians and 9 cyclists were involved in collisions. All 14 pedestrians were struck at intersections of major roadways. Seven of the 9 bicyclists were involved in collisions at an intersection of a thoroughfare. The other two bicycle collisions occurred on Caroline Street.

### Crash Hotspot Locations

The following signalized intersections were identified as higher crash locations, because they had at least 20 collisions between 2010 and 2014:

- Main @ Hermann – 115 collisions
- Fannin @ Blodgett – 47
- Main @ Binz – 35
- Almeda @ Southmore – 29
- Main @ Wentworth – 28
- Fannin @ Wentworth – 22
- Almeda @ Binz – 20
- San Jacinto @ Blodgett – 20

The majority of crashes took place at intersections, with most taking place at signalized intersections. Two intersections with stop signs that had a higher number of crashes are:

- Main @ Ewing – 35 collisions
- Crawford @ Calumet – 11

Figure on the following page depicts the areas of high crash locations within the study area.

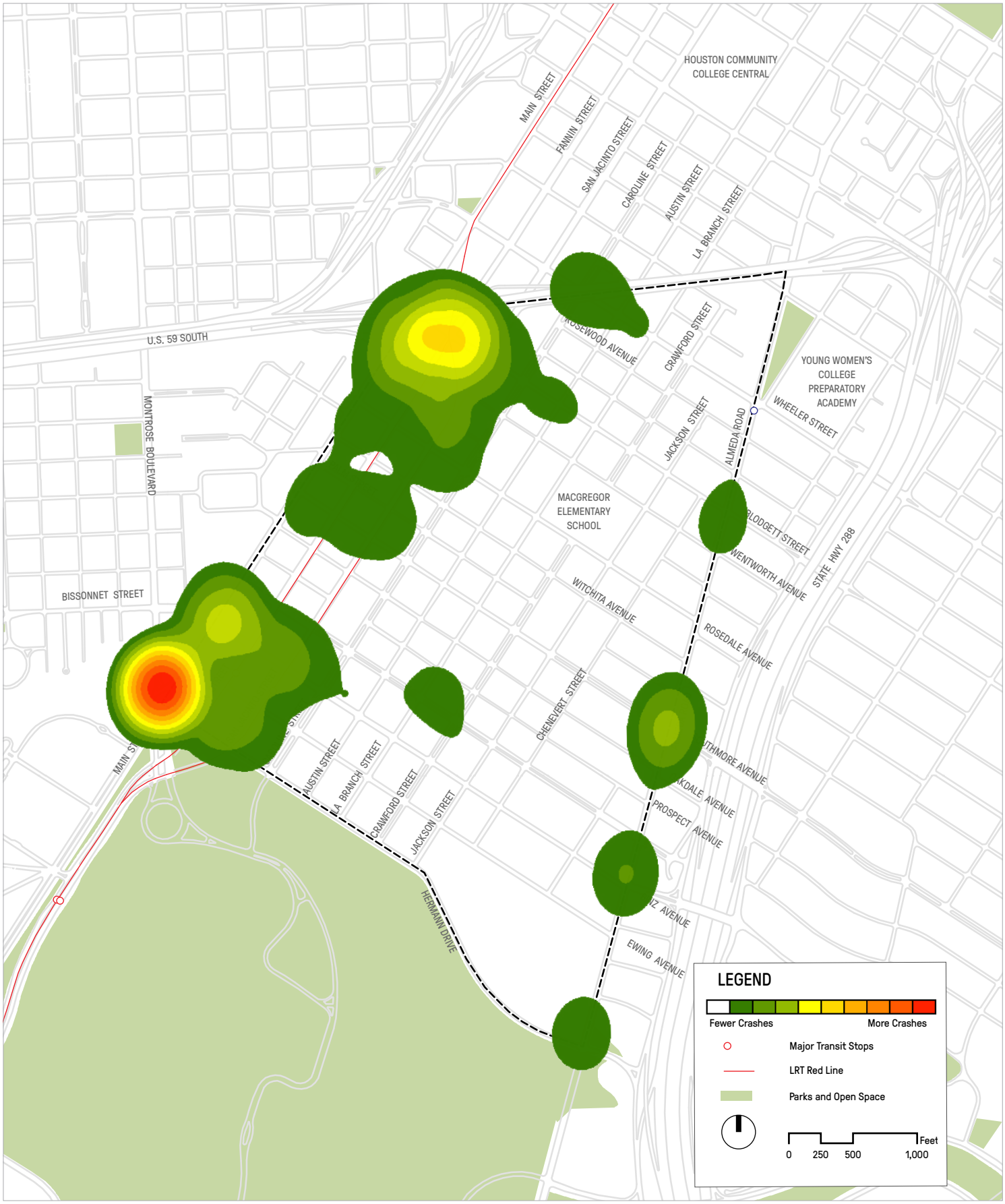
## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

Active transportation consists of walking and biking as the primary mode for a given trip. These modes are both part of a healthy lifestyle and they provide environmental benefits. Assessing the extent and quality of these networks is crucial to understanding the current capacities and opportunities for active transportation within the Museum Park neighborhood.

The Museum Park neighborhood currently provides some high quality sidewalks and neighborhood streets for biking, but lacks consistency throughout the neighborhood. This creates barriers and connectivity problems for many who walk and bike. This encourages a disconnect between various parts of the neighborhood. In order to understand the magnitude of the issue, further data exploration regarding sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure and quality is detailed below.

### Assessing Sidewalk Quality

Sidewalks provide crucial mobility and connectivity on a neighborhood level. Pages 206 identifies the standards used to score sidewalk and curb ramp quality, which are defined in greater detail in the figure on page 207. Sidewalk quality can range from exceeding current standards to missing. Additionally, curb cuts have a significant impact on sidewalk conditions and are included in the assessment. Curb cuts can range from meeting standards to missing.

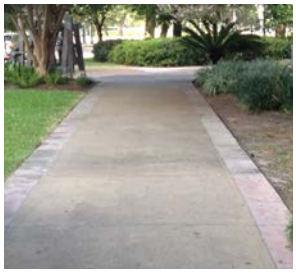



WHERE COLLISIONS TOOK PLACE (2010-2014)

## SIDEWALKS

**Exceeds Standard (Blue)**

A sidewalk exceeding five feet in width, with a smooth surface and no obstacles.



**Meets Standard (Green)**

A sidewalk with a minimum of five feet in width, with a smooth surface and no obstacles.

**Below Standard (Yellow)**

A sidewalk that is less than five feet in width, has low pavement quality, is impeded by light posts or trees, exceeds maximum slope requirements, or presents other challenges to the user.

**Needs Replacing (Orange)**

A sidewalk with unacceptable pavement conditions, which present challenges to the user, and is in need of replacement.

**Missing (Red)**

A location without a sidewalk.

## CURB RAMPS

**Meets Standard (Green)**

A ramp meeting ADA requirements for slope and width, in good condition and oriented in the desired direction of travel.

**Below Standard (Yellow)**

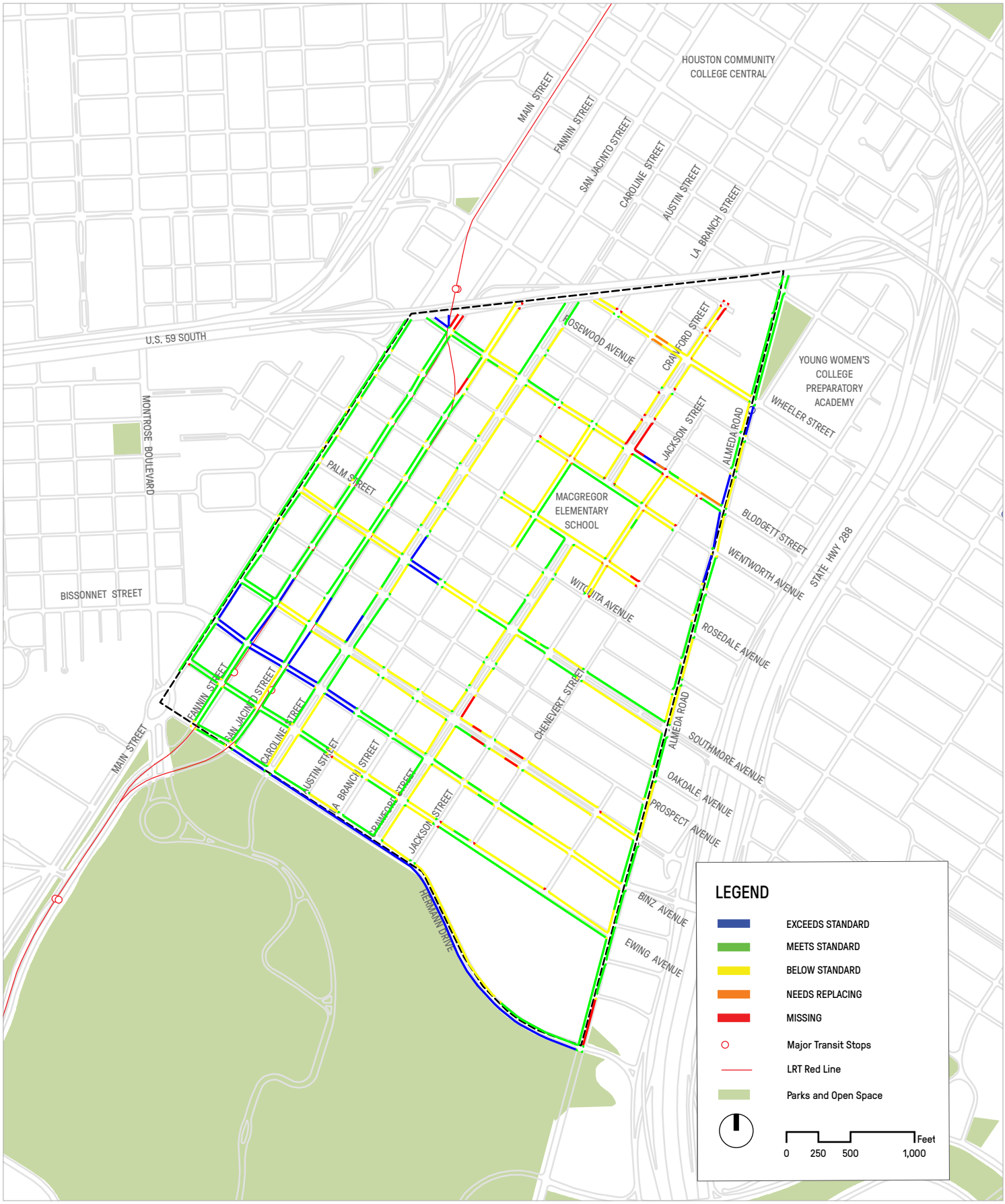
A ramp that is too narrow or sleep, in bad condition, or leads the user off of the desired travel path.

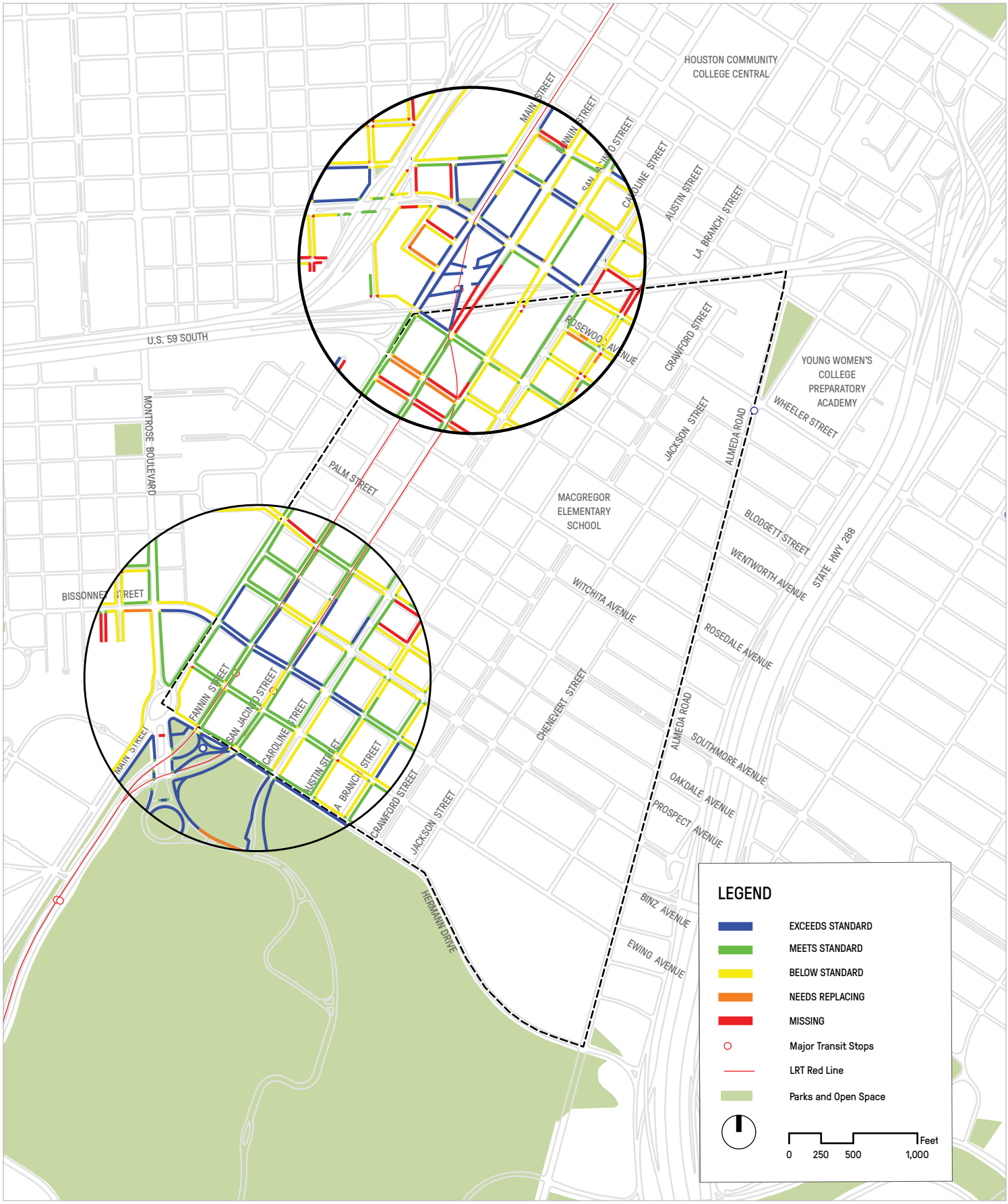
**Needs Replacing (Orange)**

A ramp with conditions that present challenges for the user, and is need of replacement.

**Missing (Red)**

A pedestrian crossing without a ramp connecting to the sidewalk.


HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CENTRAL
MAIN STREET
FANNIN STREET
SAN JACINTO STREET
CAROLINE STREET
AUSTIN STREET
LA BRANCH STREET
U.S. 59 SOUTH
ROSEWOOD AVENUE
CRAWFORD STREET
YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY
WHEELER STREET
MONTROSE BOULEVARD
JACKSON STREET
ALMEDA ROAD
PALM STREET
MACGREGOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BLODGETT STREET
WENTWORTH AVENUE
STATE HWY 288
BISSONNET STREET
WITCHITA AVENUE
ROSEDALE AVENUE
CHENEVERT STREET
SOUTHMORE AVENUE
OAKDALE AVENUE
PROSPECT AVENUE
HERMANN DRIVE
BINZ AVENUE
EWING AVENUE
LEGEND
EXCEEDS STANDARD
MEETS STANDARD
BELOW STANDARD
NEEDS REPLACING
MISSING
Major Transit Stops
LRT Red Line
Parks and Open Space
0 250 500 1,000 Feet




SIDEWALK QUALITY ON THOROUGHFARES AND NEAR RAIL STATIONS

## BICYCLE NETWORK

It is commonplace to see people bicycling around Museum Park. The number of homes, jobs, and destinations located in an area with many local neighborhood streets, make bicycling an attractive mode of transportation. Many of the streets within the neighborhood have low traffic volumes, few signalized intersections and trees to provide shade.

### Barriers

The perimeter of Museum Park has busier roads that provide less comfort and safety, and may serve as a barrier to cyclists. Main Street is a busy six-lane street with vehicles traveling in both directions. Fannin Street and San Jacinto Street are a busy one-way pair that are also a light rail corridor. On the east side of Museum Park, Almeda Road is wide, retail lined corridor with much more traffic than any nearby north/south street. An elevated portion of US Highway 59 currently separates Museum Park from Midtown.

### Existing Facilities

On the southern edge of Museum Park, Hermann Drive serves as one of the few designated bike routes in the neighborhood. The Hermann Drive signed bike route runs parallel to the park from Caroline Street to Almeda Road, which can be used to access Brays Bayou and is near the Columbia Tap trail, two high comfort bicycle facilities. Caroline Street is also a signed bike route that runs the length of Museum Park and continues into Midtown. The route is along a street with low traffic volumes, a landscaped median and no signalized intersections. The only other road that is a part of the bicycle network is a short portion of Southmore Boulevard between Main Street and Caroline. Also a signed bike route, this segment connects neighborhoods west of Museum Park to the north-south bike route on Caroline Street.

### A Network For All Riders

To increase bicycle ridership in Museum Park and the surrounding neighborhoods more safe bicycle facilities and connections are needed. Having bicycle facilities that provide a higher level of comfort will appeal to a broader range of cyclists. Higher comfort levels can be achieved by giving cyclists dedicated space on the road and physically separating them from cars, through the use of bike lanes and cycletracks. There are not currently, or plans for, any dedicated bicycle facilities in Museum Park.

### Providing Connections

Developing a successful bicycle network in Museum Park not only requires the use of safe facilities, but also providing access to destinations and connections to the rest of the city. Accessibility to busy destinations such as museums, retail, jobs, schools and dense housing developments will increase the bicycle network utility. It is equally important that destinations provide safe bicycle parking in convenient locations.

The network will only be used if it provides meaningful connections to Museum Park and beyond. Caroline Street is currently the lone north-south component of the network. A dedicated facility that connects Hermann Park to Midtown is needed to reach the neighborhood and connect to surrounding areas. Similarly, an east-west bicycle corridor needs to be identified. The current connection to the west of Museum Park requires cyclists to ride on the sidewalk for a block along Main Street. A route with safe crossings west of Museum Park needs to be identified. Hermann Drive is the only bicycle route that connects to the east of the neighborhood. Another east-west route needs to be identified that provides a safe, comfortable environment for bicyclists, and also crosses over State Highway 288 providing a connection to Third Ward.

HIDDEN BIKE ROUTE SIGN

### Types of Bicycle Facilities

The following page provides definitions of bicycle facilities to provide the basis of describing which facilities exist in Museum Park already and which are recommended in the conceptual plan.

### Level of Comfort

The degree of interaction with vehicular traffic determines the level of comfort for a bicycle user, Mapping of bicycle corridors in the neighborhood is color-coded to represent that level of comfort. It is evident that the majority of interior streets in Museum Park provide a high level of comfort for bicyclists. Perimeter roads and transit corridors create more stress with higher speed and higher volume vehicular traffic.

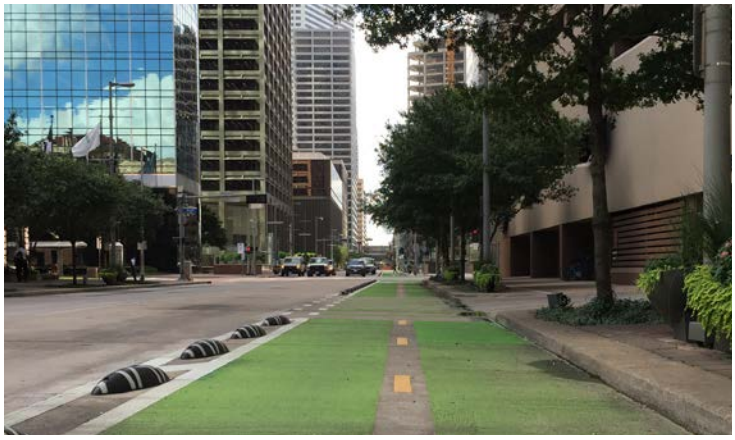
LoC 1 – A facility that presents very little stress and provide a relaxed riding experience.

LoC 2 – A facility that requires occasional interaction with calm, low-speed traffic.

LoC 3 – A facility that involves more interaction with cars, and provides an exclusive riding zone if it is adjacent to multiple lanes or moderate-speed vehicular traffic.

LoC 4 – A facility that requires interacting with multilane and moderate to high speed traffic.

## TYPES OF BICYCLE FACILITIES



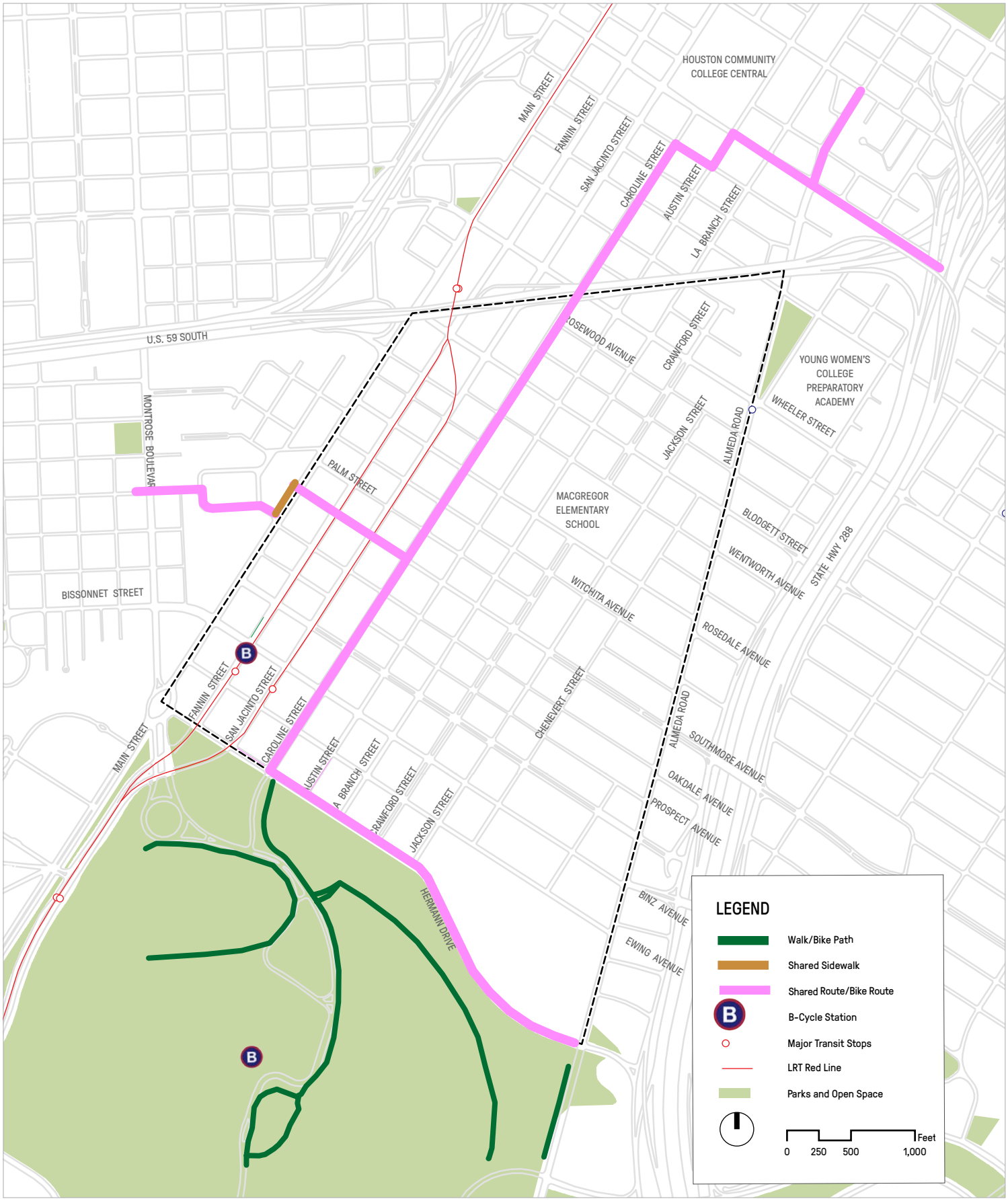
**Separated Bike Lane** – Dedicated on-street space for bikes separated from traffic with a buffer or other physical delineation.

**Bike Lane** – Dedicated on-street space for bikes separated from traffic with a white line.

**Neighborhood Bikeway** – Low speed, low volume residential street shared by motor vehicles and bikes. Marked with "bike route" signs.

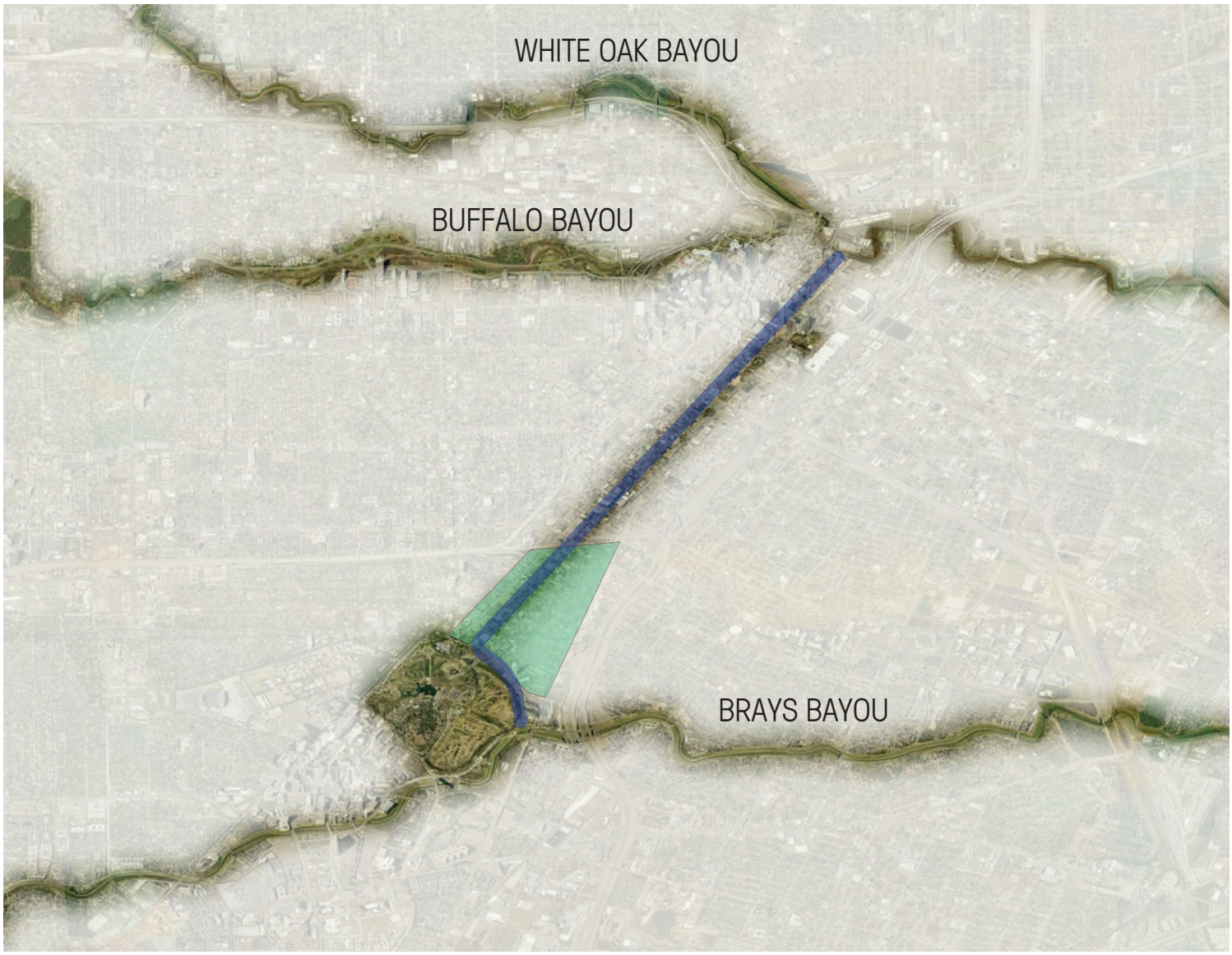
**Shared Lane/Bike Route** – A road shared by both motor vehicles and bicycles marked by "sharrow" pavement markings or "bike route" signs.

**Walk/Bike Path** – Off-street facility shared by people bicycling and walking.




EXISTING BICYCLE FACILITIES

BICYCLING LEVEL OF COMFORT




POTENTIAL BICYCLE TRAIL CONNECTION BETWEEN HERMANN PARK, BRAYS BAYOU, AND BUFFALO BAYOU VIA AUSTIN AND LA BRANCH STREET CORRIDORS

## UTILIZING BOULEVARDS

Museum Park has some wide neighborhood streets that have little traffic, landscaped medians, trees that provide shade and are lined with older, well-maintained homes. Corridors like these are particularly attractive for pedestrians. Focusing on these corridors, such as Caroline Street, Crawford Street and part of Southmore Boulevard and Calumet Street presents an opportunity to further enhance the pedestrian experience and provide beautiful routes that connect the residents to the museums, Hermann Park and transit stops.

## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Museum Park's only grade school, MacGregor Elementary, is bound by Wentworth, Jackson, Rosedale and La Branch Streets. The HISD school has about 500 students enrolled from kindergarten to fifth grade. The school attendance boundary, which includes most of Museum Park, spans from Texas State Highway 288 west to Montrose Boulevard, and from parts of Binz Street to as far north as Westheimer Road. Streets surrounding the school have a school zone speed limit of 20 miles per hour from 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. and from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. To encourage parents and students to walk and bicycle the surrounding area needs adequate sidewalks and safe crossings at intersections.

There are three additional schools that provide early childhood education and child care within Museum Park: Montessori School of Downtown at the intersection of San Jacinto Street and Ruth Street, Montessori Country Day School at La Branch Street and Southmore Boulevard and St Paul's School at Main Street and Calumet Street. Adequate street crossings, accessible sidewalks and traffic calming around these schools are needed to provide safe access for children, parents and staff.

## PARKING AVAILABILITY

Parking is an important issue within the Museum Park neighborhood as the museums and Hermann Park in the study area are regional destinations. Most neighborhood streets allow on-street parking with some areas of no parking or metered parking typically closer to the museums, Hermann Park, and rail stations. The Existing Parking figure on the next page shows parking restrictions within the neighborhood.

Current issues with parking revolve around the popularity of free on street parking for museum visitors as well as buses idling within the neighborhood for field trips and group visits. The bus idling occurs in the southern section of the study area near and along on Binz, the museums, and Hermann Park.

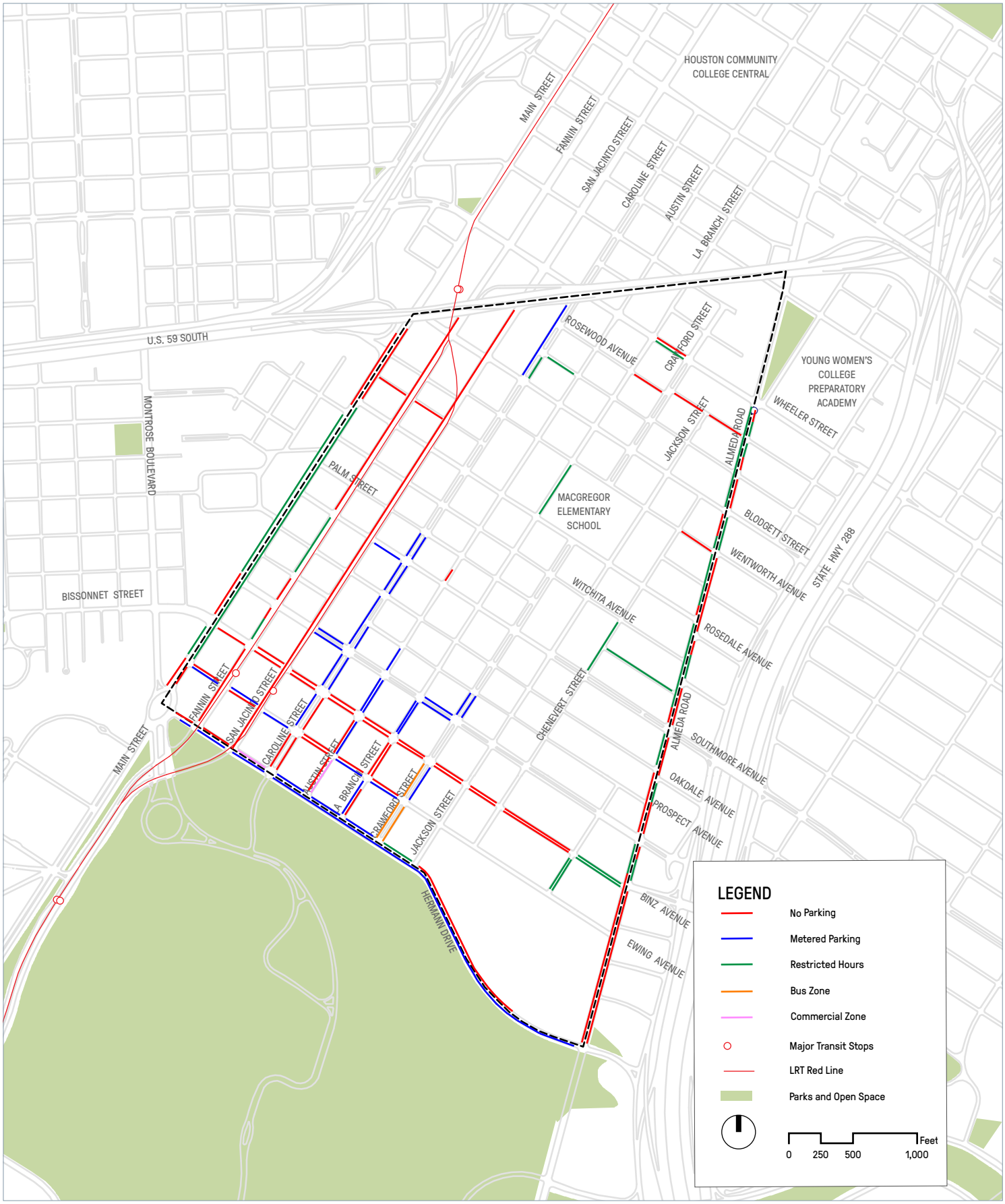
## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING PLAN

In 2014 a Parking Management Study was compiled for the Museum Park neighborhood. It was intended to provide recommendations that promote smart parking and access management strategies, including sustainable parking and transportation solutions. This parking study identified parking problems throughout the study area, including on Southmore and Caroline.

Potential improvements to the current parking situation recommended in the Parking Management Study include increasing paid parking with permits for residents, improving wayfinding to parking for the area destinations, and specified bus parking.

BOULEVARDS HELP PROVIDE A MORE COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS.

PARKING ALONG CRAWFORD STREET NEAR HERMANN PARK




EXISTING PARKING

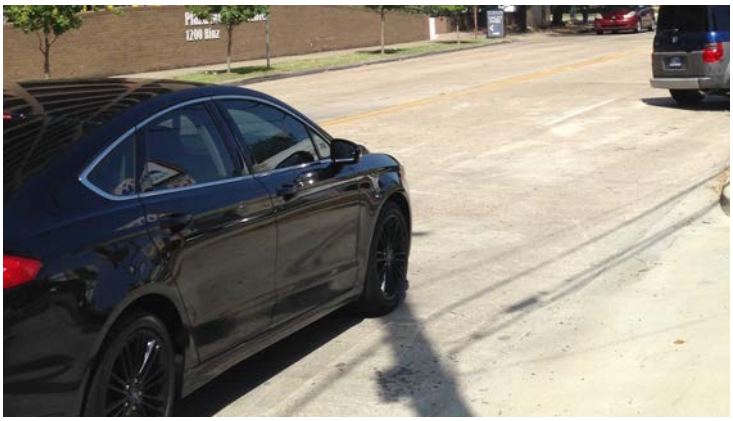
## COMMUTE BEHAVIOR

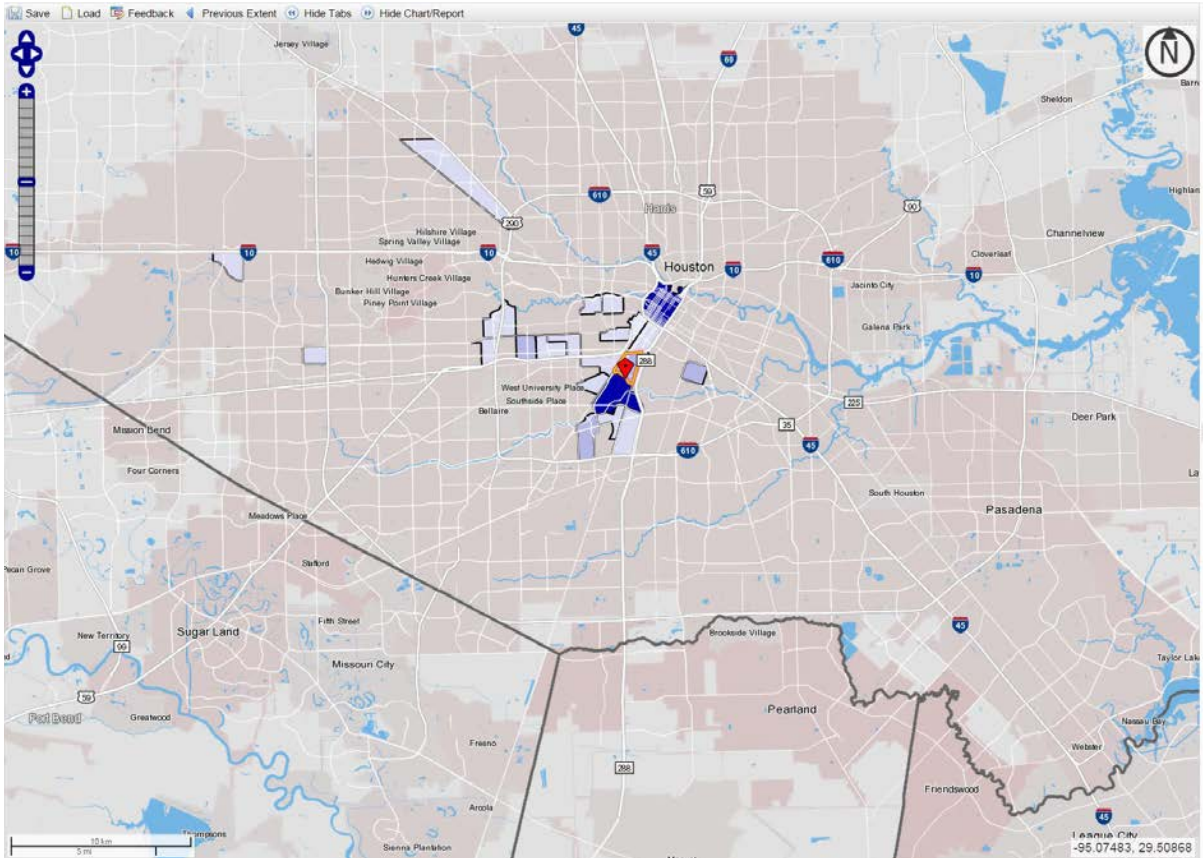
Most commuters that live in Museum Park, like the rest of Houston, drive alone to get to their workplace. With 75% of commuters driving alone and 6% taking transit, resident commute habits are very similar to the rest of the city (see table on this page). Despite the proximity to transit with connections to Downtown and the Texas Medical Center, respectively the largest and third largest activity centers in the region, Museum Park has only a 1% increase in public transit mode share versus the City of Houston overall. Biking and working at home are also slightly more prominent in Museum Park than the rest of Houston, while walking to work is slightly lower. This indicates that there is an opportunity to increase mode shares for alternative modes with an appropriate mix of treatments and strategies to increase mobility options for the neighborhood.

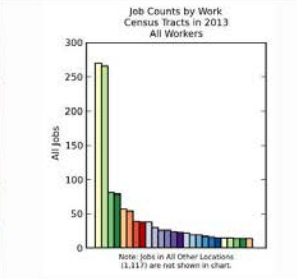
One way to identify appropriate strategies and treatments is to examine where residents of the study area travel to work, as well as where people who work in the study area live. This information combined with an analysis of overall travel patterns and destinations provide an understanding of the existing conditions that contribute to mode share for the Museum Park neighborhood specifically. Figures on the next page show some of this information through Journey to Work data. Specifically, they show that people who live in Museum Park are most likely to work in Downtown, the Texas Medical Center, Greenway Plaza, and University of Houston. People who work in Museum Park are most likely to live in the study area and south along the SH 288 corridor, particularly in the Pearland area.

| MODE | MUSEUM PARK % | HOUSTON, TX % |
|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |
| DRIVE ALONE | 75% | 76% |
| CARPOOL | 5% | 11% |
| TRANSIT | 6% | 5% |
| WALK | 3% | 5% |
| BIKE | 6% | 2% |
| WORK AT HOME | 5% | 1% |

STUDY AREA MODE SHARE





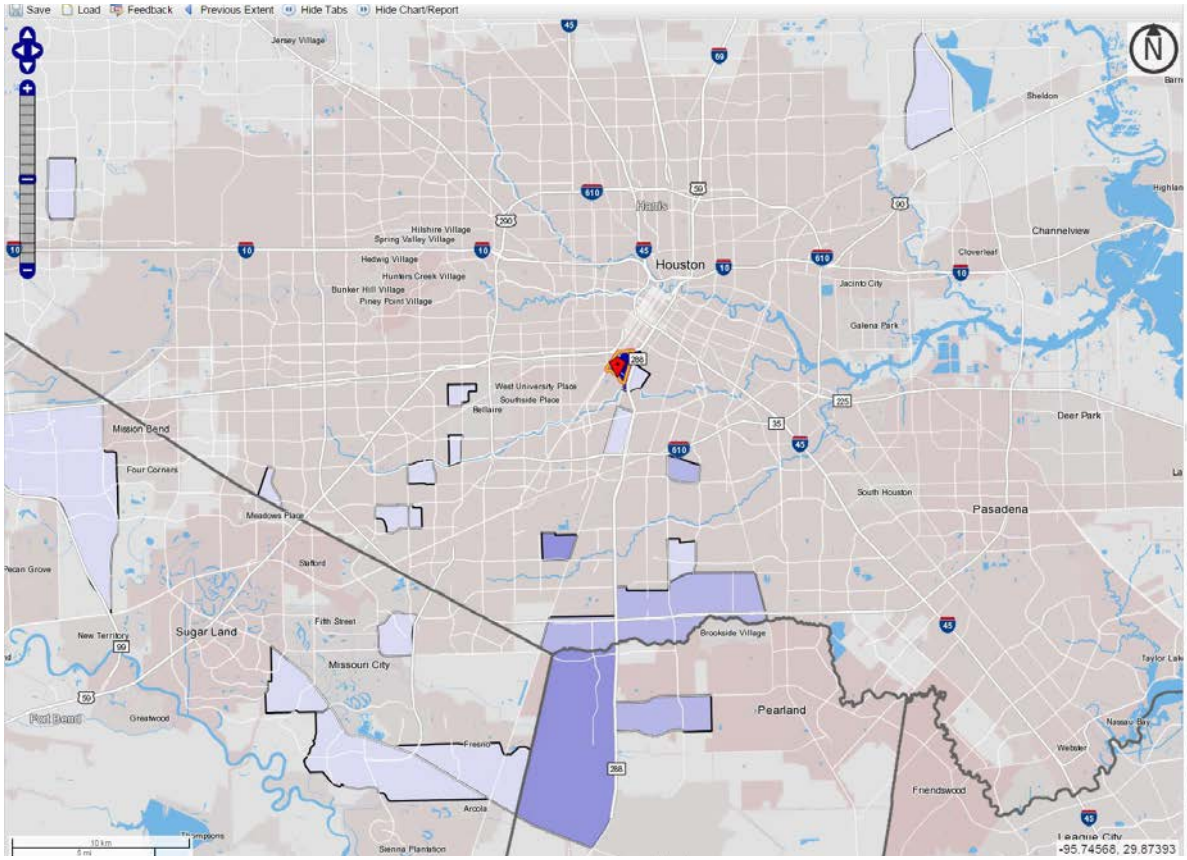



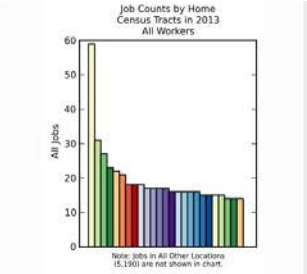

View as Bar Chart

**Jobs Counts by Census Tracts Where Workers are Employed - All Jobs**

| | 2013 Count | 2013 Share |
|---|---|---|
| All Census Tracts | 2,348 | 100.0% |
| 3131 (Harris, TX) | 270 | 11.5% |
| 1000 (Harris, TX) | 266 | 11.3% |
| 3121 (Harris, TX) | 81 | 3.4% |
| 4115.01 (Harris, TX) | 79 | 3.4% |
| 3144 (Harris, TX) | 57 | 2.4% |
| 3126 (Harris, TX) | 54 | 2.3% |
| 4115.02 (Harris, TX) | 39 | 1.7% |
| 4121 (Harris, TX) | 38 | 1.6% |
| 4319 (Harris, TX) | 38 | 1.6% |
| 4106 (Harris, TX) | 30 | 1.3% |
| 3139 (Harris, TX) | 26 | 1.1% |
| 4318.02 (Harris, TX) | 26 | 1.1% |
| 3140.01 (Harris, TX) | 24 | 1.0% |
| 4113 (Harris, TX) | 23 | 1.0% |
| 3125 (Harris, TX) | 22 | 0.9% |
| 4110 (Harris, TX) | 19 | 0.8% |
| 4119 (Harris, TX) | 19 | 0.8% |
| 4504 (Harris, TX) | 17 | 0.7% |
| 4103 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.7% |
| 4107.01 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.6% |
| 5205 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.6% |
| 9801 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.6% |
| 2227 (Harris, TX) | 14 | 0.6% |

TOP 25 CENSUS TRACT WHERE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE STUDY AREA WORK




View as Bar Chart

**Jobs Counts by Census Tracts Where Workers Live - All Jobs**

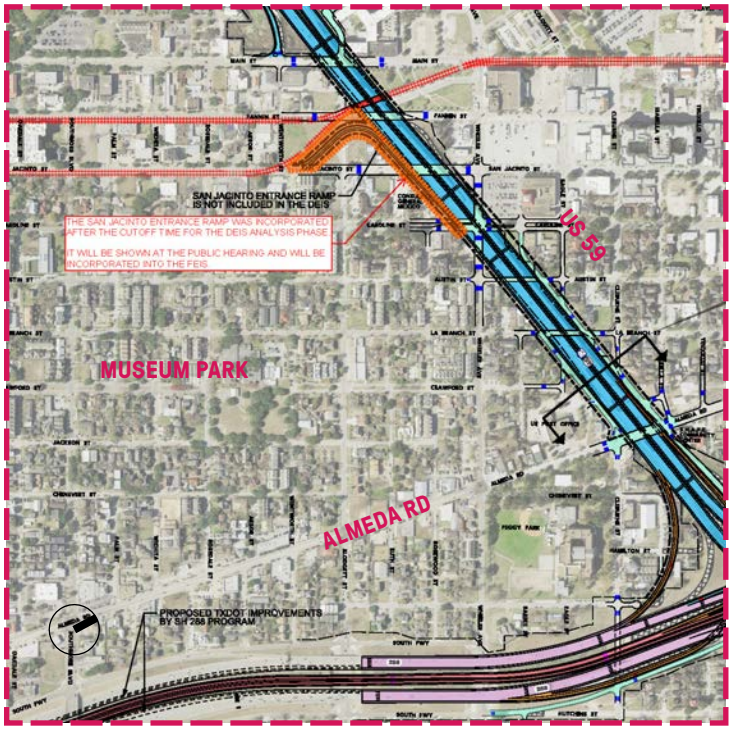
| | 2013 Count | 2013 Share |
|---|---|---|
| All Census Tracts | 5,677 | 100.0% |
| 3126 (Harris, TX) | 59 | 1.0% |
| 3301 (Harris, TX) | 31 | 0.5% |
| 6606.02 (Brazoria, TX) | 27 | 0.5% |
| 3308 (Harris, TX) | 23 | 0.4% |
| 6607.01 (Brazoria, TX) | 22 | 0.4% |
| 3320 (Harris, TX) | 21 | 0.4% |
| 6729 (Fort Bend, TX) | 18 | 0.3% |
| 6743 (Fort Bend, TX) | 18 | 0.3% |
| 2323.02 (Harris, TX) | 18 | 0.3% |
| 6706.01 (Fort Bend, TX) | 17 | 0.3% |
| 6745.01 (Fort Bend, TX) | 17 | 0.3% |
| 4225 (Harris, TX) | 17 | 0.3% |
| 5506.01 (Harris, TX) | 17 | 0.3% |
| 3130 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.3% |
| 3316.01 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.3% |
| 4215 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.3% |
| 4218 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.3% |
| 4535.01 (Harris, TX) | 16 | 0.3% |
| 6708 (Fort Bend, TX) | 15 | 0.3% |
| 2411.02 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.3% |
| 4234.01 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.3% |
| 5420 (Harris, TX) | 15 | 0.3% |

TOP 25 CENSUS TRACT WHERE PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE STUDY AREA LIVE

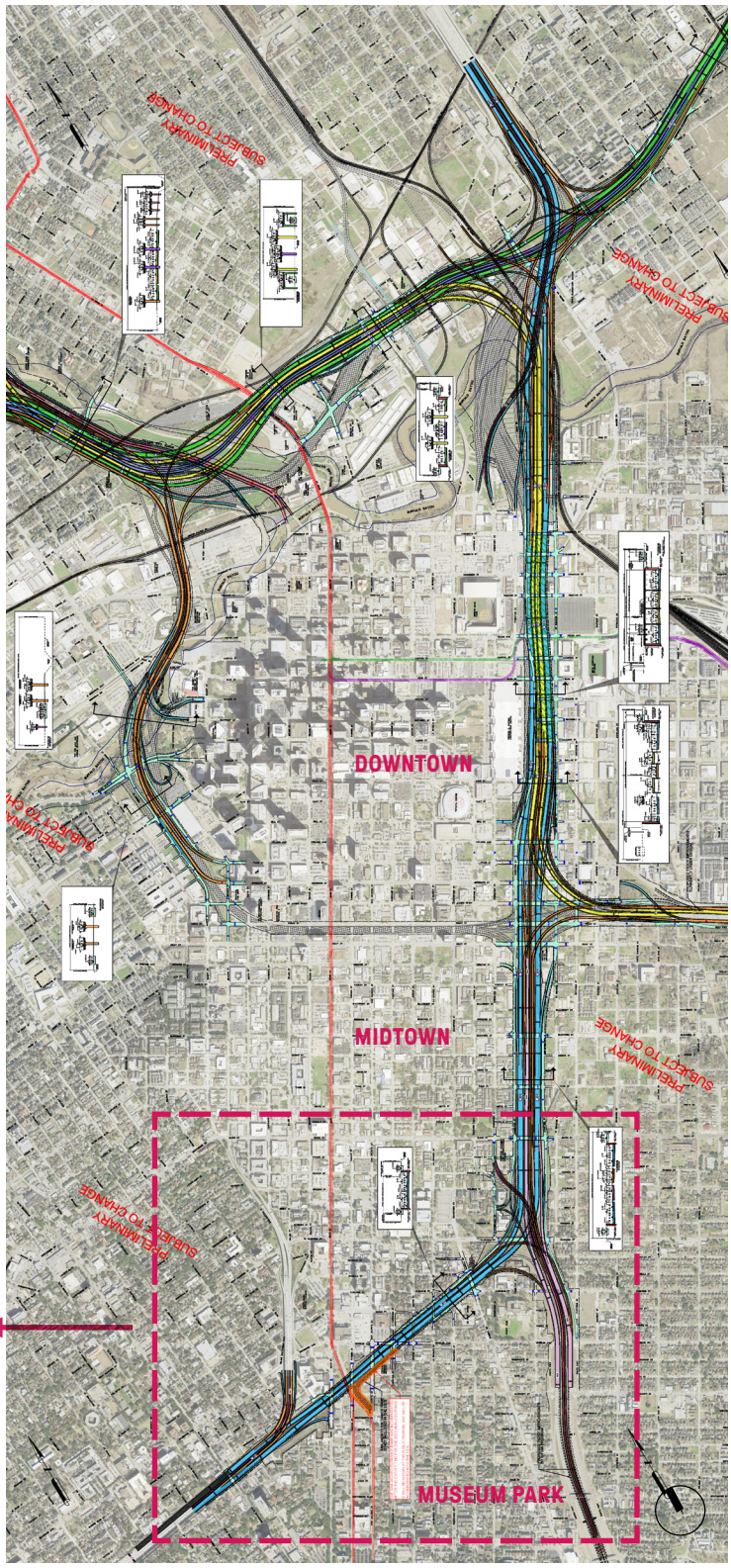
## NORTH HOUSTON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Historically, freeway projects reshaped development realities around Museum Park. The current North Houston Highway Improvement Project is also going to have a great impact on the future of the neighborhood's character and connectivity. The project is led by TxDOT and is expected to break ground in a few years. Segment 3 of the project encompasses Downtown and extends south along US 59 freeway to include the northern boundary of Museum Park. US 59/I-69 segment near Museum Park will be depressed in a trench, a complete transformation from an elevated roadway that it is right now. The plan to depress US 59 will greatly impact transit, pedestrian, and bicycle access, and potentially unlock great development opportunities. Clarity of direction and a focus on connectivity in this area could serve as a catalyst for transit-oriented development at Wheeler Station. Thoughtful development plans and coordination with METRO on the future of the University Line could transform the station area and increase the desirability of northern section of the study area with an increase in retail/business opportunities, housing options, and overall safety improvements.

In the process of design and engineering evaluation, TxDOT coordinates with agencies, stakeholders, and the public. In response to comments and further evaluation, the Proposed Recommended Alternatives for projects segments receive updates before the design is finalized and goes under construction. The Museum Park community has a tremendous stake in the process and needs to advocate for the best local outcomes of the regional transportation objective.




PROJECT PLAN ENLARGEMENT




NORTH HOUSTON HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, SEGMENT 3

*SOURCE: HTTP://WWW.IH45NORTHANDMORE.COM/NEWS.ASPX*

# MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY PLANNING STRATEGIES

The Museum Park neighborhood has an amazing asset base to build upon including many one-of-a-kind destinations and strong residential housing stock within the neighborhood's footprint. However, Based on community feedback and team assessment of Museum Park, the neighborhood can feel fragmented, and defines itself by adjacencies (e.g., the Museums and Hermann Park) rather than its internal character. The existing infrastructure provides inconsistent and at times uncomfortable experiences for residents and visitors. Mobility enhancements to the strong existing grid of streets can connect unique and inviting experiences along corridors and at key destinations strengthen the neighborhood. A focus on prioritizing walkability can help create a connected, healthy and vibrant community.

By focusing on the walking experience first, while considering the role other mobility options play in the community, Museum Park can be a neighborhood where residents and visitors can easily access various museums, safely utilize the attractive transit options, explore shops and businesses, or take a stroll to nearby parks.

## OBJECTIVES

Focusing on the following objectives will facilitate a connected transportation network, supportive of a vibrant neighborhood:

- Prioritize walkability
- Leverage high quality, existing assets
- Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and walkable mixed-use development

## STRATEGIES

Transportation networks and strategies can be an effective way to influence and support desired changes in all areas of the livable centers context. Specifically, the strategies below will advance the above-mentioned objectives and address the needs of the neighborhood.

Develop a comprehensive transportation and mobility network that considers walking as a priority for major street corridors to help prioritize and guide investments in infrastructure improvements. Street improvements related to transit, bicycles, and automobiles should also be considered as appropriate for the context of the roadway and surrounding uses.

- Focusing on sidewalk infrastructure, particularly on priority corridors early, could provide a walkable grid that enhances the existing neighborhood, businesses, museums and transit access.
- Creating a network of comfortable bike facilities the neighborhood would enhance connections and safe biking, and encourage biking to destinations outside of Museum Park.
- Redesigning streets to allocate appropriate space to walking, biking, on-street parking, while still maintaining vehicle and transit access can have a great benefit to the surrounding uses of the street as well as the neighborhood.
- Enhance transit access and sites. Improving transit facilities can improve safety and enhance mobility options and connections to the large adjacent employment centers of Downtown and the Texas Medical Center. Enhancements should reflect the character of the neighborhood and be comfortable for people to access.

Improve access to Hermann Park by focusing on safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Develop a comprehensive parking strategy for the neighborhood that addresses the significant number of buses and visitors, while preserving access and parking for residents.

As part of the overall I-45 Downtown Access Study led by TxDOT, which has the potential to transform the US 59/I-69 freeway segment that makes up the northern boundary of the Museum Park Neighborhood, advocate for a cap over US 59/I-69 from west of Main street to East of Caroline to preserve connectivity. The cap allows improved roadway connectivity between Museum Park and Midtown as well as access to the METRO Rail station at Wheeler. Clarity of direction and a focus on connectivity in this area could also serve as a catalyst for TOD at Wheeler Station. Thoughtful development plans and coordination with METRO on the future of the University Line could transform the station area and increase the desirability of northern section of the study area with an increase in retail/business opportunities, housing options, and overall safety improvements.

# PLACEMAKING AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ANALYSIS

## OVERVIEW

The idea of "place" in Museum Park is strongly defined through such physical features as a tight interconnected grid of streets and unique architectural and landscape typologies. Museum Park landscape character features recognizable iconography of Houston's cultural heart. The necklace of stately live oaks continues from the Rice campus, past Mecom fountain, and along the Main Street corridor, to announce the arrival to the Museum District. Southern edge of the neighborhood interfaces with Hermann Park and shaded streets extend its character along the neighborhood's streetscapes and esplanades. Historical residential architecture offsets contemporary design of institutional buildings and new multi and single-family housing developments. Museum Park is gifted with a great concentration of the City's cultural assets, the way it presents culture in a residential setting will have both regional and national visibility. The unique blending of history, culture, and landscape in Museum Park should be highlighted to further promote this place as a desirable "stay-cation" destination for visitors and to create a sense of comfort and pride for its residents.

Museum Park exists at the intersection of very distinct places: Houston Museum District, Hermann Park, and a historic residential neighborhood. And the three themes clearly emerge as the building blocks of Museum Park identity:

**1. Culture**- supported by the presence of 19 museums, galleries and creative class businesses in the area.

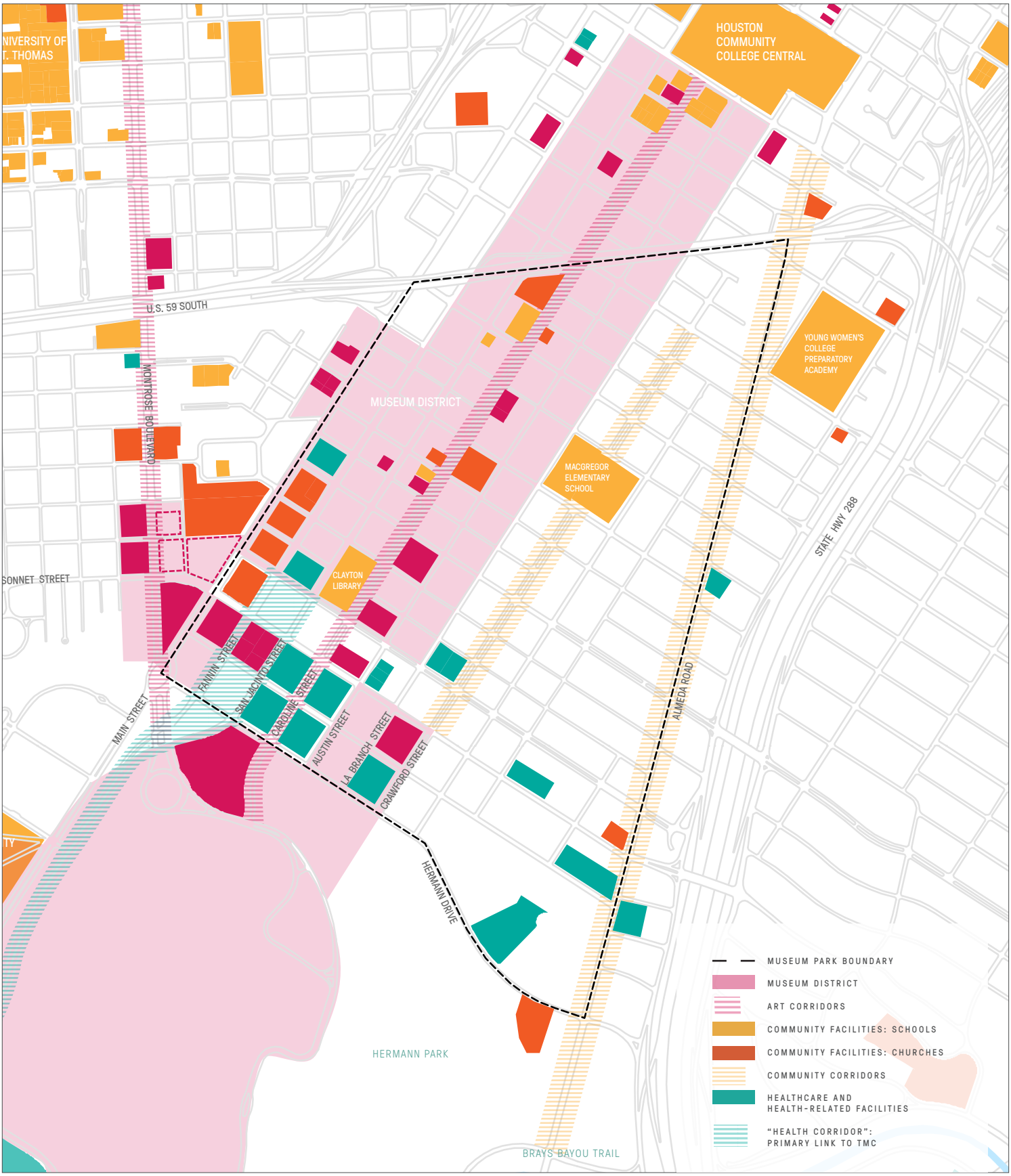
**2. Health** - defined by proximity to Hermann Park and Brays Bayou linear park. Although the Texas Medical Center is outside the reaches of Museum Park's boundary, its influence is seen throughout the neighborhood, as well. Beyond clinical offices, to the homes of medical staff and students, health and wellness resonates with recreation opportunities.

**3. Community**- a historical neighborhood with schools, churches, historic landmarks root Museum Park in architectural heritage and social histories of Greater Third Ward.

The identity of this premier Houston neighborhood is largely defined and should be further strengthened through a thematic intersection of culture, health and community. Cultural infrastructure of the arts district and green and health infrastructure of the parks and TMC will support the social infrastructure of "shared space" where varied communities of users will come together: residents, students, healthcare workers, restaurant connoiseurs, exercise enthusiasts, nature lovers, and visitors that come from other parts of the City and the region.

As it is evident in the map on the following page, a lot of the thematic facilities of community, culture, and health blur the Super Neighborhood boundaries by concentrating focused activity and interest on or just outside of its margins. Capitalizing on these influences will strengthen character of place in Museum Park. In addition to the general thematic zones of influence, specific landmarks distributed throughout the neighborhood draw visitors and anchor the area with their identifiable character. Map inventory of local landmarks begins to geographically define a walkable district of many unique destinations.

THEMES THAT DEFINE MUSEUM PARK PLACE CHARACTER




HEALTH, CULTURAL, SOCIAL THEMES IN AREA'S FACILITIES

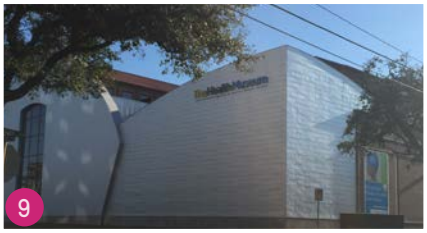
## TOP REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

1. Houston Contemporary Craft
2. Lawndale Art Center
3. Czech Center Museum Houston
4. Houston Museum of African American Culture
5. Asia Society Texas Center
6. Holocaust Museum Houston
7. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
8. Children's Museum of Houston
9. The Health Museum

1. Houston Center for Photography
2. Rothko Chapel
3. The Menil Collection
4. Diverseworks
5. Buffalo Soldiers National Museum
6. The Jung Center
7. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
8. Houston Museum of Natural Science + Houston Zoo
9. Rice Gallery

1

5


9

2

6

3

7

4

8

## TOP REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

TOP REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

## TOP COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

1. Restaurants - Lucille's (1a), Reggae Hut (1b), Barnaby's, Dak & Bop (1c), and Green Seed Vegan (1d) add to the community's local flavor.

2. Daniel Boone Cycles - sponsor to the Houston Bicycle Museum, this shop offers bike, parts, and expertise to community cyclists.

3. Gallery Jatad - Fine African Art and Contemporary Works are featured here. A true complement to the Houston Museum of African American Culture on Caroline Street.

4. MacGregor Elementary School - Residents value this school's presence in the neighborhood. Many would like to see the green space used more as a neighborhood park.

5. Asia Society Texas Center - The world class facility, the second floor reflection pond, and the night market contribute to this institution's popularity in the neighborhood.

6. Labyrinths - St. Paul Methodist and Covenant Baptist Church are home to medieval-inspired labyrinth installations open to public use.

7. Lawndale Art Center Mural - Visible from the street this facade welcomes visitors to enter and experience contemporary art from Houston-based artists.

8. MFA Sculpture Garden- Secluded and quiet, attracts residents to the outdoor exhibits at the MFAH.

9. Native Plant Garden at the Children's Museum - aligned with Museum Park's values, this garden demonstrates the benefits of landscaping with native plants.

10. Hermann Park - Centennial Garden, Miller Outdoor Theater, the jogging trail, and the Japanese Garden are beloved and well- used community destinations.

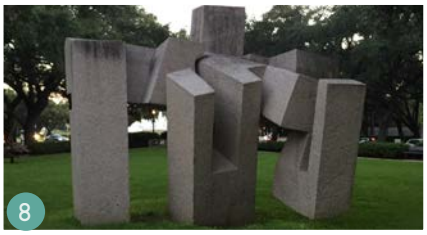
1a

1b

1c

2

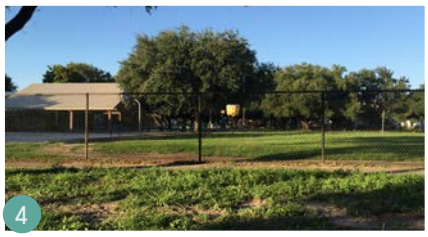
5


8

3

6

9


4

7

10

MUSEUM PARK HAS AN ECLECTIC MIX OF ART AND CULTURE AS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

TOP COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

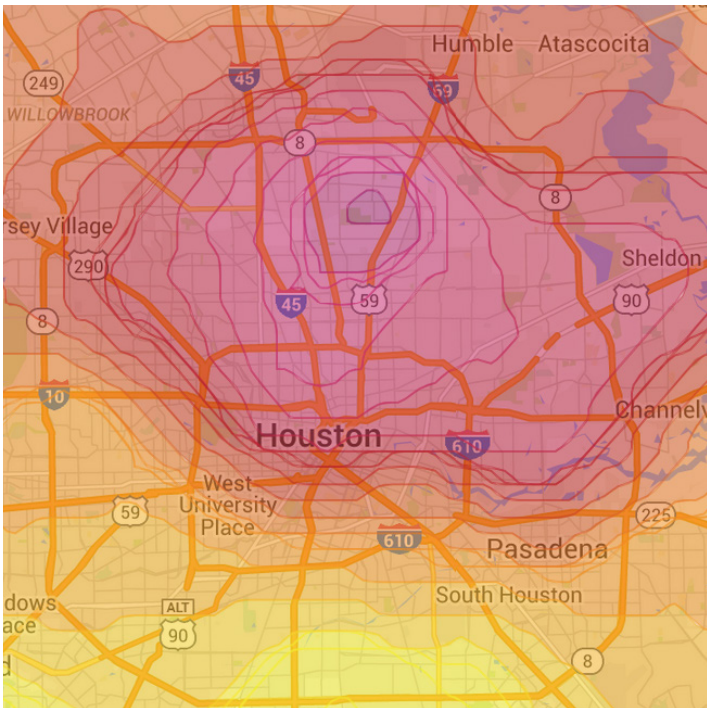
### Air Quality

According to the American Lung Association, Houston's air quality is the 6th worst in the nation (measured with data from the past 3 years). Regional climate paired with industry across the metropolitan area, as well as, vehicular emissions affect the quality of air in Museum Park on any given day.

Mapping technologies are limited, therefore making it difficult to map air quality on a block by block level. However, the density of tree canopies across the area can indicate areas for potential improvement (see Heat Island figure on the next page). Higher density tree and planting zones counteract ozone while collecting particulate matter, therefore localizing healthier air.

Over 40% of Museum Park is urban canopy. This includes public right-of-way, medians, parks, and private properties. Extending the canopy to the west and the south would be beneficial not only for air quality, but also for visual continuity, stormwater filtration, and reduction of heat island effect.

Additionally, high traffic zones and popular idling locations detract from Museum Park's air quality.



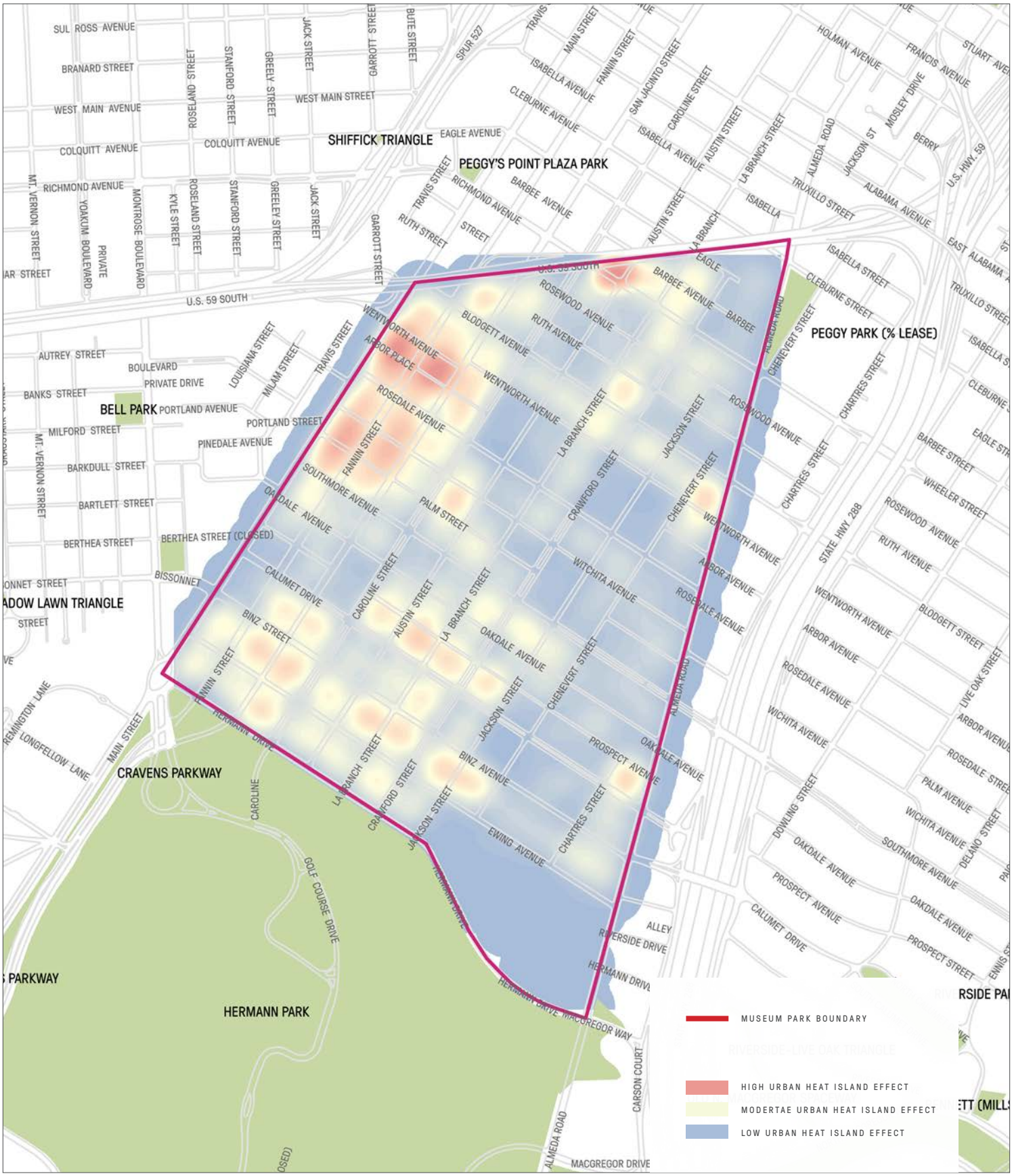

MODERATE (YELLOW) TO UNHEALTHY (PINK) OZONE DAY, AUGUST 2015
*(SOURCE: HOUSTON CLEAN AIR NETWORK)*

### Stormwater Run-Off

Rain events in urban conditions cause stormwater to pick up pollutants and debris, without opportunity to return filtered to the ground water table. This especially problematic in Museum Parks least permeable areas, as identified by non-porous materials and minimal landscaping. Improvements can be made with beneficial planting and future material selection.

### Urban Heat Island Effect

Documented by generalized urban surfaces, this simplified graphic represents concentrated conditions that cause heat island effect. From a neighborhood standpoint, the indicated "high" spots can be several degrees warmer than surrounding areas. These disturbances are documented as contributors to heat related illnesses, exacerbators of energy demands, reductors of air quality, and interruptors of weather patterns. Smart future development with generous amounts of landscaping can reduce or eliminate negative effects.

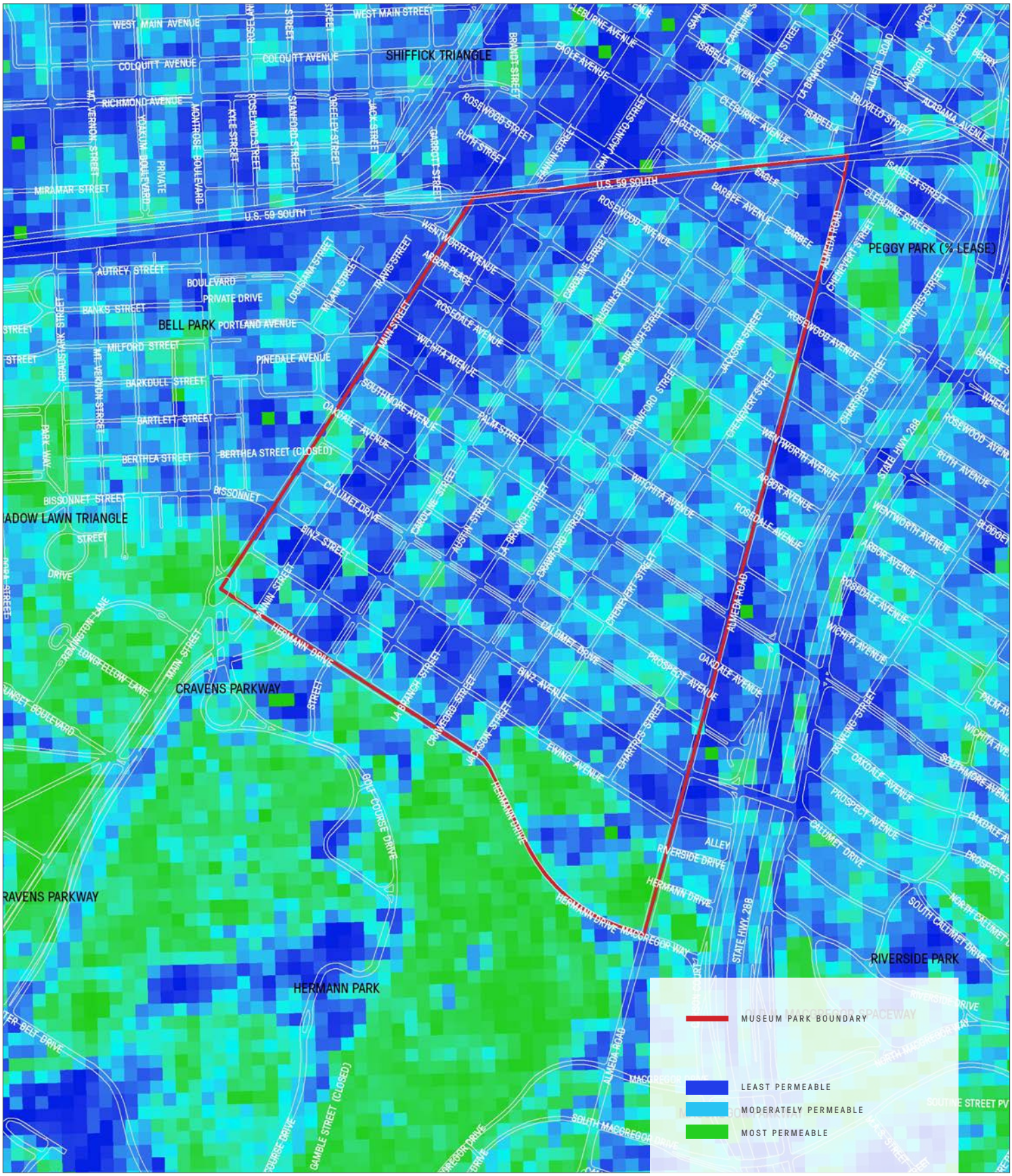



HEAT ISLAND

*SOURCE: USGS, H-GAC*

ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER

SOURCE: USGS




PERMEABILITY

SOURCE: H-GAC

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ACCESS

The majority of residents and visitors along Museum Park's periphery are within a 10 minute walk of a nearby park. Central users are close to MacGregor Elementary School's open space yet further away from accessible public park spaces such as Hermann Park, Peggy Park, and Bell Park. The neighborhood's esplanades are wide enough to serve the residents as gathering spaces, particularly on Crawford Street.

PEGGY PARK

MACGREGOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OPEN SPACE

BELL PARK

MFAH SCULPTURE GARDEN

AERIAL PHOTO OF HERMANN PARK LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS MUSEUM PARK

MUSEUM PARK BOUNDARY
WALKING DISTANCES FROM OPEN SPACE
PUBLIC PARK
5 MINUTE WALK
10 MINUTE WALK
15 MINUTE WALK
POTENTIAL PARK SPACE
5 MINUTE WALK
10 MINUTE WALK
15 MINUTE WALK
1
2
3
4
5
SUL ROSS AVENUE
BRANARD STREET
WEST MAIN AVENUE
COLQUITT AVENUE
RICHMOND AVENUE
WEST MAIN STREET
EAGLE AVENUE
U.S. 59 SOUTH
ROSEWOOD AVENUE
BLODGETT AVENUE
WENTWORTH AVENUE
ARBOR AVENUE
ROSEDALE AVENUE
WICHITA AVENUE
OAKDALE AVENUE
PROSPECT AVENUE
EWING AVENUE
CHARTRES STREET
ALMEDA ROAD
CHENEVERT STREET
JACKSON STREET
LA BRANCH STREET
BARBEE AVENUE
ISABELLA AVENUE
CLEBURNE AVENUE
HOLMAN AVENUE
FRANCIS AVENUE
STUART AVE
MOSLEY DRIVE
BERRY
U.S. HWY. 59
ALABAMA AVENUE
EAST ALABAMA
TRUXILLO STREET
ISABELLA STREET
CLEBURNE
EAGLE ST
BARBEE STREET
WHEELER STREET
STATE HWY. 288
LIVE OAK STREET
ARBOR AVENU
ROSEDALE STREE
PALM AVENUE
DELANO STREET
SOUTHMORE AVENUE
DOWLING STREET
CALUMET DRIVE
ALLEY
RIVERSIDE DRIVE
HERMANN DRIVE
MACGREGOR DRIVE
NORTH MACGREGOR WAY
SOUTH CALUMET DRIVE
NORTH CALUMET DRIVE
ENNIS S
MT. VERNON STREET
YOAKUM BOULEVARD
MONTROSE BOULEVARD
KYLE STREET
ROSELAND STREET
STANFORD STREET
GREELEY STREET
JACK STREET
GARROTT STREET
BUTE STREET
SPUR 527
TRAVIS
MAIN STREET
FANNIN STREET
SAN JACINTO STREET
CAROLINE STREET
AUSTIN STREET
ALMEDA ROAD
JACKSON ST
TRUXILLO STREET
ISABELLA
LA BRANCH STREET
TRAVIS STREET
RICHMOND AVENUE
BARBEE AVENUE
RUTH STREET
STREET
EAGLE
BARBEE
ROSEWOOD AVENUE
RUTH AVENUE
BLODGETT AVENUE
WENTWORTH AVENUE
ARBOR PLACE
ROSEDALE AVENUE
SOUTHMORE AVENUE
FANNIN STREET
PALM STREET
WICHITA AVENUE
OAKDALE AVENUE
PROSPECT AVENUE
EWING AVENUE
CHARTRES STREET
CHENEVERT STREET
JACKSON STREET
LA BRANCH STREET
AUSTIN STREET
ALMEDA ROAD
AUBREY STREET
BANKS STREET
BOULEVARD
PRIVATE DRIVE
PORTLAND AVENUE
PORTLAND STREET
MILLER STREET
BANDELL STREET
BURTON STREET
BURTON AVENUE
BURTON STREET
BURTON STREET
BURTON AVENUE
BURTON STREET
BURTON STREET
BURTON AVENUE
BURTON

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACES ECOSYSTEMS

Most of Museum Park's landscaped public areas are typical of an urban neighborhood's palette of turf grass, a small selection of groundcovers, and shade trees. In contrast, Hermann Park is diverse in its representation of landscape typologies. Forests, meadows, and specialty gardens provide numerous ecosystem services including habitat for urban wildlife, stormwater cleansing and run-off reduction, shade for pedestrian comfort, and seasonal experiences for visitors. Access to nature in the city to this extent is a great resource for the neighborhood and a value that can be upheld in enriching its own landscapes with multiple performative benefits.

1

3

2

4

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ECOSYSTEMS

## TREE COVER AND ESPLANADES

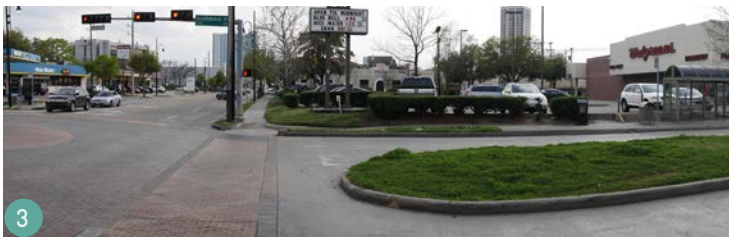
Trees are generously planted in Museum Park's right-of-ways. Although not always continuous, mature trees provide a sense of legacy and long-term investment. The residential core is moderately to heavily planted while the northern and southern edges lack coverage.

Neighborhood pride is showcased through the many esplanades that have been adopted by residents and community groups. To date, beautification and improvements have been piece-meal and on a limited scale. A more unified and all-inclusive approach could link these previous efforts to an integrated landscape character. Analysis on the following pages provides an inventory of existing landscaping from the standpoint of ecological benefit and maintenance.

### Adopt-an-Esplandade Program

Houston Parks and Recreation Department administers the Adopt-an-Esplanade program. Anyone from civic groups to garden clubs, business owners, government agencies and corporate sponsors may elect to "adopt". Houston Southeast adopted the Main Street medians while community volunteers have claimed some others.

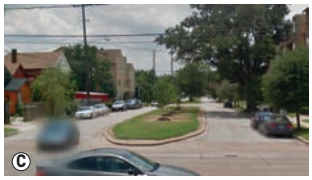
A landscape plan with irrigation intent is required for approval. Special permits may be needed. The city will review feasibility and if accepted the applying person or organization will assume responsibility of all maintenance (minus cost of irrigation water).

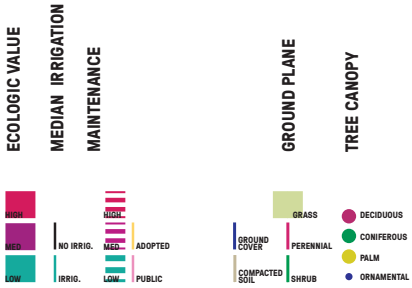


CAROLINE, CRAWFORD (NORTH AND SOUTH), SOUTHMORE, AND CALUMET ESPLANADES

ESPLANADES "OWNERSHIP"

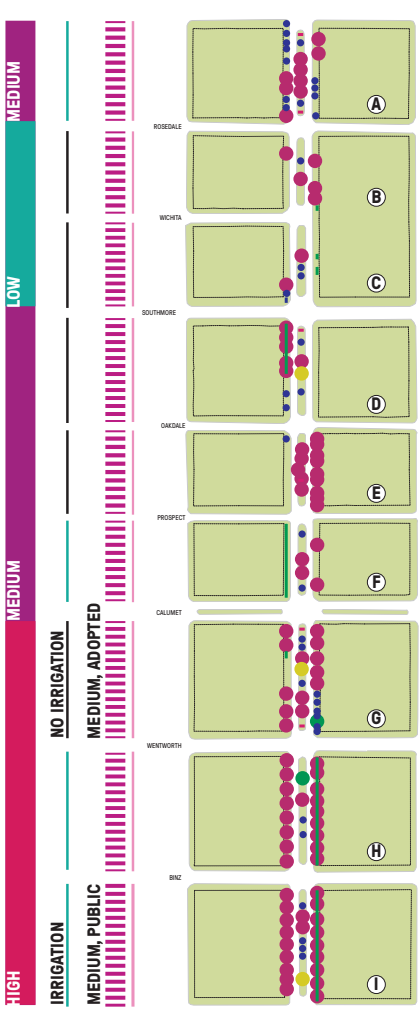
## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER

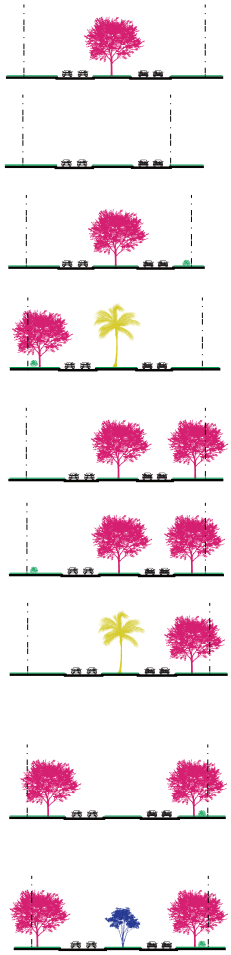


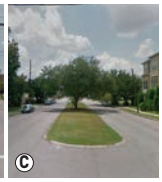


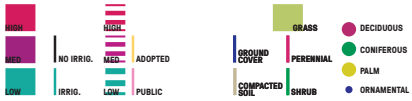

# CRAWFORD STREET (NORTH)

## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER



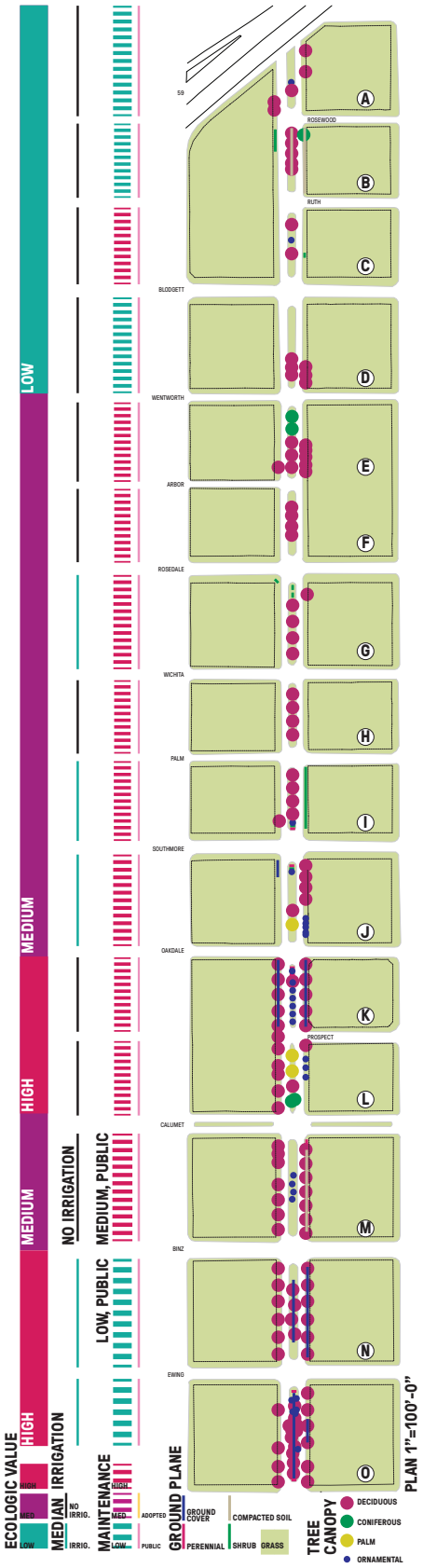



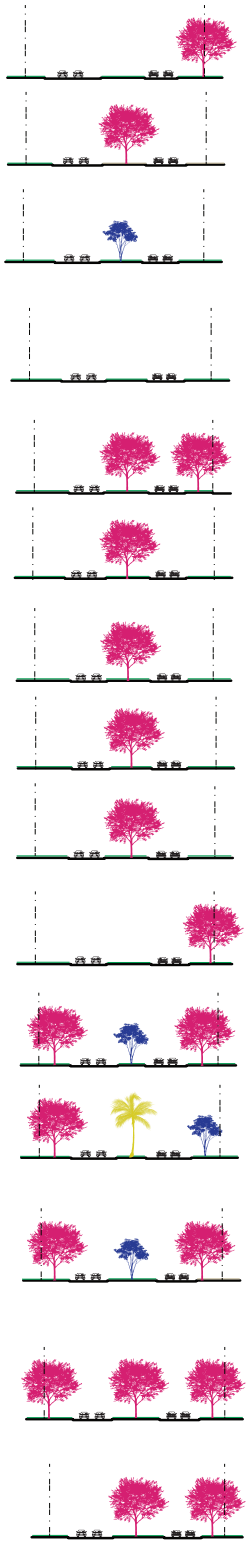


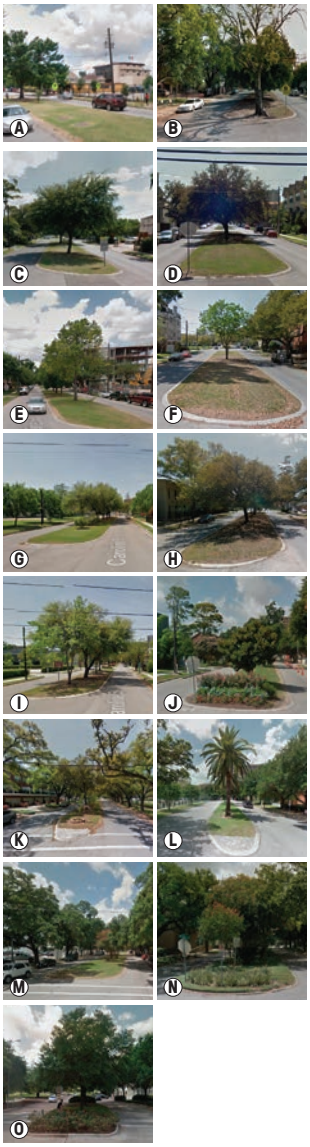



# CRAWFORD STREET (SOUTH)

## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER

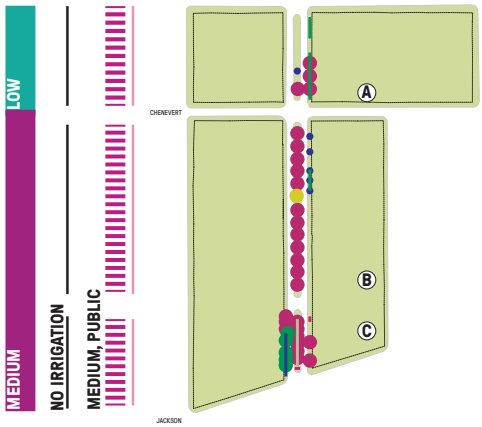


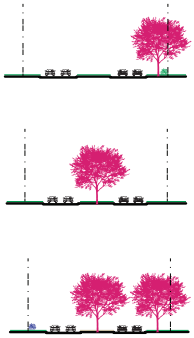



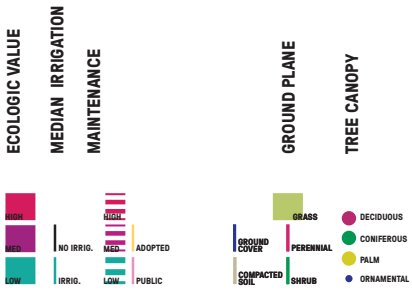


# CAROLINE STREET

## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER






# SOUTHMORE STREET

## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER

ECOLOGIC VALUE
HIGH
MED
LOW

MEDIAN IRRIGATION
NO IRRIG.
IRRIG.

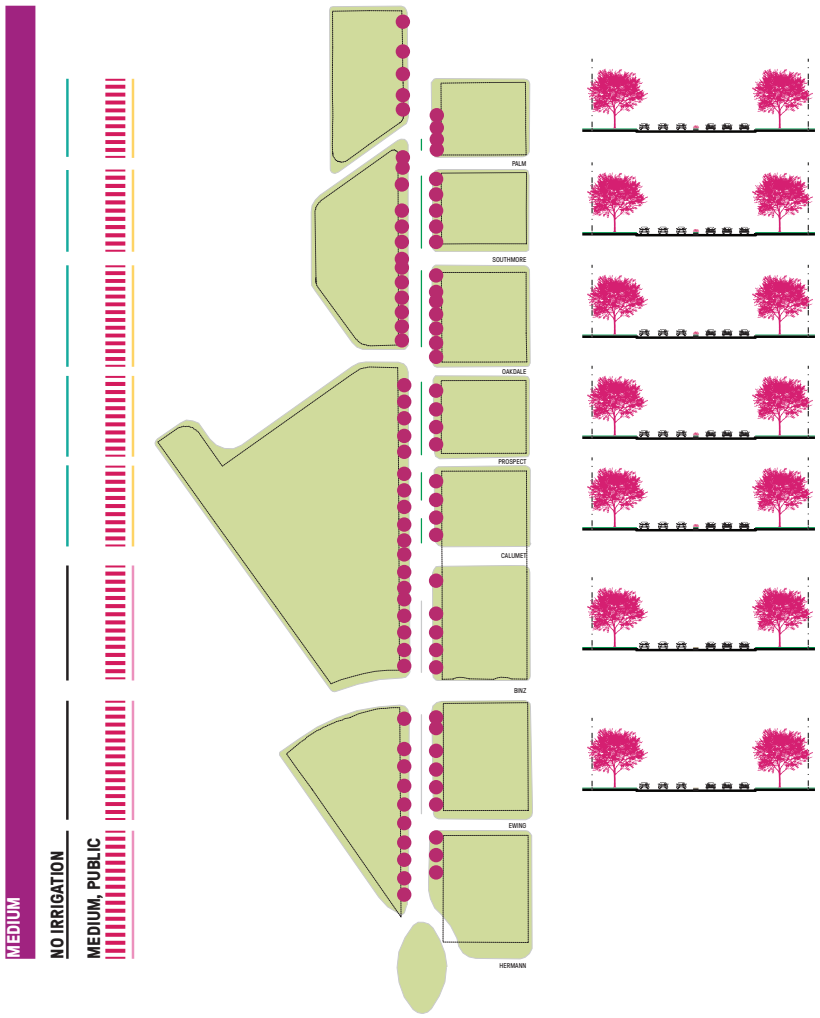
MAINTENANCE
HIGH
MED.
LOW
ADOPTED
PUBLIC

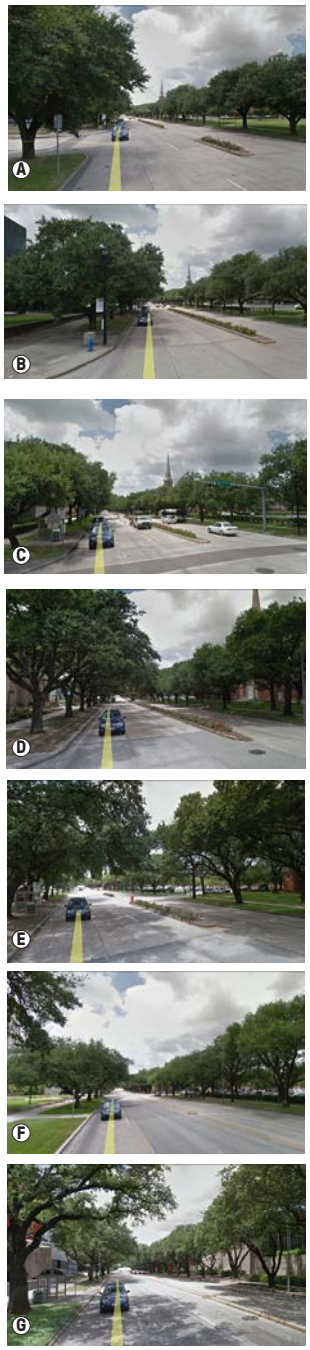
GROUND PLANE
MULCH
GRASS
PERENNIAL
SHRUB

TREE CANOPY
DECIDUOUS
CONIFEROUS
PALM
ORNAMENTAL

# CALUMET STREET

## ESPLANADES AND TREE COVER



ECOLOGIC VALUE
HIGH
MED
LOW

MEDIAN IRRIGATION
NO IRRIG.
IRRIG.

MAINTANANCE
HIGH
MED.
LOW
ADOPTED
PUBLIC

GROUND PLANE
CONCRETE
GROUND COVER
COMPACTED SOIL
GRASS
PERENNIAL
SHRUB

TREE CANOPY
DECIDUOUS
CONIFEROUS
PALM
ORNAMENTAL

# MAIN STREET

## GATEWAYS AND FOCUSED CORRIDORS

### 1. Gateways

A gateway experience into the neighborhood differs based on the character of the corridor intersections that define it. The key arrival points are on Almeda at US-59, Almeda at Southmore, Hermann Drive at Crawford, Hermann Drive at Caroline, Main, Fannin, San Jacinto at Binz and Main at Southmore. Currently each gateway experience could be strengthened by projecting the character of Museum Park for different modalities and speeds of travel. Working with neighboring entities such as Midtown, Museum of Fine Arts, Hermann Park will leverage enhancement efforts that are already underway.

### 2. Focused Corridors

Externally and internally focused corridors emerge as a notion describing the movement of character and energy throughout Museum Park. Some corridors establish a sense of regional context. For example, Main, Fannin, Almeda, Caroline, Wheeler, Southmore and Binz invite influences from downtown Houston, Third Ward, Montrose, Hermann Park, TMC, and Museum District.

Main, Fannin, and Almeda are primary connections from downtown to TMC. These streets provide diverse services drawing on those influences. Caroline is even more diverse, connecting campuses to institutions, residences, and a park. Wheeler, Southmore, and Binz bear cultural and historical influence from the Third Ward and its connection into Montrose.

In contrast, Crawford is an internally focused street. Neighbors are the primary travelers and users of this corridor. Therefore, most of the character comes from within Museum Park. The street serves as a communication channel for the residents as a common gathering spot and place to walk.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STREETSCAPES

GATEWAYS AND FOCUSED CORRIDORS

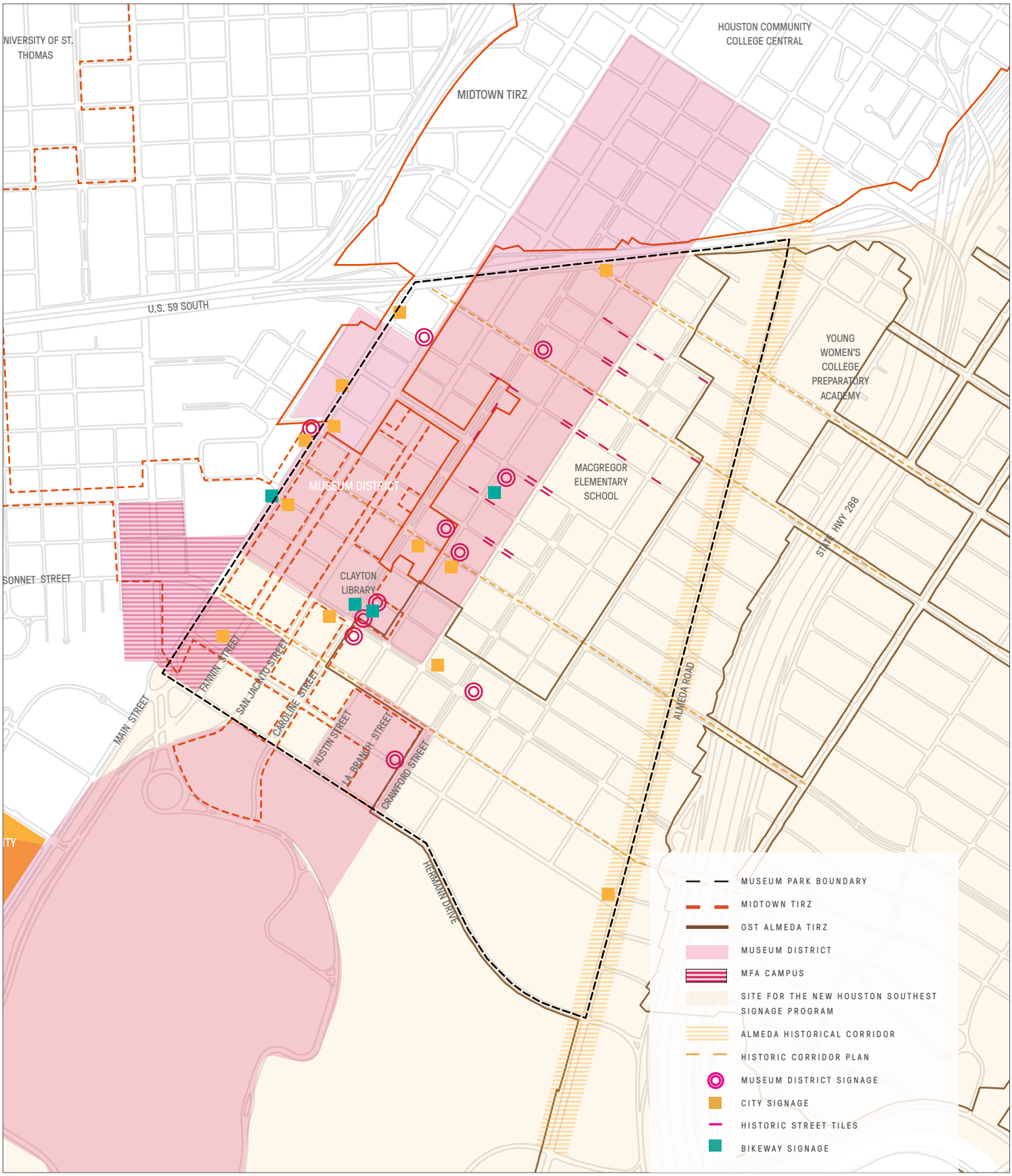
## BRANDING, WAYFINDING, SIGNAGE

Several established area brands influence Museum Park by proximity: Museum District, Rice University, TMC, Almeda Road, Midtown, Houston Southeast, COH. Museum District heavily defines the west side (green markers, institutional landscapes) while cues from the Third Ward shape the east (decorative lighting and special paving at Almeda intersections). The extended reach of the Midtown TIRZ could bring in additional branding and wayfinding sensibilities. Houston Southeast, in turn, is going through rebranding that will result in a new signage program and gateway elements.

Street signs in Museum Park are standard with exception of the Main Street Corridor and a few streets within the Midtown Management District boundary. Outside of street signage, additional signage typologies are seen within the community.

- Museum District signage is found at the intersections near museums. Often including a map, these green markers show all museum related destinations at visitor hotspots. They include walking distances and arrows to select points of interest.
- Museum District City signs are municipal brown metal signs that state nearby attractions at noted locations.
- Historic blue and white tiles are unique to Houston. They are placed at curbs, marking each street's name.
- Bikeway signage leads pedestrians and bicyclists to bikeable networks within and around the neighborhood
- Banner program on Almeda marks seasonal celebrations

SIGNAGE TYPES FOUND THROUGHOUT MUSEUM PARK

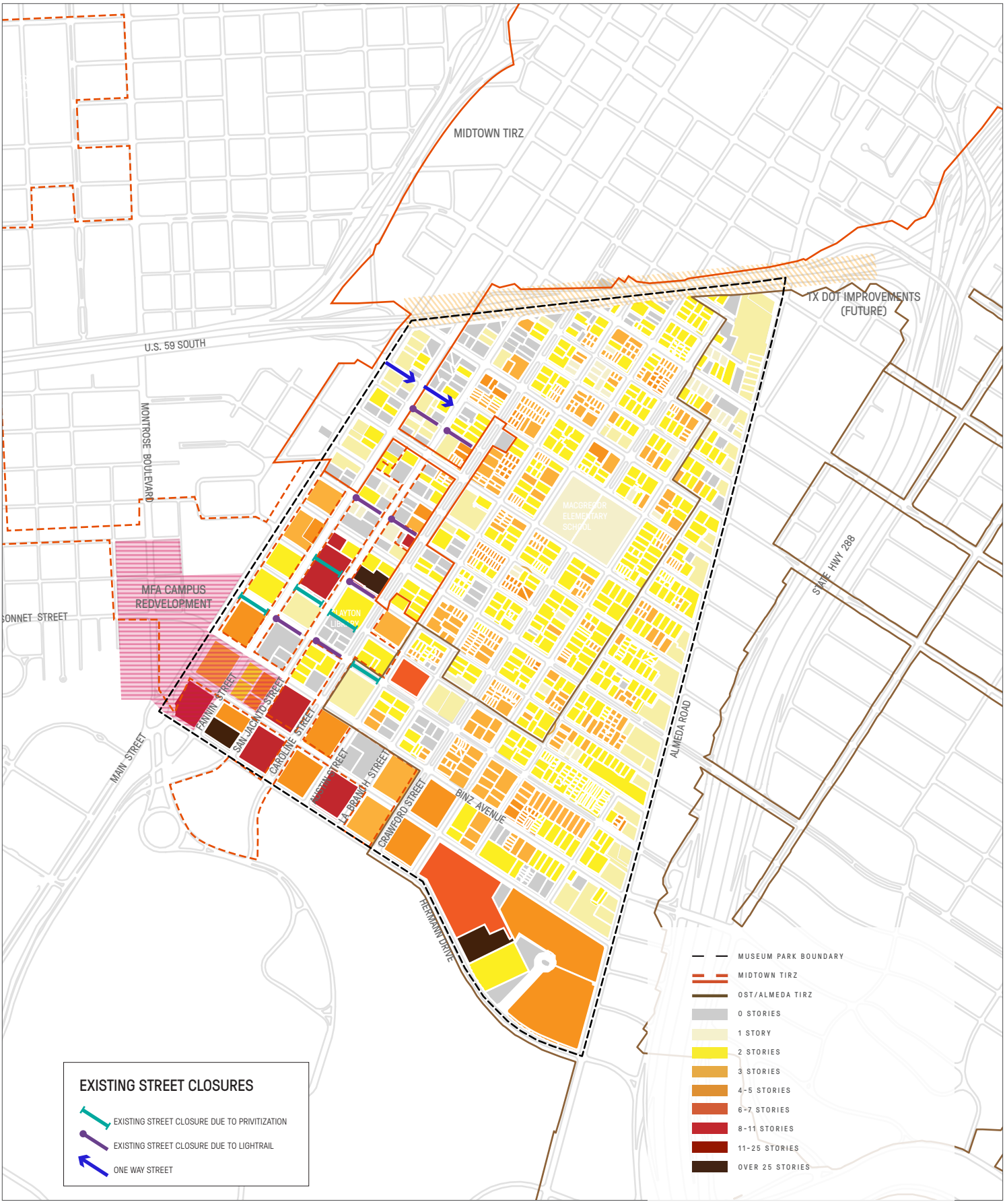

NIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE CENTRAL
MIDTOWN TIRZ
U.S. 59 SOUTH
YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY
MACGREGOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MUSEUM DISTRICT
STATE HWY 288
SONNET STREET
CLAYTON LIBRARY
FANNIN STREET
SAN JACINTO STREET
CAROLINE STREET
AUSTIN STREET
LA BRANCH STREET
CRAWFORD STREET
MAIN STREET
ALMEDA ROAD
HERMANN DRIVE
MUSEUM PARK BOUNDARY
MIDTOWN TIRZ
OST ALMEDA TIRZ
MUSEUM DISTRICT
MFA CAMPUS
SITE FOR THE NEW HOUSTON SOUTHEST SIGNAGE PROGRAM
ALMEDA HISTORICAL CORRIDOR
HISTORIC CORRIDOR PLAN
MUSEUM DISTRICT SIGNAGE
CITY SIGNAGE
HISTORIC STREET TILES
BIKEWAY SIGNAGE

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The unique characteristic of Museum Park's development mix is the integration of residential, commercial, and institutional uses in a traditionally low-rise architecture at the core and along Almeda, and in higher density buildings between Binz and Hermann Drive along the park. Contemporary architectural styles and increased density is becoming the new norm for development in Museum Park. These new development typologies have affected the public realm and the neighborhood character in the following ways:

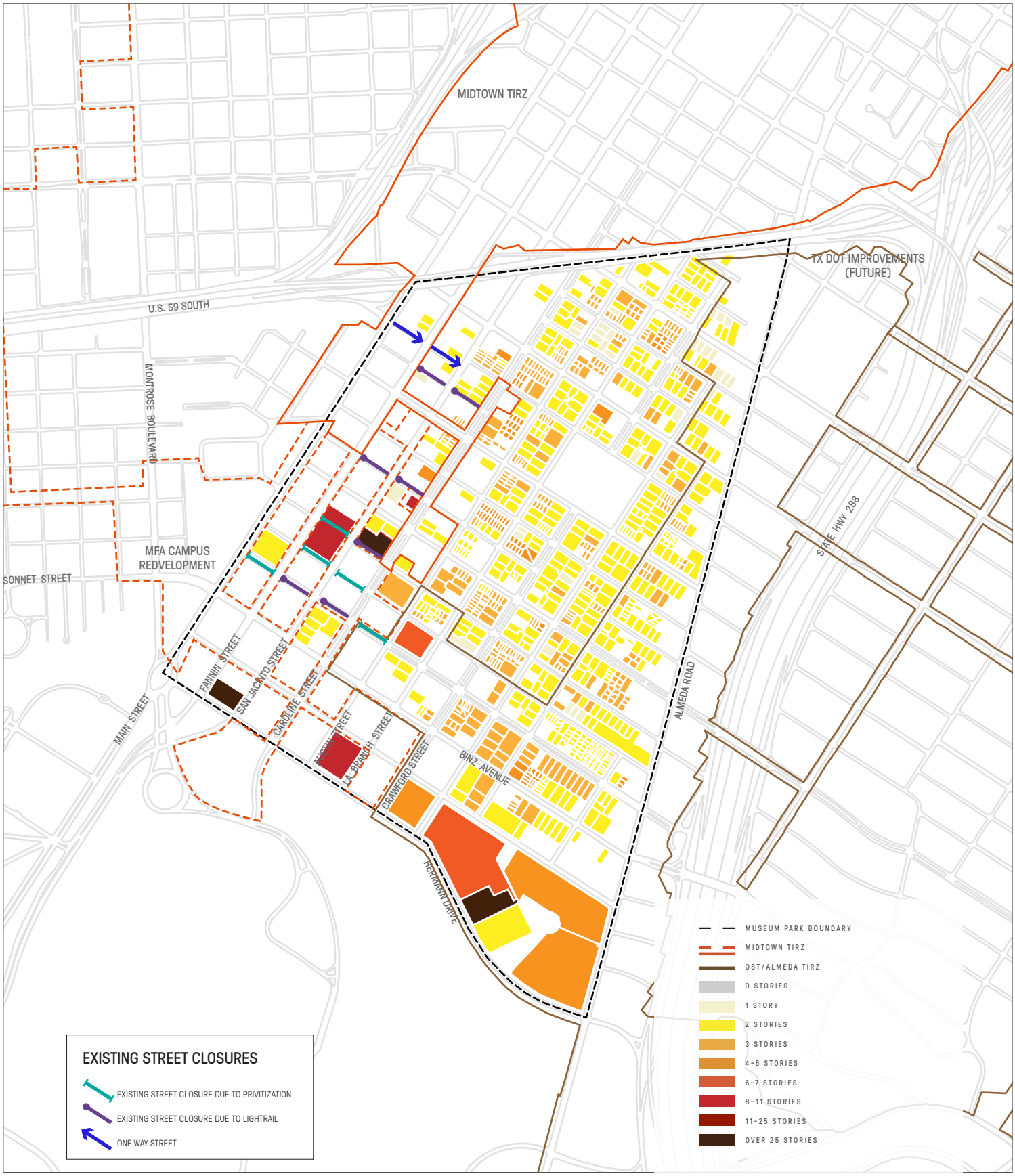
- The pedestrian realm in the right-of-way is discontinuous due to multiple curb cuts. The pedestrian experience is altered by varied sidewalk conditions and disrupted tree canopy / shade cover.
- Various street right-of-ways have been privatized over the years closing public access. This impacts ease of circulation through the neighborhood both by car and on foot.
- Traffic volumes and street parking are increased from the growing number of residents and visitors.
- Streetscape architectural language is not cohesive. Adjacent typologies do not always consider context of historical value and small scale.
- Development zones are not uniform. Often, there is little to no transition among scales.

HOUSING TYPOLOGY TRANSITIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD




EXISTING BUILDING DENSITY

GRADUATED BUILDING DENSITY



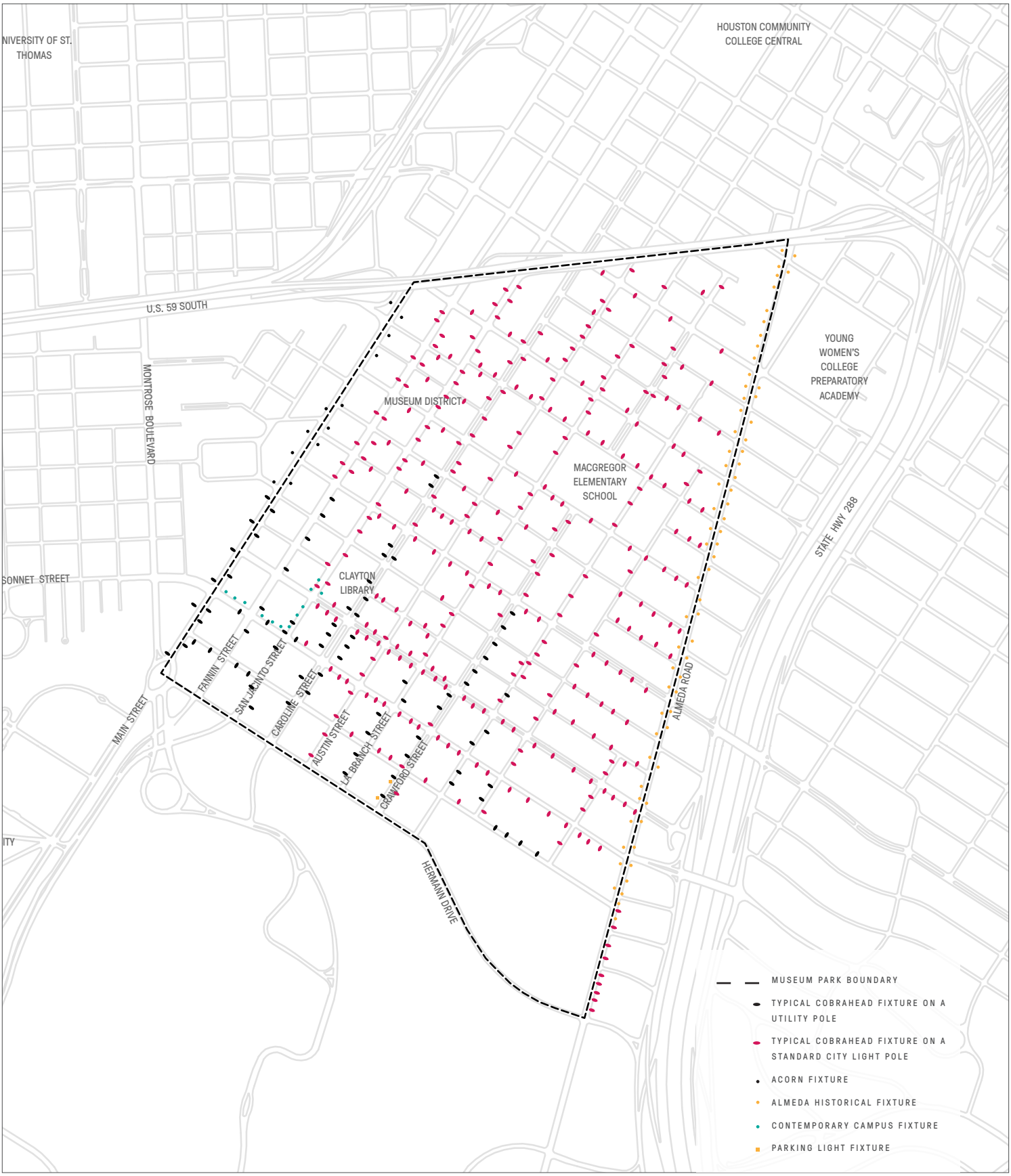

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DENSITY

## LIGHTING

Most of the neighborhood is lighted by cobrahead fixtures either mounted on a utility pole or a city light pole. Special corridors such as Main Street, Almeda Road, and Binz/San Jacinto are the exception with distinct lighting programs. Distinct campus lighting is also associated with a few cultural institutions.

The walkability of a neighborhood at night heavily relies on comfort and safety. Although smart landscaping and friendly neighbors active on the street contribute positively to the perception of safety, adequate lighting is critical.

LIGHTING INSTALLATION EXAMPLES IN MUSEUM PARK




EXISTING LIGHTING

# PLACEMAKING AND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER PLANNING STRATEGIES

From its namesake, Museum Park assumes its identity from its peripheral characteristics. Numerous museums are located within the boundaries of Museum Park and the esplanades and green canopy are what define the area as a park. Fragmented by result of its context, with multiple identities borrowed from its edges, Museum Park is at a moment of renegotiation.

The following observations allude to neighborhood needs from the placemaking standpoint:

- Rapid changes are uncontrollable, uncoordinated, and take away from a cohesive aesthetic neighborhood appearance.
- Neighborhood's own identity is weaker than Museum District's and other adjacent destinations, as a result it is perceived as a "drive-through" area and not a place in and of itself.
- There's a deficiency in community cohesion, partially due to new and renting communities of residents not engaging, partially due to a fragmented public realm.
- There's unmet potential for great physical assets: street grid structure, wide landscaped esplanades, proximity to transit, regional park and cultural institutions, historical character and landmark quality of architecture.

Cohesion, as identified by the design team and defined by the neighborhood, is an aspiration for Museum Park. In a neighborhood changing so rapidly, upcoming buildings and their future occupants are largely unknown. Landscape and public realm elements are tools that can reinforce neighborhood consistent aesthetic appearance and a stronger sense of place.

Museum Park contributes to a healthier Houston and can inspire change in adjacent neighborhoods by sharing current and implementing new urban strategies in the landscape. Recommendations for place making should emphasize health in the urban setting from various perspectives. Benchmarks will be set for areas of including resiliency, environmental comfort, and biodiversity, all while considering personal and community health.

## OBJECTIVES

Meeting the following objectives will improve the sense of place and highlight the character of the study area:

- Improve environmental comfort
- Improve pedestrian and vehicular navigation
- Clarify branding and image
- Add to the community cohesion

## STRATEGIES

Planting strategies, landscape and place making approaches below can be used to strengthen neighborhood image and sense of place:

### 1. Create an Esplanade Improvement Plan

Planted medians are a central point of pride for Museum Park. A number are associated with Houston's Adopt-An-Esplanade program where residents volunteer time and resources to their improvement. Developing a shared vision that details plant selection and sustainable maintenance regimes are essential to moving forward.

- Caroline's esplanades embody a strong sense of internal neighborhood values. The community welcomes visitors with visual experiences that connect them to their destination. Most of the medians along this street are adopted with native displays. To amplify this energy, non-natives and those outside the recommended plant list can be reduced over time.
- By default, Crawford's medians are the go-to neighborhood gathering spot. Block parties and festivals are held regularly in these common areas. With this in mind, design recommendations can accommodate to and strengthen this use.
- With some exception, North/ South Boulevards are driven by cultural institutions, have a more internal connection (pedestrian), East/ West are neighborhood connectors, are more externally focused (vehicular). Medians and right of way improvements should reflect this understanding and respond accordingly with planting and additional features.

### 2. Create Streetscape Improvement Plan

Visual consistency is a long term ambition that will require the cooperation of various entities. A collective plan will navigate design direction for the public right of way. and provide structure for possibilities.

- Although Museum Park is generously landscaped, the appearance is inconsistent across the neighborhood. New development may serve as a further hindrance as established street trees risk being removed and not

replaced. Conscientious neighbors would also like to see more native landscapes; adding beneficial and sustainable landscaping to the streetscapes. A refined planting approach for the future will strengthen the neighborhood's overall image and improve ecological value.

- Art installations in the right-of-way (including medians) can be approved on a case by case basis. Exploration past a planned destination can be encouraged with select pieces that can physically link museums to one another and the greater neighborhood. Strategies for selection, location, and management can enhance neighborhood walkability and sense of place.
- An illumination plan describing lighting strategies will appease concerns for safety and provide additional branding opportunities at night.

### 3. Make Wayfinding Strategic

- Reducing signage clutter through a strategic plan can conserve resources and provide useful guidance to neighborhood visitors.
- Regional connector corridors that surround and bisect the neighborhood allow activity to escape the boundaries too fast. An inwardly focused "pedestrian loop, walkabout" strategy for navigation and circulation counteracts this dynamic. Organizing wayfinding program in support of walkability will additionally promote health and a more robust pedestrian environment.

### 4. Make Branding Unique to Museum Park

- Signage is not the only answer to branding. The neighborhood would like to be perceived as a high quality livable urban environment and aspiration to that quality is a branding strategy in its own right.
- Museum Park differentiates itself from other neighborhoods with the idea of "museum" and "park". Branding can support that image through landscape gestures and high quality hardscape and architectural elements.

### 5. Promote a Strong Community in Support of a Strong Image of Place

- Establishing a strong advocacy network that will promote the neighborhood's goals means engaging resident, business, professional, and student communities in the neighborhood activities. Better outreach tools will be important in serving community's needs.

### 6. Promote Shared Space Development

Other than the medians, common public spaces within the community are scarce. Outdoor neighborhood spaces are recognized by residents as places that build community. More collective spaces to recreate, relax, and host festivities are necessary considerations especially at the block level. Demand for shared public places will continue to increase with the rise in resident numbers (especially from those without access to private yards).

- Undeveloped parcels provide potential opportunity for open space and require further analysis.
- Underutilized spaces created by I-69 and those created by highway modifications could add to available land for public use.

### 6. Clarify Character Zones

Recognizing that there are distinct character zones within the neighborhood will focus advocacy and begin to inform the distribution of placemaking improvements:

- There are four distinct zones that overlap within the boundaries of the study area, associated with Almeda corridor, transit corridors of Fannin and San Jacinto, a higher density zone between Binz and Hermann Drive, as well as the low-rise residential core.
- The distinct zones will help guide improvement strategies based on their existing unique qualities and strengths.
- The condition of built form diversity is innate and interesting, but it raises the question of potential jarring transitions from one type of development to the next, and the need for buffering at those transitions.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# APPENDIX D:
## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The design and planning team led by SWA implemented a robust public engagement process, inviting a broad range of stakeholders to share their neighborhood expertise and commitment via public input process. The public input process was guided by a Community Outreach Plan that was prepared at the beginning of the planning process.

## PROCESS

To engage as many voices as possible, Museum Park residents, civic leaders, museum representatives, faith leaders, educators, business owners, and elected officials (i.e., those that have a stake in the realization of the community's vision for Museum Park) were provided with numerous opportunities and avenues to engage in the planning process for the Museum Park Livable Centers Study. Moreover, the team leveraged relationships with sponsors, partners, and others, such as Houston Southeast, Midtown, museum representatives, the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council, the Museum Park Civic Club, elected and appointed officials, business leaders, religious organizations, and others.

The Project Team engaged residents and other stakeholders throughout the planning process, providing varied and numerous opportunities for engagement. The team convened meetings at venues and times convenient for Museum Park residents and other stakeholders, conducted individual and group interviews with community leaders, faith leaders, business leaders, and representatives of cultural and educational institutions.

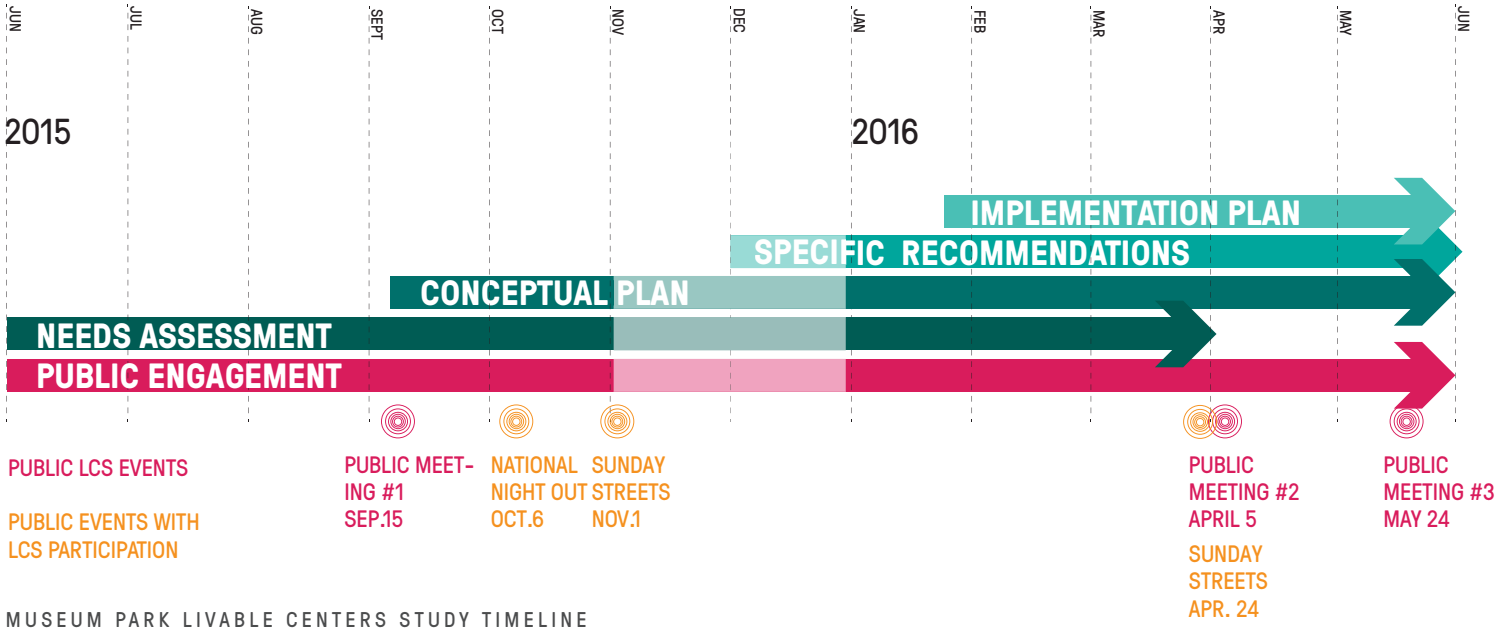
The team's approach reflects its commitment to a comprehensive and inclusive process that engaged a broad cross-section of community members.

## CONTACT WITH RESIDENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Following is a summary of contact with Museum Park residents and other stakeholders. Outreach was conducted via traditional and digital means. In addition to public meetings, Museum Park Facebook page was maintained, as was a link to the Museum Park Super Neighborhood website. In order to seek input in a variety of formats, the design team attended community events such as National Night Out and Sunday Streets held in the neighborhood over the course of the Study.

In recognition of the key role played by the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), the team participated in three sessions with the group. The first occurred at the beginning of the planning process and served as preliminary guidance to the team; the second occurred at the Needs Assessment stage and the third prior to the presentation of preliminary plan recommendations to the public.

SAC was comprized by the members of the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council representing local businesses, places of




MUSEUM PARK LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY TIMELINE

worship, Museum Park Neighborhood Association, Park Plaza Hospital, Museum District; represenatives from the Management District, H-GAC, COH Planning Department, Mayor's Office, Hermann Park Conservancy, and the Miller Outdoor Theater. The team attended monthly meetings with the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council to provide updates on the project progress and seek advice on various items of the plan.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

The largest assemblies of stakeholders that were engaged at any one event were participants in the public meetings. The public meetings were held at venues in and proximate to the study area and attendance was in keeping with standards set at other Livable Centers Study meetings. Public meeting venues were as follows:

Public Meeting
Venue
#1 Asia Society Texas Center
#2 Buffalo Soldiers Museum
#3 Asia Society Texas Center

Public meeting materials were organized and presented in a user-friendly format that focused on key issues affecting community members and other stakeholders. In every instance, there was a formal presentation that provided an overview of the project and its status, along with an opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide feedback subsequent to the presentation.

In addition, all of the public meetings were highly interactive, i.e., after the formal presentation, participants were provided with an opportunity to circulate to display boards that related to each of the Study's components, engage with members of the Study team, and share verbal and written comments. At the third and final meeting, participants were given an opportunity to rank the proposals presented by the team.

## MEETING DOCUMENTATION

The public input received at the Stakeholder Advisory Committee goal-setting and visioning session was shared with the Committee to ensure accuracy. To ensure that public input influenced the Study outcomes, all public input that was received was documented and circulated to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, where relevant, and to the design team members.

## MEETING NOTICES

Potential participants were notified via telephone, electronic mail, and notices sent through the United States Postal Service. The protocol was to send an initial notice and follow it up with a reminder notice. Announcements of the upcoming meetings appeared on road-side signs distributed throughout the neighborhood and were also posted on the project Facebook page.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Goal-Setting and Visioning Session with Museum Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee** | July 8, 2015 |
| **Plan Recommendations Review Session with Museum Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee** | February 9, 2016 |
| **Interviews with Key Stakeholders** | September 2015 through May 2016 |
| **Museum representatives roundtable** | September 9, 2016 |
| **Public Meeting #1** | September 15, 2016 |
| **Public Meeting #2** | April 5, 2016 |
| **Public Meeting #3** | May 24, 2016 |
| **Monthly meetings with Museum Park Stakeholders Advisory Committee/Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council** | Second Wednesday of every month through May 2016 |
| **National Night Out** | October 3, 2015 |
| **Sunday Streets** | November 1, 2015 |
| **Communication with Montrose Management District** | May 2016 |
| **Meeting with Midtown Houston** | April 2016 |
| **Interview with de facto business leader** | February 4, 2016 |
| **Interview with St. Paul's United Methodist Church representative** | October 5, 2015 |

MUSEUM PARK LIVABLE CENTERS STUDY MEETINGS

DIGITAL OUTREACH VIA WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE

# PUBLIC MEETING #1

## AGENDA ITEMS

The first public meeting's goal was to primarily listen and learn from the community. Following a brief background presentation on the project, multiple stations set up for interactive activities allowed the design team to cover multiple topics and receive valuable knowledge about the area:

**1. "What Does Museum Park Mean to You?" Interactive Storyboard Exercise**
Guests were encouraged to bring photos and objects with a message about the neighborhood and with a help of an artist assembled a visual "Storyboard" for Museum Park.

**2. "Insider's Guide to Museum Park" Questionnaire**
Guests provided lists of their favorite destinations in the area and identified them on a map. This questionnaire got used at subsequent public and stakeholder meetings, and allowed the design team to develop destination maps with personal community insights.

**3. Breakout Sessions**
Everyone had an opportunity to record their comments and place them on boards specific to transportation, housing, development, placemaking, sustainability, and branding themes. Also, an overall project goal-setting exercise was conducted at a separate station. After the meeting, the comments were recorded and circulated to the stakeholders. In addition to formatted activities, the team engaged multiple guests in informal conversations about the neighborhood issues. The following pages contain a summary of the breakout sessions from the meeting.

The materials from the meeting were posted on the Super Neighborhood's website for additional comments.

## Museum Park Livable Centers Study Public Meeting #1 Breakout Session Public Comments 9.23.15

***1. Community in Museum Park Means _____***

- Community parks can be small and dog park (many houses here without yards)
- Neighbor knowing neighbors
- Vibrant cultural institutions
- Block parties
- Neighbors that know each other and actually participate
- Neighbors outside/less fences gated townhomes
- Museum Park recognized by real estate companies and HAR. They only list Museum District.
- Integrating residents with institutional/businesses entities in the neighborhood for a vertically integrated neighborhood
- Neighbors look out for each other. Sense of community, not strangers
- Free meals --- bring in from all over. Walking, littering, sleeping, smoking, etc in park. No constables.
- Outdoor spaces and activities, festivals and block parties
- Let's make the boulevards beautiful and functional.
- Good/great schools. Huge amounts of walkability

***2. Museum Park can be a model district for_____***

- Mixed-income neighborhood
- Great access to downtown or Medical Center with the feel of a neighborhood
- Great idea. Except all this will be useless unless something is done about vagrants.
- Walkability and inability. (With some more walk improvements)
- Culture center of art.
- Houston urban activity with library, museum, beautiful, well designed landscape.
- An ecosystem that maintains itself.
- An intimate/cohesive neighborhood.
- Urban living
- A residential, vibrant intimate neighborhood in an urban setting surrounded by cultural, healthcare, downtown, business connectivity

***3. Business: What other kinds of businesses, would you like to have in the neighborhood and why?***

- Kid friendly restaurants
- Grocery/3 comments
- Retail/3 comments
- Startups (tech, medical, O&G)
- Weekend fruit/vegetable market
- More varied restaurants, cafes
- I want you Starbucks on Almeda
- Starbucks on Binz or Caroline
- Wine shop/wine bar
- Weekend fruit/vegetable market
- Could encourage professional business in stately homes to create low impact business neighbors
- Not just pricey restaurants
- Grocery store (improving/renovating Fiesta would help too)
- Grocery specialty market
- Development at south side of Binz and Almeda
- Royal Blue Grocery

***4. Landscape: What defines the neighborhood landscape character? How is Museum Park's access to recreation and a neighborhood activities? Does the landscape promote a healthy urban lifestyle?***

- Make the boulevards more functional and more attractive, native plants, drought resistant planting
- Choppy sidewalk on Calumet. Some places, no sidewalks. Strollers go down "street".
- Trash is a big problem.
- Caroline needs a wide boulevard/sidewalks
- Children's Museum. Example planting design
- More street trees (too many coming down with new townhome developments)
- Need to clear stop signs and streetlights from trees.
- Develop Almeda for retail and as a destination area. Ex: Washington Ave, Heights
- Master plan landscaping with natural habitat plants
- Neighborhood cleanup volunteers (Like adopt a street)
- Afraid to walk 6 blocks at night/fear of getting mugged
- I enjoy the formal planting in the boulevards.
- Lots of trees and green, but not cohesive and often not well-kept

- Edible community gardens
- Need a cohesive design plan (not identical throughout)
- No more trees that grow to 50 feet under 12' power lines
- Esplanade curve/Need to fix Crawford, Wheeler and Rosewood
- Community garden spot

***5. Wayfinding: How is Museum Park wayfinding? Are directional signs landmarks helpful?***

- Barnaby and Dak &Bop restaurants ---free parking needs better signage
- People are confused. Re: parking, transit
- Work with HMDA to refine and improve wayfinding signage
- The new signage about the museums is helpful for pedestrians, but we need better directional signage for drivers and parking info.
- Human tour art guys sign on sidewalk and Austin and Wichita, NW side
- New street sign to brand neighborhood like Upper Kirby
- Better bike lane signs
- Monument signs would give an anchor to our neighborhood.
- New green signs are great. They are wayfinding for Museum District.
- Need more directional signage.
- Mark where the light rail goes/is

***6. Branding: What do you think Museum Park's brand? How is it visible? Could the neighborhood identity be improved? What makes it unique?***

- Branding needs help!
- Nobody knows us as Museum Park
- Street art @ street corners/main intersections
- Replace the old tile street names that were on the curbs. (Could have fundraiser)
- Branding is absolutely necessary to give/promote a sense of arrival, places and cohesion
- Signature art/plants to tie together diverse housing appearances
- Would be nice to identify historical roots/landmarks i.e., 3rd Ward, etc. More public art too
- Museum District/park should showcase history creativity
- Work with HMDA to improve awareness.
- Distinctive street signs
- Expand "culture" as an identity – We have the museums (get more food, music, etc).
- Definitely lacks a "brand"
- Brand the Wheeler Station as Wheeler/Museum Park.
- Connect with Hermann Park
- Play up Hermann Park
- Create it with a sense of place!

***7. Active Transportation Walking & Biking – Where would you like to walk? What would make it easier?***

- People almost get hit walking on Binz
- Lighting can be improved
- (Want) bike trail from US 59 to Hermann Park
- Sidewalks. Enough said
- Need defined crosswalks, especially near museums, parks
- Trees limiting visibility
- More trees and shade, make it better to walk outside
- Sidewalks terrible for strollers and elderly
- Sidewalks! Horrible due to tree roots. No consistent size.
- Continue development of sidewalks and bike trails (Currently discontinuous). With light rail nearby, need pleasant shaded access to stations to encourage use.
- Rebuild sidewalks. Not safe to walk at night.
- Wider sidewalks needed and bike lanes (2 comments)
- Small grocer in the middle of neighborhood, within ¼ - ½ mile walk
- Appearance and street lighting need improved
- Biking is difficult – no space for bikes on road
- Bike routes to bike museum
- Safety issues prevent walking at night
- Bike/greenway to connect to downtown/Buffalo Bayou along US-59
- Nice lighting
- Bike lane striping on Caroline needed
- Need defined bike paths and B-cyle
- Being able to walk to small/local grocer (3 comments)
- Need some clearly marked crosswalks – combo of pedestrians, 4 way stops, 2 way stops, drivers unfamiliar with area create dangerous situation for walkers (2 comments)
- Not enough sidewalks to allow safe walking on many streets

- How about hike/bike trails down the center of esplanades
- Build bicycle trail connect north to south: 1) secure traffic; 2) police can focus on trail to watch crime for security; 3) build little park around trail
- More pet waste bag stations and trash cans for disposal
- Need more pedestrians to feel safe at “x’s” and “eyes on streets”
- Stop signs on Hermann at Crawford
- Need to take advantage of COH’s program to get sidewalks built
- Better lighting, park lights are even off early
- Walking and every corner hit on by vagrants
- Need to get parked cars off bike lanes.
- When roots grow under sidewalks, replacing concrete with compressed dirt/gravel
- Need “Share the Road” bike signs

# PUBLIC MEETING #2

## AGENDA ITEMS

The second public meeting's objective was to introduce ideas about potential project recommendations and gather initial community feedback. The preliminary conceptual plan was developed via proposals for neighborhood transportation system overlayed with economic development and placemaking strategies.

### 1. "Your Walking Loop" Interactive Exercise

Walkability had emerged as the primary design goal for the area. To help prioritize improvements to the pedestrian realm, the preferred walking routes in the neighborhood were identified via "Your Walking Loop" interactive exercise. Guests created drawings of their favorite or most frequently taken routes that tied together the areas' destinations in the context of the residents' lifestyle routines.

### 2. Open House Discussions

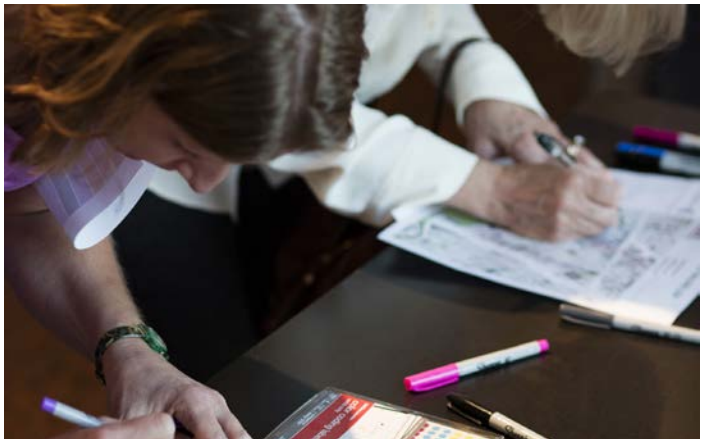
The initial plan ideas were displayed gallery-style on multiple boards allowing the guests to get an overview of how various design systems might fit together in the context of conceptual plan for Museum Park. Informal discussions with the members of the design team provided additional explanation and context. Comments were recorded by the team's staff during the meeting and incorporated in the consecutive phases of work.

After the meeting, materials were posted on the Super Neighborhood website and circulated for additional comment among the community and the area stakeholders.

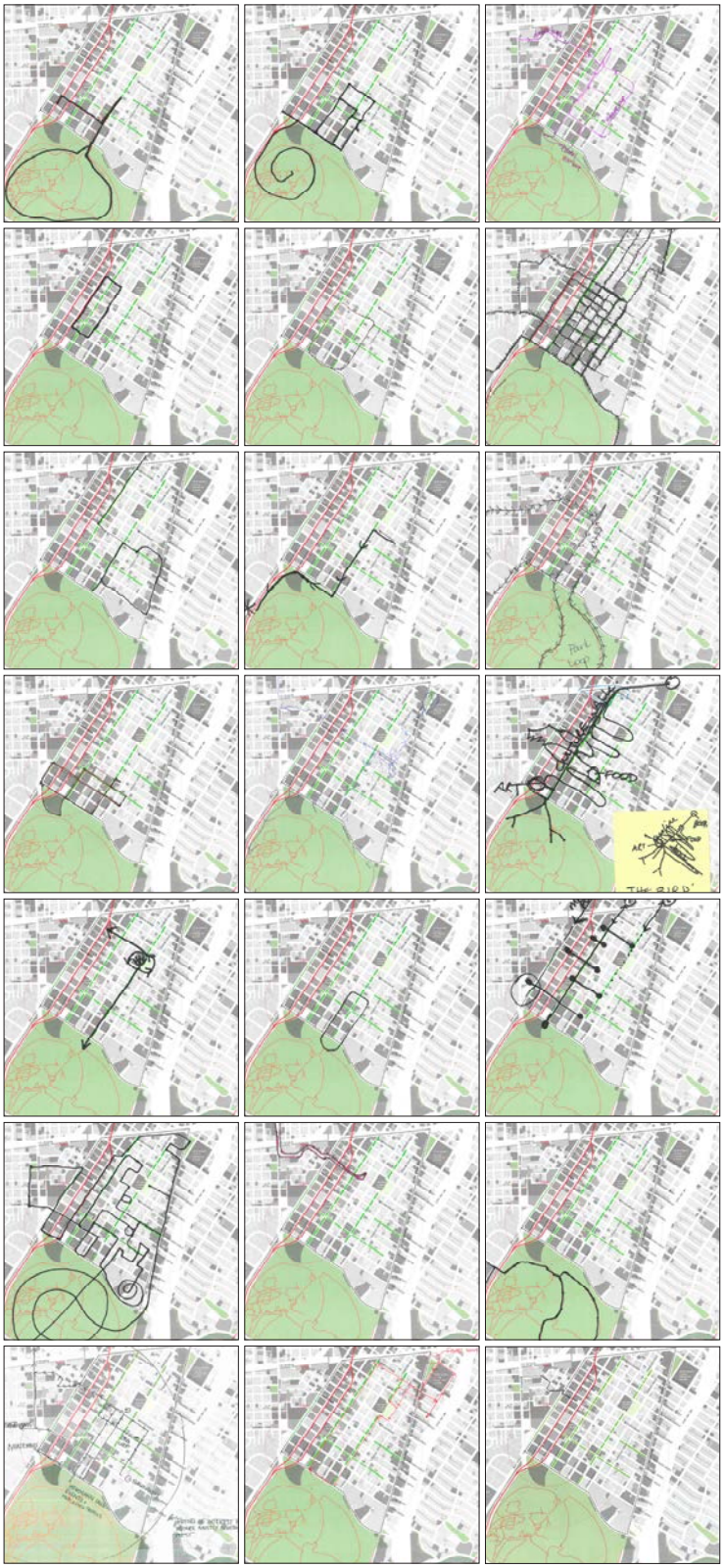
TOP; BERMUDA MOW STRIPS KEEPS NATIVE LANDSCAPING CONTAINED TO ESPLANADE
BOTTOM: PERENNIAL PLANTINGS ARE GROUPED FOR IMPACT

## YOUR WALKING LOOP

Walking patterns in the neighborhood are created in the residents' individual habits and preferences. Routes differed thematically, as some connected to specific destinations at a certain time of day, some were used for enjoyment and recreation, some for convenient access. Most of the routes collected in the process of public engagement, established links to Hermann Park. The residents' insider knowledge of the neighborhood served as a foundation for formalizing improvements for a trail network and its specific elements. The primary and secondary routing of the Culture Trail recommendation, for example, re-traced the patterns that were called out in the drawings and described by the residents as logical and desirable.



A COMPOSITE OF INDIVIDUAL WALKING LOOPS



RESIDENTS' INDIVIDUAL WALKING LOOPS THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

# PUBLIC MEETING #3

## AGENDA ITEMS

The final public meeting aimed to collect feedback on the components of the Conceptual Plan and establish a priority projects list based on that feedback.

**1. "Unveiling the Plan" Presentation**
During an overview presentation at the beginning of the meeting the team reiterated how the goals for the Study developed with the help of the stakeholders and community feedback shaped the recommendations of the Conceptual Plan. Key plan recommendations were highlighted in detail during the presentation.

**2. "Gallery" Open House**
The plan recommendations were displayed in a gallery-style setup on individual boards. Guests were asked to study the content of the boards and vote on their favorite proposals of the plan. The votes were tallied after the fact and served as the basis for project prioritization within the Implementation Plan part of the Study.

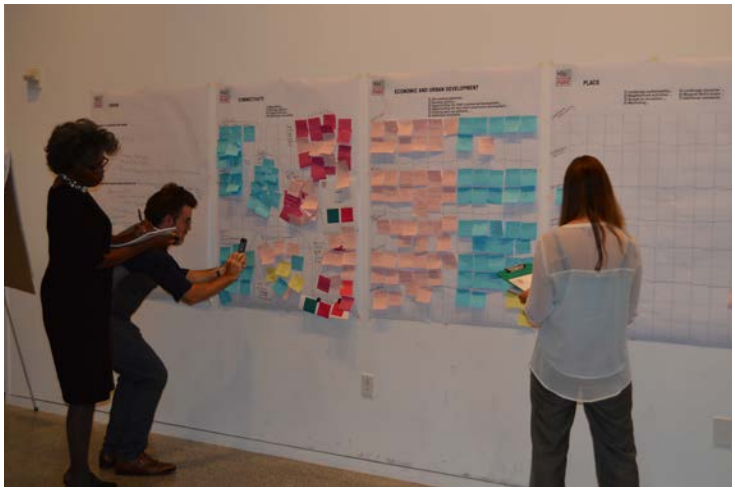
**3. "Timeline Prioritization" Workshop**
The "Timeline Prioritization" workshop materials provided the community members with insights on the complex planning context in the area and on how it affected the timeline of potential project implementation. Implementation priorities for Museum Park were considered in that context and addressed during an interactive exercise where the potential near-term projects were moved to the front of the timeline, and the potential long-term projects to the back.

The materials from the meeting were posted on the Super Neighborhood's website for additional comments.

# STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings provided a guiding direction to the design team throughout the planning process. The SAC group was comprised of the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council representing local businesses, places of worship, Museum Park Neighborhood Association, Park Plaza Hospital, and the Museum District. Representatives from Houston Southeast (Greater Southeast Management District), H-GAC, COH Planning Department, Mayor's Office, Hermann Park Conservancy, and the Miller Outdoor Theater also served on the committee.

SAC meetings set the tone to the public engagement process as a whole and helped focus the design team's effort on particular areas of inquiry important for Museum Park. Throughout several workshops with the SAC, overarching project themes were developed, vetted, and refined. The following notes from the first SAC meeting summarize stakeholder input that shaped the first steps of the Study.



# Museum Park Livable Centers Study Stakeholder Advisory Committee Workshop #1 Summary Notes

## 07.08.2016

Farish Media Room, Museum of Fine Arts - Houston

In attendance:

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members and Others

Project Team

## 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for the Museum Park Livable Centers Study Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) to share its vision and goals for Museum Park and to identify community assets, issues and share ideas for realizing the community's vision and goals.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS

Following self-introductions, Kathleen O'Reilly, president of the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council and SAC member, provided an overview of the Museum Park community and stated that the Livable Centers process is an opportunity to talk about high level goals and ideas.

Meredith Dang, representing the Houston-Galveston Area Council, followed. She provided background about the Livable Centers studies that have been undertaken by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, indicating that the Museum Park Livable Centers Study is the 22nd such study.

Natalia Beard, representing the SWA-led Project Team, presented a slide show that included a description of similar projects completed by SWA Group and an overview of the Museum Park Livable Centers Livable Centers Study planning process.

## 3.0 VISIONING AND GOAL-SETTING EXERCISE

Project Team member Roberta F. Burroughs led a visioning and goal-setting exercise. The outcome of the visioning exercise, to summarize and paraphrase, is that Museum Park aspires to become a prototypical healthy community and a center for innovation.

During the exercise, workshop participants expressed a heightened awareness of the fact that Museum Park is both a place to live and a premier cultural destination. Reflective of this awareness, enhancements to connectivity emerged as a primary goal. Workshop participants indicated that improved connectivity can strengthen community cohesion, support walkability, and enhance the sense of place.

## 4.0 INTERACTIVE EXERCISE

Workshop participants were asked to share written input related to circulation and connectivity; urban development, economic development, and housing; and placemaking, branding, wayfinding, landscaping, and sustainability. Afterwards, team members Roberta Burroughs, Geoffrey Carlton, and Natalia Beard presented verbal summaries of this input.

Identified assets, challenges, gaps, and deficiencies, and proposed solutions to identified challenges are summarized in the sections that follow.

### 4.1 Circulation and Connectivity

Circulation and connectivity are issues that were the subject of a substantial amount of input. This input falls under the categories of walkability, parking, and transit.

#### 4.1.1 Walkability

Walkability was identified as having many advantages, including its contribution to connectivity and safety.

There was consensus that there are lots of world class destinations in the neighborhood. A historic grid and beautiful street design, along with beautiful trees that create shade were cited as contributors to walkability.

Additional comments regarding walkability follow.

- The community generally feels safe as a place to walk.
- Walkability contributes to a sense of community, to neighborliness, and to a healthy lifestyle
- Walkability encourages exploration.
- The METRORail Red Line is within walking distance, which is a benefit.

Impediments to walkability that were identified are:

- Absence of continuous shade
- Dearth of shade and lighting
- Poor condition of sidewalks
- Narrowness of sidewalks
- Absence of ADA-accessible curbs
- Unsafe pedestrian crossings
- Lack of pedestrian amenities
- Narrow streets that result in pedestrian-bicyclist-automobile conflicts

Desired improvements include paths leading to Hermann Park and Rice University, speed limit postings that alert drivers to drive slowly, stop signs, wayfinding mechanisms, sidewalk improvements, ADA-accessible curbs, pedestrian level lighting, sidewalks as natural

trails, viable pedestrian connections to the museums, and pedestrian crosswalks throughout the Museum Park community.

#### 4.1.2 Parking

Workshop participants expressed the general view that there are lots of parking options, with dedicated parking at some destinations and on-street parking options elsewhere. As well, parking is viewed as being secure and well monitored and as encouraging visitation. However, cited a number of problems related to parking were cited, including:

- Insufficient amount and too diffuse
- Inadequate information for visitors
- Poor match between destination and parking
- Lack of coordination and centralization
- Unattractiveness
- Negative impact on homeowners and businesses caused by the current parking situation
- Need for buses to have a designated lot
- Restrictive time limits imposed by meters
- Cost
- Absence of signage
- Use of visitor and residential parking spaces by area employees
- Absence of means of alerting visitors to the fact that can park their car at the zoo, pick up a bike, and bike to the Asia Society

#### 4.1.3 Transit

Workshop participants acknowledged the variety of transit options available to the Museum Park Community. With respect to the METRORail RedLine, identified benefits include:

- Enables visitors to gain easy access to cultural institutions
- Reduces the number of cars on the road, which benefits everyone
- Connects the neighborhood to outside destinations, including sports venues

In addition to the METRORail RedLine, participants recognized the existence of nearby bus lines thatenhance mobility and connectivity. BikeShare options for bicyclists were also mentioned.

Expressed transit challenges include:

- Inability to gain access to some parts of town on METRORail
- Lack of an east-west axis connection
- Absence of a rapid transit corridor
- Problems with bus transit routing and distance to stops
- Issues related to wait times and routes
- The failure of transit to contribute to neighborhood cohesion
- Failure of METRORail to serve as an effective visitor shuttle
- Lack of bicycle infrastructure
- Unavailability of bicycle racks at Museum of Fine Arts-Houston
- Impediments to east-west and north-south mobility

A circulator bus was proposed as an additional transit option.

### 4.2 Land Use and Urban Development, Economic Development, and Housing

A summary of input related to land use and urban development, economic development, and housing follows.

#### 4.2.1 Land Use and Urban Development

There was general agreement that land uses should encourage opportunities to live, work, and play in the Museum Park community. Further, there was agreement that the growing densification and gentrification of the area increases the base for commerce.

In addition, the following “positives” were identified:

- Opportunities exist for growth.
- There is a diversity of land uses and preserved greenspaces.
- There is good delineation between residential and non-residential uses.
- There is property along Binz Street and Almeda Road that is available for commercial development
- There are development opportunities on Main Street.
- There are green space opportunities created by METRO street closures and the community’ substantial amount of rights-of-way.

Identified land use challenges include perceived gaps in city codes and ordinances that regulate development, the need to balance new and existing development, and the impact of density on flooding and traffic.

In the context of urban development, it was stated that connectivity between Midtown and Museum Park and Third Ward and Museum Park can be improved.

Lastly, the Project Team was directed to investigate special purpose districts, form-based codes, nature corridors, and urban transit corridors.

#### 4.2.2 Economic Development

The community is perceived as benefiting from employment diversity, inasmuch as it is located between Downtown Houston and the Texas Medical Center and is accessible via US-59, SH 288, and METRORail.

Inviting and encouraging new commercial development appears to be

a consensus goal. In line with this, it was noted that although Binz Street is slowly becoming a restaurant corridor, there are insufficient restaurants and deficiencies with respect to neighborhood retail services such as grocers, drug stores, and dry cleaning establishments.

Highland Village and Rice Village were cited as examples of the type of shopping area that could be developed. Moreover, Almeda Road is perceived as not having achieved its potential as a retail corridor.

Small businesses that are in scale with the community, such as professional services like architectural offices and health care-related services are other desired forms of commercial development. Mentioned also were the desire to attract jobs that pay above minimum wage.

#### 4.2.3 Housing

Identified housing attributes include diversity, relative affordability, and good architectural design in proximity to Downtown Houston and the Texas Medical Center.

With respect to housing affordability, the contrary view was expressed that rising prices have led to a lack of affordability. In addition, challenges that were listed include:

- Poor construction
- The gating of new housing developments
- The replacement of older housing with new construction
- Densification
- An aging housing stock
- The strain imposed on infrastructure by new residential construction

A desire to maintain the historic character of the community by preserving older homes was a consistent theme. These homes are viewed as a beneficial aspect of the Museum Park community's identity.

### 4.3 Placemaking, Branding, Wayfinding, Landscaping, Sustainability

The final discussion of the session pertained to placemaking, branding, wayfinding, landscaping, and sustainability.

#### 4.3.1 Placemaking

A number of issues related to placemaking (and also to place) were discussed. According to participants, there is no common public space within the boundaries of the community. When asked where events take place, the responses were:

- Lucille's Restaurant
- Esplanades
- Miller Outdoor Theater
- Crawford Esplanade (for National Night Out)

It was asserted that the Museum Park Super Neighborhood is more compact (than others), with a strong identify and a lot of integrity, although a lack of definition of hard edges was identified as a challenge.

Potential is seen in the possibility that the proposed U.S. Highway 59 suppression initiative will make the community a gateway. Potential is also seen in the existence of well-defined boulevards, esplanaded streets, and the space around dead ends created by the construction of the METRO RedLine.

Supplementing these possibilities are the multiple in-community and proximate venues that workshop participants view as assets. These include the museums alluded to in the community's name and Hermann Park, which is viewed as a resource that keeps the community healthy. However, the issue of connectivity arose in this context, as well — connections among venues are perceived as lacking. The issue of safety also arose — the danger of crossing Binz Street and Hermann Drive to gain access to some of these venues was alluded to.

In addition to the nearby Hermann Park, there is a large open space at the site of the MacGregor Elementary School, but no SPARK park program that would allow for the community's use of the park in the school's off-hours. It was stated that access to this recreational amenity is restricted, given that the school is fenced and most of the children who reside in the community do not attend the school. The idea of repurposing the school's open space was propounded, as was the idea of an arts park.

Enumerated gaps in recreational facilities include the absence of a swimming pool, playing fields and sports gathering areas for children, tennis courts, and basketball courts.

#### 4.3.2 Branding

There was extensive discussion on the topic of branding. The view was expressed that the community is a "great brand" in need of better marketing, more recognition, and more exposure. Better connectivity and sustainability were recommended as means of achieving these objectives. With respect to the former, a cultural trail to connect the north side of the community to Downtown Houston was proposed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the question arose as to what branding would achieve.

Reference was made to the fact that there are several ongoing branding efforts; efforts undertaken by the Greater Southeast Management District, Museum Park, and the Museum District were presented as evidence of this.

Other points that were articulated relative to branding are:

- Not everyone in the Museum District is in Museum Park; an effort needs to be made to distinguish "Museum Park" from "Museum District"

- Some residents are resisting the name "Museum Park."
- People use the term "Museum District" all the way over to Kirby Drive.

#### 4.3.3 Landscaping

Landscaping assets identified by workshop participants include a good tree mix and boulevards that serve as "green fingers." It was asserted that "smart choices need to be made," since Houston suffers from climate extremes. Smart choices were identified as:

- Wastewater management to recharge groundwater
- Repurposing of wide roads as bike paths
- Use of landscaping to deter heat
- Utilize of native-adapted plantings for shade
- Use of esplanades to showcase a sustainable landscape
- Realization of the potential for "end cap" gardens

Perceived challenges are:

- Discontinuous and uncoordinated planting, impeding the creation of an ecosystem
- Non-native trees and plants that are not consistent with landscaping throughout the area
- Barren esplanades
- Under-utilized public rights-of-way and the lack of public spaces that is tied to this
- Lack of public education regarding landscaping
- Absence of outreach with other organizations

#### 4.3.4 Wayfinding

Museum District signage and Hermann Park signage are viewed as contributive. However, workshop participants asserted that deficiencies manifest as inadequate wayfinding signage for attractions, inadequate bike route signage, and inadequate nighttime illumination for signs.

#### 4.3.5 Sustainability

With respect to sustainability, the view was expressed that both residential and commercial development should move toward sustainability. Sustainability was also addressed within the context of landscaping, as previously noted.

### 4.4 Community Engagement And Cohesion

According to workshop participants, a community benefit is the presence of active, knowledgeable stakeholders. In addition, the Museum Park Super Neighborhood Council website is viewed as a community benefit, along with National Night Out, Museum Experience Day, and Sunday Streets. Stated challenges include:

- Super Neighborhood Council membership does not reflect a majority of the community.
- The substantial number of renters causes the community to feel transient or temporary.
- The absence of a community gathering place was cited as a potential deterrent to community cohesion.

Lastly, the issues of (1) what can be done to encourage social mobility and (2) what can be done to encourage an integrated community in the face of rapid change were raised.

## 5.0 NEXT STEPS

On behalf of the Project Team, Natalia Beard outlined "next steps." She indicated that a project kick-off meeting with the general public is being scheduled and that there will be monthly presentations to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, at regularly scheduled Super Neighborhood Council meetings.

## 6.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

YOUR MUSEUM PARK

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD
A LIVABLE CENTER

# APPENDIX E:
## PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

# PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The following strategies are recommendations by the Houston Southeast Management District as key points for the Parking Management Strategies and should be viewed together with this section in the main body of the report.

## 3.3 EVALUATE PAID PARKING FEE STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- Free parking should be made available to eliminate barriers to access and enjoyment of the museum facilities, especially by low income visitors.
- Charging a higher rate for long term, non-resident parking and non-museum visitors, for example parking over four to eight hours, would discourage long term parking. The intent is to promote free parking and not to charge individuals who are in the area to visit the museums at all the times the museums are open to the public.

MUSEUM PARK SUPER NEIGHBORHOOD

HOUSTON SOUTHEAST
The Legacy District

Texas Department of Transportation

HGAC Houston-Galveston Area Council

**For additional project information please visit the Museum Park Super Neighborhood website:**

http://museumparksn.org/livable-centers

swa

© SWA 2016