



PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

2012-03 West Road

APPLICANT: EastGroup Properties

KEY MAP: 410 E, F

JURISDICTION: Houston ETJ, Harris County

LAMBERT: 4963, 5063

DISTRICT/PRECINCT: Pcnt. 4

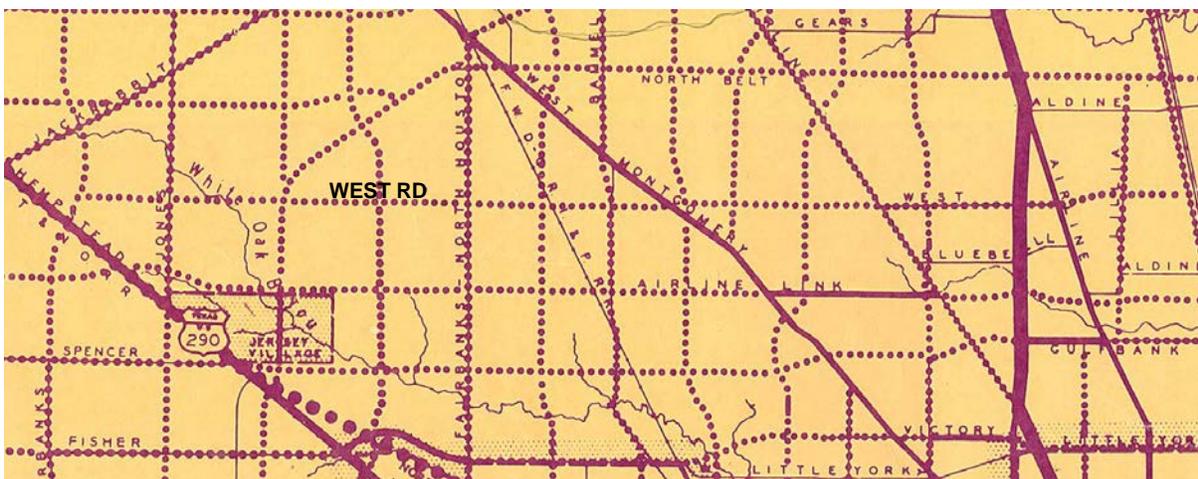
PROPOSAL:

- 1) Realign proposed West Road between Gessner Drive and Windfern Road to align with the existing 100' right-of-way. (*EastGroup Properties*)
- 2) Realign proposed West Road between Windfern Road and Fairbanks North Houston to align with existing 100' ROW for Breen Drive/West Mount Houston. (*Planning & Development Department*)

HISTORY & APPLICANTS JUSTIFICATION:

West Road was first included on the Houston's Major Thoroughfare and Freeway Plan (MTFP) in 1957 as a designated east-west thoroughfare. It extended due east of Addicks-Fairbanks (current North Eldridge Parkway), north of US 290, to West Lake Houston Parkway. The map also identified proposed West Beltway 8, Gessner Drive, Fairbanks N. Houston Road and Airline/Link (W. Mount Houston). The 1976 MTFP map identifies the dedication of West Road east of Fairbanks N. Houston through the Westbank Subdivision. It also identifies the dedication of ROW for West Mount Houston (Plat Recorded 1974, Vol. 221 Pg. 60 HCMR; Corrected 1984, Vol. 326 Pg. 112 HCMR) between Windfern Road and Fairbanks N. Houston Road as sufficient width. The map also identifies the dedication of West Mount Houston north of Rodney Ray Boulevard. METRO acquired a 100' wide right-of-way for West Road from Beltway 8 to Windfern Road in 1979 which bisects the subject tract.

In 1980 West Road was realigned and extended west of US 290. The West Mount Houston alignment terminated at Gessner Drive. From 1983 onwards West Mount Houston alignment is identified along the alignment of Rodney Ray Boulevard. In 1996 West Mount Houston is realigned north of Rodney Ray Boulevard, west of Fairbanks N. Houston to align with the West Road alignment.



1957 MTFP



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1976 MTFP



1996 MTFP



1999 MTFP



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In 1999, Poarch-Swinbank, Ltd. requested the deletion of West Road from Fairbanks N. Houston and its intersection with West Mount Houston due to the permitted and active Type IV landfill. The Planning Commission and City Council approved the deletion of West Road and realigned the West Mount Houston corridor to correspond with Breen Road between Fairbanks N. Houston Road and North Houston Rosslyn Road. This realignment of West Road, west of Fairbanks N. Houston, was identified as to-be acquired on the MTFP Map. The justification for approval of the S-curve realignment was:

The expanded landfill site limits potential roadway alignments to make connection between West and W Mt. Houston Roads. A reverse curve to link these two corridors is not possible. Due to the shallow lot depth between Fairbanks-N. Houston and the landfill, the largest curve radius possible will create an intersection spacing of 800 feet from Fairbanks-N. Houston to West Road along W Mt. Houston. This is below standard for efficient traffic operations.

Right-of-way has been dedicated for W Mt. Houston between Fairbanks-N. Houston and Windfern. Since no roadway exists, modification of the alignment can be coordinated with Harris County to exchange for land.

The existing W Mt. Houston Road alignment west of N. Houston Rosslyn passes through an industrial site. Harris County has experienced problems with right-of-way acquisition through this property. The Breen alignment makes connection between N. Houston-Rosslyn and Fairbanks-N. Houston and crosses the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. Harris County supports realignment of the W Mt. Houston corridor to Breen Road.

Since 1999 an exhibit of the proposed realignment of West Road between Gessner and Fairbanks N. Houston was prepared with a minimum 1100-foot reverse curve. In 2008 Planning Commission approved a subdivision plat for Windfern Vista Business Park Section 1 with the proposed dedication of right-of-way for West Road along that followed this proposed alignment which is in accordance with today's 2011 MTFP. There have been no amendments to thoroughfares in the study area since 1999.

EastGroup Properties, representing the 26 acre tract between Gessner Drive and Windfern Road, are requesting to realign West Road since the current MTFP alignment "adversely affects the ability to develop, market and value the land." Currently, the vacant 26 acre tract is an underutilized, vacant land with limited marketability for several reasons. Most notably, the site is encumbered with proposed West Road alignment and the existing 100' right-of-way. Also, according to the applicant, the abutting neighbors to the north (a row of run down, if not abandoned, trailer homes) and to the east (a Type IV landfill) create health and life safety concerns that are generally avoided by most developers. However, subject to approving this proposal, EastGroup will commence designing, permitting and developing the property which will drastically improve the land use and appraised property values while generating new, growing tax revenues.

EastGroup will also, at its sole costs, immediately commence designing, permitting and constructing of a two-lane roadway (one lane in each direction) within the ROW that extends and connects West Road from Gessner Drive to Windfern Road. All costs relating to this two-lane roadway will be at EastGroup's expense. Thus, saving the taxpayers and the City



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significant infrastructure costs, while enhancing mobility between Gessner Drive and Windfern Road via a new eastwardly extension of West Road, a desired objective of the MTFP.

The current MTFP alignment of West Road between Gessner Drive and Windfern Road has the following issues:

- (i) it creates substandard S - curve radii that are less than the required 2,000' radii for major thoroughfares,
- (ii) it creates less than desirable geometry for a curved intersection at Windfern Road instead of a perpendicular "T" intersection, and
- (iii) the proposed roadway would end at the applicants' property line which would hinder mobility because the road would not make the connection to Windfern Road without the financial assistance of the City or County to acquire more right-of-way and construct the roadway between applicant's property line and Windfern Road.

These limitations are removed with the proposed realignment. The City/County already owns the existing West Road right-of-way between Gessner Drive and Windfern Road, and the applicant owns the land surrounding this right-of-way. "Therefore, the applicant's proposal to revert the West Road extension back to the existing right-of-way does not affect other property owners and does not require further action by the City or County other than approval of this application."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Deny the requested realignment of West Road between Gessner Drive & Windfern Road.

STAFF JUSTIFICATION

The current alignment of West Road is a result of two major thoroughfare amendments from 1996 and 1999 that realigned West Mount Houston along West Road, and deleted West Road between revised West Mount Houston alignment and Fairbanks N. Houston respectively. The 1999 alignment also realigned the W. Mount Houston Road along Breen Road between Fairbanks N. Houston and N. Houston Rosslyn.

West Road is an essential east-west major thoroughfare to the Houston region. West of Gessner Road, West Road is currently improved to Greenhouse Road approximately 10.5 miles. The road is planned to extend west into Waller County and is included in the Waller County's 2012 Thoroughfare Development Plan. The proposed extension of West Road along Breen Road between Gessner Road and North Houston Rosslyn is approximately 3 miles. Breen Road extends east of Rosslyn N. Houston to SH 249 however this segment is not included on the MTFP.

Fallbrook Drive and West Gulf Bank are also designated as proposed east-west major thoroughfares that are spaced approximately 1.7 mile north and south of West Road respectively at Gessner Road. Thus the spacing of these existing east-west thoroughfares exceeds the typical one-mile thoroughfare spacing. There are few east-west streets that function as collector streets in the general area; however these segments are typically short like



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Rodney Ray Boulevard or Philippines Street. Thus it is critical to maintain through east-west movement in the general area. Thus mobility in the general area is limited to thoroughfares.

East of Beltway 8, north-south mobility will primarily be provided by Gessner, Fairbanks N. Houston, Hollister and N. Houston Rosslyn. These thoroughfares are spaced approximately a mile apart from each other. Windfern is a two-lane roadway (60' ROW) and functions like a collector street since it extends north of US 290 to the north side of Beltway 8.

Exhibit A (2035 TDM - Base) depicts the Travel Demand Model outcome in the year 2035, for the study area based on the current MTFP alignment. The model assumes that Gessner - north of West Road; West Road - east of Gessner; Gulf Bank - east of Gessner; Breen Road and also Windfern Road are improved to thoroughfare standards. The projections indicated that if West Road were extended to Breen Road it would carry as significant volume of traffic.

Exhibit B (2035 TDM - Request) depicts the Travel Demand Model outcome in the year 2035, for the study area based on the applicant's request with the same TDM model. The maps also identifies the change in traffic along individual segments when compared with Exhibit A. The outcome of the proposed realignment of West Road is that it becomes less attractive for vehicular traffic since the ADT for a portion of the roadway between Gessner Road and Windfern Road drops by 7,500 to fewer than 23,000. These trips jump to other streets like Gessner Road, Windfern Road, Philippine Street, Fallbrook Drive and northern part of Fairbanks N. Houston Road. The increase in traffic south of West Road may have a negative impact on the residential neighborhoods that take primary access for Gessner Road, Windfern Road and Philippine Street. Windfern Road will be most significantly impacted since it is a 60' right-of-way local street.

The applicants request results in creating two T-Intersection for West Road and Breen Road extension along Windfern. T-intersections are appropriate along minor streets where higher traffic volumes are not expected. Where higher traffic flows are expected, T-intersections "create excessive turning movements" for both right and left-turning vehicles. The traffic moving east or west along West/Breen Road now have to make a left-turn on Windfern. The spacing between the two intersections is approximately 1500'. Given the amount of traffic that would be forced to make a left-turn from Windfern within a short distance and limited stacking for left turn movement, would make the operation of this intersection difficult. Drivers will try to find alternative routes especially during peak hours.

In summary staff recommends denying the applicants request for the following reasons:

1. West Road is an important east-west major thoroughfare corridor in the Houston region extending between US 59 and Waller County.
2. The east-west thoroughfares are already spaced 1.7 miles apart; more than the typical 1-mile spacing
3. The proposed T-intersections along Windfern make the roadway less attractive for east-west circulation thereby displacing excess traffic on other streets in the area.
4. The proximity of the proposed T-intersections along Windfern (60' ROW local street) will require large numbers of unprotected left-turn movements from Windfern, creating traffic operation challenges at these two intersections.



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Deny the requested realignment of West Road between Gessner Drive & Windfern Road.

1. Population & Employment Projections

According to 2010 Census, Texas grew by 20% in ten years, to over 25 million people, recording about a quarter of the nation's overall growth. The rate of growth in Texas was twice the national average. Harris County is the most populous county (4 million) in Texas. Today, 2.1 million people live within the City of Houston and another 2 million live in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Since 2000, the City of Houston added 146,000 people (8 %) to its population. Houston's ETJ however grew 35 % during the same time period.

Houston and its ETJ's rich employment sector are home to more than 1.8 million jobs, making it the state's most populous and robust economic center. More than one million jobs are located within the City limits and are saturated within the City's eight major activity centers.

One of the greatest challenges to Houston's mobility is that by 2035 significant numbers of residents are projected to live outside the City limits in the ETJ; while the major employment growth is expected to occur within the City limits. This increase in distance between the population and employment centers will result in more travel, greater travel time, and longer travel delays.

In addition to anticipated growth within the ETJ, an additional 550,000 new residents are expected within the current city limits. The most notable population growth is projected to occur inside Loop 610. It reflects efforts to create a dense urban core through mixed-use development strategies.

To compare the result between 2000 and 2010 Census, the subject area's population grew by 19.5 % from 41,363 to 49,470 which demonstrates a percent change significantly higher than that of the City of Houston's grow.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) projects that over the next 25 years (2010 – 2035), the population within the study area* will increase from 49,470 to 78,146 (28,676 persons), or 58%. The number of persons per acre is projected to increase from approximately 5.5 to approximately 8.7. During the same period, H-GAC estimates that the total jobs in the subject area will increase from 13,390 to 19,288 (5,898 jobs), or 44%. The number of jobs per acre is projected to increase from approximately 1.5 to 2.1.

Expressed in percentages, the subject area's population growth is expected to be more than the City of Houston's (58% vs. 24%), and the area's job growth is more than the City's (44% vs. 37%).



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Year	Population (Persons/ Acre)	% Chg	Households (Households/ Acre)	% Chg	Jobs (Jobs/ Acre)	% Chg
2010	5.5		1.8		1.5	
2018	6.0	10%	2.0	11%	1.6	6.0%
2025	6.3	5%	2.2	5%	1.6	3.0%
2035	8.7	38%	3.0	37%	2.1	31.9%
Change (2010 to 2035)	3.2	58%	1.1	60%	0.7	44.0%
City of Houston Change (2010 to 2035)		24%		31%		37%
City of Houston ETJ Change (2010 to 2035)		43%		48%		39%

Source: H-GAC's 2035 Regional Growth Forecast

* Data represents population, jobs, and households in 16 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) encompassing approximately 505 acres around the proposed amendment. Population projections do not include projections for group housing.

2. Land Use & Platting Activity

For the period 2009 to present, the platting activity for the general area where the West Road MTFP amendment is being requested was non-residential in nature. Of the approximately 31 acres platted, only 6 acres (19%) were restricted to commercial use, whereas the remainder 25 acres were platted as unrestricted reserves.

Subdivision Plat Name	Action Date	Key Map	Land Use	Property Size (acres)	Number of Lots
Lockwood Holdings Subdivision	May 12, 2011	410A	Unrestricted	19	
Reid Estates Plaza Subdivision	October 29, 2009	410F	Commercial	4	
Jai Mouni Krupa Subdivision	April 30, 2009	410E	Commercial	2	
West at Gessner Reserves partial replat no 1	February 19, 2009	410E	Unrestricted	7	

3. Right-Of-Way Status

West Road is identified as a four-lane major thoroughfare with a 100' ROW. East-west connection terminates at Gessner Road. A portion of the roadway east of the Gessner Road, West Road is identified as "to be acquired". West Road aligns with Breen Drive east of North Houston Rosslyn which is identified as "to-be-widened". Other roads in the study areas are identified as sufficient width. Portion of Gessner Road between Dorrington Drive and Windfern Road, and segments of Gulf Bank Road are to be acquired, to ensure a well connected network.



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Street	From	To	Classification	Status
West	BW 8	Gessner	T-4-100	Sufficient width
West	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	T-4-100	To be acquired
Breen	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	T-4-100	To be widened
Gessner	Fallbrook	Dorrington	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Gessner	Dorrington	Windfern	T-4-100	To be acquired
Gessner	Windfern	West	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Gessner	West	Gulf Bank	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fairbanks N. Houston	Fallbrook	West	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fairbanks N. Houston	West	Breen	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fairbanks N. Houston	Breen	Gulf Bank	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fallbrook	BW 8	Gessner	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fallbrook	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Fallbrook	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	T-4-100	Sufficient width
West	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Gulf Bank	BW 8	Gessner	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Gulf Bank	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	T-4-100	To be acquired
Gulf Bank	Fairbanks N. Houston	Wood Bluff	T-4-100	To be acquired
Gulf Bank	Wood Bluff	Shady Vale	T-4-100	Sufficient width
Gulf Bank	Shady Vale	Hollister	T-4-100	To be acquired

* 2010 MTFP indicates these segments as "To be widened" however the ROW width is sufficient. The map will be updated with the 2011 MTFP.

4. Major Thoroughfare Spacing

The thoroughfares in the general area do not follow the traditional one mile grid with the alignments of US 290 and Beltway 8. Fallbrook Drive to the north, and West Little York Road to the south are the only through thoroughfares. West Gulf Bank does not extend between Beltway 8 and US 290 through City of Jersey Village. Portions of West Road and West Mount Houston were deleted in the past. Thus east-west connectivity in the study area is limited. West Road is spaced approximately 1.7 miles at Gessner Road and 1.55 miles at Fairbanks North Houston, between Fallbrook Drive and West Gulf Bank Road.

North-south connections are spaced adequately via Beltway 8, Gessner Road and Fairbanks N. Houston Road. Gessner Road is spaced approximately 0.50 and 1.55 miles, from Beltway 8 and Fairbanks N. Houston Road respectively.



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Street	From	To	Street Type	Direction	Spacing (mile)
West	BW 8	Gessner	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	0.51
West	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	1.21
Breen	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	1.61
Gessner	Fallbrook	West	Major Thoroughfare	north-south	1.67
Gessner	West	Gulf Bank	Major Thoroughfare	north-south	1.71
Fairbanks N. Houston	Fallbrook	West	Major Thoroughfare	north-south	1.55
Fairbanks N. Houston	West	Breen	Major Thoroughfare	north-south	0.32
Fairbanks N. Houston	Breen	Gulf Bank	Major Thoroughfare	north-south	1.25
Fallbrook	BW 8	Gessner	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	0.77
Fallbrook	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	1.11
Fallbrook	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	0.85
West	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	1.12
Gulf Bank	BW 8	Gessner	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	0.50
Gulf Bank	Gessner	Fairbanks N. Houston	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	0.98
Gulf Bank	Fairbanks N. Houston	Hollister	Major Thoroughfare	west-east	1.06

5. Mobility

Mobility in the overall study area is limited to the major thoroughfare & freeway network. Portions of this network have not been improved hindering effective circulation. Additionally BNSF Railroad, White Oak Bayou and existing development create challenges for extension of the roadway network. Currently north-south thoroughfares like Fairbanks N. Houston Road and N. Houston Rosslyn Road extend between Beltway 8 and US 290. Gessner Road, between Fallbrook Drive and West Road has not been improved. Extension of Hollister Drive south of Tomball Parkway would require an overpass at BNSF Railroad and sand pit.

Fallbrook Drive extends from the west side of Beltway 8 to Tomball Parkway. However its extension west to Bammel N. Houston is hindered by an existing development. West Road also does not extend across BNSF Railroad. Portion of the alignment west of Fairbanks N. Houston was deleted because of an existing landfill. West Mount Houston alignment west of N. Houston Rosslyn was deleted or realigned along other roadway. The extension of Gulf Bank Road between Hollister Drive and Gessner Road is impacted by mobile home developments, White Oak Bayou and flood plain, and Harris County Flood Control Detention Basin.

There are few local collector streets, however there is no established collector street network in the general area. Thus it is critical to preserve the thoroughfare network to improve mobility in the study area in the future.



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The propose realignment of West Road between Windfern and Gessener would create two T-intersections along Windfern - an existing 60' ROW two-lane local street. Additionally these intersection would be spaced only 1500' apart. T-intersections are appropriate along minor streets where higher traffic volumes are not expected. Where higher traffic flows are expected, T-intersections "create excessive turning movements" for both right and left-turning traffic. Where two T-intersections are proposed, problems can occur if not properly spaced which include:¹

- 1) Potential overlap of left-turn vehicles if storage length is limited (negative offset).
- 2) Excessive right and left hand turning movements
- 3) "Operation of the two intersections may interfere with one another. In general, the offset t-intersection arrangement where major street left turns do not overlap (positive offset) is better because it eliminates the problem of queue overlap for the major street left turns."

Exhibit A (2035 TDM - Base) depicts the Travel Demand Model (TDM) outcome in the year 2035, for the study area based on the current MTFP alignment. The TDM model assumes that Gessner - north of West Road; West Road - east of Gessner Gulf Bank Road- east of Gessner. and Breen Road are improved to thoroughfare standards. Due to the existing traffic volume along Windfern Road it was modeled as a 4-lane undivided roadway functioning as a collector street. The projections indicated that if West Road were extended to Breen Road it would carry and average daily traffic (ADT) of more than 30,000 implying that it would be an important east-west thoroughfare in the region.

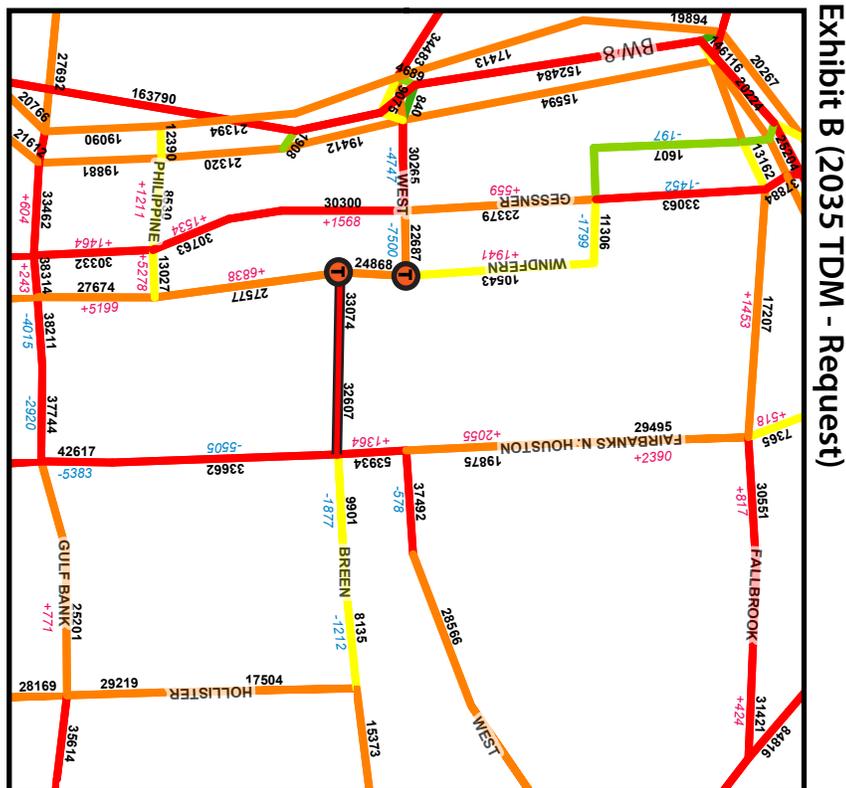
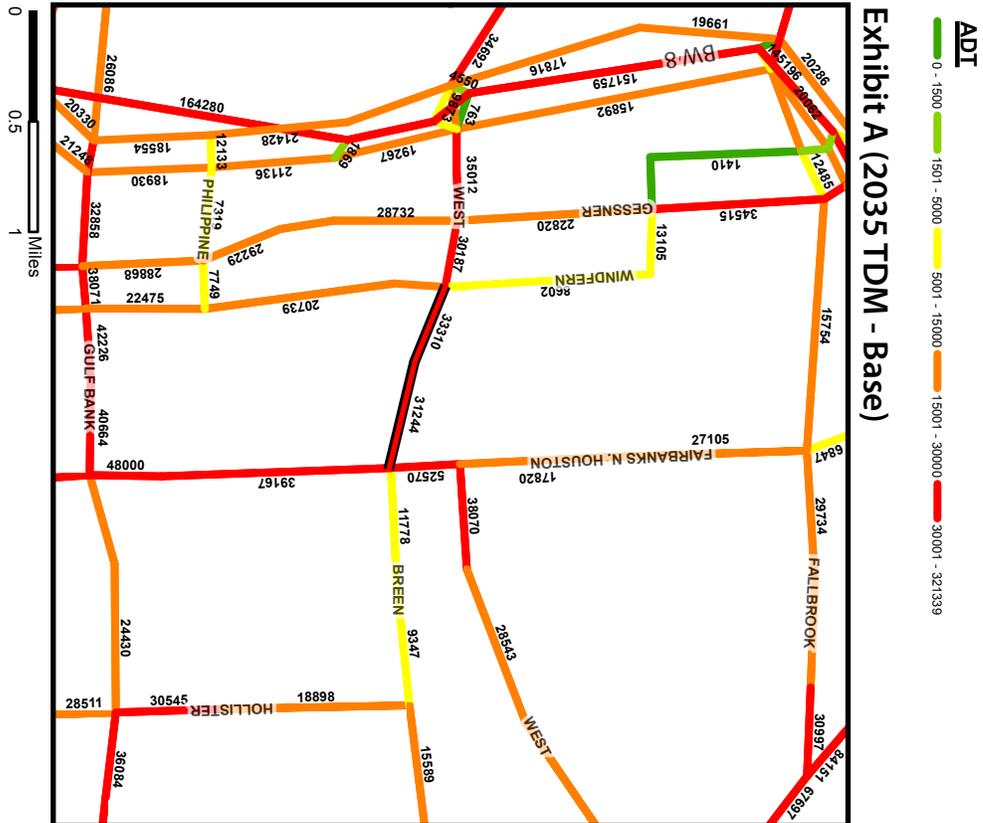
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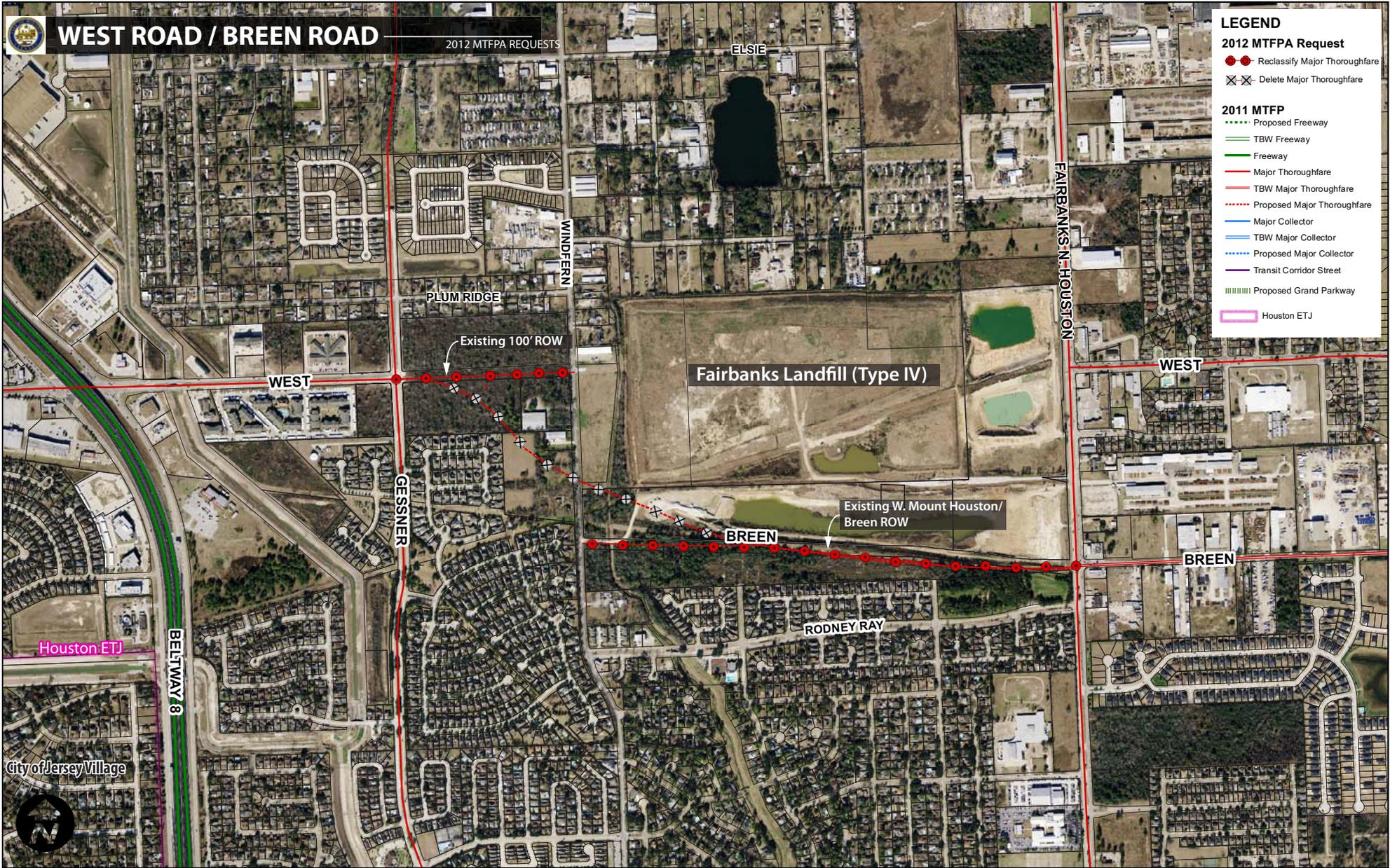
The above analysis concludes that it is important to preserve West Road as a through east-west connection between Gessner Road and Fairbanks N. Houston.

¹ Signalized Intersections: Informational Guide, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), PN: FHWA-HRT-04-091. August 2004. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/04091/10.cfm#fig75>
Section 10.1.3



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WEST ROAD / BREEN ROAD

2012 MTFPA REQUESTS

LEGEND

2012 MTFPA Request

- Reclassify Major Thoroughfare
- ⊗⊗⊗ Delete Major Thoroughfare

2011 MTFPA

- ⋯ Proposed Freeway
- TBW Freeway
- Freeway
- Major Thoroughfare
- TBW Major Thoroughfare
- ⋯ Proposed Major Thoroughfare
- Major Collector
- TBW Major Collector
- ⋯ Proposed Major Collector
- Transit Corridor Street
- ▤ Proposed Grand Parkway
- ▭ Houston ETJ

Fairbanks Landfill (Type IV)

Existing 100' ROW

Existing W. Mount Houston/
Breen ROW

0 0.25 0.5 Miles