



Academy Station area

F1.4

Summary of Initiatives

The Initiatives Plan compiles and maps the initiatives, projects and plans that have been prepared for lands in the study area. In addition, initiatives identified by participants in the workshop have been added.

A comprehensive picture emerges of the immense planning and development efforts undertaken in the University Corridor to date and the geographical relationship between the initiatives and the Transit Streets and Stations. From a strategic stance, the Initiatives Plan provides a clearer sense of the location of priority areas within the Corridor and how future Transit Oriented Development objectives might be focused and positioned to build on existing initiatives and planning efforts.

Opportunity Areas

These locations identify sites that are or could be considered for redevelopment. Some sites located along the Transit Street are suitable for intensification with transit supportive uses. These locations were identified by workshop participants.

1. **South of Richmond Ave, East of Fountain View St.**

Workshop participants identified these blocks as potential redevelopment sites for Transit Oriented Development that would frame the existing Anderson Park.

2. **Southeast of Rice Station**

Industrial and undeveloped lands are located adjacent to Rice Station. Redevelopment with a mix of uses and higher density would help create an activity node at the station.

3. **West of Richmond Station**

To the west of the future Richmond Station is an underutilized site that currently houses a one-storey big box development. Creative alternatives to the typical large format retail layout have shown that it is possible to incorporate these into denser mixed use developments.

4. **West of Newcastle Station**

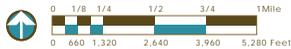
The site east of the 610 and Westpark Drive is a prime site for a transit supportive development adjacent to the Corridor and the highway.

5. **North of Academy Station**

The commercial, office and industrial sites in this area could accommodate higher density mixed use buildings that would help support transit.

Initiatives University

-  University Transit Street
-  Connecting Transit Streets
-  Proposed Pedestrian Realm
-  Opportunity Area
-  Stable Area
-  Existing Open Space
-  Proposed Open Space
-  Opportunity District





Dunlavy St. south of Richmond Ave.



Land adjacent to the Eastwood TC (Lockwood) Station

6. **Richmond Street, between Greenway Plaza Drive and Kirby Stations**
Many infill opportunities can be found along this section of the corridor.
7. **Proposed Community Center**
A mixed use community center is proposed surrounding Levy Park.
8. **W Main Street and Kirby Drive**
A proposed mixed use development is currently being reviewed for this site.
9. **Between Ferndale St. and Sackett St., south of Westheimer Rd.**
A high density residential development is currently under construction and will contain 177 units.
10. **Corner of Kirby Dr. and Westheimer Rd.**
A mixed use development is under construction and will contain 390 residential units, 180,000 sf of retail and 16,000 sf of office space.
11. **Between Kirby Dr. and Argonne, south of Cameron**
A high density residential development is currently under construction and will contain 93 units.
12. **East of Revere, south of Cameron, north of Steele**
A high density residential development is currently under construction and will contain 330 units.
13. **Morningside to the east, Revere to the west, W Main to the north and Richmond to the south**
A high density residential development is currently under construction and will contain 230 units.
14. **Northeast of the Revere and Sul Ross Intersection**
Located within a 5 minute walking distance to Kirby and Shepherd Stations, future redevelopment of existing plazas set far back from the curb should contribute to an enhanced pedestrian environment.
15. **Land surrounding Kirby Station**
This underutilized intersection has the potential to become an important Upper Kirby destination, where one could live, work and be entertained.
16. **Southwest of Shepherd Station**
Adjacent to transit and near highway access, this is also a prime redevelopment site. Bringing the building frontage closer to the street would improve the character of the area.
17. **Shepherd Street, North of Shepherd Station**
A consistent street edge would provide spatial definition and containment to the street.
18. **Transit Street from Shepherd to Main St Station**
This street segment is underutilized and could benefit from transit supportive development that compliments existing retail, restaurants and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
19. **Dunlavy St. south of Richmond**
A high density development is under construction with 236 residential units spanning 2.7 acres with potential for retail at grade in the second phase.
20. **North of Dunlavy Station**
The grocery store and facing development are complementary uses, but the current built form does not entice pedestrian movements. Redevelopment of this site with transit oriented uses and an enhanced streetscape would enhance transit ridership.

- 21. **Intermodal Station**
The proposed Station has the potential of acting as a signature gateway highlighting the transition between the University and Main Street Corridors.
- 22. **Southwest of Bute and Branard**
This site is surrounded by residences and could be redeveloped to contribute to the neighborhood life.
- 23. **Proposed High School for Performing and Visual Arts**
A new high school is proposed between Truxillo and Cleburne, fronting the lawn of the South Main Baptist Church.
- 24. **Dowling Street**
Properties to the north and south of Dowling Station offer some redevelopment opportunities that would complement the residential and historic nature of the area.
- 25. **Land adjacent to the Southeast Transit Street between McKinney and Wheeler St.**
These sites are mainly under-used or vacant lots, which are suited for mixed use, Transit Oriented Development that would complement the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

- 26. **Land adjacent to the Eastwood TC (Lockwood) Station**
The eastern limit of the Corridor is surrounded by vacant and industrial lands that can accommodate future transit supportive mixed use development.

 **Opportunity Districts**

- 27. **Between Pierce St. and Reeves St.**
The proximity of this residential neighborhood to the Transit Streets and the IH 45, and the number of vacant lots available, make this an attractive opportunity district.
- 28. **Potential retail development- Scott St. At Wheeler St.**
Retail concentration areas have been identified in the Greater Southeast Management District market demand study for potential retail development (CDS Market Research). This area has a lack of quality shopping for residents and campus visitors. The proximity of this node to the Universities, residential neighborhoods, and the Transit Streets creates an attractive redevelopment opportunity that could provide basic goods and services to the community.



Scott and Wheeler St. intersection



Wheeler St. between Dowling and Ennis Stations

Stable Areas

Workshop participants identified neighborhoods, schools and employment areas as Stable Areas. It is important to protect and enhance employment areas close to the Transit Stations so that employees can conveniently and safely walk to and from the stations. Neighborhoods should work with the City to evaluate the application of available tools to preserve Stable Areas or encourage redevelopment. Safe and convenient pedestrian connections to the Corridor will encourage ridership and help to support the new retail and service uses that may develop near the Stations. The following areas were identified as Stable Areas by workshop participants.

29. South of Richmond Ave, North of Hillcroft TC Station
30. South of Westpark Dr. between US 59 and Renwick Dr.
31. South of Westpark Dr. between 9th and Royalton St.
32. Northwest of Rice Station
33. West of W IH 610 between Rice and Newcastle Stations
34. East of W IH 610 between Rice and Newcastle Stations
35. Northeast of Richmond Ave. and E Briar Hollow Ln.
36. South of the Academy Station between Community Dr. and Edloe St.
37. South of Westheimer Rd. and West of Eastside St.
38. South of Transit Street between Shepherd and Montrose Stations
39. South of Hawthorne between Dunlavy St. and Graustark St.
40. Neighborhood between Dowling and Ennis Stations

Pedestrian Realm

The University Corridor has only a few parks and open spaces. Workshop participants identified several initiatives for open space. In addition, the management districts along the Corridor have been involved in significant streetscape and open space enhancement projects.

Existing Parks/Open Space:

- 41. **Anderson Park**
Southeast of Beverly Hill and Bering Street is a 7 acre neighborhood park to be maintained.
- 42. **Levy Park**
Located at the southern end of Eastside Street, Levy Park has been recently renovated, through the Upper Kirby Management District's Adopt-A-Park agreement with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD).
- 43. **Ervan Chew Park**
In 2004, the Friends of Ervan Chew Park, helped establish the first off-leash dog zone in a neighborhood park. Previously known as Dunlavy Park, this open space also offers a picnic area and swimming pool that should be maintained.
- 44. **Mandell Park**
The Friends of Mandell Park are transforming the site located on the southeast corner of Richmond and Mandell (between Shepherd and Montrose) into a pocket park equipped with seating, walkways and lighting for a more enticing urban space.

- 45. **Emancipation Park**
The park has recently been designated a protected historic landmark under the Houston Preservation Ordinance. The designation means that the park will be protected for prosperity. This site was the first established public space in Texas and was originally conceived as a site for freed slaves to celebrate the anniversary of June 19, 1865, when Texas slaves were emancipated. The Friends of Emancipation Park are working to fix the park's neglected state.
- 46. **Menil Collection**
The Menil's outdoor sculpture collection, reflecting pool and Rothko Chapel are privately owned spaces that were opened to the public in 1987. This internationally renowned collection is a very important destination for the City of Houston.
- 47. **Peggy Park**
The community feels strongly about enhancing and maintaining this neighborhood park.

Proposed Parks/Open Space/Campuses:

- 48. **Texas Southern University Master Plan**
The Master Plan for the campus of 11,000 students is a five-year blueprint for the maintenance, improvement and expansion of University facilities and grounds. Projected construction of new buildings is based on planned growth of the student population and related program space needs. The University hopes to: acquire land for additional facilities, upgrade infrastructure and increase student services.



Peggy Park



Menil Collection



University of Houston Campus



Columbia Tap Trail Construction



Columbia Tap Trail groundbreaking

49. University of Houston Master Plan

It is expected that the number of students will increase from 35,000 to 45,000 students in the next ten years. In response to this probable growth, the University has completed a planning strategy for the next twenty years. The main objectives of the Master Plan are: double the learning space, double the living space, create districts for the arts, professionals and undergraduates and increase parking.

50. Potential Linear Park

The hydro corridor in this location is suited for a linear park and could be the site for the relocation of the Danny Jackson Family Bark Park.

Trails/Streetscape/Connections:

51. Sharpstown Center

This site is currently undergoing changes and improvements to landscaping, paving, lighting and utilities. The Center is also in the process of addressing the issues surrounding large, vacant retail facilities.

52. Hike/Bike Connection

The existing trail system should be enhanced to improve connections to the Hillcroft Transit Center and adjacent neighborhoods.

53. Streetscape along Richmond Avenue

The Richmond Rail organization is committed to enhancing the quality of life and vitality of neighborhoods, businesses, and institutions on Richmond Avenue.

54. Potential Linear Park

The land between the Hillcroft Transit Center and Loop 610 is suited for a linear park that would service the dense apartment neighborhoods in the area.

55. Rice Avenue Streetscape, North of Rice Station

56. Streetscape along Sage Road

57. Streetscape and access along Loop Central Rd

58. Pedestrian environment between Newcastle and Academy Stations

59. Streetscape along Briar Hollow Lane

60. Pedestrian connection to Academy Station along Willowick

61. Access to neighborhood east of Cummins Station

62. Highway 59 Overpass Security
 These overpasses have seen the implementation of security devices at the overpasses of Edloe Street, Kirby and S Shepherd Drive.

63. Upper Kirby Wayfinding
 Within the Upper Kirby TIRZ, specialized TIRZ-specific wayfinding street signage has been installed and continues to be maintained.

64. "Richmond Esplanades"
 Along Richmond, within the Upper Kirby TIRZ, there is an initiative to create "Richmond Esplanades", to increase the pedestrian access and visitation frequency, along with the aesthetic draw.

65. Streetscape along Eastside connecting Lamar High School to the Transit Street

66. Access to Transit Street from Kirby

- 67. **Shepherd Streetscape**
- 68. **Streetscape along Dunlavy**
- 69. **Streetscape along Mandell**
- 70. **‘Clean Montrose’**
The Neartown Community has launched a beautification project involving the clean-up of graffiti along Montrose Blvd.
- 71. **Sidewalk adjacent to Spur 527**
Pedestrians going towards downtown from Richmond Avenue must walk along side of Spur 527. A safer enhanced pedestrian environment has been requested by the community in areas adjacent to this highway crossing.
- 72. **Wheeler between Spur 527 and La Branch**
A Pedestrian Walk has been proposed with enhanced street planting, safe and connected sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting and amenities such as benches and trash receptacles.
- 73. **Gateway- Main St. and US H59**
This significant entry point has been identified to strengthen the community identity. This gateway could include signage, landscape treatment or special buildings.
- 74. **Main St. Corridor Enhancement**
See initiatives in the Main Street Corridor Specific Report.
- 75. **Almeda Road Improvements**
The OST/Almeda Corridors Redevelopment Authority is implementing streetscape reconstruction and resurfacing enhancements.

- 76. **Wheeler Street, from Highway 288 to Ennis Station**
This portion of the Corridor, being mainly residential, will require special attention to connections, parking and screening.
- 77. **Columbia Tap Trail**
A 4 mile hike and bike trail is being constructed along the old Columbia Tap railroad. Once completed, the trail will connect the neighborhoods to the existing bikeway network along Polk, McGowen and Alabama Streets, the Brays Bayou Trail, and the Dixie bike route.
- 78. **Streetscape along Cleburne St.**
- 79. **Streetscape along Reeves St.**

Intersections:

The Houston-Galveston Area Council’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Special Districts Study (Phase II) recommended improvements at these intersections.

- 80. **Dowling St. and Alabama St.**
- 81. **Dowling St. and Holman St.**
- 82. **Roundabout at Elgin St. and Dowling St.**

Infrastructure:

- 83. **Richmond east of Greenbriar Plaza Drive Station**
New development should take into consideration the storm drainage issues in this area.
- 84. **Levy Park**
The park is currently undergoing drainage improvements.
- 85. **Kirby, Greenbriar and Shepherd**
Storm Drainage Improvements are in progress on these streets.



Cummins Station area



University Corridor Workshop



University Corridor Workshop Presentation



Table group discussions during the workshop

F1.5

University Corridor Workshop

A two day workshop was held in January 2008 to engage area stakeholders and residents in Urban Corridor Planning.

The purpose of the first day of the workshop was to establish a common understanding of existing conditions and opportunities along the Corridor. During the day, the consulting team met with City staff representatives as well as major landowners to review the Corridor's current context, potential issues and opportunities. During the evening session with the public, following a presentation on our understanding of the context, participants were asked to identify projects or initiatives that would enhance the area, as well as to help identify areas that could change and those that should be protected. As background, the Current Initiatives plan was presented at the workshop. It was a compilation of projects identified in previous strategies, plans and reports.

Each one of the table groups identified many opportunities in the University Corridor that have been included in the Initiatives Plan (see Chapter F1.4). Suggestions of the participants, with respect to the public realm, redevelopment opportunities and areas to be protected included:

Public realm

- need wider sidewalks, 10' near stations
- push trees to curb and widen the pedestrian zone
- encourage awnings and arcades
- consider fences to keep pedestrians from wandering into traffic and crossing at wrong places
- improved access to the Hillcroft Station
- dense trees to screen the train
- pocket parks should be created where train alignment follows a corner (dog park, kids jungle gym, etc.)
- screen objectionable facilities
- pedestrian links are necessary and desirable
- want hike and bike trails along railroad
- need more streets and smaller blocks in the western portion of the Corridor
- enhance Hillcroft Center park and ride
- save the trees
- provide parking structures
- improve traffic signals
- improve drainage along proposed sidewalks
- improve wheelchair accessibility
- should put utilities, trees, fire hydrants, etc, at the curbs to act as buffer zones
- smaller block faces were suggested with alleyways for easy access from neighboring areas so that residents don't have to walk too far out of their way to access the trains

Redevelopment opportunities

- Richmond at Spur 527
- Richmond from Shepherd to Montrose – Near Town: there are many opportunities for infill development but would like to see scale and character that reflects the surrounding residential neighborhoods
- Dunlavy, North of Richmond currently has a great neighborhood- scale grocery store. How can we encourage this type of development?

Evolution from workshop suggestions to report University

Pedestrian Realm



Initiatives



Land Development





University Corridor Workshop



Participants discussing initiatives during the Workshop



University Corridor Display Panels

- relocate city facilities (i.e., solid waste) and create signature area between corridor and freeway
- when apartment redevelopment occurs, need more streets- blocks too big
- area between Rice and 610
- many one-story strip centers that were built for a 15 year lifespan
- big box developments offer an opportunity to redevelop as well
- create financial incentives to improve storefronts along rail lines
- create commercial nodes along rail stops
- former location of Houston Community College Tech Ed Campus would be good location for public private partnership parking garage/lot
- would like to see more mid-rise mixed use development
- want more cafes at stations
- multi-level parking should gradually be introduced so that we don't have huge asphalted areas that serve no purpose after work and in the weekends

Areas to be protected

- neighborhood west of Wesleyan Road
- diverse stores at Harwin Drive
- area encompassing the University of St. Thomas and Menil Museum
- apartment neighborhoods south of Westpark Drive
- residential neighborhood adjacent to Texas Southern University
- existing historic buildings



Yorkville Street, Toronto, ON



Nicolett Avenue, Minneapolis, MN



Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL

Need parks!

Historical preservation is important

Please don't short change Hillcroft just because we're not a wealthy neighborhood

Good! Yes! Please!

Provide wider sidewalks

Need soccer fields!

Concerns about rail include safety, health, mobility, noise, and loss of mature trees and character of the existing neighborhood

We want underground utilities

These comments were taken during the University Corridor Workshop