

URBAN CORRIDOR PLANNING HOUSTON



What is Urban Corridor Planning?

Urban Corridor Planning is focused on changing the City's land development regulations and infrastructure standards to accommodate a broad range of mobility options – walking, bicycling, public transit, and driving – in order to improve access to jobs, services, entertainment and recreation, now and in the future.

Urban Corridor Planning is concentrating on the areas surrounding the light rail and guided rapid transit currently being developed by METRO, with a special emphasis around the transit stations. The corridors under study include East End, Main Street, North, Southeast, University, and Uptown.

Urban Corridor Planning will not result in land use zoning, nor will it affect METRO's decisions on the transit alignments. The outcomes of the process will include development regulations and infrastructure standards for more transit-supportive built environment.



Why is this important?

The amount of growth that is projected for Houston is staggering. According to the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Houston region will grow by more than 3.5 million people over the next 30 years, with 2 million more people expected in Harris County alone.

The way the city grows is directly related to the rules that regulate land development and the standards for the infrastructure that supports development. These dictate things like the width of streets and sidewalks, the distance between buildings and the street, how many parking spaces a business must have, what type of landscaping must be added, and much more. Each of these items may seem like a minor issue on its own, but when taken as a whole, they create the world we live in and make the difference between having communities we can walk in or where we have to drive everywhere. Changes to regulations and standards can positively impact how growth is distributed, the way the city looks, and how we get around.



What can we do about all this growth?

We can seize the opportunity we have, knowing that Houston is going to grow considerably, to find ways to shape our city, preserve our neighborhoods, and sustain a high quality of life. Urban Corridor Planning is working on ways to help deal with the projected growth by developing new regulations and setting new standards for areas where urban development is occurring, such as near existing and planned light rail and guided rapid transit stations.

How will this be done?

During the Urban Corridor Planning process, we are exploring the type of regulations and standards that are needed to improve the built environment and support transit ridership. We are also investigating how these should be applied based on the unique characteristics and needs of each corridor. For example, where do we need wider sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks? Where do we need to provide public gathering places, benches and parks? How can these public improvements be funded?



What has happened already?

Phase I of Urban Corridor Planning was launched in June, 2006. A community workshop, held on August 26, 2006, and was attended by almost 300 people. The key messages that we heard from the community workshop were:

- » Create a connected multi-modal network and provide transportation options – including more transit service and streets friendly to pedestrians and bicycles
- » Protect the unique character of existing neighborhoods and preserve historic buildings, homes, landmarks and community treasures
- » Develop urban standards and ordinances that enable, encourage and allow urban development
- » Create neighborhood centers and great places
- » Initiate pedestrian-friendly destination places, neighborhood serving amenities and neighborhood centers
- » Preserve and expand parks, open space, greens space corridors and trail connections
- » Encourage and support more urban infill development
- » Make new development sustainable
- » Provide affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods



What is going on now?

Phases II & III of Urban Corridor Planning are now underway. A consulting team has been retained, consisting of The Planning Partnership, and assisted by Asakura Robinson Company, The Gunda Corporation, Cushman Wakefield LePage, and Working Partner. Phases II& III will examine issues of mobility, public spaces, urban design and implementation capacity, and develop appropriate conceptual plans and implementation tools for each corridor.



What role does the community play?

Many people have already participated in overall planning activities such as Blueprint Houston and Envision Houston. There have also been detailed plans prepared by various groups and organizations that impact portions of the corridors. Phases II & III of Urban Corridor Planning will build on these initiatives.

Urban Corridor Planning is being assisted by a stakeholder group, which consists of community leaders representing communities throughout each corridor. The stakeholder group is providing guidance to City staff and the consultant team to help encourage community participation, gather information and ideas, and facilitate dialogue.

Intensive community workshops will be held within each corridor and they will be open to anyone who is interested in participating.





How can I get involved?

Information about Urban Corridor Planning is available on the project website, which can be accessed by going to www.houstonplanning.com and clicking on the link to Urban Corridors, or by going directly to: http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/urban_cor.html. You can also call 713-837-7701, email urban.corridor.planning@cityofhouston.net, or contact a member of the **Urban Corridor Planning Stakeholder Group**:

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|--------------------------------|---|
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| CM Ada Edwards | District D |
| CM Pam Holm | District G |
| CM Adrian Garcia | District H |
| CM Carol Alvarado | District I |
| CM Peter Brown | At large Position 1 |
| John R. Breeding | Uptown Houston |
| Jamie Brewster | Houston Intown Chamber of Commerce |
| Patrick Castillo/Rebecca Reyna | Greater Northside Management District |
| David Crossley | Gulf Coast Institute |
| Jack Drake | Greater Houston Partnership/Greater Greenspoint Management District |
| Robert M. Eury | Central Houston |
| Steve Flippo | Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority |
| Reeves Gilmore | Harris County Public Infrastructure Department |
| Mary Margaret Hansen | Greater East End Management District |
| Kimberly Williams | Texas Southern University |
| Gabriel Johnson | Texas Department of Transportation |
| Jim Langford | Crescent Real Estate Equities Ltd/Greenway Plaza |
| Charles LeBlanc | Midtown Management District |
| Dr. Carol Lewis | Houston Planning Commission |
| Clark Martinson | Energy Corridor Management District |
| Todd A. Mason | Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority |
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| Carol W. Nixon | Texas Department of Transportation |
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| Theola Petteway | OST/Alameda Corridors Redevelopment Authority |
| Ed Reyes | Northside Village Super Neighborhood Council |
| Carroll G. Robinson | TSU Barbara Jordan Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs |
| David Robinson | AIA Houston Chapter |
| Susan Rogers | University of Houston, Community Design Resource Center |
| Ian Rosenberg | Main Street Coalition |
| Jeff Ross | Pate Engineers |
| Anton Sinkewich | Central Houston |
| Jason Stuart | Urban Land Institute |
| Martha Murphree | Blueprint Houston |
| Jeff Taebel | Houston Galveston Area Council |
| Joe Webb | Houston Intown Mobility Committee |
| Susan Young | South Main Center Association |