

fifth ward

healthy community design

ideas book



FIFTH WARD: Healthy Community Design Ideas Book

Community Design Resource Center
University of Houston
in partnership with the
Community Transformation Initiative
through the Houston Department of
Health and Human Services

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Introduction



Introduction

Community Transformation is a movement taking place across the nation that is changing the way we look at health and prevention of chronic diseases. Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a strategy to improve the health of the population by addressing factors outside the health system that have important health effects. These factors relate to our common life: what we eat and drink, where we live, how we work and how we spend our leisure time which may have positive or negative effects on our health.

The HiAP approach has gained support from health advocates in the United States. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) acknowledges that policies made outside of the health sector shape the environments people live in and the choices they make. They note that some public health problems are sufficiently complex that they are best tackled not just through traditional health policy but also through policies and issues that affect the social determinants of health such as schools, zoning, food advertising, public transportation, parks, workplaces, restaurants, and tax policy. The IOM recommends implementing a HiAP approach in order to more fully address the determinants of health, better coordinate efforts across sectors, and more effectively use public resources.

The National Prevention Strategy, published in June 2011, calls for increased coordination between government agencies, as well as partnerships with community organizations, businesses, healthcare providers, and others. The National Prevention Strategy prioritizes work around four strategic directions: creating healthy community environments, empowering individuals to make healthy choices, integrating clinical and community preventive services, and reducing health disparities. This can be accomplished, for example, through ensuring more neighborhoods have better access to fruits and vegetables, opportunities for physical activity, active transportation options, and clean air.

The Community Transformation Initiative through the Houston Department of Health and Human Services has promoted a Health in All Policies approach in its recent efforts. This project in collaboration with the University of Houston's College of Architecture and the Community Design Resource Center (CDRC) represents one current example of this approach.

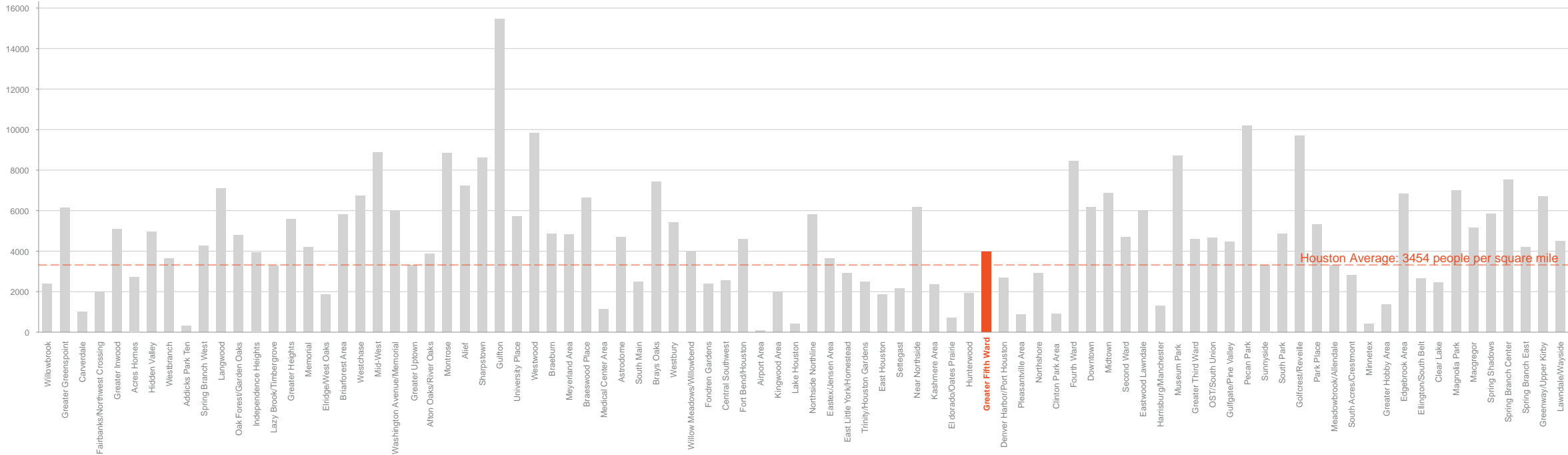
Our partnership with the College of Architecture and the CDRC has been mutually beneficial. For example, students and faculty at the College of Architecture and CDRC have integrated ideas about healthy communities into a comprehensive approach to community change. At the same time, the Community Transformation Initiative team has an increased understanding of the built environment and has gained new insights into the challenges and opportunities for health impact planning. Another key element of our collaborative approach has been to actively engage community leaders and stakeholders in the process, bringing community voices to the table as partners in our efforts to imagine and create healthy communities. This has included a series of community meetings and listening sessions held in each neighborhood. Finally, experts and professionals from a diverse array of disciplines, including community development, public health, urban planning, architecture, and non-profit leaders shared their expertise with community stakeholders at a day long community design charrette. In the end our goal has been to create a collaborative and comprehensive approach to community health and community design that is based in partnership, and works across disciplines, policies and scales to generate real solutions.

Context

Context



BELOW: Population Density by Super Neighborhood, 2010
BELOW, Right: Fifth Ward Location Map

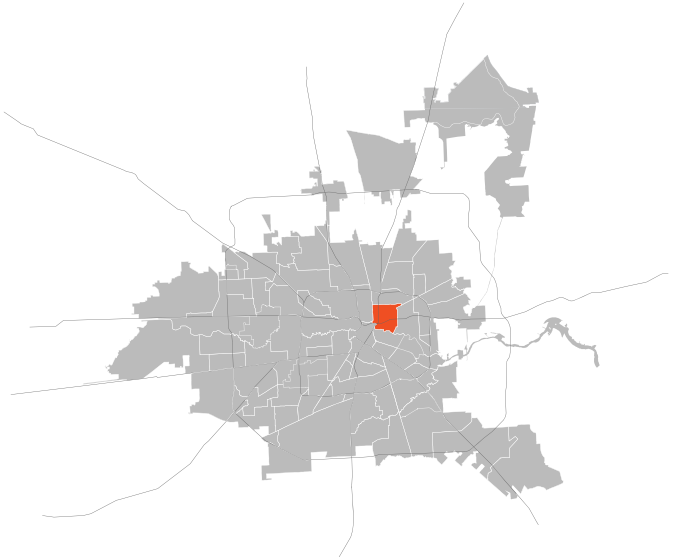


Across our cities leaders, organizations, and institutions are looking for new ways to achieve sustainable and comprehensive community development. The renewed interest in a holistic approach is reminiscent of the original community development legislation passed in 1968 that focused simultaneously on political empowerment, education, the arts and culture, housing and economic development, and social equity and opportunity. In addition to these goals new tools and strategies for building healthy communities are increasingly sought out as health care costs and obesity rates skyrocket.

Today, it is vital that we find new ways to work across disciplines, scales, and issues to develop innovative strategies for positive change in our communities. This means looking for new models of economic development such as co-operatives to improve food security, finding new ways to develop quality affordable housing, for example by mixing models and programs, creating new opportunities for us to come together as citizens, not as consumers, identifying existing skills and resources in our

communities as a means to shape and create new jobs, enhancing access to open spaces, recreation, and trails as means to build healthier communities, and working towards achieving sustainability in its fullest and most meaningful definition—which includes achieving a balance between equity, economy, and ecology in all that we do.

Participatory, proactive, and asset-based community processes have the potential to point us towards opportunities for meaningful and sustainable change that will create thriving and healthy communities. To this end the strategies included in the Fifth Ward Healthy Community Design Ideas Book have been developed over the course of a year and based on interdisciplinary problem-solving, community engagement and collaboration. Nearly 100 people from diverse backgrounds, including students, residents, stakeholders, and professionals have been engaged in the process. The publication is intended to be a guide, or toolbox, for change—as well as point to potential strategies and tactics in communities across the country.





Houston, the fourth largest city in the U.S., is a study in contradictions. It is simultaneously diverse and divided, connected and isolated, sprawling and dense, rich and poor, urban and rural. In Houston, and across the nation, health is directly related to the socio-economic conditions of our neighborhoods. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that “the socioeconomic circumstances of persons and where they live and work strongly influence their health.”

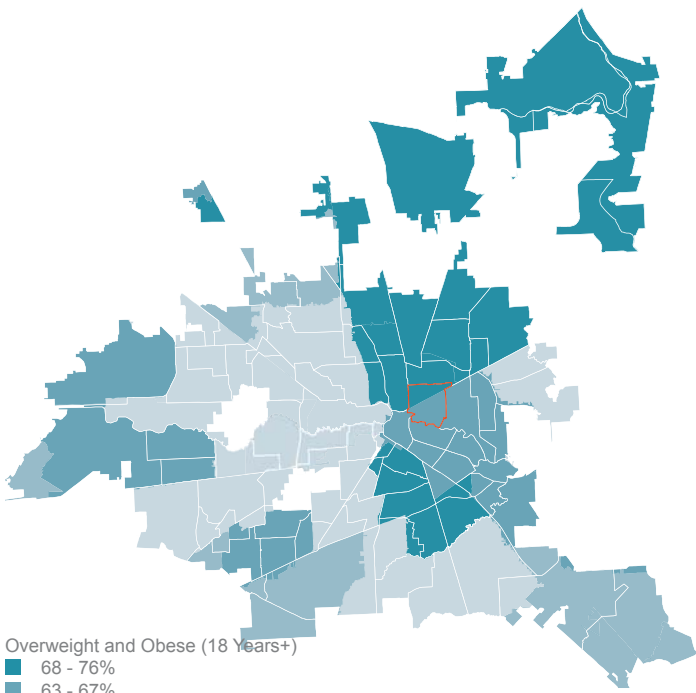
Houston, while incredibly diverse, is also profoundly divided by income, education, and opportunity. This division is reinforced by ethnic and gender disparities that continue to define inequality in the city. The socioeconomic conditions that divide us have also created geographic disparities where some neighborhoods are rich with resources and others are without even the most basic of necessities. Finally, the neighborhoods that face the most

severe economic hardships are more often than not the same neighborhoods that have significant health challenges.

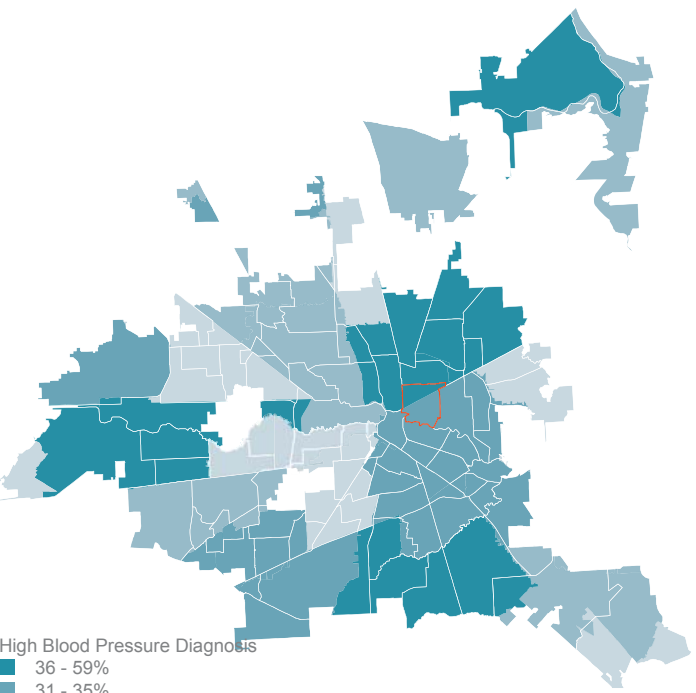
Community design has a role to play in advocating for and creating healthy communities. The first step is to understand and illustrate the qualities and conditions that exist in our neighborhoods and identify both the assets and constraints. The second step is to understand the factors that design has the power to impact. For example, design can influence the quality of public spaces, creating attractive and useful places for exercise, recreation and play. Design can impact safety by working to ensure that places are active, visible, and free from hazards. Design can transform our neighborhoods, by advocating for development that is compact, walkable, and affordable. Design can help to create alternative networks for pedestrians and cyclists. And finally, design has the power to innovate, creating new models for

partnerships and processes that have the potential to transform neighborhoods.

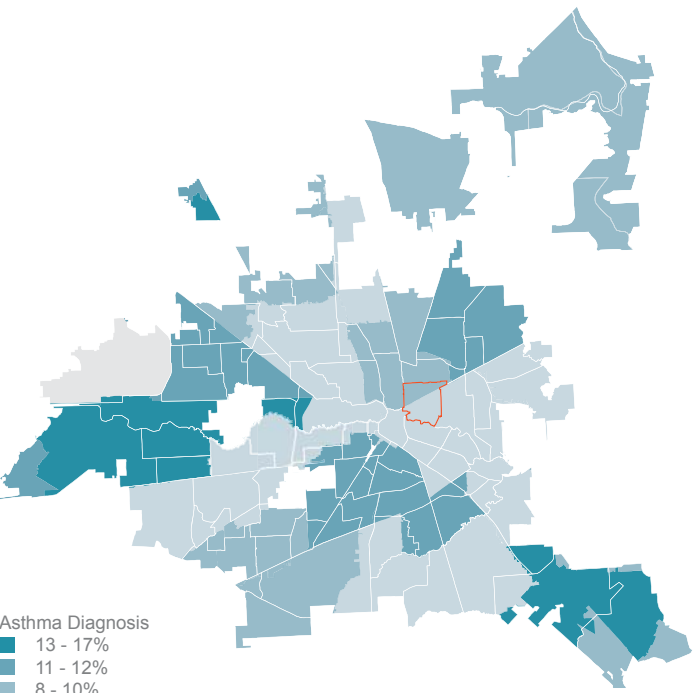
As health care costs continue to escalate and decades of gains in longevity are at risk because of sedentary and unhealthy lifestyles there is a new emphasis on the relationship between where we live and our health. This emerging emphasis points to the need for new ways of thinking about change in our neighborhoods, and the need for a new process that departs from standard ideas about planning and design to create a more inter-disciplinary and dynamic process which incorporates a comprehensive vision for community health. Healthy communities are a goal across the nation, and a hope for Houston. By focusing on creating healthy communities we can begin to move toward a goal of ensuring that all of our residents have the opportunity for healthy and productive lives.



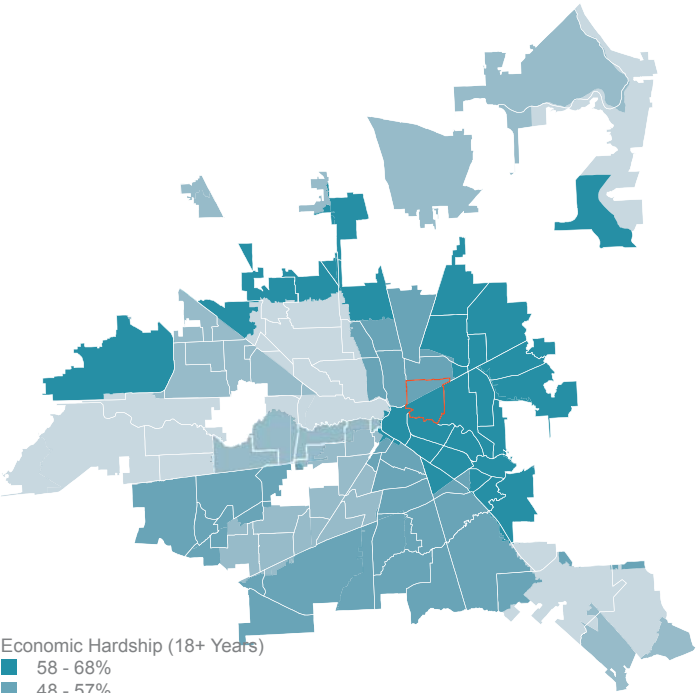
Overweight and Obese (18 Years+)
 68 - 76%
 63 - 67%
 59 - 62%
 46 - 58%
 Houston Average: 63%
 Source: Health of Houston Survey 2010



High Blood Pressure Diagnosis
 36 - 59%
 31 - 35%
 26 - 30%
 18 - 25%
 Houston Average: 30%
 Source: Health of Houston Survey 2010



Asthma Diagnosis
 13 - 17%
 11 - 12%
 8 - 10%
 4 - 7%
 Not Applicable
 Houston Average: 9%
 Source: Health of Houston Survey 2010



Economic Hardship (18+ Years)
 58 - 68%
 48 - 57%
 38 - 47%
 22 - 37%
 Houston Average: 48%
 Source: Health of Houston Survey 2010

Health and Community Design

The built environment, including our homes, businesses, parks and green spaces, infrastructure, transportation networks, and public buildings, shape our neighborhoods. These same factors impact opportunities for walkability, economic opportunity, recreation, play, safety, social cohesion and health—in other words these factors are both determinants of the health of a neighborhood and determined by the health of a neighborhood.

As a result the neighborhoods where we live impact our chances to live healthy lives, rich with opportunities. In cities across the U.S., including Houston, the distribution of resources and the quality of our built environments, public spaces and neighborhoods are not equal. The socio-economic context of our neighborhoods— income, race, housing, education, and employment—is more often than not directly correlated to the health of the people that call them home. Some neighborhoods have plentiful fresh food options while others are food deserts, some neighborhoods have well-maintained parks while others do not, and some neighborhoods thrive while others decline.

The goal of this project has been to identify the determinants of health that can be impacted by community design. Much work has been done to this end over the last decade, as more and more resources are expended on addressing existing individual health problems, instead of understanding how the larger environment effects health issues and proactively working to ensure that all of our communities and the people who call them home have an opportunity to be healthy. At the national level, the Healthy People 2020 program includes two broad goals that can be addressed through community design. First, creating social and physical environments that promote good health for all. Second, promoting quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages.

Seven strategies for building healthy communities were identified. The strategies include: Food Security, Education, Environmental Justice, Neighborhood Stability, Economic Opportunity, Safety, and Public Spaces and Amenities. Each strategy is defined and detailed on the pages that follow, including the potential impacts.

"Where people live affects their health and chances of leading flourishing lives."

World Health Organization

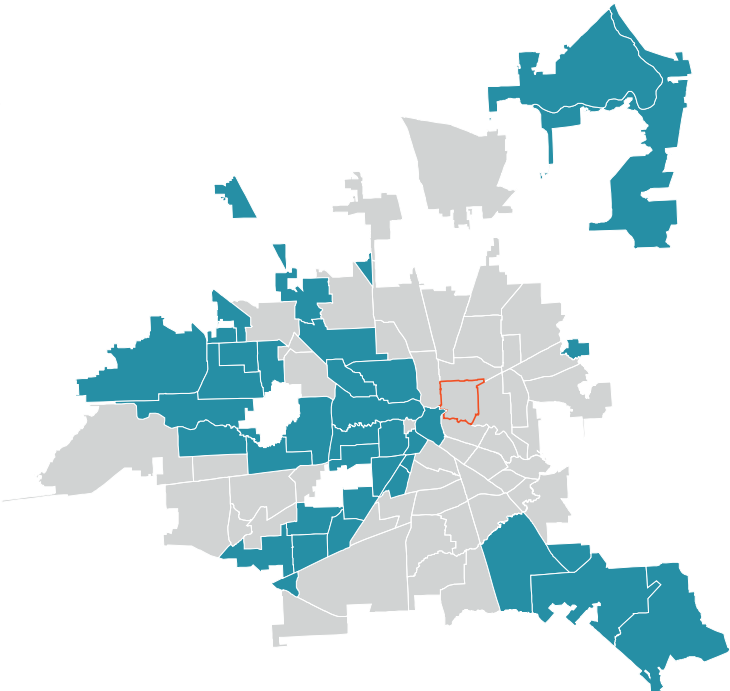
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Healthy communities depend on healthy economies, equity, and opportunities to succeed, including:

- Employment opportunities
- Access to employment resources, such as computers, job training and learning opportunities
- Wealth building opportunities such as home ownership
- Local businesses
- Entrepreneurial opportunities
- Access to banking services

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Reduced Stress
- Improved Personal Health
- Greater Equity and Family Wealth
- Safer Neighborhood Greater Social Cohesion
- Improved Property Values



Median Household Income (2010)
■ Above Median
■ Below Median

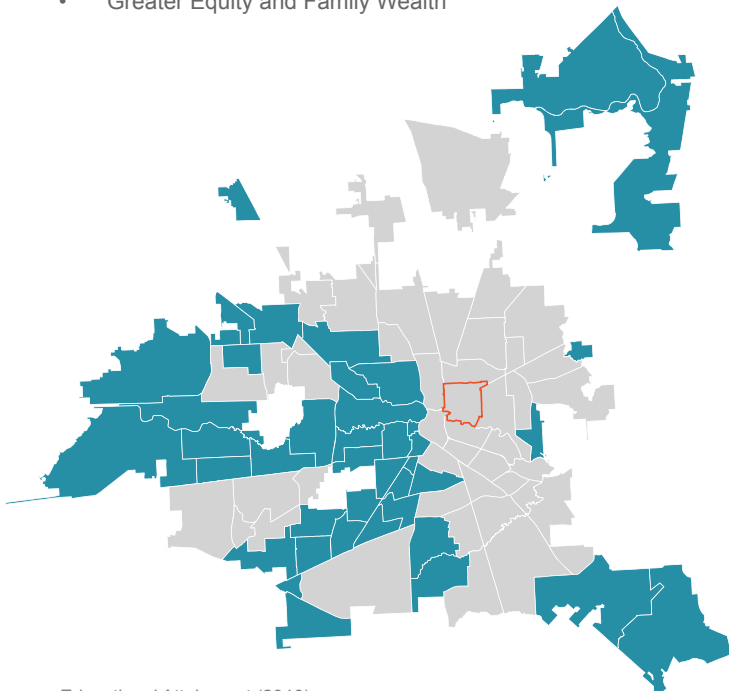
EDUCATION

Education is the foundation for our future, ensuring quality school environments and lifelong learning opportunities enhances economic success and community health, including:

- Schools that are the center of communities, with shared spaces, resources and programs
- Multi-generational learning opportunities
- Quality after-school programming

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Increased Physical Activity
- Reduced Obesity
- Improved Personal Health
- Community Activation
- Safer Neighborhood
- Greater Social Cohesion
- Economic Prosperity
- Greater Equity and Family Wealth



Educational Attainment (2010)
Percent of Population over 25 years
With a High School Diploma
■ Above Houston Average (74%)
■ Below Houston Average

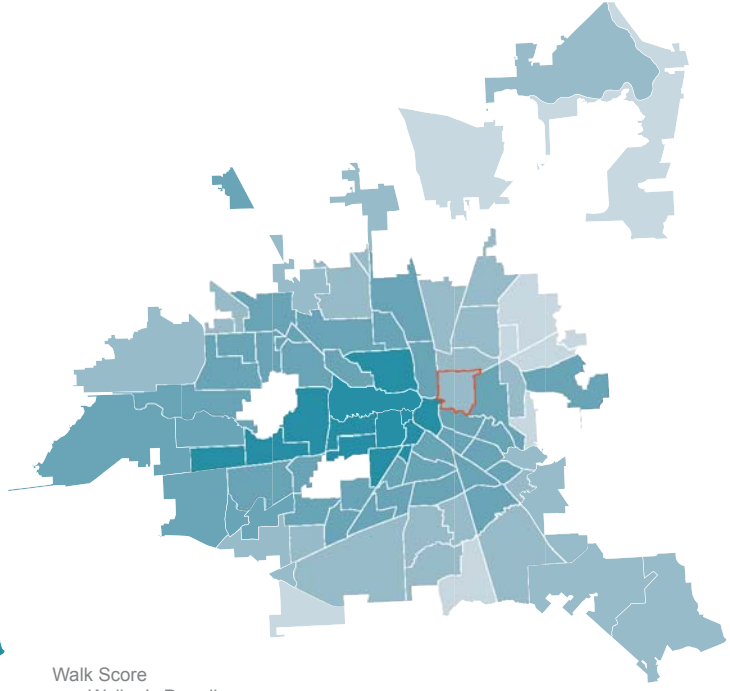
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

A neighborhood free from environmental hazards is a healthier community, including:

- Accessible waste and recycling systems to eliminate litter and dumping
- Freedom from pollution, including hazardous air, soils and industries
- Elimination of blight and abandoned or hazardous properties
- Transit options that eliminate air pollution

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Improved Personal Health
- Community Activation
- Reduced Stress
- Improved Property Values



Walk Score
■ Walker's Paradise
■ Very Walkable
■ Somewhat Walkable
■ Car Dependent
■ Extremely Car Dependent

FOOD SECURITY

Creating neighborhoods where the healthy choice is the easy choice begins with the basics, access to healthy food, including:

- Convenient access to fresh, affordable, and nutritious foods, whether at nearby grocery stores, community gardens, or local farmers markets
- Healthy restaurant options
- Limited fast food, liquor and convenient stores
- Urban farming and garden programs
- Nutrition and cooking classes

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Healthy Eating
- Increased Physical Activity
- Reduced Obesity
- Improved Personal Health
- Greater Social Cohesion

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY

The strength and stability of a neighborhood impacts the health of residents through social engagement, ownership and empowerment, including:

- Building community pride and identity
- Engaging residents to invest in their neighborhood
- Locally organized civic events to bring people together
- Multi-generational activities, especially at schools or senior centers
- Programs that celebrate the history and future of a neighborhood

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Community Activation
- Safer Neighborhood
- Greater Social Cohesion
- Increased Community Pride
- Reduced Stress
- Improved Property Values

PUBLIC SPACES AND AMENITIES

Neighborhoods designed to promote healthy lifestyles have quality public spaces and the infrastructure to make it easy to walk or bike as part of a daily routine, including:

- Complete Streets (streets designed for transit, pedestrians, and cyclists)
- Greenery and shade along pedestrian routes
- Wide sidewalks
- Dense, mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods
- Accessible libraries, clinics, parks, schools and recreational centers
- Safe routes to schools

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- Increased Physical Activity
- Reduced Obesity
- Improved Personal Health
- Community Activation
- Safer Neighborhood
- Greater Social Cohesion

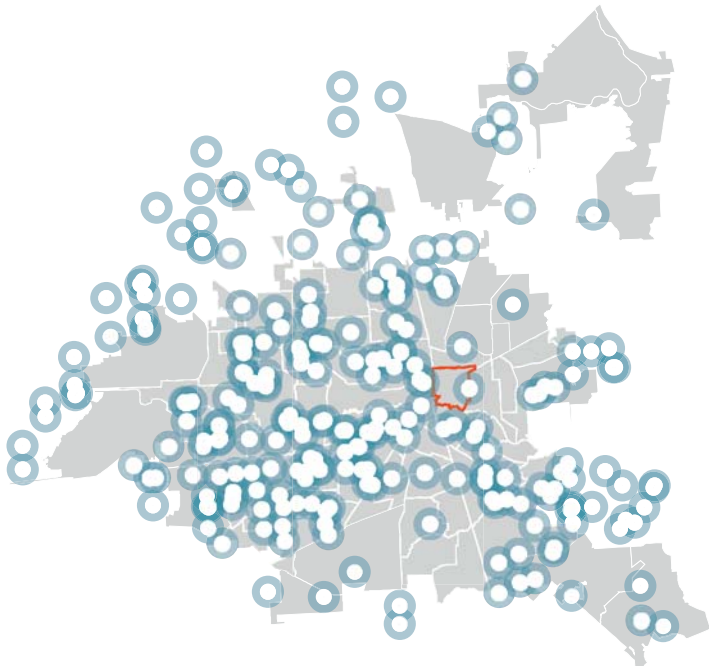
SAFETY

A healthy community is a safe community, and safety is influenced by how well a neighborhood is cared for, including:

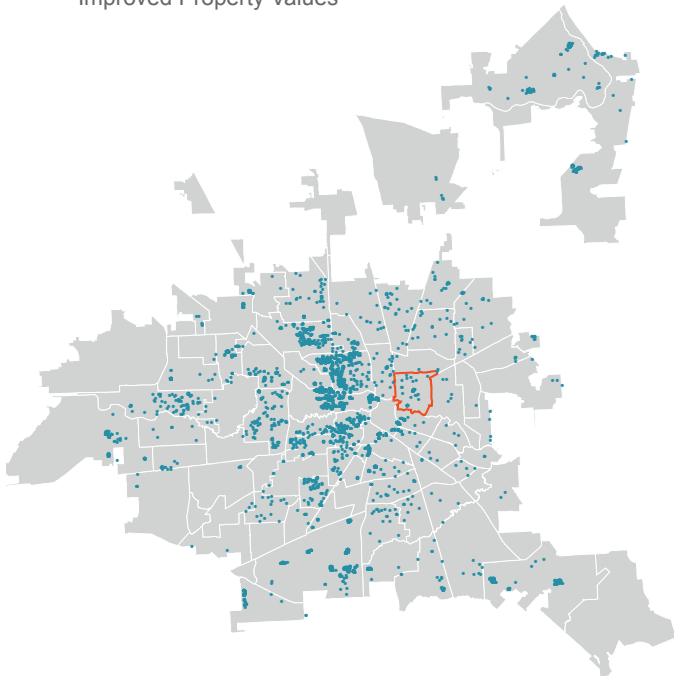
- Freedom from crime and violence
- Adequate street lighting
- Freedom from stray animals
- Resident led safety programs, for example Neighborhood Watch
- Well maintained vacant lots and vacant homes
- No littering or dumping

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

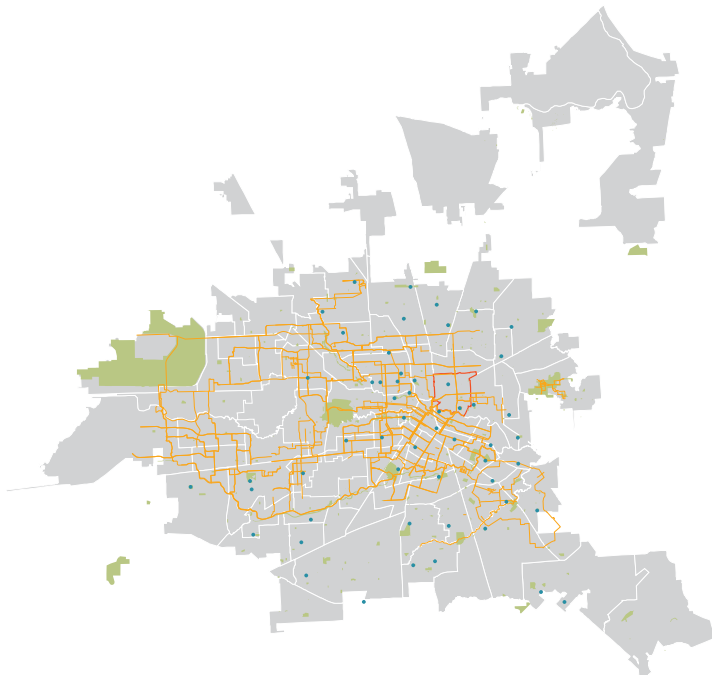
- Increased Physical Activity
- Reduced Obesity
- Improved Personal Health
- Community Activation
- Safer Neighborhood
- Greater Social Cohesion
- Increased Community Pride
- Reduced Stress
- Improved Property Values



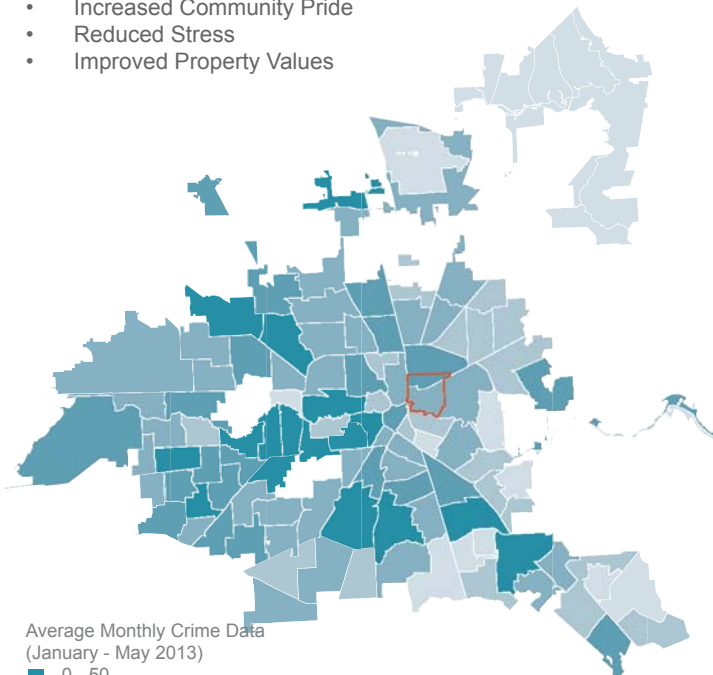
Map of Grocery Stores (2011)



Single-Family Housing Permits (2012)

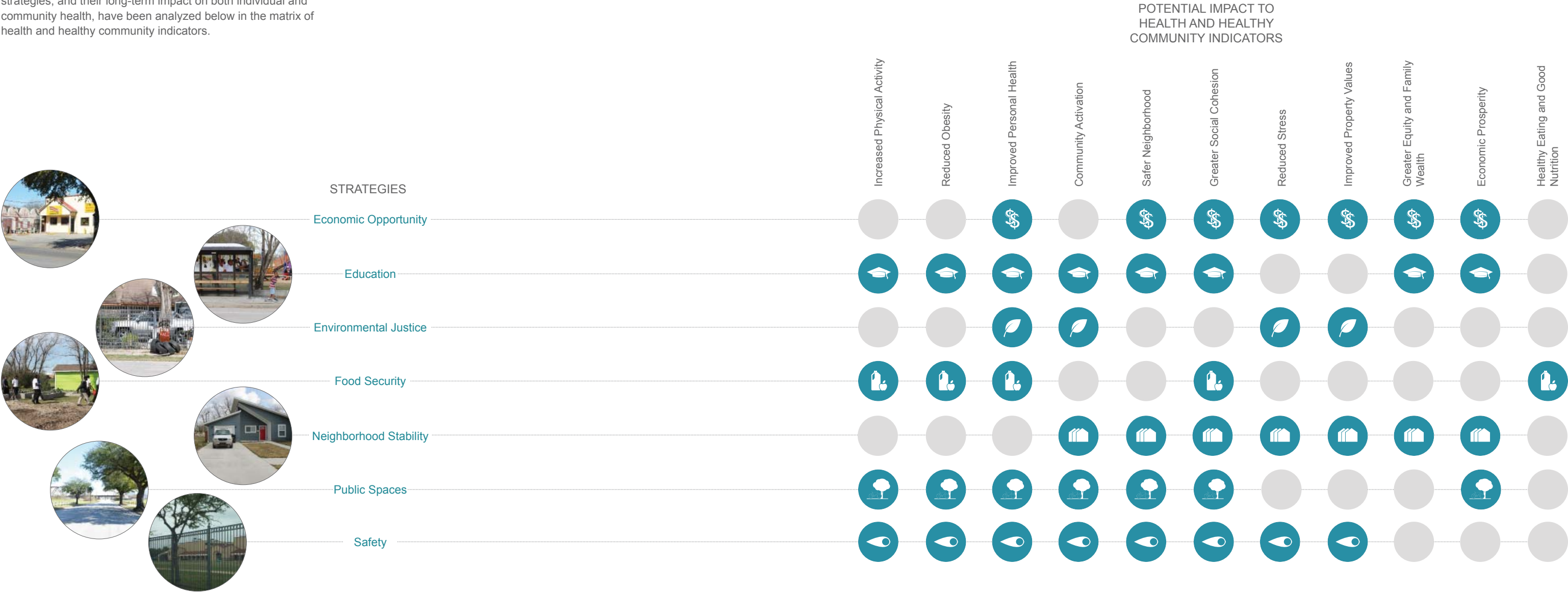


Public Amenities
Parks
Bike Routes
Community Centers

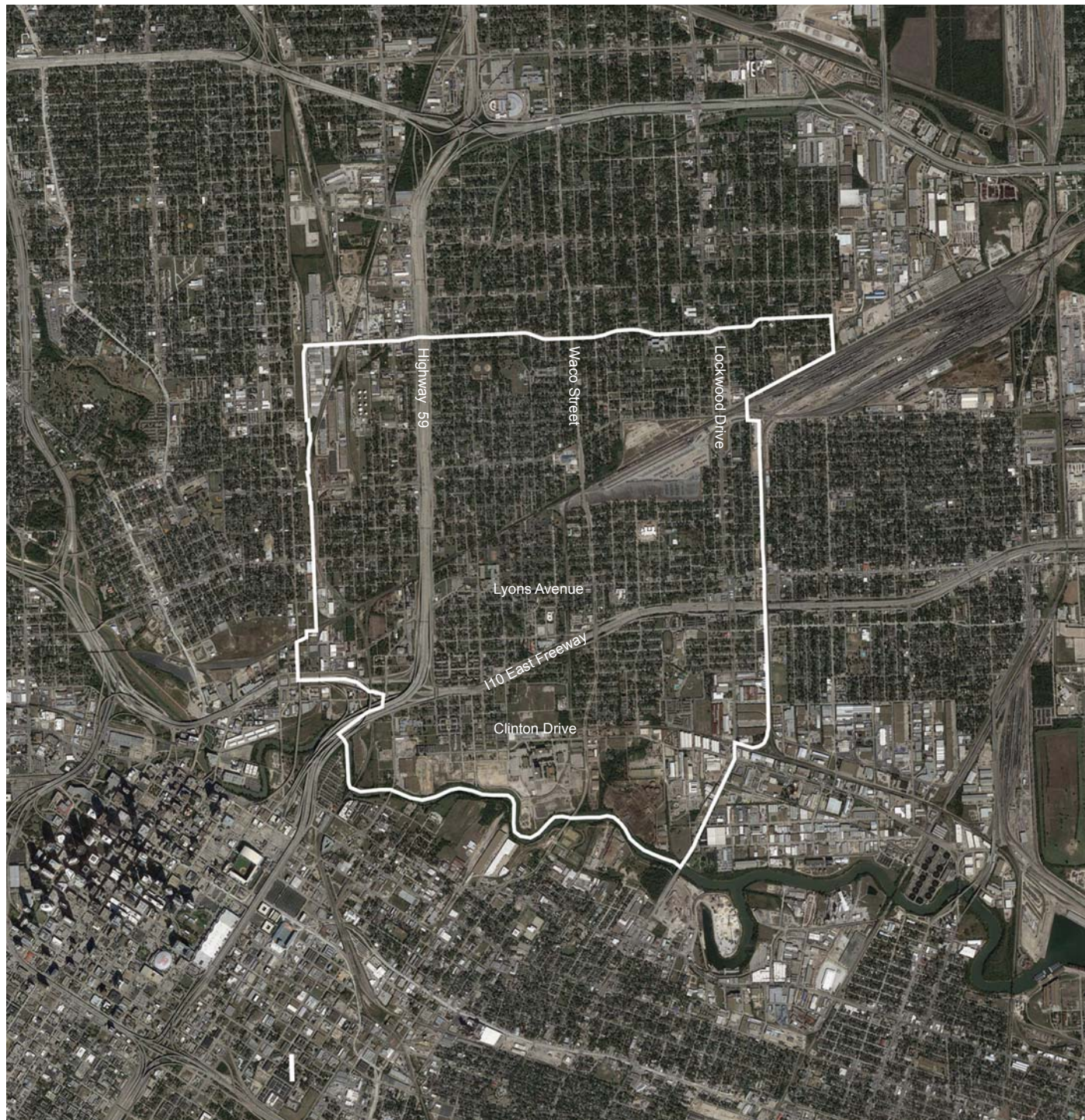


Average Monthly Crime Data
(January - May 2013)
0 - 50
51 - 100
101 - 150
151 - 200
200 +

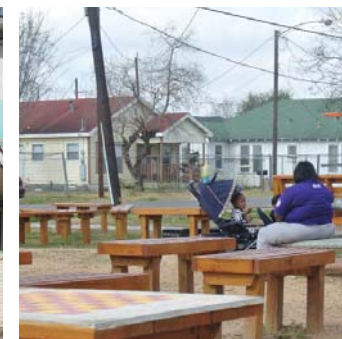
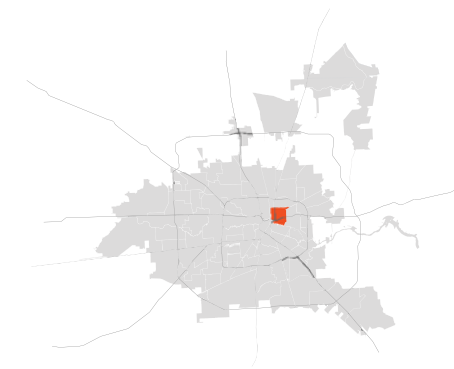
The seven healthy community design strategies address economic opportunity, education, environmental justice, food security, neighborhood stability, public spaces, and safety. The seven strategies focus on building a healthy community by increasing physical activity, social cohesion, economic prosperity, equity and healthy eating, while reducing obesity and stress. The seven strategies, and their long-term impact on both individual and community health, have been analyzed below in the matrix of health and healthy community indicators.



Fifth Ward



Fifth Ward



The Fifth Ward is a historic neighborhood just northeast of downtown Houston. The neighborhood is bounded by Collingsworth Street on the north, Lockwood Drive on the east, Jensen Drive on the west, and Buffalo Bayou on the south. The neighborhood's name, Fifth Ward, comes from the political ward system of governance used in Houston during the 19th century.

For much of its history the Fifth Ward grew alongside Houston and developed into the heart of the Black community. During these early years the neighborhood prospered. In the middle of the twentieth century residents began moving to the suburbs, the population declined and many businesses closed. Compounding the exodus, two freeways (Interstate 10 and Highway 59) were constructed through the heart of the community in the 1960s, quartering the neighborhood and creating significant barriers that led to decay.

Since the middle of twentieth century the neighborhood has seen significant change. As the population declined vacant buildings, storefronts and lots became more prevalent. As abandonment

accelerated violence and crime took hold of the neighborhood, and for a short time the area was known as the "Bloody Fifth."

Over the last twenty years new development, affordable housing, and public spaces have begun to transform the neighborhood. The historic De Luxe Theater is currently being renovated for use as a performance space, and will include new retail spaces. A new health facility is also being planned. These changes, along with the possible Hurricane Recovery investment in new housing, have begun to create real transformation.

Today, proximity to downtown, affordable land and vacant lots are considered an opportunity. Yet, the neighborhood continues to face significant challenges—poverty rates are high, chronic diseases impact too many residents, home ownership is low, and the quality of existing housing is deteriorating. The goal of this study is to focus on community design strategies that will directly address the health and well-being of residents, pointing to new solutions for creating healthy communities.



RIGHT, From Top to Bottom: Aftermath of the Great Fifth Ward Fire, 1912; De Luxe Theater, 1950s; and Lyons Avenue and Jensen, 1956
OPPOSITE PAGE: Aerial Photographs from 1953 and 1978

History

The neighborhood we define today as the Fifth Ward was first settled in the late 1800s. In 1866, as the population expanded, Houston’s political leaders added the area to the existing four political wards, and the Fifth Ward was born. The ward system of governance was eliminated in 1906 but the identity of the neighborhood would remain unchanged, as it did for the other six wards.

In the 1870s the Fifth Ward was fairly diverse, but by the turn of the twentieth century the area became predominantly African American. During the 1880s the Fifth Ward prospered, sparked by a building boom and the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Mount Vernon United Methodist Church, founded in 1865 by former slave Rev. Toby Gregg, is the oldest institution in the Ward. There are five other churches over 100 years old.

In 1912 the Great Fifth Ward Fire destroyed much of the neighborhood including 119 houses, 116 boxcars, nine oil tanks, 13 industrial plants, and St. Patrick’s Catholic Church and school. In 1927 Phyllis Wheatley High School was constructed, with over 2,600 students and sixty teachers, it was one of the largest Black high schools in America.

In the 1950s the Fifth Ward became the heart of black Houston. Lyons Avenue thrived with over 40 Black-owned businesses, including a pharmacy, a dentist’s office, a parlor, a theater, and several barber shops. By the 1960s, and the decades that

followed, the Fifth Ward like many other urban neighborhoods, began to experience a slow but steady decline. The combined impact of freeway construction, disinvestment, and redlining plagued the neighborhood and led to population loss. These factors combined with the exodus of upper and middle class families to more prosperous neighborhoods in the city as the barriers of segregation came down with the passage of civil rights legislation, would deliver additional blows to the health of the neighborhood.

In the 1960s two major freeways ripped through the heart of the Fifth Ward neighborhood. Interstate 10, running east to west separated the Lyons Avenue corridor from French Town; and Highway 59 severed the core of the Lyons Avenue shopping district from the neighborhoods to the east. The impact to the community was significant. Decay and abandonment occurred along the edges of the freeways and further contributed to the overall decline of the neighborhood. By the 1970s the Fifth Ward had experienced substantial population loss. In the wake of the exodus houses were boarded-up, businesses along Lyons Avenue closed and stood vacant, and the neighborhood experienced further decline.

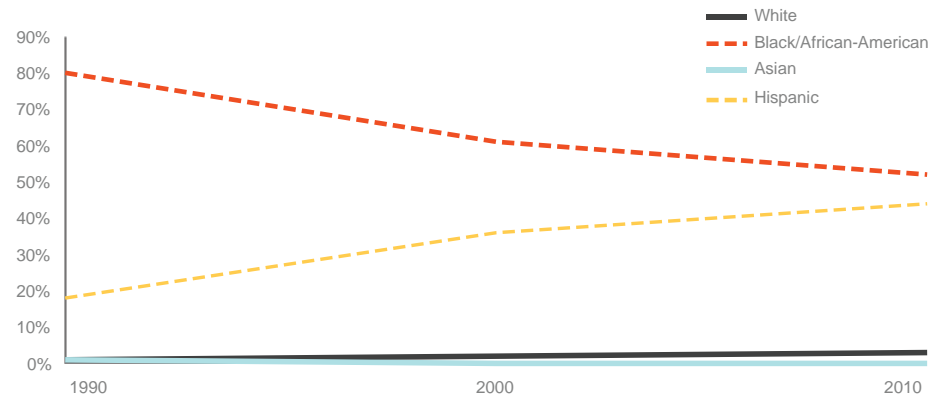
In recent decades new housing construction and other programs and investments have made a difference. Yet the population has continued to decline and demolition has led to an abundance of vacant lots.





ABOVE, Left: Figure Ground, 1974
 ABOVE, Right: Figure Ground, 2010
 BELOW: Photo, K. Roosen, J. Gardosik, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado
 BELOW, Right: Population Ethnicity, 1990-2010

Over the last forty years the Fifth Ward has lost a substantial amount of its built fabric.



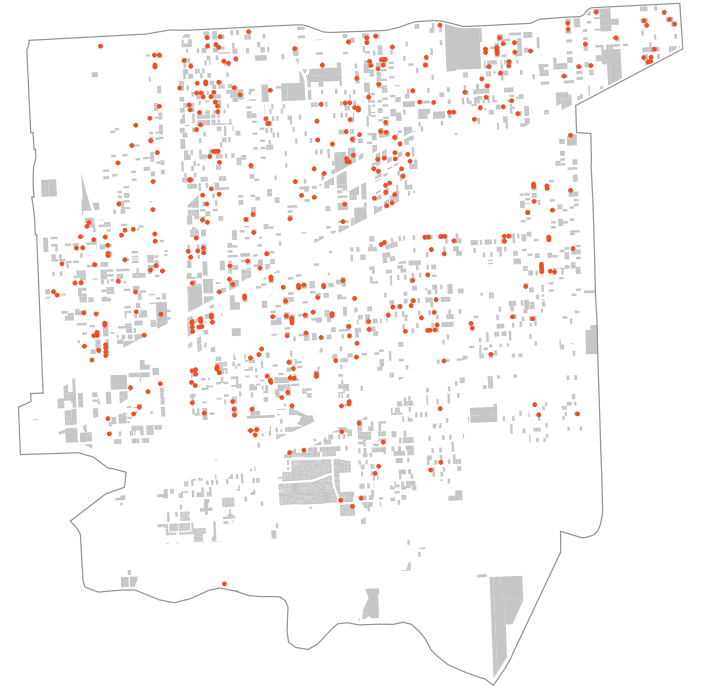
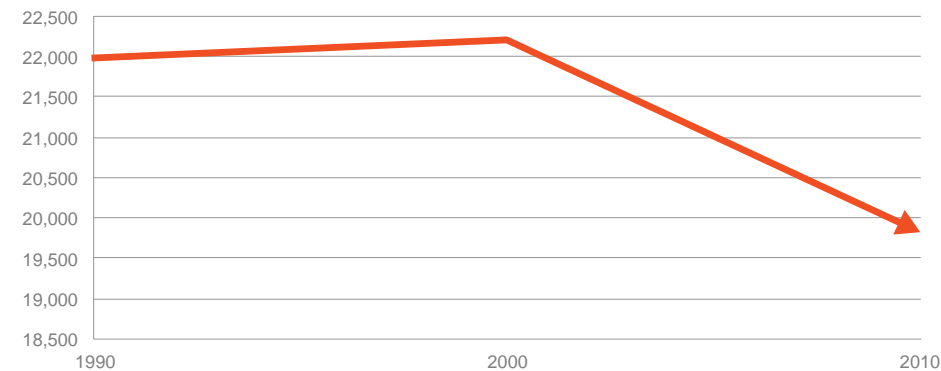
Context

The Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood is roughly 5 square miles in area and home to 19,823 people. The population density of the area is approximately 3,964 people per square mile, slightly higher than the average population density in the City of Houston. Over the last twenty years the population in the neighborhood has decreased by 10% compared to a 29% increase in the city of Houston. In addition, the population of Fifth Ward is becoming more diverse. Between 1990 and 2010 the Hispanic population nearly tripled from 18% to 44%, the African-American population decreased 15%, and the number of foreign born residents increased significantly from 5% to 29%.

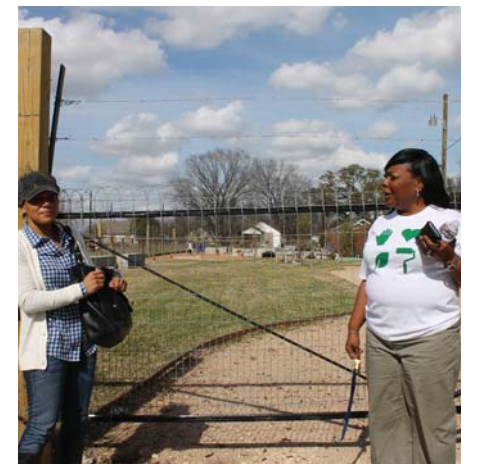
Since the 1970s the Fifth Ward has lost a substantial portion of its built fabric. This loss, illustrated on the opposite page, is distributed evenly across the neighborhood. Today, there are over 500 vacant lots in the Fifth Ward and 19% of the existing housing is vacant. In addition, according to the City of Houston there are over 400 tax delinquent properties in the area.

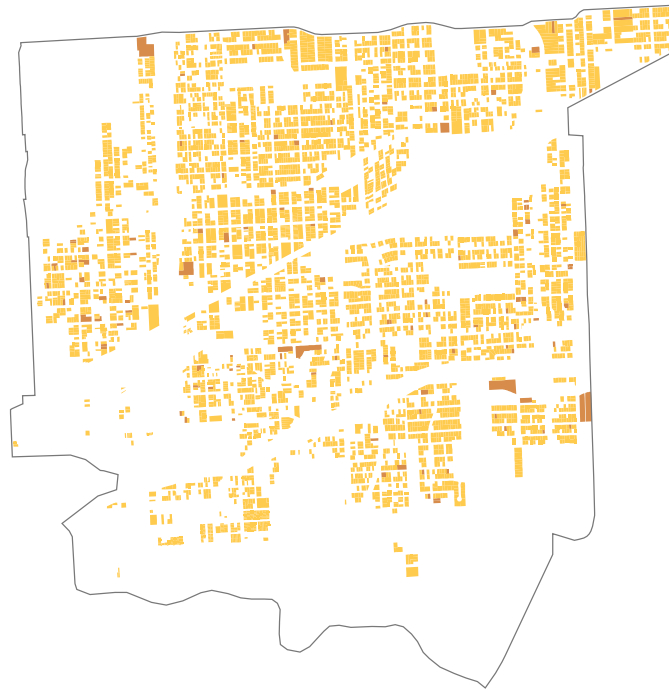
Vacant land and housing can pose a challenge for area residents, leading to a negative perception of the neighborhood and illicit unwanted activity, such as dumping. However, vacant land can also be seen as an opportunity for new development and innovative design strategies that can lead to a healthier community.

To this end, a recent study by the AIA R/UDAT Team completed in partnership with the Fifth Ward CRC reported that 100 new housing units could potentially be absorbed every year in the Fifth Ward if population growth projections are accurate. At this rate, existing vacant lots would be absorbed in five years.



ABOVE: Map of Vacant Land
 Vacant Land
 Tax Delinquent Property
 BELOW, Left: Population Change, 1990-2010
 BELOW: Cane River Garden Photo

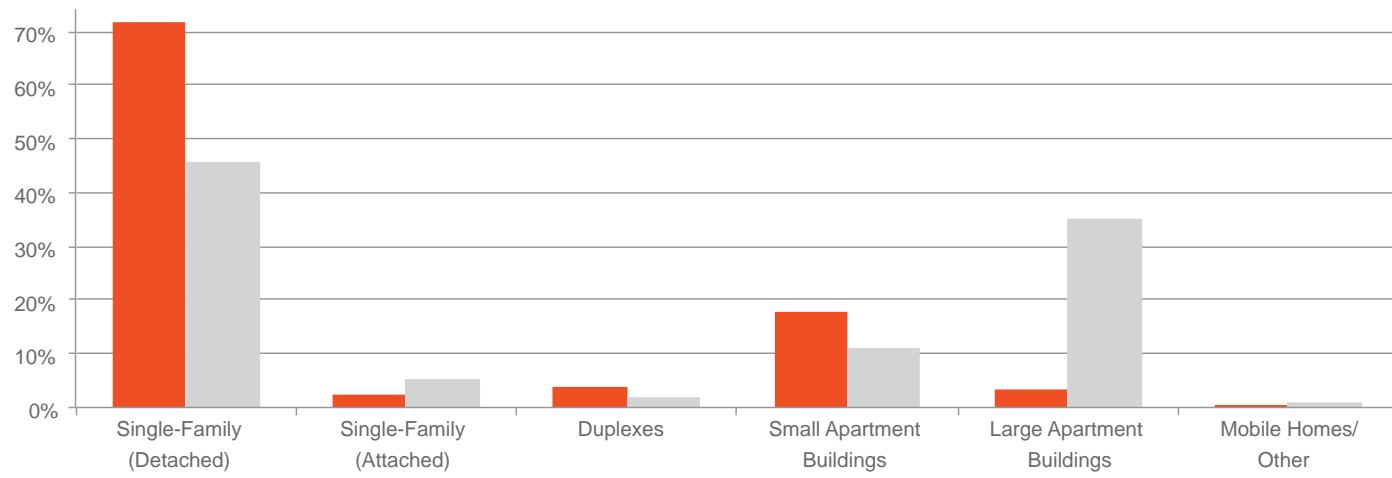




The Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood is comprised of residential districts with small pockets of industrial land uses on the east, south, and west. Housing in the neighborhood is primarily small wood frame structures on 5000 square foot lots. The single-family detached home comprises 72% of all housing in the neighborhood. The remaining housing is a combination of attached single-family, duplexes, or apartments in buildings with 9 units or less. Comparatively 46% of all housing in Houston is single-family, and 35% is in large apartment complexes with 10 or more units. 19% of all housing is vacant in the Fifth Ward.

There are more renters in the Fifth Ward than home owners. 62% of households rent, and 38% own. In 2010, over 2,000 renters in the Fifth Ward were cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their income towards rent) of these renters, approximately 25% were over the age of 65. In the city of Houston 55% rent and 45% own. However, the percent of home owners in the Fifth Ward is climbing, in 2000 only 34% of households owned.

ABOVE: Residential Land Use
 Multi-Family
 Single Family
 BELOW: Housing by Type, 2010
 Fifth Ward
 Houston



Between 2009 and 2011 over 1,000 parcels in the Fifth Ward changed ownership, representing 11% of all lots. Two large vacant parcels south of I-10 could transform the neighborhood. The former 136-acre KBR property, on the banks of Buffalo Bayou, recently sold. Just north of this site is the former MDI Superfund site, which was remediated in 2004. If both of these sites were re-developed an additional 1400 to 1700 housing units would be added to the neighborhood, housing 4000 to 5000 new residents. New development has the potential to increase the population density and draw additional investment to the neighborhood, enhancing everyone's access to services and amenities, such as grocery stores, and increase employment opportunities.



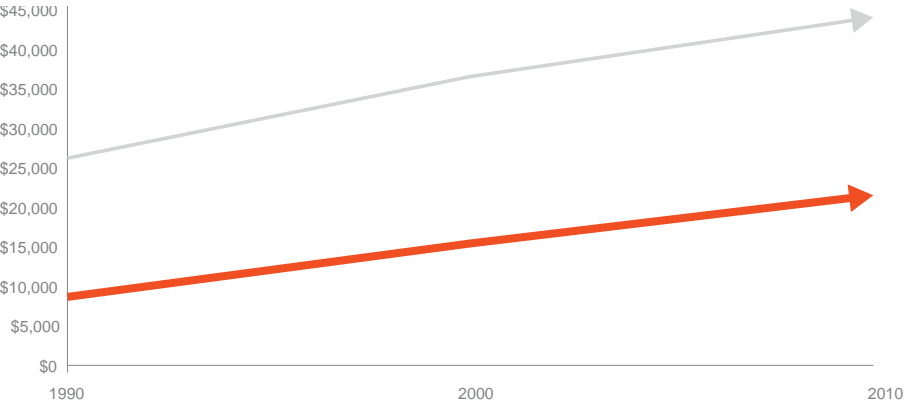
ABOVE: Property Owners Change, 2009-2011
 Parcel Changed Ownership
 BELOW: Photos, K. Roosen, J. Gardosik, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



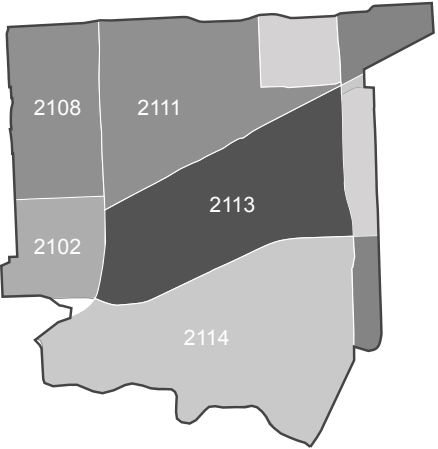
The 2010 median household income in the Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood was \$21,544. Comparatively, the median household income in Houston was \$44,124.

In 1990, 62% of Fifth Ward’s families lived below the federal poverty line. Today 40% of households live in poverty, compared to 22% of Houston’s population. Poverty rates are the highest in census tract 2113 in the central portion of the neighborhood. In this tract 53% of families are below the poverty line. In the northwest part of the neighborhood (tracts 2108 and 2111) poverty rates are 40%.

The five largest employment sectors for residents of the Fifth Ward are Construction, 17%; Health Care 14%; Manufacturing 10%; Retail 8%; and Education 7%.

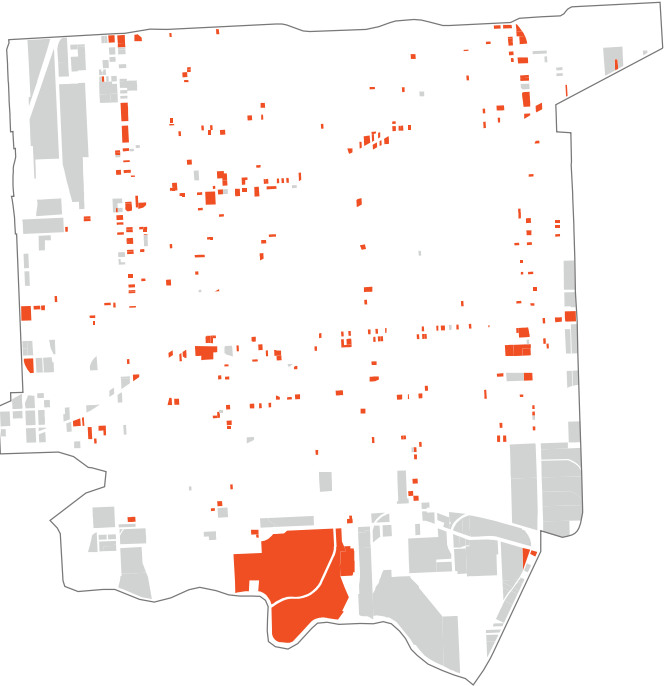


LEFT: Median Household Income, 1990-2010
Fifth Ward
Houston
BELOW, Left: Fifth Ward Photo, K. Roosen, J. Gardosik, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado
BELOW: Percent of Families Below Poverty
20-25%
25-30%
30-40%
40-50%
50-70%

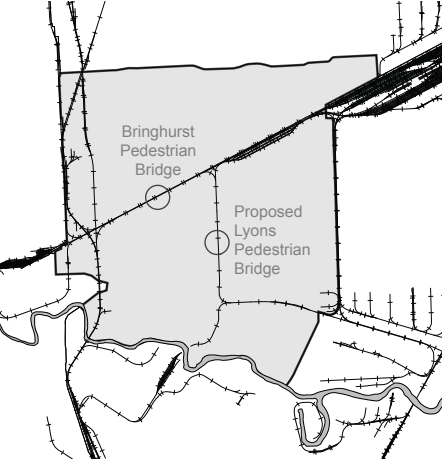


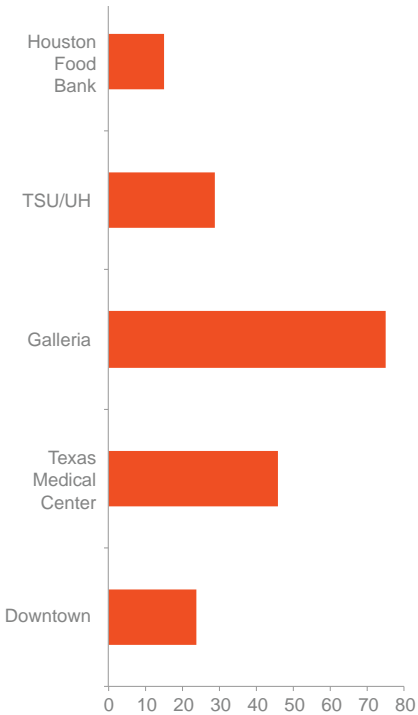
The Fifth Ward is bounded on the west and the south by industrial land uses. Many of the industrial uses along Buffalo Bayou, the southern edge of the neighborhood, are being shuttered which will open up this property for new development. Commercial and retail areas are sparsely distributed throughout the community, with concentrations along Lyons Avenue, Highway 59, Lockwood, and Liberty Road. The neighborhood is far underserved with retail, and according to the recent Social Compact Study (2007), residents spend \$58.4 million annually on retail expenditures outside of the neighborhood. Efforts to revitalize Lyons Avenue are seeking to address some of this leakage by providing new retail spaces and encouraging entrepreneurs.

Rail lines crisscross the Fifth Ward neighborhood. The active lines create frequent barriers for pedestrians. In one location where trains frequently stop, a pedestrian bridge has been proposed. The rail line crossing at Bringhurst Street is the site for a \$1.3 million dollar bridge, which is expected to be complete by 2015. Once built, Bringhurst Street and Hailey Street will be closed to vehicular traffic, but Gregg Street will remain open.



ABOVE, Right: Commercial and Industrial Land Uses
Commercial
Industrial
BELOW, Left: Railroad Lines
BELOW, Right: Photos, K. Roosen, J. Gardosik, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado





ABOVE: Graph of Travel Time to Major Destinations (calculated using METRO's Trip Planner)
 ABOVE, Right: Map of METRO Bus Routes
 BELOW: Lyons Avenue, Figure Ground 1974



Transportation and mobility are key factors for building healthy communities. Transit options lead to better health for residents by improving the air quality, increasing or encouraging physical exercise, and creating greater connectivity in a neighborhood—for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders.

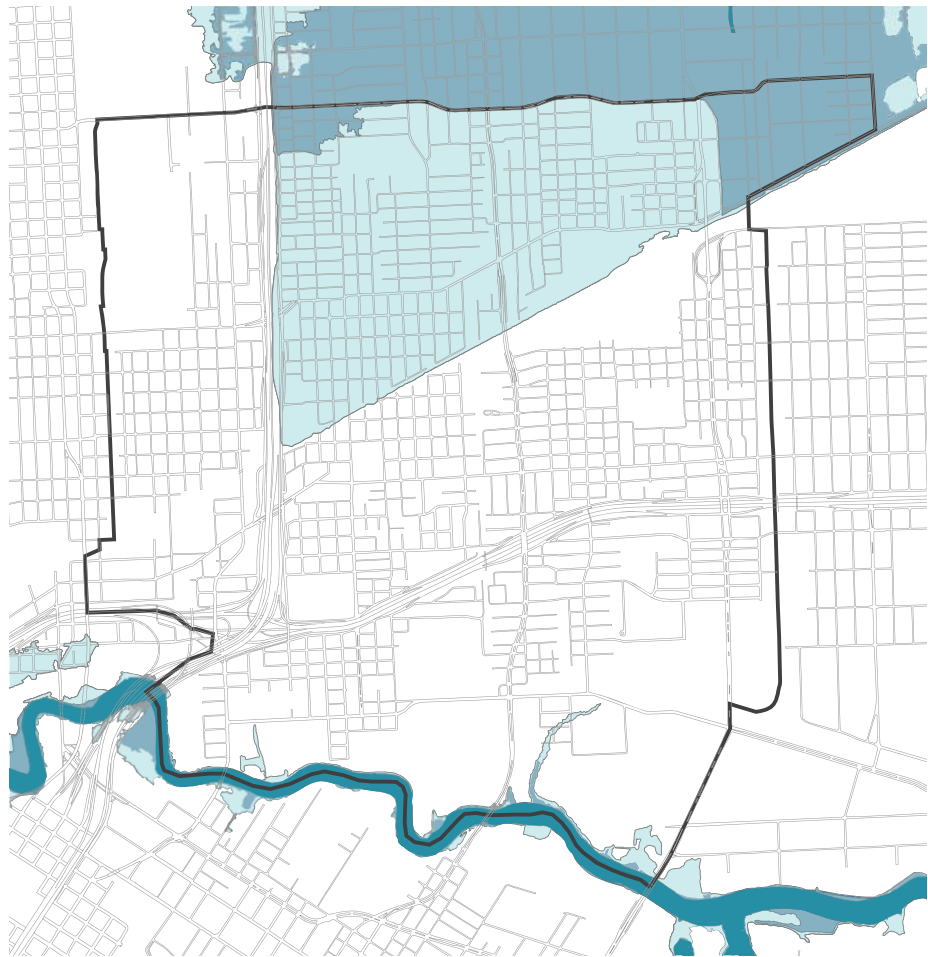
The Fifth Ward shares a major transit center with Denver Harbor. The transit center is located at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Lockwood on the far east side of the neighborhood. Nine bus routes travel through the center, including the 11 Almeda / Nance, 26 Outer Loop Crosstown, 27 Inner Loop Crosstown, 29 TSU / UH Hirsch Crosstown, 30 Clinton / Cullen, 42 Holman Crosstown, 80 Dowling / Lyons, 137 Northshore, and the recently established 348 Food Bank Shuttle. The new Food Bank Shuttle, established to meet a direct need, connects residents directly to the Houston Food Bank with a short and direct bus ride of approximately 15 minutes.

One-third of all households in the Fifth Ward do not have access to a vehicle, impacting nearly 2300 families. Approximately 10% of residents depend on public transportation to get to work, while an additional 12% walk, bike, or work at home. While transit is available, travel times are extensive, for example it takes 22 minutes to get to downtown, a trip of just over three miles.

Lyons Avenue is the central transit and commercial corridor of the neighborhood. The street has suffered from substantial disinvestment, demolition and decay over the decades.

RIGHT, Top: Lyons Avenue Today, AIA R/UDAT Study
 RIGHT, Middle: Historic Lyons Avenue, AIA R/UDAT Study
 BELOW: Lyons Avenue Figure Ground, 2010





RIGHT: Flood Zone Map
 ■ 100 Year
 ■ 500 Year
 BELOW, From Left to Right: Legends
 Playspace and Fifth Ward Jam,
 Photos by J. Gardosik, K. Roosen,
 N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



According to the Trust for Public Land, "nearly half of Americans get less than the recommended minimum amount of physical activity and more than one-third engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all." Parks within walking distance have a direct impact on the amount of physical activity of nearby residents.

The Fifth Ward is very well-served with small neighborhood parks. The neighborhood has 11 parks: Boyce-Dorian, Brewster, Catherine, Evella, Fifth Ward Jam and Splash Pad, Finnigan, Gregg Street, Hennessy, Swiney, Tuffly, and Wipprecht Parks. The parks total 46 acres, or approximately 100 square feet per person. In addition, the Fifth Ward Jam and Reliant Splash Pad were recently developed on a vacant lot on Lyons Avenue, and includes a playground for young children.

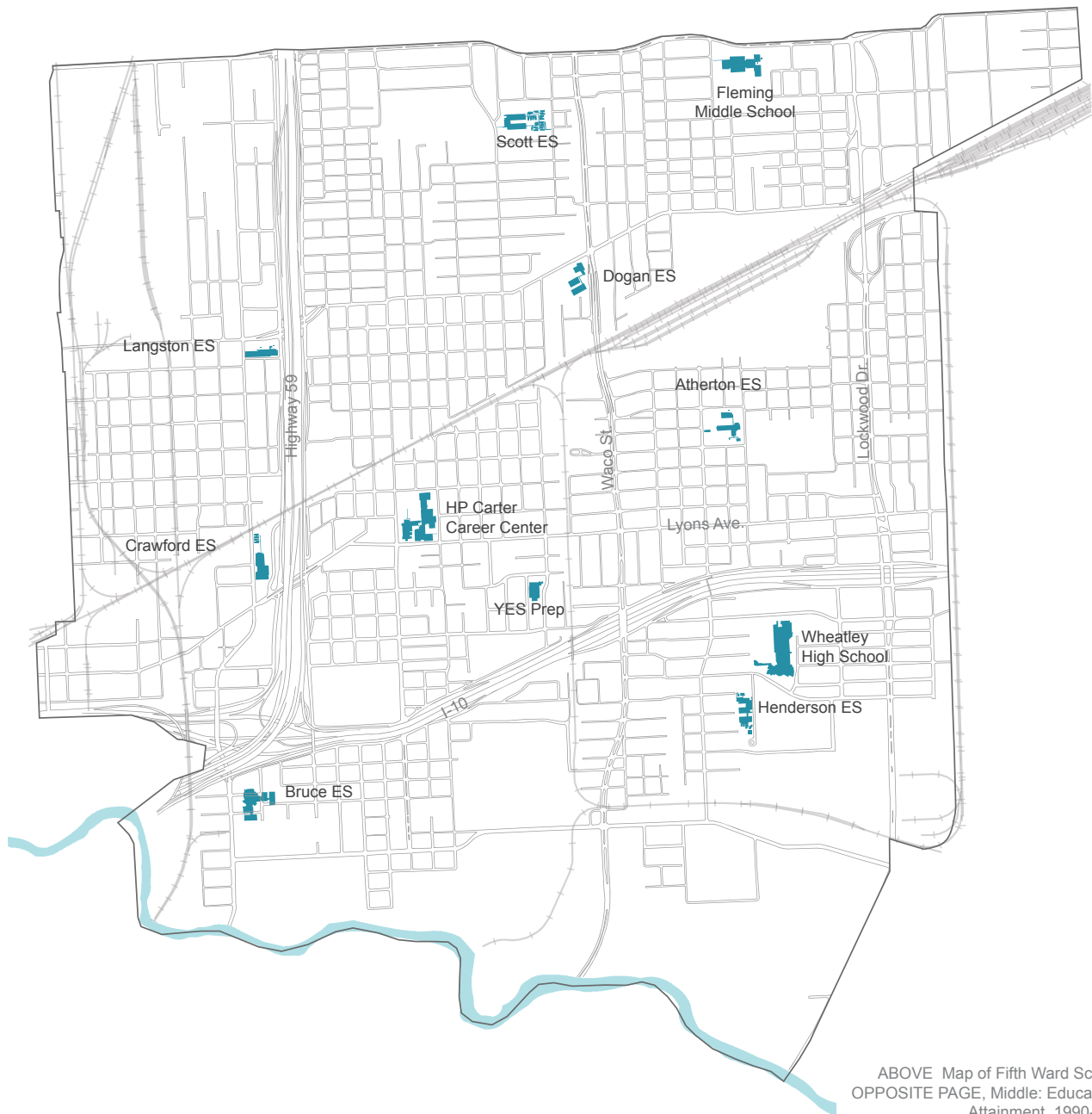
Finnigan Park and Boyce-Dorian Park have swimming pools, basketball courts, sports fields, and community buildings. These two large parks are located less than a mile from one another on the eastern side of the neighborhood near Lockwood Drive.

The southern border of Fifth Ward is Buffalo Bayou, a necklace of parks and trails are planned along this waterway.



ABOVE: Map of Parks
 (1/2-mile radius)
 BELOW, From Left to Right: Japhet Creek
 Trail and Reliant Solar Splash Park,
 Photos by J. Gardosik, K. Roosen,
 N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



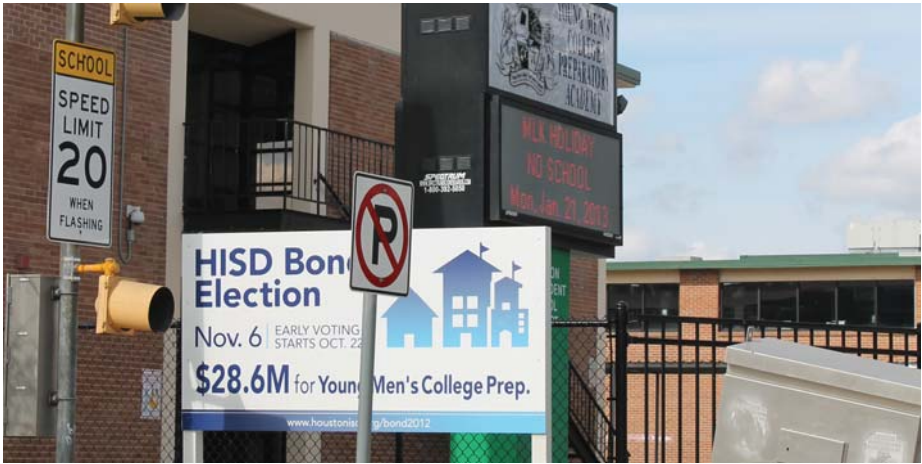
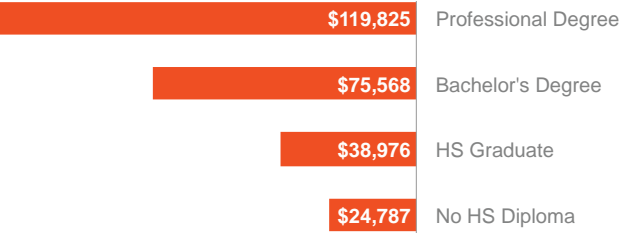
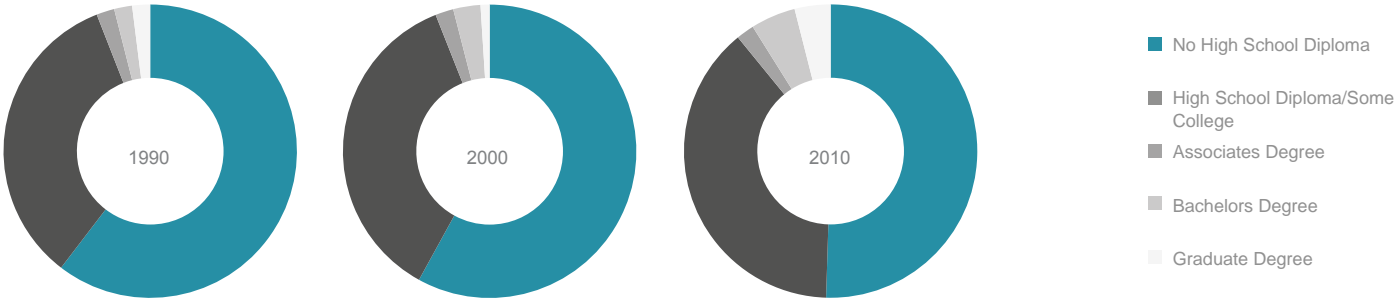


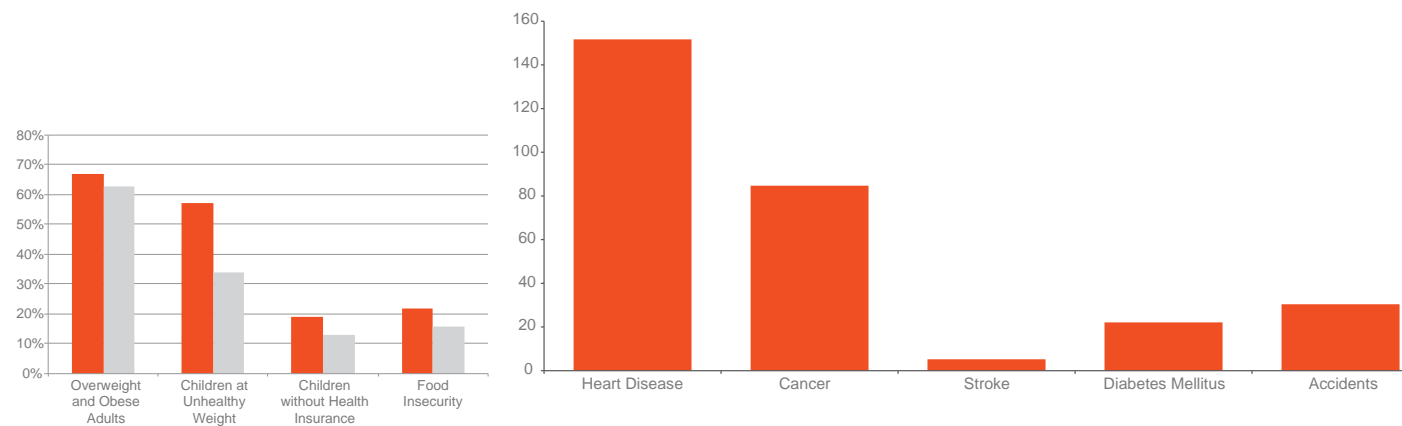
ABOVE Map of Fifth Ward Schools
 OPPOSITE PAGE, Middle: Educational Attainment, 1990-2010
 OPPOSITE PAGE, Bottom: Lyons Avenue and Young Men's College Prep

In many ways education is key to the health and stability of a neighborhood. Education is directly related to income, and individual income impacts access to health care, life expectancy, and the quality of life in a community.

Over the last 20 years the educational success of Fifth Ward residents has increased substantially, yet remains low in comparison to Houston. In 1990 61% of the population had not received a high school diploma, in 2010 the number had dropped to 51%. 9% of residents have a bachelor's or graduate degree, compared to 36% in Houston. Even with the gains in education Fifth Ward residents are twice as likely to have not finished high school as the overall population of Houston.

The Fifth Ward has ten public schools, seven elementary schools, one middle school, Wheatley High School, HP Carter Career Center, Young Men's College Preparatory, and one charter school, YES Prep.



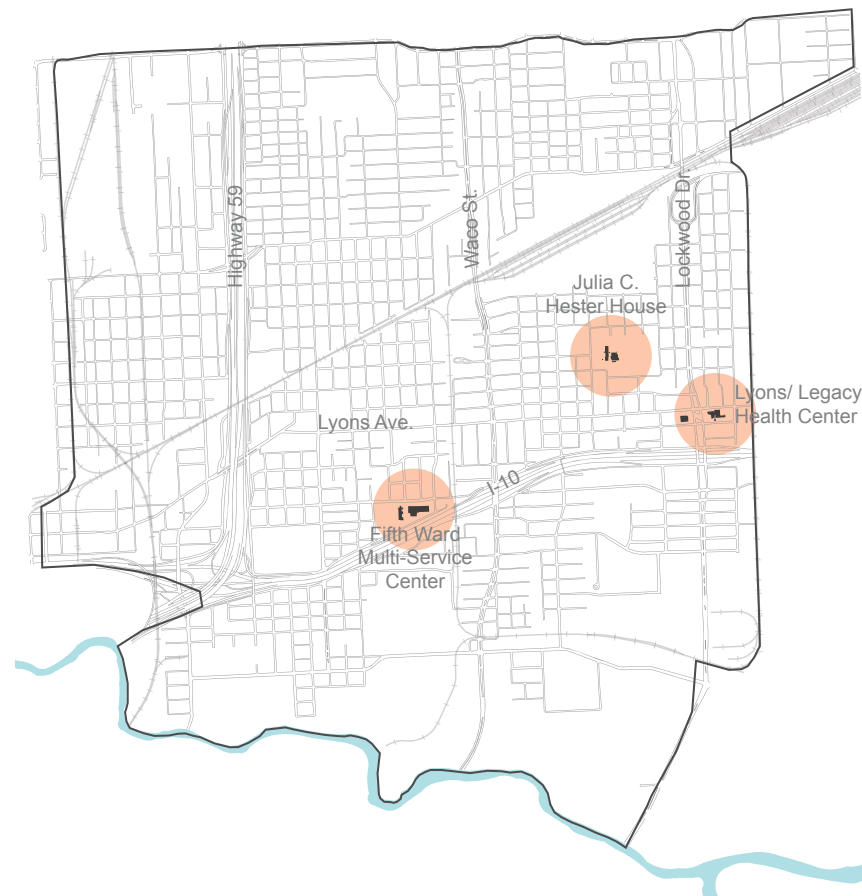


ABOVE: Health Indicators

■ Fifth Ward
■ Houston
 ABOVE, Right: Leading Causes of Death for Fifth Ward Residents as Compared to Houston (Positive numbers indicate higher rates of death)
 RIGHT: Health Services Map

A 2013 study completed by the City of Houston's Department of Health and Human Services measured a number of health indicators in the Fifth Ward. The findings point to the need for additional programs serving children. The data reported that 57% of children were at an unhealthy weight; 19% of children did not have health insurance; and 22% of all residents faced food insecurity.

According to this same study death from chronic diseases are much more prevalent in Fifth Ward than in Houston, this includes heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and accidents. The first step to building a healthy community is to insure that everyone has access to preventative health care and information.

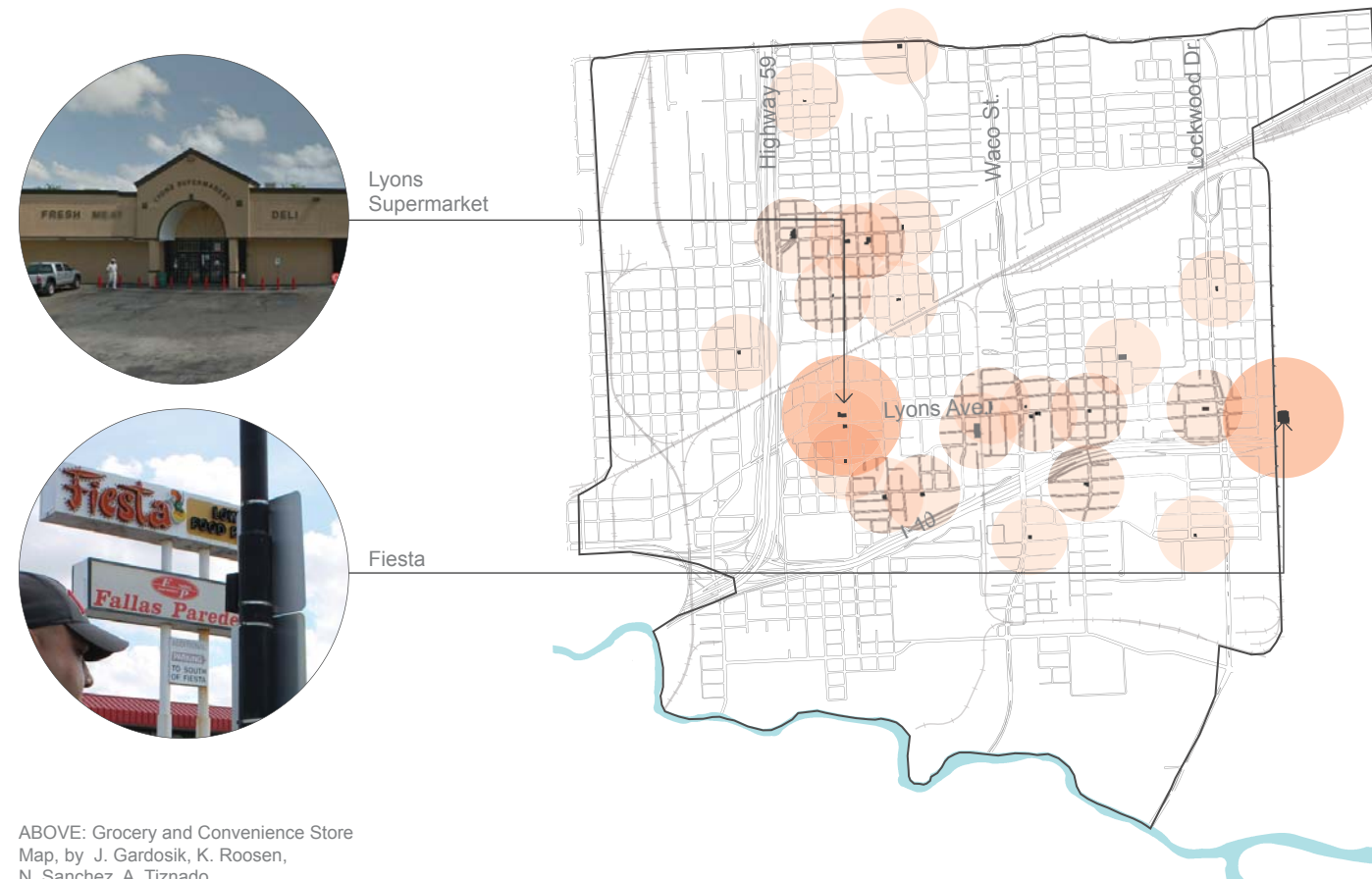


The Fifth Ward has only one grocery store, the small independent Lyons Supermarket. The store is centrally located on Lyons Avenue, but the prices are quite high and the quality of goods poor. A recent study noted that a gallon of milk at Lyons Supermarket was priced at \$4.99, while at Fiesta, located just outside the neighborhood, the same gallon cost \$3.79. According to the 2007 Social Compact Study residents spend \$24 million each year outside the neighborhood on groceries and could easily support an additional 70,000 s.f. supermarket.

There are small convenience and corner stores scattered throughout the neighborhood. CAN DO Houston, an organization committed to reducing childhood obesity, has been working to

develop the Healthy Corner Store Initiative which would provide fresh produce at local corner stores. CAN DO is also holding Healthy Cooking Classes at Bruce Elementary and has facilitated a Mobile Produce Unit in the Fifth Ward in partnership with Veggie Pals. The produce unit locates near Swiney Park and offers close access to a variety of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables, and also accepts Lone Star Cards.

There are three community gardens in the Fifth Ward, Cane River Gardens, Peavy Senior Center Community Garden, and the Fifth Ward Community Garden and Food Co-op. The neighborhood is also home to an urban farm, the Last Organic Outpost.



ABOVE: Grocery and Convenience Store Map, by J. Gardosik, K. Roosen, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



The Fifth Ward has six brownfield sites and one former Superfund site. The MDI Superfund site, located at 3617 Baer Street was placed on the EPA's priority list in 1999. In 2004 the site was remediated at a cost of \$6.6 million. The 36-acre site is targeted for a future planned residential development and is located just north of the 136-acre former KBR site on the banks of Buffalo Bayou that was recently sold.

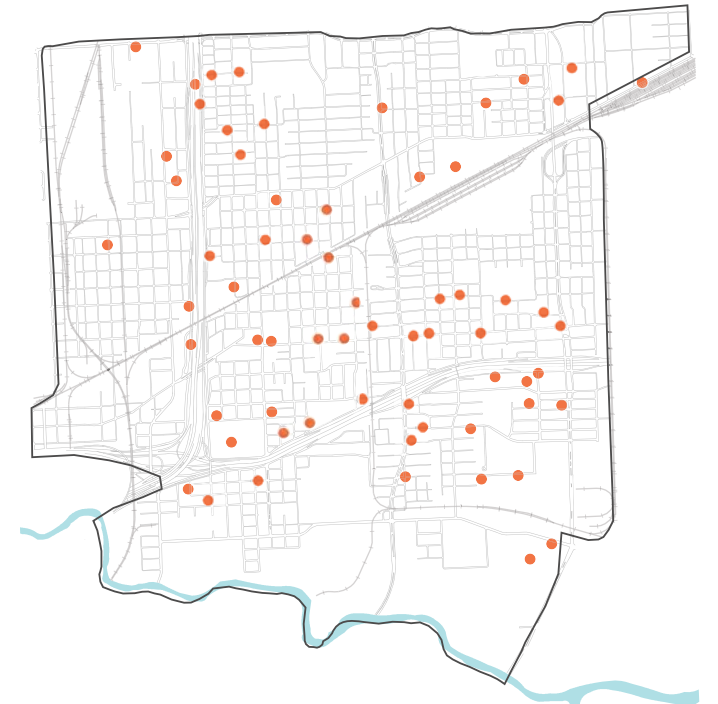
The City of Houston Department of Health and Human Service reports that within one mile of the Fifth Ward there are 59 Toxic Release Inventory reporting facilities, 13 Large Quantity Generators of hazardous waste, 4 facilities that treat, store, or dispose of hazardous waste, 7 major dischargers of air pollutants, 2 major storm water discharging facilities, and 4 radioactive waste site which is also listed as an active Superfund site. In all, these sites total approximately 14% of all monitored facilities and potential hazardous sites in the Houston area.

- Fifth Ward Environmental Reporting Facilities
LEGEND:
- Large Quantity Generator (LQG) of Hazardous Waste
 - Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) Facility
 - Major Discharger of Air Pollutants
 - Brownfield Site
 - Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage, or Disposal (TSD) Facility
 - Major Water Pollution Point
 - Source
 - Superfund Site

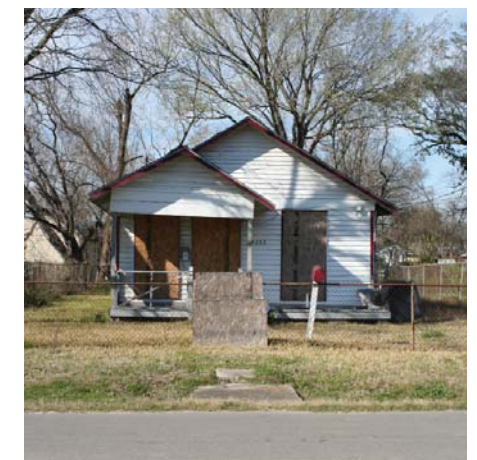


Crime reported for the Fifth Ward in the month of April 2013 is mapped to the right. The map illustrates that crime is concentrated along Lyons Avenue, Highway 59, and Interstate 10. Reported crime declines in the northern residential areas that make up the heart of the neighborhood.

The relationship between crime and health in a neighborhood is difficult to correlate, yet there is increasing evidence that working to diminish the early signs of neglect in the physical environment, such as dumping and poor maintenance, and creating and caring for quality green spaces can be one step towards reducing crime. In addition, working to provide economic opportunity, quality educational resources, and family support can also reduce the factors that might lead to crime.



ABOVE, Right: Map of Reported Crime (30 day period), from My City Map Viewer
BELOW: Fifth Ward Photos

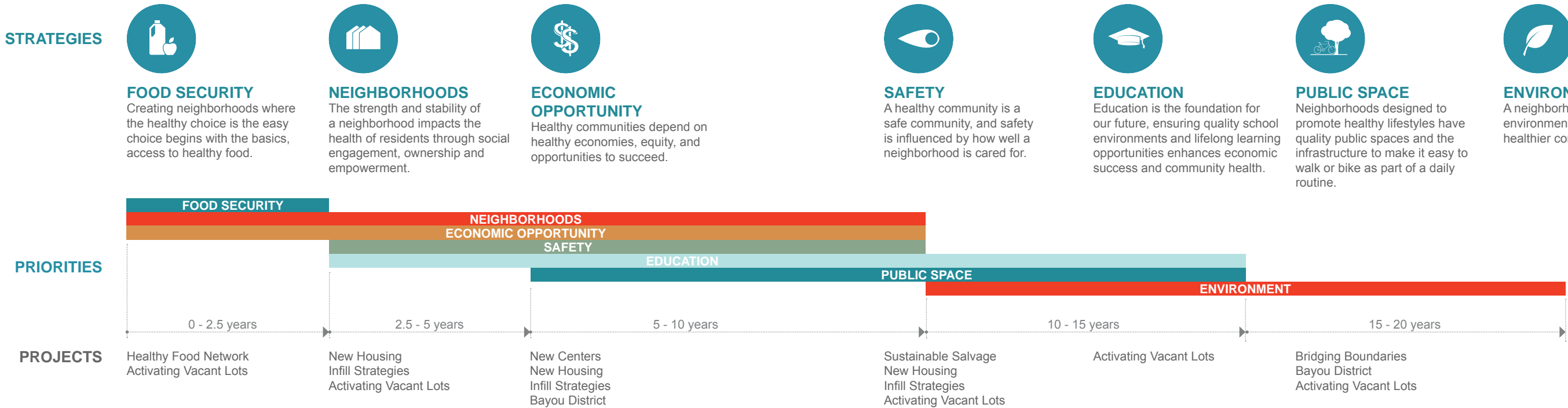


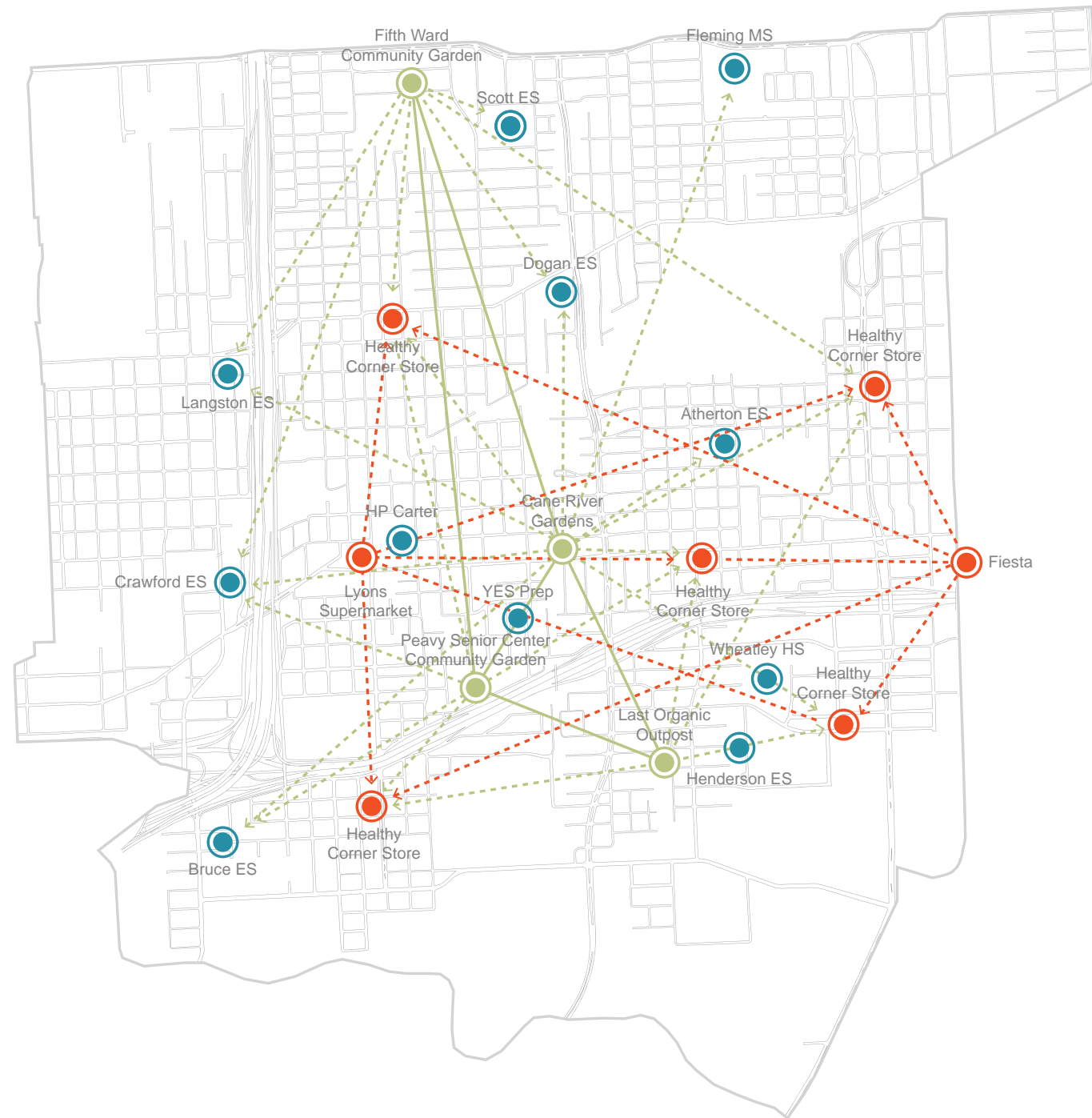
Healthy Community Design Strategies

Healthy Community Design Strategies

Seven strategies, listed below, have been identified to address the challenges of building a healthy neighborhood through community design. The strategies for the Fifth Ward focus on access to food, stable neighborhoods, affordable housing, and economic opportunity. The emphasis is on activating vacant lots with temporary programs and identifying focus areas for permanent infill and redevelopment programs, as well as building on resources and developments that are already occurring. High priority projects include addressing food security, neighborhood stability, and the opportunity and change that come with new affordable housing, employment and entrepreneurial activities. Many of the specific community design ideas work across several strategies, for example a vacant lot activation program will build neighborhood stability, provide access to fresh food and improve education through enhanced access to library resources. Each design idea is covered in detail on the following pages.

The healthy community design strategies for the Fifth Ward focus on access to healthy food, stable neighborhoods, affordable housing, and economic opportunity.





FOOD SECURITY Healthy Food Network

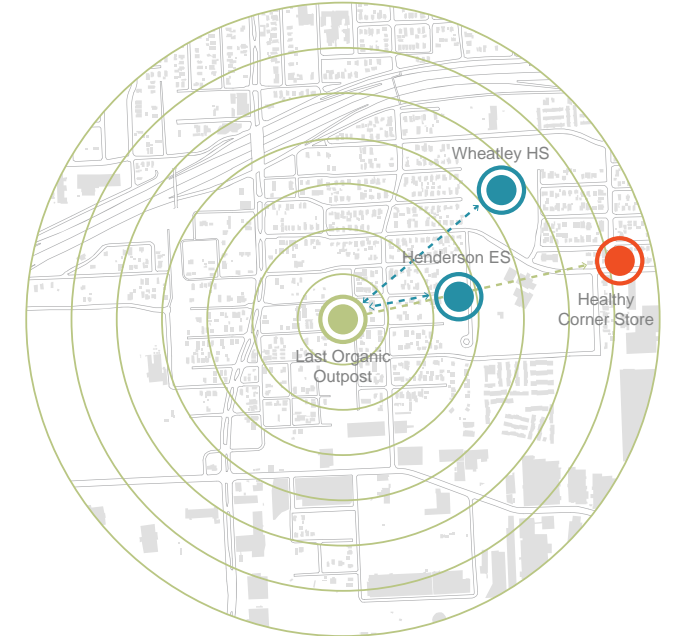
The Fifth Ward neighborhood has only one small grocery store, Lyons Supermarket on Lyons Avenue. Just east of the neighborhood is a Fiesta grocery store, also on Lyons. Fifth Ward is home to three community gardens, Cane River Gardens, Fifth Ward Community Garden, and Peavy Senior Center Garden, and the Last Organic Outpost, an urban farm. In addition, there are ten area schools and five corner stores. The goal of the Healthy Food Network is to link all of these sites as participants in a program to greatly improve accessibility to fresh food in the neighborhood.

Specifically, the Healthy Food Network links community gardens, schools, corner stores, schools and new farming and garden sites to improve food security and access across the neighborhood. Food would be grown in area gardens and farms and distributed to neighborhood corner stores and area schools for lunches and snacks. As a means to further improve food security, additional community garden sites should be identified and developed. The I-Grow Houston Initiative is a program that transforms vacant tax delinquent property into new community gardens in areas with limited access to healthy food. The program is part of the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority, which forecloses on vacant properties that are long-term tax delinquent. The Fifth Ward neighborhood has over 400 parcels that are potential candidates for this program.

RIGHT: Detail of Healthy Food Network
BELOW: Cane River Gardens and Last Organic Outpost Photos
OPPOSITE PAGE, Top: Concept Diagram for the Proposed Healthy Food Network



Food grown at local community gardens would be distributed to local corner stores and area schools.



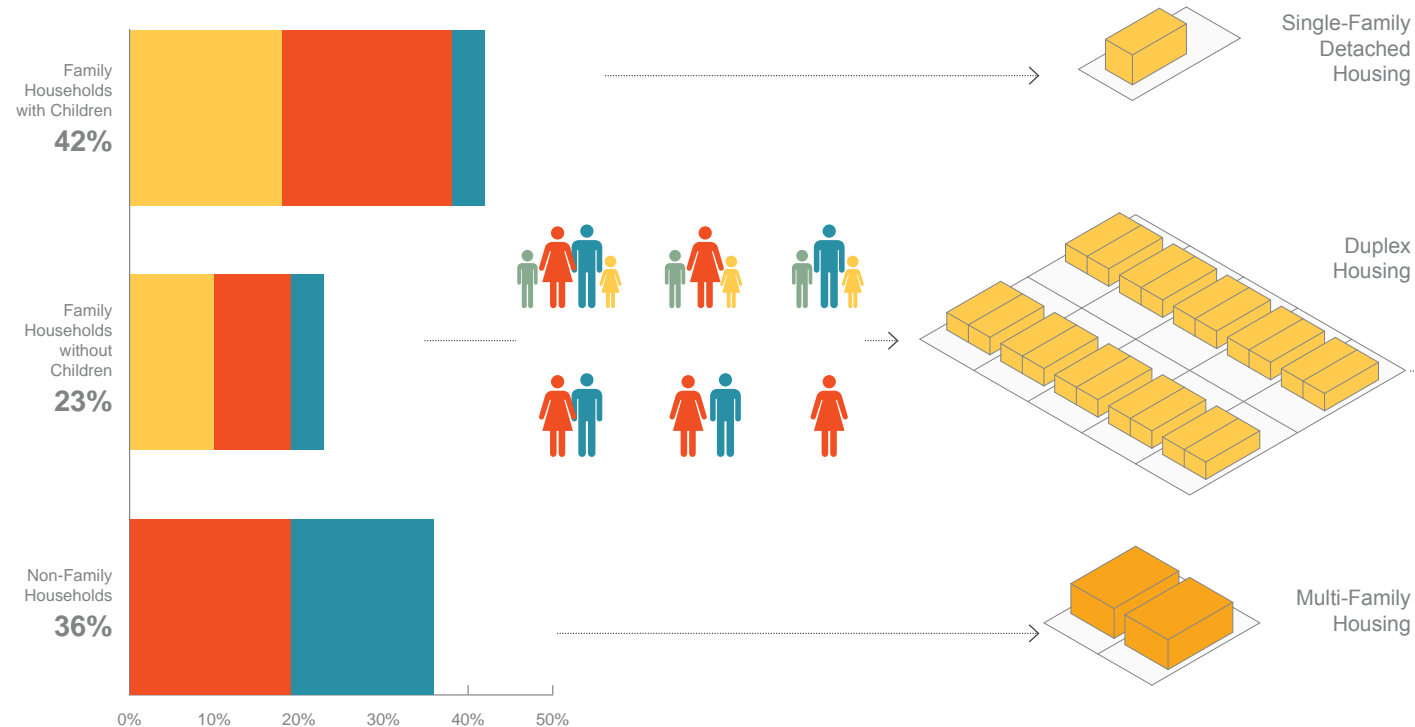


NEIGHBORHOODS New Housing Typologies

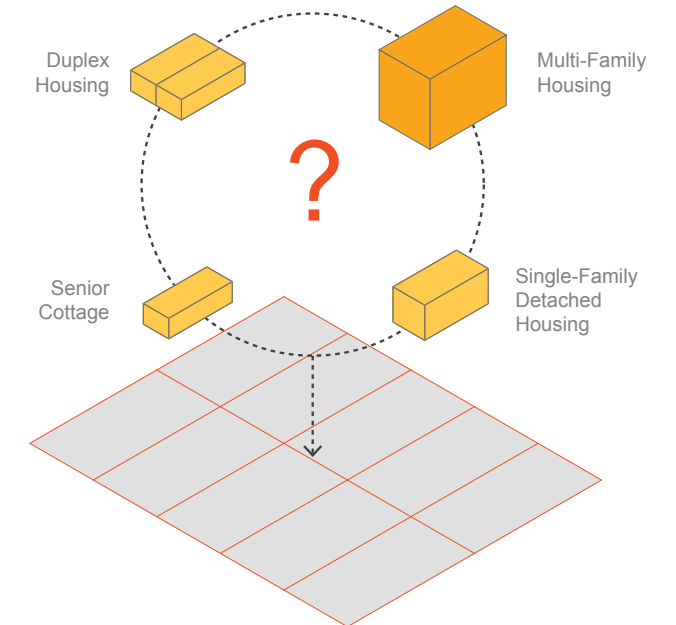
Housing is one of the most important units that comprise our neighborhoods. Exploring different housing typologies—such as duplexes, rental cottages, and multi-family—in the Fifth Ward can contribute to the development of a sustainable and healthy community. This includes creatively combining owner and rental properties, affordable and market rate units, and units targeted to families and seniors or singles. The aim is to add density, build on the context, and to create a multi-generational and mixed-income neighborhood.

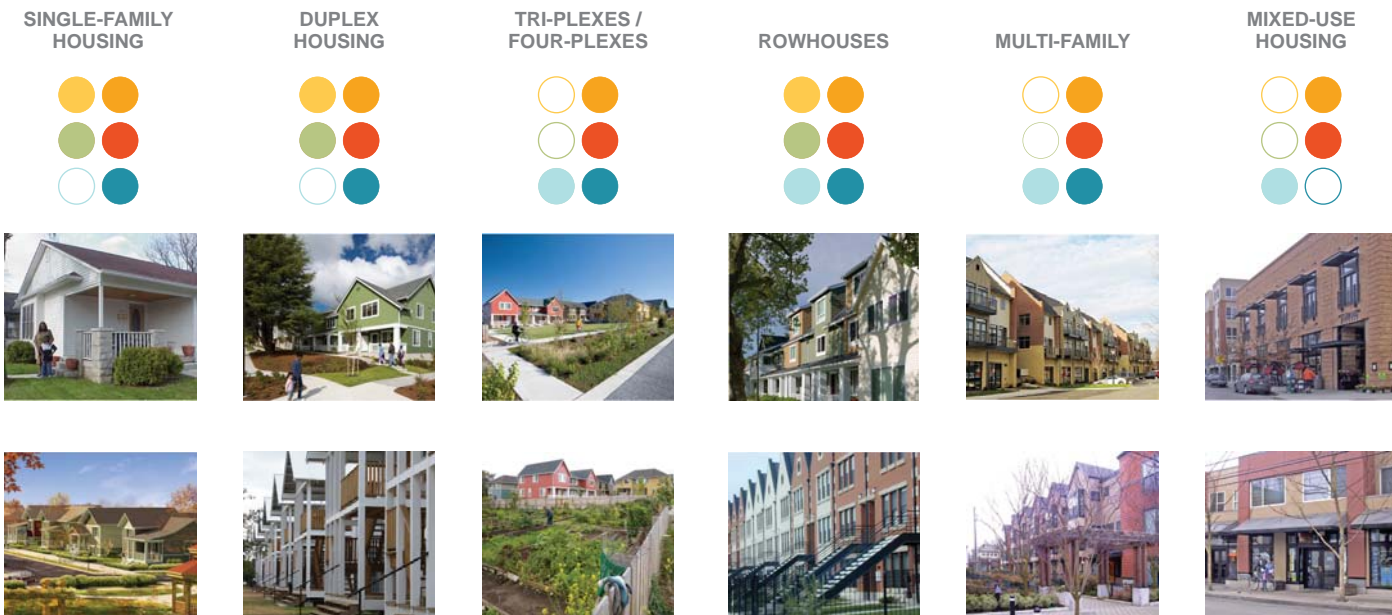
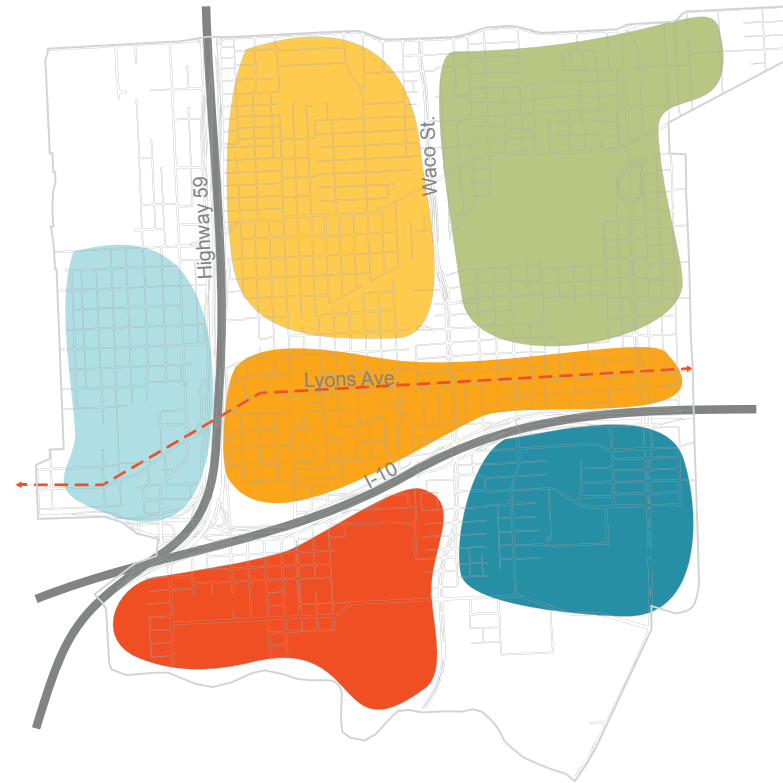
An analysis of existing households in the Fifth Ward illustrates that families with children make up the majority of households, 42%. The second largest household type is non-family households, defined as roommates, relatives, singles, or other partners who are not married, 36%. The third is family households without children, 23%. In addition, 2% of households are headed by residents under the age of 25, 38% by householders age 25-44, 34% by householders age 45-64, and 26% by seniors over the age of 65.

Developing housing that meet the needs of diverse households, by both type and income, has the potential to create a strong and healthy neighborhood where residents support one another. Furthermore, organizing this housing around shared green spaces or gardens can create places for people to come together.



ABOVE, Left: Fifth Ward Households by Type
 Married Couple
 Female Head of Household
 Male Head of Household



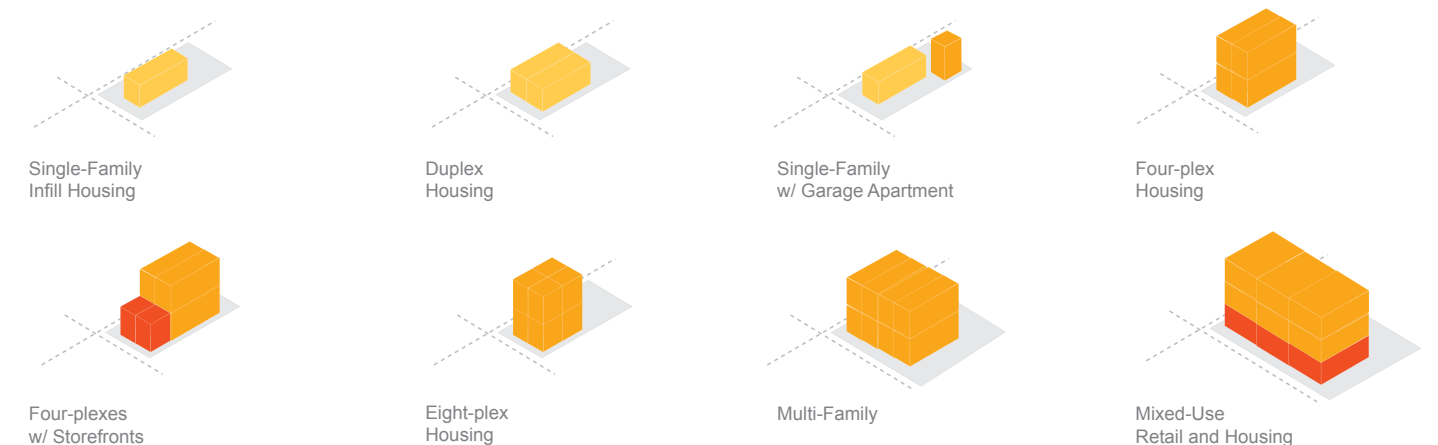


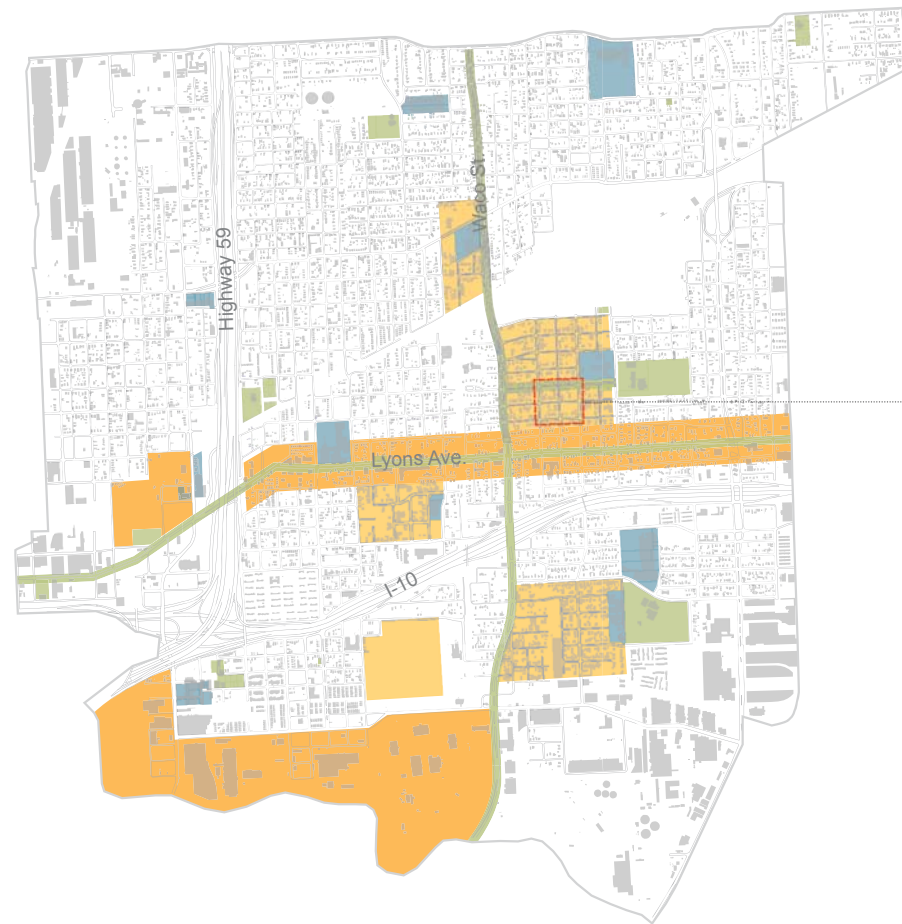
Creating a mixed-income and multi-generational neighborhood is one way to create a healthy community. To this end, and to meet the needs of the diverse households in the Fifth Ward, a full range of housing typologies have been explored, including housing for young singles, families, empty nesters, and seniors. Six housing zones were identified in the neighborhood. Each zone has different qualities, characteristics, and opportunities. For example, single-family infill housing, which is appropriate for many of the zones, should conform to the character and quality of the existing housing.

The typologies include single-family infill housing, duplexes, garage apartment units, senior cottages, fourplexes and eightplexes, multi-family, and high-density mixed use housing. Duplexes and single-family units with garage apartments, or mother-in-law suites, have the opportunity to simultaneously provide affordable housing and generate income for families. This housing type also maintains a traditional scale that is consistent with the neighborhood. Fourplexes and eightplexes provide affordable rental housing that conforms to predominantly single-family areas.

Finally, higher density mixed-use housing should be explored along the Lyons Avenue corridor and adjacent to Buffalo Bayou in the southern portion of the neighborhood. Higher density housing has the potential to draw singles, students, and seniors. Overall, increasing the population density in the neighborhood will create catalysts for new retail and commercial development and diverse housing options will allow residents to remain in the neighborhood over their lifetime.

BELOW: Housing Typology Concepts
OPPOSITE PAGE, Top: Map of Neighborhood Zones
OPPOSITE PAGE, Bottom: Matrix of Housing Typologies, by Neighborhood Zone





NEIGHBORHOODS Infill Strategies



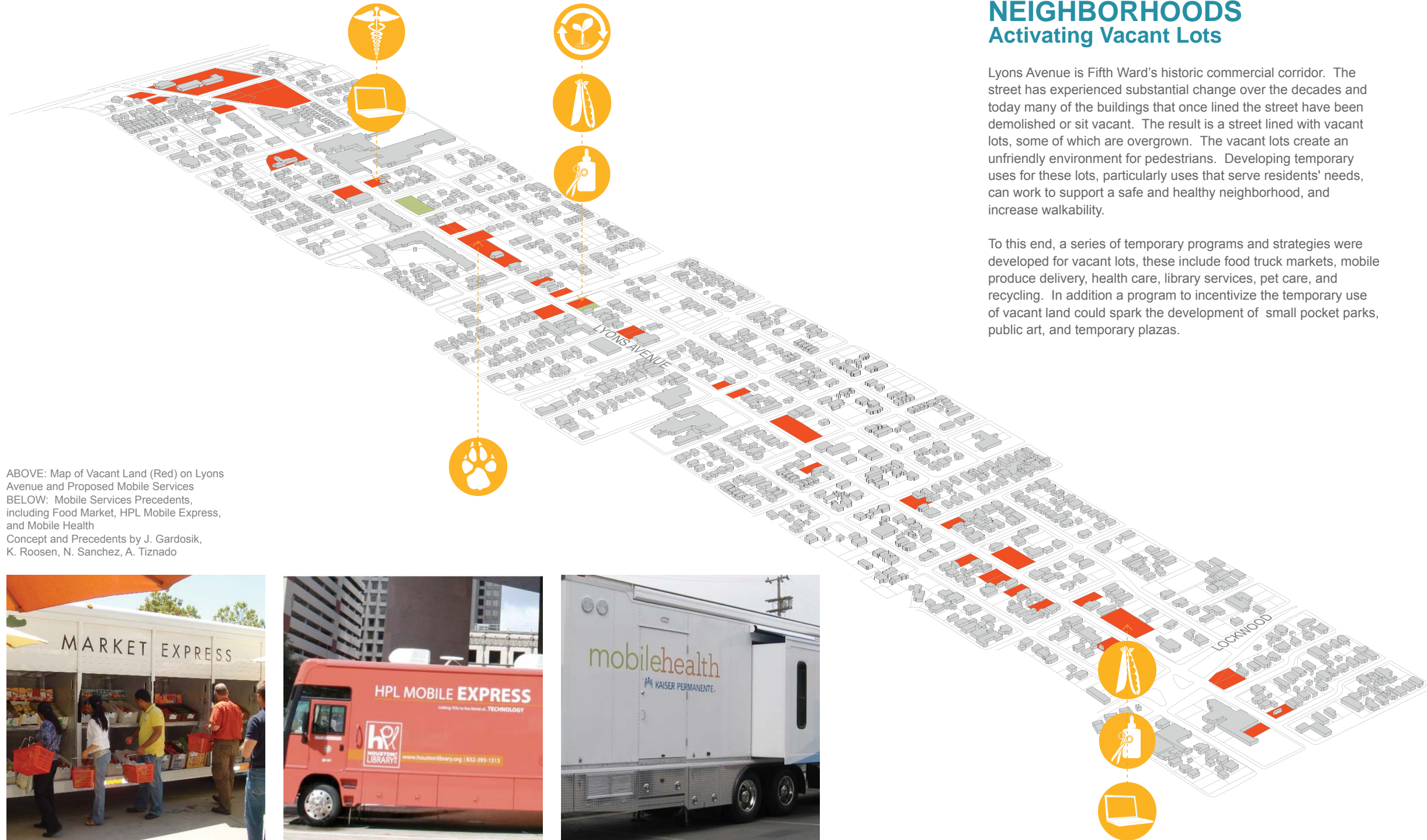
The Fifth Ward has an abundance of vacant land, buildings, and tax delinquent properties. For example, 500 lots are currently vacant, totaling 437 acres of land. This is approximately 14% of all land in the neighborhood. In addition, there are 400 tax delinquent properties, most of which are vacant. There is increasing evidence that caring for vacant lots can help create stronger communities. To this end, a focused housing infill strategy has been developed that takes advantage of existing assets and resources in the neighborhood including parks and schools.

A primary aspect of the infill strategy is to mix housing typologies to meet the needs of diverse households. For example, infill might include single-family homes, duplexes and row houses. The aim is to add density, build on the context, and create supportive multi-generational and mixed-income neighborhoods. Housing infill must be supported with a complete sidewalk network to enhance walkability and quality open spaces that provide areas for gardening, gathering and play.

New housing typologies, targeted for vacant lots also have the potential to piece the community back together and provide innovative solutions to the wide range of housing needs in the neighborhood.



ABOVE: Housing Infill Detail
OPPOSITE PAGE, Top: Map of Housing Infill Zones
Single-Family Infill
High-Density Multi-Family Infill
OPPOSITE PAGE, Bottom: Housing Precedents



ABOVE: Map of Vacant Land (Red) on Lyons Avenue and Proposed Mobile Services
 BELOW: Mobile Services Precedents, including Food Market, HPL Mobile Express, and Mobile Health
 Concept and Precedents by J. Gardosik, K. Roosen, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



NEIGHBORHOODS Activating Vacant Lots

Lyons Avenue is Fifth Ward's historic commercial corridor. The street has experienced substantial change over the decades and today many of the buildings that once lined the street have been demolished or sit vacant. The result is a street lined with vacant lots, some of which are overgrown. The vacant lots create an unfriendly environment for pedestrians. Developing temporary uses for these lots, particularly uses that serve residents' needs, can work to support a safe and healthy neighborhood, and increase walkability.

To this end, a series of temporary programs and strategies were developed for vacant lots, these include food truck markets, mobile produce delivery, health care, library services, pet care, and recycling. In addition a program to incentivize the temporary use of vacant land could spark the development of small pocket parks, public art, and temporary plazas.



Mobile Health Care: Provide screening, preventive wellness service, prenatal care, vaccinations, and other health services.



Mobile Recycling and Composting: Collects recyclable materials and organics. Compost materials would be available for area gardens.



Public Art: Activate vacant lots with public art projects that engage children and youth in the community.



Mobile Food Markets, Healthy Nutrition, and Food Trucks: Provide access to healthy food, nutrition classes, and entrepreneurial spaces for food trucks.



Mobile Animal Care: Provide spay and neuter services, pet care, and vaccinations.



Mobile Library: Provide access to books, resources, and computers.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

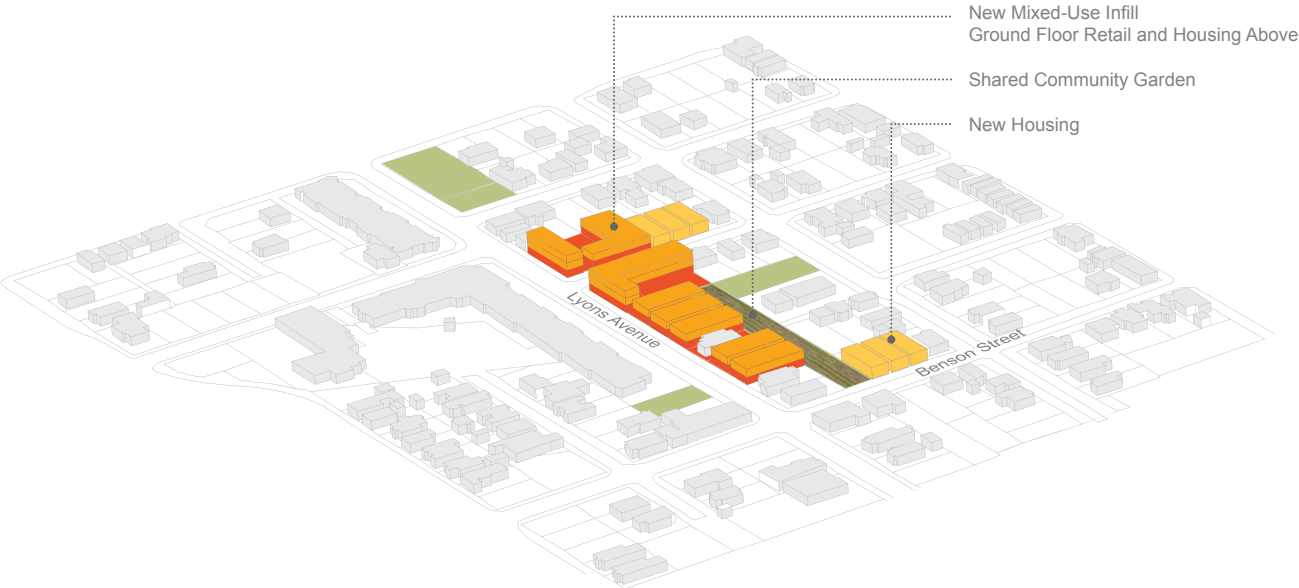
Lyons Avenue Corridor



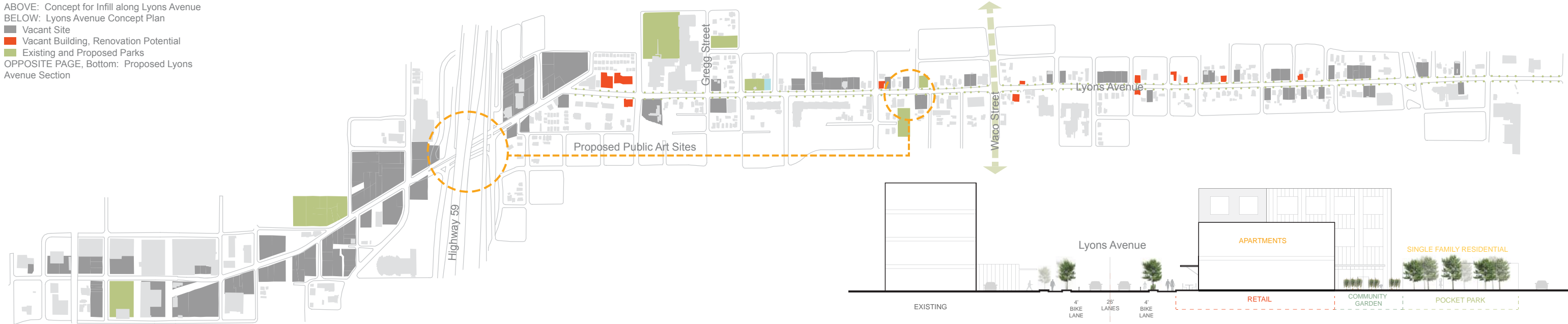
Lyons Avenue is the spine of the Fifth Ward. Identifying new uses for vacant building and under-utilized structures, while developing an infill strategy for vacant lots can transform the street and re-activate the corridor. Strategies to activate Lyons Avenue can be temporary and permanent. Temporary strategies include the development of food truck markets, mobile produce delivery, and go-kart racing.

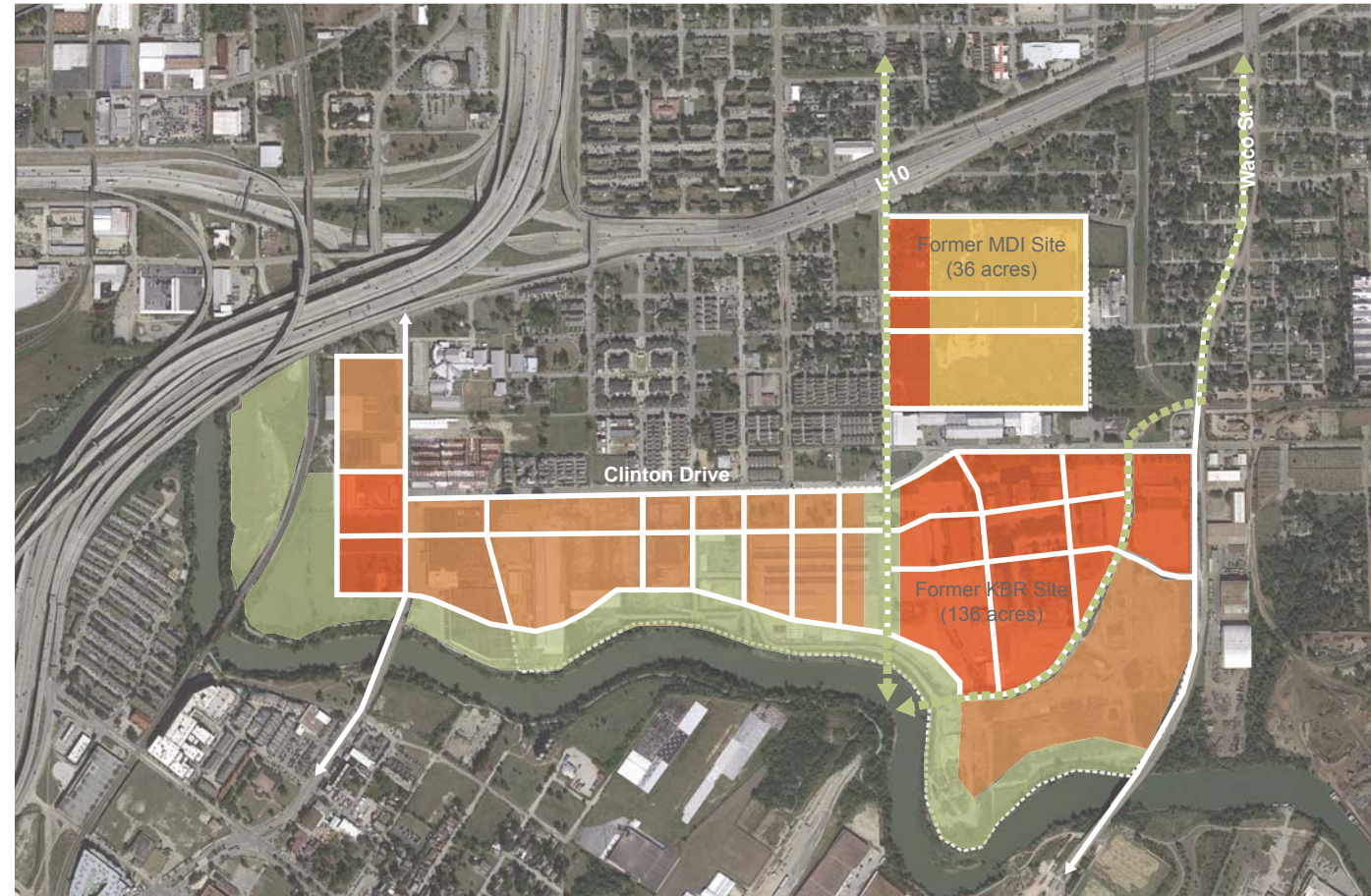
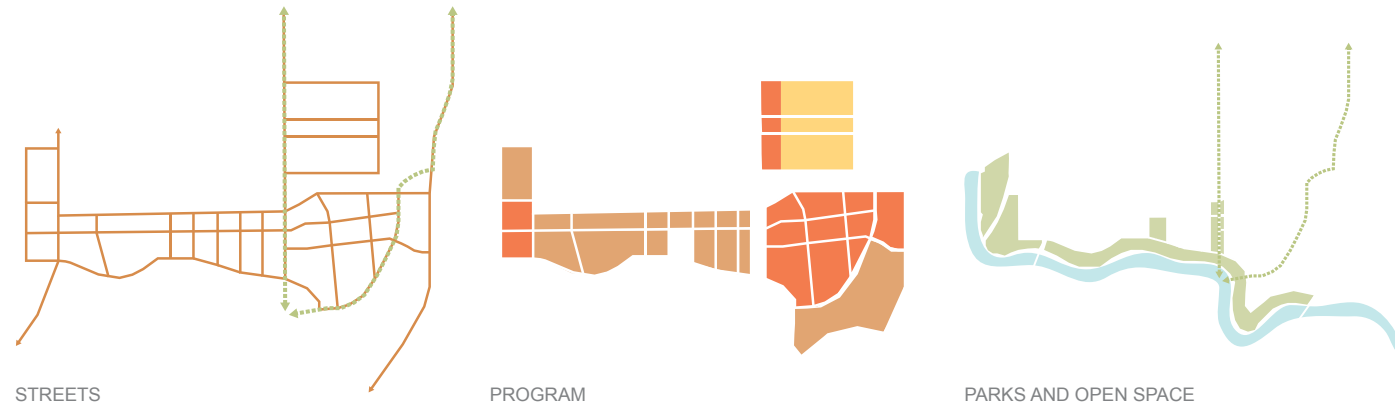
Permanent strategies include shared uses of existing spaces. For example, area churches with commercial kitchens could incubate local chefs and restaurants. Vacant buildings could become small business incubator spaces, or pop-up stores.

New development on vacant land has the potential to draw new residents, provide affordable housing, small pocket parks and plazas, and create a more walkable neighborhood. New development should be mixed-use and high density, with retail on the ground floor and housing above. Finally, a local trolley system along Lyons Avenue would connect destinations along the street and public art projects (orange circles on the plan below) would celebrate the neighborhood.



ABOVE: Concept for Infill along Lyons Avenue
BELOW: Lyons Avenue Concept Plan
■ Vacant Site
■ Vacant Building, Renovation Potential
■ Existing and Proposed Parks
OPPOSITE PAGE, Bottom: Proposed Lyons Avenue Section





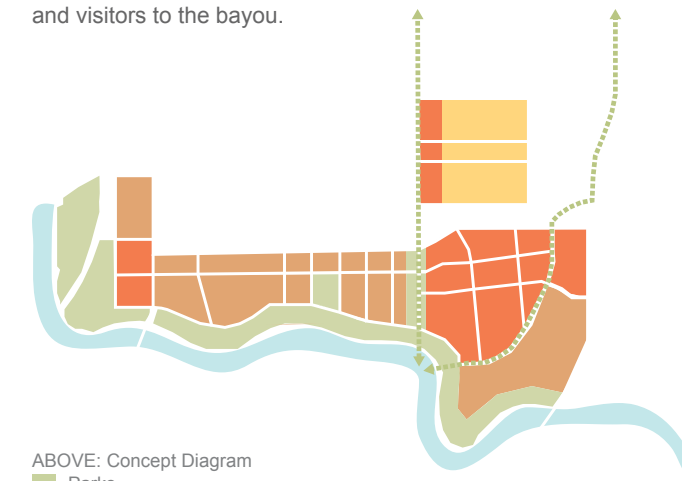
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY Bayou District



There are two large vacant parcels in the Fifth Ward that could become models for sustainable and healthy neighborhood design—connected to transit, walkable, mixed-use and mixed-income. In addition, new development would increase the population density of the area drawing investment to the neighborhood and thereby enhance everyone's access to services and amenities, such as grocery stores, and increased employment opportunities.

The two parcels are the former KBR site, a 136-acre tract along the banks of Buffalo Bayou, which was recently sold, and the 36-acre MDI Superfund site, which was remediated in 2004. If both of these sites were developed at current densities an additional 5000 residents would call the Fifth Ward home.

A set of strategies developed for the site include the development of a large linear green space along the bayou, pedestrian links north to the historic core of the Fifth Ward, and mixed-income housing, co-operative work spaces or incubators, retail, and commercial development. The linear green space would create a destination for neighborhood residents and draw activity to the bayou. In addition, public programs should be focused along the bayou to activate the waterfront. Overall, the goal is to create a dense, walkable and healthy community that would draw residents and visitors to the bayou.



ABOVE: Concept Diagram
 Parks
 Single-Family Housing
 Multi-Family Housing
 Commercial and Retail
 OPPOSITE PAGE, Top: Streets, Program, and Green Space
 OPPOSITE PAGE, Bottom: Concept Plan



SAFETY Sustainable Salvage

The decay and demolition of many original homes in the Fifth Ward has left an abundance of vacant lots and has had a substantial impact on the community's sense of safety. Good affordable housing is a core element for any strong and healthy neighborhood. To this end a strategy was developed, based on programs across the country (see opposite page), to salvage and re-use building materials from housing slated for demolition. A salvage program would ensure the timely demolition of abandoned properties, provide job training and employment for residents, create a funding stream to fund new housing, and in the long run contribute to the revitalization of the neighborhood by eliminating blight.



PRECEDENTS

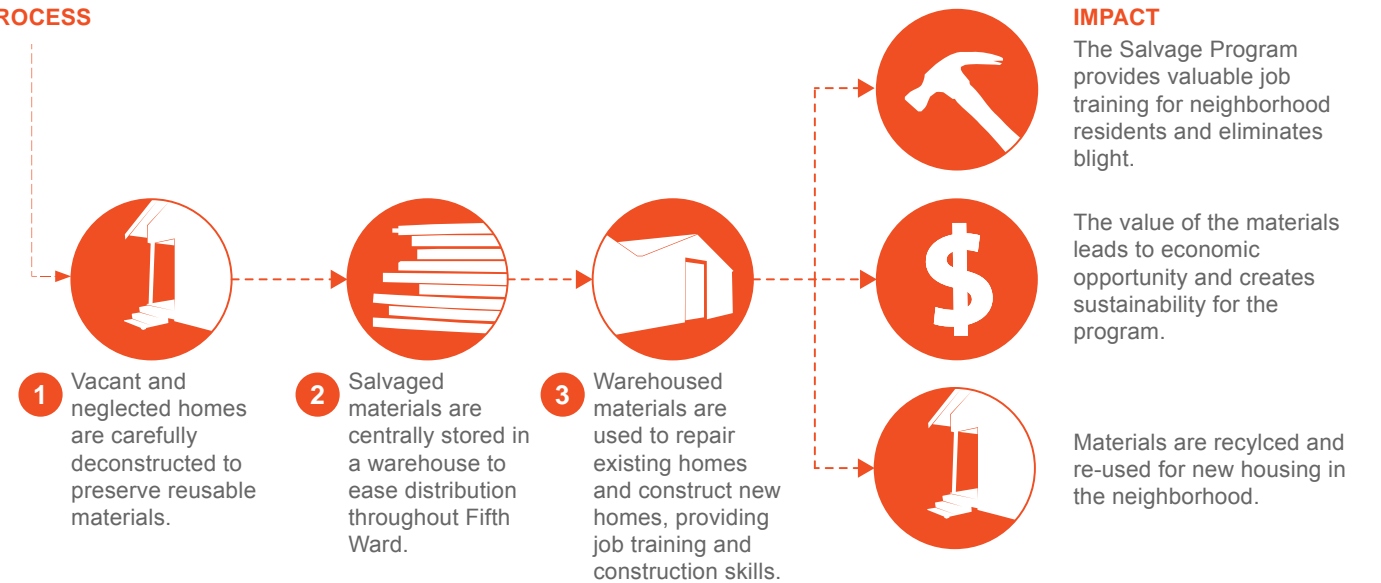
Reclaim Detroit is an organization founded to salvage and reuse as much material as possible from demolition in the city. The organization provides job training for local residents and resells the salvaged material (images above / www.reclaimdetroit.org).

In Huntsville, Dan Phillips' Phoenix Commotion uses salvaged and waste materials to build low-cost homes, particularly for single mothers in need. Each home is unique and the eventual owners participate in construction (see images above, or www.phoenixcommotion.com).

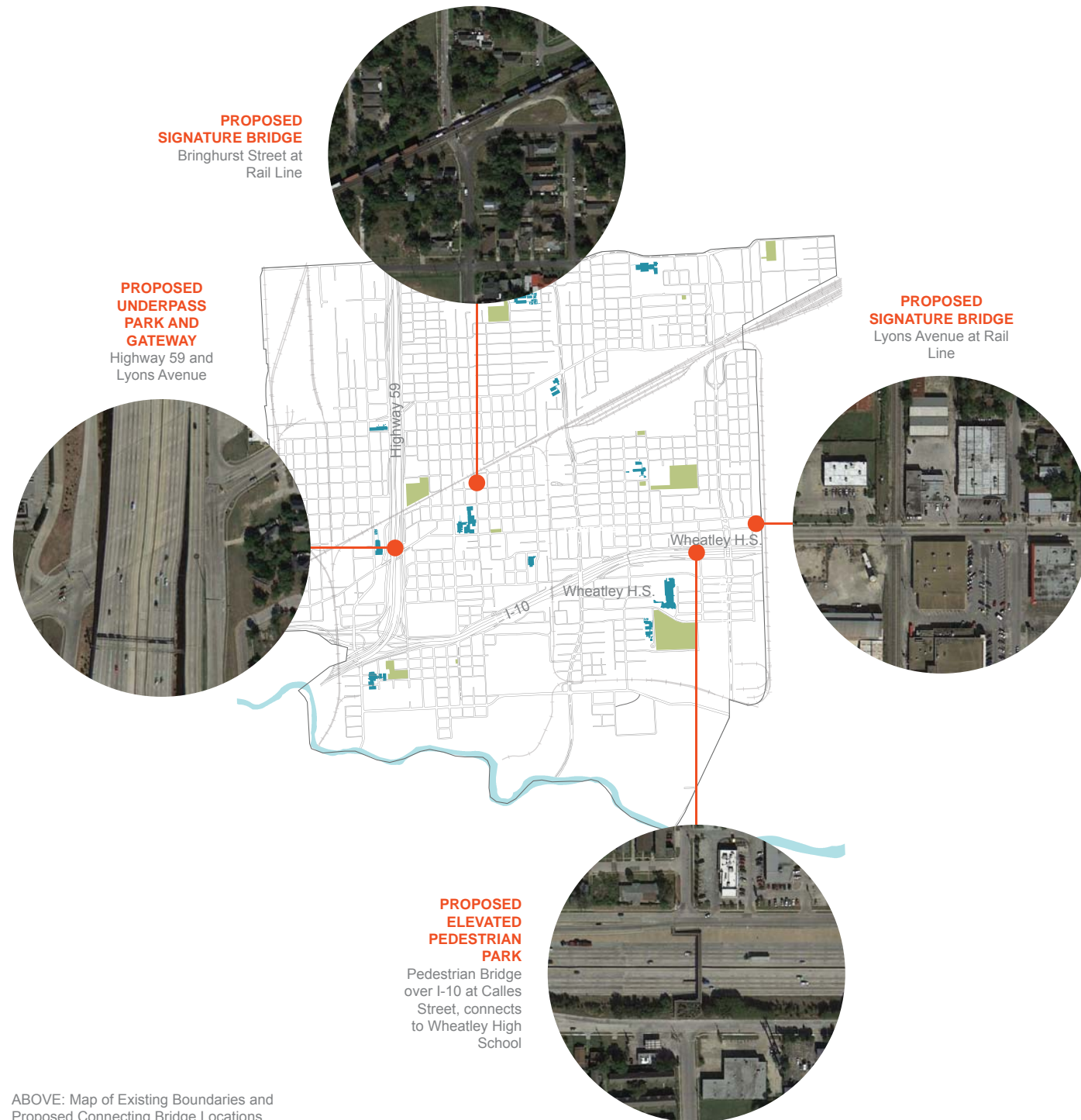
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Salvage Program is to eliminate blight in the form of vacant, abandoned and decaying structures, to provide job training and construction skills, to provide affordable recycled materials, and to promote the re-use of building materials.

PROCESS



TOP: Fifth Ward Housing Photos
 ABOVE: Concept Diagram of Proposed Salvage Program
 OPPOSITE PAGE: Precedents
 Concept, Diagram and Photos by J. Gardosik, K. Roosen, N. Sanchez, A. Tiznado



ABOVE: Map of Existing Boundaries and Proposed Connecting Bridge Locations

PUBLIC SPACE Bridging Boundaries

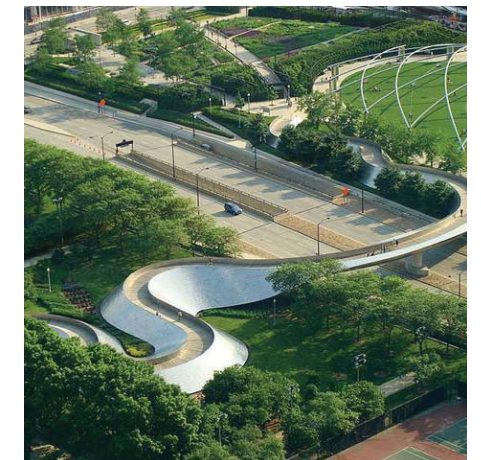
The Fifth Ward—its schools, parks, centers, and amenities—are divided by numerous boundaries, including I-10, Highway 59, and several active rail lines. Bridging these boundaries would create greater connectivity in the neighborhood and also improve safety.

Four bridge sites have been identified, two which bridge freeways and two railroad lines, each condition is different and represents distinct possibilities and challenges. The first site is at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Highway 59. Lyons Avenue travels under the freeway at this location creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians. An urban park constructed under the freeway would connect the east and west sections of Fifth Ward. The park could also serve as a gateway to the neighborhood from downtown. The second site is an existing pedestrian bridge that connects students across I-10 to Wheatley High School. A new bridge structure, with an elevated park, could create a signature pedestrian link in the neighborhood.

The final two sites are railroad lines, where again signature pedestrian bridges could celebrate the neighborhood's history and culture and create greater connectivity. The first bridge site, at Bringham, has already been approved. The \$1.3 million dollar structure is planned to be completed by 2015, the bridge will create a safe crossing for local elementary school students, as trains frequently stop. Community stakeholders should be included in the planning and design of the bridge. Finally, the fourth site is at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and a rail line on the east side of the neighborhood. Trains are frequent at this location and block pedestrian traffic to and from Fiesta and area shopping.



ABOVE: Map of Fifth Ward Boundaries
BELOW: Underpass Park Projects and BP Pedestrian Bridge, Chicago



Participants and Sponsors



Participants and Sponsors

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Community Design Workshop Spring 2013
University of Houston College of Architecture
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