

TIRZ 15 Visioning Session, 18 April 2009

Gensler



TIRZ 15 Visioning Session

Invitees /Attendees

- Alan Colyer Principal Gensler Houston
- Andy Icken Deputy Director - Public Works and Engineering COH
- Anton Sinkewich Plan, Design & Devt Coordinator Central Houston
- Bob Eury Executive Director Downtown Management District
- Bryan Sanchez Director - TIRZ No. 15
- CK Pang Principal Gensler Houston
- Clark Stockton Lord Attorney Vison & Elkins
- Cliff Halvorsen Area Engineer TxDOT
- Dan Nip Chairman of the Board TIRZ No. 15
- Dawn Ullrich Director - CE&F Department City of Houston
- Denis Wan Executive Director Chinatown CDC
- Donald Henderson President & CEO DJH Consulting, LLC
- Edmund Petry Planning METRO
- Guy Hagstette President Discovery Green
- James Rodriguez City Council Member - District I City of Houston
- Jill Jewitt Director - TIRZ No. 15
- Jim Furr Managing Principal Gensler Houston
- Joe Palmiera General Manager Hilton - America Hotel
- Joshua Espinedo Director - TIRZ No. 15
- Karin Werness Director - TIRZ No. 15
- Larry Badon METRO
- Luther Villagomez General Manager GRB City of Houston
- Mario Ariza City of Houston
- Marlene Gafrick Director of Planning & Development City of Houston
- Miki Milovanovic Director Capital & Environmental Planning METRO
- Neal Rackleff Locke Lord
- Norm Pegram Chairman of the Board East Downtown District
- Oliver Luck President & General Manager Houston Dynamo
- Peter Brown Houston City Council
- Peter Merwin Senior Associate Gensler Houston
- Ralph De Leon Senior Staff Analyst - Finance Department COH
- Robert Fiederlein Assistant Director - Finance Department COH
- Scott Barker Senior Project Manager METRO
- Stephen Lewis Deputy Director Convention & Entertainment Facilities COH
- Steve Granson HDR Engineering
- Steve Powell Houston Dynamo
- Tina Araujo Executive Director East Downtown District
- Tina Peterman Director - TIRZ No. 15
- Tom Davis Special Projects Manager COH

Site Aerial Photo

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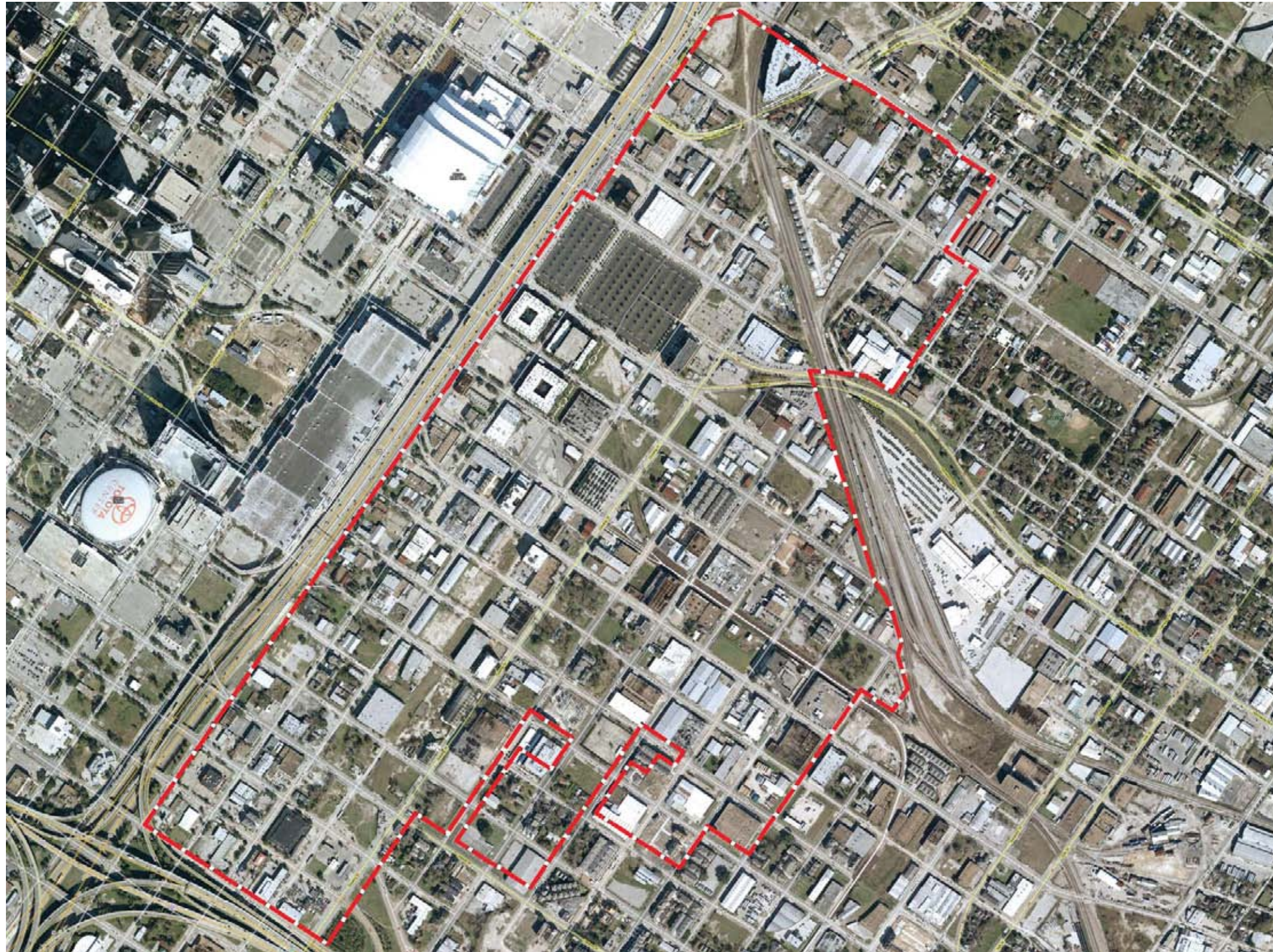
Summary

The TIRZ 15 area represents a significant opportunity for a coordinated vision benefiting both stakeholders and the greater community. A number of current initiatives each have the potential to contribute positive steps toward such a vision. Taken together these efforts could give renewed purpose and definition to this largely neglected neighborhood. Houstonians and visitors alike stand to benefit.

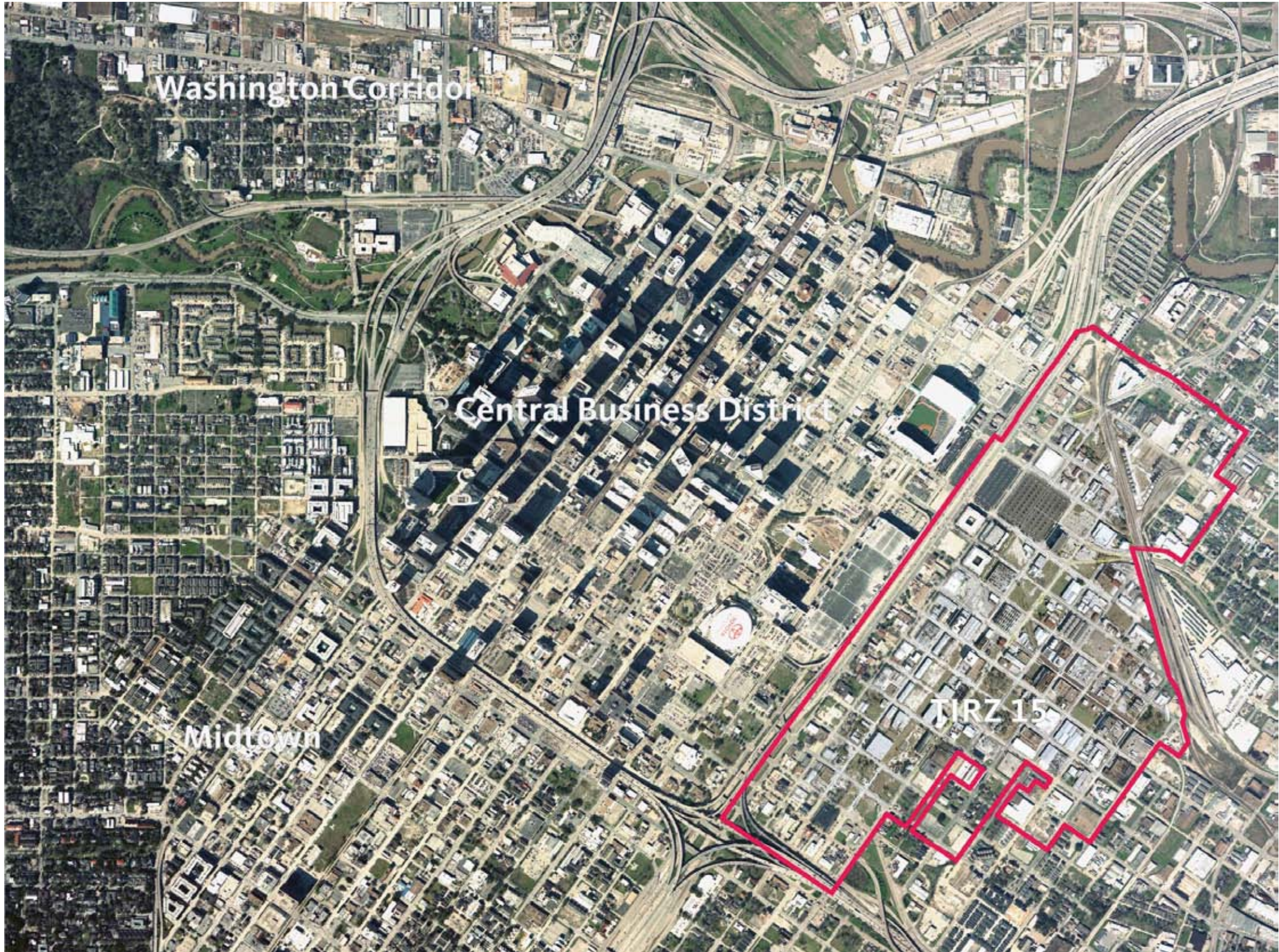
Degraded and incomplete infrastructure; shifting land values effecting development typology; the highway 59 barrier and connectivity to the CBD are some of the greatest challenges to be met. Future parking demands and traffic volume also need to be planned for.

A persistent vision for the TIRZ included creating a mixed-use International/Entertainment Zone to serve as a 24/7 destination. Stakeholders felt walk-able pedestrian scaled streets and park spaces edged by commercial business with residential above would provide a desirable density and interest. Such a conception would complement the Hotel and the Convention business currently in place while leveraging the potential created by the new stadium. There are strong incentives to improving connectivity into and out of the surrounding areas from a variety of modes of transportation.

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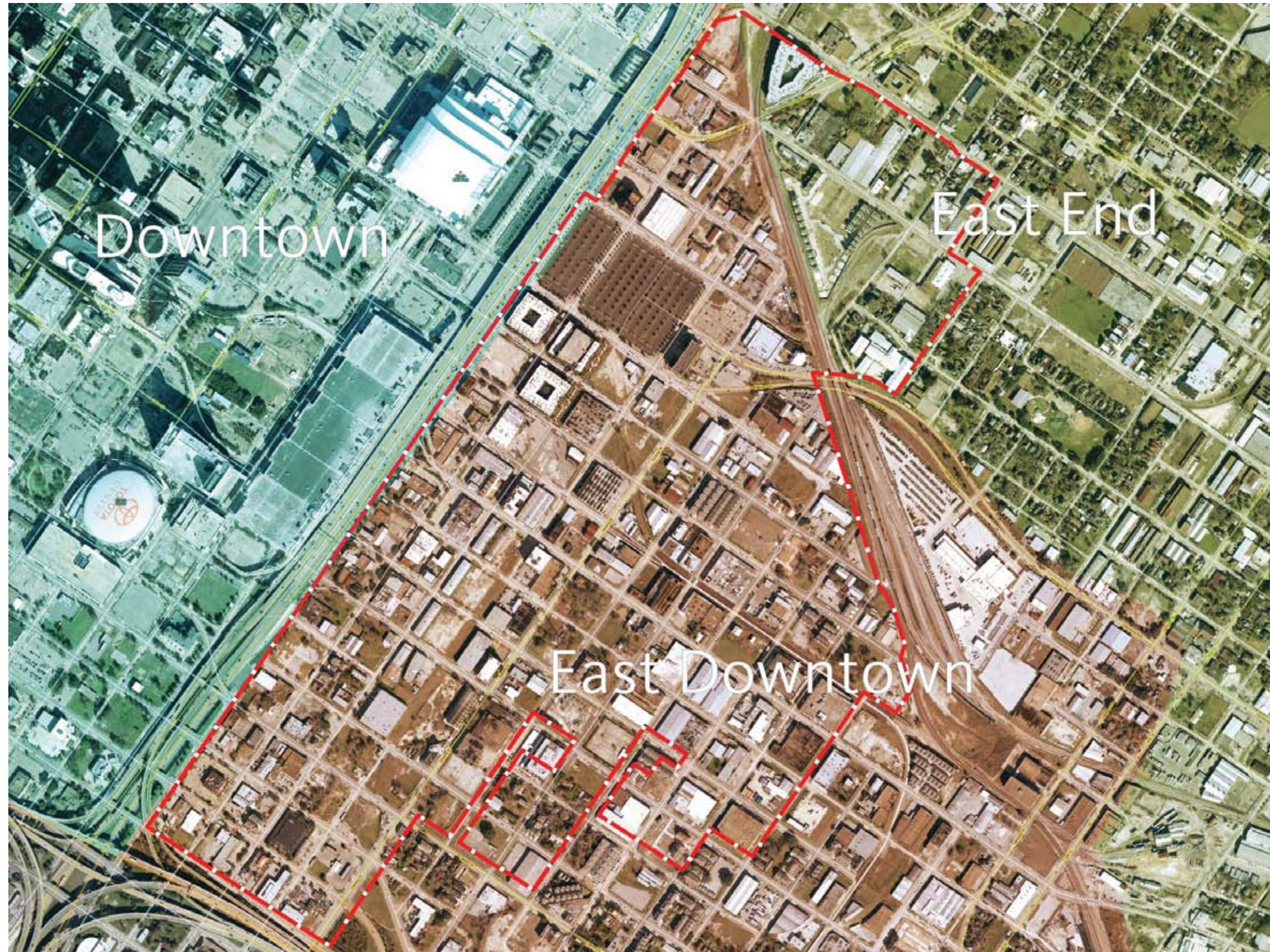
Regional Context



- This map shows the relative size of the Central Business District and the defined area of the TIRZ 15
- Nearly 300 acres east of downtown Houston
- Close Proximity to George R. Brown Convention Center, Minute Maid Park, the Toyota Center, Discovery Green and the Hilton Americas
- US Highway 59 forms the western boundary of the zone and Interstate 45 serves as the southern boundary, Ennis Street to the east, and Canal Street to the north

Management Districts

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- East Downtown is characterized by a lack of or inadequate, aging infrastructure and tremendous under-utilization of land.
- Management Districts abut and divide TIRZ 15, but have overlapping interests.
- A Sports and Entertainment Zone overlaps the Downtown and East Downtown Management Districts.
- The District is accessed easily from IH10, IH45, US59 and SH288. Many of the primary roadways within the District have access to one or more of these highways.

Dashed red line indicates TIRZ 15 boundary

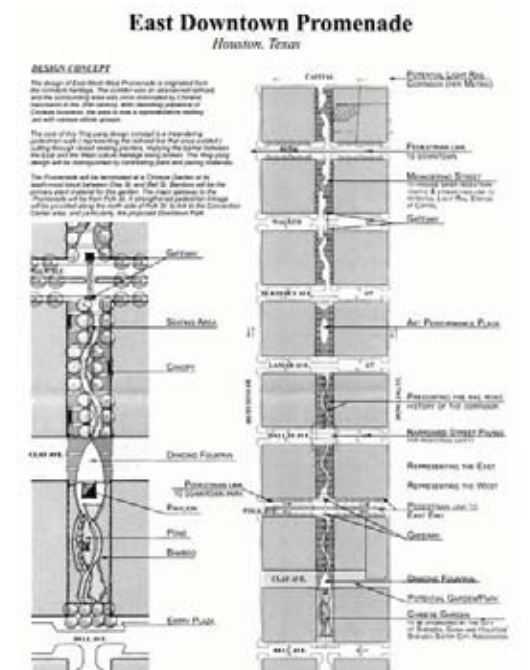
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Future Amenities Map

Current Initiatives



- The Proposed Dynamo Stadium will abut streets Dowling and Hutchins to the East and West and Texas Ave and Walker St to the North and South.
- The Proposed Southeast Rail Line will begin at Smith St Downtown, and end on Griggs near the 610 South Loop.
- The Sister City Promenade aligns with Bastrop and is on axis with the Southern end of the proposed Dynamo Stadium.



Land-Use Diagram



- The predominant land use in East Downtown is light industrial and commercial warehousing.
- Other uses include restaurants and stores selling ethnic groceries and supplies.
- The area currently has several multi-family residential projects that are the result of recent reinvestment by private developers in the area.
- A significant portion of the land is either undeveloped or consists of vacant, abandoned structures in serious need of repair. Some of these abandoned warehouses are occupied by artists who have retrofitted the cheap space inside them to function as live-work studios.

Land-Use – Residential

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- The housing in the area is a mix of new 3-story townhomes and low-rise apartment buildings.
- Single family homes, built in the first half of the century have fallen into disrepair, and are making way for current development.
- Pockets of residential zones are spread throughout the TIRZ, and usually only take up a 2-3 block radius.
- The "Lofts at Ballpark", a 375 unit apartment complex with an internal parking garage, is complete and occupies a 3-block area between Rusk and Texas streets.
- The Stanford Condominiums on Texas and Dowling streets is near completion.

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Leeland St + Ennis St



McKinney St + Hutchins St



McKinney St + Hutchins St



Dallas St + Palmer St



Land-Use – Commercial

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Walker St + St Emanuel St



McKinney St + St Emanuel St



Dowling St + Leeland St



Chartres St + Jefferson Ave



- Retail establishments and restaurants are scattered throughout the district along St. Emmanuel.
- Independently owned local restaurants pepper the area, drawing crowds from the nearby Central Business District during the weekdays.
- Parking Lots take up a large portion of the real estate nearest to Minute Maid Park.
- Certain establishments, like Warehouse Live, have their own following and bring people from all areas of town.

Land-Use – Industrial



- Several warehousing and distribution businesses located towards the south end of the district are thriving because of their central location and excellent highway access.
- Warehouses abutting new townhomes are a common sight.
- Many of the warehouses are not in use or in need of rehabilitation.
- Since Houston's Port moved further south, the area is no longer in need of so many shipping and storage facilities. Many of them can be repurposed for residential or commercial uses.

Chartres St + Preston Ave



Hutchins St + Bell St



Hutchins St + Lamar Ave



McKinney St + Delano St



Land-Use – Undeveloped



- Many of the existing structures seem abandoned, but a large area of promise lies in the undeveloped portions of the TIRZ. Contiguous tracts of land are available for development.

Polk Ave + St Emanuel St



Polk Ave + Bastrop (Future Promenade)



Dallas St + Hutchins St



Hutchins St + Walker St



Land-Use – Streets



- The main streets carrying through traffic have fair pavement conditions, but a few of the roads have been allowed to deteriorate severely.
- Dallas and portions of Hutchins have been neglected the most, as compared with the surrounding streets.
- Because the area was a big shipping inlet in the past, many of the roads start and stop where they intersect the railyard.
- Excepting Chartres, the N-S streets in TIRZ 15 remain 2-way.
- E-W streets between Leeland and Rusk are 2-way.
- Access and speed of traffic are important considerations for future development.

St Emanuel St + Dallas St



Bastrop St + Jefferson Ave



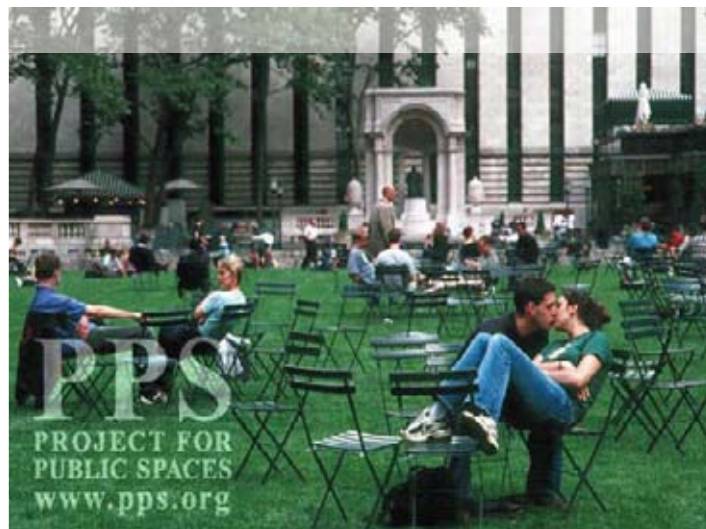
Chartres St + Polk Ave



St Emanuel St + Texas Ave



Potential Open Space



Red Dots denote Stakeholder votes

- The visioning Session revealed a preference for tree-lined, pedestrian scaled alleys, neighborhood markets, and public performance venues.
- Single use open spaces were less appealing to the visioning session attendees.
- Existing trees should be maintained in order to achieve appealing spaces sooner.

Potential Parking & Circulation



Red Dots denote Stakeholder votes

- A critical component to the TIRZ 15 area will be parking and access.
- It was felt a combination of convenient street parking, disguised parking structure, and a well designed light rail with landscape to soften the scale would be most effective.
- No one liked massive parking lots or large expanses of paved area.

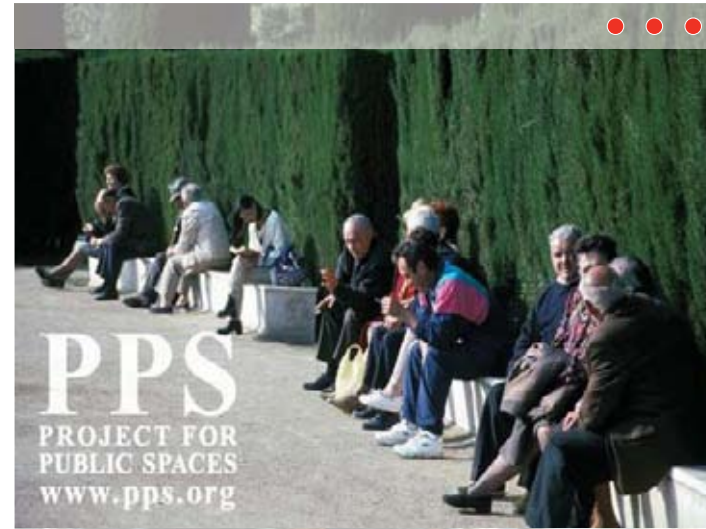
Potential Street Amenities

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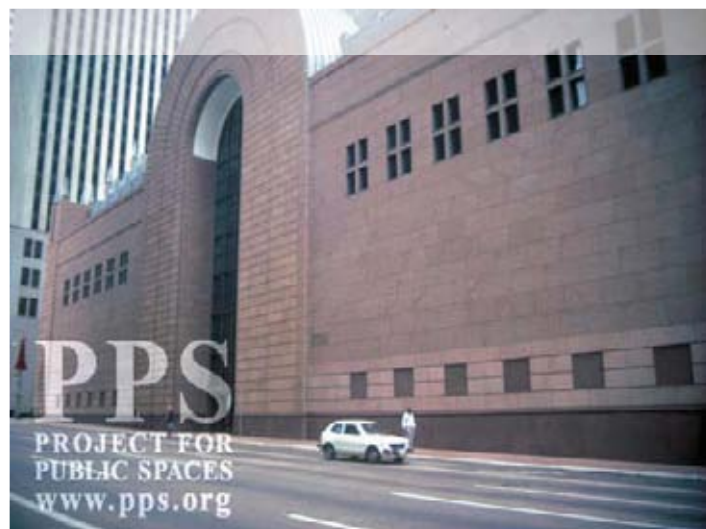
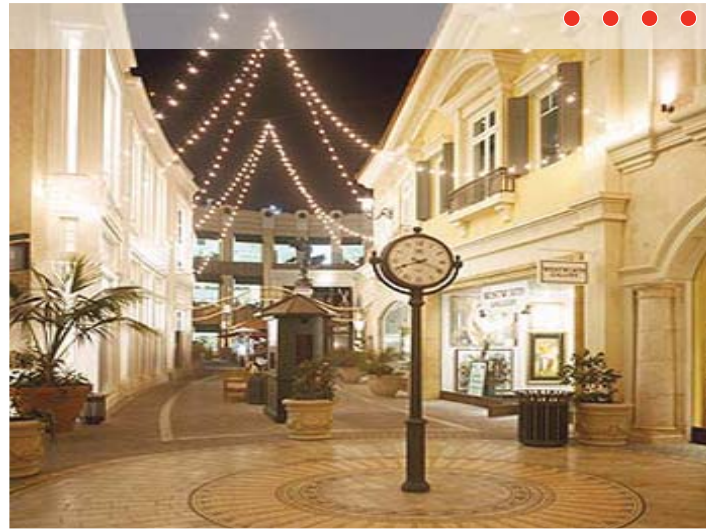
Red Dots denote Stakeholder votes

- Widths of sidewalks should be scaled to accommodate outdoor seating and cafes; people places.
- Large paved plazas lacking in street life contribute little.

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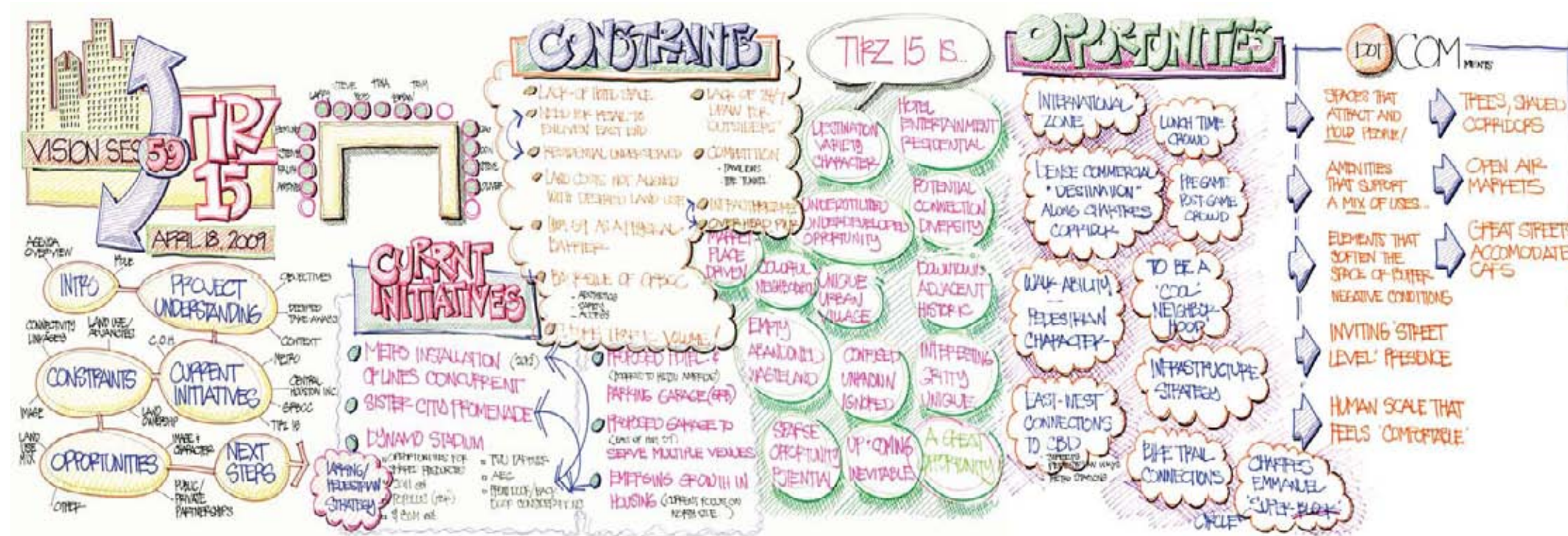
Potential Street Character



Red Dots denote Stakeholder votes

- Pedestrian scaled streets with adequate shade and comfort will help create a 24/7 destination.
- High-walled edifices with little street presence did not attract any votes. Austere, scaleless, treeless streetscapes need not be repeated.

Visioning Session Banners



Current Initiatives:

- Metro Installation 2012
- Sister City Promenade
- Dynamo Stadium
- Proposed Hotel & Parking Garage bookend North GRB
- Proposed Garage to East of I-59
- Emerging Growth in Housing

Constraints:

- Lack of Hotel Space
- Need for Retail to Enliven East end
- Residential Underserved
- Land costs not aligned with desired land use
- Highway 59 is a physical barrier
- Backside of GRB (aesthetics, safety, access)
- Future traffic volume
- Lack of 24/7 draw for outsiders
- Competition (Pavilions, the Tunnel)
- Infrastructure
- Overhead power

3 Words Describing TIRZ 15 today...

- Market Place Driven
- Colorful Neighborhood
- Empty, Abandoned, Wasteland
- Sparse, Opportunity, Potential
- Destination, Variety, Character
- Underutilized, Underdeveloped, Opportunity
- Unique, Urban, Village
- Confused, Unknown, Ignored
- Up-and-coming, Inevitable
- Hotel, Entertainment, Residential
- Potential, Connection, Diversity
- Downtown adjacent, Historic
- Interesting, Gritty, Unique
- A Great Opportunity

Opportunities:

- International Zone
- Dense Commercial Destination along Chartres Corridor
- Walk-ability, Pedestrian Character
- East-West Connections to CBD (auto, pedestrian, metro)
- Lunch-time Crowd
- Pregame, Postgame crowd
- To be a cool neighborhood
- Infrastructure Strategy
- Bike Trail Connections
- Chartres/St. Emanuel "super circle"

Dot-Comments:

- Spaces that attract and hold people
- Amenities that support a mix of uses
- Elements soften the area / buffer negative conditions
- Inviting "Street Level" presence
- Human scale that feel 'comfortable'
- Trees and shaded corridors
- Open air Markets
- Great Streets accommodate cafes

Visioning Session Workshop

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Gensler Task: Polk, Rusk, St. Emanuel and connectivity to Downtown , transit lines, and bike trails.

[STAKEHOLDER ACTIVITY]

Metro: East End line before SE line 2012

Ralph: 6-block area sister city has plans for one block - Shenzhen Garden in Houston, Chinese gateway (detailed drawings available)

Bloku-Istanbul is also a sister city. TIRZ will build some sort of park and/or pedestrian way to stadium.

Oliver Luck (OL): Dynamo site has been cleared. OL believes Dynamo will happen...the borings have happened. Six city blocks co-use with MM Park for parking to the northwest. HOK/Populous has designed an \$80 million, 20,000-21,000 seat stadium structure to be ready for 2011 Season. Field level is 13 feet below surrounding grade. It will have 30 suites. TSU has agreement to play football there. AEG is parent company to Dynamo. The live music events exclusive for Toyota Center expires after 2013...

Harrisburg SE line runs along the north side of the future Dynamo, a transit stop and main public entry to the stadium will be on this side, and most will park north of Texas Ave. There are gates at all four corners of the stadium. There will be a pedestrian way out to the west and parking area there. The service entry to the stadium is to the south where there will be about 300 cars parked. Bastrop linear park leads right into the south, service entry of the Dynamo Stadium...an opportunity

Ralph De Leon (RDL): Property ownership along Bastrop is beneficial and conducive to a retail street. 1800 spaces exist in Astros lot. Needs are additional 6,000-7,000 spaces.

Tina: Transit line critical in moving people

Steve: To the North, book ended to Hilton, will be a garage of about 1600 spaces. This will be the new convention center hotel. Meeting rooms on top of garage, built over Rusk rail line.

Dan Nip (Nip): To the SE of I-59 there is private developer looking at garage to serve Dynamo, MM park and the convention center...either on Chartres or St. Emanuel

Bob Eury (Bob): 5 blocks is the practical limit of pedestrian. Some people will pay \$20 for a preferred location.

Steve: The "bookend hotel" land is assembled by a private developer and waiting for economy to turn around. Hotel use is currently dipping.

Don: Garages are more than speculative.

RDL: (Boundaries of TIRZ discussion) Re-platting for residential uses. Tina agrees - "There has been an increased density of residential shown on HCAD plans."

OL: Brown & Root Proposition? What will happen? (TIRZ 18) MBI is being remediated.

Bob: The area West of Jensen and North of Bayou has been cleared will be residential. As the market gets juiced it drives up land values, just like midtown.

Steve: GRB faces west - we are not turning our back on East side hotel, retail, and residential potential. GRB is hopeful for neighbors to east.

Don: Houston is the 4th largest city, but only 27th as a convention destination. It only has 2,500-5,000 rooms. His Dream - lots of residential as feeder. It also needs a destination appeal beyond game day. (e.g. The Pavilion downtown works so well because of the House of Blues.) We need strategic thinking to create a "One of a kind" destination. An International Zone - fits perfectly with a sister city program. Museums, buildings, and restaurants are needed to create a flavor of these different cultures. This would enable conventioners to enjoy the Eastside. 4,000 - 5,000 rooms are needed near GRB. If we had these rooms Houston would move up to 12th or 15th for conventions. Atlanta has 18,000 rooms.

Jim Furr(JEF): World cup - World culture.

Bob: To the East of Dowling is residential, in between is higher density. We need to be more Disney-like. It's hard to control all the properties. Is low-rise office a possibility to create daytime use? How about Medical Office Buildings (MOB)? What if a campus of office buildings supplants the industrial use?

Nip: Townhouse development will stop as land values increase. At \$35-85/SF you currently need 6 stories of development to justify costs. At \$30-\$50/SF what do you need to build? We've already bypassed midtown on land cost. We needs more than 6 stories of Mixed-use development in this area.

RDL: TIRZ 7 is contiguous to Third ward and has good cash flow. It has \$50m flat, and \$30m underway, totaling \$70-\$100 million.

Bob: St. Emanuel needs to be a Destination street. In section (west to east): GRB -I-59 - Chartres - MUD - St E. - Linear Park - Residential.

Nip: 10-30 year vision: Chartres commences with Restaurants, Night clubs, and bars catering to the GRB convention center. St E. becomes a one way street with parking @ storefront. Hutchins Street a mixed-use residential development. Dowling...

Bob: Let's say there are 7 restaurants off the ball park with traffic supported. What do you do on an off day...?

OL: The Astro's draw 3 million people per year.

Bob: Yes but Dynamo wants those people to feed on the inside, and the TIRZ wants them to feed on the outside!...(Take West Grey @ Bagby as an example - if there was a hotel there, it would be great. Camden is getting up there in density.)

OL: Victory (in Dallas) is a great model

Bryan: Victory is not working. There has been a saying about that project, "Victory is Defeat"... They need \$2.30/ SF rents.

Nip: Assuming \$50K /year service workers for GRB, Dynamo,

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Minute Made Park...where do they live and park? This area needs affordable multi-family housing. (Probably east of Dowling) There is a projected demand of 10,000 units in the \$1.00-\$1.30/SF rent range.

Bryan: Then land needs to be <\$30/SF

Nip: Hanover gets \$1.35/SF

Tina: EaDo has: Industry- Zoom Spring, Oak Farms, Premiere IMS, Breathing Foods. EaDo needs: Commercial! EaDo has: Art, Warehouse, Theatre, 3-Ward culture, Chinatown... (Three writers from NYC love EaDo...!) St. Emanuel is walk-able and should remain so. It has a pedestrian character and restaurants that are packed 2-3 hours @ lunch. The HPD south central office doesn't want St. E. to become one-way. One way streets create high speed traffic! Chartres is not viable for pedestrian because cars travel too fast. How do you transform Chartres...?

[WHAT IS TIRZ 15...? THREE WORDS]

Steve (w/ Dynamo): GAS LIGHT DISTRICT

Don:(speaking as someone who has been in Houston 15 yrs working in the world of hospitality) UNDER-UTILIZED AND UNDEVELOPED OPPORTUNITY. Why does CBD end at 59...?

Nip: HOTEL, ENTERTAINMENT, RESIDENTIAL ...is what he wants.

Tom: POTENTIAL, CONNECTION (to what's beyond), DIVERSITY

Bryan: DOWNTOWN ADJACENT, HISTORIC (all the energy comes from Downtown), The TIRZ is currently a 100 year old neighborhood.

Tina: St. Basils, a historic African American church. In 2008 the area was defined as EaDo - "The Art and Soul of the City". UNIQUE URBAN VILLAGE, COLORFUL NEIGHBORHOODS, ENTERTAINMENT - sparkles...

Bob: UNIQUE, INTERESTING, GRITTY-makes you competitive, a little rough, shabby, the physical environment and attitude here

is authentic.

RDL: EMPTY, ABANDONED, WASTELAND -observations of 20 people on a walk around the perimeter; infrastructure not there; railroad cuts through sewer and water; no curbs or gutters; no streets; no storm sewers.

Steve GRB: CONFUSED-development ambitions, big development shoves out small residential; UNKNOWN- to outsiders; IGNORED- by public, city, and developers. Upshot...this is an area waiting to happen.

Larry: A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

Edmund: (speaking as a non-Houstonian planner) SPARSE, OPPORTUNITY, POTENTIAL

Steve: UP-AND-COMING, INEVITABLE- due to its relationship to the CBD...just a matter of how and when.

Anton: UNIQUE, POTENTIAL, NEIGHBORHOOD; gardens next to each other.

OL: INEVITABLE, MARKET PLACE DRIVEN. Dynamo is being greedy. Don't forget Harris County.

[BENCHMARKS AND IMAGES EXERCISE]

[FORGOTTEN OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS]

Tina: east - west streets and sidewalks

OL: Is GRB considering anything in their vision to the east? TXDOT

Steve: Closing one lane of Chartes; fence replaced, shrubs and flowers, sidewalks

Bob E: Woodway under 610 Loop has laid back sides that are nice.

Don: consider Hotel cross-connections, underground.

RDL: Think of a "Circle of Connectivity" with accepted portals or pathways.

Tina: Union Station to (promenade circle); connection of Polk with bike lanes to Discovery Green

CK: GRB connections

Steve: 2nd level (registration level) skywalks; under or over escalators; TXDOT X.

Tina: Chartres is a city street... and could be improved by parking lane and sidewalks

RDL: Downtown Houston CBD Cottswald idea - Hannover used the same model on the east side...precedent.

Bob: Challenge - future traffic at a 2035 build-out. Chartres' needs at that time will be substantial.

Steve GRB: 38 loading docks, 10 trailers at any one time...

Steve City: Power poles are a constraint; put duct banks in ground, fiber optics, communications needs should be considered at same time.

[IN CLOSING]

RDL: Need a single vision for both the TIRZ and the MGMT district

Steve GRB: a 262 room Embassy Suites was just announced to NW of Hilton

ABC: We'll report back on our vision session, organize and distribute.

RDL: Three steps, S, M, L



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