

**July 1, 2020**

## **SHEPHERD – DURHAM CORRIDOR PROJECT FUNDED**

The Memorial Heights Redevelopment Authority (MHRA) is pleased to announce that **both** phases of the Shepherd and Durham Major Investment Project are now funded. The corridors were originally added to the MHRA Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in 2016 when planning efforts identified the project as an opportunity to achieve significant improvements in safety, access, connectivity, and congestion. The project was discussed in detail with the community at a public meeting held on May 2, 2018, at the Historic Heights City Hall and Fire Station.

The first phase of the project, between I-610 and W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, was funded through a \$25M contribution from MHRA and a highly competitive \$25M United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) BUILD grant, announced in December 2019. MHRA is grateful to Representative Dan Crenshaw for his leadership in securing the BUILD grant, as well as to Mayor Turner and the City for their essential support.

Following the BUILD award, the MHRA began an intensive coordination process with local, regional, state, and federal officials to seek additional funding for the second phase of the project, between south of W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street and I-10. City of Houston elected officials led by Mayor Sylvester Turner and the City's delegation to H-GAC's Transportation Policy Council: Councilmembers David Robinson (At-Large), Abbie Kamin (District C), Carolyn Evans-Shabazz (District D), and Sallie Alcorn (At-Large) led this effort, with important support from METRO and others. After several months of coordination, \$40M of federal funding, matched by an additional \$10M in MHRA funding, was allocated to the second phase of the project on June 26, 2020.

These funding achievements were the result of a bipartisan effort involving federal, state, and local support by key individuals (in addition to those listed previously). These include: Senator Cornyn, U.S. Representatives Babin, Fletcher, Jackson-Lee, Olson, and Weber, State Senators Whitmire and State Representative Farrar, Harris County Judge Hidalgo and Commissioners Cagle and Ellis.

The approximately \$100M construction cost that is now funded is in addition to the cost of design and planning, which is entirely borne by MHRA.

These funding allocations will now allow for reconstruction of the entire corridor from I-610 to I-10. The project scope includes the reconstruction of several major cross-streets between Shepherd and Durham. in the future. The City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department is also coordinating additional improvements, extending south of I-10 to Buffalo Bayou.

### **Project Scope**

The project will replace and upgrade all public infrastructure within the right-of-way. This includes:

- Traffic safety improvements such as access management and traffic signals, modifications to existing turning radii, and sight lines;
- Congestion and travel time delay reductions through intersection signalization and turning movement improvements;
- Reconfiguration of Shepherd and Durham's travel way to include 3 travel lanes for vehicles, protected bike facilities, and improved pedestrian facilities which will reduce crash rates and facilitate better crossing movements for all users;

- New and repositioned Houston METRO bus stops;
- Upgraded stormwater infrastructure to meet post-Hurricane Harvey standards; and
- Improvements to water and sanitary sewer lines.

Two independent traffic engineering evaluations confirm that the project will improve safety and use for ALL transportation users—a unique opportunity.

### **What's Next?**

Final design of the entire corridor has begun. It is anticipated that construction of the first phase will begin in calendar year 2022. Construction on the second phase is anticipated to begin late in calendar year 2023. During the construction phase, the MHRA will provide regular updates at its public Board meetings and via this website. As always, MHRA welcomes public comment during regular Board meetings and informally to its President or Board members at any time.